

# KULT®

◇ DIVINITY LOST ◇

QUICK START RULES \* ALPHA VERSION 0.1



# KULT

## ♦ DIVINITY LOST ♦

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## Please read this!

Dear Kultist!

These rules are a condensed summary of the rules from the KULT: Divinity Lost Core Rule book, due in 2017. With this PDF we wanted you – the curious, the longtime fans, the twisted minds, and the lost souls, to be able to pre-play, try the rules, create scenarios, and experience horrifying stories with your friends.

Due to the condensed nature of this summary, almost no world information is present – so it will be easier for old-timers to pick up and play quicker. For the rest of you who are new to the world of Kult, please check out the web for a general overview.

Please note that we list this version of the Quick Start Rules ("QSR") as "**Alpha version 0.1**" – so a **Work-in-Progress** document. That means the following:

- ♦ The texts has gone through the first pass of translation from Swedish to English, but no further proofing has been done.
- ♦ Our very experienced native-English speaker Editor hasn't edited the texts yet.
- ♦ We prioritized releasing the QSR early, and before Christmas, meaning we had to put a hold on proofing and editing.

The QSR does not show final pages from the Core Rules book – this is a unique summary, specially made for being the QSR booklet. So the final Core Rule books may look completely different.

With that said, there **will be** typos, "swenglish" phrasing, strange formatting, some rules may need clearer descriptions, etc. So please expect that! This is a Work-in-Progress document, and you are invited right into this process – for better or for worse!

Feed-  
back

– We  
very much  
would appreciate  
feedback from you  
on matters focusing on  
rules and mechanics – if the  
Moves make sense or not, or if  
they are written in a confusing way.

Pure typos or strange phrasing will be  
picked up at a later stage by our proofing  
and editing passes done early next year.

If you are new to the KULT: Divinity Lost game line,  
and want to get a copy for yourself, you can Pre-Order  
KULT: Divinity Lost in the Modiphius web store: <https://www.modiphius.net/collections/kult>

Let the torment commence!

Humble Regards,

*The KDL Design Team*

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# THE WORLD OF KULT

**W**E LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE the sun has set. Us humans are trapped in an illusion which dulls our senses and bind our immortal souls in basic bodies made from flesh, fettered in time and space. The world we see around us is a false façade hiding a truth more terrifying than we could ever imagine.

Those of us who see beyond the veil find themselves face to face with a dreadful reality. Oppressive dark buildings, grimy stone walls, doorways and stairwells leads into labyrinthine border worlds where ashen beings dwells in shadows. The abandoned home at the end of the street has a hidden entrance others cannot perceive, and if you pass through the blue portal you end up in Metropolis – the eternal city. The sharply dressed stranger is actually a mutilated, lacerated nepharite who leaves bloody footprints in his wake. The fashion model is a soulless phantom evoked into physical form by humanity's distorted subconscious beauty ideal, and that charming man from the dating site is an avatar of the archon Tiphareth, slave-god of the principles of beauty, affirmation, and shallowness.

Most of us humans don't suspect the truth, but we harbor a deep subconscious conviction that something is wrong. A worry and restlessness that won't release its grip. To deaden our collective pain and confusion we desperately search for some sort of purpose. Some dive deep into their jobs and work until the stress consume them, and then some. Others lose themselves in drugs and sex to forget their existence in intoxication and ecstasy, or are prescribed psychopharmacological or talk therapy to deal with their cognitive dissonance. There are those who throw in with sects, cults, and religions to rediscover the freedom of being a cog in a hierarchical machine – to obey without thought or reflection. Internet tablets, espresso machines, selfie sticks, and other material things provide a sense of security and safety to some. Others maniacally dedicate themselves to positive thinking, a return to nature, correct and clean eating and thinking and speaking. Even this is a trap. Our bodies are our prisons and we forget we are beings of spirit – souls far mightier than what we could ever imagine.

When our reality tears apart our nightmares take physical shape, forgotten horrors of the deep are awoken, and entities which used to be our slaves and servants seek us out to take revenge. The terror originates with us, shaped by our psyches and our pasts.

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This is where the game begins. A crumbling illusion, powers far outside our understanding following ancient scripts and agenda, the thin membrane separating humanity from the divine, and how we allow ourselves to become enslaved out of fear of the unknown.





## PLAYING KULT

In KULT's stories, the protagonists are people being involved in or being pulled into events tied to their own pasts. Old sins catch up to them and demand atonement. Childhood fears finally bubble up to the surface and take on physical forms. The terrors take shape based on what's inside of us. Whatever exists out there, we cannot perceive it without being reflected by it. Every human being has their own demons, their own purgatory. In these stories the protagonists are forced to journey down into the abyss, perhaps even across the threshold of death itself, only to discover that there is no final destination – that death is only the beginning.

The oracles and prophets tries to catch our attention with graffiti carrying hidden meaning, in manic rambling screeds on conspiracy blogs, and by directly stopping us on the street and shouting truths in the form of spit-laden monologues into our faces. But we immediately turn our gaze down towards the smartphone screen's comforting light, and keep walking as if nothing happened.

In KULT's stories the main characters are forced to suddenly awaken from their slumber and, despite everything they thought they knew, realize their life is a lie. While the reality these characters have carefully constructed for themselves fall apart piece by piece, they will start to glimpse a darker reality through the cracks in the mortar. The illusion is starting to tear.

In KULT's stories the characters will confront unthinkable horrors. Those who don't perish will change irrevocably. They will make pacts with some entities to elude

others, they will glimpse the truth that renders their past lives meaningless, and they will taste both the sweetness of victory and its rotten aftertaste.

### Roleplaying

To play KULT means to gather in a group of 3–6 people to experience a dramatic horror story. One of the participants take on the role of gamemaster (GM) and is responsible for leading the conversation and managing the story's scope. The remaining participants are the players, who use the game rules to create player characters (PCs) acting as protagonists in the story, one each. Before the game the group will determine guidelines for the story: when and where it's set, and any notable events the player characters have been part of.

During the course of the game the GM is tasked with describing the scenes and characters the player characters encounter, events which transpire in the story, and ask the players what their characters are doing. The players will describe what their characters do, and adopt the roles of their characters when they converse with each other or with other characters they encounter. The GM controls and portrays all characters who aren't player characters – we call them non-player characters, or NPCs. If a PC encounters an NPC in the story, the GM will explain what that character does and says.

*The conversation might look something like this:*

**GM** – "It's eight twenty in the evening, Saturday November 22nd, 2014. Heavy sleet falls onto the streets of Stockholm, covered in brown slush and people hurrying, almost running, through the ice cold downpour. John, you're hanging



out on The Slab at Sergel's Square, underneath the roofing by the subway entrances. You're waiting for Johanna, your contact at Daily News, to show up. You'd decided on meeting here at eight, now it's twenty minutes later and Johanna is always punctual."

**Player** – "I'm sure I've been here since a while before eight, just to make sure I wouldn't miss her, so I'll have been waiting for a pretty long time. I'm probably pretty nervous considering the people pursuing me so I'll give Johanna a call to see if she picks up."

**GM** – "Sure, you call. A few rings later Johanna's voice-mail picks up and asks you to leave a message."

**Player** – "Shit! I'm pretty sure something must've happened. What if they know I'm here? Out of habit I start fiddling with the gun in my inside jacket pocket."

**GM** – "You're aware there's a pretty large number of police on the square at this time on a Saturday night..."

**Player** – "Yes, exactly. I glance around nervously stop messing with the gun. Where the hell is she? I think I'll wait for another ten minutes and if she doesn't show by then I'm out of here."

**GM** – "Yeah okay, you stand there waiting, the minutes ticking by impossibly slowly while hundreds, maybe thousands of people run by you out onto the wet square towards the stairs leading to surrounding buildings. You're just about to get on your way when you spot Johanna."

**Player** – "Oh, damn. I approach her, quickly."

**GM** – "Okay, as you start to walk you notice the man behind her walks real close. Johanna's got the hood of her jacket up but you can still spot heavy bruising on her face. Something is terribly wrong here. What do you do?"

**Player** – "Fuck, fuck, fuck. I don't know."

**GM** – "Do you continue approaching her or do you just stay out on the square?"

The conversation between GM and player continues like this, letting us discover what will happen in the story.

## Rules, moves and rolls

The GM is responsible for applying and adjudicating the rules of the game. Before the game action starts, the rules help the GM in preparing the story and assist the players in creating their characters. During the game they help the GM tell the story and serve to introduce unexpected narrative twists, adjudicate outcomes, and determine the fallout of certain actions the players take.

All actions taken by NPCs happen as described, since the GM will have already determined it makes sense

for that character to take that action. Certain actions the PCs commonly want to take are described as moves in the rules, and require following the instructions in the rules whenever they're carried out. Frequently, this will involve the roll of two ten-sided dice, doing some simple arithmetic, and consulting the move text for the outcome depending on the result.

*Example:*

### • Influence other

*When you influence an NPC through negotiation, argument, or from a position of power **roll +Charisma**.*

**(15+)** She does what you ask

**(10–14)** She does what you ask, but the GM chooses one:

- ♦ she demands better compensation
- ♦ a complication will arise at a future time
- ♦ she gives in for the moment, but will change her mind and regret it later

**(–9)** Your attempt has unintended repercussions. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

The italicized text is considered a *trigger*. Whenever the situation described in the trigger occurs in the story, the move is executed by following the rest of the instructions. In this case the move only executes if

- a) the target of the PC's influence is a non-player character (controlled by the GM)
- b) if the influencing is done via negotiation, argument, or from a position of power

If it's unclear if a move's trigger applies – for example, if a child PC argues with their imposing teacher who they have minimal leverage over – it is up to the GM to adjudicate whether the move fires or not.

If the move does apply, the player taking the action rolls two ten-sided dice and adds their character's value in the attribute *Charisma*.

A result of 15 or greater is referred to as complete success, and means the action takes place exactly as the player character intended.

A result between 10 and 14 is referred to as success with complications, and means the player character did what they set out to do but there's a complicating factor, something unexpected, or a bit worse of an outcome than what the player character hoped for.

A result of 9 or less is referred to as failure, and means the action has consequences that tend to be very bad for the player character.



Moves are the basic mechanic in KULT's rules and will be activated frequently. When PCs take actions to which no move's trigger applies, the GM will decide what happens. Often they will do exactly the thing they intended to do, but if they're unskilled, unequipped, in a bad situation, opposed by someone or something powerful, or just because the GM thinks it'd be more appropriate, the GM can instead give them an unexpected or unwanted outcome, or make a move themselves.

The GM has moves as well, but those don't tend to have triggers. Instead, the GM will execute a move of their choice during certain dramatic moments. There's no dice rolling involved and the events in the move transpire immediately and irrevocably. These moves often result in obstacles or consequences in the story which the PCs must react to.

## THE PLAYER CHARACTER

The player characters are people portrayed by the players around which the story revolves. In the Archetypes chapter you will find four character templates and rules for customizing them. This chapter explores the rules utilized by player characters.

Every PC has a past which has shaped her into who she is today. Traumatic events, guarded secrets, and encounters with the supernatural has instilled a suspicion that something isn't right. Through pain, fear, guilt, and madness these events have shaped the player character's personality and provided her with strengths and weaknesses.

### Dark secrets, advantages and disadvantages

These events and personality traits are represented in the form of dark secrets, advantages, and disadvantages. Every character begins play with one or more dark secrets, two disadvantages, and three advantages.

Dark secrets are windows into traumatic, mystical, or guilt-laden events in the character's past. Each dark secret has a theme which the player and GM takes into consideration when working out the specifics of the secret, but any given dark secret can provide the framework for a great variety of events. It's used as inspiration to develop a character concept and backstory, but also acts as a storytelling aid for the GM and players.

Through the player characters' dark secrets the GM is provided with concrete themes for the story, such as guilt, revenge, flight, sorrow, passion, and redemption. They also serve as anchor points for locations, objects, and entities to include when preparing a story.

Disadvantages can be personal failings or odious personality traits, conditions afflicting the character, or external threats in the form of individuals, institutions, creatures, and supernatural powers. The character might be suffering from schizophrenia, harboring a rampant urge to take revenge on someone, or being followed by faceless enemies. Disadvantages are moves rolled by the players, but unlike the basic player moves these serve to provide the GM with opportunities to affect the player characters later in the story. Examples might be that the character's schizophrenia distort her perception of reality, or that the character's pursuers catch up with her.

Advantages are strengths, rare abilities, supernatural powers, and resources the character can use in the story to gain an edge and be able to accomplish things others can't. The character might be tough and doesn't get hurt easily, or have special training in the investigation of crime scenes, maintain influential friends, or is the leader of a gang of underlings. Advantages are moves which either give the character permanent bonuses on rolls of a certain kind, extend the scope of a basic move, or provide the player with the opportunity to take special actions nobody else can.

### Attributes

There are ten attributes, each with associated moves. The attributes modify the die rolls of player moves and advantages. Attributes and their moves are either passive (triggered automatically when conditions are met) or active (triggered by a player character taking a certain action).

#### PASSIVE

Passive attributes are used to resist external and internal influences. The player moves associated with passive attributes are triggered when the player character is threatened. When creating the player character, the player distributes adjustment values of +2, +1, and 0 across the passive attributes. There are three passive attributes: **Fortitude**, **Willpower**, and **Reflexes**.

**Fortitude** measures the player character's physical resistance, pain threshold, and stress response when suffering physical injury. A character with high fortitude is capable of enduring injuries that would drop a character with lower fortitude.



**Willpower** measures the player character's mental resilience, composure, peace of mind, and capacity for working through trauma. A character with high willpower can resist the influence of supernatural powers and stay sane despite terrifying experiences.

**Reflexes** measures the player character's quickness, responsiveness, and instinct when physically assaulted or when at risk of physical injury. A character with quick reflexes is better at getting out of harm's way.

### ACTIVE

Active attributes are used when a player character acts proactively. The player moves associated with active attributes triggers when the player character takes a certain action in the fiction. When creating the player character, the player distributes adjustment values of +3, +2, +1, +1, 0, -1, and -2 across the active attributes. There are seven active attributes: **Reason**, **Intuition**, **Perception**, **Coolness**, **Violence**, **Charisma**, and **Soul**.

**Reason** measures the player character's analytical ability. A character with high reason is good at information gathering and investigation.

**Intuition** measures the player character's empathy and gut feeling. An intuitive character is good at reading the intentions and hidden motives held by other intelligent creatures.

**Perception** measures the player character's alertness. A perceptive character is good at scanning environments and taking notice of what others overlook.

**Coolness** measures the player character's cool. A cool character is good at stealth, theft, and other situations demanding quick decisions under stress.

**Violence** measures the player character's raw strength, fighting expertise, and viciousness. A violent character excels at inflicting harm on others.

**Charisma** measures the player character's charm, leadership, and rhetorical talent. A charismatic character easily persuades and manipulates others.

**Soul** measures how sensitive the player character is to supernatural forces. A soulful character has an easier time perceiving Reality and is more attuned to their intrinsic powers.

### Player moves

Player moves are moves available to all player characters. When a player character executes an action in the story that triggers a move, the player rolls two ten-sided dice and references the move's instructions to find out what happens depending on the dice outcome. The GM describes the outcome in the story, and might in some cases make her own follow-up moves.

### THE COMPOSITION OF MOVES

**Trigger:** player moves always begin with a phrase describing what triggers the move. For example, "*When enduring injuries...*" or "*When you investigate something...*". Any time a player character takes an action in the story corresponding with this trigger phrase, the player should execute the matching move. This also means that to roll for a move, the player character must be performing an activating action in the story.

**Roll:** Player moves include a roll modifier. These are bolded to make them stand out, for example: "**roll +Violence**" or "**roll +Fortitude -Harm**". The player rolls two ten-sided dice, adds up their results, and finally subtracts (-) or adds (+) the modifiers. Occasionally this value will be 0 in which case the roll stands, unmodified.

**Outcomes:** A player move will have different outcomes depending on if the total is 15 or greater (complete success), 10 to 14 (success with complications), or 9 or below (failure). The player move says what happens in the case of complete success and success with complications, and on occasion will say what happens even in case of failure.

When the roll is a complete success (15+) the player character accomplishes their goal with no complications.

When the roll is a success with complications (10-14) the player character accomplishes their goal but the success is accompanied by complications in the form of a hard choice, costs, or subsequent troubles. For example, if they're fighting someone in close combat, they might be able to inflict injury on their opponent but not without also sustaining harm, or they successfully uncover what happened to the crime victim while investigating the apartment but is also caught in the act by the cops.

When the roll is a failure (-9) the player character might accomplish their goal, but the GM may additionally make one of her GM moves.

Moves must always push the narrative forward. Regardless of the outcome the story will take a new turn when player characters execute moves.

This chapter describes all player moves. The move is described in its entirety followed by trigger and outcome explained in greater depth to give the GM a better understanding of how they affect and should be described in the story.



## • Endure Injury

When enduring injury **roll**

**+Fortitude –Harm**. If you are wearing armor, add its rating to the roll.

**(15+)** You ride out the pain and keep going.

**(10–14)** You are still standing but the GM picks one:

- ♦ The injury throws you off balance
- ♦ You lose something.
- ♦ You receive a *serious wound*.

**(–9)** The injury is overwhelming. **You** choose if you:

- ♦ Are *knocked out* (the GM may also choose to give you a *serious wound*).
- ♦ Receive a *critical wound*, but may continue to act (if you already have a critical wound you may not choose this option again).
- ♦ Die.

### Serious wounds

The wound requires appropriate care and time to heal, but will not get worse on its own. Alcohol and painkillers can remove the penalty the wound imposes, if only temporarily. A PC can have at most 4 serious wounds. Additional serious wounds are considered critical. *Examples of serious wounds*: lacerated arm, facial cuts, broken ribs, bone-deep cut, concussion, profuse bleeding, broken fingers, sprained ankle.

### Critical wounds

The wound will not heal on its own, and will get worse if untreated. A critically wounded character must get medical care urgently if they wish to live. When a critical wound has been stabilized and given time to heal it's considered a stabilized serious wound. *Examples of critical wounds*: punctured lung, severed aorta, spilling intestines, mangled arm, gun-blasted genitalia, torn out eyeball, shattered shoulder, internal bleeding, spinal cord damage, cerebral hemorrhage.

### Wound penalties

If you have any non-stabilized serious or critical wounds you're subject to the penalties below.

If you have any	Deduction
...serious wounds (non-stabilized)	–1 ongoing
...critical wounds	–1 ongoing
...both serious and critical wounds	–2 ongoing

## • Avoid Harm

When you dodge, parry, or block harm, **roll +Reflexes**.

**(15+)** You emerge completely unharmed.

**(10–14)** You avoid the worst of it, but the GM decides if you end up in a bad spot, lose something, or partially sustain harm.

**(–9)** You were too slow to react or you made a bad judgment call. Perhaps you didn't avoid any harm at all, or you ended up in an even worse spot than before. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

## • Keep it Together

When you exercise self-control to keep from succumbing to stress, traumatic experiences, psychic influence, or supernatural forces, **roll +Willpower**.

**(15+)** You grit your teeth and stay the course without undue influence.

**(10–14)** The effort to resist instills a condition which remains with you until you have had time to recuperate. Choose one:

- ♦ You become angry (–1 **Stability**)
- ♦ You become sad (–1 **Stability**)
- ♦ You become scared (–1 **Stability**)
- ♦ You become guilt-ridden (–1 **Stability**)
- ♦ You become obsessed (+1 Relation to whatever caused the condition)
- ♦ You become distracted (–2 in situations where the condition will limit you)
- ♦ You will be haunted by the experience at a later time
- ♦ You get –1 in situations where this condition would be a hindrance to you.

**(–9)** The strain is too much for your mind to handle. The GM chooses your reaction: cower powerless in the threat's presence, panic with no control of your actions, suffer emotional trauma (–2 **Stability**), or suffer life changing trauma (–4 **Stability**).



## Stability

○ Composed	
○ Uneasy	Moderate stress:
○ Unfocused	–1 disadvantages
○ Shaken	Serious stress:
○ Distressed	–1 <b>Keep it Together</b>
○ Neurotic	–2 disadvantages
○ Anxious	Critical stress:
○ Irrational	–2 <b>Keep it Together</b>
○ Unhinged	–3 disadvantages
	+1 <b>See through the Illusion</b>
○ Broken	The GM makes a move

**Stability** measures how comfortable the player character is mentally. A character will start out in a composed state but her **Stability** may decrease upon experiencing traumatic events.

- ◆ When the character is *Broken* the GM makes a move at a time of her choosing as follows:
- ◆ Activate a disadvantage's failure (–9) effect
- ◆ The Illusion tears around or for the character
- ◆ Shift the character in time or space
- ◆ Fragments from the character's dark secrets manifests in present-day reality
- ◆ The character gets a new disadvantage based on the event
- ◆ The character becomes suicidal and must succeed at a **Keep it Together** roll to resist the impulse

Or give the character one of these:

- ◆ You undergo change: Switch two attributes with different values. Improve **Stability** to *Anxious*.
- ◆ Your life changes direction: Choose a new Archetype. Improve **Stability** to *Neurotic*.
- ◆ You catch a glimpse of the Truth: +1 Experience.

## • Act under pressure

When you do something risky, under time pressure, or try to avoid danger, the GM will explain what the consequence of failure is and you **roll +Coolness**.

**(15+)** You do it.

**(10–14)** You do it, but hesitate, is delayed, or must deal with a complication – the GM reveals an unexpected outcome, a high price, or a difficult choice.

**(–9)** There are consequences, you make a mistake, or you're exposed to the danger. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

## • Engage in Combat

When you engage an able opponent in combat explain how and **roll +Violence**.

**(15+)** You inflict damage to your opponent and avoid counterattacks.

**(10–14)** You inflict damage, but at a cost. The GM chooses one:

- ◆ You're subjected to a counterattack.
- ◆ You do less damage than intended.
- ◆ You lose something important.
- ◆ You expend all your ammo.
- ◆ You're beset by a new threat.
- ◆ You'll be in trouble later on.

**(–9)** Your attack didn't go as anticipated. You might be subjected to bad luck, miss your target, or pay a high price for your assault. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

## • Influence other

When you influence an NPC through negotiation, argument, or from a position of power **roll +Charisma**.

**(15+)** She does what you ask

**(10–14)** She does what you ask, but the GM chooses one:

- ◆ she demands better compensation
- ◆ a complication will arise at a future time
- ◆ she gives in for the moment, but will change her mind and regret it later

**(–9)** Your attempt has unintended repercussions. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

When you influence a player character **roll +Charisma**.

**(15+)** Both:

**(10–14)** Choose one:

- ◆ she's motivated to do what you ask, and gets +1 for her next roll if she does it
- ◆ she's worried what might happen if she doesn't do what you ask, and gets **–1 Stability** if she doesn't do it

**(–9)** The character gets +1 on her next roll against you. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

No matter the outcome it is *always* the player character's option whether to do as you ask or not.



## • Read a person

When you *Read a Person* **roll +Intuition**. On a success you may ask the GM/player questions about their character anytime during this scene while in conversation with their character.

**(15+)** Ask 2 questions.

**(10-14)** Ask 1 question.

**(-9)** You accidentally reveal your own intentions to the person you're trying to read. Tell the GM/player what these intentions are. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

### Questions:

- ◆ Are you lying?
- ◆ How do you feel right now?
- ◆ What are you about to do?
- ◆ What do you wish I would do?
- ◆ How could I get you to... ?

## • Observe a situation

When you *observe a situation* **roll +Perception**. On a success you may ask the GM questions about the situation. When you act on the answers take +1 to your roll.

**(15+)** Ask 2 questions.

**(10-14)** Ask 1 question.

**(-9)** you get to ask a question anyway but you attract unwanted attention or expose yourself to danger. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

### Questions:

- ◆ What is my best way through this?
- ◆ What here poses the biggest threat?
- ◆ What can I use to my advantage?
- ◆ What should I be on the lookout for?
- ◆ What is being hidden from me?
- ◆ What seems strange about this?

## • Investigate

When you *investigate something* **roll +Reason**. On a success you uncover all direct leads and may ask questions to get additional information.

**(15+)** Ask 2 questions.

**(10-14)** Ask 1 question, but the information comes with a cost determined by the GM: you need someone or something to get the answer, you expose yourself to danger, or you must expend time or resources.

**(-9)** You may ask one question anyway but you expose yourself to unexpected dangers or costs. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

### Questions:

- ◆ How can I find out more about what I'm investigating?
- ◆ What is my gut feel about what I'm investigating?
- ◆ Is there anything weird about what I'm investigating?

## • Helping or hindering

When you *help or hinder another player character's move*, explain how before their roll and **roll +attribute**, where the attribute is the same as the other player is rolling.

**(15+)** You may modify the subsequent roll by +2/-2.

**(10-14)** You may modify the subsequent roll by +1/-1.

**(-9)** Your interference has unintended consequences. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

With the GM's assent a player may make a case for a retroactive assist or hindrance after a roll is made, but in stressful situations this often results in a hard choice between two possible actions.

## • See through the Illusion

When you *suffer shock, injuries, or distort your perception through drugs or rituals* **roll +Soul** to see through the Illusion.

**(15+)** You perceive things as they truly are.

**(10-14)** You see Reality, but you also affect the Illusion. The GM chooses one:

- ◆ Something senses you
- ◆ The Illusions tears

**(-9)** The GM explains what you see and makes a hard or soft move.



## Relations

The player characters have **Relation** values to all other player characters, in addition to some of the more important non-player characters they encounter. The player characters gain **Relations** with non-player characters if established during character creation or during the course of the story.

During character creation **Relations** are established between the player characters. Each player may also create three relations with non-player characters: a **neutral relation**, a **meaningful relation**, and a **vital relation**.

### RELATION STRENGTH

**Neutral (0):** Applies to most relations. Acquaintances, friends, coworkers, and others you don't have much in common with.

**Meaningful (1):** Close friends, family members, romantic interests.

**Vital (2):** Passionate lovers, your own children, your "one and only", an obsession.

### INCREASE & DECREASE

After each game session you may modify a Relation by +1 or -1. Explain why.

A relation's strength can also be raised or lowered due to events occurring in play.

Examples:

- ◆ Betrayed by a **meaningful** or **vital relation**: -1
- ◆ Seduced by a **neutral relation**: +1
- ◆ Unexpected assistance from a **neutral relation**: +1
- ◆ Influence by magic or supernatural powers: +1/-1

### RELATION MOVES

Applicable to Relations at strength 1 (Meaningful) or 2 (Vital) only.

**Wish no harm:** If you intend on harming or killing your Relation – whether directly or indirectly – you must make a **Keep it Together** move with the influence being an unwillingness to cause injury. In case of success with complication (10–14), in addition to the normal outcome you also get a **-Relation** modifier to your damage-inflicting move. In case of failure (-9), in addition to the normal outcome you cannot bring yourself to harm your Relation.

**Regain Stability:** In a scene where you experience closeness, assurance, and affirmation from a Relation your **Stability** is improved a number of steps equal to the strength of the **Relation value**.

**Lose Stability:** If a relation of yours is seriously injured or dies, your **Stability** is decreased a number of steps equal to the strength of the **Relation value**.

## Dramatic hooks

A dramatic hook is a request for a player to have their character take a certain action in the story.

At the beginning of each game session each player character should have two dramatic hooks. During the first session the player gets to choose two dramatic hooks on her own. In later sessions the player character receives dramatic hooks from the other players and the GM. When she's fulfilled a dramatic hook she asks the other players to think of a new one.

When a dramatic hook is fulfilled the players marks **1 Experience**. A player can ask to exchange a dramatic hook for another one if a game session passes without any dramatic hooks being fulfilled.

When the players think of dramatic hooks they may use the following verbs for inspiration ("You should..."):

- |          |               |
|----------|---------------|
| ◆ Finish | ◆ Complete    |
| ◆ Reveal | ◆ Confront    |
| ◆ Tell   | ◆ Investigate |
| ◆ Visit  | ◆ Develop     |

Finish the sentence with something appropriate. For example, "You should *visit* the place where the kidnapper took you" or "You should *reveal* your infidelity to your wife." The player character can be considered to have fulfilled the dramatic hook regardless of what transpired in the scene for as long as the player executed the verb. Don't dictate what the outcome of the scene should be when determining a dramatic hook. That should be discovered in play.

## Experience

After each session the players answer the following questions:

- ◆ Have we discovered anything new about the Truth?
- ◆ Have we learned anything new about our characters?
- ◆ Have we challenged ourselves?

For each question the players can justify answering yes to, every player character gets **1 Experience**. This implies the player characters can gain up to 3 Experience from these questions after each session, but they can gain more Experience through dramatic hooks and certain advantages.

When the PC has accumulated **5 Experience** the player may choose an advancement available on the character sheet. Advancements can increase attribute values or give the PC additional advantages. When an advancement has been chosen it is crossed off, which means some advancements may only be chosen a few times. By the 6th advancement the player will unlock a new set of advancements which might mean attributes can increase even higher, or even a change of PC Archetype.



## Weapons & Armor

These rules explain how weapons and armor work. The GM can decide that the PCs are only equipped with firearms and other deadly weapons if it seems appropriate based on the setting and the concept of the PC.

### WEAPON TYPES

**Base harm:** This is the harm this weapon type will cause before any advantages and edges have modified it. The harm mechanics have two effects:

- 3) PCs subtract the harm value when they make the **Endure Injury** move.
- 4) NPCs take the harm value directly after subtracting any armor.

**Ammo:** A resource value indicating how many times a firearm can be fired before it needs to be recharged. The value doesn't literally indicate how much ammo is in the weapon, but is symbolic of how many rounds are being discharged in a typical attack. To use an attack you must first ensure you have the requisite amount of ammo to spend. After using the attack, check off that amount of ammo on the weapon's ammo track.

**Distance:** A rule of thumb for how close or far a given weapon or attack could feasibly hit its target.

- ♦ *Arm:* when you're close enough to attack with a leap
- ♦ *Room:* when you're just several steps apart
- ♦ *Field:* when you're within a hundred meters of one another
- ♦ *Horizon:* when you can barely see your target with the naked eye

**Attacks:** Different forms of attacks the PC can make with the weapon. The first underlined attack is the default if the player doesn't specify otherwise. The value in angle brackets [x] is the amount of harm caused by that attack.

### CLOSE COMBAT WEAPONS

#### Unarmed

**Distance:** arm

**Attacks:**

- ♦ Violence [1]
- ♦ Lock [0] [you are in control of the target until they break free]
- ♦ Shift [0] [you create distance between yourself and the target through a throw, body check, or push]
- ♦ Disarm [0] [you remove an object your opponent held in their hand]
- ♦ Excessive force [2] [focus entirely on killing your target]

#### Edged weapons

**Examples:** knife, stiletto, dagger

**Distance:** arm

**Attacks:**

- ♦ Close combat [2]
- ♦ Edge at the throat [0] [you are in control of the target until they break free]

#### Crushing weapons

**Examples:** baseball bat, hammer, crowbar

**Distance:** arm

**Attacks:**

- ♦ Close combat [2]
- ♦ Knock down [1] [the target falls to the ground]
- ♦ Knock out [1] [target is knocked out; PCs must successfully **Endure Injury** to avoid getting knocked out]

#### Chopping weapons

**Examples:** machete, axe, sword

**Distance:** arm

**Attacks:**

- ♦ Close combat [2]
- ♦ Momentum [1] [may hit one additional target]

### RANGED WEAPONS

#### Automatic pistol/revolver

**Examples:** .38 Special, 9 mm pistol, .40 S&W, .45 ACP

**Distance:** room

**Attacks:**

- ♦ Aim & fire [2] [-1 ammo]
- ♦ Concentrated fire [3] [-2 ammo]
- ♦ Rapid fire [2] [may hit one additional target] [-3 ammo]

**Ammo:** □□□□

#### Heavy pistol/revolver

**Examples:** .357 Magnum, .44 Magnum, .50 AE, .500 S&W Magnum

**Distance:** room

**Attacks:**

- ♦ Aim & fire [3] [-1 ammo]
- ♦ Concentrated fire [4] [-3 ammo]

**Ammo:** □□□



## Rifle

**Examples:** hunting rifle, sniper rifle

**Distance:** room, field, horizon

**Attacks:**

- ◆ Aim & fire [3] [-1 ammo]

**Ammo:** □□□

## Shotgun

**Examples:** pump shotgun, SPAS-12, Mossberg 500 bullpup.

**Distance:** room/field

**Attacks:**

- ◆ Aim & fire [3/1]\* [-1 ammo]
- ◆ Rapid fire [3/1]\* [small close group all hit at once] [-2 ammo]

\* Base Harm is 3 if target(s) is at Room distance, and 1 if beyond.

**Ammo:** □□

## ARMOR

PCs who wear armor gets a positive modifier to their **Endure Injury** roll. NPCs who wear armor gets to subtract their armor rating from the amount of harm they take each time it applies.

Armor	Rating	Example
Normal	+1	Bulletproof vest
Heavy	+2	Heavy full-body armor

# ARCHETYPES

Each archetype contains a set of options, which when chosen combine to define a unique player character centered around a particular concept and theme. The archetypes originate from movies, books, and other sources of inspiration for KULT: Divinity Lost. It could be *The Avenger* who has dedicated their life to take revenge for an old injustice, *The Artist* who attract dark forces through their art, the disillusioned *Detective* who has sacrificed everything in the pursuit of an elusive serial killer, or a *Seeker* who has discovered a terrible conspiracy and is now hunted by faceless pursuers. The archetypes aren't limited to a handful of stereotypes but can be tuned to a role the player really wants to portray. All archetypes can be reused again and again and still create unique player characters. The rules serve mostly as a framework for creative constraint which assist both player and GM in the telling of the story.

Before you play you should print out the four archetypes and one copy of the character sheet for each player. Each player character should be based on

a unique archetype, which limits the number of players to four with these quick-start rules. The group can either discuss what sort of story they'd like to play and create characters later, or the GM can give the players directions for what kind of characters to create. In the former case the GM will prepare a scenario based on the characters the players have created, leveraging the characters' dark secrets and disadvantages for the setup and backstory. In the latter case the GM prepares a scenario ahead of time and pre-determines guidelines for creating suitable player characters. Read more about this in the Construct a scenario chapter.

Four "aware" archetypes are included in this ruleset – The Artist, The Detective, The Avenger, and The Seeker. The main KULT: Divinity Lost text includes an additional 20 archetypes.

- ◆ The Sleeper
- ◆ The Criminal
- ◆ The Fixer
- ◆ The Prophet
- ◆ The Careerist
- ◆ The Scientist
- ◆ The Veteran
- ◆ The Academic
- ◆ The Agent
- ◆ The Broken
- ◆ The Cursed
- ◆ The Deceiver
- ◆ The Doll
- ◆ The Drifter
- ◆ The Occultist
- ◆ The Ronin
- ◆ The Death Magician
- ◆ The Beast
- ◆ The Revenant
- ◆ The Disciple



## The Artist

*The Artist exists to create – to give their soul to the arts. A hypnotizing painting, music trapping the audience in pure ecstasy, books that spellbind their readers, a model's naked flesh. Artists have the ability to speak to the souls of others by letting them into their own, and this ability always comes at a price. The price is the artist themselves...*

### OCCUPATION

Choose your artist's occupation from the list below, or invent one of your choosing.

Author, dancer, actor, painter, videographer, photographer, designer, model, musician, singer, television host, director, reporter, blogger.

### DARK SECRETS

Choose 1 or more dark secrets. Suggestions:

#### Heir

You have been granted a unique inheritance from a relative or friend. It could be a small object or something larger, like a house. The inheritance has instilled an unnatural obsession in you. You know it hides secrets and perhaps unknown forces. Could it possibly reveal what transpired with its previous owner? Others want to possess your inheritance also, and you have a suspicion they will stop at nothing to acquire it.

#### Curse

You are afflicted by a curse, knowingly or not. The curse has started to influence your life and you must find a way to get rid of it. The curse may have been inherited or something you brought upon yourself through your actions. Its effects are starting to make you lose your grasp on reality and threaten to harm those closest to you.

#### Victim of crime

You have been subjected to a terrible crime. Your whole life is marred by what happened to you and no matter how much you try you cannot suppress the violation. Fear, shame, anger, and helplessness torment you, and in order to make it through this you have to find a way to heal your wounds.

#### Pact with dark forces

You have sealed a pact with a powerful being. You may have made the pact willingly or been tricked into it. Regardless, you are now under the being's spell. Deep inside you understand you must find a way to trick the being into breaking the pact. The question is: how?

### Mental illness

You or one of your close relations have a mental illness. There's a good chance you have seen with your eyes, or heard from your relation, that reality is just an illusion. But who would believe a crazy person? Psychiatric institutions have many secrets and many doctors have hidden motives. For the insane who end up on the streets, disturbed mentors gladly take newcomers under their wing to initiate them in the Truth.

### DISADVANTAGES

Choose 2 disadvantages. Examples:

#### • Depression

You are constantly fighting depression, dejection, and discouragement. *When facing personal setbacks* **roll +0**:

**(15+)** You remain in control.

**(10–14)** You experience temporary anxiety, decreased self-confidence, or lack of will (**–1** on the next roll).

**(–9)** You give up and succumb to hopelessness or blame yourself. Reduce **Stability (–2)**. Your inability to act or be self-destructive does not go away until you can numb your depression with medicine, drugs or alcohol.





### • Curse

You are cursed. *At the first session and whenever you're confronted by the supernatural* **roll +0** to see how strongly influenced by the curse you are.

**(15+)** You have temporarily managed to avoid the curse.

**(10–14)** The GM holds 1.

**(–9)** The GM holds 3.

The GM can spend a hold to make a move for the curse. For example, you or someone you care about have an accident, something of yours is taken from you, you're forced to do something with risk of consequences if you refuse, or you experience terrifying visions.

### • Repressed memories

You have repressed a particularly unpleasant event in the past, but the memory of it sometimes rises to the surface. It could be a crime or some horrible thing you have done, been subjected to, or witnessed. The GM will decide the nature of your repressed memory based on your dark secrets. *In situations associated with your repressed memories* **roll +0** to determine if the memories surface.

**(15+)** You repress or suppress your memories.

**(10–14)** The memories partly surface in the shape of flashbacks and/or hallucinations (**Keep it Together**).

**(–9)** You completely lose yourself in your repressed memories. The GM makes a hard move and you reduce **Stability (–2)**.

### • Nightmares

You have recurring nightmares that are probably connected to your dark secrets. *During a scene when you sleep* **roll +0**.

**(15+)** You sleep in peace.

**(10–14)** The nightmares torment you. The GM may make a move for your nightmares. For example, you may not have slept at all during the night (–1 ongoing until you sleep), something follows you back into reality, the nightmares give you insight into the Truth, or you are forced to process some trauma (**Keep it Together**) when you wake up.

**(–9)** The nightmares take over completely. You are trapped in the dream until you find a way to wake up, and everything that happens there directly affects your sleeping body.

### • Drug addict

You are addicted to hard drugs. Name at least one. *At the start of the first session, when you are using, or when you have the possibility to use* **roll +0**.

**(15+)** You are in control, for now.

**(10–14)** The GM gains 1 hold.

**(–9)** The GM gains 3 hold.

The GM may spend 1 hold to make a move for your addiction. For example, you cannot resist using the drug, are out of drugs, become indebted to a dangerous person, put yourself in danger while under the influence of drugs, or ruin something that is important to you – like a relationship – while under the influence of the drug.

### • Schizophrenia

You struggle with extended psychotic episodes and terrifying hallucinations. *At the start of the first session and when you go through difficult experiences* **roll +0**.

**(15+)** You maintain control of your insanity.

**(10–14)** The GM gains 1 hold.

**(–9)** Schizophrenia overtakes you. The GM gains 3 hold.

The GM may spend 1 hold to make a move for your schizophrenia. For example, one of your hallucinations take on physical form, you experience something in your surrounding as hostile to you, you're afflicted by terrifying hallucinations, you're subjected to dark visions – true or false – or that someone in your vicinity turns out to not actually be real.

### ADVANTAGES

Choose 3 advantages from the list below.

### • Artistic talent

*When you perform your chosen art form or show your works to an audience,* **roll +Charisma** for opportunities to influence your audience anytime during the scene.

**(15+)** Choose 2 options.

**(10–14)** Choose 1 option.

**(–9)** Choose 1 option anyway but a threat emerges. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

#### Options:

- ◆ They want to see more of my art
- ◆ They are affected by the emotion I wanted to convey (e.g. anger, sorrow, fear, joy, lust)
- ◆ They look up to me (take +1 ongoing with the audience during this scene)
- ◆ Their attention is fixed entirely on me throughout my performance



### • Enhanced awareness

When you are at a location where the Illusion is weak, **roll +Soul**. On a success you have visions about the place and may be able to speak to entities tied to it.

**(15+)** You can discern clear details.

**(10–14)** You get some basic impressions.

**(–9)** The Illusion tears and the veil to an alternate dimension is lifted temporarily. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

### • Forbidden inspiration

When you dive deep into your art and allow yourself to be inspired by the Truth **roll +Soul**.

**(15+)** Choose 2 options.

**(10–14)** Choose 1 option.

**(–9)** You have gazed too deep into the abyss. Choose 1 option anyway but you also experience terrifying visions or encounter something horrible. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

#### Options:

- ◆ *Enticement:* Entice an entity to come to you, and manipulate it.
- ◆ *Visions:* See through the Illusion in a specific place.
- ◆ *Inspiration:* Ask the GM if there is anything strange or supernatural about the situation you're in. The answer will be revealed through your art.

### • Fascination

When you use your art to seduce someone **roll +Charisma**.

**(15+)** Choose 1 option.

**(10–14)** Choose 1 option but the GM also chooses one of:

- ◆ They become obsessed with you.
- ◆ They want you now.

**(–9)** They are affected by you in a way you didn't anticipate, or the attraction is uncomfortably strong – you choose. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

#### Options:

- ◆ They are attracted to me (+1 **Relation**)
- ◆ They forget their woes when experiencing my art (+1 **Stability**)
- ◆ They are totally captivated by my art and forgets all about their surrounding environment.

### • Body awareness

Your body and mind are as one. When you perform acrobatic or agile feats **roll +Perception**.

**(15+)** Choose 1 option.

**(10–14)** Choose 1 option but you expose yourself to danger or a cost.

**(–9)** Choose 1 option but something goes wrong. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

#### Options:

- ◆ Escape bondage
- ◆ Get past an obstacle (creature or object)
- ◆ Get into or through a space you normally wouldn't be able to

### • Celebrity

When you encounter someone new, at your option, **roll +Charisma**.

**(15+)** They have heard of you, and you decide what they have heard. The GM makes them act accordingly and you take +2 to your next move targeting them.

**(10–14)** They have heard of you, and you decide what they have heard. The GM makes them act accordingly.

**(–9)** They have heard of you, but the GM decides what they have heard and makes a hard or soft move.

### • Snake charmer

When you perform your chosen art form for an intelligent monstrous creature, **roll +Charisma** to awaken a desire in them.

**(15+)** Choose 1 option now and you may choose 2 more anytime in the future.

**(10–14)** Choose 1 option now.

**(–9)** The desire is beyond the creature's ability to control. It will attempt to devour or imprison you.

#### Options:

- ◆ Ask the creature for help with a problem
- ◆ Ask the creature for something you desire



## • Eye for detail

When you **Read a Person**, in addition to its selection of questions, you may additionally choose from the following:

- ◆ What do you think of me?
- ◆ What sort of person are you?
- ◆ Is there anything odd about you?

### ATTRIBUTES

Assign the modifiers +2, +1, and +0 to the three passive attributes: **Fortitude**, **Reflexes**, and **Willpower**.

Assign the modifiers +3, +2, +1, +1, +0, -1, and -2 to the other seven active attributes: **Charisma**, **Coolness**, **Intuition**, **Perception**, **Reason**, **Soul**, and **Violence**.

### LOOKS

Select or come up with your own distinguishing features for your character.

**Clothing:** New Age, goth/metal, peacockish, designer, bohemian, worn, or normcore clothes.

**Facial features:** Haggard, cute, pretty, captivating, beautiful, ascetic, or expressive features.

**Eyes:** Easy, cheerful, crystal clear, magnetic, profound, burned out, hypnotizing, or passionate eyes.

**Body:** Cute, agile, robust, emaciated, sexy, lanky, sensual, warped, graceful, or voluptuous body.

### NAME

Choose a name for your character suitable to the locale in which the story is set.

### RELATIONS

Everyone introduces their character by name, looks, and per-

sonality. Take your turn. Write down the other player characters' names. Go around the table again to work out your Relations.

If you know any of the other player characters from before, choose one of these options to establish the relationship between the two of you.

- ◆ One of the characters is involved in your art. Take **+1 Relation** with them.
- ◆ One of the characters is your lover. Take **+1 Relation** with them.
- ◆ One of the characters has hurt you. Take **+0 Relation** with them.
- ◆ One of the characters is infatuated with you. They take **+2 Relation** with you.
- ◆ You have made a work of art for one of the characters. They take **+1 Relation** with you.

Decide the nature of three additional Relations: one **neutral (0)**, one **meaningful (+1)**, and one **vital (+2)**.



## The Detective

*Disillusioned private eyes in offices shrouded in clouds of cigarette smoke, hardened investigators whose lives are consumed by a pursuit of perverted murderers while their families disintegrate and they are thrown into a spiral of darkness and addiction. The detective is motivated by a desperate need to find the answers to the mysteries they face. This search leads them down lonely and dangerous paths best left untrodden.*

### OCCUPATION

Choose your detective's occupation from the list below, or invent one of your choosing.

Beat cop, private eye, lawyer, investigator, security guard, investigative journalist, intelligence officer, detective, medium, hacker, cryptologist, conspiracy theorist



## DARK SECRETS

Choose 1 or more dark secrets. Suggestions:

### Strange disappearance

Someone that was close to you was investigating something when they got too close to the truth and disappeared. You have no idea what happened but someone sent you cryptic information urging you to finish what they started. When they disappeared, you became the victim of unknown stalkers.

### Forbidden knowledge

You have uncovered secrets that bring the nature of reality into question. It might be a way to move between dimensions, the mayor's true demonic visage, proof that history has been rewritten, or something else that reveals that the world as we know it is an illusion. The keepers of the Illusion are after you and it is only a matter of time before they catch you.

### Occult experience

You have witnessed occult proceedings and it has changed your view of reality. You may have taken part in rituals, exposed cults serving disturbing entities, or seen things that reveal that the world is not what it seems. Your experiences make it difficult for you to accept the illusion that most others live in.

### Guilty of crime

You feel constant remorse for a crime you have committed. Regardless if you committed the crime on your own initiative or because you were coerced by others, you feel you are to blame. The victim, their relatives, or police are probably looking for you.

### Returned from the Other Side

You have experienced an event where the Illusion shattered completely and you were the only one who returned. Your apartment block may have slipped into another dimension, its existence wiped from history. An airplane may have disappeared and you were found 20 years later without memories, not having aged a day. A company of soldiers in Afghanistan may have walked down into hell and you returned covered in the blood of your comrades. Deep down you feel that you were not meant to survive and that something is coming for you to restore balance and order.



## DISADVANTAGES

Choose 2 Disadvantages. Suggestions:

### • Depression

You are constantly fighting depression, dejection, and discouragement. *When facing personal setbacks* **roll +0**:

**(15+)** You remain in control.

**(10–14)** You experience temporary anxiety, decreased self-confidence, or lack of will (*–1 on the next roll*).

**(–9)** You give up and succumb to hopelessness or blame yourself. Reduce **Stability (–2)**. Your inability to act or be self-destructive does not go away until you can numb your depression with medicine, drugs or alcohol.

### • Repressed memories

You have repressed a particularly unpleasant event in the past, but the memory of it sometimes rises to the surface. It could be a crime or some horrible thing you have done, been subjected to, or witnessed. The GM will decide the nature of your repressed memory based on your dark secrets. *In situations associated with your repressed memories* **roll +0** to determine if the memories surface.

**(15+)** You repress or suppress your memories.

**(10–14)** The memories partly surface in the shape of flashbacks and/or hallucinations (**Keep it Together**).

**(–9)** You completely lose yourself in your repressed memories. The GM makes a hard move and you reduce **Stability (–2)**.

### • Stalker

You are hunted by a faceless enemy. Anyone could be one of their minions. No one can be trusted. You have to change your address constantly and be vigilant at all times to avoid leaving any tracks that can be followed. *At the start of the first session and whenever you make a mistake*, **roll +0**.

**(15+)** You are safe for now.

**(10–14)** Your enemies are on to you. GM gains 1 hold.

**(–9)** Your enemies have caught up to you. GM gains 3 hold.

The GM can spend 1 hold to make a move for your pursuers. A person may have been paid off by them, one of your loved ones or allies disappears, something you are trying to do is foiled by your enemies or they try to actively hurt you.

### • Nightmares

You have recurring nightmares that are probably connected to your dark secrets. *During a scene when you sleep* **roll +0**.

**(15+)** You sleep in peace.

**(10–14)** The nightmares torment you. The GM may make a move for your nightmares. For example, you may not have slept at all during the night (*–1 ongoing* until you sleep), something follows you back into reality, the nightmares give you insight into the Truth, or you are forced to process some trauma (**Keep it Together**) when you wake up.

**(–9)** The nightmares take over completely. You are trapped in the dream until you find a way to wake up, and everything that happens there directly affects your sleeping body.

### • Drug addict

You are addicted to hard drugs. Name at least one. *At the start of the first session, when you are using, or when you have the possibility to use* **roll +0**.

**(15+)** You are in control, for now.

**(10–14)** The GM gains 1 hold.

**(–9)** The GM gains 3 hold.

## ADVANTAGES

Choose 3 advantages from the list below.

### • Crime Scene Investigator

*When you investigate a crime scene* **roll +Reason**. You get to ask questions from the list below.

**(15+)** Ask 2 questions

**(10–14)** Ask 1 question

**(–9)** Ask 1 question, but your investigation leads to danger or problems later on.

#### Questions

- ◆ What was the chain of events?
- ◆ What can I assume about the perpetrator?
- ◆ Which mistakes have the perpetrator made?
- ◆ When was the crime committed?
- ◆ When was someone here last?
- ◆ Does the crime remind me of something I am familiar with already and if so, what?
- ◆ Who might know more about the crime?



### • Interrogator

When you **Read a Person** and mention a name, person, or object, you can always ask “Are you lying?” This doesn’t use up any of the questions you may have been given from succeeding.

### • Dreamer

You are a dream wanderer. When you want to meet someone or find out the truth about something while you sleep, **roll +Soul**.

**(15+)** You meet the intended person or arrive at the specific place in the Dream where space and time bends.

**(10–14)** You meet the intended person, or arrive at the specific place, but something has changed, or followed you or the person in question.

**(–9)** You are lost in the Dream and is put in danger.

### • Enhanced Awareness

When you are at a location where the Illusion is weak, **roll +Soul**. On a success you have visions about the place and may be able to speak to entities tied to it.

**(15+)** You can discern clear details.

**(10–14)** You get some basic impressions.

**(–9)** The Illusion tears and the veil to an alternate dimension is lifted temporarily. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

### • Instinct

When you **Observe a Situation** and act on the GM’s answers, take +2 instead of +1.

### • Read a crowd

When you move through a small crowd to gather information you’re sure someone there ought to know, **roll +Perception**. Examples of a “small crowd” include a party, a bar, or an office. You decide what specific information you are looking for, as long as it makes sense for the crowd to possess such information.

**(15+)** Ask 2 questions.

**(10–14)** Ask 1 question.

**(–9)** Ask 1 question but you also draw unwanted attention to yourself. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

### Questions:

- ♦ Who here has information I want?
- ♦ Where can I find what I am looking for?
- ♦ Who is watching me?
- ♦ Is there anything else of interest?

### • Shadow

When shadowing someone, **roll +Coolness**.

**(15+)** You avoid discovery, follow your target all the way to her final destination and learn something about her you can use to your advantage later.

**(10–14)** You avoid discovery and follow your target to her final destination.

**(–9)** You are spotted or encounter some sort of problem. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

When you want to lose someone shadowing you, **roll +Coolness**.

**(15+)** You have lost your pursuers and can choose to try to shadow them instead.

**(10–14)** You have lost your pursuers.

**(–9)** Your pursuers are still on your tail but they can set up an ambush, disappear without a trace and show up when you least expect it, or refuse to go away. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

### • Fast talk

When you talk to an NPC to get their attention, **roll +Coolness**.

**(15+)** Choose 2 options.

**(10–14)** Choose 1 option.

**(–9)** They grow suspicious. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

### Options:

- ♦ Stop the NPC from noticing something in her immediate vicinity.
- ♦ Get the NPC to disclose something important (the GM will provide the details).
- ♦ Distract the NPC. You take +1 to your next roll against them.

### ATTRIBUTES

Assign the modifiers +2, +1, and +0 to the three passive attributes: **Fortitude**, **Reflexes**, and **Willpower**.

Assign the modifiers +3, +2, +1, +1, +0, –1, and –2 to the other seven active attributes: **Charisma**, **Coolness**, **Intuition**, **Perception**, **Reason**, **Soul**, and **Violence**.



## LOOKS

Select or come up with your own distinguishing features for your character.

**Clothes:** Suit, tweed, trendy, casual, or shabby clothes.

**Face:** Friendly, sharp, round and sweaty, innocent, determined, or tired face.

**Eyes:** Empathic, indifferent, squinty, sharp, suspicious, warm, or concerned eyes.

**Body:** Spindly, fat, wiry, stout, short and wide, or muscled body.

## NAME

Choose a name for your character suitable to the locale in which the story is set.

## RELATIONS

Everyone introduces their character by name, looks, and personality. Take your turn. Write down the other player characters' names. Go around the table again to work out your Relations.

If you know any of the other player characters from before, choose one of these options to establish the relationship between the two of you.

- ◆ One of the characters has saved you from a dangerous situation. Take **+1 Relation** with them.
- ◆ One of the characters has tricked you to protect someone you have been investigating. Take **+0 Relation** with them.
- ◆ You have helped one of the characters solve a mystery. They take **+1 Relation** with you.
- ◆ One of the characters is your coworker. Take **+1 Relation** with them and they take **+1 Relation** with you.
- ◆ One of the characters is your informant. Take **+1 Relation** with them.

Decide the nature of three additional Relations: one **neutral (0)**, one **meaningful (+1)**, and one **vital (+2)**.





## The Avenger

*The Avenger has been robbed of everything that ever meant anything to her. It could be the avenger's loved one, job, family, humanity, honor, memories, or life goals that have been shattered. Regardless of what has been taken away, it can only be compensated for with blood. The only thing remaining is revenge, and the avenger isn't about to let anything get in her way regardless of consequences.*

### OCCUPATION

Choose your avenger's occupation from the list below, or invent one of your choosing.

Homemaker, police officer, panhandler, unemployed, student, criminal, conspiracy theorist, refugee, prison escapee, prize fighter, widow(er), washed up celebrity, failed businessperson, science experiment on the run.

### DARK SECRETS

Choose 1 or more dark secrets.  
Suggestions:

#### Strange disappearance

Someone that was close to you was investigating something when they got too close to the truth and disappeared. You have no idea what happened but someone sent you cryptic information urging you to finish what they started. When they disappeared, you became the victim of unknown stalkers.

#### Victim of crime

You have been subjected to a terrible crime. Your whole life is marred by what happened to you and no matter how much you try you cannot suppress the violation. Fear, shame, anger, and helplessness torment you, and in order to make it through this you have to find a way to heal your wounds.

### Victim of medical experiments

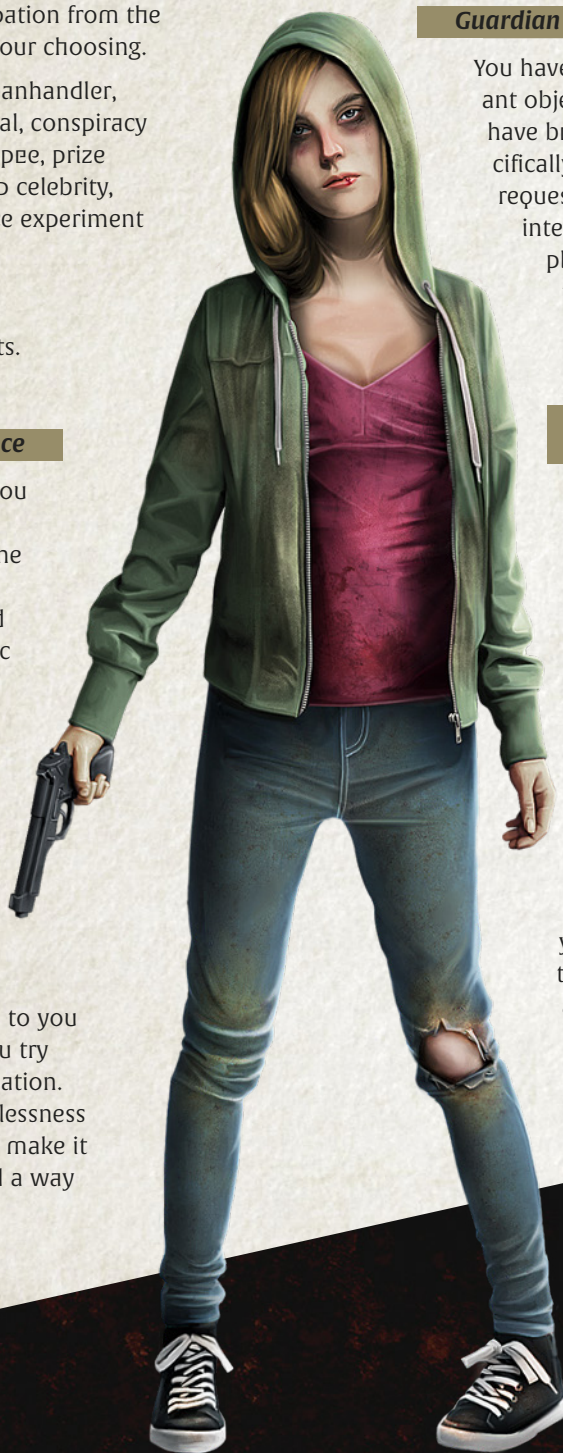
You have been subjected to medical experiments with unexpected outcomes, with or without your consent and knowledge. The experiments could have had mental or physical effects. They may have shown you windows into alternate dimensions, with madness as a result. The side effects are still tormenting you and to get rid of them you must find those who are responsible. It's also possible your parents were the test subjects and that you inherited the experimental effects.

### Guardian

You have been chosen to protect an important object, place, or person. The duty could have been inherited, assigned to you specifically, or granted to you by your own request. What you are protecting may be intended to be used or spent to accomplish something at a particular point in time, or you may be safeguarding it to ensure it doesn't fall into wrong hands.

### Returned from the Other Side

You have experienced an event where the Illusion shattered completely and you were the only one who returned. Your apartment block may have slipped into another dimension, its existence wiped from history. An airplane may have disappeared and you were found 20 years later without memories, not having aged a day. A company of soldiers in Afghanistan may have walked down into hell and you returned covered in the blood of your comrades. Deep down you feel that you were not meant to survive and that something is coming for you to restore balance and order.





## DISADVANTAGES

### • Oath of revenge

You have sworn to avenge an unforgivable injustice. Decide who is the subject of your vengeance and what they have done to you. It could be a single individual or many who share a certain trait or membership. *When the target of your vengeance, or someone or something who belongs to it, appears* **roll +0**:

**(15+)** You remain in control of your lust for revenge and can act rationally.

**(10–14)** You can't focus on anything but the target of your vengeance (–1 *ongoing* while in the same scene as it).

**(–9)** You become obsessed and can act only to further your revenge. To do anything else you must **Keep it Together**. Your obsession cannot be assuaged while the target remains in the same scene with you.

Choose 1 additional Disadvantage. Suggestions:

### • Wanted

You are wanted by the state on account of crimes you have committed. *When you attract attention to yourself or forget to keep your head down* **roll +0** to see if you've been discovered:

**(15+)** You are safe for now.

**(10–14)** You have made a mistake. The GM gets 1 hold.

**(–9)** All eyes are on you. The GM gets 3 hold.

The GM can spend hold to make a move for the state. Examples: your mugshot appears on the six o'clock news and milk cartons, police, agents, or military personnel attempt to trap and catch you, they catch and interrogate someone you care about, they confiscate your possessions, or they turn someone against you.

### • Stalker

You are hunted by a faceless enemy. Anyone could be one of their minions. No one can be trusted. You have to change your address constantly and be vigilant at all times to avoid leaving any tracks that can be followed. *At the start of the first session and whenever you make a mistake,* **roll +0**.

**(15+)** You are safe for now.

**(10–14)** Your enemies are on to you. GM gains 1 hold.

**(–9)** Your enemies have caught up to you. GM gains 3 hold.

The GM can spend 1 hold to make a move for your pursuers. A person may have been paid off by them, one of your loved ones or allies disappears, something you are trying to do is foiled by your enemies or they try to actively hurt you.

### • Nightmares

You have recurring nightmares that are probably connected to your dark secrets. *During a scene when you sleep* **roll +0**.

**(15+)** You sleep in peace.

**(10–14)** The nightmares torment you. The GM may make a move for your nightmares. For example, you may not have slept at all during the night (–1 *ongoing* until you sleep), something follows you back into reality, the nightmares give you insight into the Truth, or you are forced to process some trauma (**Keep it Together**) when you wake up.

**(–9)** The nightmares take over completely. You are trapped in the dream until you find a way to wake up, and everything that happens there directly affects your sleeping body.

### • Schizophrenia

You struggle with extended psychotic episodes and terrifying hallucinations. *At the start of the first session and when you go through difficult experiences* **roll +0**.

**(15+)** You maintain control of your insanity.

**(10–14)** The GM gains 1 hold.

**(–9)** Schizophrenia overtakes you. The GM gains 3 hold.

The GM may spend 1 hold to make a move for your schizophrenia. For example, one of your hallucinations take on physical form, you experience something in your surrounding as hostile to you, you're afflicted by terrifying hallucinations, you're subjected to dark visions – true or false – or that someone in your vicinity turns out to not actually be real.



### • Mental compulsion

You are fixated on a particular idea or action in a way that strongly impacts your life. Choose a compulsion when you take this disadvantage. *In situations where you might be distracted by your compulsion* **roll +0**.

**(15+)** You maintain control of your compulsions and can focus on other things.

**(10–14)** You're distracted and take *–1 ongoing* to all rolls until you have gotten out of the situation or succumbed to your compulsion, taking any actions it demands of you.

**(–9)** You become completely obsessed with your compulsion. If you focus on anything else, take *–2 Stability*.

### ADVANTAGES

Choose 3 advantages from the list below.

#### • Animal speaker

You are able to understand and control animals. *When you attempt to control an animal* **roll +Intuition**.

**(15+)** Choose 3 options. You may save up to 2 until later.

**(10–14)** Choose 2 options. You may save 1 until later.

**(–9)** Choose 1 option, but the animal is affected by your memories and disadvantages. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

#### Options:

- ◆ Make the animal go against its instincts.
- ◆ Make the animal follow you.
- ◆ Make the animal protect you against an attacker.

#### • Enhanced Awareness

*When you are at a location where the Illusion is weak,* **roll +Soul**. On a success you have visions about the place and may be able to speak to entities tied to it.

**(15+)** You can discern clear details.

**(10–14)** You get some basic impressions.

**(–9)** The Illusion tears and the veil to an alternate dimension is lifted temporarily. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

#### • Code of honor

You abide by a strict code of honor. Decide its nature. *When you take risks or make sacrifices for your code of honor,* take *+1 Stability*.



### • Eye for an eye

When you suffer a serious or critical injury name the person you find most responsible. You get +2 ongoing to all rolls against them, forever. All rolls targeting the person counts, but rolls targeting the person's family, friends, minions, and property only count if the GM feels it's applicable.

### • Instinct

When you **Observe a Situation** and act on the GM's answers, take +2 instead of +1.

### • Rage

When in combat you may awaken the rage inside you. Take -1 **Stability** and mark **Rage 1**. Every time you **Endure Injury** and every time you defeat a foe, increase Rage by 1. Rage lasts until the end of the combat.

During combat you may spend 1 Rage to choose 1:

- ◆ Increase the Harm of an attack by +1.
- ◆ Take +2 to **Endure Injury**.
- ◆ Shake off and ignore psychological or supernatural influence.

### • Intimidating

There is something about you that instinctively makes others fear you. When you're trying to frighten a human NPC **roll +Violence**.

**(15+)** They succumb to fear and gives in to your demands.

**(10-14)** They run away from you or gives in to you, GM's choice.

**(-9)** They see you as their primary threat and acts accordingly. The GM makes a move for them, hard or soft.

### • Survival instinct

When you suffer a serious or critical injury yet refuse to yield, **roll +Violence**. On a success you may ignore the effects of the injuries for a limited time, but as soon as that time is up you will need treatment to stabilize them.

**(15+)** You ignore your injuries until conflict is over and may choose one:

- ◆ Viciousness (+1 ongoing to **Engage in Combat** rolls for the remainder of the combat)
- ◆ Adrenaline rush (+1 ongoing to **Endure Injury** rolls for the remainder of the combat)

**(10-14)** You ignore your injuries until the conflict is over.

**(-9)** You overexert yourself and after a few moments your injuries cause you to black out and collapse. After your next action the GM will decide when and how you black out.

## ATTRIBUTES

Assign the modifiers +2, +1, and +0 to the three passive attributes: **Fortitude**, **Reflexes**, and **Willpower**.

Assign the modifiers +3, +2, +1, +1, +0, -1, and -2 to the other seven active attributes: **Charisma**, **Coolness**, **Intuition**, **Perception**, **Reason**, **Soul**, and **Violence**.

## LOOKS

Select or come up with your own distinguishing features for your character.

**Clothes:** Leather, survival, coat, casual, or worn clothes.

**Face:** Haggard, sharp, boyish/girlish, scarred, bony, thin, mutilated, or dour face.

**Eyes:** Ruthless, frosty, indifferent, desolate, sorrow-filled, tired, mad, or dark eyes.

**Body:** Robust, deformed, plump, mutilated, slender, animalistic, bony, emaciated, tall and thin, massive, strong, or youthful body.

## NAME

Choose a name for your character suitable to the locale in which the story is set.

## RELATIONS

Everyone introduces their character by name, looks, and personality. Take your turn. Write down the other player characters' names. Go around the table again to work out your Relations.

If you know any of the other player characters from before, choose one of these options to establish the relationship between the two of you.

- ◆ You have entrusted one of the characters with a secret that could put you away in prison. Take **+0 Relation** with them.
- ◆ One of the characters has tried to get you to forget your oath of revenge. Give them **+1 Relation** with you.
- ◆ One of the characters try to help you fulfill your oath of revenge. Take **+1 Relation** with them.
- ◆ One of the characters have ties to the target of your revenge. Take **+0 Relation** with them.
- ◆ One of the characters are connected to your past somehow. Take **+0 Relation** with them.

Decide the nature of three additional Relations: one **neutral (0)**, one **meaningful (+1)**, and one **vital (+2)**.



## The Seeker

The Seeker is an explorer of modern, ancient, and long forgotten urban myths. They are bloggers, hackers, seekers, and the storytellers of modernity. On the internet obscure voices whisper of lies and conspiracies. In apparently meaningless graffiti in abandoned subway stations, someone is leaving cryptic messages. If you search deep enough the truth is likely to be buried there, but

most of us cannot see the thick smog of information – we get hopelessly lost in the abyss of propaganda, pornography, and mindless entertainment. The seeker knows how to use the 'net

to find secrets under stones best left unturned. For the seeker no price is too great to uncover the truth and expose it for public consumption.

### OCCUPATION

Choose your seeker's occupation from the list below, or invent one of your choosing.

Student, unemployed, blogger, hacker, activist, academic, researcher, parapsychologist, author, journalist, thief, medium.

### DARK SECRETS

Choose 1 or more dark secrets. Suggestions:

#### Strange disappearance

Someone that was close to you was investigating something when they got too close to the truth and disappeared. You have no idea what happened but someone sent you cryptic information urging you to finish what they started. When they disappeared, you became the victim of unknown stalkers.

#### Family secret

Your family has a well-kept secret that has been haunting you your entire life. They may have been members of an obscure sect or have been exposed to a dreadful horror. You may have been initiated into these truths as a child, or you found out the truth as an adult. This secret keeps you on edge and threatens to destroy your life. You will likely have to take action to save yourself and your family.

#### Forbidden knowledge

You have uncovered secrets that bring the nature of reality into question. It might be a way to move between dimensions, the mayor's true demonic visage, proof that history has been rewritten, or something else that reveals that the world as we know it is an illusion. The keepers of the Illusion are after you and it is only a matter of time before they catch you.

#### Occult experience

You have witnessed occult proceedings and it has changed your view of reality. You may have taken part in rituals, exposed cults serving disturbing entities, or seen things that reveal that the world is not what it seems. Your experiences make it difficult for you to accept the illusion that most others live in.





## Guardian

You have been chosen to protect an important object, place, or person. The duty could have been inherited, assigned to you specifically, or granted to you by your own request. What you are protecting may be intended to be used or spent to accomplish something at a particular point in time, or you may be safeguarding it to ensure it doesn't fall into wrong hands.

### DISADVANTAGES

Choose 2 Disadvantages. Suggestions:

#### • Wanted

You are wanted by the state on account of crimes you have committed. *When you attract attention to yourself or forget to keep your head down* **roll +0** to see if you've been discovered:

**(15+)** You are safe for now.

**(10-14)** You have made a mistake. The GM gets 1 hold.

**(-9)** All eyes are on you. The GM gets 3 hold.

The GM can spend hold to make a move for the state. Examples: your mugshot appears on the six o'clock news and milk cartons, police, agents, or military personnel attempt to trap and catch you, they catch and interrogate someone you care about, they confiscate your possessions, or they turn someone against you.

#### • Curse

You are cursed. *At the first session and whenever you're confronted by the supernatural* **roll +0** to see how strongly influenced by the curse you are.

**(15+)** You have temporarily managed to avoid the curse.

**(10-14)** The GM holds 1.

**(-9)** The GM holds 3.

The GM can spend a hold to make a move for the curse. For example, you or someone you care about have an accident, something of yours is taken from you, you're forced to do something with risk of consequences if you refuse, or you experience terrifying visions.

#### • Stalker

You are hunted by a faceless enemy. Anyone could be one of their minions. No one can be trusted. You have to change your address constantly and be vigilant at all times to avoid leaving any tracks that can be followed. *At the start of the first session and whenever you make a mistake,* **roll +0**.

**(15+)** You are safe for now.

**(10-14)** Your enemies are on to you. GM gains 1 hold.

**(-9)** Your enemies have caught up to you. GM gains 3 hold.

The GM can spend 1 hold to make a move for your pursuers. A person may have been paid off by them, one of your loved ones or allies disappears, something you are trying to do is foiled by your enemies or they try to actively hurt you.

#### • Repressed memories

You have repressed a particularly unpleasant event in the past, but the memory of it sometimes rises to the surface. It could be a crime or some horrible thing you have done, been subjected to, or witnessed. The GM will decide the nature of your repressed memory based on your dark secrets. *In situations associated with your repressed memories* **roll +0** to determine if the memories surface.

**(15+)** You repress or suppress your memories.

**(10-14)** The memories partly surface in the shape of flashbacks and/or hallucinations (**Keep it Together**).

**(-9)** You completely lose yourself in your repressed memories. The GM makes a hard move and you reduce **Stability (-2)**.

#### • Haunted

You are haunted by supernatural forces. Determine what you think it is that's haunting you. *At the start of the first session and whenever you are distracted or weakened,* **roll +0** to see if the entity gains power over you.

**(15+)** The entity leaves you be.

**(10-14)** The GM gets 1 hold.

**(-9)** The GM gets 3 hold.

The GM can spend 1 hold to make a move for the entity. For example, it requests a service from you and threatens retribution if you don't, the entity possesses your body for the night, the entity reveals a clue of what it is and what it wants from you.



## • Nightmares

You have recurring nightmares that are probably connected to your dark secrets. *During a scene when you sleep* **roll +0**.

**(15+)** You sleep in peace.

**(10–14)** The nightmares torment you. The GM may make a move for your nightmares. For example, you may not have slept at all during the night (–1 *ongoing* until you sleep), something follows you back into reality, the nightmares give you insight into the Truth, or you are forced to process some trauma (**Keep it Together**) when you wake up.

**(–9)** The nightmares take over completely. You are trapped in the dream until you find a way to wake up, and everything that happens there directly affects your sleeping body.

## ADVANTAGES

Choose 3 advantages from the list below.

### • Endure trauma

You are not as easily affected as others. *When your **Stability** decreases* you always lose 1 fewer level than normal.

### • Stubborn

*When you push yourself to the limit to overcome a threat* **roll +Willpower**.

**(15+)** Choose 3 options. You may save up to 2 until later.

**(10–14)** Choose 2 options. You may save 1 until later.

**(–9)** Choose 1 option, but you push yourself past your breaking point. Decrease Stability two steps.

#### Options:

- ◆ *Refuse to give up:* postpone the effects of a critical injury until you have made it out of the threat's reach
- ◆ *Will over skill:* **roll +Willpower** instead of the normal attribute when you avoid or fight what is threatening you
- ◆ *Steel yourself:* break free from a supernatural effect

## • Prepared

*When you investigate a location* **roll +Reason**.

**(15+)** Choose 3 options. You may save up to 2 until later.

**(10–14)** Choose 2 options. You may save 1 until later.

**(–9)** Choose 1 option, but you have missed or overlooked something crucial. The GM holds 1 and can spend that hold anytime to make a hard or soft move for the location.

#### Options:

- ◆ Find or create a map of the location
- ◆ Uncover any security systems and other obstacles
- ◆ Pinpoint the location of something you're after

## • Enhanced Awareness

*When you are at a location where the Illusion is weak,* **roll +Soul**. On a success you have visions about the place and may be able to speak to entities tied to it.

**(15+)** You can discern clear details.

**(10–14)** You get some basic impressions.

**(–9)** The Illusion tears and the veil to an alternate dimension is lifted temporarily. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

## • Hacker

*When you penetrate digital networks in the pursuit of confidential data, crack software, or disable security systems* **roll +Coolness**.

**(15+)** You accomplish your task without a problem.

**(10–14)** Complications arise, choose 1:

- ◆ Someone discovers the intrusion. You must take risks or compromise on how much you're able to accomplish.
  - ◆ You leave traces of your intrusion.
- (–9)** Unbeknownst to you, things didn't work out as you wanted. Maybe you didn't succeed at your task as well as you imagined, or you may have been discovered by personal enemies, law enforcement, or something else lurking in the network. The GM makes a hard or soft move.



## • Parkour

When you execute acrobatic maneuvers **roll +Coolness**.

**(15+)** Choose 2 options. You may save 1 until later.

**(10–14)** Choose 1 option.

**(–9)** Choose 1 option, but a complication, cost, or new threat emerges. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

### Options:

- ◆ Scale a seemingly impossible obstacle
- ◆ Make a seemingly life threatening leap without taking any harm
- ◆ Run away from a threat

## • Keen-eyed

When you **Observe a Situation**, in addition to its selection of questions, you may additionally choose from the following:

- ◆ What weaknesses do they have that I can use to my advantage?
- ◆ What strengths do they have that I ought to watch out for?

## • The Dark Web

When you search the dark web for forbidden information, rare items, or myths **roll +Perception**.

**(15+)** You discover what you were looking for and may, if you wish, choose 1 option:

- ◆ You also discover a portal to another dimension, and a path you can trace back to it later.
- ◆ You also make contact with someone – or something – that can help you, for the right price.
- ◆ You also find something valuable or important in addition to what you were looking for. The GM will tell you what it is.

**(10–14)** You find what you're looking for but you're also exposed to repulsive and frightening stimuli. You must **Keep it Together** to see how it affects you.

**(–9)** You find what you're after but make contact with something very dangerous. It might attempt to latch onto you or follow you out into your realm. The GM makes a hard or soft move.

## ATTRIBUTES

Assign the modifiers +2, +1, and +0 to the three passive attributes: **Fortitude**, **Reflexes**, and **Willpower**.

Assign the modifiers +3, +2, +1, +1, +0, –1, and –2 to the other seven active attributes: **Charisma**, **Coolness**, **Intuition**, **Perception**, **Reason**, **Soul**, and **Violence**.

## LOOKS

Select or come up with your own distinguishing features for your character.

**Clothes:** Nerdy, second-hand, leather, alternative, casual, durable, or ripped clothes.

**Face:** Wrinkled, lively, cute, boyish/girlish, pale, grim, smashed, or innocent face.

**Eyes:** Clear, hard, tired, bloodshot, doubtful, curious, avoidant, suspicious, or evaluating eyes.

**Body:** Lanky, sinewy, robust, fragile, hefty, deformed, wispy, chubby, bebt, short, or youthful body.

## NAME

Choose a name for your character suitable to the locale in which the story is set.

## RELATIONS

Everyone introduces their character by name, looks, and personality. Take your turn. Write down the other player characters' names. Go around the table again to work out your Relations.

If you know any of the other player characters from before, choose one of these options to establish the relationship between the two of you.

- ◆ You have entrusted one of the characters with a secret that could put you away in prison. Take **+0 Relation** with them.
- ◆ One of the characters has helped you with your investigations. Take **+1 Relation** with them.
- ◆ You look up to one of the characters. Take **+1 Relation** with them.
- ◆ One of the characters has saved your life. Take **+1 Relation** with them.
- ◆ You have discovered one of the characters in the act of something criminal, obscene, or extremely shameful. Take **+0 Relation** with them.
- ◆ You befriended one of the characters in the process of assisting them with some supernatural trouble. Give her **+1 Relation** with you.

Decide the nature of three additional Relations: one **neutral (0)**, one **meaningful (+1)**, and one **vital (+2)**.





## THE GAMEMASTER

This chapter explains how the GM lead the conversation in stories, make her own moves against the PC and upholds the horror contract of KULT stories.

### The Conversation

To play KULT: Divinity Lost is to carry on a conversation between players and gamemaster. The players' job is primarily to say what their characters say and describe what they do and how they act. They will also relay what their characters think, feel, and remember. They also answer questions posed by the GM about their characters and how they live. The GM's job is to say everything else: say what every other person in the world says and does, and what else transpires in the storyworld. Whenever the player characters enter a new environment the GM will describe notable details and answer any inquiries the players have about the scene. When the player characters speak with somebody, the GM takes on the role of that person and portray them in that moment. All people, creatures, and entities who aren't player characters are called *non-player characters* (NPCs) since it's the GM and nobody else who portray and control them.

### AGENDA

- ◆ Tear the Illusion and reveal the true Reality behind.
- ◆ Keep the player characters on edge; allow them few moments of respite.
- ◆ Let the player characters' actions make an impact, regardless of consequences.

When creating stories in KULT you should be checking off these three agenda items over and over. The rules of the game are designed to help you drive towards them.

Every story in KULT: Divinity Lost ought to strive towards tearing the Illusion apart, and to reveal the true Reality behind it. Whenever the player characters' inaccurate understanding of the world and what they believe to be real collides in violent conflict with the dark Truth, madness and horror emerges. By allowing the player characters to confront Reality you also put them in a position to finally confront their own lost divinity.

The player characters in these stories are haunted. Occasionally by external elements, but just as often by internal forces and conflicts which drive them towards Madness. It is your job to challenge the player characters and drive them towards action. In the dark, horrific tales being told in KULT any respite is very temporary. New threats lurk behind every corner. The rules will assist you with this: disadvantages allow you to invent threats; dark secrets anchor the player characters to the terrors in their pasts; and the GM's moves naturally escalate danger and drama into a crescendo and, eventually, climax.

In KULT's stories the player characters are the protagonists. It's their activities the story revolves around, whether those activities occurred in the past, the current, or the future. Your job is to encourage the player characters to act, and through use of the rules the characters' actions will make an impression on the story. Put obstacles in the player characters' path, and then stand in support of them discovering solutions to the situations they're in. Never say "no" but "yes, and...", or in some cases, "okay, but how...?" When the player character says she drives her dagger into the lictor's eye you don't say "you can't", but "Her eyeball



bursts with a sound like cleaving a cherry tomato in two. Its white goopy insides trickles down Laura's face while the dagger sinks deep into the eye socket. She grabs you, lifts you up like a small child into the air. With a wicked smile playing across her lips she whispers, 'so, you want to play with me?'

## PRINCIPLES

Principles serve as the GM's guidelines for running the game. Whenever she chooses and describes a move, the GM ought to remember her principles.

### *Insinuate the supernatural*

As GM you will want to create a world in which the player characters suspects that something is terribly wrong. You should describe odd occurrences and weird details from time to time, which will suggest to the player character that there's something questionable about the concept of reality that they've been fed.

- ◆ Where does the homeless man who dances in the fountain go, when one moment he is present and the next he's gone?
- ◆ What forgotten subway stop does the train drive pass between 50th and 42nd street?
- ◆ How could he have fallen from the sixth floor onto pavement without getting crushed?
- ◆ What message did I get in my voicemail where someone who sounds just like me warns me of events they say will occur in the future?

The true Reality exists on the periphery of the player characters' awareness, ready to burst forth when the Illusion tears. By suggesting a fundamental wrongness about minor details in the story, the GM can incite the sense that the player characters' concept of reality is falling apart and that something awful might be revealed any moment.

### *Address the characters, not the players*

Say "What are you doing that evening, John?", not "Sara, what does John do during the evening?" Explain to the player character, "She observes you with lustful eyes as she releases one of the hooks in her macabre dress from her skin. With one hand she motions at you, without uttering a word making it evident that she wants you – she has come to make all your dreams come true. She knows exactly who you are and what you desire." It is the *player character's* dreams the demon is here to fulfill. By speaking directly to the character, the GM and the player is present together in the story, instead of acting as two players looking in on the fiction from the outside.

### *Make your moves but base them on the fiction*

The GM makes moves based on real-world events rather than what transpires in the fiction. When a player character enters a new location or otherwise transitions to a new scene, when a player misses their roll (usually by rolling a –9), when the text for a move a player makes instructs the GM to make a move, when the players looks to the GM for input, then the GM makes a move. Yet the GM should act as if the reason is because of events in the story! For example, if the GM's move is **capture someone** she should never say "since you failed your **Act Under Pressure** move when sneaking into the factory, you make it only halfway before they catch you." Instead say "As you climb through the broken window you drop down onto some old glass panes, which break with a loud crash. After a few seconds it seemed like you were in the clear, but as you exit out into the main hallway you only make it a few feet before you hear footsteps behind you. Two security guards look down the barrels of their rifles at you, and out of the rooms in front of you yet another two emerge. What do you do?" The final outcome is the same, the player character will be captured in the factory, but the GM has tricked the players into feeling like the move they made was triggered by events in the fiction.

Make your moves but describe them in the fiction

When the GM's move is to **deal damage as established**, you don't say "you take damage". Instead describe how the creature's teeth sink deep into the player character's flesh. Even if you make the move **turn someone's move against them** you don't say "I turn your move against you", but "You aim your pistol at the back of her head and she slowly raises her hands. Suddenly, her elbow strikes you in the face and in a disorienting flash she's torn the gun away from your grip. With a wicked grin, she points it directly at your forehead and says "Who did you say should put their hands up?"

### *Assign motivations to all your NPCs*

All NPCs, human or not, should be given their own straightforward emotional drives and self-interests. For example: Captain Ben Harrison is willing to climb over bodies to get his hands on one of the player characters to take her back to the military research compound she escaped from. His reasoning is that he's convinced it was his fault she got away, so it's now his duty to ensure she returns – even if it ends up killing him.

There's no need to get overly complicated. Assign simple, straightforward reasons for why people act the way they do. If the GM knows the reason the club bouncer only fulfills his duties for the money, she knows immediately how he'd act differently when one of the characters tries to bribe him than if he had been working due to loyalty to his boss.



### *Give your creatures their own internal logic*

All entities in KULT: Divinity Lost have their own backstories, their place in the cosmology, and their own purposes and motivations despite how alien and inhuman they may appear. They're driven by urges in the same way humans are, and aren't just dropped into their locales as obstacles for curious player characters. It's the GM's job to ensure the entities the characters meet are exciting and true to life, no matter how bizarre they may be. A nepharite seeks out guilt-racked people and create personal purgatories for them. To the nepharite these purgatories are not 'evil', but rather, a gift she grants her victims to allow them to experience the gospel of pain. Lictors impose their control mechanisms on people, because they know first-hand what fearsome and ruthless gods the humans would become should they be released from their prison. A wraith haunts someone because they want something from them – to regain their physical form, or carry out a task in the land of the living. Every entity's actions should have an internal logic to them, however twisted or weird, and it's the GM's job to come up with that logic and reveal it to the player characters. She doesn't tell the players directly, but let it saturate and become apparent in the actions the creature takes.

### *Ask questions and build on the answers*

Start with simple questions. "What does your apartment look like?" "Who among you have known each other the longest?" As the story progresses, the GM can start asking direct and intimate questions about the player characters' experiences, emotions, memories, and opinions. Sometimes it's interesting to zoom in, like "Do you keep photographs on your office desk?" while on other occasions the GM is only looking for big picture overviews, "How is your office furnished and decorated?" depending on the narrative pacing at that time. When a player character takes an unanticipated action, the GM can ask questions about it: "Oh shit, you beat him to death with a hammer?! Is this really the first time you've assaulted someone?" This gives the player a chance to contextualize their action to the rest of the players and give their character more depth, while giving the GM more information to determine what might happen next.

When an answer has been provided, the GM should follow up on it. Following up means three things:

- 1) Things might not be as they seem, the GM might throw in some detail causing the player character to doubt their reality
- 2) The GM can reincorporate the answer into the story later on
- 3) The GM uses the information to inform her own threats, incorporating the answer into their own vision of the world

For example, if the question is "Who do you think your pursuers are?" and they respond "They're inhuman – they travel through doorways and disappear without a trace" the GM can use it in the following ways:

- 1) "One time, when you opened one of the doors a pursuers had gone through, you saw another world through the doorway. It was supposed to be a bathroom, but instead you saw a decrepit gallery filled with exotic mosaic and old, broken statues of angels."
- 2) The pursuers and their doorways appear later in the game, maybe directly in case of a door cracked open to another dimension, or indirectly in the form of myths or stories the player characters hear about relating to creatures that travel between doorways.
- 3) Consider what sort of creatures the pursuers might be and to where the doorways lead.

It's particularly important to ask questions the first time a player character utilizes a supernatural advantage, for example **Enhanced Awareness**. How does the character experience the visions? Do they come on suddenly when the character is unprepared for it, or does she conjure them consciously? Are they terrifying to her? After the first time it's happened, the GM should add her own details when the character makes use of the advantage.

### *Be a fan of the player characters*

Being a fan of the player characters means the GM offers the PCs opportunities to be cool as well as vulnerable, and not to thwart progress and successes they've earned through hard work.

The worst thing a GM can do is remove what makes a player character cool. If a player has put in time to describe their character's faithful German shepherd and pointed out how the dog is their character's entire life, it's not okay to have the dog get run over and killed at the first game session for no reason. It's a different story if some of the character's enemies kidnap the dog, giving the character an opportunity to fight to get it back. In the latter case the GM is validating the player's character concept regarding their relation to the dog, while in the former case she's just destroying it.

The other worst thing the GM can do is deny the player characters successes she's fought for and won. It's more interesting to give the characters' successes consequences. Have NPCs react to the player character achieving one of their goals. What threats might now see the player character as a possible ally? What threats now see her as a dangerous enemy? Allow the player characters to affect the world. Let their choices matter. If the characters depose a lictor from its position of power in the



city it would be pretty strange if there were no consequences. And what player enjoys playing a story where their actions don't matter?

### **Think beyond the scene from time to time**

When the GM is about to make a move, she might consider what her NPCs have been up to. Has any of them done or planned something that might become apparent right now? Is something taking place elsewhere that's deserving of the GM's attention? Maybe the death cult is opening a portal to Inferno to release the living dead into the city while the player characters are busy snooping through the mafia hideout down by the docks. When the GM makes her move she'll describe the characters hearing sirens and helicopters in the city. Pillars of smoke rises from the downtown districts.

This method makes the world feel real, and by frequently recalling her threats the GM also makes the characters' lives more interesting.

## **GM Moves**

The GM's moves are meant to create obstacles the player characters overcome during the course of the story. Unlike the players, the GM never make dice rolls for their moves.

### **When?**

The GM makes a move when one of the following takes place during a game session:

- ◆ When the GM wants to increase tension
- ◆ When a player move dictates that the GM may make a move (note the "may" – the GM always has a choice whether to make a move or not)
- ◆ When a player character's actions grant an opportunity for the GM to make a move

### **How?**

- 1) The GM follows this sequence when making a move:
- 2) The GM describes an obstacle and asks what the player characters do about it.
- 3) The players describe their characters' responses to the event. Sometimes these responses involves rolling for one of their moves.

The GM describes the outcomes of the responses, based on established fiction and any moves the players made.

As the GM makes her moves she keeps her principles in mind and describes the environments the player characters find themselves in.

An obstacle is a creature, object, or event that obstructs the player character from reaching their goals. In the

GM move descriptions, and under the threat section in chapter "Influences", there's plenty of inspiration for obstacles the GM can put in the characters' way.

Some examples of obstacles are: a storm, a hostile witness, a psychotic killer, an inquisitive police inspector, a mysterious object, a curse, a locked door, the sound of approaching footsteps, a revelation that the murderer is one of the character's best friend, a rusty old fire escape, a fire, a riddle, a vision of the illusion ripping apart and Inferno intruding upon the cityscape.

### **Soft and hard moves**

The GM's moves are often described as 'soft' or 'hard'. The distinction is drawn based on the move's impact and whether or not the player characters can prevent them or not.

A soft move is a setup for a consequence that is still preventable.

Hard moves are consequences crashing down on the player characters directly and irreversibly. Hard moves often entail the characters suffering harm or other affliction, or have something taken from them.

## **THE GM'S MOVES:**

### **• Separate Them**

The GM separates the player characters from each other and/or from their allies.

### **Examples:**

- ◆ "You hear the rotted floor start to give way, and behind you Jessica emits a shriek. A gaping dark hole has opened up and Jessica is nowhere to be seen. What do you do?"
- ◆ "The others don't appear to see the rusty pipes, or hear the pained creaking of the machinery. They take off down the stairs as if everything seemed normal. When they pass through the door you spot the mechanisms along the walls. They look like torture instruments. The others have already gone on ahead, but you can hear their voices as if from somewhere far away, "Where did Sandra go?" What do you do?"
- ◆ "John, you're in Ray's Bar drinking a black coffee. Cassie still hasn't checked in with you since you parted at the factory three days ago. What do you do?"



### • Capture Someone

The GM introduce an obstacle that keeps the player character in place.

#### Examples:

- ◆ “When you’re about to leave the room, the enormous guardian steps in front of the door. He grins and evil grin at you, and you’re certain how has no qualms about injuring you. What do you do?”
- ◆ “The car door clicks locked behind you. What do you do?”
- ◆ “You notice they have you surrounded. Some stand in cover behind the wall out in the corridor, two are crouched behind one of the pool tables, and yet another man with a rifle is waiting for you by the exit. As soon as your head pops out, the bar counter is peppered with bullets. What do you do?”

### • Put Someone in a Bad Spot

The GM sets up a difficult situation or a hard choice for one or more player characters, or applies additional pressure and urgency to a pre-existing one, and observes the result.

#### Examples:

- ◆ “You wake up feeling urgently nauseous. Everything is sore and your clothes are sticky. You retch and vomit over the side of the bed. Blood, flesh, chunks of hair. You don’t remember anything from the night before, except that you saw the demon in the mirror just before you went to bed. What do you do?”
- ◆ “You’ve walked a block or so when you hear footsteps approaching rapidly behind you. When you glance over your shoulder you spot the grotesquely contorted figure limping after you. She’s back. What do you do?”
- ◆ “Your hands are bloody and your face swollen after the beating you took. Masrov’s body lies immobile on the table, the knife protruding from his back. You hear the doorbell. What do you do?”

### • Exchange Harm for Harm

One of the GM’s threats, or something else in the environment, deals some harm to a character in exchange for taking some herself. This works in much the same way as the similar 10–14 outcome of the player move attack.

#### Examples:

- ◆ “You launch yourself at him and you both fall and tumble down onto the wet cobblestone. He manages to get on top of you and lands punches down

into your face with closed fists, but you roll over and clutches him by the head. You bring it down on the hard stone over and over until he’s stopped struggling. That’s the first time you notice the bloody knife in his hand. **Endure Injury** with –2.”

- ◆ “You release a couple of rounds blindly around the corner at the cops out in the street. The tall mustached one falls over onto the pavement. The dark skinned one you spoke with earlier fires back at you, and pain courses through you. **Endure Injury** with –2.”

### • Announce Off-Screen Problems

The GM describes a potential threat manifesting outside the area the player characters are at.

#### Examples:

- ◆ “When you pick up you hear Kelly’s frightened voice on the other end. ‘They’re here in the apartment. I’ve hid in the bedroom.’ You hear a door opening and Kelly goes quiet. Someone seems to be looking around the room. Kelly’s breathing is heavy and rapid. ‘Good God, don’t let them find me’ she whispers. Then you hear someone tearing the closet door open and Kelly’s screams. What do you do?”
- ◆ “When you look over towards Ginza you see how Nakamura Tower seems to have grown. It reaches up to the clouds. Huge flocks of those deformed birds circle the building and the sky is a shade of sickly red. Sakamoto’s ritual must have been performed to completion prior to her being sucked into the rift. What do you do?”

### • Announce Future Problems

The GM describes a threat that will manifest in the future if the player characters don’t do something about it. This is a great soft move you can use as a setup to build tension in most scenes.

#### Examples:

- ◆ “You hear voices outside. It sounds like Russian. They stop outside the office door and starts to turn a key in the lock. What do you do?”
- ◆ “The skin around the wound has taken on a dark sickly tone. It smells bad and pus oozes out of it. The pain is throbbing constantly now and you feel mildly nauseous. What do you do?”
- ◆ “It’s evident that he doesn’t believe you and it’s only a matter of time until he summons security. What do you do?”
- ◆ “You’re not allowed to leave me again.” Her beautiful face splits into a wide smile. The corners of her mouth reaches unnaturally far, nearly up to her earlobes, and



her face contorts. She looks taller now – she bends her neck to clear the ceiling – and the previously perfectly manicured nails look like they could rip through your skin as if it was newsprint. What do you do?”

### • Deal Damage

The GM harms the player character or someone in her vicinity. Dealing damage is always a hard move. Normally the player would roll to **Endure Injury** but sometimes a character is affected by harm they wouldn't be able to get out of. If someone pulls the trigger on a gun where the nozzle is pressed directly at their temple, or they leap off the roof of a skyscraper, or they fall into the gaping maw of an enormous monster, it's alright to simply hand out a **serious** or **critical wound**, or even say the character is dead or dying. In this case the harm ought to be derived from actions the player character made of their own free will, not just a random hard move she never had an opportunity to avoid. If the harm inflicted is fair, the player will accept it. By abusing this power the GM risk unnecessarily conflict with their players and violate the principle of **be a fan of the player characters**.

#### Examples:

- ♦ “He smiles at you, the gun resting against Kelly's head, and says ‘It's too late to apologize now.’ You hear a bang and watch as Kelly's left eye explodes. She watches you in shock and surprise until the right eye fills up with blood and her body falls limp to the floor. What do you do?”
- ♦ “It feels like forever before you reach the pavement. You manage to glimpse the giant's contorted face up there in the broken window on the fifth floor. Glass shards sail through the air around you. You recall Jason and the kids at home. You wonder if they're still looking for you, or did he give up already? And then your body hits the asphalt.”
- ♦ “You duck the left hook but you're not fast enough to avoid the right. When you're off-balance she continues raining blows down on your body and face. **Endure Injury** with -1.”

### • Decrease Stability

Sometimes the player characters experience something so horrifying the GM feels there's no way they wouldn't be affected by it. In these situations it's okay for GM to just decrease their **Stability** by one, two, or even four steps rather than ask them to make **Keep it Together** moves.

#### Examples:

- ♦ “The razide starts sawing your hand off with the rusty knife. You can hear the bones crunching as they

give way, and you can hear someone screaming from somewhere in the room. Then you realize the screams are yours. Decrease **Stability** by four steps.”

- ♦ “As you step into the bedroom, James meets your gaze, madness in his eyes. His arms and legs are hooked onto long iron chains attached to the walls, and someone has neatly cut into his chest and splayed the ribs out like wings. You can still see his heart beating, somewhere inside the chest cavity. Decrease **Stability** by two steps. What do you do?”
- ♦ “When you come to, you're hanging upside down and the bus is a massacre of broken, shot up bodies. Tree branches have smashed the bus's windows and impaled any passengers in their path. You and a few others are still alive, but from the mountain brow you can hear the rebel soldiers shouting excitedly just before new volleys of automatic fire clatter against the steel roof and the jungle surrounding you. You can all decrease **Stability** by two steps. What do you do?”

### • Take Their Stuff

The GM takes, or otherwise prevents access to, something a player character considers theirs. Sometimes they might regain the possession, but there's often a risk or cost involved.

#### Examples:

- ♦ “You leap on top of him and both of you tumble into a table, flipping it, glassware and plates smashing against the floor. At first he nearly gains the upper hand, but you manage to throw him off and sit astride his chest, pinning him down. After several punches you feel his body cease struggling as he loses consciousness. You hear footsteps approaching and when you get up you realize your gun isn't tucked into your pants anymore. What do you do?”
- ♦ “The enormous creature bull rushes your car at preternatural speed. As its muscular body smashes into the hood, there's a bang as if you'd crashed on the highway. Airbags explode out into your faces and your ears are ringing. As you maneuver your way out of the airbags you see the hood is bashed right in. The engine is smoking, and the beast staggers and turns to fix its furious attention in your direction. What do you do?”
- ♦ “You reach for the cellphone but suddenly realize – shit! You must have left it on Engström's desk. What do you do?”
- ♦ “As you drive up the street outside the house you see a black BMW with tinted windows parked outside. You spot movement in your office window. They must've gotten here before you! What do you do?”



### • Give the Possible Consequences and Ask

The GM simply informs the player of what consequences their character's action are likely to have, giving the player an opportunity to change their mind. This ensures there's no miscommunication and that the player is fully aware of the situation before committing, or allows the player to double-down on a risky course of action.

#### Examples:

- ◆ "If you fire at him you will probably attract every security guard in the building. Are you doing it anyway?"
- ◆ "Of course you can attack the demon, but to get past the chain it's brandishing you will have to **Act Under Pressure**. Are you going to?"
- ◆ "You have your pistol pressed up against his daughter's temple, so naturally you can use that as leverage to **influence** him, but you get the sense that if you did you would make an enemy out of him. Are you doing it anyway?"

### • Offer an Opportunity, with or Without a Price

The GM describes an opportunity and on occasion potential obstacles or dangers, and give the player character a choice of whether to accept it or not.

#### Examples:

- ◆ "Suddenly Natasha's bodyguard leaves the table. The gigantic man lumbers towards the bathroom. Now is your chance to speak with her in private. What do you do?"
- ◆ "The moment you're about to leave the warehouse you hear a voice from inside one of the shipping containers. 'Papa?' You can open it, but the noise might attract one of the night guards. What do you do?"
- ◆ "Inside the bowels of the machinery there hangs a key, surrounded by spinning cogwheels and thrusting crankshafts. To reach out and grab it would be risky, but not impossible. What do you do?"

### • Turn Their Move Against Them

The GM interrupts the player character's planned action in a way that turns it around against them.

#### Examples:

- ◆ "You emerge from your hiding spots and point your firearms at the seemingly solitary Mr. Volkov, who breaks out in laughter. 'You really thought I'd be on my own?', he says with a malicious smile, and through the hall doors heavily equipped soldiers armed with Kalashnikovs start streaming in. What do you do?"

- ◆ "You wrestle her to the ground, but despite your strong grip she manages to slip away. She grabs your arms painfully and pulls one of her legs up. You realize how one of your arms and your neck are now caught between her legs in a triangle, and as she tightens her grip your breath weakens. Somehow she's managed to completely dominate you. 'So what was it you said? You were going to beat me to death?', she inquires with an ice cold glare. What do you do?"

- ◆ "He doesn't appear bothered by your threats but lowers the pistol anyway, smiling smugly. 'Eliza, I happen to know something you don't. Your sister is alive, and is held captive here in town. Help me escape your friends and I will let you know where she is.' If you don't help him, you must decrease **Stability** by one step. After all, he's your only shot of getting your sister back. What do you do?"

### • Make a Threat Move

The GM can give her threats unique moves to use instead of the regular moves.

#### Examples:

- ◆ **Influence:** buy someone's allegiance. "You're just about to depress the trigger into Mr. Volkov's face as you feel an ice cold pistol muzzle against your neck. 'I'm sorry to have to betray you like this, Sam, but they have my wife.' You can hear him sobbing behind you. 'I have to stop you. I'm sorry!' What do you do?"
- ◆ **Object:** summon a demon. "Your blood drips down onto the cube, which starts emitting a black sheen as if something was devouring the light around it. The ornate patterns start to move and the cube floats up into the air. The darkness around it gets so thick you cannot see past it. All the children stand staring in the pitch black sphere. Then, something emerges. It is only vaguely human, twisted and contorted with a smile plastered onto its disfigured child-like face. You feel your bowels empty as the creature's dead eyes looks right at and through you. What do you do?"

### • Activate a Disadvantage (spend a hold)

When the GM activates a disadvantage she is either framing a scene in which a disadvantage is activated, or she spends a hold she's received due to a disadvantage from one of the players' earlier moves. Holds from disadvantages let the GM choose freely what kind of soft or hard move she should make, but feel free to take inspiration from other GM moves.



### Examples:

- ♦ **Schizophrenia:** “You can tell that someone is tailing you onto the subway car, just a few steps behind you. A middle-aged man with thinning hair and a cheap brown suit. He pretends to be reading a newspaper but as soon as you look away you can feel his eyes on you. What do you do?”
- ♦ **Liar:** “All of a sudden you spot your supervisor Janet through the crowd on the dance floor. She’s seen you as well and approaches you at a rapid pace. “I thought you said you had a fractured bone? What are you doing here?” She makes no attempt to hide the disappointment in her eyes.
- ♦ **Wanted:** “Inside the crowded train station you spot several police officers. You’re just about to turn around when you see two of them come right towards you. One of them, a tall white man, is talking into a police radio while the other, a middle-aged black woman, fixes you with her gaze. What do you do?”

**After every move, “What do you do?”**

When the GM has made a move she *always* asks the player characters what they do, giving them an opportunity to respond to the move. This grabs the players’ attention and prompts them to respond in the here-and-now, so they don’t trail off and lose the scene’s focus. Sometimes they will want more information about the situation before they can make a decision. In that case, hand over the information unless it would be better to activate a player move to discover it instead.

## Conflict resolution rules?

KULT: Divinity Lost doesn’t have a distinct set of rules for handling combat or other conflicts. Every conflict is resolved using the regular player moves. Regardless of whether the player character opts to convince or attack their opponent, resolution of that conflict is handled no differently than any other activity: the players describe what their characters do, making moves as triggered, and the GM describes the outcome of the moves and consequences of their actions, making her own moves as necessary which incites responses from the players. The game continues on as a conversation between GM and players, where the fiction determines how much detail is necessary.

*A brawl between a player character and an NPC could look like this:*

1

**Player:** “I run towards Volkov to tackle him to the ground.”

**GM:** “Okay. He’s got a large caliber revolver, which he’s about to unload into you. Still going ahead with that?”

**Player:** “Yeah, I’m blind with anger. Right now I don’t care if I get shot.”

**GM:** “He empties the cylinder in a series of loud bangs while you run towards him. Roll to **Act Under Pressure**. The pressure here is that the revolver might stop you in your tracks.”

**Player:** “Okay. Haha, that’s a 16.”

**GM:** “Cool! You rush straight at him, you can feel the bullets fly by you. You hear clicking from the revolver and right then you’re on top of him. Can I assume you’re tackling him, then?”

**Player:** “Yes!”

**GM:** “You connect with his abdomen and the two of you fall down onto the floor. You’re on top of him and he’s trying to fend you off. What do you do?”

*Or it could have gone like this:*

2

**Player:** “I leap forward and try to pummel him to death.”

**GM:** “Okay, sounds like you’re using Excessive Force, unarmed attack.”

**Player:** “Yes, definitely.”

**GM:** “He’s obviously planning to attack you back. Roll to **Engage in Combat**.”

**Player:** “11.”

**GM:** “Okay. You run up to him and suckerpunch him right in the jaw. He teeters backwards but regains his balance, and ducks out of the way of your next blow. His elbow hits you in the face but it doesn’t bother you, you get two rapid blows in on his kidney and liver area. He gasps painfully and lowers his guard for a moment. Your bloodied fist hits him in the chin and he falls to the stone floor limp. You keep bashing his face in until no human features remain. Everything is blood and your knuckles hurt like hell. Roll to **Endure Injury** with a –1 modifier.”

In example #1 the GM frames the struggle such that just tackling the man to the floor triggers **Act Under Pressure**. More moves will be activated before either of the parties have won. In example #2 the GM zooms out a bit, and let one attack roll determine the entire fight. In this way the GM can easily emphasize a given conflict more or less depending on how important it is to the story. Depending on the moves you make and the moves you let the players activate, you can control the tempo and narrative details of a conflict.

It’s okay for the players to use any moves they want as long as it makes sense in the story. Maybe the player character would start negotiating when she realizes she’s not going to persevere in a



violent conflict. All that's needed is to cause the move's trigger to be activated in the fiction as usual.

*Example:* "Wait, stop, wait, I give up! Will you stop shooting if I put my gun down?" The trigger for **Influence Other** is 'When you influence a non-player character through negotiation, argument, or from a position of power...'. In this case, the player character would have to actually negotiate (as they do here), offer a strong argument (e.g. "if we don't stop shooting, this ceiling will collapse and we'll both die!"), or be in a position of power (e.g. proven superior firepower) in order to make the move.

An NPC can yield, negotiate, run away, or take any other appropriate action in much the same way, if they feel that's their best option. Make conflicts feel fluid and alive. Transition between talking, violence, and back to talking again. A charismatic character will make the most from negotiation while tough characters would rather solve conflicts with violence. Remember that the consequences for screwing up a negotiation are rarely as grave as being on the losing side of a violent exchange, even though they both technically result in the GM making a move. Remember your principles and base all your moves on the fiction.

### CONFLICT FLOW

The order of action between player characters and NPCs is primarily determined by the fiction. When the conflict is limited to conversation and intimidation there's no need to formally track the order as it will emerge naturally. During violent physical conflicts the GM might need to decide who acts next. If a player character initiates the conflict, for example due to an attack on someone else, they will be the ones taking action first. If an NPC starts the conflict, then they will be taking action first. As the player characters trigger moves, these moves will generate a natural flow where opportunities to act and react jump back and forth between the PCs and NPCs involved.

Two methods are available to the GM to help determine which player character should be acting next: a fixed order, or an order based on the fiction.

If it doesn't matter much to the story, the GM can just go around the table in a fixed order and ask the players one by one to describe and execute their characters' actions. But rather than executing each action as it's described, it's often more flexible and cinematic to ask for all of the actions up front, then determine the execution order based on what makes sense to the fiction. Someone might be firing their pistol, while another wants to run away and take cover, and a third wants to take stock of the situation. The GM determines that the shooter acts first since it ought to be instant. Afterwards the person observing the situation gets to make their move. Finally

the character diving for cover gets to roll to see how that works out.

From time to time the GM will want to create tension by jumping between different conflicts in the scene, constructing mini-cliffhangers where the players are forced to wait to discover the outcome. A player character might have missed their attack, and the GM describes their opponent swinging an axe at them – only to skip to the character's ally who's fighting somewhere else, then returning focus to the axe-wielding lunatic and the outcome of their attack. One reason to do this is to build tension, another is to allow the other character to affect the situation by giving them an opportunity to assist their friend. This is only possible when using an order based on the fiction.

*Example:*

Three player characters, Ashley, Hadi, and John, find themselves inside a deserted bazaar in Istanbul. They're searching for the basement workshop of Bahadin the clockmaker to follow up on a clue.

**GM:** "You walk slowly down arched pathways, dimly illuminated by moonbeams through skylights. Lining the paths are carts and semi-permanent constructions with spices, clothing, and every sort of handicraft. Ashley, you notice a staircase leading down with a wall clock hanging above it. At the same time, John and Hadi, you see three figures approach further down the path. Glancing over your shoulder you realize two additional figures are approaching from behind [the GM is **Announcing future problems**]

*Fixed order, from player 1 to 3:*

**GM, to player 1:** "John, what do you do?" [note the GM is always **Addressing the character, not the player**]

**Player 1:** "I draw my revolver and try to determine whether or not they're a threat."

**GM:** "You're **Observing the Situation** then. Roll and add **Perception**."

**Player 1:** "I got a 12 so I can ask one question. I want to know what seems strange about this."

**GM:** "As you focus on them you can tell the figures are stooped and muscular. They appear naked, and move as if hunched over, almost like they were running on all fours. Remember you get to take +1 if you act against them now."

**GM to player 2:** "You see the figures approach. Ashley, what do you do?"

**Player 2:** "I run down the staircase."

**GM:** "Okay. It's dark down there so you'd have to use your cellphone for illumination."



**Player 2:** "Sure, I do that."

**GM:** "At the bottom of the stairs is a closed door."

**Player 2:** "I check it to see if it's locked."

**GM:** "Yes, it's locked."

**Player 2:** "I pull out my lockpicks and try to pick the lock."

**GM:** "You'd be **Acting Under Pressure**, the pressure here being that the figures reach you before you manage to unlock the door."

**Player 2:** "I got a 15."

**GM:** "Within a few seconds the lock goes 'click' and opens."

**GM to player 3:** "The figures are approaching. John is looking them over and Ashley has descended the staircase. Hadi, what do you do?"

**Player 3:** "I get the shotgun out of my bag and growl in English and Arabic, 'Stop, or I'll shoot!'"

**GM:** "They don't even flinch, just keep going like they don't understand, or care. Do you actually fire at them?"

**Player 3:** "Yes, I blast the two figures coming up from where we came from."

**GM:** "You fire the shotgun with loud bangs, and you see how both figures fall over. As they turn and twist in agony on the ground, they emit loud, inhuman growls which echo down the passage. Simultaneously the figures on the other side of you start loping towards you. By the way, don't forget to mark off two ammo." [the GM knows, even while the players don't, that the creatures are unfamiliar with the concept of firearms and doesn't know to take cover – they are not 'able' opponents and thus won't trigger the **Engage in Combat** move. As the weapon's harm value is sufficient to eliminate both enemies, they're both blown away.]

**GM to player 1:** "So, John, what do you do now?"

*Decide based on the fiction:*

**GM to player 2:** "You open the door. Inside is a shop filled with all kinds of clocks, with a workbench at the far end where you see a man half lie down, stooped in a chair, surrounded by clock parts and tools. Where the man's face is supposed to be there's just a meaty mess of flesh and cartilage. Suddenly rifle shots sound from outside, where the others are." [The GM describes the environment and emphasizes that Ashley is able to hear the gunfire from above]

**Player 2:** "I ignore the sounds from above and examine the man. You said his face is missing, gross. Should I roll to **Keep it Together**?"

**GM:** "Oh, yeah definitely. It's a horrible bloody mess, part coagulated, and you think you can see movement in there. Maybe maggots."

**Player 2:** "I only got a 12. I feel terrible examining him, thinking he died because of us and me somehow. Violated like this in his own shop. I become guilt-ridden." [Player 2 lowers her character's **Stability** by 1] "I'm at **Shaken** now."

**GM:** "Okay, good to know. Remember you'll have –1 to all **Keep it Together** rolls from now on, and –2 to all disadvantage moves. Alright, it's going to take a while, but roll to Investigate."

**Player 2:** "17. I want to find out more about it, and I want to know if there's anything weird about it."

**GM:** "Alright. I'll let you know what you discover in just a moment."

**GM to player 1:** "John! After Hadi discharged her shotgun the three figures ahead of you start loping rapidly towards you. Their movements are animalistic and they emit distorted growls and snarls. What do you do? [The GM is **Putting John in a bad spot**]

**Player 1:** "I draw my pistol and fire at the foremost of them while I back up towards the staircase."

**GM:** "Okay. You are **Engaging in Combat**, go ahead and roll **Violence**."

**Player 1:** "Shit! I only got a 9."

**GM:** "You fire a few shots at the creature – reduce ammo by the way – but the bullets don't appear to slow it down. With a force that knocks the wind out of you it leaps on top of you and knocks you down to the ground." [The GM sets up a move to **Capture** John, but then turns to Player 3...]

**Player 1:** "Okay, I..."

**GM:** "Just wait a moment, John, I'm cutting over to Hadi now."

**Player 1:** "Okay."

**GM to player 3:** "Hadi, you see John fall over with one of the creatures on top of him. The other two are rushing towards you, but the creature is on top of John and is just about to bite into him. What do you do?" [The GM **Offers Hadi an opportunity with a cost** to help John, the cost being that he might get overrun by the other two creatures if he takes it]

**Player 3:** "I fire my final shot at the beast attacking John."

**GM:** "Roll to Help, using **Coolness**."

**Player 3:** "I got a 12, which gives him +1 to his roll. That makes it a 10, right?"

**GM:** "That's right. Hadi, your hailshot blast causes the creature to get thrown off John. The other two launch



themselves towards you, with slaving jaws and fingers twisted like claws. What do you do?" [as before, the GM knows the shotgun does enough damage to neutralize the beast. The GM picked "run into problems later" from the 10–14 list, making a mental note to have this close encounter come back to haunt John and Hadi.]

**Player 3:** "I roll to the side and down the stairs."

**GM:** "Roll to **Avoid Harm**."

**Player 3:** "11."

**GM:** "As you jump to the side one of the beasts manage to grasp hold of your shotgun. You lose your grip of it as you tumble down the stairs. You land in the doorway of the clockworks, staggered." [The GM chooses for Hadi to **Lose Something**, namely his shotgun]

**GM to player 1:** "John, the beast that used to be perched on top of you is lying immobile in a pile a few paces away. It's a woman, with a large hole in her back as a result of Hadi's shotgun blast. Behind you you can see two contorted, naked persons ravenously tear into Hadi's shotgun as if it were a piece of meat. They don't appear to take any note of you. What do you do?" [The GM **Offers an opportunity, with or without a cost**].

### HARMING NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

When a player- or non-player character's attacks a non-player character, she receives as many wounds as the total harm inflicted, minus any armor rating.

♦ Wounds = Harm – Armor

A normal human NPC dies at 3 wounds while tougher opponents and creatures can withstand far more.

When an NPC takes one or more wounds the GM makes a harm move describing what happens in the story. The harm move could involve the opponent becoming neutralized, or even die, before all their wounds are crossed off.

Normal human NPCs have the following harm moves:

- ♦ Subdued
- ♦ Dying (but can be saved)
- ♦ Death

*For example:* When a normal human NPC is punched by a player character (unarmed attack, harm 1) the GM can choose the harm move **Subdued** and have the NPC e.g. go down unconscious as a result.

As most of the bit players in the game's world are regular people, the GM doesn't need to track wounds for them. They can always just assume 3 wounds will take them out, and use the harm moves **Subdued**, **Dying**, and **Death**.

Creatures and tough human NPCs can withstand more wounds, and thereby survive attacks which would neutralize or kill a regular human.

## The horror contract

More than any other roleplaying game genre, the horror genre relies on the players agreeing on its premise – in this case that they want to be frightened. If the players aren't on board with the premise, the game won't work. All descriptions and portrayals in the pursuit of an atmosphere of discomfort and dread will fall flat.

Due to this it's important the players agree to a "horror contract", in which they agree to help frighten themselves. This will give you an open door straight into the players' imagination, which you ought to utilize in techniques to help build and maintain the horror genre mood.

### Know your players

If the GM knows what scares the players it's clearly going to make it easier to frighten them. Find out what makes your players tense up by spending talking to them about it and relating to them. If there's something in particular they're scared of, consider including it in the story.

### Quality before quantity

When the horrors reappear too frequently, when there are demons around every corner, and everywhere you go you run into dismembered, mutilated corpses, the story loses its edge. By overwhelming the players with a stream of horrific events, one after each other, they will become desensitized. It's sometimes important to hold back and apportion the horror to give the players time to recover. As an analogy, consider yourself as GM to be a coachman. The horse is horror, and it is constantly trying to dash off. Your task as GM is to hold tightly onto the reins, holding back the horror before it starts to lose its impact. Ensure the players are given time to recover, breathe, and regaining a sense of control and comfort. At this point you can start threatening them again.

### Build the atmosphere

Building an atmosphere means creating the prerequisites for horror with the players. It could mean choosing the right environs for unpleasant scenes. Compare, for example, a sealed off underground subway station at night, or a packed café at lunchtime. In the subway station the players are tense from the moment they enter the place, while in the café they feel safe. If a player spots five-year old girl through the darkness in the subway station she will think twice. If she spots the same girl at the café she won't have a reaction whatsoever.



Atmosphere is also about creating the prerequisites for horror in the play environment. If you play in a dark room with lit candles and dark-ambient music it's a lot easier to enter into a horror mood than if you'd played at the kitchen table in a lit apartment with the TV blaring from the living room.

### ***Stay in the scene***

When you notice a scene starts to get scary and effective, try to hold onto that moment. As GM, you control time and space. When a player character flees in a panic through the dark cellar and the mood is perfect, drag it out. Don't allow them to escape in a mere moment. The character stumbles, drops her phone, feels something grabbing onto her, notices the stench of what's coming up behind them. When a player character is injured, describe the sensation of their skin peeling back, how the blood trickles slowly down their abdomen. Bone breaking, teeth being knocked out. When the player character steps out of tunnel leading to Metropolis and the tension is heavy in the air, take a moment to describe the smells, the coldness of the walls, the persistent sound of dripping liquid, and the tangible absence of someone or something in the darkness.

### ***Suggest rather than overwhelm the players with sensory information***

It's always better to let the players themselves imagine the horror rather than describe it for them. Given a certain amount of information, the imagination will start filling in the gaps for us. Human brains are constructed such that we're more prone to exaggerate threats than downplay them. Because of this it's often scarier to hear a horrible sound or spot a fleeting figure than looking at a monster directly. When the GM creates a horror atmosphere she ought not give the players too much information too quickly, but small pieces they have to piece together into a terrifying whole. For example, she can describe the clamor of screams from the insane, tortured moans, gurgling and the snapping of bones, and the wet, sloppy sound of something enormous dragging itself onwards as the cairn approaches. The player gets to create an image of what is making those sounds on her own.

### ***The inexplicable***

It's uncomfortable to encounter something you cannot explain. When you have that gnawing feeling that something is off, even the most mundane things will appear threatening. This is frequently used in Japanese horror films where ghosts appear

human but move in strange, jerky ways, or in David Lynch's movies and TV-series where situations and locations seem familiar but some small detail make it apparent something isn't right.

**People:** The girl at the end of the corridor moves spasmodically. The man in the nice suit smells of iron and blood. The doctor never removes his surgical mask. It's as if something is bulging and moving under the fat man's clothes. The old lady threateningly rattles her teeth. The stranger greets you as if you're close friends yet every sentence seems to contain a veiled threat. A child is standing in an abandoned industrial site in the middle of the night.

**Situations:** Your missing daughter's diary lies open on her bed when you get home. All the food in the fridge has rotted overnight. You notice that someone's made four calls on your cellphone while you've been sleeping. There are strange sounds on the other side of the wall. Your body feels cold and alien when you wake up that morning. You smell the scent of your dead father's deodorant in the car.

**Places:** The corridor continues on where the house logically ought to be ending. A door leading to the fourth floor of a three-story building. A doorway in a deserted building leading to a bright kitchen smelling of fresh-baked pies and a smiling woman in a checkered apron. A decrepit but mundane apartment with a rusted steel door in one wall that doesn't fit in at all. A modern office with a mosaic floor depicting obscure machinery.

When things are not as they ought to be the players become suspicious and guarded. Make use of this to make them feel threatened and vulnerable.

### ***Incite a sense of exposure***

A simple rule of thumb for horror is that the bigger the crowd the safer you feel. This includes both the number of player characters in the scene and the number of other people in the location. A solitary player character will feel more exposed than five of them together. A player character alone in dark woods will feel more exposed than one on a city plaza with a bunch of other people.

It can sometimes be hard to isolate player characters as the players aren't keen on splitting up.



Their instincts are to stick together to feel safer. A trick the GM can use to isolate PCs from each other is through spending hold on disadvantages. For example, disadvantages like **Repressed Memories** and **Nightmares** gives the GM full control over where the player character is and what the scene looks like. **Repressed Memories** gives the player character flashbacks where they remember and play out events from their past. **Nightmares** create terrifying scenes played out in the dream world. The GM can also separate the characters in regular scenes by having antagonists cut them off or use the environment against them, for example by having a character fall through the rotted floor of an old house while the rest remain on the floor above. Failed **Keep it Together** rolls can also lead to the player losing control over their character. The character might panic and escape a situation, only to later realize she's run away from all her allies as well.

Getting the player characters to venture to clearly unsafe places is all about motivating the character. If there's something sufficiently important and interesting at the place, the characters will go there. If the GM base her stories on the player characters' Dark Secrets and motivations the players can generally be trusted to find a reason to have their character investigate.

### ***Dare to be unpleasant***

Exposure isn't just about particular places where the player characters experience isolation, the player character's inner life should also be afflicted. Take the players to places you don't normally want to go, where it's sensitive and difficult and disconcerting. Violence and death can easily be oversimplified in movies, games, and novels where people are shot, stabbed, and beaten to death without pause and reflection. Instead, make sure to set up distressing and unnerving moments. These scenes are often tied to the intimate, family, and sex and feelings of shame, guilt, and helplessness. Have no mercy. It should be difficult, offensive, and transgressive to the player character.

- ◆ You're held in place while the gangster you owe money to undoes your pants and grabs onto your cock. He strokes it, almost tenderly. "When do I get my money," he asks.
- ◆ You scroll through the webpages. Your name and picture is featured everywhere, alongside that grainy security camera footage. The creature you unleashes, which looks exactly like you, is gunning people down in a mall. It's all a blur of newspaper headlines, wanted alerts, and your mother crying while paparazis get footage.
- ◆ You feel like you can't control your own body. The lictor's commanding voice has entangled your mind. You feel your newborn son's warm, soft skin. You lift him up and he babbles and coos happily, unaware of

what is about to transpire. You start walking towards the oven.

- ◆ There's a taste of blood in your mouth. Your head is spinning and one of your front teeth are knocked out as he throws you onto the asphalt. There's a ripping noise as he tears your pants down. He pushes his dick into you. You scream. He keeps going.
- ◆ You can't get away. One of the police officers hold your head still while the other reveals a pocket knife that he puts up against your eye. The tip rests against your cornea. Suddenly, he applies pressure. It turns dark and you scream as you feel the wet bloody mess that used to be your eye drip down your cheek.
- ◆ You wake up coughing. It's difficult to focus your vision and your face feels swollen and smashed. You're in fetal position in the bed of a cheap motel room. Hardcore porn on the TV. There's a taste of semen in your mouth. The bed is drenched in blood. One of them got everything on camera.

**Important!** Discuss any sensitive subjects with the group to ensure they can be included in the story. Certain subjects will cross a boundary for certain players (as opposed to their characters). It's better to ensure participants have the opportunity to make certain subjects off-limits than to have to console traumatized players after the session.

### ***Create interesting monsters***

It's insufficient to just throw out a vile creature and elaborate on its horrific visage. A monster in broad daylight is never as terrifying as one that isn't seen at all. Your monsters should be both fascinating and fearsome. Encountering a nepharite, razide, or lictor should make the players feel existentially threatened and be a memorable moment in the game. Before that encounter the monster's presence must have made itself known in the story, so the encounter in anticipated. If the player characters have found multiple tortured and mutilated bodies throughout the story that a razide has left in its wake, they will expect the worst when they face the creature face-to-face. It's good to plan ahead of the encounter what the being looks like, both as obscured by the Illusion and in its true form, and how it behaves, to ensure it provides the most unpleasant and disturbing impression possible. Try to imagine little details the players have problematic associations with. For example, describe how the razide's human form in the Illusion is constantly adjusting the skin on its face, as if it didn't fit properly. If they pierce the Illusion and see its true form they see how its face has actually been surgically removed from its original host and strapped onto the monster's head like a mask.







As you describe monsters you can put their supernatural nature on display by highlighting the influence they have on the player characters and the Illusion, not merely their physical appearance.

**Distort perceptions:** creatures from other planes don't belong in the Illusion, and player characters' senses may be distorted in their presence.

- ◆ A sour stench that causes the eyes to water
- ◆ The skin crawls as if thousands of tiny parasites were walking across it
- ◆ Colors turn muted and diffuse, and bloom out like ink in water
- ◆ It suddenly gets extremely cold, as if you were submerged into ice water
- ◆ All sounds turn hard and sharp, like the inside of an enormous oil tank
- ◆ Your saliva turns thick and slimy, and your skin feels feverish, clammy, and heavy

**Use metaphors:** Create a surreal, alien atmosphere through use of metaphors.

- ◆ The demon harbors enormous power, as if a roaring storm was gathering just below the surface.
- ◆ Having her gaze upon you is akin to being flayed. She cuts through layer after layer to look right into the core of your being.
- ◆ The being hovers in the air like a mirage. You get the sense that if you were to look away even for a moment it would vanish.

**Pervert their thoughts and feelings:** When monsters are in their presence, the player characters' minds are influenced – as if contaminated – by wills that are not their own. This is particularly true for beings with close ties to Archons and Death Angels, and their principles.

- ◆ The nepharite pulls her clothing aside to reveal her glistening cunt. You feel a strong desire, a lusty pull, to put your tongue on it. To be permitted to kneel in front of her, to please her.
- ◆ You feel weak, abandoned, and realize that nobody has ever been on your side. But now the creature is offering you its hand.
- ◆ You're overcome with a burning hatred. All your memories from Iraq bubble to the surface and you feel the fury, the terror, and the stench of white phosphorous.
- ◆ The swollen, soaked beast stares at you and you're filled with a hunger. To devour it, to tear into it with your jaws and eat its flesh and intestines.

## CONSTRUCTING A SCENARIO

A scenario is a story where the GM herself chooses the place, time, archetype, and threats before the start of the game. Often the GM picks archetypes and dark secrets that she detailed ahead of time, to integrate the characters' backstories with the scenario.

Scenarios are particularly suitable for beginning players and groups who only meet for a limited number of sessions. They allow for more active playtime but is more demanding of the GM's time, as she will have to make preparations ahead of playing the scenario.

### Checklist for scenario creation

This is a list of items the GM can prepare before the scenario starts.

- 1) Think of a scenario concept
- 2) Choose a theme for the scenario
- 3) Pick a time and place for the scenario
- 4) Think of a backstory
- 5) Select what archetypes will be available to the players
- 6) Pick dark secrets and disadvantages for the player characters and integrate these with the scenario backstory
- 7) Possibly give the player characters more details such as name, looks, advantages and relationships
- 8) Create threats connected to the backstory and the player characters' dark secrets
- 9) Create milestones for the threats
- 10) Consider and make notes of descriptions of places and important people in the scenario
- 11) Think about possible endings for the scenario

### Concept

To think of a scenario concept means the GM will determine a vague idea of what the scenario is all about. For example:

- ◆ The characters are employed at an excavation of Metropolis' forgotten catacombs in the glaciers of Antarctica.
- ◆ The characters are all estranged childhood friends who are haunted by terrible crimes in their pasts.
- ◆ The characters are evangelical congregation members in a small town threatened by demons.



- ◆ The characters are police officers trying to stop a twisted serial killer.
- ◆ The characters are tourists at a remote hotel in which the proprietor is looking to open a gate to hell.
- ◆ The characters are unwittingly trapped in a purgatory where a nepharite confronts them with their pasts.

## Theme

The scenario theme is connected to the concept, and could be chosen before the concept if so desired. The simplest way to pick a theme for the scenario is to choose one of the Higher Powers in the game and focus the scenario around its principles or goals. If there are several Higher Powers, the theme can be described as the conflict between them. For example:

- ◆ The Death Angel Sathariel provides the theme *exposure*
- ◆ The Archon Geburah and the Death Angel Gamaliel in the same scenario makes the theme *control vs lust*

When preparing archetypes, dark secrets, disadvantages and threats the GM can consider how to best highlight the theme throughout the story.

## Time and place

When and where the scenario takes place affects the mood of the story and provides a varying range of possibilities for the player characters. Consider what works best with the concept. Should the scenario be based in a big city or elsewhere? Do you want to use an actual existing place or invent your own? What sort of locale works best to serve the goals you have with the scenario? Some examples:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ◆ Big city  | ◆ A building (e.g. a hospital, asylum, school, etc.)   |
| ◆ Small town  |  |
| ◆ Countryside   | ◆ An event (e.g. the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the Umbrella Revolution in Hong Kong in 2014, the Srebrenica massacre in 1995, the MS Estonia disaster in 1994) |
| ◆ The wilds   |  |
| ◆ Isolated locale (e.g. a ship, an island, a prison or similar) |  |

## Backstory

The scenario's backstory doesn't have to be novella-sized, but you should consider and maybe note down a few sentences about what has previously taken place in the scenario's locations and what made the situation the way it is. The backstory will naturally take shape and be complemented by the other choices the GM does while creating the scenario, so just figure out the basics and return to flesh out the backstory occasionally.

*Example:* "The arctic dig is operated by the company Innovim Inc., which is controlled by lictors tied to the Death Angel Nahemoth. They're searching for a lost god who is said to be sleeping in Metropolis' catacombs."

## Archetypes

The choice of archetypes available will affect the direction of the scenario. For violent conflicts, archetypes like the Avenger, the Criminal, and the Veteran could be suitable. If you want more of a focus on investigation and research, the Detective, the Fixer, or the Seeker have advantages which would prove useful. The Careerist and the Artist make room for more social play, while the Prophet and the Scientist have advantages which give the players more insight into the supernatural.

Often a mix of archetypes is preferable and it's usually obvious which archetypes are the best fit for the scenario concept.

It's frequently the case that the archetypes' specific dark secrets, disadvantages, and advantages matter when considering this choice. If it's important that a character would be able to hack into a security system, the GM might choose the Seeker as one of the available archetypes due to its **Hacker** advantage.

## Dark secrets and disadvantages

To ensure the players' characters are the scenario's protagonists, it's important to connect their dark secrets and possibly even their disadvantages to the scenario's backstory.

*For example:*

If the scenario is about a mysterious figurine, it's one of the player characters who have inherited it (**Heir**) and been affected by its **Curse**.

A boyfriend of one of the player characters used to be a researcher at Innovim's research station (**Strange Disappearance**). The character has applied for employment at the station to investigate what transpired.

The evangelical congregation struggling against the town's demons are led by the *Prophet* who has been **Chosen** by their god to protect the town from the evil.

## Detail the characters

How much to detail the characters in advance is to a large degree dependent on how much control the GM wants to have over them and how quickly you want to be able to start playing.

Letting the players choose on their own means they will be influencing the direction in which the scenario plays out, and the plot may take unexpected twists





and turns. The Detective the GM thought of as a crime scene investigator might become a dreamwalker with **Enhanced awareness**, and the Servant of God becomes a prophet with a voice that whips crowds into a frenzy. Besides that, even seemingly straightforward decisions can take some players a long time to make.

If the GM makes all choices herself she can prepare exactly the protagonists she wants from the scenario.

A compromise is to let the players choose some options on their own but impose constraints on their selections. For example, “You can pick three advantages but one of them has to be **Crime scene investigator**.”

If the scenario is intended to be short and intense, it's wise to impose some control over the player characters' relations to one another. Letting the characters familiarize themselves and build trust with the others can take a long time in game, and sometimes they don't seem to want to cooperate at all. The GM can also use relations to create character motivations and ensure characters stick together.

*For example:* “The Avenger rescued you from certain death, and this is why you're helping her get her revenge.”

## Threats

Threats are the scenario's antagonists and will be responsible for most of the obstacles the player characters will have to overcome. It's important to put some time into considering what the nature of the threats are and what in the characters' lives they're threatening. The GM will often have a few threats ready to go through having developed the scenario concept, backstory, and the player characters' dark secrets and disadvantages. Note these down and consider what their goals and motivations are in the scenario. For inspiration for additional threats, check the entries for the Higher Powers you've selected for the scenario.

Some examples of threats for the arctic research station scenario:

- ◆ CEO de Arnán (Leader), Lictor under the Death Angel Nahemoth. Wants to awaken the sleeping god.
- ◆ The snow storm (Event), freezes everything to ice.
- ◆ Starvation (Event), kills the station crew and compromises reason and perception. The last shipment of food is delayed and the stocks are running out.
- ◆ The cult (Group), secret society among the employees of the station who worship the sleeping god.
- ◆ The dead children (Abominations), malicious spirits haunting the Veteran due to misdeeds in her past.

## Milestones

For some threats the GM will author milestones, step-by-step plans leading up to a final goal. Not all threats need milestones, but they're often useful for determining what ought to happen next in the scenario.

The milestones can have a variable number of steps before the goal state is reached. As a guideline you could work with 3 to 5 steps before the execution of the final goal. This gives the player characters room to discover and interfere with the threat and its plans. Many more steps than that might be overplanning and wasted effort, as the characters' interference should cause the threat to adjust their plans.

*Example:*

**Lictor de Arnán's plan to awaken the sleeping god**



- 1) Open the portal to the sleeping god's catacombs
- 2) Intercept and silence all outgoing transmissions from the research station
- 3) Send an exploration team into the catacombs to find the sleeping god
- 4) Have the cult take control of the station
- 5) Sacrifice the crew to the sleeping god in the catacombs

**Goal:** Awaken the sleeping god

Each step in the plan can be detailed ahead of time as much as seems necessary, noting possible consequences for completion or interference, emergence of new threats, and other details.

It's important to understand that even if the threats' plans are predetermined, the GM cannot control how the player characters will react to what transpires. The GM can affect the player characters' choices through crafting their backstories, manipulate them through relations and NPCs, and so on, but she may *never* decide for the players what actions they take. This means it's problematic to write milestones based on the player characters' actions. Try to word the milestones such that the characters are able to discover and react to them. If the characters manage to stop the antagonists' plans they might be able to save themselves, as well as the day.

## Places and people

Consider what places the characters might visit in the scenario and jot down what is special about them: impressions, sounds, smells, sensations, moods. The descriptions will set the tone for the scenario, so spend a bit of time to ensure you have a clear picture of the environments the characters will be spending time in. If a location is meant to be creepy, the GM should have an idea of *how* it is creepy before the scenario starts. If the player characters will be investigating a crime scene it's smart to have prepared clues for them to find ahead of time.

Places that act as home turf for threats can be adapted to suit those threats. If a threat is tied to a Higher Power (Archon or Death Angel), let the Higher Power's influence transform the location.

*Example:* Damien Leclerc, servant of the Archon Kether, lives in a palatial mansion exuding authority and old wealth. Rank and pecking order is very noticeable among the houses' masters and servants, and family portraits illustrate how titles have been passed down through the ages.

Ensure you also create non-player characters for the scenario that can operate as friends, allies, relatives, and clue dispensers for the characters. Give them names, distinct behaviours, and physical descriptions.

## The Ending

When preparing a scenario it's important to consider how to bring it to an end. There are several methods available to help make this decision.

- ◆ The scenario ends when a particular threat accomplishes their goal or the player character manages to stop them, e.g. the cult awakens the sleeping god or the characters put a stop to their plans.
- ◆ The scenario ends at a point in time, e.g. when the snow storm subsides.
- ◆ The scenario ends when the player characters realize something, e.g. they figure out they're all dead and trapped in a purgatory.
- ◆ The scenario ends when the player characters accomplish something, e.g. escape the scenario location and reach safety.
- ◆ The scenario ends when the GM feels her prepared threats and challenges are fully explored and overcome.

## INFLUENCES

The Higher Powers in the universe of KULT is at war. An "influence" is a map of a Higher Power's willing and unwitting minions in that war, as well as places, objects, and forces which contribute to the Higher Power's goals.

### USING INFLUENCES

Influences are a tool the GM can use to focus in on the story's most important themes, which also serve as a quick overview of the threats the characters are opposing. Creating an influence is quick, and can be expanded upon to whatever degree the GM wants.

### CREATING INFLUENCES

The GM creates an influence by completing the following two steps:

- ◆ Pick a Higher Power
- ◆ Create and/or categorize threats by Higher Power

How many influences the GM brings into a story depends on which Higher Powers she'd like to influence it, and how many threats she's already created.



## Higher Powers

Higher Powers represent powerful inhuman entities, ancient pacts and interests whose influence reaches all the way from other dimensions into the human lands. The Higher Powers can only be defeated by extremely powerful beings, and even then it's not a certainty they have met their final annihilation. The higher powers act via unwitting marionettes, devoted servants, invisible forces, magical objects, and places where the Illusion is weakened. As a Higher Power influences areas in the world, those places transform both physically and emotionally to resemble the Higher Power's abode.

Archons and Death Angels strive to strengthen their primary principles among humanity. All Archons – aside from Malkuth – intend to preserve and maintain humanity's prison and keep humans ignorant of The Truth.

### METROPOLIS

#### Archons

**Kether:** Primary principle – hierarchy

Kether's influence manifest as hierarchical structures with masters and servants, widening class gaps, and an aristocracy with power and benefits.

**Chokmah:** Primary principle – submission

Chokmah's influence manifests as the submission to religious leaders, martyrhood, fanaticism, theocratic rule, and dogmatism.

**Binah:** Primary principle – belonging

Binah's influence manifests as the family's power over the individual, mistrust of state and authority outside of the family, strengthened traditions, and distrust of strangers.

**Geburah:** Primary principle – order

Geburah's influence generates bureaucratic institutions, stricter laws, increased policing and societal control over its citizens. Those so influenced yield to increased control out of a fear of chaos.

**Tiphareth:** Primary principle – beauty

Tiphareth's influence incites a manic craving for beauty and affirmation which must be fulfilled by any means necessary. Celebrities are worshipped as prophets, the mediocre while their days away on the internet and through television shows, and anyone who doesn't meet the cut are despised and ignored.

**Netzach:** Primary principle – conquest

Netzach's influence strengthens patriotism and nationalism, uniting a society's inhabitants against a common enemy, us versus them. The righteous obliterate all that threatens them, strengthening the military, justifying violence in the name of the greater good,

and cause people to arm themselves.

**Hod:** Primary principle – honor

Hod's influence conflates honor with prestige, elevating your status among others above all else, and sets law aside in favor of personal vendettas.

**Yesod:** Primary principle – greed

Yesod influences a society through greed, capitalism, economics, consumer frenzy, admiration and respect for wealth as a sign of personal intelligence and ambition, contempt for the poverty-stricken who are associated with laziness and stupidity, increased corporate power, and the dismantling of social welfare institutions.

**Malkuth:** Primary principle – insight

Malkuth's influence strives to free people from their prison, collapsing society, spreading insanity, shattering the Illusion to reveal other dimensions, people questioning the nature of society and the fabric of reality, scientists letting their experiments run amok, the spread of conspiracy theories, and the manifestation of magic.

### INFERNO

#### Death Angels

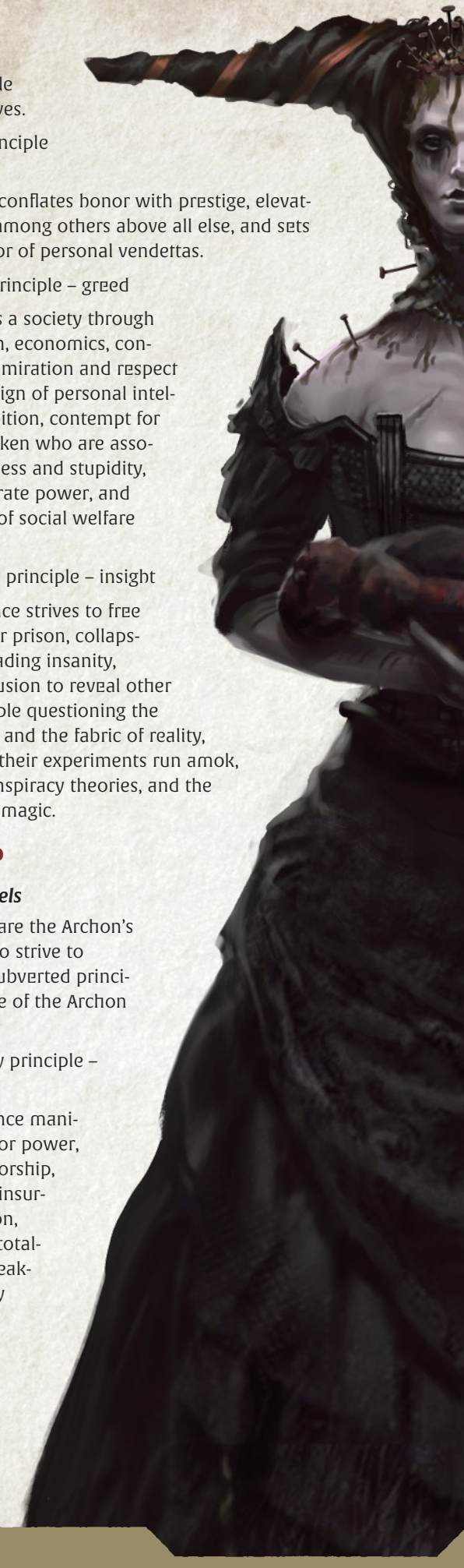
The Death Angels are the Archon's dark shadows, who strive to strengthen their subverted principles at the expense of the Archon they mirror.

**Thaumiel:** Primary principle – lust for power

Thaumiel's influence manifest as a hunger for power, corruption, dictatorship, fascism, intrigue, insurrection, oppression, ruthlessness and totalitarian rule – a breakdown of solidarity and trust.

**Chagidiel:** Primary principle – abuse

Chagidiel's influence take







the shape of violation of children and the perversion of adult love and care, forgotten and lost children, homeless street kids, and the degrading and ruination of school systems.

**Sathariel:** Primary principle – exclusion

Sathariel's influence incite self-loathing, loneliness, hopelessness, contempt for "normals", self-destruction, anxiety, depression, suicide, school shootings and massacres, and communities of outsiders egging each other on to commit destructive actions.

**Gamichicoth:** Primary principle – fear

Gamichicoth's influence awakens fear of "the Other", escalating distrust, people blaming various ethnic groups, religions, or political dissidents for society's problems, false narratives created and distributed through news media, rumors, and manipulated visual evidence, heralds whispering how all concerns would dissipate if only "the Others" would be punished or disappear.

**Golachab:** Primary principle – torture

Golachab's influence increases societal sadism, giving people pleasure in inflicting pain on others or to be subjected to torment themselves, criminals are tortured in public, people carry out their most sadistic ideas unto both willing and unwilling subjects in obscure safehouses, murders leave a trail of mutilated bodies.

**Thagirion:** Primary principle – compulsion

Thagirion's influence increases the manic

creativity that distorts reality and tears beauty asunder, artwork opens portals to Inferno, death itself acts erratic with souls binding themselves into rotting corpses and magicians experimenting at the border of life and death.

**Hareb-Serap:** Primary principle – conflict

Hareb-Serap's influence propagates uncontrollable rage, bloodlust and senseless violence, gangs have shootouts in public places, police beat suspects to death, hooligans storm the arenas, lynch mobs tear their targets into pieces, harmless conflicts escalate into bloody fistfights, people teeter on the brink of explosive outbursts at all times.

**Samael:** Primary principle – vengeance

Samael's influence strengthens paranoia, vindictiveness, and obsession with injustices, perpetrators take brutal revenge for nonexistent affronts, jealous partners cut down their loved ones for imagined betrayals, terrorists exact gory retribution upon their foes.

**Gamaliel:** Primary principle – lust

Gamaliel influences society towards greater oversexualization and objectification, crowds commit gang rape, people are forced into prostitution, pornography turns more hardcore and perverted, people gather in clubs and secret societies for macabre orgies, people invite mindless desire with no consideration of the consequences of their actions.

**Nahemoth:** Primary principle – discord

Nahemoth's influence deforms the natural world, turning it dangerous and threatening, expressed as forest fires, oil spills, poisoned streams and groundwater, misshapen animal life, violent storms, cold snaps, heat waves, torrential rains, earthquakes, tsunamis, cannibal tribes, disfigured fetuses, and baleful eclipses.

## THE UNDERWORLD

**Children of the Underworld:** Goal – liberation

The children of the underworld's influence manifests as people suddenly disappearing without a trace, children and madmen witnessing strange figures, the emergence of odd artifacts and mystical knowledge, people re-experiencing repressed memories of apocalyptic crumbling worlds in their dreams, and grotesque characters influencing societal institutions.

**She Who Watches in the Deep:** Goal – the cessation of everything

She Who Watches in the Deep influences humanity to dream of the Labyrinth, people are subconsciously attracted to tunnels and sewers to seek the deep subterranean dark, zeloth and cairath expand their hunting grounds further towards the surface to prevent humans from reaching deeper, the Guardians of the Labyrinth contact the one who has been chosen by its deity.



## LIMBO

**Dream Princes:** Goal – populate their dream realm

The Dream Princes consciously or subconsciously pull people into their realms. When a sufficient number of people are bound to the same dream realm, it might start affecting the waking world. The borders to Limbo weaken and people's subconsciousness start altering reality to become more like the dream realm.

## GAIA

**Gaia the Living Earth:** Goal – breakdown of civilization

Gaia's influence tears civilization apart, incites societal collapse, the rule of law is rejected, communication breaks down and isolation sets in, people turn savage, overgrowth creeps and engulfs human construction, wild animals enter settled areas, and feral gods bargain over what cultural artifacts remain.

## Threats

Threats are locations, events, objects, organizations, and antagonists which oppose or otherwise threaten the player characters in the story.

*Examples:*

- ◆ An old factory bordering Metropolis (a location)
- ◆ A magical ritual impregnating a woman with an inhuman being (event)
- ◆ A camera that takes photos of other dimensions (object)
- ◆ A suspicious police officer looking for a wanted player character (antagonist)
- ◆ A monstrous creature predating the sewers (antagonist)
- ◆ A ruthless corporation trying to silence the player characters (organization)

## UNIQUE MOVES

Unique moves are special moves the GM keeps for single threats of the types locations, events, objects, and organizations. The GM executes her unique moves in exactly the same way as her other GM moves:

- ◆ When the GM wants to increase tension
- ◆ When a player move dictates that the GM may make a move
- ◆ When a player character's actions grant an opportunity for the GM to make a move

*Example:* The Equitable Building is given the unique move "summon the guardians of Yesod". The GM can execute this move instead of one of her normal GM moves if the players seem to be getting complacent and relaxed (increase tension), or if a player misses a roll (player move

dictates), or if a player character crosses the threshold to the building's inner sanctum (player action grants opportunity).

Not all threats require unique moves, but frequently the GM may feel like a threat ought to have certain abilities that might come up when the player characters encounter the threat. Unique moves serve both to remind the GM to use these abilities and to legitimize invoking such abilities in the story despite them not normally being covered by GM moves.

*Example list of possible unique moves the GM can assign to threats:*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ◆ Reveal prophecy or exposition                                   | ◆ Manipulate the surrounding environment                |
| ◆ Hide something  | ◆ Incite desire and jealousy in someone                 |
| ◆ Block a path  | ◆ Make contact with another entity                      |
| ◆ Open a door   | ◆ Summon a demon  |
| ◆ Shift, move, change   | ◆ Harm or obliterate something or someone               |
| ◆ Offer guidance  | ◆ Demand sacrifice                                      |
| ◆ Rob someone of something: lost, consumed, destroyed, or defiled | ◆ Grow  |
| ◆ Unveil a secret   | ◆ Show another dimension                                |
| ◆ Disclose facts about Reality                                    | ◆ Ruin something by defiling, decaying, or violating it |
| ◆ Rend the Illusion   | ◆ Drive someone insane                                  |
| ◆ Influence or control a creature                                 | ◆ Send a vision   |

## Opponents

Opponents in KULT: Divinity Lost are threats representing living creatures, humans, beings, and groups. Unlike other threats the characters will often find themselves in direct conflict with opponents. These conflicts can be social, physical, or anything in between. For this reason the GM will want to flesh out opponents a bit more than other threats.

Construct opponents according to the following template:

**Name:** The opponent's actual name, or a designation for creatures that don't have individual names.

**Home:** The dimension the opponent is native to.

**Type of creature:** What Higher Powers the creature is tied to.

**Attributes:** Opponents have three attributes. **Combat** indicates how dangerous the opponent is in a fight, **Influence** indicates the degree of power the creature wields in its home dimension, and **Magic** indicates how much knowledge the opponent has of the Truth and how great



their powers to affect Reality. The level of each attribute determines the creature's strength.

#### Level

- ◆ 1: Weak
- ◆ 2: Novice
- ◆ 3: Considerable
- ◆ 4: Powerful
- ◆ 5: Exceptional
- ◆ 6: Legendary
- ◆ 7: Divine/Awakened
- ◆ 8: Fallen Archon or Death Angel
- ◆ 9: Weakened Archon or Death Angel
- ◆ 10: Archon or Death Angel

**Description:** A description of the opponent. If the opponent is inhuman the description usually includes both their true form and the shape they appear as in the Illusion.

**Abilities:** Abilities are unique abilities the opponent has access to. Abilities are always active and automatic. For example, an opponent could be resistant to certain forms of harm, or be able to shapeshift.

**Unique moves:** Give an opponent the same number of unique moves for Combat, Influence, and Magic as their level in the attribute. The GM can think of her own moves to assign for each attribute, and may execute them in place of one of her regular GM moves. The GM should remember that she's not limited to using these unique moves – their primary purpose is to make encounters with important opponents in the story different from those with regular henchmen, who normally wouldn't get unique moves at all.

**Attacks:** Summarize the opponent's attack methods and weaponry and then expand on those methods, underlining their name and harm value, range, and special effects. The GM

can invent and decide on any type of attacks she wants but the weapon types listed in the *Equipment* section of the *Player Character* chapter can be used for inspiration and guidelines for damage and effects.

**Harm and harm moves:** Indicate how much harm the opponent can withstand before dying. Also list a number of harm moves the GM can make anytime the opponent suffers 1 or more harm. The skull (☠) counts as one harm on its own, but when it's crossed out the opponent dies. The GM can use the following list to determine how much harm an opponent should be able to withstand:

- ◆ 3 harm: An average human with no special training
- ◆ 4 harm: A tough or battle hardened opponent (capable of surviving getting shot by a heavy pistol)
- ◆ 5 harm: An extremely tough human, or an inhuman creature infused with supernatural forces.
- ◆ 8 harm: A tough, resistant creature.
- ◆ 10 harm: A powerful supernatural being.
- ◆ 15 harm: A very large, armored, or magically enhanced being.
- ◆ 20+ harm: Extremely powerful beings very difficult to kill or even hinder.

Harm moves differ for different types of creatures and can even be unique to individual opponents. An average human has the following harm moves:

- ◆ Subdued
- ◆ Dying (but can be saved)
- ◆ Death

Anytime an opponent suffers 1 or more harm the GM can pick any of the harm moves to trigger. An opponent can be taken out even if it doesn't have all its harm boxes checked off.

#### HUMAN OPPONENTS

Human opponents are the most common opponents in KULT stories. Their strength and weakness is their humanity. As humans the PC can't treat them as monsters, but they're also controlled by human emotions as pity, love, hatred and fear. Remember to give human opponents faces and behaviors the PC can relate to.

##### Police patrols

Police are tasked with upholding the laws of the land in the player characters' vicinity. They're authorized to use violence and to stop and arrest people who are a danger to society, and carry weaponry to enable this without exposing themselves to risk. They typically work in pairs but in



confrontation with people considered dangerous police often call in backup in the form of several patrol cars and possibly even heavily armed special police forces. Beat cops can be encountered on foot or driving. In large cities it's not uncommon for police departments to have access to SWAT cars and teams to deal with violent crimes with multiple participants.

#### Unique moves:

- ◆ Call for backup
- ◆ Put under arrest

**Attacks:** The lethality of the weaponry police patrols possess and is willing to make use of against perpetrators depends on the culture they're working in. Laws are often written such that police must attempt to neutralize perpetrators via non-lethal means if at all possible.

*Teargas/TASER:* Spray/shock [-], [Range: arm, player character **rolls +Fortitude: (15+)** Still capable of acting, **(10-14)** Dazed: -2 ongoing during this scene, **(-9)** The victim is subdued for this scene]

*Expandable baton:* Melee attack [2], [Range: arm]

*Light pistol:* Directed fire [2], [Range: room]

*Pump shotgun:* Directed fire [3/1], [Range: room/field]

*Armor:* Bulletproof vest [1], [protects wearer from bullet wounds]

#### Harm & harm moves

Harm: ○○○☠

- |                     |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| ◆ Retreat to safety | ◆ Badly injured |
| ◆ Subdued           | ◆ Dead          |

#### Gang member

In the cities it's common that charismatic, ruthless leader types gather criminal elements around them to take control of illicit activities. Gang members can be drug dealers, muggers, pimps, thieves, hitmen, or foot soldiers fighting other gangs. The gangs are often connected to particular city districts which are under their "protection" (particularly against their rivals). Mess with one gang member and you're liable to antagonize the whole gang. Insults and wrongdoings are often avenged as brutally as possible to set examples for others.

#### Unique moves:

- ◆ Apply knowledge of the city's seedy underbelly
- ◆ Purvey illicit services
- ◆ Attack at the slightest provocation

**Attacks:** What sort of weaponry a gang has access to varies greatly based on where in the world it's based. Gangs in third world countries or countries with liberal gun regulation might carry heavy arms, while those in

societies with strict gun control are generally armed with close-combat weapons and light firearms.

*Knife:* Lunge attack [2], [Range: arm]

*Light firearm:* Directed fire [2], [Range: room]

*Light machine gun:* Directed fire [2], [Range: room]. Mow down [2], [Range: room, may hit up to 2 targets].

#### Harm & harm moves

Harm: ○○○☠

- |                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| ◆ Scratched up | ◆ Badly injured |
| ◆ Dazed        | ◆ Dead          |

#### SUPERNATURAL BEINGS

Supernatural beings are transformed humans or other-worldly beings. They can seem human at a first glance but it's the GM job to make the supernatural beings fascinating, scary and weird. Always remember the horror contract.

#### Harold Knight (Lictor)

**Home:** Elysium.

**Creature type:** Lictor serving the Archon Yesod

**Combat** [4], **Influence** [5], **Magic** [4].

*In his false human form Harold is an obese man with blue-black slick combed hair and piercing dark eyes. He wears opulent costumes with intricate patterns of squares and lines, and gleaming leather shoes. He carries with him an aura of arrogance and prurience. He's constantly surrounded by a throng of thin models – barely recognizable as female – in tiny revealing dresses.*

*In his true form, Harold's skin turns pale and transparent, and his large physique swells to a gigantic, grotesque size. He has a bald head and an enormous mouth with a long black tongue drooping down to his chest. His anatomy is covered by a blood spattered, gilded cloth from which gold chains are attached to shackles around the emaciated girls' necks.*

#### Abilities:

- ◆ *Lightning fast:* Subtract -2 to all ranged attacks against the creature.
- ◆ *Gigantic:* Cannot be grappled or knocked over in close combat. Melee attacks Harold makes which connect always cause the target to be knocked over.

#### Combat [Powerful]

- ◆ Knock someone over.
- ◆ Grapple and hold someone.
- ◆ Move long distances with a leap.
- ◆ Attack many targets simultaneously.



## Influence [Exceptional]

- ◆ Offer some thing or a favor to someone else in exchange for hold over them.
- ◆ Threaten someone, outright or veiled through implications.
- ◆ Manipulate and corrupt someone.
- ◆ Sell knowledge of the supernatural.
- ◆ Stealthily manipulate individuals/groups/organizations.

## Magic [Powerful]

- ◆ Make contact with another entity.
- ◆ See peoples' and creatures' true natures.
- ◆ Manipulate the surrounding environment.
- ◆ Spread Yesod's principles to one or several people.

## Attacks

Fights with his bare hands or a long chain covered in sharp blades.

*Unarmed:* Crush [3], Throw back [2], Grapple and hold [1].

*Chain:* Sweeping attack [3], [Range: room, area], Shackle [4], [Range: room, 1 victim becomes shackled to the chain]

*Magic:* Manipulate the Illusion [2], [Range: field, area].

## Harm & harm moves

*Harm:* ○○○○○○○○○○☠

- ◆ Ignore the injuries.
- ◆ Drops whatever he's carrying in his hands.
- ◆ In an uncontrollable rage, tears up aspects of the surround environment (via Manipulate the Illusion)
- ◆ Escapes through obstacles
- ◆ Dazed
- ◆ Dies

## Kushiel (Nepharite)

**Home:** Inferno.

**Creature type:** Nepharite under the Death Angel Samael

**Combat [4], Influence [3], Magic [5].**

*Kushiel adopts the forms of important people from her victims' pasts. In these familiar shapes she encourages her targets to be overtaken by vengefulness, and provides them the strength to carry out their revenge fantasies. Only when her victims are already enslaved by the pacts to her will the nepharite reveal her true form. But by then it's already too late...*

*In her true form Kushiel is close to three meters tall, with long, unnaturally slender arms and legs in a tight-fitting blood-splattered dress. Her skin is pale and reflective like a porcelain doll's, and her face is unnaturally beautiful with cherry lips and obsidian*

*eye-balls.*

*Her raven black hair flows around her head like a dark sun's corona, entirely unaffected by wind or even gravity. Her long fingers end in 4" crimson nails that cuts through skins like razorblades.*

## Abilities:

- ◆ *Bound to Inferno:* If the creature is annihilated in Elysium it will be reshaped in Inferno.
- ◆ *Domain (purgatory):* Is bound to its domain and will immediately become aware if anyone intrudes on it, even if the creature is elsewhere.
- ◆ *Pactbinder:* The creature can make pacts with humans.
- ◆ *Shapeshifter:* The creature can alter its physical appearance and form at will.

## Combat [Powerful]

- ◆ Grapple and lift someone.
- ◆ Teleport somewhere within line of sight.
- ◆ Tear a human apart.
- ◆ Attack many targets simultaneously.

## Influence [Considerable]

- ◆ Lead purgatides.
- ◆ Manipulate someone in accordance with their deepest desires.
- ◆ Spread the principle of vengeance.

## Magic [Exceptional]

- ◆ Enslave the weak-minded.
- ◆ Distort and warp rooms, streets, paths, and stairs.
- ◆ Turn the screws on an entire town.
- ◆ Gaze into somebody's soul and past lives.
- ◆ Summon purgatides.

## Attacks

Kushiel would rather use magic or brains to manipulate people, but can also attack them with her razor sharp nails.

*Nails:* Cut up [3], Nail in place [2], Tear out entrails [4], [target must be nailed in place]

*Magic:* Warp surroundings [-], [See through the Illusion to orientate yourself], Reveal true shape [-], [**Keep it Together**], Gaze into soul [-], [**Keep it Together** so as to not reveal disadvantage or dark secret]



## Harm & harm moves

Harm: ○○○○○○○○○☠

- ◆ Ignore the injuries.
- ◆ Momentarily stop to appreciate the pain.
- ◆ Change shape to someone the player character cares about.
- ◆ A limb breaks or is torn off, but there's no blood.
- ◆ The skin cracks like a porcelain doll and black sand spills out.
- ◆ An eyeball dislodges and Kushiel momentarily stagger in confusion.
- ◆ Emits a piercing shriek and start crawling on all fours [**Keep it Together**]

- ◆ Her torso cracks open, revealing a solitary pumping child-sized heart in an otherwise empty hollow chamber [**+2 Harm** when attacking]
- ◆ Kushiel falls to the ground and shatters into pieces of porcelain and black sand.

## Purgatide

**Home:** Inferno.

**Creature type:** Slave to a Death Angel or nepharite

**Combat** [3], **Influence** [-], **Magic** [1].

*Broken, mutilated, lacerated bodies subjected to eternal torture. Metal shrapnel, spikes, scars, exposed muscle tissue, stitched and gaping wounds. Some have had sexual organs and breasts surgically removed, others are held together by metal clasps and thread. The broken bodies are often concealed behind long coats and the purgatide leaves tracks of blood and pus in its wake. Filtered through the Illusion they often look like pale, sickly individuals with a fevered, fanatical eyes. Purgatides are usually sent to Elysium to serve a Razide or other power. They have been brainwashed by the years they've spent in Inferno and can't keep up the human facade for longer durations.*

### Abilities:

- ◆ *Fanatical:* Cannot be reasoned with.
- ◆ *Resistance to injury:* Firearms and edged weapons do **-1 harm**.

### Combat [Considerable]

- ◆ Prepare an ambush.
- ◆ Surround someone.
- ◆ Torture.

### Magic [Novice]

- ◆ Contact master.

### Attacks

Normally armed with knives, chopping weapons, and torture instruments. Will sometimes have firearms or similar.

*Edged weapons:* Cut up [2], [Range: arm], Nail down [1], [Range: arm, **Act Under Pressure** to get loose]

*Chopping weapons:* Brutal hacking [3], [Range: arm]

*Submachine gun:* Bulletstorm [2], [Range: room]

## Harm & harm moves

Harm: ○○○○○☠

- ◆ Ignore the injuries.
- ◆ Lose control.
- ◆ Appear defeated.
- ◆ Die.





• Name

• Archetype

• Occupation



Choose your player character's occupation from the archetype, or invent one of your choosing.

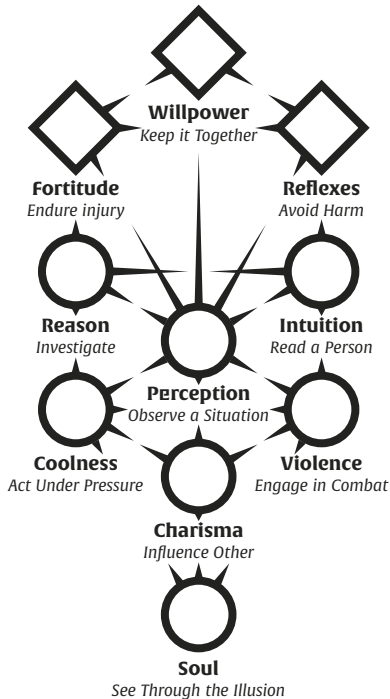
• Appearance

Select from your archetype or come up with your own distinguishing features for your character.

## • Attributes

Assign the modifiers +2, +1, and +0 to the three passive attributes: Fortitude, Reflexes, and Willpower.

Assign the modifiers +3, +2, +1, +1, +0, -1, and -2 to the other seven active attributes: Charisma, Coolness, Intuition, Perception, Reason, Soul, and Violence.



## • Dark Secrets

Choose 1 or more dark secrets.

## • Disadvantages

Choose 2 disadvantages.

## • Advantages

Choose 3 advantages from your archetype.

## • Relations

Everyone introduces their character by name, looks, and personality. Take your turn. Write down the other player characters' names. Go around the table again to work out your Relations.

If you know any of the other player characters from before, choose one of the options from your archetype to establish the relationship between the two of you.

Decide the nature of three additional Relations: one neutral (0), one meaningful (+1), and one vital (+2).



## • Wounds

Serious wounds (–1 *ongoing*)      Stabilized

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

Critical wound (–1 *ongoing*)      Stabilized









☐

## • Stability


<input type="checkbox"/> Composed	
<input type="checkbox"/> Uneasy	<i>Moderate stress:</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Unfocused	–1 disadvantages
<input type="checkbox"/> Shaken	<i>Serious stress:</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Distressed	–1 Keep it Together
<input type="checkbox"/> Neurotic	–2 disadvantages
<input type="checkbox"/> Anxious	<i>Critical stress:</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Irrational	–2 Keep it Together
<input type="checkbox"/> Unhinged	–3 disadvantages
	+1 See through the Illusion
<input type="checkbox"/> Broken	The GM makes a move

## • Advancement

Choose one of these:

-  Increase one active attribute +1 (to max +3).
  -  Increase one passive attribute +1 (to max +3).
  -  Increase any one attribute +1 (to max +4).
  -  Select a new advantage from your archetype.
- After 5 Advancements you may also choose:
-  Increase any one attribute +1 (to max +4).
  -  Select a new advantage from any aware archetype.
  -  End your character's story arc as you see fit, and create a new aware character, who starts with 2 Advancements.
  -  Replace your current archetype with another aware archetype, and keep 2 advantages.

After 10 Advancements you may also choose:

-  Advance your character to an enlightened archetype.

## • Weapons

### Unarmed

Distance: arm

Attacks:

- ◆ Violence [1]
- ◆ Lock [0] [you are in control of the target until they break free]
- ◆ Shift [0] [you create distance between yourself and the target through a throw, body check, or push]
- ◆ Disarm [0] [you remove an object your opponent held in their hand]
- ◆ Excessive force [2] [focus entirely on killing your target]

## • Dramatic Hooks

## • Gear