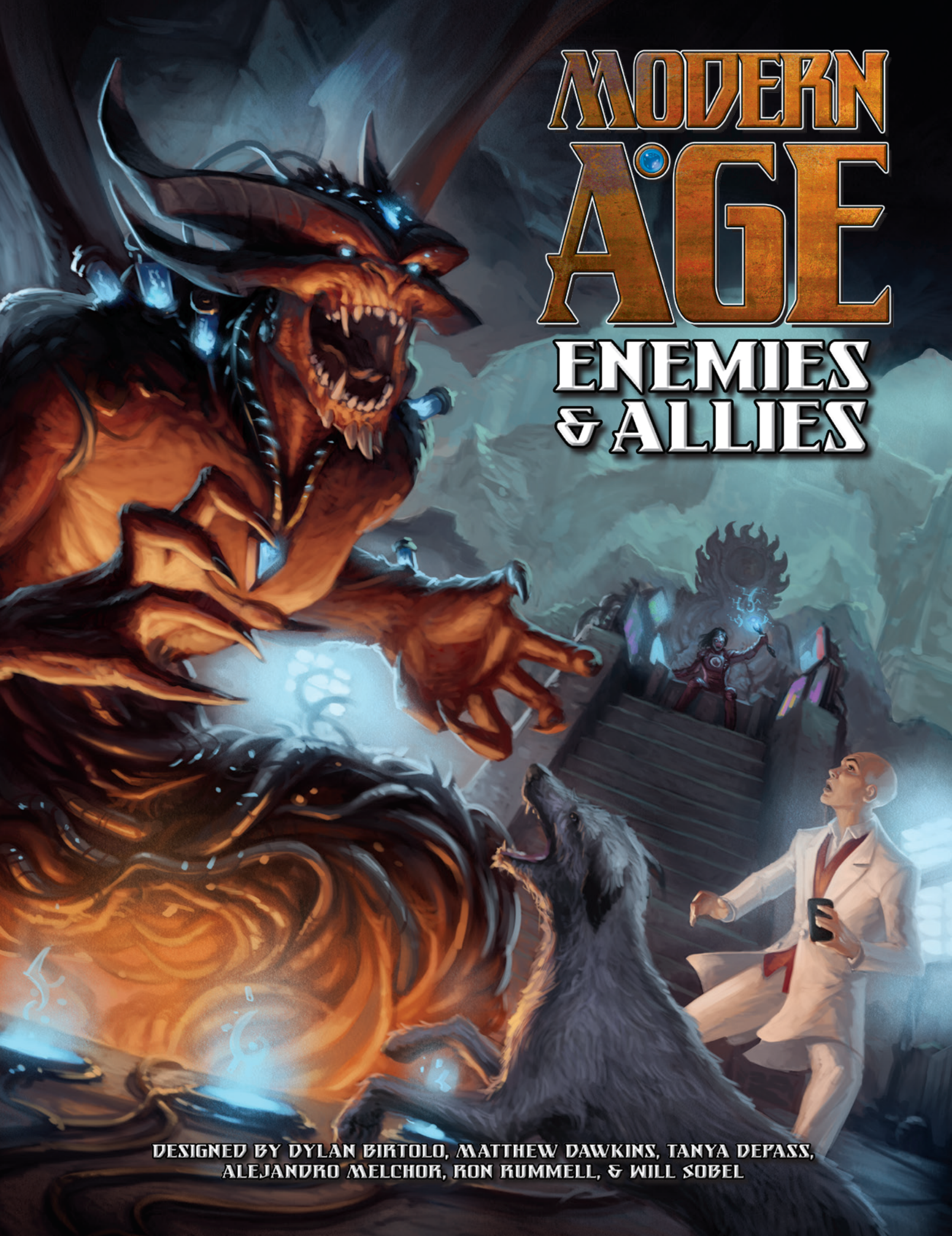
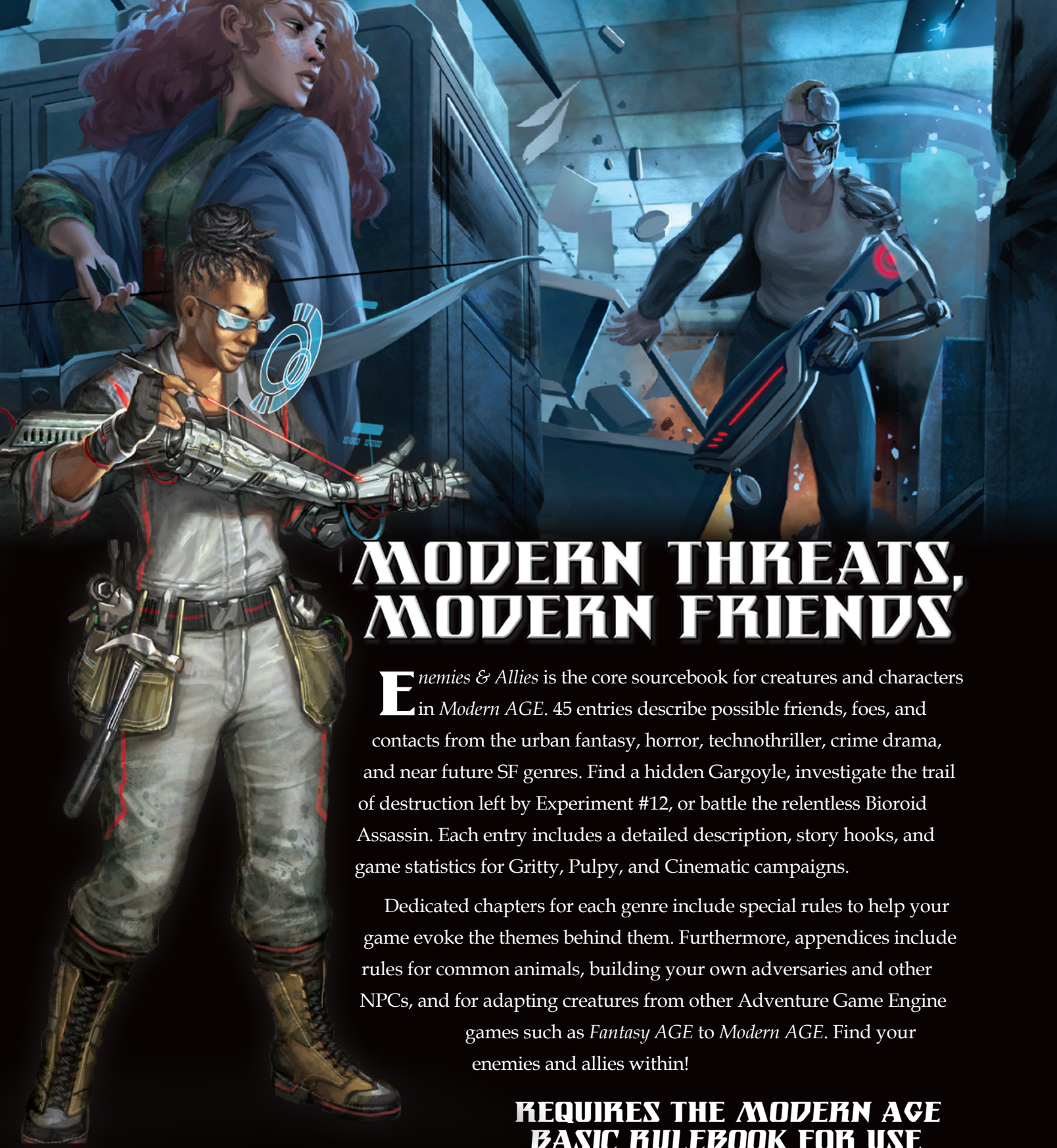


Modern AGE

Enemies & Allies

Designed by Dylan Birtolo, Matthew Dawkins, Tanya DePass, Alejandro Melchor, Ron Rummell, & Will Sobel



MODERN THREATS, MODERN FRIENDS

Enemies & Allies is the core sourcebook for creatures and characters in *Modern AGE*. 45 entries describe possible friends, foes, and contacts from the urban fantasy, horror, technothriller, crime drama, and near future SF genres. Find a hidden Gargoyle, investigate the trail of destruction left by Experiment #12, or battle the relentless Bioroid Assassin. Each entry includes a detailed description, story hooks, and game statistics for Gritty, Pulpy, and Cinematic campaigns.

Dedicated chapters for each genre include special rules to help your game evoke the themes behind them. Furthermore, appendices include rules for common animals, building your own adversaries and other NPCs, and for adapting creatures from other Adventure Game Engine games such as *Fantasy AGE* to *Modern AGE*. Find your enemies and allies within!

REQUIRES THE MODERN AGE BASIC RULEBOOK FOR USE

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age adventure game engine

MODERN AGE

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MODERN AGE

ENEMIES & ALLIES

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Enemies & Allies*, a sourcebook of Non-Player Characters and creatures for *Modern AGE*. This book provides a selection of people and unusual beings the protagonists of your games might go to for information, ask for aid, or, in desperate situations, fight. *Modern AGE* covers multiple genres within the modern era, so this book divides its entries into multiple categories, described chapter by chapter, as follows.

CHAPTER 1: ARCANE BEINGS

This chapter features people and entities with magical or fantastic natures. Some are practitioners of magic; others are creatures from folklore. These beings are designed to fit into games where the extraordinary magical powers called arcana (see **Chapter 6** of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*) exist, but even if they don't, they can be adapted to other games.

CHAPTER 2: ELITE OPERATIVES

Now we get into the "best of the best": individuals with specialized or exceptional abilities. These are modern warriors, analysts, and other figures Player Characters might encounter in campaigns involving modern-day action and espionage.

CHAPTER 3: HORRORS AND WITNESSES

We return to stranger beings with a selection of entries suitable for horror-oriented campaigns. Not all of these entities are malevolent. Some are victims of unknown forces, forced to obey bizarre supernatural laws. The characters and creatures in this section are designed to fit into games where psychic powers (see **Chapter 6** of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*) exist, but can be adapted for campaigns where they don't.

CHAPTER 4: THE LAW AND THE LAWLESS

Not all characters are interested in fighting crime—some are criminals themselves, out of necessity, greed, or ideals that put them in conflict with the law. In any event, a selection of criminals and law enforcement figures populate this chapter.

CHAPTER 5: SCIENCE'S EDGE

In futuristic campaigns, or worlds where small groups have pushed innovation beyond what we think is possible in the present day, the characters in this chapter act as brokers, scientists, and users of science-fictional technology.

APPENDICES

In addition, this book contains three appendices.

Appendix I: Quick Non-Player Characters provides rules to build Non-Player Characters from scratch or modify existing NPCs.

Appendix II: Animals features a variety of wild and domestic natural creatures Player Characters might encounter.

Appendix III: Adapting Creatures from Fantasy AGE and Blue Rose is just what it sounds like: rules and advice for converting the game statistics of *Fantasy AGE* and *Blue Rose* creatures to *Modern AGE*. All three games use the same basic Adventure Game Engine mechanics, so this is a relatively straightforward process.

USING THIS BOOK

Enemies & Allies adds to the selection of NPCs found in **Chapter 9** of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*. All the rules and advice in that chapter (some of which, along with other parts of the core rules, will be repeated here for ease of use) apply to the new entries in this book. Note that to give you the most value for your game, we have mostly avoided presenting Non-Player Characters and creatures found in other Adventure Game Engine (AGE) books, including the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook* and other AGE system books, including the *Fantasy AGE Bestiary*.

SPECIAL RULES

In each chapter, we've included a few special rules for working with entries from that chapter, such as the rules for Heat (how much interest police and rivals have in a character) in **Chapter 4**. It's entirely up to the Game Master whether these special rules are in force, and whether they might apply to Player Characters.

INDIVIDUALS & TYPES

The entries in each chapter of this book are divided into two categories. If an entry has a singular, unique name, it's for a specific NPC or creature. For example, the Headless Horseman in **Chapter 1** is *the* Headless Horseman, a unique individual. Game Masters are always free to rename individuals, reuse them under different names, or otherwise change them. You might decide multiple Headless Horsemen exist. You could even use its game statistics to represent an alien hunter.

NPCS ARE NOT PCS

One important design principle in *Modern AGE* is that Non-Player Characters don't have to follow the same rules as Player Characters. The game isn't designed to simulate human physical and psychological development. Player Characters (PCs) are protagonists and need an advancement structure fine-grained enough to put their development at the heart of the story. Non-Player Characters have either reached their potential or advance at a different rate, according to story demands or across life stages, instead of through level or experience point awards. Furthermore, NPCs can acquire different qualities than PCs. Some of these are simplified versions of what Player Characters can do. Some are unique. In any event, from Health scores to Talents, NPCs don't have to use the same game statistics and ratings as PCs. When you design your own NPCs and creatures, remember that their story functions are always more important than how they "realistically" compare to PCs with similar abilities. Only use full Player Character rules when an NPC is a constant, ongoing companion, or in a truly Gritty game where nobody's special and today's onlooker could be tomorrow's protagonist.

Most entries are types, not individuals. For instance, the psychic vampire entry assumes that multiple versions of these beings exist. Feel free to adjust their game statistics and descriptions from one individual to the next.

ENTRY FORMAT

The beings detailed in this book range from minor threats and everyday contacts to legendary villains that could be the climactic encounter for an entire campaign. Each entry has the following sections:

- A name.
- A quote or short bit of fiction to set the mood.
- A description of the entity focusing on its nature, behavior, role, and other important information.
- The character or creature's game statistics, including its abilities, focuses, combat ratings, special qualities, and threat rating. Game statistics exist for each mode—Gritty, Pulpy, and Cinematic—using the same color coding as in the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*. A few entries have a +3 noted next to their focus. This indicates the focus grants a +3 bonus, not the usual +2. Certain entries also have unique focuses. These are either explained in the text, or represent special attack forms whose total bonuses are already calculated in the entry.
- Multiple adventure seeds that feature the character or creature.

MODIFYING NPCS & CREATURES

In addition to the options in **Appendix I**, you can use the following rules to change characters or creatures. These appear in **Chapter 8** and **9** of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook* and are repeated here for convenience.

MAJOR, MINOR, & EXTRA CHARACTERS

For convenience in combat, *Modern AGE* divides NPCs, including nonhuman creatures, into three categories: major, ninor, and extra.

MAJOR NPCS

Non-Player Characters who use the same combat rules as PCs are major NPCs. In a Gritty game, all NPCs will be major NPCs, with full Toughness, though you might use the group combat rule for Minor NPCs with them when it's convenient. In Pulpy or Cinematic-style games, important or especially dangerous NPCs are major NPCs. You may, at your option, apply the rules for dying PCs to major NPCs.

MINOR NPCS

If you're running a Pulpy or Cinematic campaign, consider making some combatants minor NPCs. Minor NPCs use the

NPCs and Creatures in *Threefold*

Enemies & Allies has been designed in conjunction with *Threefold*, the first in-house setting for *Modern AGE*. In *Threefold*, characters travel across secret places on Earth, alternate histories, strange planes of existence where magic is stronger than science, and hellish realms ruled by sinister forces. *Allies and Adversaries* is designed to be compatible with *Threefold* without requiring you to use that setting, but it is useful to know some of the assumptions the setting is based on.

In *Threefold*, magic is a creative force, stronger on other planes of existence. It's good or bad based on how it is used, and is associated with fantasy creatures. Psychic powers exist alongside magic but aren't presented as a sort of pseudoscientific "psionics," rather as contact with dangerous supernatural forces from other planes. Think less about Zener cards and more about sinister seances, poltergeists, and Things From Beyond. Besides supernatural powers, futuristic technology can be harnessed by several conspiracies. These conspiracies also exert overarching influence over governments and crime syndicates.

Knowing these factors, feel free to change them, and note that few of the entries require them. That said, if you do use *Threefold*, the people and other creatures in this book can all be used in your adventures.

same rules as typical NPCs (which in turn, use the same rules as PCs), but with the following exceptions:

- **Group Combat:** When a group of minor NPCs have the same game statistics, roll initiative once for the entire group. They all act on the resulting initiative number. Furthermore, you can roll once for the group to determine surprise and morale. You may use this option in Gritty games as well to reduce the number of rolls and better organize combat.
- **Not So Tough:** Minor NPCs don't have Toughness; only equipment and special circumstances provide armor.
- **Falling Hard:** When reduced to 0 Health, minor NPCs are instantly killed. If they're knocked out, they regain consciousness only at some point after combat, as determined by the GM, unless other characters intervene to revive them.

Extras

In a Cinematic game, some minor NPCs are extras. They're nameless cultists, guards, and gunmen who can be taken out in an instant by the heroes. They use the same rules as minor NPCs, but with the following additional rules:

- **One Shot:** If an attack on an extra inflicts even 1 point of damage after reducing it by any armor, the extra drops to 0 Health.
- **Horde:** If multiple extras are side by side, a PC can attack a number of them equal to 1 plus their Dexterity score (minimum 1). Make one attack and damage roll, and apply the results to each extra.

Beefing Up Enemies & Allies

You may wish to make NPCs tougher or more competent than their base game statistics. To make them more potent, you can change anything you like, but we recommend the following adjustments. Note that the Health increases usually come into play only in Pulpy or Cinematic games, but you should provide bonus Health and recalculate Toughness (as well as Defense) based on any ability score increases as well. These changes are additions to the game-statistics block of the NPC or creature.

Elite

To make the subject a little tougher than average, add 1 to any three abilities, and add two focuses. You can also make the NPC a Novice in a new talent or add a degree to an existing one. You may also wish to increase the Toughness or Defense of combatants by 1.

Pulpy Mode: In addition to the above, increase Health by Constitution × 2 (minimum 2).

Cinematic Mode: In addition to benefits listed for all elites, increase Health by (Constitution × 2, minimum 2) +3 for Cinematic mode.

Heroic

To make a truly formidable example of the subject, add 2 to two abilities, add 1 to any three other abilities, and add four Focuses. Also, increase Toughness and Defense by 1. You can also make the NPC an apprentice in two new talents or add two degrees to existing ones. This usually bumps the character or creature firmly into the next threat level.

Pulpy Mode: In addition to the above, increase Health by Constitution × 4 (minimum 4).

Cinematic Mode: In addition to benefits listed for all heroic types, increase Health by (Constitution × 4, minimum 4) +10 for Cinematic mode.

Epic

To make a character or creature extremely potent, add 3 to one ability, 2 to any two other abilities, and 1 to any three others. Add five Focuses. You can also add three degrees to new or existing talents. For combatants, additional equipment and training increases Toughness and Defense by 2. This either raises the subject to the peak of the next threat level or makes them strong enough to be counted as two threat levels above the standard type.

Pulpy Mode: In addition to the above, increase Health by Constitution × 6 (minimum 6).

Cinematic Mode: In addition to benefits listed for all epic types, increase Health by (Constitution × 6, minimum 6) +15.

ARCANE BEINGS

Inspired by fantasy and folklore, arcane beings use weird powers and have origins based in myth and mystery. Some hail from recent folklore, while others come from deeper in the past. Not all are monsters; some are the heirs of traditional sorcerers, now called *arcanists*.

MAGIC & MONSTERS IN THE CAMPAIGN

Where do magical creatures come from? The answer is up to you. In modern campaigns where they do exist, the GM must explain why they've remained hidden in a modern world, unless the game is set in an alternate Earth or some other realm where everyone knows magic exists. This chapter assumes Earth exists as we know it, and arcane beings stay in the shadows. In the *Threefold* setting, many arcane creatures come from other worlds: magical planes connected to Earth by secret gates. Between ancient pacts and the nature of magic in the setting, ordinary people tend to ignore magical phenomena.

This is just one option. You may decide the game takes place in a magical plane—or that Earth *is* a magical plane, where arcane energies have either recently returned or never disappeared. On the other hand, magic might be passed down as a family secret, or through a hidden college only a select few are invited to attend. Your game may not even give players access to magic, leaving it a dark resource for villains. In that case, magic might even be a corrupting force, dooming Player Characters who master it to utter damnation. Magic may also be literally occult, hidden as a function of its nature. Spells may elude recording devices, and ordinary people who see monsters may convince themselves they only witnessed animals, strange people, or something that they can't remember well but *must* have a perfectly reasonable explanation.

No matter what you choose, if magic exists, it's often a path to power, and power is often coveted by the desperate and downtrodden, to lift themselves up—or vicious, greedy individuals, eager for another tool to keep their feet on the necks of enemies and subordinates.

This chapter assumes that while humans must master magic, some creatures are born to it. Magic is part of their very nature. In many cases, they need the presence of magic, found at geomantic nexuses, around certain items, or even in the vicinity of arcanists, to survive. These places and people attract strange creatures and can drive stories as characters find themselves near the same phenomena. Thus, Gargoyles are found around geomantic nexuses, and Elementals are almost always the result of some magical phenomenon such as a summoning or the opening of a gateway to a dimension where they thrive. The GM may even decide that some special ordinary creatures transform into magical beings when exposed to magical energy. This might be the case with the Glawackus, found in this chapter. Could it be a lynx or some other mundane big cat (albeit one with a special bloodline or quirk of birth) that's mutated in the presence of magic?

Magic and Horror

While some arcane beings are undoubtedly horrific, to make fantasy creatures a distinct category in this book we've aligned them with magic, represented by *Modern AGE*'s arcana, while the terrors of **Chapter 3: Horrors and Witnesses** are linked to psychic powers. In this sense, psychic disciplines represent the paranormal, occult aspects of supernatural phenomena, while arcana represent "high magic" as seen through the lenses of modern fantasy and older mythology. This is the default scheme used in the *Threefold* setting, but you don't have to adhere to it in your campaign. When the rules say something is affected "by magic," the GM may decide whether this is limited to arcana or includes psychic disciplines and, possibly, other extraordinary powers.

Note, however, that not all magical creatures require external magical power, and even those attracted by magic may thrive without it. When this chapter doesn't go into detail about such things, the Game Master is free to decide whether this is a factor. In all cases, the GM should interpret and change things to fit their adventures.

Inspirations

Nearly every culture has mythic magical traditions. In some societies, magic is an innately evil power, used by sinister practitioners (who anthropologists sometimes call "witches," that differs from how modern pagans use the term) and taught by unsavory cults or even the Devil himself. Other cultures believe magic is a morally neutral force, a virtuous religious practice, a power which changes according to the morality with which it is used, or that it just plain doesn't exist. If you're using this chapter, that last option probably isn't true in your campaign.

When using or inventing arcane beings, you can draw on folklore and real beliefs for inspiration, but note two things. First, many magical legends come from living religious traditions, and you should respect the beliefs and cultures of people who play with you. Second, do not feel bound to existing legends. If magic is real but obscure, many stories about its nature and the beings that partake of it may be inaccurate, giving you the freedom to put your own spin on arcanists and magical beings. *Threefold* takes this approach so that few legends tell the whole truth.

Places of Power

Some of the creatures below have associations with specific areas, but might be found all over the world in their preferred climates. The beings listed here can fit into virtually any type of modern setting, from downtown Lagos to small-town America. In this chapter, some creatures are connected to a mysterious power called **geomantic energy**. Ley lines, telluric force, and dragon tracks are all names for the paths geomantic energy takes. Lines of geomantic power are said to arise from shapes in the land, rivers, and bodies of water, and even from artificial structures.

When geomantic paths cross or move through certain areas, concentrated arcane energy supposedly influences human wellness and behavior, based on whether it contains creative or destructive energies. Individuals with magical training can consciously harvest power from **geomantic nexuses**, and some magical creatures do so instinctively—in fact, some of them need this energy to survive. As geomantic nexuses attract arcanists and magical creatures alike, they explain why arcane beings might be present.

Magical beings aren't the only ones attracted to nexuses. Humans and certain animals instinctively visit and even settle in places filled with beneficial energy. They regard them as holy places, or, subconsciously appreciating them, build impressive structures at their sites. Meanwhile, places with darker energies are either thought to be cursed, subconsciously avoided, or used for purposes most people regard as dismal or depressing.

Channeling Geomantic Energy

Arcanists at a geomantic nexus can use a minor action to reduce the power point (PP) costs of spells they cast. This is based on the nexus' strength, as listed in the **Nexus Strength** table. However, each nexus has an aspect: a keyword or short descriptor noting the place's magical "flavor." If a spell matches the aspect (such as a Fire Arcana spell cast at a nexus with the *scorching* keyword), it gains the greatest benefit. Neutral spells gain a lesser benefit, while spells opposed by the nexus' aspect (such as a Divination Arcana spell cast at a nexus *where lies smother the truth*) cost more PP to cast. At the GM's discretion, a failed spell test on an opposed spell may result in some additional mishap. This should never cause serious harm, but simply signal that something works against spells cast in the area.

Nexus Strength

Strength (Example)	Diameter	Matched Aspect	Neutral Aspect	Opposed Aspect
Minor (Old Crossroads)	2-5 Yards	-1 PP	No Change	+1 PP
Lesser (Local Shrine)	5-10 Yards	-2 PP	-1 PP	+2 PP
Moderate (City Graveyard)	10-25 Yards	-4 PP	-2 PP	+3 PP
Major (Cleopatra's Needle)	25-50 Yards	-6 PP	-3 PP	+4 PP
Legendary (Troy)	GM's Discretion	-10 PP	-4 PP	+5 PP

BANSHEE

It's not that I'll never forget its scream. It's that I still hear it now, while talking to you. It's as soft as shifting grave earth, and loud as a last, desperate heartbeat.

Do the dead have trouble letting go of life, or do the emotions of the dying, charged in their finality, find a postmortem shape? Banshees are often depicted as people with unfinished business, but that might not be the truth. Whether a dead soul or some magical duplicate of the dead, a Banshee is something death hasn't fully claimed. Perhaps the Reaper demands compensation in the form of another's death, or perhaps a Banshee knows death comes for their loved ones and escapes the afterlife to warn them. While a Banshee's true nature is a mystery, the trigger for creating one is not. All Banshees come from people who were exposed to destructive magic, such as by residing near a dark geomantic nexus, suffering a curse, or being killed by a spell. Destructive magic won't always produce Banshees, though it is rumored a forbidden spell grants the power to intentionally produce them.

Banshees are usually invisible and incorporeal knots of arcane energy, tied to familiar places and their graves by geomantic threads. They see flows of dark magic—the power of death itself—weaving through the world. It's easy to see why these spirits' sense of reality unravels, as they retain human psyches but witness clouds of doom forming around the living. Thus, they haunt loved ones in warning and seek vengeance on those who wronged them.

Banshees have no control over their appearance, drawing from the living individual's self-image, confused by disordered memories crashing down at the moment of death. A high school football star might wear his jersey in the afterlife, if that image stuck. The longer a Banshee exists, the further it degenerates from its initial human visage. They acquire coldly glowing eyes, rotting skin, longer limbs, and long, sharp, yellowed nails. These are signs of the spirit "unraveling." Tragically, being present at the moment of a human death—including that of a loved one—arrests and may even reverse the process, as nearby death refreshes the Banshee's reserve of necromantic energy.

After some time, these spirits become completely decoupled from their old lives, with only bits and pieces remaining as instincts. Laying a Banshee to rest is incredibly difficult since only the freshest can coherently communicate.

THE HAUNTING

The Haunting is a remnant of whatever magic created the Banshee. A Banshee's creation leaves a magical mark on a place, object, or person significant to it in life. This can be found using the *unveil* Divination Arcana spell, or by detective work that uncovers the place by studying the Banshee and its living precursor. Destroying whatever the Haunting is attached to banishes the Banshee, but it instantly becomes aware of the attempt and has an overriding instinct to defend the Haunting's material anchor, regardless of whether it wishes to survive. Otherwise, a Banshee can be banished by destroying its magical form.

Banshee

Abilities (Focuses)	
0	Accuracy
-1	Communication
-1	Constitution
4	Dexterity (Stealth)
1	Fighting
1	Intelligence (History, Occultism, Theology)
2	Perception (Empathy)
1	Strength (Intimidation)
2	Willpower (Voice)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
14	14	16	21	14	14	14	0 + 0	0	0

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage
Unarmed	+1	1d3
Scream	+4	2d6+2

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Shock and Awe, Strafe (usable with Death Scream)

Death Moan: When a Banshee senses death energy gathering around someone, it utters its *death moan*. This sounds like a distant keening slightly too resonant to have come from a human voice. This emulates the effects of the *ill omen* Divination Arcana spell, except that it costs no PP for the Banshee to use and the Banshee rolls its Willpower (Voice) versus the target's Willpower (Courage). A Banshee may use the *death moan* while it's incorporeal, but can be no more than 30 yards away from its target. Like the *ill omen* spell, the *death moan* can only be successfully used on a target once every 24 hours.

Another Life: Banshees were originally mortal, and retain the same or similar Communication, Intelligence, and Perception abilities they possessed while alive, along with the focuses and talents they learned. The GM should modify a Banshee's game statistics when necessary to reflect this. Banshee abilities degrade over time, especially when it comes to remembering the past.

Death Scream: A materialized Banshee can utter a death-tainted scream. This is a ranged attack (range increment 50 yards) that inflicts 2d6 + Willpower damage, and also uses Willpower (with the Banshee's Voice focus) for its attack roll.

Incorporeal and Semi-Material: The Banshee is an invisible, incorporeal matrix of death magic, but must materialize to interact with the physical world, except to use its *death moan*. Materialization or dematerialization requires a minor action. A materialized Banshee is semi-transparent but visible, and its form ripples like mist. An incorporeal Banshee may walk through solid objects, and even a materialized one may seep and slip through any non-airtight barrier. A materialized Banshee suffers only half damage (rounded up) from all attacks except for those inflicted by magical spells or weapons. An incorporeal Banshee is invisible, and can only be harmed with magic.

Necrovore: Banshees sustain themselves on the energies of death. When an intelligent being dies in a Banshee's line of sight, it recovers 2d6 Health. It may also recover 2d6 Health every 24 hours it spends in a geomantic nexus whose aspect is related to death. It cannot heal in any other fashion.

Equipment: None

Threat: Minor

Adventure Hooks

Each of the adventure hooks in this section presents the Banshee in a different scenario based on how it came to exist, through a particular form of magically tinged death.

Job Gone Wrong

Was it just a bank heist betrayal, where one of the thieves killed the rest? That doesn't explain why tellers swear the dead thieves *are still there*, or why two night-shift guards in a row dropped dead. The bank's closed until the characters investigate and find multiple Banshees, thieves risen from the dead, haunting the place. Their living partner wished on a crimson jewel she had found in a safety deposit box, and her partners in crime keeled over dead—only to rise again. Where is she now? And just what *is* that jewel, anyway?

Hello From the Other Side

Death haunts the Sky Valley Apartment Complex where the protagonists or their close associates live. Each of these apparent heart attacks, strokes, and suicides were all accompanied by a horrific scream, except for one: that of Joanne Wells, the first victim. After stumbling on her neighbor carrying *something* wrapped in a carpet down to the furnace, Wells died in a freak electrical accident (actually the neighbor's use of Machine Arcana). As a Banshee, Wells' unhinged remnant haunts the complex, instinctively protecting—and terrifying—her wife by killing anyone who looks like her murderer. The killer moved as soon as he heard the first scream.

Narrenschiff

When an elderly man has a fatal stroke on a cruise, right after snorkeling through an old shipwreck, most people would consider it sad but not unusual, unless a middle-aged woman suffers the same fate the next day—and unless they were both representatives of rival crime families who chose the cruise as neutral ground to negotiate. Mob enforcers unpack their guns, ignorant of the true cause: a Banshee whose Haunt was bound to a barnacle-encrusted gun the old man found. His stroke provided enough death to rouse the Banshee, who promptly killed the woman. The spirit of *Fregattenkapitän* Erich Köhler of the *SMS Karlsruhe* doesn't know World War I has been over for about a century and will rampage through the ship until stopped. Those mobsters are getting touchy, too.

DRAUGR

> All power is time...and I have all the time in the world. I can even get used to the smell.

The earliest Draugr legends come from Iceland's *Grettir's Saga,* where the titular hero defeats the Draugr Glámr, but not before being cursed. (Cynical occultists say Glámr actually killed Grettir, and the "curse" was that Glámr took his place in further adventures.) In their time, Draugr have been called many things, including liches, though many arcanists shun this pop culture nomenclature. In life, most Draugr studied magic to conquer death. This is usually not out of a love for life or greater purpose, but to hold on to wealth, power, and other worldly pleasures until Ragnarok.

While living, the future Draugr binds their soul to an object that represents everything they desire in the world of the living. This is typically a durable item they associate with pleasure, wealth, or personal accomplishments. The traditional method uses an item from the subject's funeral hoard, but practical considerations (including the fact that burying someone with a treasure hoard isn't normally done in the 21st century) have made the old way unpopular. In a state of deep concentration, the candidate commits their *hurgr*, or animating will, to the item. The practice also requires a spell the candidate can either cast themselves or get someone to cast for them. The twofold ritual doesn't animate the Draugr's corpse—not directly. It intensifies the candidate's obsession with worldly desires, embodied by the focus object, or *gridrsteinn* ("greed-stone") so that it consumes the hurgr, which must animate the body to satisfy itself.

NATURE OF THE CORPSE

If the individual truly commits their hurgr and the spell succeeds, they become a Draugr upon death—that is, a corpse animated by pathological greed and egotism. Some take their own lives immediately, to exist in a younger-looking corpse, but it's a corpse nonetheless. In its true form, a Draugr is a blue-black corpse with sunken eye sockets, hair the color of chalk, and a vile odor called the *hraereyr* ("corpse-reek"), which drives animals mad. The gridrsteinn prompts memories of the Draugr's living self, however, so that when it sees, touches, or carries the object, it can conceal its stench and shapeshift into its last happy memory of its body. When separated from the gridrsteinn, it reverts to its true form by dawn. The Draugr can also become larger and stronger, or travel as a foul mist. A few Draugr are skilled arcanists, but most have only minor magical talents, acquired as a side effect of becoming Draugr.

DISPATCHING THE GREEDY DEAD

A Draugr's gridrsteinn is its primary weakness. Destroy it, and the Draugr has no fixed point for the obsessions that animate it. Deprive the Draugr of contact with it and it reverts to its revolting corpse form. Its secondary weaknesses are its obsessions. When Draugr stop lusting for worldly things, they die. Denying a Draugr something it wants saps its hurgr. Finally, a Draugr fear two things symbolizing the proper internment of its body. First, fire is particularly effective against them. Second, if a Draugr is placed in a sincerely consecrated tomb without being able to visually witness its own entry, it cannot find its way out except through an open door. Even a closed, unlocked door is utterly invisible to it. Arcanists who know of this last weakness are unsure why it exists. Either something powerful despises Draugr enough to curse them, or the animating hugr knows when its dead body is in its proper place and refuses to let it leave.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Draugr should be used as a signature adversary, met at the finale of a storyline. A Draugr cultivates followers and allies to hide its nature and satisfy its needs, and might be confronted after dealing with such associates. The adventure hooks in this section mostly follow this pattern.

THE DARK TENANT

The neo-Baroque office complex is around 90 years old and an architectural classic, but tenants never stay long, complaining about a horrid smell and doors that seem to lock themselves. When people look for a cause too closely, they vanish, to keep the building's secret: One of its stones is a gridrsteinn, and the Draugr architect connected to it has no intention of leaving his hidden lair in a sub-basement. He failed to properly plan to keep the building under his ownership. He needs someone to file paperwork—and hide the bodies of anyone who gets too close.

FRIEND OF MY FRIEND

After being shot and killed, student of the mystic arts Irmi is horrified to have risen again. Her occult training means knows she's a Draugr now, made so against her will. She suspects one of the three arcanists she studied with is responsible, and gathers her forces to exact revenge. She wants characters to either help her or get out of the way, but her plans may harm many more people than her targets, since all have gathered conspiracies around themselves whose often-hapless members would bear the brunt of her attacks.

Draugr

Abilities (Focuses)	
2	Accuracy (Mist Lash)
2	Communication (Deception, Disguise)
4	Constitution (Stamina, Tolerance)
2	Dexterity
4	Fighting (Grappling)
2	Intelligence (Occultism)
1	Perception (Tracking)
6	Strength (Might)
4	Willpower (Morale)

* See special quality: Another Life.

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
12	34	90	120	12	13	15	4I/4B+4	+6	+7

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage
Grappling Grip	+6	1D3+8
Mist Lash	+4	2D6+4

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Force: 13 **Power Points:** 40

Favored Stunts: Human Shield, Impress, Vicious Blow

Another Life: Draugr were originally mortal, and retain the same Communication, Intelligence, and Perception abilities they possessed while alive, along with the focuses and talents they learned. The GM should modify a Draugr's game statistics when necessary to reflect this. Note that magical skills are covered by the *innate magic* quality.

Curse of Draugr Hunger: Draugr exist to continue doing whatever obsessed them in life. These are always selfish pursuits—nobody joins their ranks because they wanted to do more charity work. If a Draugr is prevented from indulging its desires for 24 hours (typically measured from dawn to dawn) it suffers 2d6 penetrating wound damage, which it cannot recover until it satisfies its urges.

Curse of the Tomb: Draugr suffer double damage from fire. Furthermore, a Draugr trapped in a closed mausoleum, coffin, or other enclosed space designed to contain a body after funeral rites cannot escape until its door, lid, or other means of access has been opened—unless the Draugr saw to its own internment.

Curse of the Girdrsteinn: All Draugr possess a *gridrsteinn*, an object which acts as its anchor to unnatural existence. A gridrsteinn has the object's natural Armor Rating, but a Health score equal to the Draugr's current Health. Damage inflicted on the gridrsteinn is suffered by the Draugr, and vice versa. If a Draugr is kept from seeing, touching, or carrying the gridrsteinn until the next dawn, it reverts to corpse form and cannot shapeshift until it gets it back. A Draugr in possession of its gridrsteinn heals all damage, save that from the *curse of Draugr hunger*, at midnight, or after spending an hour in a lightless location.

Corpse-Reek: In its true form or as mist (see *dark mist*), a Draugr emits *hraereyr*, the *corpse-reek*. Any creature that can smell or taste that comes within three yards of the Draugr must succeed at a TN 11 Constitution (Tolerance) test or suffer a -2 penalty to all tests until they leave the vicinity, or use a minor action to steel themselves, affording a new test to resist it. The scent lingers for one minute on people or objects in range, though it does not impose penalties, and individuals with a keen sense of smell may make a Perception (Smelling) test to detect it for months afterward, with the TN starting at 11 and increasing over time. Attempts to remove or hide the stench have limited effect.

Dark Mist: By spending 10 PP and using their major action, the Draugr may take the form of a blue-black mist. The mist is obviously unnatural and possesses the *corpse-reek*. It is immune to damage except by fire or magic. It moves at the same speed as the Draugr in solid form, though it may pass through any barrier that isn't airtight and walk across liquids. For 3 PP per round, a Draugr in *dark mist* form may move at a Velocity of Fast/(+ Dexterity score). A Draugr in *dark mist* form may rapidly strike with tendrils of its mist as a semiautomatic weapon (due to its speed, using the Mist Lash focus) with a Range of 50 and unlimited Capacity. Mist lashes inflict 2d6 + Willpower ballistic wound damage, along with the Stunt Die result, as is usual for semiautomatic weapons.

Innate Magic: Most Draugr aren't arcanists, but they were brought back to life with magic, so it now runs through their rotting veins, providing the Novice degree of Power Arcana. Draugr who performed their binding rituals have the Master degree of Power Arcana and the Intelligence (Power Arcana) focus. Dedicated arcanists who become Draugr retain their abilities. For each degree beyond Novice Power Arcana the Draugr possesses, they gain 6 additional power points.

Shapeshifting: A Draugr's true form is that of a decay-darkened corpse. When close to its *gridrsteinn*, it can take a form based on memories of life. This removes *corpse-reek*. By spending 5 PP and using a minor action, the Draugr can change shape into a mammal ranging in size between a wolf or a bear. Its physical abilities remain the same, though it can use the creature's base Speed and any natural weapons, such as fangs or claws. By spending an additional 3 PP per round, the Draugr gains +3 Strength and grows to giant size in any form it takes. While changing shape, the Draugr reveals its corpse form and emits the *corpse-reek*.

Undead Nature: Draugr don't need to eat, drink, sleep, or breathe, and are unnaturally tough, as represented by innate 4I/4B armor. They see in darkness as if it was dusk.

Talents: Misdirection (Novice), Overwhelm (Master; usable with Grappling), Power Arcana (Novice)

Equipment: Fine Clothing, Luxury Goods, *Gridrsteinn*

Threat: Dire

Silratto Industries

The board of Silratto Industries hires the characters to find a thief. They suspect it was an inside job, since the perpetrator defeated the strongest facility security they have, and breached the vault located in the basement of the company's headquarters. Despite this seemingly precise and carefully planned operation, items seem to have been taken seemingly at random. None of the valuables (paintings, precious metals, etc.) or critical documents stored in the vault have entered the black market. The greatest mystery is a old safe stored within the vault, which was broken into. There is no record of the safes contents, for good reason. It contained the gridrsteinn of CEO Victoria Silratto (a draugr, and her security agents shadow the protagonists to interrogate and kill the thief or theives, and retrieve the gridrsteinn…at any cost.

ELEMENTALS

> Looking into the microscope, I realized it wasn't just alive but aware. It knew it was being watched and, somehow, it looked back.

Elementals are the personifications of primal natural phenomena, the building blocks of our world, come to life. Most Elemental phenomena are subtle: changes in shape, composition, or activity in inert substances, energetic reactions, or simple life forms. Scientists usually explain them away as statistical flukes, errors in experiments, or hallucinations brought on by hours of repetitive work. Fully manifested Elementals defy such excuses, rising as roughly humanoid, twitching masses of a primordial substance.

Elementals are either summoned by arcanists, or spontaneously form at geomantic nexuses whose energy patterns are conducive to their specific natures. In the latter case, Elementals may form in response to scientific research, resource extraction, or other activities that move, reorder, or study an Elemental's base substance. Although arcanists typically believe Elementals arise from magic infusing their base substances, they do not rule out the notion that the Elemental precedes its element, as a magical pattern that produces its mundane counterpart, and that these ultimately come from other planes of existence.

Arcanists hypothesize that Elementals respond to sapient observation, explaining their humanoid manifestations and even the varieties that appear. Ancient magical traditions usually recognized four or five major Elemental varieties with numerous sub-types, but the modern world has broken this scheme so that new Elementals defy the old categories. For example, magnetic Elementals have acquired new prominence in the age of electricity, and might have been defined as air or etheric Elementals in the past—or, say a minority, they never existed until theories of magnetism created a category for the phenomenon.

While many encounters with these Elementals have ended with violence or hostility, Elementals are not naturally evil. They follow natural instincts to survive and protect their domains, but aren't feral or animalistic, though their intelligence is an alien one, influenced by these instincts, their respective Elemental substances, and the circumstances under which they manifested. Summoned Elementals typically serve the arcanists who cast the spell, while a spontaneously manifested genetic Elemental may destroy the laboratory that unwittingly caused it to appear.

ATOMIC ELEMENTAL

This solidly built humanoid form is made of roiling radioactive particles, held together by an aura that thankfully also partly shields witnesses from the energies it contains. Beyond raw radiation, Atomic Elementals contain the power to transmute substances, magically performing tasks normally left to chemistry, particle accelerators, and nuclear energy.

GENETIC ELEMENTAL

This entity appears to be a radically mutated human, and changes shape constantly as it rewrites its own genetic information. Genetic Elementals can similarly alter the genetic makeup and expressions of those it encounters. Some Genetic Elementals steal a victim's shape by sampling their genome. These beings are sometimes summoned to perform genetic engineering beyond the bounds of known science.

QUANTUM ELEMENTAL

A Quantum Elemental's appearance is affected by the way it's "smeared" across probability. Its hazy humanoid shape may be duplicated across a cluster of possible locations. The entity travels by adjusting its quantum waveform to make it more or less likely they're in each place. Quantum Elementals are often summoned to make truly improbable events happen.

MAGNETIC ELEMENTAL

A metallic humanoid surrounded by anything its magnetic field can grasp, a Magnetic Elemental is usually summoned to make use of its power over electromagnetic fields. In the modern world, the applications are nearly limitless—from construction to computer hacking—but they come with many dangers. Frying your phone is one thing, but getting torn apart by magnetized shrapnel is usually more than a would-be summoner would bargain for.

RADIATION

As an attack or hazard, radiation inflicts penetrating wound damage. Otherwise, its effects are based on your game's mode.

Gritty: Radiation damage cannot be healed without special medical treatment. This involves specialized medication, which requires a TN 15 Intelligence (Medicine) test to properly administer. Until healed of radiation damage, characters suffer a -2 penalty to all ability tests due to nausea and other symptoms. After 24 hours, make a TN 17 Constitution (Tolerance) test. If the test succeeds, the character experiences no further effects. If the test fails, the character suffers extended effects based on the dose, ranging from radiation-related illnesses to death. The Game Master determines the severity of exposure.

Pulpy: As Gritty, except that the character never suffers extended effects.

Cinematic: Radiation damage has no special effects for Player Characters, but NPCs may suffer long-term consequences.

ATOMIC ELEMENTAL

Abilities (Focuses)	
1	Accuracy (Atomic Bolt)
0	Communication
2	Constitution
2	Dexterity
2	Fighting (Atomic Strike)
3	Intelligence (Chemistry, Earth Sciences, Engineering, Physics)
2	Perception
2	Strength
0	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
12/Fly 12	17	27	42	14	15	15	0+2	+2	+3

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Atomic Strike	+4	1d6+2 and 1d6
Atomic Bolt	+3	1d6+2 and 1d6

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Atomic Alchemy (4 SP), Duck and Weave

Atomic Blast and Atomic Strike: The atomic Elemental inflicts damage in the form of hot particulate matter and radiation, by touch or with blast (the blast is treated as an unlimited Capacity single-shot weapon with a Range of 25). In both cases, the attack inflicts 1d6 + Perception ballistic wound damage, and 1d6 penetrating damage from radiation.

Stunt — Atomic Alchemy: The atomic Elemental can change the atomic composition of inanimate objects with a sufficiently firm touch and concentration. In combat, this can be used as a stunt for 4 SP. If the object is standing still and the atomic Elemental isn't preoccupied with combat or another task, it also can perform this feat as a major action. Atomic Alchemy can perform the following feats:

- *Brittle/Strengthen:* The atomic Elemental increases or reduces the Armor Rating of a nearby object (including one worn or carried by a character) by 1d6. If this reduces an object's Armor Rating below 0, the object shatters or otherwise falls apart. The object's mass can be no more than 90 kilograms (equivalent to about 200 lbs in standard gravity). If this increases the object's Armor Rating, it may make the object distinctive looking or unusable, due to changes in its atomic composition.
- *Create Hazard:* The atomic Elemental creates an acidic, explosive, toxic, or radioactive hazard. This inflicts 3d6 damage in a radius determined by the Game Master, and may be reduced or nullified by characters using appropriate ability tests, such as Constitution (Tolerance) for poison. The GM determines the exact parameters. Only a small part of the object is converted, though the reaction may damage or destroy the rest of it, at the GM's discretion.
- *Convert Substance:* The atomic Elemental converts one substance to another. As a side effect, exotic or valuable elements may become radioactive, at the GM's discretion.

Atomic Self-Manipulation: The atomic Elemental can use a minor action to increase its density, trading +1 to +6 Toughness for an equal penalty to Defense, or decrease it, trading +1 to +6 Defense for an equal penalty to Toughness. If an atomic Elemental chooses -6 Toughness and +6 Defense, it becomes lighter than air and can fly at its Speed.

Threat: Moderate

GENETIC ELEMENTAL

Abilities (Focuses)	
1	Accuracy
4	Communication (Disguise)
4	Constitution (Stamina, Tolerance)
1	Dexterity
2	Fighting (Natural Weapons)
3	Intelligence (Biology, Medicine)
0	Perception
1	Strength
1	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
11	19	39	54	11	11	12	+3	+4	+4

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Grappling Grip	+1	1d3+1

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Genetic Absorption (4 SP), Genetic Mutation (4 SP), Grapple

Stunt—Genetic Mutation: For 4 SP, a genetic Elemental can mutate a living target it has firmly grasped. This allows it to redistribute 3 ability points (increasing some to decrease others by the same amount) and, if desired, impose a cosmetic change, such as a new eye color or altered facial feature. Multiple uses of this stunt have cumulative or progressive effects. These are undone if the genetic Elemental wills it, is destroyed, or is banished from the same plane as the target. Genetic Elementals are capable of making more radical, permanent changes out of combat. Intelligent subjects of *genetic mutation* must agree to these changes of their own free will.

Stunt—Genetic Absorption: For 4 SP, a genetic Elemental can suck biomass out of a living target to heal itself. The target suffers 1d6 penetrating wound damage, while the Elemental heals 1d6 damage.

Genetic Sampling: A genetic Elemental can become a duplicate of any living creature with a biological genome if it makes physical contact with the creature's genetic material. It acquires the creature's Constitution, Dexterity, and Strength ability scores, its size and appearance, and any natural special qualities it possesses. The genetic Elemental duplicates the original down to the genetic level, and will be identified as the original through genetic testing, but lacks acquired traits such as scars. Fingerprints and retinal patterns may vary from the original as well, as these are not entirely genetically determined. The Elemental's Fighting (Natural Weapons) Focus includes any unarmed attack its current body can deliver. If the genetic source dies, the Elemental can no longer assume its form.

Threat: Moderate

QUANTUM ELEMENTAL

Abilities (Focuses)	
2	Accuracy
1	Communication
0	Constitution
4	Dexterity
2	Fighting (Quantum Smear)
4	Intelligence (History, Physics)
2	Perception
2	Strength
0	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
9	15	20	35	14	15	15	0 + 0	+0	+1

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Quantum Smear	+4	2d6+2

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Lightning Attack, Quantum Skirmish (1+ SP)

Quantum Action: A quantum Elemental doesn't roll for initiative or move in the usual sense, because the times and places it manifests are probabilistic waveforms that do not entirely collapse into one possibility. Instead, it gets its turn at any point in the round it chooses, and appears wherever it wants within range of its Speed without having crossed the intervening space. This allows it to ignore barriers and other obstacles to movement, though it cannot materialize inside a solid object. Furthermore, once per round, it may "revise" its true position by another three yards after another combatant has moved, but before they attack.

Stunt—Quantum Skirmish: When a quantum Elemental uses the Skirmish stunt, neither it nor its target traverse the intervening distance, and simply appear in their new locations, ignoring all obstacles to movement; neither the Elemental nor its target may appear inside a solid object, however. This costs the same as the standard Skirmish stunt (*Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*, p. 82).

Quantum Event: Once per encounter, the quantum Elemental may alter an event that occurred during the encounter or a few minutes beforehand (the exact limit is left to the Game Master). While it can change the event, it does not control what happens instead. If no test was involved, the Game Master chooses a probable alternate circumstance. If the event hinged on a test, re-roll the test and keep the second result. Quantum Elementals are often summoned to change an undesirable event with this power. When this power has been used to change the same event two or more times, it has led to . . . undesirable circumstances, such as important individuals being replaced with sinister alternate-universe doppelgangers, or "butterfly effect" incidents with awful circumstances. Therefore, doing so is not recommended.

Quantum Smear: A quantum Elemental harms targets by "smearing" a body part across multiple probabilities. Incompatible locations and injuries that might have been damage the victim. This inflicts 2d6 + Perception penetrating wound damage.

Threat: Moderate

Adventure Hooks

Elementals are naturally combative when they feel threatened. This most often occurs when something influences the Elemental substance they're made of, or if commanded to act by an arcanist. However, all Elementals have unique abilities, which make them useful allies, willing or not. These facts inspire the following story hooks.

Suitcase Nuke

Characters stumble across a bizarre suitcase. Informed physicists and engineers know it would be a small nuclear bomb, except that its reaction mass is lead, not uranium, and it has an inert putty in place of shaped explosives. In its current state it's useless, but once its components are converted into real uranium and chemical explosives by an atomic Elemental, it will work perfectly. An arcanist with apocalyptic urges is willing to summon the Elemental for the terrorists who acquired the "dummy" bomb, but they're being followed by government agents who not only want to recover the device, but also suppress all knowledge of its existence, since it would be evidence of plans to violate nonproliferation treaties.

Lights Out

The power's down across the city. While characters help civilians to safety, their electronics go haywire as two magnetic Elementals battle, block by block. One was spontaneously generated by switching on a new power station at a geomantic nexus, the other serves an arcanist hacker who's ordered it to capture its counterpart. The enslaved magnetic Elemental doesn't want to fight, but has no choice for as long as its master possesses the enchanted lodestone that binds it.

The Genetic Candidate

Characters with Intelligence (Current Events) note that a national-level government official who'd previously blocked genetic research has become a zealous advocate of everything from human genetic engineering to keeping tissue samples of all citizens "so they can be alerted when treatments relevant to them become available." Yet that's not as strange as a haggard individual who looks just like that politician, claiming they just escaped capture, and there's a "shapeshifting alien" masquerading as them! This is not only true, but the genetic Elemental who replaced the representative wants to get the original back, and has government resources on their side.

Magnetic Elemental

Abilities (Focuses)	
1	Accuracy (Magnetic Shrapnel)
1	Communication
4	Constitution
1	Dexterity
2	Fighting (Magnetic Strike)
1	Intelligence (Computers, Earth Sciences, Electronics, Physics)
3	Perception
2	Strength (Might)
1	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
11	24	44	59	11	12	12	0I/2B+4	+4	+5

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Magnetic Strike	+4	2d6+2 or Weapon + 1d6
Magnetic Shrapnel	+4	1d6+3 or Weapon

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Magnetic Grasp (3 SP), Ricochet

Stunt—Magnetic Grasp: For 3 SP, a magnetic Elemental may pull a magnetically reactive object within 10 yards that weighs 20 pounds or less into the magnetic field that surrounds it. If the object is anchored or stuck to something, the Elemental must succeed at a Strength (Might) test with a TN set by the situation, or opposed by the Strength (Might) test of a character holding the object. After grasping the object, the Elemental may use it for *magnetic strike* or *magnetic shrapnel* attacks.

Magnetic-Electronic Interaction: A magnetic Elemental easily perceives unshielded electromagnetic patterns and can comprehend their functions and the data they represent. The Elemental can perform actions that require a computer and network connections to affect all devices within its line of sight as if it had a hardline connection to them, and can access wider networks as if connected to any router or modem it can perceive.

Magnetic Deflection: If struck by a weapon or ammunition that reacts strongly to magnetic fields, the magnetic Elemental may deflect the attack and hold it in its magnetic field by beating the initial attack roll with its Fighting (Magnetic Strike) test. The attack inflicts no damage, and the Elemental may use the weapon for future *magnetic strike* or *magnetic shrapnel* attacks.

Magnetic Field: All electronic devices within 10 yards of a magnetic Elemental cease to function unless they've been shielded against electromagnetic pulses. Magnetic Elementals can selectively apply this to devices and, as a major action, can render an electronic device permanently nonfunctional unless it is shielded or uses primitive technology such as vacuum tubes.

Magnetic Strike/Shrapnel: A magnetic Elemental attacks with magnetically reactive objects that whirl in the field around it. In hand-to-hand combat, the Elemental strikes with these objects at high velocity, inflicting 2d6 + Strength ballistic wound damage with metal shards, or with the same damage as the weapon, +1d6, with the damage becoming ballistic for the purpose of penetrating armor and Toughness. The field weakens at a distance, but the magnetic Elemental may still make ranged attacks inflicting 1d6 + Perception impact wound damage with metal shards, or damage equal to the weapon held in its field, though the damage is always of the impact type, even if the Elemental has bullets to throw.

Threat: Moderate

FAIR FOLK

Our new home trades beauty for harsh, unwelcoming lands and people. Mystic kanna doesn't flow as readily. It hobbles us, but discourages the Myrolc, which passes through reluctantly, its senses dulled. Find refuge. We will make this world our own.

The Fair Folk, or *Aozi*, came to our world to escape the "Great Evil," or *Myrolc*. If what they say is true, the Myrolc is a dark, life-consuming force that would reduce the Fair Folk to twisted, half-alive servitors. If the Great Evil is exactly that, it's tempting to think the Fair Folk must be virtuous beings, opposed to moral darkness. This isn't exactly true.

For the most part, Fair Folk look like Earth's humans, but their presence is somehow more real, like a high-definition image imposed on the fuzzier background of ordinary reality. A few have strange features, such as white irises or supernumerary digits, but these can be explained through cosmetics and uncommon genetics. Fair Folk have behavioral quirks, too. They talk to animals, tell people what they're feeling but not expressing (and are often right), and live in communal arrangements with (as far as outsiders are concerned) vaguely defined romantic and familial borders. They only eat meat, too—the rarer, the better.

The most unusual things people experience around them are indirect: strange accidents, hallucinations, and missing time. These events can be extremely distressing to friends of the Fair Folk, at least on Earth. They occur because while the Fair Folk may be opposed to the Myrolc, they're its children, born of a malicious, fitfully waking, world-binding intelligence. Fair Folk were created to inflict suffering, and have rebelled against that role, but it still influences their nature. They can only eat meat because this obligates them to live off the death of sentient beings. They know others' feelings well, to better manipulate them. They radiate derangement and chaos.

FROM THE FAIR PLANE

The "Fair Plane," called Glynvar, is only known to a handful of arcanists who study alternate realities. In Glynvar, animals speak, and the land appears to have been sculpted for epic journeys with grand, dragon-haunted mountains, endless twisted forests, and deserts where the sand sings. Geomantic nexuses visibly glow. And if its grand vistas don't suggest a guiding, godlike intelligence, one need only look upon its devastated cities and the the gaunt, black-armored creatures who patrol flame-blackened roads with lances and eldritch pistols: former Fair Folk. "The time has come to serve the true Father," they say. And they're right.

The Myrolc is Glynvar's god. Most of the time it sleeps, feeding on whatever suffering reaches it. When the world's ambient pain lessens, it awakens, hungry, and recruits its creations to torture Glynvar's inhabitants. The Fair Folk are descended from enslaved race of "elves," the *Arvu*, and renegade godlings the Myrolc consigned to prison camps after a terrible war against the dark gods of many planes. On most worlds the forces of good won, but not on Glynvar. The camps became the basis of the Fair Folk's cities and kingdoms.

The Fair Folk were roused to do evil for the first time a thousand years later, but after that, the Great Evil slept and the Fair Folk forgot their origins. They discovered gates to other planes, and finding Earth, were inspired by its innovations. Natural laws didn't work exactly the same, but the Fair Folk used Glynvar's *kanna*, or magical energy, to work around any barriers to technological innovations. The Fair Folk created semi-magical aircraft, information technology, and more, in nations which resolved their disputes through negotiation, not war, and lived in balance with intelligent fauna. This reduced the plane's suffering to an absolute minimum, and the Myrolc awoke very hungry indeed. It had the power to immediately enslave the smallest fraction of the Fair Folk population. These Black Sky Knights killed or converted all but a few refugees who fled to a world they knew through ancient legends: Earth.

TRICKERY AND MAGIC

Fair Folk have a natural talent for misdirection and inflicting petty harm, a shadow of their intended functions as divine torturers. Earth-dwelling Fair Folk have strong moral codes against taking lives or doing undue harm, and primarily exercise their talents to defend themselves, though all feel instinctive pleasure at successfully misdirecting and distressing others. Fair Folk are innately magical, though their abilities on Earth are greatly reduced. They believe this prevents the Great Evil from following them, but the Game Master may decide the Black Sky Knights have found them—and even bound some communities to serve the Great Evil.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Due to their cautious natures, Fair Folk avoid "adventures," but their trickster ways often lead them into odd situations.

Trickster Stunts

SP Cost	Stunt
1-3	**Flash and Smoke:** A bright light, mote of darkness, or split-second, disturbing shapes send your target reeling, imposing a penalty equal to SP spent on their Perception and Accuracy tests.
2	**Twist:** The world lurches around your target, and they face another direction, disoriented. They lose their next minor action, and cannot see you until their next turn.
3	**Twitch:** Your target experiences a minor, ordinary pain, such as stomach spasms or a twisted ankle. They suffer 1d6 + your Perception stun damage, and their Speed either falls by half or they drop a held object.
4	**False Face:** As far as the target is concerned, you swap appearances with another individual in your mutual line of sight as a hallucinatory haze consumes them. They must succeed at a Willpower (Self-Discipline) test opposed by your Intelligence (Occult) test, or have only a 50% chance of identifying which of you is which.
5	**Weird Grasp:** You exchange an object held or carried by a target for one of your own, and, if you like, may immediately use the purloined item for any function that would require no longer than a major action (such as an attack with a weapon) as a bonus action.
6	**Fair Form:** Your target sees the pale, monstrous being you would become if you served the Great Evil, surrounded by screams and an aura of nerve-ripping pain. They suffer 1d6 penetrating damage and must succeed at a TN 15 Willpower (Courage) test or flee.

They live apart, in hiding from mortal authorities and the Great Evil, and often need help to resolve the resulting conflicts.

A Fair Sacrifice

Sandra, a Fair Folk who lives in the city, revealed the secret of her kind to Sylvia, her human lover. Sylvia is an arcanist and trusts her teacher in the mystic arts with the secret—but the teacher, Argent, is a Warlock (see p. 24). Argent has heard that "certain demons" hunger for the Fair Folk, and kidnaps Sandra. The characters know Sandra and Sylvia, and must not only save Sandra but also mend the breach in their relationship caused by Sylvia's indiscretion.

Black Sky Traveler

On a moonless night, the characters encounter a disoriented, strangely dressed individual clutching a red gem set in a black iron chain. After muttering in an unknown language, he seemingly hits upon a tongue one of the characters knows. He asks for help finding "his people." With his help, characters find the Fair Folk. He is indeed one of them, but serves the Great Evil as a Black Sky Knight. The gem contains a reserve of magical power he'll use in his quest to capture refugees and send them back to "properly serve."

Fair Folk

Abilities (Focuses)	
1	**Accuracy**
4	**Communication** (Deception, Expression, Persuasion, Seduction)
2	**Constitution** (Stamina)
3	**Dexterity** (Acrobatics, Riding)
-1	**Fighting**
1	**Intelligence** (Art, Evaluation, Homemaking)
2	**Perception** (Empathy)
0	**Strength** (Climbing, Jumping)
1	**Willpower** (Courage, Self-Discipline)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
13	12	16	21	13	14	14	2I/4B +4	+4	+5

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Fouling Fairness (Melee)	+6	1d6+2
Fouling Fairness (Ranged)	+6	1d6+2

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Force: 11 **Power Points:** 15

Favored Stunts: Disrupt Power, Play Dead, Read the Room, Trickster Stunts

Trickster Stunts: Fair Folk have a list of unique stunts called Trickster Stunts. These can be called upon in connection with any action, and may even be used unconsciously. See the table at left for details.

Fouling Fairness: When Fair Folk must fight, they combine misdirection with the aura of ill luck that surrounds them to attack using Communication (Deception) instead of Fighting. While they can use this with any weapon, they rarely carry them. They are always considered to be armed with *fouling fairness* in hand-to-hand combat, as a weapon that inflicts 1d6 + Perception penetrating stun damage, or as a semiautomatic ranged weapon with unlimited Capacity and a Range of 20, which also does 1d6 + Perception penetrating stun damage.

Talents: Arcane Shield, Animal Training (Expert), Artistry (Novice), Protection Arcana (Novice), Spell Ward

Equipment: Fake ID, Multicolored Coat (2I/4B armor; a relic of home), Strange Clothes

Threat: Minor

The Great Evil

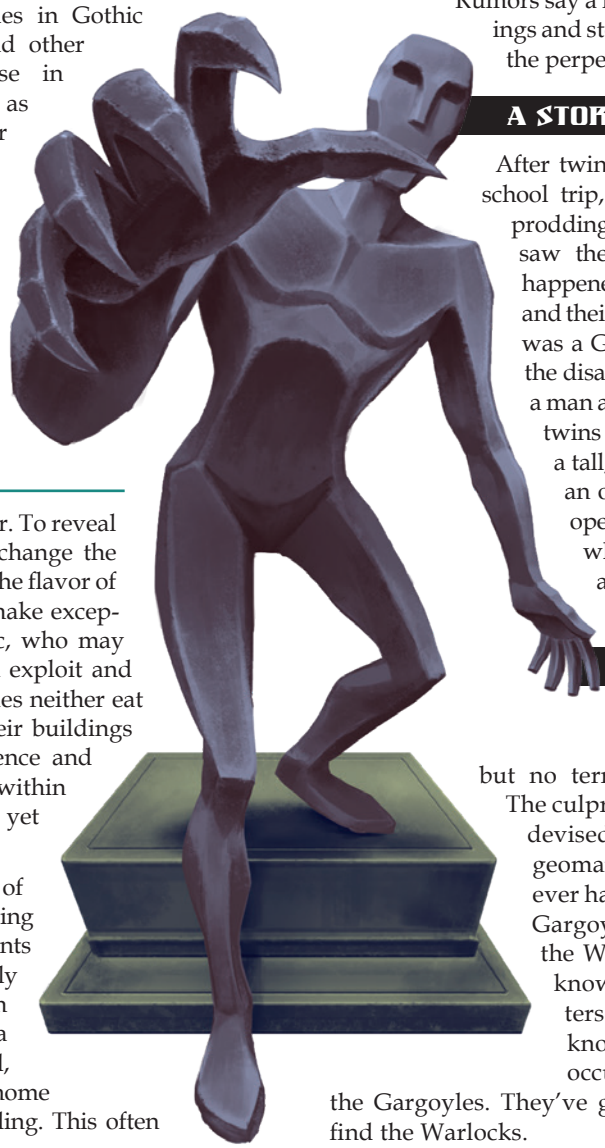
Direct travel between Glynvar and Earth is difficult; one must pass through many intermediary planes. Four Black Sky Knights come to Earth to find mystic artifacts capable of shortening the way, so their brethren can capture the Fair Folk in number. But one of these "artifacts" is a person: one of the characters marked by destiny to save or doom the Fair Folk. The protagonists must protect one of their own from both the Black Sky Knights and Fair Folk who believe killing the fate-touched character would end the threat.

GARGOYLE

> We were backed up against the wall. He was going to burn the building down with all of us inside. Then the walls shook, and Little Vinnie dropped dead right in front of us. There was a shadow like a man—a huge, twisted man—then nothing, and the walls stopped shaking.

Spirits of places, Gargoyles create statue-like bodies to serve, defend, and protect their homes. Gargoyles prefer to use existing statues as the basis for their bodies, but can magically modify any part of a building to create one. Traditionally, Gargoyles occupy spiritual or religious buildings, because these are often built on geomantic nexuses, but they can appear in any structure occupying such a location. They blend into their surroundings easily. Those who threaten their buildings or territory tend to disappear. The stones groan, and if the offender doesn't vanish, their body turns up in an obscure corner of the building, broken by some great force.

Gargoyles' bodies reflect the architectural styles of the buildings they've dwelled in, using the most current dwelling as their basis. Gargoyles in Gothic buildings have wings, horns, and other traditional features, while those in modern buildings may appear as sculptures of glass and steel, or even abstract forms like spheres and cubes. Gargoyles can exist outside of them, but can't create new bodies outside their zones of influence. Multiple Gargoyles may inhabit a building, but this usually only happens at especially powerful geomantic nexuses.



GENIUS LOCI

Gargoyles hide as a matter of honor. To reveal themselves to the masses might change the meanings of their homes, altering the flavor of any ambient magic. They rarely make exceptions for people attuned to magic, who may not be ordinary people, but often exploit and defile geomantic nexuses. Gargoyles neither eat nor sleep, and exist as long as their buildings do. They possess unlimited patience and can remain perfectly concealed within their homes for centuries, alert yet unmoving.

Gargoyles have protected places of power since people started building sturdy buildings and monuments upon them. They instinctually defend geomantic nexuses from being diminished or changed. If a Gargoyle's building is destroyed, it perishes, but it may leave its home beforehand to occupy a new building. This often happens when humans construct a new building at a geomantic nexus. In time, the Gargoyle's old home influences the new, and the latest skyscraper may soon develop certain things in common with forgotten stone temples.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Gargoyles can be both adversary or ally, depending on how characters treat their buildings and geomantic nexuses. Innovative architects may become friends, or treated as the worst vandals. Look at the following adventure hooks for ideas.

IT'S GOING DOWN

St. James' Cathedral in Wisconsin has seen better days. Its congregation has moved on to a new church and the original stands empty. Last year, the harsh winter shattered its stained-glass windows and destroyed the interior. Now the church is scheduled for demolition, but the second foreman in a row has died after an apparent fall—one nobody saw. Rumors say a local gang uses the church for meetings and storage. Are they responsible, or does the perpetrator lie *inside* the old stone walls?

A STORMY TOWER

After twin teenagers vanish from a museum school trip, it takes considerable poking and prodding to get the rest to admit said they saw the museum's statue come alive. It happened right before the lights went out and their classmates disappeared. The statue was a Gargoyle, but wasn't responsible for the disappearances. The Gargoyle identifies a man and a woman: arcanists who took the twins as sacrifices. The arcanists lair is in a tall, thin house (a "spite house" built in an odd shape to defy real estate developers) on its own geomantic nexus, which has its *own* Gargoyle—one that aids the arcanists in return for maintaining its home.

GEOMANTIC DANGER

Buildings all over the city are collapsing in apparent bombings, but no terrorist group takes responsibility. The culprits are Warlocks (see p. 24) who've devised a ritual to steal energy from geomantic nexuses by "sterilizing" whatever had been built upon them. Surviving Gargoyles go on a rampage in search of the Warlocks, but only the perpetrators know about geomantic power. Characters are targets either because of their knowledge or because a student of the occult has asked for protection from the Gargoyles. They've got to clear up the confusion and find the Warlocks.

Gargoyle

Abilities (Focuses)	
2	Accuracy (Tectonic Spike)
0	Communication
5	Constitution (Stamina)
1	Dexterity (Acrobatics, Stealth)
5	Fighting (Claws, Grappling)
1	Intelligence (Art, Cartography, Earth Sciences, Engineering, History)
2	Perception
5	Strength (Climbing, Might)
3	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
11/flight 11	25	75	105	11	11	13	2I/2B+5	+7	+7

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Talons	+7	1d6+5
Tectonic Spike	+4	2d6+2

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Break Weapon, Pin

Gargoyle Form: A Gargoyle normally dwells as a spirit within the building it calls home, and can't interact with other beings in this state, though it can be harmed with spells. As a major action, it constructs a body out of a combination of its building's materials and the echoes of any past homes. It emerges at the end of the major action. In this form, it can fly at its Speed and perform other physical actions. It also benefits from a 2I/2B Armor Rating. Gargoyles cannot be affected by toxins and other injuries that would not affect their inorganic bodies. The dominant material in a Gargoyle's body determines its exact capabilities:

Glass: Add +3 to Defense and Dexterity (Stealth) tests. When struck, shards of glass spray at any one attacker within five yards. The target must succeed at a TN 11 Dexterity (Acrobatics) test to avoid the shards. Otherwise, the target suffers 1d6 impact wound damage.

Metal: Add +2B/+2I to the Gargoyle's Armor Rating. When the Gargoyle scores doubles on a successful Fighting (Grappling) attack, add +2 SP as it wraps its enemy in metal.

Stone: Add +10 Health and +2 Strength.

A Gargoyle can use a major action to discorporate, as long as it is inside or touching its chosen building. Its body merges with the building and any nearby broken pieces of it vanish.

Tectonic Spirit: If a Gargoyle's building is destroyed while it dwells there, it dies. Significant, rapid damage to the building inflicts 1d6 to 5d6 penetrating wound damage, depending on the severity. Repairs to the building heal this damage. Damage accumulated over years has no such effect, so even a ruin can host strong Gargoyles, though it is more easily destroyed. A Gargoyle may disconnect itself from a building and find another, but this process takes hours to days, as the Gargoyle pulls its essence away and seeks out a path of geomantic power leading to its new home. Gargoyles can travel away from their buildings while remaining connected to them but must take *Gargoyle form* to do so.

Tectonic Senses: A Gargoyle senses most activity within its chosen building, and within 30 yards of its walls or borders. It sees and hears all things in this vicinity as well as a human of equivalent Perception, and likewise extends its sense of touch to anything in contact with its building. This renders stealth and privacy impossible or imposes a penalty set by the Game Master. *Tectonic senses* remain active even when the Gargoyle manifests a body.

Tectonic Spike: A Gargoyle can shoot a spike or other dangerous missile from any part of itself or its building. This leaves no mark on the building, and if not loosed from its body, is aimed with the Gargoyle's *tectonic senses*. The spike is treated as a single-shot weapon with unlimited Capacity and a Range of 50 yards. The Gargoyle attacks with an Accuracy (Tectonic Spike) roll and inflicts 2d6 + Perception ballistic damage. It may choose whether this is stun or wound damage.

Threat: Major

Glawackus

> No way those are panther tracks—too big. The way Billy's body looks, gotta be a bear that did that. I know, I know, bears don't leave their food—excuse the expression—up a tree.

In 1939, the small town of Glastonbury, CT, fell into a frenzy after a mysterious critter attacked livestock and pets. Lumberjacks and other witnesses said the beast resembled a dark-furred panther or lion, or a huge, shaggy, snub-nosed dog, perhaps three or four feet tall at the shoulder. These same witnesses were often unable to describe where they were, exactly, or when they saw the creature. A few of them forgot where they lived, or what their jobs were, too. In many cases, their experiences were blamed on pathological drinking. A skeptical scientist dubbed the creature "Glawackus" by appending a Latin "us" to "Glastonbury" and "wacky." Hunts in the 1950s also placed it near Granby, northwest of Glastonbury, and later to outlying states including Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Colorado. This has led to the creature's other name, the Northern Devil Cat.

The Glawackus is real, though it has abilities that make accounts of it seem less plausible. Its dark fur indicates a creature adapted to colder climates, and it can most often be found in winter woodlands hunting prey to satisfy both its current hunger, and for periods of hibernation that last months or years. It will eat almost any animal it finds. When confronted by a threat, it either attacks immediately or rises on its hind legs in a threat display. An active Glawackus hunts on the move, abandoning the cave it hibernated in for a new one, which will serve as its lair while active and, eventually, its new hibernation spot.

How many are there? Even cryptozoologists can't begin to estimate their numbers. The Glawackus is extremely long-lived—perhaps even immortal—and may be a unique

GLAWACKUS

Abilities (Focuses)	
1	Accuracy (Gaze)
0	Communication
4	Constitution (Stamina, Running)
3	Dexterity (Stealth)
2	Fighting (Bite, Claws)
0	Intelligence
1	Perception (Tracking)
4	Strength (Climbing, Jumping)
0	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
13	24	44	59	11	11	12	0I/0B+4	+5	+6

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Bite	+4	1D6+6
Claws/Grapple	+4	1D6+4
Glawackus Gaze	+3	See description

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Grapple, Lightning Attack

Glawackus Gaze: A Glawackus can remove a memory as a ranged attack, rolling Accuracy (Gaze) to look into the eyes of a target capable of sight. The target forgets the Glawackus' immediate location and actions. This imposes a penalty to attack rolls, and to Defense against the Glawackus' attacks, equal to the Glawackus' Stunt Die result. Furthermore, the victim must succeed at a TN 13 Willpower (Self-Discipline) test or lose an additional memory. If the character's Stunt Die on a failed test is 1-3, it forgets the Glawackus is even present. On a 4-6, the character forgets some other memory, chosen by the GM. Immediate memories return at the end of the encounter, but long-term memories take weeks or even months to return, barring innovative drugs or hypnosis used to recover them.

Glawackus Instincts: A Glawackus makes grappling attacks with its claws and the Fighting (Claws) focus. If it generates stunt points with a claw attack, it may use Lightning Attack on the target it struck to follow up with its bite or *Glawackus gaze* for just 1 SP. It only gets this benefit once per round.

Talents: Grappling Style (Novice)

Threat: Moderate

creature, or there may be a handful who periodically mate, though no cubs have ever been spotted.

WHERE? WHAT?

The Glawackus isn't a purely physical threat. It possesses the ability to erase memories with its gaze. It can do this to immediate recollections, disorienting its prey, or older memories, making it difficult for hunters to track. The creature does so on instinct, and it's not precise, so witnesses often lose unrelated memories as well.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Glawackus-related stories usually involve investigating fragmented memories, though dismembered bodies pop up, too. Cryptozoologists, con artists, and other eccentrics follow legends of the creature, producing numerous opportunities for conflict.

GLAWACKUSTUBE

It starts with kids claiming a video can get them high, but by the time the characters arrive, most of the town's been hit with memory loss, thanks to a cryptozoologist who captured a perfectly focused 4K shot of a Glawackus gazing straight at the camera. She naturally forgot all about it, but when her son stumbled across the video file and lost some trivial memories, he assumed the video was acting like a drug and shared it. Nobody's uploaded it to a streaming service yet, but that danger may have to be dealt with later, since the Glawackus, which can sense memory loss, has come to town to feed from newly abundant prey.

THE APPALACHIAN WAMPUS

Just as the northern lynxes have southern bobcats as evolutionary cousins, so too can cryptozoologists see a connection between New England's Glawackus and the Appalachian Wampus. Both can be best described as exceptionally large cat-like creatures with a supernatural ability to avoid capture. Comparing encounters, the Wampus appears to be about six inches shorter at the shoulder, lankier, and more definitely cat-like. Its fur is smoother and jet black.

Where the Wampus really differs is in its reputed abilities. Witnesses describe them vanishing into thin air and being terrorized by a shrill whistle. If the Game Master wants to use the Wampus, use the same game statistics as the Glawackus as a starting point, but reduce its Accuracy and Strength by 1, increase its Communication to 2, and give it the Whistling Communication focus. After that, replace the *Glawackus gaze* with the following special qualities:

Wampus Whistle: As a major action, the Wampus may make a horrific whistling sound. Roll the Wampus' Communications (Whistling). Any character capable of clearly hearing it (which may or may not be possible over professionally recorded audio, but is never possible over ordinary microphones and speaker output) must succeed an opposed Willpower (Courage) test or suffer panic and confusion. The first time the Wampus succeeds against a specific target during the encounter, they suffer -2 to initiative. The second time it succeeds, targets experience -1 to Accuracy, Perception, and Willpower tests. On the Wampus' third success, the victim must use an additional minor action to attack or move closer to the Wampus. Each effect lasts for 1d6 rounds.

Wampus Vanishing: The Wampus is semi-translucent. This imposes a -2 penalty to ranged attack rolls against it, and adds +2 to its Stealth checks to avoid being seen.

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLAWACKUS

The characters don't know how they got into the woods. They don't know why they lack proper food, clothing, and equipment to survive a forest in the winter, though they have a few odds and ends that may serve as clues. At the Game Master's discretion, they may not even know each other. All they know is, something hunts them. Can they survive a stalking Glawackus while piecing together their identities, why they're in the woods, and who the impostor among them is?

THE GREAT GLAWACKUS HUNT

Every year in Glastonbury, CT, local and tourist alike convene for the Glawackus Hunt, a celebration of the weird, fantastical creature. This year, the discovery of a savaged corpse puts a damper on things. The second body makes it even worse. Is the Glawackus real? Are confused sightings the result of pranksters in homemade Glawackus costumes? Does anyone have anything to gain by hiding a murder as a Glawackus killing?

THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN

> Standing in the saddle of its galloping demonic steed, it raised its bloody saber. The severed head beneath its arm growled "Schwalb," the name of my last living companion. It echoed like a summons from the Infernal Pit. I did not see the blade fall but, in an instant, Schwalb was as headless as the Horseman itself.

Tales of the Headless Horseman have passed from one storyteller to the next since the 15th century, changing in each iteration. In truth, the Horseman is a timeless, singular supernatural being from the Netherworlds—damned realms beyond our own reflected in legends of Hell and other dismal afterlives. Stories change not only because memories fail and storytellers embellish but also because the Horseman itself adapts to new eras.

In virtually every story, the Horseman is, of course, headless, rides a sinister-looking horse, and carries a severed head in one arm, lashed to its belt or tied to its saddle. Sometimes the severed head's eyes glow, as if replaced with flaming candles. It wears military clothing, though the period doesn't always match the time of its manifestation. Its sex is unknown, though its slender but strong body is typically described as male. The smell of sulfur accompanies the Horseman whenever it appears. The Horseman wields many weapons, but always possesses a sword of some kind called *Headsman*, and the whip, *Tormentor*, made of past victims' neckbones.

The Headless Horseman is from another world, but appears human in almost every way. Anyone who describes the appearance of the rider has had a slightly different take on the wardrobe; however, there is always a protective layer over them. In modern times, this looks like a long, black overcoat that hangs past the rider's knee.

THE DEMON OF JUDGMENT

Arcanists call the Headless Horseman an Inimical, a malevolent, purposeful being some cultures might call a "demon." The Horseman is unique, and may have even once been human, but its essence has been reshaped to satisfy its function: to claim the souls of murderers and other evildoers who have escaped judgment in the mortal realm. The Horseman's target must have committed a serious moral offense for which they've escaped the consequences. Killers and planners of genocide are typical targets now, but the Horseman has been known to hunt breakers of sacred vows. The cultures of the offender and victim are said to play roles in whether the target draws the Horseman's ire, and the Horseman has allegedly even been tricked into hunting innocents. If anyone knows the precise rules that govern

THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN

Abilities (Focuses)	
5	Accuracy (Inimical Missile +3)
2	Communication
4	Constitution
5	Dexterity (Riding +3)
6	Fighting (Flexible Weapons +3, Heavy Blades)
3	Intelligence (Anthropology, Astronomy, History, Law, Occultism, Theology)
4	Perception (Tracking +3)
5	Strength (Intimidation, Might)
5	Willpower (Faith +3, Morale, Self-Discipline)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
15	34	106	166	15	17	19	5I/5B+4	+6	+8

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Headsman	+11	2D6+8
Tormentor	+12	1D3+5
Inimical Missile	+8	2D6+6

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Lightning Attack, Momentum, Shock and Awe

Horseman's Panoply: The Headless Horseman has three weapons and a distinctive piece of armor. *Headsman* is always a sword from the Heavy Blades category, though its form varies from one manifestation to the next. It adds +3 to attack and damage rolls, and when it reduces an opponent to 0 Health, it decapitates them and instantly burns their headless body to ashes. It may be captured by others, but the Horseman will pursue and attempt to slay whoever possesses it. *Tormentor*, a whip made of spines, can be extended up to 10 yards, and automatically provides 2 SP to be used on Melee or Grappling stunts on any successful attack, in addition to SP gained from other sources. It extends from the Horseman's body and may not be removed. Its *Inimical Missile* may be anything from a crossbow to a modern assault rifle, but never needs to be reloaded, has a Range of the Horseman's line of sight, and is otherwise treated as a single-shot weapon that inflicts penetrating wound damage. The *Inimical Missile* is a projection of the Horseman's wrath, and disintegrates into a stinking mist if taken, though the Horseman may not manifest it again while hunting the same primary target. Finally, the outer layer of the Horseman's uniform (typically a long coat called the *Brimstone Cloak*) provides 5I/5B armor without encumbering it. This may be taken and kept with no particular consequences, unless the Game Master invents one (see **Horseman's Hell** in **Adventure Hooks**.)

Horseman's Head: The Horseman always carries the severed head of a past victim with it. The head speaks for the Horseman and, after babbling in an untranslatable inhuman language, can unleash the following spells: *ill omens* and *unveil* from the Divination Arcana; and *arcane lantern* and *firestorm* from the Fire Arcana, though *firestorm* may only be employed once when hunting the same quarry. Do not roll tests to activate these spells. They are automatically successful (and do not generate SPs from tests), do not cost power points, and have a Force of 18. Each spell requires a minor action, regardless of its normal duration. The head has 20 Health. If destroyed, the Horseman must acquire a new one from its steed. This takes as much time as drawing a weapon. Nobody else can use the *Horseman's head*, though the GM may give a captured example additional supernatural properties.

Horseman's Nature: The Headless Horseman is a demonic being. If killed, the patterns of arcane energy that sustain it are disrupted, but it is not permanently destroyed. It may manifest again, but not for the same reason (though it may be called to pursue the same person through a new ritual or event). It speaks all languages and has no need for food or rest. As a spiritual being, it can affect or injure creatures who can be hurt through only magical means, as its touch and attacks are inherently magical.

Horseman's Pursuit: The Headless Horseman appears at the uninhabited geomantic nexus closest to its quarry, and acquires the 5-point Intensity Relationship Bond: "I am destined to find and kill (name of quarry)." If the quarry is separated from the Horseman by a body of water, it may use a major action at the water's edge to cross any intervening distance. If the quarry somehow leaves the same plane of reality as the Horseman, the Horseman may follow by entering the closest geomantic nexus. It will thereupon appear at the closest geomantic nexus on the new plane after using a major action. The Horseman's travel abilities also apply to its Steed, when they are together.

Horseman's Steed: The Headless Horseman's steed appears with it. See its accompanying game statistics. The Horseman may travel no more than a mile away from its steed, or from the last place the steed occupied, if it is killed.

Talents: Speed Demon (Horseman's Steed—Master)

Equipment: *Horseman's Head*, Horseman's Panoply, Horseman's Steed

Threat: Legendary

the Horseman, or how to summon it, they've kept it secret, though anyone who stands in the Horseman's way becomes a secondary target it will slay, unless such an unfortunate surrenders and helps the Horseman catch its main quarry.

The Horseman always appears atop its steed: a huge, dark stallion with sharp teeth and subtle differences in its face and musculature which indicate it's not a true horse, but a creature that only superficially resembles one. The steed's hooves and mane have been known to burn with infernal fire, and it can run faster than any mortal mount—at least, faster than any made before the age of the automobile.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The Horseman is surrounded by conflict. It relentlessly pursues and punishes evildoers—or at least, people the Horseman believes should be punished. The Horseman may hunt an enemy down before characters have a chance to acquire vital information from them, or may reveal the past sins of a close friend who becomes its quarry.

HORSEMAN'S HELL

A close ally asks characters to join them in the dead of night to fight an unnamed enemy, revealed to be the Headless

The Horseman's Steed

Abilities (Focuses)	
1	Accuracy
0	Communication
4	Constitution (Running, Stamina, Tolerance)
5	Dexterity
2	Fighting (Hooves)
2	Intelligence
3	Perception (Searching, Tracking)
5	Strength (Climbing, Might)
0	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
20 or Velocity Fast/+5	24	64	94	13	14	15	0I/0B +2	+3	+4

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Fiery Hooves	+4	2d6+5

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Guardian Angel, Knockdown, Skirmish

Fiery Hooves: The Horseman's Steed may switch between a Speed of 20 and a Velocity of Fast/5. When it moves at its Velocity, its hooves burn with unearthly flame, which streams behind it. Pursuers suffer a -3 penalty to attack from behind. The steed may also light its hooves aflame to produce fire-based hazards. The parameters of these are left to the Game Master.

Fiery Mane: When enemies come within six yards of the Horseman's Steed, its mane erupts into flame. This burns brightly but never affects the Horseman. To approach the steed when its mane-flame is lit, a character must succeed at a TN 13 Willpower (Courage) test. Anyone who attempts to leap atop the Steed suffers 2d6 damage from the flame per round, unless they have protection from its heat.

Servant of the Horseman: If the Steed is killed while the Horseman lives, it returns to life 2d6 hours later, with the lower of the Steed's maximum Health or the Horseman's current Health. If the Horseman is destroyed, the Steed disintegrates in a cloud of sulfur, and may be recreated for its next hunt.

Equipment: Saddle, Saddlebags Containing 1d6 *Horseman's Heads*.

Threat: Major

Horseman. Thanks to careful preparations, ranging from landmines to heavy military weapons, they prevail! The Horseman leaves behind the *Brimstone Cloak*. When characters draw near, it becomes an abyss that swallows them, and takes them to the Horseman's netherworld realm. The undead victims of the Horseman dwell here, utterly under their killer's control, when they're not being tortured by petty demons. How can the characters escape? Can they trade their ally's life for safe passage? Will they?

A Town Together

In a small town, the Horseman appears and kills one adult resident per week. Terrified new residents ask the

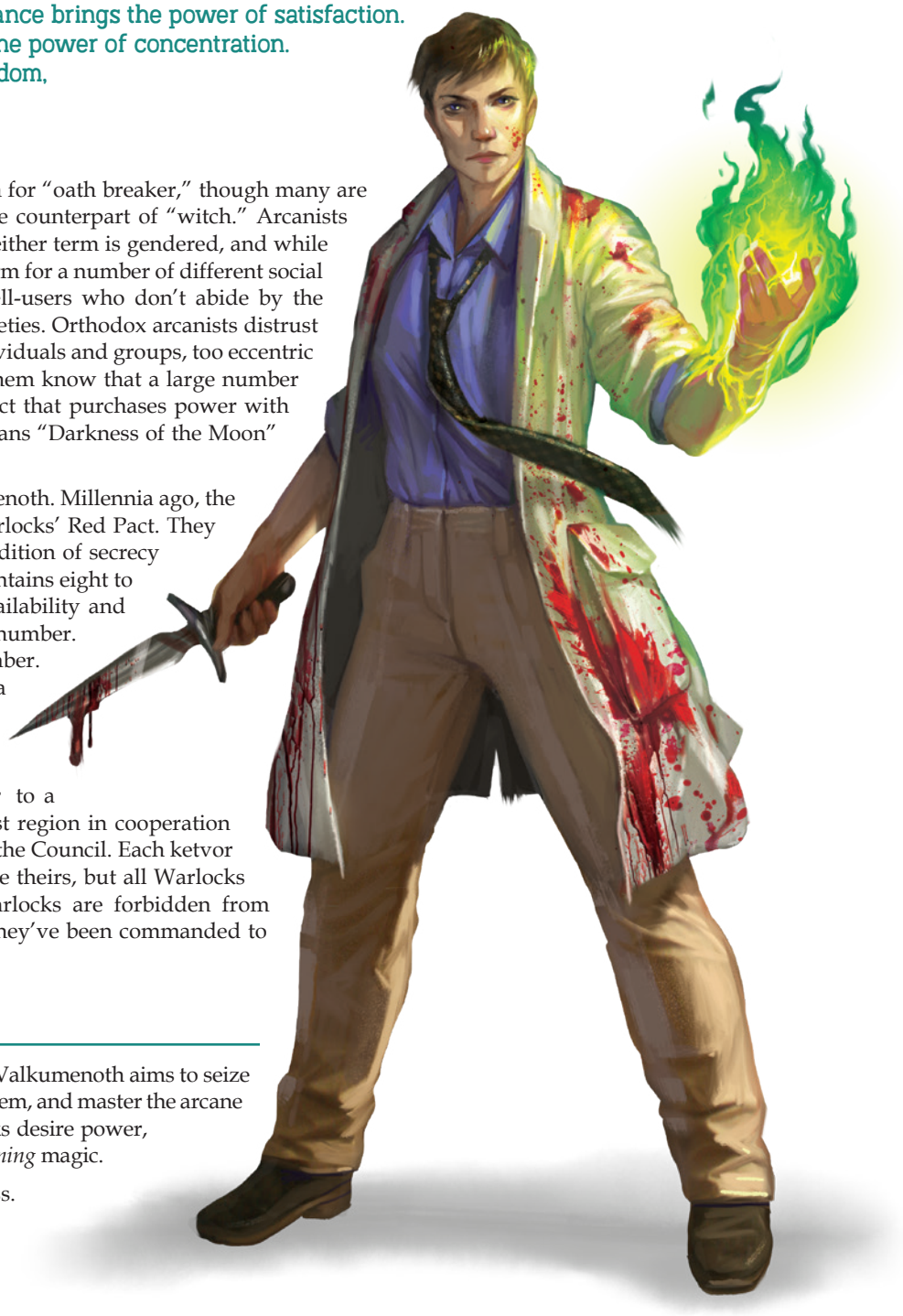
characters to investigate. The protagonists soon learn that certain citizens—members of the oldest families—avoid them, even forming a posse to throw them out of town. The Horseman is only targeting members of these families, leaving new residents alone, but the old-timers confuse the issue, kidnapping and killing newcomers. The town's elite aims to appease the Horseman through sacrifice—just as they appeased their secret god in cult rituals that attracted the Horseman in the first place.

RIDER'S WRATH

The Headless Horseman pursues one of the Player Characters or a close ally, neither of whom know why they became its quarry. A freak accident kills the Horseman's Steed, so the characters have 12 hours (choose the maximum amount for when the Steed falls) to discover what sin drew the Horseman—or whether it's been tricked into chasing its quarry.

WARLOCK

Knowledge before compassion, for knowledge brings the power of judgment.
Dominance before patience, for dominance brings the power of satisfaction.
Self before others, for the Self brings the power of concentration.
These are the three pillars of dark wisdom,
The forbidden powers of magic.
So sayeth the Warlock's Doctrine.



Warlock supposedly comes from Old English for "oath breaker," though many are under the misapprehension that it's the male counterpart of "witch." Arcanists and other students of the occult know that neither term is gendered, and while arcanists use "witch" as a non-disparaging term for a number of different social and religious roles, "Warlock" refers to spell-users who don't abide by the common codes and traditions of arcanist societies. Orthodox arcanists distrust Warlocks, believing them to be disparate individuals and groups, too eccentric or irresponsible to follow the rules. Few of them know that a large number of Warlocks belong to a tightly organized sect that purchases power with blood and pain: the Valkumenoth, which means "Darkness of the Moon" in the Warlocks' ancient tongue.

The Council of Wisdom oversees the Valkumenoth. Millennia ago, the first Council discovered the secret of the Warlocks' Red Pact. They taught others the method, along with the tradition of secrecy that binds the cult to this day. The Council contains eight to 14 members at any given time, based on availability and arcane forecasts to determine an auspicious number. Yet few Warlocks will ever meet a Council member. The basic unit of organization is the *ketvor*, a group of four. The lowliest ketvors report to a single regional leader, the *ekvos* ("horse," in the Old Tongue) who belongs to their own ketvor. Ekvos-ranked Warlocks answer to a *kovon* ("hound") ruling a nation or other vast region in cooperation with the rest of their ketvor. These answer to the Council. Each ketvor knows of only one Warlock of the rank above theirs, but all Warlocks below them in the chain of command. Warlocks are forbidden from revealing their abilities to outsiders, unless they've been commanded to infiltrate another arcanist sect.

THE RED PACT

Under the Council of Wisdom's direction, the Valkumenoth aims to seize the secrets of rival groups before eliminating them, and master the arcane arts in general. But while all member Warlocks desire power, the Red Pact presents another possibility: *becoming* magic.

Initiation into the Red Pact is a painful process. Subjected to increasing degrees of ritual bloodletting over the course of a year or more, an initiate must eventually use the power of the Pact to take blood and wellness

Other Warlocks

The Valkumenoth is just one possible Warlock group. The Game Master should invent their own when necessary. Take the game statistics in this section, change the Arcana, and replace their special qualities with others better suited to how the Warlock approaches magic. Warlocks possess a host of strange abilities due to their unique approaches to magic. Some of these might even be learned as talents by arcanist Player Characters.

from a handpicked victim, and then a fellow Warlock. Failure means death.

Under the Red Pact, all Valkumenoth Warlocks belong to a single mystical body. Magic flows between them like the breath and blood of a collective organism. If all magic is of the Valkumenoth, the sect believes the Council of Wisdom will become the mind of magic itself, able to change and channel it with a thought. Everyone in the cult will merge and become God. Magic outside the sect belongs to rogue organisms—mere viruses and bacteria compared to the future Leviathan of the Valkumenoth, but infections which must be eliminated.

Adventure Hooks

There are enough Warlock plots to fill an ancient tome, but here are three to get you started.

Two of Four

A vacant building explodes and draws the attention of the characters. Fortunately, only two people died, with strange daggers and other occult paraphernalia on their persons. They were half of a Warlock ketvor, bystanders in a rivalry between the other two—brother and sister. If characters investigate, each sibling claims the other was responsible and asks for aid in defeating their counterpart. Furthermore, each claims the other acted to secure sole access to a magical artifact capable of draining blood and power from victims at great distances. While this is true, one of them wants to use the artifact to rise in rank, while the other one searches for a way to destroy it. Who can the characters trust?

Fair Raid

On orders from their superiors, an ekvos ketvor kidnaps Fair Folk (see p. 16) to investigate the power locked within the refugees' blood and souls. Not only do the Fair Folk need the characters' help against the Valkumenoth threat, but should the Warlocks harvest their powers, the resulting magical aura will attract the Great Evil of the Fair Folk, whose agents will violently lay claim to kidnap victims, killing anyone who stands in their way.

Visit from the Wise One

A member of the Council of Wisdom has come. Rumors of that reach the Player Characters from contacts familiar with the Valkumenoth conspiracy. Their true identity is unknown, but corresponds with the unlikely rise of an obscure, nebbish politician as a serious contender for high office, and a journalist working the political beat ending up in an alley, exsanguinated with surgical precision. What's the connection? Is the politician the Councilor's puppet—even the actual Councilor? Or has the Councilor come to wage a shadow war against the politician's true backers, who are equally dangerous?

Warlock

Abilities (Focuses)	
2	Accuracy
1	Communication (Deception)
2	Constitution
0	Dexterity (Acrobatics)
0	Fighting
2	Intelligence (Astronomy, Fire Arcana, Medicine, Occultism)
2	Perception
-1	Strength
2	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
10	17	21	26	10	10	10	0I/0B+2	+2	+2

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Ritual Dagger	+0	1d6
Flame Blast	+4	2d6+1

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Force: 12 **Power Points:** 20

Favored Stunts: Lesser Life Drain (3 SP), Mighty Power, Powerful Manifestation

Stunt—Lesser Life Drain: Initiation into the Red Pact gives the Warlock access to a special stunt called Life Drain. By spending 3 SP while touching a target with bare skin (such as in an unarmed attack) or a magical implement (such as the Warlock's ritual dagger), the Warlock inflicts an additional 1d6 damage and heals the same amount of Health. If the target is an arcanist, or otherwise possesses magical power points, the Warlock may drain power points instead of Health.

Blood of the Pact: Warlocks trained in the Red Pact are stronger together. Power flows freely between them. As a minor action, the Warlock may spend 2, 4, or 6 power points to make a comrade's next spell more powerful. For every 2 PP spent, the ally reduces the spell's TN by 1 and increases its Force by 1. Up to two Warlocks may increase the power of a single comrade at any given time. All Warlocks involved must possess the *blood of the pact* ability.

Valkumenoth Apprentice: These statistics suit the lowest-ranked members of the Valkumenoth. See **Beefing Up Adversaries** in the **Introduction** to create stronger members of the sect. New talent ranks should be devoted to increasing arcana. Additionally, a talent degree may be used to grant a new special quality, similar to *blood of the pact* and *lesser life drain*.

Talents: Digital Arcana (Novice: *bypass*), Fire Arcana (Novice: *flame blast*)

Equipment: High-End Smartphone, Lab Coat, Ritual Dagger, Surgical Equipment

Threat: Minor

CHAPTER 2

ELITE OPERATIVES

In any arena, there are always champions. Those select few individuals who rise to the top of their profession or craft manage to have greater level of power and influence than their counterparts. Sometimes they are specialists, performing tasks with skill that borders on the supernatural. Other times they proved to be the most durable, the most manipulative, or most ruthless. Talent helps, but it can only open the doorway to excellence. It takes effort to step through.

This chapter introduces several Non-Player Characters (NPCs) who exist in this class of elites. Each of these entries represents someone who has worked their way to the top of the ladder, whether through physical confrontation or social interactions. These exist in any field, but *Modern AGE* Player Characters (PCs) are most likely to meet members of fields related to their adventures, such as top-level combat specialists and peerless social manipulators.

Elite characters are not just masters of their fields of expertise. They are also aware of their status. As such, they have a confidence and self-assurance that can only come from regular reminders of their skill and value. This may produce an air of superiority or a holier-than-thou attitude, but can also lead to uncommon humility. Most of these characters remember when they weren't quite so skilled, and the difficulties they encountered on the way to reaching apex ability. Furthermore, developing skill rarely occurs in a social vacuum. Elites are respected members of communities where their skills are either extremely useful, if not the primary focus.

CONNECTING WITH ELITE OPERATIVES

Reaching out to find an elite operative is no simple matter, and may prove to be an adventure itself. After all, these are not necessarily individuals with an online presence. If their information is available, any communication is likely to be sent through multiple layers of filtering and assistants before it ever reaches them. These NPCs are also extremely busy practicing their skills or teaching them. In some cases, elites may be considered the special assets of some sponsoring faction, such as a government or private enterprise, to the point where their skills are considered state or corporate secrets. Finally, elite status comes about as the result of a special drive to excel, which is an eccentric personality trait—possibly one of a handful of obsessions and quirks PCs must address.

Characters with the Contacts talent (*Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*, p. 56) are especially adept at getting favors from NPCs, and elites are no exception. The standard rules apply, shifting the challenge from asking for help to finding the appropriate operative. Otherwise, the secret to enlisting help is through social advantages: Relationships, Memberships, and Reputation. An appropriate Relationship Bond that has been reciprocated by the elite NPC is probably the easiest path, followed closely by common Membership in an organization where the Player Character and NPC would naturally work together. Reputation is the least reliable way to make a connection. The Reputation must suitably impress

the elite operative by both its nature and by being something the hero can back up with their deeds.

Barring these connections, getting help is a social task, which may be handled through pure roleplaying, or through the social systems in the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*. However, if the Game Master wants an elite NPC to work with PCs, social efforts should define the nature of their connection, and not a test where failure could stop an adventure in its tracks. Failed Communication rolls may indicate that the operative doesn't like the protagonists much, but might still help them if the story requires it.

ELITE ENEMIES

On the other hand, elite characters may be enemies: masterminds behind attacks by thugs, or peerless combatants who've been hired to hunt down one or more PCs. In some cases, the elite NPC plays a support or leadership role, and requires effort to find and confront. For instance, a Field Commander may not make their presence felt in direct combat, but through the exceptionally capable subordinates they bring to the field. Social operators may ruin lives through innuendo and anonymous posts.

As elite NPCs require special motivations to act, the Game Master can incorporate the reasons they were brought into the game as story material. Why is top fighter Clara Lynch (p. 30) guarding a mob boss? Does Clara have some truly formidable bills to pay? Is she being blackmailed? Is someone close to her being held hostage in exchange for her services? The answer not only adds drama to the story, it also provides alternative ways to deal with Lynch as an antagonist. In many cases, Player Characters won't be able to defeat an elite enemy within that NPC's field of expertise, so these other possibilities may be necessary. Even when you do want a head-on struggle, such as pitting Clara against a player's martial artist, these options provide ways for heroes with other specialties to get involved.

MODELING ELITE ABILITY

As this book and the core *Modern AGE* rules both note, Non-Player Characters do not develop in the same way as Player Characters. The rules for PCs are designed to produce gradual growth in an ongoing campaign. Even elite NPCs are not meant for successive adventures, and don't have to use the rules for Player Characters. Thus, you can use a variety of game systems for their abilities.

SPECIAL QUALITIES

Many characters in this chapter have special qualities to represent extraordinary skills. For example, the Armored Soldier's Hold It Together quality allows them to keep a fighting vehicle running in spite of severe damage. Elite NPCs may also have access to special stunts, or pay a reduced SP cost for common stunts.

FOCUSES AND TALENTS

Elite NPCs may possess the same focuses and talents as Player Characters. They do not necessarily learn them in the same way or require the same prerequisites, since unlike Player Characters, their ongoing development isn't measured and they don't need rules to distinguish themselves among a group of protagonists.

Elite characters may possess one or more focuses that provide a +3 rating instead of a +2, similar to characters who concentrate on a focus at higher levels, as per **Chapter 1** of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS AND SPECIALIZATIONS

While there's no rule against giving Non-Player Characters specializations, most *Modern AGE* books avoid doing so. This creates distinctive abilities for Player Characters alone and simplifies NPC design. However, the Game Master may always grant specializations if they desire. This is usually appropriate for NPCs who teach or guide characters with that specialization, or rivals in the specialization's field. For instance, while NPC hand-to-hand fighters usually don't have the Martial Artist specialization, a character's rival in the dojo may be an exception.

MODERN AGE COMPANION TALENTS

The *Modern Age Companion* introduces several new and expanded talents. This includes two degrees beyond Master, Grandmaster, and Apex, which are often appropriate for elite characters. Several new talents in that book may also be appropriate. If you use the *Modern Age Companion*, the following list shows you how to incorporate its new rules for entries in this chapter. This replaces the listed talents in each entry, which otherwise assume you're only using the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*. New and expanded talents are italicized.

- **Armored Soldier:** Expertise (Driving, AFVs) (Expert), *Grease Monkey (Expert)*, Speed Demon (Master)
- **Clara Lynch:** *Knife Style (Master)*, Overwhelm (Expert), Protect (Expert), Self-Defense Style (Expert), *Striking Style (Grandmaster)*
- **Double Agent:** *Linguistics (Grandmaster)*, Oratory (Expert)
- **Field Agent:** *Close-Quarters Firearm Style (Novice)*, Freerunning (Novice), Improvisation (Novice), *Knife Style (Novice)*
- **Field Commander:** Command (Master), *Hardened (Master)*, Inspire (Expert)
- **Mediator:** *Intrigue (Grandmaster)*
- **Publicist:** Contacts (Master), *Influencer (Grandmaster)*, Intrigue (Novice), Oratory (Master)
- **Robot Dog:** *Hardened (Apex)*, Observation (Master), Overwhelm (Expert)
- **Stunt Performer:** Animal Training (Expert), Emergency Care (Novice), *Hardened (Expert)*

In some cases, these expanded and additional talents may make an elite character significantly more dangerous. Three or four additional degrees in talents roughly equate to an

increase to the next threat level. Unlike Elite, Heroic, and Epic enhancements (see the **Introduction** or **Chapter 9** of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*), this increased threat is more specialized, and can be bypassed by characters who find a way to exploit an elite character's weaknesses.

ELITE STUNT POINTS

One way to model exceptional specialized ability is to give qualifying Non-Player Characters Elite Stunt Points (Elite SP). This new, optional system functions much like a Relationship. The NPC gets a certain number of stunt points per game session, which may be spent to enhance actions related to their specialty. These may be spent on any successful action, whether or not the dice rolled doubles.

ELITE FIELDS

Like a Relationship Bond, the specialty uses a short description, which determines when and how Elite SP can be spent. This is the elite character's Field. A Field's description notes what the elite is best at doing in a general sense. This should be consistent with the NPC's basic concept and other game statistics (especially abilities and focuses) but doesn't require firm rules. The Game Master consults the Field and judges whether an action falls under it. NPCs in this chapter or in other *Modern AGE* books who lack specific identities can often use their names (such as Field Agent) as their Elite Field descriptions, though the GM may wish to make changes to better define their respective Fields.

CALCULATING AND USING ELITE SP

Unlike Relationships, Elite SP don't have a 1-5 rating. Instead, elite characters start with 2 Elite SP. Each additional Elite SP is equivalent to one talent degree. 1-3 Elite SPs are equal to one special quality, depending on how powerful the quality might be. Game Masters can use these standards to swap Elite SPs for talent degrees and special qualities, to simplify NPC game statistics, or add them to existing game statistics to make the elite character more powerful. 4 Elite SP on top of existing game statistics (or statistics converted to additional Elite SP) is usually sufficient to move a character to the next threat level.

While these adjustments can produce a large number of bonus SP to spend, an elite character can normally only spend +1 threat level (1-5, counting from Novice to Legendary) Elite SP on a single action.

EXAMPLE

Meghan wants to use Clara Lynch, but, to simplify running her as an NPC, doesn't want to use her listed talents. She decides to keep Lynch's special qualities. Meghan decides Lynch's Field is "Fearless Fighter." Nine degrees of talents converts to 9 Elite SP in addition to a base of 2, for a total of 11. As a Dire threat, Lynch can use up to 5 Elite SP on a single successful action that fits the Fearless Fighter Field.

If Meghan decides to further simplify Lynch's game statistics, she can convert her special qualities. Meghan decides the Call In A Favor stunt is worth 1 Elite SP, while The Bigger They Are is worth 2 Elite SP. Instead of using these special qualities, Meghan can increase Lynch's Elite SP to 14.

Meghan might also use Clara Lynch's game statistics as written instead, but use the Elite SP system to make her more powerful. Meghan adds 3 Elite SP – not enough to increase Lynch's threat level – to the NPC, which can be used whenever an action fits her Fearless Fighter Field.

ARMORED SOLDIER

Some people look at a traffic jam and just see hours of time lost. You know what I see? Speedbumps.

The Armored Soldier is a specialized combatant who has trained how to drive armored fighting vehicles (AFVs) ranging from armored cars to mobile artillery. The armored soldier knows the value of technology and believes machines should do all the hard work, the heavy lifting and, if need be, absorb all the deadly force found in modern battlefields. That's not to say Armored Soldiers do not believe in physical fitness and marksmanship. They maintain peak fitness and the ability to effectively function on foot in dangerous environments. However, an Armored Soldier special training makes them most effective at the wheel of an AFV. While they often perform ordinary transportation tasks, active war zones and urban vehicle combat scenarios require their distinctive abilities. Armored Soldiers are expert drivers, with fast reaction times. They know how to make their vehicle of choice respond to the slightest touch or adjustment, but even other cars and trucks demonstrate remarkable agility under their control.

Most Armored Soldiers have a penchant for vehicles long before they joined the military. They customize personal vehicles and restore vintage cars with the same mechanical knowledge they use to operate military vehicles at peak efficiency. To learn their abilities, they need to understand every purr and twitch of the engine.

While an Armored Soldier can drive many different AFVs, they tend to prefer one model, and among those, bond with one specific vehicle, even over others with the same chassis and specifications. Armored Soldiers give their favorites names, enhanced features, and even custom décor, as far as regulations permit. Furthermore, the Armored Soldier will frequently be protective of their vehicle, not wanting anyone else to use it without their presence. Some find this connection strange, but most are willing to at least grudgingly accept it, especially after they witness the feats an Armored Soldier is capable of with their preferred vehicle.

Armored Soldiers usually dress in full uniforms. They expect to get greasy and never know when their vehicles will take on shrapnel, or when they'll need to get elbow deep in grease to make a repair. Exceptions work as civilian drivers or private security personnel, where they're expected to be unobtrusive. In the private sector, an Armored Soldier's vehicle may look like a bulky limo or SUV, but often contains hidden armor, weapons, and other military-grade features.

Armored Soldier

Abilities (Focuses)	
2	Accuracy (Pistols)
1	Communication
3	Constitution (Stamina)
5	Dexterity (Driving +3, Piloting)
2	Fighting
1	Intelligence (Engineering)
2	Perception
2	Strength
2	Willpower (Courage)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
15	21	36	51	15	16	16	2I/4B+3	+3	+4

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
SA Handgun	+4	2D6+2

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Mobility Kill, Ramming Speed (2 SP), Slowdown

Stunt—Ramming Speed: For 2 SP, an Armored Soldier can drive their AFV into another vehicle, doing significant damage to the target. This reduces the target vehicle's hull by 1 point until someone repairs it. This stunt does not require the Armored Soldier to spend SP on Pierce Hull before using it.

Hold it Together: An Armored Soldier maintains a special bond with their AFV, and knows its features and mechanical quirks on an instinctual level. As such, they can keep the vehicle running even when another driver might have to abandon the cockpit. Using the Activate action, an Armored Soldier may attempt a TN 15 Dexterity (Piloting) test to keep the AFV operating and temporarily ignore any results from Destroy System or Slowdown stunts. Once the Armored Soldier fails the check or stops trying, all of the results must be immediately applied.

Evasive Maneuvers: Once per round, an Armored Soldier may attempt to get their vehicle out of the way of an attack upon it. The Armored Soldier makes a Dexterity (Piloting) test with a TN equal to the attack roll. This does not require an action.

Talents: Expertise (Driving, AFVs) (Expert), Speed Demon (Master)

Equipment: Bullet-Resistant Cloth Body Armor, ID Card, SA Handgun

Threat: Moderate; Major with vehicle

Adventure Hooks

The Armored Soldier is not likely to be found randomly. The fact that this Non-Player Character requires a high level of training and substantial equipment means that they are usually found in dedicated military environments. These include national militaries, mercenary companies, elite security firms, and SWAT teams. Whenever they are found, they will have support, usually in the form of other soldiers and, possibly, a Field Commander.

LIGHT TANK

The most common AFV for an Armored Soldier to operate is a light tank, also called an infantry fighting vehicle (IFV). These machines are cheap and relatively easy to produce by military standards, but pack a powerful punch for their size. They are designed to withstand most non-military-grade weaponry and roll over anything in their path. A light tank grants an Armor Rating of 8 versus ballistic damage and explosions to passengers. This stacks with worn armor and (if applicable) Toughness. Light tanks without other features are used by special police divisions and for transportation just short of the front lines. Models with autocannons, reactive armor, and other high-end military features should be handled by the GM on a case-by-case basis, producing hazards and nullifying certain attacks without being so powerful they make it impossible for Player Characters to prevail—or fail—when confronted by a threat.

Handling Difficulty	-4
Capacity	8
Velocity	Fast/0
Ram	5d6
Hull	4
Resources TN	N/A

DELIVERY JOBS ARE EASY

The heroes are attempting to deliver a package, and all seems to be going smoothly when an armored car shoots out of a side street and attempts to ram the heroes. Now they find themselves attempting to either outrun or outfight an Armored Soldier. This results in either a chase or a vehicular combat with a high propensity for collateral damage, and mystery: Why is the Armored Soldier after them?

MASSIVE ASSAULT

The heroes have been recruited to attack a veritable fortress. To penetrate the walls of the structure, they are going to need a lot of firepower. The heroes team up with an Armored Soldier who will be responsible for breaching the walls and enabling the heroes to get inside. They must not only survive to carry out their mission but also protect the Armored Soldier—the only one capable of driving their way in or out.

NOT PLAYING FOR PINK SLIPS

An Armored Soldier learns about the heroes and seeks them out when they're getting a drink. They challenge the heroes to a demolition derby and offer up their customized vehicle on the line. But, if they emerge victorious, the heroes must help the Armored Soldier with a personal matter. The Armored Soldier won't share the details of the personal matter before the competition.

CLARA LYNCH

> I don't believe in second chances. If you keep coming around the people I care about, I'll gladly remind you to keep your distance.

Clara Lynch was born and raised in rural Ireland, the youngest in a family with two brothers and two sisters. Against them, she first learned how to fight for what was hers. Over time, she gave more bloody noses than she got and was often considered the problem child. Her parents were both physical training instructors in the Irish Army. They taught her to only use the force necessary to win a fight, but never back down when her cause was right. Subtlety was a skill she never bothered to learn. The direct approach suited her, for its honesty, decisiveness, and the opportunity to throw a punch or two.

She joined the military to follow in her parents' footsteps. She excelled in basic training and received recognition for her shooting, especially for her hand-to-hand combat skills. While she showed little aptitude for teaching her skills, she loved fighting in unofficial military tournaments, off-base MMA matches, and even street fights funded by illegal gambling. She never got caught fighting illegally and donated the money she won to charity. She eventually found a niche in the Military Police Corps, though as a sparring partner and occasional arresting officer, she earned the respect of elite soldiers in the *Sciathán Fiannóglaigh an Airm* (SFA, or Army Ranger Wing/ARW), and through them, members of special forces in other countries. Although she's rumored to have been specially assigned to counterterrorism missions in multiple countries, her record doesn't list specifics.

Her term of service concluded, she left the military to chase championships in several combat sports. Discharged from the military in good standing, she maintained contact with former commanders, comrades, and associates in the armed forces of multiple countries. They're more than willing to do her favors, both out of admiration and because she allegedly knows things which would embarrass elite soldiers and their units.

But the challenge and adrenaline of the fight became her true calling. She made an impressive entrance by defeating a local champion—a man a weight class up from her—in under a minute. That stunt catapulted her into the international limelight without spending years in smaller circuits. After other high-profile victories, she has her sights set on the women's featherweight world championship. She continues to fight in underground arenas and take on all challengers, including larger, stronger fighters of all genders. Professional fighting pays her bills, but these private bouts are her passion. She got away with them before, and if that was all she was up to, she could probably manage. But people aware of her background sometimes beg for her help against bullies and gangsters, and she spent enough time behind the scenes to see the spies and ex-soldiers behind certain criminal ventures. As Clara never backs down from a fight, she has sometimes beaten up the problem at its root. Several dangerous people now know who

she is and want revenge. So far, her contacts have helped keep her problems quiet, but a new, impulsive conflict where she won't back down is bound to change that.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Clara's not hard to find as she lives in the public eye, but following her to her underground fighting "hobby" or the vigilante matters she gets entangled in is more complicated. Getting her attention is another matter entirely, and depending on the circumstances, this may not be a good thing for the heroes.

HUNTED

While the heroes were involved in a skirmish, someone valuable to Clara Lynch was injured. As far as the Player Characters were concerned, this was nobody special, but when Lynch finds out, she hunts down the heroes, using her contacts to track them. Furthermore, the real fight has just begun, as the PCs' enemies plan to strike back. They need Lynch as an ally, not an enemy. Why was Lynch's associate present? Was that person an innocent bystander, or did they misrepresent their role to her? The characters must justify their actions, determine why Lynch's associate was present, and recruit her for when the enemy strikes back.

CLARA LYNCH

Abilities (Focuses)	
3	Accuracy (Assault Rifles, Pistols, SMGs)
1	Communication
4	Constitution (Running, Stamina)
4	Dexterity (Acrobatics, Initiative, Stealth)
6	Fighting (Brawling +3, Grappling +3, Light Blades)
2	Intelligence (Tactics)
3	Perception
4	Strength (Climbing, Intimidation, Jumping, Might)
2	Willpower (Courage)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
12	24	84	114	12	13	15	0I/0B+3	+5	+6

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Unarmed	+9	1D6+7
Dagger	+8	1D6+8
SA Handgun	+5	2D6+3
Automatic Rifle	+5	2D6+6

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Brutal Strike, Call in a Favor (2 SP), Guardian Angel

Stunt—Call in a Favor: For 2 SP, Clara realizes she knows someone who might be useful in her current situation. This can be in the form of reinforcements, where she calls other fighters or military personal to her side. During an investigation, this can result in knowing someone who can give her vital information or otherwise steer her in the right direction. For example, Clara might know someone who can track the heroes through facial recognition algorithm on traffic cameras. This assistance shows up quickly, but not unrealistically so.

The Bigger They Are: Clara is willing to take on all comers and never backs down from a fight. If she is outnumbered or facing an opponent with a higher Strength, add +4 damage to all her Fighting-based attacks.

Talents: Protect (Expert), Overwhelm (Expert), Self-Defense Style (Expert), Striking Style (Master)

Equipment: Automatic Rifle (at home), Military Combat Knife (dagger), MMA Gear, SA Handgun

Threat: Dire

KIDNAPPING

Clara Lynch's friend disappears, a victim of a conspiracy among elite former spies and military officers, and none of her powerful contacts can help. At least one of these contacts points to the heroes as alternate allies. Lynch appeals to the Player Characters for assistance, and leads them into the world of mercenaries, spies, and criminal thugs. Why can't Lynch's usual contacts help? Why did they target her friend?

TAKE OUT THE CHAMPION

A benefactor approaches the heroes with something they need—material or perhaps information. However, to win what they need, they must defeat a local champion in an underground cage fight. It's Clara Lynch, and she's not privy to the deal between the heroes and the benefactor, a mob boss and ex-mercenary she beat down months ago. The benefactor either hopes the PCs will beat her, or hopes she'll kill one of the heroes—and might use poison to frame her.

DOUBLE AGENT

> Wear a mask too long and it starts to become part of your face.

Double Agents are masters of disguise and intrigue, capable of blending into any situation. They have been trained to be the ultimate deceiver, always making their mark think they are on the same side. The Double Agent may pretend to be loyal to just one side or seem to serve multiple authorities at once, keeping their true allegiance a mystery. It is a testament to the value they provide that nations, businesses, and less-definable conspiracies rely on them, especially since their true loyalties are fluid and obscure. In many cases, spies are ordinary people who happen to have access to secret information. The Double Agent is a cut above these amateurs, having been trained to betray others. They may be conveniently placed individuals who excel in a crash course in espionage, true professional spies who prefer wit over codes and guns, elite undercover police, or even agents from terrorist organizations or strange conspiracies. More than a few began as con artists and street hustlers who found their way to a better class of client and victim.

A skilled Double Agent blends in, looking like nothing other than a loyal member of the team, though they may hint at an ambiguous commitment as a tactic, to keep targets off balance or feed them false intelligence from the other side. Some Double Agents work with the lowest-level members of an organization, trying not to draw any attention to themselves as they gain access to information and locations that would otherwise be off limits. Others focus on being very public, powerful supporters of those they betray, often working their way up to second-in-command and most-trusted general. Either way, the core element of the Double Agent's identity is that they seem either completely loyal, easily manipulated, or somehow indispensable in their positions, despite any perceived risks.

Double Agents are unlikely to be identified by outside observers unless they tip their hand and reveal their betrayal—or pretend to, in cases where they confess to be working for the enemy but claim to have turned. (The latter gambit technically makes the Double Agent a *triple* agent, but such operatives have the same abilities.) After all, if a Double Agent could be definitively identified, they wouldn't survive long.

A master of duplicity and etiquette, the Double Agent can be put in just about any unguarded social situation and will charm their way into belonging in moments. Organizations with security precautions take a little longer. Several of them start their career as being simple con men who are found by someone that recognizes their talent and offers formal training to enable them to excel and reach the next level. The difficult part is finding ways to ensure a Double Agent's loyalty.

The Double Agent is a social chameleon, able to blend in with just about any situation given the appropriate time to study their target and prepare. Their appearance will be tailored to fit in with their surroundings. When a Double Agent is working, they will adjust their dress, mannerisms, and even speech patterns to fit those of their infiltration target. Above all, a Double Agent is charming. They need to have a bit of a silver tongue to keep their position and assuage any concerns about their loyalty with a combination of pretended sentiment, hard work, and, when appropriate, useful-looking but irrelevant intelligence (real or not) from rival organizations the operative pretends to have penetrated for their "friends."

Most have minimal combat training to help them escape in case their cover is blown. However, Double Agents often have a well-planned exit strategy and some form of backup. A Double Agent's strength lies in never letting anyone know their true motives by the time they either slip silently away or create useful chaos once their role is revealed.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The Double Agent is a master of intrigue and will usually be able to talk their way out of just about any situation. When dealing with a Double Agent, it is often difficult to know where their loyalties lie. The following stories play upon the Double Agent's benign-looking but ultimately unreliable nature.

FIND THE SPY

A local crime lord the characters tolerate knows someone in their employ has been leaking information to the authorities. To deal with this matter, they seek outside help, recruiting the heroes to find the mole. The crime lord puts their top lieutenants at the characters' disposal, and one of them happens to be the mole: a Double Agent who's either an undercover law enforcement officer, or a freelance agent who's been turned by the law. Can the characters find the mole, and can they stand by and watch if the crime lord seeks out sadistic revenge?

HANDLE WITH CARE

One of the heroes' contacts is a Double Agent. After a misadventure that blows the agent's safe house, they panic

Double Agent

Abilities (Focuses)	
1	Accuracy (Pistols)
4	Communication (Deception, Etiquette, Investigation, Persuasion)
2	Constitution
2	Dexterity (Forgery, Sleight of Hand, Stealth)
1	Fighting
3	Intelligence
3	Perception (Empathy)
0	Strength
2	Willpower (Self-Discipline)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
12	18	28	43	12	13	13	2I/4B+2	+2	+3

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
SA Handgun	+3	2D6+3

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Benefit of the Doubt, Blend In (2 SP), Read the Room

Stunt—Blend In: For 2 SP, a Double Agent in an environment full of people (such as a party or busy street) may attempt to shift the attention away from them so that they can blend back into the crowd. In order to do so, the Double Agent rolls Communication (Persuasion) vs. the target's Willpower (Self-Discipline). If the Double Agent is successful, they shift attention to another member of the crowd, creating a distraction large enough for them to disappear from scrutiny. This allows the Double Agent to attempt to escape notice completely (which may require a Stealth test) or make them seem less important than a third party, who the Game Master should present as being more interesting and relevant than the Double Agent.

Masks Behind Masks: Double Agents are masters of convincing others that they are on the same side. As such, if a target's attitude toward the Double Agent shifts to Hostile or Very Hostile, the Double Agent may roll Communication (Persuasion) vs. the target's Willpower (Self-Discipline) to convince the target they are on the same side. If the Double Agent is successful, the target's attitude shifts to Neutral. The Double Agent has either come up with a new lie that affirms their loyalty, or has convinced the target they are really a triple agent, working to sow seeds of disinformation. If the Double Agent fails, the target's attitude shifts to Very Hostile if not there already.

Talents: Linguistics (Master), Oratory (Expert)

Equipment: Bullet-Resistant Cloth Body Armor, Multiple Fake IDs, SA Handgun

Threat: Moderate

and run to the characters, bleeding from multiple wounds. They pass off a package, saying that it's critical no one else finds it, and that if the characters deliver it to a specific place at an allotted time, they'll be rewarded in some meaningful

way, be it patriotic pride or cold cash. The problem isn't that the people the Double Agent took the package from will look for the heroes, but at the time of the handoff, they tell interested parties the characters were the ones who took it in the first place. And what's in that package anyway?

Double Agent Double Cross

A Double Agent needs heroes to support a deep-cover identity as a senior corporate manager. The Player Characters will be the agent's supposed management team, and they'll use the collective cover to steal important information, claiming that their help is needed to go undercover into a corporate environment to help recover some information. In truth, the corporation knows someone from the Double Agent's department is a spy, but not who, and the Double Agent recruited the characters to divert suspicion from themselves. When the building goes into lockdown, the characters must escape security forces or convince them who the real spy is.

Field Agent

Bullets or bright ideas, it all depends on the mission.

The Field Agent is the grunt soldier of intelligence communities, getting violent jobs done in unusual scenarios, after doing the intelligence work (or having it done for them) to get to the right place and moment. They are highly trained in a variety of tactics, able to get themselves in out of situations by stealth or force, as the situation requires. They don't carry arsenals on the job (and rumors they have an array of small, disguised gadgets are usually exaggerations), but focus on concealed or improvised weapons and using the environment to their advantage. Field Agents are bodyguards, a more sophisticated brand of criminal enforcer, discreet security personnel, thieves, stalkers, kidnappers, and assassins.

In the real world (and many Gritty campaigns), intelligence agencies have limited use for sneaky combatants, and usually retrain the few they require from the ranks of former soldiers, though human intelligence always requires someone who can follow persons of interest on foot or in a vehicle, and violently intervene in emergencies. Field agents in action-adventure films and fiction are often more competent, better funded, and better dressed. But in all situations, Field Agents rarely work alone. Technical specialists, local liaisons, analysts, and of course a Field Commander (see p. 35) all provide aid—the last most often when other plans have fallen apart, and the hammer takes over from the scalpel, so to speak. In emergencies, a Field Agent is the frontline instrument of the Field Commander's will. Without operational support, a Field Agent is far less dangerous, and in far more trouble, because being alone means something has seriously gone wrong.

Field Agents come from all walks of life, but most often represent governments or corporations, with a smattering of other allegiances (criminal, military, or revolutionary groups, for example) forming the minority. Fiercely loyal but often cynical, they trust in handlers and immediate allies over the agency that employs them. They know today's valued operative is tomorrow's cannon fodder. Field Agents are

Field Agent

Abilities (Focuses)	
2	Accuracy (Pistols, SMGs)
2	Communication (Deception, Investigation)
2	Constitution (Running)
2	Dexterity (Stealth)
2	Fighting (Light Blades)
1	Intelligence
2	Perception (Searching)
2	Strength (Climbing)
1	Willpower (Self-Discipline)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
12	22	26	31	12	12	12	4I/2B+1	+1	+1

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Dagger	+4	1D6+2
SA Handgun	+4	2D6+2

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Talents: Free Running (Novice), Improvisation (Novice)

Favored Stunts: Jury Rig, Silent Strike (2 SP), Whatever's Handy

Stunt—Silent Strike: By spending 2 SP after a successful Fighting-based attack, the Field Agent restrains and/or injures their enemy in a way that makes it impossible for them to speak, use a communications device, or otherwise make more noise than they would by moving during the struggle, until the end of the Field Agent's next turn. The target can't yell or reach an alarm button.

Support Staff: A Field Agent usually operates with a team of subject matter experts communicating by voice or text. This allows the character to be able to perform tasks where a focus is required to succeed at all, such as computer hacking or emergency surgery, even if they don't have the focus. They do not gain the missing focus' bonus, but may make the attempt. A Field Agent forced to rely on notes and briefings instead of real-time advice may only use this ability on tasks anticipated as part of the mission, and still fails when the Stunt Die comes up 1-3. If the Field Agent strays outside mission parameters and has no contact with their support staff, they can't use this ability.

Equipment: Bullet-Resistant Cloth Body Armor, Concealed Bodycam, Lockpicks, Magnetic Card Skimmer, Satellite-Linked Smartphone and Wireless Earpiece, SA Handgun

Threat: Minor

sometimes motivated by a sense of duty that overrides any fear of betrayal, but a few are just egotistical and believe they can escape any crisis with bullets and a plan.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The Field Agent is someone that the heroes will run into if they find themselves working with or going against a well-organized intelligence agency. The Field Agent is likely to be wary of the heroes, even if they are on the same side, unless the agency vouches for them.

PROVING USEFUL

The heroes are recruited to help infiltrate a paramilitary organization. The target organization has a large cache of explosives, and it's the characters' mission to find it before they use it in a terrorist attack. They're the tip of the spear, tasked with finding the site so that Field Agents can take it out. Ideally, the heroes should leave the site intact so "the Agency" can harvest useful intelligence; destroying it before the Field Agents show up displeases the Player Characters' clients and risks concealing other terrorist plots.

EMPTY NEST

Entering the field office of an allied intelligence agency, the protagonists discover everyone inside is dead—but their missions are active. A team of Field Agents is stranded halfway around the world on a time-sensitive mission. They need advice. The Player Characters can reach them through terminals in the office. Who raided the office? Will the Field Agents trust the PCs?

SURPRISE PIECE ON THE BOARD

As the heroes close a deal exchanging a large briefcase of money for a stolen prototype, Field Agents embedded in the other side's entourage take both prizes and escape. The stiffed prototype thieves blame the Player Characters, but to get to the bottom of things, both sides need to find out who the Field Agents are really working for. This is a tough proposition, since the Field Agents are mercenaries—even they don't know who's directing them by coded message and earpiece.

AGE, MODERN AGE

Pulpy and Cinematic Field Agents may be much more competent than the example here. Use the rules for beefing up characters in the **Introduction** or **Chapter 9** of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook* to create more competent Field Agents. In addition, you may wish to add new special qualities, such as the following:

KNOWN ENEMY (CINEMATIC)

The Field Agent has a Reputation Honorific (see **Chapter 10** of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*) they may invoke by dropping any cover and announcing who they really are (or at least, the code name they use in their own agency). Examples include "Callous Yet Determined Agent" or "Sadistic Assassin." Furthermore, this public revelation makes enemies suspect the Field Agent has another trick up their sleeve, which would be triggered if the operative's foes acted on this information. This prevents foes from sharing this information with anyone else for the remainder of the encounter.

SPY TECH (PULPY/CINEMATIC)

The Field Agent has one or more gadgets that can turn the tables in a tight spot. These provide 5 SP per session, which can be spent, in whole or in part, on any successful roll, whether it scores doubles or not, stacking with other sources of SP. For example, the character may have an explosive hidden in a pen that can be used on the Collateral Damage stunt. The exact devices and what they do aren't defined beforehand but when the bonus SP are spent. Alternately, spending 3 SP after a failed test gives the Field Agent a second roll.

FIELD COMMANDER

> Do exactly as I say, and there's a chance this might not all go to hell and I can get you out alive.

Usually, the Field Commander's in the van, calling the shots and directing their team on the inside. They function as the brains of the operation. Considered too valuable to risk within the team itself due to their operational knowledge, they stay a slight distance from the thick of it, in a mobile command center, field office, or other final link between an organization's headquarters and its field teams. In well-financed operations, Field Commanders lead a team of specialist advisors, covering signal intelligence, medicine, local knowledge, and anything else required. In smaller outfits, the Field Commander may be the only remote operative, and may even be the one who drives agents to and from the mission site.

Field Commanders are highly trained individuals, taught to assess situations and determine the best course of action as fast as possible. Field Commanders must maintain contingency plans for every anticipated variation in the mission. They are used to giving orders and having them followed without question. As confident, strong-willed individuals, they know how to give commands that break through fear-founded indecision and pull agents out of shocked paralysis. This requires a bond of trust between agents and their Field Commanders.

Field Commanders who knowingly betray their teams are especially despised among rank and file operatives. This isn't the same thing as sending a team into a situation where they're likely to be captured or killed as a feature of the mission—that's just business—but sometimes there's a fine line. Field Commanders aren't supposed to lie to agents, but sometimes their agency demands it. Prospective Field Commanders must show an aptitude for quick, objective thinking capable of helping agents navigate foreign streets and sending them to hopeless shootouts with equal efficiency.

The classic Field Commander is a former front-line operative for an intelligence agency who hasn't quite made it

to a desk job, but sits somewhere in between, closer to the front line than anyone else out of the field. Beyond intelligence agencies, Field Commanders work for private military, intelligence and security firms, law enforcement, and well-organized criminal enterprises. Due to a background on the front lines, a Field Commander may have several

FIELD COMMANDER

	Abilities (Focuses)
2	Accuracy (Pistols, Shotguns, SMGs)
3	Communication (Leadership +3)
1	Constitution
1	Dexterity (Driving)
1	Fighting
3	Intelligence (Computers, Navigation, Security, Tactics)
3	Perception (Searching, Seeing)
1	Strength
3	Willpower (Self-Discipline)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
11	17	22	37	11	12	12	4I/6B+1	+1	+2

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Combat Shotgun	+4	2D6+5

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Follow My Word (3 SP), High-Tech Hustle, When a Plan Comes Together

Stunt—Follow My Word: For 3 SP on a successful test related to communicating with or aiding their team, a Field Commander can inspire a subordinate they can communicate with in real time to competently follow an order. The subordinate gains a +2 bonus to the next test they attempt, if it is consistent with the Field Commander's order.

Don't Ask Questions: A Field Commander can give up a major action to enable certain characters to immediately take one minor or major action out of turn. This uses up the recipient's action, but allows them to ignore the normal initiative order. If the action takes place after the character's turn, it uses up an action on the character's next round. Qualifying recipients include members of the same organization, Field Agents under their command, and any character who has a Relationship with them where the Bond indicates they'd listen to the Field Commander's advice. A Field Commander can't use this ability on the same character two rounds in a row.

Never Alone: If a Field Commander is threatened and they have access to a communication network, they may attempt a TN 15 Communication (Leadership) test to call two Field Agents to aid them. The Field Agents arrive as soon as realistically possible and are almost always aware of the situation they're entering.

Talents: Command (Master), Inspire (Expert)

Equipment: Ballistic Plate Armor, Combat Shotgun, Laptop, Wireless Communications Gear

Threat: Moderate

surprising additional skills. The GM may modify their game statistics accordingly. The version below assumed the Field Commander's been at their job a few years, and their front-line abilities have degraded in favor of their new role.

When Field Commanders and Field Agents (see p. 34) work together, they form formidable teams. When a Field Agent performs incredible tasks and moves promptly from one goal to the next, it's a good indicator that a Field Commander is responsible for calling the shots.

THE FRONT DESK

A Field Commander usually sets up in the closest safe place to the operations site, in a vehicle, temporary office space, or even in ventilation shafts and other unlikely "command centers." This is not always the case. Sometimes the Field Commander might be thousands of miles away. This is usually the case when their team enters highly secure or hostile territory, where any temporary command post is likely to be discovered. A Field Commander's post possesses, at minimum, a means to communicate with agents in the field and reference material relevant to the mission. In contemporary settings, this would be a laptop with a reliable internet connection and wireless voice communications with the team, along with GPS data and electronic dossiers that can be called up with a click. In campaigns set before these technologies, a Field Commander uses radios, maps, file folders, and a prodigious memory to coordinate it all.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The Field Commander is responsible for a team and prefers to be aware of the details of the situation and control it as much as possible. Field Commanders act through their teams, so if they're forced to deal with the opposition directly, something has gone seriously wrong.

STOP THE INTERROGATION

A Field Commander's team is being held captive and interrogated on a remote island. Team members have anti-interrogation training but can only hold out for so long. Furthermore, the Field Commander's agency has a solution in place if the situation lasts longer than 24 hours: a cruise missile. The heroes have been recruited to rescue the captured team, eradicate or spoil any intelligence the enemy has gathered, and get out before everything blows up.

ROGUE COMMANDER

Out of disillusionment, treacherousness, or due to blackmail, the heroes' Field Commander has set them up to be killed or captured. The Player Characters need to survive and escape, find out why their Field Commander has turned against them, and deal with another team their turncoat handler has waiting in the wings to hunt them down.

PINCH HITTER

The heroes are at an elite social event, attempting to gain social status or information. At some point during their networking, one of them notices a small earpiece tucked out of the way on a windowsill. When they place it in their ear, a Field Commander on the other end informs them that unless they take the earpiece's previous owner's place, everyone at the event is going to die. The key is to find enemy agents embedded among the guests. Those enemies are in turn directed by their own Field Commander. Do they take out the enemy handler first, or deal with the threat agent by agent? Do they reveal the threat or keep quiet?

MEDIATOR

We can talk, but good faith is a two-way street.

A Mediator is no simple peacekeeper or dealmaker. This Non-Player Character works with powerful organizations that have reasons to hate each other, and enough power to cause serious trouble in their chosen arenas. Without a Mediator, these rivals might cause mob wars, economic collapses, or regime failures. These Mediators are the ones called in when two rival crime families need to broker peace after a boss' suspicious death, or when a corporation finds a government unwilling to honor terms of a shady agreement. The Mediator is a neutral, trusted party, able to distill a complex conflict into what each side wants, and what they're willing to give to the opposition.

Some Mediators are formally trained for the job. They bring an impressive knowledge of the law, bargaining tactics, applied psychology, and field-specific knowledge to the table. They may have studied labor relations or worked as diplomats. Others attained a position of trust in an ad hoc fashion. They retired from the competition in their fields, have social connections that made them ideal advisors, or developed a knack for negotiation that led to increasingly greater responsibilities. In the intelligence field, a Mediator may be a special position held by an agent working for a faction two belligerent groups can trust. In a Cold War game, an Austrian Mediator may facilitate communications between American and Soviet spies.

A Mediator's neutrality is their most useful asset. If it is ever discovered that they do have something to gain from one side's advantage, the consequences range from professional disgrace to a back-alley execution. Mediators earn their reputations through multiple, stressful negotiations. Every situation that ends with a peaceful resolution spreads their fame through their communities and prompts others to entrust more work to them. Because of their involvement with powerful organizations, Mediators are often privy to secret information. A Mediator who leaks information is almost as despised as one who chooses a side, unless it's done as a punitive act, or to balance the scales when meddlers throw negotiations off-kilter. Skilled Mediators know the proper channels to selectively spread information.

While one might envision a Mediator sitting between two groups at a big table, much of their work involves research and informal contacts. Mediators often lead fact-finding teams of their own, or temporarily employ agents to uncover critical information. It's not the Mediator's job to settle disputes through platitudes and pure oration, but to

Mediator

Abilities (Focuses)	
0	Accuracy
3	Communication (Bargaining +3, Etiquette)
1	Constitution
0	Dexterity
0	Fighting
3	Intelligence (Business)
2	Perception (Empathy)
0	Strength
3	Willpower (Faith)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
10	10	12	17	10	10	10	0I/0B+1	+1	+1

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Pocket Pistol	+0	1d6+2

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Cards on the Table, Hold On! (3 SP), Let's Make a Deal, See Need (2 SP)

Stunt—Hold On!: For 3 SP, the Mediator can delay or interrupt action, including combat, between any parties they have not been seen to act against. This stunt works on anyone the Mediator can communicate with, and creates a 1-round window where actions to being harm (including, but not limited to attack rolls) suffer a -3 penalty to tests, but social actions which are not intended to provoke harm or gain an advantage in combat enjoy a +3 bonus.

Talents: Intrigue (Master)

Stunt—See Need: For 2 SP, a Mediator can discover how to improve a Non-Player Character's attitude by an additional step. This doesn't actually improve the attitude, but reveals what could be done to improve it based on what the Mediator could reasonably discover.

Useful Asset: A Mediator is viewed as a valuable asset to all parties involved in the negotiation, even if they do not like the situation or the deals being proposed. As such, parties engaged in the negotiation are unlikely to want to incite violence against the Mediator. If any party does decide to attack the Mediator, either directly or indirectly, the Mediator may attempt a TN 13 Communication (Bargaining) test to talk them out of any violent action. The violent party may still decide to leave the negotiation or attack someone else, but they will refrain from attacking the Mediator. Player Characters may ignore this quality, but suffer a penalty equal to the Mediator's Stunt Die result on their first attack. The Mediator may use this quality in conjunction with the Hold On! stunt to repeatedly interfere with combat.

Friends in High Places: If a Mediator is attacked and has access to some form of communication (cell phone, email, etc.), they can ask concerned parties to come to their aid. The composition of this rescue party is based on what would be appropriate for the campaign and individual Mediator. In the case of a labor mediator, rescuers might be police, while a diplomat may be able to rely on their country's foreign intelligence service. Furthermore, if the Mediator is unable to initiate any form of communication and fails to appear for normal personal and professional activities, allies will start looking for them in 1d6+1 days.

Equipment: Briefcase, Laptop, Pocket Pistol, Smartphone

Threat: Minor

synthesize the positions of all sides with the objective facts of a conflict, finding points of commonality, hidden obstacles, and, in the end, a way forward. The expertise of a Mediator's contacts directly affects their ability to function. Partisan moles, false information, and incompetent help will ruin even the best Mediator's efforts.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Mediators stay out of situations that do not involve them as much as possible. As such, they will rarely be ones to reach out to a group of heroes, unless the heroes are somehow involved in a conflict the Mediator is currently overseeing.

THE BEST MEDICINE

A dispute over who owns a lifesaving medication will soon conclude with the Mediator deciding in favor of the corporation with the superior claim, but that company plans on burying the drug in favor of one that is less effective and cheaper to produce. Without the better drug, some people suffering from the disease it treats will suffer and perhaps even die. A group of these patients and their associates pleads with the heroes to do something—anything—to sway the Mediator. If the Player Characters take the job, then fail or change their minds, this same group will take revenge.

CRITICAL NEGOTIATIONS

As their military forces gather in a disadvantaged third country, two rival superpowers discover their respective efforts to plant nuclear bombs in each other's capitals have succeeded. One false move in their conflict and twin mushroom clouds will result in mutual death and anarchy. A Mediator in the intelligence service of a respected neutral country has agreed to negotiate the disarmament and withdrawal of these hidden weapons, and the heroes have been selected to act as escorts and independent investigators. They'll discover that this is a ploy by generals and senior officials in each rival country to seize power. The last thing they want is a successful negotiation. And of course, the spies who planted the bombs have started to get their own ideas about how things should proceed.

SAVE OUR MEDIATOR

Two rival criminal conspiracies enlist the heroes to find their missing Mediator: a retired gangster who is the only one capable of preventing a bloody mob war. The Mediator is an eccentric free spirit who could be in one of many strange places with unusual people, but the longer he's gone, the more third parties get it into their heads they could take advantage of the situation. Smaller gangs think the war will benefit them. Police believe they can turn the Mediator into their informant. Junior members of each mob think a war might open senior positions in their respective organizations. They're all after the Mediator. What will the heroes do?

PUBLICIST

> I could ruin your career before breakfast in 280 characters or less, or I can make you a star. What'll it be?

Behind every successful public figure is a Publicist. It doesn't matter if the individual is an athlete, musical sensation, artist, or even a politician. Once anyone enters the public eye, a Publicist gets involved, on retainer, as a member of a management team, or as a third party hoping to exploit that fame. A Publicist excels in making the public focus on well-crafted narratives about the target celebrity—stories which may be more than a little disconnected from the truth. Publicists avoid attention themselves, but they have their finger on the pulse of what the audience wants.

Because of their skills, these Non-Player Characters are well-connected, often crossing class and cultural boundaries with ease. Their phones contain the numbers and social media accounts of any number of famous people (though often as pseudonyms). More importantly, when they make contact, those influencers answer. Ignoring your Publicist is a sure way to guarantee your slide into insignificance, if not infamy. An angry Publicist may seek vengeance for the slight of being ignored.

Publicists come from all walks of life, though many grew up with connections they would later exploit for professional purposes. Publicists from humbler backgrounds have applied their skills to themselves first, cultivating the ties they use from that point on. It takes drive and dedication to fight for someone else and get results, especially in a world where everyone craves fame. To cut through the noise, a Publicist needs a loud and dedicated voice as well as a stalwart demeanor. A good Publicist has the gift of gab, expressed at parties, in elevator pitches for projects, and in devastating insults aimed at clients' rivals.

Most Publicists serve multiple clients, unless an individual is so important they require constant media manipulation. The elite of the elite may call upon a personal Publicist's entire attention. Furthermore, to spin the truth, one needs to know what it is in the first place. Publicists know their clients' indiscretions and failings, as well as those of other famous individuals. Most observe a rough code of ethics where they won't reveal personal secrets that are genuinely nobody else's business, but sometimes determining what qualifies for that protection is either hard to figure out or interpreted to the Publicist's personal benefit. Sometimes the line between discretion and blackmail gets blurred.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

If the heroes ever enter the public eye, they will likely be approached by a Publicist. If not, adventures involving celebrities will attract a Publicist's interest. Among their duties, the Publicist serves as the first line of defense for their clients.

HELPING THE HAND THAT FEEDS

When a city council member takes note of the heroes, they send their Publicist to enlist their aid. The politician wants to be associated with the Player Characters in the public eye. Once the Publicist makes the connection seem real to the average person, the councilor reveals that blackmailers know about a past indiscretion: a loan from a relative in the mob that financed the politician's most recent run for office. The Publicist has made sure the general public will believe the PCs are partly responsible for anything the councilor does, so it's in everyone's best interest for the heroes to find the blackmailers, whether they

want to or not. How do the characters get out from under the thumb of this PR threat? Who are the blackmailers?

THE SET UP

The heroes get caught up in a rally. When fascist rioters intrude, they protect decent people from them, earning recognition on social media and a small dose of fame. A Publicist contacts the heroes and offers to help them shape the narrative and sell their stories, but the harder the Publicist works, the angrier the fascists get, and they plan to make their mark by taking out the Player Characters in spectacular fashion.

THE COST OF A WHITE SUIT

After the heroes witness a famous singer shoot and critically injure a fan outside a show, the singer's Publicist warns them to not go public with what they witnessed. If they agree, the Publicist will make it worth their while. At that point, the heroes can agree to the Publicist's terms or go up against the Publicist and risk facing their wrath in the social arena. Either way, the Player Characters will get pulled into a web of media distortions, a criminal investigation, and a musician who grows more violent and erratic every day with the help of an entourage shielding them from any consequences.

PUBLICIST

Abilities (Focuses)	
0	Accuracy
5	Communication (Bargaining +3, Expression +3, Persuasion +3)
1	Constitution
1	Dexterity
0	Fighting
4	Intelligence (Art, Business, Current Affairs +3, Law)
2	Perception (Empathy)
1	Strength
3	Willpower (Self-Discipline)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
11	13	23	53	11	12	13	0I/0B+1	+2	+3

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Stun Gun	+0	1D6+2

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Don't Cross Me (5 SP), Sway the Crowd

Good Connections: A Publicist can reach out to their contacts and share a story, knowing that it will be passed on to the general public. Given the Publicist's connections, once they share details with a trusted ally, it will become publicly observable within 1d6 minutes over modern social media, and unless a powerful organization makes a concentrated effort to squash the story, it will propagate through modern media at an accelerated rate and become common knowledge.

Insurance: If ruined or murdered, a Publicist has methods in place to destroy the reputations of anyone they would have suspected of the act beforehand. This acts as an application of the *good connections* quality except that it shares believable information (true or not) and apparently genuine evidence to change the attitudes of anyone who lays eyes on the information to Hostile or Very Hostile (though the Game Master may decide close friends, family and loved ones are exempt). If the Publicist isn't around to direct this attack, former associates refine it, so it most likely harms the right targets. A Publicist may allude to this ability and the GM should make it clear that the threat is a credible one, though Player Characters may choose to ignore it.

Known Reputation: Given their pervasive influence, Publicists pay 1 SP less for Reputation Stunts, and can use 1 SP Reputation Stunts for 0 SP at any time.

Stunt—Don't Cross Me: For 5 SP, a Publicist can make the target immediately back down from a challenge with a threat of blackmail, or revenge from contacts and connections (see *insurance*, following). The target must immediately remove themselves from the scene, retreating without saying another word or attempting to offer up a social challenge. This is similar to the Enrage stunt, but the target is unwilling to attack the Publicist for fear of repercussions.

Talents: Contacts (Master), Intrigue (Novice), Oratory (Master)

Equipment: Business Card Wallet, Smartphone, Sports Car, Stun Gun, Tablet

Threat: Major

ROBOT DOG

> Anything you do just prompts a new path on its decision tree. Its options increase. And while you get tired and wounded, your options shrink.

"Robot Dog" is a generic term, chosen by the security robotics industry to evoke familiar pets and working animals. Several models have just been introduced to the civilian market, their designs perfected in private labs and on obscure military missions. Civilian robot dogs are brightly colored, with a head-like sensor suite (infrared, LIDAR). They weigh about 300 pounds, including a rubberized case, the aforementioned "head," and insect-like legs, which give it a three-foot height. A disc where a one might imagine a tail supports optional attachments, such as a mechanical arm to open doors. The military version dispenses with the head to embed sensors in the body, which is bare metal instead of rubber. The attachment disc is in its center and usually uses the same railing system for attachments as the civilian model. Theoretically, both models could sport the military version's weapons systems, though the civilian model isn't supposed to be able to operate them.

When powered on for the first time, it goes through an out-of-box experience to familiarize itself with its home territory and the people it will interact with. Until this step is performed, the Robot Dog is nothing other than a large, expensive paperweight. The civilian model guides owners through each step in a friendly, slightly silly voice, as one would imagine belonging to a cartoon talking dog. It recognizes its masters through facial and voice recognition, along with gait analysis and a password. The military version is set up through a terminal, and logs mission parameters. It identifies friendly personnel as the civilian model does, or via worn IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) radio tags.

Robot Dogs draw programming from a central server over Wi-Fi and next-generation cellular networks, though they can perform simple tasks if they can't connect to their servers. Military models add satellite communications to the available options. When fully connected, a Robot Dog follows a combination of set and dynamically generated behaviors within parameters set by its owner and function; however, having been rushed to market, there is no hardware-based obstacle to prevent a civilian model from using military parameters.

Civilian models obey commands to walk around, film, and act as a personal computer. They can also go on patrol. With the arm attachment, they can open doors. If confronted with an intruder or fire, they sound a loud alarm and call emergency services, filming whatever they see. They cannot attack anyone. Military models can do the same, or be set to several combat modes allowing them to use various degrees of force, ranging from body slams and and touch-based electroshock to unleashing attached weapon systems. Default mission programming prompts it to protect identified friends by returning fire and providing cover. Both versions can be operated by smartphone or dedicated controller, either to alter automated behaviors or control directly, like a conventional drone.

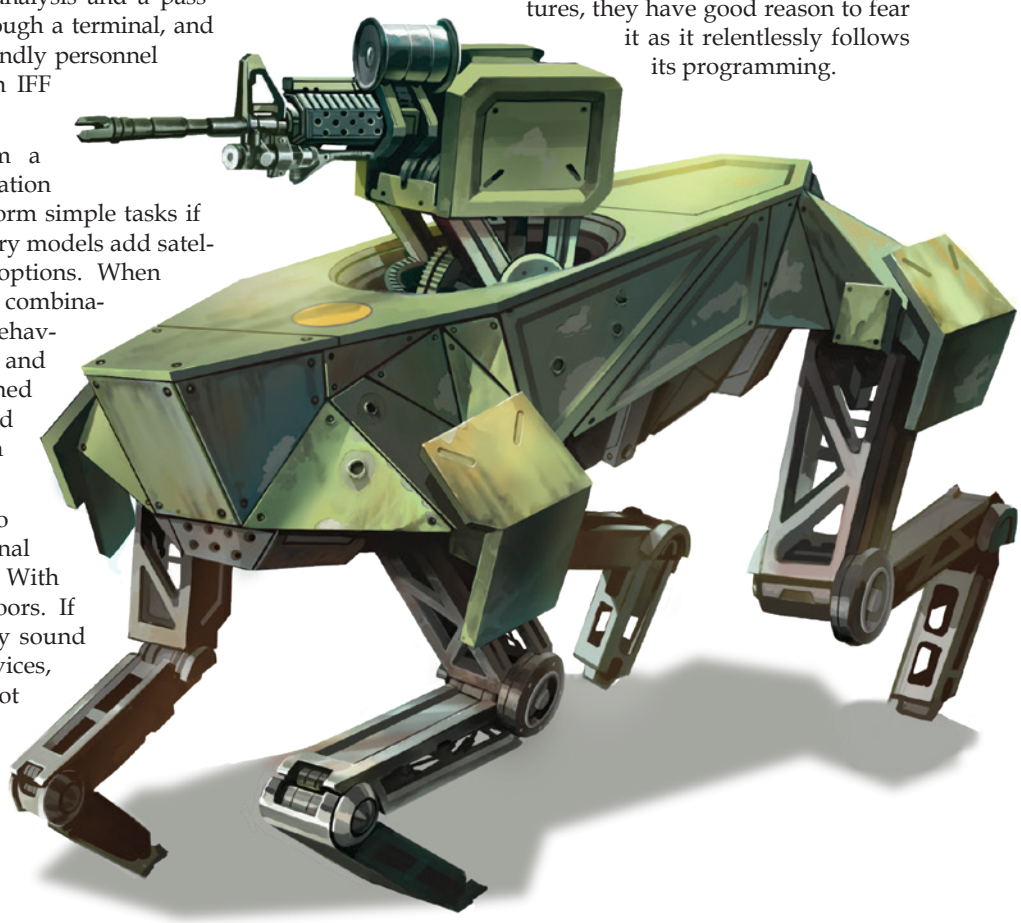
A Robot Dog's weakness is its limited power. Current models can operate for 48 hours on immobile standby, eight hours on patrol, walking slowly, and two hours of more vigorous activity.

NEXT GENERATION MODELS

The Robot Dog listed here is only slightly futuristic. Game Masters may wish for a version of this robot that pushes further into science fiction to match the characters in **Chapter 5: Science's Edge**. To create a more advanced version, GMs may use the rules for **Beefing Up Adversaries and Allies**, in the **Introduction**, and add additional special qualities using the rules for extraordinary technology in **Chapter 5** and the options in **Appendix I** of this book. Later models will also have increased operating time before they require a recharge. Use these options sparingly, since the Robot Dog is already a formidable opponent.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Few things are more terrifying to come across in combat than the Robot Dog. It is not likely to seek out the heroes, but if they find it during the course of their adventures, they have good reason to fear it as it relentlessly follows its programming.



Robot Dog

Abilities (Focuses)	
3	Accuracy
0	Communication
5	Constitution
2	Dexterity
5	Fighting (Slam +3)
0	Intelligence
6	Perception (Hearing, Seeing, Tracking)
4	Strength
0	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
12	35	91	136	12	13	15	10I/5B+4	+6	+7

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Slam Attack	+8	1d6+3
Assault Weapon System	+3	2d6+3
Autonomous Marksman System	+3	3d6+3
Squad Support Weapon	+3	3d6
Stun Body	+5	1d6

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Heavy Pin (4 SP), Knock Prone, Lightning Attack, Momentum

AI: A Robot Dog isn't truly intelligent but follows preset behaviors combined with heuristics that govern its reaction to unusual situations. When a Robot Dog is confronted with something unusual, such as an obstacle it must push out of the way, make a TN 11 Intelligence (no focus) test as a minor action. If the test succeeds, the Robot Dog deals with the unusual situation, and need no longer roll if the same or a very similar situation arises. If it fails, it cannot act until it either succeeds or a higher priority stimulus prompts familiar behaviors. If cut off from its servers, the target number for such Intelligence tests increases to 16. The Robot Dog's AI also limits it to its Favored Stunts, Anti-Vehicle Stunts, and stunts associated with specific *attachments*.

Attachments: A Robot Dog comes with one attachment point that, when equipped with a purpose-built module, gives it additional capabilities. Certain attachments can only be used in military mode (see **Op Modes**) or in drone mode by military models, unless someone hacks the Robot Dog. Attachments also provide access to additional stunts. Current models can only support one attachment at a time. Attachments include:

Arm (All Modes): The Robot Dog gets a three-foot long, three-fingered arm. This arm has a Strength of 2 and allows the Robot Dog to open unlocked doors as well as lift and carry objects. (Locked doors are a novel problem, as per the *AI* quality.) **Stunts:** None.

Assault Weapon System (Military Mode): This attachment is the equivalent of an automatic rifle with eight reloads. In Gritty Mode, it benefits from the Robot Dog's *automatic targeting* quality. **Stunts:** Long Burst, Overwatch, Strafe

Autonomous Marksman System (Military Mode): This attaches an anti-materiel rifle with four integral reloads to the Robot Dog. In Gritty Mode, it benefits from the Robot Dog's *automatic targeting* quality. **Stunts:** Collateral Damage, Expose, Knock Prone. Attacks with this system get 1 free SP to devote to these stunts.

Squad Support Weapon (Military Mode): This is an automatic grenade launcher, which fires miniaturized fragmentation grenades as a semiautomatic weapon with a Range of 300 meters, a Capacity of 4 and four reloads. In Gritty Mode, it benefits from the Robot Dog's *automatic targeting* quality. **Stunts:** Collateral Damage, Overwatch, Short Burst

Automatic Targeting (Gritty): A military-mode Robot Dog using a ranged weapon attachment automatically hits. Make the attack roll anyway, to determine whether it generates stunt points. This quality is best suited to Gritty games, as it models emerging capabilities in real-world targeting systems.

Hackable: A Robot Dog may be hacked via its network connection or, if this is turned off, using a custom hardline that comes with it. If the hardline is not available, a substitute might be jury-rigged with a TN 13 Intelligence (Electronics or Tinkering) test. Switching a Robot Dog's *op mode* without a password and proper biometric input (facial recognition and fingerprint on an input device, or facial and gait recognition in sensor range) requires a TN 16 Intelligence (Computers) test. Changing the people it recognizes or its behaviors within an *op mode* requires a TN 13 Intelligence (Computers) test.

Op Modes: A Robot Dog has three *op modes*, which determine how it functions. Civilian models may be switched between civilian and drone mode by authorized users. Military models may be switched to any mode by authorized users. Mode switching without permission, or switching a civilian model to military mode, requires hacking, as noted under *hackable*.

Civilian Mode: The Robot Dog may patrol an area, respond to commands from authorized users, or sound an alarm or call emergency services when confronted with intruders, a fire, or when commanded by anyone using a name given to it when it's set up. It may not attack anyone, and if approached by a human, will get out of the way.

Drone Mode: The Robot Dog may be operated as a drone. In these cases, it uses its owner's Accuracy, Dexterity, Fighting, and Perception (the last gains the benefit of the *sensors* quality). The owner uses a custom controller or a smartphone app. If the app is used, the owner suffers a -2 penalty to any test to pilot it. A civilian Robot Dog in drone mode cannot use attached weapons unless it's hacked to allow military mode operations.

Military Mode: The Robot Dog will perform any task, including autonomously using lethal force, given to it by an authorized user. Rules of engagement identifying who is an enemy must be well-defined, or it may attack allies or not identify enemies. The Robot Dog may not be commanded to attack with a vocal prompt unless this has been set up ahead of time.

Robot: As a robot, the Robot Dog is immune to hazards which only affect living things, but if damaged, it must be repaired by a qualified technician. Its tough chassis provides additional Health and armor, which have already been figured into its game statistics. It can stand still for 48 hours, walk for eight hours, and engage in combat and running pursuit for two hours before being recharged. It takes 30 minutes to reach 50% power, and 90 minutes to reach 100%.

Sensors: A Robot Dog actively searching for a target adds +2 to Perception (Sight) and Perception (Tracking) tests. This also eliminates any penalties for darkness.

Stun Body (Military Model Only): A military Robot Dog is capable of delivering an electroshock stun through a limb or chassis. If a *stun body* attack hits, any unarmored target must succeed at a Constitution (Stamina) check with a TN of 10 + the attack's initial damage (before stunts) or be paralyzed for 1d6 rounds.

Stunt—Heavy Pin: For 4 SP, a Robot Dog can knock a target prone and jump on them, attempting to pin them to the ground. This maneuver functions the same as the normal Pin stunt. However, if the target loses the opposed Fighting (Grappling) roll, they remain pinned until either the Robot Dog lets them up or they pass a TN 14 Strength (Might) test as a minor action on their turn.

Improved Armor (Military Only): A military model may be fitted with additional armor that improves its Armor Rating to 12I/8B, but doing so imposes a -2 armor penalty.

Equipment: Attachments, Charging Station, Controller, Large Crate, Manual

Threat: Dire

VIOLENT AWAKENING

The heroes receive a call for help from the manufacturing company responsible for making the Robot Dogs. One spontaneously activated in military mode on the premises, identified all intruders as enemies, and in a spontaneous learning behavior, armed itself with an assault weapon system being tested on site. It's now attacking anyone who enters the factory. The Robot Dog needs to be neutralized with the utmost discretion. How did this happen anyway?

MYSTERIOUS PROTECTOR

When a homeless individual is assaulted, a civilian Robot Dog slams into the attackers, driving them away. From this point forward, the Robot Dog protects this person, staying by their side, occasionally asking in the civilian model's goofy voice for a recharge. Is this Robot Dog being controlled by someone, or is it acting autonomously?

KILLER K9

At a gritty multiple murder scene, one victim seems to have been beaten with a metal object, while another's corpse is riddled with military-issue rounds from a fully automatic weapon. The victims were armed, and a few of their bullets can be found at the scene, flattened and with traces of titanium and paint on them. The killer didn't leave any physical evidence except for an oddly shaped piece of steel. Nobody was seen entering the area in a vehicle, except for a delivery van, which dropped off a box at the back of an adjacent warehouse. Once the characters discover a military Robot Dog is responsible, they must find out who the operator is and why they killed these people in particular.

STUNT PERFORMER

> You need me to drive the car over that ramp, then jump out of the vehicle before it crashes into the lake, then jump up and be ready to fight? Sounds easier than my last shoot.

Even with advances in CGI and holographic projections, there is still a role for someone willing to risk life and limb for the entertainment industry. The Stunt Performer is the one willing to jump forward and fill those shoes. They do it for the adrenaline rush, for the fame and glory, or because it is the easiest way they've found to make a living.

Regardless of what drives them to take on this occupation, the Stunt Performer has courage bordering on bravado. They rarely, if ever, will back down from a task because it is too dangerous. And if they do, the challenge probably goes beyond simply risky, to something so difficult and hazardous no sane director would ask anyone to do it. A few Stunt Performers attempt these tasks anyway, but are more likely to do so in scenarios where they're the main attraction and not pretending to be someone else. If you're going to jump the Grand Canyon in a rocket, they *better* know your name!

All successful Stunt Performers have had some degree of training. Athletes, martial artists, physically talented actors, race car drivers, or people with military and security training enhance what they know with on-the-job training as they jump from one task to the next. Beyond occasional workshops, it is rare for them to receive formal training. Most people in this role stumbled into it by having some related knowledge and being willing to do something no one else would while looking passably like one of the leads. It can pay reasonably well in addition to giving the Stunt Performer a healthy dose of adrenaline on a regular basis, but extracts a fine in exhaustion, injuries, and unstable employment, moving from gig to gig. Once a Stunt Performer has been around for a while, they earn a reputation and start making solid contacts. Working in this role may give them close access to celebrities. Beyond doubling for characters in film and television, Stunt Performers may become entertainers, doing spectacular tricks for an audience under their own names.

Stunt Performer

Abilities (Focuses)	
1	Accuracy (Pistols, Rifles)
2	Communication (Animal Handling, Performing)
3	Constitution
3	Dexterity (Acrobatics, Driving, Riding)
1	Fighting (Brawling, Light Blades)
0	Intelligence
1	Perception
2	Strength
3	Willpower (Courage)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
13	23	38	53	13	13	14	0I/0B+3	+4	+4

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Unarmed	+3	1D3+2

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Fake Attack (3 SP), Making an Entrance, Play Dead

Stunt—Fake Attack: For 3 SP, a Stunt Performer can make it look like they genuinely attacked someone but missed. This can be combined with an existing attack (causing a hit to turn into a near miss), or can be a fake attack launched in addition to an action, which doesn't use up the Stunt Performer's actions. If combined with an existing attack, the target may pretend to have been hit with a TN 14 Communication (Performing) test.

Fall Well: A Stunt Performer knows how to deal with a fall or full-body impact, such as from a car crash. Reduce the hazard's damage by 1d6. If the Stunt Performer uses a major action to prepare for the hazard (such as by jumping from a height or intentionally crashing a car), reduce the hazard's damage by 2d6 instead. Safety gear and other features can lower such a hazard's damage even further.

I'm Fine: Every Stunt Performer has suffered an injury but had to power through it to earn a paycheck. As a result, every Stunt Performer knows how to hide their injuries. If another character tries to see if the Stunt Performer is injured, make an opposed test of the observer's Perception (Empathy) or Intelligence (Medicine) versus the Stunt Performer's Communication (Performing).

I'm Hit: With a successful TN 12 Communication (Performing) test in the presence of a real or fake attack (it's TN 14 for anyone else to pretend to be hit by a fake attack, and they can't pretend to be hit by an ineffective real attack), a Stunt Performer can successfully pretend to be struck by an attack that missed, or more injured than they really were by an attack that hit. The Stunt Performer can even pretend to be knocked out or killed, but pretending to be dead fails on close examination.

Talents: Animal Training (Expert), Emergency Care (Novice)

Equipment: Emergency Medical Kit, Makeup Kit, Prop Gun, Prop Sword

Threat: Moderate

Over time, a Stunt Performer starts to develop a specialty they become known for and excel in above any others. When this happens, their game statistics should change to reflect this specialty. For example, a Stunt Performer who specialized in car chases should gain increased Dexterity, while one who specializes in stage combat earns a higher Fighting ability. Most people in the trade are younger, as injuries and poor job security encourage people to move on. That said, an older Stunt Performer will have significantly more skill.

The statistics listed here are for a Stunt Performer who has all-around ability but specializes in working with animals.

Adventure Hooks

A high-adrenaline Non-Player Character, the Stunt Performer tends to be found in interesting, dangerous-looking environments. Despite the fact that stunts are designed to be as safe as possible, heights, fast cars, and other factors complicate action scenes they appear in, both onscreen and in encounters.

A Dangerous Play

A local big-budget musical generates renown and positive reviews as it tours, but in the latest run, a Stunt Performer's rigging snaps in the middle of a flight across the stage. They narrowly avoid death by twisting out of the way of fence scenery—and get fired, because they were responsible for the rigging. The Stunt Performer swears the accident couldn't have happened, which suggests sabotage, and asks the heroes to investigate. Who's responsible for the accident, and why?

Doppelgangers

A Stunt Performer asks the heroes to act as consultants on an upcoming production, and brings in actors and other Stunt Performers to learn exactly how the Player Characters operate. The Stunt Performer's team even takes head and body shots of the heroes. So, when the Player Characters are fingered for a heist, and footage shows people who look just like them acting as they do, the true suspects are obvious. The heroes have to find them while dodging the police.

Driver Damned

The Stunt Performer bought the car—a cool American classic used for closeups and non-damaging stunts—at the end of a production they worked on, unaware that it used to belong to someone who not only wants it back very badly but seems determined to kill anyone who's driven it. This pursuing crime lord isn't a slouch at the wheel either, and has an arrangement with law enforcement to avoid interference. The Stunt Performer needs the heroes' protection in a race across the city and beyond, to somewhere the crime lord has no influence. Is the crime lord driven only by sentiment for the car, or is something hidden inside?

CHAPTER 3

HORRORS & WITNESSES

Some creatures exist outside mundane mortal ken. Some are urban legends with a little too much truth to them. Others are the stuff of nightmares and midnight movies, brought to terrifying life—or something stranger than life. Those who confront these monsters risk falling to evil and depravity. Minds bend and break. Innocents succumb to manipulation. Desperate people take extreme measures to fight evil forces, until they become as depraved as the beings they hunt. Some monsters gain real power from immoral acts and frayed sanity, and a few even reproduce in the presence of moral or psychic darkness.

HORRIFYING GENESIS

Few horrors manifest in a vacuum. Some are born of malevolent design, and others are the sentient fallout from inhuman powers. Dream Shards spill free from nightmares which seize children, psychics, and arcanists. Cacodemons evolve from mania and rage, where concentrated malefic thoughts emerge as a twisted simulacrum of their originator, or a figure composed of pure imagined malice. Anyone hoping to defeat a horror must understand its origins and history, because these provide clues as to its motives, capabilities, and weaknesses.

There is no defined family tree or food chain for these adversaries, though students of the paranormal posit that, in their meddling, Puppeteers and Chameleons give rise to Cacodemons and Anomalies. They believe Psychic Vampires must exist, because every source of nourishment travels through ecosystems, and every ecosystem has room for an apex predator, or at least a scavenger. Then again, Cacodemons may emerge from the psychic residue of crime and corruption. An Anomaly may blink into existence after scientists discover a bizarre natural law, or with no clear genesis point at all. The true nature of a horror is up to the Game Master. In some campaigns, all horrors may arise from a dark cosmic secret, but GMs may believe it's better to give each one a unique origin.

While terrifying monsters and people who walk with horrors have many origins, this chapter keys beings from the horror genre to psychic powers and phenomena to further distinguish them from the fantasy creatures found in **Chapter 1: Arcane Beings**. By default, the horrors in this chapter emerge from the darkest corners of psychics' dreams. They are residues of twisted psychic projections and strange mental attacks. They're the still-moving shadows left by a dead psychic's passing. Many of the horrors and witnesses in this chapter possess psychic powers or are born of psychic phenomena.

The Game Master should feel free to give the creatures magical or technological backgrounds instead, if they desire or even leave their origins undefined—horror is the cousin of mystery, after all. Some of the fantasy creatures in **Chapter 1** are quite frightening as well, and would not be terribly out of place in a horror-themed *Modern Age* game. In the *Threefold* campaign setting, horrors often come from the netherworlds: alternate realities that ancient people (and

some modern) might have identified with Hell, or other afterlives of the dishonored, tortured dead.

Psychic Premonitions

Psychic protagonists might sense the presence of horrors but not necessarily understand what they're dealing with. This happens when a horror is close by, or when it has taken an interest in the psychic or individuals it shares a Relationship with. The psychic may receive these impressions while conscious or asleep. In these cases, the Game Master may make a TN 13 Perception (Empathy) test for the psychic. If the test succeeds, the result of the Stunt Die determine what the psychic experiences. Once the character receives an impression, they don't get another one until the entity does something new and significant.

Psychic Premonitions

Stunt Die	Premonition
1	A vague but significant sense of unease.
2	Recurring patterns of words, numbers, or images hinting of the horror, in dreams or found in the environment.
3	A distinct vision of a person, place, or thing related to the horror.
4	A symbolic impression of the horror, which can be deciphered to provide useful information.
5	A clear impression of the horror.
6	A clear impression of the horror in a likely future event.

If the GM prefers horrors with an arcana emphasis, they can allow arcanists to experience psychic impressions as well. In games where extraordinary powers are not available to Player Characters, Game Masters have two options. First, they can decide that any character can receive psychic impressions. Second, the GM can decide that a character may acquire the ability to receive psychic impressions by taking it instead of a talent degree.

The Darkness Meter

Horror protagonists are often defined by their moral choices. This is a common element between the slowest-moving Gothic novel and modern slasher films. Characters who make poor moral choices seem destined to end up in the monster's jaws, though in many cases, the punishment doesn't fit the crime—and some of the "crimes" hardly fit modern notions of right and wrong. Plenty of horror media doesn't follow this rule at all. Monsters prey on the virtuous and evil alike. But if you wish to connect a character's outcomes to their moral decisions, the Darkness Meter provides an option

The Darkness Meter is similar to a Relationship in that it has a 0 to 5 rating and fuels stunts. Unlike a standard Relationship, the Darkness Meter is employed on stunts used *against* the character. In campaigns using the Darkness Meter, every character has one, starting with a 0 rating.

EXAMPLE MORAL CODES

The Game Master can use one of the moral codes here as-is, or use them as the basis for one in their own games

EVERYDAY MORALITY

Bad Deeds	Good Deeds
Theft and Fraud	Charitable Giving
Lying for Personal Advantage	Telling the Truth Even When it's Hard
Physical Assault	Relieving Pain and Distress
Causing Prolonged or Intense Suffering (2)	Defeating True Evil (2)
Premeditated Murder (2)	Saving a Life (2)

GOTHIC MORALITY

Bad Deeds	Good Deeds
Minor Impious Behavior	Pious Behavior
Disobeying Family	Sacrificing Oneself for Family
Self-Indulgent Behavior	Denying Worldly Pleasures
Blasphemy (2)	Saintly Self-Sacrifice (2)
Harming True Love (2)	Defending True Love (2)

AXIOMS

Instead of a Relationship Bond description, the Darkness Meter has an Axiom: a description of the character's most important moral beliefs. Characters might possess the following Axioms:

- Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
- Vengeance belongs to God, not humans.
- If you're not fighting injustice, you're helping it.
- Everyone deserves a second chance if they're sincerely trying to atone.
- Do not succumb to temptations of the flesh.
- Family before everything.

THE MORAL CODE

Personal Axioms join a universal Moral Code consisting of a list of good and bad deeds. Unlike Axioms, the Moral Code govern all characters, and represents the moral themes of the campaign world. The Moral Code doesn't have to represent what the group believes is right and wrong, but what fits the campaign's theme, tone, and genre. Nevertheless, the group should all agree on the Moral Code in play. If it wouldn't be fun to use, it's not worth using.

While each player picks their own Axiom, the Game Master sets the Moral Code by picking five good deeds and five bad deeds. In each category, two deeds are especially bad and two are especially good. The two especially significant deeds are listed with a (2).

By default, the GM should always inform their player beforehand if their character's action is a good or bad deed, and is the final arbiter of which actions qualify as such according to the campaign's Moral Code. This requires trust in the GM's ability to make interesting and fair rulings. If a group is still learning to play together, it might be better to set these rules aside until everyone feels ready to use them.

INCREASING & DECREASING DARKNESS

When a character does a bad deed, their Darkness Meter increases by 1. If the bad deed is serious (as listed with a 2) it goes up by 2. Good deeds lower its rating by 1, or 2 for (2) deeds. If a character violates their personal Axiom, their Darkness Meter increases by 2 as if doing a major bad deed. A character can't gain or lose more than 2 points per game session, and can't have a rating higher than 5 or lower than 0.

USING THE DARKNESS METER

A horror or other enemy aligned with supernatural evil may harvest a character's Darkness Meter for additional stunt points on a 1-for-1 basis. This does not lower the Darkness Meter's permanent rating, but it does reduce the number of points available to be used against the character that session by the number of points spent by the adversary. Thus, if an adversary uses 3 extra SP out of a character's Darkness Rating of 4, 1 SP remains to be used that session. When character actions change the Darkness Meter, they also change the number of SP available per session by the same amount.

Stunt points from the Darkness Meter should be used for effects that support the adversary's role, but do not always represent the enemy acting directly on the character. Dark-souled characters may stumble when being pursued, or be particularly vulnerable to a horror's tempting words.

ANOMALY

I saw a dozen alien shadows on the wall, but not my own. That was an omen of things to come.

Anomalies are shadows of things nobody can see, shuddering balls of mauve light, or crackling voids like rips in the tissue of reality. The flickering lightbulb and the shadows it casts, the effervescent glow from a crack in the wall, and trees that sway without wind might all be Anomalies heaving themselves out of the background. Once they fully emerge, a typical Anomaly is a mobile cloud of inexplicable phenomena about the size of a person. Some have a human-like form, while others are rippling spheres or columns from which pseudopods erupt to interact with the environment.

Anomalies exist where natural laws cave in. Are they motes of anti-reality or intruders from a parallel universe hostile to our own? Whenever they appear, Anomalies twist reality, causing things to blink in and out of existence or suffer horrific distortions. People exposed to them undergo bizarre changes, like wet clay in rough hands. Their intentions, if any, are unknown, though some follow patterns imposed on them by the events which caused them to manifest. If a breakdown in reality brought them forth, they're usually limited to where it occurred—though they might spread the breakdown in inches, then yards, then miles. Summoned Anomalies may follow the summoner's instructions, at least for a time. Anomalies do not communicate in any coherent fashion, though they may speak nonsensical phrases, untranslatable chants, or broadcast scrambled radio signals.

Most encounters with Anomalies come as a surprise, such as when a spelunker enters a strangely glowing cave, a renovator breaks into a walled-off room, or a solitary traveler finds herself alone on a railway platform as the lights start flickering. Anomalies can spend an indefinite period in these latent forms before coalescing into bodies. Some occultists believe Anomalies are anti-Elementals. Elementals represent the building blocks of existence, while Anomalies are the gaps between those blocks, or the things that contradict or tear them down.

Until an Anomaly takes a more tangible physical form, it can't be affected. However, these latent manifestations hold the key to combating them. One way to eliminate an Anomaly requires studying the entity's latent manifestations, then altering the environment to compensate. This forces the Anomaly into physical form. For example, if the Anomaly exists as buzzing static, drowning it out with a loud, clear musical note may bring it forth as a shivering silver prism. If forced into physical form, it can be attacked, but it will then attempt to escape to some new location capable of supporting its latent form.

REARRANGING OUR FABRIC

Anomalies are attracted to living things. It may be that an Anomaly is affected by observation, and changes the observer to better witness the unnatural laws sustaining it. In embodied form, an Anomaly's touch might mutate a target's mind and body, causing disability, madness, or strange phenomena bound to the victim. Psychics have allegedly been born from an Anomaly's touch, though seeking out one for that purpose is ill-advised. A would-be psychic adept could just as easily end up a mass of distorted and transmuted flesh.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following hooks will help you introduce Anomalies into *Modern AGE*.

NIGHT TRAIN

Nobody likes to catch the last train. All the weirdos and drunks climb aboard with you, leering and starting fights. One of them pulled the emergency brake when she spotted a group of people on a station platform being wrestled into the rafters by flashing lights and inky tendrils. The train driver claims to have seen nothing but can't explain why he didn't stop at the platform—or why the last train *never* stops at that platform, as an unwritten but strictly obeyed policy.

LAST CALL

Kids like to dare each other to stay the night in the boarded-up Ferryboat Inn because local legend says the owner murdered 13 people there. Local boy Edward Wilmslow took up the dare last week but hasn't been seen since. His friends have taken a vow of silence on

ANOMALY

Abilities (Focuses)	
2	Accuracy (Elemental Blast)
0	Communication
3	Constitution
4	Dexterity (Flying, Stealth)
3	Fighting (Pseudopod)
3	Intelligence
3	Perception
2	Strength
0	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
14/Fly 14	23	38	53	14	15	15	0I/0B +3	+3	+4

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Pseudopod	+5	1d6+2
Elemental Blast	+4	2d6+1

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Blockade, Hamstring, Lightning Attack

Beyond All Barriers: An Anomaly may use a minor action to convert an impediment to its movement into a chaotic mix of energies and substances. The Anomaly may pass through the barrier and generate the Collateral Damage stunt. Roll the Anomaly's Intelligence to produce the roll pursuers must beat.

Elemental Blast: The Anomaly can hurl a destructive manifestation of its element that inflicts a base 2d6 impact wound damage at a Range increment of 20 yards.

Elemental Invulnerability/Vulnerability: Anomalies appear in myriad forms but possess preferred elements. When surround by their preferred element, a physically manifested Anomaly suffers only half from all attacks; when exposed to a significant amount of an opposing element, in the environment or as a direct attack, it takes +3 damage from attacks. For instance, an Anomaly spawned from a fireplace is immune to all damage when surrounded by the fire's light and heat, but takes an additional +3 damage when doused in water or frozen and attacked.

Latent: Anomalies spend most of their time in an insubstantial, latent form. They exist in a particular place matching their preferred element but cannot be touched or attacked. Anomalies must manifest physically to interact with the environment and attack. Manifesting or returning to latent form requires a major action, and the Anomaly can only become insubstantial in a place containing their preferred element. An Anomaly is forced into physical form if their environment is exposed to their elemental vulnerability.

Anomalous Touch: When an Anomaly successfully hits with its pseudopod, the victim rolls a Constitution (Tolerance) test and consults the accompanying table.

Anomalous Touch

Result	Effect
4 or less	**Disintegration:** The target takes 1d6 additional damage every 1d3 rounds (on the Anomaly's turn) as their body corrodes, transforms into strange substances (including shadows, sounds, etc.), or mutates into tumor-like masses, supernumerary organs or other body parts, and the like. This damage stops progressing if the Anomaly is destroyed, but it can't heal until that point unless the character is the recipient of the *restoration* touch.
5-8	**Elemental Change:** The target takes an additional 2d6 damage as a layer of tissue is disintegrated or turned into a new substance, such as iridium or chlorine.
9-12	**Mutation:** The target takes an additional 1d6 damage and acquires a physical or cognitive limitation due to being physically distorted. This imposes a -2 penalty to two ability tests. If this effect occurs twice, it imposes a new limitation affecting new ability scores, or increases an existing effect's penalties by a further -1 to a maximum of -5. Limitations persist until the Anomaly is destroyed or the character experiences a *restoration* touch.
13-16	**No Effect**
17-20	**Restoration:** The target suffers no damage from the initial attack and actually heals 2d6 Health. This nullifies all *mutation* touches and heals damage from a *disintegration* touch.
21+	**Psychic Alteration:** The target gains 1 degree in a psychic power for the remainder of the game session. The player may acquire the power's talent when their character's advancement makes this possible. If the character is barred from acquiring psychic powers, the Game Master should provide an alternative benefit, such as a prophetic insight or a temporary ability increase.

Equipment: None

Threat: Moderate

the subject, but his sister says the shadows of the owner's victims still haunt the property's beer cellar, where light still pours from an open fridge—even though there hasn't been any electricity at the place in years.

THE HUMAN ANOMALY

Nobody survives contact with an Anomaly, except this one guy—or that's his story, anyway. He regularly records videos for a fringe news site, talking about how he visits "Fortean hubs" and has attuned himself to "Telluric wavelengths." After these rants, he bends spoons, levitates objects—does all the tricks credulous people think are psychic powers, and skeptics call mislabeled stage magic. He's got a bit of a following, even a cult, and now plans to bring his "Platinum level disciples" to a "major Fortean hub—the strongest yet."

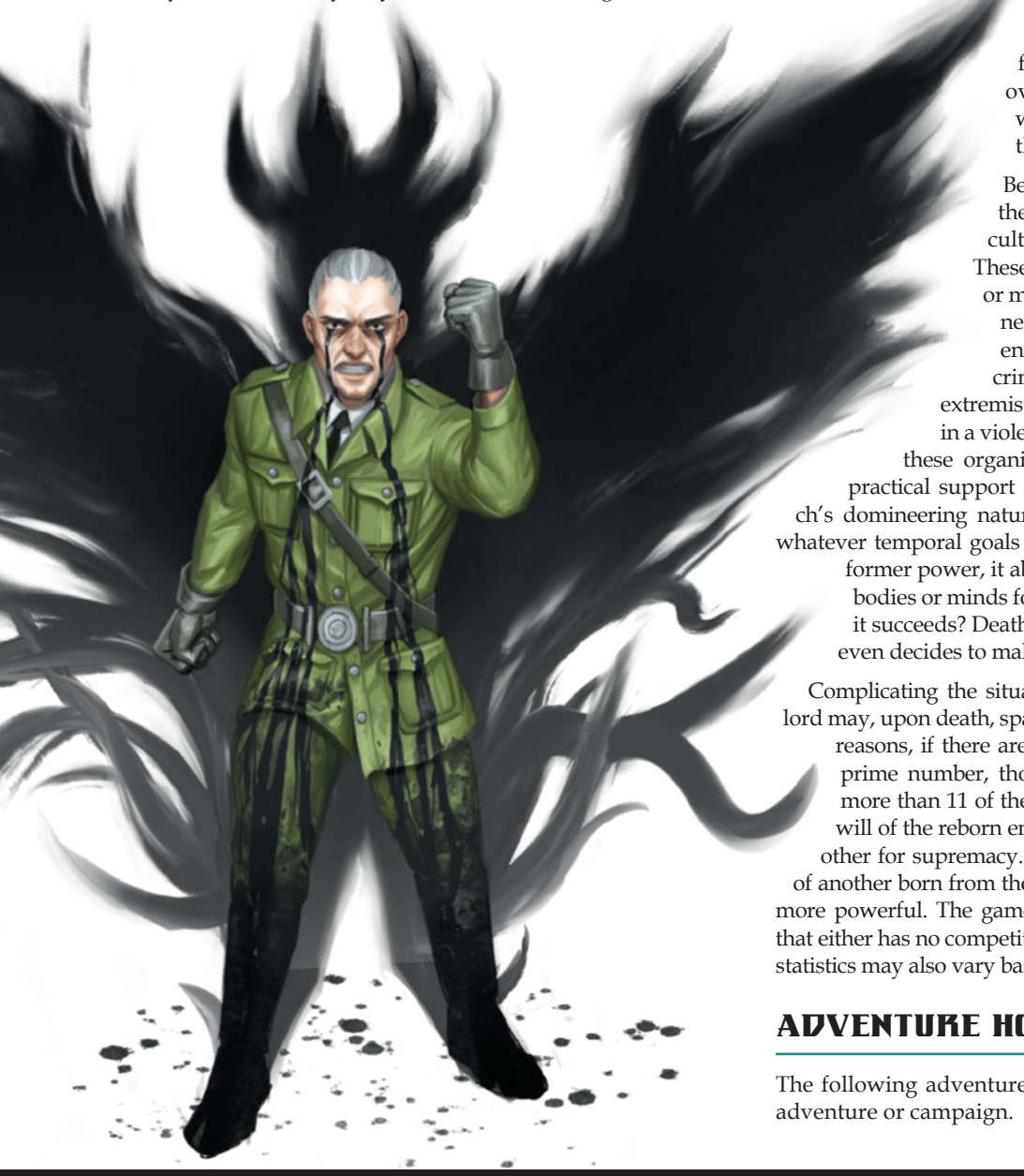
AUTARCH

The damned shall be ruled by the damned.

Beyond the dimensions ordinary humans can perceive there exist deformed universes, fragmented worlds, clusters of impossible elements—and sometimes, damned souls. These are the Netherworlds, sometimes called "hells," hostile realms with strange natural laws which, constantly on the verge of tearing themselves apart, must be bound to a peerless will. Thus, every Netherworld has so-called demon princes who hold their hells together. But sometimes those princes die, and their world-binding wills are cast into the void. And sometimes those wills fall to Earth.

An Autarch is a psychic fragment of a powerful malevolent entity, which might be called an archdevil, god of the underworld, Old One, or fury. Some metaphysical texts call these beings "alastors," referring to the belief they torment souls in their home realms. With godlike powers, alastors are not easily slain—and they may not die as other beings—but such a fate disperses their essence. Shards of a dead demon prince's being may vanish into inconceivable states, or enter the world as curses and disasters, but Autarchs only come about when one of them inhabits a human whose personal weaknesses make them vulnerable to its peculiar form of possession. The subject must either possess an instinct for tyranny or dream of oppressing others.

Therefore, Autarchs are fascists, psychopaths, and abusers before a piece of a demon prince enters and empowers them with its domineering, reality-cracking psyche. The shard enters during a moment of crisis, and can even resurrect a dead host, though this is a one-time benefit. The evil within whispers to its host, and for a time both sides maintain separate personalities, but the alastor fragment ultimately wishes to resurrect its true self. This invariably requires a ritual with bloody or mind-killing requirements, or the fulfilment of an apocalyptic prophecy. An Autarch usually follows whatever cruel interests they had while fully mortal until the demon-shard overwhelms them, and they move to whatever occult means will resurrect the original entity.



Between the host's inclinations and the shard's willful nature, an Autarch cultivates cults, gangs, and conspiracies. These may be entirely new organizations, or may repurpose some existing group. A newly possessed crime boss might order enforcers to perform strange, bloody crimes, while the weakest member of an extremist militia group might use their powers in a violent rise to power. In the end, however, these organizations provide nothing more than practical support and psychic nutrition for the Autarch's domineering nature. Once it eats its fill and achieves whatever temporal goals are required to reach the cusp of its former power, it abandons its lackeys, or sacrifices their bodies or minds for its final ascension. What happens if it succeeds? Death. Disaster. Perhaps the reborn alastor even decides to make Earth a new hell….

Complicating the situation is the fact that a single demon lord may, upon death, spawn multiple Autarchs. For unknown reasons, if there are more than one the total is always a prime number, though occult lore has never recorded more than 11 of them. Only one can be the true guiding will of the reborn entity, so multiple Autarchs battle each other for supremacy. If an Autarch eats the heart or brain of another born from the demise of the same alastor, it grows more powerful. The game statistics below are for an Autarch that either has no competitors or has yet to devour one. Autarch statistics may also vary based on the host's abilities.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following adventure hooks bring an Autarch into your adventure or campaign.

AUTARCH

Abilities (Focuses)	
0	Accuracy
4	Communication (Persuasion, Deception)
2	Constitution
0	Dexterity
2	Fighting (Brawling)
4	Intelligence (Occultism +3, Research)
2	Perception (Empathy)
2	Strength (Intimidation +3)
6	Willpower (Morale, Self-Discipline)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
10	20	40	70	10	11	12	+2	+3	+4

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Unarmed (Human Form)	+4	1d3+2
Unarmed (Inimical Skin)	+4	2d6+4

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: And Another Thing, Dominate the Weak (3 SP), Incessant Corruption (6 SP), Shock and Awe, Vicious Blow

Stunt—Dominate the Weak (3 SP): For 3 SP, the Autarch's domineering will takes control of a nearby morally compromised NPC. This is a function of the being's psychic aura, and works even if the Autarch doesn't know or communicate with the NPC, who reflexively serves out of fear and awe. Only morally compromised NPCs can be manipulated this way. If the Game Master uses the Darkness Meter rules at the beginning of this chapter, the Autarch can only spend SP granted by the target's Darkness Meter.

Stunt—Incessant Corruption (3/6 SP): The Autarch contains a small piece of an entity that once bound together an entire hell-universe. It's nowhere near as powerful in its current form, but it can still warp natural laws. This takes the form of a stunt it may attach to any action. For 3 SP, it can render inoperative a piece of complex technology, such as a firearm or electronic device, present during the encounter for that round and 1d6 rounds following. For 6 SP, the device becomes hazardous, even changing shape or composition to inflict 2d6 penetrating wound damage to anyone within five feet of it. This renders the item permanently nonfunctional.

Devour the Rival: If the Autarch depicted here eats the heart or brain of a slain Autarch spawned by the same entity, it becomes an Elite version of itself as per the rules in this book or p. 132-133 of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*. If it does this to half of its rivals, it adds the Heroic template listed in those rules, and if it devours all rivals, it gains the Epic template. Each template replaces the last one applied, instead of stacking with it. Furthermore, such improved versions of the Autarch may devote bonus talents to learning psychic disciplines, gaining power points using the rules for **Limited Power Point Gain** on p. 92 of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*.

Indominable: Extraordinary powers that influence minds and emotions have no effect on an Autarch, and attempts at social influence suffer a -2 penalty to relevant rolls, due to the fragment of inhuman will possessing them.

Inimical Skin: By using a minor action, the Autarch can assume the ectoplasmic phantom of its demon-self's body, though it is much reduced in power compared to what it once was. Smoke or fluid in various colors erupts from wounds and orifices, and surrounds their body in the desired shape, be it a scaly, horned humanoid or a bundle of tentacles, red eyes, and serrated, strangely placed teeth. In this form, add +2 to the Autarch's Strength, give it an Armor Rating of 6I/6B, and reduce the damage caused by temperature or chemical-based hazards (including poisons and acids) by half, rounded up. In this form, its unarmed attacks inflict 2d6 + Strength penetrating wound damage, as it rips and burns flesh and steel alike.

Talents: Command (Expert), Tactical Awareness (Novice)

Equipment: Stylish Clothing, Occult Tomes, Smartphone

Threat: Major

EVERYTHING OLD IS HORRIBLY NEW AGAIN

An old crook, cultist, or other petty troublemaker the Player Characters dealt with returns—even from the dead. They not only go right back to their old habits, and add the heroes to their list of people to deal with in decisive, unpleasant terms, but they attack these tasks with competence and ferocity above and beyond anything previously displayed. After all, they can literally act like someone possessed. But there's more to it; the old enemy occasionally breaks off to work on other, stranger projects, hunting down psychics, stealing allegedly magical artifacts, and diving headlong into the paranormal world, all in search of the secrets of the entity called Anzuthu: the very being who has manifested within the characters' old enemy, and who's looking for a way to return to power.

WAR FOR THE THRONE

A demon king dies; its remnants rain down on Earth. Three Autarchs rise, along with dark paranormal phenomena around the world. As they cut a swath through the unprepared moral realm, all three eventually converge on the Player Characters' home city. This is where they'll stage their final battle, and the gods help anyone caught in between. However, not all is lost, for just as each Autarch is one small aspect of a greater being, various ill-starred places and cursed objects also contain its essence. If the heroes gather these other fragments, they might fuse them into a weapon capable of defeating the infernal combatants and saving their city.

THE OUTER DARK AND FINAL BATTLE

A dark goddess falls from her realm, and one of her fragments possesses a venal presidential candidate. An infusion of unholy charisma vaults her to the top of the polls. Unless things change, she'll have armies and weapons of mass destruction at her fingertips. But she's not the only problem. The goddess' killers, rebellious tortured souls called the Nighthost, have found a gateway from their liberated hell to Earth and know some small part of their enemy survives there. With zeal and potent psychic abilities, they invade the world to seek and destroy the Autarch, caring little about any collateral damage in their wake. Who should the Player Characters deal with first, and how?

CACODEMON

It's your fault.

Look at a Cacodemon straight on and you'll see a smiling man or woman, their grin a little fixed, their eyes glazed over, their hair a little too pristine. Out of the corner of your eye, though, the Cacodemon is a beast of smoke, fire, fangs, and claws. Witnesses remember strange buzzing sounds in the near distance, like flies or a form of tinnitus. A Cacodemon disguises itself as an innocuous or charismatic human, but as a creature of malice, it has distorted ideas about what ordinary people truly desire. There's always something a little plastic and stereotypical about its act. It wears a suit made of the images of the people who brought it into existence through conscious ill-will and terror, or half-remembered nightmares. That's the Cacodemon's disguise: a doll inhabiting a psychic uncanny valley, too real to dismiss but too contrived to trust. If denied their desires, a Cacodemon explodes into a manifestation of all the rage and hostility that went into their creation.

Cacodemons are made of evil desires and disturbing thoughts, like the predatory hopes of serial killers, the memories of psychics who read the minds of fascist mobs, or the awful, persistent nightmares of traumatized families. Cacodemon behavior is notoriously destructive and homicidal. They can communicate, negotiate, and even engage in casual repartee. As soon as the Cacodemon wins the victim's trust, however, its evil pours forth. Subtle Cacodemons manipulate, abuse, and destroy victims for sadistic pleasure. Brutish Cacodemons just hunt humans to eat their hearts. Cacodemons adore hearts, believing all emotions are stored within them. Whether their belief is literal or symbolic is irrelevant to their enjoyment. Patient Cacodemons foster despair in victims to "ripen their hearts" before extracting and eating them.

Powerful psychics and arcanists can trigger Cacodemon emergence through human sacrifice or extreme violence, fueled by their peculiar powers, but most manifest out of the malicious or frightened emotions of ordinary people. These emotions must reach a critical strength driven by the number of people who feel them and the intensity of the feeling. When a town feels collective grief at the murder of a leading citizen, or her murderer swears revenge beyond the grave before hanging herself in a cell, a Cacodemon might then emerge. People lost in the wilderness may produce them after days or torment, or a single elderly man, fallen, injured and alone, may conjure one out of resentment for everything that brought him to that point.

If the hate and suffering grow strong enough, hours or years later, a glyph appears in a place related to the emotion, carved into brick, burned on a wall, scrawled on a thousand old textbooks in a broken-down classroom—the possibilities depend on the place. This is a sign of the Cacodemon's emergence. Who draws this glyph? That is a subject of debate. Some believe Cacodemons mark their territory, while others attribute the glyphs to cultists who worship them, or occultists seeking to bind them to service.

A Charming Psychopath

Cacodemons have a way of making victims let down their guard. Maybe it's their superficially ordinary appearances, mellifluous words, or how they never break eye contact when they speak (which is easy to do when you don't blink), but a Cacodemon builds trust through charming, even comforting behavior, before betraying it with increasingly abusive behavior. Gaslighting, accusing the victim of being the *real* psychopath, and emotionally eviscerating people for failing to live up to impossible standards are all parts of the Cacodemon's arsenal.

A Cacodemon can only be destroyed when it manifests in its bestial form. As a human simulacrum, injuries only force it to disperse and reform elsewhere, with revenge on its mind. A Cacodemon denied its meal will remain in its true form: a cloudy whirlwind of faces, fangs, and bony fingers with a tooth-lined maw

Cacodemon

Abilities (Focuses)	
0	Accuracy
5	Communication (Deception, Persuasion, Seduction)
3	Constitution
1	Dexterity
5	Fighting (Bite, Claws)
3	Intelligence
3	Perception (Tracking)
2	Strength
2	Willpower (Empathy)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
11	28	58	88	11	13	13	0I/0B +3	+3	+5

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Bite	+7	1d6+4
Claws	+7	1d6+3

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Force: 14 (Empathy) **Power Points:** 30

Favored Stunts: Impress, Maim, Oozing Confidence

Begging Feeds Me: Cacodemons find a way of surpassing even the most ironclad of wills, to the point where rejection strengthens them. They want pleas for mercy, crave frightened rejection, and toy with people bargaining for their safety. Whenever someone attempts to bargain, flee from, or plead with the Cacodemon, or tries to divert its attention, it gains +2 Strength, +1 Willpower, and heals 1d6 Health, if injured. It can gain this benefit up to three times per encounter, though it vanishes afterward. On the other hand, if someone rejects or denies the Cacodemon's wishes in an assertive fashion, it doesn't gain any power, and loses any Strength and Willpower bonus acquired using this quality.

Extract Heart: A Cacodemon that reduces a target's Health to 0 may use its next major action to rip their victim's heart out of their chest.

Inelegant Attack: Cacodemons attack as an expression of their rage and craving for pain, and care nothing for grace. They can take up to a -4 penalty to their attack rolls to receive a corresponding bonus to damage rolls. This does not apply to extra damage generated through stunts.

Mask of Humanity: In human form, a Cacodemon may not use its teeth and claws, but if its Health is reduced to 0, it doesn't die. Instead, it reforms where its glyph appeared, in its natural form. It cannot appear human again until it eats a human heart.

Murderous Frenzy: In its natural form, the Cacodemon is a blur of gnashing teeth and thrashing claws. Anyone adjacent to the Cacodemon suffers 1d3+1 ballistic wound damage. A character with a long weapon such as a spear or staff may avoid being injured in melee combat. Furthermore, a Cacodemon's teeth and claws shred through its victims at high speeds, so its attacks inflict ballistic wound damage as well.

Talents: Attractive (Expert), Empathy Discipline (Master)

Equipment: Designer Bag, Perfume, Tailored Outfit

Threat: Major

at its center, into which it grinds a victim's extracted heart. Once it takes its meal, the Cacodemon may change back into a smiling psychopath (if it wishes).

Adventure Hooks

The following adventure hooks are suited to plots involving Cacodemons.

Boyfriend Trouble

Dawn and Chronos (maybe it's Greek, maybe it's a name he chose for himself) are inseparable. They met during her first year of college. They're both artists who produce weird videos together. He does the scripting and she performs, making strange statements like "Nobody bleeds unless they want to!" in a monotone, while dressed in a rose-colored suit and tie. The only problem with Chronos is that he's mean to all their friends. They keep leaving. They stop answering their phones, and don't even post on social media anymore! Oh well. They can always make new friends, and Chronos is never mean to Dawn.

Graffiti Artist

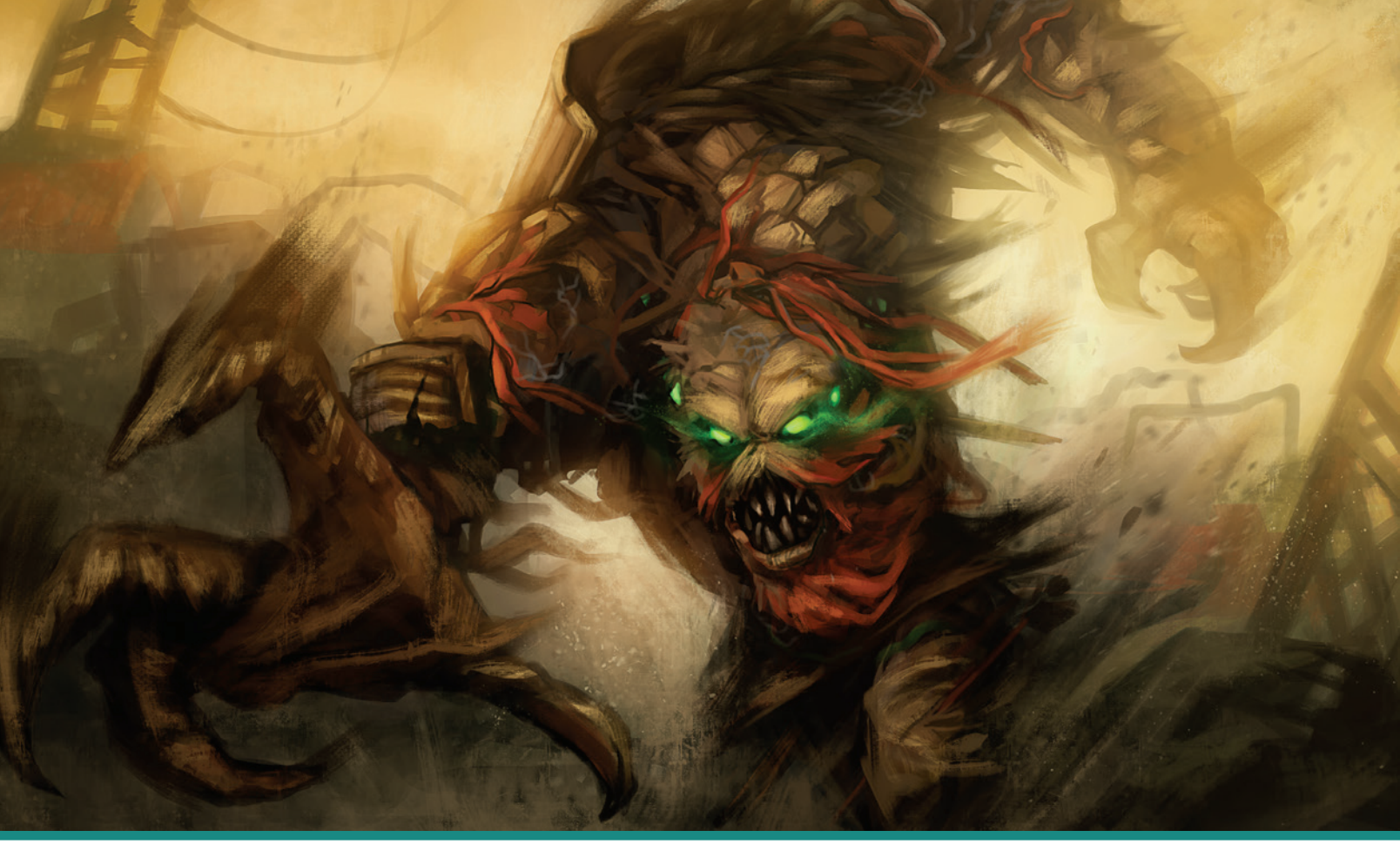
Someone has been tagging the inner city with intricate graffiti: geometric designs requiring a stencil or a supremely steady hand. Recently, witnesses spotted a bald man, tall and stoic, delicately spraying the glyph with artistic flair. Seized by the police, he introduced himself as an aspiring Banksy and paid his fine. Occultists believe these are Cacodemon glyphs. His fans have identified 16 symbols—a lot of Cacodemons.

Using Cacodemons

A hidden Cacodemon's manipulations recall the way real abusers and narcissists treat people, so the Game Master should use this element with care. There's no need to explicitly detail how a Cacodemon treats people, and you should only present this element if all the players would find it a worthwhile experience.

Murderers' Pact

When eight murderers in the same prison wing commit suicide at the same time, few people mourn them, though it still makes the news. What doesn't make the news and is leaked to the heroes by a concerned insider six months later, is that law enforcement is tracking a new, prolific serial killer. The killer's *modus operandi* combines those of the dead murderers, including elements deliberately hidden from the media.



CARIES

> You made me with your mind, now give me your meat.

Decay. Caries means "decay." They are remnants of living thoughts, bursts of psychic energy, and the corpses of psychics left to rot. They coalesce from the refuse, debris, and environments surrounding an outpouring of psychic might. Whether the bracken, moss, and twigs from a forest or swamp, the scaffold, rebar, and stone from a building site, or fragments of furniture, metalwork, and crockery from a house in which a psychic expired, they are shards of the world given life and horrid purpose. A Caries needs a combination of psychic power and environmental entropy to arise. They rarely appear around new, well-groomed neighborhoods or smoothly paved business districts. They're creatures of abandoned houses, junkyards, and ruins. Modern waste collection plucks garbage for mundane and horrific sites alike, providing ways for Caries to appear far from the psychic events which spawned them.

As a result of their varied surroundings, Caries have varied appearances. A shambling mound of partly recognizable components, the hulking Caries clutches its victims in arms of wire, rope, and rubber hosing, dragging them into its center mass to wear away the victim's flesh. Metal shards, rusty wires, industrial acids, and other corrosive, grinding, and cutting refuse do the work. Strangely, the victim sheds no blood. If the Caries consumes a victim's arm, it wears it down from fingers to shoulder but leaves the stump completely cauterized.

Caries speak in a gnashing moan, like gears crunching in heavy machinery and echoes from a tin-roofed shack. They emerge from the floor, soil, walls, or trees in a grinding, whirring form, demanding a sacrifice of flesh. The words are simple: *HOLD OUT HAND. TAKE HAND. YOU LIVE.* Caries do not need to kill for satiation, accepting a limb or other sacrifice of living meat in exchange for promises to otherwise leave the victim alone. Some Caries even form pacts with individuals who bring them meat for protection. In some places, an unusual number of amputees live near dumpsters, or people who sneak into junkyards don't come back.

IMMORTAL HUNGER

Flesh fed into the grinder of a Caries' body rots immediately, becoming little more than flakes of skin and lumps of ash. A Caries doesn't need the flesh itself but its life force, which they consume to extend their existences. Caries theoretically last forever if they keep feeding. Their bodies are incredibly robust, but can be dispersed by sufficient force. When this happens, they reform the following night. The only way to permanently destroy a Caries is to deny it flesh for an extended period of time, with the exact length varying based on its age (older Caries eat more) and most recent meal, or by burning every fragment of its body to ash and grinding what can't be burned to dust. The latter tactic is almost impossible to carry out. If even one fragment escapes, it can draw new refuse into a body as large and strong as ever. Combining these tactics may work, since it may be possible to burn a

Gritty Grinding

Grind is a nasty stunt quality. In a Gritty game of *Modern AGE*, the effect of losing one's limbs or being sucked into a Caries by the head is devastating or lethal. In Gritty Mode, *Grind* is a series of stunts, based on the body part captured.

SP Cost	Stunt
2	**Grind Hand:** The victim takes 1d6 damage and must make a TN 13 Constitution (Stamina) test to remain conscious. If they fail, they are stunned until a successful Intelligence (First Aid) test at TN 11 revives them. The victim loses a hand.
4	**Grind Arm:** The victim takes 2d6 damage and must make a TN 15 Constitution (Stamina) test to remain conscious. If they fail, they are stunned until a successful Intelligence (First Aid) test at TN 13 revives them. The victim loses an arm.
5	**Stunt—Grind Leg:** The victim takes 3d6 damage and must make a TN 17 Constitution (Stamina) test to remain conscious. If they fail, they are stunned until a successful Intelligence (First Aid) test at TN 15 revives them. The victim loses a leg.
6	**Stunt—Death Grind:** The victim is reduced to 0 Health as the Caries destroys their head or chest cavity.

Caries down to a manageable size and confine it in a locked box until it starves.

Adventure Hooks

If you want to introduce a Caries into your game, consider these adventure hooks.

Deal with the Devil

Despite their monstrous appearance, Caries are quite lucid and open to discussion before they consume a victim. One of the Player Characters' adversaries makes an alliance with a Caries to act as a bodyguard and killer in exchange for a ready supply of flesh and blood. The heroes' enemy naturally decides to set the Caries on them, but doesn't know where to find them. That's why the Player Characters' associates end up missing…or missing pieces.

Scorch Marks

The old abandoned rowhouses burned down—that much was certain. The Fire Department doesn't seem to know if it was a meth lab accident, fireworks, or arson, because evidence at the scene doesn't resemble any of the usual causes. Even worse, an inspector believes someone's been tampering with the debris. It's been moved around, and none of the forensic staff have the event logged. What's worse is that last night, a security guard hired to guard the ruins disappeared. They just found his hat.

Swampy

A Caries arises from the swamp outside the city limits, but unlike most of its kind, it retains the full personality and mind of the murdered psychic who triggered its creation. This Caries plans on killing the conspiracy of pyrokinetic psychics who killed it, and those psychics are eager to burn anyone they believe is coming after them. Plus, the Caries must eat to live, and unless dissuaded, is willing (though reluctant) to take its meal from bystanders, so it can survive to exact revenge.

Caries

Abilities (Focuses)	
2	Accuracy (Thrown)
1	Communication
6	Constitution (Stamina)
2	Dexterity
3	Fighting (Grappling, Flexible)
2	Intelligence
3	Perception
6	Strength (Intimidation, Might)
3	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
12	31	115	160	12	12	15	6I/6B+6	+9	+9

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Bludgeoning Arms	+3	2d6+9
Heavy Chain	+5	1d6+9
Thrown Rock	+4	1d6+5

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Collateral Damage, Grind (4 SP), Lethal Blow, Play Dead

Stunt—Grind (4 SP): For 4 SP, a Caries grappling a target rots and grinds its flesh off. This action immediately inflicts 2d6+1 damage and the Caries recovers the same amount of Health. The victim loses the use of one limb.

Anatomical Invulnerability: Caries have no vital organs or sensitive parts of their body, granting it a natural Armor Rating of 6I/6B. If rendered to small rocks or scattered dirt, the Caries reforms one night later.

Tear It Down: As an overwhelming heap of flailing garbage and rocks, a Caries smothers and smashes weaker opponents. Anyone struck by a Caries must succeed at a TN 16 Strength (Might) test or either be knocked prone or suffer a -3 penalty to their next physical action as they struggle to throw off debris. The player chooses which disadvantage to accept.

Equipment: Heavy Chain, Rocks

Threat: Dire

CHAMELEON

> Yeah, I forgot which bedroom mine was, but I've been stressed out. Please. I'm your son. I am your son.

While psychics often possess a great aptitude for meditation and undoubtedly know the inner workings of the mind, their abilities concentrate on the world around them. Chameleons are different. They focus their power inward. These psychics steal identities from the inside out, applying their power to their own faces and bodies. They mold their own flesh to match their visions, but the easiest visions aren't just imagined but representations of real people. They use a rare power called Psychic Shapeshifting to do this.

Novice Chameleons may excel at the simple tweak of a nose shape, force a brow to protrude a little more, change the color of their eyes, or add a couple of inches to their height. They find the body alteration process addictive, and soon master it. Cosmetic vanity evolves into a feeling of superiority. A fixed shape is a fixed consciousness, they believe, and someone able to adopt and abandon a shape, being more enlightened, has a better claim to it than its original owner. This claim extends to a victim's money, reputation—everything.

Some Chameleons are content to work as thieves who steal cars, rob banks, and take confidential information under the cover of their purloined identities. The most ambitious or obsessive Chameleons steal victims' entire lives. They find someone they idolize or envy and replace them, living the victim's life until they get bored. They leave a trail of crises in their wake, and suffer little guilt. While the easiest option is to kill and replace the target, keeping them alive and imprisoned has several advantages. They can not only consult the victim for information but also use them as a template to maintain a perfect impression. Plus, when all is said and done, they can release the original to answer for the Chameleon's crimes.

In a few cases, Chameleons double people with their permission. When an executive wants to be in two places at once, or a crime lord wants a decoy to confuse killers, a Chameleon might provide those services for an impressive fee, but the Chameleon is usually tempted to take over from the original. This doesn't mean Psychic Shapeshifting is always a corrupting influence, but it has long been taught by psychic thieves and grifters who will kill to hide their secret abilities. It isn't easy to escape from that way of life.

Chameleons are despised among the rare psychic communities that know of them. Even Puppeteers (see p. 65) turn their noses up at these crooks, for their petty aspirations. It's rare for a Chameleon to take over a CEO, or go for some high-ranking politician. They may look like the target, but they don't know everything the target knows. It's better to steal simple lives, especially if they require minimal day-to-day effort. Psychic powers can grant a lot of insight but don't change the personality behind the mask.

PSYCHIC SHAPESHIFTING

You can psychically manipulate the shape and proportions of your body.

Novice: You gain two Novice-degree Psychic Shapeshifting effects.

Expert: You gain one Expert-degree Empathy effect. You also gain the power focus Willpower (Psychic Shapeshifting).

Master: You gain one Master-degree Psychic Shapeshifting effect. You can also choose one power stunt you can perform with your Psychic Shapeshifting effects for -1 SP.

ERSATZ

Requirement: Psychic Shapeshifting (Novice)
Cost: 2 PP **Time:** Minor Action **Target Number:** 9
Test: Willpower (Self-Discipline) vs. Force

After spending but a brief moment in the company of another human, you establish a minor link between the target's mind and your own, allowing you to parrot behaviors—from voice to accents to body language—to an impressive degree. The target is unaware of the mental link being formed, but subconsciously tries to resist.

The cost for using *ersatz* increases to 4 PP if you have no familiarity with the target prior to the initial emulation attempt, but all subsequent attempts with that target as a base cost 2 PP. If you are working from the memory of your target, the cost increases by +2 PP. If you're working from a recorded reference, such as a video file, this cost increase is reduced to +1 PP.

You perfectly emulate your target's voice and speed patterns, fooling anyone who can only hear you, as long as you don't betray yourself through a lack of knowledge or extremely uncharacteristic behavior. You also gain a +3 bonus to Communication (Disguise) tests to either pretend to be them or, at least, someone other than your normal self. Improving a disguise requires you to visually copy the target by other means. *Ersatz* provides no help in that regard.

Ersatz lasts an hour after the successful test, but you may extend it by 2 PP for each additional hour without rolling another test.

TWEAKS

Requirements: Psychic Shapeshifting (Novice)
Cost: 2 PP **Time:** Major Action **Target Number:** 9
Test: None

Tweaks allows you to adjust minor facets of your appearance. You might lengthen your fingers, reshape your nose, change your eye color, or alter your hair's fullness, color, texture, and style. As a rough guideline, this power can do anything common cosmetic surgery and makeup can do. You may also use *tweaks* to emulate an injury or signs of illness. Any changes stand up to medical scrutiny.

If you use *tweaks* to improve your overall appearance, you gain a +2 bonus to Communication (Seduction) tests. If you use it to improve a disguise, you gain a +2 bonus to Communication (Disguise) tests to look unrecognizable or as someone of your own invention, but only a +1 bonus if you're trying to emulate the appearance of a specific person.

Tweaks lasts an hour after the successful test, though it can be extended by an hour for each additional expenditure of 2 PP without making a new test.

REGENERATION

Requirements: Psychic Shapeshifting (Expert)
Cost: 4 PP **Time:** Major Action **Target Number:** 13
Test: None

This power affects injuries on any part of the body, including internally. You require a period of uninterrupted thought to make *regeneration* occur, with any disruptions canceling the effect of this power and wasting the 4 PP used in its application. When successful, you recover 2d6 Health.

To treat a complex condition with this power, you would need to make an Intelligence (Medicine) test at a target number of 15 to successfully treat the ailment. In such a case, psychic healing can never eradicate terminal illness, old age, or disease, but can slow its progress or render it dormant for a time.

METAMORPHOSIS

Requirements: Psychic Shapeshifting (Master)
Cost: 10 PP **Time:** Major Action **Target Number:** 15
Test: Willpower (Self-Discipline) vs. Force

When the will is strong enough, a psychic can appear however they wish to appear. With *metamorphosis*, you can gain or lose weight and height, alter bone structure and musculature, and adopt any sexual characteristic or skin color possible for a human. There is no limit, within the confines of the human form, to how you might alter your look.

CHAMELEON

Abilities (Focuses)	
0	Accuracy
5	Communication (Deception, Disguise, Persuasion)
3	Constitution (Tolerance)
2	Dexterity
0	Fighting
4	Intelligence (Anthropology, Medicine)
3	Perception (Tracking)
2	Strength
4	Willpower (Empathy, Psychic Shapeshifting, Self-Discipline)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
12	13	19	24	12	12	12	0I/0B +3	+3	+3

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Dagger	+0	1d6+3
Flame Blast	+4	2d6+1

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Force: 16 (Psychic Shapeshifting) / 16 (Empathy) **PP:** 35
Favored Stunts: Cover Your Tracks, Impress, Sway the Crowd
Talents: Body Psychic Shapeshifting (Master), Empathy (Expert)
Equipment: Another Person's Clothes, Dagger, Handcuffs, 1d6 ID Cards, 1d6 Bank or Credit Cards, Stolen Phone

Threat: Minor

But *metamorphosis* extends to more than just appearances. By psychically altering body shape, you can add or subtract up to 5 points divided among your Constitution, Dexterity, or Strength abilities for the duration of the power (this is the total number of points that can be shifted, not a net total after reductions), though no score can be adjusted above 5 or below -2.

If you use *metamorphosis* to appear to be a person of your own invention, your disguise is nearly perfect. You can only be found out if you use your normal speech and habits, and if you use *ersatz* to change those as well, it requires an extraordinary power or specific information to tell that it's you.

If you use *metamorphosis* to appear as a specific individual, you gain +5 to Communication (Disguise) tests. This stacks with the bonus for *ersatz*, but not the bonus from *tweaks*. You must make physical contact with the living person you are duplicating, and they resist with a Willpower (Self-Discipline) test versus your Force. If you prevail, you can take their form repeatedly. If, however, you are unable to touch their living body within 24 hours of again taking their shape, and are rendered unconscious or fail a Constitution test to resist pain, illness, or extreme discomfort, you will revert back to your original form.

Once you use *metamorphosis*, the shape you choose and its capabilities are set until its duration expires, you dismiss the power with an instant of concentration, or you use *metamor-*

phosis again to adopt a new shape. You may, however, stack other Psychic Shapeshifting effects on top of metamorphosis to produce minor alterations to your altered shape.

The effects of *metamorphosis* remain in place for 24 hours, or until you use the power again.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following adventure hooks involve Chameleons.

UNEARTHED

A local news report announces a shocking discovery: Builders discovered a hidden room in a vacated house, containing seven skeletons. The former house owner's records only go back so far, making her an apparent ghost in the system, who's gone missing herself. This was a Chameleon's lair, where the psychic stashed victims and seemingly left them to die. Tracking her down is imperative to saving the lives of other potential targets. Of course, the Chameleon can counter these activities by staying close to the action, as a journalist or police officer.

THE BUTTON

The President has been taking increasingly hostile action against nations he classifies as "threats to our way of life," in a far cry from his campaign for world peace at the UN last year. In yesterday's press briefing, he even said, "I would be prepared to use our nuclear arsenal if our enemies don't stand down." Has the President been replaced? Yes—but it was the Vice President's idea. If the heroes get involved, they discover the VP had the Chameleon impersonate the President to act erratically and trigger removal via the 25th Amendment, but now that the psychic has the Oval Office, they've quashed the effort by allying with Cabinet war hawks.

JIM NEVER HAS A SECOND CUP OF COFFEE AT HOME

Something's up with Jim. His life partner, one of the Player Characters' connections, confides that Jim—a typically trustworthy and reliable sort—has recently changed all sorts of behaviors. He drinks more coffee, no longer watches sports, and he's stopped caring about family finances. If the heroes dig deeper, they discover that the problem isn't that Jim is really a Chameleon; it's that a Chameleon replaced Jim for six months, his partner never noticed, and after the Chameleon said, "I'm bored. Here's your life back!" and dropped him off at his own front door (he was kept in a storage locker before), he feels like his life is meaningless. To find the Chameleon, the heroes will have to deal with Jim's malaise and convince him nobody else should have their life damaged as Jim's was.

DREAM SHARD

She asked me to look under her bed. I should have listened.

Dream Shards form during a child's most powerful nightmares, but most are banished when the dreamer wakes. Nobody sees them, hearing only a creak and a whisper, or a flickering shadow in a nightlight. But if the dreamer is a precocious psychic or sleeps in a place with a history of paranormal activity, the dream might not dissipate. It hides in a closet, under the bed, or in a chest of drawers. It starts off small and half-substantial, but grows whenever the dreamer sleeps, feeding on the psychic energy of a child's imagination. Until the child has spent 14 hours in deep sleep (of their nightly sleep, about two hours per night qualifies), the creature must stay close, in the same or adjacent rooms, or later in a basement or attic in the same house.

After this period of maturation, the Dream Shard fully manifests. It usually puts its dreamer in a coma with a touch (the dreamer's brain and body show the signs of near-continual REM sleep) and escapes the home, seeking up to three other dreamers capable of increasing its power. These are children, teens, and adults with extraordinary imaginations, including all psychics. Its touch renders prepubescent victims comatose, but adolescents and adults enter a half-sleepwalking state, where they hallucinate about the Dream Shard and its actions in the material world. The symbiotic relationship between the Dream Shard and its dreamers means that while it's being dreamed of, it must perform terrifying acts in the real world, to fulfill its role as a nightmare.

Materialized Dream Shards are as varied as human imaginations, but must appear to be a person or creature. In media-saturated modern culture, Dream Shards may look like creepy character actors, monsters from video games, and such, but any source of fear and anxiety, or things purely imagined, can influence its form. Before they fully materialize they exist as shadowy, half-real things. But they are able to possess and animate toys representing people or creatures, such as teddy bears, dolls, and action figures. While these forms may seem comical, Dream Shards sometimes use them to dispose of suspicious family members with a kitchen knife in the dark or by tripping them on the stairs. The simplest way to dispose of a Dream Shard is to find it in this state. In shadow form, exposure to bright light destroys it. If it's a toy, one need only break or burn it.

Once they reach full power, Dream Shards can be destroyed with physical force. This is no easy task, as destroying its body merely disrupts a link with one host, allowing it to reform near another, though with less power. Once it only has its creator to rely on, destroying its body eradicates it for good. Killing a host will also destroy the Dream Shard's body, forcing it to reform. Killing a Dream Shard's creator permanently banishes it. That would be a vile act indeed, but it has been known to happen.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Dream Shards can be introduced into your game in a number of interesting ways.

ABANDONED TOY

A child comes home with a ratty old teddy bear they found abandoned by the school. Obviously, mommy and daddy want to throw the filthy thing away. But the child is insistent on keeping it. Daddy takes it for dry cleaning, mommy stitches

Dream Shard

Abilities (Focuses)	
0	Accuracy
2	Communication
3	Constitution
3	Dexterity (Stealth)
1	Fighting (Claws)
2	Intelligence (Host)
4	Perception (Empathy)
3	Strength (Intimidation)
0	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
13	18	23	38	13	13	14	2I/2B+3	+4	+4

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Claws	+3	1d6+5

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Dream Touch (5 SP), Shock and Awe, Sleep with One Eye Open, Taunt

Stunt—Dream Touch (5 SP): If a Dream Shard touches a target with an exceptional imagination, it may spend 5 SP to place the victim in a supernatural dream state. Younger children fall into a coma. Adolescents and adults enter a sleepwalking state where they cannot fully control their actions. To do anything but follow the impulses of their nightmares, an older victim must succeed at a TN 17 Willpower (Faith) test. Success makes the character semi-lucid for a minute or two, or able to act normally for one round. This test may only be attempted once per encounter, or once per hour out of action time. Victims of *dream touch* are aware of the Dream Shard's actions no matter where it is, and become hosts for its *dream parasite* quality. Fortunately, a Dream Shard can only have three active victims of *dream touch* at any time.

Dream Parasite: The first time a Dream Shard uses *dream touch* on a host other than its creator, it becomes an Elite adversary (see the **Introduction** of this book). The second time it does so, it becomes a Heroic adversary. The third time, it becomes an Epic adversary. Replace each set of adjustments with the new ones—don't stack them. Furthermore, reducing a Dream Shard's Health to 0 when it has additional hosts downgrades its template by one degree (Epic to Heroic to Elite to none) and causes it to vanish and reform alongside another host, with the full Health of its newly weakened form. If it loses its links to all additional hosts, it reforms alongside its creator, and may be permanently killed. Killing a host also severs the link, and killing the Dream Shard's creator destroys it permanently. A Dream Shard cannot have more than three hosts beyond its creator. The Dream Shard also has the Intelligence (Host) focus, which is a shorthandAnd for it having the same Intelligence focuses as all its current hosts.

Nightmare Aura: In the Dream Shard's presence, characters move slower than they should. Objects flicker in and out of existence, distances change, and the Dream Shard's position shifts. Characters suffer a -3 penalty to Dexterity (Initiative) rolls. Once per round, the Dream Shard can either attempt to preempt an attack by declaring it isn't where it first appeared to be, or interrupt a character's movement by causing a barrier to appear in the way. The attacker must defeat the Dream Shard in an opposed test; both roll Dexterity (Initiative) to react faster than the Dream Shard can manipulate its *nightmare aura*. Instead of distorting its position and the environment, the Dream Shard can instead materialize a piece of equipment suited to its nightmarish form—longer, sword-like claws for a movie slasher, or body armor for an evil cop, for example—as its once-per-round use of this power. *Nightmare aura* doesn't use up the Dream Shard's actions and can be activated out of initiative order.

Under the Bed: Until it matures, the Dream Shard is either a shadow creature that can be instantly destroyed with bright light but not otherwise harmed, or inhabits and animates a toy representing a person or creature. When possessing a toy, it has 5 Health, -2 Strength, and has no innate attack forms, though it might be able to use found objects as weapons. Destroying the toy before it can escape eradicates it. It requires a major and minor action, in succession, to shift from one form to another. In both forms, it may re-roll Dexterity (Stealth) tests, but must keep the results of the second roll.

Equipment: As made by *nightmare aura*.

Threat: Moderate (linked to creator only), Major (linked to one or two hosts), or Dire (linked to three hosts)

its eyes back on, and their kid is happy. The nightmares start soon after. Is a new Dream Shard inhabiting the stuffed animal, or is an established one searching for another host?

The Institute for Dream Analysis

The newly opened Dawn Institute for Dream Analysis (DIDA) welcomes those who struggle with sleep—and quietly offers special treatment for those who make claims of clairvoyance, ESP or telepathy. To those seeking treatment, DIDA initially does appear to be pursuing innovative sleep therapy methods—though the facility's security features are puzzling, resembling a prison more than a clinic. But seven nights after the Player Characters' arrival, the doors automatically lock, and the lights go out. Dawn, you see, is the name of the primary funder's daughter who recently awoke from a coma, thanks to the fact that her mother agreed to give a Dream Shard "new friends to play with."

Scuba Man's Revenge

Something's been dragging people to the local lake and drowning them. The creature sighted resembles a bloated, waterlogged body with boneless, ropy limbs, wearing the remains of a rotted business suit—and strangely, a scuba mask and oxygen tank. Investigation results in hostility and even violence from the locals; they think "Scuba Man" might be a traveler the powerful Mayor's son killed in a drunken bar fight. When his own children saw him hauling the body onto his boat for disposal in the lake, he told them the man was "going scuba diving." The Mayor's son barely remembers that night, and is more concerned with his daughter's sudden coma than the recent killings.

EXPERIMENT #12

I think you've got a bit of a temper, mister.

Experiment #12 says her parents volunteered her for tests and treatments at "the Respite," a black-site laboratory. "I was smarter than them," she says on one of the facility's few surviving interview tapes. "They weren't good people. I can always tell who's a good person." Years later, she was discharged. When police investigated the silent lab a week later, they found a scene of mass slaughter and no survivors. Experiment #12 disappeared into the mob of humanity, leaving a few fragments of her patient records among the lab's debris. Paper records list her number—no name. Facility hard drives and videotapes were mostly scrambled, as if exposed to an electromagnetic pulse.

Experiment #12 is polite, quiet, and often walks around with a half-smile playing across her face. She speaks huskily but warmly, and the only time her friendly persona drops is when someone touches her. She hates that. When someone reaches out to her shoulder, places their hand on hers, or brushes against her, her smile drops and everyone around her finds their aggression mounting to terrible extremes. People around her threaten each other. As their agitation increases, they might lash out with fists, boots, and whatever they can lift. Before you know it, they're murdering each other in broad daylight. Experiment #12 is never a victim of these assaults. She watches the violence, breathes deeply, and walks away from the carnage. "This is who they really are," she once said to witnesses.

Experiment #12 cannot control minds. She is not a psychic in the traditional sense. Whoever experimented on her and why are lost to time and her trail of destruction. She turns everyday aggression into tailspins of rage that only weaken after she's left the scene. She seems to enjoy these storms of violence. According to survivors, experiencing Experiment #12's rage is akin to being blasted by a tornado of intense heat that restricts their breathing and makes their eyes water. Only acting on their aggressive impulses provides relief. She can definitely use her power voluntarily, but in many instances it seems to manifest unconsciously.

How Experiment #12 thrives without a legal identity is unknown. She carries money in small denominations but has no bank account. If she feels she's being followed, she activates her abilities.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Experiment #12 could show up in your game via one of the following story hooks.

BLOOD ON THE CROSSTOWN

It's all over the news: There was a massacre in a subway car last night. Security cameras went dead when it happened, but one of the victims was found with an old-fashioned film camera in his hands—he'd been bludgeoned to death with it. Forensics is eager to get that film developed and identify

EXPERIMENT #12

Abilities (Focuses)	
1	Accuracy
3	Communication (Deception)
2	Constitution (Running)
3	Dexterity (Stealth)
1	Fighting
6	Intelligence (Chemistry, Medicine, Psychology)
5	Perception (Empathy)
1	Strength

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
13	12	32	62	12	14	14	0I/0B+2	+2	+3

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Brawling Strike	+1	1d3+1

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Cover Your Tracks, Skirmish, Take Cover

Aura of Blindness: Victims of the *aura of rage* have a blind spot where Experiment #12 is concerned. They remember her before and after the fact, but when in a state of rage can't see or pay attention to her. Experiment #12 can reduce an unknowing subject's Health to 0 by succeeding at an attack versus a Defense of 10, using an edged weapon, bludgeon, or firearm. Characters who have thrown off the *aura of rage* can sense her normally.

Aura of Rage: Experiment #12 keeps her nuclear levels of hostility bottled up until provoked. Once someone lights the fuse, she unleashes an aura of psychic rage in a 20-yard radius concentrated on Experiment #12. This requires a major action to initiate and a minor action to maintain. Experiment #12 may involuntarily release the *aura of rage* in situations determined by the Game Master, including rudeness from others and unwanted physical contact. Any mammal capable of aggression suffers the following effects:

Social Rage: Victims must make a TN 17 Willpower (Self-Discipline) test or develop a Very Hostile attitude (see **Chapter 2** of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*) toward all strangers, and a Hostile attitude toward people they know. This manifests as subconscious aggression coming to the fore, and even after it passes, victims may end up dealing with the fallout from extremely regrettable statements. Victims cannot utilize Relationships based on positive feelings while under the effects of *social* rage or any other *aura of rage* effects.

Violent Rage: 1d3 rounds after *social rage*, anyone still under its effects must make a Willpower (Self-Discipline) test at TN 15 to avoid attacking each other to inflict superficial injuries, but not lethal force. Each time a victim successfully hits someone with an attack inspired by this power they may make the Willpower test again, with a cumulative +1 bonus to throw off its effects for the encounter. Once an enraged character has knocked out a target, they seek out another if they're still influenced by this power.

Homicidal Rage: 1d3 rounds after *violent rage*, anyone still under its effects must make a TN 13 Willpower (Self-Discipline) test or attack nearby people with killing intent. If a Player Character murders someone as a result, they immediately snap out of the effect. NPCs get an opportunity to throw off the power's effects with a +1 bonus to the test, cumulative for each victim. *Homicidal rage* persists for 1d6+1 rounds or until Experiment #12 leaves the area.

Once a victim succeeds at the Willpower (Self-Discipline) test required for a given manifestation of the *aura of rage*, they are immune to any other effects for the remainder of the encounter. People newly entering the *aura of rage* start with *social rage* and work their way up. People under the effects of the *aura of rage* who leave the 20-yard radius around Experiment #12 remain affected until she leaves the immediate area.

Magnetic Rage: When Experiment #12 activates the *aura of rage*, all electronic devices are disrupted by an accompanying magnetic pulse, as if hit by a Chaff Grenade (see the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*, p. 79) but in a 20-yard radius of her. This holds true even in Gritty games.

Talents: Advanced Medicine (Novice), Observation (Expert)

Equipment: Burner Phone, Casual Clothes, Fake ID, Tranquilizers

Threat: Major

the one pair of boots that left prints in the subway car's blood spatter but didn't match those of any of the victims. These belong to someone with small feet and a pigeon-toed stride—and she wasn't running.

COMPETITION

A video streaming star claims he can make people fight. An early video has him sitting poolside, compelling three of his "bros" to fistfight until they fall in the water and snap out of it. These escalate until his viral hit where he's walking through a park making people and animals savage each other as he laughs. Shortly after, 43 people on a bus are treated for injuries sustained during a period of "mass psychosis" that erupted shortly after it pulled into the streaming star's hometown. Experiment #12 is coming.

THE ANGRY JOB

Experiment #12 wants to go somewhere remote, with enough money to set her up for life. That's why she joined a crew robbing a casino after demonstrating her ability to disrupt cameras and wreck computers. At least, that's according to the crew's survivors, who were waiting in the getaway car for companions who shot each other instead. The money's gone, Experiment #12 is gone, and the crew wants revenge—and so do the casino's owners, who are old-school leg breakers.

GHOST

> I wasn't going to let my killers hurt anyone else. Of course, now I'm stuck here, and I'm seeing a lot of guys who look like the gang that murdered me. I guess they have to go, too.

Most people think Ghosts are the spirits of the dead. Various cultures see Ghosts as beings with excessive attachment to the world, benevolent, guardians of their descendants, or people who died with unfinished business in the living world. Parapsychologists often say Ghosts are psychic remnants impressed into places or objects by trauma. Grim interpretations say they're people so evil Hell rejected their souls, or they broke the rules that would have let them into a peaceful afterlife. Skeptics say they don't exist—but that's wrong, of course.

Ghosts are as diverse as their rumored origins. The so-called Angry Dead haunt specific sites, attacking people who remind them of its rage's source in their appearance, actions, or time of entry. The Restless Dead are not bound to locations but go through routines and actions they remember from life. They attack anyone who interrupts their routines or makes them confront the fact that they're dead. The Cold Dead possess mortals to renew the obsessions they had while they lived, take care of unfinished business, or punish the living for life itself. The rarest Ghosts, at least in Western countries, are the Benevolent Dead, who protect families and undertakings important to them. All Ghosts appear to lack a full measure of free will. That part of them is either incomplete or somehow constrained by their natures.

Ghosts are intangible, barely discernible except as shadows, strange lights, or static sparks. In this state, some are mistaken for Anomalies (see p. 48). Ghosts cause electromagnetic disturbances, which can be detected through special equipment. These reveal the Ghost's outline: a silhouette of the body it had in life. Few Ghosts can manifest into a tangible state, but all can project their preferred appearance into witnesses' minds. Few Ghosts can project anything other than a single preferred appearance, so once someone sees a lady in white or an unblinking child, that's usually how it will appear in subsequent visitations.

GHOST TYPES

ANGRY DEAD

The Angry Dead guard locations and attack intruders they don't approve of. As a minor action, the Ghost can psychically project disturbing sensory phenomena within its protectorate, such as bleeding surfaces and threatening whispers, prompting a TN 11 Willpower (Courage) test on each occasion, until victims succeed or fail three times. For each failed test, the victim suffers a -1 penalty to all tests except Willpower, from fear and disorientation. Finally, if a victim fails three times, they must succeed at a TN 13 Willpower (Courage) test when moving around in the Ghost's territory, or else hallucinations and disorientation cause them to go wherever the Ghost wants them to. If this leads to injury, the victim snaps out of the effect.

BENEVOLENT DEAD

The Benevolent Dead protect their descendants and things they loved in life. As a minor action, this Ghost may lay a blessing on an individual so that for 24 hours, they experience a +2 bonus to tests using one ability, and gain +2 SP whenever a roll using that ability generates SP. The Ghost may also curse someone so that they suffer a -2 penalty to tests using one ability, and rolls which generate SP lose 2 SP. The Benevolent Dead can't lay blessings or curses on large numbers of people simultaneously, but the limit is up to the Game Master and should encompass a group of Player Characters.

COLD DEAD

The Cold Dead possess mortals. The prospective victim must have at least one significant point of similarity in appearance, belief, personal history, or another important factor. When the Ghost attempts to possess its victim, this requires its major action. Roll opposed tests between the Ghost's Communication (Persuasion) and the victim's Willpower (Faith) once every few minutes, or once per round in an action scene, until one side succeeds three times. The Ghost may gain up to +3 to its roll based on the degree of similarity with the victim, with +3 being for a virtual reincarnation of the Cold Dead's living

self. Once the victim succeeds three times in any 24-hour period, it throws off possession, and may not be unwillingly possessed again. The first time the Ghost succeeds, it controls one minor action per round, or an equivalent slice of activity outside of action time. The second time the Ghost succeeds, this increases to a major action. The third time, the Ghost takes full possession for 24 hours, at which point the process starts again, unless a bystander intervenes. The GM is encouraged to allow various social and supernatural efforts to help possessed characters "snap out of it." The victim is cold to the touch. Cold Dead never take actions that would kill the bodies they inhabit. Once they gain full possession, they control the victim's actions using their victim's Constitution, Dexterity, Strength, Health, Toughness, and Defense, but not the Ghost's other abilities. Cold Dead inhabiting others use their own focuses, regardless of ability.

Restless Dead

The Restless Dead follow the same routines they did while alive, and punish people who remind them they've died. Unlike most Ghosts, Restless Dead may materialize as a major action. They shed ectoplasm (a semi-solid material that vanishes when they do) as they move, and come with any equipment that helped define their identities in life. In solid form, Restless Dead gain +10 Health and a 5I/5B Armor Rating due to their solid but inhuman natures.

Adventure Hooks

The following are adventure hooks are suited to Ghosts.

The Haunting of Livingstone Manor

A ghost-hunting television crew heads to old Livingstone Manor, a house that couldn't be more archetypally haunted if it tried. The crooked, creaking building lay abandoned for over a century. Everyone's heard rumors it was haunted, but nobody takes it very seriously until the crew runs out terrified, carrying their dead host, who seems to have died by falling down the stairs. The crew's equipment doesn't record any Ghosts, but does show a local skeptic sneaking around. Funny thing is, the skeptic honestly doesn't remember going there.

Help Me

One of the characters is going through their morning ablutions when they see "HELP ME" written on their mirror and spy a human-like shape disappearing into a wall. The Restless Dead Ghost is the victim of one of the character's adversaries, and if they don't help it take revenge, it becomes increasingly agitated and may turn its anger against them.

A. B. Abrams

One of the vengeful Angry Dead prowls a massive city skyscraper, causing lethal "accidents." People fall down elevator shafts, get electrocuted on exposed wiring, and burn in office fires. The Ghost knows that a man named A.B. Abrams and his corporate cronies killed her, but the building has three executives in three different companies by that name. The Ghost remembers a name tag and fragments of conversation, but no faces. Who should she kill, and should the heroes allow it?

Ghost

Abilities (Focuses)	
3	Accuracy (Thrown)
2	Communication (Persuasion)
0	Constitution
4	Dexterity (Stealth)
1	Fighting
3	Intelligence (Occultism)
4	Perception (Tracking)
1	Strength
2	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
14	10	10	15	14	14	14	0I/0B +0	+0	+0

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Poltergeist	+6	1D6+5

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Expose, Lightning Attack, Whatever's Handy

Another Life: Ghosts were originally mortal, and retain the same or similar Communication, Intelligence, and Perception abilities they possessed while alive, along with the focuses and talents they learned. The GM should modify a Ghost's game statistics when necessary to reflect this.

Ghost Type: Ghosts vary greatly in their manifestations, and these influence their abilities. Use the following types, or invent your own. The sidebar in this entry describes the abilities of those mentioned here.

Incorporeal: Except for the Restless Dead, Ghosts can't take material form. This means they cannot be damaged except through the use of extraordinary powers such as magic or psychic disciplines. The GM determines what exactly can affect an incorporeal Ghost. Unless it *manifests*, a Ghost is invisible and cannot communicate or be seen. Attacks suffer a -5 to hit the Ghost while it's invisible. Ghosts pass through solid objects at will.

Manifest: To communicate, a Ghost must take visible form. This requires one minor and one major action in succession, and the same time to turn invisible again. Despite the time required of the Ghost, it may appear and disappear slowly or extremely quickly. The Ghost may appear in a frightening version of its habitual appearance (so that a lady in white appears with a flayed face, roaring, for instance) to frighten onlookers. They must succeed at a TN 14 Willpower (Courage) test, or choose between fleeing or standing firm with a -3 penalty to tests for the next round. The Ghost can only attempt to frighten a given victim once per encounter. Manifestation is a psychic phenomenon and doesn't appear in recordings.

Poltergeist: A Ghost may throw objects within two yards of itself a Range of 15 + Strength yards. It may also use this ability to manipulate objects, but not living things.

Equipment: None

Threat: Minor

PSYCHIC VAMPIRE

You'd look prettier if you smiled.

You've seen movie vampires. The Count stalks toward his victim theatrically. Dead bikers rip open veins in a back-country roadhouse. A child taps on the door or window, begging to be let in. They want blood.

Psychic Vampires are not movie vampires. They don't wear capes or leather jackets. They don't hold court over a secret counterculture. They're not creepy—but sometimes, they're *creeps*. Psychic Vampires are some of the most charming, courteous, flirtatious, good-looking parasites you'll ever take home to meet the parents. Sure, they come off as a bit arrogant, even presumptuous, but until they need to fight, or take more than a sip of psychic energy, they keep their aggression strictly within what most people will tolerate. That's how smart monsters work. You won't see a Psychic Vampire at some underground club, but somewhere with bottle service and four- to six-figure-a-night DJs.

When he feels the need, he hits the dance floor, smiling as everyone else slows down. Around the Psychic Vampire, revelers feel tired, limbs heavy. Music turns to droning static.

The Psychic Vampire smiles, and as everyone else's joy, lust, and even energetic anger drains from them, they see their predator—one of the local beautiful people, but not *too* beautiful, like the personification of an upscale mall—sucking all the happiness out of the room. That's how it feels. That's how it really is.

Another Psychic Vampire takes the more familiar seduction route, but is less a dark lover, more a sports casual type with a slightly brash dating app profile who's smart enough for dinner, at least. But as the night progresses, and the Psychic Vampire talks about workout tips and pop music, their date feels depressed and weak. Maybe it's the conversation and the crackling static beneath it—probably a headache. And if they go back to the monster's place, their date comes out an empty shell, incapable of feeling anything ever again.

Sometimes, though, Psychic Vampires get impatient in their hunger. They're not above kidnapping, if they need to do it.

Psychic Vampires handle daylight, religious symbols, silver, and the like just fine. A stake through the heart hurts them less than it would a human, who'd be killed, but it still hurts.

PSYCHIC VAMPIRE

	Abilities (Focuses)
1	Accuracy (Electrical Burst)
4	Communication (Persuasion, Seduction)
2	Constitution
3	Dexterity (Acrobatics)
3	Fighting (Grappling, Light Blades)
2	Intelligence
5	Perception (Empathy)
2	Strength
1	Willpower (Empathy)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
13	27	37	52	13	13	14	0I/0B +2	+3	+3

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Dagger	+5	1D6+3
Electrical Burst	+1	2D6+5**
Grappling Grip	+5	1D3+3

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes. **see electrical burst special quality

Special Qualities

Force: 13 (Empathy) **Power Points:** 35

Favored Stunts: Impress, Oozing Confidence, Vicious Blow

Drain Emotions: As a minor action, the Psychic Vampire feeds on the emotions of victims up to 10 yards away. The victim must make a TN 13 Willpower (Morale) test or suffer one level of fatigue, using the optional rules on p. 92 of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*. If the victim is a psychic, they lose 3d6 psychic power points instead. The first time the Psychic Vampire uses *drain emotions*, they sate their hunger for the next 24 hours. After that, the monster gains +2 to rolls for one ability for one hour, recovers 8 PP, heals 8 Health, or recovers one level of fatigue—Psychic Vampire's choice. The Psychic Vampire can't gain the +2 bonus to the same ability more than once, but they can use the other benefits repeatedly. The victim hears a crackling sound. If the Psychic Vampire uses two minor actions to *drain emotions* in the same round, bystanders can hear the sound as well with a successful TN 13 Perception (Hearing) test. Electronics within 10 yards of the monster momentarily fail for the round as well.

Electrical Burst: Psychic vampires crackle with static: emotional energy converted to electricity by some bizarre means. A psychic vampire can spend 4 psychic power points to unleash this energy as a ranged attack (Range 50 yards) inflicting 2d6+Perception penetrating stun damage (monster's choice).

Frailty: A Psychic Vampire accumulates one level of fatigue (see p. 92 of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*) for every 24 hours it goes without feeding. This level of fatigue can't be recovered through rest or conventional healing. Only feeding relieves it. A Psychic Vampire who "dies" in this way grows dormant and appears to be a wax effigy or inexpertly embalmed corpse. It stays this way until it feels powerful emotions of any kind nearby, at which point it revives at the Exhausted level for an hour, during which it attempts to feed.

Talents: Attractive (Expert), Empathy (Master), Grappling Style (Novice)

Equipment: Antique Dagger, Fashionable Clothing, Sports Car

Threat: Moderate

However, Psychic Vampires do have some detectable unnatural features. When they feed, victims hear loud crackling static, and bystanders hear it as a whisper. Sensitive electronic devices may temporarily malfunction. This is why Psychic Vampires prefer to feed in places with a great deal of ambient noise, or privately. Open one up and you'd find atrophied organs embedded in an overdeveloped nervous system. Psychic Vampires have remarkably keen senses, though no true passions. No Psychic Vampire has been known to value other living beings as anything but nutrition, and none of them have sexual desires, though they often pretend to. Beyond feeding, the monster's greatest joy is in feeling a sense of domination over their prey.

Psychic Vampires don't remember their origins. Some believe they're Anomalies in human form, but they may be soul-scoured victims of Psychic Vampires who become infected by their predators—in this, at least, they follow tradition.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following are adventure hooks you can use to introduce Psychic Vampires to your game.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

When a Psychic Vampire feeds from a group of gang members partying in the street, Experiment #12 (see p. 60) arrives, inducing unnatural fury in the same victims. The Psychic Vampire feeds on the heightened aggression, and enjoys it immensely, but blunts the rage Experiment #12 triggered. This begins a game of mutual stalking, as Experiment #12 fires them up and the Psychic Vampire devours the resulting fury, escaping before she can confront it. The Psychic Vampire grows more powerful, and Experiment #12 grows more frustrated. Characters must uncover the conflict by talking to witnesses, and prevent the collateral damage of a final showdown—or worse, an alliance.

SANCTUARY

A desperately hungry Psychic Vampire is nevertheless determined to not hurt another living soul. It comes to one of the Player Characters and begs for sanctuary and a cure, and is willing to give up the secrets of its kind. Other Psychic Vampires want to destroy the traitor, and until the traitor is cured—a process that must be discovered—it must continue to feed.

VEGETATIVE STATE

A Relationship connection with of one of the Player Characters has apparently suffered a stroke, but the truth is a Psychic Vampire fed from them and enjoys the emotional tastes the Player Character inspires in Relationships. Now the creature hunts anyone who has a Relationship Bond with the character (either way) and investigates the hero's social lives to find suitable prey.

PUPPETEER

> Did you see the way I got her to gun down her father? That's poetry, old boy. Must position me closer to the top of the leaderboard, surely.

Officially known as "the Honorable Guild of Esteemed Puppeteers," these psychics have operated since the 19th century, playing games with victims to gain prestige within their own ranks. They cultivate the power to possess and operate the bodies of others. Puppeteers love forcing targets into compromising positions, compelling acts out-of-keeping with normal behavior, or simply causing sadistic pratfalls, all to impress their peers. Puppeteer circles hand out prizes for the most outrageous manipulations—what they consider the funniest torments they can inflict on their "Puppets."

If they sound vulgar, that's because Puppeteers are—at least when it comes to "the Old Game." Puppeteers are bound by Guild law to conceal their powers and shield their comrades from the consequences of their actions, but those actions are praiseworthy when their "Puppets" make the news after being forced to commit acts of mayhem. Yet, beyond a little insider training and other small conveniences, Puppeteering for personal gain is forbidden. The Guild's laws proclaim, "a Puppeteer must never use the Old Game for excessive advantage in matters of wealth, prestige among the Puppets, or any matter in their political arena." They rightly fear what an ambitious Puppeteer might do, and in enforcing their laws, they perform a public service, in their own perverse way. They execute members who exhibit signs

of overweening greed, allude to great plans, or target high-level political and military leaders.

Puppeteers dress well and act with a gentleman or lady's etiquette. They do not always hail from noble backgrounds, but one of the first tasks upon joining the Guild is "Filling the Collection Plate." The Puppeteers demand new members use their abilities to acquire an amount of money set by the local circle, along with a list of desired luxuries. Creative Puppeteering is encouraged to rob banks, run confidence schemes, and so forth. These acquisitions become communal Guild property, so that every member can enjoy a comfortable life. When coffers run low, or a member wants a sports car or diamond ring or something, members Fill the Collection Plate again.

Puppeteers would merely be larcenous pests if they just cared about wealth, but the Old Game is a sadistic practice above and beyond violating "Puppets'" bodily autonomy. Their refinement is a pose; they prefer crude compulsions that leave victims injured, emotionally traumatized, or even dead, and since everyone outside the Guild is a mere "Puppet" too, it doesn't matter who else the Puppeteers harm—the more upset they cause the better their score in the Old Game. Guild laws forbid a current or past Puppet from seeing the face of their Puppeteer, and members of the Guild wear Punch and Judy masks when coming into close proximity with their victims.

Body Alone

To gain access to a target's motor functions requires establishing a psychic link with the victim. This means all Puppeteers at must possess the Telepathy psychic discipline (see *Modern AGE*, p. 107) at the Novice degree, and Telekinesis (see *Modern AGE* p. 105) at the Expert degree or better to control a victim's body. Puppeteers cannot use their peculiar abilities to manipulate a target's mind, or even access it. Developing the *puppeteering* power requires a form of psychic self-mutilation where the Puppeteer cannot identify with others. This bars the ability to learn higher degrees of Telepathy or any degree of Empathy. New powers which allow the Puppeteer to read minds or emotions are also forbidden, though powers that merely sense the presence of minds are permitted.

Adventure Hooks

If you want Puppeteers in your game of *Modern AGE*, consider using one of the following story hooks.

Going Too Far

Puppeteers are supposed to handle their own. If a Puppeteer's ego takes over and they start using their powers to achieve great, noticeable ends, the Guild closes ranks and eliminates the danger. The problem today is the rogue puppeteer isn't obvious. None of the puppeteers can work out who it is that's been manipulating the head of an investment bank for the last week and sending the stock price crashing down.

Lamb to the Slaughter

The Player Characters notice a strange event. A distressed-looking man, walking a lot like a zombie or automaton,

PUPPETEER

Abilities (Focuses)	
1	Accuracy (Telekinesis)
3	Communication (Disguise, Etiquette)
1	Constitution
2	Dexterity
1	Fighting
3	Intelligence (Current Affairs)
2	Perception
2	Strength
4	Willpower (Telekinesis)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
12	12	15	30	12	13	13	+1	+1	+2

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Telekinetic Throw	+1	1d6+2

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Force: 16 (Telekinesis)/14 (Telepathy) **Power Points:** 40

Favored Stunts: In Good Standing, Ignore Harm's Way (2 SP), Oozing Confidence

Stunt—Ignore Harm's Way (2 SP): While controlling a victim's body with *puppeteering*, the Puppeteer can ignore threats to it to act more effectively. The Puppeteer can perform an additional major or minor action after suffering 1d6 penetrating wound damage, either by acting without considering hazards or pushing the stolen body beyond human limits. This second action can't gain stunt points. This represents reflexive callousness, and is too quick to allow the victim to break free of *puppeteering* as self-destructive attempts usually permit.

Puppeteering: After using the *psychic contact* Telepathy power to connect to a subject's mind, the Puppeteer can exert their telekinetic will to take control of the target's body. This costs 8 PP. When controlled by *puppeteering*, the victim uses the Puppeteer's Willpower in lieu of Strength, and the Puppeteer's Accuracy, Dexterity, and Fighting abilities instead of those of the victim. The victim can attempt to resist with a TN 16 Strength (Might) test. For every hour that passes, the Puppeteer must spend 4 PP, and the victim may attempt the test to break free again, at a cumulative +1 bonus. If the Puppeteer attempts to push a victim into a self-destructive act or situation, the victim immediately gains a test attempt to break free beforehand, at an additional +2 bonus. If the victim breaks free or the Puppeteer relinquishes their hold, the Puppeteer must re-initiate *psychic contact* and begin the *puppeteering* process anew. However, the victim retains the time-based cumulative bonus to break free until 24 hours have passed.

Callous: The process of becoming a Puppeteer stunts the ability to value others' thoughts and feelings. Puppeteers suffer a -2 penalty to tests that rely on knowing what another person is thinking or feeling, and cannot use stunts supporting such actions.

Talents: Telekinesis (Master), Telepathy (Novice)

Equipment: Expensive Suit or Dress, Punch or Judy Mask, Wallet Full of Cash

Threat: Moderate

strides toward what looks like a Masonic lodge and disappears inside after being greeted by a man in an elaborate Mr. Punch mask. In the news the following day, the man they saw is reported deceased, as he was found hanged to death from a nearby bridge in an apparent suicide.

UNLIKELY THIEVES

The protagonists are caught up in an armed robbery, but the individuals participating in the heist are an odd assortment including a besuited office worker, a pensioner, a punk off the street, and a fruit seller. They each hold guns and seem incredibly confused by the words coming from their lips. Unfortunately, it seems impossible to reason with them, as they execute one of the hostages for attempting to flee.

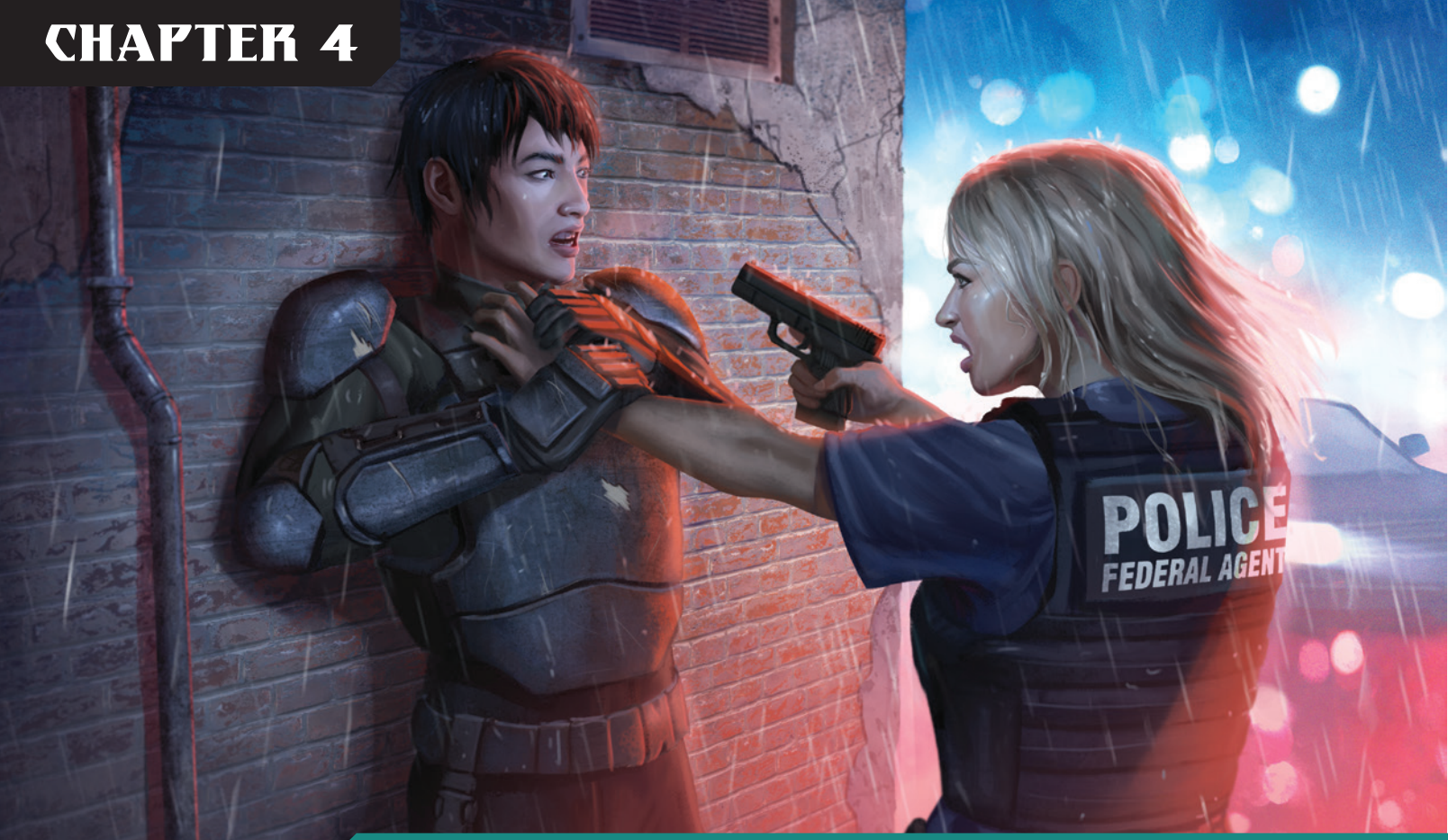
YOU SAY WHO WANTS A REVOLUTION?

A Puppeteer comes to the characters with a proposal: They'll help in the characters' quest to take down an enemy organization, even a major government, as long as they let the Puppeteer force its leaders to give away its resources to the Puppeteer (with a cut for the characters, of course!) and perform a few "pranks." But as Player Characters may or may not know, this flouts Guild rules against excessive self-enrichment or political influence. Do the characters trust the Puppeteer? What happens when the Guild finds out, especially given that the renegade, in forcing the enemy to behave bizarrely, seems to want it to find out?

LAYERS

After inadvertently taking over a Chameleon (see p. 56), a Puppeteer re-visits that victim repeatedly until they learn how to use is shapeshifting powers. Now the Puppeteer works through two layers of deception and is ready to let the Chameleon take the blame for its actions, either to break Guild rules or just get away from investigators. Worse, the Chameleon victim knew others with the same gift, so the Puppeteer can steal and abandon their bodies in succession. Can the characters track the Puppeteer down, and can they trust the Chameleons they'll have to deal with during any investigation?

CHAPTER 4



THE LAW & THE LAWLESS

In *Modern AGE*, crime and policing can both be used by Game Masters to create complications in a story, or as the basis for entire campaigns. Crime dramas and investigative procedural games can draw from perhaps the greatest number of possible media inspirations. Numerous novels, films, and TV shows are centered on law enforcement and criminal plots. Even games in other genres use elements from mysteries and crime dramas.

Modern AGE uses multiple systems to play out the sorts of stories you find in these genres. For police procedurals, the investigation and social systems in **Chapter 2** of the *Modern AGE Core Rulebook* will see frequent use. Criminal capers benefit from the Breaching rules in **Chapter 7** of the core rules. This chapter doesn't just add new Non-Player Characters, but also supports crime-focused tales with Heat, an optional system to track the attention of police and criminals.

I FOUGHT THE LAW...

A well-developed criminal conspiracy creates an immersive world for Player Characters to move through. Here are a few questions to aid in building the criminal society in your story. What are the criminal factions and independent criminal organizations in your story? What is the specialty of each criminal faction? Who are the important criminal NPCs in your campaign?

Your answers will not only depend on your raw, creative ideas but also on the scale and structure you wish to use. If your campaign is a crime drama set in a single city, local gangs and police departments will be your focus, but in a globetrotting story about smashing an international arms cartel, you'll need to focus on bigger players. These will determine which Non-Player Characters fit the story. Your answers will sometimes suggest crossover elements. In a setting where magic exists, criminals treat it as another tool to pull off successful heists, and arcanists are in great demand. If psychic powers are real, police might employ psychics when other investigative tools fail.

EXAMPLE

In Threefold, a setting for Modern Age, the Krypteia is an alliance of organized crime and corrupt corporations. Although strife-ridden, these organizations are united by avarice and access to resources unattainable by lesser cartels, including extraordinary items and power. The Krypteia operates in a veil of shadows, hiding their activities with layers of shell corporations and anonymous digital currency. The organization is based on an alliance of unscrupulous individuals, and if one leader ever happens to be caught they are easily replaced.

GM Meghan decides the local Krypteia is led by a mysterious lady referred to as the Whisper Woman on the streets, because people are afraid to say her name. She uses the Mob Boss entry and her subordinates are usually Smugglers and Enforcers, since her business concentrates on illegal arms smuggling and extortion. The Krypteia

exists in a world where magic is real, but the Whisper Woman prefers not to let arcanists into her inner circle; it keeps a mercenary Warlock on retainer.

Not all crime in the city comes from Krypteia affiliates, however, and Meghan wants the heroes to uncover a street-level connection to the criminal underworld before tackling the Whisper Woman. Thus, she designs the Burnouts, a car-stealing street racing gang with its own chop shop. Their leader's real name is Duane Wash, but on the street, he goes by Hemi. The Burnouts is an independent organization, and its garage is inside a large, walled junkyard on the outside of the city. Burnouts members use the Hardened Gang Member entry, or the Getaway Driver from the Modern AGE Basic Rulebook.

Once the factions are established, the GM determines how they interact. What do those NPCs know and feel about each other? In what ways do criminal factions cooperate or fight each other?

EXAMPLE

Some of the younger members of the Krypteia compete in street races against members of the Burnouts with tricked-out race cars. Neither faction views the other as criminal competition because they focus on different types of crime. The Whisper Woman does not respect the Burnouts and considers Hemi a petty thief. Hemi is quick to avoid conflict with the Krypteia, and secretly fears their leader.

Finally, consider how to roleplay criminal factions and their leaders. Does the faction act boldly or exercise caution? Do they display their wealth and power or operate from the shadows? Are they quick to violence or do they prefer con games and veiled threats?

EXAMPLE

The Krypteia hides behind a legitimate front business called Sasaki Inc. Krypteia henchmen act in a professional manner, but their actions always carry an implied threat of violence. The Whisper Woman is rarely seen but exudes an air of mystery and danger.

The Burnouts flaunt custom cars and put on an air of superiority. While they aren't afraid of a brawl, members flee if threatened with firearms or other forms of lethal violence.

...AND THE LAW WON

A law enforcement-style campaign can offer a lot of fun while giving the GM a structured framework to tell stories. Police procedurals are among the easiest genres to use when characters are called in to fight crime. The Procedurals genre is discussed in the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*, **Chapter 11: The Campaign Setting**.

The GM determines which law enforcement agencies and NPCs best fit the story. One way to determine which agencies and NPCs to use is by matching them to criminal factions and their chosen specialties. In stories where the characters work with the law, agencies with overlapping jurisdiction might compete over the same investigation. In games set in the US, a drug trafficking gang might be the subject of a DEA task force. Again, the scale of your setting also plays a factor. A game set in a small town need only deal with the sheriff's department or local constabulary.

EXAMPLE

In Meghan's game, the local Sheriff's Department is investigating a recent spree of stolen cars. She uses entries for the Police Chief and Medical Examiner, as well as the Police Officer and Police Detective from the Modern AGE Basic Rulebook. *Meanwhile, the ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, & Explosives) has two agents following up on leads that illegal guns are entering the city. The agents use the entry for Special Agent. To create a story complication, Meghan decides a psychic in the city assists law enforcement on a freelance basis. The police psychic uses the entry for Psychic in the* Modern AGE Basic Rulebook.

Roleplaying law enforcement will vary depending on the GM's style and the story they are telling. Use the same advice as for criminal groups.

DIRTY COPS & UNDERCOVER AGENTS

Sometimes the line gets blurred between "good" and "bad" guys. There are countless Hollywood plot twists based on characters crossing that line. Game Masters are free to decide any of these entries represents a character working undercover for one side or the other. If you go this route, consider modifying a turncoat NPC's game statistics according to the Undercover NPCs table in this section. Use these in full if a criminal is really a police officer, or vice versa, or in part if the NPC is simply affiliated with the other side.

Beyond these modifications, undercover work involves new Relationships, Memberships, and reputations, using the rules in the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*. In some cases, reputation honorifics represent a challenge to characters trying to go undercover. If the honorific is related to an identity that would reveal the character as someone working for the other side, it may provide a bonus to tests devoted to uncovering their true affiliations. If you're using the optional Heat system below, an undesirable honorific generates +1 Heat if a character uses it, or is recognized as the owner of the problem honorific.

UNDERCOVER NPCS

Game Statistics	Criminal is Undercover Law Enforcement	Law Enforcement is Secret Criminal
Focuses	Accuracy (Pistols), Communication (Disguise), Intelligence (Law)	Communication (Deception), Dexterity (Sleight of Hand or Stealth), Intelligence (Evaluation)
Talents	Add one degree from Emergency Care, Intrigue, Observation, Pistol Style, or Self-Defense Style	Add one degree from Contacts, Freerunning, Misdirection, Party Animal, or Pinpoint Attack

HEAT

In the business of crime, it pays dividends to cover your tracks. Get sloppy, leave a trail, or make things personal for your opposition and you might end up in a jail cell (or worse). As an optional rule, Game Masters track the accumulated evidence and angst that a character leaves behind by assigning a Heat rating from 1 to 5. The rating is assigned for a specific faction, like the police, a gang, an organized crime family, or a federal agency. This indicates which organization has developed an increased interest in the character. Heat also reflects miscellaneous information that makes it easier for that faction to track the character down. High heat means pursuers interview people about the character, review videotape, and otherwise exploit available information.

You can also allow Heat to apply to a small group, such as a street gang, an armed robbery crew, or a group of Player Characters. If you use this option, it should never apply to large organizations.

HEAT

Heat Rating	Description
1	Some members of the faction have noticed the character's activity.
2	A warning about the character has been circulated through the faction.
3	Faction members are aware of the character's activity and are passively searching for them.
4	The faction is actively searching for the character.
5	Finding the character is the faction's priority.

RAISING & LOWERING HEAT

Characters raise their Heat rating by attracting attention to themselves and leaving evidence of actions that interest the pursuing faction. Heat can be lowered by avoiding attention or taking deliberate action to misdirect interested parties. Laying low for a month reduces Heat by 1. If pursuers discover an event that matches the character's habits, such as an armed robbery that fits the modus operandi of a crew being tracked by police, increase Heat by 1. Otherwise, the GM determines when Heat ratings rise or fall.

USING HEAT

Heat can be spent by members of the faction against the offending character. Each rank of Heat grants 1 free SP to an Attitude or Investigation stunt related to the character. The pursuers can use some or all of the character's Heat for this advantage, which does not change the character's ongoing Heat rating. Available points recover once per game session.

EXAMPLE

Sean was seen talking to the police about the Burnouts street gang. Word has gotten back to the gang, so the GM determines that Sean acquires a Heat 1 (Burnouts) rating. This increases to 2 when Sean is seen at a street racing event. When the leader of the Burnouts looks for Sean, his player or the GM can gain up to 2 free SP per session to help their search.

ENFORCER

We won't kill you today. If you're dead, you can't make your payment.

Enforcers are the muscle of organized crime. When someone crosses the crime family, they handle the retribution. Whether they are tasked with delivering a violent message or with killing the offender, nobody wants to see an Enforcer at their door. They're physically intimidating: healthy, fit, and comfortable with the violent acts they carry out. They often dress in business wear when on the job. The suit jackets help to conceal a variety of weapons. Then again, coveralls help when work gets especially messy. Gloves are a must.

Enforcers prove themselves to the organization over years of service. Once their trustworthiness is confirmed through a host of lesser crimes, they swear loyalty to their mob for life. Their oaths bind them to the code of their criminal family under penalty of death. Once promoted, they run violent criminal rackets, paying a tribute to their bosses in exchange for turf and assistance. They also punish debtors, traitors, and disobedient gangsters with a variety of violent acts. Someone skimming a little something for themselves might just get shot in the kneecaps. Betrayal merits the most gruesome death. Each criminal organization has a moral code and a leader (often a Mob Boss) determining the range of offenses and punishments.

Player Characters can meet an Enforcer in several ways. The most obvious is when the mob targets them for punishment. This doesn't necessarily mean death; Enforcers bust kneecaps when required. An Enforcer might also subcontract work to characters with criminal connections and few scruples. The Enforcer might also be the someone heroes need to track down. Then there's the matter of an Enforcer who, for whatever reason, wants to leave their employer. They might want to work for the police, join another syndicate, or simply escape for personal reasons.

EVERYONE HATES A RAT

Enforcers all swear to never help law enforcement (at least, legitimately). Enforcers might violate this oath for a variety of reasons. They may want to avoid prison after being apprehended, may have crossed the family, and go to the police to escape punishment, since they'll only be safe if their masters are behind bars. Those who turn state's evidence are viewed as the lowest type of traitor by their family, who will seek revenge. Enforcers who aid law enforcement and manage to avoid jail can expect a life in hiding, using a new name and identification provided by the state.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

These adventure hooks are designed to help introduce Enforcers into your adventure or campaign.

STATE'S EVIDENCE

A prominent Enforcer has turned state's evidence in return for immunity from prosecution and a new identity. If the Enforcer speaks at the trial, the state will have enough to put the Enforcer's former boss and her lieutenants away for a long time. That's why the Enforcer's successor has been charged with killing the traitor. The Player Characters come in as allies of either the law or the mob. If they're working for the law, they've been contacted to help keep the Enforcer safe until trial. If they work for the mob, they're looking for that safe house.

ENFORCER

Abilities (Focuses)	
3	Accuracy (Pistols, Shotguns, SMGs)
2	Communication
3	Constitution
1	Dexterity
4	Fighting (Brawling, Light Blades, Short-Hafted)
1	Intelligence
2	Perception
3	Strength (Intimidation)
2	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
11	25	53	89	11	12	13	2I/4B+3	+4	+5

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Baseball Bat	+6	1D6+5**
Brawling Strike	+6	1D6+3
Combat Shotgun	+6	2D6+4
SA Handgun	+6	2D6+2

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes. **includes Overwhelm Talent

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Intimidate Into Submission (2 SP), Pistol Whip, Vicious Blow

Stunt—Intimidate Into Submission: For 2 SP on a Strength (Intimidation) test, the Enforcer can intimidate an NPC into submission and silence. The submissive NPC will resist attempts to obtain or share information related to the Enforcer, increasing the TNs of tests to extract information by +2. (This also applies in opposed tests, as a bonus to the intimidated character's roll.) For the remainder of the scene, the NPC also suffers a -2 penalty to initiative.

Backup: If the Enforcer needs reinforcements, they can call on others in their organization for help. This ability must be used sparingly, or the Enforcer will be seen as unable to take care of their own affairs—losing status in the family. By default, backup consists of one Minor threat NPC for each Player Character.

Talents: Overwhelm (Expert), Tactical Awareness (Novice), Striking Style (Expert)

Equipment: Baseball Bat, Bullet-Resistant Cloth Armor, Gym Membership Card, SA Handgun, Shotgun, Sedan

Threat: Major

TRUCKLOAD SALE

The characters are contacted by Wan Fok, a local Enforcer. When they meet, they see his arm is in a sling and he's recovering from injuries. He explains he has a lucrative job lined up but can't do it because of his current injuries. He wants the characters to step in as subcontractors. If the family knows he can't do it, rivals will target him for apparent weakness.

The job is robbing a delivery truck full of leather coats. The box truck leaves the Gibson's Leather warehouse once or twice a week and makes deliveries to a dozen clothing outlet stores. He has buyers lined up for the full truckload. The drivers sometimes collect cash for deposit from retailers, so he hopes to score that, too. He even has a taker for the truck. Wan hasn't done any the legwork for the job yet but can provide addresses for the warehouse and retail stores. The characters need to figure out the delivery schedule and plan the heist. Will Wan Fok double cross them? Does he have the buyers he says he does, and can they be trusted? Is there some other reason he's working outside his crime family that will become an issue for the characters?

CONTINGENCY PLAN

Alex is an Enforcer for a drug cartel who contacts the characters based on their reputation. Once they get face to face with her, they see she has a little girl in tow. Alex was ordered to protect the boss's daughter, Elena, while he was out of state. Alex took her to a secret family safe house, but somehow a rival cartel found and attacked it. She managed to get Elena out in time. She knows someone from inside their operation had to provide the location, so she needs outside help. The other syndicate's hit squad is on the way, so it'll be a running battle until they get to her boss, in another city.

GANG SOLDIER

Survival. Respect. That's what it's about.

Raised in city slums or broken-down rural communities, the Gang Soldier joined a local street gang at an early age, for protection and a sense of belonging. They started out as lookouts and runners, worked the gang's main business at a corner or a house, and after a series of initiations and violent experiences, became one of the gang's frontline fighters. Not all gangs have soldiers. Some sets aren't organized enough for that or lack older members. A Gang Soldier belongs to a group straddling the line between ordinary street gangs and higher-level organized crime. Outfits like that practice a division of labor, giving this hardened individual a professional approach to violence. These gangs often have a presence in prisons, and the Gang Soldier may have done at least one stint as a convict.

Gang Soldiers look the part, though the specifics vary from one gang to the next. Tattoos are common. So are specific clothes, colors, and patches. Hand signals and slang demonstrate insider knowledge and conceal the gang's business. Depending on the gang, gathering places may be completely hidden, marked by tags, or even be well-furnished clubhouses. Beyond these signs, a Gang Soldier is trusted enough to earn a significant amount of cash. The most respected Gang Soldiers might wear tailored clothing and drive expensive, customized cars.

The Gang Soldier's business is violence. They act as bodyguards for leaders, carry out punitive strikes in enemy turf, and enforce internal discipline. In many ways, a Gang Soldier is like an Enforcer, and the division between gang and syndicate is a thin one. Gang Soldiers and Enforcers can encounter Player Characters for similar reasons.

In addition, a Gang Soldier usually feels a strong connection to their neighborhood. If characters meddle in local business, the Gang Soldier may warn them off, if not violently punish them. On the other hand, Gang Soldiers may encounter situations where neighborhood and gang loyalty come into conflict. They might approach characters as third parties capable of helping them resolve the situation.

TYPES OF GANGS

While police compile lists of gangs, and many groups self-identify as such, "gang" is a subjective term. Authorities who want to suppress political movements may call them gangs—and in the case of organized racist groups, this is not unjustified. Stereotypes focus on urban gangs, but outlaw motorcycle clubs are also gangs with a wide range of illegal concerns. Historically, some gangs have evolved into charities and business associations. In stereotypes, gangs tend to be monoethnic as well, but this is often not true. With the exception of racist groups, any gang can have a diverse membership. Some gangs have even deliberately recruited members from diverse communities to throw law enforcement off their trail or make a political statement.

The gang's focus may alter its members' abilities and equipment. Biker gang members own motorcycles, of course, and may possess the Driving focus and talents that make them better riders. A gang situated somewhere where firearms are restricted will equip its members with hand-to-hand weapons, and their Gang Soldiers will possess focuses related to their use. In the most lawless regions, Gang Soldiers may have access to military weapons, and might be ex-soldiers with the appropriate abilities.

In a *Modern AGE* game, you can use real-world and fictional examples to create gangs for your campaign, but be mindful that popular media's approach to gangs often reinforces stereotypes about marginalized communities. Never make a criminal gang synonymous with an entire community.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

These adventure hooks are designed to help introduce Gang Soldiers into your adventure or campaign.

BULLETS ASTRAY

By threatening a young man's family, a Gang Soldier forces him to shoot and kill a member of a rival gang. The kid didn't know this, and the Gang Solider set it up to pull off a hit

Gang Soldier

Abilities (Focuses)	
3	Accuracy (Pistols)
0	Communication
3	Constitution
2	Dexterity (Stealth)
3	Fighting (Brawling)
0	Intelligence (Security)
1	Perception
3	Strength (Intimidation)
0	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
12	23	38	53	12	12	13	4I/0B+3	+4	+4

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Heavy Chain	+3	1D6+6
SA Handgun	+5	2D6+1
Unarmed	+5	1D6+3

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Double-Team, Kick 'Em When They're Down (1 SP), Knock Prone

Stunt—Kick 'Em When They're Down: The Lightning Attack stunt costs the Gang Soldier only 1 SP for melee attacks against a prone target.

Gang Symbols: Members of the gang know the secret hand symbols, graffiti, code words, and phrases specific to their gang and can recognize the symbols of other gangs (but not read them). This ability acts as a language of its own for gang members.

Talents: Quick Reflexes (Novice), Striking Style (Novice)

Equipment: Heavy Chain, Heavy Leather Jacket with the gang's symbols, SA Handgun

Threat: Moderate

without getting fingered by the enemy. This sparks a war between the two gangs, while the young man gets abandoned to be caught by the enemy gang. The kid turns to the Player Characters or one of the heroes' associates for help. Meanwhile, the violence is ramping up, and bystanders are being caught in the crosshairs.

So far, the only arrests have been low-ranking gang members with small arms, but as both sides in the conflict buy heavier weapons and threaten even worse violence, the characters need to find a way to bring the conflict to an end, discover why the Gang Soldier started it in the first place, and help the young man reach safety.

Get Off My Lawn

A street gang has moved into the characters' neighborhood. Gang members harass residents and break into their homes. They demand protection money from local businesses. This kind of aggression is unusual, since gangs don't like attracting too much attention. But the gang's members seem desperate to squeeze as much money from locals as possible, and the police seem pointedly unwilling to help. Locals are too afraid of reprisal to speak out, so the characters are the only hope they have. The gang's taskmasters seem to be a squad of Gang Soldiers who push junior members into action. Why did they move into this neighborhood and why are they so aggressive?

Inside Job

A local gang is always one step ahead of the police. Rivals that push into the area do not have the same fortune. In fact, it's as if the police know every move gangs make—except for the one that always escapes them. Only low-ranking members of that favored gang get caught, and even then it's never on serious charges. Whenever there's credible information that should lead to an arrest, the gang clears out evidence long before warrants get served. Can the characters find out how the gang is getting their information and bring them to justice?

MEDICAL EXAMINER

The skull fracture was made with a blunt instrument, but the hole in his abdomen? That was made by a canine after the fact. Man's best friend, scoring a meal.

Years of college courses, internships, and medical school have made the Medical Examiner into an invaluable resource for law enforcement. They are a fully licensed medical doctor whose special training helps them determine the cause of death and surrounding events in exceptional detail. The Medical Examiner's expert knowledge helps law enforcement solve difficult cases. Cool under pressure and able to focus under adverse conditions, the Medical Examiner often testifies in court as an expert witness.

The Medical Examiner first works to establish the identity of the body. If there are no witnesses, family, or physical clues to confirm their identity, then the examiner can run other tests. Fingerprints, dental records, and facial reconstruction can all help to identify a victim.

If it appears that the victim died through foul play, the Medical Examiner looks for clues during the autopsy. They start with the cause of death but also examine the body for other physical evidence, such as defensive wounds, gunshot residue, foreign tissue, fibers, and more. Some of these clues are beyond the Medical Examiner's ability to interpret, but can be sent to other experts and labs for further information. The Medical Examiner's report shapes ongoing investigations and can provide invaluable clues to the detectives working on those cases.

In some jurisdictions, the position of coroner and Medical Examiner are synonymous. In others, a Medical Examiner works for a coroner who is not necessarily a doctor. The title of "coroner" might just belong to the head of the office, but many jurisdictions do not use that title at all, and the head of a group of Medical Examiners is just called the Chief Medical Examiner.

Player Characters usually meet Medical Examiners if they're connected to law enforcement, as police or consultants. Characters with medical backgrounds may meet the Medical Examiner in a number of scenarios, from conferences to consultations; however, characters are often called on to sneak into places they're not permitted. If that's the morgue, chances are the Medical Examiner is someone they'll have to avoid. They'll also have to eliminate signs they were present. That won't be easy, because Medical Examiners are observant by nature.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

Abilities (Focuses)	
2	Accuracy
2	Communication
1	Constitution
1	Dexterity
0	Fighting
4	Intelligence (Chemistry, Medicine, Research)
4	Perception (Searching)
0	Strength
2	Willpower (Self-Discipline)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
11	16	21	36	11	12	12	0I/0B+1	+1	+2

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Unarmed	+0	1d3
SA Handgun	+2	2d6+4

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Breakthrough, Cards on the Table, Intuition

I'm That Good: Medical Examiners reduce the cost of the Breakthrough investigation stunt by 1 SP, making it cost only 4 SP.

Coroner's Report: After examining a body, the Medical Examiner can put together a report for investigators working on the case. It automatically unlocks the next lead in an investigation. Investigation-related tests using information recovered from the body gain a +2 bonus when investigators refer to the report.

Forensic Physician (Optional): These game statistics also cover forensic physicians, with a few adjustments. Replace Intelligence (Research) with Intelligence (Anthropology), and Perception (Searching) with Perception (Empathy).

Talents: Advanced Medicine (Expert), Expertise: Medicine (Expert)

Equipment: Badge, Box of Latex Gloves, Cell Phone, Evidence Bags, SA Handgun

Threat: Moderate

FORENSIC PHYSICIANS

Doctors who are trained to examine and treat living victims of crime are called forensic physicians. These doctors are trained to deal with the victim's psychological state as well. They collect evidence during the examination and provide a full report for use in the investigation and prosecution of the case. Forensic physicians are also used by law enforcement to treat detainees. These physicians develop a wellness plan and issue medicine as needed for the wellbeing of their patient. Psychiatric forensic physicians monitor and treat detainees exhibiting mental illness.

Unfortunately, not all forensic physicians are ethical, and may help corrupt authorities increase the psychological and physical stresses of captivity. Forensic physicians who collaborate in torture and illegal detention rationalize what they do in various ways, from patriotic duty to the promise of a significant paycheck.

Forensic physicians use the same game statistics as Medical Examiners, with adjustments noted in the *forensic physician (optional)* special quality.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

These adventure hooks are designed to help introduce the Medical Examiner into your game.

A HOT CUP OF JUSTICE

A serial killer has been dumping bodies in the city park every other week. Citizens are on edge as politicians pressure the police to stop the murders. All of the victims to date have been overweight adults from the same neighborhood. Police have been searching for other common ties and have been baffled. Files for each of the victims show their residences, jobs, and other basic information.

The characters have been asked to aid the investigation. The Medical Examiner notes one piece of information the police appear to have overlooked: each victim had virtually identical stomach contents, down to the same coffee and apple turnover. Can the characters use this newfound information to find and catch the killer before they strike again?

THE LAST DANCE

Kids playing in an abandoned lot find a partially decomposed body. The remains are taken to the Medical Examiner, who determines the victim was female, in her late teens, with ligature marks consistent with strangulation. It looks like she had dental work done, but it doesn't match the records of anyone they can find. The body was clothed, but missing shoes or identification.

Player Characters find the Medical Examiner's report when an eccentric associate passes it to them, having seen it thrown out with a bunch of paperwork a local identity theft ring determined was useless for their purposes. Given the date and circumstances, characters may note that the death wasn't even mentioned in the news. Who was this young woman? How did the report fall into the hands of local crooks? Who was the killer? Is the Medical Examiner corrupt or under some sort of duress?

PSYCH OUT

The characters are approached by a psychic who claims to be channeling a ghost. The psychic asks the characters to help solve their own murder, and can (through the psychic) provide some details about their past life. The ghost remembers being poisoned but cannot remember the exact circumstances of their death otherwise. The psychic asks the team to convince the Medical Examiner to reopen the case and help solve the crime. The Medical Examiner is skeptical of the whole business, and needs to be convinced this isn't some kind of scam.

Should the characters persuade the Medical Examiner to reopen the case based on the psychic's word? Is the psychic channeling a real ghost? If so, what other clues can it provide? If not, what's the psychic's angle in getting involved?

MOB BOSS

Can you refuse the offer? Sure. It just wouldn't be very smart.

In every culture with a criminal underworld, the most ruthless predators rise to the top. In a society of predators, violence is the key to staying at its apex. The Mob Boss has committed unspeakable acts of violence to gain their position, and is very comfortable inflicting pain and suffering to get what they want. The Mob Boss may dress well and, in the right company, act with extreme gentility, but is still ready to fight just as brutally as they did when they were still foot soldiers in their syndicate.

In some cases, years of successful service led to promotions within the organization. Moving up through the ranks, they took part in numerous criminal schemes and eventually led their own. They moved from their crew to the inner circle and won command after the old boss passed away. But other transfers of power are messier. Betrayal, civil war, and even collaborating with the enemy might have vaulted a Mob Boss to supremacy.

The Mob Boss rules their organization with an iron fist. Members who lack discipline or fail the organization are punished with everything from beatings to executions. They believe it's better to be feared than respected. Being in the presence of the Mob Boss can be unsettling. They view themselves as the top predator in the room, and demand respect accordingly. Some dress in expensive clothing in an obvious display of wealth and power. Others play at being subtle and unassuming but expect deference from everyone else. A

Mob Boss

Abilities (Focuses)	
4	Accuracy (Pistols, SMGs)
5	Communication (Leadership)
3	Constitution
2	Dexterity
4	Fighting (Brawling, Light Blades)
4	Intelligence (Evaluation)
2	Perception (Empathy)
3	Strength (Intimidation)
4	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
12	23	65	95	12	14	15	2I/4B + 3	+4	+6

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Dagger	+6	1d6+3
SA Handgun	+6	2d6+2

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Double Team, Filthy Rich (3 SP), Sleep With One Eye Open, Take the Fall (3 SP)

Stunt—Filthy Rich: For 3 SP, the Mob Boss can throw their wealth around. They can immediately produce one piece of equipment, hireling, or other resource no matter how expensive it would be to procure, or they may gain a +2 to the next Communication test they make that relies on a bribe.

Stunt—Take the Fall: The Mob Boss has the full protection of their crime family. For 3 SP, they can convincingly pin an act on a subordinate, who loyally confesses while the rest of the family fabricates supporting testimony and evidence.

Order a Hit: The Mob Boss can issue a murder contract on an individual. If the GM is using the optional Heat system, this means the Mob Boss can immediately place 5 Heat (Mob) on a character. Once a contract is issued and active, the individual will be targeted for killing by assassins and enforcers. These are highly motivated, gaining +1 to rolls to attack or track their target. The target can expect ongoing trouble as the crime family will attempt to complete the contract whenever the opportunity presents itself. Alternatively, a Mob Boss may also cancel a contract issued by their organization, or nullify one from an organization of equal or lesser power. In the latter case, the target usually owes the Mob Boss a significant favor.

Talents: Command (Master), Misdirection (Expert), Overwhelm (Expert), Pistol (Novice)

Equipment: Ballistic-Resistant Cloth Armor, Expensive Wine, Knife, SA Handgun

Threat: Dire

Mob Boss may have a mercurial personality, switching from geniality to animalistic aggression in the space of a breath.

Characters normally only meet a Mob Boss in dire circumstances. They may have been captured and hauled into the Mob Boss' office. The Mob Boss and their elite soldiers might be defending themselves against the characters' assault: the final fight in a campaign to take down the entire syndicate. Less extreme scenarios may involve the Mob Boss asking for a favor, or demanding a service for a favor given in the past. The Mob Boss almost never appears in isolation. They have Enforcers, advisors, and other subordinates. Some Mob Bosses try to ingratiate themselves with high society, and appear at elite soirées, impeccably dressed, alongside wealthy people who either consider them a peer or a vulgar member of the nouveau riche.

Layers of Leadership

Layers of leadership maintain a strict hierarchy and minimize the Mob Boss' exposure to law enforcement. The Mob Boss calls on a variety of criminals from their organization to handle jobs suited to their talents. The syndicate practices information security, so each crew only knows the essentials, while reporting upward to a trusted inner circle including the Mob Boss, their advisor, and a small number of senior gangsters. Information and money mostly travel upward, and rank determines how informed and wealthy a member is. Snitching is the worst offense one of the Mob Boss' underlings

can commit and earns a painful death. These patterns remain mostly consistent regardless of culture.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

These adventure hooks are designed to introduce Mob Bosses into your adventure or campaign.

OF SHADOWS AND LIES

The Whisper Woman, a mysterious Mob Boss, has asked to meet with the characters. When they arrive, syndicate soldiers remove their weapons and invite them inside. The Whisper Woman emerges and explains she wants them to steal an ancient bronze dagger from the museum. She says that their success "was foreseen," and that they will be well compensated for this task.

As the characters leave the mansion, they are met by an old groundskeeper. In a hushed voice, he explains that he has overheard the Whisper Woman talking into a bowl of darkness, and that she takes her orders from the "Netherworld." He tells the characters that they must not do whatever she has asked of them. Is the groundskeeper unhinged. Is the Whisper Woman? Why do they want the dagger?

TAX RELIEF

Old friend Joey Walker calls the characters for help. He owns a small corner store in a lower-class neighborhood. He paid protection money to the local mob for several years, but now a new guy's in charge of collecting the fee for the Mob Boss. The new collector asks for more money than Joey can afford, so he asks the characters to either speak with the Mob Boss on his behalf or come with him to work out a new arrangement. The huge increase is a surprise to Joey. He never loved the mob, but considered protection money the price of doing business, not something that would drive him out of business. Is the new collector skimming off the top? Is the Mob Boss desperate for cash, and if so, why? What does the Mob Boss need to make a better deal with Joey, and will the characters stand for it?

O.C.D.E.T.F

The characters are assigned to aid the federal Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF). They are responsible for finding evidence to convict the key individuals and trying to bring an end to two rival organized crime groups. These mobs have painted the streets with blood, and too often bystanders have been caught in the crossfire. The characters have been selected because one of them resembles a relative the Mob Boss lost track of. The impostor will receive a false identity and infiltrate one organization with some of the characters, while the rest will work their way up the ranks of the rival syndicate. They'll work together to bring both groups down, gathering evidence along the way. Can the divided party pull this off? Can they betray the criminals they'll make friends with and avoid the wrath of two Mob Bosses?

PICKPOCKET

No, this just *looks* like your watch.

The Pickpocket lives by their wits and skill. They are opportunistic thieves, taking advantage of any opening by an unwary mark. Their light touch can lift a wallet, unsnap a necklace, or even take a watch off a wrist without anyone noticing. Some Pickpockets prefer close-up sleight of hand, while others rely on bolder forms of distraction, causing commotions so they can snatch purses, luggage, and briefcases the moment a traveler diverts their attention away from the item.

Some Pickpockets have been known to plant belongings on people for various reasons. Their skills at giving are just as good as taking. They've either been hired to plant the item or have hidden it on someone else to avoid being caught with it themselves. The goal is to either frame the recipient or place the item on them for later retrieval.

The typical Pickpocket is slender and agile. Most of them dress in clothing that blends into the background, though Pickpockets that prefer to steal while making a scene may opt to wear bright or weird clothes to better distract their victims. The victim should have no idea they've been stolen from or, better yet, no clue a crime took place at all.

Pickpockets can be found wherever there are crowds, but for a time, pickpocketing was a dying art. Cities grew large enough that thieves could get away with brute-force muggings more easily. They could vanish into the general populace. Yet they still ply their trade, which has seen a revival. Closed circuit television catches violent crimes, so stealth has become an asset once again. Modern Pickpockets may use card readers and customized cell phones to steal data instead of cash and physical valuables. These devices often need to be deployed at close range for maximum effectiveness, or the Pickpocket may still need to take the victim's card or cell phone to physically connect to a data reader.

Player Characters are most likely to meet Pickpockets as potential victims of their trade. This may be as straightforward as theft for money, or the Pickpocket might have been hired to take or plant a specific item on a character. Then again, a Pickpocket might ask characters for aid because they're being chased by one of their marks, or they've stolen something that unnerved them.

CARD SHARPS, "MAGICIANS", & SCAMMERS

Some Pickpockets exercise their sleight of hand skills through cards, cheating to keep specific cards or maintain a certain order of cards. To do this they use false shuffles, cards dealt out of order, and sleight of hand to switch specific cards in the deck. These skills duplicate the skills of stage magicians. Virtually every magician skilled in close range magic is also a skilled Pickpocket, but the reverse isn't necessarily true. The Pickpocket must develop a verbal patter and master the art of misdirection to a greater degree. Developing this skill expands the ways a Pickpocket can earn a living. Stage magic becomes a legal option, but so do shell games, shirt change scams, and other profitable tricks that rely on a quick hand and verbal deceptions.

Pickpocket

Abilities (Focuses)	
0	Accuracy
3	Communication (Deception)
0	Constitution (Running)
4	Dexterity (Initiative, Sleight of Hand)
1	Fighting (Grappling)
2	Intelligence
2	Perception
0	Strength
1	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
14	15	17	22	14	14	14	0I/0B+0	+0	+0

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Unarmed	+0	1D3

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Duck and Weave, It Wasn't Me, Sticky Fingers (4 SP)

Stunt—Sticky Fingers: For 2 SP, the Pickpocket can attempt to pilfer a small item from their opponent during a Fighting (Grappling) or Communication (Deception) test. They must immediately make a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) test that is opposed by their opponent's Perception (Touching). If successful, they are able to take the item without their opponent knowing. If the Pickpocket uses this stunt while already attempting to steal something, they can take the item in addition to whatever else they were trying to steal. The Pickpocket can use this stunt to plant an item instead of stealing it.

Talents: Grappling (Novice), Misdirection (Novice)

Equipment: Cell Phone, Deck of Cards, Earbuds, Hoodie, Wallet Full of Cash

Threat: Minor

Adventure Hooks

These adventure hooks are designed to help introduce Pickpockets into your adventure or campaign.

My Wallet's Gone

The characters are traveling through a crowded street to deliver an envelope of important information to their employer. As the traffic light changes and the crowd moves in all directions, the character that was carrying the envelope realizes the envelope and their wallet are missing. Quick action and good perception may catch a glimpse at the thief moving on the other side of the street, away from the characters.

The Pickpocket will attempt to lose the characters in crowds, through traffic, and when boarding a subway car. Will they be able to catch the thief? Was the Pickpocket working on their own, or were they hired to intercept the envelope, and if so, by whom?

Scams and Other Tricks

As noted, some pickpockets are more larcenous sleight of hand experts than simple thieves. They might use the following tactics:

Cheating at Cards: Cheating at poker is a time-honored scam, and often dangerous when large sums of money are involved.

"Magic:" Aimed at the more superstitious, some scams involve burning or burying money to invoke supernatural aid. Naturally, the money is safe, sound, and in the medium's safekeeping.

Three Card Monte/The Shell Game: One uses cards and the other, shells and stones, or cups and a ball, but the objective is the same: Guess which of three options has the prize. A skilled sleight of hand expert ensures the mark never finds it. Nowadays most people know the game is a con, so a shill encouraging the mark to bet is often necessary.

Switches: A number of cons involve swapping something valuable for something worthless. A scammer might convince the mark to pool money with them, and even give the mark the envelope of cash to keep, but it's been swapped for an envelope full of scrap paper, which the mark notices after the con artist is long gone.

Adventures in Babysitting

One of the characters is contacted by an old friend. They are out of town and their daughter, Yasamin, has gotten herself into trouble shoplifting. They ask the characters to bail her out and look after her for a few days, until they return.

Unbeknownst to the characters, Yasamin is a Pickpocket and adrenaline junkie who enjoys stealing for the rush. She plays at being repentant until she gets the opportunity to escape from the characters. At that time, Yasamin meets up with her hooligan friends and gets involved in more petty crime. Will the characters be able to stop her crime spree and keep her out of trouble? Can any of the characters make a connection with her and get her to stop her criminal behavior?

High Stakes

A card sharp contacts the characters and asks them to plan security for a high-stakes underground poker game that is going to run all weekend. They are concerned that someone might try to rob the game and want the characters to secure the money. The sharp expects to have 20 people playing at four tables, with a buy-in fee of $5,000 each. The game is going to take place in the suburbs at an empty house that is listed for sale but not scheduled to be viewed that weekend. The characters can investigate and explore the house, neighborhood, and guest list to decide what types of security they would like to have in place. The exact threats could come in many forms, from a nosy neighbor, to the police, or to armed thieves attempting to get away with the money. The main threat comes from cheating players and their confidantes, of course—and that means plenty of Pickpockets to deal with.

POLICE CHIEF

Not every officer can make a good chief. Some of us aren't cut out to deal with politicians, lawyers, media, and the fact that no matter what you do, somebody's going to hate you.

With over 25 years on the force, the Police Chief has seen all manner of crimes, scandals, and crises. This experience has honed their skill at sorting out fact from fiction. They may not have been exceptionally good at detective work, community policing, or anything else in their careers, but they were never incompetent, and demonstrated a strong aptitude for working with people, tracking their work, and interacting with the general public. This led to increasing responsibilities as a watch commander, captain, and into the force's senior management, where they eventually made the shortlist for the top job. The exact selection process varies from one jurisdiction to the next, but requires someone who balances knowledge of policing with administrative skills and savoir-faire.

Unfortunately, the Police Chief must deal with resentment by past rivals for the job, street-level officers, other city officials, and, of course, criminals. Rivals for the office didn't have the skills or had vices that disqualified them from the position. Other unfriendly elements within the force may have rackets going they don't want the Police Chief involved in, or may represent the police union when demanding better working arrangements from the Chief, the chief management figure. Since taking the mantle of leadership, the Police Chief spends little time on the streets. They look at crime through high-level reports and only intervene in individual cases when they attain a special degree of infamy. The Chief manages internal discipline, too, and is privy to corruption on the inside—and is sometimes corrupt themselves.

Every political player in the city wants to be friends with the Police Chief. They want the Chief to be at their banquet, their ribbon cutting, or their meeting. They want to be seen as powerful and influential. The Chief wants to be seen as independent, not in anyone's pocket. The city's "old money" pulls a lot of political strings. The mayor loves a good photo op, but if anything goes sideways they'll be the first one in front of a camera claiming the department is out of control. Factions like the district attorney's office, unions, judges, community organizers, schools, firefighters, and the chamber of commerce all play politics as well. Each of these factions wants the department to devote valuable resources a certain way. The Chief needs to be receptive to the needs of the community while maintaining control of their department. Participating in the right activities can help its perception by the community. Funding for new cars, body armor, weapons, or specialized gear is always difficult—unless you have help from the right people.

The Police Chief is a high-profile figure, so characters will normally know what they look like before meeting them. Characters who move in elite political circles may rub shoulders with them. Otherwise, working with police or city officials usually provides access to the Police Chief. Corrupt Chiefs may have more sinister ties to organized crime.

POLICE CHIEF

Abilities (Focuses)	
4	Accuracy (Pistols)
5	Communication (Bargaining, Investigation, Leadership, Persuasion)
3	Constitution
1	Dexterity (Driving, Initiative)
3	Fighting (Grappling)
2	Intelligence (Law, Tactics)
3	Perception (Empathy)
2	Strength
4	Willpower (Courage)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
11	23	65	95	11	13	14	2I/4B + 3	+4	+6

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Unarmed	+3	1D3+2
SA Handgun	+6	2D6+3

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Intuition, Meddle, Pin, Precision Marksmanship

Bodyguards: The Police Chief gains a +1 to Defense for each police officer present in the scene and able to help protect them (maximum +5).

Dossier: If their police department has sufficient information, the Police Chief can have a dossier assembled that greatly helps in investigations. Characters who refer to the dossier gain a +2 bonus to investigation tests related to the dossier's topics.

Manhunt: The Police Chief can declare a manhunt against a person or people. All local law enforcement resources will be directed to capture and detain the target of the manhunt. If the GM is using the optional Heat system, this means the Police Chief can immediately place 5 Heat (Police Force) on a character. This requires several hours to set up, however. If Heat is not in play, characters suffer a -3 penalty to all tests to avoid identification and pursuit by the authorities for the duration of the manhunt.

Political Influence: The Attitude Stunt: Meddle costs the Police Chief only 3 SP.

Talents: Command (Master), Inspire (Expert), Observation: Empathy (Novice), Tactical Awareness (Expert)

Equipment: Badge, Business Suit, Bullet-Resistant Cloth Armor, Cell Phone, Handcuffs, Police Radio, SA Handgun

Threat: Dire

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following adventure hooks introduce the Police Chief into your adventure or campaign.

THE FOXHUNT

A criminal mastermind has the city in their grasp. Crime is out of control. Seemingly unconnected criminal crews strike separate areas at precisely the same time, making it impossible to stop them all. Police resources are spread too thin to adequately investigate while maintaining order.

The city's politicians demand police develop a proactive plan to stop this epidemic. The Police Chief adds the Player Characters to a special task force put together in response, and answer directly to the Chief. The heroes are given special latitude to respond to the crime wave and investigate its source, but must also send regular confidential reports to the Police Chief. What does this crime wave represent? Who's the mastermind? Is the Police Chief interested in solving it, or is this a diversion designed to limit access to the truth?

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

The Chief meets with the characters away from the office. They suspect corruption in the department and need to find out how bad the problem is. Local drug dealers are being tipped off before police raids, and arrests are down drastically over the last few months. The Chief wants the characters to quietly investigate the department and see what they can find out.

If the characters work for the department in an official capacity, they can investigate internally by watching others, searching desks, or reviewing station surveillance, though if they're caught, line officers will treat them with suspicion—and corrupt cops may try to take them out. Should characters investigate from the outside, they need to get the local gang leader to flip on their source in the department. Since the gang leader believes they are protected, that won't be easy.

TWIST OF FATE

An alliance of wealthy businesspeople wants the Police Chief to back a new proposal to privatize security downtown. The Police Chief has no desire to do so, and even thinks this is dangerous, not just to the department's health but to public safety. The businesspeople point out that the primary way police keep people safe is through deterrence, which security guards can provide.

Characters can get involved working for the Chief or for the alliance, since each side wants dirt on the other. Each side also suspects the other has a hidden agenda. The Chief thinks the alliance wants cover for local organized crime. The alliance thinks the Chief is less than squeaky clean and has a few trusted officers managing illegal interests downtown. Who's right?

SPECIAL AGENT

> We're taking over the investigation. We'll thank you when we finish doing your job for you.

Dark suits, sunglasses, and unmarked sedans are the trademarks of Special Agents, though they can also appear in full tactical gear or undercover, whatever helps them to blend in. When they arrive, they bring the full weight of the federal government with them. The Special Agent described here is a senior member of the profession, who either leads less-accomplished subordinates, works with an equally skilled partner, or is part of an elite team. Depending on the agency, the Special Agents may even operate abroad, though their powers depend on agreements with the host country.

The United States possesses numerous federal agencies with their own specially trained law enforcement officers, specialized jurisdictions, and separate facilities. Other countries usually possess fewer federal-scale police services. In Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have inspectors with comparable abilities, while in Mexico, the Policía Federal ("Federales") and Policía Federal Ministerial train agents to a comparable standard. In the United Kingdom, high-level national law enforcement comes from cooperation between various municipal and regional Special Branch divisions, and support from intelligence services.

Special Agents concentrate on particular crimes according to agency or division focus. This holds true even in countries with only a few federal law enforcement agencies. The purviews of various groups may cross over on occasion. For example, if a US-based terrorist organization funds itself through the drug trade, DEA agents may work with the FBI's Counterterrorism Division on the same operation. This may lead to the formation of a special inter-agency task force.

The Special Agent has gone through extensive, rigorous physical training, obtained a college degree, worked a successful internship at the agency, and maintains an excellent pistol proficiency range rating. Agents are some of the top people law enforcement has to offer. Because of their skills, they sometimes come across as arrogant or dismissive of local law enforcement. Those perceptions can cause friction. Jealousy, personality differences, and jurisdictional overlap also cause problems between federal and local law enforcement.

Characters meet Special Agents as targets or allies. Outside undercover work, they may appear gruff or aloof, since they usually don't want to waste time explaining elements of their job that are well known within their teams. Characters with relevant knowledge and an ability to handle themselves in stressful situations earn their respect.

INVESTIGATING WEIRDNESS

Most federal agencies retain Special Agents, and the alphabet soup of federal acronyms can get confusing. Larger, well-known agencies carry a lot of sway with local law enforcement because of their familiarity, but there are many lesser-known agencies, or agents from unexpected bodies, such as the US Postal Service, with law enforcement power. National security and classified information flow through various agencies as well, so top secret files may transfer from one unit to another.

In some campaigns, this maze of organizations is the perfect place to hide units devoted to extraordinary phenomena, such as futuristic technology, Fortean events, UFOs, cults, magic, and psychic powers. These agencies are also perfect

Special Agent

Abilities (Focuses)	
3	Accuracy (Longarms, Pistols +3, Shotguns)
2	Communication (Investigation)
2	Constitution
3	Dexterity (Driving, Stealth)
3	Fighting (Grappling)
3	Intelligence (Law, Research)
3	Perception (Searching, Tracking)
2	Strength
2	Willpower (Self-Discipline)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
13	23	43	73	13	14	15	2I/4B+ 2	+4	+5

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Grappling Grip	+5	1d3+2
SA Handgun	+5	2d6+3

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Intuition, Knock Prone, Restrain

Agency Mission: Each Special Agent is trained in the Intelligence focuses that correspond to their agency's mission. The GM should assign one or two appropriate intelligence focuses based on the agency that the Special Agents report to.

Government Databases: Special Agents have access to vast government databases that give them +2 to all Intelligence (Research) tests. The agent must be able to access the government records to gain this bonus.

Talents: Fast Fury (Expert), Pistol (Expert), Protect (Novice), Self-Defense (Expert)

Equipment: Badge, Bullet-Resistant Cloth Armor, Business Suit, Handcuffs, SA Handgun, Sedan

Threat: Major

places to hide high-level conspiracies devoted to exploiting these secrets. In extreme cases, agents for secret organizations might possess extraordinary powers, or access to equipment decades beyond the state of the art—or so alien it defies comparison to human devices.

Adventure Hooks

The following adventure hooks are designed to introduce Special Agents into your adventure or campaign.

Bloody Dagger

An inter-agency task force asks the Player Characters to act as consultants and go-betweens in its investigation of a violent narcotics syndicate. The criminal organization built itself around a core of ex-military officers who use battlefield tactics and stolen military-grade weaponry to deal with rivals and police. Once the task force swings into action, however, it becomes apparent it's willing to match the mob's violence, using brutal methods to coerce persons of interest into talking. Little of what the task force does is even admissible in court.

As they get closer to the mob's leaders, the situation escalates into brutal guerilla warfare, and the head of the task force eventually makes one thing clear: They plan on killing the leaders, and have the tacit approval of higher-ups. Will the heroes cooperate in assassinating these drug lords? Either way, what are the consequences?

Power Corrupts

Senator Farnsworth of the Intelligence Committee has become aware of the alleged existence of persons with unusual abilities during his briefings. He uses his connections with the intelligence

community to get a Special Agent assigned to his pet project: to find a citizen with powers and force them to use their power to his own benefit. Several likely candidates present themselves. Many of these were employed by government agencies or the military in now-defunct experimental programs devoted to cult activity, UFOs, psychokinesis, and remote viewing.

The Special Agent contacts the characters as outside consultants, since they've been involved in various unusual situations, and the Agent is a straight-arrow type and skeptic. Sure enough, some of the individuals turn out to be frauds—and some of those end up as dead frauds, shortly after being contacted. Who is killing people involved in paranormal research? Is any of it legitimate?

WHITE BEAR

Each year, several people disappear from the Majestic Peaks National Park without a trace. This year, a park ranger found a campsite splattered with blood. All the campers were missing, and their belongings were strewn around the area. The ranger believed a bear attacked the campsite, but he couldn't find the bodies. They did find a cell phone, which was taken to local authorities, who discovered blurry footage of the attack. Whatever attacked the campsite was large, hairy, pale white, and made an inhuman growling noise. They attributed the attack to an albino grizzly bear.

When the footage was released back to the Forestry Service, it dispatched Special Agent Oriana Riegner to investigate the attack. Despite the footage, the incident resembles no other bear attack on record, making it especially suspicious. Upon arriving at the scene, she discovers the park ranger who found the site has gone missing while documenting the attack site. With no other local resources available, Special Agent Riegner asks the characters for help solving the disappearances before more people are hurt.

SMUGGLER

> I can move it through security. You understand a premium service like this is not cheap?

The Smuggler grew up on the streets, working odd jobs and getting to know people in all walks of life. They learned that relationships make the world go round. The Smuggler knows where to look for buyers and sellers. More importantly, they know the right palms to grease to move their products. The type of product isn't as important as the payoff. Smugglers move drugs, guns, people, or any other contraband into or out of buildings and borders where their product is forbidden. Good Smugglers take the time to learn the security procedures and law enforcement measures meant to keep them out. They do their homework on any weaknesses that could be exploited. Sometimes that research involves hiring others to test security responses or hack into computer systems. The more complex the job, the more the Smuggler will charge.

Many Smugglers are good at working with their hands and operating vehicles. They learn how to build secret compartments and when deception fails, how to get away from the authorities at top speed. Smugglers' vehicles may be faster and more agile than they look, due to a variety of creative modifications under the hood. Running away is a last resort, however, since an identifiable vehicle is a useless one, relegated to chop shops while the Smuggler acquires another. Most Smugglers operate cars and trucks, but a few specialize in exotic vehicles, from plans and boats to makeshift submarines.

Few Smugglers get rich from their trade. A Smuggler usually stops moving contraband themselves as soon as they earn enough money to move to other ventures, or manage a smuggling ring with one or more subordinates. Impulsive or violent tendencies are liabilities at all levels of the business. A known Smuggler is virtually useless, so they avoid attracting attention to themselves. A skilled Smuggler either dresses down and maintains a forgettable appearance, or lives a dual life, enjoying the profits of their trade away from the job but leaving fancy clothes and other luxuries behind when shipping their goods from point to point.

Characters involved in law enforcement might track down Smugglers, while heroes who need to get important items and people across guarded borders might turn to them for help. Beyond the smallest jobs, smuggling requires a network of allies. A Smuggler may approach Player Characters to hold on to contraband (making them "mules" if this involves crossing a checkpoint on the Smuggler's behalf) or help get them past checkpoints. Characters may also meet Smugglers through connections in organized crime, since successful Smugglers must do business with the mob, or through espionage work, since spies sometimes get their help to surreptitiously cross borders.

SMUGGLING NETWORKS

A good network of Smugglers makes moving contraband easier. Each Smuggler (or team of Smugglers) focuses on moving the product for one leg of the journey, shuffling cargo between them to avoid detection. This divides the risk between the Smugglers. Smuggling networks can also more effectively scout the best routes and use decoy vehicles to confound pursuers.

Smugglers and their networks do not always work for a profit. An altruistic smuggling network might help people escape a brutal regime or bring humanitarian supplies past a blockade to people who desperately need them. Of course, many Smugglers will argue they're doing a good deed even if most people would disagree. Human traffickers, arms traders, and other such Smugglers angle for sympathy to either avoid the consequences of their actions or lure clients—including people they intend to kidnap.

Large-scale smuggling is the purview of organized crime. The mob may handle the sales of contraband or take part in human trafficking, moving smuggled people to guarded locations where they're forced to perform various jobs. Characters who interfere with smuggling earn the wrath of the syndicate. Significant smuggling usually relies on corrupt enforcement, as well. Border control officers and police on the take will do their best to insulate themselves from the consequences of an exposed smuggling ring.

Smuggler

Abilities (Focuses)	
1	Accuracy
4	Communication (Bargaining, Deception, Persuasion)
1	Constitution
4	Dexterity (Driving, Stealth)
0	Fighting
3	Intelligence (Evaluation, Security, Tinkering)
3	Perception
0	Strength (Steering)
1	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
14	16	21	36	14	15	15	2I/4B+1	+1	+2

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
SA Handgun	+1	2d6+3

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Cover Your Tracks, Let's Make a Deal, Take Cover

Smells Like Profit: The Smuggler gains +2 to Intelligence (Evaluation) tests to determine the value of any contraband item.

Smuggling Ring: The Smuggler can offer to use their contacts to obtain an illegal or restricted piece of equipment or other resource within 24 hours (for a fee, of course). The Resources TN of any item obtained this way is increased by 3, or by 6 if the item is to be delivered into a secure site.

Talents: Burglar (Expert), Speed Demon (Expert)

Equipment: Bullet-Resistant Cloth Body Armor, Cell Phone, SA Handgun, Sedan

Threat: Moderate

Adventure Hooks

These adventure hooks are designed to introduce Smugglers into an adventure or campaign.

Cottonmouth Bayou

The Smuggler's hot cargo needs to be transported to a buyer. It needs to be delivered the next day at to a set of GPS coordinates located deep in a swamp. The Smuggler can't get it there in time without help. They don't have the time to go mucking about in a swamp, and don't know the area, so they ask the characters for help. All they need to do is get a carload of contraband to the coordinates. Can they trust the Smuggler? Can they trust the buyer? Are they being set up as a decoy? What's the cargo?

Requiem

When a cargo container containing eight bodies belonging to would-be migrants is found along the highway, a relative of

one of the victims asks them to investigate. The victims were shot. Evidence at the site suggests the truck was surrounded and stopped by several motorcycles, although neither the motorcycles nor the truck's cab are present at the site. One of the victims scratched the word "Carmen" on the inside of the trailer. Near the container, about five yards from where the truck would have parked, an unlabeled music CD can be found in the sand and dust. The transport truck wasn't registered with any company, but criminal contacts reveal it belongs to a Smuggler nicknamed Coyote. Can the characters find Coyote? Who were the bikers and what role did they play? Who was Carmen? What sort of justice will the players seek?

FENTANYL BLUES

A rash of drug overdoses leaves a community in shock. Politicians, community organizers, and citizens cry for the police to put an end to the epidemic. The characters become aware local gangs have a new drug supplier, pushing a potent product spiked with fentanyl. The supplier is disconnected from the usual drug trade and seems to export the fentanyl-laced product from overseas. Will the characters be able to track down the Smuggler's identity? Will they obtain evidence of the Smuggler's crimes and discover the drugs' manufacturer?

TRIAL LAWYER

> No, you're not taking the stand. Nobody looks innocent up there. Look at what I'm about to make this chump say and you'll see what I mean.

With thousands of laws on the books, litigious segments of society, and police ready to arrest them for breaking the law, the chances are good that characters will have to deal with a lawyer at some point. The classic attorney is the Trial Lawyer, famed in fiction for spontaneous courtroom speeches and sudden revelations. Most lawyers never have these exciting moments, and do their work through pure research and paperwork, but they don't usually have the personalities that bring them to the forefront of dramatic events.

Criminals generally hire the best Trial Lawyer they can afford to avoid jail time, and use the public defender as a last resort. Attorneys for the defense generally specialize in one or more types of crimes. They become experts at finding the legal loopholes in the law for those crimes to get their clients out of trouble. Public defenders are generally too overburdened with cases to be able to mount a strong defense, but you never know when their idealism will push them hard enough to do better.

On the other side, the public prosecutor's office employs Trial Lawyers responsible for the prosecution of the law in criminal proceedings. Country and jurisdiction determine the exact title—district attorney, state's attorney, the Crown in Commonwealth countries, and so on. Like police, they have jurisdiction over crimes in a specified region. The lawyers in this office may also begin new investigations. In some locations the prosecutor's office even has their own detectives.

Businesses also hire Trial Lawyers to protect their interests. Sometimes it's more cost effective to settle a claim, while other times it's better for the business to stall the proceedings indefinitely with legal delay tactics. Businesses with deep pockets can also use these tactics in court to drain an opponent's resources until they can no longer afford to fight in court.

All lawyers are legally bound to a code of conduct designed to protect both clients and the integrity of the courts. This represents the expected behavior of the profession. The Trial Lawyer is expected to maintain client confidentiality, represent the client's interests in good faith, be honest to members of the court, avoid perjury, and abstain from any unethical or criminal conduct. Unethical behavior can result in disbarment or criminal proceedings, but the rewards can be vast. In the case of Trial Lawyers, their personalities and skills often help them deceive people.

The game statistics listed here fit Trial Lawyers for both criminal and civil cases, but lawyers almost always specialize in one segment of criminal or civil law, so characters will rarely meet an attorney involved in both forms of litigation. Beyond the broad divisions of civil and criminal law, there's also a division between lawyers who work for the government and those retained by private individuals.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following adventure hooks bring Trial Lawyers into your adventure or campaign.

CORPORATE TRASH

The characters are hired as detectives by the district attorney's office. The DA received a tip that a powerful local business Imatrol, has been secretly dumping toxic material from their manufacturing plant. The characters must investigate, and collect evidence that will stand up in court proceedings. This means meticulous documentation and sticking to a chain of custody that ensures the evidence never leaves their sights. Success would bring the company and its leadership to justice.

Following leads brings the characters to a gulley near some train tracks where they find dozens of unmarked barrels containing chemical waste products. These belong to Imatrol, but proving it is the challenge. The barrels are brought in unmarked vans in the dead of night, by armed security. Furthermore, they're not the kind of chemicals Imatrol would require for its business, which is plastics and rubber, but are used in agriculture, medicine, and bioengineering. Imatrol's factory is uncommonly well guarded, and CEO Roland Imamu has a formidable legal team. What is Imatrol up to, and how can the heroes acquire unquestioned evidence of the truth?

NOTHING PERSONAL

While in the market for detective work, the characters are approached by law firm L.G. Beghley and Associates. A powerful, connected couple are in the process of getting a divorce, and the proceedings have not been amicable. The firm hires the characters to obtain information that they can use in the divorce on behalf of Shari Jeung, celebrity chef. Jeung owns Sizzle, a restaurant that's very popular in the foodie scene, and stars in a cooking show. She claims her wife, pop country singer Milena Pride, cheated on her and has blown thousands of dollars on drugs and gambling. Photos and audio files seem to confirm this.

Pride is booked with club and concert venues on most nights, and is preparing for a second tour with her band. She seems too busy and focused to be spending money on vices, and is constantly accompanied by her band and road crew, denying opportunities for the kind of privacy that might make an affair possible. If it's not true, who's responsible for the pictures and audio files?

BELLADONNA BILL

Serial killer "Belladonna" Bill Green was infamous for killing his victims with the poison of his moniker. Law enforcement eventually caught up with Bill Green. There was little physical evidence to link him to the murders, but district attorney Dwayne Wright was able to get a conviction based on circumstantial evidence.

Green has escaped from prison, and it's suspected that he has returned to the area to take revenge on former District Attorney Wright and his family. Local police have placed guards on the former DA's family but cannot maintain them indefinitely. The characters have been brought in to try and catch Bill before he can carry out his plan.

TRIAL LAWYER

	Abilities (Focuses)
0	Accuracy
4	Communication (Etiquette, Expression, Persuasion, Deception)
0	Constitution
0	Dexterity
0	Fighting
4	Intelligence (Current Affairs, Law +3, Research)
2	Perception (Empathy)
0	Strength
3	Willpower (Self-Discipline)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
10	15	25	55	10	11	12	0I/0B+0	+1	+2

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Unarmed	+0	1d3

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Cast Out, Confession (6 SP; Cinematic), Read the Room, Surprise Evidence (4 SP), Sway the Crowd

Lawyer: As an attorney, the Trial Lawyer enjoys special privileges, such as attorney-client confidentiality, access to legal libraries and databases, and the ability to file motions and process paperwork.

Legal Expertise: Each Trial Lawyer has the Expert level of the Expertise talent for Intelligence (Law). The specific focus should be chosen for each lawyer to represent their chosen practice.

Stunt—Confession (6 SP; Cinematic): In a Cinematic game, a Trial Lawyer may spend 6 SP to force someone they're interrogating to tell the absolute truth, even against their will.

Stunt—Surprise Evidence (4 SP): For 4 SP on a roll related to winning a case, the Trial Lawyer may produce a new piece of evidence supporting their argument. This can even by a Non-Player Character with new testimony. Prosecutors are often required to disclose this evidence to the defense, but defense lawyers don't necessarily have to share their evidence with the prosecution. The evidence is not necessarily true, either, and the Trial Lawyer may be deceived as to its veracity.

Talents: Expertise: Intelligence (Law), Intrigue (Novice), Oratory (Expert)

Equipment: Expensive suit, briefcase, gold wristwatch, cell phone, sports car

Threat: Major

Belladonna is lethal when even a single leaf is ingested, and the poison can be used to coat an edged weapon or arrowhead. It is suspected that Bill had been growing the plant in secret caches around the local area. It's very possible that some or all of the plants could survive untended on their own. If so, it is likely that those caches of the plant would be one of Bill's first stops.

DR. VANYA PATEL

> Pay in 30 days, cash only. Otherwise, we can work something out. I know people who'd pay well for a fresh kidney.

Vanya Iswary was born and spent her early years in Surat, India. Her mother died when she was a baby, and her father was a medical doctor. As she grew older, she worked with him daily at his clinic. When she was 15 years old, a policeman came into the clinic with a gunshot wound and wanted it treated with no questions asked. Her father was unable to save the man, and local police began to harass the clinic and her father. The two emigrated, and Vanya finished her high school education in her new homeland.

She enrolled in pre-med, then medical school. With her prior experience at the clinic, practical application of medicine came easily. Her father was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer while she was in residency. His life insurance covered basic treatments but not newer, more effective therapy. Buried in her student debt already, neither of them could afford the better option out of pocket. Desperate to keep her father alive, Vanya accepted money from a loan shark. She couldn't pay, but that wasn't a problem. The loan shark was part of an organized crime family, and they needed someone who'd treat injured members—again, no questions asked.

Unfortunately, one of the men that she had treated ratted out the mob, destroying them as a force. Collaborating with them earned her a few months in prison and deprived her of her medical license. Her father died, leaving unpaid medical bills on top of her other debts. Seeing no other recourse, she changed her name to Patel (the most common Indian name she could think of) and became a veterinarian, hoping she could evade background checks in that less-secure industry.

She made interest payments and kept her head down, until one of her old criminal acquaintances brought in his dog for treatment. He was up to new work with a new syndicate, and made it clear she'd either do the work she used to do or get exposed. Fortunately, the syndicate was willing to buy the veterinary clinic, and even pays her well, but she's busier than ever with stab wounds, gunshots, and drug overdoses. She wants out, but doesn't have the leverage.

THE CLINIC

From the outside, Patel's veterinary clinic appears unexceptional. The two-story building has a small parking lot facing the road and a paved delivery access behind the building. Landscaping hides the view to the unsightly delivery door and to the rear kennels.

During working hours, a receptionist assists clients and handles sales transactions from this area. There are two examination rooms for animals and a restroom connected to the entry area. Most of the first floor is devoted to providing sterile medical treatments and surgery for animal clients, but there is also an area for boarding animals and a small storage room.

The second floor has two small recovery rooms for human patients, a kitchenette, a bathroom, and a common area.

The door to the basement is locked at all times, but when opened it leads to a laundry room. There is a concealed door to a fully functional examination and operating room behind some shelving in the laundry room. The mob had an escape tunnel built into the operating room, which connects to the sewer and opens into a storage unit a block away.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following adventure hooks are designed to introduce Dr. Patel into your game.

DR. VANYA PATEL

Abilities (Focuses)	
1	Accuracy
3	Communication (Bargaining, Deception)
1	Constitution
2	Dexterity
2	Fighting
5	Intelligence (Biology, Chemistry, Computers, Medicine)
3	Perception
1	Strength
2	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
12	16	21	36	12	13	13	0I/0B+1	+1	+2

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Knife	+2	1d6+1
Pocket Pistol	+1	1d6+3
Unarmed	+2	1d3+1

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: A Stitch in Time, Let's Make a Deal, Lethal Blow

Euthanasia: Dr. Patel knows how to deliver a lethal dose of phenobarbital to a patient based on their health and body weight. She keeps a capped syringe hidden on her person, calibrated for a healthy, 200-pound man. If injected, a victim must succeed at a TN 15 Constitution (Tolerance) test (just once, for the whole effect) or suffer a cumulative -1 penalty to actions and 1d6 penetrating stun damage per round, and never less than 1 point, regardless of the victim's Constitution. Once this damage renders the victim unconscious, they die on the following round unless they succeed at a second TN 15 Constitution (Tolerance) test. This damage can only be healed through means capable of treating drug overdoses. If Dr. Patel custom-crafts the dose for the patient, the TN for both tests increase by 2. If the patient has a higher body mass than the dose is calibrated for, the TN for these tests drops by 2. Injecting an unwilling subject is difficult, requiring a Fighting (Grappling) attack at a -3 penalty. Armor and heavy clothing increase this penalty even further. Dr. Patel will only perform *euthanasia* to save her own life or someone else's when she feels no other option is available.

Medical Services: Dr. Patel has the ability to treat medical problems without leaving records or notifying authorities of any suspicious wounds. This service is offered to characters who have been vouched for or vetted, but it is not cheap, and characters must pass a TN 14 Resources test to afford outpatient (treat and release) service, or TN 17 for the equivalent of hospitalization.

Talents: Advanced Care (Expert), Animal Training (Novice), Emergency Care (Master)

Equipment: Casual Clothes, Doctor's Bag, Knife, Lab Coat, Pocket Pistol, SUV (use sedan statistics), Veterinary Clinic

Threat: Moderate

COMPOUND X

In pursuit of an experienced armed robbery crew (working for the police or a rival outfit), the Player Characters corner them in a warehouse—and that's where all hell breaks loose. The crew fights back with heavy weapons, and bullets don't seem to slow them down unless they get hit dead center in the chest, through armor, or in the head. The crew members are fast, aggressive, and suicidal. Any taken into custody die of apparent heart attacks. Spent autoinjectors are found at the scene, containing residue from a cocktail of drugs, some unidentifiable.

Dr. Patel developed this compound at the behest of the crew, who took too much—and now other mobsters want in on it. The drug mixture increases aggression and dulls pain, but too much can be fatal, Patel doesn't want to be in the drug trade, but her employers aren't giving her a choice. Can the characters help?

DOCTOR-PATIENT CONFIDENTIALITY

Dr. Patel reaches out to the Player Characters based on their reputation or a previous relationship. One of her regular clients is the subject of a manhunt in the city. She says he's injured and needs ongoing treatment. She has some leads as to where he normally holes up when he's in trouble, but the police also know about some of these spots. The client, a hardened mobster, is found injured, but the injury shouldn't require special care. Then, in a stressful moment, he has a seizure.

Dr. Patel knows about the seizures. Her client asked that it be hidden. Otherwise, the syndicate would relieve him of his duties, and his enemies might exploit his condition. In return, the mobster's paying Patel for drugs and ongoing care to keep the seizures in check. His drugs are gone now, and he's on the run, so unless the heroes turn him over to the police, they have to deal with his condition while fleeing the law.

WORD ON THE STREET

It's not *completely* true that Dr. Patel doesn't keep records. For months now, she's used a hidden camera to record some of her more interesting patients. The footage is intended as an insurance policy, escape plan, or blackmail material to earn some extra money. She's not sure *which* of these things they are, yet. When in use, the camera copies footage to a remote server in real time.

However, the mob isn't completely ignorant. They suspect she might be up to something like this, and have hired a hacker to inspect traffic coming from her network. The hacker can't crack the encrypted data, but they have intercepted it—and ripped the rest from her remote server, too. Dr. Patel spied a shady character with a laptop in a car across the street, however, and has found her server wiped. She asks the Player Characters to come up with a plan to spirit the original data on her camera, under the noses of mobsters monitoring the clinic, to safety.

SCIENCE'S EDGE

You don't need the supernatural to find a world full of wonders. Miracles exist apart from any mysterious agency, built by innovators using a mixture of creativity and determination. Thanks to their efforts, science and technology may stray too close to magic for some, due to a combination of uncanny effectiveness and the esoteric principles at work. This chapter presents Non-Player Characters intimately involved in making and using technology one step beyond what's possible in the modern era. In *Modern AGE* games, this usually involves campaigns revolving around conspiracies that hide the true pace of innovation from ordinary people. *Modern AGE* also covers the near future, however, and these characters might also appear in a cyberpunk-style campaign where advanced bionics, brain-computer interfaces, and other wonders are better known.

Within these genres, the Game Master determines which technology is available and the role it plays. Generally, if Player Characters will be using it, it's better off following principles they can understand and extrapolate from, since heroes will usually try to innovate. On the other hand, not every science-fictional item needs to be something characters can duplicate, modify, or even understand. Laser cutters, small fusion power plants, and non-Newtonian smart materials represent forms of comprehensible technology, while pocket wormholes, time travel, reactionless thrust, and force fields represent elements that characters are unlikely to truly comprehend, and will usually remain under the control of Non-Player Characters.

When using this chapter, consider the following questions: Why does a given NPC gravitate toward their particular technologies? Are they trying to save a spouse, child, parent, sibling, or lover? Do they want to save the world, using what's available to them to fight the good fight? Are they activists with a political agenda, and if so, what is it? Liberation? Tyranny? Or are they just in it for the money?

BLEEDING EDGE GENRES

The characters in this chapter fit a variety of genres, but the Game Master's choice of genre and the particulars of the game setting will determine how Player Characters encounter them and their technologies. Two basic divisions suggest themselves: cyberpunk, where next-generation technology suffuses the game world; and secret science, where obscure individuals and organizations control these innovations, and do not readily share them with outsiders.

CYBERPUNK

In cyberpunk games, the future has already arrived. Brain-computer interfaces, advanced bionics, nanomachines, and genetic engineering are part of everyday society, though characters' access to it is controlled by prevailing political, social, and economic circumstances. In most cases, this creates a world where not everyone truly benefits from futuristic technology. In fact, new technologies may produce new social problems. Just as the 21st century has developed new forms of harassment, surveillance, and inequality, a future where, say, computers can send and receive brain signals

may produce new problems. One of the signature elements of cyberpunk is the deep embedding of technology in culture. Bionic limbs aren't just the products of unnamed labs and clinics. They come with branding, corporate ad campaigns—even junk software that may prompt a character's artificial limb to reach for a particular soft drink.

Cyberpunk games usually take place in near-future settings, but this doesn't need to be the case. You may devise a campaign where certain innovations came early, and even took the place of those we take for granted now. You might develop a campaign where bionics and biotech have made it much harder for those who can afford enhancements to die, but where the Internet never got beyond simple text-sharing. You can even push exceptional technology into the past, such as in a steampunk game where gear-based computing took off and Jules Verne's fictional inventions became commonplace. This world of airships and "Babbage thinking engines" may retain the social problems of their periods, or technology might have powered revolutions against sexism, imperialism, and other forms of oppression.

Secret Science

In a secret science game, the everyday toys most people use are nothing compared to the innovations employed by a select few. Futuristic technology is the subject of whispers and unreliable online rumors. Encountering it is part of the story instead of a background element. There are various ways in which this can be used in your games. In one campaign, this technology may be held back to maintain the businesses of various corporations. Energy innovations may be suppressed by oil magnates and their government allies, while revolutionary health science could be hidden by businesses that would rather treat disease than cure it. Of course, top-tier CEOs and their most trusted agents have full access. There may even be a clandestine market selling futuristic technology for stupendous sums—or services you can't put a price on. Cyborgs may owe their lives to these elites, who can pull the plug at any time, while eternally beautiful celebrities may sign over their earnings to shadowy patrons in exchange for sustained youth.

Not all secret science games place a suppressed future in elite hands. Throughout history, innovation has erupted from every social stratum. The next scientific revolution might come from a garage in a poor neighborhood, or at the hands of a poorly paid research assistant. In some campaigns, the future may belong to a hidden community—even a small nation—that stays under the radar to avoid exploitation.

Some NPCs you might encounter may have gotten genetically enhanced, exchanging their humanity for power, or in some cases to save their lives, or to attempt to use what is available to them just to survive. These characters are not the standard NPC you will come across in your campaign; you'll find more everyday people trying to survive from day to day versus trying to beg, buy, or work their way into these upper echelons of technocratic society.

In some cases, secret science doesn't come from human hands. It's the result of reverse-engineered alien technology, strange artifacts, or legendary societies from deep in Earth's past. Some innovations might even come from time travelers who either accidentally left devices behind or deliberately gave them to people who might use them to change history.

Extraordinary Technology

Characters in this chapter have access to futuristic technology. The *Modern AGE Companion* provides detailed rules for new inventions, technology-driven powers, and extraordinary items. The *Threefold* campaign describes specific items and abilities that fit its setting. If these rules aren't available, you may use the rules for extraordinary powers in **Chapter 6** and the Extraordinary Stunt talent in **Chapter 11** of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*. This section provides additional adjustments to those rules to bring them in line with the science fiction elements of this chapter.

One element that remains constant in this chapter, the *Modern AGE* core, and the *Modern AGE Companion* is that extraordinary powers and items are measured in degrees, like talents. For personal abilities, a degree in a talent is generally equivalent to a rank in a power, either measured in Novice, Expert, and Master degrees, or simply counted in a number of degrees. Item abilities are measured in the number of times a given benefit is applied. No matter whether you use the systems in the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook* with the notes herein, or the *Modern AGE Companion*, you can measure benefits and items in degrees. They're known in this chapter as tech degrees, and the entries within will refer to them.

Tech-Based Powers

Characters with cybernetic, genetically engineered, or other extraordinary personal powers may use variants of the abilities in **Chapter 6** of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*, with the following changes.

- **Technological Premise:** The Game Master determines the source of the ability and modifies the rules accordingly. For example, the Digital Arcana power might be a function of an implanted expert system. In this case, it may only function on targets with wireless input, or which the character can physically access.
- **Technological Power Source:** The character gains 15 power points (PP) with the first tech degree, and 5 additional PP for each additional degree. The character recovers PP based on a necessary power source. A cyborg may need to plug into an external battery, or may convert the energy of the character's movement into electricity. Nanotech-based abilities may require a new colony of nanorobots.
- **Technological Power Stunts:** Technological powers may not fit with existing power stunts. The Power Shield, Imposing Power, Omen, and Disrupt Power stunts are the ones most likely to be inappropriate. The GM may substitute stunts from other categories instead.

Extraordinary Stunts & Technology

Chapter 11 of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook* introduces the Extraordinary Stunt talent on p. 164. These operate as written, though the technology being used determines which stunt is enhanced and how it happens in the story.

TECHNOLOGICAL ITEMS

In game terms, the difference between a technology-based power and item is that an item can be separated from its user without causing any injury and using relatively simple methods, from swiping a weapon from its user's hands to taking a character out of a powered exoskeleton.

Like powers, items are measured in tech degrees, equivalent to extraordinary power talent degrees or ranks in the Extraordinary Stunt talent. These can be applied on top of an ordinary piece of equipment, however, so a futuristic firearm that shoots with extra speed (using the 2 SP Lightning Attack stunt for free) has a value of one tech degree. An item based on ordinary equipment has the limitations of that piece of equipment (ammunition, fuel, etc.), unless the technological enhancements themselves override them.

In the case of items which replicate psychic of magical abilities, the rules for emulating those powers with technology apply. In that case, power points are stored in the item, represented in a fashion appropriate to the technology.

ASHER KOVINDRENARA

> That you did not realize you stole is of no consequence. A remittance is owed.

Asher Kovindrenara is often assumed to be Indian or East African, with ancestry from both regions. His home country of Invindara occupies an island in the Indian Ocean that's roughly equal distance away from both Sri Lanka and the northern tip of Madagascar. Invindara is an obscure country, claimed but never occupied by many colonial powers, who in the end never made landfall—"bad luck" claimed those who tried. It almost never appears on Western maps. Surveillance satellites see an island about the size of Manhattan but covered in rainforest. Atlases rarely mention it, and when they do, it's described as a sparsely populated island of a few thousand (estimated) controlled by a traditional monarchy. Its citizens mostly subsist through hunting, fishing, gathering, and low-intensity agriculture.

This is all true, but highly incomplete. Invindara's monarchy is the family responsible for calling the Samiti council of representatives. The reigning monarch also casts tie-breaking votes, directs the Danda ("staff") emissary service, and communicates with the artificial intelligences that advise the nation. Virtually all Invindarans hunt, fish, gather, and farm to satisfy a national ethos calling for striking a balance with nature, but they're also computer scientists, cybernetic surgeons, and bioengineers working in a nation that also applies balance to its own development. Invindara's a place where people use foot power, not cars, to get around, but if they need a ride can summon a self-driving ground-effect vehicle. Elders pass on the stories of their people to their children with holograms.

Long ago, Invindara became one of the founding members of the Peridexion, a global organization that regulates the most advanced technologies. Asher Kovindrenara is a member of the Danda and an agent of the Peridexion. As a scientist, he investigates other countries to ensure their technologies don't defy Peridexion controls. As a diplomat, he maintains Invindara's cover as a poor, simple nation. As a spy, he studies threats to his people and, when necessary, neutralizes them. Asher's specialty is intercepting stolen Invindaran technology, whose basic achievements in fusion and AI alone could topple the existing economic order.

Asher respects his country's policy of neutrality and its responsibilities to the global Peridexion, but the static world order contains many injustices. Settler-colonial empires may have waned, but they maintain a system of global exploitation a motivated country with access to an Invindaran

Asher Kovindrenara

Abilities (Focuses)	
5	Accuracy (Thrown +3)
5	Communication (Deception, Etiquette, Investigation)
3	Constitution (Propelling)
4	Dexterity (Initiative, Sabotage)
5	Fighting (Flexible, Long-Hafted +3)
6	Intelligence (Biology, Computers, Electronics)
3	Perception (Tracking)
3	Strength (Climbing)
4	Willpower (Self-Discipline)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
14	28	70	100	14	16	17	5I/10B/3P + 3	+4	+6

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Apakunta, Battle Mode	+8	2D6+6
Apakunta, Hunting Mode	+10	1D6+8
Apakunta, Lash Mode	+8	1D6+3

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: High Tech Hustle, Just a Shadow, Read the Room, Vicious Blow

Apakunta: The apakunta ("water spear") is a traditional Invindaran weapon and tool, used for hunting, fishing, and as a digging stick. Asher's apakunta is a touch past the state-of-the-art in Invindara itself. The weapon is collapsible into a foot-long rod, made of shape-changing smart materials, and has an onboard computer and sensor suite. Responding to Asher's handprint and touch commands, his apakunta has three modes. In battle mode, the spear inflicts 2d6+3 impact wound damage, as it reaches maximum sharpness and rigidity. In hunting mode, the apakunta takes an aerodynamic shape to guide it to targets, and it inflicts 1d6+5 impact wound damage. In lash mode, the apakunta becomes a flexible blunt instrument that takes tactically optimal shapes, inflicting 1d6 impact stun damage and granting +2 Stunt Points whenever an attack roll using it scores doubles.

Diplomatic Immunity: Asher is an accredited diplomat and cannot be prosecuted for a crime in any country where his privileges are recognized. In practice, Asher avoids leaning on diplomatic privileges except to avoid traffic tickets and unpaid bills. Even then, he only does this to look like an irresponsible diplomat, not worth special attention.

Memory Alteration: Asher has a device capable of altering memories through transcranial magnetic stimulation, but the subject must be conscious but immobile. Therefore, it can only be used on restrained or paralyzed subjects. Asher can use it to make rough changes to subjects' memories. Whether these can be resisted or are reversible is up to the Game Master.

Samar Kanzu: This East African robe became a traditional form of dress in Invindara over a century ago. Asher's is a samar ("war," or "contest" in Invindaran) model. It's made of fibers that become rigid upon impact. This provides an Armor Rating of 5I/10B. Asher also owns an Italian-styled suit with the same properties.

Talents: Intrigue (Master), Misdirection (Master), Two-Handed Style (Expert)

Equipment: Apakunta, Diplomatic Credentials, Next Generation Smartphone, Samar Kanzu

Threat: Dire

tactical satellite or economic management AI could challenge. Therefore, he has begun to enforce his people's laws somewhat selectively. He may let a cache of advanced weaponry find its way to poor farmers, while ensuring the invaders who stole them from a sunken Invindaran wreck never enter the Indian Ocean again.

Asher leads a team of Cyberspies (see p. 96) and other advanced operatives from any number of Invindaran holdings, including the country's handful of embassies and consulates. While he's versed in a number of different scientific fields, his specialty is in brain-computer communication. He performs research in this field when his duties permit, and this has led to innovations that allow him to selectively edit memories. This has proven extremely useful in his work as an emissary.

Adventure Hooks

The following adventure hooks introduce Asher to your campaign.

Contract Enforcement

Asher is not one for frivolous personal or business relationships. He and his people have often been betrayed by the privileged, ignorant citizens of other countries. Case in point: He brokered a limited arrangement between the TrevTech Corporation and the Invindara to mass-produce piezoelectric metamaterials, which convert kinetic energy to electricity. TrevTech has the industrial capacity, and Invindara was willing to release the technology for peaceful purposes in exchange for part of the profits and some of the higher-grade materials being diverted back to Invindara.

Instead, TrevTech broke off contact and developed the technology for use with next-generation infantry combat armor. Asher needs a team to sabotage this operation, effectively imposing "intellectual property law" even though Invindara isn't a signatory to the relevant treaties. Complicating matters is the fact that Asher may have brokered this agreement a bit prematurely, and the monarchy is not yet aware of the situation.

Trespassing

Asher has to return home after an emergency summons, but his plane is wrecked by advanced airborne nanorobots that seem to be tearing apart incoming aircraft. These sorts of "wild" nanorobots employed on a mass scale violate the rules of the Peridexion, which prevents the wide distribu-

tion of technologies that could constitute threats to all life on Earth. Communications aren't getting through either, and somebody's watching Invindaran consular holdings abroad. Thus, Asher contacts the characters to help him figure out where the international elements of the plot are coming from, and to help him devise a way home past the barrier. In the end, they must stop whoever unleashed the forbidden tech from growing even more careless.

DEATH TO TRAITORS

This time, the Player Characters are Asher's second choice. The outsiders he hired to help establish an Invindaran rapid reaction outpost betrayed him, killing another member of the Danda who carried advanced plans for the facility and its weapons, and himself having arrived in an experimental, invisible VTOL craft. The characters' job is to find the traitors and begin the work of bringing them to justice—but not to finish it. The heroes are expected to activate a homing beacon when they corner the enemy, so Asher and his agents can mete out their own justice. But when it's all over, Asher will want the characters' help disposing of the evidence. If they prove their loyalty then, he may offer the heroes special dispensation to enter Invindara and use some of its technology. They've earned it.

BIOROID ASSASSIN

> You may attempt to run. But I will hurt you if you do.

Designed and grown in a hidden lab, the Bioroid Assassin is almost impossible to visually distinguish from a human. Dogs and other creatures with a keen sense of smell detect an inhuman scent, but otherwise, even a wounded Bioroid will appear human until it demonstrates impossible speed, strength, or toughness. The term "bioroid" is short for "biological android." Thus, the Bioroid Assassin has more than a superficial human appearance, because it is primarily made of living tissue, genetically engineered and surgically grafted to mimic the human form.

The construction of Bioroids can vary depending on who manufactures them. Some Bioroids are simply flesh over a synthetic robot chassis, but many are more substantially biological, and a few may be made entirely of organic bones and tissue. The more human-like its composition, the harder the Bioroid Assassin is to detect through physical means. The technology used may also influence its build. Some models may be especially tall and broad, to carry enhanced musculature and bulky metal components, but the most sophisticated can look like any adult-sized human. (Child-sized Bioroid Assassins may exist as well but do not use the game statistics in this entry.)

Where a Bioroid Assassin exposes itself is in its personality…or lack on one. Each one has been programmed with the necessary aptitudes for stalking and killing targets, but not for empathy, social skills, and certain forms of intuition that many people innately understand. Bioroids lack not only these abilities but also the neurological diversity for alternate forms of understanding how people work, beyond general algorithms used for tracking their quarry. The unpredictably of a sentient target can be an obstacle.

The Bioroid's knowledge is almost entirely programmed, and despite its adult appearance, it may be days, weeks, or fewer than five years old. Thus, it concentrates on raw tactics and logistics to pull off its mission, and rarely tries to use social guile to get closer to its target. It acquires the weapons it needs, does what it can to visually camouflage itself, gets close, and goes in for the kill. The Bioroid Assassin usually operates with no concern for its own survival, though it often tries to hide what it is. Some of them may even dissolve or explode upon completing their missions, to prevent anyone from performing an autopsy.

Bioroid Assassin

Abilities (Focuses)	
4	Accuracy (Plasma Rifles)
-1	Communication
6	Constitution (Running)
3	Dexterity (Initiative, Stealth)
5	Fighting (Brawling, Grappling)
0	Intelligence (Security, Tactics)
3	Perception
6	Strength (Intimidation, Might +3)
0	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
13	36	96	126	13	14	15	2I/4B + 3	+4	+5

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Brawling Strike	+7	2d6+6
Plasma Rifle	+6	3d6+9

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Expose, Shock and Awe, The Upper Hand

Mission Knowledge: The Bioroid Assassin knows how to operate all weapons, vehicles, and other common technologies in its designated mission location. It is also always considered to have the primary Intelligence and Perception focuses required for any investigation required to pursue its target, and gains the focus' +2 bonus to rolls to investigate the way to their quarry.

Antisocial and Unnatural: The Bioroid Assassin cannot initiate a Communication test. Animals have a Hostile attitude to it by default, as they sense it isn't human.

Brutal Strength: The Bioroid Assassin inflicts a base of 2d6 impact wound damage in unarmed combat, and +1d6 damage while using a melee weapon, inflicting wound damage even if the weapon normally inflicts stun damage, unless the stun damage is due to a special effect such as from an electroshock weapon.

Plasma Rifle: By default, the Bioroid Assassin is equipped with a plasma rifle, an energy weapon that inflicts a base 3d6+6 penetrating wound damage, uses the Accuracy (Plasma Rifles) focus, and is reloaded using specialized batteries. Otherwise, it has the same game statistics as a conventional assault rifle.

Unstoppable: The Bioroid Assassin's construction renders it immune to stun damage and suffers half damage (rounded up) from kinetic energy-based impact damage, such as from melee weapons. It also has an inherent 2I/4B Armor Rating due to its innate toughness.

Talents: Overwhelm (Master)

Equipment: Leather Jacket, Motorcycle, Plasma Rifle, Sunglasses

Threat: Major

Deviations

While a Bioroid Assassin is a formidable enemy, anyone who knows its target might reliably predict its behavior. But what happens when it starts to think for itself? Bioroids who've been on an extended hunt, who've been captured and reprogrammed, or who've experienced uncommon accidents may exhibit unusual behavior. The most basic of these deviations might be tics, unusual verbalizations, and other minor oddities. More severe examples resemble emotional responses. The Bioroid Assassin may display unusual anger toward their target, or develop obsessive habits. At its most severe, a behavioral deviation may prompt it to abandon its mission and display something like human free will. If a Bioroid Assassin starts to act like a human, does it deserve the same rights as one? Is it truly conscious? If not, how can we prove even ordinary humans are conscious?

Adventure Hooks

The following story hooks bring the Bioroid Assassin into your campaign.

I'll Return

A Bioroid Assassin's target takes refuge with the Player Characters, warning them about the seemingly unstoppable pursuer. What the target doesn't mention is the heroes aren't the first people they went to. This individual originally went to the police, and the Bioroid Assassin attacked head-on, killing several officers. The hunted character escaped in the confusion but is wanted by the police as well. According to press releases, the police believe the Bioroid Assassin and its target are actually working together as killers for an organized crime group police caught in the crossfire had been investigating—and as soon as that news drops, that syndicate also starts looking for the Bioroid's quarry. The hunted NPC and heroes have to battle them all and clear up the confusion.

Records Lie

In search of a well-hidden target, the Bioroid Assassin matches its information to a database it finds in the field… and comes to the wrong conclusion. It targets one of the Player Characters or a close ally. Unless the heroes defeat it head on, they need to make the Bioroid aware of its mistake. The easiest way to do this would be to find its real target, but is it right to expose that individual to danger? What did they do to warrant a Bioroid Assassin coming after them in the first place?

Bid for Freedom

When a Bioroid Assassin starts to think for itself, it approaches the heroes for help. It needs a new identity, a place to hide, and to learn about what it means to be human. This last is especially important, since it only has the life experience of a small child. The Bioroid's former masters send a next-generation synthetic killer—perhaps even a team of them—to dispose of their "malfunctioning asset" and everyone who knows about it.

CERISE ANYERIS

I will not be tagged, bagged, assimilated by, or give in to the machine. I made myself a ghost so I could truly live.

CERISE ANYERIS

	Abilities (Focuses)
5	Accuracy (Bows +3, Pistols)
3	Communication
3	Constitution (Running, Tolerance)
3	Dexterity (Crafting, Sabotage, Stealth)
4	Fighting (Grappling +3, Short-Hafted)
5	Intelligence (Biology, Computers, Security)
4	Perception
4	Strength (Intimidation, Machining)
3	Willpower (Self-Discipline)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
13	25	58	88	13	14	15	0I/0B+ 3	+4	+5

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Grappling Grip	+7	1D3+4
Longbow	+8	1D6+7

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts:, Fancy Meeting You Here, Sleep with One Eye Open, Whatever's Handy

Ghost in the Machine: Cerise Anyeris has access to an AI-designed worm that eradicates most digital traces of a person's existence, from pictures to birth records, within hours of being initiated. She can use this on her own digital footprint, or on someone else's. If someone actively resists erasure, make an opposed advanced Intelligence (Computers) test between Cerise and any opponents, with intervals of one hour and a success threshold of 15. If Anyeris hits the threshold first (or scores more points on a tie) she erases the target's information. If anyone else wins, they decide whether to preserve the information or let it be erased.

Structure Infection: Although she refuses to admit it, Cerise Anyeris was exposed to the Project Structure second-stage human enhancement package. This has given her superhuman reflexes. By taking the Activate action, she can use the Lightning Attack stunt for 0 SP, once per round. She also gains +3 to initiative rolls if she is aware combat is imminent. Structure should also render her vulnerable to mind control, but by remaining off the grid, she has avoided being targeted by the project's masterminds—assuming her anonymous patron isn't one of them.

Talents: Hacking (Expert), Pinpoint Attack (Expert), Scouting (Expert)

Equipment: Bow, Custom Memory Stick with Ghost in the Machine Worm (Secured With Fingerprint Sensor), Medical Kit, Notebook, Pens with Purple Ink

Threat: Major

Intelligence agencies say Cerise Anyeris is a Luddite terrorist, but they've never been clear on her politics or demands. It seems to be enough that she's a holdout who refuses to use all but the most basic technologies. Currently, she's a person of interest for incidents at several labs and industrial facilities, not a fugitive per se, but she avoids the law anyway, along with corporate agents and most of the complex technologies people use every day. If it has a circuit board, she avoids it. She survives off the grid, not just to avoid questioning but also to throw up a middle finger at the establishment that she used to uphold.

Under another name, Anyeris was an operative for Project Structure, a secretive initiative where a rogue government agency and semi-criminal corporation cooperated on human enhancement experiments. The project combined pharmaceutical efforts, engineered retroviruses, and nanorobotics to produce minimally invasive human enhancements. Anyeris was responsible for monitoring and testing subjects' physical performance. After significant death and disability rates, Project Structure managed to improve the rate of survival without complications to 60%. Half the survivors demonstrated increases in strength, reaction time, and certain cognitive functions.

Cerise Anyeris' employers decided this was good enough for the next phase of Project Structure: using the water supply of a local town as a vector for the enhancement package. It would be activated by radio frequencies generated by high traffic online services. The new package would also include behavior modification routines devised in another lab. She was briefed on the plans after supervising the burials of those who failed to survive the last round of research.

That was too much for her. Her change of heart was as extreme as it was sudden, starting with her wiping her data and digital footprint off the servers of her former employers, and through their extraordinary access, a number of additional government and private databases. After eliminating electronic data, she blew up the servers, burned hard copy backups, and destroyed as much of Project Structure's technology as possible.

GHOSTS

Cerise Anyeris has a striking appearance. She's a muscular, tanned, green-eyed redhead, dressed as if combat's just around the corner. No pictures of her can be found online. Most electronic evidence of her existence vanishes within days of being posted. Anyeris' government records are fragmentary, and she only uses cash. She's built multiple shelters in remote woods and urban tunnels. Avoiding complex technology, she continues her war against Project Structure and its relatives, using the most primitive methods available to accomplish her goals. "It lives in all the machines," say says, "so the best you can do is minimize exposure by keeping things simple." Cerise doesn't talk about her silent partner, who communicates through coded messages on radio and TV shows, and calls from pay phones using electronically masked voices. She thought she was losing her mind at first, but has come to believe a very skilled hacker—

perhaps one that isn't human, but an artificial intelligence—assists her. This patron provided the worm she uses to eliminate digital evidence of her existence. She's used it on others as well, to help or harm them. As for the latter, she keeps in touch with them and someday might call upon them as her "army of ghosts."

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following story hooks introduce Cerise to your adventures.

NOW YOU SEE ME, NOW YOU DON'T

Heroes need to get off the grid. Cerise Anyeris provides unmatched assistance in this regard, but it doesn't come easy. First of all, the characters need to hide out beyond any form of electronic monitoring until Anyeris finishes the job. This isn't just a matter of ditching cell phones but avoiding everything from purchases recorded in point-of-sale systems to being photographed by satellites. According to Anyeris, anything less risks rebuilding their digital footprints. Player Characters will have to rough it for a few days.

Second, Anyeris doesn't do this kind of work for free. The characters have joined her "army of ghosts." While they remain invisible, she wants them to perform tasks tracking down Project Structure operatives. This is highly dangerous. Structure agents have superhuman enhancements, well-heeled patrons, and a knack for tracking their enemies. To stay off the grid, characters will have to keep their identities hidden from them as well.

WHO DRAWS FIRST BLOOD?

Cerise Anyeris gets exposed not by a secret conspiracy, but by police in a remote community. They not only found one of her hideouts, but took the car she stole to get there, trapping her hundreds of miles away from any other inhabited area. As police comb the woods for her, she relies on her survival skills to hide and improvise shelter. Reinforcements will take days to arrive. Anyeris fears exposure if she fights her way out of the area.

Player Characters get involved to either help Anyeris get away or help police capture her. Either task is challenging. As a target, Cerise Anyeris brings an array of improvised traps and formidable combat ability. Local police aren't as tough, but they know the area, and the clock is ticking as federal agents will eventually arrive to provide support.

INVISIBLE ONES

Cerise Anyeris asks the characters for help when she suspects one of her "ghosts" has become a serial killer, and furthermore, seems to have access to the ghost in the machine worm. The killer is using it to cover their tracks. Anyeris has narrowed it down to three suspects based on her personal investigations of the killings.

What Anyeris doesn't say is she needs the heroes because the killer seems to be hunting people associated with Project Structure. She doesn't want to expose herself to Structure operatives but also wants to use the characters as stalking horses. They'll flush out the killer and Project Structure, and she'll choose who to take down.

CYBERSPY

> Decades ago, they built TEMPEST shielding to protect information from what I can do with a wave of my hand. But those standards are out of date. I know your secrets.

Even if the Cyberspy didn't come from old money, they still act like it, using the manners associated with aristocratic wealth as if they were raised with them. Cyberspies are skilled at blending into many different social strata but prefer the habits of the elite. They often believe that as an augmented human, they belong to a superior group: so-called post-humans willing to use technology to discard mortal frailties and improve performance. Not all Cyberspies believe they're members of a new subspecies, but most have been exposed to this ideology. At the very least, it justifies their careers as information thieves and saboteurs, since according to these beliefs, post-humans should be able to take anything produced by their supposed inferiors. Many Cyberspies are driven by greed or patriotism. In a few cases, they're revolutionaries who reject elitist beliefs and use their skills to fight injustice.

Cyberspies have been augmented for stealth, information gathering, and physical performance. Their bionic arms are strong, tough, and absorb sound. Their artificial hands and eyes house advanced sensor packages capable of deciphering digital information at a distance. These can see (their hand sensors include fingertip cameras) beyond normal human visual spectra. The Cyberspy combines these enhancements with training as an intelligence agent. Their fieldwork would be impeccable even if they didn't have cybernetic advantages. They blend into social situations with ease, making marks comfortable and far too trusting. If pressed, they can falsify the data to back up their pretenses. They always dress appropriately for the part, but if they have a choice, they'll usually go for a stylish, comfortable look. They arm themselves with precision weaponry but prefer to win through wit, not force. But if worse comes to worst, a Cyberspy's enhancements include a coiled length of sharp metamaterial that can be used as a sword or garotte.

THE NEW GREAT GAME

In a cyberpunk game, the Cyberspy belongs to a cadre of similar field agents, but in campaigns where human augmentation is a secret, they're the result of individual experiments or belong to a program that's either classified above Top Secret or the result of well-hidden corporate research. In any event, the Cyberspy is naturally suited to industrial espionage. Just as their skills rely on special technologies, their missions often revolve around stealing those technologies. In some cases, they may destroy enemy research, or even kidnap scientists and engineers who would otherwise help the enemy improve their technology. Over the course of their work, they might even keep a few technological toys for themselves, especially if they have direct applications for their work.

This entry's description assumes the Cyberspy's enhancements come from bionic limbs and an array of other surgically implanted advanced electronic devices. If the Game Master feels it's more appropriate, they can decide the Cyberspy's abilities derive from genetic engineering, nanotechnology, or some other source. Note that it may be necessary to modify the Cyberspy's abilities to fit any new rationale for their powers.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following adventure hooks help introduce the Cyberspy to your players.

NAME OF THE GAME

The Cyberspy took a job penetrating the Parasol Corporation's biotechnology division, but it only accepts scientists and executives whose backgrounds have been vetted with multiple interviews after their researchers deeply examine candidates' data trails. The Cyberspy asks the characters for help constructing just such an identity. They must pose as past associates and help on several small missions to plant false data before breaking into Parasol's security wing and setting the Cyberspy up as an authorized employee.

The Cyberspy isn't the only one on the job, however. A rival agent with comparable abilities is also attempting to break into Parasol and needs to set up a false identity that will pass muster. The characters must foil the rival or, failing that, help the Cyberspy complete their mission first.

DEAD OF NIGHT

To the Cyberspy, blackmail is a legitimate tool of the trade. When the Cyberspy gets burned and needs to lay low, they look down their list of possible blackmail marks to provide discreet funding. Unfortunately, this brings them to a trusted ally of the Player Characters. Long ago, this ally killed a man in self-defense but never went to the police. The Cyberspy traced the ally's anonymous online confession back long ago. The ally asks the heroes to either put a stop to the blackmail or act as go-betweens for payment.

Can the characters believe their ally's self-defense claim? Should they protect their ally at all? If they try to prevent the blackmail, how do they stop the Cyberspy from revealing everything? Who is the Cyberspy hiding from?

THE ACADEMY

The Cyberspy needs intel on the one organization they can't look at themselves: their patrons. The Cyberspy suspects their employers can track their implants and even acquire data stored on them. Therefore, when the Cyberspy asks the Player Characters for help, they appear to be blind and paralyzed, as their implants have been deactivated to ensure privacy. The Cyberspy fears their patron is getting ready to burn their cover identities and betray them to past marks.

The best way to get the Player Characters into the agency is to bring them in as recruits. The heroes must deal with the hardships of training while penetrating the organization's upper echelons. If the characters succeed, they may be transformed by their experience, with new skills and even cybernetic enhancements.

CYBERSPY

Abilities (Focuses)	
2	Accuracy (Pistols)
3	Communication (Deception)
2	Constitution (Tolerance)
3	Dexterity (Acrobatics, Sabotage, Stealth +3)
3	Fighting (Flexible, Light Blades)
4	Intelligence (Computers, Security, Tactics)
2	Perception (Seeing)
2	Strength
1	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
14	25	36	50	13	14	15	2I/2B+2	+2	+2

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Implant Light Chain Setting	+5	1D6+4
Implant Dagger Setting	+5	1D6+3
Implant Fencing Sword Setting	+5	1D6+5
Pocket Pistol	+4	1D6+2

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Brutal Strike, It Wasn't Me, Parry

***Metamaterial Close Combat Implant:** The Cyberspy's favored hand contains an implanted, motorized coil of sharp material three feet long and half an inch wide. The Cyberspy can extend or retract this implant in a split second, without using an action. Its rigidity is controlled by an electrical current the Cyberspy mentally controls. At various uncoiled lengths and settings, it acts as the equivalent of a dagger, fencing sword, or light chain (though it does extra damage as the last, due to its sharp edges). It remains attached to the Cyberspy, who cannot be disarmed unless the hand it uncoils from is removed.

Bionic Eyes: The Cyberspy has artificial eyes that look completely natural but provide hyperspectral optics. Except for color perception, the Cyberspy sees in total darkness as well as they do during the day. They can visually assess heat levels and sources of radio waves. Image processing sharpens everything the Cyberspy sees, providing a +2 bonus to Perception (Seeing) rolls.

Bionic Limbs: The Cyberspy's arms and legs have been replaced with artificial limbs that are tougher, faster, and stronger than their biological counterparts. These add +4 to the Cyberspy's Speed, a 2I/2B Armor Rating that stacks with worn armor, and +2 to Strength (Might) and Dexterity (Initiative) rolls. The fingertips contain cameras and sensors allowing the Cyberspy to see through them with the same capabilities as their bionic eyes. The Cyberspy's bionic limbs appear perfectly natural unless damaged.

SIGINT Implant: Sensor and emitter implants in the Cyberspy's arms are capable of wirelessly interfacing with any computer that isn't especially shielded against emitting or receiving electromagnetic signals. The computer does not need to have wireless communication abilities of its own. The implant also performs the functions of a current generation communications device.

Talents: Intrigue (Expert)

Equipment: Pocket Pistol, Stylish Clothing

Threat: Moderate

EXTRACTOR

Think of me as your next career move.

An Extractor specializes in getting people out of tight spots by any means necessary. One Extractor might specialize in rescuing people who've been kidnapped, by managing ransom payments or, when that fails, finding and taking back victims by force. Another might be a professional kidnapper who seizes individuals to hold for ransom, though this is relatively uncommon, as an Extractor's expertise is too expensive for most criminal enterprises. Perhaps the most interesting use of an Extractor's skills is to help VIPs change jobs against the wills of their former employers. The Extractor helps these individuals get away from organizations that would rather kill them than let them leave. An Extractor might guard someone leaving an abusive relationship, though this is less common because there's generally not much money in it.

The Extractor's abilities are also suited to bodyguarding, bounty hunting, and security work. A few make ends meet as private eyes, though they prefer to get into the thick of the action instead of investigating it from afar. While most Extractors have military backgrounds, they now avoid naked force, since they mostly operate in urban centers full of bystanders and police. They've traded battle dress for suits and discreet body armor. They avoid police involvement through stealth and a thorough knowledge of the law. More than a few are accredited lawyers. This character might even represent a highly specialized, elite law officer operating for a federal agency as an MP, or for the police force of a major city.

Clients and operational details determine what Extractors do. There is no typical extraction subject, since the circumstances that prompt the Extractor's involvement are always out of the ordinary. One subject might be a military scientist whose abilities are considered state secrets, but who wishes to defect. Another client could be a pop idol wanting freedom from a large entertainment conglomerate holding them prisoner. Extraction subjects usually have interesting, troublesome personalities to go along with their unique circumstances. Managing willful extraction subjects who don't follow instructions is part of the job. Extractors use reassuring words, threats, and knockout drugs to deal with them, depending on the subject, the situation, and the Extractor's preferences.

The Extractor's enhancements often tell the story of why they moved into their current line of work. Severe injuries, past failures, and personal obsessions determine the changes they make to their bodies. Their enhancements didn't come cheap, either, prompting work to clear the debt or satisfy the demands of a patron who paid for them. Successful Extractors upgrade their enhancements for additional prowess.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

These adventure hooks add the Extractor to your campaign.

EXTRACTOR

	Abilities (Focuses)
3	Accuracy (Grenades, Pistols, Shotguns, SMGs)
3	Communication (Leadership)
2	Constitution (Stamina)
2	Dexterity (Stealth)
2	Fighting (Grappling)
2	Intelligence (Law)
3	Perception (Empathy)
2	Strength
2	Willpower (Morale)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
12	25	35	50	15	16	16**	2I/4B+2	+2	+2

** Includes Bulletproof Briefcase

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Grappling Grip	+4	1D3+1D6+2
SMG	+5	2D6+3

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Blockade, Guardian Angel, Knock Prone

Bionic Arm: From shoulder to fingertip, the Extractor's right arm is a chain of powerful servomotors capable of interpreting neural input. By using an Activate action, the Extractor either inflicts +1d6 damage in hand to hand combat or gains +3 to Strength tests involving the use of the arm.

Electronic Reflexes: The Extractor has an artificial parallel nervous system that relays instructions faster. By using an Activate action, they may either gain +3 to initiative or use the Lightning Attack stunt for free.

Talents: Protect (Expert), Self-Defense Style (Expert)

Equipment: Ballistic Cloth Vest, Bulletproof Briefcase (equivalent to Ballistic Shield), SMG, Sports Car, Suit

Threat: Moderate

BARELY WORTH SAVING

A mercenary Extractor has taken a client halfway to safety, but when a payment doesn't clear, they leave the client high and dry, in a ratty hotel room with enemies closing in. The Extractor left the Player Characters' information with the client as someone to contact who "might take charity cases." If the heroes don't intervene, the Extractor's client will either be killed or reacquired by captors. The client also offers a considerable payment and future favors: inducements the Extractor didn't believe were forthcoming. Do the characters take over the job? Does the client have the resources they're promising and if they do, will the Extractor come back for their share, since they supposedly "did the hard part"?

TOO MANY TANAKAS

The Extractor managed to take one Yuto Tanaka, who they believed was a specialist in biological warfare. In fact, this

Yuto Tanaka, who has the same security clearance and name, is the head of soft drink development for the same corporation's foods division. Both happen to work at the same secret laboratory. Soft drink maker Tanaka *does* hold information the company would kill to keep secret, however, since he has developed an additive that reduces the calories absorbed from sugary foods and beverages. The Extractor needs the characters' help to get the correct Tanaka and find something to do with the one who was erroneously kidnapped. Plus of course, there's the question of which of these secrets really should escape the corporation's secret lab.

PRISON BREAK

Alpha Island is a rusted steel platform in the middle of the Pacific. Originally designed as a Cold War submarine base, it's now a prison holding inmates the world's governments never want to see again. When an Extractor approaches the heroes asking for help busting someone out of Alpha Island, the Player Characters will probably have to be told what it is in the first place. The Extractor already has a plan, but the characters won't like it, since it involves getting them inside as inmates. From there, the heroes have to find the client and work with the Extractor's other operatives to pick up the necessary equipment, evade security, and escape.

SHOE'S ON THE OTHER FOOT

Normally the Extractor's the one getting people out of trouble, but this time they're trapped, blackmailed by a client they moved to a new corporation. The client is now a power broker in their organization and has threatened to tell police the Extractor killed two guards getting the client out, unless they agree to become a leg-breaker and occasional assassin. The Extractor asks the Player Characters to destroy any evidence and discredit the former client.

MAKER

> My work is unique. You can't get the parts from the mall, or the theories from your local community college.

Makers don't do one-size-fits-all work, and are never just generic manufacturers working the line at a factory, or sharing a clean room in a corporate lab. They might do those things for money, but fabricating ordinary technologies isn't the Maker's true calling. A Maker builds extraordinary items for themselves and select clients. Maker specializations vary, and along with it, their personal styles of business and aesthetics. Some stick to coveralls and lab coats, letting function dictate form. Others go with contemporary street styles, razor-sharp business attire, or a wholly idiosyncratic look. Generally speaking, these hint at whether the Maker considers themselves a businessperson, scientist, worker, or artist.

Makers rarely follow conventional learning paths. They could be self-taught via books swiped from the library after finishing school work. They might have taken an inspired path at a top-tier university, performing so well they'll pay her way as long as she sticks with them. Makers specialize in whatever fields calls to them during their educations. Possibilities include nanotechnology, electromagnetic fields, artificial intelligence—anything possible in the campaign. The Maker's concentration determines the equipment they need. When this gear is expensive or well-guarded, they may turn to outside help to get it.

A trade for equipment is one way to get the Maker's help. They might also help Player Characters in exchange for straight cash, secret research from a rival, or even for free if the Maker believes the characters will use the gifted tech to do something that fits the Maker's agenda. Makers differ widely in motivations, and characters may run into one who plies their trade for strictly mercenary reasons, one devoted to a cause, or one who makes things as pure works of art. No matter the Maker's goals, however, they're always devoted to innovating within their chosen technological sphere. Some Makers may even be convinced to violate their own values for the chance to create something new.

THE WORKSHOP

Makers almost always have their own workshops. Their appearances vary greatly, based on the Maker's concentrations. Biotech workshops include facilities for tissue cultures and storing biohazardous materials. Makers into robotics may run a cavernous garage with plenty of room to build and test their creations. Most of the Makers Player Characters meet will be independent operators who usually keep their facilities as discreet as possible, and take numerous security measures, some of which use extraordinary technology to repel, trap, or even kill intruders. Makers guard their innovations, and either put schematics under lock and key or don't use them at all, preferring to commit everything to memory. Of course, a Maker might also be an elite scientist or engineer working in an academic or corporate environment, in which case their patron manages the workshop and its security. Even then, the Maker may add something special to the facility's features.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following adventure hooks introduce the Maker to your campaign.

IF YOU NEED IT, SHE CAN MAKE IT

Forget makerspaces—there's a woman who blows away the limits of what can be fabricated by small groups. Her custom-made 3D printers, mills, and less-identifiable machines produce the kinds of things that people rarely find outside of heavily guarded corporate labs and government black sites. If you need the gear for reasons she sympathizes with, she'll make it for you... if you can find her.

She stays off the grid and is never found in the same place twice. She has enemies who claim she stole their prototypes, so it makes sense for her to be cautious. Spy agencies say she deals in secret technology, too. The questions may be, what's this Maker's real agenda, and can the characters find common ground to get her help? Then again, the heroes may

Maker

Abilities (Focuses)	
2	Accuracy
1	Communication
2	Constitution (Tolerance)
3	Dexterity (Forgery, Sabotage, Sleight of Hand)
2	Fighting (Short-Hafted)
5	Intelligence (Crafting, Engineering)
2	Perception (Searching)
2	Strength (Machining)
0	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
13	15	25	40	13	13	14	0I/0B+2	+3	+3

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Stun Baton	+4	1d6**
Light Chain	+2	1d6+2
SA Handgun	+2	2d6+2

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes. **If the stun baton hits an unarmored target they must succeed at a Constitution (Stamina) test of TN 10 + damage or be paralyzed for 1d6 rounds.

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Guardian Angel, Jury Rig, The Upper Hand

Maker Specialty: Pick two Intelligence focuses among the following: Biology, Chemistry, Computers, Earth Sciences, Electronics, Explosives, Medicine, and Physics. The Maker gains these focuses and the Novice degree of the Expertise talent, in the form of a +1 bonus to rolls related to creating, fixing, or understanding extraordinary items and enhancements that utilize one or both of the selected focuses.

Fabrication and Repair: The Maker can create extraordinary items or personal enhancements related to their Maker specialty. Access to their workshop allows them to create a 1-tech-degree extraordinary personal enhancement or item. If a personal enhancement requires surgical or other medical skill to install, the Maker needs an assistant with the Advanced Medicine talent or an equivalent ability. The GM decides the difficulty of the procedure. For extraordinary items, the Maker needs to manufacture or acquire any base technology (such as an automobile to modify). A Maker can also repair extraordinary items and enhancements that fall under their Maker specialty, automatically restoring 1 tech degree of functionality. To create or repair more than 1 tech degree of function, the Maker requires additional materials determined by the GM, such as those Player Characters must acquire on the Maker's behalf. The GM determines how long creating or repairing extraordinary technology takes.

Tech Security: Makers know how to cover their tracks and keep their wares from being used against them. While manufacturing an item that falls under the character's Maker specialty, roll the appropriate attribute and focus to manufacture or repair an item, including any bonuses from Expertise or Maker, against a TN 12. If this test succeeds, the roll becomes the TN of any attempt to detect the booby trap the Maker has installed. Unless it's disabled, the Maker can activate it at any time, rendering the item (including a piece of extraordinary tech or an implant) non-functional. If the item contains data, it may wipe it, if the Maker decides the booby trap has that function.

Talents: Expertise (see Maker specialty), Maker (Master)

Equipment: Light Chain, SA Handgun, Stun Baton, Workshop

Threat: Moderate

find themselves on the other side, and the Maker might be supplying so-called terrorists.

DIRE STRAITS

A character's ally needs cybernetic implants to stave off multiple organ failure—the ally's criminal background is just one of the reasons they avoid conventional medicine. The ally knows a Maker who will help, but the Maker needs a surgeon who can keep their mouth shut. Once the Player Characters find a suitable surgeon, the procedure seems to go off without a hitch.

After fully recovering, the patient develops extraordinary speed and strength, alongside a desire for a designer drug provided by the Maker. The heroes' associate now has no choice but to act as the Maker's agent, performing acts of sabotage, theft, and assault as the Maker's debt collector. Things reach their nadir when the Maker orders the patient to take out the surgeon, who has an inkling that the implants come with undocumented features and side effects. Can the Player Characters save the surgeon? Can they get their friend away from the Maker's control? Is this part of a bigger plot on the Maker's part?

THE ONE TRUE PART

Viable biobatteries, which store energy the way living organisms do, have been at the experimental stage for decades. While multiple corporations have developed every other aspect of the technology, they haven't cracked the problem of creating an electricity-generating metabolism that converts glucose to electricity. That honor belongs to a lone Maker, an unsung innovator in the field who struck out on their own after being ignored by their superiors.

The Maker devised a unique bacterium that would revolutionize the technology. Biobatteries using it could power bionic limbs and cybernetic implants with nothing more than the owner's blood glucose. Now the companies that once left the Maker out in the cold want to steal the bacterium for their exclusive use. The Maker has other ideas, and needs the heroes' help to protect the sample and guard her while she documents her work for open source release.

STOLEN ALGORITHM

The Maker developed an algorithm to improve mind-machine interfaces to help an old friend who relies on them in their daily life. They underestimated the utility of such an innovation, however, and discover their friend has been robbed of their assistive devices. The Maker asks the characters for help finding these devices, along with the perpetrator. After an initial investigation, the street criminals who carried out the theft reveal they're working for an Extractor (see p. 97) who is, in turn, employed by an arms manufacturer. Unless stopped, the Maker's algorithm will be applied to a variety of mind-controlled weaponized drones. Once the Player Characters make it to the lab where the interface is being tested, they may even have to deal with such drones, or the Extractor may come for the Maker to ensure nobody else benefits from these innovations.

REACTIONARY

It's about ethics in personal enrichment.

Descended from trolls, stalkers, blackmailers, terrorists, mercenary hackers, and bigots of every stripe, Reactionaries do half their work for money and half for whatever self-aggrandizing ideology or profit motive moves them. In essence, they represent the next generation of technologically mediated crime.

Antisocial by conventional standards, Reactionaries usually hide behind aliases, doing their dirty work through cybercrime, proxy operatives, and drones. The exceptions join mobs devoted to the Reactionary's belief system. These are often fascists who abuse personal privileges and society's tolerance to commit acts of violence. With the Reactionary's help, hacking, encrypted communication channels, and homemade drone strikes enhance the mob's abilities. When the Reactionary needs money, their allies provide muscle and other hands-on assistance.

Reactionary ideologies are, at the core, nonsensical, filled with pseudoscientific claims that put the Reactionary's personal identity and habits on some pedestal of superiority, while denigrating anyone different for similarly obtuse reasons. To the Reactionary, there's little difference between their politics and pure selfishness. Their mercenary earnings come through multiple untraceable streams: obscure cryptocurrencies, wire transfers to anonymous accounts, precious metals, drugs, and, sometimes, blood-soaked cash. The Reactionary's weakness lies in their chaotic, illegal incomes. It might be possible to track them through their wealth, and by blocking it, put a damper on their activities. Otherwise, a Reactionary flush with cash is free to organize terrorist attacks from afar, and hide evidence of their involvement.

Through need or greed, a Reactionary's need for wealth can also be used to control them. Reactionaries burn through their money, and often get in debt to the crime syndicates and governments that hire them. Organized crime groups hire Reactionaries for everything from identity theft to assassination by drone. Intelligence services either support the Reactionary's destructive causes to sow chaos or hire them for specific operations. If a Reactionary turns against these patrons, they may find themselves exposed, blackmailed, or even killed.

THE REACTIONARY ARSENAL

A Reactionary's main tool is a custom computer backed by virus-seeded, distributed resources around the world. Reactionaries primarily use these to direct operations from afar. This involves straightforward hacking, communicating with operatives, and activating devices. As noted earlier, operatives are fellow believers in the Reactionary's politics. Most of them aren't good for much more than carrying torches, screaming slogans, or throwing punches. The Reactionary sometimes hires more competent agents for specific functions, but this is rare; they don't want to be upstaged, after all. Reactionaries also deploy extraordinary tech, gleaned-

Reactionary

Abilities (Focuses)	
2	Accuracy (Pistols)
3	Communication (Deception, Persuasion)
1	Constitution
2	Dexterity (Forgery, Sabotage, Stealth)
2	Fighting (Short-Hafted)
4	Intelligence (Computers, Evaluation, Security, Tactics)
3	Perception
1	Strength
1	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
12	16	21	36	12	13	13	0I/0B+6	+1	+1

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Club	+4	1d6+1
SA Handgun	+4	2d6+3

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Dox (3 SP), It Wasn't Me, When A Plan Comes Together

Stunt—Dox: By spending 3 SP on an appropriate test, the Reactionary gains access to significant compromising information about someone. This may be their exact location, access to a password-protected account, or information about their real identity, behind an alias. If the target has made more than a basic effort to hide this information, the Reactionary must succeed at an opposed test of their Intelligence (Computers or Security) versus an ability and focus related to how the target protected the information. However, if the target has used ordinary precautions, Dox works automatically.

Advanced Drone: The Reactionary possesses an armed, advanced autonomous drone they can use as a personal protector or send into combat. It acts on its own, with a +6 bonus (in addition to any others, such as Handling) to tests to attack, move, and maneuver.

Reactionary Connections: The Reactionary has a source for extraordinary technology and people willing to follow their plans. This usually applies to one rough category (such as cybernetics, nanotech, or biotech) or application (such as combat or intelligence gathering). The source may be corporate government or independent, such as a Maker or Tech Broker. The Reactionary can get their hands on 2 degrees of extraordinary tech, or 1d6 unskilled NPCs (Minor threat level) from their connections at any given time, or more if they're willing to go into debt.

Talents: Hacking (Expert), Living on the Fringe (Expert)

Equipment: Advanced Drone, Custom Laptop, Encrypted Smartphone, Fake ID, Police Baton (Club), SA Pistol

Threat: Moderate

ADVANCED DRONE

The advanced drone is about the size of a piece of carry-on luggage, with an armored hull, ducted fans, and an integrated personal defense weapon.

Autonomous: The advanced drone is capable of flying itself and responding to verbal commands from an authorized user, rolling tests with a bonus of 0 + Handling. When controlled by the Reactionary, this bonus is +6.

ADVANCED DRONE		
Handling Difficulty	Capacity	Velocity
+4	0	Fast/+2
Ram	**Hull**	**Resources TN**
0	1	N/A

PDW: The advanced drone carries a PDW (see the Modern Age Basic Rulebook, p. 73) with two integrated reloads. When programmed by the Reactionary, it attacks with a +6 bonus. Otherwise, use the controller's Intelligence (Computers) focus. Instead of the operator's Perception, the PDW inflicts a flat +2 damage due to the drone's sensor suite. The PDW can be swapped out for another item weighing no more than 10 pounds, or an empty cargo space with the same capacity.

Sensors: The drone possesses a sophisticated sensor suite capable of capturing the faintest sounds and images in total darkness. Eliminate penalties for darkness, smoke, and fog, and add +2 to tests to examine the environment through the drone.

Personal Combat Stats: If treated as a combatant instead of a vehicle, the advanced drone has 30 Health, Defense 14, and an Armor Rating of 5I/5B (it does not possess a Toughness trait).

from various contacts related to their political and criminal activities. Fascist sympathizers working on experimental or potent technologies may share their wares. Syndicates might put them in touch with Makers and Tech Brokers capable of providing the items they need. In the end, the Reactionary's true skills lie not in hardware but in code, so they have little ability to maintain what they acquire.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

These adventure hooks will help you get to know the Reactionary.

GETTING EVEN

The Reactionary has so many enemies they've honestly lost count, but they've managed to eliminate or easily escape them all—except one. One activist traced them back as the source of an online scam, alerted the authorities, and forced the Reactionary to abandon everything and start again. Now the Reactionary's ready to take revenge on the person who stood up to them—and who, as it turns out, barely remembers doing anything. To the activist, it was a trivial thing done by email, years ago.

The Reactionary either hires the Player Characters to dig up dirt on the activist, or the heroes intercept rumors of the revenge operation. Depending on their morals, they might help the Reactionary or protect the activist. If the Reactionary's first efforts are stymied, they escalate to sending thugs and high-tech terror attacks.

GETTING ONE OVER

The Reactionary's masterminded a full-fledged fascist movement in the heroes' backyard. They organize violent gangs and use extraordinary technology on terrifying attacks, all while remaining semi-anonymous, known by a handle and invectives delivered by streaming video. The Player Characters notice there's one family the Reactionary's thugs don't touch but closely monitor—and violently keep investigators away from. Someone in this family knows the Reactionary isn't the superior human being the fascists think they are. The Reactionary's sexuality, heritage, or some other factor is supposedly "inferior." If the characters discover this information and convincingly link it to the Reactionary, exposing their true identity, they'll do serious damage to the movement.

A HARD REFORMATION

The Reactionary needs the characters' help after they decide to repent for their awful behavior and beliefs. In the Reactionary's case, regretful social media posts and charity donations aren't going to cut it. They need to make amends to a long list of victims, most of whom don't want anything to do with them. The Reactionary wants the characters to act as a conduit for their good will, and to help devise appropriate compensation. If the Reactionary committed crimes, they're willing to confess and accept prison, but want to do a better job for former victims than the legal system.

Complicating this issue is the Reactionary's former allies, who are enraged at the betrayal and will do anything in their power to stop the Reactionary's attempts at redemption, from laying new offenses on the Reactionary to hiring goons to hurt the "traitor." Finally, the situation poses a question: Does the Reactionary deserve forgiveness? Is the Reactionary confessing to minor trespasses to conceal a greater crime? And what triggered the change, anyway?

GETTING SCREWED

After some failed jobs and expensive political gambits, the Reactionary owes bad people big money. These are more than just loan sharks. They expect some specific services from the Reactionary, or else they'll send an appropriately fearsome operative to "close the account." This forces the Reactionary to get sloppy, engaging in contract mayhem along with other income-generating crime to avoid a hitman's bullet. Characters must not only deal with this sudden crime wave but also use it to find the Reactionary. Finally, since the Reactionary is part of a noxious political conspiracy, it might be a good idea to fend off potential assassins, to expose the wider network.

TECH BROKER

> Nothing is out of reach, and no technology is a myth. Its distribution is merely . . . obscure. I will carry your lantern through the darkest supply chains.

The Tech Broker's clothes represent the latest fashion, just slightly newer than the Tech Broker's current identity. Their precise, urbane speech, the ID they carry, even the color of their eyes conceal the past. The Tech Broker used to be somebody else, disconnected from the secret channels the elite use to acquire extraordinary technology. Somehow, they not only found valuable tech, but tracked it back to its source and made a deal. Now they're the middle tier of gray and black market distribution. You go to the Tech Broker when you need the kind of gear that someone else would get issued as part of a special operations mission, a secret corporate security detail, or to penetrate the network defenses of the most paranoid nation states on behalf of a cybernetic warfare unit.

The Tech Broker redirects their formidable tech to other clients: revolutionaries, criminals, and the enemies of their usual users. They know their clients value discretion, and the usual users of these technologies resent the Broker's trade. Thus, they often think the world is out to get them. They rarely trust people they encounter, and keep most of their relationships transactional, though it isn't always about the money. Favors, leverage, and specific services are often preferred over cash. Only the Tech Broker knows why they might want a client's labor instead of a seven-figure payout. The truth usually has to do with the Broker's sources, and their constantly shifting contingency plans.

The Tech Broker's suave exterior and air of mystery hides a simple desire to both protect their sources from exposure and keep them supplying valuable technology. To protect these interests, the Tech Broker is prepared to use an axe where kind words fail. Without sources to supply extraordinary tech, the Broker has nothing. These sources are willing to risk ruin (and sometimes even death) to discreetly supply the Tech Broker via backdoors in secret labs, underground workshops, and anywhere else extraordinary tech gets researched and built.

THE FORTRESS OF COMMERCE

Due to their confidential connections, Tech Brokers keep records and do business in highly secure facilities. A Tech Broker has at least one office with state-of-the-art security, which may or may not be where they keep additional records. The Tech Broker may have tough bodyguards on hand or

TECH BROKER

Abilities (Focuses)	
3	Accuracy (Longarms, Throwing)
4	Communication (Bargaining, Deception)
2	Constitution (Tolerance)
2	Dexterity (Initiative)
2	Fighting (Short-Hafted)
4	Intelligence (Business, Computers, Evaluation)
2	Perception (Empathy)
2	Strength
1	Willpower

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
12	22	32	47	12	13	13	2I/4B+2	+2	+2

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Sniper Rifle	+5	2D6+4
Tomahawk, Hand to Hand	+4	1D6+3
Tomahawk, Thrown	+5	1D6+3

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Bind Weapon, From the Heart, Precision Marksmanship

Living a Lie: The Tech Broker has a completely false identity. Even their face is different, and the accompanying credentials are effectively authentic. In an emergency, the Tech Broker can walk away from their identity and return to their old lives, or establish a new false identity. If the Tech Broker takes the latter route, it takes a year for them to reestablish themselves.

Mail Slot: The Tech Broker can ignore cover when using a ranged weapon in their office, or in another facility they're highly familiar with, and note this is often used to fire through a security/mail slot.

Source: The Tech Broker has a source for extraordinary technology. This usually applies to one rough category (such as cybernetics, nanotech, or biotech) or application (such as combat or intelligence gathering). The source may be a corporate researcher, government mole, or independent operator, such as a Maker. The Tech Broker can get an item from their source with a successful Communication (Bargaining) test with a TN of 12, +2 for each tech degree the item or enhancement possesses. The Tech Broker can pass on rough instructions about how to install or use the item but isn't an expert. The Tech Broker is assumed to pay for the item from their business' funds. The price they charge to Player Characters is up to the Game Master.

Tech Delivery: The Tech Broker is capable of getting an item into the hands of any client whose location they know within 24 hours or less, through a combination of drones, couriers, and other imaginative means.

Talents: Intrigue (Expert), Observation (Expert), Tactical Awareness (Novice)

Equipment: AR/Night Vision Contact Lenses, Stylish Ballistic Cloth Clothing, Sniper Rifle, Tomahawk (Throwing Axe)

Threat: Moderate

may be willing to unleash their own surprising capacity for personal violence. Tech Broker offices may be well decorated or run down on the inside, but on the outside, they usually look nondescript, if not outright unwelcoming.

Inventory is always an issue, especially when it might include an intelligence-enhancing virus or prosthetic legs capable of kicking holes in armored cars. Security is a mix of stealth and brute force, based on the Tech Broker's resources and personal style. The Tech Broker might deliver via a drone, an armored limousine service, or through someone who looks like a perfectly ordinary courier. The signature difference is Tech Brokers deliver their wares fast to deter theft and meet the needs of their clients.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following adventure hooks introduce the Tech Broker to your players.

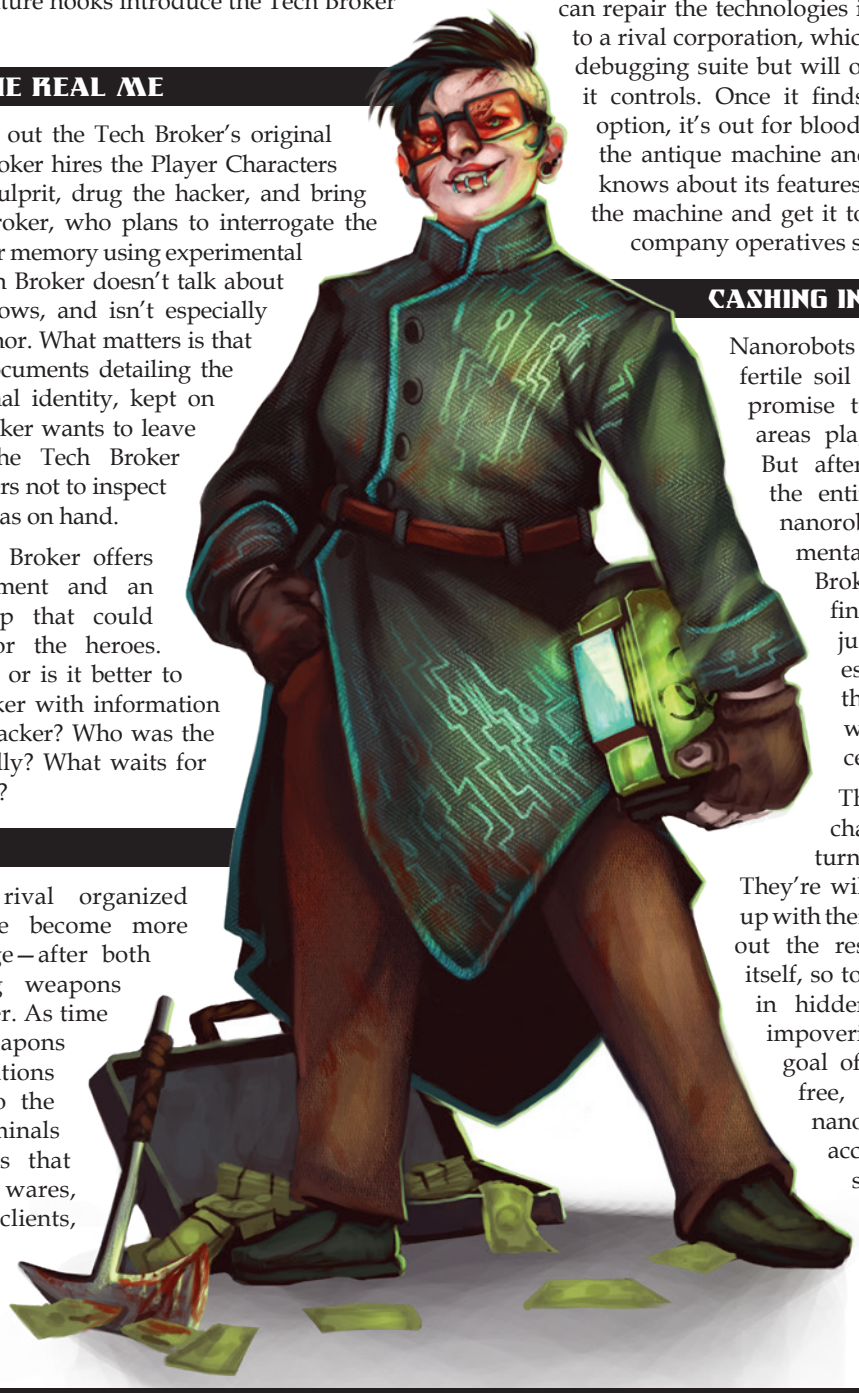
OUT TO GET THE REAL ME

After a hacker finds out the Tech Broker's original identity, the Tech Broker hires the Player Characters to track down the culprit, drug the hacker, and bring them to the Tech Broker, who plans to interrogate the hacker and erase their memory using experimental technology. The Tech Broker doesn't talk about what the hacker knows, and isn't especially concerned about rumor. What matters is that the hacker found documents detailing the Tech Broker's original identity, kept on hand in case the Broker wants to leave their profession. The Tech Broker instructs the characters not to inspect any files the hacker has on hand.

In return, the Tech Broker offers payment in equipment and an ongoing relationship that could be very helpful for the heroes. Is the deal worth it, or is it better to extort the Tech Broker with information acquired from the hacker? Who was the Tech Broker originally? What waits for them in their old life?

FIRE SALE

Clashes between rival organized crime groups have become more deadly—and strange—after both sides attack using weapons from the Tech Broker. As time goes on, these weapons and other innovations find their way into the hands of petty criminals as well. It appears that the Tech Broker's wares, once limited to elite clients, are available to anyone willing to pay a reduced price. When characters trace things back to the Tech Broker, it looks like they've abandoned their office. But as the streets burn under high-tech mayhem, it's only a matter of time until someone unleashes a device that inflicts considerable collateral damage. The characters not only have to deal with the dangers of technology run amok but also find out why the Tech Broker went into hiding, and whether they possess countermeasures to their lethal wares.



SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

The Tech Broker needs an old computer. The machine from the 1980s has a fraction of the computing power of a modern watch or cardiovascular implant, but it's capable of debugging multiple forms of computer code, including legacy code essential to thousands of new devices.

This computer is the only way the Tech Broker's source can repair the technologies it controls without going to a rival corporation, which has designed a custom debugging suite but will only use it on technology it controls. Once it finds out about the archaic option, it's out for blood, sending a team to steal the antique machine and eliminate anyone who knows about its features. Can the characters find the machine and get it to the Tech Broker before company operatives stop them?

CASHING IN FAVORS

Nanorobots capable of maintaining fertile soil better than earthworms promise to boost crop yields in areas plagued by soil depletion. But after promising field tests, the entire research team, their nanorobots, and their documentation vanished. The Tech Broker hires the heroes to find the team, but they're just one of dozens of interested parties. The group that finds the technology will control the next century of agriculture.

This is the Tech Broker's chance to go legit and turn into a corporate player. They're willing to bring the heroes up with them. Unfortunately, it turns out the research team kidnapped itself, so to speak. They're working in hidden labs across multiple impoverished nations, with the goal of sharing the results for free, even manufacturing nanorobots to fertilize the soil according to open source standards. Should the characters leave them alone, or follow the Tech Broker to new wealth by stealing their research?

APPENDIX I: QUICK NPCS

Within these pages you can find a very wide variety of Non-Player Characters to populate your story, but there are times when you have an idea and none of the characters presented here *quite* fits it, and you don't want to create a character from scratch.

This appendix helps you create new Non-Player Characters by choosing options based on your ideas, your campaign's mode, and other considerations. These rules are optional, and weren't used to create the entries in previous chapters. You may, however, apply these rules to those entries as you see fit.

FLESHING OUT A CHARACTER

Creating a new Non-Player Character quickly and effortlessly follows a simple process: You select a base block of game statistics (a "stat block") and add templates that modify it, until you end with a working collection of game statistics.

Throughout this process, keep in mind the kind of character you wish to introduce to your game. The process of choosing templates can spark new ideas and suggest directions the character can take, but in the end it's all about the NPC's concept and story role. You can always adjust the final stat block to suit these needs.

NON-COMBATANTS AND BIT PLAYERS

As noted in **Chapter 9** of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*, not all NPCs require full stat blocks, and some fulfill lesser roles which make them less capable for purely dramatic reasons. Adjust the rules for such characters as follows:

- **Non-Combatants:** Non-combatants have 0 in every ability, no modifiers to attack roles, 0 Toughness, 10 Defense, and 10 Health, regardless of game mode. Use the rules in this section solely for story functions, background, and personality, applying as many or as few steps as you like. Non-combatants may automatically miss or be automatically hit (and immediately knocked out of combat) whenever the GM requires.
- **Utility NPCs:** These are the equivalent of "other NPCs," as noted in the *Modern AGE* core rules for adversaries. Choose the NPC's Role, Mode, and Threat Level, but only use their abilities and focuses; ignore everything else. In combat, they flee or fall at the GM's discretion, or can be given combat traits when necessary.
- **Extras and Minor Characters:** You may designate some NPCs as extras or minor characters, as detailed in the **Introduction** of this book. Apply those rules.

You can always promote one of these characters to status as a fully capable NPC, or demote an NPC to "lesser" status when the story's spotlight moves on.

THE CONCEPT

What role will the NPC play in the story? This question is what separates an NPC from a PC, because players create their characters with a very open expectation of what their character will do and how they'll evolve, while Non-Player Characters exist to fulfill a story function, as mentors, subordinates, allies, enemies, local color, and more. This directs you to consider a number of factors:

GENRE

Your campaign's genre closes some conceptual doors while opening others. A cyborg won't fit many urban fantasy stories, while an arcanist would be a little out of place in a straight detective story.

WORLD

The fictional world your campaign takes place in modifies genre conventions—you might be running a game where fantasy magic and cyborgs exist side by side, as they do in *Threefold*—but not to the point where an NPC would break the tone you want to set. For example, while standup comedians certainly exist in a campaign set in a version of our world beset by cosmic horror, your PCs won't meet one unless they're connected to a cult of the Old Ones or some other relevant element. (On the other hand, in grim campaigns, it's often a good idea to lighten the mood from time to time, so you never know!)

ROLE

What do they do in the story? That's what it comes down to. Are they deadly foes? Steadfast allies? Annoying dependents? Smarmy foils? The answer directly affects the game statistics they should have, while the details of their story backgrounds depend on the genre and world.

SCOPE

A Non-Player Character's scope is how long they are supposed to be part of the story. Unlike Player Characters, most NPCs come with an expiration date. They are usually not meant to last unless you promote them to a recurring supporting cast, as an ally or long-term antagonist. The smaller the scope, the less you need to worry about the NPC's personal details, such as their personal connections, upbringing, career, personal motives, and so on. If an NPC has a larger role than expected, you can always fill in these blanks later.

BACKGROUND AND PROFESSION

Non-Player Characters have social classes, backgrounds, and professions, but these are purely social distinctions, so you don't use the rules for them to generate their statistics. If desired, you can look at backgrounds and professions to help guide the talents and focuses you pick, but don't feel constrained by the options for Player Characters. Note that few Non-Player Characters have the equivalent of a drive. They don't have personalities that compel them to get involved in dramatic situations. They simply want to do whatever fits their role.

COMBAT

Is the NPC meant to enter combat? If not, you don't need to worry about combat-related details like Health, weapons and attacks, and combat-related talents. If this character enters combat, they'll either cower and hide, run away, or do something out of bravery or confusion that gets them killed or taken out of the fight.

THE CHECKLIST

When you have a defined idea, start creating your NPC by following these steps:

1. **Choose Role and Mode:** Pick a base template appropriate for the NPC's role: Action, Exploration, or Social, then modify the listed Health according to the campaign's mode: Gritty, Pulpy, or Cinematic.
2. **Choose Story Function:** Add traits based on what role the NPC plays in your story.
3. **Choose Threat Level:** Modify the base template according to how dangerous the NPC is supposed to be for the character's current level. Also modify the template if the NPC is supposed to be better compared to their peers.
4. **Add Special Qualities (optional):** Add talents and their degrees, decide if the NPC is a psychic or arcanist, or add some other quality, if appropriate.
5. **Add Equipment:** Equip the NPC according to their role and function.
6. **Add Quirks (optional):** Pick or randomly determine a minor character trait to add distinctiveness, if desired.
7. **Add Hooks (optional):** An NPC may know or have leads that send characters into new directions. Define these if it would be useful.

ACTION NON-PLAYER CHARACTER

Abilities (Focuses)

Accuracy 2, Communication 0, Constitution 2, Dexterity 1, Fighting 2, Intelligence 0, Perception 1, Strength 2, Willpower 0

Speed	Health	Defense	AR + Toughness
11	15	11	2

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Vicious Blow, one Melee/Firearms/Grappling stunt; Speed Demon, one Exploration stunt

Special Ability: These are decided later in the NPC creation process. See **Special Qualities**, later in this appendix.

Talents: One degree in one combat style talent (Novice)

Equipment: Assign appropriate equipment, see the Equipment section later in this appendix.

Focuses: Choose three Accuracy, Dexterity, Fighting, or Strength focuses, and one Constitution focus.

Threat: Minor

ROLE

Start with the general role the NPC will have in your story, as an Action, Exploration, or Social character. An Action NPC may be an enemy combatant or a helpful martial arts trainer who helps characters in a scuffle. An Exploration NPC might be an elusive serial killer or a weaselly informant. A Social NPC can be the criminal mastermind who sends hitmen after the PCs, or a socialite who can introduce characters to key figures in government and business.

Choose the role based on the concept behind the NPC, and start with the corresponding base template.

- **Action NPC:** A character who excels at physical challenges, including combat.

SOCIAL NON-PLAYER CHARACTER

Abilities (Focuses)

Accuracy 0, Communication 3, Constitution 1, Dexterity 0, Fighting 0, Intelligence 2, Perception 2, Strength 0, Willpower 2

Speed	Health	Defense	AR + Toughness
10	10	10	1

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: With a Flourish, one Investigation stunt; Making an Entrance, one Membership and Reputation stunt

Special Ability 1: These are decided later in the NPC creation process. See **Special Qualities,** later in this appendix.

Talents: One degree in Intrigue or Oratory

Equipment: Assign appropriate equipment; see the Equipment section later in this appendix.

Focuses: Chose two Communication focuses, and two Intelligence or Perception focuses.

Threat: Minor

EXPLORATION NON-PLAYER CHARACTER

Abilities (Focuses)

Accuracy 2, Communication 1, Constitution 0, Dexterity 1, Fighting 0, Intelligence 2, Perception 2, Strength 0, Willpower 2

Speed	Health	Defense	AR + Toughness
11	10	11	0

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Skirmish, one Firearms stunt; When a Plan Comes Together, one Infiltration or Investigation stunt

Special Ability: These are decided later in the NPC creation process. See **Special Qualities,** later in this appendix.

Talents: One degree in Expertise or Observation

Equipment: Assign appropriate equipment; see the Equipment section later in this appendix.

Focuses: Choose two Intelligence focuses, and two Dexterity or Perception focuses

Threat: Minor

- **Exploration NPC:** A character who uses skills and ingenuity to get out of trouble, or get others into trouble.
- **Social Non-Player Character:** This character can always be found connecting with people, asking, understanding, and sometimes manipulating those around them.

Health & Campaign Mode

By default, Health scores in the base templates above fit minor threat level NPCs in Gritty mode. Make the following adjustments for other modes:

Pulpy: If you are running a Pulpy campaign, you may increase the character's Health by double the Character's Constitution or +2, whichever is higher.

Cinematic: If you are running a Cinematic campaign, you may add the Health bonus for Pulpy characters, along with an additional +5.

These additions are optional. In some cases, you'll want NPCs to keep lower Health totals even in Pulpy or Cinematic games. This is common for enemies you'd like characters to defeat quickly (though not as quickly as extras) or who are vulnerable to physical threats.

Talented or Not?

Different steps in the NPC creation process list talents and talent degrees you can add to an NPC, but an NPC may have fewer talents or none at all, to further streamline the process or otherwise fit your goals. Generally speaking, talents related to social interaction, knowledge, and making or repairing things can be handled abstractly. They indicate what the NPC can do, but you don't need to roll dice for them as you would for a PC. The GM decides what they can do, and how successful they are.

Story Function Group

3D6	Table
3-6	Column 1
7-10	Column 2
11-14	Column 3
15-18	Column 4

Story Functions

1D6	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
1	Assistant	Guide	Plot Device	Romantic Rival
2	Best Friend	Informant	Prey	Sidekick
3	Bureaucrat	Lieutenant	Pursuer	Significant Other
4	Employer	Mentor	Relative	Supplier
5	Fence	Nemesis	Rival	Support
6	Grunt	Overlord/ Mastermind	Romantic Interest	Ward

Story Function

Player Characters have a very clear function in the story: They are the protagonists. NPCs have a variety of different functions intended to drive the story. Choose a story function for your NPC, randomly generate them using the tables provided (roll first on the **Story Function Group** table, then on the **Story Functions** table), or invent a story function using the guidelines in this section.

As your creations, NPCs fulfill their functions for a single scene, a session or two, or as long-term as recurring characters. If they stick around long enough, their functions may change as they grow alongside the protagonists, but they do not gain the new function's traits; these templates are meant to describe an NPC's function when they first enter the story.

Function Descriptions

Story function works like backgrounds or professions do for player characters. Once you assign a function to the NPC, modify their abilities, focuses, and talents as listed. If the NPC changes over time, they keep these traits, but may learn others to best interact with the protagonists in their new function.

Feel free to create your own functions; a function increases an ability by the same amount that it decreases another up to a +2/-2, offers a choice to add one of two focuses, and gives you the option to add a degree in one of two talents.

If the NPC already has a focus or talent, add the remaining option. If the NPC already has all the listed focuses and talents, add an additional focus of your choice and a degree to one of the talents. You may also increase an existing focus' bonus to +3, though this is usually only done when you plan to make the NPC significant enough to be a Major or greater threat.

Assistant

This character is employed by the PCs or is a subordinate in an allied organization.

Abilities: Intelligence +2, Strength -2
Focuses: Intelligence (Business) or Intelligence (Homemaking)
Talents: Knowledge or Theory and Practice

Best Friend

While this character can be friendly to all Player Characters, they have a much closer relationship with one of them. Like the adage says, a friend helps you move, but a best friend helps you move bodies.

Abilities: Communication +2, Willpower -2
Focuses: Intelligence (Medicine) or Strength (Might)
Talents: Contacts or Party Animal

Bureaucrat

This character is part of the organization the PCs interact with. They may mire the protagonists in paperwork or pepper

them with uncomfortable questions, or help them cut through red tape.

Abilities: Perception -1, Willpower +1
Focuses: Communication (Deception) or any one knowledge focus
Talents: Intrigue or Observation

Employer

This character is the protagonists' employer or manager, or otherwise has authority over them.

Abilities: Communication -2, Perception +2
Focuses: Communication (Leadership) or Strength (Intimidation)
Talents: Affluent or Inspire

Fence

This character receives ill-gotten goods from the PCs and turns it into money. They may have limited access to information or other goods in trade or for cold, hard cash. Fences are useful, but not necessarily trustworthy.

Abilities: Strength -2, Willpower +2
Focuses: Any one Intelligence focus related to their business or Perception (Empathy)
Talents: Affluent or Contacts

Grunt

This character is a mercenary, thug, or low-level officer in a group that uses violence to achieve its aims or defend its interests. In Cinematic games, most grunts are extras, but even in the most action-oriented over-the-top stories, a few may be tougher to beat. In Gritty and Pulpy games, grunts are likely to be just as formidable as PCs with equivalent experience, and might be even more dangerous.

Abilities: Accuracy or Fighting +2, Willpower -2
Focuses: Any one Accuracy focus or any one Fighting focus
Talents: Any one style talent

Guide

This character takes protagonists from point A to point B. They may by a loquacious tourist guide who knows every corner of the city, or a grizzled ranger with years of experience in the wild. It all depends on who they are and the areas they know.

Story Function and Relationships

NPCs often fill a PC's Relationship slots based on their story function. Player Characters can start out with Relationships that define an NPC's function, guiding how you design them. Later on, while players always choose how to assign Relationship slots, the GM can suggest NPCs who've proven themselves important. The GM and player can use the story function to define the Relationship, though as manifestations of personal feelings, this isn't required. For instance, a PC might grow to resent a helpful NPC, and develop a negative Relationship based on that.

Abilities: Communication -1, Intelligence +1
Focuses: Intelligence (Cartography) or Intelligence (Navigation)
Talents: Knowledge or Scouting

INFORMANT

The name of this character's game is information. They know people and hear things, and will gladly share them with the PCs for the right price. Informants are often punished for spilling secrets, and might be persuaded to share information about the protagonists with their enemies, too.

Abilities: Communication +2, Fighting -2
Focuses: Communication (Persuasion) or Intelligence (Current Affairs)
Talents: Contacts or Living on the Fringe

LIEUTENANT

This character is a trusted member of an enemy organization or works for an individual foe of the Player Characters. The lieutenant commands a number of grunts, guiding their brute efforts with effective strategies.

Abilities: Communication +1, Dexterity -1
Focuses: Communication (Leadership) or Intelligence (Tactics)
Talents: Command or Tactical Awareness

MENTOR

This character is a teacher or patron who provides Player Characters with knowledge or favors from a position of authority. Responsible mentors limit their meddling, and while most will be happy to help their former or current pupils, they'll usually demand some sort of payment for outrageous favors.

Abilities: Increase an ability related to the mentor's area of expertise (such as Fighting for a martial arts expert, or Intelligence for a professor) to that of the PC with the highest rating +1.
Focuses: Any one which the NPC helped the characters learn
Talents: Expertise, Knowledge, or any talent the mentor taught

NEMESIS

This NPC despises the protagonists and is driven to ruin their lives through Machiavellian schemes. This may be due to romantic or professional rivalries, political differences, or some other motive which the nemesis cannot put aside barring some truly significant development.

Abilities: Intelligence +2, Willpower -2
Focuses: Any one Accuracy focus or Intelligence (Research)
Talents: Command or Intrigue

OVERLORD/MASTERMIND

This character uses their considerable intelligence to further an agenda that clashes with the PCs' interests. The NPC eschews physical conflict, preferring to advance their goals through complex plots and false fronts.

Abilities: Fighting -2, Intelligence +2
Focuses: Communication (Deception) or Intelligence (Business)
Talents: Affluent or Intrigue

PLOT DEVICE

This is the kidnapped victim, scientist in hiding, traveling psychic, or other character whose whereabouts and knowledge are the key to the story. These NPCs usually have some knowledge, unique ability, or special social position which makes them essential.

Abilities: No change
Focuses: Any one Intelligence focus
Talents: Knowledge, any one Arcana or Psychic talent, or none

PREY

The character is on the run from the protagonists or others. They've escaped custody, dropped off the grid, or otherwise obscured their traces. Interviewing or apprehending them may be an important goal, or Player Characters might have to help them find a new place to hide after a hideout gets compromised.

Abilities: Agility +2, Constitution -2
Focuses: Agility (Stealth) or Perception (Seeing)
Talents: Living on the Fringe or Misdirection

PURSUER

This character wants to capture one or more protagonists. They might have legal authority, might belong to a clandestine organization, or might hunt Player Characters out of a personal obsession. Bounty hunters, police detectives, and hitmen all qualify as pursuers.

Abilities: Agility -2, Perception +2
Focuses: Communication (Investigation) or Perception (Tracking)
Talents: Observant or Tactical Awareness

RELATIVE

This character is a family member of one or more of the protagonists. Their presence highlights relationships and personal histories, providing a deeply personal source of support or strife. A relative is a potential hostage or a tragic enemy.

Abilities: Perception +1, Willpower -1
Focuses: Any one Intelligence focus
Talents: Contacts or Expertise

RIVAL

This character wants to demonstrate their superiority to one or more protagonists. Rivals are not always enemies, but always want to outdo anyone they see as a competitor. A rivalry might be a vague social thing, or could be focused on a specific profession or other activity.

Abilities: Communication +2 for a general rivalry, or Increase the ability most related to the rivalry (such as Intelligence for an academic rivalry) to the highest among the PCs. Apply -2 to Willpower in all cases.
Focuses: Those related to the rivalry, or Persuasion for a general rivalry
Talents: Intrigue for a general rivalry, or increase a talent related to the rivalry to as many degrees as the highest among the PCs.

Romantic Interest

The character feels an attraction for one or more of the Player Characters. The NPC might not be fully aware of their feelings, and may even initially dislike protagonists they grow to desire. Some of these NPCs are romantics at heart, while others want a relationship out of pure physical attraction or as a means to an end.

Abilities: Communication +1, Willpower -1
Focuses: Communication (Seduction) or Perception (Empathy)
Talents: Attractive or Observation

Romantic Rival

This character is romantically interested in the same person as one of the protagonists, and won't tolerate anyone they believe has the same intentions. The romantic rival is often an opponent in social encounters, as they look for any way to increase their own attractiveness while diminishing that of their rival.

Abilities: Communication +2, Willpower -2
Focuses: Communication (Deception) or Communication (Persuasion)
Talents: Attractive or Intrigue

Sidekick

This character wants to help the protagonists but often has more enthusiasm than ability. Nonetheless, a sidekick can cover gaps in the protagonists' skill set, or help if the group is shorthanded for a particular task.

Abilities: +2 to the lowest ability among the Player Characters, -2 to the highest ability among the Player Characters
Focuses: Any one Accuracy or Fighting focus or any one Communication or Intelligence focus
Talents: Any one the characters don't have, which might come in handy

Significant Other

This character is an established romantic partner for one (and sometimes more than one) of the PCs. Significant others and PCs will share Relationships if the connection is genuine. Significant others may be targeted by the protagonists' enemies, or the NPC's enemies may attack loved PCs.

Abilities: Perception +1, Willpower -1
Focuses: Perception (Empathy)
Talents: Emergency Care or Protect

Supplier

This character is the go-to source when the protagonists need equipment. The supplier may be a legitimate source that works in the same organization as the characters, a black market operator, or simply a very resourceful vendor. They have a deeper knowledge of their wares than the Fence NPC, and belong to a network of experts they can refer characters to.

Abilities: Accuracy -2, Intelligence +2
Focuses: Intelligence talent related to their wares or Intelligence (Business)
Talents: Affluent or Contacts

Support

This character is there for the protagonists when they need a hand to get them out of trouble. They are a source of favors and services, but expect to be repaid in some way. A support NPC is usually part of a protagonist's contacts.

Abilities: Intelligence +2, Fighting -2
Focuses: Intelligence (Medicine) or any one Intelligence manufacturing focus
Talents: Emergency Care, Hacking, or Maker (choose one)

Ward

The ward is usually a minor, but can be anyone who is believed to be helpless in most situations, whether they are or not. A protagonist or NPC has a responsibility to take care of the ward as a legal obligation or social duty. Wards tend to test these duties by getting into trouble.

Abilities: Communication +1, Strength -1
Focuses: Communication (Bargaining) or Dexterity (Acrobatics)
Talents: None

THREAT LEVEL

By default, the numbers in the base template correspond to a Minor threat level. Choose a threat level according to the average level of the player characters as per **Chapter 9: Adversaries** in the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*, and apply the corresponding template in this section. If the NPC is not meant to represent a challenge or a more potent ally, choose a lower threat level (usually one or two levels lower). Once you choose a threat level, add just one of these templates onto the base NPC.

You can distribute the increases to abilities freely. The number in parentheses is the maximum recommended score for any single ability. Note that unlike PCs, NPCs don't have to use multiple advancements to gain abilities above five.

Likewise, you can add talent degrees granted by each threat level template to existing or new talents, up to the Master degree. If you're using rules from the *Modern AGE Companion* for talents beyond the Master degree, you may even advance an NPC to those higher degrees, though you should do so sparingly.

MODERATE

Trait	Increases
Abilities	+5 (6)
Focuses	Add 3
Talents	+3 degrees

Trait	Pulpy	Cinematic
Health	+(Constitution × 3)*	As Pulpy, +5
Defense/Toughness	+1/+0 or +0/+1	+1/+1

* Minimum +3.

MAJOR

Trait	Increases
Abilities	+10 (8)
Focuses	Add 6*
Talents	+6 degrees

Trait	Pulpy	Cinematic
Health	+(Constitution × 8)**	As Pulpy, +25
Defense/Toughness	+1/+1	+2/+2

* Instead of adding a new focus, you can use one increase so that an existing focus provides a +3 bonus, instead of +2. ** Minimum +8

DIRE

Trait	Increases
Abilities	+15 (10)
Focuses	Add 8*
Talents	+9 degrees

Trait	Pulpy	Cinematic
Health	+(Constitution × 12)**	As Pulpy, +25/40***
Defense/Toughness	+2/+1 or +1/+2	+3/+3

* Instead of adding a new focus, you can use one increase so that an existing focus provides a +3 bonus, instead of +2. ** Minimum +12 *** The number after the slash applies to NPCs with non-human capabilities.

LEGENDARY

Trait	Increases
Abilities	+20 (12)
Focuses	Add 13*
Talents	+12 degrees

Trait	Pulpy	Cinematic
Health	+(Constitution × 16)**	As Pulpy, +25/55***
Defense/Toughness	+2/+2	+4/+4

* Instead of adding a new focus, you can use one increase so that an existing focus provides a +3 bonus, instead of +2. ** Minimum +16 *** The number after the slash applies to NPCs with non-human capabilities.

HEALTH BY THREAT LEVEL

Health increases depend on game mode, and are added to the base Health you set for the character as a minor threat.

Gritty: Gritty characters do not gain more Health.

Pulpy: Pulpy characters gain the listed multiplier of their Constitution, with a minimum equal to the multiplier x 1.

Cinematic: Cinematic characters add the listed bonus on top of the Constitution-based Pulpy bonus for a final total. Unless the NPC is inhumanly resistant to damage, this bonus tops out at +25 (before the +5 for the base NPC as a minor threat). This corresponds to how a Cinematic PC stops gaining the 1d6 roll for bonus Health after 10th level.

DEFENSE & TOUGHNESS BY THREAT LEVEL

Game mode also determines adjustments to Defense or Toughness. Gritty characters' scores do not increase, while Pulpy and Cinematic characters add bonuses as noted with each threat level.

BOOSTING NPCS

You may also use the rules for beefing up adversaries found in the **Introduction** of this book and in **Chapter 9** of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook* to adjust an NPC within its threat level, or bring it to a higher threat level. In these rules, this is referred to boosting an NPC's power, and the Elite, Heroic, and Epic options for doing so are known as boost templates.

SPECIAL QUALITIES

Special qualities encompass special training, extraordinary powers, and other miscellaneous characteristics. Some special qualities require supernatural ability or futuristic technology, while others reflect intense practice or social advantages. Special qualities also serve as a shorthand for abilities which work better as talents for PCs. For example, an NPC may have the ability to summon subordinates listed as a special quality, while for a PC, this would be the result of contacts, Relationships, and other social circumstances the character built over time.

TALENTS

The easiest special qualities to add are talents; you get a number of degrees depending on threat level and boost template. Choose the talents that best define the NPC's role and concept. NPCs do not require the usual ability or focus prerequisites for talents, though they must usually take degrees in order. If you want an NPC to have an ability from a high degree in a talent without having the previous degrees, this is allowed, but should be noted as a separate special quality. Ultimately, the arrangement should make sense to the GM, and help the NPC fulfill its role in the game, regardless of what the NPC would "realistically" know.

FAVORED STUNTS

You can add as many favored stunts as you want, as they illustrate the NPC's preferred methods and training, and don't provide a mechanical advantage. Try to limit yourself to two or three favored stunts in addition to the ones listed in the base templates.

PREARRANGED STUNTS

One way to reduce the effort involved in determining NPC stunts is to simply decide that every other successful roll generates 3 SP. This will result in slightly fewer SP on a given roll compared to ordinary SP generation, but allows you to pre-plan stunt use. You may also reduce the SP gained by one roll to increase it on the next, for results like 2 SP/4 SP, or 1 SP/5 SP, to add variation. Knowing this ahead of time, you can note the stunts the NPC will use when they gain those SP on an action they're likely to perform during the encounter.

EXTRAORDINARY POWERS

You may devote talent slots to Psychic and Arcana talents. Choose the spells or effects related to the Arcana or Psychic talents and degrees, adding the appropriate power focus if the NPC has any of these talents at the Expert degree. You don't need to calculate an NPC's power points unless the character is a recurring ally or major enemy whose power needs to be tracked across time. Instead, the NPC can either use their powers as often as the GM likes, or the GM can use the rules in **Using NPC Powers**.

Because NPCs the Player Characters fight are not meant to use their powers beyond the encounter in which they exchange blows with the protagonists, a full pool of power points would mean the NPC can go all out, unlike players' arcanists or psychics, who must ration their pool in case they have to use their powers in a future encounter.

ACTIVATION POINTS

To represent this limited use, most NPCs use their powers differently. Instead of power points, you may decide that NPCs use *activation points* (AP) instead. The NPC's threat level (and boost template, if any) determines how many activation points they receive. Instead of spending the listed power point cost, NPCs spend 1 AP to use a Novice power (spell or psychic effect), 2 AP to use an Expert power, and 3 AP to use a Master-degree power.

LIMITED POWER POINTS

Threat Level	At-Will Powers	Activation Points
Minor	None	4
Moderate	1 (Novice)	6
Major	1 (Novice)	8
Dire	2 (Novice)	9
Legendary	2 (Novice)	10
Boost Template		
Elite	-	+1
Heroic	+1 (Novice)*	+2
Epic	+1 (Novice)*	+4

* If the NPC would gain the ability to use 3 Novice powers at will, 1 Novice and 1 Intermediate power can be selected instead.

The NPC must still roll a test to use the power, just like a PC, unless the GM uses the **Automatic Powers** option. If the NPC fails, they spend the necessary activation points and use the required action, but the power doesn't work.

AT-WILL POWERS

Furthermore, an NPC of sufficient power may use a certain number of powers at will, paying 0 AP. The NPC must still roll to use the power as a PC would, but loses nothing for failure. At-will powers reflect that fact that for the NPC, the cost of using these powers is trivial and not worth tracking during the encounter.

AUTOMATIC POWERS

Instead of making a test to use a power, you can rule it automatically successful of the difference between the NPC's bonus is 5 or fewer points less than the TN to use the power. You may also automatically succeed at using a power by spending 1 additional activation point on either an at-will power or one that would normally cost activation points.

NEW SPECIAL QUALITIES

The following special qualities are appropriate for a variety of genres in a *Modern AGE* campaign.

ALERT

Whether by paranoia, psychic awareness, or simple superlative presence of mind, the character can always react. If surprised, the character can still take a major action during the first round of combat.

ARCANA SINK

An arcanist must spend 2 additional power points to affect this character with a spell. Alternatively, the arcanist can spend 3 SP to negate this quality for each attempt to use a spell on this character.

ARTIFICIAL ORGANISM

The character is an artificial being, made rather than born, and its physiology isn't biological but the product of unusual

EXISTING SPECIAL QUALITIES

The *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook* and this book contain ready-made NPCs and creatures from which you can copy special qualities that you consider adequate. You may also refer to other AGE books if their creatures and powers fit your campaign. The special qualities found in the *Fantasy AGE Bestiary* are geared toward epic fantasy stories, but they can easily represent the results of strange technology or supernatural power.

technology. The character doesn't need to breathe, eat, or sleep. To recover Health lost to damage, the character must undergo repairs, which is the same as the First Aid action or undergoing extended medical attention, except that, instead of Intelligence (Medicine), the person helping the character recover rolls Intelligence (Electronics), Intelligence (Engineering), or Intelligence (Tinkering), depending on the character's base technology.

BRUTE

The character is big and bulky. The Knock Prone and Skirmish stunts, as well as all Grappling stunts, require 1 more SP than normal to work on this character.

CHILD

This character is small and appears childlike. They gain +2 Defense due to their size, but lose 2 Strength. They cannot gain more than 4 SP in any given roll. However, most people are loath to act violently toward a child. The GM may ask characters to succeed at a Willpower (Self-Discipline) test, with a TN depending on the situation, to attempt to injure the child. Witnesses will most likely call for help or intervene if the NPC appears to be in danger.

COMBAT ACROBAT

The character can flip and tumble as easily as they can walk. The character can use the Activate action to tumble out of the way of a melee or thrown weapon attack. When struck after using this action, the character can make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) test with a TN equal to the successful attack roll. If successful, the character flips 2 yards away at the last moment. If the character is blocked from making this lateral movement, they can't use this ability.

COOPERATION

The character is a team player: a member of a military unit, a tight-knit group of friends, or simply good at helping others. In combat, the NPC may use a minor action to give an ally +2 to their next test, as long as the GM can describe a way the NPC might help the ally. In advanced tests where multiple characters collaborate or cooperate, the NPC may provide this benefit to one other participant's roll, but suffers a -1 penalty to their own roll.

DRUGGED HAZE

The character acts under the effects of a powerful drug that dulls their pain and increases their aggression, but impedes their judgment. The character gains a +2 bonus to Strength, Fighting, and their Toughness rating, but suffers a -2 penalty to Intelligence, Perception, and Willpower tests. At the beginning of their turn, the character must succeed at a TN 13 Perception (Empathy) test to distinguish friend from foe.

ELUSIVE

When this character fights in close combat, they expertly weave between people and obstacles, using them as protection. If the NPC uses an action to move, their Defense increases by +1. In an area filled with people or debris, this bonus increases to +2 or +3.

EXPERT SNEAK

The character can hide anywhere. The character gains a +2 bonus to any Dexterity (Stealth) checks to hide or avoid being noticed.

HARD HITTER

Due to training or natural ability, the character inflicts +1d6 damage with Fighting (Brawling) attacks.

HIT THE DECK

This character always takes half damage (rounded up, before applying Toughness and armor) from attacks that target an area or multiple targets in the same attack.

Gritty/Pulpy: Using this quality forces the character to drop prone or move behind cover, and uses up their next minor action.

KEEN SENSES

The character's senses are honed to perfection. Choose two Perception focuses other than Empathy, Searching, and Tracking. Double the amount of SP gained when using the chosen focuses.

LIGHT-FOOTED

This character is exceptionally fast. They gain +5 to Speed.

LOW PROFILE

The character habitually erases traces of their presence in the physical, bureaucratic, and online realms, or for some reason attempts to find them encounter unusual obstacles. Add +2 to the TN of tests to discover their identity, personal history, or location.

MASTERFUL RIPOSTE

This character is an expert in defense with a hand-to-hand weapon. If a melee attack misses this character, the attacker suffers damage equal to their own Stunt Die in the failed attack roll.

MUTATION

Science, magic, a leap in evolution, or an unusual ancestry gives the character special abilities unattainable by ordinary humans. Choose one mutation for each threat level of the

character, or take the same mutation twice (for two threat level "slots") to give it increased power. All mutations leave visible evidence such as glowing eyes, wings, claws, or scales, unless the character takes a mutation allowing them to hide the signs. The following mutations represent a starting point, as the GM can invent others.

- The character can breathe normally underwater and swim at their ground Speed. If taken twice, the character can swim at Fast Velocity, with a Velocity modifier equal to their Dexterity, and the character never suffers a penalty for hand-to-hand attacks or moving underwater.
- The character gains +5 Health and 2I/0B armor from their hardened skin. If taken twice, this increases to +10 Health and 3I/2B armor.
- The character has claws or another natural (or implanted) weapon. These deal 1d6+3 impact wound damage, modified by Strength, as per other close combat attacks. The character also gains the Fighting (Claws or other natural weapon) focus. If taken twice, the character either gains another natural weapon, which inflicts 1d6 + 1 impact wound damage and may be used to attack with a minor action, or increases the damage inflicted by the first natural weapon to 2d6 +1.
- The character has wings or another physiological factor that allows them to fly at their ground Speed. Unless knocked unconscious, the character takes half damage from falls. If taken twice, the character can fly at Fast Velocity, with a Velocity modifier equal to their Dexterity.

The character can summon or dismiss all their mutations as an Activate action. When dismissed, the mutations are invisible but cannot be used. If taken twice, the character can selectively summon or dismiss one or more of their mutations without using an action, so that they are only obvious when used.

Odor

The character has a repulsive smell. Any adjacent character must succeed at a TN 11 Constitution (Tolerance) test when ending their turn next to the malodorous character, or suffer a -2 to all attack rolls and Perception tests until they spend an entire turn at least five yards away from the NPC.

One Step Ahead

This character anticipates others' moves. Once per turn, when any other character spends SP to affect this NPC, the NPC may make an Intelligence (Tactics) test at a TN equal to the roll that generated the SP being used against them. This does not use up an action. If they succeed, the NPC reduces their opponent's SP by the Stunt Die result.

Psychic Blank

This character is a null presence to psychic effects. Add +2 to the TN of any psychic effect targeting the character or their immediate surroundings.

Rally

As a major action, this character can rally their friends with a TN 11 Communication (Leadership) test. On a success, a number of allies equal to the NPC's Stunt Die gains +1 SP on one successful test of their choice during their next turn. Allies need not score doubles to use this bonus SP, and it stacks with any others gained. If the rally action gains SP through doubles or other means, the NPC can use them all personally or grant +2 SP, instead of +1, to allies.

Unbreakable

This character refuses to stay down. Whenever this character is reduced to 0 health, roll a TN 11 Constitution (Stamina) test. If successful, they recover Health equal to the result of the Stunt Die × (Gritty 2/Pulpy 3/Cinematic 5).

Quirks	
Die Rolls	Quirk
1/1	Has a small item they fiddle with constantly
1/2	Sniffs a lot, even if healthy
1/3	Speaks very formally and dislikes colloquial speech
1/4	Always wears the same hat or cap
1/5	Constantly whistles or hums
1/6	Phrases every other sentence as a question
2/1	Their hands constantly move
2/2	Constantly uses drawings and emojis in any text communication, even on paper
2/3	Interrupts conversations with trivial knowledge, which is only occasionally useful
2/4	Hates some form of food or drink, and cannot even stand its smell
2/5	Hates mornings, and avoids doing anything before noon.
2/6	Obsessive fan of a current movie, TV show, band, or cultural trend
3/1	Looks disheveled despite any effort at grooming
3/2	Mispronounces words
3/3	Can guess something trivial about a person (age, zodiac sign, clothing size, etc.)
3/4	Can't figure out social media etiquette, or some other subset of etiquette, though understands other social standards just fine
3/5	Is always doodling
3/6	Wears mismatched socks (or another notable item) for luck
4/1	Skilled in a very narrow, minor artistic field—can cartoon but not paint, or play the banjo but no other instrument, etc.
4/2	Arranges everything around them in straight lines
4/3	Always arrives 10 minutes early
4/4	Generous to beggars and street artists
4/5	Can't back down from a challenge
4/6	Needs to be told something twice, or have it written down, to remember it exactly
5/1	Enjoys an obscure or hard-to-find food
5/2	Wears a lot of jewelry
5/3	Always chewing gum, straw, or something else
5/4	Annoying or lengthy laugh
5/5	Germaphobe
5/6	A sore loser
6/1	Sleeps very little
6/2	Famous in an obscure subculture (board games, macramé, shoemaking, etc.)
6/3	Tells tall tales
6/4	Never says "no" if they can avoid it
6/5	Always feels hot or cold
6/6	Loves animals

Custom Qualities

Sometimes the existing rules do not quite cover what you want an NPC to do. You are allowed and encouraged to develop your own custom qualities. To add them, replace one available talent degree with the special quality, or two degrees if you think the quality is too powerful.

Special qualities can be passive, which means that they provide a constant bonus or advantage, such as night vision or a static bonus to Stunt Die results. A special quality is active if the NPC must use a minor or major action to enjoy its advantages. It can be a special attack using high tech equipment, or a special power innate to the NPC. Qualities that require actions, or can be taken away by intelligent opponents, should be more potent than qualities without those properties.

You can also use existing talents and stunts to design qualities. The *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook* provides rules for this via the Extraordinary Stunt talent on p. 164, and the *Modern AGE Companion* includes rules for additional powers and items.

Equipment

Equipping an NPC is a very straightforward process. NPCs don't usually use Resources rules. Simply give them any gear you feel would be appropriate. For combatants, note weapons and armor, adding their values to the NPC's stat block. For other equipment, write down any items that would be immediately useful, and assume the character has access to other items befitting their personal history.

Quirks

Non-Player Characters with quirks will become more memorable for the players. A quirk can be subtle or glaringly blatant. Not all characters need them, of course. Leave quirks to recurring NPCs.

The following table presents numerous sample quirks, but you can always invent your own. Roll 2d6, but don't add them together. The first die represents the number before the slash. The second die is the number after the slash. Thus, rolling 2, then 5, would generate a character who hates mornings.

Hooks

Give significant NPCs connections to further adventures along the main plot, or interesting side stories. These plot hooks come from the NPC's history, personality, and role. NPC adventure hooks should prompt characters to explore more of the campaign world, highlighting aspects you want the players to be aware of.

Each character or creature in the previous chapters of this book includes a few adventure hooks you can use as guidelines to create your own for your NPCs. One to three hooks in point form is more than enough to get you started. You don't need hooks for every NPC, and for some, you can devise a hook belonging to every NPC that fits a certain role. For example, all mercenaries may have a hook relating to their lieutenant and the organization employing them.

APPENDIX II: ANIMAL THREATS

This appendix includes information on common animals or beasts (with one that is not quite common). Animals are driven by instincts such as food, reproduction, territory, and defense, and can demonstrate sophisticated adaptations that make up for a lack of intelligence. A character with the Animal Training talent can attempt to tame an animal from a non-domesticated species, but it will require special care, which might not be compatible with the character's adventures. Campaign mode may also determine how an animal behaves. Generally speaking, wild animals in Gritty games are not amenable to human contact, while Pulpy or Cinematic games might allow for a range of unusual animal companions.

A campaign's history and geography influence encounters with animals. In the 21st century, urban development encroaches on the last wild ranges for many species, changing their numbers and behavior. In earlier periods, some species are far more numerous and behave differently.

CUSTOMIZING ANIMALS

In certain games, animals might be changed by science or magic. Feel free to add new special qualities like those in **Appendix I**, those from other listed adversaries, or others of your own invention. Giant, tough, and/or unusually intelligent versions of animals can be represented by increasing their threat level or adding Elite, Heroic, or Epic alterations.

RELATED SPECIES

In rules terms, closely related species are largely the same, except for some minor changes. For example, you can change the guard dog listed in the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook* into a feral dog by adding Skirmish and Lightning Attack as favored stunts, or give it a special quality that favors these stunts. You might turn it into a wolf, making it bigger, stronger, and tougher, by making it an Elite version of the guard dog with the Pack Tactics special quality (see below), and a Tough Hide quality that grants an Armor Rating of 1.

ANIMAL STATISTICS

CAMEL

Found from the Middle East and Horn of Africa to Asia, camels are valued for their ability to transport people and goods while surviving on next to no water. Less commonly, camels are raised for their milk and meat. However, camels are known for having a bit of a temper—and for spitting.

DOLPHIN

Related to whales, dolphins are marine mammals that give birth to live young and must breathe air to survive. Dolphins are sometime kept performing tricks at aquatic parks, and some have been trained by military forces to aid in underwater operations, though the ethics of these acts are sometimes questioned. Even wild dolphins have been known to interact with humans, following them at sea and sometimes even saving them from drowning.

ELEPHANT

Two species of African elephants and one Asian variety exist. Elephants are under threat from poachers and the loss of their habitat. As the largest mammals, elephants are sensi-

CAMEL

Abilities (Focuses)

Accuracy 0, **Communication** -3, **Constitution** 7 (Stamina), **Dexterity** -1, **Fighting** 2 (Bite), **Intelligence** -4, **Perception** 2 (Hearing), **Strength** 5 (Might), **Willpower** 1

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
16	50	64	69	9	9	9	0I/0B +7	+7	+7

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Bite	+4	1d6+5

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Knock Prone, Skirmish

Desert Adaptation: A camel suffers no effect from extremely hot environments, and suffers no reduction to their Speed when moving on sand.

Thirst-Resistant: Camels can spend 10 days without drinking with no harmful effect.

Threat: Minor

DOLPHIN

Abilities (Focuses)

Accuracy 0, **Communication** 0, **Constitution** 3 (Swimming), **Dexterity** 3 (Acrobatics, Stealth), **Fighting** 2 (Bite, Slam), **Intelligence** -1 (Navigation), **Perception** 2 (Hearing), **Strength** 3 (Jumping), **Willpower** 3 (Courage)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
20 (Swim)	40	46	51	13	13	13	1I/0B + 3	+3	+3

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Bite	+4	1d6+3
Slam	+4	1d6+4

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Group Tactics, Guardian Angel, Skirmish, Set-Up

Hold Breath: A dolphin can hold its breath for 10 to 15 minutes.

Swimming Charge: Dolphins can move at full speed when using the Charge action.

Echolocation: Dolphins can function normally even if blind.

Talents: Overwhelm (Novice), Tactical Awareness (Novice; replace "On foot" with "When swimming")

Threat: Minor

ELEPHANT

Abilities (Focuses)

Accuracy 0, Communication -2, Constitution 4 (Running, Stamina), Dexterity -2, Fighting 3 (Gore, Grappling), Intelligence -2, Perception 3 (Hearing, Smelling, Touching), Strength 7 (Might), Willpower 0

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
11	80	120	150	8	8	8	2I/0B + 4	+4	+4

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Tusks (Gore)	+5	2d6+9

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Collateral Damage, Expose, Grapple, Knock Prone, Skirmish, Vicious Blow

Trample: If an Elephant successfully knocks an opponent prone, it gains 1 SP to use for the Skirmish stunt. A prone opponent in the way of the elephant's movement must succeed at a Dexterity (Acrobatics) test opposed by the elephant's Strength (Might) or suffer 3d6+9 damage under the elephant's feet.

Trunk: Elephants use their trunks to grapple smaller opponents, and suffers no penalty to defense when grappling.

Thick Hide: The elephant's thick hide gives it an Armor Rating of 2.

Threat: Major

GORILLA

Abilities (Focuses)

Accuracy 0, Communication 0, Constitution 5 (Stamina), Dexterity 0 (Stealth), Fighting 3 (Bite, Unarmed), Intelligence -1, Perception 2 (Empathy, Smelling), Strength 5 (Climbing, Intimidation, Might), Willpower 1

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
13	55	80	95	10	10	10	2I/0B +5	+5	+5

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Bite	+6	1d6+10
Unarmed	+6	2d6+7

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Brutal Strike, Lightning Attack (1 SP), Skirmish, Vicious Blow

Rampage: A gorilla only needs to spend 1 SP to use the Lightning Attack stunt, and it can move before the second attack if it hasn't used up all its movement.

Tough Hide: Gorillas have thick muscles and fur that provide a natural Armor Rating of 2I.

Talents: Overwhelm (Expert)

Threat: Moderate

tive to environmental changes, which affect their ability to satisfy prodigious needs as herbivores. Humans have trained elephants throughout history, as mounts in war, beasts of burden, and entertainers.

GORILLA

Territorial encroachment, trophy hunting and hunting for food have greatly reduced gorilla populations. These primates walk on their knuckles but can stand on two legs when necessary. Males may weigh in excess of 400 lbs. They are herbivores but can be extremely dangerous when threatened or teased.

HORSE

Abilities (Focuses)

Accuracy 0, Communication -3, Constitution 6 (Running, Stamina), Dexterity 0, Fighting 0 (Kick), Intelligence -3, Perception 1 (Hearing), Strength 5 (Might), Willpower 1

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
18	30	42	47	10	10	10	+6	+6	+6

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Kick	+2	1d6+5

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Knock Prone, Skirmish

Fast: Horses have a base Speed of 18.

Gallop: Horses move at triple Speed, not double, when taking the Run/Chase action.

Threat: Moderate

HYENA

Abilities (Focuses)

Accuracy 0, Communication -2, Constitution 3, Dexterity 1 (Stealth), Fighting 1 (Bite), Intelligence -1, Perception 1 (Smelling), Strength 2 (Intimidation), Willpower 0

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
17	45	60	75	11	11	11	+3	+3	+3

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Bite	+3	1d6+2

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Double Team, Knock Prone

Nightvision: Hyenas can see in near darkness as if it were normal light.

Pack Tactics: If a hyena is attacking with at least three other hyenas, it may perform stunts for 1 fewer SP than normal.

Tough Hide: A hyena's hide and natural toughness provide it with an Armor Rating of 1.

Threat: Moderate

HORSE

Many breeds of horses exist, and the game statistics below represent a compromise between them. Most "wild horses" are actual feral colonies of domestic horses, with only one wild species, the small Przewalski's Horse, still in existence. Game Masters should modify horses based on their breed and training. For example, police horses are trained to stay calm in situations other horses would flee, suggesting the Willpower (Morale) focus.

HYENA

The four species of hyenas aren't dogs or cats. The mongoose and aardwolf are more closely related to them. While striped hyenas are known as scavengers, spotted hyenas kill most of their own prey. Hyenas are social predators who belong to large groups called clans. As social animals, hyenas are known for the wide variety of vocalizations they use to communicate with each other, including something like human laughter found among spotted hyenas.

The spotted hyena can be found in central and southern Africa, while the smaller striped hyena has a range spreading from North Africa to India.

LAB DINOSAUR (DEINONYCHUS)

It finally happened. Some genius used fringe genetic engineering to bring a dinosaur back to life! And instead of producing a small herbivore, they recreated the Deinonychus, a 200 lb fast predator, known for the curved foot claws it used to disembowel prey. Presumably the secret outfit that created the lab dinosaur keeps it hidden and securely imprisoned, but life often finds a way of bypassing even the most thorough precautions.

DEINONYCHUS

Abilities (Focuses)

Accuracy 0, **Communication** -1, **Constitution** 3 (Running), **Dexterity** 3 (Stealth), **Fighting** 4 (Bite, Claw), **Intelligence** -2, **Perception** 3 (Smelling), **Strength** 4 (Jumping), **Willpower** 2

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
16	50	65	80	13	13	13	3I/0B +3	+3	+3

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Bite	+6	1d6+4
Claw	+7	2d6+4

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Double Team, Knock Prone, Lethal Blow (4 SP), Lightning Attack, Vicious Blow

Deadly: A deinonychus can make two claw attacks or one bite attack with a single attack action and they may perform the Lethal Blow stunt for 1 fewer SP than its normal cost.

Disembowel: A deinonychus deals +1d6 damage with its claws against prone targets.

Tough: A deinonychus' leathery hide and scales (or if accurately revived, a layer of tough feathers) give it a natural Armor Rating of 3I.

Threat: Moderate

OWL

People sometimes liked owls to "flying cats." In some ways this is an apt description, because like cats, owls are nocturnal creatures who ambush their prey, preferring small rodents. However, owls fly instead of pouncing. Owls find their prey

OWL

Abilities (Focuses)

Accuracy 0, **Communication** -2, **Constitution** 0, **Dexterity** 3, **Fighting** 2 (Bite, Claws), **Intelligence** -2, **Perception** 3 (Seeing), **Strength** -1, **Willpower** 1 (Morale)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
4 (16 Fly)	10	10	15	13	13	13	+0	+0	+0

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Bite	+4	1d6-1
Claws	+4	1d6-1

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Precise Force, Skirmish

Keen Sight: Owls can reroll a failed Perception (Seeing) test at night but must accept the second roll, even if it's lower.

Nightvision: Owls can see in near darkness as if it were normal light.

Talents: Tactical Awareness (Novice)

Threat: Minor

Animals Aren't Monsters

Game Masters should be careful not to treat animals like monsters. Animals attack to hunt, protect territory, and assert dominance, and each of these entail different levels of aggression. Outside of struggles for dominance (which often involve controlled force) animals avoid injury whenever possible. Even predators are reluctant to attack prey that fights back. For an animal to fight until killed it must be cornered or otherwise desperate, suffer a disease that changes its behavior, or have an extraordinary bond with a creature it's trying to protect.

In *Modern AGE* games, you can use Willpower (Morale) tests to help determine when an animal flees, but you should also consider how familiar the animal is with humans and its species' behavior, and run it accordingly. The most dangerous animals are generally those that have grown familiar with humans.

While issues of animal consciousness and emotions are controversial, it remains a fact that some people can form extraordinary bonds with them. This is particularly true for dogs and other domesticated animals, and overall more common for social animals. You can represent this with a Relationship Bond held by the animal. Note, however, that while domesticated animals have been bred for sociability, even the most highly trained wild animals lack the instincts possessed by dogs or even cats to recognize human behavior. Thus, wild animals may unexpectedly attack long time human companions after long periods of innocuous or obedient behavior.

Finally, animals aren't monsters in the sense that they're not built for the conveniences of roleplaying games. This means that in many of the game statistics presented, we've employed approximations that suit *Modern AGE* play instead of realistically modeling their abilities. When you're not rolling dice, don't be afraid to use your own research to describe what the animal's capable of, even if we didn't give it any rules.

using their excellent senses of sight and hearing, combined with a thorough knowledge of their territory.

Ram

A ram is the male of the Bighorn Sheep, a species native to North America and found in the wild around the Rockies. Rams are excellent climbers and big, with many weighing well over 200 lbs. During mating season, rams can grow especially aggressive, and may charge those who get too close, even if they present no threat. Beyond mating season, rams use their horns for self-defense. Both males and females have horns.

A ram's game statistics are suitable for many horned herbivores, though most of these will have increased Speed and little to no climbing ability.

Rhinoceros

Endangered due to hunting for their horns, wild rhinoceroses' ranges in Africa and Asia are much reduced, with several surviving subspecies close to extinction. Rhinoceroses are territorial herbivores, and while they are not unduly aggressive, their horns, tough hide, and a weight that can exceed two tons in some males mean they're still not safe to approach. Rhino horns are made of keratin, the material humans use for nails.

Ram

Abilities (Focuses)

Accuracy 0, **Communication** -2, **Constitution** 3, **Dexterity** 3 (Acrobatics), **Fighting** 2 (Gore), **Intelligence** -4, **Perception** 2, **Strength** 3 (Climbing, Jumping), **Willpower** 0

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
14	30	36	41	13	13	13	1I/0B +3	+3	+3

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Gore	+4	1d6+3

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Knock Prone, Skirmish, Vicious Blow

Mighty Charge: When a ram takes the Charge action, it deals +1d6 damage with its gore attack and gains 1 SP to use in the Skirmish or Knock Prone stunts.

Tough Hide: Rams have thick hides that provide a natural armor rating of 1.

Sure-footed: A ram can re-roll a failed Dexterity (Acrobatics) test to avoid losing its balance, but it must keep the second result. Additionally, the Skirmish and Knock Prone stunts cost 1 SP extra when targeting a ram.

Threat: Major

Rhinoceros

Abilities (Focuses)

Accuracy 0, **Communication** -3, **Constitution** 7 (Running, Stamina), **Dexterity** 0 (Acrobatics, Stealth), **Fighting** 2 (Gore), **Intelligence** -2 (Chemistry), **Perception** 1 (Hearing, Smelling), **Strength** 5 (Might), **Willpower** 1 (Morale)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
13	75	145	175	10	10	10	3I/0B +7	+7	+7

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Gore	+5	2d6+5

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Knock Prone, Skirmish, Vicious Blow

Mighty Charge: When a rhinoceros takes the Charge action, it can move its full speed, deals +1d6 damage with its gore attack, and gains 1 SP to use in the Knock Prone stunt.

Tough: A rhinoceros' armor-like hide gives it a natural Armor Rating of 3.

Talents: Overwhelm (Novice)

Threat: Major

Swarm of Bugs

Abilities (Focuses)

Accuracy 0, Communication -3, Constitution 0, Dexterity 4, Fighting 0, Intelligence -3, Perception 2 (Touching, Tracking), Strength -3, Willpower 0

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
5 (Fly 13)	25	25	30	14	14	14	+0	+0	+0

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Swarm	+5	1d6

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Skirmish

Insect Senses: A swarm of bugs can operate normally even if blinded or in complete darkness. A strong odor can "blind" a swarm of bugs.

Swarm Attack: A swarm of bugs covers an area with a rough diameter and height of three yards, and can attack all creatures inside or adjacent to that area on its turn as a single major action. Roll separately against each target.

Swarm Defense: A swarm of bugs suffers only 1 point of damage from any sort of attack that targets a single point, extra damage from stunts deals only an amount equal to the number of dice rolled. Only area attacks or extraordinary attacks with a broad effect inflict full damage on the swarm.

Swarm Movement: A swarm of bugs can move at half its Speed through openings as small as 1/4 inch.

Venom (Optional): Some swarms are of venomous insects. Characters damaged by the swarm of bugs' Swarm Attack must succeed at a TN 9 Constitution (Tolerance) test or suffer an additional 3 damage and suffer a -2 penalty on all tests until they recover at least 5 points of Health.

Threat: Minor

Stag

In Europe, stags are popular in heraldry, and around the world, male deer have had religious and other symbolic significance, often associated with male fertility, kingship, and bravery. While stags will use their antlers for self-defense against other creatures, they most often use them against each other to establish a social hierarchy.

Swarm of Bugs

The game statistics below can be used to represent any swarm of biting, stinging insects. These are recommended when you'd like combat against them to be an option or need to know their game traits for the sake of other complex interactions. If the swarm is just a damage source, it's better to treat them as a hazard, as per the rules in **Chapter 8** of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook*.

Tiger

The largest extant feline, tigers are endangered in the wild. Most people will see tigers in zoos or at circuses. As stalking predators, they possess a talent for stealth and prefer to attack by surprise. With minor modifications, these statistics can also be used for lions and, in case of time travel, the saber-toothed cat *Smilodon Fatalis*. Note that their threat level is moderated by the fact that, as natural animals, they rarely attack without a reason.

Stag

Abilities (Focuses)

Accuracy 0, Communication -3, Constitution 3 (Running), Dexterity 2 (Stealth), Fighting 2 (Gore), Intelligence -3, Perception 2 (Hearing, Seeing), Strength 4, Willpower -1

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
17	40	46	51	12	12	12	+3	+3	+3

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Gore	+4	1d6+4

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Precise Force, Skirmish, Vicious Blow

Alert: A stag can re-roll a failed Perception test to perceive approaching enemies, but it must keep the second roll, even if it's lower.

Impale: When the stag takes the Charge action, its attack deals +1d6 damage and can use the Precise Force stunt for free.

Threat: Minor

Tiger

Abilities (Focuses)

Accuracy 0, Communication -2, Constitution 4 (Swimming), Dexterity 4 (Initiative, Stealth), Fighting 5 (Bite, Claw), Intelligence -2, Perception 3 (Seeing, Smelling), Strength 5 (Climbing, Intimidation, Jumping, Might), Willpower 1 (Morale)

Speed	Health			Defense			AR + Toughness		
17	40	46	51	12	12	12	+3	+3	+3

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage*
Bite	+7	2d6+5
Claw	+7	1d6+10

*+2 to damage in Pulpy and Cinematic Modes

Special Qualities

Favored Stunts: Lightning Attack (1 SP), Skirmish, Vicious Blow

Fast: Tigers have a base Speed of 13. This is figured in the listed Speed.

Leap: Tigers are prodigious jumpers, gaining +3 to Strength (Jumping) tests.

Pounce: A tiger only needs to spend 1 SP to use the Lightning Attack stunt, and it can move before the second attack if it hasn't used up all its movement.

Tough Hide: Tigers have thick muscles and fur that provide a natural Armor Rating of 2I.

Talents: Overwhelm (Master)

Threat: Moderate

APPENDIX III: ADAPTING CREATURES FROM *FANTASY AGE* & *BLUE ROSE*

Other Adventure Game Engine games such as *Blue Rose* and *Fantasy AGE* provide potential adversaries, contacts, friends, and weird encounters for *Modern AGE* games. When designing this book, we've tried to avoid overlap with the NPCs and creatures in other Adventure Game Engine books, to give you the widest variety to choose from between multiple resources.

Across these games, statistics are similar in many respects, but *Modern AGE* has distinct focuses, uses some abilities differently, and features the Gritty, Pulpy, and Cinematic modes of play. Therefore, some adjustments are necessary when converting creatures in other books to *Modern AGE*. This section provides guidelines to supplement your own judgment as Game Master. Remember, a GM is always allowed to make whatever adjustments they deem necessary, even if these don't match published rules and advice.

ABILITIES & FOCUSES

In most cases, you shouldn't have to modify the nine ability scores. The only exception is when a melee weapon or attack is listed as an Accuracy focus, which is allowed in *Fantasy AGE* and *Blue Rose* but not in *Modern AGE*. In those cases, consider increasing the subject's Fighting by 1 or 2 if it normally uses Accuracy-based melee attacks as its primary attack form, and its Accuracy is higher than its Fighting. Decrease Accuracy by the same amount if the subject doesn't primarily use Accuracy for ranged attacks.

While other focuses don't affect abilities, they should be converted into the nearest *Modern AGE* equivalents where applicable, if it would be convenient. For simple combatants, it might not matter, since they won't be using weapons they didn't bring with them or encountering non-combat challenges. Note that Grappling is a separate Fighting focus from Brawling in *Modern AGE* and should be given to any subject the GM believes would grapple foes in unarmed combat. If the creature has a focus not listed in *Modern AGE* that relates to attacks it makes with a part of its body or some inherent quality (such as a tentacle or magical blast), keep the focus.

Note that *Modern AGE* doesn't apply penalties for being untrained in the use of a weapon, so if an NPC picks up a weapon not listed as a focus or part of their usual equipment, you don't need to reduce their attack rolls. Just calculate them normally, using the applicable ability and focus, if any.

OTHER CHARACTERISTICS

Creatures and NPCs in *Blue Rose* and *Fantasy AGE* are roughly equivalent to Cinematic individuals in *Modern AGE*. Furthermore, *Modern AGE* has different damage types than these other games. This affects various derived game statistics as follows.

SPEED

By default, no change is necessary. However, if you want flying creatures or beings of legendary swiftness to compete with modern vehicles, you may wish to apply a Velocity class and modifier, using the vehicle listings in **Chapter 4** of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook* as benchmarks. This means, for instance, if you want dragons to dogfight with Spitfires in an alternate 1944, they should possess Extreme Velocity. Note, however, that a higher Velocity Class than Standard (the rating for all creatures with a normal Speed score) provides an immense advantage in chases.

HEALTH

In Cinematic *Modern AGE* games, don't change the creature's Health. In Gritty or Pulpy games, reduce Health according to the **Health Conversion** table based on threat level.

HEALTH CONVERSION

Threat Level	Pulpy	Gritty: As Pulpy, Plus Subtract*
Minor	No Adjustment	No Adjustment
Moderate	-10 to -15	- (Constitution ×5)
Major	-25 to -35**	- (Constitution ×10)
Dire	-35 to -45**	- (Constitution ×14)
Legendary	-50 to -60**	- (Constitution ×18)

* Subtract at least the multiplier x 1, even for Constitution scores of 0 or less.
** This penalty is never higher than 30 for Non-Player Character members of races who can be Player Characters in *Fantasy AGE* and *Blue Rose*.

DEFENSE

Modern AGE characters may increase Defense in certain game modes, but this doesn't happen in *Fantasy AGE* or *Blue Rose*. The simplest option is to leave Defense as it is. Optionally, you may use the adjustments presented in **Other Game Mode Adjustments** on p. 132 of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook* to increase Defense, Toughness, or both.

TOUGHNESS

Toughness doesn't exist in *Fantasy AGE* or *Blue Rose*. Consequently, assign creatures a Toughness equal to their Constitution score. Toughness applies to damage based on its type and the campaign's mode, as is usual for *Modern AGE*. If a creature is tougher than usual, this is calculated as Armor, not Toughness. Note that as mentioned under Defense in this section, you may use the guidelines on p. 132 of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook* to further increase the score by game mode.

ARMOR

Keep the creature's existing armor as an Armor Rating versus impact (I) damage. If you believe a creature would be particularly resistant to ballistic damage as well, you can assign a secondary rating equal to or less than the impact rating. This depends on the role of the creature. If you want a monster to act as a menace for a team of soldiers, you might apply

the full Armor Rating to ballistic damage, but if you want a revisionist modern fantasy game where bullets cut down legendary monsters, the creature's armor might have a reduced effect or none at all.

ATTACKS AND DAMAGE

Attacks and damage should remain the same. Most creatures inflict impact wound damage with their natural attacks, though you may decide fists and other less-lethal attacks inflict stun damage instead. Note that in Pulpy or Cinematic *Modern AGE* games, attacks inflict +2 damage.

SPECIAL QUALITIES

Use most special qualities as-is, adjusting to fit *Modern AGE* where necessary by defining damage types where not specified, and so on.

When a being from *Fantasy AGE* or *Blue Rose* has talents and specializations, replace them with *Modern AGE* equivalents when necessary, or swap them out for an equal number of new talent and specialization slots, to customize the creature for modern era campaigns.

Modern AGE uses different stunts than *Fantasy AGE* or *Blue Rose*, but some stunts are the same or similar. Generally speaking, stunts are balanced across games, so you should only have to swap them out when you don't have the rulebook the stunt appears in.

ARCANA

Fantasy AGE and *Blue Rose* both feature magical abilities called arcana, but these are different types of powers. *Modern AGE* arcana resemble *Fantasy AGE* arcana, not the version featured in *Blue Rose*. *Fantasy AGE* and *Modern AGE* arcana are close enough that you can keep *Fantasy AGE* arcana as-is or swap them out for *Modern AGE* arcana on a rank-for-rank basis. When it comes to *Blue Rose*'s arcana, which represent intuitive but exhausting magic, you may use the rules in *Blue Rose* as they are (and even introduce them to *Modern AGE*) without game balance concerns. If you would rather use *Modern AGE*, one *Blue Rose* arcanum is equal to one rank in a *Modern AGE* psychic discipline. You may use the **Power Fatigue** option on p. 91 of the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook* to make these more like *Blue Rose*, or simply use standard power point costs—your choice.

CONVERTING TO OTHER AGE GAMES

Applying most of these guidelines in reverse will convert a *Modern AGE* creature to *Blue Rose* or *Fantasy AGE*. In general, a fantasy version of a *Modern AGE* entry uses the Cinematic mode version as a base. Remove Toughness (which is not used in the other games) and covert abilities, focuses, and talents. Modern NPCs and creatures should be considered trained in the use of whatever weapons and armor they're equipped with, and some Fighting focuses are Accuracy focuses when they involve light melee weapons.

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