BILL COFFIN'S

SEPTIMUS



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01: Setting

This chapter will give you an overview of the thematic backdrop of the game: the imaginary landscape where all of its action, character development, drama and resolution takes place. it is here where tour adventures will take place, where your heroes will meet their destiny, confront their worst enemies, and perhaps do their part to nudge the course of human history just a little in the right direction. The game of Septimus has a multi-headed setting, where the game can take root just as easily in one place as much as any other. The setting includes:

- *The galactic Seventh Empire, which spans all known space*
- *The mysterious worldsphere Septimus, which is big enough to accommodate the entire galactic population, and which lies on the edge of known space*
- *The worlds within Septimus, including numerous planets, moons and asteroids, each with its own unique culture*
- *The domain of the tyrannous Sindavar Extent, including the edges of its territory where its own law and order have begun to crumble*
- *And finally, the practically endless frontier of the sphere's surface where anybody can get lost anywhere just by hiding out in plain view, no more visible against the vast backdrop of the surface than a single grain of sand on a beach.*

However, before one can explore the sphere, learn its mysteries, fight its overlords and partake of its dramas, one must actually get to Septimus. And as anybody from the Seventh Empire knows, getting anywhere these days is a pretty tall order. Little of the system is known, and what has been reported is almost certainly lies, exaggerations and misinterpretations. For many of those going to Septimus, they are simply too desperate to leave the Empire, or too hard-bitten, to care about what they don't know about the place. Chances are, wherever these people are coming from, anything within the sphere is preferable to the death throes of the Seventh Empire out in realspace. These are the naïve travelers who often end up as fodder for predators along the way, for if there is anything certain about Septimus, it is this: you better realize what you are in for before you make the trip, because going to a place like Septimus is not the kind of trip you can just back out of. When you go, you must go all the way. If you are to do that, then you had better do your homework first. All too often sufficient preparation is what separates the successful travelers from those skeletons in torn spacesuits drifting across the cold darkness of space; a grim warning to those foolish enough to repeat such folly.

The Seventh Empire

The game of Septimus takes place in a galactic civilization that has run its course and now is going through an extended death spasm. This civilization is the vaunted Seventh Empire, the greatest single political entity ever crafted by humanity. The Empire's mostly undisputed reign over all known space has extended for more than seven millennia, and during the time it has seen the colony ships of a thousand worlds reach out across the darkness of space to create new settlements. Endless expansion has been the hallmark of the Empire, giving it the growing resources it needed to sustain an increasingly affluent culture, but that has all come crashing down with a speed and suddenness that took all but the most prescient of forecasters entirely off guard. Since then, the history of the Em-

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pire has been one of desperate attempts to cling to what it has, while entire systems fall by the wayside, and every past grudge and grievance harbored in the hearts of the Empire's subjects has become a cause to secede, to rebel, to turn away. It is a dark time for the Empire, and many of its leaders are simply content to hold on the what wealth they can, living lives of isolated comfort while their great social construct disintegrates. Others have joined the mass exodus to Septimus, where they hope to re-establish their power base within the worldsphere. Still others have tried to stick it out but have been dislodged from their homes and positions by forces beyond their control. Such is the way of the Empire these days.

History

It was not always like this. The Seventh Empire took root more than 7,000 years ago through the collective effort of those space faring powers who left their various homeworlds behind many thousands of years before and joined in the depths of space to create a star-spanning society that would be a mutual benefit to all. Wildly divergent social, military and commercial priorities soon pushed this patchwork collective to the brink of collapse, so it fell to the elites to impose their will upon their charges, demanding they sacrifice some freedom for the sake of stability. Thus was born the first galactic empire, whose name has been lost to the passage of time. It ruled in its own way for a time before it fell to the same perils that consume all great empires: infighting, greed, passion, sloth, decadence, jealously, brutality, elitism, tyranny. Thus the empire fell, and a great chaos reigned in its stead until a new empire was reborn from the ashes of the old, restoring peace and plenty among the worlds of the galaxy and reminding its people what it could mean to be part of something great. Alas, all empires must die, and so too did the third, fourth, fifth and sixth, until such time as the wreckage of history had piled so high that the galaxy seemed to be smothered under the weight. It was from this environment that the seed of the Seventh Empire sprung.

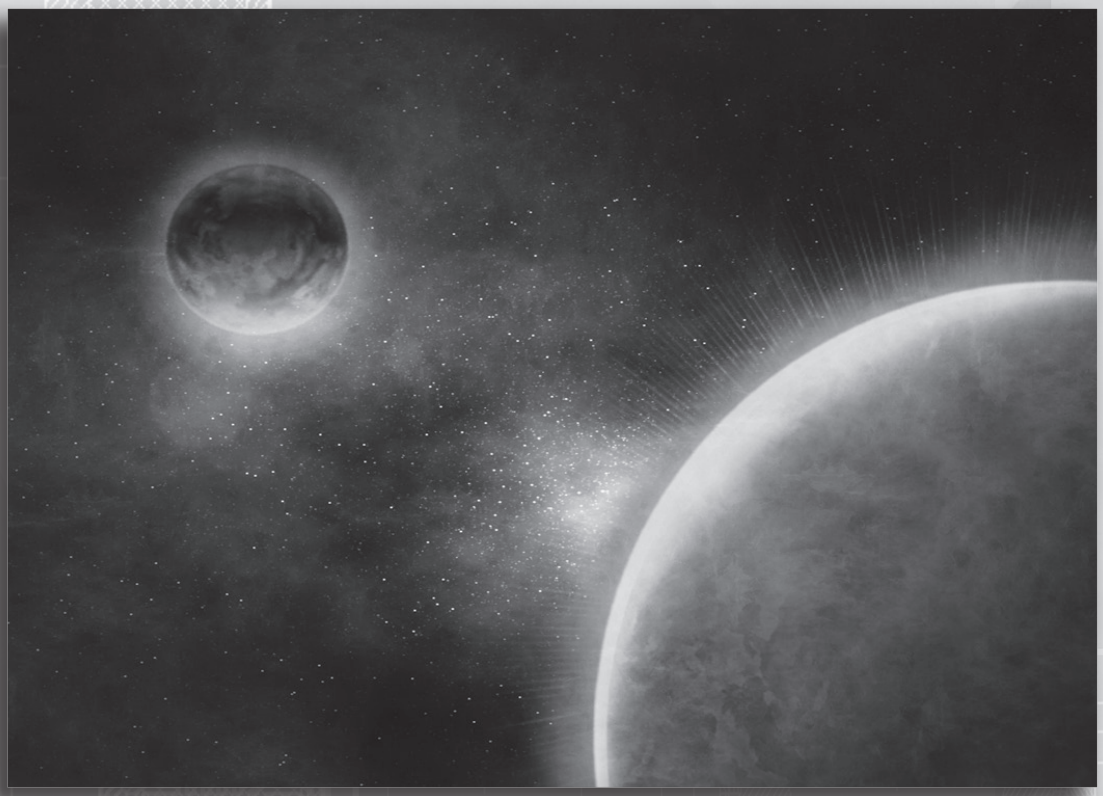
Although the galaxy had long been ruled by elite groups of one kind or another, the rise and fall of the various empires of history never did much to dislodge these entrenched groups from their power. Some were destroyed with each great upheaval, of course, but many of these institutions were older and more stable in their ways than the empires of which they were part. So it was that simple companies, military institutions, social groups, extended families and other populations bound by enduring commonalities became long-lived dynasties, each with its own brand of power and styles of leadership. Each had cultivated the kind of wealth that perpetuates itself. Each had developed a way of life that was unique and as much a part of history as the empires of old. Each had become something greater than its individual members, something that the common people of the galaxy clung to during times of trouble. The greatest of these is the **Aedos Dynasty**, a large family of self-styled nobles whose financial interests stretch across the entire galaxy. Its philosophers have shaped the pattern of thought for trillions of people. Its soldiers have enforced its will across the stars. Its factories have manufactured the very building blocks of an empire. Its will has been absolute.

The Aedos nobility has ruled for more than seven centuries from Aedos Prime, its homeworld near the center of the galaxy. Ensconced in almost unimaginable levels of wealth, power and privilege, the Aedos nobles consider themselves almost a race apart from the rest of humanity, carefully and selectively bred into a particular genotype that has made the Aedos bloodline very much an isolated gene pool from which all future lords of the galaxy are meant to come. The elitism and special rule of the Aedos has been made possible by its many tiers of leadership, each lording over the

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one before it. The members of these tiers are in turn driven by the hope that in reaching the pinnacle of their particular level of the pyramid they might be granted the opportunity to interbreed with the Aedos. This would ensure that one's own descendants might become part of the **Familia Galactica**. It is a wild dream held by the most ambitious of commoners, and somehow the dream endures despite the grand scope of the galaxy and despite the fact that incredible fortunes can be made without ever coming into contact with the core of the Aedos Dynasty. Such is the power of the Aedos.

The economics of the Empire have been a simple, if gigantic, network of manufacture, trade and retail. A constant force in the galaxy has been rising population and the necessary colonization of other worlds. As intrepid settlers have tamed new planets on the galactic frontier, they created new societies with great economic power and needs. As the empire has thus expanded, the Aedos industrial base has been there to build cities out of wilderness, to bring civilization where there is none. Those who settled the outlying worlds of the empire have exploited new resources and sent them back to the core of the empire for sale and to further enrich the entire system. As competing interests among the populace have created friction and even internal warfare — many other companies, organizations and clans have built their own militaries, even if they pale to that of the Aedos — it has been the self-important Aedos warfleet that has kept the peace. Capable of subjugating entire planets in a single bombardment, the various armadas of the fleet keep all imperial subjects in line and working in relatively peaceful productivity. Still, old grudges die



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hard, and beneath the seemingly placid exterior of imperial life lies a seething cauldron of unresolved conflict.

These long-standing hostilities would be the empire's undoing in the long run. For as long as there has been travel among the stars, there has been the use of hyperdrives that instantaneously transport ships from one spot of the galaxy to another by creating a temporary wormhole through the skin of space-time. These wormholes essentially create the effect of folding space so that any two points become as one. However, space is not actually folded by these drives. When engaging a hyperdrive, a starship creates a tunnel that runs — for lack of a better explanation — beneath, alongside and apart from realspace. It is through this tunnel that the ship travels in defiance of the natural speed limits of the universe, instantaneously leaping from point to point. These tunnels are channels in hyperspace, which Imperial scientists explain is essentially the flip side of realspace. The theoreticals of it are generally beyond the understanding of most people, and truth be told, nobody really wants to know how it works. They simply are interested in being able to travel anywhere at any time, regardless of the distance.

Hyperdrive is what has made the entire Seventh Empire — and every other empire before it — possible. It is what has enabled settlers to send huge amounts of raw materials to factory worlds, for factory worlds to send finished products to population centers, and for population centers to send fresh settlers to the frontier. It is a simple triangle trade that works out very well, all because of hyperspace.

Until now.

The long-standing and intensive use of hyperspace has caused it to degrade and grow threadbare. Actually, research describing the first signs that hyperspace was breaking down were published not long after the formation of the Seventh Empire. However, that single dissenting scientific opinion was drowned out by a galactic chorus of voices so happy with the system the Seventh Empire had for indeed, it was delivering unprecedented prosperity to all, and no one could be bothered by the thought that the empire was in fact destroying the very thing that sustained it. And so for the first century of its existence, the Seventh Empire underwent extraordinary expansion as it reached out to those thousands of systems that had fallen away during the last imperial collapse, reestablishing trade routes and re-incorporating them into a new order; this was **the Ascension**.

The second century was **the Expansion**, where the Aedos lords challenged their subjects to conquer the furthest reaches of known space, allowing nothing to stand in the way of bringing the Empire to the edge of infinity. This great crusade to settle the unsettled more than doubled the Empire's size and put greater stress upon hyperspace as the numbers of ships traveling through it increased exponentially.

During the third century came **the Domination**, that time when a number of outlying sub-empires, formed from the wreckage of previous regimes, were connected. Unwilling to join the Aedos, there arose the first great conflict of the Seventh Empire's history. On seven different fronts the Empire fought in total warfare against these confederacies that would not assimilate into the Aedos way. For decades, vicious warfare ranged all along the frontier, and many great engagements took place within hyperspace itself, and the resulting destruction doubtlessly caused even further damage. All along, a growing number of voices within the scientific community raised the alarm that hyperspace was faltering, that it would collapse if its abuse continued, and that if practices were reversed, perhaps the damage to hyperspace could repair itself. To do this, however, would require massive shifts in behavior throughout the empire. It would mean no more rampant expansion, no more ubiquitous luxury — sacrifices nobody was willing to make.

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The wars of assimilation were long and costly, and they drained much of the material wealth of the Empire as well as its collective psyche. Gone was the mind-set of endless opportunity and growth. Now, the Aedos and their subjects merely wished to recover from the great wars and to maintain what they had already built. It was no longer so important to tame the galactic frontier; the goal became to bring the level of development seen in the core worlds out to the furthest reaches of the galaxy. There was no need to invent new things, only to deliver what was already possible to the places where it was not. It was a time to enjoy the fruits of the empire's labors and simply to maintain the status quo. This was **the Stagnation**, and the scientific community that had tried to warn the Aedos of the situation in hyperspace simply went quiet.

But after a century of societal stasis, the long-standing tensions within the Empire began to grow ever more intense, as the outlying systems of the Empire were no longer policed as heavily as had been before. At first it was thought that the imperial fleet was simply not doing its job, but then it became known that the fleets were in fact disappearing. Their thousand-ship armadas, known for making mass hyperspace jumps, were misshaping, ending up thousands of light-years off course, or simply disappearing into hyperspace, re-emerging weeks, months or years after they jumped. Some never returned at all. It was then that the populace finally realized that the dire warnings of old about the fraying of hyperspace were true, and now the space travel that the Empire had built itself upon was in great jeopardy. The huge fleets of trade ships and manufacturing barges that powered the Empire now stayed in dock, afraid to venture forth. The level of trade and income across the galaxy fell, and entire systems found themselves on their own, forced to fend for themselves, but they also were free from Aedos edict and the threat of the Aedos warfleet. Thus, these worlds went feral, fighting amongst themselves and forgetting the Empire that had once controlled them. This was **the Corrosion**, and it was the beginning of the end of the Seventh Empire.

We now are in the seventh century of the Empire's reign, and it is known as **the Dissolution**, for the social, financial and military phenomena that began during the Corrosion have accelerated at great pace in the Dissolution. Hyperspace is rapidly falling apart, to such a degree that even the smallest ship runs a great risk of losing its way. Only the most skilled pilots can hope to ply the old interstellar routes, but even then such a thing requires more courage than skill. The old trade routes are falling by the wayside, and more than half of the planets within the Empire essentially have become cut off trade-wise from the Aedos core worlds. The Aedos warfleets still patrol but far less frequently than before and in far smaller numbers. This has given any world with even the slightest hint of independence the will to break away, to denounce its allegiance to the Aedos way, and to cease sending back any trade revenue whatsoever. Small- and medium-scale warfare has broken out throughout the Empire as old grudges fan into full war and as secessionist systems fight to break away from their old masters. Still other systems have fallen to anarchy or civil war as they try to find a way to govern themselves without the Aedos hand to guide them. And all the while, the Aedos themselves have largely withdrawn to the core worlds, where the hyperspace lanes are at their strongest, and where their incredible wealth still enables them to live at a level of comfort and regality unchanged from previous centuries. As the empire stumbles and falls, bleeds and burns, its rulers have decided to look the other way and allow it all to happen. The strength and will that led them to forge this great Empire is gone. Their inventiveness and their ambition have been squandered. The Aedos have become like every other great Imperial family before them: an addled continuum of over-privileged aristocrats so distanced from the realities of their own Empire that they lack the collective will

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to recognize that something must be done, and those few that do have no clue how to save it.

But not all frontiers have gone fallow. The announcement of Septimus, an alien worldsphere on the edge of known space, has galvanized many in the Empire to seek out this mysterious place and perhaps find sanctuary there. The greatest minds and most ambitious hearts of the galactic populace are leaving their homeworlds in droves, willing to brave the dangers of a long interstellar trip in the hopes that a better life can be made for oneself within the worldpshere. All walks of life are heading to Septimus, and according to one demographic report, nearly 1% — a trillion people — have already made the trip. By the end of the century, that figure is likely to climb to 10% of the galactic population — nearly ten trillion people — despite the huge numbers likely to be lost in hyperspace along the way. The idea of the Empire itself is dead. All that remains now is the will to survive individually, and going to Septimus is the only thing that binds this collective will together. The hold the Aedos once had over its people is gone, and the enigmatic allure of Septimus has taken its place, even if most have no clue what Septimus really is or what it can do. But it is the hope it embodies that makes it so irresistible to so many, and thus with each passing day a thousand new starships begin the trip there with the intention to never return to the worlds from which they came. The intellect and strength and courage of the Seventh Empire itself is bleeding away like a fatal wound.

This is the state of the Seventh Empire today, a once-great expanse of worlds that is unraveling at a pace far faster than the rate at which it once grew. At the present even the Core Worlds will be in upheaval within a century, and the next age that begins will be the first one in nearly a millennia where there is no appreciable Seventh Empire to speak of. There will only be the mammoth diaspora of worlds it once governed, frontiers it once tamed and peoples it once ruled. The Seventh Empire is in its final days, and as with all great beasts, its death throes can be massive, violent and destructive. None will be spared.

Cartography

There are seven main sections to the Seventh Empire. Together they encompass the entire galaxy, measuring nearly 100,000 light years across. They are the Core Worlds, the Inner Expanse, the Outer Reaches, the Periphery, the Horizon, the Void and Hyperspace. These various sections form concentric rings, like the growth rings of a giant tree. As such, each section resembles a ring spanning the galaxy. With the exception of the Core Worlds, which is rather small and technically part of the Inner Expanse, each section of the Empire is about 10,000 light-years Wide, which is an enormous distance. Very large empires could exist within that kind of magnitude and never come into contact with each other — and in the days between the galactic empires, that is exactly what happened. It probably will again once things settle to the point where star systems might once again come together for a common purpose. But for now, these sections of space are just the different districts of an increasingly self-alienated Empire that has lost its way.

Each section of the Empire has become fairly separated from the other, given the Empire's collapse, and within the game of Septimus, chances are most players will not be traveling too much within these parts of the galaxy. But as people from all across the galaxy are flocking to Septimus, they will bring with them the history and conditions of the parts of the Empire from which they hail, and thus the expanse of the Seventh Empire might somehow condense itself to exist in full within the single worldsphere.

The Core Worlds

These are the star systems at the heart of the galaxy. The stellar density here is quite high, and the distances between stars

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is very short, so it has been theorized that hyperspace has always been much stronger here than elsewhere and can still withstand high levels of traffic. That is why the core of the galaxy has not yet felt the effects of the galactic unraveling. Even though the Core Worlds make up perhaps 1% of the galactic expanse — a territory with a radius of about 500 light years from the galactic center — it is home to fully 25% of its total population. Living in supertech luxury, these people are going on as if nothing has ever befallen the Empire. Surely the reports of widespread instability are exaggerated, they feel, and it is only a matter of time before some scientist finds a fix for hyperspace, the Imperial warfleet settles things down, and things get back to normal. Because the Core Worlds were the primary recipient of the galactic trade structure, its wealth and resources are still at very high levels. They are not replenishing themselves, however and within a decade or so, it will become obvious that the general level of wealth within the Core Worlds is starting to dwindle. Already, there are those who see the writing on the wall and have left for Septimus under the guise of tourism or adventurism. But in reality, the hierarchs and industrialists and generals and free citizens of every kind are leaving the Core Worlds while they still can, for they know that it is only a matter of time before the hyperspace lanes here dissolve too, and by then, it won't just be too late to get to Septimus — it will be too late to get anywhere.

The Inner Expanse

Covering a ring of territory extending about 10,000 light years beyond the Core Worlds, the Inner Expanse is the heart and soul of the Seventh Empire. This is the territory that has been settled since the earliest galactic empires, so the societies here are quite advanced and developed. There is very little unknown territory here, and almost every world has either been settled, developed for resources, or earmarked for one or the other to occur at a later date. The Inner Expanse contains nearly 40% of the galactic population, and it is here that the worst infighting has been occurring. One might think that the civil war in the Empire would happen farther from the Core Worlds, but it has been here that the suppressed conflicts between power blocs has been simmering the longest. These wars tend to be concentrated in flashpoint systems, which keeps the fighting contained, but the political fallout has been massive, with huge numbers of systems still staying faithful to the Empire, but refusing to have anything to do with each other. This has created a very fractious Empire, with large swathes of its territory not working together or trading with one another. This is the quiet catastrophe that has undercut the Empire terribly; a huge portion of its wealth comes from the Inner Expanse, and here it is anything but business as usual. Many of the extended elements of the Aedos have their power bases here, and one by one, as they realize that the Aedos cannot hold the Empire together as before, they are each quietly picking up and heading out, some to Septimus, others to hidden enclaves on the outskirts of the galaxy where they can wait out, in relative peace and quiet, the madness that is consuming the Empire.

The Outer Reaches

Beyond the Inner Expanse are the Outer Reaches, which for most of the life of the Seventh Empire, was the main frontier area where large-scale colonization, terraforming and resource mining took place. During the Empire's era of Expansion, it was in the Outer Reaches where most of the colony ships touched down. Even today, there is still a considerable level of development going on here, executed by a hardy breed of settler that got used to making its own fortune and getting by without any help or interference from the Empire. There is not a lot of fighting out here, but a whole lot of quiet secession as systems just stop reporting home. The Aedos Warfleet is trying to crack down, but there are just too many dissident systems to make a meaningful difference. As such, large supply chains of raw

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materials are not getting from this district to the other parts of the Empire, which is also stunting growth in a huge way. Where there is open fighting and rebellion, it tends to be much more directed specifically at the Aedos Dynasty rather than at other subject worlds (though there is a bit of that going on, too). More importantly however, the fighting is much more large-scale than the various insurrections seen elsewhere in the Empire. Here military engagements require large deployments of the Aedos Warfleet to meet equally large concentrations of insurrectionist warships intent not just on kicking out the Aedos power structure in the area but also counter-invading and striking hard at Aedos-controlled worlds deep within the Inner Expanse and even the Core Worlds. It is here that the hardest and most destructive fighting is done, and more than one planetary system has been scourged of nearly all life, as giant battleships duke it out in deep space with every manner of population-killing technology at their disposal. The irony out here is that many of the power blocs fighting against the Aedos have no real plan for life afterward. They are just as unable to maintain interstellar trade routes than the Aedos themselves were, so the speculation is that if and when these breakaways throw off the Aedos yoke, they might very well turn inward and fight amongst themselves for control over their own dwindling resources. Unsurprisingly, more than half of the local population here has been displaced themselves or is harboring those who have been. The notion of leaving for Septimus is very powerful here, since the Aedos and their enemies give everybody out here more reasons to leave every day.

The Periphery

Beyond the Outer Reaches lies the Periphery, where the stellar density really starts to thin out. While there are still many thousands of star systems here in the middle band of the galaxy, there are notably fewer than in the Outer Reaches. Moreover, the average distance between stellar neighbors gets longer out here, meaning longer jumps and a greater danger when going into hyperspace. As such, the risks of travel in the Periphery have really killed interstellar trade and exchange, with most systems preferring to rough it on their own rather than tempt fate by jumping into the tattered remains of hyperspace. This is where the first scientific study of the degradation of hyperspace was conducted, and more than a few systems took it upon themselves to address the issue rather than wait for the rest of the Empire to get with the program. It was out here that **genotechnology** — the science of altering the biology of the human body and mind — was pioneered, largely to lengthen human lifespans in order to make interplanetary travel using slower-than-light (STL) means plausible. At this moment, large numbers of STL ships are cruising between the stars, powered by solar sails, ramscoops, ion engines and a host of other low-tech propulsion systems that will take decades just to cross the distance to the next closest star. Still, to these people the long game is the only way to go. Besides, many of them believe that after decades in the isolation of deep space, the technology and knowledge they brought with them might be all that remains of the Empire once they finally land on a planet again. Meanwhile, there are also those sectors that have already successfully broken away from the Empire and have established themselves as powers of their own. These breakaway empires are the real nail in the Imperial coffin, for if these areas can operate in open defiance of the Empire and not even suffer the mildest retribution, then surely the Empire cannot possibly hold on to all who wish to abandon it.

The Horizon

The next band of 10,000 light-years is the Horizon, the effective frontier of the Empire. This is where the settlements get very patchy. Most of the planetary colonization is at varying stages of development, and the breakdown in the Imperial transit channels means that there is a wildly varying level

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of Imperial support to these settlements. Some of them are somehow still getting decent amounts of material supplies in, and as such are shipping home large quantities of exports. Others are virtually cut off, with their only connection to the Empire coming in the form of hyperspace radio broadcasts that at least let them tune in to propaganda coming from the Core Worlds as well as competing chatter from every other system looking to get the word out about something. It is said that there are still robust hyperspace channels way out here because the level of ship traffic was never all that bad this far from the Core Worlds. Such a theory is widely discredited by experienced ship drivers, but it has not been enough to keep plenty of refugees from coming out here, hoping to rebuild a version of the Empire's glory days out in the galactic boondocks. Such recolonization efforts are usually not carried out with the best of intelligence, and more often than not they fail miserably, with their naïve participants marooning themselves on less than desirable stellar real estate far from any appreciable network of support or service. The Horizon is the stretch of space where most people pass through on their final leg of the trip to Septimus, and by the time they get out here, they really know that they are far from home. The Empire never even got very well established on most of the worlds here, and since they are so spaced out, and their populations are so low, it almost feels in entire sectors that the Empire simply never was. For all intents and purposes, it might as well never have been, because there is almost nothing to show for it. There are the occasional Aedos warfleet patrols, but these ships have basically become roaming warlords answerable only to themselves and not bothering to check in with their masters at all anymore. Relatively self-sufficient, these roaming enforcement patrols "live off the land" by pillaging whatever small settlements they can find and moving on in a never-ending course through the Horizon. For them, it is only a matter of time before they either run out of supplies and starve in space, or get lost in a deep space jump, so the Aedos warfleet captains figure they will take what they can while they can and let destiny run its course.

The Void

This is the outermost edge of the galaxy. It is the final band of territory, where the spiral arms of the galaxy really taper down and the proximity between the stars become huge rifts that are dangerous to cross even without hyperspace being all shot through with holes. Technically, this entire district is considered to be part of known space, and hence, part of the Seventh Empire, but that is only how it looks on the official records. In reality, most of the space out here is uncharted. Most of the worlds are unsettled, and the few that are are little more than lonely outposts struggling to survive in the cold, dark harshness of the galactic edge. There is very little out here to encourage the majority of spacers to come out all this way, especially with hyperspace being in such a state of disrepair, the trip is likely to be one-way. One enticement is that out here a number of weird spatial phenomena have been observed, ranging from the discovery of the worldsphere Septimus to strange hyperspace depressions where entire planetary masses seem to be dwelling half in realspace and half in hyperspace; to temporal disturbances where time seems to move faster, slower or in a strange parallel to the areas around it; and the reception of radio signals of unknown but possible sentient origin. Despite the extreme age and breadth of humanity's life among the stars, nowhere in the galaxy have any sentient aliens been encountered. It is just humanity and the stars so far, and that is all. Given the bleak, cyclical nature of human civilization, it has occurred to many philosophers during the final days of the Seventh Empire that perhaps our only way of breaking free of our self-destructive behaviors as a species is to get a little help from another sentient race that could provide us with a little perspective if nothing else. The search for sentient life occurs

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mostly out on the edge of the Void, and so far there have been many enticing leads but nothing concrete. What progress has been made also has been disqualified by those who insist that humanity is alone in the universe and therefore unique and supreme among all beings. It boggles the mind of scientists looking for alien life that this kind of conflict would flare up so far from the rest of civilization — while an entire Empire is falling apart — it seems that wherever two humans are, the potential for conflict persists And so it goes.

Hyperspace

The last section of the Empire is hyperspace itself, which is easily the least understood part of the galaxy. As far as scientists can tell, hyperspace extends across the entire universe, connecting galaxies with massive quantum strings, phase doors, dimensional vortices and a host of other theoretical constructs of which only the most advanced scientist has even a loose grasp. What is commonly known is that wherever you can go in the galaxy, you can go in hyperspace, too, only there is no real physical distance to hyperspace, which is why going into and out of it translates to instantaneous travel here in realspace. Going through it is like pushing a needle through cloth; once or twice and you don't even notice what it does to the cloth. But do it a million times, and soon the cloth itself is shot. For it to have collapsed as it has is quite a blow to the mindset of the spacefaring culture of the Seventh Empire. To most ship passengers and drivers, it just doesn't seem possible that it is no longer safe to go through hyperspace. Some try to prove that it is safe to themselves by going through for the heck of it while others make repeated jumps in the hopes that something bad actually will happen. That way, they can study the effects of it up close and in so doing, maybe discern a way to fix it. By traveling through hyperspace in specially modified scanning vessels, some scientists profess to have found spaces beneath hyperspace — infraspace, magnaspace, ultraspace — and beyond that other layers of extraspatial dimensions that form an endless layering through the universe through and between which there might exist entire alternate realities. Whether that is the case is something only the bravest, the most foolhardy and most naïve are left to ponder, for most everyone else with a well-developed sense of self-preservation simply will not enter hyperspace anymore. It just is not worth it.

The Sphere

Getting There

Septimus is a remote, high-tech settlement that plays a unique role in galactic politics, being at the fringe of interstellar exploration, diplomatic cross currents, and the ever-increasing need for the Seventh Empire to enhance trade and industry among the few remaining hyperspace lanes that connect its remaining systems. Despite its geographical isolation, Septimus is on the minds of nearly everyone within the Seventh Empire, for it is the system that contains **Septimus**, the mysterious alien worldsphere, discovered by the **Sindavar Extent** years ago, colonized, and now opened to the galactic populace as a safe haven as the rest of the Empire crumbles. Those who come to Septimus will find that getting to Septimus is no small matter.

It is on the far side of a series of **galactic rifts** — large expanses of deep space without any star systems to stop at along the way (usually, in order to refuel by skimming what you need from the local star). As such, arriving at Septimus entails first jumping across the Sorenceti Rift and landing at either Caldehot or Boreena, both of which are breakaway systems with no love

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for the Empire and even less for Imperial citizens who like to pass through on their way to Septimus. After that, one must then jump across the Uulekose Rift, landing at the outpost world of Nos Terhain, most of whose inhabitants died recently in what appears to be a massive biological weapons malfunction. All that remains are a few crazed survivors who are slowly mutating into something distinctly inhuman, as well as automated message buoys exhorting ships not to land here. Beyond that is the third and final expanse, the Koli Rift, beyond which is the Sargasso, an expanse of systems all just out of realspace travel distance from each other. Most of these systems are barren and uninhabited, while a few might have the occasional exile colony or rock hermit eking out a living in the distant void of the galaxy. At the outermost edge of the Sargasso lies Septimus.

For ships traveling to Septimus, either a high-end jump drive is required, or ships must carry enough fuel to make it to the next stop in the journey. Over the years, the midway worlds between the galactic rifts have survived almost entirely off the processing and sale of starship fuel, drop tanks, and charging transit fees for all ships heading to and from Septimus. Most travelers heading to Septimus only get hit with a minor tariff upon landing. Laden cargo ships leaving Septimus, on the other hand, are taxed according to their tonnage and cargo mass, so the charges get pretty hefty. Still, this is little more than legalized robbery, and even though the rates the midway worlds charge are outrageous, the travelers going through pay them because they have little option otherwise. It is worth noting that various energy companies in the midway worlds have set up additional refueling stations in the area, where they charge traffic going to Septimus barely more than production cost for ship fuel and drop tanks in the hopes of encouraging more traffic to Septimus. The more traffic that goes to Septimus, the more traffic that's likely to come out with a heavy load ripe for taxation. That's the theory, anyway. Hyperspace itself might not last for too much longer to see if the theory holds water.

For those who finally get to Septimus, surviving the many chancy hyperspace jumps required to even get this far, what they arrive at is a dark system with all of the mass of a solar system reading on a ship's scanners, but no star to see, just an enormous gravity well surrounding the point where the system star ought to be, out to a galactic astronomical unit. Automated message buoys around the system greet incoming ships with a pleasant but disturbingly vague message that does not seem to have changed over the last few decades. And what it says is simple to the point of distraction:

"This is the Sindavar Extent, welcoming any and all to Septimus, our world of worlds on the edge of known space. As you flee the chaos consuming the galaxy, know that within the confines of the Septimus worldsphere awaits a world free of want and conflict. Supertechnology advances and the wondrous artifacts left by the alien ancients who built this sphere have enabled us to build a perfect society where humanity and technology can live as one, without fear or envy and without want. You have come far to share in our dream. Take your final step inside our world, and become part of what we have built. Septimus and its wonders await."

The message is well known throughout the galaxy and itself is something of a story. The Sindavar Extent are a strange technology-obsessed cult that left the Empire many years ago to seek out what they knew was an amazing discovery on the edge of Known Space. At the time, they were written off as a pack of deluded pilgrims, and when nobody heard from them after their departure, they figured the Extent died out on the void's edge. But when

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this message began transmitting across the entire galaxy about 10 years ago, suddenly the joke of Septimus wasn't so funny anymore, and the Sindavar Extent looked less like crackpots and more like visionaries. That said, this message is all anybody has left to remember the Extent by. The entire population of that society relocated to inside the Sphere, and none has ever returned from it. This spare message is all that marks their existence to the universe outside of Septimus. To see what the Extent is up to, one must enter the Sphere.

However, not all who come to Septimus can summon the courage to enter the Sphere. The hyperspace signature around the Sphere is especially unstable, meaning that any ship that tries to enter the Sphere runs more than a 50% chance of a catastrophic misjump that could place them millions of light-years off course, destroyed, or simply lost forever within the reality-bending properties of hyperspace itself. A common reaction when the local readings of Septimus' hyperspace signature are read is that even if one does jump inside the sphere, the chances of being able to jump out are very sketchy. Are there properties within the Sphere that will make return impossible? After all, none has ever come out of it. Is that because they do not want to… or because they simply cannot?

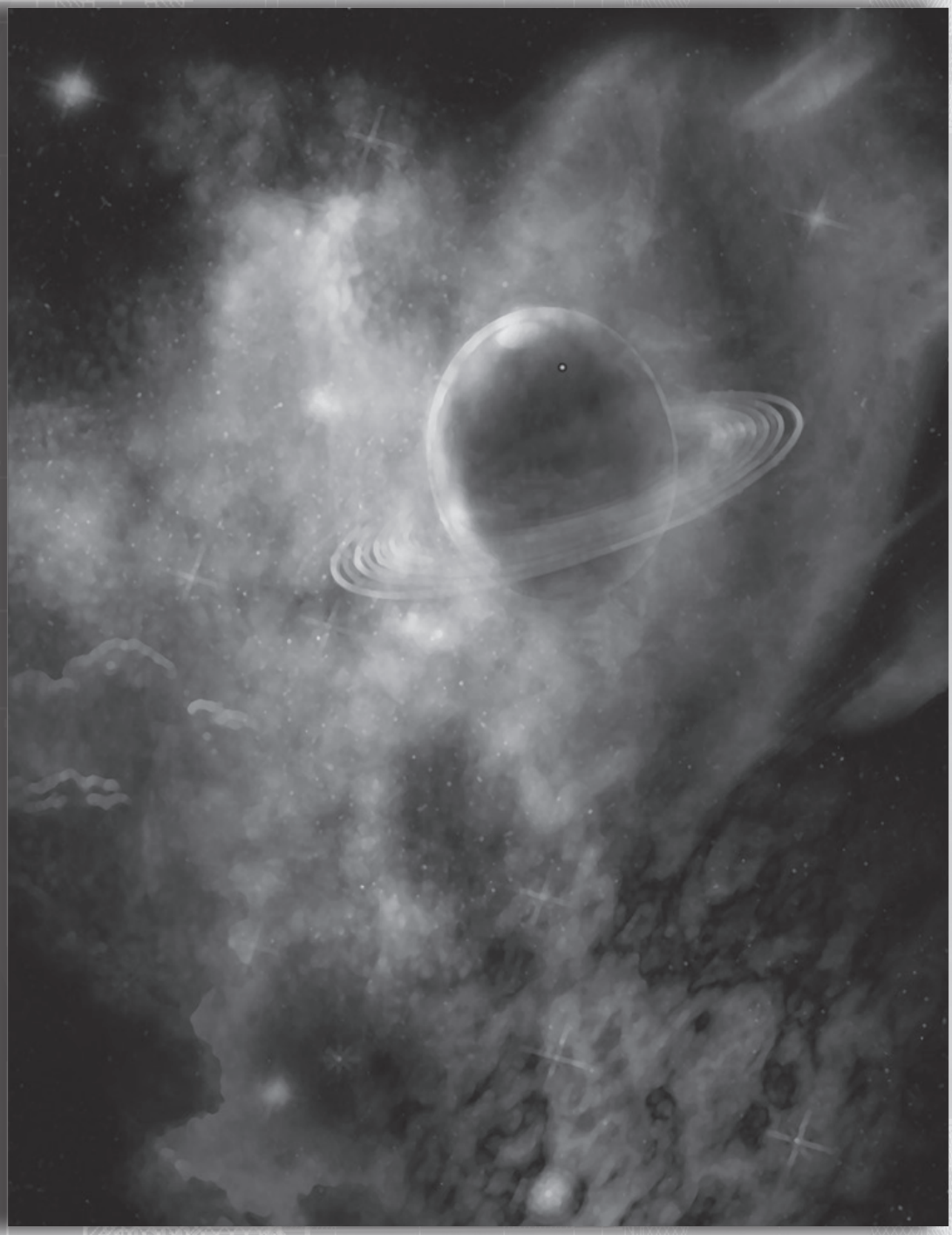
As compelling as this concern may be, the reality is that by the time travelers get to Septimus, they are already so isolated that it is not just a matter of jumping to another system if they cannot summon the courage to jump inside the Sphere. To get to anything even remotely civilized, one would have to make multiple jumps, and even then still be stuck in the boondocks. There is always the possibility of staying outside of the Sphere, but there are no major settlements on the Sphere's surface, and there is not even any local starlight to provide some semblance of energy. The Sphere mysteriously gives off no appreciable heat or other energy, considering that it contains a star, science demands that its contained energy must go somewhere, but wherever that somewhere may be, it's not outside the Sphere's shell. That means that ships can't siphon solar energy to keep going. Onboard reactors can run for centuries but are prone to breakdown, and out here, a downed reactor is a death sentence. Staying out of the Sphere is to live a life of slow resource depletion of some kind, but there are those who try to do it, and the outer surface of the Sphere is littered with the hulls of hundreds of ships that for whatever reason could not or would not enter. It is also homes to those ships that have landed on the Sphere's surface and simply scrounge what they need from the wreckages of others. It is a bleak, cannibalistic life, but for those unwilling to take that final step into the sphere, it is the only option.

The jump inside the Sphere, if it goes well (and for those playing the game, we'll assume that it does), feels like any other jump through hyperspace, but on the other side awaits not the familiar deep space of the Seventh Empire but the awesome sight of the worldsphere Septimus.

What Is Septimus?

Septimus is a **Dyson Sphere**, an artificial construct that completely surrounds a star, called Helion, and encloses it in a shell that has an internal radius of exactly one **astronomical unit** — the distance from Earth to the Sun. The inner surface of the sphere is one big Earth-like environment, with a normal atmosphere, untouched wilderness and 1 G. of gravity. The surface area of the inside of the sphere is several million times that of most rocky planets. In fact, Imperial cartographers who have come inside the sphere have estimated that there is more habitable living space within Septimus than on all of the habitable worlds of the Seventh Empire combined. Given that the Seventh Empire spans over much of the galaxy, that is an incredible comparison indeed. Immediately upon entering Septimus, one can see how this place could become the universal

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fallout shelter for the entire Empire. Truly, the whole of the Empire could fit within this one massive world and still have plenty of room and resources to go around for as long as anybody would foretell.

The sphere itself is constructed of an unknown material since whatever comprises the shell is covered by a very thick crust and mantle of Earth-like geology, complete with a deep subterranean asthenosphere that makes the surface of the sphere tectonically active. Scientists have speculated endlessly on what properties the Sphere's basic building blocks must exhibit to make this even possible, but so far all such hypothesizing has been little more than mere guesswork. The truth is, whoever built Septimus did so with a far more complete knowledge of science and the universe than any human possesses, which is why to us a Dyson Sphere is a perplexing hypothetical construct. To the ancients who built Septimus, such a thing is not just a theoretical possibility but a proven reality. For them, some think, it would be no problem to build several, and maybe they have. But whatever they did, the fact remains that they had access to knowledge and abilities that far exceed anything known in the Seventh Empire, and that reality has in fact discouraged many of the Empire's greatest minds from studying Septimus; they feel that to do so would be little more than a dog trying to watch a hologram and understand the principles behind it.

The leading theory is that an ancient and alien race (one that somehow seemed to eliminate all record of its existence from the universe except for this sphere — which may have been their intentional legacy) built what could initially be thought of as a swarm construct — a complex array of orbital plates placed in a sphere configuration around the star at the heart of Septimus. These were built over time and put into place one by one. After that was completed, the project went into phase two, wherein an equatorial band of swarm plates were fused to form a ring about the central star. This was the first continuous habitat about the central star, and it was most likely from here that the effort was undertaken to create another equatorial ring, this time at a 90 degree angle to the first, creating a crossing superstructure onto which every other swarm plate would eventually be attached.

Obviously, the construction of a device such as Septimus challenges the limits of even the most advanced forms of theoretical science within the Empire. Current scientific thought dictates that the nature of a solid shell about a star would in fact have no gravitational relationship with that star, since the shell itself could easily drift from its position around the central star and eventually collide with it. Likewise, the biosphere placed on the inside of the shell should have no gravitational compulsion to stay on the shell; it too should simply drift away from the shell and fall inward to collide with the central star. Furthermore, a solid shell entraps all of the energy output from the central star; without any mechanism to harness this energy, the surface would absorb all of it. This should also adversely affect the inner biosphere, but those who live on the surface can attest that somehow, it does not. On a purely engineering front, the pressure placed upon any point of the shell should be equivalent to that of the base of a dome 1 Astronomical Unit in height and under the equivalent of the star's gravity. No known material in the Seventh Empire even comes close to being able to exhibit the kind of strength that is required to keep Septimus from breaking apart. Yet the sphere maintains itself with no signs of breaking down.

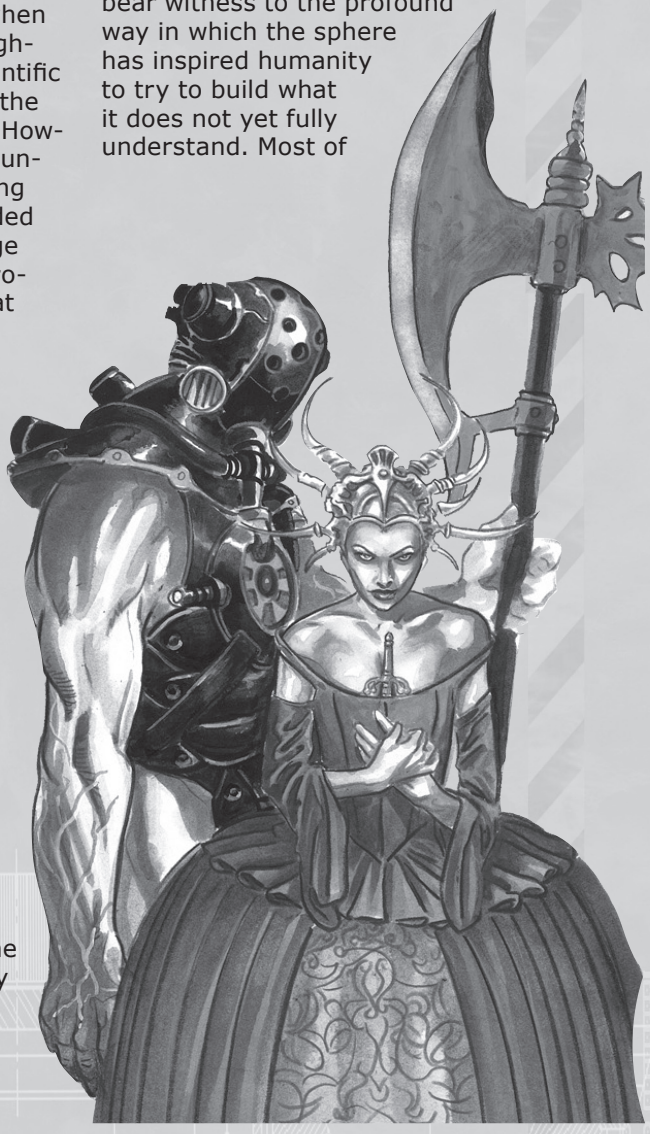
Then there is the point of raw material; it is theorized that an entire Earth-like solar system would have to be mined in entirely – every single planet, moon and asteroid just to make what would amount to a fairly thin Dyson shell. Intense scanning efforts suggest that the thickness of the Septimus shell is nearly the diameter of an Earth-class planet. This means that multiple solar

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systems would have to have been mined to create the Sphere. This might account for the numerous galactic rifts that lead up to Septimus, but even still, the resources necessary to mine an entire solar system, break it down to its elemental components and then use those components to build something else simply boggles the mind.

These are just a few details that display how Septimus is, in many ways, an ongoing contradiction of current galactic science. This has been a big factor why, even when scanning footage was broadcast throughout the galaxy, most of the official scientific organizations of the Empire dismissed the very existence of Septimus as a hoax. However, as more and more travelers encountered the sphere and sent back scanning evidence of it — or in some cases, landed on the surface and took home wreckage that had crashed there — it became progressively more impossible to deny that Septimus was real, even if building something like it was utterly beyond current human capabilities. The truth is, Septimus has existed for many millennia, and is likely to continue existing for many more. So any scientific precepts that the sphere seems to have broken by its existence or by its means of construction or maintenance in fact do not break any known laws of science. Instead, it is upholding laws that are as yet unknown to the greatest minds of the Seventh Empire.

This is perhaps the sphere's most endearing trait to the scientific community, that it is physical evidence of undiscovered knowledge (and quite a bit of it, too). One can easily conclude that the secrets used to build Septimus could be the secrets of humanity as well, if only it could bring itself to the level of the Septimus engineers. It may be a very long journey, and the chaos of the Empire's dissolution does not help the situation any, but the scientists studying Septimus are nothing if not an optimistic lot, and the motivation for nearly all who come to the sphere is to see what can be learned from this, the greatest and most significant mystery ever posed to the human race. To the rest of the Empire that has not gone to Septimus, the existence of the sphere has fired the imaginations of engineers everywhere. At present, there are more than a dozen Septimus-style projects under construction. Each is but a pale shadow of Septimus itself, but they bear witness to the profound way in which the sphere has inspired humanity to try to build what it does not yet fully understand. Most of



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these building projects are either "Septimus swarms," Septimus bubbles" or "Septimus nets."

A Septimus swarm is simply an array, as described earlier, of habitational plates placed in a sphere-like configuration around a central star. A Septimus bubble is similar to a swarm in that it entails the placement of many elements around a single star. However, these are all freely positioned satellites within a fixed orbital distance, unconnected and able to move as they like. The Septimus nets take this concept one step further, as the various satellites of a bubble somehow string themselves together, usually with hyper-molecular filament, creating a mesh structure that fully encloses the star, even if it is highly open and easily passed through. None of these kinds of projects are even close to completion, however, and even under the best of circumstances, they would take decades to finish. As it stands, with the Empire suffering ongoing political chaos, and the collapse of hyperspace making it impossible to ship large amounts of building materials, it seems unlikely that any such project could be completed under present conditions.

On The Inside

Once a ship crosses into Septimus, the first thing one notices is just how bright it is inside. The albedo, or luminary reflectiveness, of the Earth-like surface of Septimus' interior is quite high — think of how brightly Earth shines against the darkness of space, and then think of that same brightness surrounding you entirely on all sides. For the ship drivers that cross into it, even though there is a considerable expanse of deep space within Septimus, it sure doesn't feel like the black void they just left. It feels like an huge expanse of sky, really, in which wherever you look, you see the vast surface spreading out in front of you, above you, to the sides of you, and below you. This is the Deep Sky, and for those within Septimus, it is one of the three primary environments one encounters. The second is the Surface, which is simply the interior biosphere of Septimus. It is the surface area of several million Earths, and the large continents and oceans visible from the Deep Sky understate just how enormous the geological features of the surface really are. Seen from space, the large continents on the surface are large enough to accommodate the surface area of many Earths; the smaller islands the size of just one, and this is just the largest, most visible geology. There are countless smaller land masses on the surface that only come into view when one gets to the shallowest areas of the Deep Sky and near the atmospheric envelope of the surface. Only then do Earth-level land mass and water bodies come into focus.

Within the Deep Sky, it is otherwise like normal deep space in that there is no atmosphere or gravity. There are high, even lethal levels of solar radiation that would kill those humans unprotected by spacesuits. The level of, for lack of a better term, "daylight" that is present everywhere, however, often requires those in the Deep Sky to figure out some way of simulating darkness for at least part of the 24-hour cycle. Otherwise, a lengthy adaptation process must begin where one gets accustomed to there being no night-time darkness whatsoever. Just as it has been recorded elsewhere in the Empire that those exposed to too much darkness in the day tend to suffer for it psychologically, those exposed to too much sunlight also tend to suffer the same effects, becoming strangely morose, distracted and even quarrelsome.

Some relief for this can be found on the surface of the sphere, where the natural environment ranges from tropic, to subtropical and temperate. It is worth noting that there are no true "polar" regions of Septimus, and as such there are no really cold environments. In fact except for microclimatic variance on the surface, the overall climate and environment on the surface is rather uniform. The weather is usually agreeable, the precipitation manageable, and overall, it

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is a very pleasant place in which to survive. The leading theory for why this is true is that there lies within the substructure of the sphere a weather manipulation matrix that creates hyper-realistic simulations of known weather patterns, and that the weather on Septimus is no natural process, but simply just another construct that looks, behaves and feels like the real thing. If there is a weather matrix, then it must malfunction every now and again, for there do form periodic superstorms that, each the size of a large planet, and with a force capable of destroying virtually any human construction in its path. These killer storms do not occur often, but when they do, they leave thin scars of damage on the surface that take many years to recover. Eventually the recovery does happen, as the natural processes of the biosphere (or what passes for natural processes, anyway) take their course. Water flows, soil moves, trees regrow, animals repopulate, and in the grand scheme of things, life goes on.

It is worth noting that the gravity felt on the surface is identical to that felt on the most Earth-like planets within the Seventh Empire. This is yet another scientific conundrum, since the sphere does not seem to be rotating to gain gravitational effect, for if it did, then there would develop "polar" regions where the gravity was much weaker. However, no such poles have been detected, and gravity appears to be uniform across the sphere. The likeliest explanation for this is a network of gravity generators built into the sphere, but like the weather manipulation matrix, there is no proof for this. There is not even evidence that might hint of proof.

Those on the surface will eventually run across nearly every kind of Earth-like environment, flora and fauna encountered throughout the Seventh Empire. In fact, the biological content of the sphere seems to represent a kind of ark that contains a sample of all of the indigenous life that can be found within the Empire. These many different species of plants and animals have come together into a massive patchwork quilt biosystem that has worked pretty well. There have been some mass extinctions it seems, but for the most part the plants, animals and protests of the Empire seem to have been transplanted by the ancients to the sphere. Then again, as some suggest, perhaps the creatures of the Empire really came from the Sphere and were sent to proliferate across the inner galaxy. Without proof of either possibility, adherents to both camps debate their points endlessly and without any real chance of convincing the other side of "the truth."

The Sindavar Extent

Just as the physical history of Septimus is murky at best, so too is its political history. Everybody in the galaxy now knows of the Sindavar Extent, but nobody really knows who they are, what they want or how they set out to accomplish it. They simply know that about a century ago, the Extent, long known as a radical fringe group that openly advocated the creation of artificial intelligence and the nanotechnological augmentation of humans (despite the illegality of both), tired of trying to convince an unsympathetic galaxy of the legitimacy of their views, packed up and moved out, announcing that it had discovered an alien artifact of immeasurable power, and that they were going to colonize it. The Extent's departure was ignored, and their disappearance was met with a galactic shrug. So much for the Extent — or so the Empire thought.

The Extent is a community of scientists, philosophers and technologists who are bound by the concept that there is no problem that cannot be solved through the proper application of technology. To that end, artificial intelligence is seen as

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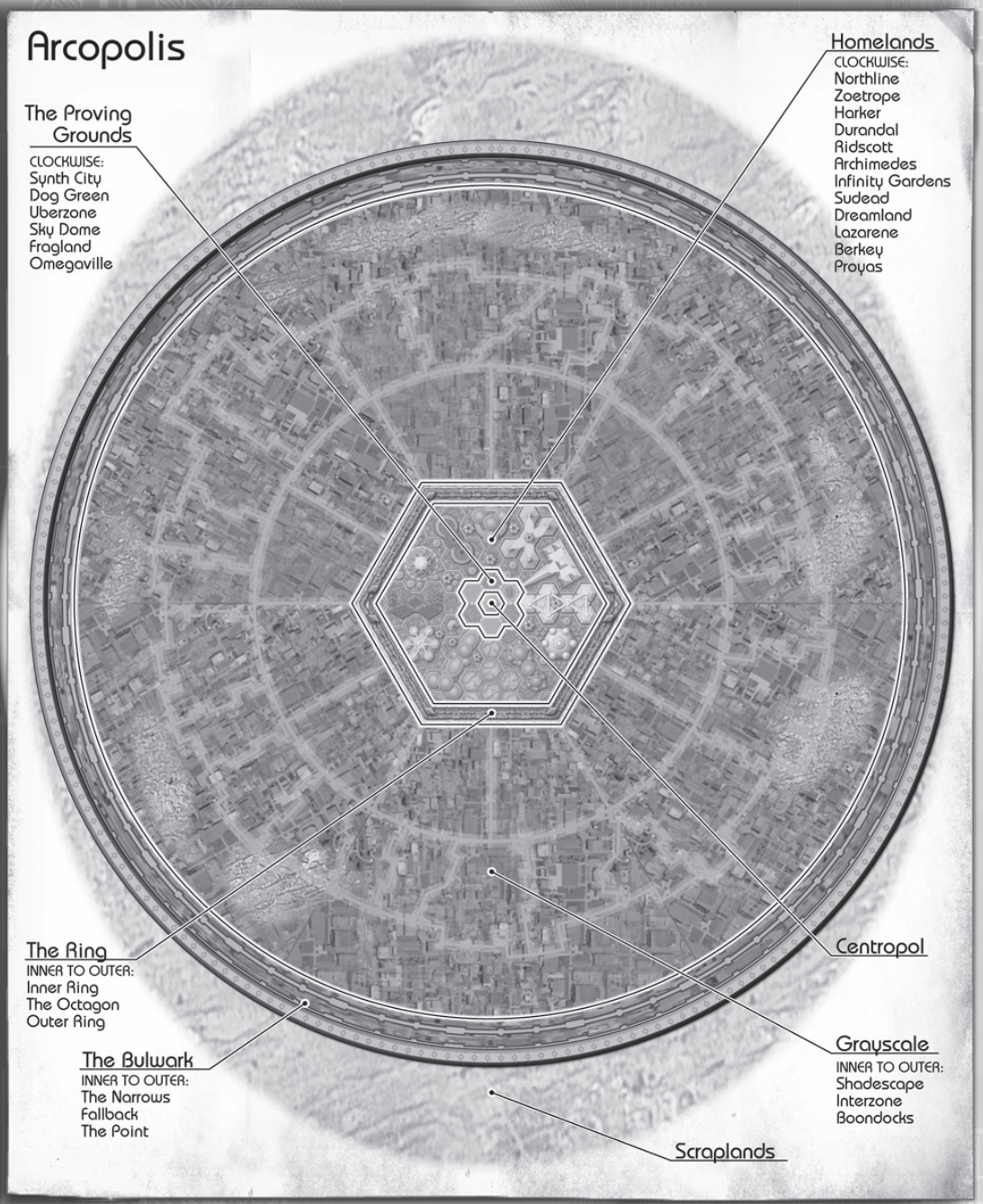
an extension of human evolution, and the mechanical modification of human biology (e.g., through the implementation of nanotechnology) is thought to be a commonplace extension of natural abilities. To the Extent, if science can conceive of something and execute it, then it is, in fact, as natural as the human ability to breathe oxygen or to bear live young. To the Extent there is no ghost in the machine; for all machines are simply echoes of the human soul, and those who fail to see that simply doom themselves to a life of spiritual unfulfillment and the misguided use of technology to ends that are not compatible with human destiny.

This outlook earned the Extent "lunatic fringe" status because of the prevailing attitude across the galaxy that technology is good but only in moderation. A spate of wars fought by self-aware robots and artificial intelligences very early in the Empire's history made the Empire forever distrustful of technology that was too sophisticated. As such, the supertech advances that the Extent professes to support and develop were more than enough reason to suggest to the Extent that maybe its members should settle some place far, far away. The Extent was only too happy to oblige.

Today, the Extent is the power in control of Septimus, but it is a far cry from what it once was. Something happened to the Extent upon entering Septimus, and the alien technologies it encountered there seem to have forever altered their group identity and psyche. Instead of a core of technocultists content to mechanize themselves in peace and isolation, they have become now a paranoid militant empire bent on subjugating all who come into contact with it. The Extent seemed to have fulfilled the very prophecy that led to their initial ouster from the galactic population: they dabbled too deeply with technologies they did not understand and thus have been transformed into something distinctly unsettling. Occupying massive arcology cities on the surface, the Extent has developed rejuvenation and cloning technologies as well as persona digitization that enables people to make copies of themselves ad infinitum. What began as a relatively small group has mass produced itself into a society of trillions where the greatest duty is to conform, the greatest show of loyalty is to not think too hard, and the highest honor is to believe what your leaders tell you.

At the top of the Extent is the sinister **Cadre**, whose exact identity is known only to themselves. The Cadre is thought to be an elite group of seven thinkers within the Extent — perhaps its original founders — whose fusion with artificial intelligence and alien technology have so far removed them from humanity as to be an entirely new race of beings. They dwell somewhere within the heart of the territory controlled by the Extent (most likely within **Arcopolis**, the Extent's capital city) and they rule by joint decree, coming to a consensus amongst themselves and simply ordering that it be done by its legion of drone-like followers. They tolerate no insubordination, and they will do anything to crush whoever opposes them. They are cruel as they are kind, providing for their subjects a life that is, by Extent standards anyway, purely peaceful and idyllic. Indeed, the Cadre does allow for the average Extent subject to live without having to work (unthinking robots take care of all of that), deal with poverty (nanotech compilers tap the limitless resources of Septimus itself to make almost anything one desires with the push of a button) or think about the unpleasantness of the outside world (an aggressive propaganda campaign makes sure the people of the Extent know only what the Cadre wants them to know and nothing else). So long as you can play within those rules, you and the Cadre will get along just fine. But step one inch outside of that and the Cadre will come down on you like a hammer, wiping your memory and replacing it with something more acquiescent. Or maybe they'll just kill you and make your friends and family forget that you ever existed. In a society like the Extent, and to a power base like the Cadre,

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memory is a weapon, and its use begets the fear that keeps most who even dream of defying the Cadre in line.

The public face of the Extent is a synthetic personality known only as **Machina** (pronounced "MAH-heen-ah," as in the second half of the term, "deus ex machina"). She is a regal, queen-like figure (depicted on the cover of this book, in fact), who is broadcast in all of the public media throughout the Sindavar Extent as the leader of the Extent, its moral center, its guardian, its prophet and as its all-seeing, all-knowing, benevolent godhead.

The majority of the Extent, Machina is the only true authority figure they know. Sure, there are the many security agents of the Cadre, but they are seen almost as priests serving the godhead; they are the agents of Machina's will, and despite their oppressive methods, they are accepted as required to safeguard the greater good.

This sheep-like attitude is something the Cadre actively promotes. The widespread phenomenon known as the Corruption is felt everywhere throughout the Extent. At first, it was seen as a massive systems failure of the mechanization technologies that were central to the Extent's social identity. That is when the Cadre formed, seeing the Corruption as a chance to remake the Extent into something different, something with the purity of an insect colony. It was the Cadre that began the massive cultural indoctrination program that convinced those living within the Extent that corruption is actually a good thing, since it will bring you, incrementally, to a state closer to a true fusion between man and machine, a state that will bring you closer to Machina herself. In that regard, the Extent's populace generally does not fear the corruption, though they do not seek it out quite as enthusiastically as the Cadre would like for the more people who are corrupted, the more people who will be willing to kill and to die for the good of the Extent. To the Cadre, that is all that matters.

Arcopolis

The world of the Sindavar Extent consists mainly of the mega-city **Arcopolis** and its immediate surroundings. As vast as all this may be, it still represents an utterly tiny portion of what the Extent refers to as the **Prime Sector**. The Prime Sector is, according to Extent analysis, a single hexagonal block of territory on the surface of Septimus that contains Arcopolis and all of its outlying development as well as the widely dispersed series of alien ruins on top of which Arcopolis was built.

At least a few of the **Seven Cities** are thought to be somewhat intact, but at the moment there is really no way of knowing. The people of Arcopolis are, for all intents and purposes, cut off from the rest of the world and anxiously await the day when communications come back on line and the global community begins re-establishing its connections.

Why this has not yet happened is a troubling mystery to the people of the Extent. One would think that with the incredible technologies at the Extent's disposal, making contact with any remaining arcologies would be a simple matter. But for reasons the Extent's technicians have been unable to discover, the communications blackout remains in effect. Some think Steel Helix so severely damaged the world's technology that only entirely new forms of Corruption-free equipment must be designed and built. Others think there is a hostile cloud of nanites in the atmosphere suppressing all but the most local of communications. Others think there is simply nobody left to with whom to communicate; that Arcopolis and the hostile states surrounding it is all that are left in a vast and unfriendly junkyard world.

Many in Arcopolis have made it their life's work either to establish contact with the rest of the world or to ascertain once and for all that there is no one else left. Those in the **Grayscale** tend not to care about such things as much. Those in the

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Scraplands generally don't care about it at all, unless they are interested in salvaging technology or recruiting an ally for their war against the Extent. For all three groups, however — the Extent's civilians, the Grayscale, and the Scraplanders — the world they know is both enormous and confining, familiar and strange, both welcoming and hostile. It is the only world these people have ever known, and in the years since the devastation of Steel Helix and **ZPG**, it may very well be the only world they are ever likely to know. Some take this truth with a despairing resignation that humanity's greatest years are far, far behind it. Others accept this with a shrug and a nod and keep on keeping on. Other still recognize the challenges before them as their canvas on which to somehow, someway, paint a better world — not just for themselves alone, but for all of humanity, now and forever more.

Another Day In Paradise

Nearly 90% of the Extent's citizenry are what are known as "**Proles**," simple people with few ambitions, modest nanomodification and minimal skill specialization. On the other hand, they tend to be fairly Corruption-free, and those who become adventurers, soldiers of fortune or outlaws find that their high capacity for rejuvenation gives them a lease on life few others can appreciate. These people are the "blank slates" of the Extent. They start with little, but that gives them the most room to maneuver when it comes to later customization.

Despite their unique qualifications for a life of adventure, nearly all Extent citizens never embark on one. They live a life where, even in these troubled times, the Extent sees to their every need. They descend from a people who have learned over the course of generations that they do not need to do much of anything to get what they want. Most have become so slothful and indolent that they have forgotten that sometimes pleasure can come out working for the sake of working. No, the average Extent citizen is more than content to wake up each day, spend his days doing nothing of consequence, watching way too much holorama and checking up on Trencher gladiator stats before having dinner, watching more holorama and finally retiring to sleep.

Such a lifestyle is not completely without productivity, however. With so few pressing duties on hand, there has developed a rich and varied Prole culture full of hidden meanings, intentions within intentions, multiple layers of manners, double, triple and quadruple entendres, and the like, For many Proles, life is just one big courtly intrigue, with people spending inordinate amounts of energy wondering who attended who's latest party, what the hidden meaning of somebody's latest correspondence might mean, why one family might seek to donate its genetic records to that of another family, who would duel (in holorama simulation, of course) if a particular slight to one's character were not corrected in time, and so forth.

In the event that life as a Prole gets boring, most citizens turn to holorama to entertain themselves. This fully immersive digital reality medium offers endless chances to engage in interactive storytelling, role-playing, sim/stimulation, and carrying on in games of every kind. Holorama is also the medium of choice to tap into watching a Trencher deathmatch, an exercise that allows citizens to either hover above one of the gladiatorial battlefields like an invisible bird, viewing the action below from a free-floating camera angle, or through the eyes (and sensorium) of one of the fighters, feeling everything the fighter feels. In the event an observer's "mule" (the civilian name for a fighter they piggyback on during a holorama session) dies, the civilian is simply transferred to the free-floating camera vision until he hooks up with another fighter on the field. There is no risk to watching a deathmatch which is why so many Proles, who crave excitement and unpredictability — but would not have the slightest clue how to react were they actually confronted with it — love their holorama so.

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Despite their lives of endless luxury, Proles also embody a quiet desperation pervading the entire Extent. These are bad times, what with rampant Corruption and enemies all around the Extent trying to overthrow, and even though the Proles do an excellent job of insulating themselves from the harsh realities of life beyond Arcopolis, they cannot forget that they have been victimized by the Steel Helix and by the Extent's enemies. For them, the fears of the next blow to their way of life are exceeded by one thing: their grim conviction that there is nothing they can do about it.

Life Is A Battlefield

Born out of a social experiment designed to cure humanity of its latent aggressions, the Morituri are a caste of professional gladiators within the Extent. They generally live apart from the rest of the citizenry, inhabiting warrior towns and villages within vast battlefields called the **Proving Grounds** that are located in the heart of Arcopolis. The Morituri participate in a never-ending series of live-fire war games that are just as deadly as any real battle, only the participants have no real grudge against each other, have no political motivation for fighting, and see their combat merely as a way to put their skills and love of warfare to good use. Thanks to the Extent's incredible medical technology, injured and slain Morituri can be fully restored moments after they take a bullet or catch some shrapnel, allowing tem to wage endless wars no matter how many times they get injured or killed.

Despite the painful lives they lead, the Morituri generally do not mind their bloody existence, nor do they carry many lasting psychological scars from a lifetime of carnage and casualties. To them, this is what they were meant to do, plain and simple.

Because of their great combat experience, Morituri have been recruited by the Cadre as freelance soldiers for the Extent, a move that probably saved the Extent during the Battle of Arcopolis. Since then, Morituri have routinely appeared as auxiliary soldiers and consultants to the Cadre, either of their own accord or because they were pressed into service by the powers that be. Either way, the Morituri touch on the battlefield is a considerable asset to any fighting force, and the Morituri themselves are all too glad to be considered the Extent's top experts on battle.

The war games in the Proving Grounds are a major source of entertainment to the rest of the Extent, which follows the action via holorama. This has made the Morituri celebrities who can expect to be mobbed by fans when they venture out into public. Especially famous gladiators often have fan clubs and devoted followers who track their every battlefield statistic.

As the Proving Grounds grow in popularity, the majority of the Morituri lead increasingly isolated lives. Most are content only to live within the Proving Grounds and have little interest in the vast megacity that surrounds them. They have no need for the comforts of the Extent or the dramas affecting it from abroad. All the average Morituri needs is a steady supply of military hardware, medical technology, a barracks to bunk down, and a rallying point. Everything else is ancillary.

The basic social group for the Morituri is the **Combat League**, a strange combination of professional sports team, army unit, and familial clan. Most Morituri are randomly assigned their Combat League when they first enter the gladiatorial life. Once assigned, Morituri do not change, and many have their Combat League's insignia branded to their face or some other commonly seen part of their body. The League and the soldier are one, and Morituri who buck this trend run the risk of being viewed as dangerous renegades by the others.

That said, not all Morituri fight for a Combat League. There are many independent gladiators in the Proving Grounds and in the Extent at large, fighting on their own terms and sometimes getting involved in larger

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adventures with the Cadre, in the Grayscale, or within the Scraplands. While there is talk of large numbers of Morituri defecting to the Scraplands and starting their own Traitor Nation, there remains no proof to back up such stories…yet.

There are, at present, sixty-four Combat Leagues split into four divisions (**Blue**, **Red**, **Green** and **Gold**) of sixteen Leagues each (sporting names such as **Section Eight**, **Crossbones**, **The Scream League**, **Army of Darkness**, and others). Each division has a set schedule of which Leagues fight when and what war games they will play.

Typically, Morituri remain at their Combat League's staging area until their units are informed they have been selected for a match. Then the soldiers suit up, are transported to their start zone deep within the Proving Grounds, and go to work. Morituri adhere strictly to the rules and regulations of whatever game they are playing. There is no room for cheaters in this gladiator culture, and those who break the rules are often ejected from their Combat League and simultaneously barred by the others from joining them. Thus, the disgraced fighter must live life as a shamed independent or drop out of the life altogether.

Shades Of Gray

In its weakened state, the Extent can only extend its reach to a modest distance outside of Arcopolis' borders. Beyond that are the Scraplands, which dominate the many, many miles between Arcopolis and whatever is left of any of the Seven Cities. Where the Extent and the Scraplands meet is the **Grayscale**, an interzone where the lawlessness of the Scraplands meets the technology of the Extent. Technically, Arcopolis claims dominion over the Grayscale and is on a mission to enforce law and order there, even if its residents can live without the Extent's interference.

The Grayscale suffered massive damage during the Steel Helix attack, and it has only been modestly rebuilt since then, so the entire region sports something a of high-tech shantytown appearance, a cobbling of nanofoundry supertech and recycled debris. It makes for a strange look and lends an even stranger character to the area, but it only matches the people that live there.

Also known collectively as the Grayscale, this fringe element of the Extent is a largely lawless bunch, given to working both sides of the Extent-Scraplands conflict. In many cases, Grayscalers will deal with spies, smugglers and saboteurs from the Scraplands, and then turn right around and cut similar deals with operatives from the Extent. While the Grayscale does not always have to worry where it's getting its next meal from, it lacks the material excess of the Extent, so some of its people will use money and bartering to get the things they want but have difficulty manufacturing.

Grayscalers generally feel like they have been abandoned by the Extent, which explains their simmering hostility towards their parent society. But for all of their posturing and double-dealing, life in the Grayscale is much more comfortable than life in the Scraplands, and most Grayscalers are only too aware of it. They like the freedom they enjoy from the Extent, but they want the full benefits the Extent has to offer. It is a contradictory set of demands the Extent — and the Cadre in particular — have a hard time sympathizing, when Cadre patrols enforce the law in the Grayscale, they are trying to send a double message: one to the Scraplands that any incursions will not be tolerated; and one to the Grayscalers that neither will any funny business from them. The Cadre has already deported numerous people from the Grayscale to the Scraplands to make examples out of them, and in some cases it has worked. The people there are more respectful to the Extent and friendly to the Cadre forces patrolling the area. Other areas use such

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actions as further justification to carry out their clandestine campaigns of disobedience and sabotage against an Extent they find too tyrannous to bear but too powerful to oppose openly.

So it is that the Grayscale remains as double-sided as ever. On one face it is a struggling outland section of the Extent trying desperately to rebuild itself and regain the comfort it once knew as a part of Arcopolis proper. Then there is that other side, the dark side, an underground economy and society made up of creeps, crooks, killers, smugglers, hackers and rebels who resent the society that spawned them. These underlings will gladly do whatever it takes to express their low regard for the Extent, stopping just short of open rebellion. No, that task can fall to the Scraplanders, thank you very much. The bad boys of the Grayscale are happy to live lives of crime and disorder, not full-blown revolution.

Noble Savages

Beyond the outer limits of the Grayscale are large areas that were reduced to rubble altogether. These areas cover many square miles and are a symbol of the limit of the Extent's power. Here is where the Extent decided it was simply not worth it to rebuild after the Steel Helix attack, and hundreds of thousands of people were left to fend for themselves. This is the part of Arcopolis that has been reduced to an endless supertech junkyard where there is no law, only barbarism and aggression. These are the **Scraplands**, the nemesis to the luxurious paradise of the Extent. At least, that is what the Extent would have you believe.

The Scraplanders who live beyond the Extent's reach are the survivors and descendants of survivors from the Steel Helix attack. One day, they lived in the lap of luxury, the next day they were fighting just to stay alive. Angry that they were never retrieved by the Extent (which was busy with its own problems at the time), these people soon learned to loathe their former homeland and were driven to thoughts of bloody revenge.

In the years following, the Scraplands are still as wild and woolly as they ever have been. Those that live there are on a constant search for salvageable technology, energy sources and food. Banditry and barbarism are rampant in these ruins, and anybody traveling alone had better be well armed, or they might end up as some savage's lunch. But at the same time, numerous communities have formed out of the chaos and darkness, and these groups are growing both in number and in strength. They are united by a common goal — the downfall of the Extent. Accepting the Extent's name for them — the **Traitor Nations** — these Scraplanders are resourceful, vicious and tough. They are used to living on the edge of survival, where nothing can be taken for granted and where the only law is what comes at the end of a gun barrel.

In the Traitor Nations, life has recovered enough that many of the Scraplanders there no longer focus on survival but on their desires to deliver some payback to the Extent. As a result, many of the Traitor Nations are little more than warrior collectives, filled with legions of soldiers for whom life is a dodgy risk at best, and dying in battle is the greatest joy one can ever hope to attain. It is this mentality that inspired Scraplanders to launch a suicidal raid on Centropol three years ago, known ever since as the **Battle of Arcopolis**. It is also this mentality that sustained the Scraplanders when the Cadre counterattacked afterward, pushing deep into the Scraplands and utterly destroyed two entire Traitor Nations. They have become so used to conflict and hardship that they will work for ten thousand years if that is what they must do to destroy the Extent. And that is why, if the Extent is ever to be free of the Scrapland menace, the Scraplanders must be defeated entirely, to a man, without quarter.

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The Scraplanders know this, too. They also know that for the moment the Extent is not yet dedicated to the total war effort required to tame the Scraplands, and this gives the Traitor Nations even greater courage. But on a higher level than mere aggression or a lust for revenge, the Scraplanders abhor what the Extent has become: a decadent empire of idle times, a massive waste of resources, a temple dedicated to treating the most precious aspects of life with the utmost triviality. They see the Cadre as a tyranny more sinister than anything that has ever plagued mankind, and they see the extreme merging of man and machine as dire aberration that will bring ruin upon the whole of mankind. Already, many Scraplanders are beginning to feel the effects of the Corruption, a condition they wholly blame on the Extent. In fact, numerous conspiracy theories abound that the Corruption is actually a bioweapon developed by the Extent to finish off the Scraplanders once and for all. This is wholly untrue, of course, but the Scraplanders prefer their version of history and cling to it tenaciously. After all, the Extent lacks the courage to fight a true war with the Scraplands, so why not infect it with a dread plague?

All of these things have contributed to a situation where there can be no peace between the two sides. Not without a miracle anyway, and without one, the Scraplanders and the people of the Extent will continue to tread an inexorable path to the next great cataclysm, a war perhaps to end all wars.

Lay Of The Land

Arcopolis is broken into several different sectors that each tend to operate as their own societies. This is much like how the galaxy itself has been divided into interstellar districts. The Extent is not unaware of this, however, and it strives to maintain close contact with the entire expanse of the mega-city, even with the Grayscale and especially with the Scraplands. By the time you get as far as the Scraplands, the Extent's idea of contact is military surveillance, but hey, you have to start somewhere, right? The sections of Arcopolis are:

Centropol

This is the heart of the city and the central district where the Extent's power is concentrated. It is here that the Cadre is headquartered and where the bulk of the Extent's supertechnology can be found. Most of the nanoproduction in Arcopolis is researched and developed right here.

The Proving Grounds

Massive free-fire arenas so huge that the gladiators fighting in them do not realize that their battlefields are essentially in the middle of city parks the size of small worlds.

The Homelands

The primary residential areas of Arcopolis, where the bulk of its populace lives. It is also a primary target of the enemies of the Extent because of the enormous concentration of people here.

The Ring

This is what amounts to a middle wall separating central Arcopolis from the Grayscale. The division makes sure that insurgents and troublemakers from outside of central Arcopolis can't sneak in and raise hell, but it also ensures that the two sides will never be able to live together side by side so long as they are separated by a mighty reminder of the Cadre's security apparatus.

The Grayscale

The middle area between the part of Arcopolis that still works as it is supposed to and that part of Arcopolis that never quite recovered fully from the Steel Helix attack. Those who enter the Grayscale do so at their own risk, and most of the time those

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coming to it from within Arcopolis proper are in search of something improper at best, illegal at worst.

The Bulwark

This section resembles that of the Ring, only it is more devoted to security and not so much toward residence. It was substantially built up after things got bad in the Scraplands, and it is considered to be the outer wall of the inner city. Nobody crosses over or through this without going through strictly controlled Cadre checkpoints.

The Scraplands

The wasteland that is Arcopolis' back yard. Here there be monsters, namely in the form of anti-Extent insurgents looking to put the hurt on any city folk stupid enough to wander out from behind their big walls.

The Traitor Nations

These are large arcology cities that have been established by newcomer settlers. These cities have been kept secret from the Extent and are scattered across the surface of Septimus. Knowledge of them is a carefully guarded secret among the Seven Cities, but select elements within the Newcomer coalition know of them so they can run supplies and personnel to and from these places while trying to avoid detection by Cadre search ships.

The Seven Cities

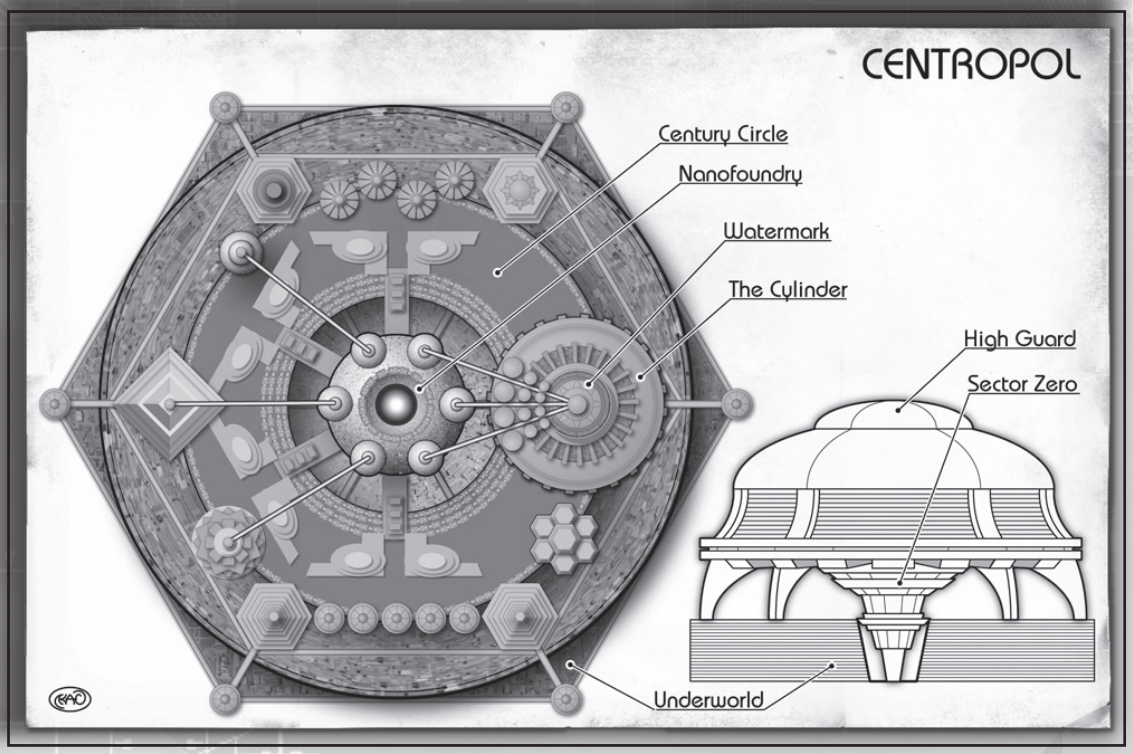
Collectively, the settlements known as the **Seven Cities** are not technically a part of Arcopolis. They are in fact very far away from it, scattered across the surface in locations that have been kept secret from the Cadre. However, the farcaster platforms throughout Arcopolis are also hooked up to the same farcaster nodes used by the Traitor Nations. Thus, those with the secret transmit codes of one of the Traitor Nations can easily teleport from there to Arcopolis and back again without anybody knowing the difference. This is a HUGE security concern for the Extent, which is why finding the location and transmit codes of each of the Seven Cities is a top priority. With those, Arcopolis can cut off farcaster access to the Seven Cities. Without it, the Seven Cities will continue to be the most mysterious and safest back door into Arcopolis.

Centropol

This is the heart of Arcopolis, the central super-arcology that is the city's largest source of production, residential habitat, command center, and logistics management headquarters. As grand as Arcopolis is, no single part of it compares to the utter magnitude and scope of its crown jewel, Centropol.

Although Arcopolis is made up entirely of residential, recreational and industrial arcologies, the Centropol arcology is the prototype from which all others gained their design philosophy. Centropol is a single mega-structure nearly one mile in diameter, built around a central nanofoundry large enough to power and supply every personal and industrial automat in Centropol. Even if the population were to begin growing again, the Centropol nanofoundry is expected to maintain current levels of production — which includes ramped up military production on the Cadre's behalf — for the next century or more. From the sky, the Centropol nanofoundry looks like a massive fusion reactor, with a lava-like orange glow deep within its belly. The foundry chamber is actually a first-stage production facility and a materials acquisition sink; the lowermost levels of the chamber receive both piped–in raw materials as well as materials mined from the bottom of the chamber itself by the nanofoundry. The materials shaft for the facility is currently over one mile deep. It can go another mile before structural concerns will force the city to open another raw materials shaft. All of the waste, soil, minerals, etc. dug from the shaft is fed directly into the main foundry chamber where it is broken down to the molecular level and

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re-ordered into materials that can be more easily transformed. Some of this material is then piped out to other parts of Arcopolis, where smaller-sized automats can turn this base material into finished goods without much hassle. The rest of the material is kept at the nanofoundry, where it is manufactured into every kind of good the people and the Extent need, ranging from simple foodstuffs to fusion-powered heavy stratobombers to next-generation synthetic intelligence arrays. If it can be thought of, the Centropol nanofoundry can produce it. *Lots* of it.

Ringing the central foundry are three backup foundries which are kept operational but never more than at 25% capacity. On any given day, they handle their manufacturing overflow from the main foundry if there is an order for goods that for some reason can not be adequately handled by the central foundry. A good example would be military hardware, much of which is specialized and requires a lot of manufacturing time. The main foundry has to handle the manufacturing needs of everyday things just to keep the city going. It cannot shut down every other order just because the Cadre needs military equipment right away. At the same time, if the Cadre ordered it, it must be important. So, the backup foundries come in to handle producing mundane goods while the central foundry shifts the bulk of its power to fulfilling the priority order it has received. It is a very workable arrangement, and even in the biggest manufacturing crunch times there has never been a need to make more than two of the three backup nanofoundries go to work at the same time. The Extent's most knowledgeable experts firmly (and with good reason) believe that as the Extent enters into full-blown warfare against the Traitor Nations and begins rebuilding all that was lost during the Steel Helix attack, Centropol's nanofoundry can more than handle the production needs for the war effort. Natu-

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rally, this makes the central foundry a chief terrorism and sabotage target, which is why it is so important that the three backup foundries are in place. Were this redundant system not in place, Centropol — and by extension, the rest of the Extent — would be in a far more vulnerable position than it is now. As it stands, the Extent is taking no chances and beginning next year, it will start construction on a ring of nine tertiary nanofoundries that will be a backup for the backup, as well as an intermediary production ring that can pipe out to the sectors of the Extent outside of Centropol more directly.

Outside of the three backup foundries is Centropol's biggest component, the **Habitat Cylinder**. This is a mega-scraper that hugs the nanofoundries' outer cooling jackets, although the heat retention technology of the foundries is such that the Cylinder is in no danger of energy bleed-through. No, the nearly *one billion* residents that live, work and play within the Cylinder's 250 levels are so deeply surrounded by the everyday luxuries of their supertech society that they easily forgets they are adjacent to the most powerful manufacturing machine ever built.

The Cylinder's layout is actually fairly simple and repetitive but on a scale so large that the average resident never gets a chance to appreciate how modular his home really is. Every level of the Cylinder contains some four million individual domiciles, each of which is not exactly the roomiest arrangement, but it is comfortable and welcoming. Many residents agree to share their domiciles, in which case they can retract the walls separating their units and enjoy the benefit of communal space. Indeed, this trend is so popular that some groups of people form large unions or clans spanning hundreds of people. The cooperative habitats that can be built in this way have been known to stretch halfway across the course of the Cylinder, even spanning multiple levels. For those who live solo — which remains the prevalent choice made by residents despite increasing communal living — a Centropol domicile offers everything one needs for basic comfort: a sleeping area, personal automat for compiling food and basic consumer goods, a Datastream terminal, a Holoverse rig, some comfy lounging furniture, and whatever else which the occupant decides to fill the place. After all, people living here are citizens of Utopia. If an automat can make it, you can have it, no limit.

Most folk, however, do not collect items and leave their domiciles fairly simple and plain. They do not mind their relatively small size because they use them for sleeping, mostly. The average Centropol resident spends the majority of his time out in the vast public plazas between levels and on the outermost edges of the Habitat Cylinder. Throughout this section of the city are enormous parks, pedestrian areas, gaming centers, scenic vistas, holorama theaters, Datastream hookups, the works. There are vehicular tracks and skyways within the building itself in which people can zoom, and the public areas even feature small-scale nanofoundries where those who are inclined to hold a job may do so.

All things considered, Centropol remains that part of Arcopolis closest to the Utopian ideal held by the Extent. It has been impacted hardly at all by the turbulence of the Grayscale, the Scraplands, and the open warfare heating up with the Traitor Nations and the Newcomers. To the vast majority of Centropol's inhabitants, these troubles might as well be on another planet. None of it affects their daily life in ways they cannot simply ignore. One day, that might all change — especially if Traitor Nation agents were to launch an attack within Centropol itself. But until such an unlikely scenario occurs (the super-arcology is extremely well-secured by robotic and human soldiers and security apparatus), the people of Centropol continue living their carefree lives of idle pleasure, constant indulgence, and joyful obliviousness to the much harsher world that surrounds them.

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There are five main sections to Centropol: the **Underworld**, **Sector Zero**, **Century Circle**, **Watermark** and **High Guard**.

Underworld

This is the subterranean foundation to the entire arcology, devoted exclusively to industrial production, materials acquisition and handling, and energy production. The entire level is pretty much infrastructure for the central nanofoundry, combined with a series of energy generators that keep Centropol humming. The level's footprint is substantially larger than the above-ground portion of Centropol, both for support's sake and because as time has gone on the arcology has needed to expand its production and energy facilities; simply extending them underground was the best way to do it without disrupting the surrounding layout. There are very few permanent residents to Underworld. In fact, the level is almost entirely automated, and the spaces that might have been used for human domiciles instead warehouse extra robots, spare parts and other materiel. There are, of course, those gearhead humans who really want to be where all the heavy machinery is, and for these devoted few exceptions have been made to carve out some living space for them. To the rest of Centropol, however, the Underworld is almost as forgotten as the world outside Arcopolis. The Centropol's populace scarcely dwells on how their automats are supplied or where all their energy comes from. They know the Underworld is responsible for it all, but beyond that they don't know or care.

Sector Zero

So named because it resembles an enormous chrome crater, Sector Zero is the above-ground trunk of the Centropol arcology. Its inwardly sloping design bears testament to the early material well dug by the central nanofoundry; rather than fill in the starter hole the well left, the builders simply shored up the crater and built out from that. The result helps give Centropol its unique and striking look. As the arcology spreads out, support struts ringing the crater's edge help hold up the upper levels. Ultimately, this level umbrellas out over the foundation crater, providing the arcology's ground support and obviating the need for the original support struts, which were converted to materials conveyors for the nanofoundry. Today, Sector Zero is home to a big chunk of Centropol's industrial sector, particularly finished products manufacturing. There are numerous spots on the level that interface directly with the central nanofoundry; there are also dozens of production bays where newly finished items come out of the **macromats** (industrial-grade automats) and are either deployed to those who ordered them or transported to safe storage until they are picked up. When the Cadre places a hardware order, Sector Zero becomes a frenzied place as all production ramps up to meet the need. Like the Underworld, most of the work here is robotic, supervised by a few select humans who have been specially augmented for the job. Still, there are plenty of people for whom working the macromats is the key to happiness, so there is and always will be a place for them. Also, in addition to the production facilities on this level, Sector Zero also houses the primary drivers for the arcology's **farcaster** (teleportation) network, as well as the drivers for most of the Extent's farcasters. Most of the farcasting done on this level is for shipping materials between the nanofoundry and the various macromats as well as transporting finished goods to their clients. Most personal farcasting is done on the next few levels up.

Century Circle

This middle level of Centropol takes up the majority of the Habitat Cylinder as well as a secondary outer shell that surrounds the power half of the arcology with a heavily sloped surface, allowing for thousands of verandas, porches, and other viewpoints. The bulk of Century Circle is dedicated to personal domiciles, but there also exist here the primary servers for the Holoverse

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as well as the realtime feeds to the Proving Grounds. This makes Century Circle the entertainment capital of the entire Extent, something of which the residents here are plenty aware. A good portion of the Century Circle populace spends its time hooked into one form of digital entertainment or another, rarely venturing outside of their domiciles. However, the majority of the people are not quite so enamored of having their fun piped directly into their heads, and as such there is a vibrant social atmosphere present throughout this part of Centropol. People often gather together in "societies" and celebrate their common interests' ranging from art, song, and other cultural pursuits to high-tech extreme sports (aero racing chief among them) to good old-fashioned debauchery.

The outdoor meeting areas of Century Circle, staffed with legions of robotic servants, make for the perfect places where Societies can do their thing. Given the security threats facing the entire Extent, however, these outdoor venues are in fact enclosed with fully transparent plasteel shields to prevent any incoming hostile actions. Most folks do not even know the shields are in place, however, since the shields themselves are made of a porous nanoreactive material that lets wind and moisture through, and does not impede natural light but will instantly harden and solidify the moment a threat is detected. There are also throughout Century Circle hundreds of farcasters. This makes it easy for people to get together with friends from other arcologies, even those far removed from Centropol itself. Indeed, farcasting is such a popular luxury that some Societies are devoted to this mode of transportation alone, setting up grand parties that surround dozens of different farcaster nodes and spending an evening jumping between them all, sometimes to the frustration of others who are trying to use the platforms for less frivolous transport.

Watermark

On top of the Habitat Cylinder is a secondary cylinder that is connected to the nanofoundry chamber by a series of spoke-like megaspans, between which are huge circular landing pads for various types of aerial vehicles. This is Watermark, that segment of Centropol devoted to residential domicile and more high-minded cultural activities than what is typically found down in Century Circle. Here is where special nodes of the Datastream are contained that have been specially hardened against any form of interior or exterior assault. As a result, here are found the most secure datacores within the Extent and the best on which to conduct any kind of heavy technical work. At first, these datacores were restricted to general use, but as time wore on, the lawless nature of the Extent prevailed, and even these secure datacores were opened up, where they became the second home of that generation of designers and tinkerers who like to spend their days coming up with new technologies for the fun of it. Strangely, this group of freewheeling tech experts has become a society within the Extent, one responsible for the vast majority of its technological progress over the last few years. Robotics, nanotechnology, genetics, mathematics, and virtually any other hard science in existence has its core of dedicated students and masters here, who have turned the secure datacores into a scientific campus that the non-technically minded generally avoid for its serious nature and lack of cheap diversions. For those who can appreciate what's going on in Watermark, this place is a Utopia within Utopia, a community of pure science, research and development where anything goes, resources are limitless, and the only stopping point is one's own imagination. Most do not realize it, but the recreational scientists in Watermark are the ones really responsible for keeping the Extent the supertech paradise it is, and as long as Watermark stays up and running, there is a good chance that any cure for ZPG and the

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Corruption, as well as the next generation of secret weapons to pacify the Scraplands, will come from here.

High Guard

Atop the uppermost levels of Centropol sits a newly constructed extra level which houses the Extent's top administrators and more importantly, the strategic headquarters of the Cadre. Here is where the military forces of the Extent make their decisions, collate their intelligence, allocate resources, and plan the next Big Push into the Scraplands for the greater glory of the Extent and the promise of a reclaimed, rebuilt world for all. High Guard is one of the few places in Centropol (or the rest of the Extent, for that matter) that is restricted access. Only those on official Cadre business may enter this level, and even then the level itself is a honeycomb of levels within levels, each with its own specific security clearance. Ultimately, only the Cadre's supreme commanders and analysts have access to every part of the level, but even then, no single individual can go everywhere in High Guard. At the very least, it would take a concerted effort of at least a half dozen people to combine their efforts to manage simultaneous access throughout High Guard. But even then, the chances of such a group executing a nefarious plan would be slim indeed, for there are robotic and human security measures everywhere on this level, where safety and stability have a premium over freedom and privacy. One of the reasons why High Guard was placed on top of Centropol was so it would be as far out of the way of the average citizen's daily routine as possible. While the Cadre feels it has need for a strong military, and that by nature requires it to trample on some of the freedoms that make the Extent what it is, the Cadre is fully aware that if it does not keep its disruptive presence as contained as possible it runs the risk of contaminating the rest of the Extent. The more people forget about the troubles they face, the better, the Cadre thinks. The best way to ensure that is to interface with the public as little as possible. Thus, High Guard is essentially a small arcology slapped on top of a larger one, accessible only from the air and not built to interface with the rest of Centropol below. It should be noted, however, that there are many smaller replicas of High Guard throughout the Extent, especially on the linear arcologies (the Ring and the Bulwark) that wall off the Extent against outside incursions as well as within the Grayscale and elsewhere. These are the real field bases of the Cadre, where the bulk of the fighting forces are housed and equipped. High Guard itself is more of a command center, a war room writ large where every intelligence concern of the Extent can be monitored and analyzed with up-to-the-second information.

The Proving Grounds

These are the freefire arenas where the Morituri fight their endless battles, where the populace watches their heroes perform and where the Extent breeds its next generation of super soldiers. In many ways, these slaughteryards have become a focal point for the entire Extent, which has discovered a seemingly endless thirst for the heroics and carnage of its gladiators. If nothing else, the spectacle of the Proving Grounds is hardening the Extent's populace to the kind of hardship, horror and warfare it must adjust to if it ever is to exert total control over the Grayscale and reconquer the Scraplands. Those who disapprove of the Proving Grounds and the Morituri have long since learned to hold their tongues, for as long as this form of bloody entertainment remains as popular as it is, and as long as there is a breed of people willing to live this kind of life, the Proving Grounds will remain as they are: a centerpiece of Arcopolis and a hallmark of the Extent.

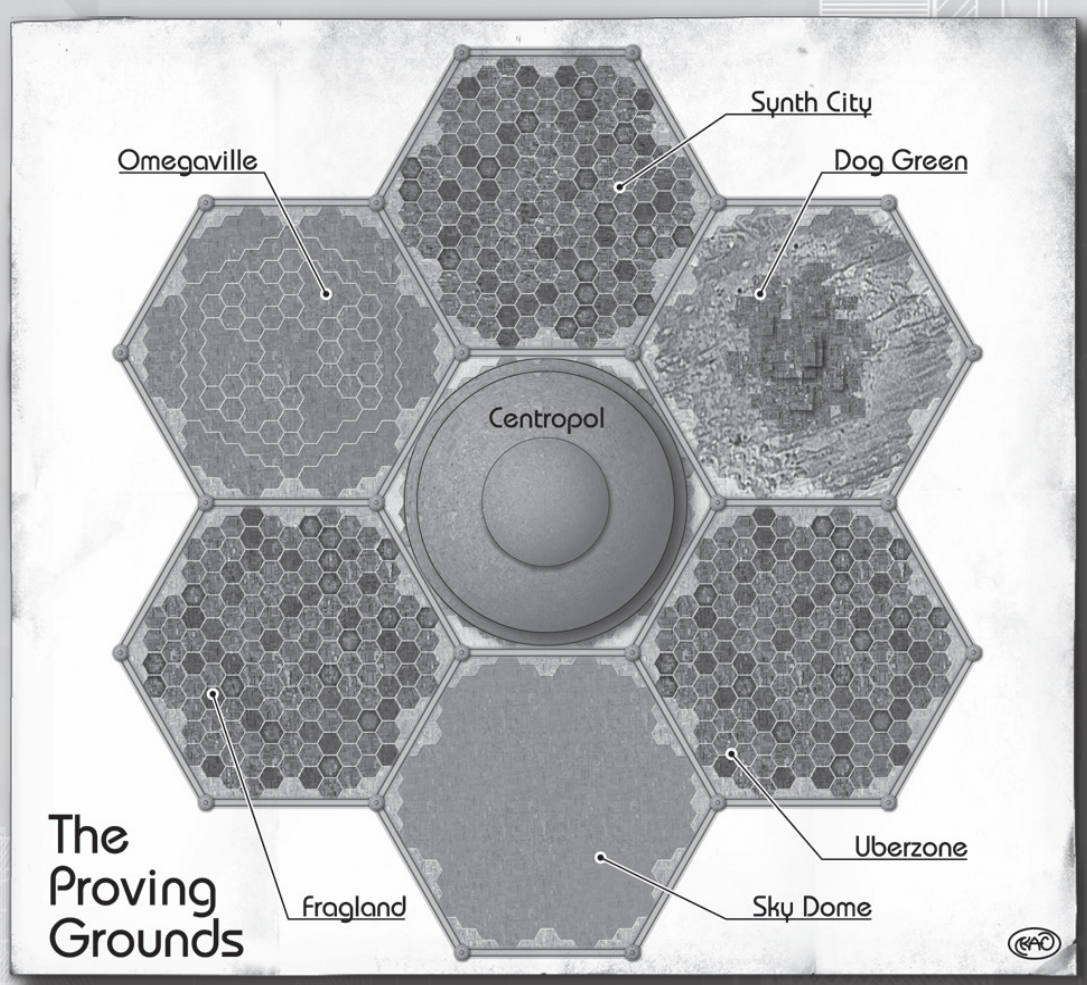
There are six Proving Grounds in all, each the size of the Centropol arcology and adjacent to one of Centropol's six faces. The Proving Grounds, while enormous, are generally not designed for permanent habi-

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tation by the citizens of the Extent; many Morituri, however, live their entire lives in one of these artificial battlegrounds.

Each Proving Ground is specifically dedicated for a particular kind of warfare event — personal death matches, mass combat, vehicular challenges, even aerial dogfighting. Regardless of their specialty, the subterranean levels of each Proving Ground remains more or less the same. Here in the multiple under-levels of the arenas do the Morituri gather into their clans, train in simulated combat, receive their mission/game briefings, suit up for action, and return after a game for recuperation and recovery. Most Morituri bunking areas are spare, dormitory-like quarters with no frills and little comfort, just the sort of place many of these professional warriors enjoy calling home.

Elsewhere underneath the ground here are on-site nanofactories dedicated to powering the surface-level terrain editors that will determine the actual makeup of each gaming environment. A Proving Ground can typically support many different games at once, each of which might have a different terrain and/or floor plan. The computers that handle all of this are kept in their own restricted area; it would not do to



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have unscrupulous Morituri hack into these datacores and fiddle with the terrains, now would it?

The underground nanofoundries also produce, service and store the various kinds of armor, hardware and vehicles needed for the games. The foundries here generally aren't designed for super-mass production. The central foundries in Centropol are for that. No, the nanofoundries here are good enough to keep the gladiators well armed and equipped, but that's all. After each match, weapons and hardware typically are recycled for later re-compilation.

Aside from the terrain editors, there is another series of computers stored underneath each Proving Ground that is responsible for programming, deploying and commanding any robotic forces to be used in the games. Most times, human gladiators are used on both sides, but there are a fair number of challenges in which humans are pitted against robotic foes (or required to work alongside robotic allies). For games such as these, the Proving Grounds themselves provide the robots to be used. They are standard military models, but they often fare poorly against the great combat skills of the vastly more experienced Morituri.

Finally, the underground levels contain a massive series of farcasters that can teleport Morituri, weapons, equipment and vehicles from the subterranean levels to anywhere within the Proving Ground. These are typically used to deliver fighters from their ready areas to the battlezones above and to bring soldiers back to their ready areas after a mission. Injured or slain fighters generally are farcasted straight to medical facilities.

Ultimately, the gladiators can only spend so much time down below. Eventually, they must surface into the harsh lights of the arena floor, watched by hundreds of different cameras and broadcast all over Arcopolis. There are no cheering crowds in attendance at the Proving Grounds — there would be no way to ensure their safety. But there are hundreds of flying midge cameras at the scene that have a knack of capturing on video feed everything that happens during a match. These matched with direct holofeeds on fighter's armor, weapons, implanted in their very heads and slaved to their nervous systems give spectators to view the action from multiple points of view, even experiencing what the fighters themselves experience. Only when a gladiator dies does the spectator feed cut out before the shock of death feeds back to any along for the ride.

Of course, for the Morituri, death is never really the end, and slain fighters are typically collected after the game ends. Their bodies are delivered to medical facilities within the underground levels of the Proving Ground. The primary form of medical care is that wonder technology, the regen tank, also known as the **Lazarus Tank**, an immersion chamber into which dead or injured fighters are placed. Suspended in a solution of medical nanites, the patient can be brought back to full health, regardless of the nature of the injuries. The regen tank can bring the dead back to life, even if it only has pieces of the patient to work with. So long as there is a bit of you left, the Lazarus Tank can regenerate, rebuild, and rejuvenate you, given enough time. For the gladiators of the Proving Ground, time is a commodity with which they are all too willing to part if it means they can return to their beloved battlegrounds.

There are six Proving Grounds: **Fragland**, **Synth City**, **Dog Green**, **Omegaville**, the **Skydome** and the **Uberzone**.

Fragland

This is an arena-style battleground where Morituri fight solo or in small tactical units in battlefields designed specifically for wild and woolly small arms combat. It was the first of the Proving Grounds and remains to this day the most intensively used and watched. There is just something thrilling and strangely intimate about the kind of point-blank, man-to-man warfare for

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which Fragland was specifically designed that makes it such a favorite both among the warriors as well as those spectators for whom Fragland is really just an exciting place to watch others live on the razor's edge. This Proving Ground can support up to 144 different games at any time and often does. The gamescapes range from the inside of enormous vehicles to ancient castles to alien environments, to high-tech military facilities, and everything in between. Most of these gamescapes are fairly enclosed and tightly arranged, enforcing a sort of up close and personal fighting that often means that he who shoots first lives to tell about it. Body counts in Fragland matches are high, and those who like pure bloodshed without a moment's rest would find it here.

Synth City

Proving Ground number two is an urban warfare-oriented environment made to look, act and feel like a dense cityscape. The scene editors can change the feel of the landscape to anything from a burned-out city from well before the Chrome Wars to a supertech mimic of the heart of Arcopolis itself. This proving ground can also support up to 144 different games, each with its own landscape, although many times gamescapes are combined for larger, more immersive environments that foster larger-scale battles. Games in this proving ground typically last anywhere from an hour to a day but very rarely much longer than that. Synth City was designed in part to maximize the collateral damage likely to occur from the fighting within, both by providing plenty of buildings to demolish and enough open spaces to accommodate armored ground vehicles and very small classes of fighting aircraft (mostly jumpgliders, flying buckets, battle skiffs and the occasional microfighter). For those who like seeing lots of wreckage, Synth city is where it's at. Reportedly, civilian spectators will soon be able to observe the action from within the Proving Ground through a remotely controlled robotic body, which should give this battleground the unique feature of having innocent bystanders.

Dog Green

This Proving Ground is designed for and devoted solely to mass combat. The scene editors can change the look and feel of the landscape from untamed wilderness to modern-day cityscapes and anything in between. The gamescape can either be one environment or more likely a mixture of many. Wilderness with intermittent settlements and the occasional cityscape is a popular and often-used mix. The thing with this proving ground is it can only support a single game environment at any given time, designed as it is to accommodate full-blown warfare situations. Tens of thousands of Morituri can engage in a single massive, multi-theatre conflict that may last up to a year. While most matches here are much shorter in duration (raid-type missions being the most common, which start and end within 48 hours), longer scenarios often allow fallen warriors to rejoin the fighting after their exit from the Lazarus Tank. Some Morituri specialize in Dog Green fighting and have accepted it as a way of life, preferring to live in their proving ground barracks than out with the rest of society in a comfortable arcology. Others find the sheer numbers of Dog Green either a little intimidating, too impersonal, and too difficult for any one soldier's exploits to stand out, making it difficult to establish a superstar career. After all, there rarely are heroes in human wave assaults, just lots and lots of bodies.

Omegaville

The fourth Proving Ground is the combat gearhead's dream environment. It is specifically dedicated to vehicular combat, with many of the battlegrounds within the arena allowing for potentially huge armored clashes. Most of the fighting done here is on the ground, but there are allowances for low-flying aircraft to make their play in the games, too. Air fighting generally comes in

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the form of close air support and air-to-air defense of ground forces. Heavy, high-altitude dogfighting is pretty much forbidden here on account of the low altitude limits placed on the games. For serious aerial combat, the **Skydome** is the Proving Ground to visit. In Omegaville, armored vehicles of all shapes and sizes are the main playing pieces, though by matter of technicality, fighting robots and infantry in heavy armored suits are allowed in too. Given the heavy weaponry involved, however, most infantry stand little chance of survival if they get directly involved in big battles, but the wily armored soldier can prove to be an efficient spoiler while hiding in the wreckage of some cityscape with a few tactical missiles at his command — woe be the tank that rolls in front of him unaware! The matches in Omegaville run the gamut from point-blank death matches in open terrain to complex, large-scale battles spanning many environments and involving numerous groups of armored fighting vehicles (AFVs). Though it is gaining in popularity, Omegaville is perhaps the least favorite of the Proving Grounds (though that is a relative assessment, since they all have many millions of devoted fans) and as such it does not yet have certain games that are hard-core fan favorites. As a result, the arena experiments with all sorts of unusual games and unit mixes. For those looking for combat a bit different from the usual fare, Omegaville never fails to satisfy.

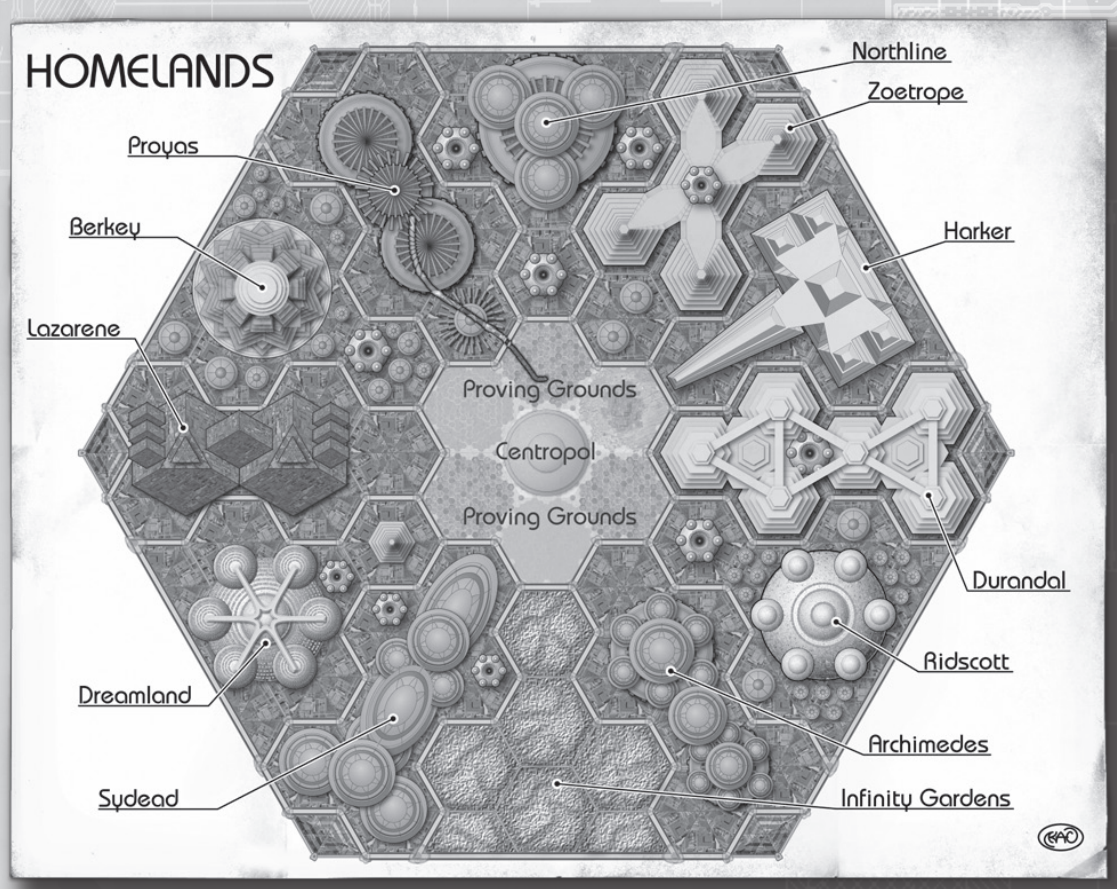
The Skydome

This Proving Ground offers an enclosed fighting environment for aerial battles. It is not enclosed in a traditional sense — by a dome or wall — but by security countermeasures that ensure the shots fired and craft flown here do not accidentally damage other parts of Arcopolis. Though the aircraft have an unlimited flight ceiling, if they get within 1,000 meters of the edge of the field, their flight computers will automatically override and turn the craft so that at the very least it will hug the outer perimeter of the Proving Ground. All craft in the arena are given proximity alerts as well, so there is no pilot worthy of the name who can claim he did not realize how close he got to the edge of the field. Every pilot knows where he is when flying the Skydome. In a similar fashion, all bullets, missiles and other weapons fired within the Skydome will automatically self-destruct the moment they get to the outermost edge of the Proving Ground's airspace facility structure. Unless weaponry or the central datacores of this Proving Ground are tampered with, there is no chance of stray shots leaving the arena and landing on some poor bastard who has no idea a long-range missile is going to come from the sky unannounced and clobber him. There are a wide variety of missions available in the Skydome, but for the most part, the Proving Ground sticks to one game session at a time so fliers from different games do not accidentally interfere with each other. One commonly played scenario pits against each other solo pilots or wing groups as large as 24 craft on a side. Other games include ground-attack strike bombing against automated ground defenses and aggressor aircraft, bomber interceptions, suicide runs, unarmed recon into enemy territory, and so on. Skydome Morituri are an exclusive lot who see theirs as a more noble and skillful form of combat than what is practiced in other Proving Grounds. As such, they tend to have their own subculture and an arrogant attitude that both grates on other Morituri's nerves as well as endears them to their adoring fans.

The Uberzone

The final Proving Ground is where the various forms of fighting featured in the previous five all come together in huge mixed batches. In the Uberzone, anything goes. Want to see a hundred guys with pistols try to stop a tank? The Uberzone. Want to see skydiving support gunners blast at each other in freefall? The Uberzone. Want to see ten heavily armored troops try to keep from getting overrun by a thousand robotic goons? The Uberzone, baby. The Uberzone.

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The popularity of this arena is growing at an incredible pace, thanks mostly to its wild mixture of battle elements which often runs to the extreme and bizarre (and this, in an entertainment medium that already runs to the extreme and bizarre). The terrain editor here gets a workout coming up with outlandish and alien battlescapes that never repeat themselves. Battles have been fought on huge simulated polar icecaps in the process of breaking apart and falling into the surrounding waters, on the tops of super-tall skyscrapers, on platforms moving so fast it is nearly impossible to keep one's footing, on mega-freeways where tanks blast at each other from various passing lanes, and so on. If it's bold, brassy and bloody, it's got a place here. Anything less than that is not cutting edge enough for the Uberzone and its growing ranks of zealous fans for whom only the extreme carnage of this arena will do.

The Homelands

This is where the bulk of the Extent lives, builds and plays, a dozen supersectors filled with self-sufficient but highly interconnected arcologies. Each sector of the Homelands covers a footprint almost six times the size of Centropol, yet houses almost the same number of inhabitants — one billion. And, it should be noted, that the arcologies of the Homelands are much smaller than their Centropol counterpart, even if they are structured similarly to it. No, the Homeland sectors are more decentralized, more

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ground-level, and more spread out than the Extent's super-arcology. Out here is really where the true nature of the Extent can be seen. Out here, life is not so different than in Centropol, but there is certainly a whole lot more of it.

As mentioned before, each Homeland sector is based around a massive superscraper arcology that houses the area's main nanofoundry, Cadre command and control, energy production and other vital, centralized services. This only accounts for a few hundred acres; the rest of the territory is covered by a seamless surface-level arcology some 100 levels deep generally known as the **Superstructure**, which covers the original landscape of the surface. This artificial second landscape is essentially a massive skyscraper that extends in all directions for much farther than anybody cares to travel, a uniform layer of construct that surrounds Centropol.

Life within these surface arcologies feels less like being in a huge building as it does being underground. Granted, the majority of any surface arcology is not really subterranean since it was built upon the true surface. But to those living inside of it, the lack of natural light, the hemmed in feeling despite the generous hallways, rooms and public areas all lend to a feeling of being contained, trapped. To combat this, the Extent has recreated **Topside**, a simulacrum of natural landscape on the "roof" of the surface arcologies, so all one needs to do is go to the uppermost level of the surface and exit into a vast network of open woodlands, waterparks, driving and flying lanes, recreational yards, the works. The surface is basically one enormous recreational preserve where people can spend as much time as they like. Cleverly concealed automats are never far away, someone can call up some food or supplies when needed, as many in fact do when they decide to spend the night out under the evening sky. There is the risk of Scraplander or Newcomer incursions, however, so not everybody feels safe staying out on the surface all the time, but many folks do, in some part due to the security presence on Topside. Flying midge cameras keep an eye on everything, and at a moment's notice they can give the call to arms to any of the many robotic servants walking the parks who also double as soldiers when crises arise. For additional safety, Cadre response units are situated in strategic locations throughout Topside in retractable deployment hangars. When things go badly, huge hatches will pop out of the ground, disgorging Cadre soldiers and attack robots, armored exosuits, and even tactical aircraft.

This, however, is an extreme contingency. So far, the need for Cadre intervention on Topside has remained minimal, and the Cadre aims to keep it that way. Topside is the pacifist antidote to the Proving Grounds: those who crave peace, tranquility and beauty come here to escape. In that regard, it is every bit as important a societal safety valve as the Proving Grounds, and it will not do to have armored soldiers storming the place at the slightest hint of danger. That's what the robots are for.

There are similar parks within the surface arcologies themselves, but they just don't feel the same. As such, there remains a division between Topside and the rest of the arcologies. Not that people dislike their admittedly comfortable lives in the Homelands. Indeed, they do, but from time to time, everybody needs to get away, even in Paradise, and so at any given time there will be thousands upon thousands of folks populating Topside, enjoying a nature which is not nature, not caring that the world as they know it died out a very long time ago.

The superscraper arcologies at the center of each Homeland remain connected to each other via farcaster, roadway and skylane. Although farcasting and taking mass transit (airbuses and hypertrains being two prevalent modes) are far more efficient ways of traveling, people often will resort to more interesting forms of getting from point A to point B. As a result, personal ground cars, aero vehicles, and even hik-

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ing in powered armor are all very popular methods of going places. Given the tremendous populations of these sectors, there is always a brisk amount of traffic going to and fro across the sector as people visit friends, acquaintances and so forth. The Cadre is uncomfortable with this because so much movement could easily cloak insurgents, terrorists and saboteurs. Indeed, the terror attacks at the Extent's edge have proven the Cadre's concerns well-founded.

There are twelve different sectors that make up the Homelands. They are: **Northline**, **Zoetrope**, **Harker**, **Durandal**, **Ridscot**, **Archimedes**, **Infinity Gardens**, **Sydead**, **Dreamland**, **Lazarene**, **Berkey** and **Proyas**.

Northline

All Homeland sectors are self-sufficient, with their own nanofoundries, energy centers, residential domiciles, recreational facilities and so forth, but Northline is different. The people living here gravitated toward lifestyles marked by working hard with machines, especially nanofoundries, farcasters and robots. After a while, the community here took on a life of its own, attracting more and more gearheads to it. In response to their common desires, the sector slowly turned into a far more industrial area than the others. Northline is marked by at least three major nanofoundries and a seemingly endless array of manufacturing nodes. This particular arcology is in a strategic position relative to the Extent and the Traitor Nations of the Scraplands. As a result, it often produces a lot of auxiliary hardware for the Cadre attack robots, armored vehicles, aircraft, etc.

Zoetrope

Just as Northline has evolved into a home for gearheads, so too has Zoetrope become a center for the **Holoverse**, the fully interactive virtual reality entertainment medium that is the only pastime that even comes close to the Proving Grounds' games in terms of popularity. The Holoverse is a true phenomenon throughout the Extent, and here in Zoetrope, it has become something akin to an entire lifestyle. People are known to live for days in the Holoverse, sleeping there and gaining sustenance either by hooking themselves up with an intravenous nutrafeed or consuming a few days worth of nutrient concentrate beforehand. Still, there are plenty of folks in Zoetrope whose Holoverse usage gets the better of them and they click out only when they reach the point of severe exhaustion or dehydration, after which they recover in the nearest med facility and jump right back in. There is no social stigma to this, at least not in Zoetrope. For here the Holoverse is not just a way of spending time. It is a means of role-playing, of telling stories, of examining the human and mechanical condition. Other regions of the Extent do not share this unabashed love for the medium, sometimes nicknaming it the "hollowverse." Still, Zoetrope's love affair with this world that is not a world continues to grow. Many of the most popular facets are the deep-immersion role-playing games it offers, in which users can assume the role of a hero or hardcase in any number of imaginary settings such as **Omega Reign** (a pre-starship world that has been hit by an asteroid bearing an alien material that either gives you superpowers or makes you undead), **Zarabar** (an ancient archipelago in the age of sailing ships that has become home to a gallant nation of pirates who must struggle to remain free against the oppression of large, tyrannous nations), **Chronosphere** (a time travel game where agents must go back in time to keep alternate histories from developing out of control) and **Thane** (an ancient world of mystery and magic spread out across five distinct ages). These are just the most popular games, however. There are dozens more and users are encouraged to create their own. Given the high technical expertise of the average Holoverse fanatic, programming a new venue is not that big of a deal. The greatest limitation is merely one's own imagination.

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Harker

As popular and prevalent as the Holoverse is in the Extent, there could be no Holoverse without the **Datastream** having been developed first. It is, simply put, a decentralized network of datacores and I/O terminals that grants everybody within the Extent full and virtually unrestricted access to the Extent's entire information store. Information networks like this are hardly unique; there were versions of it in place during even the oldest days of the Seventh Empire. What makes the Datastream so unique is its degree of decentralization. Every single palmtop terminal carries a substantial load of the Datastream's total information, since the data itself is not stored permanently on any servers. There is a backup for the Datastream in Centropol, but this is pure storage, meant to be decompressed only if something were to happen to the Datastream itself. The version of the Datastream that is currently active is like a flowing river, stored, interacted with and maintained solely through the terminals of those who use it without being anchored or filtered through any central datacores whatsoever. For a belligerent party to seriously disrupt the Datastream, it would have to destroy the millions upon millions upon millions of terminals used by the populace to interface with it every day. The Harker sector alone would prove a nearly impossible place to totally disrupt owing to the extremely high Datastream usage of its residents.

Just as the Holoverse is the prime mover of Zoetrope, the discovery of new information and sharing it with others is what drives the people of Harker. Information zombies to the core, these people have made data management an exact science, research an art, and cross-referencing a religion. But before one writes them off as an oddball bunch of library geeks, consider this: Harker represents the most powerful collective data-crunching apparatus in the entire Extent. Were these people to collaborate on a single project, there is probably no limit to what they could accomplish. The people of Harker know this, relish it, and are simply waiting for the day the Cadre asks them to bring their formidable talents to bear and somehow, some way, save the Extent itself. That is the Harker dream, and one day, it might very well come to pass.

Durandal

Although it was never designed as such, this sector has become the Homeland's Cadre headquarters. This grew out of the intersection of a few conditions: the sector never really repopulated after the mayhem of Steel Helix, there have been consistent threats against this sector by forces from the Scraplands, and the Cadre had always wanted a stronger presence outside of Centropol. Thus Durandal quickly transformed from luxurious residential district to a considerable less friendly and more severe military-industrial compound. With heavy farcaster support, the area is a major military rally point, both for launching incursions into the Grayscale and for marshalling defenses within the city proper should they ever be needed. The central nanofoundry is scarcely as big as Centropol's, but there are numerous auxiliary foundries that make the sector a prolific military production site. As the war against the Scraplands heats up, more and more civilians are leaving this sector, making it the sort of military-only subset of the Extent the Cadre has seemingly craved all along.

Ridscot

This otherwise unremarkable surface arcology is home to a most unusual breed of people who have formed one of the largest societies within the Extent and whose members make up over half of the sector's population. They are **protohistorians**, whose blend of sociological and mathematical expertise makes it possible for them to predict in broad terms the likely future of any large body of people. Protohistory is a young science yet, and its results vary wildly in their accuracy, attesting the many

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refinements the discipline needs if it is ever to become a reliable forecasting device. But for the people of Ridscot, not getting things right is half of the fun, for it enables them to debate and discuss their various analyses of current events, prognostications of the future, and other such topics. Nowhere else in the Extent will you find a microculture so thoroughly devoted to conversation and sharing of information. So far, the Cadre has shown a predictable level of interest in protohistory as a concept, but every time it has tried making decisions based on protohistorical conclusions, it has come to regret it. Thus, this curious discipline remains a phenomenon pretty much exclusive to Ridscot, where it dominates daily life and has made a deep and lasting imprint on the personalities who reside there.

Archiemedes

Design studios and technology gardens can be found in abundance in Archimedes, that sector of the Homelands where lovers of all kinds of technology convene and share their thoughts, dreams and designs for making this machine-driven world even more so. These are not tinkerers per se, as the average Prole here is not interested in actually building anything. For them, the art of design and the thrill of discovery is the real deal, and so these quiet geniuses spend most of their time on the datastream using autodrafters to plan new devices and run simulations. The vast majority of the designs here are faulty or simply too impractical to work, so most never make it out of the conceptual stage. Those few that do are submitted to the Datastream so they might be included in the Extent's nanofabrication datacores. Only then can any of these devices, big or small, be called up on an automat or nanofoundry and manufactured. Most times, items that make it that far are a waste of material because they either do not work, their inventors tire of them and move on to the next project, and/or they have no wider application and are not adapted by the Extent or the Cadre. To cater to the design mania that drives Archimedes, there is an unusually large number of design workshops where the public can gather and work on their pet projects. Forums for showcasing new tech — called **technology gardens** — also are everywhere, and at any given time, a tech garden will have at least one big, bold new piece of machinery on display, and half a dozen others, too. Some laugh this off as a waste of time, energy and resources, but the strange visionaries of Archimedes know that one day, one of them will change the world with one of their designs. Just wait. You'll see…

Infinity Gardens

On all of the surface arcologies is a rooftop level of simulated wilderness and parklands where the citizens can enjoy time away from all of the steel, plastic and chrome that dominates arcology life. The Infinity Gardens, however, takes this to an extreme unseen elsewhere in the Extent. The entire upper surface of the sector is pure wildlands. Because of the uniform climate enforced by the Extent's airborne nanotechnology (it regulates the temperature to a moderate 60 to 70 degrees F), the environment is mostly forest and light jungle. Other climates, such as arctic terrain and deserts are currently being simulated on smaller scales within the Infinity Gardens themselves, but there are no plans on wasting outside surface area on what the Extent considers to be experiments in desolation. There are also efforts to step up genetic replication protocols so the wilderness may be populated with recreated animals found from the surface of Septimus and domesticated into a placid harmlessness. These efforts have not yet worked, however, so at the moment there is a lot of plant life on the Infinity Gardens topside, but no animals to speak of. Perhaps one day when life becomes a little less threatening, the surface of the Infinity Gardens will teem with fauna both old and new, but such is a peacetime dream and one on which the Extent will not embark for now. This saddens many residents of this sector, some of whom have the biological and genetic ex-

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pertise to design their own animal species and set them loose up top. In fact, if the rumors are true, there are a few renegade geniuses who might have done so already.

Sydead

People across the Extent know the Sydead sector most for its bizarre internal structure, which is more akin to a grid-like arrangement of tall column-like buildings than anything else. With no bridges connecting these column structures and a huge amount of vertical space surrounding everything, aerial travel is the way to go here. The spaces between the buildings are wide enough to admit most small and medium aircraft. Personal flight devices, such as **jumpgliders**, are a preferred method of getting around. Unsurprisingly the people of Sydead are all expert fliers, and it is thought by some that the reason this sector was modified into its current form was to breed a generation of vehicular experts that would have skills, readiness and technical familiarity far greater than anybody from the Grayscale or the Scraplands might ever possess. Indeed, as the Cadre is looking for more people to fill its ranks, this theory holds more merit, as many of Sydead's most daredevil fliers are pledging their service to the Cadre and becoming some of the most fearsome combat pilots the Extent ever has seen. How they hold up to real combat, however, remains to be seen, but Sydead has every confidence that its patriots will do them proud.

Dreamland

This sector's most interesting feature is the sprawling arcological suburbs spread out on its rooftop level. Though the area still features liberal amounts of open space, parkland and transportation lanes, there also are enormous neighborhoods with surface domiciles of many different shapes, styles and constructions. This is like an architect's dream gone rampant, with millions of domiciles adhering to every conceivable type of design, a reflection of the carefree and resource-infinite lifestyle the people of Dreamland carry out with vigor. The average surface house here will be inhabited for less than a month; people come to Topside, activate the building-grade nanofoundries embedded in the surface, and put together the components for a designed structure. After it is completed, the builders and their society mates hold a big party to celebrate the successful design and build. After the festivities die down, the place is abandoned for other people to use. But more often than not, the place just stays empty forever — there are a zillion of them, after all. The Cadre's concern is that if there ever is a hostile incursion into this sector of the Homelands, all of these empty domiciles, which feature nonstandard floorplans that have never been entered into the Datastream, could present a difficult environment for soldiers to recapture. With so many homes to be converted all too easily into pillboxes, fighting in this sector likely would be relatively short, savage and complete.

Lazarene

Every part of Arcopolis is self-sufficient and has plenty of medical facilities to serve the needs of its people. That said, Lazarene stands out as a sector largely devoted not only to basic medicine but also as the leading R&D center for genetics, morphology, nanorejection and the Corruption. Nowhere else in the Extent will you find a group of citizen-scientists so fascinated with the human body and its study. They tend to fall into four basic Societies, each focused on one of the four medical fields mentioned previously. Genetics seeks greater understanding of the human body's most fundamental workings, perhaps so that it might be better unlocked and modified so people can enjoy their superhuman lives without relying on nanotechnology. Morphology focuses on mutation, genetic drift, microevolution and the symptomatic effects of the Corruption. Nanorejection is that most rare disorder where one's body refuses any nanomodification whatsoever. In a soci-

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ety like the Extent, not having access to nanotech is a true cause for pity, even if those who suffer the condition often don't mind. Finally those devoted to studying the Corruption carry out endless research and risky experiments to find out exactly what started the Corruption, what it does to one when at Death's door, how the Corruption can be contained, and how or if it can be cured entirely. Setting the tone and theme of this section of the center city is the fact that the current version of the regen tank was designed here, and as a matter of pride and tradition, all future rejuvenation research is carried out in Lazarene, usually by select committees of people from all of the different sector Societies.

Berkey

This sector is, essentially, the Extent's art colony, populated largely by those who have taken full advantage of the scarcity-free lifestyle the Extent offers and devoted themselves entirely to pursuing crafts and matters of culture. Singing, acting, writing, drawing, painting and sculpting are just the beginning of the artistic diversions practiced with gusto in Berkey. The Societies here often are focused on a particular type of artistic expression, and even then sub-Societies form devoted to even more specific genres, styles and schools. Life here generally consists of people working on their art for part of the day, taking a break from it to stay fresh, and then either returning to their work or sharing it with others. Major artistic releases are big news here, and even though there is supposed to be no real hierarchy among the creative types, most people can't help but feel that they really are competing with their peers for recognition. There are those who have gained superstar status with what they do, especially if their work has become popular outside of the sector, and Berkey practically stops when these rare individuals put their latest work on display.

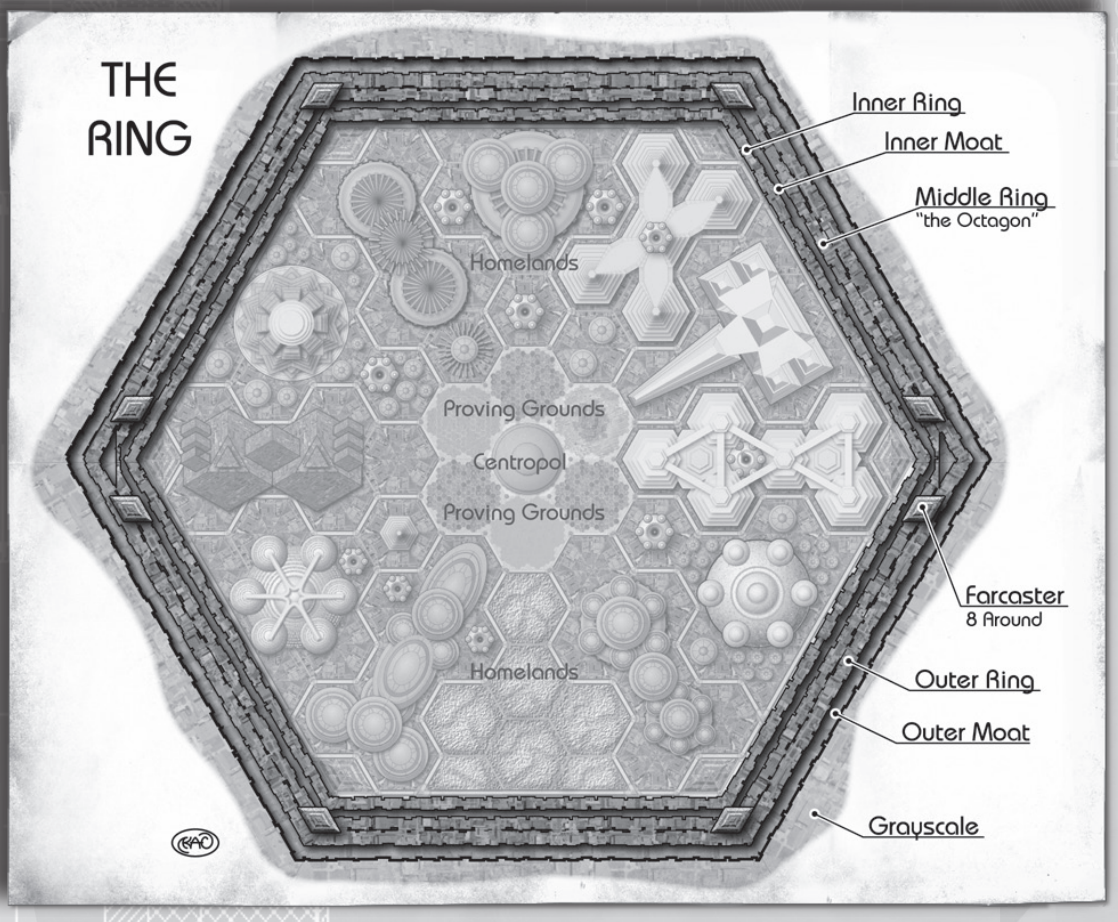
Proyas

At the behest of its residents, this entire sector has become a grand experiment in modular architecture. The interior of the surface arcology is in nearly constant motion, with huge sections of it moving and shifting into new and innovative floor plans, always in flux, always being modified so no matter where each section of the arcology is, it remains fully linked and interfaced with those adjacent to it. For visitors, this is a maddening condition, for there is no way of telling where anything is from one moment to the next. To the people of Proyas, however, their home arcology is a great big piece of kinetic art. But more than that, it is an example of the supreme adaptability of arcological design, which is something the Cadre should pay close attention to if ever the city suffers another major structural attack along the lines of the Steel Helix. As hyperdynamic as the arrangement of Proyas may be, it also is in a state of constant rebuild, recycle and reorder, making it more stable in the long run. For if the sector can handle being changed around on a constant basis, chances are it can handle any other disruption as well. Just the same, living in Proyas is an acquired taste for most people, and the vast majority of the Extent will not come here even to visit their friends. For them it is too much like spending time in a funhouse.

The Ring

This linear arcology was built as both a defensive measure and an additional industrial base on which to pin the Extent's massive manufacturing needs. The Ring is nothing more than a supermassive skyscraper one thousand stories tall, nearly a quarter of a mile wide, and nearly 80 miles long. It encircles the outer edges of the Homeland sectors, ultimately looping back on itself forming a huge barrier between Arcopolis proper and the Grayscale. Since the Ring is so obviously a defensive measure against any nasty surprises from either the Gray-

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scale or the Scraplands, few people were willing to live there aside from ex-Cadre and retired Morituri. After it became clear that the Grayscale and not the Ring would be the first probable battleground in the event of an invasion or raid on the Extent, people slowly warmed up to the thought of living in this imposing superstructure. The Extent sweetened the deal by outfitting it with numerous medium-grade nanofoundries, material sinks, Datastream nodes, and enormous Holoverse hookups. This enticed additional folks to come out here, but it was a slow process, and even now the arcology is not entirely filled with permanent residents. Most of those who live here are tech heads of one sort or another, ex-Cadre or ex-Morituri. For retired soldiers, the Ring is the perfect retiring spot, because it has always maintained a more stripped-down, less luxurious culture than what can be found in Arcopolis proper. Plus, there are plenty of grunts to swap war stories with and relive the best parts of the old days. Besides, the place is close enough to the Grayscale that there is the veneer of danger even if there isn't really any.

Today, the Ring serves mostly as the gateway through which people must pass if they are moving between Arcopolis and the Grayscale. Aircraft are strictly forbidden from flying over the Ring wall unless granted special permission to do so (permission which, it should be noted, is almost impossible to obtain unless you are actively

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serving in the Cadre as a field officer). Those who violate this rule are intercepted immediately by robotic microfighters that will give two warnings to offenders before shooting them down. Sounds harsh, doesn't it? Well, that's what you get when you try to bluff a robot cop. This is one of the very, very few hard and fast rules of the Extent. An identical rule applies for flying over the Bulwark, the other liner arcology of the Extent, which forms the border between the Grayscale and the Scraplands, though some daredevil pilots can and do make the flight over the wall there. Given how utterly anarchic things are in certain sectors of the Bulwark, it's no surprise that border gets crossed sometimes, but nobody dares that over the Ring. This sector has a 100% security record; no unauthorized aircraft has ever crossed this airspace and landed safely afterwards.

The Ring consists of three basic sections: the **Inner Ring**, the **Middle Ring** and the **Outer Ring**. Unlike certain other areas of the Extent, however, the component areas of the Ring run into each other and it can be difficult to tell where one section ends and another begins. The component sections are mostly differentiated by function rather than the cultures of the people who live there.

The Inner Ring

Considered the most secure area of the Ring, the Inner Ring is dedicated to industrial purposes, featuring nearly all of the Ring's nanofoundries, material sinks, and production facilities. From here, materials and goods can be sent to and from the Ring via industrial-grade farcasters. Most of the production stays within the Ring, however, and very little of it is ever exported back into the Homeland or Centropol. However, the Ring does sometimes suffer raw materials shortages because its material sinks are a little less than dependable, so sometimes the Centropol superfoundry will shunt some of its output to the Ring directly. Aside from production, the Inner Ring also features the Ring's security apparatus for crossing to and from the Homeland sectors. A deep and a quarter-mile wide moat provides a neutral ground where Cadre midge robots can scan any travelers, robots and vehicles for arms, suspicious ID codes, and other data that might identify a potential threat. The moat, which has no cover whatsoever within it, makes for a killing ground for any hostiles crossing it. Cadre live-fire exercises have shown that just a few gunners on top of the Ring's Inner Ring or situated in sniping perches along any of its balconies or verandas can wreak havoc on any raiding parties trying to exit the Ring on the ground. The moat angles up away from the Ring, making it an uphill climb for exiters, something that also stands against belligerents. Aside from the moat, the numerous gateways on the Ring's ground level feature air lock-style portcullises that require all passers-through to undergo multiple scanning passes while they enter or exit the arcology. Those trying to smuggle through this gauntlet will have their work cut out for them, as any offenders will be confronted immediately by a potent mix of robotic and human security personnel.

The Middle Ring

Nicknamed "the Octagon," this section of the Ring is best known for its network of eight super heavy farcasters, designed by the Cadre for moving armored vehicles, large infantry units, even grounded aircraft. For the moment, there is no clear and present danger to inner Arcopolis, so the farcasters are used for industrial purposes only. But if and when the Cadre decides it must hold the line at the Ring, the farcasters will switch over to military use only as they bring in huge amounts of hardware and personnel from Centropol. The people who live in the Ring generally make their homes here, comfortably separated from the Inner and Outer Rings, where one is not constantly reminded of the uncertain security situation. Aside from that, though, many people who are not ex-Cadre or ex-Morituri find living here difficult because

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of the ever-present atmosphere of danger. Elsewhere in the Extent, people can live in complete isolation from the larger troubles of the world but not in the Ring. That draws a certain breed of daredevil or trouble-shooter to the area, for whom the uncertainty of the situation provides an exhilarating thrill. Most of the societies here are some forms of ex-soldiers' group that exist to trade war stories among other things. You don't have to be an old grunt to get into one of these societies or to feel that you fit in the Middle Ring, but it sure does help.

The Outer Ring

This is inner Arcopolis' first and best line of defense against any hostiles looking to come over from the Grayscale. The Outer Ring, designed very similarly to the Inner Ring, features a huge defensive moat, multiple staging areas where visitors are screened and scanned prior to letting them through, and a fast-response staff that is second to none. As an added defense, the gateway portcullises leading to the Grayscale are contained within a series of parapet towers equipped with robotic gun emplacements and IFF scanners. If any hostile parties approach this end of the Ring, the chances are by the time the human guard shows up, the bad guys will probably have been turned to giblets by the Ring's autoguns. Despite such physical security, the lawless culture of the Grayscale does seep in somewhat, encouraging certain residents of the Outer Ring to engage in criminal activity: smuggling to and from the Grayscale, giving unauthorized people safe haven in the Ring, hacking into the nanofoundries to make dangerous goods (weapons, armor, etc.) without the system ever knowing it, and so on. This has given the Outer Ring, and by extension the rest of the Ring a bid of a bad rap of the Extent. Its not really the Ring's fault — it and its people are doing everything possible to prevent Grayscale bad apples from turning the arcology into a wretched hive of scum and villainy. But there will always be those determined to leave sooty blast marks on even the most innocent of locales.

The Grayscale

Although the Extent has had much success with brainwashing the majority of its people, the remainder have been thoroughly disillusioned by the Cadre's actions. Some of these people identify themselves as the descendants of those who were once the original members of the Extent (just as the Cadre themselves do) but were pushed aside when the Extent militarized and became what it is: a massive body bank and security apparatus meant to serve the whim of the Cadre.

For years, the Cadre actively sought out and cracked down on those who showed the least amount of individuality or resistance to total authority. These dissidents were dealt with harshly, but for every one that got nabbed, ten more went underground (literally, in some cases, hiding out in the subterranean levels of Arcopolis) and formed a loose countercultural resistance. They called themselves the Grayscale, and though they were not a rebel movement per se, they simply wanted to live with the Extent's technology, though not within the Extent itself and certainly not subject to its laws. Over the years, the Grayscale grew despite the Cadre's efforts to destroy it entirely. When the Corruption grew to the point where it was beginning to crash the Extent's social and industrial architecture, that's when the Grayscale turned from a criminal problem to a full-blown second society within the domain of the Extent.

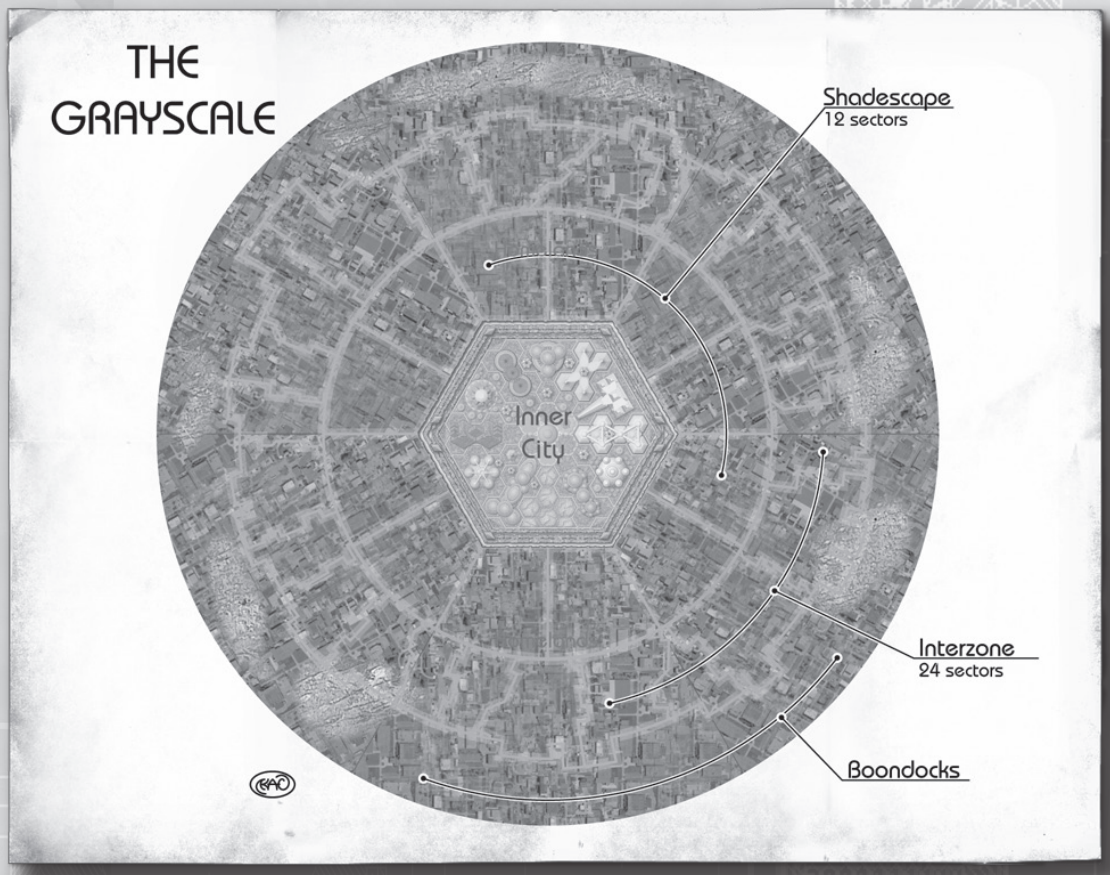
Today the Grayscale exists on the edge of Arcopolis and its outlying settlements, a kind of societal transition between the mindless droning of the Extent and the wild individuality of the Newcomers from outside of the sphere. For what it is worth, most people in the Grayscale don't really support one or the other. They just want to be left alone, but because of their middleman sta-

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tus in the struggle between the Newcomers and the Extent, the conflict has a funny way of reaching into the lives of everybody within the Grayscale, whether they want it there or not.

The Grayscale is a huge collection of individuals. There are really no major social groups to speak of; most of the people here live as loners or in the loosest of affiliations. In many ways, life in the Grayscale is like what social critics used to say of the cities of the Seventh Empire: big, sprawling places where millions of strangers live right next to each other yet are somehow totally alone. That is the Grayscale, made even more so by the broken down nature of things, the fear of dealing with the Extent and the competition of being able to make a connection with some Newcomer so you can become their trade connection. Life in the Grayscale is a harsh and lonely one, but ask most blighters scrounging a living out here what they think of it, and they will most likely tell you that they wouldn't have it any other way.

From a geographical standpoint, the Grayscale is that highly contested middle ground between Arcopolis and the Scraplands — the outermost reach of the city that has fallen into ruin and wreckage. The Grayscale is both a part of Arcopolis and the endless junkyard wasteland beyond. It is both friendly and hostile, cooperative and antagonistic, simple to behold yet maddeningly complex to master. It lacks the refinement, luxury and simplicity of the Home-



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lands and Centropol, being as it is in partial decay and without the full supertechnology that delivers a scarcity-free existence to the Extent's citizens. But despite this, the Grayscale has compelling strengths of its own: a wildly diverse population where every culture of the world might live in a crazy kind of harmony, coping with conditions that the pampered citizens of Centropol and the Homelands could never understand.

Somehow, the Extent remains oblivious of the resentment this situation might engender. After all, the Cadre is stationed throughout the Grayscale, constantly patrolling and shaking people down in searches for evidence of bootlegged nanomanufacture, knockoff weapons, or anything else smugglers might try bringing outside to the Scraplands. Out there, there are no nanofoundries, and the endless technology manufactured by the Extent is treasured in by the Extent's enemies, making for a healthy black market and smuggling industry. This more than anything is the primary security trouble of the Grayscale. Not that smuggling itself is so bad; the Cadre figures not enough technology is getting out to the Scraplands to make a difference. No, the problem is dealing with Scraplanders is likely giving them access to the Grayscale, and that might ultimately parlay into greater enemy infiltration, bringing Arcopolis itself one step closer to being invaded. The Cadre can't have that, so they have imposed a rough police state here in the Grayscale, where there is no law except whatever the Cadre feels like enforcing in its endless quest to lay the smack down on Scraplander infiltrators, insurgents and their various allies and agents.

While many Grayscalers appreciate the Extent's hard-handed tactics to root out any traces of Scrapland influence, many others resent this sort of behavior, seeing it more as tyranny than liberation. That the Cadre can create collateral damage it never repairs while chasing its targets is of special concern to angry Grayscalers, many of whom toil their whole lives to build something for themselves only to watch some ill-planned Cadre operation destroy it with stray fire, blundering tactics, or simple carelessness (such as landing a microfighter on somebody's home or workshop). The Cadre has never considered launching any kind of public relations campaign to mitigate the hard feelings its operations create, and so it comes to them as a great mystery why, despite its many efforts, so many Grayscalers seem so hostile to them. Some mystery.

There are three primary elements to the Grayscale: **Shadescape**, the **Interzone** and the nefarious **Boondocks**. Despite their differences in sophistication, lawlessness and culture, they all resemble high-tech shantytowns, possessing a decrepitude that could only come from the Scraplands and an ever-present technopresence that could only come from being in the shadow of Arcopolis. Most of the Grayscale is a vast stretch of arcologies of various sizes and stages of disrepair. On the street level is a constant buzz of activity as scrap dealers, salvagers, junkyard packrats, retrotech experts, outland adventurers and other such sorts rub elbows and do business under constant watch of the Cadre and in dangerously close proximity to the Scraplands and its agents.

Shadescape

Divided into twelve sectors of roughly equal size, Shadescape is easily the most high-tech, cared-for and Extent-friendly part of the Grayscale. Abutting against the Ring, this sector has numerous Cadre command posts, garrisons, farcasters and resupply centers in its midst, which has helped keep things under control. Most of the action happens in the other sections of the Grayscale anymore, since this area has been pretty much pacified. Thus, the people here tend not to have the same resentment of the Cadre and by extension, of the Extent. Without that anger simmering under the surface, there is no reason for Shadescapers to smuggle goods to the Scraplands

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or help Scrapland insurgents with their various covert operations within the Grayscale. In fact, the average Shadescaper is likely to alert the Cadre upon learning of any Scraplander activity in his or her midst, making this place pretty safe. The area got its name because it stands, both literally and figuratively, in the shadow of Arcopolis. It possesses an above-average number of small-scale nanofoundries and farcasters, so it keeps its people pretty well supplied. The majority of its buildings, skyscrapers and sub-arcologies have been more than 80% rebuilt, though most of them still adhere to an organic street layout, rather than the clean, grid-like orderliness of inner Arcopolis. For the Shadescapers, this uneven layout is part of the charm of their home; it reminds them that cities are living organisms, with their own unique pulse and soul. They cannot all be laid out like honeycombs, as Centropol is. Indeed, some Shadescapers would argue that any such city, no matter how perfect it seems, is destined to fail. One thing is for certain, though, Shadescape is populated by skilled and thoughtful people who appreciate both the Extent and their home outside of it in all the ways that matter.

The Interzone

Split into 24 different sectors of varying size, shape, density and layout, the Interzone is where the Extent's real struggle to control the Grayscale takes place. Unlike the Shadescape, the Interzone is considerably more decrepit, showing much of the first-hand damage that resulted from the Steel Helix attack years ago. While plenty of densely packed skyscrapers still stand, most of them are barely more than metal and supercrete skeletons ready to collapse at any moment. The buildings that are sound have been patched up, re-welded and reverse engineered since the Steel Helix. These are secondhand, retrotech monuments of the kind of junkyard sensibilities the Scraplands will have to offer. In such nonstandard buildings, there are plenty of places for bad guys, mercenaries, dealers and other criminal sorts to hide out, conduct their illicit business, and keep away from the Cadre's prying eyes. The Interzone is the first place where crime and insurgency becomes a serious problem and many of these hashed-together buildings mentioned before become junkyard fortresses when the Cadre burst in looking to round up whatever opponents they will find there. Indeed, there is a large and robust community of pro-Extent, hard-working, civility-minded people living in this part of the Grayscale, and to them, life is especially hard, since they must deal with both the specter of criminals and revolutionaries in their midst as well as the heavy-handed methods of the Cadre to deal with it all. Talk about living amid crossfire. Despite all this disruption, there still exists a decent industrial base, with a few third-rate nanofoundries, unreliable farcasters here and there, and a lot of shops that specialize more in bodging together broken bits of old technology than manufacturing something shiny and new. But don't let the low-tech look of this place fool you. There are hundreds of genius designers and builders here, and some of the best mecha work to come out of the Extent in the last decade (particularly innovations in robotics and armor technology) got its start in the secondhand makings of Interzone gearheads.

The Boondocks

It's pretty darn difficult to tell the Boondocks apart from the Scraplands. The vast majority of the cityscape here is pure ruin. There are no buildings on the scale of Arcopolis. Most buildings are sub-arcologies that fell to ruin, the husks of even smaller buildings that covered the area before the central redistribution of Arcopolis others are defunct factories, flat-out wreckage and crazy reconstruction areas where amok nanotech tried to rebuild the damage from the Steel Helix and ended up producing square miles of insane architecture. On top of all that, the landscape is further punctuated by dozens of half-built, half-demolished buildings whose occupants are

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trying desperately to bring back online, probably for some anti-Extent purpose, like giving Scraplander insurgents a forward base or safehouse, setting up a bootleg nanofoundry that pirates materials from Arcopolis, or illegal farcasters that hack into the Extent's farcaster network to ride the lines without authorization (which is dangerous by the way; unauthorized farcasting sometimes results in two or more people getting mashed together then they re-materialize at the same time in the same spot — it's happened). What buildings have been left intact are probably rigged to collapse by some gang of insurgents, gunrunners or thrill killers looking to bag a few Cadre agents. There are some civilians here, sure, but those with any sense moved closer to Arcopolis long ago. There is no safezone in the Boondocks, just miles and miles of hazardous junkland filled with an endless number of nooks and crannies where bad guys can do bad things and ambush any hero, hardcase or heavyweight looking to come after them. The only thing not making the Boondocks a Scraplander insurgent's paradise is that there are a dozen heavily fortified, large-scale farcasters in the region through which the Cadre routinely sends enormous combat patrols consisting of dozens of armored troops, fighting vehicles and close air support. These patrols are looking to shoot any thing that moves, and they blaze a trail through the Boondocks, sweeping and clearing anybody without the sense to keep his or her head down. Inevitably, those criminals and revolutionaries can't resist the urge to scrap with the Cadre, and so they oblige them, usually getting plastered in the process. Time and again, this brute force method of pacifying the Boondocks is employed only because it works so well. In the downtime between combat sweeps, the Scrapland insurgents and their Grayscale middlemen scramble about the wreckage, trying to put together that big score, that real deal, that once in a lifetime op that will put them or their cause on the map. For the Grayscalers, usually it's a quest for street cred. For the Scrapland insurgents, it's usually the chance to hit the Extent where it will do the most damage. For everybody else living in this somewhat forsaken place, it's all about keeping down, sticking to cover, and wondering why the hell you bothered to stay here after all these years.

These are the Boondocks. No, they're not likely to get much better any time soon.

The Bulwark

The second of the Extent's two linear arcologies, the Bulwark, differs from the Ring in that it was designed for defense first and for providing additional living space and manufacturing capabilities a distant second and third, respectively. The Bulwark is the structure that holds the Scraplands at bay, the rallying point from where Cadre units launch their daring missions of conquest into hostile territory, the outermost declaration of the Extent's sovereignty, and for the people of the Scraplands themselves, the first of the Extent's many garish displays of wealth and power.

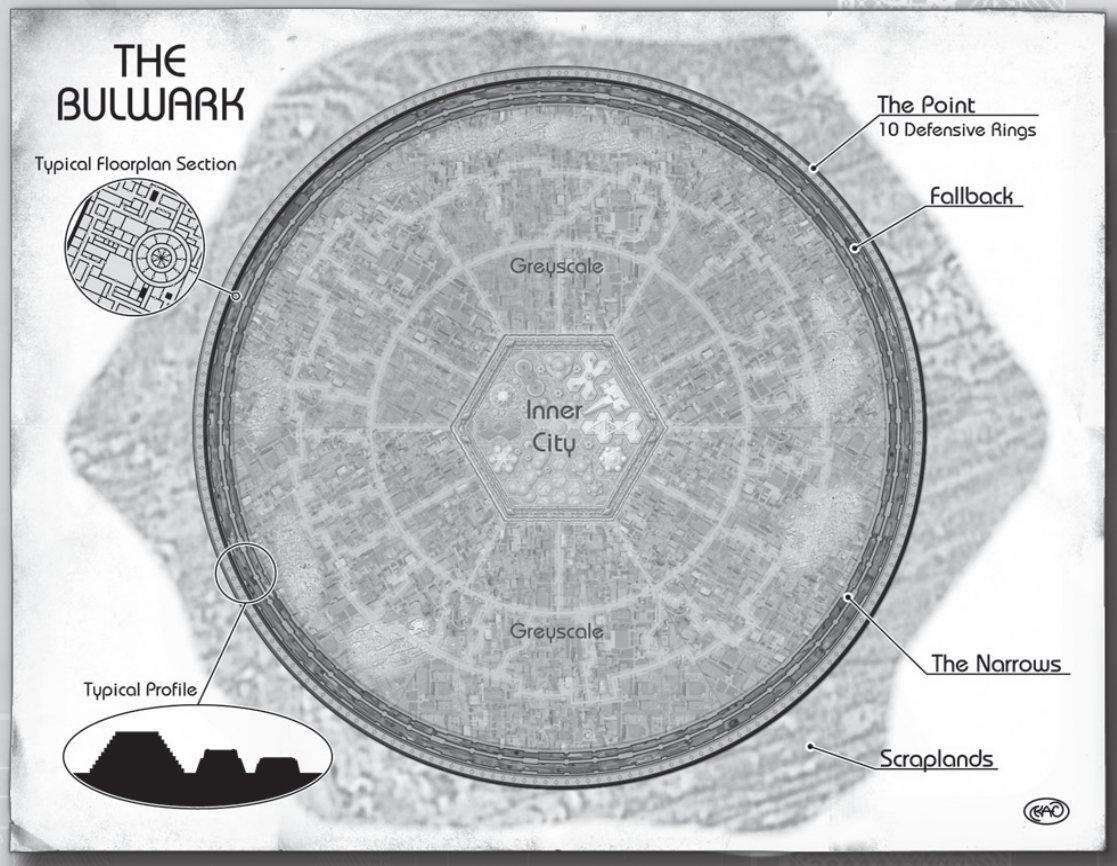
The Bulwark is a stark, huge, imposing building with virtually no discernible outward features. All windows and living space have been incorporated into the building structure all for the sake of armor. The result is that the Bulwark might as well be a wall of solid steel; it is virtually impregnable to outside damage, so the only way for enemies of the Extent to defeat it is either to sneak through or to fly over it. Because the Cadre can not field nearly enough human operatives in the Bulwark to secure it properly, and because the robotic troops deployed in people's stead are easily fooled, gaps in the defenses can and do exist, and it never takes the Scraplanders long to find and exploit them. The most common breaches are in the air, where scrapped together fliers make the daring run between the Grayscale and the Scraplands. Fully 50% of these blockade runners are

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destroyed in the attempt, but the odds are still good for those who don't mind playing coin toss with their lives.

When renegade fliers go over the top, automated defense turrets take care of the problem. When there are more serious breaches, Cadre and robotic soldiers are dispatched, emerging from numerous rally points built into the arcology and slaved to the Bulwark's farcaster network. In an instant, any of the thousands of Cadre soldiers stationed here can be deployed anywhere along the Bulwark's perimeter. Reserves from the Grayscale, the Homelands, the Ring or Centropol can be rallied immediately to the Bulwark in time of need, a contingency that has only been exercised twice, and even then, it involved only soldiers from the Grayscale and the Homelands. So far, the Bulwark has proven too difficult for the Scraplanders to infiltrate in large numbers or to overwhelm with massed attacks. The automated defenses plus the ability for the place to resupply itself infinitely are aces in the hole the Scraplands so far has been unable to counter. But that does not mean they won't keep trying, however, and it is only a matter of time before that next big attack comes. When it does, the troops stationed here will respond to it with energy and enthusiasm, for they all know that if the Bulwark were to fail, the forces of destruction would be let loose within the Grayscale, an all-too-fertile breeding ground for even more enemies.

Structurally, the Bulwark is nearly identical to the Ring except its entire aesthetic is geared toward military applications. The



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number of domiciles, common areas and recreational facilities has been drastically reduced, and in their place are additional staging areas for troops, combat robot warehouses, repair yards, nanofoundries, spare equipment depots, and farcasters. The Bulwark's floor plan is also a bit labyrinthine, making it difficult to navigate and even more difficult to move large numbers of people throughout much of the facility. While this makes little impact on the highly trained and drilled Cadre soldiers and robots, it will prove a big obstacle if and when soldiers from the Scraplands rush the place and make it into the interior sections. The idea is that, baffled and stymied by the floor plan, snipers and sappers within the Bulwark can massacre any invaders. The plan has worked flawlessly in military simulations thus far. Whether it works when the moment of truth arrives remains to be seen.

Like the Ring, the Bulwark is divided into three sections, each with its own structural purpose: **The Point**, **Fallback**, and **The Narrows**.

The Point

This is the outermost ring to the Bulwark, a section specifically dedicated to monitoring the immediate area and for providing that crucial first line of defense against any Scraplander incursions. There are ten separate levels lining the outside of the Bulwark (also known as the "defensive rings" or "D-rings") where automated and manned stations constantly scan the area out to ten miles away from the Bulwark itself. The junklands have been cleared over time out to nearly two miles, making it additionally difficult for hostile parties to approach the facility. Once within the ten mile scanning range, most hostiles can be tracked and monitored. That last two miles, however, provides virtually no cover, just a long, flat terrain to cross before assaulting the city of cities herself. The final quarter-mile features a downward-sloping moat just like what is on the inside of the Ring. Attackers trying to cross this had better either be in fast vehicles or have some kind if flight/speed ability, because ground soldiers running and gunning across this killing zone are simply doomed. In the years since the Extent has finalized this defensive package, there have been a half-dozen serious attempts to breach the Bulwark by force by different militant groups. Each time, a pitched battle resulted, but the invaders never even made it to the defensive moat. Even attackers coming in by air were taken apart well before they could cross into the Grayscale. To thank for all that carnage are the vast array of heavy support guns, sniping nests and missile batteries that line the ten D-rings. For the Bulwark's defenders, the chances of any firing station running low on ammo is virtually nonexistent, especially since each station has a small farcaster right there where gunners can request additional supplies from the depots deeper within the facility, which are then transported to the gunnery station within seconds. In one incursion, a single sniper accounted for 492 confirmed kills, thanks in large part to the Bulwark's ability to keep its outer combatants constantly supplied with whatever they need to lay the smack down on those who assault the Extent. Indeed, the defenses to the Bulwark have been so good that there has not been a massed incursion attempt in over three years, as many of the Traitor Nations and other militant groups in the Scraplands realize that they can no longer afford to throw their precious manpower against such a monolith. The better way is to sneak through the Bulwark somehow, which has prompted an internal reshifting of priorities on the Extent's part: internal security, counter-intelligence, and developing a new breed of operative that is as skilled in good old-fashioned dirty tricks as their myriad opponents certainly are.

Fallback

In the grim event that enemies breach the Bulwark's Point level, the Fallback sector provides a second line of defense, where soldiers can retreat from the Point and

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regroup within the Bulwark itself, deploying to internal strategic hardpoints that will hopefully prevent any further Scraplander advance. Thanks to the maze-like floorplan of Fallback with its narrow hallways and turning corridors, invaders are likely to run in circles or into dead ends or into any of the many traps that the Cadre defenders can and will lay for any unwelcome guests. Here, even a single combat robot can rack up an impressive number of kills while situated behind a gunnery shield and hammering away down a hallway where invaders have nowhere to run or hide. In circumstances such as these, only an utterly massive number of invaders, who could press forward despite losses, would prevail. That, or invaders who somehow are immune to the Cadre's weaponry, a situation the Cadre reckons is so remote as to not merit serous discussion. But still, the Traitor Nations are known to design their own weird weapons, and when they make their next big push, the enemies of the Extent might indeed carry arms for which the Bulwark provides the wrong kind of defense.

The Narrows

This is the sector of the Bulwark closest to the Grayscale. It is also the last stand area, that part where the Cadre defenders are to rally and hold their ground or die trying. Many of the floors and walls here are themselves lined with automated weaponry as well as offensive set-ups that will electrify or heat the corridors to lethal intensities. It would not be pleasant to command the troops responsible for running through here, as they would face a wall of suicidal defenders through which the only way would be to destroy them all. As an additional precaution, there are numerous self-destruct mechanisms placed throughout the Bulwark to partially collapse the structure if a full breach seems inevitable. In this case, the Cadre's position is that it would be better to destroy the "infected" parts of the facility before the enemy could fortify them or make them impossible to retake. Along similar lines, the farcaster and nanofoundry networks for this section all can be cut off permanently at a moment's notice by the sector commanders, as well as set on self-destruct. One of the reasons why the Scraplands insist on invading the Extent is to steal its nanofoundry technology and to enjoy the ability to produce their own… *everything*. It is part of the final defensive protocols for the Bulwark to make sure all of the Extent's secrets stay safe. And if that means destroying them and perhaps some of the Cadre defenders in the process, then so be it. The stakes are simply too high to do otherwise.

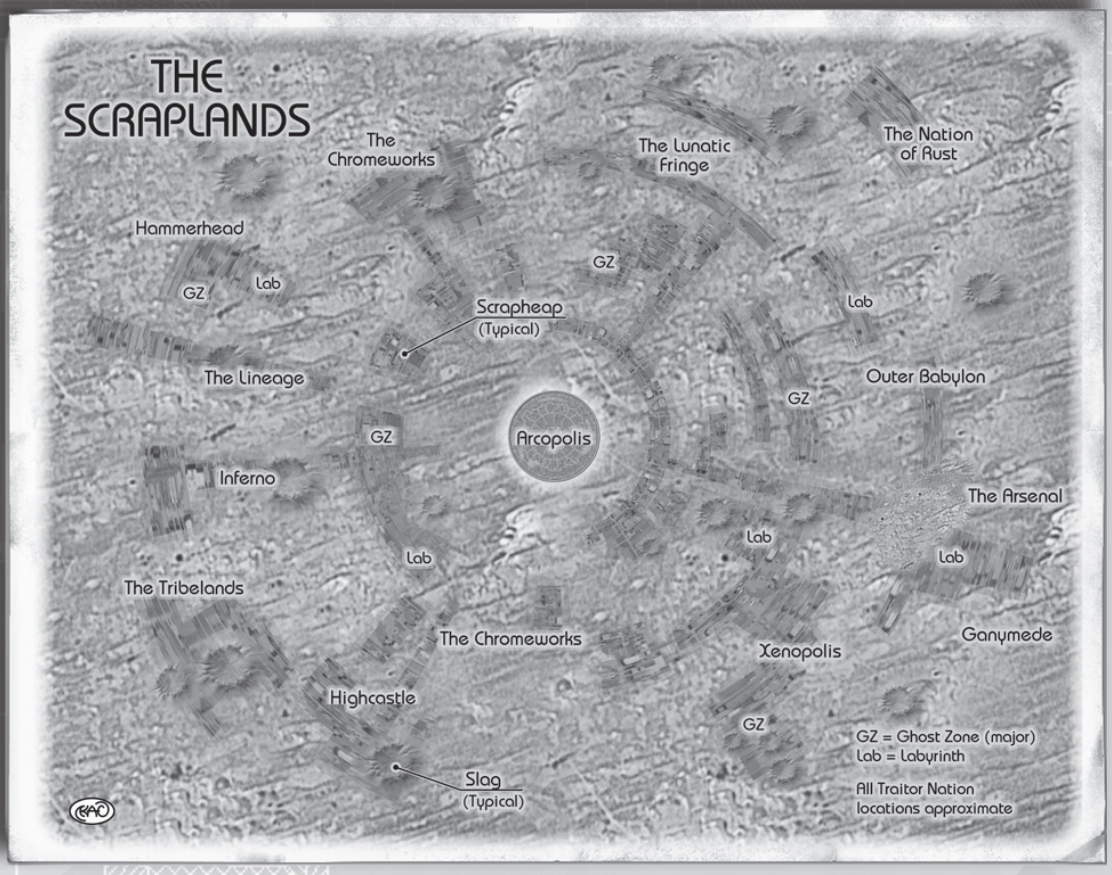
The Scraplands and Beyond

Once past the Bulwark, the landscape extends endlessly into a field of wreckage, craters and urban decrepitude. These are the ruins of the former Golden Age, of a world that had rebuilt itself after the Chrome Wars, only to face a greater devastation than ever before at the hands of the Steel Helix. These are the Scraplands, and as far as anybody in the world of ZPG knows, there is no end to them. With the exception of the Seven Cities, which have yet to be found by anyone (that is, found and reported), Arcopolis might very well be the last bastion of the supertech paradise that has been destroyed. The Scraplands are now the baseline for the entire world; their wreckage and desolation are the backdrop against which humanity's drama will continue to play for the foreseeable future.

The Scraplands are much like the worst parts of the Grayscale, only more so. The buildings and arcologies have been largely abandoned and in most cases, at least partially destroyed. The superdense street layouts are choked with rubble of all kinds — building debris, slag, broken down vehicles and mecha, junk infrastructure manufactured by nanofoundries run amok in the last hours before they died altogether.

There is discarded technology everywhere out here, ranging from the smallest handheld items to enormous super-indus-

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trial machinery, all of which can be salvaged to some degree if you have the right expertise. For this reason, scroungers and tinkerers love to prowl the Scraplands in a never-ending quest to find that one spare part, that mystery component, that missing piece of machinery they need to complete whatever contraption they're building back at their workshops. But make no mistake: even for those born to the Scraplands, there is hardly a single person eking out a living here who would not rather live a more comfortable life. All the scraphunting done out here is in the name of survival, and the junkyard techs who make a living out of cobbling together secondhand machinery do it for the love of the craft, sure, but more because it is the only way they know how to make it out here. The vast majority of people living in the Scraplands must hunt and scrape every day just to find enough food to survive. They must find or manufacture some kind of shelter. They must search for every basic necessity for life. Things like staying warm, getting decent medical care, transporting from place to place, and other such travails are all deadly serious business out here. Nobody is in the Scraplands for their health. They are out here because they were born to it, because they see no other way to live, and because they see the Extent as a strange and alien place not to be trusted and certainly not to be joined.

Despite all the wreckage of the world, there still exist, many believe, large and undiscovered caches of ancient technology, things that could re-deliver the magic of nanoscience to the Scraplands and elimi-

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nate scarcity once again. This is the golden find that really compels most of the people who live out here: they all want to find the hidden technology that will put them on top. After all, because everything is scarce out here, things have value in ways that do not exist in the Extent. Out here, there is an economy. There is trade, currency, wealth and poverty. There are all the trappings of the old ways out here, where the bold vision of the future has died. Here, the thought of possessing the supertech of the Extent is seen not as a way of delivering Utopia once more to all, but as a way to gain power and wealth and glory for oneself. In a world where survival is so paramount, it is hardly surprising that self-interest is everyone's prime motivator over pursuing a grander vision for humanity in general.

There are five basic kinds of territory within the Scraplands: **Slags**, **Scrapheaps**, **Labyrinths**, **Ghostzones** and **Enclaves**. Scrapheap territory accounts for 80% of the Scraplands in general. Slags, Labyrinths and Ghostzones each account for about 4 percent. Enclaves, including the **Traitor Nations** (which will be described in the next section) account for the final 8 percent.

Slags

These are sites of total ruin, wreckage and meltdown. During the Steel Helix, many power stations and nanofoundries either melted down or went critical and exploded. Either way, they destroyed not only the central facility but most of the surrounding area, too. Many of these sites generated heat so intense that they melted buildings up to a mile away, creating enormous craters of fused metal, plastic, supercrete and other materials. In some places, this melting effect was not quite as strong, leaving behind utterly ruined buildings; they are slumped, appear to be oozing or dipping into the ground, or look like they are on the verge of total collapse. Areas such as this offer virtually no technology to salvage nor places to hide and get rest. They are the Slags, those areas of total destruction within Ground Zero. They are a reminder of just how damaging the Steel Helix really was, lest anybody be foolish enough to forget. While Slags do not offer very many places for people to hide or seek shelter, they are good rallying points for large numbers of bandits, militants, or other such folk, since they provide some of the only relatively flat ground in the Scraplands. Everywhere else tends to be littered with wreckage and tightly confined into a dense urban landscape. Not so in the Slags, which is why so many warlords see them as potential command areas.

Scrapheaps

These are areas that have been pretty much destroyed but they never experienced the extreme conditions that would have made an area a Slag. Most often, these are residential areas that simply were destroyed like everything else, turning a once-proud arcology farm, for example, into a rubble field many stories high, filled with dangerous nooks and crannies that might contain lost technology — or it might trap forever those who have forgotten that curiosity killed the cat. In these areas of near-total wreckage, some salvage opportunities still exist, especially among the larger buildings and arcologies, many of which have relatively untouched interiors if only you could get to them. Clearing the wreckage blocking them off is a major undertaking, especially since the best places in the Scrapheaps are also where various hermits and hardcases can be found. Given the lack of decent living conditions out here, expect anybody whose home has been detected to put up a fight about it with lethal intensity. Just because the people out here make do with secondhand, salvaged gear does not mean they can't protect what they think is their's with amazing ferocity.

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Labyrinths

When the Steel Helix crashed the incredibly complex and interconnected machine world that once existed, one of the first victims were the many nanofoundries. These machines proved especially vulnerable to the Steel Helix and were instantly struck with the compulsion of producing obscenely large amounts of materials before they flamed out and died. In most cases, the nanofoundries depleted their material reserves in order to spew forth huge streams of molecular gibberish, strange materials that covered the surrounding areas with nanotech goo, fast-setting megacrete, spare parts that could not possibly work for machines that were never invented, and so on. In many cases the nanofoundries went into an arcology-building mode, which would not be so bad if they had not built incredibly complex, maze-like structures that only a machine could truly appreciate. Many of these so-called Labyrinths extend for miles and possess a fractal pattern or a repeating motif that lends some degree of stability to the design. Still, these places are elaborate traps for those who dare enter them, for they are the size of small arcologies but were never intended for human habitation. Thus, explorers who check these things out would be well warned to consider that once you enter a Labyrinth, you really might spend the rest of your life there. The reason why these dangerous places are such draws to explorers, scroungers, adventurers and the like is because at the center of most Labyrinths is the remains of a nanofoundry. There persist rumors that some Labyrinth nanofoundries are not destroyed merely in a dormant state. If they could be revived, they could be used to build a new supertech community in the middle of the wastelands, a prospect many Scraplanders look upon as outstanding success.

Ghostzones

These unusual sectors somehow endured the worst effects of the Steel Helix, but suffered total depopulation when the ZPG assault came afterwards. In places such as these, the infrastructure and remaining technology is in pretty good shape. There are just no people. Furthermore, in many Ghostzones, residual traces of ZPG have been reported to infect explorers and scavengers, killing them even if they have been treated with immunization nanotechnology. Whether or not this is the case is a bit of a mystery, since no reliable studies have been done and few accounts on the Ghostzones can be assumed accurate. Is it possible that some wild variant of ZPG remains like a booby trap? Perhaps, but unlikely.

A better explanation of the Ghostzone phenomenon is that people are simply creeped out by the prospect of scouring through a place where everybody just dropped dead from ZPG, and as a result, their minds come up with all sorts of novel reasons for why the Ghostzones are not to be visited. The theory of the moment changes regarding why visiting the Ghostzones is a bad idea, but they usually range from stories about lingering bio-agents to rebellious robots that will kill all organics they find, to stories that actually suggest the Ghostzones are under some form of magic spell or curse that will destroy all who tempt it.

For those who can shrug off the Ghostzone's sinister reputation, there are excellent salvaging opportunities to be had. Weapons, nanofoundries, vehicles, robots, armor, it's all there for the taking, provided you are willing to make the effort. Unfortunately, such heavyweight salvage operations require lots of manpower, or at the very least lots of robot power, and those who seek to do some serious tech-scrounging in the Ghostzones need to reconcile themselves with the fact that there are people within the Scraplands who will attack scavengers at every turn. Some are merely bandits looking to steal whatever the scavengers find. Others are more concerned with stopping the scavengers before they uncover something terrible in the Ghostzones, whether it be a new strain of ZPG or

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the angry spirits of the millions of people who died there. Whatever their reasons, these interlopers fight without reason and kill without mercy. They are to be monitored and fought hard at every opportunity, lest such powers get their hands on some ages old supertech and do something truly awful with it.

Enclaves

This is a catch-all category that counts for any region in the Scraplands, be it a Slag, a Scrapheap, a Labyrinth or a Ghostzone that has been permanently settled by a decent-sized group of people. In most cases, Enclaves are tiny communities that consist of 20 to 50 people, but there are larger Enclaves out there supporting much larger populations. The greatest of the Enclaves are where the various militant societies known as the **Traitor Nations** make their bases of operations, having populations of tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of people.

The degree to which the citizens of any given Enclave have developed their territory varies considerably. A tribe of neosavages who have given up all but the last vestiges of civilization may live among the ruins of a Scrapheap, hunting other people for food and using for tools whatever items they can find. Meanwhile, a large and sophisticated group might lay claim to a Labyrinth, clear out any existing wreckage, map the groundwork, restore power and basic services, and even get some kind of automated manufacturing back online. Out in the Scraplands, one Enclave never exactly resembles another. They are like fingerprints: each a unique and complex thing unto itself. All survive on the strength, courage, resilience and ingenuity of their citizens, however, and as a result, any given Enclave is likely to be fiercely independent. This has given rise to an increasing strain of militancy among all Enclaves, an alarming number of which are either seeking to defend themselves from unknown (and sometimes imaginary) invaders, or looking to impose their will on their neighbors. There are also those that fall into neither category, most often because they are so isolated that they do not realize that even now, their little world is about to be disrupted by the presence of outsiders. Such "neutral" Enclaves often are powerful waystations for traveling adventurers, mercenaries and explorers who are always in the market for a friendly place to stay. Naturally, the average Enclave will not let any strangers inside unless they have something to offer the Enclavers. Trading skills is one common form of exchange, as are gifts of technology — the more advanced, the better. Providing an Enclave with any elements of nanofoundry technology is likely to win you a friend-for-life rating from its members.

The Traitor Nations

The mightiest (and fewest) of the Scrapland Enclaves, the Traitor Nations are the only powers in the world of Septimus that present a serious threat to the Extent. Indeed, the danger from the Traitor Nations (a name given by the Extent itself but gladly accepted by these militant Scraplanders) is severe as they grow stronger and bolder with each passing day.

Most of these hodgepodge nations are relatively small in scope and do not even have clearly defined boundaries. But they are united in their hatred of the Extent and their desire to bring no small amount of pain, suffering and revolution to Arcopolis, either transforming it in their image or destroying it altogether. But that is where their unity ends. For each Traitor Nation diverges wildly from the next in terms of its culture, strengths, weaknesses, and motivations outside of warring with the Extent. To no small degree, these divisions are keeping the Extent alive, for the Traitor Nations can not truly agree on anything for a long period of time, making a lasting alliance between them, even against a common enemy, a fickle prospect at best. Most times, the Traitor Nations will form small

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coalitions of up to three or four member groups, posing a serious threat to some sector of the Extent, but the alliance never lasts. Either it disbands after achieving its goals (giving the Extent much-needed time to recover from the attack), or it is struck by the Extent and in face of overwhelming firepower, breaks apart, not to reform until an entirely new alliance can be drafted from the ruins of the old.

It is not unheard of for the Traitor Nations to war amongst each other, but this is usually kept to modest skirmishing and raiding. These nations generally do not yet have big enough axes to grind to merit truly going to war with each other. But the seeds of conflict are there, and should the Extent fall one day, the Traitor Nations might very well find themselves in a bloody and internecine factional conflict that will spell their collective doom.

There are a dozen Traitor Nations currently within striking distance of Arcopolis: The **Nation of Rust**, **The Arsenal**, the **Lunatic Fringe**, **Hammerhead**, the **Enclave**, **Highcastle**, **Inferno**, the **Chromeworks**, **Xenopolis**, **Ganymede**, **Outer Babylon**, and the **Tribelands**. There may very well be additional Traitor Nations in addition to these, especially as the Traitor Nations themselves splinter and form offshoot societies and Arcopolis' outcasts travel even further into the Scraplands to establish their renegade realms. But these twelve are the ones that pose a clear and present danger to the City of Cities, and as such, they are the outermost part of Septimus' center stage.

The Nation Of Rust

This is a society of tinkerers, scroungers and packrats who are experts at finding choice bits of discarded technology and bodging it into something workable. To spend time in the Nation of Rust's enclaves is to journey through a bizarre retrotech scrapworld filled with dilapidated machinery yet possessing a strange kind of grandeur. This Traitor Nation has, in its own way, captured a sense of style and greatness that few other Traitor Nations have. They have converted miles and miles of ruined cityscape into a rusty and barely-working parody of the world before the Steel Helix struck. Everything is on the verge of breaking down, but since the average member of this society is highly proficient with any kind of machinery, making the constant repairs

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needed just about everywhere is never a problem. In fact, with so many mechanics around, the Nation of Rust is in a constant state of upgrading, remodification and technical evolution.

This nation will never achieve the greatness of the Extent, but it does not care. Its mindset is only to master the weapons and armor it can field. Everything else is inconsequential. That is, except for one thing: its utter hatred of the Extent and its need to reduce Arcopolis to a smoking pile of rubble. Nobody, not even the oldest members of the Nation of Rust can explain exactly how they came to hate the Extent so. Perhaps it is simple jealously: they covet the beautiful and advanced machines that live there. Or maybe the Nation of Rust, so used to having to fight for the best supplies and spare parts, is starting to lose patience with the hardscrabble life out in the Scraplands and has decided to take what it feels it deserves to move itself into a bigger, bolder, better future where the retrotech foundation it has established may springboard into further greatness. To this end, the Nation of Rust spends a great deal of its resources building huge robot armies for the ultimate goal of swarming over the Arcopolis walls, storming the innermost reaches of Centropol, and planting the Nation of Rust's flag there once and for all, where all might see who is the new and rightful and true heir of the world.

The Arsenal

Within the Extent, there is always a select portion of any given population who are unhappy with their living conditions, no matter what the circumstances. The protocol for dealing with these folks has been to encourage them to simply leave the Extent. The reason why most don't, of course, is because like it or not, life in the Extent is a heck of a lot more comfortable than life out in the Scraplands. That said, there are those who so dislike the Extent and its philosophies that they will abandon it for the tender mercies of the wastelands beyond.

After the Steel Dream, many citizens (the majority of whom suffered substantial Corruption from the Steel Helix attack) decided that the Extent had become a victim of its own excesses, and that they would venture into the wastelands and build their own version of the Extent, newer, simpler, purer, better. In the years that have followed, this group of outcasts and misfits have, improbably enough, fired up a few half-functional nanofoundries and built a ramshackle version of the Extent. It has hardly the amount of luxury that Arcopolis offers, nor its military power or pure technological prowess, but what it does have is lots and lots of people, none of whom are afraid of being severely modified with the latest combat nanotech. The result is a series of bodged-together city-states that house a virtual army of seriously corrupted and combat-ready "citizens" all of whom blame the Extent for bringing the Steel Helix upon itself. And, by extension, these people hate the Extent for destroying the world and pushing humanity to the brink of extinction. For that, these self-styled "citizen soldiers" decree the Extent must die, and a bold new society of tomorrow will be built upon its smoking ruins. To this end, these warriors call themselves the Arsenal, a traitor nation committed almost exclusively to breeding its people for war and to maximizing its military output (its nanofoundries constantly verge on critical failure thanks to overuse).

The average Arsenal warrior is a lethal fighter in melee, gunplay and heavy combat. They work well in large units, partly because they are usually all networked on a system of redundant remote links to each other's brains. They have no fear of death, usually because they are so hopped up on combat nano that they can't feel pain anymore, and their greatest pleasure is to die with the knowledge that they have taken a piece of their enemies with them.

The territory of the Arsenal is, ironically, much like the Extent itself. There is no commerce, no private property, no exultation of the self at the expense of others. There

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is merely a communal hatred of a huge and seemingly indomitable enemy, and that hatred and preparation for conflict unites this entire society. Without that, the Arsenal would fall into harmless rabble. For the moment, its most able and decorated soldiers lead by virtue of their combat ability, and when they are not plotting the next big offensive against the Extent, they are spying on it, sending in saboteurs and suicide squads to shake things up, and generally keeping an eye on its Utopian arch-enemy. The Arsenal does **not**, however, possess the regen tank technology, so once an Arsenal soldier dies, he dies unless somebody drags the carcass elsewhere and revives him or her. The Arsenal philosophy vehemently opposes this, however, and most Arsenal soldiers will simply commit suicide the moment they learn they have been revived. Some will try to take out the regen tank that revived them first, and then do themselves in. Some social experts believe that the true nature of Arsenal hatred for the Extent stems entirely from its refusal to accept life after death, whatever the context, whatever the cost. Until an outsider actually does a serious study of these people, however, nobody is likely to know what exactly makes them tick.

The Lunatic Fringe

They say misery loves company. Well, in the world of Septimus, the same is true for insanity. As if they had a gravity all their own, the Lunatic Fringe proves that the renegades of the Scraplands definitely have a knack of gathering together in frightfully large numbers. Their territory is an endless warren of hermitages and places to hole up while the members of this scatterbrain society mill about, forming temporary cliques and Societies based on the most bizarre points of reference. (The **Brotherhood of Triskadekaphobes**, a unity of those fearful of the number 13, is a decent example. So is the **Skalagad Continuum**, whose members are devoted to three things: people who are devoted to three things, three things to which one might devote oneself, and the things that can be devoted to in degrees of three. Caught all that? No? Neither did we.)

Since the Lunatic Fringe's members are all as crazy as they come, their makeshift Societies rarely hold together for very long. And, those that do often recycle their entire membership within a span of months or even weeks. The mental instabilities of the most disturbed Scraplander, combined with their innate paranoia and religious devotion to conspiracy theories, makes it simply impossible for any one group of Lunatics to hold together long enough to get anything done. The closer these people get to reaching any sort of societal critical mass, the more likely it is to fragment, sending its members back into their individual lairs, where they can wrangle with their inner demons solo for a while.

What makes the Lunatic Fringe a nation in the loosest sense of the word is the large number of malfunctioning insomniac robots that serve the people here. As nutty and distorted as their human masters, the Lunatic robotic population never fully fragments or splinters, and as such, they provide the tenuous baseline the Lunatics need to consider themselves an ongoing community instead of a densely packed mob that pulls together into varying cliques from time to time.

Where the Lunatic Fringe most impacts the lives of those outside their territory is in the realm of conspiracy theory. Any given nutcase usually has two or three really good alternate explanations for the nature of the world of Septimus and the motivations of everyone in it. Each contain a scrap of truth, no matter how small, and if somehow all of these theories were to coalesce, the conspiracy community might very well put together a revelation that would shake the world to its very core. Most times, other Traitor Nations and academics in the Extent discount whatever the weirdos have to say. But once in a great while, the Lunatic Fringe comes up with an idea, a theory so infectiously convincing (despite its patent illogic)

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that it becomes an infectious meme in the minds of all who learn of it. It replicates and passes from person to person until somewhere, somebody accepts it as truth and begins to act on it. This phenomenon has altered the course of history on more than one occasion, prompting other Traitor Nations to go to war with the Extent, to make peace among themselves, to seek out strange new technologies, and so on. In this sense, the Lunatic Fringe are the unlikeliest oracles of the Septimus world, but they are, despite their nature, the most effective ones, too.

Hammerhead

In the Proving Grounds of the Extent, every gladiator will get a chance to know victory and glory in some measure if he stays around long enough. The law of averages demands it. Even the most marginal of warriors is bound to get lucky once or twice and enjoy his victorious moment in the light. On the flip side, no matter how good a gladiator is, all know death and defeat at some time, too. Often, Morituri are fragged more commonly than they survive. This too is part of what it is to be a Morituri: to fight with honor and to die without fear. There are many different Morituri subcultures within the Proving Grounds who ascribe to that general state of mind, but there are always those who do not. These are the misfits within misfits who see no point in playing fair or in maintaining honor to any degree, for whom winning is worth villainy, and for whom the taste of defeat is too bitter to endure. Every year since the Proving Grounds have opened, a small number of Morituri have left the Extent, angry or put off by their failure to achieve their goals within the strictures of the Proving Grounds. Some feel their skills are wasted in games where the consequences of death have been minimized. Others have grown to hate specific clans within the Morituri subculture but have no patience for getting payback against them within the Extent's war games and have been expelled from them for attacking fellow gladiators between games, while fighters were in safe zones, or while outside of the Proving Grounds. The castaway Morituri have come together over a long period of time, and they and their progeny have created a Traitor Nation of professional warlords and combat specialists who have been honing their skills and battlefield instincts. Collectively, they consider themselves the Hammerhead clan, the lost clan of the Morituri, the outcast army who shall one day return triumphantly to the Proving Grounds, defeat all comers, and reign as the rightful lords of the fields of battle. All told, these people are a little kooky, and their desire to rule the Proving Grounds but not destroy them, not to mention their overlooking of how they would ever play into the larger picture of the Extent if they ever achieved their goals, makes them a short-sighted bunch. Known for having more enthusiasm than brains, Hammerheads are often taken advantage of by others, especially those who plot to bring down the Extent but who do not care to use their own resources to do it. For jobs such as these, the naïve and foolish Hammerheads make the perfect disposable heroes.

The Lineage

The Steel Helix assault did more than sentence the remainder of humanity to a slow extinction. It poisoned the minds of many of the Extent's citizens, making them radically reject the very notion of any sort of nanomodification, use of robots, or any other form of technology that merges man and machine. These zealots celebrate the human potential to its utmost, convinced that with enough skill, training and spirit, the human body could outperform any machine it competed against. At the same time, however, they do not reject technology altogether. They will gladly use high-tech weapons and devices against their enemies. They simply will not use any machinery that they feel blurs the line between where humanity ends and technology begins. Exoskeletons, cerebrally piloted vehicles, all forms of nanotechnology and any sort of robot are all prime examples of what forms of

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machinery these people consider an affront to humanity itself. Known collectively as the Lineage, these human extremists uphold their convictions with a religious intensity; any who dare oppose or reject their views is an enemy of the Idea, and must be converted or destroyed. Given the violent behavior the Lineage philosophy demands of its adherents, there was no way these people could remain in the Extent, not when they were so prone to going on killing sprees against simple civilians and plotting to destroy nanofoundries, power generators, and other symbols of the Extent's supertechnology. As a result, the Cadre rounded up as many Lineage members as it could find and expelled them to the Scraplands. There, the Lineage has only grown in number, as more and more disaffected people who blame the Extent for all of their problems join this cult and its war to destroy the world's last semblance of Utopia and rebuild it, to the exclusion of everybody who does not think, talk, act and live as they do. Despite their considerable strength — they are one of the largest Traitor Nations in terms of sheer population and territory controlled — and their desire to bring the Extent down, the Lineage almost never confronts the Extent directly (or any of its other enemies, for that matter). It prefers to send agents to infiltrate and destroy from within or to hire freelancers for dangerous missions or better yet to manipulate the other Traitor Nations to do their fighting for them.

Highcastle

Not all Traitor Nations are mini-civilizations that run counter to the Extent. Some are simply glorified gangs of killers, bandits and hooligans who thrive on bloodshed and excitement and who see the Scraplands as one huge playground in which to raise holy hell 24-7 using the heaviest weapons available. The mercenary army known simply as Highcastle is a perfect example. These guys were just another large and well-armed band of Grayscalers and Scraplanders trying to make a living beyond the creature comforts of Arcopolis. What they found, however, are the ruins of one of the supermassive space needles that covered the world before the Steel Helix crashed everything. Dubbing their stronghold Hightower, these lawless villains soon drew many followers. Their followers turned into a gang, and that gang turned into an army, and that army now stands poised out in the Scraplands like a dagger aimed at the Extent's heart. For in the heart of Highcastle is a sputtering nanofoundry and a compromised datanode, so not only can these vicious killers build whatever kind of weapon, armor, vehicle or equipment they want, they can also hack their way into the Extent's Datastream and if they are lucky into off-limits datacores to boot. Most of the time, Highcastle devotes its energies to trying to destroy the Extent's data infrastructure from within, but none of their hackers have the expertise to do it, which limits their efforts largely to highly political vandalism.

Of infinitely greater danger, however, is Highcastle's long-running program of providing heavy weapons and other military hardware to whomever wants it. Hightower mostly provides tech to second-rate gangs of mercs, assassins, revolutionaries, bandits and adventurers. Money is virtually worthless to these black marketers, so they usually trade for information (Extent security codes are favored) or favors. The standard operating procedure for many of Highcastle's clients is to arrange an equipment pickup, receive a job request for Highcastle as a way to pay for the gear, get a few weapons or items in advance to help them carry out the job, and then pick up the bulk of the shipment when the job is done. People generally don't try to double-cross Hightower on this, because any Scraplander with half a brain knows that crossing these guys will earn you a death mark. As a result of this "guns for jobs" arrangement, Highcastle is a major producer of the various criminals and insurgents who make trouble for the Extent, particularly along the outermost sectors of the Grayscale, where life has a funny way of turning into one big bullet festival.

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The Cadre would dearly love to send a strike force against Highcastle itself, but this Traitor Nation is probably the most heavily fortified of them all. To overtly attack and destroy the space needle would require and overwhelming number of troops, time, and diversion of production capability to sustain the assault until its completion. And even then, there would be no guarantee that the assault would destroy Highcastle entirely. No, the Cadre would much rather conserve its warfighting capabilities to defending the Extent against direct attacks. It is building up its reserve strength for the major offensives to come against Highcastle and other priority targets in the next few years. For now, the Cadre's plan for dealing with Highcastle is to use the Traitor Nation's methods. Rather than mount a huge frontal assault, it routinely sends in highly trained covert agents and mercenaries to destroy the space needle from within. Thus, the Extent and whatever Grayscalers and Scraplanders who work for it often sneak into Highcastle to scout it out, sabotage its heavy equipment, gain critical intelligence and eliminate key personnel. So far these incursions have had only modest success, but the Cadre is convinced that with the right people, Highcastle would be no more.

Inferno

The damage from the Steel Helix ranges from outright destruction of entire arcologies to relatively moderate amounts of damage to sectors that are otherwise running about well as they ever have. Somewhere between those two, there are those nanofoundries that were knocked offline and corrupted somehow by the attack, so when they recovered and fired their production matrices once more, they began producing insane quantities of what amounted to molecular gibberish. Such nanofoundries usually ended up feeding back on themselves, either failing completely (and leaving behind an alien structure as a testament to its rampaging production) or self-destructing so spectacularly they leave nothing but a crater of fused glass and stone. However, some amok nanofoundries find a crazy sort of equilibrium, churning out millions of tons of raw junk each year, but never drowning itself in it or running out of material it can compile into the next layer of its infinitely expanding outer shell. Inferno is a prime example of the self-sustaining rampant nanofoundry.

The Inferno arcology resembles a child's dribble-sand castle from afar, being a huge mountain of blobs dripped on top of each other to form a mountainous megastructure reaching up into the sky. Deep in its convoluted heart lies its central nanofoundry, which glows red with heat and molecular slag. Periodically, Inferno ejects waste material that not even its compiling computers know what to do with, forming lava-like gouts streaming down its sides. In the surrounding area have lived huge numbers of neosavage brutes who have all but forsaken technology and its many uses and have reversed to a barbaric style of life. To them, Inferno is truly fascinating, and many have come to revere the structure as a god, routinely offering sacrifices of junk, technology, and most importantly people into its central shaft as a sacrifice. Anything thrown into the mouth of Inferno will fall straight into the foundry pool itself (unless they save themselves somehow), where they will be incinerated, compiled into the foundry's raw material pool, and used to fabricate something down the line. It is a fate most people, especially those from the Extent, find both chilling and barbaric. With regards to the Extent, the Inferno barbarians see Arcopolis as the home to a rival pantheon of gods that must be destroyed. The Extent's people, by extension, are agents of these dread gods, and they too must be dealt with by being fed into Inferno itself.

The Chromeworks

This Traitor Nation is comprised of fanatical devotees to the thought of not just augmenting themselves with nanotechnology but with actually merging themselves

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with machines. Somehow crossing the line that separated the two and becoming a new synthetic species of man and machine is the idea here, to become something greater than the sum of each. In the Extent, this train of thought is considered to be taking the Extent's love of technology and human integration to an insane extreme, but out in the Scraplands, it makes perfect sense to those who are indeed crazy as loons but also to those who simply crave power or the means of striking back at the Extent. For all such people, there is the dreaded Chromeworks, a series of moderately damaged nanofoundries and arcologies that have been taken over by megalomaniacs who share the twisted dream of committing the human genetic record to digital memory and to transforming the last vestiges of humanity into shiny robotic versions of itself. Known as the Chromeworks, this mighty Traitor Nation has forsaken regen tank technology in favor for highly specialized persona digitalization infrastructure that enables its citizens to undergo full persona transfers, leaving their bodies behind and living the rest of their lives as the digital souls of a new kind of robotic hybrids. The Chromeworks is a nation of Chrome dedicated to the end of all flesh, and they have the means to do it. Their every convert is, in essence, a powerful war machine merely awaiting weapons outfitting and the orders to go to battle.

The production capabilities of the Chromeworks are truly frightful, since they are geared exclusively to churning out new robotic shells and the various replacement parts and support technology needed to keep such a highly mechanized society up and running. Weapons development is also a high priority, and the Chromeworks when it goes to war will be one of the most thoroughly armed civilizations ever to field an army.

So far, the Chromeworks seems to be biding its time for the perfect opportunity to make that singular assault that will breach the Extent's defenses and lay waste to the whole thing in a short, overwhelming campaign. For the Extent's part, the Cadre have extensive intelligence on this threat and have noted its major weakness: virtually no heavy vehicles of any sort. When the Chromeworks attacks, it will be a massive mechanized infantry assault. The Cadre hopes that with its incredible air power they can stem the tide of Chromeworks' invasion, but until both sides' battle plans truly are tested, there is no reliable way to forecast who will prevail.

Xenopolis

A Traitor Nation of genetic experiments gone wrong, these freaks and misfits are defined by their universal application of a bizarre form of self-replicating cosmetic nanotechnology similar in effect to the various kinds of nano used in the Extent to give oneself an alien or monstrous appearance. Only the nano used out here seems to be some kind of mutant strain changed by the Steel Helix attack and kept "alive," for lack of a better word, by its constant transferal from person to person. As a newcomer enters Xenopolis society, he is injected with the blood of another citizen already infected with the mutant nanotech. Within hours, the nano attaches to the newcomer's genetic structure and affects a permanent and teratogenic change throughout the entire body. Those who join Xenopolis are forever crafted in its monstrous image; those who wish to leave never can, for they shall always appear to others as part of this outlandish and virulent society.

Exactly who founded Xenopolis is a mystery as is the reason why anybody would wish to join it. It has no unifying social agenda, no common philosophies, no driving goals except for a nebulously defined hatred of the Extent and pretty much every other Traitor Nation. In simple terms, Xenopolis seems to hate anything prettier than itself, which means just about everybody else in the world. Considering the sad state most of civilization has been reduced to, that is saying a lot.

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Of special note is that "first-generation" citizens of Xenopolis, those who were born outside of it and are modified once they join, typically suffer extreme and progressive Corruption as the result of their nanomodification. They also tend to develop additional nanotechnological abilities as they grow older, a sign that their nanotech is in a mutagenic state and developing on its own. Even more fascinating is that "second generation" Xenopolites, those descending from first-generation citizens, are born with mutagenic nano already inside them, so they appear monstrous from birth. However, as they grow older and develop ever more nanotech abilities, their Corruption level stays the same. It is widely suspected that third generation Xenopolites and all other future generations will also have this ability, making this Traitor Nation the unlikely cradle of a new offshoot of humanity, a mutant species that truly is a merger of man and machine. What the future has in store, especially regarding the Extent's bid to reclaim the Scraplands, remains to be seen. Will the Xenopolites embrace another stab at Utopia, offering their unusual perspective on humanity for future generations, or will they resist the Extent and any other civilization that tries to rebuild the world, happy only to preside over the wreckage of former golden ages, the stewards of an inexorable descent into darkness?

Ganymede

Nanofoundries driven amok by the Steel Helix are to blame for this region. Damaged to the point between utter unreliability and actual systems failure, the foundries here have kept sputtering along for years, spewing forth enough junk nanotech and molecular gibberish to transform the local landscape into something that looks more at home at the bottom of the ocean than on dry land. Here, rolling hills and valleys of nanoform stretch for miles in every direction their understructures a vast and incredibly complex warren of tunnels, chambers and hollows. Many Scraplanders would choose not to live in this oversized nanotech anthill, but a cohort of warlords have taken them over and turned them into a fortified stronghold. Used to living a Spartan life, the warrior-bandits who command the area require few creature comforts, seeking only to establish their dominance. These are a junkyard people who have been raised amid the wreckage of a lost age, who have learned to spill blood in order to survive, and who consider themselves as impossible to accept an outsider as any kind of friend or ally. This Traitor Nation is known as **Ganymede**, named after the severely damaged AI who used to administer the nanofoundries here but has long since died. Ganymede soldiers, scouts and spies routinely roam their surrounding area in search of travelers to bully and persecute, which often gets them into big trouble. However, Ganymede's central nanofoundries are still in operation, pumping additional nanoform to displace what it has already produced. This means that Ganymede, which is already some two miles in diameter, is constantly growing bigger. One day, the top muckety-mucks of this Traitor Nation will feel that they have "grown" sufficiently close to Arcopolis, and when that day comes, the soldiers of Ganymede will assemble, lay siege to the City of Cities, slay its people, and litter the ground with their bones. Why? Because it is there. That's why.

Outer Babylon

The Traitor Nation of Outer Babylon is a breakaway society founded by citizens of the Extent who rejected the callous violence of Arcopolis' Proving Grounds, the decadence of Arcopolis, the wasteful production of the nanofoundries and the general idleness of Utopian life. Leaving the Extent behind, these people struck out for the Scraplands intent on jump-starting or commandeering a nanofoundry and using it to build a replica of the Extent in their own style, a place where life was comfortable but production was free to everyone, where life would adhere to the order and wisdom of a leadership class, and where a common ideology would unite all of its citizens. Not

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surprisingly, Outer Babylon is one of the few Traitor Nations that is losing people, as nobody wants to leave the Extent to join its more tyrannical, less comfortable doppelganger. Likewise, many of the cultural revolutionaries who founded Outer Babylon have since come to their senses (and left), lost the fanatical resolve that made the vision of this Traitor Nation a reality, or died and were never replaced.

At the same time, the core nanofoundry that this society has based itself on has failed, and Outer Babylon must cannibalize its own technologies and buildings in order to scavenge what it needs to survive. In short, this is a repressive, paranoid rogue nation version of the Extent trapped in an inevitable death spiral. However, in its heyday, it did attract a huge number of Scraplanders who preferred Outer Babylon's comforts and tyranny to the abject poverty of the Scraplands. That is why there are still well over a million citizens loyal to this failing society, all of whom sense that their homeland's time is near and that before everything crashes down around them, perhaps they ought to salvage what remains of their small but powerful supertech army and drive it straight into the heart of Arcopolis. That way, Outer Babylon may perish from the Sphere, but so will its nemesis. For many Outer Babylonians, that would be a good enough end.

The Tribelands

The largest Traitor Nation in terms of territory and population, the Tribelands are an amalgamation of the Scraplands' greatest Alpha Tribes. They were united by outcasts from the Extent who were exiled for their transgressions in the Proving Grounds and determined that they would gain their revenge by forming a composite army-nation of barbarians from beyond who would one day return to the Extent and dismantle it. There were six of these exiles originally, and through brutality and combat, they gained control of tribe after tribe by defeating their leaders in single combat, using their Extent-borne skills and modifications to great advantage. One by one, these reckless adventurers assumed control of these tribes personally, creating cults of personality strong enough to assert leadership over a million subjects or more. Over time, these exiles assumed control of these tribes personally. The Extent exiles then turned on each other, no longer trusting one another to share power. In a series of brief and bloody encounters, the exiles slew each other to a man, leaving their huge patchwork nation effectively leaderless. Shrewd war leaders from the various factions making up the Tribelands have sought to ascend to control the coalition, crafting deals with likely allies and killing whomever gets in their way. Thus for now, the Tribelands governs itself loosely through a council of some two dozen war leaders who each have an equal say in things and who jointly decide courses of action through a vote, much like how a parliament might act. Still, they know that only war against a common enemy will really provide the glue to hold this super-nation together, and so the Tribelands are gathering whatever scrounge-worthy weapons, armor and equipment they can for a massive assault on the Extent. When they bring this fight to the Extent, the entire Tribelands shall go on the march, every man, woman and child, regardless of what role they have to play back home. This shall be a total war effort, and it will either overwhelm the Extent or it will falter on the Extent's defenses, causing the Tribelands themselves to separate into a hundred fragments, likely never to come together so completely ever again.

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The Seven Cities

To anyone in Arcopolis, the Traitor Nations represent the outermost frontier of the world. Indeed, most citizens of the Extent never venture far outside their home sectors, much less out of Arcopolis entirely and into the Grayscale. For them, any given Traitor Nation might as well be on another planet. Likewise for the Traitor Nations: though Arcopolis is a hated and target enemy for most, it still represents a long way off. The Traitor Nations form a ring around the City of Cities; outside of that ring, as far as anyone can tell, is an endless expanse of increasingly desolate wreckage. The farther away from Arcopolis you go, especially once you pass the Traitor Nations, the less hospitable the wasteland becomes. Soon there is nothing more to scavenge than rusting metal, broken rock and crumbling synthetics. There is no water, no movement, no life. Just the disintegrating ruin of the past.

Beyond the Traitor Nations, nobody from the Extent, Grayscale or the Scraplands has measured how far it is to the next settlement of note, much less what that settlement might be. Historical records refer to the **Seven Cities**, whose grandeur and level of technology is surpassed only by Arcopolis itself. The thing is, despite their many mentions in various datacores and archives, the locations of any one of the Seven Cities remains a complete mystery, as does their status. It is likely that all seven perished in the Steel Helix catastrophe. Then again it is just as likely that one or more of them survived, perhaps to face a similar fate as Arcopolis does right now, besieged as it is by the forces from outside its borders and from internal decay. Or maybe some of the surviving cities have stabilized and are busy reclaiming their particular corner of the world and restoring it to greatness. Nobody from the Extent or its neighbors would know of it were that the case, however, because the Seven Cities are to them a big blank spot in its collective memory.

Numerous searches for the Seven Cities have turned up nothing. Most notably, any aerial surveillance sent out has always failed. In fact, most of the craft are never seen or heard from again once they pass the **Second Circle**, that perimeter which is as far from the Traitor Nations as the Traitor Nations are from Arcopolis. Beyond this point, scanners, sensors and other instruments fail, pilots are stuck flying blind, and navigating becomes very, very difficult. Those pilots who do not turn back typically get so lost that they never find their way home. Some suspect there are energy fields far out in the wastelands that will destroy any person or vehicle that crosses them. Such things remain as unproven as the whereabouts of any of the Seven Cities, but that sure doesn't stop the people of Arcopolis and the Grayscale from believing that the Second Circle is, for all intents and purposes, the edge of the world.

Still, the very notion of the Seven Cities captures the imagination of anybody in the Septimus world who yearns for a better place but somehow does not believe that such a thing will ever occur. To those who despair for the future — and they are legions in these times of trouble — the Seven Cities represent many things. A fresh start. A world less touched by the horrors of the Steel Helix and the Corruption. A place where war is still a memory, not a mocking ghost who threatens to visit once again.

So it is that certain people in the Extent, the Grayscale and even in the Scraplands spend the lion's share of their time and effort searching for any information they can find on the Seven Cities. Where they are. What their status is. Who might live there. Why they remain so utterly undetectable to any technology used to find them. And, if their existence can be verified, and if their location can be determined, and if whoever lives there can be contacted, whether they would be willing or able to involve them-

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selves in the troubles surrounding Arcopolis and bring the festering conflicts there to some kind of resolution.

It is a dream for those who interest themselves in such matters but a dream worth chasing. After all, if the Seven Cities have survived the horrors of recent years, then perhaps there really is some hope after all that the world can return to the way it was. Maybe the damage can be undone, and paradise might once more return to this battered and bruised world. Currently, life demands much from everyone in it, even those living in the sheltered luxury of Arcopolis. For no matter how insulated from the troubles of the world one becomes, the world is always there, as is one's knowledge of the darkness it represents. It is a darkness from which many can see no escape, and so they look to the Seven Cities, because in these trying days, sometimes fantasy is more compelling than reality.

The Seven Cities consist of **Triad**, **Vermilion**, the **Well**, **Polaris**, **Halcyon**, **Overmark** and **Gnosis**. The sparse notes that follow represent the entire body of knowledge that exists on these locations. Most of what has been learned about the Seven Cities is so spotty, fragmented and contradictory that there is upwards to a 90 percent chance that the information is either false or so incomplete as to be worthless. Rumors persist of entire datacores hidden somewhere in the Scraplands that will give the whole scoop on the Seven Cities, but the chances of finding such a treasure trove of information are probably about as likely as finding one of the Seven Cities themselves. Even with that in mind, data hunters throughout the Extent search on for whatever will reveal the secrets of the Seven Cities. To these researchers, simply learning about the Seven Cities is as good as finding out where they are.

Triad

A three-tiered megalopolis built on three massive triangular platforms. The base of these foundations can rotate, allowing the city to move and click into place like a set of gears, allowing entire sectors to realign for more easy transference of people, equipment and materials. In an age where farcasting technology makes such a feature irrelevant, the modular elements and kinetic nature of Triad remains a fascinating mystery. Leading theories insist that the design is actually an energy generating and regulating mechanism, since the city sits atop the world's largest cluster of energy production facilities. The turning, changing nature of Triad may help the energy disperse evenly and prevent critical build-ups and overloads. Then again, maybe it is just home to lots of kinetic engineers who thought that it would be fun to build a moving city.

Vermilion

According to record, the name of this city keeps changing from color to color as the primary purpose of it changes. For most of its existence, it was named **Indigo** as it focused almost entirely on nanotech production. As **Emerald**, it focused on molecular reclamation and recompilation. As **Onyx**, it switched to a military footing until the advent of the Steel Helix catastrophe. In the wake of the worldwide crash, the city reportedly renamed itself once again to Vermilion, but the purpose of the change to justify the new name has never been discerned. Some believe the color code refers to a rebirth of the city, like a phoenix rising from its ashes. Less optimistic experts suspect the color code refers to a state of alert — not quiet yet red but getting there. Still others believe the new code refers to next-generation Lazarus Tank technology the city has developed that not only provides true immortality to its people but eliminated the prospect of Corruption altogether, as well as performing genetic modifications with virtually no chance of any kind of genetic feedback or rejection.

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The Well

This city is best known for a resource shaft dug several miles into the crust, both as a way of mining raw materials and tapping geothermal vents for additional energy. Exactly how deep the Well goes remains undocumented. Some say it reaches molten rock, while others insist such a detail is pure folly. Either way, the Well is a remarkable technical achievement. The city has very little structure on the surface; over 90 percent of it has been built into the walls of the resource shaft, making this the most vertically aligned settlement in human history. Nanofoundries are likewise built into the shaft walls, with their output vents pointed into the shaft center. When producing aircraft, this arrangement makes the nanofoundries something like launching pads, as newly-built craft rocket out of the foundry and up into the shaft where they fly to their destinations. Heavy ground units, however, must be airlifted from the foundry if being transported to other places. For this reason, farcasting is more prevalent here than in other cities; to move large numbers of men and materials any other way would be overly burdensome. Rumor has it that new developments in farcasting here have led to unusual technological advances, such as **twinning** (using a farcaster to create a duplicate of yourself), **hitchhiking** (bouncing one farcaster signal off multiple farcaster nodes to make long journeys take much less time), and **cramming** (deliberately sending more than one person or object to the exact same location at the exact same time using different farcasters, but in such a way that the arriving cargoes merge into an inert block of molecular material which can be later un-integrated).

Polaris

Long heralded as a center for supertech research and development, this city is the birthplace of numerous landmark technologies, including later-generation nanotech production matrices, molecular compilation protocols, and the foundations for what would later become the Lazarus Tank. On more than one occasion, civilization has had to pull itself back from the brink and rebuild what it had lost. Polaris took a lead role in each rebuilding, becoming a haven for top-flight researchers, designers and other visionaries. As such, a culture of building has taken root here, along with a fierce can-do spirit that has made Polaris home of the "last-minute miracle," an engineering term for finding a solution to a problem well after the deadline had passed. What makes Polaris especially interesting is that if it were found again, it might have special technologies within that will give whomever discovers them such a military edge that the war threatening to engulf the Extent could be over very quickly indeed.

Halcyon

Just as Polaris has made a name for itself as a leader in "hard" technologies, Halcyon is considered the cutting edge in nanotech R&D, especially nanotech modifications to the human body. Nanomods are thought to have been first mass produced here, and over the years, Halcyon scientists and design houses were responsible for at least 60 percent of all new nanomod upgrades, patches, and fixes. Much of Halcyon's nanotech testing was done on simulators, but it did conduct some experimentation on willing human subjects. Over the years, these test subjects developed greater and stranger nanotech modifications on their own, as if the nanomods inside them were growing and evolving. This story echoes to some degree the mutation phenomenon governing Xenopolis right now, so some in the Extent feel that Halcyon might very well be a hoax cooked up by Xenopolites to better justify what the rest of the world sees as an unhealthy obsession with turning people into monsters.

Overmark

This city was supposedly built off of the ruins generated from the **Battle of Overmark**, when the bulk of the Imperial war-

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ships from the Seventh Empire made their unified effort to destroy the Extent warfleet in the Deep Sky. Unsurprisingly, the details of the battle are as yet unknown, but it is believed to have been an epic conflict between the two sides that was as vicious as it was internecine. In the end, the Seventh Empire ships that engaged were destroyed, as was the entire Extent fleet. The big difference was that the Extent could simply build a new warfleet, whereas the Seventh Empire loyalists could not. Thus, the Seventh Empire's one big chance to take over Septimus from within evaporated. Meanwhile, as the Extent set to rebuilding its war machines, Newcomer settlers supposedly salvaged the remains of the destroyed fleets and used the materials to build a new city for themselves in a hidden location on the surface.

As for the city itself, it is believed to have a central supertower ringed by a wall of megascrapers that provide plenty of views into the battleground. Beyond the crater sector, the city is much like many other large urban centers, except it is much larger and more densely arranged. Overmark gained some renown for having such efficient arcologies that it could accommodate up to twice as many people in a square mile of territory than any other city, but until the site is examined firsthand, the truth will remain a mystery. Numerous members of the Cadre are interested in this bit of information because it lends credence to the theories that Overmark's scientists and techs had pioneered new advances not yet replicated throughout the Extent, that could mean a second revolution in matter conservation and nanodesign efficiencies. If realized, these achievements would make Arcopolis able to build anything with even less material, if such a thing can be imagined. In a war situation where the number of units carries the momentum, any kind of production enhancement is welcome news indeed.

Gnosis

Thought to be the birthplace of a rogue AI known as Caliban. Little is known of this figure except that he is highly wanted by the Cadre, whose members will stop at nothing to find Caliban and destroy him. Some believe that Caliban, upon gaining sentience, raided the datacores of Arcopolis and caused massive damage to the city's mainframe before escaping. Others believe the AI was perhaps involved with the Steel Helix attack. Some believe that Caliban retreated to Gnosis after the Steel Helix, where he remained hidden until he could further his murderous rampage against the Extent. What that revenge could be is anybody's guess, but a lot of people point to the Steel Dream as an obvious candidate. What else could motivate an AI to violence than the notion of its fellows having been reduced to slavery? This has made the notion of Gnosis a drawing point for doomsday fanatics who embrace the thought of the world finally coming to an end on Caliban's dark terms.

Apparently, this attitude has some appeal, because the Cadre has noticed a growing number of Gnostic zealots throughout the Grayscale and especially in Scrapland territory not yet affiliated with any Traitor Nation. The Sons of Gnosis (SOG) are an ascending group that the Cadre believes is likely to become the next Traitor Nation. Utterly devoted the concept of Caliban, the SOG are devoted to learning anything they can about Gnosis, which they consider to be a holy place where Caliban resides and is building a robot army that shall wipe the world clean of all flesh once and for all, committing humanity's entire genetic history to digital record. Not surprisingly, the Cadre is interested in learning if Gnosis indeed exists as the SOG thinks, for if Caliban's presence can be affirmed anywhere in the world, that is where the Extent must concentrate its defensive efforts. In the meantime, however, the Cadre is scouring the Grayscale and parts of the Scraplands in search of any SOG soldier they can find.

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Standard operating procedure with these especially dangerous militants is to capture, question, and then destroy them. No mercy is shown to this particular group, for they have made it clear they will show none to the Extent. To the Cadre, aligning with Caliban even on hypothetical terms is itself a death sentence.

The Newcomers

As has been made clear by the recent news broadcasts coming from Septimus itself, the political situation in Septimus has become critical. Originally settled as a science colony by the Sindavar Extent, Septimus was later seen as the only safe haven in a galaxy that had literally fallen apart at the seams. Eager to perpetuate its power within Septimus, the Aedos imperials tried to annex Septimus by decree. In so doing, the Empire proclaimed that the worldsphere had been cleared by the Seventh Empire for mineral development and sent one of its Aedos warfleets to enter the sphere and pacify it for Imperial interests. Of course, the Aedos fleet was given a rude welcome by a Sindavar battle fleet even larger and more advanced than the outmoded Aedos warships. In the epic battle that followed, the Aedos fleet was reduced to ruins and with it the Seventh Empire's hopes of incorporating Septimus into its domain.

Despite the battle between the Aedos and the Extent, conditions in the Empire continued to deteriorate to the point of encouraging beleaguered people from all walks of life to relocate to Septimus. All the while, subspace transmissions from Septimus promoting the Sindavar way of life and a virtual Utopia within the sphere only made the migration even larger. Collectively, those heading to the sphere to join those already inside of it called themselves the Newcomers, and they looked forward to a new life within Septimus.

Of course, by the time the Newcomers arrived at Septimus, they found a world ruled by a tyrannous government that was bent on incorporating all visitors to the sphere into the totalitarian, brainwashed hegemony that is life within the Extent. Many Newcomers rebelled against this, opting to settle on the many planets and moons orbiting within Septimus — known collectively as the **Archipelago** — instead. The Extent chose not to pursue the issue too strongly, for by that time, insurgency from within its own ranks had become a big enough problem that the Extent chose to focus on cleaning house on the surface before returning its attentions to the Archipelago. That the Extent naval forces are still rebuilding after the major battle with the Aedos warfleet helps keep a lid on things, too, but it is only a matter of time before the Extent make another serious push to conquer the entire Archipelago, and that scares the hell out of the Newcomers.

For a brief time, the Newcomer population, as diverse as it was, stood united against the Extent, but infighting amongst the Newcomers brought civil war to the Archipelago, and for now both the Extent and the Newcomers are distracted by their own internal problems. This is what has prevented all-out war thus far, but both sides are counting down to the inevitable standoff that will bring things to a very nasty head.

In the meantime, there exists a lot of small-scale action by both sides against the other. The Extent routinely sends spies, assassins and saboteurs to various strongpoints in the Archipelago in search of scientific data or to weaken key power players so when the big war comes, the Extent will have an edge. Much more commonly, however, Newcomers venture into Extent territory to try to rescue friends who came to Septimus but whose ships were intercepted by Extent patrols and who were forced into captivity. Newcomers who see the Extent as

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a major threat are also known to go to the Scraplands or the Extent and join in the underground resistance there, hoping to bring down the Extent from within. It's an uphill battle to be sure, but for many Newcomers it is the only one worth fighting anymore.

This sort of situation normally would be handled in the Seventh Empire by the intervention of an Aedos warfleet. However, the possibility of martial law descending on Septimus might have been real cause for concern in previous years, but the Aedos warfleet in the area is just a shadow of its former self, its numbers depleted by defections, ships lost during mass hyperspace jumps, and ships destroyed or disabled in the constant border fighting with the various militant groups in the area, as well as large-scale secession happening elsewhere in the galactic sector.

The reality is that things could probably get a lot worse in Septimus before the Aedos warfleet would really do anything about it. Commanders dispatched to the sector would know that their assignment would most likely be a permanent one, making them the de facto rulers of Septimus. Little do the people of the system know that this has caused a bit of a power struggle within the Aedos high command, with numerous high-ranking fleet admirals squaring off with each other to be the one to get sent to Septimus. This is why the sector fleet patrolling has been reduced to tatters and has not been relived: there are too many top brass who want the job. Irony continues to flourish in the Seventh Empire, even if efficient rule and common sense do not.

The Aedos warfleet patrolling the sector maintains only a handful of surveillance ships in the system. The rest of the fleet are elsewhere, chasing down enemies of the state, exploring weird fringe systems where hyperspace exhibits strange new qualities that might offer a means of repairing and restoring the rest of hyperspace, and keeping renegade systems from turning their backs on the Empire. This means that Septimus really is on its own for now, policed only by those decent enough to want the job, or those brazen enough to sense an opportunity for power when they see one.

At present, there are five main factions fighting for control over Septimus: the **Commonwealth of Maximus**, the **Cigomi Consortium**, **Sarkis Intertrade PLC**, the **Blackfeet** and the **Fellowship of the Septimus Proletariat**. There are also dozens of tiny groups, crews and factions running through the system trying to get by, as well as many independent ships who simply stay within system space, but will not approach any of the Archipelago's planets and moons. They figure life is difficult enough as it is without landing in some pirate haven, practically daring its leaders to boost your ship.

The Commonwealth Of Maximus

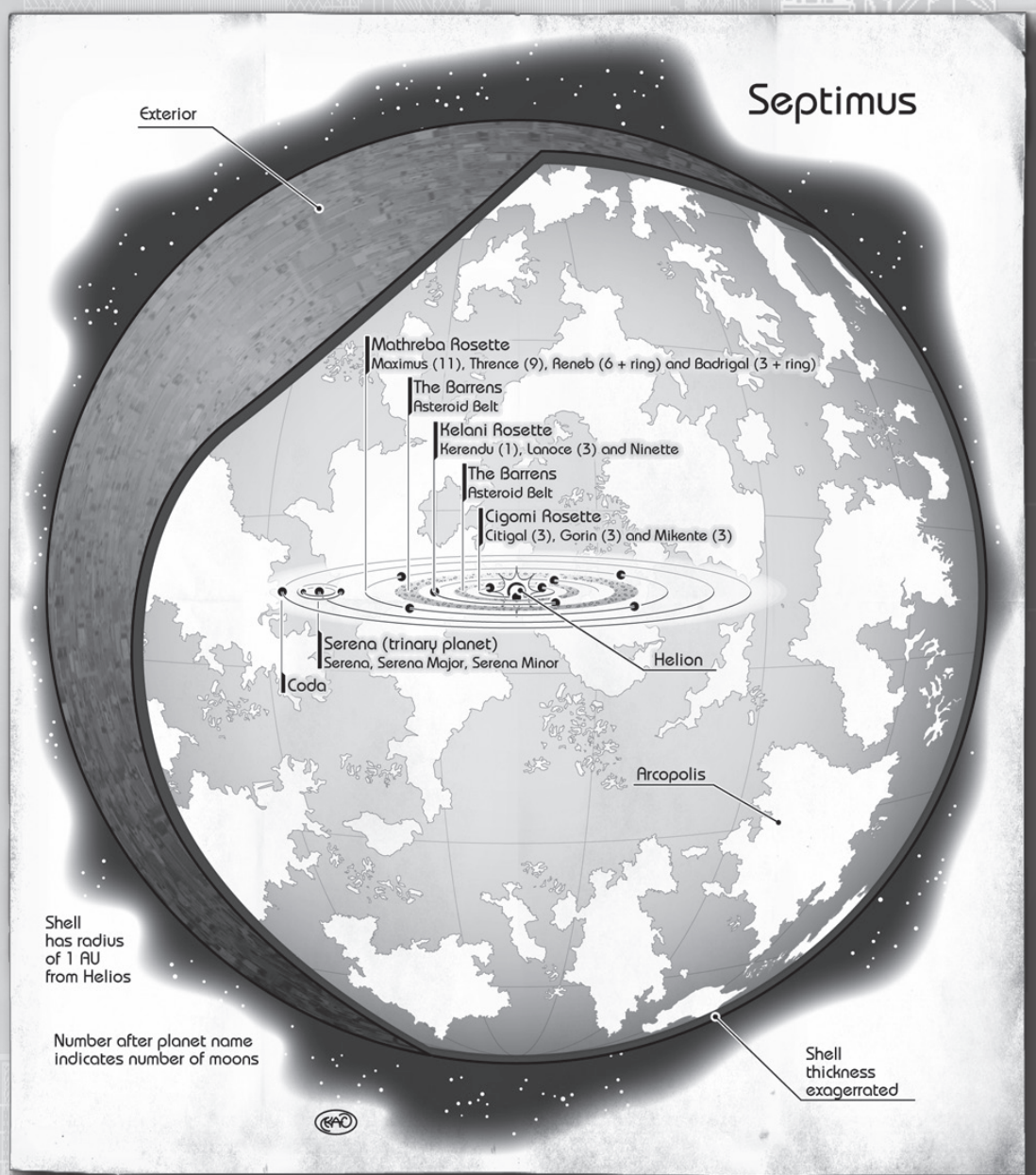
This is what remains of the original Imperial exploration teams that settled Septimus. Originally comprised of scientists and technicians, the exploration team learned that once they needed to settle Septimus permanently in order to fully research the system's many scientific mysteries, a formal leadership would have to be established. Though a noble family came with the original survey team for just such a purpose, the nobles themselves were weak and apathetic, allowing the true rulership of the system to fall upon the exploration team, which ultimately formed the Commonwealth of Septimus. As the system's political nature unraveled, the Commonwealth retreated to the orbit of **Maximus**, where its settlements were strongest. Renaming itself the Commonwealth of Maximus, it is in the process of reluctantly converting some of its impressive science-industrial complex to military production in the hopes of reclaiming the system before the Imperial Navy does.

The Cigomi Consortium

This faction is a commercial mining company that has laid claims to the three inner orbits of the Septimus system, even though there is no formal trade pact authoriz-

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ing such sovereignty. Based in the Cigomi planetary rosette, the Consortium largely is concerned with chasing out all other commercial and governmental interests within the first three orbits, but a recent leadership change within the company suggests it is considering making a run at conquering the whole system. Should it succeed, it will strip mine all of Septimus, possibly destroying whatever scientific wonders remain to



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be discovered there. At present, the Consortium has so severely undermined the independent democracies of the **Cigomi rosette** that they effectively control those worlds.

Sarkis Intertrade PLC

Sarkis entered the system as a general goods manufacturer, supplying both the mining consortium and the outer settlements with everything required to make frontier life more comfortable. To do this, Sarkis formed a massive commercial fleet, a fleet that now more closely resembles a military flotilla than a commercial enterprise. Sarkis has only a few strongpoints throughout Septimus, but its heavily armed trade runners are threatening to cordon off entire orbits and disrupt all trade within Septimus unless all governments cede their authority to the Sarkis Executive Council.

The Blackfeet

A violent and unpredictable paramilitary organization present almost everywhere throughout the system, they began as a labor union among the various mining colonies but soon corrupted into little more than a vastly diversified criminal empire dedicated to making money off of the many illicit industries heavy industry always creates — drugs, prostitution, gambling, loan sharking, robbery, etc. For years, the Blackfeet have been too fragmented to be more than a ubiquitous criminal threat to any settlement with more than a few dozen people. But as Septimus has slid into civil war, the group has unified and now is using terrorism and guerilla warfare — both on planets and in space — to enforce its increasingly vicious and greedy demands. The Blackfeet will not rest until it controls all of Septimus.

The Seventh Proletariat

The Seventh Proletariat (also know as "the **Fellowship**") is what the Blackfeet originally meant to be: an organized labor union. It is still that to some degree, but as tensions rose among the system, the Fellowship became increasingly political in nature, and now has decided that the only way to return justice, law and order to Septimus is to overthrow every single commercial, military and governmental institution in the system and replace it with ones in line with the Fellowship's totalitarian, property-less philosophy. In recent months, the Fellowship has "nationalized" a large amount of industrial equipment and facilities throughout the system and has begun outfitting a fleet of ships for war. What the Fellowship lacks in material strength, it makes up for with pure zealotry, which is what makes them so very dangerous.

Aside from the Five Factions, there are various other power blocs within Septimus further complicating the situation.

The Splinter Factions

Each of the Five Factions has its own **splinter factions** which not only are making the political landscape that much harder to figure out but in their drive to grab power and prestige are resorting to drastic and dangerous measures to make sure their message is heard and their presence is noticed.

Pirates

Pirates absolutely love it in Septimus, both because of the pervasive lawlessness everywhere and because of the heavy commercial traffic, providing buccaneers with a target-rich environment. The system's many uninhabited moons and planetoid belts provide these scallywags with more than enough places to hide, and so they have moved into Septimus like a swarm, preying on the weak and unsuspecting and eroding whatever social order is left.

Smugglers

Smugglers also thrive here, especially as trade is dwindling amid constant demands for raw materials and finished goods. Unwilling to pay the outrageous transit

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fees of Caldero, Boreena and Nos Turhain, these rebellious business folk often refuel off those systems' water or gas giants illegally before heading to Septimus. Once here, they buy and sell wares from whomever they like without regard for those with whom they are doing business or to what end the money they make further destabilizes the system. Most smugglers are now affiliated with criminal guilds, from lowly street gangs to super-organizations like the Blackfeet.

Mercenaries

Mercenaries have entered Septimus in record numbers, smelling civil war and wanting to get in on the action. Since so many of the planetary systems of the Seventh Empire are nonmilitary in nature, hiring mercs quickly is becoming standard practice. This has led to a nearly ridiculous proliferation of freelance patriots throughout the system, who do not always obey the rules of war and are prone to looting whatever they can in order to extract a "proper payment" for themselves.

Bounty Hunters

Bounty Hunters are at first a good thing, as they are coming to Septimus to nab ne'er-do-wells. But their methods tend to be excessively harsh and entail a fair amount of innocent casualties. They also acknowledge no law other than their own and when not on paying jobs they often become little more than mercenaries or pirates in order to tide themselves over.

Privateers

Privateers are private warships authorized to make war on behalf of a political power. With five factions fighting it out, the privateer population has exploded. This is the real root of civil war within the system; while the lawlessness that has flourished as a result of it is a major problem, Septimus might become more governable once the various factions' privateer fleets are destroyed or somehow made to disband.

Regardless of their affiliation or former allegiances to power structures outside of the sphere, Newcomers mainly occupy three areas within Septimus. The first are a scattering of settlements on the surface of the sphere itself. Some of these have even gotten to nation strength and have loosely affiliated with each other. These are in fact the Seven Cities, and they stand in opposition to the Sindavar Extent, quietly building themselves up using technologies that somehow render them invisible to Extent scanning. They are invisible to conventional scanning as well, which leads some to believe that the Seven Cities are nothing more than a myth. But they are real, for they have developed a number of advanced technologies and shared them with other Newcomers. They just don't want others joining them for the moment, and as such prefer to live off the radar.

Then there are the settlers of the Deep Sky, the space within Septimus where hundreds upon hundreds of ships — some by themselves, some in convoys and fleets — live in isolation. Conventional wisdom considers the Deep Sky to be that space from the upper reaches of the surface atmosphere to the edge of the inner planetary system known as the Archipelago. The Archipelago is the third main Newcomer habitat within Septimus. These planets that themselves bear the evidence of alien placement and modification have become the new homes for the Seventh Empire's refugees.

Archipelago

Within the Deep Sky is an entire solar system's worth of planets, moons and asteroids all in orbit around Helion, the central star of Septimus. This is the Archipelago,

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which consists of seven "orbits," seven different orbital tracks that have planetary mass on them. Three of these are rosettes – orbits that have multiple planets on the same orbital track, like a planetary string of pearls. These are obvious signs of massive planetary engineering conducted by whomever built Septimus. The mass differentials between these worlds should have these rosettes flying apart, but somehow, they do not, something planetologists within Septimus have been scratching their heads over ever since. The remaining orbits either have asteroid belts on them or single planets that seem to have formed naturally around Helion. Still, even these tend to have unique qualities to them, raising the question if the Septimus engineers might have placed these weird worlds within the sphere also, perhaps to study them, perhaps to exploit their unusual resources, or perhaps as planetary trophies of a kind to make a spectacular place even more so. The Archipelago's seven orbits consist of:

- ***Cigomi*** *rosette, consisting of the worlds of* ***Citigal***, ***Gorin*** *and* ***Mikente***.
- *An asteroid belt known as the* ***Barrens***
- ***Kelani*** *rosette, consisting of the worlds of* ***Kerendu***, ***Lanoce*** *and* ***Ninette***
- *An asteroid belt known as the* ***Growlers***
- ***Mathreba*** *rosette consisting of the worlds of* ***Maximus***, ***Thrence***, ***Reneb*** *and* ***Badrigal***
- *The planet of* ***Serena*** *and its two moons and*
- ***Coda***, *a lonely singleton world halfway between* ***Helion*** *and the surface*

The Cigomi Rosette

Cigomi, a rosette of three small planets, each orbited by a rosette of three moons occupies the innermost orbit of Helion. This most unusual planetary arrangement is, like the other rosettes within the Deep Sky, almost certainly the work of whomever built Septimus. These planetary formations just don't appear in nature. At least thousands and thousands of years of stellar cartography across the galaxy have yet to discover a natural rosette, which means that the three found here must be constructs of the most ambitious kind. More than that, these three planets are physically identical, as are their moons. It is as if somebody cloned an entire world and its moons and then placed all three systems together as weird reflections chasing each other around Helion.

The name Cigomi is an amalgamation of the three planets of the rosette — Citigal, Gorin and Mikente. All of these worlds and their moons are identical geologically and are rich in heavy metals and transition elements used for making supertech energy production equipment. The planets' small size (3,200 km diameter), lack of surface water, low gravity and lack of atmosphere makes mining a bit difficult, but it also makes exporting the ore off-planet a breeze, which is why Newcomer mining concerns have fought over control of these planets for years.

Each planet in the rosette has three moons only 300 km in diameter. All are uninhabited, supposedly protected by a scientific charter established by a series of unmanned beacons on the moons that warn ships to stay away in order to preserve the moons' unique environment, whatever that is supposed to be. The beacons do not say who decreed that the moons are off-limits, or what will happen to those who visit the moons, but most legitimate spacers stay away just to hedge their bets. (Remote scanning shows the moons have no appreciable mineral wealth, making compliance with the beacons easy.) Recently, the Commonwealth of Maximus has taken to enforcing the no-landing order protecting the moons and allows only specially designated scientific survey teams to even make a close approach to the surface. Ships that

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violate this order trip off remote sensors, which report the breach back to the Commonwealth. Despite this, outlaw miners and other rogues often find ways to sneak through security and set up operations here anyway.

While originally settled by three different mining corporations, the Cigomi planets have since evolved into truly independent, democratic governments. Forming a loose alliance, they had been able to act as a unit for years until the Cigomi Consortium gradually infiltrated these worlds' markets and governments, expelling anybody with ties to the old commercial roots and installing representatives more friendly to the Consortium. This has been good for the Consortium's profits but bad for the worlds themselves, all of which now stand on the brink of revolution.

Citigal

Citigal is the first world of the Cigomi rosette, and its half-million inhabitants are part of one of Septimus' few representative democracies, ruled by elected representatives. At least, that's what it says in the Senate chamber. Everybody knows law and justice is open to the highest bidder on Citigal, and as long as you're paying from a Consortium bank account, you will always get what you pay for. The company is not officially in bed with the government here, but has completely taken over the mining operations, running them like fortress cities cut off from the rest of the settlement. The mining centers have their own spaceports and are self-sufficient through Consortium supply ships. The rest of the world, living largely on Consortium handouts, has become a criminal free-for-all. The thriving arms markets here are giving heavy weaponry to all the wrong people.

The law on Citigal restricts most concealed weaponry but allows larger, heavier guns, and as a result, citizens are increasingly walking about fully armed, just in case they encounter trouble. With crime being what it is, scared civilians are forming vigilante posses, and shootouts between them and criminal gangs are becoming a serious threat to everyday life.

Being a vacuum world, the majority of this settlement — including the mines — is below the planet's surface. It's simply easier to contain a breathable environment under such conditions. A few contained structures are on the surface, mostly around the local port facilities. This is true also of Gorin and Mikente, the other worlds in the rosette.

Citigal's moons are **Eovar**, **Laska** and **Voss**, and they are, like the other moons in the Cigomi rosette, uninhabited rocks with no obvious value other than as a hideaway for people who know that they probably should not be there.

Gorin

Unlike Citigal, the second Cigomi world of Gorin has only about 50,000 people living on it making use of the primitive spacer facilities here. The weapons restrictions here are the same as on Citigal, but a generally more stable environment here leads to far less gunplay between locals and visitors. One would think that this would have fostered a much more successful community, but the reality is that Gorin's community is much younger here, formed recently by those who left the uncertainty and violence of Citigal behind. It's still in the early stages, but in another decade or so Gorin might become the primary world in the rosette. It's moons are **Stunes**, **Jinn** and **Rabaal**.

Mikente

The third world of the rosette, Mikente, has set itself apart by getting a primitive terraforming project off the ground. There is only a thin, unbreathable atmosphere here, but given time, this world might develop something of a livable biosphere, which will certainly make it prime real estate for anybody looking for a home in the Deep Sky. About 50,000 people live here as they do on Gorin, with an unusually good spaceport fostering lively trade

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and travel. Despite — or perhaps because of — this success, the planet's government, the Republic of Mikente, has become thoroughly corrupt as the Cigomi Consortium has systematically bought out its government. Politicians who challenge this Cigomi-allied power base are often blackmailed out of public office. As such, the populace is unhappy and on the verge of some form of violent action, even if only rioting and looting, to protest their deplorable political situation. Not surprisingly, the world's weapon restrictions are openly flouted. The people here are just itching for a fight. Wearing pistols is almost universal here. The moons of this world are **Aldovar**, **Ghen** and **Bakran.** All are uninhabited rocks, heavily cratered and barren.

The Barrens

This large planetoid belt was the first place where commercial miners struck their claims when Septimus was opened for development. Now, the Barrens largely have been stripped of the valuable commercial mineral deposits, so the corporate concerns have moved on. Today, only a token population of rock hermits and prospectors remain, hoping to strike that big chunk of ore the major players missed, or even better, to crack open a planetoid containing some kind of alien artifact. There are only primitive spacer facilities here, mostly consisting of the deep space equivalent of small, independent truck stops nestled in the nooks and crannies of larger asteroids. There are only about 100 permanent residents in the asteroid belt, most of whom are determined miners looking to make a lucky strike. Since vital resources such as water must be imported or mined from the rock in the form of ice, the Barrens are probably maxed-out, population-wise.

There is very little sense of community out here. Lots of the spacers live in their ships or might tunnel a little home for themselves in a planetoid. The Barrens are also home to the various hermits and curmudgeons of the system who want remote places to live out their days without many people coming to bug them. To that end, the Barrens are a great place to hide. Unfortunately, criminals have also figured that out, making this region a very popular hideout for crooks on the run. On any given day, there is probably a greater population of transients in the system than permanent settlers, and chances are all of those drifters are up to no good.

Technically, the Barrens are a Cigomi colony. The Consortium supposedly controls it from afar but it has refrained from outright takeover in order to discourage the Seventh Proletariat from setting up shop in the Barrens and disrupting operations there.

Personal weaponry is prohibited throughout the Barrens. Most of the folks here rely on themselves, so regardless of the law (which is pretty much unenforceable anyway), they carry what they feel necessary. Lack of funds prevents most residents from arming themselves to the teeth, though, heavy automatic weapons and shaped explosives are the weapons of choice.

The Kelani Rosette

Between the two asteroid belts of Deep Sky is The Kelani Rosette, a collection of the worlds of Kerendu, Lanoce and Ninette. Unlike Cigomi, these worlds really don't have much of a collective identity, with each one being a fairly insular orbital community. Trade between the rosette worlds exist, as does political rivalry, infighting and other drama.

Kerendu

Kerendu was the original advance base for the Septimus expedition, the first Newcomer fleet of ships that came to the sphere after the Sindavar Extent colonized it. The expedition chose this world for settlement largely because initial readings indicated huge amounts of metallic deposits with unknown spectrographic signatures. It was

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only after the expedition team landed that it realized the readings were in fact due to a sensor malfunction. The hastily constructed research outpost was abandoned soon thereafter as the expedition team moved to the far more promising orbit of Maximus. Since then, Kerendu has been a cipher in the Archipelago, a smallish world (6,400 km diameter) of virtually no value to anybody thanks to its thin, unbreathable atmosphere and lack of water. In recent years, however, the anonymous nature of the world and its moons has made it the perfect hideout for pirates, mercs, smugglers and other belligerent parties.

From time to time, small pirate kingdoms are formed on Kerendu, but local paramilitaries and mercenaries usually break them up. With war between the Extent and all takers engulfing the system, Kerendu has been left to its own devices. As a result, the Blackfeet have taken over large portions of the world and its moons and have set up training camps, weapon production facilities and other terrorist infrastructure here. The total Blackfeet population is dynamic and remains unknown, but the latest intelligence from the Commonwealth of Maximus is there might be as many as ten thousand Blackfeet fighters scattered across the planet, as well as sophisticated production facilities and even a primitive shipyard and spaceport.

Unusual qualities in the stones making up Kerendu's rings create a communications blackout for any ships passing through them. While in the rings, no radio messages may be sent or received. This makes the rings a perfect ambush spot for fighters and other small craft under 20 tons, which can hide pretty well among the rocks. Ships larger than that stand out too easily.

Domo is Kerendu's only moon, a heavily cratered rock in space that receives little to no attention. Recent reports suggest, however, that Blackfeet technicians are in the process of building huge mass drivers onto the world so it can be piloted as a suicide craft and slammed into a highly populated world of the Blackfeet's choosing.

Lanoce

Lanoce is an airless world about 8,000 km in diameter. Serviced by a top-rate spaceport and extensive colonization resources, the world has become home to some 100,000 people, nearly all of whom are employees of Sarkis Intertrade PLC.

The Cigomi Consortium originally settled Lanoce, but a stoppage of operating capital delayed any serious colonization or commercial development until recently. But by then, Septimus had become a warzone, and rival corporation Sarkis Intertrade PLC took the opportunity to invade the world and annex it. The takeover was carried out with lightning speed, taking Cigomi completely by surprise. Since then, there has been surprisingly little additional fighting between the two companies.

The leading theory is they struck a deal soon after the takeover effectively burying the hatchet. Another theory points to how Cigomi was looking to divest itself of the world anyway, as its operating costs were becoming prohibitive in the face of takeover efforts in the Cigomi rosette. Likewise, Sarkis seems to be more interested in fighting with the outer worlds of the system (especially the Commonwealth of Maximus) and has no problem turning its back on the Consortium.

Although the Cigomi Consortium gave the planet up without much of a fight, many of its citizens feel betrayed and wish not only to kick out Sarkis but to gain revenge on Cigomi as well. This, coupled with Sarkis' less than effective policing efforts, have given rise to a well-organized and motivated underground resistance here that threatens to rise up as a guerilla army capable of wresting control of the planet away from Sarkis and adding a sixth faction to the witch's brew that is the Archipelago's political climate.

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To further complicate things, the revolutionary atmosphere has allowed for strong elements of both the Blackfeet and the Fellowship of the Septimus Proletariat to infiltrate Lanoce. Chances are, should Sarkis lose control of the planet, the civilians, the Blackfeet and the Fellowship will continue fighting each other. This world has the potential for prolonged, savage infighting if it is not stabilized immediately.

Lanoce is governed by the Sarkis managerial elite; citizens are company employees. Sarkis Intertrade PLC keeps its headquarters on a massive trade ship in high orbit over Lanoce that is guarded by a fifth of the total Sarkis fleet.

Possession of any weapon outside of one's residence is prohibited. Sarkis is having difficulty enforcing this in light of the growing resistance movement, though. People inclined to fight the company have become very proficient at hiding their arsenals and at smuggling additional hardware onto the planet. The tight orbital security, however, restricts most shipments to small arms and light explosives, so the rebels are in dire need of heavy weaponry if they intend to openly challenge Sarkis' security detachments.

Lanoce was at one point a staging ground for scouring the Barrens for alien artifacts, as well as for exploring the many traces of alien civilization present on Lanoce itself. Several caches of alien technology were discovered years ago, but largely they were smashed, and only fragments of what must have been a much larger amount of technology were ever recovered. From what scientists could tell, the aliens who once lived on or visited Lanoce commanded technology somewhere between TL 18-20. Chances are, there is a large amount of archeological treasure still waiting to be found here, but Sarkis has never given much thought to the matter, as it does not really believe that the findings so far are actually alien in nature. The official company line is that rogue traders and smugglers from bygone eras probably dropped their garbage here, and it is being misinterpreted as something more important than it really is.

Lanoce has three moons — **Skoto**, **Astand** and **Kuriens** — each about 5,000 km in diameter, but with no atmosphere or water. As dead moons, they have also been declared off-limits preserves, just as the Cigomi moons. And like the Cigomi moons, the Commonwealth of Maximus helps enforce the no-landing laws here…to the extent that they really can be enforced. This is the Deep Sky, after all. It's kind of like the Wild West on booster rockets.

Ninette

Despite being a dry and desolate world, Ninette has become a major population center, thanks to a concerted colonization effort by the Cigomi Consortium. A steady stream of supplies from outside of the system keeps the standard of living here fairly comfortable. The strict corporate laws laid down by Cigomi give its Security Bureau free reign to crack down on troublemakers as they see fit. The Security Bureau has become a kind of secret police and paramilitary strike squad, ruthlessly hunting down rebels, criminals and dissidents where they find them. On Ninette, they answer only to the Cigomi upper executives, but more often than not they are left to their own devices. So far, they have not caused a serious amount of bad will among the civilian populace, but it's only a matter of time before they do. In the meantime, the Security Bureau is busy recruiting additional members, procuring heavy weaponry and training for war as it prepares to subjugate the worlds of the Cigomi rosette if they do not soon cede all authority to the company.

Ninette is 16,000 km in diameter, but it has no free-standing water, relying on imports from elsewhere to keep itself going. This world is the regional headquarters of the Cigomi Consortium, which has largely settled and developed this world on its own (and at great cost, too). The Consortium cedes most decision-making authority to

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local managers but isolates the top executives from the goings-on there in case things get really violent (as is likely to be the case on the Cigomi world of Mikente) thereby allowing the company heads to divorce themselves from a potentially sticky legal situation.

In addition to the corporate headquarters here, Ninette is also very rich in mineral wealth, and the majority of all Consortium mining operations occur right here on the HQ planet. This is a world with a standard, breathable atmosphere, but the harsh desert environment makes life hard for the millions of inhabitants.

Laws are currently going through corporate channels to outlaw all weapons, a change that will probably take effect within the next month or so. Already, anybody known to carry weapons of any sort can expect an unpleasant visit from the Cigomi Security Bureau. After all, there are nearly eight million people living and working on Ninette, and maintaining strict law and order is a top priority for the Consortium.

The Growlers

This is the second major planetoid belt within the Septimus System, and it too is controlled by Sarkis Intertrade PLC. Unlike Kerendu, however, Sarkis took control of the Archipelago from the start, using it both as a waystation for shipping within Septimus and to lease its mineral rights to independent miners.

Sarkis keeps the majority of its Septimus fleet stationed within the Archipelago, where it is relatively safe within the rocks. Pirates still make routine forays into the Archipelago looking to prey on Sarkis ships, spacers and other traffic that comes through here, prompting Sarkis to deploy fighter patrols along the edge of the orbit. It's not doing much to keep out the hostiles, however, but that's not really a major concern of Sarkis, because it often is too busy deploying ships to raid the space and moons of the Commonwealth of Maximus in the adjacent orbit. To that end, it is much rumored that Sarkis has begun hiring privateers to plunder Commonwealth ships rather than the Sarkis fleet. Now that Maximus has formed the Septimus Rangers Corps, it is a sure bet that Commonwealth privateers will begin staging similar raids, which will turn the Archipelago into a major battleground.

Only a few hundred people live within the Growlers, and these are almost entirely independent spacers who are extracting valuable metals (especially gold and platinum) from the planetoids. Unfortunately, the Blackfeet have begun mining the asteroids as well, and to protect their "claims," they have taken to mining entire asteroids just to keep other miners off of them. They decline to tell anyone which asteroids are mined, however, so periodically some poor spacer blows himself to kingdom come while trying to extract some ore. The point is to scare everybody off the asteroids. So far, it's working pretty well.

Sarkis technically rules the Growlers, but the reality is that their law only extends to Sarkis-owned ships traveling within the asteroid belt. Independent ships are not chased off, and they tend to follow their own law or none at all.

The Mathreba Rosette

This is the third of the Archipelago rosettes, between the orbits of the Growlers and the world of Serena. It consists of the planetary systems of Maximus, Thrence, Reneb and Badrigal. Like the Kelani rosette, the planetary mass along the Mathreba orbit is not even close to being perfectly balanced, yet somehow these disparate worlds are strung together by some force unknown to the current boundaries of science. There are some planetologists who think that the planetary engineering here is an even more ambitious feat than the construction of Septimus itself, since aligning worlds into uneven rosettes could be more easily

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replicated throughout the galaxy than the construction of multiple spheres. Of course, were the ancients to have done this, it only would have begged another unanswerable question. Why?

Maximus

Maximus and its moons are the most highly developed segment of the Archipelago. Maximus is a large gas giant (like Jupiter or Saturn) with eleven moons, many of which are essentially small planets themselves. After the initial survey teams made a false start colonizing Kerendu, they moved to Maximus because it provided accommodating environments, plentiful remnants of alien civilizations to study, and because the gas giant itself emanated coded, alien radio messages similar to those coming from Septimus itself. The watery moons of Maximus hold the greatest promise of discovering major alien ruins and/or technology, as it is believed that whatever race(s) once lived here, they were either aquatic or amphibious in nature. Unfortunately, Maximus' greatest ocean moons have fallen into the hands of the Seventh Proletariat, which has little interest researching alien civilizations; it is too busy trying to overthrow the Commonwealth of Maximus and the entire Archipelago.

Because it is a target worth fighting for, the Commonwealth mobilized what little paramilitary forces it had at the outbreak of war to place most of the independent governments in this orbit under protective custody, largely to deny the Fellowship from absorbing them and to provide the Commonwealth with a greater range of bases from which to operate. The Commonwealth promises this is merely a temporary solution, and once peace arrives they will relinquish all controls over other territories. So far, the Commonwealth has given no reason why anybody should not trust them, and the states under their control are confident they will enjoy full freedom once the war ends. The people of these moons do not grate under Commonwealth leadership both because it is hardly visible (the Commonwealth try to interfere in these moons' internal matters as little as possible) and because the presence of Commonwealth fighters have left these moons relatively undisturbed amid the fighting that has disrupted so much of the rest of the system.

Maximus also has incredible stores of exotic elemental deposits, and despite intense, ongoing mining efforts, it has only exported a small fraction of its total stores, ensuring economic stability for the system for at least another century, should the system calm down enough to enjoy it.

Kinjin

The first moon of Maximus, is a large (14,400 km diameter) ocean world with a standard atmosphere. While nearly 100,000 people live here, nearly all of them have settled on artificial islands or, more commonly, undersea facilities. Mining still goes on here, despite the oceanic conditions, both by drilling into the surface of the world as well as by filtering the ocean water for trace elements. Given the high concentrations of lanthanum in the water, filtration mining has proven surprisingly effective and profitable. Kinjin is ruled by a restricted minority, with little or no input from the masses. A coup d'etat several months ago put this moon in the control of the Seventh Proletariat. In the savage fighting that followed, most Commonwealth loyalists were slain, imprisoned or deported. Now, the vast majority of people who live here are Fellowship loyalists who have emigrated here from Badrigal.

The Fellowship has tried to export water to Badrigal (which has none) but Commonwealth privateers have stymied such efforts. Weapons of a strict military nature (machine guns, automatic rifles) are prohibited. This is a holdover from the heavy fighting days, when the Fellowship allowed its loyalists to arm themselves in order to "liberate" the moon. Ongoing but sporadic resistance has led the Fellowship reluctantly to keep this special weapons status in ef-

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fect. When this world was in Commonwealth hands, it was undergoing an extensive undersea survey in search for alien ruins. The survey was only a third complete when the coup happened, and Commonwealth scientists are confident that substantial ruins and perhaps even lost technology caches are waiting to be found on the ocean floor somewhere.

Rallow

The second moon of Maximus, which is also an ocean world like Kinjin, but slightly smaller (9,600 km diameter). Its population is much larger (nearly 750,000) however, due to safer conditions. As with Kinjin, Rallow also has been overthrown by the Fellowship. Ongoing labor disputes here, however, have provided the Fellowship with a much larger native power base, so there was far less fighting involved with this moon than on Kinjin. Today Rallow is a major rallying point for Fellowship operations within Maximus. It is fortifying itself and expects major military activity to commence immediately.

Rallow was always something of an anarchistic mess, and the Fellowship's takeover did nothing to improve that. Still, despite the lack of weapons restrictions (or perhaps because of it), there is very little crime or unrest, so the Fellowship in a rare show of wisdom kept the rules the way they were. Should mercs or spies ever infiltrate the planet, though, they can do so fully armed, which is of some concern to Fellowship commanders in charge of Rallow. Like Kinjin, this world is thought to have major alien ruins on the ocean floor somewhere, but the planetary survey done by Commonwealth scientists is only 33% complete.

Murtz

The third moon of Maximus, which is some 4,800 km in diameter, has a breathable atmosphere and a thriving biosphere. It has nearly five million inhabitants and a good spaceport, making it one of the success stories of the Archipelago. Murtz enjoys special protected status as a non-military zone because it is the only major agricultural producer in the Deep Sky. That coupled with the high-tech farming methods in use here (including hydroponics) enable Murtz to feed the entire Archipelago. As such, its export ships are usually left alone by pirates and privateers, although as the war gets worse food ships are likely to become a more enticing target. The Commonwealth has effectively taken control of this world but has refused to meddle in the exportation of food to all other settlements within the system. It may be in a civil war, but the Commonwealth refuses to starve anyone, including its enemies. Most of the Commonwealth's enemies do not seem to appreciate this gesture. (This world was originally settled as a colony of Maximus Prime and to this day has not fully severed its legal and constitutional ties to that moon. That is why the Commonwealth so easily asserted its control here, and why, to some extent, the people of Murtz welcomed it.) Carrying military-grade small arms is common practice when out in the rural areas of the moon. Within settlements and cities, heavy weaponry is usually stowed out of politeness, but SMGs, shotguns, pistols and blades still are worn by almost everybody.

Xinder

The fourth moon of Maximus, which is another water world about 9,600 km in diameter. Because it has much larger islands on which to settle, it has about twice the population of Murtz (nearly 10 million). The few islands that exist here are prime real estate and are almost exclusively owned by the rich and powerful for use as private residences. One major island, however, houses the moon's spaceport and administrative centers. The rest of the settlements are either on artificial islands or in subsea facilities, themselves often connected to artificial islands. The vast majority of all settlements here are connected by "go

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tubes" that enable people to travel quickly and over long distances under water without getting wet.

Weapons restrictions here are virtually non-existent. It might seem strange for heavy weaponry to be allowed on a moon where so much habitation involves contained (and therefore, breachable) environments, but weapons ownership is a part of the culture here, and nothing is ever likely to change that. As a result, most of the habitats, viewports and go tubes have been specially reinforced to withstand any damage up to starship gunnery. On the business side of things, Xinder carries out a highly profitable filtration mining operation. It does not conduct surface mining in order to preserve the diverse and rich environment. Thousands of species of aquatic and amphibious life dwell here, and scientific studies only really understand about a tenth of that. An ongoing subsea survey has covered about half of the moon and has discovered three major underwater alien ruins, although mysterious electromagnetic disturbances always kill the equipment of any exploration team that gets close to the ruins.

Morskell

The fifth moon of Maximus is a large (12,800 km diameter) water world with a nasty, corrosive atmosphere. Commonwealth scientists have begun harvesting the atmosphere for weaponization purposes. Should they succeed in synthesizing the unique molecular structure of Morskell's atmosphere, it could be one of the most dangerous chemical weapons ever produced. This project is very low-key, and most citizens (and government officials) know nothing about it. Because there is virtually no land to settle on, and because anything above the surface would be eaten away, all settlement is underwater. Despite initial colonization difficulties, Morskell has turned into a powerhouse settlement of some six million settlers. Most work for the filtration mines or the many support industries affiliated with it. The Commonwealth asserted its control here on a reluctant basis because it wants nothing to do with the military research going on here. As a result, the Commonwealth is even more hands-off with this moon than with others. Weapons of a strict military nature (machine guns, automatic rifles) are prohibited, but everything else is fair game. Like Xinder, wearing guns is just part of the culture around here, even if actual shootouts are fairly uncommon.

On the business side, filtration mining is tapering off here because the lanthanum levels in the water are getting too low to justify the cost of operations. Environmentalists are very concerned over the damage surface mining could cause, however, and violent radicals have begun killing miners and sabotaging equipment. Added to this, the roughneck mining community has a taste for the many illegal pleasures so often found in industrial communities, allowing the Blackfeet to move in and set up operations. In recent months, agents from the Fellowship also have infiltrated in the hopes of fomenting discontent and engineering a workers' uprising.

Jitrandos

The sixth moon of Maximus is a small rock world (4,800 km diameter) with only a trace atmosphere and no standing water. One might think this would lead to Jitrandos being a ghost town, but actually it is a thriving community of some five million people. It was originally settled by researchers who wanted to explore the world's geothermal dynamics as a possible energy source to export. The idea had been to convert heat energy into a light beam and shoot that to receptors elsewhere in the Archipelago. Weaponization concerns shut the project down before it ever got too far, however. The research lab was also dedicated to geothermal energy in concordance to alien ruins that extend deep within the moon's crust. It seems that aliens once tapped the core of the moon for energy, much as

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Maximus does now, only they did it with much more efficiency. Today, with research having hit a dead end, the push to explore the depths of the world in search of alien artifacts comes mostly from grass-roots efforts by amateur archeologists. Without the R&D to keep things going, the world turned to mining its molten resources, which has been a huge success. As a former colony of the Commonwealth, Jitrandos was not exactly pleased to find its old masters looking to take over. As such there is some animosity about the whole affair, even if the majority of people accept it as a necessary evil to keep the Fellowship contained. That said, Jitrandos, having always been a wild and wooly sort of place, has serious crime and insurrection problems, and attacks upon Commonwealth offices and facilities, while deplored by the public, are increasingly common. Military weapons are restricted here, but nothing else. If fewer guns were available openly here, the Commonwealth would not feel like it is facing such hostile territory. But as long as Blackfeet smugglers keep moving in Fellowship-made weapons, Jitrandos will remain an ongoing bullet festival.

Oolong

The seventh moon of Maximus is one of the largest (12,800 km diameter) water worlds in the planetary system. Home to nearly 50 million people, Oolong is constantly swept by savage storms and dangerous tidal action. Any surface craft that stays out in the open for long risks getting swamped. The best bet for landers is to enter the water directly. Once a few hundred meters below the surface, things calm down considerably. Oolong has a single, massively spread-out settlement on the ocean floor that extends many levels into the moon's surface, where the mining operations happen. Aside from harvesting the moons extraordinary abundance of plant and animal life, many other valuable minerals can be extracted here, including three that have never before been recorded by Imperial science. The research lab here is conducting extensive testing of these new metals and their possible applications. Despite these successes, Oolong recently faced a severe cash crunch as a result of massive and systemic corruption and fraud by senior government officials. As such, the new government that took over after the old leaders were imprisoned was only too happy to allow Maximus to run things while the moon worked on regaining financial solvency. Piracy is still a major problem here, and buccaneers in subs and grav craft often raid outlying parts of the Oolong super-city as well as remote mining stations. Thus, the average Oolongite lives heavily armed.

Maximus Prime

The eighth and most important moon of the Maximus planetary system is Maximus Prime, and it is essentially the capital of the Archipelago. It has an Imperial-level starport with excellent fuel services, overhaul capabilities and shipyards. The M.Prime shipyards have only recently completed militarization and can now provide support and upgrades for warships. Full production of large warships, however, remains out of the facility's reach, largely because of the populace's reluctance to devote a permanent portion of their industrial complex to military production. Even though it is a small, airless world (3,200 km diameter), it is massively populated, with some 20 billion inhabitants. All of its water is imported from nearby water world moons, such as Xinder, Morskell and especially Oolong (which supplies M.Prime with over three-quarters of its water supply). Strict conservation, recycling and stockpiling have led to M.Prime's development of vast water caches deep within the planet that have become so large that the world is nearly self-sufficient in regards to water. However, M.Prime will probably continue importing water from its allied moons for at least the next few years.

There is little development at the surface of M.Prime (aside from starport facilities, surface mines and other industrial facilities) because it has no atmosphere. The vast

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majority of M.Prime's enormous population works and lives within a network of artificial tunnels and chambers excavated from the moon's crust. In some places, the subterranean development extends very deeply, and there are even geothermal shafts that tap the moon's core for energy harvesting purposes. In the rest of the system, M.Prime is sometimes called the "beehive," the "rat's nest," the "warren" and other nicknames for its underground structure. Regardless of how odd an existence this might seem to outsiders, the triumph of M.Prime's ability to house so many people in such a small place is a testament to the scientific and practical competence that has been the hallmark of both Septimus and the Commonwealth of Maximus.

No central ruling authority exists; rival governments compete for control. It must be noted, however, that this is only the official classification for the Septimus system overall. The government of M.Prime, however, is 100% in the hands of the Commonwealth. There are diplomatic offices for the other factions on M.Prime, and indeed, sectors of the moon have large numbers of loyalists to other factions, but at the moment there is no overt struggle for the control of the capital of the Septimus system. Of course, that all could change overnight were militants of a rival faction to kill or destroy the governmental apparatus or otherwise impose their control over the moon.

Most firearms are prohibited on Maximus Prime, and the carrying of any weapon openly is discouraged. In general, openly carrying firearms is only tolerated for police and recognized paramilitaries (such as the Septimus Rangers Corps). Despite the weapons controls in place, as fears of terrorism, political unrest and criminal infiltration spread through M.Prime, an increasing number of its people are illegally storing heavy weaponry at their homes and workplaces and are concealing weapons on their persons, with blades, daggers and body pistols being most common.

There were once research stations on M.Prime, but they all have closed down so that research can be conducted closer to actual phenomena. Still, all research activities within the system (or the Commonwealth, at least) have administrative offices on M.Prime, and there are vast data arcologies here that keep backup records of all filed scientific findings. Mining on M.Prime is pretty much tapped out. Most of the excavation today involves tunneling out more of the moon for residential, commercial and industrial use. It may not be lanthanum mining, but for contractors who don't mind steady work the construction mines of M.Prime can be a lucrative place to make a living. So far, the Commonwealth has made sure to pay its miners handsomely and with generous bonuses and benefits, to discourage their need for forming a union like the Fellowship of the Septimus Proletariat.

Polsom

The ninth moon of Maximus is Polsom. It is a relatively small (6,400 km) world with a trace atmosphere, a little bit of free water, and about 10,000 people. Most are science staff with a small contingent of support administrators and paramilitary security personnel. In the hopes of stemming any foreign incursions, raids or bombardments Polsom considers itself neutral even though it is a captive government of the Commonwealth. So far, this has worked, but for how much longer?

Polsom is the last pure science colony in the Septimus system. It is devoted to deciphering what appears to be a massive set of alien glyphs carved onto the moon's surface. Heavy cratering since the glyphs were carved makes them very difficult to discern and translate, thus the Polsom Project is a long and arduous one. Should it pan out, however, the scientists here are convinced that the language codes on Polsom are the key to understanding not only the aliens who once colonized this system, but they could also tell researchers where to locate other ruins and how to decipher them.

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Technically, one can carry any weapon he likes on Polsom, but the truth is the people here are generally a non-aggressive lot who appreciate their right to arm themselves but in practice almost never do. That might change, however, if and when the ugly reality of the war that the Extent is waging eventually lands on Polsom.

Drover

The tenth moon of Maximus is Drover. It is 8,000 km in diameter and more than half covered by water. The thin atmosphere on the world allows it to get fairly cold, so most of that water is ice, slush and snow. This world's roughly 50,000 people are governed by the Drover Hegemony, a highly diversified group of clan-based power blocs that all share power along a convoluted and arcane methodology that only natives truly understand.

Drover's somewhat unique status as a farming planet gives it strong export power, and commerce here is heavily attached to the power structure; families with greater shares of power are allowed to harvest more valuable foodstuffs, while families with little or no power get stuck with trying to make a few credits off of dry meal and leftover husks. The vast farms on this world have made for a lot of rural territory, in which outlaws can easily hide. There are few weapon restrictions on this world, a tradition which largely stems from the world's frontier culture, which has never really gone away. The idea is that a well-armed society is also a polite one and hence one less likely to start fighting with each other: why quarrel with the neighbor who's got your outhouse sighted in on his Howitzer? The research here is mainly devoted to enhancing food production and is one of the few science programs not devoted to deciphering the many alien mysteries and phenomena in Septimus. As a result, the rest of the system's scientists do not take the researchers here very seriously.

Rilen

The eleventh and last moon of Maximus is Rilen. It is a small, airless world some 3,200 km in diameter, and it is the home of about a quarter of a million people. Like Maximus Prime, the people of Rilen work and live underground. Much of Rilen's extensive undercity was designed by M.Prime engineers and built by work crews on loan from that moon. There was once a working spaceport on the surface, but as the population has largely withdrawn to Rilen alone, the spaceport facilities have gone by the wayside. Ships can land here, but there are no major services waiting for them. This moon was originally a colony of M.Prime but it was granted full independence ten years ago. Financial mismanagement after that led to widespread cash shortages and labor strikes, creating an environment in which the Fellowship of the Septimus Proletariat could thrive. The Proletariat took over, but the people of Rilen soon discovered how volatile and self-destructive that regime can be. So in a counter-coup, the Fellowship was overthrown on Rilen, and the moon immediately petitioned the Commonwealth to come in and set up shop, both to stabilize Rilen society and to protect against the Fellowship's inevitable attempt to retake the moon by force. The Commonwealth has done so, and things were perceived (wrongly so) to have stabilized quickly. Power has since been handed over to the independent commercial guild known as the **Rilen Mining Consortium** (RMC), which is owned, operated and administrated exclusively by natives of Rilen. The RMC is spending considerable time and energy cleaning house here in order to turn it back into a thriving production center, not a criminal and paramilitary freezone in the making.

At the moment, the people of Rilen keep heavy arms on them at all times, so they act as a kind of decentralized militia in case any hostile parties invade. In reality, the booming weapons market here has led to both the easy infiltration by the Blackfeet, who are natural arms merchants, and Fel-

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lowship spies, who come to the world under guise as indie arms dealers. Right now, there is a critical crime and terrorism problem waiting to be born on Rilen. Chances are the RMC was not properly equipped to deal with the underlying problems on Rilen, and despite its best efforts the planet likely is to spiral downward into a seething mess of internecine warfare, fear and chaos. Unless, that is, someone can intervene and give this troubled world the chance it needs to right itself.

Thrence

At the moment, Thrence — the second planetary system of the Mathreba rosette — is an uninhabited dreadzone, but it was not always that way. Before war engulfed the Archipelago there was a fair amount of mining and interplanetary commerce going on here. Once the fighting broke out this system became a major battleground, as the various commerce settlements underwent varying kinds of revolution fomented by the Fellowship of the Septimus Proletariat or devolved into crime courtesy of the Blackfeet. Once law and order broke down, pirates and mercs virtually took over and any civilians who could leave did. Now the entire orbit is a war-torn no man's land where any pirate, privateer, mercenary, bounty hunter or belligerent can park his ship, set up shop, or simply cruise around looking for a fight.

Pacifying Thrence and its moons is a major acquisition goal of the Commonwealth of Maximus, as it would provide both a buffer against incursions into Maximus space, and it would be a strong blow to the Fellowship of the Septimus Proletariat, with which the Commonwealth is in serous conflict over the fate of certain moons and planets.

Anybody who ventures to Thrence at the moment should expect some form of space combat. Anybody who thinks of permanently relocating here should have his head checked, at least until the fighting dies down. Of course, there still is a great deal of mineral wealth to be had here, and whoever is in charge of Thrence once the fighting ends stands to profit greatly from it. This is probably why the Fellowship is fighting so hard for it.

Thrence is a large gas giant, like Maximus, with a unique ring system that has a prismatic quality that refracts laser light. Any laser fire within the rings will automatically miss. Other ship's weapons, such as missiles and energy weapons other than lasers, are unaffected. Beyond the rings, Thrence has nine satellites: **Aldovar**, **Purge**, **Isul**, **Danat**, **Sunder**, **Regovia**, **Forb's Folly**, **Sanctum** and the **Outskirts**.

Aldovar

The first Threncian moon, it is an airless world 6,400 km in diameter and is home to no one. This moon has been protected by the Commonwealth of Maximus. Only specially designated scientific survey teams may even make a close approach to the surface; ships that violate this order trip off remote sensors, which report the breach back to the Commonwealth. Despite this, outlaw spacers and other rogues often find ways to sneak through security and set up operations here anyway. The Fellowship honors the restriction, however, in the hopes that by abiding by it, it can later show itself as a legitimate form of government worthy of Imperial recognition and not just a bunch of violent revolutionaries. The large bodies of water on Aldovar are thought to contain fully intact alien cities somewhere on the bottom. However the high mineral content of the water confounds scanners, and early surveys were unable to find any signs of alien civilization, despite strong archeological evidence on other worlds within the Archipelago that there was a major civilization of some sort living here beneath the waves.

Isul

The second Threncian moon is almost identical physically to Aldovar. Likewise it is a specially protected scientific preserve. The oceans covering 40% of its surface

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suggest that subsea alien cities are in existence here. The wide diversity of life within the moon's oceans suggests that aquatic sophonts could easily have built a substantial settlement under the waves, especially if those sophonts commanded the incredible technologies hinted at elsewhere in the system. Adventuresome scientists from Maximus sometimes run their own surveys of this moon at great risk to themselves. Until the fighting stops, however, serious research of this moon will remain stalled.

Danat

The third Threncian moon, Danat, is a small (1,600 km diameter) and uninhabited rock in space. Various belligerent parties frequently use Danat as a temporary base. It is likely that numerous base camps have been built secretly on the moon at different times and by different groups and may still be active to some degree.

Sunder and Regovia

The fourth and fifth Threncian moons, Sunder and Regovia, are like Danat's big twin brothers. They are both several times larger (8,000 km and 6,400 km diameters, respectively), but have no water, atmosphere or any other really outstanding qualities. Like Danat, their undesirability as permanent settlements of any kind have made them home to the various insurgents and outlaws secretly camping there. In fact, there is a good chance that conflicting parties may inhabit base camps on this world at the same time and not even know it, because the moons are so big.

Forb's Folly

The sixth Threncian moon, Forb's Folly, is a small, airless moon of some 3,200 km in diameter. It has only a trace atmosphere and has no free water, and is home to no more than 40 or 50 inhabitants (numbers are sketchy). Virtually everybody who was able to leave this place has done so. All that are left are die-hards who refuse to leave under any circumstances. Their numbers are being whittled down, however, as every time rival factions fight for the control of this moon, they lose a few of their number in the crossfire. This was once a marginally successful independent government of miners and industrial exporters. Now that the fighting has broken out, any time pirates, mercs or other warships enter the area, they often come in and take over this outpost, toss it for valuables, and then declare dominion over it. The beleaguered people of Forb's Folly just want the craziness to end. They are tired of living in their hardsuits out in the planetary boondocks every time it looks like somebody else is going to take them over.

Sanctum

The seventh Threncian moon, Sanctum, is about 4,800 km in diameter and is a lifeless, uninhabited wasteworld. The Fellowship of the Septimus Proletariat have laid claim to this moon and have stationed ships in high orbit above it. Any ships that do not immediately declare their loyalty to the Fellowship when approaching the moon will be fired upon. Since the Fellowship's craft are largely small and retrofitted for military purposes, anybody with more powerful weaponry could easily drive off the Fellowship blockade. But if Sanctum is so worthless, why is the Proletariat so willing to fight for it?

The Outskirts

The eighth and last Threncian moon, the Outskirts, is another wasteworld much like Sanctum, except it is about twice as large, and like Sanctum, the Proletariat have laid

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claim to, and blockaded the high orbit of, this moon. However, none can fathom what their motivations for this action might be.

Reneb

The site of perhaps the worst fighting in the Archipelago is the Reneb planetary system, the third system in the Mathreba rosette. Reneb is contested both by the Commonwealth of Maximus and the Fellowship of the Septimus Proletariat. Both sides hold territory here, and both sides actively are sending armed forces to harry the other. The Fellowship, having seized production facilities in the Badrigal orbit, has actually begun building its own warships, while the Commonwealth of Maximus, reluctant to militarize its vast industrial power despite the political realities, has opted to employ privateers instead. Both sides' combatants meet head-on in Reneb more often than not, making it one of the most dangerous places in all of Septimus.

The Reneb ring system is unique among the Archipelago for being the only ring system that has a permanent population. There are only about 30 or 40 intrepid souls living here, mostly affiliated with a spying station built here by the Proletariat to monitor Commonwealth movements. The station itself is extremely heavily shielded and armed, despite its small population. To date, the few Commonwealth privateers that have attempted to destroy the station have failed. Meanwhile, the intelligence this station provides allows Fellowship combat craft to more easily intercept Commonwealth ships (and any others for that matter). The Commonwealth would very much like to see the station destroyed or better yet, captured. Possession of any weapon outside of one's residence is prohibited, despite the irony that the station itself is almost exclusively military in nature, but that's the Fellowship for you. The Reneb ring has become a matter of pride for both the Fellowship and the Commonwealth. Every time Commonwealth ships try and fail to destroy the station here, it builds Fellowship morale. Despite the relatively minor strategic importance of the spying station, the Commonwealth is feeling increased pressure to destroy it, if only to deny the Fellowship the ability to make any more propaganda off of it. While additional Commonwealth ships eye this as a potential target, more Fellowship members are readying to defend the station as a point of honor.

Screed

The first true Renebian moon, Screed, is about 6,400 km in diameter and can barely support life. As such, just under 100 people have settled here. The Fellowship of the Septimus Proletariat took over this moon a year ago and set up a puppet government that answers to the Fellowship's high command in Badrigal. The Fellowship is working hard at imposing a much stricter sense of law and order in Screed, but there seems to be little point. So few people live here, and those who do require serious weaponry to defend themselves from the various predators, making living on the surface of this moon a chancy proposition at best. Some of the creatures of Screed are so extreme in their physiology that scientists representing various causes have made trips out here more than once to take samples for use in Imperial bio-weapons research. Still no word on whether they ever made any progress. An interesting note about Screed is that the high iron content in the rocky ground makes it possible for a person with a metal tool to bang a rock and make it ring out like a bell. People have been known to communicate over long distances using this method. This has saved a few crash victims, that's for sure.

Gocz and Zaheera

The second and third Renebian moons are Gocz and Zaheera. Both are small, airless rocks with nobody living on them. These moons are restricted scientific reserves by Commonwealth decree. The Commonwealth hopes to study them some day for archeological evidence of ancient alien habitation.

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Contrarily, the Fellowship wishes to strip-mine them, but it will only invest resources in these moons once it has settled its ongoing conflict with the Commonwealth one way or the other. They had better figure that out soon, since a growing number of mining concerns within the Proletariat sense great mineral wealth to be had from Gocz and Zaheera, and they are tired of waiting for the go-ahead to obtain it.

Chalker

The fourth Renebian moon is Chalker, which is also a restricted scientific preserve like Gocz and Zaheera. Unlike those moons, Chalker is much larger (9,600 km diameter) and mostly covered by surface ice with small oceans of liquid water trapped beneath them. It has been widely reported by independent scientific surveys (operating without the approval of Commonwealth, it should be noted) that alien radio signals are emanating from the depths of its massive oceans, signals that seem to be directed at the star Helion, which is somehow receiving those signals and responding to them by broadcasting follow-up signals to the rest of the galaxy. What all of this means is a complete mystery, and despite major research done on the moon by dedicated Commonwealth teams, nobody knows for sure what it means.

Easy Money

The fifth Renebian moon is Easy Money, a small (4,800 km diameter) vacuum world that supports a mining colony of around 500 people. Easy Money was once independent, but the Commonwealth has since moved in and taken the moon into protective custody so that the Fellowship may not profit from it. With the exception of allowing Commonwealth privateers to station here and receive provisions from the basic spaceport, life in Easy Money continues much as it always has. The people work hard in the mines, process the ore they extract, ship it off, and hope they get paid for it before pirates steal or blow up their exports. Virtually all weapons are prohibited here. This has been the custom in Easy Money in reaction to its early days when there were no weapons restrictions and the moon became a freefire zone. Even without weapons, however, the miners of Easy Money like to stay fit for combat, so most of them become accomplished martial artists. Despite this moon's optimistic name, it has not generated the vast fortunes for which its settlers hoped, nor is it ever likely to, suggesting that maybe the incredible initial scanning results of this moon were "salted" to attract mining business.

Roundabout

The sixth Renebian moon is Roundabout, which is quite similar physically to Easy Money, but it is a scientific reserve as decreed by the Commonwealth. However, it is extremely tectonically active and is presently suffering a major series of volcanic eruptions and planetquakes that are literally tearing the world apart. For those who wish to brave the dangers of this moon — and flaunt the laws that quarantine it — there are few better chances to conduct some major planetary geology studies in this part of the galaxy. Studying Roundabout may provide some insight as to why this system is so rich in lanthanum; a discovery that could ultimately lead to increased transition element production throughout the Archipelago, even on worlds previously thought to have none or to have exhausted their supplies.

Badrigal

The fourth and last planetary system of the Mathreba rosette is also the home system of the Fellowship of the Septimus Proletariat, a labor movement that has morphed into a revolutionary cult of personality whereby the ideological whims of its uppermost leadership — a mysterious cabal of unidentified conspirators known only as the Revolutionary Council — are law. The Fellowship was formed to address the gross inequities the Archipelago miners suffered

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when the system was opened for commercial development, but since then, the organization has become increasingly erratic, violent and revolutionary, now seeking to overthrow all of the Archipelago, starting with the Commonwealth of Maximus.

The Fellowship, while relatively small in numbers (compared to the billions of people in the Commonwealth) has converted its industrial base almost entirely to a military footing and is now beginning to produce cheap, low-grade warships. Most of these are cut-rate system defense boats and patrol craft, but unless it is stopped, the Fellowship will produce such large numbers of them that it will simply flood the system with military vehicles that any self-proclaimed freedom fighter, rebel or revolutionary will receive gratis.

Most of the mineral wealth in Badrigal was mined and exported long ago. That, coupled with Badrigal's lack of basic resources (water chief among them) makes this part of the system dependent on imports to survive. With no trading partners nearby, this has forced the Fellowship into large-scale piracy (or nationalization, as they like to think of it). As such, Fellowships routinely raid Commonwealth territory, as well as any outside ships entering the system.

Badrigal is a small-sized gas giant with a ring system and three additional satellites: **Vandle**, **Hardpoint** and **Last Chance**. The rings of Badrigal are so thin and narrow that some have suggested that they might have been an artificial ring set constructed but never finished by the Septimus engineers.

Vandle

The first moon of Badrigal is Vandle, a tiny rock merely 200 km in diameter. A minor satellite even by minor satellite's standards, Vandle is in a degrading orbit, and one day it will break up and become part of the planetary ring system. Apparently, there is a secret religious cult within the Fellowship that believes that a) when Vandle breaks up it will signal the ascension of all mortal believers into Paradise, and b) those who speed this occurrence will receive preferential treatment in Paradise. As a result, cultists are supposedly working hard at forcing Vandle out of its orbit and will accept anybody's help, including agents from other governments, in this endeavor.

Hardpoint

The second moon of Badrigal is Hardpoint, which is fairly large (11,200 km in diameter), but it has no atmosphere or water, which has limited its population to about 25,000. Were this moon more accommodating in its environment, its population would surely be ten times larger. Hardpoint was once an independent mining and research colony of the Commonwealth of Maximus, but a recent coup d'etat by the Fellowship has wrested control of this place, much to many citizens' dismay. Law enforcement here is particularly harsh, especially since there is an ongoing resistance to Fellowship rule. To stabilize things, the Fellowship is forcing thousands of its loyal citizens to emigrate to Hardpoint in order to foster a culture of obedience and submission. Chances are, things will come to open bloodshed before the situation here is resolved one way or another. The Commonwealth wants very badly to place operatives undercover here, to hook up with the resistance and give whatever aid it needs, but so far, it has been unsuccessful in its attempts to do so. Long arms such as shotguns and rifles are prohibited, leaving only pistols and personal melee weapons as legal hardware. Many defiant citizens like to wear multiple pistols as a sign of disdain for the new Fellowship rules here. Others saw break-open shotguns down to pistol length and wear them that way. While there is still a decent amount of mining work being done here, many workers stage slowdowns or have fake accidents to halt production as a means of protest. Likewise, the science

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facility here has conveniently misplaced its entire data archive in order to deny the Fellowship access to it.

Last Chance

The third and final moon of Badrigal is Last Chance, a medium-sized vacuum world (9,600 km in diameter) that is home to some five million permanent inhabitants. Like Maximus Prime, Last Chance is an almost entirely subterranean city, with a vast maze of passageways and chambers burrowing deep into the planetary surface. The surface facilities left behind when the rest of the moon went underground have fallen into serious disrepair, making assisted landings on the moon more than a little bit difficult. Last Chance is where the Fellowship of the Septimus Proletariat got its start, and this world is now the headquarters for the movement. Aside from its oligarchical nature, the Fellowship is also extremely bureaucratic and authoritarian. Its rules are stifling and often contradictory, allowing Fellowship authorities — especially the Armed Proletariat, its paramilitary wing — to abuse its power. Most weapons, naturally, are restricted.

Serena

This orbit is also a stronghold of the Fellowship, although a pervasive Blackfeet presence is destabilizing things more and more by the day. This is especially troubling on Serena itself, where the Fellowship is desperately trying to export water to the Badrigal orbit. Blackfeet syndicates there, having been stymied from their attempts to control the water export industry and skim profits from it, have now taken to sabotaging that industry in order to intimidate the Fellowship into letting the Blackfeet have what they want. Both sides should know that the other will not fold, but thy remain firm anyway, setting the stage for a costly and intractable conflict.

Serena is a small world 8,000 km in diameter with a very thin, unbreatheable atmosphere. More than half of its surface is covered by water which must be purified before it can be fit for human consumption. Because of the challenging environment, no more than a few hundred people have settled here. But of those who did make Serena their home, a self-perpetuating oligarchy consisting of Fellowship operatives has arisen to lead them. Nearly all of Serena's inhabitants are part of the water export operation and construction team that is hard at work building a new spaceport to facilitate exporting.

Most firearms are restricted, and the carrying of any weapon openly is discouraged. Really, if you're a good Prole, you'll keep your weapons at home, won't you?

Aside from its mining operation, Serena also is home to a research facility dedicated to studying the possibility of alien ruins deep beneath the planet's oceans. The widespread insecurity and political chaos among the Archipelago has discouraged most scientists from giving this planet any of their time, and the Fellowship has neither the technical know-how nor the spare manpower to launch a serious expedition into the depths.

Serena Minor

This is the first of Serena's two moons. It is more than half the size of its mother planet (4,800 km). It has no atmosphere or standing water, which probably explains why only about 50 people have made this place their home. The community here is little more than a tiny Fellowship outpost established partly as a matter of pride and partly so the Fellowship could claim dominion over the whole of the orbit. Due to increasing Blackfeet in the area, the Fellowship High Command has reluctantly allowed citizens to arm themselves in order to apprehend or kill Blackfeet whenever they are encountered. So far, this policy is little more than window dressing; with so few

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people on the moon, the chance of them restraining any Blackfeet in the area, heavy weapons or not, is low.

Note: This moon has an enormous crater on it. It's so big, in fact, that scientists often wonder how the moon survived the impact without being shattered into a million fragments. Some suspect the moon's core is of an exotic material that possesses special, indestructible qualities.

Serena Major

Serena Major is the second moon of Serena, and it is even bigger than the first, at 6,400 km in diameter — almost as large as the mother planet. Because of the closeness in size between Serena and its moons, some consider it to be a trinary planet system rather than a traditional planet-and-moon arrangement. Despite its size, S.Major is uninhabited because of its lack of atmosphere and strange surface water. Some 30% of S.Major's surface is covered with water, but it is so thoroughly infused with microscopic lanthanum particles that it is impossible to drink or even bathe in without serious filtration. Still, the unusual qualities of this water are what prompted Newcomer scientists to research it in the hopes of designing a kind of fluid-state jump drive that could theoretically give ships the push they need to jump out of Septimus. Rumors persist that when the science staff abandoned the moon, they had a working prototype of their 7-G drive, but their ship disappeared and has not been heard from since. The abandoned base they have left behind has gone unexplored.

Coda

From the standpoint of the worlds closest to Helion, the central star of Septimus, Coda, is the outermost world of the Deep Sky. From the surface, however, it is the closest world of the Deep Sky. Either way, it lies about half way between Helion and the surface, making its way out in the middle of nowhere. It orbits in a lonely track, seeming very much like a world that naturally accreted around Helion and was trapped inside Septimus when it was built. Only 16,000 km in diameter, it is 30% water with a dense, breathable atmosphere that has made this world relatively habitable. Home to nearly 100,000 Newcomers, Coda serves mostly as a waystation for Fellowship ships that are heading out to or returning from patrols and nationalization missions. If given the right attention, this planet could be terraformed and made into a serious population center.

The spaceport here is a ramshackle facility with few services other than refueling. Back when this was a pure mining facility, that's all anybody needed, but then the Fellowship took over. The miners here initially welcomed the Fellowship but have since come to regret it. Now outnumbered by the Fellowship immigrants who have arrived to develop the settlement into a military station, the original miners are considering either leaving or forming some kind of resistance.

That might not be so easy. The law of the land here prohibits anything heavier than simple personal weapons; because of persistent Blackfeet troublemaking, the Fellowship allows greater weapon privileges here than they would prefer. But security is security, even if letting Proletariat zealots gun down anybody they even suspect of being in league with the Blackfeet. In the meantime, the Fellowship is keen to transform this once-quiet mining colony into a military installation fueled by its mineral resources, which can be used to craft and entire fleet of warships.

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02: The D6 System

What follows is a quick overview of how the D6 rules work. These are pretty simple, and after a quick read-through you should be good to go to with Septimus.

Attributes

The first thing you need to know about how to run this game is that every character has a series of basic characteristics that describe him — how smart, strong, personable, insightful or proficient he is. These are the character's attributes. Every character in Septimus has six attributes:

- ***Agility*** *is a measure of a character's coordination, balance and physical finesse.*
- ***Knowledge*** *is a character's education and knowledge of facts and data.*
- ***Mechanical*** *is short for "mechanical aptitude." It gauges the character's ability to control vehicles and other complex technology.*
- ***Perception*** *measures the sharpness of a character's senses, his ability to interpret the behavior of others, and his powers of observation.*
- ***Strength*** *is a measure of the character's physical prowess including stamina, the ability to heal, and athletic abilities as well as raw physical strength.*
- ***Technical*** *is short for "technical aptitude." It is an instinctive feel for technology and learned vocations.*

Die Codes

Many of the actions the players undertake in this game will have uncertain outcomes. Whether they are trying to fix a malfunctioning suit of power armor, pilot a jump-glider, or battle an opponent, the final result of the player's actions is up in the air. To determine whether these kinds of actions succeed or fail, the player must throw a number of six-sided dice and hope that the right number comes up. Rolling dice is a big part of this game, and the core concept to all of this is the die code. Every one of your character's basic attributes (such as *Strength, Agility, Endurance*, etc.) has a die code assigned to it. Anything your character might try to do defaults to the appropriate attribute. For example, if you have a strength of 3D, then any time your character tries to do something strength-related, you roll 3 six-sided dice to see if you succeeded or failed.

Sometimes you will want to try specific tasks for which you have a skill. **Skills** are based off of your attributes, and every character has a certain number of skills that represent the things at which he is naturally better than other characters. Suppose that your character has the *lift* skill, which is based off of your *Strength* attribute. Your *lift* die code will essentially be your *Strength* die code plus a few more dice attached to it. A starting character might have a *Strength* of 3D and a *lift* skill of 4D or 5D.

Sometimes, your die code will have a little bonus added to it, such as "+1" or "+2." These are referred to as **PIPS**: you add these to the total result you roll on the dice. So if you have a lift skill of 3D+2, you roll 3 dice and add 2 to the result. No die code can have a pip of greater than "+2" attached to it. If a die code has a pip of "+2" and it gets another pip added to it, then the die code rounds up to the next highest die code. For example, if you have a lift skill of 3D+2, and you use a really good shovel which would give you another +1 to your die code, the total result would be 3D+3. Since you can't have a pip of +3 however, the die code rounds up to 4D.

The Wild Die

Whenever any player, including the gamemaster (GM), makes any roll, one of the dice must be different from the rest

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(in size or color). This is the Wild Die and it represents the randomness of life, like the direction of the wind affecting the flight of a bullet, that is too small to warrant its own difficulty modifier.

Example: If a character's *Agility* attribute is 3D+1, when he tries to jump on a table, he rolls two regular dice and one Wild Die.

If the player has only 1D to roll, then that one die is always the Wild Die.

If the player rolls a 6 on the Wild Die, then a **Critical Success** has been rolled; the player may add that 6 to the total result and then roll the Wild Die again. If it rolls another 6, then the player adds it and keeps on rolling, repeating the process until the Wild Die finally produces a number other than 6. This is known as an **Exploding Die Roll**. The Wild Die's value essentially explodes upon rolling a Critical Success because theoretically, the Wild Die could never stop turning up 6s, making the potential result limitless. Where the effect of a Critical Success really comes into play is that it allows characters the chance, however slim, to successfully do something that might otherwise be effectively impossible.

If the player rolls a 1 on the initial toss of the wild die, this is a **Critical Failure** and the GM may chose one of two options for the result, depending on the gravity of the situation.

The Critical Failure cancels out the highest roll. Then the player adds the remaining values and the roll is determined normally.

Add the dice results normally, but a penalty or a complication occurs. The GM gauges the significance of the penalty or complication. While the type of mishap is left strictly up to the gamemaster's interpretation, penalties are much more common than complications. Penalties are routine; complications are special events which increase tension and add to the drama of the story. If you want a simple mechanic, roll a die: on a 1-4, the character suffers a penalty; on a 5-6, the character suffers a complication.

Penalties:

When a character suffers a penalty, the character loses the Wild Die and the highest die for that round. If more than one die is tied for highest roll, the character loses only one die.

Complications:

Complications are much more creative than simply taking away a character's highest die, and they help tell a more interesting and exciting story. Sometimes the results are disastrous for a character, while other times they are simply intriguing or even humorous. They should be unusual events that help move the story along or help amplify exciting or dramatic situations, such as the conclusion of an exciting adventure.

Complications may put characters into more danger, but they shouldn't be immediately fatal; instead, the characters should have to use their utmost courage and skill to deal with the situation.

A complication may also be a way of balancing characters. If one character has become invincible due to a fantastic set of armor, for example, when the character rolls a complication, the armor may malfunction.

Complications should be directly related to the skill or attribute being used when the mishap was rolled. The game master must be sure to keep his complications fair and balanced; the players will get very upset if they think you are misusing the complications rule.

Here are some suggested complications you might want to spring upon your characters. Complications must be customized to reflect the current situation and the story, so the gamemaster should take a few a minutes to come up with complications for key scenes in his adventures.

• *One of the characters kills a guard in combat. Unfortunately, when the soldier hits the ground, it triggers the grenade on*

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his belt. Most of the characters are within blast radius, and the characters only have a few seconds to react.

- *A character is trying to sneak up on enemy troops when his comlink squawks on ("Hey! Have you guys infiltrated the base yet?"), alerting the troops.*

- *A character slips and falls while moving, possibly injuring himself (if he twists his ankle, he might only be able to move at walking speed) or at the very least, being caught out in the open during the middle of a battle.*

- *A character is bargaining for a good price on a weapon when a complication happens: someone else comes up offering what the seller is asking for the weapon. This is especially helpful if the weapon is somehow necessary to continue the adventure.*

- *The characters are tracking someone with a beacon. The target has dropped the beacon or somebody else has taken it, leading the players on a wild goose chase.*

- *The characters are piloting a vehicle when a complication happens; the vehicle runs out of fuel, its controls freeze up or its cannons begin to misfire because that patch job you did on the wiring finally gave out.*

- *A character is in a sword fight with another character. He successfully parries the other character's attack but rolls a mishap. The gamemaster decides that the two weapons have entangled with each other, and both characters must make Strength rolls to free them.*

Note: Unlike rolling a Critical Failure initially on the Wild Die, no complications occur when a 1 shows up on later tosses of the Wild Die in the same roll.

Difficulties

Difficulty numbers are a simple way to resolve whether or not a character does something when he's not acting directly against another character. Each type of task should be ranked as one of six difficulty levels: VERY EASY, EASY, MODERATE, DIFFICULT, VERY DIFFICULT, and HEROIC. Each one of these difficulty levels has a numerical difficulty range assigned to it. The difficulty range represents the target number a character must roll his or her relevant die code against when trying to accomplish a task.

Very Easy 5 (1-5):

Almost anybody should be able to do this most of the time.

Examples: Firing a weapon at point-blank range; driving a jumpglider across open, flat terrain; knowing that Septimus is a Dyson Sphere within the Seventh Empire.

Easy 10 (6-10):

This task is a little tougher, but most characters should be able to do this most of the time.

Examples: Firing a weapon at short range; driving a jumpglider over somewhat rough terrain, like a choppy lake; knowing that Septimus has been colonized previously by the Sindavar Extent.

Moderate 15 (11-15):

This kind of task requires some skill, effort and concentration.

Examples: Firing a weapon at medium range; driving a jumpglider over a big ditch or other obstacle and keeping control; knowing which sectors within Arcopolis are safe havens for Newcomers and which are not.

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Difficult 20 (16-20):

Normally only professionals will be able to pull off this kind of task. These kinds of tasks require thought and effort. Luck wouldn't hurt, either.

Examples: Firing a weapon at long range; driving a jumpglider at high speed around moving pedestrians and other obstacles; knowing where in Arcopolis your character can safely hide out in a manhunt.

Very Difficult 25 (21-29):

Even professionals have to really work at succeeding at very difficult tasks. Only the most talented individuals in the galaxy will succeed at these tasks with any regularity.

Examples: Shooting at someone at long range who is behind very good cover; being able to safely drive a jumpglider at high speed through a traffic jam by taking to walkways and making insane maneuvers; knowing which members within the Sindavar Extent are open to bribery.

Heroic 30 (30+):

Something that's almost impossible to do and calls for extraordinary effort and luck. Very seldomly will this kind of success "just happen."

Examples: Shooting out the knee joint of a suit of power armor at long range with small arms; piloting a jumpglider between streams of tracer fire without getting hit; navigating a hyperspace jump from within Septimus.

Not all tasks within a given difficulty range are the same — some are a little harder than others. Therefore, each difficulty level has a range of possible difficulty numbers. Once the GM has chosen the difficulty, he should pick a difficulty number from that range.

Example: A suit of Newcomer power armor has been damaged in combat and requires a Moderate *Mechanical* roll to fix. The GM chooses a difficulty number of 12, since the character in question is already famil-

SOME SAMPLE MODIFIERS:

The characters are racing to get information out of a computer system. If one character already knows this system inside and out, and the other character has never seen a system like this at all, the first character might get a +1D bonus modifier to his die roll.

Two characters are playing a dice game. One character has a set of cheater dice, so he can control what kinds of numbers he will throw. He might get a +2D bonus modifier to his *gambling* skill roll.

The players' characters are trying to sneak out of a Sindavar outpost undetected. The Sindavar overlord knows the layout of the base and is aware that the characters have escaped. He might get a +3D bonus modifier when rolling his *search* skill to figure out which route the characters will use to escape.

Whoever has the advantage adds the modifier to any die rolls he or she makes. For a list of sample modifiers, see the list below:

+1 to +5	Character has only a slight advantage
+6 to +10	Character has a good advantage in this situation.
+11 to +15	Character has a decisive advantage and should win.
+16 and beyond	Character knows much more about the situation than the competition.

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iar with Newcomer armor designs. If the armor had been designed by the Sindavar Extent, with whose designs the character is not familiar, that same Moderate difficulty number might be 14 or 15, depending on the GM's ruling.

Opposed Rolls

Characters will make opposed rolls when they are acting directly against another character. Sometimes characters will use the same skill or attribute. Often characters will be using different skills against each other.

When opposed rolls occur, each character makes a roll. Whoever rolls higher has the advantage or succeeds. In combat, if the shooting character rolls higher than his target's *dodge*, he hits. If characters are wrestling to get a knife, whoever rolls higher gets it.

Modifiers

If one character has a clear advantage over another, you may want to assign a modifier to reflect this.

Modifiers aren't used when one character simply has a better skill than the other, because that's taken care of with the skill codes. Instead, modifiers are used to reflect unusual situations where skill is not the only determining factor.

Improving A Roll

The average person fails at average activities nearly half the time. Characters, however, are not average people, so they need ways to beat those odds. Thus, they have Fate Points and Character Points, which represent those surges of adrenaline, sudden insights and other unexplained helpful acts of chance.

Fate Points

All player characters begin the game with Fate Points. These give characters the chance to be successful at a task when they really need to, but because they are so limited in quantity, characters aren't guaranteed success on a whim.

Ordinary characters start with one Fate Point. They may have a maximum of five Fate Points. A character may only spend one fate point at a time. He must declare that he is spending the Fate Point prior to declaring any other actions for that point in the game. Once a character spends a Fate Point, all of his skills, attributes and special ability die codes are doubled temporarily. Weapon damage values, armor values and other technology or tool values are not doubled. Only the innate abilities of the character using the Fate Point are doubled. Melee weapons are an exception to this, since damage for the weapon is usually based on the user's *Strength*, with a bonus for the weapon itself. Roll double the *Strength*, but not the weapon's bonus damage.

The duration of the effects of a Fate Point are up to the GM to decide. Most often, a Fate Point's effects will only last for one round of game time (which will be described later).

Being Evil:How Fate Points are used during an adventure determines whether or not the character gets the Force Point back at the end of the adventure. If the character uses a Fate Point to do something evil, such as kill a helpless innocent, cause unnecessary harm to innocents, or knowingly act against his normal personality, the character will not get the Fate Point back at the end of the adventure. Instead, he gets a **Corruption Point**. When he gets too many of those, his character is taken out of the game and falls under the GM's control as a villainous NPC, more monster than man.

Being Unheroic: If a character spends a Fate Point to do something that is not particularly heroic but not evil either, the character doesn't receive the Force Point

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back at the end of the adventure. It is lost. Examples of being unheroic include avoiding danger, saving your own life, achieving personal gain, or using lies or deception for gain or advantage.

Being Heroic: When a character is heroic while spending a Fate Point, the character receives the Fate Point back at the end of the adventure. Examples of being heroic include exposing yourself to great danger in the name of good, making sacrifices to help others, and fighting the forces of evil.

Being Dramatically Heroic: When a character is heroic at the dramatically appropriate moment, the character receives the Fate Point back at the end of the adventure and gets another one as well. Dramatically appropriate moments are any time when success is vital to the story. Examples of being heroic at the dramatically appropriate time include: conquering a more powerful evil foe; saving a city from destruction; or preventing the deaths of millions of innocent people. In most cases, the dramatically appropriate moment for a character will happen during the climax of an adventure, or at most, one other time during an adventure.

Not all characters will have a dramatically appropriate moment available to them in every adventure, though they probably should. Since most player character groups stick together through the adventure, they will most likely all be around at the dramatically appropriate moment.

Doing The Right Thing: Characters may spend Fate Points in unheroic or wrongful ways. If a character only has one Fate Point and spends it in such a way that he shouldn't receive it back at the end of the adventure, it is lost and he has no Fate Points left. How does he get Fate Points back? By being heroic no matter what the risks. If, in the opinion of the GM, the character is heroic at the dramatically appropriate time, no matter the risks, the character receives a Force Point at the end of the adventure. This rule applies only to characters who begin an adventure with no Fate Points.

Character Points

Character Points are yet another way for characters to improve their rolls. Character Points are more plentiful than Fate Points, yet much less powerful. There is no limit to the number of Character Points that a character may have.

Character points are awarded to characters by the GM at the end of an adventure, depending on how the character performed during the adventure. These points can be used to increase the character's attributes and skills in between adventures, but any Character Points a character has left over at the beginning of an adventure can be used during the course of the game to gain a temporary boost to skills or attributes.

A character cannot spend Character Points in the same round in which he is spending a Fate Point.

Unlike Fate Points, a character can wait until after an attribute or skill is made before deciding to spend Character Points. However, the points must be spent before any other characters make any die rolls.

When a character spends a Character Point, they roll one extra die and add it to their total. If the roll is a 6, add six to the total and roll again. Like the Wild Die, a Character Point can dramatically increase a character's score. Characters so not suffer a mishap if they roll a 1 when spending a Character Point.

A character can spend more than one Character Point on an action, declaring their use one at a time. Characters can spend character points to influence their own actions but may not spend points on another character's actions. In addition, characters can spend Character Points on actions that take longer than one round to complete, as long as the character isn't spending a Fate

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Point on that action and that is the only action that is being done for the whole time period.

Awarding Character Points

Player characters get awarded additional Character Points at the end of each adventure to reflect their experience and how successful they were. Typically, a character should receive between three and fifteen Character Points depending on how he did. If the players worked well as a group and the adventure was a general success for them, then each character should receive 6-8 Character Points, depending on how hard the adventure was. Any player who played exceptionally well, either by rolling very well throughout or by executing brilliant planning or tactics, should receive another 2-3 Character Points. If the group of players worked well as a team, each player should receive another 2-4 Character Points. Players who played in character and really got into the act should receive another 3-4 Character Points. If the entire group had fun playing, then everybody should receive another 3-4 Character Points. Finally players should receive another 2-3 points for playing in character, that is, always acting consistently with the character's motivation and demeanor, as described in the Characters chapter. The total amount of Character Points gained from a single adventure should not exceed 15.

Movement

During the course of an adventure, characters usually have plenty of reason to run, jump, swim and otherwise hustle themselves into and out of danger.

Running

The difficulty to cover rapidly a distance on foot is determined by the number of extra movements the character takes. One movement equals the character's Move value; two movements equals twice the Move value, and so on. For each movement beyond the first, add 5 to the base difficulty of zero.

Example: A character with a Move of 10 meters per round who wants to move 20 meters in one round has a *running* difficulty of 5, while a character who wants to move 40 meters has a difficulty of 15. A character who fails his *running* roll in the first round covers only his Move or may even trip, depending on how badly the player missed the roll. See the "Accelerating and Decelerating" section for details on what happens in subsequent rounds.

Swimming

A hero's *swimming* Move equals half his normal Move (rounded up). One movement while *swimming* equals the *swimming* Move, two movements equals twice the *swimming* Move, and so on. Increasing this rate likewise increases the base difficulty of 5 by +5 for each movement beyond the first. Thus, the difficulty for a character to move 2 times his *swimming* speed is 10 (5 for the base difficulty plus 5 for the additional movement).

Without preparation, a character may hold his breath for a number of seconds equal to 5 times a roll of his *Strength* or *stamina*. Pre-oxygenating his lungs gives a character a bonus. The maximum any character can hold his breath with preparation is 10 times a roll of his *stamina* in seconds, though this requires having the *stamina* skill. The bonus should be much less for the average person.

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Climbing

Characters who have the *climb/jump* skill can move up a surface at their normal Move (barring adverse environmental factors) with a base difficulty of 5. Those without such a skill move at half their normal movement rate. Increasing the rate increases the difficulty by +10 for each additional one-half of the base *climbing* Move (rounded up).

Example: A character with a *running* Move of 10 and without the *climb/jump* skill wants to move quickly up a tree. His base *climbing* Move is 5. To increase this to eight meters per round means a difficulty of 15 (5 to climb the tree plus +10 to increase the movement by one half, or three meters, of his base *climbing* Move).

Jumping

A character's total leaping distance (vertically and horizontally) from a standing position equals one-quarter of his Move in meters (rounded up). The base difficulty is 5 to move this distance and +10 for each additional two meters (vertically and horizontally) the character hopes to cover. If there is enough room, the character may try *running* before *jumping*. The character may add 5 to his skill total per round of the *running* start, up to a maximum of +10 (two rounds). The character must have beat the *running* difficulty in both rounds in order to get the full bonus.

Flying

Characters who fly do so at the base rate designated in the special ability or equipment description. To increase this rate, use the same rules as for *running*, except that the character relies on the *flying/0-G* skill. Characters may not use this skill unless they have a means of propelling themselves through the air or they are in a zero-gravity environment.

Short Distances

A character may move up to 50% of his movement rate (*swimming*, *flying*, or base Move) without this counting as an action. Thus, a character with a base Move of 10 could move five meters on land or 2.5 meters in the water with no action penalty.

Maximum Movement

Characters may perform only one movement action of each type per round unless a special ability allows them to do otherwise. Gamemasters may choose to limit the speed at which characters may travel to 4 times the Move rate for each type of movement.

Accelerating And Decelerating

When it becomes important to the scenario, such as a race or a chase scene, the GM may choose to include acceleration and deceleration rules for *running*, *swimming* and *flying* characters. A character may increase his current movement rate by up to 2 times that rate, regardless of whether his movement roll would allow him to travel a greater distance. The maximum increase is 2 times the character's base Move for that type of movement.

Example: A character with a base walking Move of 10 has a maximum *swimming* change of 10 which is 2 times his *swimming* Move of 5.

Example: A character with a Move of 10 is chasing a thief, who just swiped her credkey lanyard. In the first round, she may move up to 20 meters, which has a *running* difficulty of 5. In the second round, she can increase her speed to 40 meters, which has a *running* difficulty of 15. If, in the second round, the player generates a *running* total of 20, by the acceleration rules, she may

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only move 40 meters, even though her *running* total meets the difficulty to move 50 meters.

Similarly, if a character does not make a movement roll that would allow him to move at the previous round's rate, that character automatically slows by 2 times his base Move. (The GM may lower the movement even more if the player rolled particularly poorly.) In other words, subtract 2 times the base Move from the current movement rate to get the new movement rate. If this makes the current movement zero, then the character stops. If it's less than zero, the character trips.

Example: The character chasing the thief increased her speed to a rate of 40 meters per round. To maintain this speed, her player needs to continue generating a total of 15 with the character's *running* skill. If the player gets less than 15, then her character's speed drops to 20 meters per round (40 minus 2 times her base Move of 10). Characters traveling more than 4 times their base movement rate must slow down gradually or risk hurting themselves by stopping suddenly.

Fatigue

Keep in mind that most characters cannot move rapidly for long periods of time. Determine a suitable length of time depending on existing conditions, the *Strength* of the character, and any relevant special abilities the character has. Any additional fast movement beyond that predetermined length requires a fatigue modifier of +3 to the difficulty for each additional round that the character continues *running*. The modifier is cumulative. Thus, one round beyond the maximum is +3, two rounds is +6, and so on.

The gamemaster may use the fatigue modifier for any repetitive action performed for an extended period of time. A GM also can use this as the modifier to a base difficulty of 5 when using the *stamina* or *willpower* skill in an attempt to overcome the fatigue.

Movement Difficulty Modifiers

The base difficulty for movement such as *running* is 5. For other forms of movement, such as *swimming* or *climbing*, the base difficulty is 5. However, the terrain over or through which one travels often plays a role in how rough the going will be. Consult the list below for terrain-based difficulty modifiers for movement.

Easy terrain (0): flat surface, smooth water, using a ladder, light breeze, light rain or fog

Moderate terrain (+5): uneven surface, small obstacles, choppy water, climbing a tree, strong winds, heavy rain or fog

Rough terrain (+10): large but negotiable obstacles, strong undercurrent, climbing a rough wall, flying near unyielding obstacles such as pillars or trees

Very rough terrain (+15): dense and large obstacles, stormy weather, a few airborne hazards, hail

Hazardous terrain (+20): minefield, narrow walkway, many airborne hazards, large waves, climbing a smooth surface, complete darkness

Very hazardous terrain (+25): corridor filled with falling debris and explosions, swimming or flying in a hurricane

Note: The GM may include additional modifiers or require an additional related skill roll for any form of movement, depending on surrounding conditions, such as high winds, numerous obstacles, slick surfaces, sharp turns, and so on.

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Vehicle Movement

Vehicles have five speeds of movement: stopped, cautious, cruising, high, and all-out. They may make one movement action per round.

Stopped: The vehicle is motionless. This requires no roll. Air vehicles should be on the ground when at this speed level.

Cautious: The vehicle travels at half its Move. This is generally a free action requiring no roll, but terrain conditions may increase it from its base difficulty of zero. Air vehicles at this level must be attempting to reach a higher or lower altitude at this speed; they cannot maintain altitude at cautious.

Cruising: The vehicle travels at its Move. This requires an action, but since it has a base difficulty of zero, the character need only roll if movement conditions dictate otherwise.

High: The vehicle travels at twice its Move. This requires an *exoskeleton operation*, *piloting*, or *vehicle operation* roll with a base difficulty of 5, modified by existing conditions.

All-Out: The vehicle travels at four times its Move. This requires an *exoskeleton operation*, *piloting*, or *vehicle operation* roll with a base difficulty of 10, modified by existing conditions. Vehicles may travel anywhere between half their current speed and the full current speed at each level. Rapid acceleration and deceleration are considered stunts and are dealt with later in this section.

Vehicle Stunts

For normal vehicle use or casual *flying* under ideal conditions, a character need not make a skill roll. When the conditions turn less than favorable or he decides to attempt a fancy maneuver, his *exoskeleton operation*, *piloting*, or *vehicle operation* skill plus the vehicle's Maneuverability code or his *flying/0-G* skill determines his success.

Rapid acceleration and deceleration also warrant rolls, enhanced by the vehicle's maneuverability, to see if the operator maintains control. These maneuvers have an initial difficulty of 10, adjusted based on existing conditions (see the "Stunt Difficulties and Modifiers" chart for some suggestions). A vehicle or flying character may reduce or increase movement by two levels in one round. Failing this roll means that the character has lost control for one round. If some immovable force doesn't stop the vehicle or character during that round, he may attempt to regain control (with a base difficulty of 15) on the following round.

If a character wishes to perform any other actions in addition to *exoskeleton operation*, *piloting*, *vehicle operation*, or *flying/0-G*, he must make the appropriate skill rolls for all actions, reduced by the multi-action penalty, regardless of the situation. The base difficulty for normal operation becomes 5. Stunts still have their established base difficulties.

Ramming And Sideswiping

Ramming is done with the nose of a vehicle, while sideswiping is done with its side. The character makes the appropriate vehicle roll, including the vehicle's Maneuverability. If the character fails the roll, the vehicle misses and spins. Land and water vehicles turn up to 180 degrees and lose power, while space vehicles continuing spinning. The character must then spend one round starting it or regaining control and another getting back in the right direction.

Should the character instead succeed, she keeps the vehicle reasonably straight and may try for another sideswipe or ram on the next turn. The pilot of an air vehicle that rams or sideswipes another vehicle automatically loses control. About the best she can hope for is to make a successful but rough landing. Both vehicles take damage (the mechanics of this are explained later in this section) in a successful ram or sideswipe.

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VEHICLE AND PASSENGER DAMAGE

Damage Total > Resistance Total By	Vehicle Damage	Passengers Suffer...
1–3	Very Light	No damage
4–8	Light	1/4 damage total
9–12	Heavy	1/2 damage total
13–15	Severe	3/4 damage total
16+	Destroyed	All damage total

Note: All modifiers are cumulative. A vehicle may take an unlimited number of Very Light and Light levels of damage. At Heavy or above, any additional level of damage above Very Light bumps the damage to the next level.

Gamemasters may include or substitute damage to other systems if the vehicle has them (ex., weapons, navigation, or sensors).

Very Light: Vehicle loses 1D from Maneuverability for this round and the next.

Light: Vehicle loses 1D from Maneuverability or, if at 0D in Maneuverability, top Move speed is decreased by one level. The loss or modifier remains until repaired.

Heavy: Vehicle loses 2D from Maneuverability or, if at 0D in Maneuverability, top Move speed is decreased by two levels. The loss or modifier remains until repaired.

Severe: Vehicle is out of control, decelerating by two levels each round until it comes to a stop or crashes into something.

Destroyed: The vehicle will never operate again.

COLLISION DAMAGE MODIFIERS	
+3D	Head-on
-3D	Rear-end, sideswipe
+0D	Nose to side
+0D	Into something very hard
-1D	Into something yielding

SPEED DAMAGE MODIFIERS	
+2D	Stopped speed
+4D	Cautious speed
+6D	Cruise speed
+8D	High speed
+10D	All-out speed

Note: Modifiers are cumulative in the situation the damaged vehicle is in.

Vehicle Attacking And Dodging

The base difficulty to hit a vehicle is 10, modified by distance and the sizes of the attacker and the defender (using the scale modifier listed in the "Combat Options" chapter). That means a person shooting a car has a +6 to his attack total, while a car sideswiping another car has no modifier.

If the driver wishes to fire a small-arms weapon, he must make both an Easy *exoskeleton operation*, *piloting*, or *vehicle operation* roll (modified by the vehicle's Maneuverability code) and a *firearms* roll.

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Vehicle Stunt Difficulties & Modifiers

STUNT DIFFICULTIES	
6	Docking (water), parking in a specific spot (land)
10	Landing (air vehicles)
0	Moving on a straight way
15	Regaining control (other than ramming or sideswiping
10	Sideswiping
5	Easy turn (less than 45 degrees from current direction)
9	Fast 45-degree turn
15	Fast 90-degree turn
21	Fast 180-degree turn

CONDITION MODIFIERS (ALL VEHICLES)	
+6	Moving in reverse
+10	Ramming

CONDITION MODIFIERS (LAND AND WATER VEHICLES)	
+3	Moved or moving over curb or debris
+3	Limited parking or docking area

CONDITION MODIFIERS (AIR VEHICLES & AERIAL CHARACTERS)	
-3	Unlimited landing area
+3	Limited landing area
+6	Almost no landing area
+3	Rough or unsteady landing area
+6	Climb or dive of 45 degrees or more from current direction

Note: For modifiers due to various terrain conditions, use the "Movement Difficulty Modifiers" table.

Because he's doing two actions, he also incurs a multi-action penalty to both rolls. Drivers cannot generally fire vehicle-mounted weapons while maneuvering the vehicle. Passengers may shoot with few or no penalties. (Note that these actions would not be possible in some vehicles.)

A character may also attempt to maneuver the vehicle out of the way of incoming projectiles or other vehicles. Instead of the *dodge* skill, the character uses his *exoskeleton operation*, *piloting*, or *vehicle operation* skill plus the vehicle's Maneuverability code. Use the active partial or full defense rules for characters to determine the new defense total. The defense total becomes the new combat difficulty and is in effect until the character's turn in the next round.

Vehicle Damage

When a vehicle takes damage from a weapon or another vehicle, it's the level of destruction that matters. Use the following guidelines and compare the result to the "Vehicle and Passenger Damage" chart. Modify the damage total of the attacker or the damage resistance total of the target by the scale modifier, as appropriate for the situation. A vehicle's damage resistance

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total equals its toughness plus the value of any armor. Character Points or Fate Points may not be spent on this roll.

With weapons, compare the weapon's damage total to the target's damage resistance total, including the scale modifier for the vehicle (if the GM uses that option). When a vehicle collides with something else, decide how fast it was going when it made the collision, and modify based on the circumstances of the collision. Compare that to the damage resistance total. Should two vehicles be involved, both take damage. See the sidebar for the speed and collision modifiers.

Crew And Passenger Injuries

Depending on how badly damaged the vehicle becomes, the crew and passengers may be harmed, too. Use the "Passengers Suffer" column of the "Vehicle and Passenger Damage" chart as a guideline. Adjust it based on how much the passengers are exposed (for example, motorcycles and jumpgliders offer little protection to their cargo).

Leaping Out Of A Vehicle

Leaving a land or water vehicle that is moving at less than 10 kilometers per hour is a very easy *acrobatics* or *Agility* roll (or *climb/jump* if the character leaps from the vehicle). If the vehicle is moving faster than that, the base difficulty becomes 15, with +1 added to it for every 10 movement kilometers per hour the vehicle is traveling (rounded down). Additionally, the character takes damage from the fall at a rate of +1 for every 15 kilometers per hour the vehicle is moving (rounded up) minus the result points from the roll.

Example: If the driver of a car traveling at 90 kilometers per hour decided to leave the vehicle before it hit the tree it was traveling toward, the difficulty would be 24 (90/10 = 9, plus the base difficulty of 15). She would also take 6 points of damage unless she sufficiently succeeded at her jump (90/15 = 6).

Repairing A Vehicle

The difficulty to repair a damaged vehicle depends on the amount of damage and availability of parts and tools. For difficulty and modifier suggestions, please refer to the description of the *repair* skill in the Skills chapter.

Vehicle Familiarity

Use the following table when a character is not familiar with the vehicle she needs to operate. If the character does not have the correct operating skill at all, these difficulties are in addition to the untrained modifier.

+3	Very common or simple: car, truck
+6	Common: industrial tractor, motorbike, motorboat,
+8	Moderately common: speedboat, bus
+11	Uncommon: jumpglider, tank, rocket pod, monocycle
+14	Unusual: prop plane, solar glider
+17	Rare: scramjet, submarine
+20	Exotic: starship, powered armor
-3	Instructions are in a language the character understands

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Combat

Characters in this game get into a lot of fights — combat is central to the stories of the setting. Combat is always fought in rounds and uses all of the rules explained in prior chapters.

Combat Difficulties

The combat rules are identical to the basic rules: determine the difficulty to hit, just like any other skill use. If the attacking character rolls higher than the difficulty, he hits and causes damage.

Ranged Weapons

Ranged weapons have several ranges listed with them: short, medium and long. Anything closer than short range is considered to be point-blank. Each weapon's ranges are different, so pay attention when characters are using different weapons.

- *Shooting at someone at point blank range is a Very Easy task.*
- *Shooting at someone at short range is an Easy task.*
- *Shooting at someone at medium range is a Moderate task.*
- *Shooting at someone at long range is a Difficult task.*

This difficulty can be modified by the target's cover, the scale of the target (see Section 3.3, "Scales.") and other modifiers, such as rain and darkness.

Most ranged weapons have finite ammunition. When a weapon runs dry, reloading takes an action.

Melee Weapons

Melee weapons have a difficulty to use (very easy, easy, moderate, difficult, very difficult or heroic), which is listed with the weapon. The gamemaster has to pick a specific difficulty number from that difficulty range when the weapon is used.

The gamemaster then has to decide which combat modifiers apply to the attack. Once all of the modifiers are added in, the gamemaster has a final difficulty number.

Rounds And Initiative

Generally, time in a roleplaying game doesn't matter too much. A character may spend several hours searching a library, though only a minute passes as far as the players and GM are concerned. To keep the story line moving, sometimes it is necessary to skip the tedious parts.

More intense scenes require more detail. In these cases, time slows to units of five seconds called rounds. Each character may take one action in the round with no penalty. Once a round ends, the next one begins, continuing until the scene ends (with the task completed, the opponent subdued, etc.)

Since all characters in a scene are making actions in the same fie-second round, the actual length of game time taken up by an action is usually less than five seconds. This is obviously the case when a single character is performing multiple actions, but it is also true when one character reacts to what another character is doing. Actions in rounds are not simultaneous (actions out of rounds sometimes are).

Determining initiative does not count as an action.

Once rounds have been declared and depending on the situation, the GM determines in what order everyone goes. This is done by having every character make a Perception roll. Then the characters all go in the order in which they rolled, from

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COMBAT DIFFICULTY MODIFIERS

OPTION	DIFFICULTY MODIFIER	DAMAGE MODIFIER
GUNPLAY		
Burst fire as single	0	-2D
Full auto	-2D (-6)	+2D
Single fire as multi	-1D (-3)*	+1D*
Sweep	-2D (-6)	-3D
* Modifiers are per additional round of ammunition, up to the maximum that the weapon holds.		

OPTION	DIFFICULTY MODIFIER	DAMAGE MODIFIER
BRAWLING, MELEE COMBAT		
All-out	-2D (-6)	+1D
Grab	+2D (+6)	*
Lunge	+1D (+3)	-1D
Knockdown, trip	+2D (+6)	*
Push	+1D (+3)	*
Sweep	-2D (-6)	-3D
Tackle	+1D (+3)	*

OPTION	DIFFICULTY MODIFIER	DAMAGE MODIFIER
ALL ATTACKS		
Low gravity	-1D (-3)	0
No gravity	-2D (-6)	0
Heavy gravity	+3D (+10)	0

OPTION	DIFFICULTY MODIFIER	DAMAGE MODIFIER
CALLED SHOTS		
Target is...		
10 to 50 centimeters long	+1D (+3)	*
1 to 10 centimeters long	+4D (+12)	*
Less than a centimeter long	+8D (+24)	*

OTHER MODIFIERS	
The attacker is blind or blinded	+4D (+12) to the combat difficulty.
The target is blind or blinded or attacked from behind	-4D (-12) to the combat difficulty.

the highest roll down to the lowest. When the last character acts, then the round is over, and the process begins anew with the next round. Characters roll for initiative once again (by rolling their *Perception*), and perform their actions in turn until the scene is resolved. Characters who roll identical initiative rolls act simultaneously.

Multiple Actions

Characters may, if they choose, act more than once in a given round. If a character is making two actions in a single round, then each die code for that action is reduced by 1D. Three actions, reduces all die codes by 2D. Four actions reduces all actions by 4D and so on. Eventually, every character will

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hit a point where his abilities are so downgraded by multiple actions that none of those actions will actually succeed. Multiple actions are used most often in combat, when characters use specific combat skills more than once to get off multiple attacks.

Note that some weapons have autofire options that give "free" extra attacks that do not apply skill penalties. Single-shot weapons do not have this feature.

Defensive Skills

Characters have several skills that they can use to get out of the way of different kinds of attacks. These skills can increase the difficulty to hit the character.

Dodge is used against any ranged attack, whether it is a blaster bolt, a bullet, missile weapon, or other attack made from a distance.

Melee Parry is used when the character is attacked in hand-to-hand combat and the character has a melee weapon or makeshift weapon in his hands (makeshift weapons include bottles, chairs, and anything else that is grabbed out of desperation).

If the character is being attacked by someone who is using a weapon or is attacking with very sharp natural tools, the character rolls their skill naturally.

If the character is defending against someone who is attacking unarmed and without sharp natural weapons, the character gets a +5 bonus modifier to his *parry* roll.

Brawling Parry is used when the character is attacked in hand-to-hand combat and is unarmed. Characters use this skill normally when they are attacked by someone who is also unarmed and doesn't have sharp natural tools like claws; they simply roll their skill. If the character is defending against someone who is attacking with a weapon or sharp natural tools, the attacker gets a +10 bonus modifier to their attack roll.

Full Or Normal Defenses

A character who declares a defensive skill use has two things he or she can do: a full use (full *dodge*, full *melee parry*, and so forth) or a normal use (*dodge*, *melee parry* and so forth).

Full Use: When a character does a full defensive skill use (full *dodge*, full *melee parry*, full *brawling parry*, etc.), they roll their character's defensive skill and add it to the difficulty to hit the character.

When a character does a full defensive skill use, they may only do that and make one normal speed movement that round (see "Movement"): the character may not so any other action, such as attack or use another skill.

Note that characters can't do multiple full defensive skill uses in a round – for example, a character couldn't do a full *dodge* and a full *brawling parry* in the same round. In fact, the only thing a character can do in the same round as a full defensive action is one move.

Normal Use: When a character makes a normal defensive skill use, the character simply rolls their skill dice. The player can then choose to use either the skill roll as the value for all attacks in that round or use each individual attacker's difficulty in that round. This decision applies to all attacks made in that round, and must be made at the time the roll is made.

Damage

When characters are hit in combat, they roll to see how badly they are injured. First, whoever hits rolls the damage for the weapon they are using. Then, the character rolls their *Strength* attribute to resist damage. If the damage result is greater than the *Strength* result, than the character is hurt, according to the levels described below.

Stunned (0-3): Stunned characters suffer a penalty of -1D to skill and attribute rolls for the rest of the round and for the

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next round. A stun no longer penalizes a character after the second round, but it is still "affecting" him for a half an hour, unless the character rests for one minute. If a character is being "affected" from a number of stuns equal to the number before the "D" for the character's Strength, the character is knocked unconscious for 2D minutes.

Wounded (4-8): Wounded characters fall prone and can take no actions for the rest of the round. The character suffers a penalty of -1D to skill and attribute rolls until the character is healed (through medkits or natural rest). A character who is wounded a second time is incapacitated.

Incapacitated (9-12): An incapacitated character falls prone and is knocked unconscious for 10D minutes. The character can't do anything until healed. An incapacitated character who is wounded or incapacitated again becomes mortally wounded.

Mortally Wounded (13-15): A mortally wounded character falls prone and is unconscious. The character can't so anything until healed. The character may die – at the end of each round, roll 2D. If the roll is less than the number of rounds that the character has been mortally wounded, the character dies. A mortally wounded character who is incapacitated or mortally wounded again is killed.

Killed (16+): A killed character dies immediately.

Note: Characters can spend Character Points to increase their *Strength* to resist damage. That is why we encourage GMs not to tell the player what they rolled for damage — just how many dice they used.

Fate Points can also be used to increase *Strength* dice to resist damage, but they still have to be declared at the beginning of the round, during the declaration phase. This is usually only done if a character knows he is going to be hit, or if it is vitally important that he not take damage this round. Almost always, resisting damage is a "selfish" use of fate; the character may not get the Fate Point back at the end of the adventure (though there are undoubtedly exceptions).

Armor

Some characters wear armor; other characters or have natural armor (by way of genetic or alien modification). Armor adds to a character's *Strength* roll to resist damage. Different levels of armor provide different levels of protection. A simple blast helmet might just provide a pip or two to your *Strength* roll, whereas a full suit of combat armor might provide as much as 3D or 4D. Generally speaking, heavy armor also detracts from your *Agility* attribute and any skills derived from it, so there is a bit of a tradeoff involved. For details on various armor options, check out the Hardware section.

Combat Options

So far, you have been given all the rules you need to run a combat scene in this game, but if you want to make fighting a more intricate affair, you may incorporate any of the following additional and optional rules to your game.

Using The Modifiers

All modifiers listed in this section are cumulative, though the GM doesn't need to include all of them. Modifiers may never adjust the total combat difficulty below 3. The GM rolls the indicated modifier and adds it to the combat situation. A standard modifier is included in parentheses after the die modifier, should the GM prefer not to roll.

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Gunplay Options

Burst Fire As Single: A character may perform this attack only with a weapon capable of burst fire (like an assault rifle) and switching to single fire. The firer fires only one shot instead of a burst; it is primarily used to conserve ammunition.

Full Auto: This attack is only possible with weapons that can fire at fully automatic settings (such as assault rifles, submachine guns, and machine guns). Since the character takes time to "hold down the trigger" and pump ammo into the air, the extra "to hit" and "damage" bonuses are somewhat compensated for by the modifier to the character's defensive value during the round he is performing a full auto attack.

Single Fire As Multi: The character fires a weapon several times in a round at the same target. The most common example is when someone fires a pistol several times in a row at the same target. Characters may use this option only when a weapon automatically reloads itself after firing a single shot or when it is fairly easy to ready it for firing again (such as a .45 automatic, which puts a new shell in the slide as soon as the first one clears the barrel). It increases the character's chance to hit a target as well as the damage. It does not count as a multi-action as long as the shot is taken at the same target: one target, one die roll, one damage total.

Sweep (Ranged): The character wants to "spray an area" with ammo. Only characters with weapons that go full auto, burst, or single fire as multi (in general, just about any automatic weapon) can perform this maneuver. The gun uses the amount of ammunition needed by whichever setting is used. They gain a positive modifier to hit (because of the sheer volume of shots), but this "non-targeted" attack results in a lower damage total.

Brawling/Melee Combat Options

Acrobatic Tricks: *Acrobatics* can also enhance *brawling* and *melee combat* attacks. The character must perform the acrobatics trick and the attack on the same turn. The GM determines the exact difficulty of the *acrobatics* attempt. The player may add one-half of the difference (rounded up) between the difficulty and the successful *acrobatics* roll to the amount of damage done (not to the combat skill roll). One *acrobatics* trick roll can affect one attack only.

All-Out: The character attacks with no thought to the consequences. This maneuver increases the chance of the character striking the target, but, in that round, the attacker cannot perform any other action at all — not even to defend actively.

Lunge: The character takes a step forward to jab at an opponent, usually with an edged weapon. This adds about a half-meter (more or less depending on the stride) to the range of the attack, but it lowers the effectiveness of the attack.

Knockdown/Push/Trip: Using *brawling* or a blunt melee weapon in the usual way, the attacker causes his target to stumble and, instead of taking damage, the opponent loses 2D from her next *Agility* or *Agility*-based skill roll. If this is a knockdown or trip attempt, she must also spend one action to stand up again. Generally, unless the character has special training, she may only knockdown or push a character whose *Strength* (including special abilities or Bane modifiers) is equal to or less than her own.

Sweep: These attacks, usually foot sweeps or roundhouses, are used when the character wants to make certain he hits the target, regardless of how much injury is caused.

Tackle: Tackling is much like grabbing (see below), except that the attacker seeks to overcome the target entirely. Characters may perform this with *brawling* only. If successful or the target chooses not to

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struggle, the character captures the target and may, if desired, do normal damage. The target, meanwhile, may make no actions other than attempt to escape (see the escape rules herein). On subsequent rounds, the attacker may choose to do his Strength Damage only (no modifiers).

Grab: The attacker physically grasps a target. Few melee weapons allow this option, so it is used generally only in brawling attacks. What effect this has on the target depends on the type of grab. (The ones listed here are choke, flip, hold, slam/throw, and arm pin.) See the escape rules in this section for details on getting out of grabs. On subsequent rounds of a grab, the attacker may do his strength damage only (no modifiers except those from special abilities or equipment), if he defeats the victim's escape attempt or if the defender chooses not to resist. Some grab variations may offer other options.

Choke: Ropes and hands can cut off the target's source of air. Damage on the first round equals the character's Strength Damage plus any modifiers.

See the general grab rules for damage on subsequent rounds.

Flip: The character reaches out, grabs his opponent's wrist, arm, leg, or similar body part, and jerks violently, causing the opponent to fall to the ground. The opponent takes 3D in damage from slamming into the ground and must spend the next round getting to her feet (if she can).

Hold: The character does less damage (-3D or more, at the player's option, to the damage total), but he has hold of the target with a successful attack.

Slam/Throw: The character grabs or picks up his opponent and hurls him into the ground, a wall, a bus, or another obstacle. Lifting the opponent counts as an action (using the *lift* skill), as does slamming or throwing the target (which uses the *throwing* skill). The character must be strong enough to pick his opponent up to use this maneuver. Once slammed into an object, the target takes the damage score of the object (usually determined by its toughness, but the GM may adjust this) plus the attacker's Strength Damage. The object being slammed into takes the Strength Damage of the opponent.

Arm Pin: The hero grabs his target's arm and forces it around behind him, pinning it there. After the first round, the player has three choices as to what his character can do. Each option counts as a separate action.

- *Option 1: The character does his Strength Damage only for each round he has the arm pinned.*

- *Option 2: The character tries to break the opponent's arm. The attacker must make a successful Strength or lift roll versus a breaking difficulty.*

Against an opponent who does not resist, the difficulty equals 2 times the target's Strength or lift die code plus the pips plus any relevant protection. Failing to beat the breaking difficulty in this case means the target takes damage as in option 1. Should the target choose to resist, he may make no other action in the round, but he may move his turn up. Instead, the player rolls his character's Strength or lift and adds 5 and any relevant protection to the total to generate the breaking difficulty. Failure by the attacker to beat the breaking difficulty in this case means that the target escapes and may freely take action on the next round.

- *Option 3: The character may attempt to force the target to the ground while maintaining his hold on the arm. The attacker rolls his brawling against a submission difficulty. If the opponent does not resist, the submission difficulty equals 2 times her Agility die code, dropping the pips. Failing to beat the breaking difficulty in this case means the target takes damage as in option 1. If the target chooses to resist, the opponent may make no other action in the round, though he may move his turn up. Instead, the player rolls his character's Agility and adds 5 and any*

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relevant modifiers to the total to generate the submission difficulty. Failure by the attacker to beat the difficulty in this case means that the target escapes and may freely take action on the next round.

Called Shots

The character chooses a specific target, like a pistol in a dragoon's hand, and aims for that. A called-shot modifier represents the difficulty of this (see the combat difficulty modifiers table below), which is added to the combat difficulty. On a successful attack, he knocks the item out of the target's hand, grabs the limb, pins the target to a wall, or does damage of +1D or more at the GM's discretion. The exact result depends on the situation and the player's intent.

Breaking Things

Use the *demolitions* skill guidelines for determining the effect of damage on items.

Disarm

If the disarm attempt is successful and the target character has not made an action yet, she may move up her action to try and keep a grip on the item she's holding. The defending character makes a *Strength* or *lift* roll against the amount of damage done. If the defender's roll is greater than the damage, the target character retains the item. If it is less than or equal to the damage, she drops it.

Entangle

A character throws an entangling weapon at her opponent. On a successful *firearms*, *missile weapons*, or *throwing* roll (as appropriate), the end of the weapon wraps itself around the target. Unless the weapon is spiked, electrified, or enhanced in some other way, it does no damage, but it prevents the target from doing any action except for trying to break free. The target may escape by snapping the bonds or slipping free, each of which counts as an action. To break the weapon, he must make a *Strength* or *lift* roll that meets or beats the damage total of the weapon. To slip free, he needs to roll an *Agility* or *acrobatics* total equal to or higher than the weapon's damage total.

Escape

To break free from any hold, the character must make a successful opposed *strength* or *lift* roll versus the holder's *Strength* or *lift*. This counts as an action.

Hit Locations

Hit locations are a special kind of called shot that allows a character to shoot or strike a specific point on his target's body. The table is used to determine the modifiers for hitting a target of human proportions in different areas of his body. Note that aiming at an arm or leg actually causes less damage; this is because the character took extra care to shoot an area that is "less vital."

OPTION	DIFFICULTY MODIFIER	DAMAGE MODIFIER
Head	+1D (+5)	+12
Heart	+4D (+15)	+12
Chest, abdomen	+0	+0
Left/right arm	+1D (+5)	-2
Left/right leg	+1D (+5)	-1
Left/right hand	+4D (+15)	-2

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Group Attack

This is a coordinated action. See the description of the *tactics* skill for details.

Effects

At the gamemaster's discretion, sufficient damage to a particular hit location can affect the target's ability to use that part. Except for blows to the chest, the modifier lasts until the character heals that portion (which typically takes a few days, as body points or wounds are recovered for the body as a whole, not just a specific part). When the medicine skill or a healing effect is applied, it can be specified to repair one particular location.

Hit location modifiers are in addition to wound level modifiers. If you are using them instead of the wound level modifiers, then all -1 modifiers increase to -1D modifiers.

Chest: The character can do no more than passively defend in the next round.

Foot Or Leg: -1 to all *acrobatics*, *sneak*, movement, and initiative totals.

Hand Or Arm: -1 to all *acrobatics*, *brawling*, *climb/jump*, *melee combat*, *missile weapons*, *sleight of hand*, *throwing*, *lift*, and any other rolls involving the hand or arm.

Head: -1 to all *Knowledge*, *Perception*, and initiative totals.

Knockout

This option does only half of the normal damage, but it can render the target immediately unconscious with a successful attack. It requires a successful called shot to the head. If after the resistance total has been subtracted the target sustains at least two wound levels or 50% of his maximum body points in damage, then he falls unconscious for a number of hours equal to difference between the combat skill total and the combat difficulty or until he's awoken by some external force, whichever comes first. The target receives only half the wound levels or body point damage inflicted (round down).

Multiple Weapons

Weapons that characters can use with one hand and in either hand, such as knives or most guns, may be employed at the same time in the same round. The character incurs a multi-action penalty.

Prone And Crouching

Attacking a target that is crouched on the ground adds the combat difficulty by +3. If the target is moving while crouching, then the combat difficulty increases by +6, but the defending character's normal Move, free Move, or *running* roll is halved.

For prone targets, subtract 2D (6) from the combat difficulty when attacking at point blank or short range, but add 2D (6) to combat difficulty when attacking at medium or long range.

Characters who willingly get low to the ground or make themselves small may get into and out of the position as a free action. However, a character forced into that position, such as a result of being thrown, need to make an effort to stand, which counts as an action.

Quick Draw

This option allows the character to act rapidly or draw and fire a weapon in the same round as one action. The character may use any combat skill or appropriate specialization. If she also is using a weapon, it must be suitable for quick drawing (a bow and arrow, a loaded pistol, a dagger).

Before initiative is rolled, the player must announce that she intends for her character to draw her weapon quickly. The player may then take some of the skill dice and add them to the *Perception* die code for pur-

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poses of increasing initiative for that round only. The player must leave at least 1D in her skill. If the character wants to make multiple attacks, she subtracts 1D for each attack beyond the first from the number of dice in the skill she's using before the player moves dice around. She does not take a penalty for the draw.

All attacks by the hero in the same round must be made with the same skill, though the results are determined differently, and they all occur at the same die code, because the multi-action penalty was already figured in.

Example: Two mercenaries face each other in a stand-off. One of the mercenaries has 4D in *Perception* and 8D in *firearms*. He may take up to 7D and add it to his *Perception* die code to determine initiative. The mercenary, however, wants to fire twice. After subtracting 1D for the extra attack, he now has 7D in the skill, which allows him to add up to 6D to the initiative roll. He decides to move only 3D. This gives him 7D in *Perception* to determine initiative and 4D in *firearms*. Now both mercenaries make their initiative rolls.

Once initiative is determined, at the character's turn in the round he uses the remaining dice in the skill to determine his accuracy.

Ready A Weapon

It takes one action per item to draw a gun, unsheathe a knife, reload a rifle, or something similar. Although this generally does not require a skill roll, the gamemaster may require one related to the weapon in question for particularly stressful situations. Additionally, drawing and using the weapon in the same round incurs a multi-action penalty. The GM may add further modifiers for attempting to get out an item from a restrictive location or ready an unwieldy weapon.

Scale

Occasionally, objects of vastly different sizes get involved in fights. The scale modifier accounts for the fact that bigger items are easier to hit, and usually can take more damage, than smaller ones. Use the accompanying chart as a guide for determining the appropriate value for the two combat participants. The GM may further subdivide between levels.

If both opponents are either larger than or equal to a human or smaller than or equal to a human, subtract the larger number from the smaller one to calculate the scale modifier. If one opponent is smaller than a human while the other is larger, then add together the two values.

For most cases, use these rules: if the attacker is larger than the defender, then the scale modifier is added to the combat dif-

SIZE VS. VALUE	
Small moon	96
Star freighter	50
Space yacht	46
Eight-story building	24
Four-story building	20
Two-story house	14
Tank	10
Average personal transport	6
Motorcycle	3
Average human	0
Small human child	3
Briefcase	6
Laser pistol	9
Palm computer	12
Cred-key	15
Computer chip	21

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ficulty and the damage total. If the attacker is smaller than the defender, then the scale modifier is added to the attacker's combat skill total and the defender's damage resistance total.

Example: A smuggler has snuck into a warehouse guarded by miniature robots. The robots have a scale value of 6. With the smuggler's scale value of the zero, the scale modifier is 6 (6 – 0). Because the robot is smaller than the smuggler, the robot gets a +6 to its *firearms* roll, while the smuggler gets a +6 to his damage resistance total. When the smuggler attacks the robot, the scale modifier is added to the smuggler's combat difficulty and to his damage total, if he manages to shoot it.

In some cases, the object may be large but lightly constructed (such as a parade balloon). At these times, the gamemaster should not add the scale modifier to the damage resistance total.

Typically, a weapon's scale when determining how much damage it does is the same as the person holding it or the thing it's mounted on. So a rifle has a scale value of 0, while a full-size tank's gun has a scale of 10. These would differ if someone targeted just the weapon.

Surprise

A hero who surprises her opponent may either act first in the round (if initiative hasn't already been determined) or gain a +1D to her action. Attacks from behind, ambush, or unexpected sources (such as a companion) make up the most common sources of surprise.

Unwieldy Weapons

Melee weapons longer than 60 centimeters, objects that are hard to throw or grasp, ones relying on technology with which the user is unfamiliar, or any weapons otherwise difficult to wield may incur a +5 or more modifier to the combat difficulty. The GM may decide that such factors as experience, strength, and features of the weapon (such as a well-balanced sword)

lower this modifier.

Healing

Characters can heal through a variety of ways, but the four most common methods of healing are natural healing, skilled medical care, medkits, and regen tanks.

Natural Healing

A character can heal naturally, but this process is slow. The character must rest a specified amount of time and then can make a natural healing roll: roll the character's full *Strength* plus any appropriate modifiers. Then find the result on the chart related to the character's current Wound level to see if the character heals.

Healing characters can do virtually nothing but rest. Characters who try to work, exercise, or adventure must subtract 1D from their *Strength* when they make their natural healing rolls. Any character who opts to take it easy and do virtually nothing for twice the necessary time may add 1D to the *Strength* roll to heal.

The length of time it takes to recover naturally from a wound is listed below. These times indicate how long a character must rest and recuperate before attempting to make a *Strength* roll to improve his or her condition. These times do not take into account any special modifiers that might speed the process of recuperation.

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STUNNED	1 minute
WOUNDED	3 days
SEVERELY WOUNDED	3 days
INCAPACITATED	2 weeks
MORTALLY WOUNDED	5 weeks
KILLED	Give it up, chief. That ship sailed the moment your heart stopped.

Skilled Medical Care

Characters can heal others or themselves with some basic field procedures for treating wounds. Such attempts don't require a medical kit. Simply roll *medicine* skill to treat wounds in the field. A successful roll heals the character up one level: for instance, a successful *medicine* roll on someone who is wounded would bring him back to stunned. A character using a medical kit may add its bonus to the roll.

A character may only attempt to heal a patient once per day. Other characters may also try to help the patient, adding their expertise to the first healer's.

The difficulty of using pure medical skill to heal somebody depends upon the severity of a patient's injury:

DEGREE OF INJURY	DIFFICULTY
Stunned/Unconscious	Moderate
Wounded	Difficult
Incapacitated	Very Difficult
Mortally Wounded	Heroic

Medkits

The standard "first aid" kit in the Septimus universe, the medkit, contains a combination of healing medicines, synthe-flesh, coagulants, body chemistry boosters, adrenaline drugs, and computer diagnostic hardware to help treat seriously injured individuals who can't get emergency hospitalization and regen treatment. They are very common on battlefields around the galaxy. When someone administers a medkit to someone, they roll their first aid or technical skill. The difficulty of using a standard medkit depends upon the severity of a patient's injury:

DEGREE OF INJURY	DIFFICULTY
Stunned/Unconscious	Very Easy
Wounded	Easy
Incapacitated	Moderate
Mortally Wounded	Difficult

If the medkit use is successful, the character is healed one level; unconscious characters are revived, wounded characters are fully healed, incapacitated characters improve to wounded, and mortally wounded characters improve to incapacitated.

If the roll is unsuccessful, the character remains at the current level. If the roll misses the difficulty by more than 10 points, the medkit has pushed the injured character's bodily functions to their limits and no more medkits can be used on that character for a full day (24-hour period).

A character can have multiple medkits used on him, but each use gets more difficult. For every medkit applied in a single day, increase the level of difficulty of the medkit use by one level.

Once a medkit is used, it is fully expended — characters who expect to heal several characters must carry multiple medkits.

A character can use a medkit on himself, but suffers a -1D penalty in addition to any other penalties.

Regen Tanks

Regen tanks are specialized medical healing vats in which characters may be immersed so they can heal from wounds

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faster. The attending physician can use the tank's computers to inject surface medicine into the regeneration fluid, inject medicines into the bloodstream, or dispense them orally.

Characters must have the *medicine* skill to use a regen tank. On most planets within the Seventh Empire, only licensed doctors can administer regen treatments. A very easy *medicine* skill is necessary to use a regen tank — regardless of the wound level. If the roll is made, the character will heal — it's just a matter of time. A character attempting to use a regen tank without the *medicine* skill must make a heroic first aid or *Technical* roll. If the roll failed, the patient's wound level increases by two (wounded to mortally wounded; incapacitated or mortally wounded to dead).

If the roll is successful, the healing time is dependent upon the severity of the character's injuries. Wounded characters require 1D hours. Incapacitated characters require 4D hours. Mortally wounded characters require 1D days.

Cheating Death

In Septimus, death is rarely final, at least not the first time your character crosses over to the other side. Thanks to the advanced medical technology available, dead characters often can be revived through a variety of means.

Regeneration

Regen tanks are a common means of healing seriously wounded patients or bringing back the recently slain. As long as the dead person's body can be retrieved and placed within a regen tank, the person can be regrown and reanimated. The process usually takes a full 2 weeks, and it adds 1 Corruption Point to the character's total.

Activating A Clone

Cloning is the practice of duplicating a living body and keeping it in stasis. When the original body dies, a transmitted signal goes to the static clone, which then auto-animates. This has the advantage of letting the fallen character enter action immediately. Unfortunately, any Character Points gained by the character since the clone was created are lost. Likewise, recent memories are lost, too. Updating clones can be done, but it is a costly practice. Cloned characters also gain 2 Corruption Points upon activation.

Persona Transfer

A third way of cheating death is to digitize one's personality profile and upload it to a robotic body. This is called a persona transfer, and it is an irreversible procedure. Once uploaded to a robotic chassis, the character is forevermore confined to mechanical bodies. Destroyed robot characters can have their personae transferred to other robot bodies. Every time a persona transfer is conducted, the character picks up 3 Corruption Points.

Cost And Availability

While there are monetary costs associated with each form of cheating death, consider each of them open to any character unless the GM notes otherwise. The GM should implement them as a story element to the adventure at hand. Who is providing this support to the characters, and what will they want in return? Whoever has methods of cheating death at their disposal has great leverage over those who have need of such technology. And in large parts of Septimus there is no money to speak of, so often times having revivification technology on hand becomes the one and only form of barter that is worth anything.

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Corruption

During the course of play, characters may pick up Corruption Points. Characters can only take on so many of these before they finally become irrevocably twisted inside, becoming something that is equally monstrous and mindless, easily twisted to evil purposes by others as well as themselves. At that point the character becomes a villainous character to be played only by the GM (often as an enemy to other player characters) and is taken out of play.

The Downside To Perfection

Players can gain Corruption Points through a variety of ways.

Overmodification

Every time a character is augmented by genotechnology, nanotechnology or alien technology, that character gains Corruption Points. Each mod has its own Corruption Point associated with it, the details of which can be found in the Genotech, Nanotech and Alienation chapters. In short, however, the general rule is this: the more mods one gets, the more Corrupted one gets. Corruption is a natural way to prevent individuals from getting every modification under the sun.

Mod Conflicts

Like any other kind of complex technology, genotech and nanotech don't exactly play nicely together, and those who undergo modifications that combine the two run an enhanced risk of picking up a Corruption Point for it. In addition the the Corruption Points picked up for gaining new mods, whenever a character gets a new mod that is either from the "other side of the fence," (i.e., getting a nanotech mod when currently having genotech mods or vice versa), roll 1D. A result of 1 or 2 means that the character picks up an additional Corruption point as a result of the new mod. However, this only occurs if the character is already picking up Corruption Points for that mod. If the character managed to dodge additional Corruption for that particular upgrade, then he does not need to roll for the extra Corruption that comes from crossing the line that separates nanotech and genotech. As a matter of good risk management, however, characters generally stick to either nanotech mods or genotech mods rather than risk the extra Corruption.

Alien Interaction

The more one integrates with any kind of alien technology, the more one's chances of corruption tend to skyrocket. Alien technology is one of the greatest enigmas within Septimus, because there is not much of it, and what little there is tends to be so radically advanced that nobody can figure it out. Because of the Extent's obsession with personal modification, it has poured a huge amount of resources into finding ways to use alien tech to alter one's own physiology. Alien mods are quite extraordinary things, and like regular genotech or nanotech mods, each alien mod carries with it a Corruption cost. Unlike nanotech or genotech, the Corruption that comes from alien tech interaction is unavoidable. You cannot roll to dodge Corruption Points that are associated with an alien tech mod. On the upside, alien tech does not conflict with nanotech or genotech the way that nanotech and genotech conflict with each other.

Death And Resurrection

As mentioned in the various descriptions of medical treatment, a good way to rack up a lot of Corruption Points is to die and repeatedly come back. Every time a character flatlines and cheats death, he picks up Corruption. Eventually, there comes a point where that character cannot die again without fully Corrupting, and at that point, it's over. It is worth noting, however, that certain elements within the Sindavar Extent

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think Corruption is a good thing because is converts individuals into perfect drones willing to do anything to further the regime. Rumor has it that within the deepest, darkest recesses of the Extent, there are hierarchies where those with greater Corruption rank higher than those who do not. But to whom all of these Corrupted individuals ultimately answer to, nobody knows. A rogue persona, perhaps? An Alien fragment embedded within Septimus? Could it be Septimus itself? So far, nobody's talking. Yet.

Determining Corruption

Every time a character receives a Corruption Point, roll 2D. If the result is less than the number of Corruption Points the character has, then the character has become Corrupted, and is taken out of the game.

Symptoms Of Corruption

As characters accumulate Corruption Points, even if they do not drift into a fatal case of Corruption, they might still suffer the negative effects of gradual overmodification and gradual degradation. These are the common symptoms of Corruption, and once they become manifest, it becomes increasingly impossible to delude onself that they do not have a serious problem on their hands. The principal symptoms of Corruption include persona drift, mod malfunction and fugue states.

Mod Malfunction

The involuntary breakdown or mutation of current modifications is another common symptom of Corruption. However many Corruption Points a character has gained in addition to those he started with during character creation, that is the number of times the character must roll 2D per adventure for possible mod malfunction. If the roll is less than the total number of mods the character has, then the GM may determine which one of the character's mods will temporarily cease to work for the remainder of the adventure.

Example: Freeman Kilgore the ship captain has an additional 2 points of Corruption that he picked up after the character was initially created. That means that 2 times per adventure, the GM has the right to make Freeman roll to see if one of his mods malfunctions. At a dramatic moment, the GM makes Freeman roll, and he rolls a 5. Since Freeman only has 3 mods, there is no malfunction. Later in the adventure, though, the GM strikes again, and Freeman must roll for mod malfunction a second time. He

Persona Drift

One of the first signs of Corruption is the involuntary altering of one's personality. For every 3 or 4 points of Corruption one accrues in addition to those gained during character creation, consult the table below.

# of Corruption Points	Effect
3	Redetermine primary Demeanor
4	Redetermine primary Motivation
5	
6	Redetermine secondary Demeanor
7	
8	Redetermine secondary Motivation
9	Add a third Demeanor
10	
11	
12	Add a fourth Demeanor; add a third Motivation

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rolls a 2, and the GM determines which one of Freeman's mods will stop working for the rest of the adventure.

Fugue States

The last and most serious symptom of Corruption is the involuntary loss of consciousness as the body begins to act of its own accord, perhaps even controlled from afar by some unknown force. If a character has picked up 8 or more Corruption Points in addition to those gained during character creation, then the character must make an opposed roll of 3D against his *Perception* at the beginning of each adventure. If the Willpower roll is less than the Corruption roll, then the character will suffer from a fugue state. While in a fugue state, the character will have no short-term memory of anything that happens to him while in the fugue state. He also will have no long-term memory of things that happened prior to the fugue state. He will be a functioning amnesiac for the duration of the fugue state, which will last for 1D scenes of the current adventure. While in this state, the character will also have a –1D modifier to all initiative rolls. Once the fugue state ends, the character comes back to his normal state, remembering everything that happened up to the beginning of the fugue state, but nothing afterward. Once out of the fugue state, the character's initiative rolls return to normal as well.

Repairing The Damage

Anyone who has Corruption wants to know how to get rid of it. Good luck with that: there is no known cure for Corruption, despite the very best efforts science. When you get a point of Corruption, it is for good. No exceptions.



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The Point Of No Return

The closer one gets to full Corruption, the more one knows it. Nobody accidentally falls into Corruption nor manages to overmodify themselves into oblivion without knowing it. There is something to Corruption that makes the one enduring it keenly aware that it is going on. Many who suffer from advanced Corruption often will try to find a way to repair the damage (as explained above). But aside from that, those with partial Corruption will usually look at how they can limit the chances of taking on more Corruption.

No More Mods

Halting any further modification is one way to do it, but those who have undergone substantial modification often find themselves strangely addicted to it. The rush of new powers and the thrill of expanding one's own abilities beyond normal human parameters often proves to be too alluring to those who are being destroyed by it. Another factor to consider is that getting a mod doesn't always mean getting more Corruption, and those near the edge of full Corruption often begin to think that luck is on their side and that they can sustain more mods without getting that fatal, final point of Corruption. Sometimes, luck holds and an individual gets another mod stacked on top of those they have, and sometimes luck runs out and the poor blighter falls into Corruption. That's the thing about luck and mods: sooner or later, the luck always runs out. Always.

Do Not Revive

Another means of avoiding Corruption is simply to refuse any further post-mortem revivification methods. This is easier said than done, however. In some parts of Septimus, like in the Sindavar Extent, medical facilities are required to raise any deceased patients, regardless of potential Corruption consequences. Under other circumstances, some characters may feel it is no longer worth the risk of Corruption and take steps to prevent any further revivifications. One popular method is to implant oneself with a failsafe against all known revivification technologies. A less drastic method is to simply inform one's friends and colleagues that they do not wish the be raised from the dead, though it is impossible to enforce such a decree when it counts most. This brings us to the last option…

Playing It Safe

Many characters who have not yet felt death's sting or the growing horror of Corruption take excessive risks with their lives, since they know that they can always be brought back from the brink thanks to any number of methods. The closer one gets to full Corruption, however, this behavior tends to change. Thrillseekers turn cautious. Adventurers consider retirement. Immortals get paranoid. Everybody lives under the threat of Corruption, which is widely regarded as a fate worse than death, and as a result, it tends to remind people that indeed, death is something to be feared. If not for its own grim details then for the even greater darkness of which it is the harbinger.

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03: Characters

In Septimus, you assume the role of your character, an alter ego who represents your actions within the game setting. Think of your character as your playing piece for the game, only you are not moving a mere token about on a board. You are assuming your character's role. You are pretending to be him, determining who he is, what he wants, how he would act in a given situation. Your character is your gateway into the world of Septimus, your means to become, if only for a little while, a heroic (or villainous) someone else.

Making your Septimus alter ego is a matter of selecting what traits you will have and to what degree you have them. Character generation consists of twelve steps, laid out below. Each one of these steps provides you with a new set of options with which to further personalize your character. Chargen can be a long or short process; it generally depends on how much time you like to spend making your character. For some people, the act of making a character is a bit of a game in and of itself, and they like to weigh every option carefully and think things over, a little like if they were crafting a character for a novel or a movie script. Other folks like to put something together quickly, often running into play with more generic characters they figure will customize naturally over the course of play. There is no right or wrong way. There is only what best suits how you would like to play this game.

For those of you who would rather simply grab a character and begin playing, you will find at the end of this section a number of character templates. These are pre-generated character archetypes that are commonly encountered in the world of Septimus. As the player, you can take any one of these templates, customize it a little bit and begin playing with that. As the GM, you can use these templates as stock characters the players are likely to encounter.

Step One: Attributes

Ordinary people have attributes of 2D. However, player characters in this game are a notch above ordinary folk, and as such have abilities at levels that set them apart. As such, when creating your character, allocate a total of 18D among your six attributes. Remember that each single die can be broken into three pips equal to +1 each. Also note that when dividing your initial 18D, no single attribute may be higher than 5D. Likewise, no attribute may be lower than 2D.

Using this system, even the most lopsided character could only have two attributes at 5D; the other four would be at 2D (making for a potentially imbalanced character; buyer beware!) Characters that distribute their 18D evenly among all attributes will have them all at 3D.

Step Two: Determine Your Priorities

After you have decided what levels your attributes are, you have a number of other elements to your character to customize. These include whether he is psionically active, how skilled your character us, what natural advantages he might have, what his level of Corruption might be, and how many resources he has. The degree to which your character excels in any of these categories depends on how important they are to your

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character. You must prioritize your skill dice, your boons and banes, your Corruption and your resources. The feature with top priority will be quite strong; the one last will be something of a disadvantage to you. You cannot escape coming up short on some element of character generation; this is to ensure that no matter how you work the system, your character will have some kind of Achilles' heel to keep him grounded.

Metaphysics Dice

These determine how many metaphysical powers your character starts with and how strong those powers are. A character starting with 6D in metaphysical abilities has probably dedicated his life to mastering his mental gifts. A character starting with 3D has some inborn metaphysical ability, but he has not worked full-time to develop it. A character with 0D has an inborn capacity for developing metaphysical powers, but has not done so yet; he must come into contact with an alien artifact in order to awaken his metaphysical potential. Characters with an asterisk are metaphysically inert and will never develop metaphysical abilities, even after repeated contact with alien technology.

Throughout Septimus are the remnants of the alien supertech that was used to design, build and maintain Septimus. Most of this stuff is either too broken to bring back online or too complex to work properly. But some units of alien tech have been figured out by enterprising scientists from the Extent, the Grayscale and the Newcomer factions, and those who are able to interface with this technology often are altered personally, gaining both psychic abilities as well as Corrruption Points in the exchange. The process of taking on Corruption from alien artifacts is known as "alienation," and it is said that those who enter final corruption by this process rather than through additional rebirth, nanotechnology or genotechnology, do not become dark and twisted evildoers but bizarre and detached alien hybrids unable and unwilling to keep the company of the lowly creatures currently inhabiting the sphere. While this has not yet been fully verified through scientific study, it does synch with theories that the aliens who built Septimus were creatures of pure energy, and the powers gained from their technology are simply baby steps toward becoming one of these aliens.

For more information on what powers you can acquire with your starting metaphysics dice (or how to gain further powers after character creation), refer to the Metaphysics chapter.

Skill Dice

These are additional dice you may allocate to any one of your skills. No starting skill may be more than 2D higher than its base attribute. A character with 11D has obviously focused on bettering his natural abilities through hard work and discipline. A character with only 3D has so far seen little need, or has had little opportunity, to develop his skill set.

Boons & Banes

These are those innate qualities about you that either help you along in life or get in your way. Boons are advantages, while Banes are disadvantages. A character starting with 4/0 has four points worth of advantages and zero points worth of disadvantages. A character starting with 0/4 has no points worth of advantages, but has four points worth of disadvantages. Characters may take on additional advantages and disadvantages according to the GM's permission, but these starting points must be allocated first before any additional points are accounted for. Thus, a character who starts with any points in Banes must account for them before he continues. After that, any points spent on Boons picked up must still be offset by an equal number of points spent on Banes. For more information, check out the Boons and Banes chapter.

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Corruption Buffer

This measures the degree to which your character can undergo genetic modification, cellular reconstruction and psychic alteration without suffering the adverse effects of such processes. Corruption is something with which all characters must contend as they modify their characters, bring them back to life, or interface with alien technologies. Starting characters can either choose to spend their starting Corruption buffer points to offset the corruption that comes from obtaining genetic modifications. Or they can hold these points in reserve to ward off future Corruption that may occur after they cheat death or undergo modification. Or they can do some combination of the two. Unlike starting points in Boons and Banes, you do not have to spend your starting Corruption buffer points before your character enters play.

Resources

In this game, material wealth is not measured in precise monetary units, but in a more abstract rating of one's wealth. Thus, every character has a die code that determines what resources he can buy. Every item that can be bought in this game has a difficulty number attached to it that represents how expensive it is. You roll your Resources die code to see if you were able to afford the purchase. Throughout the game, you can spend points you gain after adventures to increase your Resources level, just as you might come into large sums of money that might provide one-time bonuses to your Resources die code. Generally speaking, characters with 5D Resources are rich while those with 1D are virtually broke. Resources tend to mean different things to different people, depending on where they come from. When you determine your character's domain, later on it will be within that society that your Resource die code will be strongest, because that is where you have all of your money tied up. Your Resource code will be lower in other parts of Septimus depending on where you come from.

	SINDAVAR	THE GRAYSCALE	NEWCOMERS
SINDAVAR	+/- 0D	-1D	-2D
THE GRAYSCALE	-1D	+/-0 D	-1D
NEWCOMERS	-2D	-1D	+/- 0D

Thus, a character with 5D Resources in the Newcomer Coalition will only have 4D Resources when he is within the Grayscale Sectors and only 3D Resources when within the Sindavar Extent.

Step Three: Modifications

Next is determining what kinds of special abilities your character has from genotechnology, nanotechnology, or alienation. All of these mods carry certain Corruption costs with them, and later in the game as you spend character points to gain additional modifications, mounting Corruption might threaten the character's permanent existence. During character generation, your starting Corruption buffer may enable you to pick up a few mods "for free," meaning you can get them without incurring Corruption Points. Likewise, if you start with psionics dice, you can get a few alien psychic abilities at no Corruption cost. Other than that, if you want to start with additional modifications you will have to incur the extra Corruption that comes along with

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them. All additional modifications need to be cleared by the GM so that your character does not enter into play seriously out of step with the other characters in the game.

Genotechnology

Throughout the Seventh Empire, any kind of mechanical modification of one's body is seen as a dangerous and undesirable practice. Thus the techniques of selective genetic modification came about as ways of pushing the envelope of human abilities while not incorporating mechanical technologies into the mix. Genotech still has a cumulative effect on the body, however, and it is just as susceptible to Corruption as any other kind of modification. For specifics on the various genotech abilities open to you, refer to the Genotechnology chapter.

Nanotechnology

The Sindvar Extent, with its weird sense of techno-fetishism, virtually pioneered the art and science of individual nanotech augmentation. By inserting a shot of specially designed nanobots into a subject, the bots would react with the subject's specific biology, augmenting it in amazing ways. Many from the Seventh Empire see this practice as a bastardization of genotechnology at best and as an affront to basic human biology at worst. In the Extent, however, nanotech is second nature, and its enthusiasts point out that there is nothing about nanotech augmentation that is any more contrary to human biology than genotechnology. This fundamental ideological split is just one source of conflict between the Extent and pretty much the rest of the universe. For specifics on the various genotech abilities open to you, refer to the Nanotechnology chapter.

Step Four: Hardware

Using your Resources die code, you can try to buy a number of different kinds of gear with which to outfit your character. There are several different categories of stuff you can buy for your character in this game, all of which are detailed in the Hardware chapter. How much equipment you can enter play with is left to the GM's discretion, but a good rule of thumb is that the combined difficulty rating points of their starting equipment should not exceed 100. Items obtained as a Boon, such as robots and starships, are not included in that.

Personal Equipment

This is the basic kind of personal tech that virtually anybody in Septimus can get their hands on with minimal difficulty. Common examples include high-tech sunglasses that act as mobile computer terminals and vision-enhancing units, handheld supercomputers, and supertech pens that are universal information access devices.

Medical Equipment

There are various ways to cheat death in the world of Septimus, and having access to such technology is essential for those who wish to take great risks and keep on living. Regen tanks, medkits and persona transfer equipment are all examples of the medical technology commonly available to the general populace of the Sphere.

Weapons

Septimus is a dangerous place, mostly because there are so many well-armed people prowling around looking for trouble. Be sure to kit yourself out with a full complement of firepower so you can help be part of the problem. Weapon categories include

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melee weapons, small arms, heavy weapons and demolitions (which includes shape charges, mines, grenades and missiles).

Most characters will either start off with a weapon or two, or at least they will have access to arms if they desire them. Within the Sindavar Extent, characters must be specifically cleared to carry weapons, or else when they go to a compiler for one they will be denied, and their attempts to illegally arm themselves will go on their records. For those who are not supposed to have weapons, hacking a compiler or getting them from outside the Extent is the best bet. For those cleared by the Extent, getting arms is as simple as dialing them up from the nearest compiler. For those living outside of the Extent, there are more than enough avenues to gain weaponry, whether its from manufacturing sites set up within the Sphere, or from caches brought into the Sphere from the outside.

Even those allowed to carry weapons within the Extent must obtain certain clearances for them. There are three: a **Small Arms Clearance**, a **Concealed Carry Clearance** and a **Heavy Weapons Clearance**. The small arms clearance allows you to carry any man-portable weaponry in plain view. Morituri and Enforcers are good examples of the typical small arms clearance recipient. A concealed carry clearance allows you to hide weapons on your person. Sleepwalkers often fall into this category. Heavy weapons licenses allow you to man extra-personal weapons (i.e., support guns, missile launchers, etc.). This is often reserved for special individuals within the Sleepwalkers, Enforcers or the Morituri.

Armor

Protective technology in Septimus covers a broad range of models and capabilities. Generally speaking, the lowest tier of armor, personal armor, is a simple suit of anti-weaponry materials that provides basic protection and can be worn like clothing. The other three tiers – defensive, tactical and assault – are really powered exoskeletons that are equal parts robot, vehicle and weapons platform, and often can only be used under specific circumstances.

Armor generally requires no security clearance to wear unless it is armed, in which case, the clearances required depend on the nature of the mounted weaponry. Not everybody goes about wearing armor; typically only hard core soldiers do because it tends to be bulky and obvious to all that you're "plated." Most folks trying to plate up but be subtle about it resort to nanotech mods. As a result the most common users of armor are the disposable heroes, the suicide soldiers of the Cadre, Morituri, Grayscale and Scraplands. For these lost souls, it pays to be plated because it will definitely extend your life, even if it makes your martial intentions impossible to conceal.

Robots

In the highly automated Seventh Empire, the use of dumb robots (i.e., not self-aware) is pretty commonplace as a means of eliminating many kinds of menial and dangerous labor from the daily existence of regular people. In the Sindavar Extent, robots are used to such an extensive degree that their society is in fact more machine than human. Elsewhere, robots are encountered as personal sidekicks, companions, helpers and defenders. There are five categories of robot: midges (tiny personal robots), drones (humanoid units that do not resemble people), proxies (humanoid units that do resemble people), bugs (units that resemble large, stylized insects) and juggernauts (units that are built specifically for military purposes).

Vehicles

The size of the Sphere makes getting around on some kind of transport a must. Most people have some kind of ground or air vehicle at their disposal, whether it be a wheeled runabout or jumpglider (a personal

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flying platform) or something else. Most larger vehicles tend to be military in nature, though a large number of military vehicles have unarmed civilian counterparts.

Not all characters will start off with a vehicle, and those who do typically are some sort of specialist whose job it is to command and maintain a personal vehicle. In the cases of characters who do not start with any sort of vehicle, do keep in mind that the Extent has incredible mass transportation and that the chances of you obtaining a vehicle of some kind later in the game are excellent.

Starships

The trip to the Sphere is pretty much a one-way deal, meaning that every time a new group of people arrives, their ship gets marooned within the Sphere. Although they cannot leave the Sphere, there still is a huge amount of deep space to cross within the Sphere's interior. To those with ships, these craft are often homes, bases of operation and battle platforms. There are various classes of craft, ranging from civilian merchant ships to large colony ships to military battle carriers and everything in between. Generally speaking, starting characters will only have access to small or medium-sized ships. The challenge of maintaining such craft often makes them a mixed blessing for those who have them.

Interlude: Who Are You?

So far, your attributes, psionics, skills, Boons and Banes, Corruption and Resources all define what you can do, but they do not necessarily define who your character is. These things can play a very strong role in helping to build your character's backstory. Since characters are ultimately meant to be narrative and dramatic tools rather than just a bunch of statistics, the next few sections are dedicated to fleshing out your character's personality.

Step Five: Demeanor

This is how your character reacts on an unconscious level to any given situation. This is the most basic measure of your true personality. Everything your character does is colored by your demeanor. In game terms, demeanor really has little impact in combat results, successfully executing skills, or other such activities. Demeanor is more of a role-playing tool, a way to get more deeply into the head of your character and make your assumption of him more complete. Don't be afraid to get really into character; that's where the best role-playing comes from.

When creating your character, choose two demeanors. It is okay if you select two opposing demeanors, such as flamboyant and reserved, but you should figure out why your character would be like this. Does he have one demeanor in public and another in private? Does he go by one demeanor most times and revert to his other demeanor in times of stress? Or do different people and situations inspire different demeanors to rise to the surface?

There are thirty-two demeanors to choose from in the list below, but that doesn't mean you can't add to that list if you come up with a novel demeanor of your own.

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Aggressive: You're a natural born fighter, unafraid to throw down at a moment's notice. You're not necessarily a psychopath, though. There is a difference.

Artistic: You see things in terms of creation, expression and emotion. You're not detached from reality; you just have a way of seeing the artistic side of things.

Attentive: What other people might miss, you tend to pick up. Chances are, you've got a fairly decent *Perception* attribute.

Confident: Whatever the situation, you know that somehow, you'll find a way through. You're not overly optimistic or naïve. You just know you can get the job done.

Conventional: You don't like straying outside the generally accepted way of doing things. Too much innovation can be a bad thing if not properly thought through.

Daring: You like to take chances and buck the odds. The prospect of failure does not concern you, only the thrill of cheating defeat one more time.

Devoted: You are driven by a deep conviction: a political belief, an ideology, a cause or quest, whatever. This often colors how you view other people.

Doubtful: Not only do you have low expectations for yourself, you have them for everybody else, too. Success takes you by surprise.

Eccentric: You see and do things differently than everybody else. Others often consider you an oddball at best and a subversive menace at worst.

Ethereal: You are very imaginative and often are lost in your thoughts. Long ago you got used to folks snapping their fingers in front of your face to get your attention.

Flamboyant: Moderation is for monks, you've always said. Some folks might admire your zest for life while others might see you as a debauched showoff.

Freewheeling: You rarely do the same thing twice, savoring variety. Rules, regulations, and established ways of doing things really get under your skin.

Hardboiled: As far as you're concerned, you've already seen it all. This might make you a bit jaded, but it helps you stay cool under pressure.

Inventive: Even if there is a viable solution in front of you, you would rather shelve it and try coming up with something new just for the sake of blazing a trail.

Jovial: There is always something funny to take out of any situation, no matter how dire. This gets you in trouble in situations where humor is uncalled for.

Leisurely: You like to take things at a slow and relaxed pace. Even in pressure situations, rushing around is only going to inspire you to make mistakes.

Mercurial: Time waits for no one, especially you. You're always on the go, and you have no patience for those who are slow or indecisive.

Passive: You avoid conflict whenever possible. You would rather flex with any given situation rather than confront it head on, negotiate rather than fight.

Polite: You appreciate social mores and acceptable behavior, and as such you try hard not to offend people or to put forth a less-than-mannered public face.

Pragmatic: You are concerned with the nuts and bolts of any given situation more than the niceties of things. Don't bother with needless detail; the bare bones will do.

Rational: There is a logical explanation for everything, no matter how strange it seems. It always pays to think things through before enacting any course of action.

Relaxed: You like to take things easy, to kick back, not to work too hard. This is a prominent attitude among those able to live

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in comfort, like addled Hierarchs from the Seventh Empire, or the most blissfully ignorant elements of the Sindavar Extent.

Reserved: Head down, eyes front and mouth shut. You draw as little attention to yourself as possible, and you interact with people only when you really have to.

Selfish: Everything is about you, baby. Whatever your doing at the moment, it's most important you take care of yourself first.

Selfless: You prefer to serve others' needs than your own. This works in heroic and non-heroic situations alike. It is just how you are; placing yourself first is abhorrent.

Sensitive: You can see things from other people's points of view, be they a dear friend or a despised enemy, and this governs many of your actions.

Serious: The gravity of worldly issues makes it difficult for you to laugh at them, and you are easily irritated by those more sanguine than you (i.e., everybody).

Social: You mix and mingle easily. This does not mean you're everybody's friend, though. Plenty of weasels make good first impressions.

Solitary: You've always preferred your own company to that of others. It might be because other people freak you out. Or maybe you simply like the solitary life.

Timid: Risk-taking is just not in your blood. Although not a coward, if given the chance to think things through first, you'll take the safe and easy way out.

Traditional: The way things have always been done holds a special significance to you. Change is not good. The established order of things is something worth fighting and dying for.

Uptight: There's serious, and then there's serious. You're part of the latter camp. While this makes you ready for action, it also makes you less personable.

Step Six: Motivation

Everything you do has a motive behind it, and then there is often an ulterior motive behind that. Even further behind that is an ulterior ulterior motive. And so it goes until you get to the prime mover that in some way, shape or form, makes itself felt in virtually everything you do. This is your motivation, your reason for being. Not everything you do is overtly governed by your motivation, but chances are your actions can always be traced to it to some degree, no matter how small. True, your identification with domain and phyle carry with them certain inherent objectives, but in reality your personal goals, desires and needs are far more potent drivers than one's social class or political allegiance.

When creating your character, select two motivations. Like your demeanors, it's okay if your two motivations conflict with each other. In fact, we encourage it, since it makes for interesting and complicated characters. Having said that, if your motivations do conflict with each other, try to come up with a compelling reason why and what this ultimately means for your character.

Keep in mind that these are not some form of mind control or overriding mania to do certain things. These are just the most basic wants and desires your character might have. Use them as background tools for making your character more three-dimensional, more fully developed.

There are thirty-two motivations to choose from the list below. As with demeanors, please feel free to add to this list as you see fit.

Accomplishment: You crave the satisfaction of having completed great deeds and leaving a mark on the world through them. A few accolades wouldn't hurt either.

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Adventure: You are a thrill junkie who enjoys cheating death and bucking the odds. Chances are you're a regular at the regen tanks.

Altruism: You like to provide for the needy and underprivileged. In the Extent, your actions often take the form of doing good deeds for others.

Compassion: You are a gentle soul who seeks to alleviate others' pain. You might be a healer or counselor, or you might be dedicated to helping the powers that be bring solace to those hurt by the endless warfare within the Sphere.

Contentment: You simply want to be happy doing whatever it is you that you want to do, be it watercolors or aerial combat. This is a really common motivation.

Curiosity: You desire to know all you can. The Extent's data arcologies are a good start, but you will soon be asking questions the Extent would rather not answer.

Discontent: You are so unhappy with the way things are and you have decided to do something about it. Your outlaw potential is really high.

Duty: You are beholden to a particular person or organization. Maybe it's your friends, your caste, or your domain, but you'll die before you betray it.

Enlightenment: You seek cathartic release from seeing past life's everyday illusions. Depending on the circumstances, this might encourage people to view you as a dreamer, a visionary or a nutcase, or maybe some combination of the three.

Faith: Your particular belief structure is what keeps you going. It could be a belief in the divine, the inherent goodness of the Extent, etc.

Fame: The more the public adores you, the happier you are. Thus you routinely seek those things that bring you maximum mediatronic exposure.

Fear: You are so afraid of something that your life is spent in avoidance of it. Eventually, however, you must confront your demons.

Freedom: Who gave anyone the right to govern how you live? You want to break free of the Extent or make it answer for its tyranny.

Guilt: You have done something you regret terribly. If you are to be free of this torment, you must seek atonement.

Hatred: There is someone or something to which you are a complete antagonist. You are consumed by the need to defeat this nemesis, regardless of cost.

Honor: There is a right way and a wrong way to do things, and you have sworn to live your life by truth, justice, and honesty. Honor always comes first.

Knowledge: You crave data of all kinds, and somehow the vast libraries of the Extent are not enough for you. You need to know more, more, more.

Justice: You live to see that the wicked are punished and the law upheld in all things. This might just be on a personal level for an entire group of people.

Longevity: Regeneration tanks and cloning are not enough for you; you so fear death as to seek immortality, whatever the cost may be. Be careful what you wish for. You just might get it.

Love: In a world where there can be no further reproduction, love has vanished from much of the Extent, but not for you. Your bond with another is all-important, all-encompassing.

Loyalty: You live to protect, defend, uphold or support another, even at the cost of your own life. This person may be a friend, an ally, a mentor, or somebody to whom you are eternally.

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Oblivion: You are fascinated with all forms of destruction, most of all your own. You are most likely an extreme risk taker because you have nothing to lose. That makes you dangerous.

Obsession: You are fixated on a particular person, place, thing or condition to such a degree that you have tunnel vision. Everything you do must in some way involve your fixation

Power: You crave the ability to exert your influence over others. Maybe it will be enough to become a high-ranking hierarch, or maybe you need to become a warrior without peer.

Pride: You have such great respect for yourself that you will undertake any measures necessary to restore it if it has been damaged. This could prove to be your undoing some day.

Professionalism: Carrying out your basic career objectives and flawlessly executing your various skills is your reason for being. There can be no higher purpose than a job well done.

Revenge: Something somewhere has wronged you, and you will make it pay dearly for ever crossing you. No one and no thing can stay your wrath.

Revolution: The powers that be in your life (whatever they are) have oppressed you long enough. The time has come to take a stand and overthrow your oppressor. This time, it's war.

Socialization: You most enjoy interacting with others, making friends and gladhanding. Maybe you are a genuinely friendly sort, or maybe you're just concerned with what others think of you.

Status: You require as much material well-being as possible. Gaining upper-echeleon nanofactory access is a likely route, as is becoming kingpin of the underworld economy

Survival: You have to keep going, no matter what it takes. You have to stay one step ahead of the regen tank, of the Big Sleep, of the Darkest of Darks. You have to keep going.

Step Seven: Persona

After your demeanor and motivation, it is time to figure out the remaining details of your character's personality. These are all bits and pieces to make your character feel less like a game piece and more like your alter ego in the world of Septimus.

Name

What you go by. Most people who get involved in adventures tend to have an alias, for various reasons. Hierarch aliases are usually an honorific or a title to display their status. Enforcers and Sleepwalkers assume aliases to prevent the bad guys from learning who they are and tracking them down. The Morituri assume aliases because it makes for good PR. Outlaws assume aliases to remain hidden to their many enemies. Many Newcomers assume aliases to forget they were ever part of the Seventh Empire.

Gender

It is interesting to note that the Extent is a society in which your gender really does not mean much anymore. Thanks to Steel Helix, there can be no more biological procreation, and most people have developed a strange indifference to the opposite sex. Even if Steel Helix had not occurred, the Extent's preference for *in vitro* procreation probably would have made doing it the old-fashioned way tragically obsolete anyway.

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Still, within the Extent, there are those who fall in love and carry on passionate affairs, even if such behavior is now seen to be a little odd. Word is, there are nanotech treatments that will switch your gender all the way down to the genetic level, but the Extent never has mainlined them for public use. In the Grayscale and among Newcomers, gender still maintains the differences and drama that it does for us in the world that exists beyond these pages, even if the Steel Helix makes it impossible for these people to have babies as they once did.

Age

The Steel Helix attack happened 25 years ago, so there is nobody around in the Extent who is under 25 years of age. Those who live in Septimus quickly are infected by the Steel Helix, which robs thems of their ability to procreate, so the only kids within the Sphere are those few who come in from the outside at a very young age. In game terms, however, most characters are either adults or very close to it. That means no children. Thanks to regen tanks and nanotech, most people can extend their lives almost indefinitely, which means there are a lot of folks who are one hundred years old or more but look like they are a fraction of that age. Surprisingly, most of these sorts have not used their long lives to build up incredible skill repertoires. That is mostly the province of adventurers, who usually end up dying prematurely anyway.

Appearance

In the Sindavar Extent, people look astonishingly alike. Conformity and similarity, even in the more lawless portions of the world, are very strong social forces, and a side effect is that most people simply look like everybody else. It is the result of a unified society gone to a ridiculous conclusion: humanity had become so unified that genetically speaking it grew less diverse over time. This is not the case in the remnants of the Seventh Empire present within the Sphere as well as for a decent portion of the Grayscale, which either escaped the relentless genetic breeding programs of the Extent or used various appearance-changing modifications. Having a distinct appearance is a strong visual marker; not looking like a drone of the Sindavar Extent makes infiltrating them difficult without some form of disguise. Likewise, having the Sindavar look can make it difficult to mingle among Newcomers. The Grayscale has made a practice of using appearance to infiltrate either side of the conflict, which has eroded the importance of appearance as a clear indicator of which side you're on. But still, looking like a Extent drone or a Newcomer can have serious implications, depending on where you are at any given time.



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Unless otherwise nanomodified, the average male ranges between 6'0" and 6'5" (1.8 to 2.0 m). The average female ranges between 5'8" and 6'0" (1.7 to 2.0 m). This is pretty tall for humans, but you can thank long-term genetic modification, extremely good healthcare and nanotechnology for that.

The great thing about the Extent is that most people look like they spent the last few years at a health spa. Males range in weight from 170 lbs. to 240 lbs. (77 to 109 kg), depending on how built up they are. Females range in weight from 130 lbs. to 180 lbs. (59 to 82 kg), again depending on musculature. This is mostly true for people in the Grayscale as well. However, some Grayscalers and Scraplanders in general do not look so nice. They are about the same size as people from the System, but they look a lot rougher around the edges. Clearly, they have not led a pampered life, and it shows. They are wrinkled, scarred, calloused and grimy.

Newcomers often have a wide range of looks and body shapes, representing the wild variety of life present across the Seventh Empire. Newcomers who naturally look like they might fit in within the Extent often find themselves able to cross the battle lines with ease and can enjoy interesting careers as agent provacateurs as well as Grayscale middlemen. There's nothing quite so effective as a natural disguise.

Also keep in mind your character's distinguishing marks, features, characteristics, or fashions. Adventurers are especially known for making themselves stand out in a crowd — unless it fits their mission to blend in.

Background

This is largely determined by where you come from (The Extent, the Grayscale or the Newcomers/Seventh Empire), what caste you belong to, and what genotype you possess. After those starting characteristics, there still is room for your character to have developed a backstory, a chronicle of how he got to be exactly who he is and where he is today. Your background is an important bit of fleshing out your character, since it often provides you with the reason why you are adventuring with other people, how exactly you intend to achieve what you want to achieve, with whom you might have special relationships, and so on. Don't overlook this part of character creation; it is a crucial step to making a fully realized alter ego.

Connection With Other Characters

In Septmus, there aren't too many bars and taverns where characters can run into each other, so you're going to have to figure out why and how you came to join up with the other characters in your group. If you notice on the various template descriptions later in this part of the book, you'll find that every template will already have some information to this end. You can just consider these as guidelines for how individuals of that template might typically interact with others, not the last word on the matter. That is left to you.

Famous Last Words

Everybody's got some turn of phrase that's all their own, something people will remember you by. Don't feel compelled to use this catchphrase in play; it's just a way to sum up your character's outlook on things.

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Finishing Up

At this point, you are basically finished with your character. Congratulations! Make sure that you record all of your character's information on a character sheet. One has been provided in this book, which you can reproduce for personal use.

Also, when you and your fellow players first come together to play Septimus, the group should spend some time getting to know who the characters are. The GM should have each player introduce his character, what his most discernable features, desires and methods of operation are. Your fellow players do not need to know everything about your character, but do realize that in reality it will be difficult and exclusionary to keep a deep secret about your character from your fellow players. The GM will have to know what that secret is, and your fellow players might not react well when they realize that as a player you have been holding out on them. This is one of those cases where the defense of "But I was just playing in character!" probably will not wash, so we strongly suggest that you lare bare your character's details to your fellow players. If there is something about your character that is supposed to remain secret, let it become a role-playing challenge to the players to ignore it within a game context.

Improving Characters

One last note. As your character goes through adventures, he will accumulate character points. These are doled out by the GM as rewards for good role-playing in all its forms — executing a clever plan, thwarting the bad guys, promoting teamwork, and especially for playing "in character" — essentially getting into the spirit of the game and really playing your character rather than coldly maneuvering him about the game as an abstraction.

As you gather Character Points, you will be able to spend them to further improve or change your character in a number of ways. This includes, but is not limited to:

- *Learning and improving skills*
- *Improving strength damage*
- *Improving attributes*
- *Gaining and losing Boons & Banes*
- *Additional genomods*
- *Additional nanomods*
- *Additional psychic abilities*
- *Battling Corruption*

The accumulation of Character Points and how they might be spent can be found in the D6 System chapter.

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04: Skills

There are a number of specific skills in this game. Whenever a character tries to do something that would reasonably fall under one of those skills, he must roll the die code he has in that skill to determine success. If he does not have the required skill, he may roll his die code for the relevant attribute governing the skill in question. This is sometimes referred to as defaulting to the attribute or using the skill untrained or unskilled. The GM may include an unskilled modifier to the difficulty number. This modifier takes into account that people who are not trained or who do not have experience in certain tasks usually have a harder time doing them. Typically, this modifier to the difficulty number ranges between +1 and +5, depending on the complexity of the task: a lower modifier for simpler tasks, a higher modifier for harder ones. The GM may rule that some situations, such as building a spaceship or performing nanosurgery, are impossible for anyone to attempt without the proper training and the correct skills.

When attributes are given in the text along with the skill, do not apply the untrained modifier. This also includes most uses of the *dodge* and *brawling* skills in combat situations, attempts to find clues in a room with the *search* skill, and resisting interaction attempts with the *con* or *command* skills.

Skill Descriptions

Acrobatics (Agility)

Using *acrobatics* can also improve many of a character's *climb/jump* and running attempts. The gamemaster determines the difficulty of the *acrobatics* stunt. One-half of the difference (rounded up) between the difficulty and the *acrobatics* roll is added to the complementary skill. The *acrobatics* attempt and the *climb/jump* or *running* try must be done on the same turn, incurring a multi-action penalty.

Instead of adding a modifier to the *running* or *swim* difficulty for particularly challenging obstacle courses, the gamemaster may have the hero make an *acrobatics* roll in addition to a *running* or *swim* roll. *Acrobatics* can make a character appear more intimidating. The player may add one-half of the difference (rounded up) between the difficulty and the successful *acrobatics* roll to her *intimidation* attempt. The *intimidation* attempt may be made on the same turn as the *acrobatics* roll or on the next round.

During a fall, *acrobatics* may be used to reduce bodily harm. If the character has not already used his turn for the round, he may rely on *acrobatics* in an attempt to land properly. The character generates an *acrobatics* total. For every five points over the base difficulty number of 10, the hero reduces the damage total by one point in addition to a base reduction of one point. The damage total, however, cannot be lower than zero.

Acrobatics can also aid a character in escaping from bonds. The chart below contains sample difficulty numbers for escaping from various kinds of restraints. Modify the difficulty based on the circumstances of the escape, such as the conditions the character works under or specially designed restraints. The character may not use this skill if completely immobilized. If in multiple restraints, the character must make a separate roll for each one. A Critical Failure indicates that the character has pulled a muscle (and he does his Strength Damage to himself).

Note that this skill does not substitute for the *sleight of hand* skill. The character may be able to pull his arms over his head to use his hands, but he may not be able to slip out of the handcuffs unless they are improperly secured.

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MANEUVER DIFFICULTIES

Very Easy (5): Somersault; pirouette

Easy (10): Handspring; cartwheel; handstand; swing over a obstacle

Moderate (15): Round-off; backflip; vaulting over an obstacle

Difficult (20): Bouncing off a surface to reach a specific destination

Very Difficult (25): Walking up a wall (The character may "walk" a maximum of his move in one round; he must have a flat surface to stop on at the end of his turn or he falls and takes damage from the fall.)

Heroic (30+): Leaping long distances through an opening just large enough to accommodate your body.

SAMPLE RESTRAINTS DIFFICULTIES	
Ropes	13
Wires, chain	15
Handcuffs	16
Straightjacket	18

CONDITION MODIFIERS	
Flat surface to flat surface	0
Unlimited landing area	-3
Limited landing area	+3
Rough or unsteady landing area	+3 or more
High surface to low surface	+3
Slippery surface	+3
Strong wind	+3
Add a twist of the body (per twist)	+3
Performing the maneuver underwater or backwards	+3
Almost no landing area	+6
Low surface to high surface	+6
Performing the maneuver on a narrow surface	+6
Performing an aerial maneuver in the air	+9

Note: Characters may combine one or more maneuvers in the same action. In this case, use the difficulty of the most challenging maneuver, add 3 for each additional maneuver (up to five additional maneuvers), and include modifiers as if the complex stunt was one maneuver.

Aliens (Knowledge)

This skill governs information about the mysterious, ancient aliens who built the Sphere and left it strewn with puzzling artifacts. When a character asks a question regarding a particular piece of alien information ("How can I access alien technology?"), use the following to determine the difficulty number:

Very Easy (5): Something virtually anybody would know (aliens had something to do with Septimus)

Easy (10): Common knowledge (ancient, mysterious aliens built the Sphere)

Moderate (15): Something not widely known (alien ruins dot the landscape of the surface)

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Difficult (20): Something requiring specialized knowledge of the subject (accurate theories as to the origins and capabilities) of the ancients

Very Difficult (30): Something only an expert would know (how to operate alien artifacts let behind)

If a player asks a more general question ("What do I know about aliens and Septimus?"), don't determine a difficulty number. Instead have the player make a skill roll, and use the number rolled as a general measure of his knowledge of that topic:

5	He is pretty ignorant — he knows that aliens were at one point involved somehow with Septimus, but not much else.
10	He has typical layman's knowledge of the topic — he knows that aliens built Septimus and left artifacts behind but knows nothing about those artifacts or where to find them.
15	He has a broad, general knowledge of the topic — he would know how to identify alien artifacts on sight and that messing with these things tends to impart psychic powers, but he might not know what those powers may be.
20	He has detailed, specific knowledge but might not be up on obscure details — he'd know about previous alien sites explored and studied but might be puzzled by a set of fresh ruins.
30	He has truly comprehensive knowledge – he would have no difficulty firing up ancient alien artifacts and could intuit the true story behind who the aliens were and what happened to them.

REPAIR MODIFIERS	
-10	Previously built or modified the item; intimately familiar with item
-5	Has item's designs
+/-0	Common item
+5	Has seen but not used item
+10	Has never seen item
+/-0	All parts available
+10	Some parts available
+20	No parts available
+/-0	Correct tools (tool kits themselves might provide their own bonuses)
+15	Makeshift tools

The above repair modifiers are ubiquitious, applying to all repair skills.

Armor Repair (Technical)

Though there are many different kinds of repair skills, they all follow the same principles. The base difficulty to fix or modify anything is 10. The amount of damage sustained, the character's familiarity with the item, availability of parts, and complexity of the task can modify the difficulty. The gamemaster may require a separate roll to determine whether the character can figure out how to repair an unknown item. Destroyed parts must be replaced, which raises the difficulty. Additionally, if a hero rushes the job, not only is there an increased chance of failure, but the item could a

Artist (Perception)

The time needed to perform the artist skill varies, depending on the quality and complexity of a piece. A simple amateur piece may only take a few minutes, while a complex, prize-winning endeavor could require weeks or months. Characters may also use this skill to judge works of art created by others and possibly as a com-

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plementary skill to forgery to detect fake artistic pieces. The higher the total is above the creation total for the piece, the more information the judge knows about it (such as flaws, alterations, its creator, and the like).

QUALITY OF PIECE DIFFICULTY	
Amateur	9
Professional	15
Emotionally moving	18
Prize-winning	24

COMPLEXITY OF PIECE MODIFIERS	
Simple; has one or two parts	-5
Moderate; has a few parts	0
Complex; has many parts	+10

Astrography (Knowledge)

This skill governs information about the process of navigating starships through deep space and jumping them successfully through hyperspace. When a character asks a question regarding a particular piece of astrographic information ("How do I navigate a starship?"), use the following to determine the difficulty number:

Very Easy (5): something virtually anybody would know (you need to plot a course when traveling through deep space).

Easy (10): common knowledge (standard travel routes used).

Moderate (15): something not widely known (restricted travel routes, how to plot a hyperspace jump).

Difficult (20): something requiring specialized knowledge of the subject (where hyperspace lanes are most degraded; how to jump through degraded hyperspace lanes).

Very Difficult (30): something only an expert would know (how to tell when a hyperspace jump is going wrong and recovering from it; how to successfully jump back out of Septimus).

If a player asks a more general question ("What do I know about jumping through hyperspace?"), don't determine a difficulty number. Instead, have the player make a skill roll, and use the number rolled as a general measure of his knowledge of that topic:

5	He is pretty ignorant — he knows that you need to plot a course.
10	He has typical layman's knowledge of the topic — how to use a ship's onboard navigational computers.
15	He has a broad, general knowledge of the topic — what it's like to jump through hyperspace.
20	He has detailed, specific knowledge but might not be up on obscure details — he'd know how to jump through degraded hyperspace.
30	He has truly comprehensive knowledge — he can make almost any kind of hyperspace jump in almost any conditions.

Bargain (Perception)

Characters use this skill to haggle over prices. The gamemaster should use a mixture of roleplaying and die rolls to determine how the character is doing at acquiring or selling the desired goods or services. The player always has the choice to refuse a deal. Similarly, if the gamemaster feels that the character's roll represents an unfair deal, without the player embellishing by roleplaying the situation, he should allow the gamemaster's character to refuse the deal as well. To resolve the haggling, either make an opposed skill roll using any modifiers appropriate or select an appropriate standard difficulty number. Subtract the seller's total from the buyer's total and look up the number on the chart below. Multiply the price of the item (as credits or a number) by the percentage given to get its final cost. Be certain to include any price modifiers (as suggested in the "Equipment"

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chapter) before making the adjustment. If using Funds, this becomes the new number the Funds roll must meet or exceed.

DIFFERENCE PRICE ADJUSTMENT	
-21	300% of local market value
-16 to -20	200% of local market value
-11 to -15	150% of local market value
-6 to -10	125% of local market value
-3 to -5	110% of local market value
-2 to +2	At local market value
+3 to +5	90% of local market value
+6 to +10	85% of local market value
+11 to +15	75% of local market value
+16 to +20	65% of local market value
+21 or more	50% of local market value

Characters also can employ bargain to "pay" another person to behave dishonorably, such as through ignoring duty, looking the other way, or divulging secret information. Success depends greatly on the target. A target who is loyal or wealthy or fears being caught is less likely to accept bribes. Use the difficulties listed under "Interaction Skills" further modified by such factors as the value of the money, goods, or information offered, the extent of favors given and received, and the target's attitude toward the bribe.

VALUE OF BRIBE MODIFIER	
Less than 50% of what is reasonable	+10
50% to 90% of what is reasonable	+5
Larger than expected	-5
Significantly larger than expected	-10

Brawling (Agility)

This skill is used whenever the character tries to attack an opponent using his hands or feet. When he uses hand-to-hand weapons, then he must use the *melee weapons* skill. Fighting with other kinds of weapons requires use of the appropriate skill.

Bureaucracy (Knowledge)

This skill governs information about the process of dealing with the rules and regulations of any given government or authority. This skill is used when cutting through red tape or getting officials to waive the enforcement of a particular rule. When a character is looking for a particular piece of information regarding *bureaucracy* (e.g., "How do I get around rules and regulations?"), use the following to determine the difficulty number:

Very Easy (5): Something virtually anybody would know (you can bribe people)

Easy (10): Common knowledge (Extent officials are hard to bribe)

Moderate (15): Something not widely known (what a particular official might be in the market for or what might make him eager to flex the rules in your favor)

Difficult (20): Something requiring specialized knowledge of the subject (knowing specific loopholes in regulations that you can use to your benefit)

Very Difficult (30): Something only an expert would know (how to get even the prickliest Cadre official to let you past a bureaucratic roadblock)

Business (Knowledge)

This skill governs the art and science of cutting a business deal. This skill is used whenever buying, selling or trading something. When a character is looking for a particular piece of information regarding commerce, use the following to determine the difficulty number:

Very Easy (5): Something virtually anybody would know (buy low, sell high)

Easy (10): Common knowledge (the general, current state of a given market)

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Moderate (15): Something not widely known (where the market is likely to head in the near future)

Difficult (20): Something requiring specialized knowledge of the subject (specific trends and developments that are affecting prices and availability)

Very Difficult (30): Something only an expert would know (how to sell a set of gills to a fish)

Climb/Jump (Strength)

This skill is used for scaling sheer surfaces, traversing vertical environments, and for leaping up and over obstacles. Note that in climbing and carrying 50% or more of the character's body weight slows the character down by two meters or more per round.

CLIMB CONDITION MODIFIERS	
Taking care in climbing	-5
Less than a 90-degree angle	-3
Less than a 60-degree angle	-6
Less than a 45-degree angle	-9
Prepared for climbing	-6
Carrying 25% of body weight	+3
Carrying 50% of body weight	+6
Carrying 100% of body weight	+15
Many handholds	–10

JUMP CONDITION MODIFIERS	
Flat surface to flat surface	0
Unlimited landing area	-5
Limited landing area	+5
Almost no landing area	+10
Rough, slick, or unsteady landing area	+3 or more
Uphill (more than 30 degrees)	+6
Carrying 50% of own weight	+6
Carrying 75% of own weight	+9
Carrying 100% of own weight	+12

Communications (Mechanical)

Gamemasters can rely on the "Observation Difficulties" chart on the next page for situations involving the gathering of information. They can be used as difficulties to beat or as a means of reading the results of a dice toss.

To see if a character notices details of a scene or situation, the gamemaster may have the player make a *Perception* roll. Unless the characters are actively eavesdropping, searching, tracking, or performing a similar activity (and thus using the search skill), this passive observance of a scene does not count as an action. Use the "Observation Difficulties" chart as a guideline for how much the character notices. If the skill total meets or beats the difficulty, the character gains that much information.

Observation Difficulties

Very Easy (5): Noticing obvious, generic facts; casual glance

Easy (10): Noticing obvious details (ex. number of people)

Moderate (15): Noticing a few less obvious details (ex. gist of conversation)

Difficult (20): Spotting a few specific details (ex. identities of individuals)

Very Difficult (25): Spotting a few obscure details (ex. specifics of conversation)

Heroic (30+): Noticing many obscure details

Command (Perception)

Command governs the act of convincing individuals to comply with specific directions, as well as maintaining morale during group undertakings (such as combat or building large pieces of equipment). This skill is typically used only with the gamemaster's characters, though sometime it may be attempted with players' characters (such situations should be roleplayed first, with a bonus or penalty to the *command*

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roll based on how well the group participated in the activity together). A high *command* roll can complement individual participants' rolls in a group activity, while a low *command* roll can impose negative modifiers. It generally requires at least one round of planning to perform effectively.

Characters can use this skill to combine their attacks. One person is designated the leader and makes the *command* roll. If successful, everyone goes on the leader's initiative. Participants make their attacks with the hit location modifier (to reflect that they're aiming for a designated location), but the target resists the combined total of all damage done it. If the *command* roll fails, determine initiative and actions individually.

Complexity Difficulty

Very Easy (5): Uncomplicated; imprecise

Easy (10): Minimal precision required

Moderate (15): Requires effort or precision

Difficult (20): Requires high degree of precision

Very Difficult (25): Requires much effort or extreme precision

Heroic (30+): Requires care and thoughtfulness, or exacting precision

TEAM MODIFIERS	
All members willing to follow leader's orders no matter what	-20
All members willing to sacrifice life for others	-15
Trained together frequently to work as unit	-10
Trained together briefly to work as unit	-5
Work together regularly, or willing to work together	0
Worked together on a few occasions	+5
Seldom work together	+10
Never worked together before, or more than half of the members hate each other	+15
No interest in working together, all members despise each other, or members can't communicate with each other	+20

Computer Interface (Technical)

This skill incorporates the programming, expertise and overall wherewithal to use a computer terminal in order to obtain information, remotely control equipment that is linked to that particular network, and other such activities.

Interfacing Difficulties

Very Easy (5): Accessing an open database to get commonly available public information

Easy (10): Bypassing minimal network security to get unprotected data

Moderate (15): hacking through a protected network to get at hidden or secured information; remotely accessing and operating networked technology.

Difficult (20): hacking into a highly protected network (i.e., military mainframe) or remotely controlling complex machinery.

Very Difficult (25): hacking into a network protected by a persona construct. Remotely controlling large-scale tech, like a nanofoundry.

Heroic (30+): hacking into an alien computer (or what passes for one, anyway). Somehow figuring out a way to hack into some poor bastard's nanotech mods

Computer Repair (Technical)

Though there are many different kinds of repair skills, they all follow the same principles. The amount of damage sustained, the character's familiarity with the item, availability of parts, and complexity of the task can modify the difficulty. The gamemaster

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may require a separate roll to determine whether the character can figure out how to repair an unknown item. Destroyed parts must be replaced, which raises the difficulty. Additionally, if a hero rushes the job, not only is there an increased chance of failure, but the item could also break again soon after its next use.

REPAIR DIFFICULTIES

Easy (10): Light repairs or modifications

Moderate (15): Heavy repairs or modifications

Difficult (20): Extensive repairs or modifications

Very Difficult (25): Near-total reconstruction

Heroic (30+): Complete reconstruction.

REPAIR MODIFIERS	
-10	Previously built or modified the item; intimately familiar with item
-5	Has item's designs
+/-0	Common item
+5	Has seen but not used item
+10	Has never seen item
+/-0	All parts available
+10	Some parts available
+20	No parts available
+/-0	Correct tools (tool kits themselves might provide their own bonuses)
+15	Makeshift tools

The above repair modifiers are ubiquitious, applying to all repair skills.

Con (Perception)

The *con* skill is used to trick, dupe, befuddle or otherwise fool somebody into doing something that they might not ordinarily do, or into believing a deception. Cons can be simple or complicated; generally speaking, a simple con (bluffing your way past a guard) takes only one round. Very complicated *cons* (aka "long cons") can take hours, days or even weeks to set up. The GM should determine how much time an attempted *con* should require.

Cultures (Knowledge)

This skill governs understanding of the various ways of life present within Septimus as well as across the Seventh Empire. This skill is used to understand a particular aspect of a particular culture, which in turn can be used to get along with people of that culture. When looking for for a particular piece of cultural information, use the following to determine the difficulty number:

Very Easy (5): Something virtually anybody would know (The Sindavar Extent is into technology.)

Easy (10): Common knowledge (The Extent promotes the use of nanotech even though it has fallen out of favor in the rest of the Empire.)

Moderate (15): Something not widely known (the philosophical differences between the general aims of the Sindavar Extant and its radical offshoot, the Cadre)

Difficult (20): Something requiring specialized knowledge of the subject (The inner workings of obscure subcultures within the Grayscale)

Very Difficult (30): Something only an expert would know (the secret doctrines of the Cadre's inner circle)

Demolitions (Technical)

The base difficulty is 5. For extra damage and special effects, the character must spend one round per difficulty number setting up the explosives. The character also

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Base Difficulties

Easy (10): Conning somebody who is completely unprepared for it (i.e., a dimwitted or distracted guard)

Moderate (15): Conning somebody who is not actively trying to see through the con, but who is naturally suspicious (i.e., an alert guard)

Difficult (20): Conning somebody who is actively on guard against conning attempts (i.e., a guard expecting conning attempts)

Note: Die rolls alone should not determine interactions between players' and gamemaster's characters. Gamemasters should have their players detail what their characters say and do to before rolling the dice. The better the player acts the role of his character, the greater his chance of success should be, which gamemasters can reflect by allowing up to a +1D modifier to the skill roll. Likewise, the characters being conned may try to actively defend against it, in which case they may roll their *willpower* skill and apply the result as a difficulty modifier to the person attempting the con.

CON INTERACTION MODIFIERS	
Target is friendly or trusting	-5
Target is neutral toward character or of equal standing	0
Target is hostile or has superior standing	+5
Target is an enemy	+10
Target is in weakened position	-10
Request is something target would do anyway or target feels is of minor importance	0
Request is illegal or highly dangerous	+10

DISGUISE MODIFIERS	
Specific person	+15
Other sex	+6
Different race or species	+3
Great age difference	+3
Much larger build	+5
Much smaller build	+10
Resembles the disguise already	-5
Using skill on another character	+6
Using skill unaided	+3

needs to indicate how much explosive she's using. If the attempt is successful, compare the skill total with the object's damage resistance total (its toughness modified by size, thickness, flaws, supports, etc.). Items that take at least 10 points above their damage resistance total are severely damaged, if not destroyed. Items taking less than that are weakened, and another attempt may be made (with the object having a reduced damage resistance total and possibly other problems).

Remember that, while a character may think an object is constructed of one type of material, it may not be. Though this does not alter the difficulty of setting the explosive, it may change the results of special effects. For instance, an explosive set for thin wood won't do much good if that's only veneer for reinforced steel.

Demolition Difficulties

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Very Easy (5): Setting a time bomb to go off

Easy (10): Rigging a bomb to a vehicle so it explodes the next time it starts

Moderate (15): Blowing something open without leaving permanent marks or burns

Difficult (20): Rigging an explosion so its force goes in a specific direction

Very Difficult (25): Rigging an explosion so that only a certain, small piece of a much larger object is damaged

Heroic (30+): Rigging a chain of explosions, each set for a specific effect

TARGET FAMILIARITY MODIFIERS	
Very familiar or common (tree, wall)	0
Familiar (bulkhead, bridge support)	+5
Unfamiliar (building of unknown construction)	+10
Completely unknown item or construction	+20 or more

OBJECT CONSTRUCTION TOUGHNESS	
Flimsy (plywood door)	1D
Tough (hard wooden door, most guns)	2D
Sturdy (bolted steel door, personal safe)	3D
Very sturdy (a few layers of steel)	4D
Reinforced (numerous layers of steel)	6D

Dodge (Agility)

See the combat rules in the D6 System chapter for the difficulty to use combat skills such as dodging.

Exoskeleton Operation (Mechanical)

Operating an exoskeleton (the "power" element of powered armor) is much like piloting a vehicle. It has a sense of reaction and tolerances all its own that requires skill, practice and finesse to handle. The rules on piloting vehicles apply to operating an exoskeleton; use your skill die code for *exoskeleton operation* when trying to pull off piloting stunts within a exoskeleton.

Exoskeleton Repair (Technical)

Though there are many different kinds of repair skills, they all follow the same principles. The amount of damage sustained, the character's familiarity with the item, availability of parts, and complexity of the task can modify the difficulty. The gamemaster may require a separate roll to determine

REPAIR MODIFIERS	
-10	Previously built or modified the item; intimately familiar with item
-5	Has item's designs
+/-0	Common item
+5	Has seen but not used item
+10	Has never seen item
+/-0	All parts available
+10	Some parts available
+20	No parts available
+/-0	Correct tools (tool kits themselves might provide their own bonuses)
+15	Makeshift tools

The above repair modifiers are ubiquitious, applying to all repair skills.

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whether the character can figure out how to repair an unknown item. Destroyed parts must be replaced, which raises the difficulty. Additionally, if a hero rushes the job, not only is there an increased chance of failure, but the item could also break again soon after its next use.

Repair Difficulties

Easy (10): Light repairs or modifications

Moderate (15): Heavy repairs or modifications

Difficult (20): Extensive repairs or modifications

Very Difficult (25): Near-total reconstruction

Heroic (30+): Complete reconstruction

Firearms Repair (Technical)

This skill is used to repair the damage done to firearms weaponry as well as clear jams, eject misfired rounds, etc. The amount of damage sustained, the character's familiarity with the item, availability of parts, and complexity of the task can modify the difficulty. The gamemaster may require a separate roll to determine whether the character can figure out how to repair an unknown item. Destroyed parts must be replaced, which raises the difficulty. Additionally, if a hero rushes the job, not only is there an increased chance of failure, but the item could also break again soon after its next use.

Repair Difficulties

Easy (10): Light repairs or modifications

Moderate (15): Heavy repairs or modifications

Difficult (20): Extensive repairs or modifications

Very Difficult (25): Near-total reconstruction

Heroic (30+): Complete reconstructionn

Flight Systems Repair (Technical)

This skill is used to repair damage to the flight controls of any kind of vehicle, armor and even starships. The amount of damage sustained, the character's familiarity with the item, availability of parts, and complexity of the task can modify the difficulty. The gamemaster may require a separate roll to determine whether the character can figure out how to repair an unknown item. Destroyed parts must be replaced, which raises the difficulty. Additionally, if a hero rushes the job, not only is there an increased chance of failure, but the item could also break again soon after its next use.

Repair Difficulties

Easy (10): Light repairs or modifications

Moderate (15): Heavy repairs or modifications

Difficult (20): Extensive repairs or modifications

Very Difficult (25): Near-total reconstruction

Heroic (30+): Complete reconstruction

Flying/0-G (Agility)

This skill is used for flying personally (i.e., by using certain kinds of modification or psionic powers) or for moving oneself in zero-gravity environments. Use your skill die code for rolling against the various movement modifiers that apply against any particular stunts you wish to try when flying. For a full description of flying modifiers and difficulty numbers, check out the D6 System chapter.

Forgery (Perception)

The *artist* skill may complement this skill, or the gamemaster may require it to be used instead, with the appropriate *forgery* modifiers applied. Reduce the amount of time spent on creating a *forgery* if the char-

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acter has repeatedly succeeded at making similar items in the past. Difficulty numbers for forging items are:

Forgery Difficulties

Very Easy (5): Hard to read scrawl without a discernable style

Easy (10): Unofficial note or correspondence

Moderate (15): Somebody's signature

Difficult (20): Official document (identification documents, ship's manifest)

Very Difficult (25): Classified government documents

Heroic (30+): A top-secret document or a public document widely known and scrutinized

FAMILIARITY MODIFIERS	
Intimately familiar or has sample	-10
Somewhat familiar; has seen it quite often	-5
Passingly familiar	0
Have only had it described	+5
Guessing blindly	+15

TOOLS MODIFIERS	
Have necessary tools and some special ones	-5
Have necessary tools	0
Have some tools	+5
Missing important tools	+10 or more

The *forgery* skill can also be used to detect forgeries. This has its own set of difficulty numbers and modifiers, as described below:

Forgery Detection Difficulties

Very Easy (5): Inspector is the creator of the forged item

Easy (10): Inspector is intimately familiar with forged item

Moderate (15): Inspector is moderately familiar with forged item

Difficult (20): Inspector is unfamiliar with forged item

Very Difficult (25): Inspector is unfamiliar with this entire type of item

Heroic (30+): Inspector has never seen anything remotely like the forged item

FORGERY DETECTION MODIFIERS	
Have a sample on hand	-5
Have special tools for detecting forgeries	-5
Item is poorly forged	0
Item well forged	+5

REPAIR MODIFIERS	
-10	Previously built or modified the item; intimately familiar with item
-5	Has item's designs
+/-0	Common item
+5	Has seen but not used item
+10	Has never seen item
+/-0	All parts available
+10	Some parts available
+20	No parts available
+/-0	Correct tools (tool kits themselves might provide their own bonuses)
+15	Makeshift tools

The above repair modifiers are ubiquitious, applying to all repair skills.

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Gambling (Perception)

Gambling doesn't affect games that are purely random, but does influence games with an element of strategy, like poker. When gambling against each other, all characters make opposed *gambling* rolls, without spending Character or Fate Points, and the highest roll wins. If one of the characters does not have the gambling skill, then use their perception attribute instead. A character may cheat by using Character or Fate Points on the roll, and the GM may give bonuses to rolls for people looking for a cheater or helping the cheater. The GM should consider as many "angles" as possible when using the *gambling* skill and add these as modifiers to one or more participants' rolls.

Genotechnology (Technical)

This skill is used to identify, implement and even design genotechnological modifications. Genotech specialists are a rare breed, often highly devoted to their work; this is not the kind of skill that is usually taken by those with a casual interest in the science of *genotechnology*. Using this skill is subject to the following difficulties:

Genotech Difficulties

Very Easy (5): Knowing basic knowledge of a given genotech mod

Easy (10): Advanced knowledge of a given genotech mod; IDing a mod on sight

Moderate (15): Installing a standard genotech mod

Difficult (20): Removing a genotech mod

Very Difficult (25): Modifying a standard genotech mod

Heroic (30+): Designing an entirely new genotech mod

Gunnery (Mechanical)

Gunnery skill is used to fire weapons mounted on spacecraft, such as heavy missile systems, torpedo launchers, fusion guns and laser batteries. Some of these weapons can be confused with similar weapons systems on smaller vehicles. Just to avoid confusion, if it's mounted on a spaceship, no matter how big the spaceship is, then use the gunnery skill. If the weapon is mounted on armor or any vehicle other than a spaceship, then use the *heavy weapons* skill. And if the weapon can be handheld, use the *firearms* skill.

While more detailed rules on hitting your target are covered under the combat rules of this game, the basic difficulties for *gunplay* can be found below. Keep in mind that the ranges for each weapon in this game vary, so be sure you know what your range really is before rolling. A target at a pulse cannon's long range might only be at a missile's medium or short range.

GUNNERY DIFFICULTIES	
Very Easy/Point Blank Range	5
Easy/Short Range	10
Moderate/Medium Range	15
Difficult/Long Range	20
Very Difficult/Very Long Range	25
Heroic/Out of Range	30+

Gunnery Repair (Technical)

This skill is used to repair damage to the weaponry and fire control systems of any kind of ship-mounted weaponry. It can also be used to repair malfunctioning missiles or weapon systems. The amount of damage sustained, the character's familiarity with the item, availability of parts, and complexity of the task can modify the difficulty. The GM may require a separate roll to determine whether the character can figure out how to repair an unknown item. Destroyed parts must be replaced, which raises the difficulty. Additionally, if a hero rushes the job, not only is there an increased chance of failure, but the item could also break again soon after its next use.

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REPAIR DIFFICULTIES		
Easy	Light repairs or modifications	10
Moderate	Heavy repairs or modifications	15
Difficult	Extensive repairs or modifications	20
Very Difficult	Near-total reconstruction	25
Heroic	Complete reconstruction	30+

Gunplay (Agility)

This skill is used whenever you are trying to shoot somebody or something with any kind of firearm that is man-portable (i.e., not mounted on a vehicle or armor). For firing weapons mounted on armor or vehicles, use the *heavy weapons* skill. For firing weapons mounted on spacecraft, use the *gunnery* skill.

While more detailed rules on hitting your target are covered under the combat rules of this game, the basic difficulties for gunplay can be found below. Keep in mind that the ranges for each weapon in this game vary, so be sure you know what your range really is before rolling. A target at a pistol's long range might only be at a rifle's medium or short range.

GUNPLAY DIFFICULTIES	
Very Easy/Point Blank Range	5
Easy/Short Range	10
Moderate/Medium Range	15
Difficult/Long Range	20
Very Difficult/Very Long Range	25
Heroic/Out of Range	30+

Heavy Weapons (Agility)

This skill is used whenever you are trying to shoot somebody or something with any kind of firearm that is mounted on armor or vehicles. For firing man-portable weapons of any kind, use the *gunplay* skill. For firing weapons mounted on spacecraft, use the *gunnery* skill.

While more detailed rules on hitting your target are covered under the combat rules of this game, the basic difficulties for gunplay can be found below. Keep in mind that the ranges for each weapon in this game vary, so be sure you know what your range really is before rolling. A target at a wing gun's long range might only be at a cluster rocket's medium or short range.

HEAVY WEAPONS DIFFICULTIES	
Very Easy/Point Blank Range	5
Easy/Short Range	10
Moderate/Medium Range	15
Difficult/Long Range	20
Very Difficult/Very Long Range	25
Heroic/Out of Range	30+

Hide (Perception)

The difficulty for a *hide* attempt is usually the opponent's *Perception* or *search*, either as a die roll (if the opponent is actively trying to find the object or person) or as a derived value equal to the number in front of the "D" in the opponent's attribute or skill times 2 and add the pips.

CONDITION MODIFIERS	
Heavy rain or snow	-3
Dawn, dusk, fog, many trees, large crowd, etc.	-2
Night	-5
Inattentive observer	-5
Dense concealment (thick jungle, crowd of people in costume)	-5
Many distractions (party, parade, combat)	-5
Attentive observer	+6
Open terrain	+6
Good lighting	+6
Several observers	+9

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Intimidation (Knowledge)

The *intimidation* skill is used to frighten opponents, defusing their intent to enter into combat or to otherwise resist the will of the character doing the intimidating. Generally speaking, *intimidation* attempts only take a single round; a look of the eye, a well-timed phrase, and a general demeanor can all get the job done within single round. However, using intimidate under longer-term circumstances (such as during interrogation as described below), the intimidation attempt might take minutes or even hours. The GM should determine how much time an attempted *intimidation* should require.

Base Difficulties

Very Easy (5): Scaring the crap out of a coward

Easy (10): Rattling somebody who was inclined to do what you wanted anyway

Moderate (15): Spooking somebody who is no pushover, and who is evenly matched with the character

Difficult (20): Cowing somebody who is a stated enemy or who has a slight upper hand over the character

Very Difficult (25): Intimidating somebody who has a clear upper hand over the character

Heroic (30+): Intimidating somebody who would have no reason to even feel threatened by the character

Note: Die rolls alone should not determine interactions between players' and GM characters. GMs should have their players detail what their characters say and do to before rolling the dice. The better the player acts the role of his character, the greater his chance of success should be, which GMs can reflect by allowing up to a +1D modifier to the skill roll. Likewise, the characters being conned may try to actively defend against it, in which case they may roll their *willpower* skill and apply the result as a difficulty modifier to the person attempting the *con*.

Using Intimidate In Combat

Intimidation can enhance a character's attacks and defenses. The player adds one-half of the difference (positive or negative) between the difficulty and the intimidation roll to any one attack or defense attempt (not both) made at point blank or short range. The character must use the benefit from scaring the target on the same turn as or on the round after the interaction endeavor. The user's appearance and demeanor can also affect *persuasion*, *con*, or *intimidation* attempts. The more threatening the character looks or seems, the more effective *intimidation* attempts are. Ultimately, however, it is up to the GM to decide how much the *intimidation* attempt affects its target.

INTERROGATION MODIFIERS	
-10	Subject feels information is unimportant
+-/0	Subject feels information is of minor importance
+5	Subject feels information is important
+10	Subject feels information is very important
+10 or more	Subject would rather die than reveal information

Interrogation Vs. Torture

Note that there is a difference between interrogating someone and torturing someone. If a character resorts to torture, he will eventually get the subject to talk; everybody has a breaking point. Whether the person will actually tell the truth at that point is questionable, since a broken subject might tell whatever he thinks the torturer wants to hear just to make the pain stop. Torture is a grim activity that has the same rules as interrogation, except a failed roll automatically increases the subject's wound

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level by one step. Keep failing, and you'll eventually kill the subject. The GM may wish to assign Corruption points to torturers. It's not something heroes do.

Investigation (Perception)

When used to research a topic, a separate roll must be made for each source checked.

Investigation Difficulties

Very Easy (5): Verifying something you already knew

Easy (10): Common knowledge

Moderate (15): Requires searching through several sources; introductory theories

Difficult (20): Sources are of varying reliability; cutting-edge information; specific information about harmless individual or event

Very Difficult (25): Esoteric information; specific information about dangerous individual or event

Heroic (30+): Information that has people have made extended efforts to purge from record

INVESTIGATION MODIFIERS	
Information closely guarded	+5
Character unsure of information sought	+5
Character knows exactly what information is sought	-5

Know-How (Perception)

To use this skill to help with an activity covered by another skill (which the character does not have), the character spends the round before examining the situation, performing no other actions, and making a roll of this skill versus the difficulty set for the action. The character gets neither the unskilled modifier nor the preparing modifier. Within the next 30 seconds (six rounds), the character may add the difference between the difficulty and the *know-how* skill roll to total roll for the attribute dictated by the actual skill required. The character may not use this skill in place of a skill she already has. The GM may limit the number of times per hour this skill may be used on the same action.

Languages (Knowledge)

The common language of the Seventh Empire is called Basic. Almost everyone speaks it, so communication is normally not a problem. However, some areas of the galaxy have fallen so far afield of the Empire or were so isolated to begin with that the locals speak an offshoot of Basic that is the equivalent of a different language. There are also cultures and factions throughout known space that have devised their own languages either to express a unique culture or more commonly, so that members of that group might communicate in a secure fashion. (This is particularly true of powerful commercial guilds, military groups, and cultural enclaves such as the Sindavar Extent.)

The *languages* skill is used to determine whether a character can understand what someone says when speaking a language other than Basic. There are two ways you can handle this.

There is the realistic way that requires bookkeeping: when someone says something in a strange language, make a skill roll for anyone who overhears. If a character's roll is higher than the difficulty number, he understands the language. Make the player write the name of the language down on his character sheet, so if he ever runs into it again, he'll know that he knows the language. Difficulty numbers are:

Very Easy (5): A dialect or slang version of Basic

Easy (10): A common language related to Basic

Moderate (15): A common language

Difficult (20): An obscure language

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Very Difficult (25): An extremely obscure language

Heroic (30+): Any code language

There is also an unrealistic way of resolving language rolls, but it's simple. Even though people speak different languages in the Seventh Empire, most of the time they understand each other anyway. When a character says something in a non-Basic language, determine a difficulty number. Difficulty numbers are:

Very Easy (5): Saying something very simple ("No.")

Easy (10): Saying something simple ("I have a bad feeling about this.")

Moderate (15): Saying something of average complexity ("The ammo's getting low.")

Difficult (20): Saying something complex: ("If I had known that the hyperspace depression around this sphere was one-way, I would have stayed home.")

Very Difficult (25): Using complex, technical terms ("The mantle of the surface consists largely of diorite and feldspar, although upwellings from the artificial aesthenosphere have produced volcanic hotspots and seismic activity one would normally find on a typical terrestrial planet or moon.")

Heroic (30+): Using an archaic, forgotten or otherwise rare form of the language ("Whan that Aprill with his shoures sote / The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote / And bathed euery veyne in swich licour / Of which vertue engendred is the flour…")

The more complex or obscure the thought the speaker is trying to express, the higher the difficulty number. Anyone who hears the statement should make a skill roll. Anyone who rolls higher than the difficulty number understands the statement. This way, anyone can understand any non-Basic speaker at least some of the time.

Lift (Strength)

At the GM's discretion, a player may make a *lift* check when his character first picks up an object. Generally, if the object's weight would give it a difficulty equal to or greater than one-half of the character's *lift* rounded up, or the object is being lifted hastily or under stress, the GM should require a *lift* roll. For each round the object is carried, the character makes another check to see if she can continue to carry the object. If the player fails the roll, her character is too exhausted and must put the object down. If the character is doing anything else at the time (other than walking slowly or talking), continuing to carry the object counts as a multi- action.

WEIGHT DIFFICULTIES	
1 kg	1
10 kg	3
50 kg	7
100 kg	12
120 kg	13
200 kg	17
250 kg	18
500 kg	23
750 kg	28
1,000 kg (1 ton)	33
1,100–2000 kg (+1 to base of 33 per 100 kg over 1000 kg)	34-43
2,500–10,000 kg (+1 to base of 43 per 500 kg over 2000 kg)	44.59
15,000–100,000 kg (+1 per to base of 59 per 5000 kg over 10,000 kg)	60-77

The gamemaster may further subdivide the lift chart if desired to include weights for difficulties not listed here.

LIFTING TIME MODIFIERS	
+/-0	1–6 rounds
-5	7 rounds to 3 minutes

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-10	3–10 minutes
-15	10–30 minutes
-20	30–60 minutes

Note: After the first hour, the character must make a check once per hour at the same difficulty as one hour. If the character fails the roll, then she must rest for twice as long as she was lifting the weight.

Medicine (Technical)

This skill is used to stabilize injuries, to heal wounds and to cure illness. For difficulty numbers, modifiers and time required to implement this skill, please refer back to the healing section of the D6 System chapter.

Melee Combat (Agility)

This skill is used to wield hand-to-hand combat weapons such as knives, clubs and whips. When fighting using nothing more than your hands and feet, use the *brawling* skill. To hit an opponent in *melee combat*, the weapon used will have a difficulty number that must be met or beaten to score a hit. Opposing characters may use their *melee combat* or their *dodge* skill to add to the attacker's difficulty number.

Missile Weapons (Agility)

Missile weapons skill is used to fire any kind of "simple" projectile weapon that uses purely mechanical means of propelling its ammunition. Slingshots, bows and spring-loaded weapons all require the use of *missile weapons*. Size makes no difference; *missile weapons* would also be used for siege devices such as large ballistae (huge crossbows), catapults, and trebuchets. For guns and more sophisticated projectile weapons, use the *gunplay* skill.

MISSILE WEAPONS DIFFICULTIES	
Very Easy/Point Blank Range	5
Easy/Short Range	10
Moderate/Medium Range	15
Difficult/Long Range	20
Very Difficult/Very Long Range	25
Heroic/Out of Range	30+

Navigation (Mechanical)

This skill is used for finding one's way on any terrestrial environment, whether it be on land, water or while flying. *Navigation* while traveling through space requires the use of the *astrogation* skill. The base difficulty for *navigation* is 10, subject to the following modifiers:

NAVIGATIONAL MODIFIERS	
No idea which way is north	+10
General idea which way is north	+0
Familiar with terrain	+0
Terrain completely foreign	+5
Completely lost	+10
Have a compass or similar navigational tools	-5
Plotting a simple course	+0
Plotting a complex course	+6
Plotting a dangerous course	+9
Determine exact location	+15

CONDITION MODIFIERS	
Have a poorly drawn map	+1D
Have a sketchy but accurate map	+2D
Have a well-drawn map	+3D
Have a misleading or purposely inaccurate map (and don't know it)	-1D

Nanotechnology (Technical)

This skill is used to identify, implement and even design nanotechnological modifications. Nanotech specialists are a rare breed, often highly devoted to their work; this is not the kind of skill that is usually

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taken by those with a casual interest in the science of *nanotechnology*. Using this skill is subject to the following difficulties:

Nanotech Difficulties

Very Easy (5): Having basic knowledge of a given nanotech mod

Easy (10): Advanced knowledge of a given nanotech mod; IDing a mod on sight

Moderate (15): Installing a standard nanotech mod

Difficult (20): Removing a nanotech mod

Very Difficult (25): Modifying a standard nanotech mod

Heroic (30+): Designing an entirely new nanotech mod

Personal Equipment Repair (Technical)

Though there are many different kinds of repair skills, they all follow the same principles. The amount of damage sustained, the character's familiarity with the item, availability of parts, and complexity of the task can modify the difficulty. The gamemaster may require a separate roll to determine whether the character can figure out how to repair an unknown item. Destroyed parts must be replaced, which raises the difficulty. Additionally, if a hero rushes the job, not only is there an increased chance of failure, but the item could also break again soon after its next use.

Repair Difficulties

Easy (10): Light repairs or modifications

Moderate (15): Heavy repairs or modifications

Difficult (20): Extensive repairs or modifications

Very Difficult (25): Near-total reconstruction

Heroic (30+): Complete reconstruction

REPAIR MODIFIERS	
-10	Previously built or modified the item; intimately familiar with item
-5	Has item's designs
+/-0	Common item
+5	Has seen but not used item
+10	Has never seen item
+/-0	All parts available
+10	Some parts available
+20	No parts available
+/-0	Correct tools (tool kits themselves might provide their own bonuses)
+15	Makeshift tools

The above repair modifiers are ubiquitious, applying to all repair skills.

Persuasion (Perception)

The *persuasion* skill is used to convince opponents into doing what you want them to, making them unwilling agents of your character, even if only for a few seconds. Some persuasion attempts only take a single round while others might take more extended efforts. The GM should determine how much time an attempted *intimidation* should require.

Persuasion Difficulties

Very Easy (5): Persuading your biggest fan

Easy (10): Persuading somebody already friendly toward you

Moderate (15): Persuading somebody who is neutral toward you

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Difficult (20): Persuading somebody who is unfriendly toward you

Very Difficult (25): Persuading somebody who is violently hostile toward you

Heroic (30+): Persuading somebody who has sworn to destroy you

Note: Die rolls alone should not determine interactions between players' and GM characters. GMs should have their players detail what their characters say and do to before rolling the dice. The better the player acts the role of his character, the greater his chance of success should be, which GMs can reflect by allowing up to a +1D modifier to the skill roll. Likewise, the characters being conned may try to actively defend against it, in which case they may roll their *willpower* skill and apply the result as a difficulty modifier to the person attempting the con.

Using Persuasion In Combat

Persuasion can enhance a character's attacks and defenses. The player adds one-half of the difference (positive or negative) between the difficulty and the *intimidation* roll to any one attack or defense attempt (not both) made at point blank or short range. The character must use the benefit from persuading the target on the same turn as or on the round after the interaction endeavor. The user's appearance and demeanor can also affect *persuasion*, con, or *intimidation* attempts. The less threatening the character looks or seems, the more effective *persuasion* attempts are. Ultimately, however, it is up to the GM to decide how much the *persuasion* attempt affects its target.

PERSUASION MODIFIERS	
-10	Subject feels information is unimportant
+-/0	Subject feels information is of minor importance
+5	Subject feels information is important
+10	Subject feels information is very important
+10 or more	Subject would rather die than reveal information

Piloting (Mechanical)

This skill is used for driving any kind of aerial vehicle or spacecraft; use your skill die code for *piloting* when trying to pull off *piloting* stunts within a exoskeleton. For more details, refer to the Movement section of the D6 System chapter.

Riding (Agility)

When a character first mounts a rideable animal, she must make a *riding* roll against the creature's *willpower* roll (the GM generates this). The character's *riding* total may be modified by the attitude of the animal toward the character. The character stays in control if she ties or beats the beast's roll. If she fails, consult the table below for what occurs. When attempting to get the beast to perform a special maneuver or during events that might frighten it, the character must also roll against the animal's *Knowledge* or *willpower*. Examples of special maneuvers include jumping a fence, crossing a raging river, moving faster, or slowing down quickly. The success of special maneuvers are determined with the animal's attributes or skills. A character attacking from the back of a beast takes a multi-action penalty for having to both control the mount and use a weapon.

ANIMAL'S ATTITUDE TOWARD CHARACTER SKILL MODIFIER	
+5	Friendly or trusting
+/-0	Neutral
-5	Hostile or wounded

RIDING RESULT

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1–2	Beast stops and refuses to move for 1 round.
3–6	Beast stops and refuses to move for 2 rounds.
7–11	Beast bolts in a random direction for 1D rounds.
12+	Beast bucks rider; rider must make a Moderate riding roll to avoid being thrown off.

Robotics Interface (Technical)

Most robots do not have attributes, though sophisticated ones might. Instead, skills and their specializations represent the tasks a robot can perform. The programmer must have a means of inputting information into the robot, such as a computer terminal or hand computer. The time taken depends upon the complexity of the task; a Very Easy (5) program might take only half an hour to program, but a Very Difficult (25) one might take days or weeks to program. Once the robot has the basic skill, skill cartridges, scholarchips, or additional programming can upgrade it.

Programming Difficulties

Very Easy (5): Specialization of a skill (first 1D); Additional +1 pip in previously programmed skill

Easy (10): Additional +1 pip in previously programmed specialization

Moderate (15): Full skill (first 1D); additional +1 pip in previously programmed attribute; Reformatting main memory (not hardwired memory)

Very Hard (25): An attribute (first 1D)

SITUATION MODIFIERS	
Each additional pip of skill, specialization, or attribute programmed at same time	+2
Hardwired program (cannot be deleted by reformatting)	+30
Reprogramming hardwired programs	+30

REPAIR MODIFIERS	
-10	Previously built or modified the item; intimately familiar with item
-5	Has item's designs
+/-0	Common item
+5	Has seen but not used item
+10	Has never seen item
+/-0	All parts available
+10	Some parts available
+20	No parts available
+/-0	Correct tools (tool kits themselves might provide their own bonuses)
+15	Makeshift tools

The above repair modifiers are ubiquitious, applying to all repair skills.

Robotics Repair (Technical)

This skill governs the inspection, maintenance, repair and mechanical modification to robots. Changing their programming or behavior requires the use of the *computer interface* skill. The amount of damage sustained, the character's familiarity with the robot, availability of parts, and complexity of the task can modify the difficulty. The GM may require a separate roll to determine whether the character can figure out how to repair an unknown item. Destroyed parts must be replaced, which raises the difficulty. Additionally, if a hero rushes the job, not only is there an increased chance of failure, but the item could also break again soon after its next use.

Repair Difficulties

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Easy (10): Light repairs or modifications

Moderate (15): Heavy repairs or modifications

Difficult (20): Extensive repairs or modifications

Very Difficult (25): Near-total reconstruction

Heroic (30+): Complete reconstructio

Running (Agility)

Difficulties for this skill is included in the movement section of the D6 System chapter. Unless otherwise stated or modified, a character's base Move is 10.

Scholar (Knowledge)

This skill governs in-depth understanding of a particular topic or subject. Scholastic knowledge is generally academic in nature — "book knowledge" rather than "street knowledge." With that in mind, the best application of this skill is usually in an academic or intellectual environment, when research in the topic at hand might be called for or when searching for an obscure fact regarding a specific topic. When characters take this skill, they should specify what topic they have studied. Good examples might include the noble history of the Aedos dynasty, comparative philosophies of secessionist star systems, or the history of economic development in the Imperial core. When facing a particular scholastic challenge, use the following to determine the difficulty number:

Very Easy (5): something virtually anybody would know (There are different kinds of literature within the Seventh Empire.)

Easy (10): common knowledge (The literature of the Outer Reaches is a favorite within the entire Seventh Empire.)

Moderate (15): something not widely known (Epic poetry is considered to be the oldest and purest form of written expression in the Outer Reaches.)

Difficult (20): something requiring specialized knowledge of the subject (The themes and significance of a particular cycle of Outer Reaches epic poetry.)

Very Difficult (30): something only an expert would know (Being able to quote at length and from memory from an obscure Outer Reaches epic poem.)

Search (Perception)

This skill is used when the character is actively looking in the immediate area for a particular detail, clue or piece of information. To see if a character notices details of a scene or situation, the GM may have the player make a Perception roll. Unless the characters are actively eavesdropping, searching, tracking, or performing a similar activity (and thus using the *search* skill), this passive observance of a scene does not count as an action. Use the difficulty and modifier tables below as a guideline for how much the character notices. If the skill total meets or beats the difficulty, the character gains that much information.

Search Difficulties

Very Easy(5): Noticing obvious, generic facts; casual glance

Easy (10): Noticing obvious details (e.g., number of people)

Moderate (15): Noticing a few less obvious details (ex. gist of conversation)

Difficult (20): Spotting a few specific details (ex. identities of individuals)

Very Difficult (25): Spotting a few obscure details (ex. specifics of conversation)

Heroic (30+): Noticing many obscure details

When the *search* skill is used to eavesdrop on or secretly watch an event or another character, the skill total indicates the amount of information gained from the surveillance. A Critical Failure could mean anything from no information obtained to being immediately spotted by the character

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being observed, depending on the situation. When searching for a hidden object or person, the difficulty is generally the *hide* roll used to conceal the target. Otherwise, the base difficulty is 5, modified by the table below.

Eavesdropping/Observation Difficulties

Very Easy (5): Character knows target's exact location

Easy (10): Character knows target's approximate location

Moderate (15): Character has vague information about the target or its location

Difficult (20): Character has only general idea of what she's looking for; searching for small objects

Very Difficult (25): Character has no idea what she's looking for; searching for obscure or tiny objects

Heroic (30+): Searching for microscopic objects (might be impossible without special equipment or abilities)

When attempting to track someone, the base difficulty is 10 or the target's *sneak* roll if the target is actively trying to hide her trail. Characters also can use *search* to track or "shadow" a target. The base difficulty for this use of the *search* skill is listed below. However, if the target is actively trying to hide from him pursuer, then use the *sneak* skill to determine how well your character was able to stay on his quarry's trail.

Tracking/Shadowing Difficulties

Very Easy (5): Tracking a wheeled or treaded vehicle going over soft ground

Easy (10): Tracking over soft dirt, mud or snow, through light undergrowth, or in a thin crowd

Moderate (15): Trail is a day old; tracking in inclement weather or heavy undergrowth; shadowing through a large crowd

Difficult (20): Trail is a week old; tracking through harsh climate (desert, arctic wasteland, or hard surface); shadowing through a massive crowd

Very Difficult (25): Quarry has taken to the air or has disappeared into a crowd for more than a few minutes

Heroic: Quarry has teleported away

Security (Technical)

Opening locks that don't require deftness of hand fall under this skill, as does setting up a defensive perimeter and installing a security system. Security always requires special tools, which might give their own bonus. This skill can complement *investigation* when trying to survey the security of a building.

Security Difficulties

Very Easy (5): Entering an unprotected facility

Easy (10): Bypassing a simple security system

Moderate (15): Gaining entry into a high-quality security system (most locked down starships)

Difficult (20): Getting into specifically protected facilities, such as banks and records vaults

Very Difficult (25): Getting into high-security complexes, such as military bases and secured vehicle or starship depots

Heroic (30): Getting past cutting-edge security measures, such as gaining access to the personal sanctum of a leader of the Cadre

Security Regulations (Knowledge)

This skill governs understanding of the rules and regulations of the various security agencies operating within Septimus. This skill gives its user a knowledge of the laws of any given area, as well as knowing the extent to which they are likely to

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be enforced. This skill also can be used in a legal setting, should the character ever find himself needing to argue a legal case before the authorities. When using this skill, consult the difficulty numbers below.

Security Regulations Difficulties

Very Easy (5): Something virtually anybody would know (Stealing is likely to get you in trouble.)

Easy (10): Common knowledge (the exact laws of the Extent or the Newcomer Coaliton that govern the punishment for theft)

Moderate (15): Something not widely known (exploiting a somewhat obscure legal loophole to get out of trouble)

Difficult (20): Something requiring specialized knowledge of the subject (the exact criteria the Extent uses to try supposed rebels and insurgents within Arcopolis)

Very Difficult (25): Something only an expert would know (the fine print of obscure regulations; finding weird loopholes in those regulations)

Heroic (30+): Something only a master must know (discovering the legal flaw that undercuts an entire law or legal system.

Sensors (Mechanical)

This skill is similar to the search skill, except that it entails the use of scanning technology to find things at great distances or to find a specific something in a huge crowd of background noise. This skill is indispensable for those on starships trying to find a particular area on the surface of Septimus. This skill can also be used to eavesdrop on broadcast communications. All starships have sensor arrays; some vehicles and suits of armor come with them installed; those that do not can have them retrofitted.

To see if a character using scanning technology notices details of a scene or situation, the gamemaster may have the player make a *Perception* roll. Unless the characters are actively eavesdropping, searching, tracking, or performing a similar activity (and thus using the *search* skill), this passive observance of a scene does not count as an action.

Sensor Difficulties

Very Easy (5): Eavesdropping on the Extent's propaganda frequency; zeroing in on Arcopolis from low orbit

Easy (10): Eavesdropping on a public communications channel; finding a city on the surface from low orbit

Moderate (15): Eavesdropping on a private but unsecured communications channel; locating a particular industrial facility or other large power source on the surface from low orbit

Difficult (20): Eavesdropping on a secure, encrypted broadcast channel; locating a particular starship within the Deep Sky

Very Difficult (25): Picking up a particular conversation on a restricted, encrypted broadcast channel; locating a particular vehicle on the surface from low orbit

Heroic (30+): Picking up the energy signature of a particular individual's nanotech from low orbit

Shields (Mechanical)

This skill qualifies the character in the effective use of starship shield systems. Shields can be used in one of two modes: screens and point defense. When in screen mode the shield is less effective, but it will block all incoming fire to some degree. When in point defense mode, the shield usually is able to deflect almost any incoming fire, but it the shield operator must manually move the shield into place to intercept the shot. The character's die code in this skill is used as a *dodge* roll against incoming fire in space combat. If the shield operator defeats the incoming shot, the shot is nullified. If the shot avoids the shield operator, then it inflicts full damage to the ship. For more information on ship combat, check out the Hardware chapter.

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Sleight Of Hand (Agility)

The difficulty for a *sleight of hand* attempt is usually the opponent's *Perception* or *search*, either as a die roll (if the opponent is actively watching for tricks) or as a derived value equal to the number in front of the "D" in the opponent's attribute or skill times 2 and add the pips.

Sleight Of Hand Difficulties

Very Easy (5): Fooling an unobservant or highly distracted target

Easy (10): Fooling a confused or distracted target; palming a tiny object; sliding a hand into one's own pocket unnoticed

Moderate (15): Hiding a small object on one's person; drawing a weapon before somebody not expecting it, or obscured by cover (i.e., under a table)

Difficult (20): Hiding a large object on one's person; drawing a weapon unnoticed out in the open

Very Difficult (25): Hiding an oversized object on your person; drawing a weapon unnoticed under watchful eyes zeroed in on you

Heroic (30+): Managing to hide a rocket launcher under your trenchcoat ("Is that a cluster rocket, or are you just happy to see me?")

Characters also may use *sleight of hand* to pick locks, but they may not attempt to do so without some kind of tools (ID cards, stiff metal wire, telekinesis, etc.). Improvised tools do not add to character's skill roll, but specialized tools will.

Lockpicking Difficulties

Very Easy (5): The door is probably open anyway

Easy (10): Picking a poorly constructed lock on a ramshackle door

Moderate (15): Picking a normal lock on a normal door

Difficult (20): Picking a high security lock on a restricted-access door

Very Difficult (25): Picking a vault door

Heroic (30+): Picking a fortified blast door securing a top-secret area

LOCKPICKING MODIFEIRS	
Having makeshift tools	+10
Having ordinary lockpicking tools	+0
Having specialized or high-quality lockpicking tools	-10
Having blueprints or diagrams to the lock	-10

Sneak (Perception)

The difficulty for a *hide* or *sneak* attempt is usually the opponent's *Perception* or *search*, either as a die roll (if the opponent is actively trying to find the object or person) or as a derived value equal to the number in front of the "D" in the opponent's attribute or skill times 2 and add the pips.

SNEAKING MODIFIERS	
Heavy rain or snow	-3
Dawn, dusk, fog, many trees, large crowd, etc.	-2
Night	-5
Inattentive observer	-5
Dense concealment (thick jungle, crowd of people in costume)	-5
Many distractions (party, parade, combat)	-5
Attentive observer	+6
Open terrain	+6
Good lighting	+6
Several observers	+9

Stamina (Strength)

The *stamina* skill enables the character to keep going under conditions that might otherwise exhaust or incapacitate him. This is most useful during combat when the character sustains a wound. If the character

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has the *stamina* skill, he may roll it instead of his *Strength* attribute to see how well he shrugs off the effect of the injury.

The GM also may allow a character to make a multiaction *stamina* roll to complement a strenuous activity, such as lifting or running. The difficulty equals 5 times the current fatigue modifier. The character may add one-half (rounded up) of the difference between the successful *stamina* roll and the difficulty. The strenuous activity still receives the fatigue modifier. Whenever a character fails a *stamina* roll, he is fatigued; all actions are at -1D for every *stamina* check failed until the character rests for as long as he exerted himself. Characters still can continue if they are fatigued until they fail a third *stamina* check. At this point, the character is completely exhausted and must rest for twice the amount of time that he exerted himself to remove the penalty.

To avoid the effects of a toxin (inhaled, ingested, or absorbed) or disease encountered in any manner, a character makes a *stamina* roll. Several factors figure into the difficulty of the attempt, including the deadliness and dosage of the poison in question. For example, a fatal bout of botulism has a difficulty of 9, while a killing dose of cyanide has a difficulty of 42. Characters may attempt to counter toxins once per day.

The GM might also call for *stamina* rolls against falling asleep or unconscious. Resisting sleep is a difficulty of 5 per hour beyond the normal awake time, modified by environmental factors (too warm or too cold, noise level, etc.).

Streetwise (Knowledge)

Streetwise helps characters get around urban environments. Some situations call for seeking out those living outside the local law, while others can be handled through upstanding citizens. Generally, the modifiers are the same for each situation, but the GM should adjust them depending on the circumstances. It is possible, though generally unlikely, that a character would be well-liked by both upstanding residents and local criminals.

Streetwise Difficulties

Very Easy (5): Things that are usually easy to find (directions to the nearest police station)

Easy (10): Things that require discretion or careful investigation (asking if the local law is straight or crooked)

Moderate (15): Risky services; finding illegal and well-regulated items (finding out an appropriate bribe for the local law)

Difficult (20): Services of unusual skills; finding dangerous or carefully controlled items (seeking a fence or a safecracker)

Very Difficult (25): Finding a specific criminal in hiding; finding items or services (such as rogue nanotech labs) possession of or affiliation with means immediate imprisonment

Heroic (30+): Finding a highly wanted public enemy in hiding (e.g., the leader of an insurgent cell operating undercover in the heart of Arcopolis)

CITY SIZE MODIFIERS	
Mega-city (one billion or more citizens; e.g., Arcopolis)	-10
Large city (one million or more citizens)	+0
Small city (several hundred thousand citizens)	+5
Town (several thousand citizens)	+10
Village (several hundred citizens)	+15

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AMOUNT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OR TOLERANCE OF RESIDENTS MODIFIERS	
Martial law or no tolerance for criminals or outsiders	+15
Criminal activity overlooked as long as it's discreet; slight tolerance of outsiders	+10
Criminal activity overlooked as long as it's not dangerous to the general public; tolerance of outsiders	+5
Criminal activity overlooked as long as it's not dangerous to the local government; outsiders welcome	+0
Anarchy; outsiders given same respect as residents	-10

REPUTATION OF SEEKER MODIFIERS	
Never been to the location; no contacts; not trusted by local underworld or residents	+10 or more
Rarely visited; only passing knowledge of how the local underworld operates	+1 to+9
Minor contacts; knows what to avoid; criminals or residents have no reason not to trust character	+0
Somewhat favorably known by local underworld or residents; several contacts	-1 to –9
Well-known and liked by underworld or residents	-10

Survival (Knowledge)

Character can rely on *survival* to figure out what to eat, where to sleep, how best to deal with native dangers, and other information needed to get out of wilderness situation alive. (Use *streetwise* for help in urban situations.)

Survival Difficulties

Very Easy (5): Woods

Easy (10): High mountains, ocean (near shore)

Moderate (15): Desert, ocean (surface of deep water)

Difficult (20): Polar region

Very Difficult (25): Non-Earth-like environment

Heroic (30+): Space

SITUATION SKILL MODIFERS	
Has been to this location frequently	+1D
Has been to this location within the past 10 years	+0
Has never been to this location	-1D

Swim (Strength)

Roll skill dice when a character swims. Difficulty numbers for swimming are found below:

Very Easy (5): Swimming in a lake on a good day in a calm area

Easy (10): Swimming in the ocean on a good day in a calm area

Moderate (15): Swimming where there are riptides or other dangers

Difficult (20): Swimming in a storm

Very Difficult (25): Swimming in a gale with huge waves and sheeting rain

Heroic (30+): Swimming out of a whirlpool

If the character's roll is less than the difficulty number, he begins to drown. Roll 2D each round to determine whether he dies, as you would for a mortally wounded character. A drowning character is not, in fact, mortally wounded, and if rescued, needs no further medical help.

Another character can attempt to rescue a drowning character. To do so, he makes two skill rolls, one to *swim* himself, and the other to rescue the other character. Because he is making two skill rolls, his skill code is reduced by 1D. The difficulty num-

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ber for the second roll is 15. If he succeeds in both rolls, he may rescue the drowning character.

Tactics (Knowledge)

Tactics represents a character's skill in deploying military forces and maneuvering them for the best advantage. Characters can rely on it for general knowledge of how best to stage a military operation or the best response to an opponent's move in battle. *Tactics* attempts can complement command and combat rolls for the group the character advises. The better the result, the more details a GM should give to help the character win the battle. Hints can take the form of reminders about different moves the enemy can make, suggestions on how to maneuver the character's forces, or (for especially good rolls) risky and unanticipated moves that could throw the enemy off guard. Nonetheless, characters should keep in mind that *tactics* might suggest a theoretically optimum solution, but the execution might not come off as well as planned.

Tactics difficulties should be based on various factors of complexity within a battle: how many units are involved, the setting (empty space, asteroid field, planetary terrain), and the difference in training and equipment between units (battleships versus in-system defenders; trained mercenaries versus primitive natives; space military versus experienced rebels).

Sample difficulties for using *tactics* include, but are not limited to:

Very Easy (5): Directing a four-man fire team to breach a single room

Easy (10): Directing an eight-man squad to patrol a city block

Moderate (15): Directing a 32-man platoon to storm a large complex

Difficult (20): Directing a 128-man company to assault a small town

Very Difficult (25): Directing a 1,064-man brigade to secure an entire city or to meet in open battle with a similar force

Heroic (30+): Directing an entire army to engage in nation-level warfare

Throwing (Agility)

This skill governs a character's ability to accurately hurl things as well as to grab projectiles out of the air. The difficulty to hit things is detailed below and is generally determined by range. The difficulty of catching an object is typically the thrower's *throwing* roll. If the thrower wants the catcher to get the object, and thus takes care to throw well, reduce the thrower's skill total by 9.

Very Easy/Point Blank Range	5
Easy/Short Range	10
Moderate/Medium Range	15
Difficult/Long Range	20
Very Difficult/Extreme Range	25
Heroic/Out of Range	30+

Vehicle Operation (Mechanical)

This skill is used for driving any kind of ground vehicle; use your skill die code for piloting when trying to pull off piloting stunts within a exoskeleton. For more details, refer to the Movement section of the D6 System chapter.

Vehicle Repair (Technical)

This skill is for the inspection, maintenance, repair and modificiation of any kind of ground or aerial vehicle (excluding starships). The base difficulty to fix or modify anything is 10. The amount of damage sustained, the character's familiarity with the item, availability of parts, and complexity of the task can modify the difficulty. The GM may require a separate roll to determine whether the character can figure out how to repair an unknown item. Destroyed parts must be replaced, which raises the difficulty. Additionally, if a hero rushes the

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REPAIR MODIFIERS	
-10	Previously built or modified the item; intimately familiar with item
-5	Has item's designs
+/-0	Common item
+5	Has seen but not used item
+10	Has never seen item
+/-0	All parts available
+10	Some parts available
+20	No parts available
+/-0	Correct tools (tool kits themselves might provide their own bonuses)
+15	Makeshift tools

The above repair modifiers are ubiquitious, applying to all repair skills.

job, not only is there an increased chance of failure, but the item could also break again soon after its next use.

Willpower (Knowledge)

Willpower is generally used to resist interaction attempts and mentally damaging attacks. Characters with this skill may generally use it instead of *stamina* to resist fatigue, sleep, and unconsciousness, though there may be some situations in which the GM restricts its substitution.

See the *stamina* entry in this chapter for information on difficulties. GM can also use *willpower* (or *Knowledge*) to determine the reactions of players' and GM's characters to each other and to their surroundings. The more the GM believes that the character should be at ease or frightened, the greater the difficulty. Use the descriptions of standard difficulties to determine the level. This passive application of *willpower* is not an action.

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05: Boons & Banes

Regardless of your occupation, culture or background, there will be things about your character that additionally set him apart. These are innate qualities that cannot be prevented, mitigated or upgraded; they are just quirks of the character that he must live with. Some of them are good, others are bad, but everybody has them. These are Boons and Banes.

Exactly how many Boons and Banes you start off with depends on what priority you assigned to Boons and Banes during character generation, ranging from four Banes and zero Boons, and to four Boons and no Banes. Every Boon and Bane has four levels to it, with each level making the Boon or Bane that much more intense or diverse. When characters select a Boon or Bane, it counts as one choice; if they want, they can spend more of their choices "upgrading" the Boon or Bane.

In addition, as your character goes through more adventures, he will earn Character Points with which he can upgrade his character. Buying Boons or buying off Banes is part of that. When buying Boons with Character Points, the number assigned to each boon or Bane is how much it costs in terms of Character points. A simple, 1-point Boon costs only one Character Point whereas a major, 4-point Boon costs four Character Points.

Characters can buy off banes with Character Points, however the point cost of any given Bane requires twice that number in Character Points to buy off. Thus, a character with a 3-point Bane would have to spend six Character Points to remove that Bane from his character.

Also, Boons and Banes can, at the GM's discretion, attach to a character depending on the developments of a particular adventure or campaign. However, the GM should be careful to not hand out Boons and Banes with abandon; these are meant to be serious character developments, and characters probably should not get buried beneath them.

Boons are a beneficial character detail. They are some kind of special talent you possess, a fortunate aspect of your background, or just some lucky break your character has received along the way. Boons are not superpowers, nor are they particularly reality-shaking, but they are the kind of thing that form the background ability of a character, and as a player, you should always be mindful of what your Boons are and how they can be exercised in any given situation. Remember, your Boons are the edge you possess that few other characters might have. They help make your character unique and empower him to use unconventional methods to solve problems and get out of trouble.

Banes are just that: something bad. One of the drawbacks, from a game design level, of any RPG with a system like Boons and Banes is that some players invariably will select Banes that are really meant to act as a kind of advantage, or at the very least as something not exactly unwelcome to the player. For example, a player making a warrior-type character who loves fighting might not see the harm in taking the Hunted Bane. From his point of view, being hunted by one's enemies isn't so bad, because it gives the warrior character a steady stream of opponents to smack down. This violates the spirit, if not the law, of how Boons and Banes are supposed to work. Any bane selected for your character is meant to be a serious drawback, the kind of thing the character can not just blow off or disregard, and certainly not something the character would in any way look forward to experiencing. Banes are a burden to shoulder, a hardship to endure, an additional challenge for the player to overcome during the course of the game.

Generally speaking, the GM is encouraged to bring a character's Banes into play once a game session as a way to enforce their negative impact. By the same token, Banes

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are not meant to be character-killers. They are the sort of thing that makes the character's life more difficult (and in some cases, much more difficult), but they should not be some kind of death sentence laid down by the GM. Whenever a Bane comes into play, it should be in such circumstances that the character has at least a fighting chance of working a way around it. The crafty GM will keep his players' Banes in mind at all times, not as a reason to victimize the characters out of the blue, but because these Banes are great adventure hooks to be used. GMs, don't be afraid of working Banes (and Boons, for that matter) to your advantage.

Something else to consider is that as you determine your character's Boons and Banes, try to come up with a reason for why your character has them. Use this part of your character to craft an interesting backstory and to throw more adventure fodder at the GM.

Boons

There are many different Boons in three different categories: physical, mental and social. There is no limit to how many Boons you can have of any one group; they are separated out mainly to make it easier to customize your character along a particular theme.

Some of these Boons have multiple stages to them, such as the social Boon, wealth. It has four stages to it: comfortable, rich, very rich and filthy rich. When taking a multiple-stage Boon, you automatically start off with the lowest level; you can upgrade it by selecting it again, so a character that wanted to start with the Rich Boon would have to spend three Boon selections to get it: one to get comfortable, another to get wealthy, and a third to get rich.

Some Boons are not cumulative but simply offer multiple benefits, such as the Acute Senses physical Boon, which consists of four different sub-categories — touch, taste & smell, hearing, and sight. If you were to select the Acute Senses Boon, you would have to choose one of those four categories, leaving the other three behind unless you expended additional Boon selections on them, too. So a character starting off with Acute Touch, Acute Taste & Smell, Acute Hearing and Acute Sight would have to spend four Boon selections on them.

Some of these Boons are very similar to nanomods of a similar name or description. This is not an oversight; they are simply redundant abilities. The big difference is that getting Boons after character creation is pretty difficult but doesn't come at the cost of any Corruption.

Acute Senses (Physical)

Your sense(s) are at a heightened level all the time.

Acute Touch (1): Add +1D to *Perception* rolls involving sense of touch.

Acute Taste and Smell (2): Add +1D to *Perception* rolls involving sense of taste or smell

Acute Hearing (3): Add +1D to *Perception* rolls involving sense of hearing.

Acute Sight (4): Add +1D to *Perception* rolls involving sense of sight.

Aegis Aura (Physical)

You have an uncanny sense that makes you aware of everything around you. When fighting opponents within range of your radar, you get +1D to *dodge* all attacks made on you within range, whether they be missile or melee. **Note**: Missile attacks made outside of this ability's range can not

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be detected in time to get the *dodge* bonus. This sense works in rain, snow, fog and other adverse conditions.

Personal Aura (1)	Range: 10 feet
Immediate Aura (2)	Range: 25 feet
Extended Aura (3)	Range: 50 feet
Area Effect (4)	Range: 100 feet

Alertness (Mental)

Your sharp mind processes information extremely well, increasing your ability to carry out *Intelligence* attribute rolls and *Intelligence*-based skill rolls.

Minor Alertness (1): Add +1D to your first attribute or skill roll in combat.

Moderate Alertness (2): Add +2D to your first attribute or skill roll made in a crisis situation.

Major Alertness (3): Add +3D to your first attribute or skill roll made in a crisis situation.

Master Alertness (4): Add +4D to your first attribute or skill roll made in a crisis situation.

Ally (Social)

Somewhere in the world is somebody who will throw down for you in times of need. This is not a servant or lackey; allies have minds and wills of their own, and they are bound to you out of friendship and mutual respect, which must be acknowledged if an ally is to remain as such. In turn, there may come a day when your ally requires something of you. Note that you will have to work with the GM to determine who exactly your ally is, and what power he or she possesses.

Pawn (1): Your ally is a low-ranking NPC who would get slaughtered in open combat but whose usefulness probably is not in the martial arena anyway.

Bishop (2): Your ally is roughly on par with you, an adventurer.

Knight (3): Your ally is an adventurer of greater stature than you.

Rook (4): Your ally is a high-ranking NPC, one who commands others to do his bidding.

Alternate Identity (Social)

You have carefully crafted an alter ego (or several) that you can assume at a moment's notice. Each alternate identity is sufficiently detailed that it will fool most anybody unless they perform an extensive investigation into your background, but even then that might not turn up anything. Most times people will not check out the veracity of an alternate identity unless you do something to bring it into question.

Double Identity (1): You have your real identity and your alternate identity.

Triple Identity (2): You have your real identity and two alternate identities.

Quadruple Identity (3): You have your real identity and three alternate identities.

Quintuple Identity (4): You have your real identity and four alternate identities. Keeping track of everything is beginning to become a real headache.

Ambidexterity (Physical)

You can carry out feats of manual dexterity well beyond a normal person's capabilities.

Ambidexterity (1): You can carry out feats of manual dexterity (i.e., fixing something, playing a musical instrument, firing a weapon), just as well with either hand.

Duo Dexterity (2): You can carry out two completely unrelated tasks with either hand at the same time with no penalty.

Omnidexterity (3): Any task requiring fine motor control, such as picking a lock or conducting fine mechanical repairs, receives a +1D bonus.

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Ultradexterity (4): Any task requiring fine motor control, such as picking a lock or conducting fine mechanical repairs, receives a +2D bonus.

Appearance (Social)

You are a real looker, no two ways about it. Ever consider modeling?

Attractive (1): Add +1D to all *persuasion* rolls made against members of the opposite sex.

Handsome/Beautiful (2): Add +2D to all *persuasion* rolls made against members of the opposite sex.

Stunning (3): Add +3D to all *persuasion* rolls made against members of the opposite sex.

Godlike (4): Add +4D to all *persuasion* rolls made against members of the opposite sex.

Alien Heritage (Social)

Your ancestors were heavily into the alien legacy of Septimus. As such your genetic record is on file with the alien mainframe (or what is left of it). This gives you an advantage when interfacing with alien technology.

Minor Alien Heritage (1): Add +1D to all rolls regarding the examination, inspection and use of alien technology.

Moderate Alien Heritage (2): Add +2D to all rolls regarding the examination, inspection and use of alien technology.

Major Alien Heritage (3): Add +3D to all rolls regarding the examination, inspection and use of alien technology.

Legendary Alien Heritage (4): Add +4D to all rolls regarding the examination, inspection and use of alien technology.

Celerity (Physical)

You require less time to carry out physical actions than most other people do.

Quick (1): Add +1 to all multiaction rolls.

Fast (2): Add +2 to all multiaction rolls.

Super Fast (3): Add +3 to all multiaction rolls.

Ultra Fast (4): Add +4 to all multiaction rolls.

Common Sense (Mental)

Thanks to your acute common sense, the GM must alert you when you, as a player, are about to make a really stupid error or exercise really bad judgment on your character's part.

One Reminder (1): The GM alerts you only once per gaming session.

Two Reminders (2): The GM alerts you up to twice per gaming session.

Three Reminders (3): The GM alerts you up to three times per gaming session.

Four Reminders (4): The GM alerts you up to four times per gaming session.

Companion (Social)

Unlike an ally, a companion is more of a lackey, somebody who will obey your orders without fail. Unfortunately, companions are nowhere nearly as skilled as you are, nor do they have the potential to expand their abilities. Should a companion die, you must expend an experience point to replace him. As far as game statistics go, you may select anybody from the Templates section to serve as a companion.

Sidekick (1): You have one companion.

Followers (2): You have two companions.

Crew (3): You have three companions.

Small Army (4): You have four companions.

Concentration (Mental)

You can dramatically improve your chances for successfully executing a skill if you spend time beforehand concentrating on what you are about to do. Concentrating takes a full round, during which time you

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cannot be substantially interrupted. After that, you need to execute the skill within the next round or the effects of concentration will be lost.

Minor Concentration (1): Add +1D to your roll after concentrating for a full round.

Moderate Concentration (2): Add +2D to your roll after concentrating for a full round.

Major Concentration (3): Add +3D to your roll after concentrating for a full round.

Master Concentration (4): Add +4D to your roll after concentrating for 1 a full round.

Contacts (Social)

You have a large and well-established network of contacts you can draw on for information, small favors, connections, and the like. Generally speaking your contacts are confined to a single country, but while you are in that country you can find a contact by making a *Perception* roll.

Social Contacts (1): Your contacts are strictly from within ordinary, civilian circles.

Economic Contacts (2): You also may draw upon contacts from trade guilds.

Criminal Contacts (3): You also may draw on contacts within criminal organizations.

Political Contacts (4): You also may draw on contacts within local governments.

Daredevil (Physical)

You have a weird way of taking unusually bad risks and succeeding at them, even though you know that one day your luck will surely run out. This is an semi-expendable boon, in that it gives you a number of extra D6s per gaming session that you can allocate to your various rolls as you see fit. These are spent somewhat like Fate Points: you must announce that you are applying one or more daredevil dice to the roll before you actually make the roll.

I'm Lucky! (1): You have a daredevil reserve of 4D.

I'm Untouchable! (2): You have a daredevil reserve of 8D.

I'm Invincible! (3): You have a daredevil reserve of 12D.

I'm Immortal! (4): You have a daredevil reserve of 16D.

Deadshot (Physical)

You are especially accurate with any kind of firearm, missile weapon or thrown weapon.

Hawkeye (1): Reduce all range increments by one step.

Eagle Eye (2): Reduce all range increments by two steps.

Bullseye (3): Reduce all range increments by three steps.

Deadeye (4): Reduce all range increments by four steps.

Destiny (Mental)

Somehow, some way, your life is bound to end well. This is not you being confident; this is something you know as a universal truth. The only trick is living long enough to make sure your destiny unfolds before you. It might happen tomorrow, it might happen three days before your 100th birthday. Now, it is possible to exceed one's destiny. Those that do, however, tend to throw fortunetellers into fits for "upsetting the skein of the universe."

Common Destiny (1): You are bound to live a happy and fulfilled life, if not an extraordinary one. You might become very wealthy or of great station on a small scale, such as mayor of a small town.

Noble Destiny (2): You are bound to rise above common status. You might even find yourself in a position of minor rulership.

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Heroic Destiny (3): You are bound to become a widely hailed hero. Of course, that does not mean you might not get there under false pretenses.

Mythic Destiny (4): You are bound to become a figure of legend. Over time, your story will grow and endure with the ages, wiping all but your greatest transgressions out of the present's collective memory

Divination (Mental)

This Boon enables you to receive vague glimpses of the future that are up to you to interpret properly. It takes you 1D minutes to conduct a proper divination, and you can only do it on other's behalf. Divinations generally only reveal hazy and imprecise details, but they can be dramatic enough to bear paying attention to.

Minor Divination (1): You can foretell events up to 1D hours away. A successful moderate *Perception* roll (10) will reveal if the divination is accurate.

Moderate Divination (2): You can foretell events up to 1D days away. A successful difficult *Perception* roll (15) will reveal if the divination is accurate.

Major Divination (3): You can foretell events up to 1D weeks away. A successful very difficult *Perception* roll (20) will reveal if the divination is accurate.

Master Divination (4): You can foretell events up to 1D months away. A successful heroic *Perception* roll (31) will reveal if the divination is accurate.

Double-Jointed (Physical)

You possess an unusual degree of flexibility in your joints, making you a natural escape artist.

Somewhat Double Jointed (1): Regardless of however many dice you roll when attempting *Agility*-related tasks such as contorting yourself, reroll the lowest die and take the higher of the two results.

Moderately Double-Jointed (2): Regardless of however many dice you roll when attempting *Agility*-related tasks such as contorting yourself, reroll the two lowest dice and take the higher of the two results for both.

Substantially Double-Jointed (3): Regardless of however many dice you roll when attempting *Agility*-related tasks such as contorting yourself, reroll the three lowest dice and take the higher of the two results for each die.

Insanely Double-Jointed (4): Regardless of however many dice you roll when attempting *Agility*-related tasks such as contorting yourself, reroll the four lowest dice and take the higher of the two results for each die. You can fit into really small spaces and stay there for prolonged periods of time.

Empathy (Mental)

You can detect people's true emotions, even if they are putting up a good front. Those not trying to resist you only require a moderate *Perception* roll (15) to read. Those resisting can simply roll their *Perception* against yours to resist.

Minor Empathy (1): You can detect one's true emotions if you have any kind of physical contact with them (i.e., a handshake).

Moderate Empathy (2): You can detect true emotions from 10 feet away.

Major Empathy (3): You can detect true emotions from 25 feet away.

Master Empathy (4): You can detect true emotions from 50 feet away.

Enhanced Attributes (Physical)

One or more of your attributes is unusually high. The maximum for any one of your attributes is now 6D, rather than 5D. You also get additional dice to allocate to your attributes, as described

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Great [Attribute] (1): Permanently increase any attribute by +2 points, keeping in mind that any attribute at +3 rolls over to the next highest die code.

Remarkable [Attribute] (2): Permanently increase any attribute by +4 points, keeping in mind that any attribute at +3 rolls over to the next highest die code.

Legendary [Attribute] (3): Permanently increase any attribute by +6 points, keeping in mind that any attribute at +3 rolls over to the next highest die code.

Mythic [Attribute] (4): Permanently increase any attribute by +8 points, keeping in mind that any attribute at +3 rolls over to the next highest die code.

Entrancement (Mental)

You have the power to hypnotize others, but you can only do so when your target is not physically running away or fighting you, and it takes a full minute of unbroken concentration on your part to make this work. Entrancing somebody requires you to make a contested *Perception*/*willpower* roll against your target. Once your target is entranced, however, he will become relatively docile and will become susceptible to hypnotic suggestions. This means he will give up information, tell the truth, and can even be convinced to carry out actions contrary to what he would ordinarily do, provided they are not patently harmful to himself or radically outside his normal behavior. For example, an entranced Extent soldier will not turn his gun on himself just because you told him to.

Basic Entrancement (1): You can entrance others as described above.

Enhanced Entrancement (2): You can entrance others with +1D on your *Perception*/*willpower* roll.

Expert Entrancement (3): You can entrance others with +2D on your *Perception*/*willpower* roll.

Master Entrancement (4): You can entrance others with +3D on your *Perception*/*willpower* roll.

Extra Lives (Physical)

The moment you die, you will mysteriously revive within 1D minutes, providing that at least one of your physical attributes has not been reduced to below its permanent damage threshold. When you come back to life, that extra life is gone forever, making this one of the few expendable Boons. But hey, you're alive again, aren't you? And the best part is, you will come back without incurring any additional Corruption.

One Extra Life (1): This'll come in handy someday.

Two Extra Lives (2): That first time I died? That was just for practice.

Three Extra Lives (3): Dying is not a good habit to form, my friend.

Four Extra Lives (4): Have you considered a less dangerous job? Like mine clearing?

Fast Learner (Mental)

You pick up on new skills really fast, enhancing your future expenditure of experience points on buying or improving any skills.

Head of the Class (1): Every six Character Points you earn, you get an extra one for free.

Cum Laude (2): Every five Character Points you earn, you get an extra one for free.

Magna Cum Laude (3): Every four Character Points you earn, you get an extra one for free.

Summa Cum Laude (4): Every three Character Points you earn, you get an extra one for free.

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Favor (Social)

Somebody owes you big time, the kind of favor that you hold on to for a while and call in only when you really, really need it. Whoever owes you this favor is at least an adventurer on par with yourself or somebody of even greater ability or station. If you are owed multiple favors, chances are they are owed to you by different people. Feel free to work with the GM to determine exactly who owes you your favor(s) and why.

One Favor (1): You really helped somebody out once, and now they're indebted to you.

Two Favors (2): Maybe you helped two people at once, or you're just the helping sort.

Three Favors (3): You've got your hooks into everybody, don't you?

Four Favors (4): Okay, who doesn't owe you something?

Fearless (Mental)

You have never been easily scared, and you're not likely to start now. In game terms, you get a bonus to any *willpower* checks required of you to resist the effects of fear.

Mildly Fearless (1): +1D to all *willpower*-related rolls against fear.

Fairly Fearless (2): +1D to all *willpower*-related rolls against fear.

Seriously Fearless (3): +1D to all *willpower*-related rolls against fear.

Utterly Fearless (4): You don't need to make a fear check. Ever.

Fleet-Footed (Physical)

You possess unusual *running* speed.

Sprinter (1): Your maximum *running* speed is doubled.

Racer (2): Your maximum *running* speed is tripled.

Hypervelocity (3): Your maximum *running* speed is quadrupled.

Speed Barrier (4): Your maximum *running* speed is quintupled.

Guardian Angel (Social)

You have an adventurer more powerful than you watching your back. Somehow, you are connected to him, and he will always be willing to risk his life in order to save yours. However, he is an independent adventurer, and often will only help you for a short period time, when called. The abilities and the appearance of the Guardian Angel is left to the GM, though input from the player should be encouraged.

Bodyguard (1): Your Guardian Angel will come only when you are in mortal danger.

Watchman (2): Your Guardian Angel will come only when you are in serious peril.

Sentinel (3): Your Guardian Angel will come whenever you are in any kind of danger.

Eternal Vigilance (4): Your Guardian Angel will come whenever asked.

Heavy Hitter (Physical)

Not only are your bones so hard they almost never break, but they are like built-in brass knuckles that enhance the damage of any *brawling* attack you make.

Bones of Stone (1): Add +1 to any Wild Dice rolled when determining *brawling* damage. If the modified total exceeds 6, then add the extra to the next roll.

Bones of Granite (2): Add +2 to any Wild Dice rolled when determining *brawling* damage. If the modified total exceeds 6, then add the extra to the next roll.

Bones of Iron (3): Add +3 to any Wild Dice rolled when determining *brawling* damage. If the modified total exceeds 6, then add the extra to the next roll.

Bones of Steel (4): Add +4 to any Wild Dice rolled when determining *brawling* damage. If the modified total exceeds 6, then add the extra to the next roll. If the modified total of that next Wild Dice roll also

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exceeds 6, just keep rolling over the extra to the next throw of the Wild Dice until you get a result of less than 6.

Hidden Memories (Mental)

You have always had a strange connection with your ancestors, as their memories have been passed directly on to you. You can remember what your forebears knew as easily as something you have learned directly. This confers a bonus to any knowledge-based skills you possess. Physical skills sadly do not benefit from Hidden Memories.

Second Generation (1): You gain a +1 bonus to all knowledge-based skill rolls.

Third Generation (2): You gain a +2 bonus to all knowledge-based skill rolls.

Fourth Generation (3): You gain a +3 bonus to all knowledge-based skill rolls.

Fifth Generation (4): You gain a +4 bonus to all knowledge-based skill rolls.

Higher Purpose (Social)

You have dedicated yourself to a just and worthy cause and as such have a better chance of defeating temptation. This makes you the undercover operative: able to get in bed with the enemy but remain true to your cause.

Worthy Cause (1): Add +1D to *willpower* rolls when resisting immoral temptations.

Great Crusade (2): Add +2D to *willpower* rolls when resisting immoral temptations.

Eternal Struggle (3): Add +3D to *willpower* rolls when resisting immoral temptations.

Few Are Chosen (4): Add +4D to *willpower* rolls when resisting immoral temptations.

Heir (Social)

You are in line to inherit a major fortune. When you inherit and what you inherit both depend on the extent to which you have taken this Boon. The time to wait to cash in on this is measured not in real time, but in number of adventures played out by you, the player.

Minor Inheritance (1): +1D to your Resources within 1D-1 adventures.

Moderate Inheritance (2): +2D to your Resources within 1D+1 adventures.

Major Inheritance (3): +3D to your Resources within 1D+2 adventures.

Enormous Inheritance (4): +4D to your Resources within 2D adventures.

Huge Size (Physical)

You are obviously oversized but in a way that boosts your *Strength* and does not have any negative side effects.

Brawny (1): You get to add +2 to all *Strength*-based rolls.

Hulking (2): You get to add +4 to all *Strength*-based rolls.

Enormous (3): You get to add +6 to all *Strength*-based rolls.

Monstrous (4): You get to add +8 to all *Strength*-based rolls.

Immunity (Physical)

Somehow you have an innate immunity to something that is commonly dangerous or even lethal to others.

Immunity to Disease (1): No illness, from a cold to the deadliest plagues, affects you.

Immunity to Poison (2): You are so unaffected by toxins that you could even drink them.

Immunity to Hostile Nano (3): You will never suffer from exposure to nanotech designed to hurt you.

Immunity to Metaphysics (4): The first time a metaphysicist tries to use his powers on you, they will fail. After that, they will work as usual.

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Instant Karma (Physical)

Luck has always been on your side to such a degree that sometimes you can just sort of call on it, and things end up going your way. You tend to keep this in reserve for times when you really need to step up and deliver.

Lucky Break (1): You may re-roll a failed roll once per adventure.

Lucky Devil (2): You may re-roll a failed roll twice per adventure.

Lucky Bastard (3): You may re-roll a failed roll three times per adventure.

Beyond Luck (4): You may re-roll a failed roll four times per adventure.

Inventive Genius (Mental)

You have always been able to come up with the strangest designs for things, and somehow, they all work! Whenever trying to invent, design, or build something, whether you are going off your intelligence alone or using a skill, you get a bonus.

Minor Inventive Genius (1): Add +1D to all invention rolls.

Moderate Inventive Genius (2): Add +2D to all invention rolls.

Major Inventive Genius (3): Add +3D to all invention rolls.

Master Inventive Genius (4): Add +4D to all invention rolls.

Jack Of All Trades (Mental)

You tend to excel at everything you do. This, however, comes at the cost of you excelling at any skills in particular.

Minor Jack of all Trades (1): Add +1 to all rolls on skills in which you do not have extra dice.

Moderate Jack of all Trades (2): Add +2 to all rolls on skills in which you do not have extra dice.

Major Jack of all Trades (3): Add +3 to all rolls on skills in which you do not have extra dice.

Master Jack of all Trades (4): Add +4 to all rolls on skills in which you do not have extra dice.

Legal Immunity (Social)

Because of your past good deeds, your reputation, your personal connections with local law enforcement or some combination of the three, you can get away with criminal behavior ordinary folks could not. This Boon only applies to a single sphere of influence — the Extent, the Grayscale or the Archipelago. Outside of the area in which you have immunity, you are on your own. When you get into legal trouble, you may make a *Perception/bluff/con* roll to get out of trouble. This Boon helps those efforts.

Minor Legal Immunity (1): Add +1D to rolls made to get you out of legal trouble.

Moderate Legal Immunity (2): Add +2D to rolls made to get you out of legal trouble.

Major Legal Immunity (3): Add +3D to rolls made to get you out of legal trouble.

Total Legal Immunity (4): Add +4D to rolls made to get you out of legal trouble.

Leverage (Social)

You have somehow gained leverage over somebody, a favor that can never really be paid. The trick with this is not exercising it too often, or else the person you have leverage over might decide enough is enough and do what it takes to get out from under you. Your leverage subject is a non-adventurer but somebody who might have considerable influence anyway.

Mild Leverage (1): This person will do a small favor for you once per adventure.

Moderate Leverage (2): This person will do a small favor for you twice per adventure.

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Serious Leverage (3): This person will do a small favor for you three times per adventure.

Total Leverage (4): This person will do a small favor for you four times per adventure.

Light Sleeper (Mental)

You fall asleep and awake very quickly and lucidly, so there is little time where you are groggy and off-guard. This comes in handy when rousing under crisis conditions, like if you've been assaulted in your sleep.

Versatile Sleeper (1): You can make yourself fall asleep within a minute and can wake up within 3D6 seconds.

Fast Sleeper (2): You can make yourself fall asleep in 30 seconds and can wake up within 2D6 seconds.

Lightning Sleeper (3): You can make yourself fall asleep instantly and can wake up within five seconds.

Instant Sleeper (4): You can make yourself fall asleep and wake up instantly.

Light Touch (Physical)

When performing any feat of fine manual dexterity, such as pickpocketing, picking locks, disarming traps, etc., You get more than one chance to roll for success, making it much more likely for you to successfully carry out your task in a short period of time.

Second Chance (1): Roll up to twice for skill rolls involving fine manual dexterity.

Third Chance (2): Roll up to three times for skill rolls involving fine manual dexterity.

Fourth Chance (3): Roll up to four times for skill rolls involving fine manual dexterity.

Fifth Chance (4): Roll up to five times for skill rolls involving fine manual dexterity.

Longevity (Physical)

You age at a much reduced rate. This is not a magical effect; there is just some quirk of your body that has blessed you with much-diminished decrepitude.

Youthful (1): You will live to at least 65 before showing the slightest ill effects of aging. Until then, you will possess the youthful good looks, vim and vigor of a person ranging from 18 to 25.

Ageless (2): You will live to at least 120 before showing the slightest ill effects of aging. Until then, you will be indistinguishable in health and appearance from the average 18 to 25 year old.

Eternal (3): You will live to at least 250 before showing the slightest ill effects of aging. Until then, you will be indistinguishable in health and appearance from the average 18 to 25 year old.

Immortal (4): You will never show the ill effects of aging and will forever be indistinguishable in health and appearance from the average 18 to 25 year old. Only some kind of direct harm, wound or injury will end your life, but chances are you'll just rejuvenate in the Lazarus tank anyway and keep on keeping on, right.

Mastermind (Mental)

This Boon works similarly to Tactical Mastery below, in that your mere presence helps others perform intellectual skills better. As long as you are not actually performing a skill and are instead giving commands, advising others, and overseeing the work of others in the immediate vicinity, you confer to them a bonus for any intelligence rolls or intelligence-based skill rolls.

Primary Mastermind (1): Up to four of your comrades will receive +1D to all *Knowledge* rolls while you are assisting them.

Secondary Mastermind (2): One of your comrades will receive +2D to all *Knowledge* rolls while you are assisting

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them. Up to three others will receive +1D to all *Knowledge* rolls while you are assisting them.

Tertiary Mastermind (3): One of your comrades will receive +3D to all *Knowledge* rolls while you are assisting them. Another comrade will receive +2D to all *Knowledge* rolls while you are assisting them, and up to two others will receive +1D.

Quaternary Mastermind (4): One of your comrades will receive +4D to all *Knowledge* rolls while you are assisting them. Another comrade will receive +3D, another will receive +2D, and another will receive +1D.

Mentor (Social)

You were taught your skills by somebody who had a well-deserved reputation among adventurers. When hobnobbing, dropping your mentor's name will make it easier for you to make an impression. This Boon does not work with other members of your party, however. They've all known you long enough not to be starstruck.

Prestigious Mentor (1): Add +1D to *bluff* or *intimidation* rolls when among other adventurers.

Famous Mentor (2): Add +2D to *bluff* or *intimidation* rolls when among other adventurers.

Legendary Mentor (3): Add +3D to *bluff* or *intimidation* rolls when among other adventurers.

Mythic Mentor (4): Add +4D to *bluff* or *intimidation* rolls when among other adventurers.

Metaphysical Affinity (Physical)

You have a natural talent for metaphysics. The Corruption you sustain from gaining new metaphysics abilities is lower than usual.

Minor Metaphysical Affinity (1): When you get a new metaphysical ability as a result of interacting with alien technology, reduce the amount of Corruption you gain by one point.

Moderate Metaphysical Affinity (2): When you get a new metaphysical ability as a result of interacting with alien technology, reduce the amount of Corruption you gain by two points.

Major Metaphysical Affinity (3): When you get a new metaphysical ability as a result of interacting with alien technology, reduce the amount of Corruption you gain by three points.

Master Metaphysical Affinity (4): When you get a new metaphysical ability as a result of interacting with alien technology, reduce the amount of Corruption you gain by four points.

Metaphysical Aptitude (Mental)

You are a natural-born psionic, and as such, working psionics is easier for you than it is for other people.

Minor Aptitude (1): Add +3 to all metaphysical rolls.

Moderate Aptitude (2): Add +6 to all metaphysical rolls.

Major Aptitude (3): Add +9 to all metaphysical rolls.

Master Aptitude (4): Add +12 to all metaphysical rolls.

Metaphysical Resistance (Physical)

You have an unusual resilience to any metaphysical effect that causes direct harm to your body, such as the blast ability.

Light Metaphysical Resistance (1): Add 1D to all rolls related to resisting metaphysical affects.

Moderate Metaphysical Resistance (2): Add 1D+2 to all rolls related to resisting metaphysical affects.

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Major Metaphysical Resistance (3): Add 2D+1 to all rolls related to resisting metaphysical affects.

Incredible Metaphysical Resistance (4): Add 3D to all rolls related to resisting metaphysical affects.

Metaphysics (Mental)

You have inborn metaphysical powers. You must take this Boon before taking any other Boon that enhances your metaphysics. You do not incur any Corruption for these initial metaphysical abilities.

Minor Metaphysics (1): You have 3D with which to purchase metaphysical abilities.

Moderate Metaphysics (2): You have 4D with which to purchase metaphysical abilities.

Major Metaphysics (3): You have 5D with which to purchase metaphysical abilities.

Master Metaphysics (4): You have 6D with which to purchase metaphysical abilities.

Military Rank (Social)

You are an officer (well, not in the case of Sergeant) in the military of one of the power blocs of Septimus. This is a mixed blessing; while it gives you the command of a certain number of soldiers, you must answer to your duties the instant you are called. You also may have a hard time going off on an adventure with your soldiers following you, unless you have been given special dispensation to operate independently (e.g., a scouting group, guerilla warfare, etc.) For the stats on your soldiers, use the Dragoon archetype for Newcomer characters, the Morituri archetype for Grayscale characters and the Enforcer archetype for Extent characters.

Sergeant (1): You are in command of eight fully armed and equipped soldiers.

Lieutenant (2): You are in command of 32 fully armed and equipped soldiers.

Captain (3): You are in command of 128 fully armed and equipped soldiers.

Marshal (4): You are in command of 512 fully armed and equipped soldiers.

Mimicry (Mental)

You are adept at copying sounds and the voices of others. What is a bit trickier, however, is mimicking the voices in ways that can fool even the most sophisticated efforts of detection. Since this is more of a talent than a skill, mimicking somebody else requires a successful *con* roll.

Minor Mimicry (1): Roll a standard *con* roll to mimic somebody.

Moderate Mimicry (2): Roll a *con* roll at +1D to mimic somebody.

Major Mimicry (3): Roll a *con* roll at +2D to mimic somebody.

Master Mimicry (4): Roll a *con* roll at +3D to mimic somebody.

Natural Combatant (Physical)

You are attuned to the sensory overload of battle and can cross swords without hesitation. You are always ready for danger.

Cool Under Fire (1): Add +1D to your first action of the scenario.

Quick Draw (2): Add +2D to your first action of the scenario and +1D to your second action.

Iceman (3): Add +3D to your first action of the scenario, +2D to your second action, and +1D to your third action.

Stone Cold (4): Add +4D to your first action of the scenario, +3D to your second action, +2D to your third action, and +1D to your fourth action.

Noble Birth (Social)

You are born of noble blood, which gives you an immense social advantage; you are held to different standards, can get away

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with breaking minor common laws, and you have access to the upper echelons of power in your home country. At the same time, you are expected to behave like a noble, as well. Chances are you are part of a large and involved family that has a vested interest in seeing that you become a proper leader of the clan, not just some wastrel adventurer who will only bring controversy and embarrassment. If you are playing an archetype, then the clear choice is a Hierarch. However, plenty of people achieve noble rank through other ways, so any archetype can work.

Knight (1): You are a protector of the realm, charged with defending it against all lawbreakers. You are also a soldier in the national army with special dispensation to fight as you will, either on your own, in a coterie of fellow knights, or as a charger of a large cavalry unit. Add +1D to *intimidation* rolls when among other nobles.

Lord/Lady (2): You are among the lowest ranks of landed nobles. Typically, other Boons that go along with this are Landed and Wealth. Not much is expected of Lords and Ladies except to behave like proper nobles, maintain the good standing of their house, and to be ever watchful for that fateful moment when the opportunity arises to propel the entire house upward in the noble hierarchy, usually when another house falls from grace. Add +2D to *intimidation* rolls when among other nobles.

Baron/Baroness (3): You are a mid-level noble, both watchful of upward mobility and keeping an eye on hungry lower houses that seek your house's position. This is a dangerous place to be, and the house needs you at court more than out in the field adventuring. Add +3D to *intimidation* rolls when among other nobles.

Duke/Duchess (4): You are a high-level noble of a house that has both the national leader's ear and scrutiny. Do well, and you shall be assured a place of power for many years to come. Do poorly, and you might suffer the wrath of your superiors most directly. Add +4D to *intimidation* rolls when among other nobles.

Past Life (Social)

You have been reincarnated into your current self, but you remember quite clearly the happenings and memories of your past life. These can help guide you sometimes, if you know how and where to delve deeply enough.

One Past Life (1): Each game session you get a single, expendable bonus of +1D on any single *Knowledge*, *Mechanical*, *Perception* or *Technical* roll.

Two Past Lives (2): Each game session you get a single, expendable bonus of +2D on any single *Knowledge*, *Mechanical*, *Perception* or *Technical* roll.

Three Past Lives (3): Each game session you get a single, expendable bonus of +3D on any single *Knowledge*, *Mechanical*, *Perception* or *Technical* roll.

Four Past Lives (4): Each game session you get a single, expendable bonus of +4D on any single *Knowledge*, *Mechanical*, *Perception* or *Technical* roll.

Patron (Social)

There is somebody to whom you answer. While your patron can require you to do tasks, more likely he is somebody you can go to for protection, employment, and the occasional favor (which you'll probably have to repay).

Hero (1): Your patron is a retired adventurer who made good.

Adventurer (2): Your patron is a current adventurer now playing the role of power broker.

Leader (3): Your patron is the leader of some powerful organization (e.g., a Morituri fighting clan, a group within the Archipelago)

Nobility (4): Your patron is a noble leader who has serious political weight.

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Perfect Balance (Physical)

You have an amazing sense of balance. Very few things can truly disorient you, making you a natural for feats of agility and acrobatics.

Sure-Footed (1): Add +2 to any *Agility* roll.

Light on Your Feet (2): Add +4 to any *Agility* roll.

Cat-Like Grace (3): Add +6 to any *Agility* roll.

Uncanny Dexterity (4): Add +8 to any *Agility* roll.

Phyrric Payback (Physical)

Any time any opponent strikes you in *melee combat*, you automatically get a chance to counterattack. This is an extra action that has no time requirement to it, nor does it count as a multiaction. This only works with melee attacks, and you may only counter with a melee attack. This ability can be used whether you actually take damage from your enemy's strike, you manage to *parry* or deflect it, or if it hits but does no damage (e.g., you are too well armored).

Solo Counter (1): You can counter one opponent at a time. If you are struck by two different opponents on the same second, you can only counter one of them.

Double Counter (2): You can counter up to two opponents at the same time.

Triple Counter (3): You can counter up to three opponents at the same time.

Group Counter (4): You can counter up to four opponents at the same time.

Premonitions (Mental)

You have a tendency to get vague flashes of the future (specifically of things that will happen directly to you and you alone). When you have a Premonition is not up to you, and interpreting these things is dicey at best. Still, they have served you well in the past, so you have learned not to ignore them.

Immediate Premonitions (1): You might see events one round before they happen.

Short Premonitions (2): You might see events one scene before they happen.

Medium Premonitions (3): You might see events one adventure before they happen.

Long Premonitions (4): You might see events one campaign (a series of linked adventures) before they happen.

Quick Thinking (Mental)

You possess incredible problem-solving abilities, and can often come up with solutions in a pinch. In game terms, this Boon gives you a minimum amount of time "away from the table" to think things over and come up with a plan whenever the GM gives you a challenge and only so much time to do it in.

Just a Minute (1): Take up to a minute to think and kibitz with your fellow players.

Patience is a Virtue (2): Take up to 10 minutes to think and kibitz with your fellow players.

Don't Rush Me (3): Take up to an hour to think and kibitz with your fellow players.

All Day (4): Spend as much time as you like formulating plans and kibitzing with your fellow players. The GM can not impose a time limit on you to solve problems within the game.

Rapid Healing (Physical)

You have always been able to come back from wounds and injuries far faster than what is normal. This makes you especially well-suited to a life of danger.

Quick Healing (1): Add +2 to all healing rolls for your character's healing only.

Fast Healing (2): Add +4 to all healing rolls for your character's healing only.

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Super-Fast Healing (3): Add +6 to all healing rolls for your character's healing only.

Ultra-Fast Healing (4): Add +8 to all healing rolls for your character's healing only.

Reflexes (Physical)

You react to things with remarkable speed.

Good Reflexes (1): Increase all *Perception* rolls for initiative by +2.

Great Reflexes (2): Increase all *Perception* rolls for initiative by +4.

Greased Lightning (3): Increase all *Perception* rolls for initiative by +6.

Faster Than the Eye (4): Increase all *Perception* rolls for initiative by +8.

Relic (Social)

You possess an alien artifact. Chances are, you inherited it from an ancestor, found it by blind luck, won it in a game of chance, or bought it from somebody who did not know its true nature and value. However you acquired the thing, it's yours now, so make the most of it! For this Boon to work, the player really needs to work with the GM to come up with an item that is appropriate both for the character and the power level of the campaign. The GM has final say on what specific item this Boon will yield for the player character. Be mindful of your Relic: once you've lost or broken it, it's gone for good.

Minor Relic (1): You own an artifact of modest power. Cool, but basic. Add +1D to a single metaphysical ability roll, once per adventure.

Moderate Relic (2): You own a middle-ranging artifact worthy of respect. Add +2D to a single metaphysical ability roll, once per adventure.

Major Relic (3): You possess a powerful artifact. Use it with care. Add +3D to a single metaphysical ability roll, once per adventure.

Unique Relic (4): You possess one of the most powerful alien artifacts yet discovered within Septimus. Add +4D to a single metaphysical ability roll, once per adventure.

Reputation (Social)

You are instantly recognizable to common folk (i.e., non-nobles, non-military, non-adventurers) wherever you go, thanks to your past record of deeds. Many heroes never really get the recognition they deserve (and crave), so for you to be so well known at this stage really is something of an aberration. But the perks are great (free drinks wherever you go, the adoration of strangers, etc.), so why look a gift horse in the mouth?

Well-Known (1): Add +1D to *Perception/con/bluff/intimidation* rolls made to impress common strangers.

Renowned (2): Add +1D+2 to *Perception/con/bluff/intimidation* rolls made to impress common strangers.

Famous (3): Add +2D+1 to *Perception/con/bluff/intimidation* rolls made to impress common strangers.

Legendary (4): Add +3D to *Perception/con/bluff/intimidation* rolls made to impress common strangers.

Resilience (Physical)

With this Boon, you can soak up much more damage than usual.

Light Resilience (1): Reduce the amount of incoming damage by one point per die up to 4D.

Moderate Resilience (2): Reduce the amount of incoming damage by two points per die up to 4D.

Heavy Resilience (3): Reduce the amount of incoming damage by two points per die up to 5D.

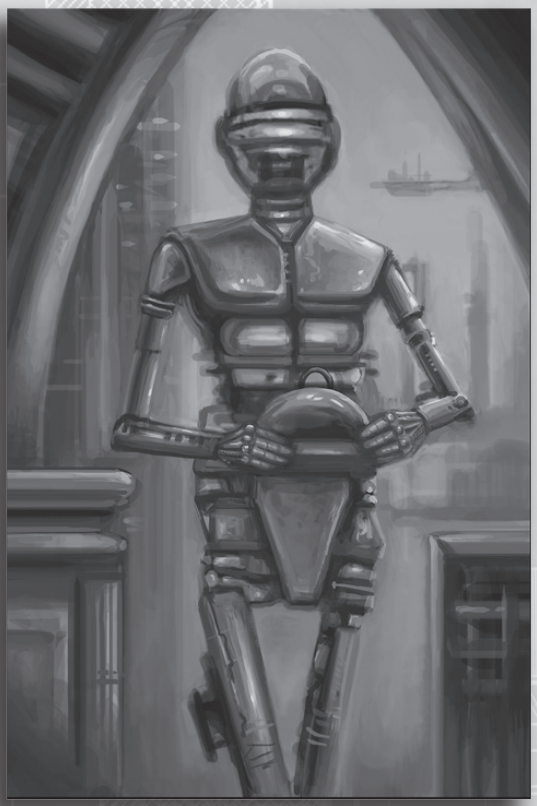
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Super Resilience (4): Reduce the amount of incoming damage by two points per die up to 6D.

Robot (Social)

Somewhere along the line, you have obtained a robot sidekick that will work to serve your needs. Because this robot is a Boon and not a mere possession, if it gets destroyed, it will be reduced to pieces, but it can always be rebuilt, no matter how badly it got blasted apart. This robot can also earn character points for future upgrades. For details on the different types of robots, see the Hardware chapter.

Midge (1): You have a midge robot as a sidekick.



Autobug (2): You have an unarmed autobug as a sidekick. Arming it can be done later, at your own cost and at the GM's discretion.

Humanoid (3): You have a humanoid robot as a sidekick.

Android (4): You have an android as a sidekick. Androids can pass for humans.

Sanctuary (Social)

You have a secret place where you can retreat to heal, gather your wits, re-equip, and generally retreat from the maddening world around you. You do not own this place; it is instead a friendly location offered to you by a friend or ally. (If you take this Boon, you might want to take the Ally Boon as well, since the two go so well together.)

Retreat (1): Your sanctum is in a common place: a home, a shop, a temple, etc. that provides you with no added security other than it being your secret hiding place.

Bastion (2): Your sanctum is in a fortified but common location, such as a small factory, a storage center, house, a manor, etc. It can ward off a small-scale assault.

Bulwark (3): Your sanctum is in a fortified facility that can ward off medium-scale assaults by the likes of a band of brigands, small military parties, and so forth.

Fortress (4): Your sanctum is a powerful military structure that can endure large-scale assaults, at least, for a while. It can also endure a prolonged siege.

Savant (Mental)

You possess a special degree of ability at a single skill. It is your natural talent, and you get a certain amount of extra success with it each gaming session.

Minor Savant (1): Re-roll all 1s on skill rolls for your savant skill.

Moderate Savant (2): Re-roll all 1s and 2s on skill rolls for your savant skill.

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Major Savant (3): Re-roll all 1s and 2s and 3s on skill rolls for your savant skill.

Master Savant (4): Re-roll all 1s and 2s, 3s and 4s on skill rolls for your savant skill.

Sixth Sense (Mental)

You see dead people…walking around… like regular people. Well, not really, but you do see creatures that can change shape in their true form, no matter what configuration they have taken at the moment.

Hand to Hand (1): You tell by touching something what its true form is. Add +1D to all *Perception* rolls toward seeing through disguise.

Face to Face (2): You can tell just by looking at something what its true form is. Add +2D to all *Perception* rolls toward seeing through disguise.

Overheard (3): You can tell just by listening to something what its true form is. Add +3D to all *Perception* rolls toward seeing through disguise.

Sensing (4): You can tell just by being within 100 feet of something what its true form is. Add +4D to all *Perception* rolls toward seeing through disguise.

Starship (Social)

You are the proud owner of your own starship. In the Seventh Empire, having a ship is the ultimate expression of freedom, even if it means that you typically are broke because you sink all of your cash into upkeep, fuel and other things. Still, it's yours, and to most Spacers, ships are not just vehicles; they are home.

Deck Boss (1): You own a one-man craft like a fighter or a skiff.

Lieutenant (2): You own small ship like a yacht or merchantman.

Captain (3): You own a medium ship like a freighter or a cruiser.

Admiral (4): You own a large ship like a colony ship or destroyer.

Strength Reserve (Physical)

You can temporarily boost your *Strength* by a certain number of points. This *Strength* boost only lasts for 1D rounds, although you can cancel the boost at any time. Afterwards, your *Strength* will temporarily go down by as many dice you boosted it by, for one round per die.

Smash Doors! (1): You can boost your *Strength* by +1D.

Break Chains! (2): You can boost your *Strength* by +2D.

Bend Bars! (3): You can boost your *Strength* by +3D.

Lift Gates! (4): You can boost your *Strength* by +4D.

Tactical Mastery (Mental)

So long as you are not carrying out any offensive or defensive actions during a battle or crisis situation, those who fight alongside you will benefit as you give snap commands, point out battlefield opportunities, and generally provide an unusually sharp grasp of the flow of the situation and what actions will prove most likely to succeed or fail in the coming seconds. This Boon will not work while attacking, counter-attacking, defending or using metaphysics. You can move about, however, without losing this Boon's effects.

While this Boon is active, you can decide who gets what benefits from it, and you can change the direction of your tactical mastery benefits round by round.

Primary Tactics (1): Up to four of your comrades will receive +1D to all combat rolls while you are exercising this ability.

Secondary Tactics (2): One of your comrades will receive +2D to all combat rolls while you are exercising this ability. Up to three others will receive +1D to all combat rolls.

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Tertiary Tactics (3): One of your comrades will receive +3D to all combat rolls while you are exercising this ability. Another comrade will receive +2D to all combat rolls, and up to two others will receive +1D.

Quaternary Tactics (4): One of your comrades will receive +4D to all combat rolls while you are exercising this ability. Another comrade will receive +3D, another will receive +2D, and another will receive +1D.

Threat Assessment (Mental)

You can tell the relative strength, health and combat worthiness of somebody just by looking at him.

Minor Threat Assessment (1): You can assess opponents within 10 feet of you.

Moderate Threat Assessment (2): You can assess opponents within 100 feet of you.

Major Threat Assessment (3): You can assess opponents within 500 feet of you.

Supreme Threat Assessment (4): You can assess any opponents within eyeshot.

Tireless (Physical)

You can go on for extended periods of time without sleep.

All-Nighter (1): You can go up to 24 hours (one day) without sleep.

Weekender (2): You can go up to 48 hours (two days) without sleep.

Insomniac (3): You can go up to 72 hours (three days) without sleep.

Zombie (4): You can go up to 96 hours (four days) without sleep.

Total Recall (Mental)

You have a memory like a steel trap, and you can recall with perfect accuracy anything you have stored mentally. The duration of your total recall may not be forever, but even beyond it, you tend to have a pretty reliable memory, so add +1D to any *Knowledge* rolls made for trying to remember something.

Minor Total Recall (1): You can perfectly recall details 1D days old.

Moderate Total Recall (2): You can perfectly recall details 1D weeks old.

Major Total Recall (3): You can perfectly recall details 1D months old.

Ma**ster Total Recall (4)**: You can perfectly recall details 1D years old.

True Love (Social)

There is only one person in this world to whom you belong, and he/she knows it and feels the same way about you. When you are together, you are a better, stronger, more powerful person — increase one of your attributes by +3, another by +2 and another by +1. Your partner also gains the same bonuses. When you are apart, you can feel that there is a part of you missing — eliminate these bonuses as if you never took this Boon. Should your True Love ever die, you will suffer the penalties of being apart from him/her for a full year while you mourn, after which your attributes will return to normal.

Hand in Hand (1): You are united if you stay within five miles of each other.

Across the Valley (2): You are united so long as you stay within 50 miles of each other.

Throughout the Land (3): You are united if you stay within 500 miles of each other.

Under Starry Skies (4): You are united if your mate stays alive, regardless of location.

Unbreakable (Mental)

You are able to withstand extreme amounts of mental strain before cracking. This makes it very difficult to torture you,

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as your tormentors will probably not have it in them to torture you long enough to make you ever have to roll against their efforts.

Minor Unbreakability (1): You can endure an entire hour of non-stop torment before you have to make your first *willpower* roll to resist torture.

Moderate Unbreakability (2): You can endure up to 6 hours of non-stop torment before you have to make your first *willpower* roll to resist torture.

Major Unbreakability (3): You can endure an entire 24 hours of non-stop torment before you have to make your first *willpower* roll to resist torture.

Total Unbreakability (4): You do not have to make *willpower* rolls to resist torture. You would die first.

Unknown (Social)

You have worked long and hard to make sure that you are known by nobody. You have destroyed old records pertaining to you, any artistic renderings of you, letters in which you were mentioned, etc. Officially, you do not exist, not even in the most extensive bureaucratic systems. That you are now part of an adventuring party is an aberration to your normal pattern, so it's likely that you've also taken the Alias Boon and know your friends through that. Your true identity however is a secret, which is a good thing for anybody wanting to be a spy, criminal, assassin, or an entrant into the many trades in which anonymity is an asset.

Blank (1): People will only recognize you when making an easy *Perception* roll (10).

Cipher (2): People will only recognize you when making a moderate *Perception* roll (15).

Shadow (3): People will only recognize you when making a difficult *Perception* roll (20).

Ghost (4): People will only recognize you when making a very difficult *Perception* roll (25).

Veteran (Social)

You have served in organized military campaigns in the past and are a more battle-hardened adventurer because of it.

One Campaign (1): You get an additional 1D to spend on *Agility* skills.

Two Campaigns (2): You get an additional 2D to spend on *Agility* skills.

Three Campaigns (3): You get an additional 3D to spend on *Agility* skills.

Four Campaigns (4): You get an additional 4D points to spend on *Agility* skills.

Visions (Mental)

This Boon works the same way as Premonitions, except Premonitions involves involuntarily seeing things that will happen to you, whereas Visions gives you vague flashes of what is to happen to others (usually on a very large scale, too). Visions also tends to see things much farther ahead in time than Premonitions.

Immediate Visions (1): You might see events one adventure before they happen.

Short Visions (2): You might see events 1D adventures before they happen.

Medium Visions (3): You might see events one campaign (a series of linked adventures) before they happen.

Long Visions (4): You might see events 1D campaigns before they happen. These events might very well never come to pass in the lifetime of the character played or in the lifetime of your game of Septimus itself, but the knowledge of this will still weigh heavily on the character with the Vision.

Voicethrowing (Mental)

Like a ventriloquist, you can speak without moving your lips, and you can project your voice so that is sounds like it's coming from elsewhere.

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Minor Voicethrowing (1): You can throw your voice up to 10 feet.

Moderate Voicethrowing (2): You can throw your voice up to 25 feet.

Major Voicethrowing (3): You can throw your voice up to 50 feet.

Master Voicethrowing (4): You can throw your voice up to 100 feet.

Weather Sense (Mental)

You have an uncanny sense of what the weather will do, which is an awfully handy ability to have if you do a lot of outdoor travel, boating, or flying in airships. This ability also augments one's survival skills.

Hourly Forecasting (1): You can accurately predict the weather up to one hour in advance.

Daily Forecasting (2): You can accurately predict the weather up to 24 hours in advance.

Weekly Forecasting (3): You can accurately predict the weather up to seven days in advance.

Monthly Forecasting (4): You can accurately predict the weather up to thirty days in advance.

Well-Traveled (Social)

You have been all over the place and are familiar with the cultures of various other lands. When making culture rolls, you receive a bonus.

Border Crosser (1): Add +1D when making culture rolls for one territory of choice.

Journeyman (2): Add +1D when making culture rolls for two territories of choice.

World Traveler (3): Add +1D when making culture rolls for three territories of choice.

Nomad (4): Add +2D when making culture rolls anywhere within Septimus.

Wealth (Social)

You have some form of savings, income, investment or other mechanism that automatically earns you money. At the beginning of each new adventure (that's adventure, not gaming session), you get a pile of money out of the blue, thanks to this Boon.

Comfortable (1): You get a one-time, +1D bonus to your Resources at the beginning of each adventure.

Rich (2): You get a one-time +1D+2 bonus to your Resources at the beginning of each adventure.

Very Rich (3): You get a one-time +2D+1 bonus to your Resources at the beginning of each adventure.

Filthy Rich (4): You get a one-time +3D bonus to your Resources at the beginning of each adventure.

Banes

As with Boons, there are 81 Banes total — 27 Physical, 27 Mental and 27 Social. Depending on what priority you assigned to Boons & Banes, you will have a certain number of points to spend buying up Banes. You must spend all of these points, and you cannot hold them in reserve, cancel them out by not taking Boons, or cancel them out by penalizing some other aspect of the character generation process. Every hero has flaws; this is what makes great heroes great. Superman would be a boring god if kryptonite did not weaken him. Frodo Baggins would be a dull hobbit if not for the constant temptation of the One Ring. Luke Skywalker would be another whiny farm kid if he didn't have a major destiny to fulfill. Try to look at Banes in that spirit. Will they harm your character and make life more

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difficult for him? Most definitely. But can they also be used to further develop your character and enrich your role-playing experience. Oh, yeah.

The most important thing to remember when selecting Banes is that they are supposed to be harmful to your character. Another way of putting it is that your character should be played in such a way that his Banes are (to him, anyway) a real problem. Any time an RPG features an advantages and disadvantages system such as this one, there will always be players seeking to find Banes that are, for them, anyway, blessings in disguise. While players should be commended for turning their character's drawbacks into something more than that, it is possible for players to overdo it. For example, a player who wants to play a samurai-style warrior might be tempted to take the Code of Honor mental bane, thinking, "Samurai lived by a code of honor, and this would be no big restriction for my character, so I'll just take that." The problem is samurai did not see their code of honor as a drawback; for them it was something to be proud of, so to this samurai-style character, Code of Honor is not a real Bane because it is not negatively impacting how the character would otherwise be played. In such a situation, it is up to the GM to decide the appropriate course of action. He could either require the player to pick a different Bane, or he could decide to make that Bane a negative one during the course of play, regardless of the player's intentions. Indeed, the samurai-style character might not mind having a Code of Honor, but when adventures keep turning up situations where the character must endure unpleasant hardship because of it, he might not view his behavioral restriction so favorably in the long run.

Addiction (Mental)

You require routine exposure to something that might not be that harmful in moderation, but your excessive consumption of it is clearly self-destructive. The subject of the addiction can be a substance of some sort, (e.g., liquor, narcotics of any kind) or it could be a kind of behavior (e.g., gambling, taking chances). When you go too long without feeding your addiction, all of your attributes reduce by -2D. Likewise, any action takes twice as long to carry out.

The GM can determine any additional harmful effects the source of the addict's habit may inflict, such as physical harm, resource depletion, losing friends and family. Likewise, the GM may determine to what degree the character's judgment may be impaired while going through withdrawal and is desperate to feed his addiction.

Minor Addiction (1): You can go up to three days before you must indulge in your addiction.

Moderate Addiction (2): You can go up to one day before you must indulge in your addiction.

Strong Addiction (3): You can go up to six hours days before you must indulge in your addiction.

Complete Addiction (4): You can go up to one hour before you must indulge in your addiction. Your addiction pretty much defines your life.

Amnesia (Mental)

You are missing a chunk of your memory. It might have been from some strange illness, or more likely from a head injury of some sort. You would know why you suffer from this Bane…if only you could remember.

Mild Amnesia (1): You have lost the last 1D year's worth of memories.

Moderate Amnesia (2): You have lost the last 2D years' worth of memories.

Serious Amnesia (3): You have lost the last 3D years' worth of memories.

Total Amnesia (4): You know nothing of your past up to 4D weeks ago. Everything before that is a total mystery. Any Boons or Banes that you have which would indicate a past are still in force, only you might not be

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aware of them (e.g., you might be Landed only have not been reminded of it yet), so keep that in mind as you role play your character.

Albinism (Physical)

You lack any pigment to your skin and as a result are highly susceptible to getting sunburned. When you are in direct sunlight without some form of protection on your skin (opaque creams, robes, armor, etc.), you will take damage.

Minor Albinism (1): 1D of damage for every six hours unprotected.

Moderate Albinism (2): 1D for every three hours unprotected.

Major Albinism (3): 1D of damage for every hour unprotected.

Crippling Albinism (4): 1D of damage for every 15 minutes unprotected.

Alien Features (Physical)

There is something freaky about you, such as strange skin color, some funky growth out of the top of your head, oversized canine teeth, a forked tongue, etc., that makes it difficult for you to blend into crowds. While some might enjoy the added attention their weird appearance brings, the sad truth is you look like some kind of weird creature, and people in general consider you as a monster that should be destroyed. Thus you must conceal your appearance if you don't want to deal with angry mobs of commoners waiving pitchforks and firebrands all the time.

Mutagenic Features (1): You have some kind of mildly inhuman appearance, one that could feasibly (though improbably) occur as a freak of evolution. Things like extra or missing fingers, oddly colored skin, a really strange voice, funky-colored eyes, crunchy teeth, etc. Aside from looking strange, this confers a +1D bonus to the *Perception* roll of anybody trying to identify you.

Transgenic Features (2): You have some kind of animal features, such as a forked tongue, backwards-bending legs, scales, fish eyes, feathers instead of hair, etc. Anybody trying to recognize you gets +2D to her *Perception* roll.

Xenomorphic Features (3): You have truly alien features such as a biomechanical appearance, extra eyes, rearranged sensory organs on your face, an inhuman skin texture, etc. People trying to recognize you get +3D to their *Perception* rolls. Also you get +1D to any *intimidation* roll made when trying to intimidate or impress somebody, though the GM gets to determine when this bonus kicks in.

Teratogenic Features (4): You have monstrous features, such as a demonic face, cloven hoofs, spikes running down your back, bioluminescent eyes, etc. People trying to recognize you get +4D to their *Perception* rolls. Also, you get +2D to any *intimidation* roll made when trying to intimidate or impress somebody, though the GM gets to determine when this bonus kicks in.

Animal Enmity (Social)

You have never gotten along with animals. It's like they can just sense that you're no good for them, and they tend to give you a hard time because of it.

Minor Animal Enmity (1): Wild animals will attack you before anybody else in the party.

Moderate Animal Enmity (2): Wild animals will attack you even if unprovoked.

Serious Animal Enmity (3): Wild animals attack you with extreme prejudice. Domesticated animals will stay away from you, attacking only if you corner them.

Severe Animal Enmity (4): Wild animals attack you with extreme prejudice. So do domesticated animals unless you keep your distance from them.

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Antisocial (Social)

You simply do not like the company of other people. You prefer to go it alone, even if life would be considerably easier for you if you didn't. If this Bane prevents you from interacting with everybody in the party, then be sure to role-play it.

Mildly Antisocial (1): You keep in touch with up to six people, total.

Moderately Antisocial (2): You keep in touch with no more than three people.

Seriously Antisocial (3): You keep in touch with just one person. That's it.

Severely Antisocial (4): You don't keep in touch with anybody. You're a true loner.

Appearance (Physical)

You are just not pleasant to look at. Sorry, there's no delicate way to put that. Even if you have a high appearance attribute, there is something unsightly and unavoidable about the way you look that people can't help but notice.

Unattractive (1): Ugh. Reduce all *persuasion* rolls by –1D.

Ugly (2): Eww! Reduce all *persuasion* rolls by –1D+2.

Hideous (3): Agh! Reduce all *persuasion* rolls by –2D+1.

Monstrous (4): Run! Reduce all *persuasion* rolls by –3D.

Arcane Restriction (Mental)

You must sacrifice physical components every time you cast a spell. While this does not require you to spend more time casting a spell, it does cost you money, as you must replenish your component supplies if you wish to keep casting. The unique nature of this Bane makes it so whatever component is offered up will be consumed entirely by the metaphysical process.

Mundane Components (1): Before you use metaphysics in an adventure, you must procure and destroy an object with a moderate purchase difficulty (15).

Specialized Components (2): Before you use metaphysics in an adventure, you must procure and destroy an object with a difficult purchase difficulty (20).

Exotic Components (3): Before you use metaphysics in an adventure, you must procure and destroy an object with a very difficult purchase difficulty (25).

Precious Components (4): Before you use metaphysics in an adventure, you must procure and destroy an object with a heroic purchase difficulty (31).

Arrogant (Social)

You are your own best fan, to the point of it hurting your relationships with others. Where this really becomes a problem is that in a hair-trigger world like Septimus where matters are most often settled at the point of a sword or a gun, being an overbearing nimrod can and will get you killed.

Cocky (1): You just can't stop running your mouth, especially about how great you are. At least once per adventure, you must attempt to make a *persuasion* or *intimidation* roll on somebody at –1D. If you fail, the offended party will become your enemy.

Loudmouth (2): You have no shortage of things to say about the extent of your greatness. At least once per adventure, you must attempt to make a *persuasion* or *intimidation* roll on somebody at –2D. If you fail, the offended party will become your enemy.

Braggart (3): Your brash nature is a recipe for instant riots. At least once per adventure, you must attempt to make a *persuasion* or *intimidation* roll on somebody at –3D. If you fail, the offended party will become your enemy. If you get a Critical Failure, the offended party will try to attack you (but not necessarily kill you) on the spot.

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Boor (4): Your abrasive nature is the stuff that starts wars, trashes treaties, and generally disturbs the peace for years after you've left somewhere. At least once per adventure, you must attempt to make a *persuasion* or *intimidation* roll on somebody at –4D. If you fail, the offended party will become your enemy. If you get a Critical Failure, the offended party will try to kill you on the spot.

Asymmetry (Physical)

Physically you are structured in such a way that one side of you is more developed than the other. You have your choice of attributes this Bane affects — *Strength* or *Agility*. Keep in mind that when an attribute gets to +3, it rolls over to the next highest die code.

Minor Asymmetry (1): On one side of your body, reduce your afflicted attribute by -2. On the other side of your body, raise your afflicted attribute by +2

Moderate Asymmetry (2): Raise/lower your afflicted attribute by +/-3.

Major Asymmetry (3): Raise/lower your afflicted attribute by +/-4.

Crippling Asymmetry (4): Raise/lower your afflicted attribute by +/- 5.

Berserker (Mental)

You become uncontrollably violent when you become injured. When berserk, you can not distinguish between friend and foe; everybody within striking range is fair game. You regain control of yourself once all possible opponents are dead or out of range, you have been knocked out, or you are restrained and given 2D rounds to calm down and see the insanity of your ways.

Minor Berserker (1): You go berserk whenever you sustain three wound levels of damage in a single encounter.

Moderate Berserker (2): You go berserk whenever you sustain two wounds of damage of damage in a single encounter.

Major Berserker (3): You go berserk whenever you sustain a single wound level of damage (beyond stunning) in a single encounter.

Supreme Berserker (4): You go berserk whenever you sustain any damage.

Blindness (Physical)

You have serious vision problems, which is not the best thing for an adventurer. Whether you have bad eyes or are missing one or both of them roughly depends on the severity of this bane. For the purposes only of striking or identifying anything outside of your vision range, this bane makes any *Perception*-based roll of heroic difficulty (or impossible, of the GM so rules).

Poor Vision (1): You can only see out to 100 feet accurately

Partially Blind (2): You can only see out to 20 feet.

Legally Blind (3): You can only see out to six feet — melee range.

Totally Blind (4): You cannot see at all.

Bloodlust (Mental)

You have an unhealthy fascination with carnage and will become uncontrollably violent if your appetite for viewing it has not been sated.

Minor Bloodlust (1): You must view 30 points of damage inflicted over the course of an adventure to receive any experience points from it.

Moderate Bloodlust (2): You must view 60 points of damage inflicted over the course of an adventure to receive any experience points from it.

Major Bloodlust (3): You must view 90 points of damage inflicted over the course of an adventure to receive any experience points from it.

Severe Bloodlust (4): You must view 120 points of damage inflicted over the course of an adventure to receive any experience points from it.

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Calling Card (Mental)

You are compelled to leave a calling card at the scene wherever you have a fight, confront an enemy, or perform something for which you would not mind receiving proper credit. That you leave a calling card is not such a problem. That they tend to get expensive after a while is. Leaving a calling card requires you to make a successful resource roll. Failure to do so means being unable to leave a calling card behind, something the GM is sure to keep in mind when rewarding Character and Fate points at the end of the adventure.

Trivial Calling Card (1): Resource difficulty 5

Notable Calling Card (2): Resource difficulty 10

Pricey Calling Card (3): Resource difficulty 15

Precious Calling Card (4): Resource difficulty 20

Clumsy (Physical)

You just can't help it: in clutch situations, you're the guy who has butterfingers, trips on his own feet, and generally becomes a walking catastrophe.

Minor Clumsiness (1): In times of crisis, reduce all *Agility*-based rolls by –1D.

Moderate Clumsiness (2): In times of crisis, reduce all *Agility*-based rolls by –1D+2.

Major Clumsiness (3): In times of crisis, reduce all *Agility*-based rolls by –2D+1.

Severe Clumsiness (4): In times of crisis, reduce all *Agility*-based rolls by –3D.

Code Of Honor (Social)

You live by a rigid code of behavior that requires you to never lie, to never show cowardice and to never steal (not even from enemies or the dead). You are also required to protect the innocent, to uphold the law of the land, and to punish the wicked. Failure to uphold your Code of Honor means a penalty.

Mild Code of Honor (1): The penalty for dishonor is passing shame. The next three experience points you earn don't count, as you will spend that time meditating and cleansing your spirit.

Moderate Code of Honor (2): The penalty for dishonor prolonged shame. The next six experience points you earn don't count, as you will spend that time meditating and cleansing your spirit.

Strict Code of Honor (3): The penalty for dishonor is deep shame. The next nine experience points you earn don't count, as you will spend that time meditating and cleansing your spirit.

Severe Code of Honor (4): The penalty for dishonor is ritual suicide. Now.

Combat Paralysis (Mental)

You are not a coward, but the prospect of combat causes you to blow a fuse, and you lock up like a statue in crisis situations. When this happens you must make a moderate *willpower* roll (15) to break free and return to action.

Mild Combat Paralysis (1): You lock up after three rounds of sustained action.

Moderate Combat Paralysis (2): You lock up after two rounds of sustained action.

Serious Combat Paralysis (3): You lock up after one round of sustained action.

Crippling Combat Paralysis (4): You lock up the moment action begins.

Cowardly (Social)

Your sense of self-preservation has crossed the line into repugnancy. You would be more willing to let your friends and family get hurt than to take a stand. Only if you make a successful *willpower* roll can

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you face serious adversity, but even then most times you are likely to fail and will find some way to weasel out of the fighting.

Lily-Livered (1): Lower your *willpower* by –1D when rolling against it to take action.

Yellowbelly (2): Lower your *willpower* by –1D+2 when rolling against it to take action.

Gutless (3): Lower your *willpower* by –2D+1 when rolling against it to take action.

Spineless (4): Lower your *willpower* by –3D when rolling against it to take action.

Cursed (Social)

You were born under a bad sign. No matter what you do, you must always contend with some undeserved hardship. And the worst part about it is these things are always changing; just as you get used to a problem, it goes away and a new one comes up. In game terms, your Curse Bane becomes different every time an adventure starts, so this is in effect an ever-changing Bane.

Minor Curse (1): Pick a different one-point social Bane at the start of each adventure.

Moderate Curse (2): Pick a different two-point social Bane at the start of each adventure.

Major Curse (3): Pick a different three-point social Bane at the start of each adventure.

Severe Curse (4): Pick a different four-point social Bane at the start of each adventure.

Dark Secret (Social)

You know something you really should not, a truth so sinister that the weight of it is slowly eating away at your mind. You dare not delve too deeply beyond what you already know, for you uncovered far more than mortal minds were meant to know.

Minor Dark Secret (1): Every fourth adventure, make a difficult *willpower* roll (20) or permanently suffer a –1 penalty to all future *willpower* rolls.

Major Dark Secret (2): Every third adventure, make a difficult *willpower* roll (20) or permanently suffer a –1 penalty to all future *willpower* rolls.

Serious Dark Secret (3): Every second adventure, make a difficult *willpower* roll (20) or permanently suffer a –1 penalty to all future *willpower* rolls.

Sinister Dark Secret (4): Every adventure, make a difficult *willpower* roll (20) or permanently suffer a –1 penalty to all future *willpower* rolls.

Deaf (Physical)

You have atrocious hearing, either because you were born that way or because an event in your earlier life damaged your hearing beyond repair.

Mild Deafness (1): Reduce all *Perception*-based rolls related to hearing by –2.

Moderate Deafness (2): Reduce all *Perception*-based rolls related to hearing by –4.

Serious Deafness (3): Reduce all *Perception*-based rolls related to hearing by –6.

Total Deafness (4): You hear nothing and cannot make hearing-based *Perception* rolls.

Deep Sleeper (Physical)

You are difficult to rouse from slumber, which puts you at a disadvantage when all hell breaks loose in the middle of the night. Until you clear the cobwebs from your head, all of your attributes are reduced by 6 when making any kind of attribute or skill roll.

I'm Up! I'm Up! I'm...Zzz. (1): You are groggy for one full minute upon waking.

Morning Starts at Noon (2): You are groggy for five minutes upon waking.

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Hibernator (3): You are groggy for ten minutes upon waking.

Is He Dead? (4): You are groggy for fifteen minutes upon waking.

Delusions (Mental)

You believe in things that have no basis in reality. Most of the time, this results in acute paranoia or visions of grandeur.

Mild Delusions (1): Delusions affect your decision-making at least once per adventure.

Moderate Delusions (2): Delusions affect your decision-making at least twice per adventure.

Serious Delusions (3): Delusions affect your decision-making at least three times per adventure.

Severe Delusions (4): Delusions constantly affect your decision-making.

Dependent (Social)

It is your responsibility to look after somebody. This is always a common person with no special abilities or adventuring potential, so if you bring this person along on adventures, you take a big risk in doing so, because if your dependent dies, you must atone for your negligence before a new ward enters your life.

Adult Dependent (1): This might be a long-time friend, a potential love interest, someone who believes he owes you a life debt and won't stop following you, etc. If your dependent dies, the next three experience points won't count, as you will be spending that energy atoning for your ward's loss.

Adolescent Dependent (2): This might be a child of your own, a child of a slain friend, or a wannabe adventurer who has adopted you. If your dependent dies, the next six experience points won't count, as you will be spending that energy atoning for your ward's loss.

Juvenile Dependent (3): This might be a child of your own or of a friend, an urchin you adopted, or pickpocket who stole from you but you caught in the attempt and now sticks around. If your dependent dies, the next nine experience points won't count, as you will be spending that energy atoning for your ward's loss.

Infant Dependent (4): This might be a child of yours or of a friend, an abandoned babe in the woods, or an orphan somebody willed to you out of desperation. If your dependent dies, the next twelve experience points won't count, as you will be spending that energy atoning for your ward's loss.

Disfigured (Physical)

At some point you have receive a terrible injury that left very visible and unsettling superficial damage to your body, especially your face, neck, hands, and wherever else your character's body might be commonly visible. There is no remedy for this other than magical reconstruction or alternation of your appearance or covering yourself up.

Mild Disfigurement (1): All persuasion rolls are at –1D.

Moderate Disfigurement (2): All *persuasion* rolls are at –2D.

Serious Disfigurement (3): All *persuasion* rolls are at –3D.

Severe Disfigurement (4): All *persuasion* rolls are at –4D.

Doomed (Social)

You have a dark destiny before you, but you do not know exactly what it is or when it will occur. No matter what you do, you know that all you are and all you do will be undone in one swift, terrible stroke. Your friends will suffer along with you, and the more power and influence you gain in this life, the greater your doom shall be for all that you touch when the time comes. For you, life is not a matter of struggling against death; you are only too aware of how precious life and happiness really are.

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Chances are you will keep this Bane secret, but you will become brooding and perhaps quiet because of it. It is plain that you bear a terrible weight on your shoulders.

Distant Destiny (1): You will meet your Doom within ten years.

Far Destiny (2): You will meet your Doom within five years.

Near Destiny (3): You will meet your Doom within three years.

Immediate Destiny (4): You will meet your Doom within a year.

Expenses (Social)

You have a never-ending series of debts hanging over you that eat into whatever money you happen to earn, capture or find. No matter how much you make, your debts just never go away. Note that if this Bane takes your Resource into negative numbers, then you are not only permanently in debt, but those to whom you are indebted will doubtlessly hound you on a regular basis for their money. This might dovetail into the Hunted Bane.

Minor Expenses (1): Reduce your Resources by –1D.

Moderate Expenses (2): Reduce your Resources by –1D+2.

Major Expenses (3): Reduce your Resources by –2D+1.

Severe Expenses (4): Reduce your Resources by –3D.

Feeble Attribute (Physical)

Pick any single attribute and permanently reduce its score to 2. How that attribute got that way is up to you. Was part of you deformed at birth? Is it a war wound?

Minor Enfeeblement (1): Reduce a single attribute by one pip.

Moderate Enfeeblement (2): Reduce a single attribute by two pips.

Major Enfeeblement (3): Reduce a single attribute by three pips (a full die).

Total Enfeeblement (4): Reduce a single attribute by four (1D+1) pips.

Feral (Social)

You grew up in the wild, apart from nearly all forms of civilization. As a result you have a difficult time fitting in with cultured society. You tend to make embarrassing scenes with your crude ways and lack of culture. Depending on the situation, your "barbarity" might even get you in trouble with the law if you step on the wrong toes.

Mildly Feral (1): Reduce your *Perception* by two pips when in civilized company.

Partly Feral (2): Reduce your *Perception* by four pips (1D+1) when in civilized company.

Mostly Feral (3): Reduce your *Perception* by six pips (2D) when in civilized company.

Completely Feral (4): Reduce your *Perception* by eight pips (2D+2) when in civilized company.

Flashbacks (Mental)

There are certain events, environments, sights, sounds, and other elements of everyday life that trigger within you a deep-seated and crippling memory of something horrible you have suffered. It might be your parents dying, a torture session you endured, a monster that nearly ate you… something of that ilk. When a flashback occurs, you must make a *willpower* roll in order to prevent from being overwhelmed by the flashback for the next 2D minutes, during which time you will act out the events that you are reliving in your mind, potentially posing a very serious danger to anybody nearby. As with the Berserk Bane, unconsciousness is the best cure for a flashback, as is restraining the victim until he comes out of it.

Rare Flashbacks: You suffer a flashback every 4 adventures.

Uncommon Flashbacks: You suffer a flashback every 3 adventures.

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Regular Flashbacks: You suffer a flashback every 2 adventures.

Frequent Flashbacks: You suffer a flashback every adventure.

Fragility (Physical)

You have brittle bones, even if you are of normal size and have decent musculature. You simply do not take a hit well and often are nursing some kind of splint, cast or sling. People with this bane are almost never more than 95% of their total health, simply because the stress of living takes a horrible toll on their easily broken bodies.

Mild Fragility (1): Add one more point of damage for every four points you sustain.



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Moderate Fragility (2): Add one more point of damage for every two points you sustain.

Serious Fragility (3): Add one more point of damage for every point you sustain.

Severe Fragility (4): Add two more points of damage for every point you sustain.

Free Bleeder (Physical)

Your blood continues to flow long after it should have clotted, meaning you take more damage than usual from cutting wounds. For every minute you bleed, you lose one additional point of *Strength*. What's worse, each separate cut on your body will bleed separately, so if you have been wounded several times, this Bane might sentence you to a quick death by bloodletting. The best ways to staunch the flow of blood is to either keep steady pressure on the wound (which requires the use of at least one hand, and is not effective for multiple wounds), to have a team of comrades dress your wounds using medical skills, or better yet, the use of some form of magical healing.

Mild Bleeding (1): It takes a cut 1D minutes to stop bleeding. Roll an additional 1D in damage once the bleeding stops.

Moderate Bleeding (2): It takes a cut 2D minutes to stop bleeding. Roll an additional 1D+2 in damage once the bleeding stops.

Serious Bleeding (3): It takes a cut 3D minutes to stop bleeding. Roll an additional 2D+1 in damage once the bleeding stops.

Severe Bleeding (4): It takes a cut 4D minutes to stop bleeding. Roll an additional 3D in damage once the bleeding stops.

Gigantism (Physical)

You are oversized but not in a good way. It is as if you have too many muscles for your frame, and while you are quite strong, your *Agility* really suffers for it.

Mild Gigantism (1): Add one pip to your *Strength*, but subtract one pip from your *Agility*.

Moderate Gigantism (2): Add two pips to your *Strength*, but subtract three pips (1D) from your *Agility*.

Serious Gigantism (3): Add three pips (1D) to your *Strength*, but subtract three pips (1D) from your *Agility*.

Severe Gigantism (4): Add four (1D+1) pips to your *Strength*, but subtract four pips (1D+1) from your *Agility*.

Glory Hound (Mental)

You are a showboat, a spotlight hog, an attention junkie. The best way you know how to satisfy this is by making sure that your heroics never go unnoticed. Unfortunately this pushes you to take extreme risks in the hope of pulling off something worthy of public acclaim. Needless to say, this Bane tends to be a direct threat to the health of those who choose it.

Small-Time Glory Hound (1): Each adventure you must take at least one unnecessary, dangerous risk if you are to receive any experience points.

Big-Time Glory Hound (2): Each adventure you must take at least two unnecessary, dangerous risks if you are to receive any experience points.

Major League Glory Hound (3): Each adventure you must take at least three unnecessary, dangerous risks if you are to receive any experience points.

Supreme Glory Hound (4): Each adventure you must take at least four unnecessary, dangerous risks if you are to receive any experience points.

Gluttony (Mental)

You are a creature of appetites, and you spend an inordinate amount of time each day eating and drinking. Unless you have

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the metabolism of a shrew, it might be a good idea for logic's sake to take the Obesity Bane, too.

Mild Gluttony (1): You need to seek out a meal once every six hours. If you go without eating, reduce all rolls by –2 until you eat.

Moderate Gluttony (2): You need to seek out a meal once every four hours. If you go without eating, reduce all rolls by –2 until you eat.

Serious Gluttony (3): You need to seek out a meal once every two hours. If you go without eating, reduce all rolls by –2 until you eat.

Severe Gluttony (4): You need to seek out a meal once every hour. If you go without eating, reduce all rolls by –2 until you eat.

Greed (Mental)

You are driven by material wealth, and above all things you desire to amass as much of it as possible. For every adventure on which you embark, you will not rest until you achieve at least some degree of further prosperity.

Mild Greed (1): You must obtain at least a one-time +1D bonus to your resources during the course of an adventure if you are to receive any character points from it.

Moderate Greed (2): You must obtain at least a one-time +1D+2 bonus to your resources during the course of an adventure if you are to receive any character points from it.

Serious Greed (3): You must obtain at least a one-time +2D+1 bonus to your resources during the course of an adventure if you are to receive any character points from it.

Insane Greed (4): You must obtain at least a one-time +3D bonus to your resources during the course of an adventure if you are to receive any character points from it.

Hallucinations (Mental)

You see, hear, smell and even feel things that simply are not there. This tends to make you jumpy, irritable, and uncertain of damn near everything. How can you trust anything once you realize that at least part of what you think is real…is not? On top of this, chances are that whatever it is you are hallucinating, you also believe is out to harm you. Thus, your friends are treated to the sight of you acting as if you are in peril by something that they know for a fact does not exist.

Mild Hallucinations (1): You hallucinate at least once per adventure.

Moderate Hallucinations (2): You hallucinate at least twice per adventure.

Serious Hallucinations (3): You hallucinate at least three times per adventure.

Severe Hallucinations (4): You hallucinate at least four times per adventure. You really shouldn't skip your meds. They'll help if you just give them a chance.

Haunted (Mental)

You did or saw something a while back that has bothered you ever since. Maybe it was a crime you committed or an atrocity you witnessed. Either way, the images of this scene are burned onto your mind, and whenever you see something that reminds you of your Haunting, you will be seriously distracted until you can somehow clear the imagery form your mind, either by isolating yourself from whatever triggered you for the next 1D minutes or by making a difficult *willpower* roll (20).

Minor Haunting (1): Reduce all attributes by two pips for the purposes of attribute and skill rolls while haunted.

Moderate Haunting (2): Reduce all attributes by four pips (1D+1) for the purposes of attribute and skill rolls while haunted.

Major Haunting (3): Reduce all attributes by six pips (2D) for the purposes of attribute and skill rolls while haunted.

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Severe Haunting (4): Reduce all attributes by eight pips (2D+2) for the purposes of attribute and skill rolls while haunted.

Hunted (Social)

You are on the hit list of some very powerful people who will stop at nothing to see you dead. The problem is that you can kill the leader of your pursuers and another one will always be there to take his place. What's more, your pursuers will always be far more numerous and more powerful than you and your allies, so fighting them directly is not always the best option. You might get away with the occasional counter-attack, but any prolonged fighting against your pursuers will inevitably result in your defeat. Get used to life on the run…if you like living, that is.

On the Run (1): You face an encounter with your pursuers at least once every fourth adventure, regardless if that adventure has anything to do with your pursuers.

Watch Your Back (2): You face an encounter with your pursuers at least once every third adventure, regardless if that adventure has anything to do with your pursuers.

One Step Ahead (3): You face an encounter with your pursuers at least once every other adventure, regardless if that adventure has anything to do with your pursuers.

Fight or Flight (4): You face an encounter with your pursuers at least once every adventure, regardless if that adventure has anything to do with your pursuers.

Imprisoned (Social)

You have spent time in jail, whether you deserved it or were unjustly put there. Now you are out, most likely because you served your time, although you could have broken out too, in which case you should take a bane like outlaw to go with it. Living in a dark, dank dungeon has taken its toll on your physical attributes (*Strength*, *Agility*).

Five Years (1): Lower your physical attributes by a total of two pips.

Ten Years (2): Lower your physical attributes by a total of four pips.

Fifteen Years (3): Lower your physical attributes by a total of six pips.

Twenty Years (4): Lower your physical attributes by a total of eight pips.

Infamous (Social)

You are well-known for a bad reason. You are not necessarily an outlaw (for that, see the Outlaw Bane), but whatever it is that has smeared your name, it is something serious and long-lasting. Your reputation is unlikely to come back in the eyes of certain people. The magnitude of this Bane depends on how widespread your infamy is. Should you encounter somebody with whom you are infamous, all social interactions will be more difficult, at a –2D modifier for skills such as *con*, *intimidation*, and *persuade*.

Disgraced (1): Every person you meet, there is a 1 in 6 chance that he/she doesn't like you.

Disliked (2): Every person you meet, there is a 2 in 6 chance that he/she doesn't like you.

Detested (3): Every person you meet, there is a 3 in 6 chance that he/she doesn't like you.

Despised (4): Every person you meet, there is a 4 in 6 chance that he/she doesn't like you.

Intolerance (Mental)

You live by excessively inflexible personal beliefs, and in the instance of one particular group of people your inflexibility has crossed the line into downright incivility. Whenever you are faced with the subject of your ire, there is no tactful way out of the situation.

Mild Intolerance (1): You can't help but verbally abuse the subject of your dislike.

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Moderate Intolerance (2): You can't help but physically bully the subject of your dislike.

Serious Intolerance (3): You can't help but physically assault the subject of your dislike.

Severe Intolerance (4): You can't help but attempt to kill the subject of your dislike. Yeah. You're that kind of evil. Seek some help.

Jealousy (Mental)

You are unreasonably possessive of your love interest/significant other/somebody you worship from afar. Anybody who gets close to this person sends you over the edge, and you begin to think terrible thoughts. Thoughts that involve hurting your loved one for being untrue, of hurting the villain who dared get between you and the person on whom you are fixated. Chances are the relationship you are obsessed with will end once you take action on your jealousy, at which point this Bane will switch over to haunted.

Mild Jealousy (1): You will verbally insult the interloper and/or your love interest

Moderate Jealousy (2): You will try to intimidate the interloper and/or your love interest

Serious Jealousy (3): You will assault the interloper and/or your love interest.

Severe Jealousy (4): You will try to kill the interloper and/or your love interest. How you intend to commit the murder depends on your personality. Will it be a challenge to a duel, or will you go after your innocent victim in cold blood?

Jinxed (Social)

You just can't catch a break. At the worst times, your luck geeks out on you. Sometimes, you can tell that things just didn't go your way, but sometimes, it's almost like there's somebody out there who is arbitrarily deciding to make things difficult on you.

Tough Break (1): The GM may without warning overturn one of your successful attribute or skill rolls once per adventure. Don't give him any lip about it either. You're the one who chose this Bane, after all.

Bad Luck (2): The GM may overturn two of your successful attribute or skill rolls per adventure.

Three-Time Loser (3): The GM may overturn three of your successful attribute or skill rolls per adventure.

Screwed (4): The GM may overturn four of your successful attribute or skill rolls per adventure.

Lame (Physical)

You either have a leg that does not work well or it is missing altogether. Naturally, this reduces your *Agility*, so you can no longer move as quickly or as gracefully as before.

Bothersome Limp (1): Permanently reduce *Agility* by two pips.

Serious Limp (2): Permanently reduce *Agility* by three pips (1D).

Missing Foot (3): Permanently reduce *Agility* by four pips (1D+1). At least you have an interesting prosthetic foot, though.

Missing Leg (4): Permanently reduce *Agility* by four points (1D+2). Look on the bright side: now you've got an artificial leg, which increases your *Perception* by one pip when in the company of fellow soldiers, criminals and adventurers, who see such an amputation as a badge of honor.

Low Pain Threshold (Physical)

You can not stand pain at all, and after suffering enough of a hit you will pass out altogether. If you have Resist Unconsciousness, you can use that to reduce the effects of this Bane.

Mild Pain Sensitivity (1): Make a moderate *stamina* roll (15) or pass out for 1D minutes if you take a single hit that inflicts 10 points of damage or more.

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Moderate Pain Sensitivity (2): Make a moderate *stamina* roll (15) or pass out for 1D minutes if you take a single hit that inflicts 8 points of damage or more.

Serious Pain Sensitivity (3): Make a moderate *stamina* roll (15) or pass out for 1D minutes if you take a single hit that inflicts 6 points of damage or more.

Severe Pain Sensitivity (4): Make a moderate *stamina* roll (15) or pass out for 1D minutes if you take a single hit that inflicts 4 points of damage or more.

Mental Block (Mental)

There is something that you are so repulsed by that you simply can not think about it in any capacity. You and the GM should decide on what this thing is, and whenever it comes up in gameplay you will be unable to acknowledge it or perform any *Knowledge*-based rolls regarding it.

Mild Mental Block (1): You hit a mental block at least once per adventure.

Moderate Mental Block (2): You hit a mental block at least twice per adventure.

Serious Mental Block (3): You hit a mental block at least three times per adventure.

Severe Mental Block (4): You hit a mental block at least four times per adventure.

Merciless (Social)

You have no sense of restraint when it comes to dealing with vanquished foes, helpless enemies, prisoners and detainees. You see no reason why such folk should not be mistreated at will, but take heed: while you might enjoy spilling the blood of fleeing enemy soldiers or working over your prisoners, the exact same fate will be inflicted upon you should the tables turn.

Kill 'Em All (1): You will run down fleeing soldiers but draw the line at that.

Vicious (2): You will run down fleeing soldiers and work over prisoners.

Torture (3): You will run down fleeing soldiers and torture prisoners for no reason.

Sadistic (4): You will run down fleeing soldiers and will kill prisoners without cause. Women and children always make for decent target practice.

Miserly (Social)

You are a natural hoarder, unable to share with others or to use any expendable resource, no matter how great your reserves of it may be.

Packrat (1): You can not make more than three Resource rolls per adventure.

Cheap (2): You cannot make more than two Resource rolls per adventure.

Frugal (3): You cannot make more than one Resource roll per adventure.

Scrooge (4): You cannot make more than one Resource roll per every two adventures.

Missing Arm (Physical)

You lost the use of one of your hands/arms, whether it was shriveled at birth, has been rendered lame by injury or disease, or has been removed altogether in battle or by medical amputation. For some reason simply regrowing the appendage will not work for you, most likely due to a freak genetic mutation that prevents a full regrowth of your body via regen tank. Even if you get blown to smithereens, regrowing your entire body will not replace your missing parts. Sorry, them's the breaks.

Missing Fingers (1): One of your hands is missing a few fingers. When conducting tasks with that hand, reduce your relevant attribute for the task by two pips.

Missing Hand (2): You are missing your hand at the wrist. You can attach a mechanical prosthesis on the stump, but you can only perform basic functions with it. Even then, reduce your relevant attribute

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for the task by four pips. You could, however, attach a weapon prosthesis on the stump and fight normally with it.

Missing Forearm (3): You are missing your hand at the elbow. You can attach a mechanical prosthesis on the stump, but you can never perform more than the most basic functions with it. Reduce your relevant attribute for the task by six points. You could, however, attach a weapon prosthesis on the stump and fight with it, but reduce your *Agility* rolls by two pips when fighting with your prosthetic arm.

Missing Arm (4): You are missing your arm at the shoulder and cannot attach a prosthesis to the stump. You must live with the fact that you have only one arm. Take care of it.

Mute (Physical)

You cannot speak normally, either because of a mental block or because of an injury to your throat/voice box.

Broken Speech (1): You can manage to speak in a broken form of your native tongue. Both you and whomever you are talking to must make easy *Perception* rolls (10) to be understood. It is impossible for you to speak in a foreign language, and you will always be considered to be slow, barbaric, or just plain strange by others.

Guttural Speech (2): You speak in something that barely resembles your native tongue. Both you and whomever you are talking to must make moderate *Perception* rolls (15) to be understood.

Emotive Speech (3): You speak in crude grunts and noises, but sometimes you get your point across anyway. Both you and whomever you are talking to must make difficult *Perception* rolls (20) to be understood. If either roll fails, you do not get your point across.

Nonverbal (4): You cannot speak. Period.

Nemesis (Social)

Somewhere out there is a foe who outmatches you in nearly every way. Each time you meet, you barely escape with your life, and the next time you encounter him might be your last. Your paths have a strange way of crossing, as if destiny has decreed that you two shall battle each other until one or both of you are dead. Should you ever manage to defeat your nemesis, another one will take his place after 1D additional adventures.

Rival (1): Your nemesis has 10 more Character Points than you, and you encounter him at least once every fifth adventure.

Opponent (2): Your nemesis has 20 more Character Points than you, and you encounter him at least once every fourth adventure.

Adversary (3): Your nemesis has 30 more Character Points than you, and you encounter him at least once every third adventure.

Arch-Enemy (4): Your nemesis has 40 more Character Points than you, and you encounter him every other adventure.

Obesity (Physical)

You are unnaturally heavy, which hurts your overall health as well as your ability to move quickly and gracefully.

Mild Obesity (1): Permanently reduce your *Strength* and *Agility* by one pip each.

Moderate Obesity (2): Permanently reduce your *Strength* and *Agility* by two pips each.

Serious Obesity (3): Permanently reduce your *Strength* and *Agility* by three pips (1D) each.

Severe Obesity (4): Permanently reduce your *Strength* and *Agility* by four pips (1D+1) each.

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Obligation (Social)

You have sworn to uphold something, to carry out a certain duty, to maintain a particular kind of task or deed. You are bound by your honor on this; should you ever shirk your obligation for any reason whatsoever, you must atone for it.

Duty (1): Upon breaking your obligation, your next three character points do not count.

Oath (2): Upon breaking your obligation, your next six character points do not count.

Vow (3): Upon breaking your obligation, your next nine character points do not count.

Bond (4): Upon breaking your obligation, your next twelve character points do not count.

Obsession (Mental)

You are driven by the irrational desire to perform some kind of act that has no particular bearing on your current situation or environment. Whatever your obsession is — licking a gold Imperial coin every time you cross the street, tying and untying your shoes three times before leaving the house, maintaining insanely large collections of things — it is at best a minor annoyance and at worst, a crippling psychological condition.

Mild Obsession (1): You need to role-play your obsession at least once per adventure in order to receive any Character Points.

Moderate Obsession (2): You need to role-play your obsession at least twice per adventure in order to receive any Character Points.

Serious Obsession (3): You need to role-play your obsession at least three times per adventure in order to receive any Character Points.

Severe Obsession (4): You need to role-play your obsession at least four times per adventure in order to receive any Character Points.

On The Edge (Mental)

You are strung out to the breaking point. Over the course of your life, you have seen too many horrible things, endured too much hardship, are fearful of too much, to last much longer. You are ready to SNAP! just like that. This means that when bad things go down, you must spend a few seconds pulling yourself together before you can take action.

Jumpy: Reduce the die code of your first roll in a crisis situation by –1D.

Edgy: Reduce the die code of your first roll in a crisis situation by –2D and your second roll by –1D.

Twitchy: Reduce the die code of your first roll in a crisis situation by –3D, your second roll by 2D and your third roll by 1D.

Freaky: Reduce the die code of your first roll in a crisis situation by –4D, your second roll by –3D, your third roll by –2D and your fourth roll by –1D.

Outcast (Social)

You are hated by other members of your own society (the Extent, the Grayscale or the Archipelago) either for something you have done or for something your friends, family or political affiliates have done.

Derelict (1): With members of your society, you have a penalty of –1D on all *Perception* rolls.

Untouchable (2): With members of your society, you have a penalty of –1D+2 on all *Perception* rolls.

Pariah (3): With members of your society, you have a penalty of –2D+1 on all *Perception* rolls.

Exile (4): With members of your society, you have a penalty of –3D on all *Perception* rolls.

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Outlaw (Social)

You have broken the law and either have not yet been caught for it or you were caught and have escaped before your punishment was completed. If your pursuers find you, they will bring you back to their jurisdiction, complete your punishment and impose additional penalties upon you for being such a bother (How does life in prison sound? No? Fine. To the chopping block with you!). On the downside, you can't really maintain social contacts outside of your party for fear of recognition. On the upside, being an outlaw raises your presence when among other criminals.

Hooligan (1): You are wanted throughout your homeland (either the Extent, the Grayscale or the Archipelago). To keep people from noticing who you are requires a moderate *sneak* roll (15).

Highwayman (2): You are wanted throughout your homeland and another society within Septimus. To keep people from noticing who you are requires a difficult *sneak* roll (20).

Villain (3): You are wanted throughout all three major societies within Septimus. To keep people from noticing who you are requires a very difficult *sneak* roll (25).

Public Enemy (4): You are wanted everywhere. E V E R Y W H E R E. Even among isolated settlements on the surface of Septimus. To keep people from noticing who you are requires a heroic *sneak* roll (30+). Better keep a low profile.

Pacifism (Mental)

You will not fight with others for any reason, even if you are directly threatened. You may run away, *dodge*, block and carry out other defensive moves, but you will never attempt to hurt another. Should you break your vow of pacifism, you will have to undergo extensive meditation and reflection to reconcile yourself with your violent deeds.

Casual Pacifism (1): The next three Character Points you earn don't count, as you will spend that time meditating and reflecting on your violent deeds.

Sincere Pacifism (2): The next six Character Points you earn don't count, as you will spend that time meditating and reflecting on your violent deeds.

Strict Pacifism (3): The next nine Character Points you earn don't count, as you will spend that time meditating and reflecting on your violent deeds.

Severe Pacifism (4): The next twelve Character Points you earn don't count, as you will spend that time meditating and reflecting on your violent deeds.

Painless (Physical)

Your nerve endings do not work properly and as a result, you have a much-diminished sense of touch. While this means you don't feel pain (and are ineligible to take the Low Pain Threshold Bane), you also can't tell when you are taking damage and might find yourself suddenly on death's door. The only way you can tell if you have been wounded is to make a *Perception* roll; only then will the GM tell you your health status at the moment. Otherwise, you can tell if you have been seriously wounded by seeing yourself bleed, etc., but you will not know how close you actually are to dying until you drop.

Dull Nerve Endings (1): You must make an easy *Perception* roll (10) to gauge your current health.

Stunted Nerve Endings (2): You must make an moderate *Perception* roll (15) to gauge your current health.

Severed Nerve Endings (3): You must make an difficult *Perception* roll (20) to gauge your current health.

No Nerve Endings (4): You must make an very difficult *Perception* roll (25) to gauge your current health.

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Persecuted (Social)

The powers that be have it in for you because of factors beyond your control, such as your race, your cultural heritage, etc. Wherever you go you are bound to find people who hate you simply for being who and what you are.

Mildly Persecuted (1): You face unjust persecution at least once an adventure.

Moderately Persecuted (2): You face unjust persecution at least twice an adventure.

Seriously Persecuted (3): You face unjust persecution at least three times an adventure.

Severely Persecuted (4): You face unjust persecution at least four times an adventure.

Phobia (Mental)

You possess an irrational fear of something. When confronted by it, you will do everything in your power to avoid or escape it. Should you find yourself cornered by what you fear, you will become hysterically violent, lashing out as if you had taken the Berserk Bane, smashing everything in sight until what you fear has been destroyed, you have been knocked out, or you have been restrained by others and given time (1D minutes) to calm down. Discuss your phobia's object with the GM.

Mild Phobia (1): Reduce whatever attribute you are rolling against by -2 when exposed to the object of your fear.

Moderate Phobia (2): Reduce whatever attribute you are rolling against by -4 when exposed to the object of your fear.

Serious Phobia (3): Reduce whatever attribute you are rolling against by -6 when exposed to the object of your fear.

Severe Phobia (4): Reduce whatever attribute you are rolling against by -8 when exposed to the object of your fear.

Poor (Social)

No matter how hard you try, you just can't hold on to money. You don't even get a chance to spend it like a drunken sailor. It just slips out of your hands somehow, always leaving you scrambling to cover your debts. This Bane only limits how much money your character may keep. It does not limit how many items or things he owns, but with so little money on hand his buying power will be limited. Taking this Bane prohibits you from taking the Wealthy Boon. You also may not select Resources as anything higher than your 4th priority during character generation.

Struggling (1): You may never have more than a total of 4D Resources at your disposal.

Broke (2): You may never have more than a total of 3D Resources at your disposal.

Impoverished (3): You may never have more than a total of 2D Resources at your disposal.

Destitute (4): You may never have more than a total of 1D Resources at your disposal. Better find some wealthy friends, mate.

Poor Memory (Mental)

You have a difficult time remembering anything in the short term. Only after repeating a bit of information many times do you have any hope of reliably remembering it. Most times you simply rely on others to remember things for you. When trying to remember something, make an intelligence roll.

Short Memory (1): You forget things 24 hours after being initially exposed to them. You generally need to be exposed to something three times to commit it to long-term memory.

Bad Memory (2): You forget things 1D hours after being initially exposed to them. You generally need to be exposed to something six times to commit it to long-term memory.

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Atrocious Memory (3): You forget things within an hour of being initially exposed to them. You generally need to be exposed to something nine times to commit it to long-term memory.

What Memory? (4): You forget things the minute after being initially exposed to them. You generally need to be exposed to something twelve times to commit it to long-term memory.

Psychosis (Mental)

You periodically suffer overpowering urges to inflict random violence upon something or somebody. When you feel these urges, a successful moderate *willpower* roll (15) will enable you to suppress your murderous urges for the moment. Should you fail to repress your violent tendencies, nobody is safe. Not friends, not family, no one. Not even yourself.

Mild Psychosis (1): You have a potentially psychotic episode once an adventure.

Moderate Psychosis (2): You have a potentially psychotic episode twice an adventure.

Serious Psychosis (3): You have a potentially psychotic episode three times an adventure.

Severe Psychosis (4): You have a potentially psychotic episode four times an adventure.

Scarred (Physical)

You bear the marks of horrible wounds suffered long ago. Chances are these are no mere accidental markings; they are the legacy of a struggle you lost, and not only do you bear the physical reminders of that humiliation, you also bear the desire to make things right against whomever or whatever scarred you in the first place.

Mild Scarring (1): Reduce all *persuasion* rolls by -2.

Moderate Scarring (2): Reduce all *persuasion* rolls by -4.

Heavy Scarring (3): Reduce all *persuasion* rolls by -6.

Grotesque Scarring (4): Reduce all *persuasion* rolls by -8.

Scatterbrain (Mental)

You have a perpetually wandering mind and find it impossible to concentrate on any one thing for an extended period of time. In the long run this makes it more difficult for you to learn new skills, improve existing ones, and the like.

Lack of Concentration (1): Negate one character point per adventure.

Short Attention Span (2): Negate two character points per adventure.

Flaky (3): Negate three character points per adventure.

Space Cadet (4): Negate four character points per adventure

Seizures (Physical)

You are subject to periodic and involuntary seizures that render you unable to move. They tend to happen more when you are emotionally agitated, but really there is no telling when they will strike, nor do you know how to prevent them. Each seizure lasts 1D minutes. In game terms, the GM will decide exactly when you will suffer seizures, but to make sure that he does not abuse this bane, you will receive one experience point for every seizure you suffer.

Mild Seizures: You suffer a seizure every 2D months.

Moderate Seizures: You suffer a seizure every 1D months.

Serious Seizures: You suffer a seizure every 1D weeks.

Severe Seizures: You suffer a seizure every 1D days.

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Sheltered Origin (Social)

You were brought up in an isolated environment, such as a monastery, where you were raised to devote your life to a singular pursuit. As a result, you can not learn as many different skills as other people. Once you reach fifth level in any skill, you can no longer advance in it, and you will have to spend your experience points on something else.

Mildly Sheltered (1): You may know ten different skills, maximum.

Moderately Sheltered (2): You may know eight different skills, maximum.

Seriously Sheltered (3): You may know six different skills, maximum.

Severely Sheltered (4): You may know four different skills, maximum.

Skin & Bones (Physical)

You are unnaturally skinny, making it impossible for you to build any serious muscle mass on your wiry frame. If you take this Bane, you cannot take obesity as well.

Skinny (1): Permanently reduce your *Strength* by one pips.

Scrawny (2): Permanently reduce your *Strength* by two pips.

Stick Figure (3): Permanently reduce your *Strength* by three pips (1D).

Two-Dimensional (4): Permanently reduce your *Strength* by four pips (1D+1).

Slow (Physical)

You possess poor reflexes, making you one of the last people in the party to act when trouble arises.

Sluggish (1): Reduce all initiative rolls by -2.

Slothlike (2): Reduce all initiative rolls by -4.

Living Statue (3): Reduce all initiative rolls by -6.

Suspended Animation (4): Reduce all initiative rolls by -8.

Slow Metaphysics (Mental)

As you use any metaphysical ability, you must verbalize it into a minor ritual. While this makes your use of the ability process seem more impressive and dramatic, it adds time to you getting the spell out. In a life and death situation, those lost seconds can make a big difference.

Sluggish Psionics (1): Reduce your initiative roll by –2 when using metaphysics in the same round.

Slow Psionics (2): Reduce your initiative roll by –4 when using metaphysics in the same round.

Creeping Psionics (3): Reduce your initiative roll by –6 when using metaphysics in the same round.

Frozen Psionics (4): Reduce your initiative roll by –8 when using metaphysics in the same round

Svengali (Social)

You were trained by a master who has since been overtaken by his dark side (most likely because of Corruption), which means nothing but trouble for you.

Infamous Mentor (1): Your mentor has since become an outlaw or a villain, meaning that you also share in his tainted reputation. Lower your presence by two points when in the company of fellow adventurers outside of your party.

Resentful Mentor (2): You have overshadowed your mentor, who now seeks to ruin your reputation, you insolent little bastard, you!

Insane Mentor (3): Your mentor has gone off the deep end. And guess what? You are at the center of his insanity. Be afraid.

Diabolical Mentor (4): Your mentor is now evil incarnate and either wants to destroy you utterly or wants to make you

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his slave. Either way, he will not stop in his sinister quest until he is destroyed. And even then, his other students will pick up where he left off.

Terminally Ill (Physical)

You suffer from an incurable disease that will kill you eventually. There is no cure that you have discovered so far, not by natural medicine, nor by magic. Presumably, there is some undiscovered remedy out there that might solve your problem, but you have neither found it nor even heard of it, and time is running out.

Recently Infected (1): You will succumb to your ailment within 1D years. It might sound like a long time, but try to think of this how your character would. 1D years is not a long time until death.

Slowly Progressing Illness (2): You will succumb to your ailment within one year.

Rapidly Progressing Illness (3): You will succumb to your ailment within six months.

The Eleventh Hour (4): You have 1D months before you succumb to your ailment. The end could come at any time, striking out of nowhere, leaving you healthy one moment and dead within the hour. If you're searching for a cure, you better get a move on.

Tiny (Physical)

You are unnaturally small, which reduces your *Strength* but increases your *Agility*.

Shorty (1): You are only 85% as tall as an average member of your race. Reduce your *Strength* by two pips.

Half Pint (2): You are only 75% as tall as an average member of your race. Reduce your *Strength* by three pips (1D).

Small Fry (3): You are only 66% as tall as an average member of your race. Reduce your *Strength* by three pips (1D) and increase your *Agility* by one pip.

Pipsqueak (4): You are only half as tall as an average member of your race. Reduce your *Strength* by three pips (1D) and increase your *Agility* by two pips.

Unstable Metaphysics (Mental)

While you might be naturally able to handle metaphysical feats, there is also something about you that scrambles them somewhat, making actual metaphysics a more difficult affair than it ought to be. The problem is if you fail to use metaphysics properly, then it feeds back on you, causing you damage.

Minor Instability (1): A failed use of metaphysics inflicts 1D of damage on you.

Moderate Instability (2): A failed use of metaphysics inflicts 2D of damage on you.

Major Instability (3): A failed use of metaphysics inflicts 3D of damage on you.

Severe Instability (4): A failed use of metaphysics inflicts 4D of damage on you.

Untrustworthy (Social)

Your broken promises and double-faced deeds have branded you as a backstabber, a cheat, and a low-down scoundrel never to be trusted. At least that is your reputation, and you seem unable to rid yourself of it, whether it is well deserved or not.

Cheat (1): People get +1D to their *Perception* rolls to recall your tainted character.

Rogue (2): People get +2D to their *Perception* rolls to recall your tainted character.

Scoundrel (3): People get +3D to their *Perception* rolls to recall your tainted character.

Blackguard (4): People get +4D to their *Perception* rolls to recall your tainted character.

Vile (Social)

There is an innate sketchiness or sleaziness about you that puts you off to all but the most evil of people. This makes it very

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hard for people to accept you as a hero. If you're a bad guy, hey, at least you've got the villainous image down pat.

Smarmy (1): Reduce your *persuasion* rolls by -2 when around non-villains.

Sketchy (2): Reduce your *persuasion* rolls by -4 when around non-villains.

Sleazy (3): Reduce your *persuasion* rolls by -6 when around non-villains.

Scumbag (4): Reduce your *persuasion* rolls by -8 when around non-villains.

Voices (Mental)

You constantly hear disembodied voices in your head that tell you what to do. What's worse is that every one of your voices has a separate motivation and demeanor from you, and none of them are in concert with each other. In addition to presenting you with an increased role-playing challenge of a character pulled in a different direction, this condition also will lower your *willpower* as your sanity has been compromised.

The Voice (1): You have a single voice; lower your *willpower* rolls by -2.

The Opponents (2): You have two voices; lower your *willpower* by rolls by -4.

The Peanut Gallery (3): You have three voices; lower your *willpower* rolls by -6.

The Parliament of Crows (4): You have four voices; lower your *willpower* rolls by -8.

Vulnerability (Physical)

You are acutely susceptible to exposure to a certain substance, material or form of energy. The subject of the vulnerability can be something exotic, like an experimental alloy, or something common, like salt. Generally, the higher a level of Bane this is, the more common the substance.

Mild Vulnerability (1): You take a 1D of damage when you come into contact or ingest the substance to which you are vulnerable.

Moderate Vulnerability (2): You take a 1D+2 of damage when you come into contact or ingest the substance to which you are vulnerable.

Serious Vulnerability (3): You take a 2D+1 of damage when you come into contact or ingest the substance to which you are vulnerable.

Lethal Vulnerability (4): You take a 3D of damage when you come into contact or ingest the substance to which you are vulnerable.

Vestigism (Physical)

Your innate abilities never developed properly, leaving you with a genetic hint of what your full capabilities could have been. The further you try to develop your inborn abilities, the further you unravel.

Mild Vestigism (1): For each new Boon you develop, you sustain one point of Corruption.

Moderate Vestigism (2): For each new Boon you develop, you sustain two points of Corruption.

Serious Vestigism (3): For each new Boon you develop, you sustain three points of Corruption.

Severe Vestigism (4): For each new Boon you develop, you sustain four points of Corruption.

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06: Nanotech

Nanotechnology is the science of manufacturing on an extremely small scale. The largest nanotech constructs are microscopic; the smallest can only be measured on a molecular level. Nanotech was, for a time, the promise of ultimate technology within the Seventh Empire until a number of widespread techno-catastrophes turned public opinion against it. As marvelous as nanotech was, the prospect of it running amok, self-replicating, and becoming a microscopic threat to human survival eventually led to this technology being outlawed within the Empire.

It still had its fans, though, and chief among them was the Sindavar Extent, whose widespread promotion of nanotech led to their public isolation and eventual exile. The Extent never stopped experimenting with nanotech, particularly as a means of human augmentation, and when they went to Septimus, the alien infrastructure they took over made it possible for them to begin producing nanotech on a massive scale. Soon virtually everyone in the Extent had some kind of nanotech augmentation, and almost everything made by the Extent has been compiled by nanotech assembly devices. This has made life in the Extent mostly a matter of going to a compiler terminal, hitting a button and waiting for the thing you want to come out of it. Even where compilers operate outside of the Extent, the throttling ingredient is not material — for compilers generally can make something out of anything, meaning there are no raw material shortages — but time. It takes a while to compile something, and generally the bigger and more complex an item is, the longer it takes. In the Extent, this has made time the currency used to procure nanomanufacturing access. Sometimes you might want something, but the system is too overwhelmed with requests and you have to wait and try again. Outside of the Extent, the same is usually true; those who have compilers are running them nonstop, and they charge for the time it takes the machine to operate.

Cost

For hardware, vehicles and the like, their costs will all be noted in the Hardware chapter. For the cost of nanotech mods — which are essentially syringes filled with nanite-saturated fluid and injected right into the bloodstream — the pricing is pretty uniform.

- *A one-point nanomod is moderately expensive to buy — Resource difficulty 15.*
- *A two-point nanomod is difficult to buy — Resource difficulty 20.*
- *A three-point nanomod is very difficult to buy — Resource difficulty 25.*
- *A four-point nanmod heroically difficult to buy — Resource difficulty of 31.*

Availability

Nanomods are freely available throughout the Extent, and one only need to get to a compiler and make his resource roll against the mod he wants to get it. But buyer beware: the Cadre monitors all mod transactions, and the obtaining of a mod may cause the Cadre to take notice. Outside of the Extent, mods are only available where compilers are functioning. Compilers are fairly commong within the Grayscale and require only a moderate *streetwise* roll (15 or higher) to locate. In the Archipelago, they are more scarce and require a difficult *streetwise* roll (20) to find. Anywhere else in Septimus and one needs to make a very difficult *streetwise* roll (25) to find a working compiler.

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Installation

Nanomods take 1D6 hours to compile. After that, they can be injected immediately. They will take effect within 1D6 hours after injection, since they need time to circulate throughout the bloodstream and replicate enough to produce the desired physiological effect.

Corruption

Nanomods are rated by points. Each nanomod description has a number in perentheses behind it. This is how many points the mod has. One-point mods are generally simple and low-powered, whereas four-point mods are the most powerful on the market. These numbers also tell you how many Corruption points you will pick up if you get that mod. A two-point mod gives you two Corruption points. A three point mod gives you three points, and so on. This is why mod-crazy characters typically will put a high priority on getting a good Corruption buffer during character creation, since it will allow for the character to take a bunch of mods without getting badly Corrupted.

Stacking

Characters cannot get any mod more than once. Characters can, however, upgrade current mods to the next level up.

Nanomod Descriptions

Nanomod List

- *Acquisition Sense*
- *Action Tether*
- *Agrav module*
- *Ansible*
- *Assimilator*
- *Audio Augmentation*
- *Aura Broadcaster*
- *Autoevasion*
- *Autorecovery*
- *Chronovision*
- *Battle Matrix*
- *Combat Reflexes*
- *Comlink*
- *Cortex Vault*
- *Damage Compensator*
- *Datalink*
- *Density Upgrade*
- *Dermaplating*
- *Dominator*
- *Energy Processor*
- *Force Projection*
- *Genius Module*
- *Genolock*
- *Holorama Module*
- *Hypertouch*
- *Internal Gyro*
- *Joint Flexors*
- *Kinesis Module*
- *Mechalink*

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- *Mediatronics*
- *Metabolic Engine*
- *Multivision*
- *Multivox*
- *Neurolink*
- *O2 Processor*
- *Payback Module*
- *Persona Transfer*
- *Polykeratin*
- *Probability Engine*
- *Radar*
- *Reactive Strength*
- *Reflex Recorder*
- *Reinforced Skeleton*
- *Sensory Catalog*
- *Snipervision*
- *Speed Enhancer*
- *Strength Surge*
- *Striomers*

Acquisition Sense

You automatically gain bonuses to strike something the moment you lay eyes on your desired target. Your target(s) will remain acquired until they are dead/destroyed, in which case you will automatically release them from acquisition. You can release a target from acquisition instantly, but it will take a one second delay before you can re-target anybody else.

Duelist (1): You can acquire and track one target at a time. While acquired, you are at +1D when making any *Agility*-based rolls against that target.

Gladiator (2): You can acquire and track up to four targets at a time. While acquired, you are at +2D when making any *Agility*-based rolls against any of these targets.

Tactician (3): You can acquire and track up to eight targets at a time. While acquired, you are at +3D when making any *Agility*-based rolls against any of these targets.

Strategist (4): You can acquire and track up to sixteen targets at a time. While acquired, you are at +4D when making any *Agility*-based rolls against any of these targets.

Action Tether

This mod enables you to set up your moves well in advance, creating a series or "tether" of actions that can have an awesome cumulative effect. This is especially breathtaking in hand-to-hand combat, where heavily modified martial artists have been known to score seven to ten unanswered hits on an opponent. Naturally, crowds go ape for this.

The trick with action tethering is that it's a huge gamble. Tethered actions require only a single roll; if the roll succeeds, then all of the actions succeed. If the roll fails, all of the actions fail. This makes tethering a good option for things like trying to strike a particularly elusive opponent. When you roll to resolve a string of tethered actions, you first add up the total amount of time it will take to complete all of the actions in the string. Then you put the string into motion as if it were a single event. When you reach the end of the event time, then you roll to see if the string succeeds or fails. In the event of stringing together melee attacks, for instance, you then roll up each hit to calculate damage and compile the results.

In defensive terms, an opponent must treat each tethered action as a separate event. However, if the string is successful, then the opponent will do nothing but *dodge*

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during the course of the string, which if nothing else, keeps him from doing anything else.

A final rule: if you are disturbed while in the middle of executing a string, such as taking a hit, stopped from doing any further actions, forced to dodge, etc., then the string is broken. It is an automatic failure and you will have wasted all that time for nothing.

Simple Combo (1): You get a +1 bonus to all multiaction rolls.

Medium Combo (2): You get a +2 bonus to all multiaction rolls.

Strong Combo (3): You get a +3 bonus to all multiaction rolls.

Monster Combo (4): You get a +4 bonus to all multiaction rolls.

Agrav Module

An antigravity matrix made up of hundreds of networked pressor modules gives the user an ability to float in the air and perfom acts of superhuman acrobatics. While this mod has obvious combat applicability, it is most popular among gladiators who can take combat showmanship to new levels with it.

Air Control (1): You can defy gravity for up to one second. While this does not seem like a long time, if you time it with a jump, you can double your maximum jumping distance and height. You can also use this ability to kick off a wall and perform a jumping *dodge* at +1D.

Wall Walking (2): You can defy gravity for up to three seconds. Not only does it triple your leaping distance, but you can run up walls and along ceilings for as long as a single round. You can also use this ability to perform a kicking *dodge* at +1D.

Hovering Feet (3): You can defy gravity for up to five seconds. This quadruples your leaping distance and enables to you run along vertical and upside-down surfaces for as long as two rounds. When leaping, you can touch down and immediately take off from any surface, even those that could not ordinarily support you, like a paper curtain or a pool of water. You can also use this ability to perform a kicking *dodge* at +1D.

Jumpglider (4): You can defy gravity for up to ten seconds. You can move at up to your maximum leaping ability each and every second during this time. In the middle of a leap, you can change your velocity from full speed to almost stationary within the span of a single second. You can also change your direction at will, making this less like leaping and more like flying. While in the air, you are +2D to *dodge* any incoming attacks, and any attacks you make while airborne are at +1D. You can also perform a kicking *dodge* at +1D, if you feel like staying on the ground.

Ansible

This mod is a major augmentation of your communications ability. For it to work, you need the **comlink** mod. If you do, then the ansible will multiply the number of people you can simultaneously and instantaneously communicate with at any given time. For those in leadership positions or who have the task of disseminating information, ansibular technology is the way to go. It is used most often by military commanders to keep in touch with their troops.

When communicating with multiple people, they do not need the ansible to communicate back to you, just a comlink. Those contacted by an ansible can not hear the communications going on with everybody else in the group and you. They only are privy to whatever communications you have with them.

Squad Link (1): You can comlink with up to eight people at once.

Platoon Link (2): You can comlink with up to 32 people at once.

Company Link (3): You can comlink with up to 128 people t once.

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Brigade Link (4): You can comlink with up to 512 people at once.

Assimilator

A derivation from the compiler technology that has so totally transformed everyday life within the system, the assimilator mod enables you to disintegrate inorganic material simply by touching it, integrate into your own body, and reassemble it molecularly into organic raw materials that can be used to heal wounds. At the high end, this mod can practically rebuild anybody, regardless of how badly hurt they are, so long as there is something inorganic for them to touch. If somebody should die, this mod will automatically kick in and begin repairing the wounds, ultimately bringing the victim back to life. Though you did not have to go through the regen tank, you still will gain additional Corruption from the experience. But for those who die far from medical help or even friendly forces who might bring your carcass to the nearest regen tank, having an assimilator mod can be what stands between your next re-spawning and the Big Goodbye.

For each level of this mod, you will consume one cubic foot of material per wound level healed (assimilation is still a crude proces, relatively speaking, and a lot of raw material gets lost in translation). What is different among the various mod levels is how fast your healing powers can work.

You can only use this mod's abilities on somebody else with the assimilator mod.

Replenishing Assimilator (1): You can heal yourself by one wound level after one hour of assimilation.

Restorative Assimilator (2): You can heal yourself by two wound levels after 30 minutes of assimilation.

Regenerative Assimilator (3): You can heal yourself by three wound levels after 20 minutes of assimilation.

Rejuvenative Assimilator (4): You can heal yourself by four wound levels after 15 minutes of assimilation.

Audio Augmentation

These mods affect how well you can hear things. A lot of folks overlook these mods, forgetting that they are a supreme device for eavesdropping on people. There is always interesting information to be gained by eavesdropping.

Noise Filter (1): You can fine tune your hearing to eliminate background noise and clutter. You can do this to such a degree that you can isolate a whispered convseration from the other side of a noisy room. This ability is much improved when coupled with microhearing, below. This mod also automatically cuts out your hearing when loud noises occur, preventing you from being accidentally deafened.

Microhearing (2): This mod includes the benefits of noise filter, and it enables you to hear from very long distances away, up to a mile if conditions are right.

High/Low Frequency Hearing (4): This mod includes the benefits of noise filter and microhearing, and it enables you to hear things said or broadcasted on very high and very low frequencies. This is best taken in conjunction with the high/low frequency hearing mod, described under **multivox** below.

Sonic Damper (8): This mod includes the benefits of noise Filter, microhearing and high/low frequency hearing, and it enables you to automatically cut out any kind of sonic focus attack, as mentioned under the multivox mod family, below. The various devices on your person, however, might not fare as well.

Aura Broadcaster

This mod projects variable frequency energy pulses either directly into the brain of a single target up to 500 feet away or into the brains of everybody within a 100 foot radius of your current position. Effects

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range from mild disorientation to unconsciousness, depending on variables. The victim of this assault will not necessarily know who is broadcasting to him, only that his upper brain functions are under attack and that if he does not successfully resist, he will be subject to whatever effect is being beamed into his head.

Aura broadcasts only work for 1D minutes, after which the victim is immune to any further broadcasting for the next 1D hours.

Each successive level of this mod includes the abilities of the levels that preceded it.

Alpha Waves (1): This produces a calming effect. Anybody who is angry, or in a combative state of mind will become docile and generally unwilling to fight. Anybody who is already in a docile state of mind will get lethargic and drowsy (all skills and attributes are rolled at –1D). Anybody who is already drowsy will be put to sleep where they stand.

Beta Waves (2): This produces a panic effect that compels the victim to flee the scene immediately. The first thing the victim lays eyes on will be the specific focus of his fear, and above all things he will endeavor to avoid it.

Gamma Waves (3): This produces an anger effect that makes the target irrationally hostile to everybody around him, friend or foe. If the victim is already in a fighting state of mind, he will consider everybody in sight his enemy, which can bring a predictable heap of chaos when applied to the right people (e.g., enemy Morituri, Cadre enforcers, etc.)

Omega Waves (4): This produces a stasis effect in which the victim falls into a coma-like state and becomes unable to move, act, or even sense what is going on around him. To the victim's point of view, he just blacked out and unless he is savvy to aura broadcasting in general is unlikely to know that he was the target of an omega wave action.

Autoevasion

This mod hardwires you to sense incoming danger and to move automatically out of harm's way: a must for those who routinely tempt fate. This mod stacks on top of whatever skill dice the character already has in *dodge*. However, autoevasion also enables the character to dodge against attacks that he is not fully aware of, giving him a chance to avoid incoming shots from long distances, sucker punches, etc. — all conditions that might otherwise defeat a conventional *dodge* attempt.

Autoavoidance (1): Add +1D to all *dodge* rolls.

Autododge (2): Add +2D to all *dodge* rolls.

Autoevasion (3): Add +3D to all *dodge* rolls; you can now dodge two incoming attacks at the same time, and you can divide that +3D bonus between the two different *dodge* attempts.

Autodefense (4): Add +4D to all *dodge* rolls; you can now dodge two incoming attacks at the same time, and you can divide that +4D bonus between the two different *dodge* attempts.

Autorecovery

This transfers your mental profile and transmits it to a clone in waiting and activates it so you have virtually no memory loss between clones should you die.

When you die, if you have a proxy, or a clone already set up and ready to go, there can still be some time in between your actual death and the moment when your clone gets the green light. The time that elapses between then is called slippage, and it generally takes 2D hours. This can be a source of trouble for hardcore warriors, especially those engaged in battles that stretch on for long periods of time, in which combatants are expected to die repeatedly and come back to keep fighting. To address this, the auto recovery mod reduces the amount of slippage between your rejuvenations.

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Also, the auto recovery mod equips you with a low-grade farcaster mod that will automatically teleport your proxy to a pre-determined spot, depending on the presets you've establish earlier. Most folks like to re-spawn 1D feet (direction determined at random) from where they died so if their opponent is camping on the kill spot, you won't re-spawn into an ambush. If one is fighting in a Morituri arena, there may be preset re-spawning sites within the facility, and you will re-spawn to one of them instead. And of course, you can always set up your own re-spawn spot, provided it is within one mile of your point of death. Unless you have the farcaster module mod, you will not be able to re-spawn from any farther away than that.

Autospawn (1): Your slippage is reduced to only one hour.

Hyperspawn (2): Your slippage is reduced to only 5D minutes.

Megaspawn (3): your slippage is reduced to only 3D minutes.

Ultraspawn (4): You now have zero slippage; the moment you flatline, the new you is on the scene and ready to get some payback.

Battle Matrix

This mod series reduces the time it takes you to overcome the shock and surprise of a dangerous situation, enabling you to spring into action that much faster. As any soldier, rebel or Morituri can tell you, getting that first good shot off can sometimes mean the difference between life and death.

Skirmish Matrix (1): When combat starts, your first combat action gets a +1D bonus.

Assault Matrix (2): When combat starts, your first combat action gets a +2D bonus and your second gets +1D.

Battle Matrix (4): When combat starts, your first combat action gets a +3D bonus, your second gets +2D and your third +1D.

War Matrix (8): When combat starts, your first combat action gets a +4D bonus, your second gets +3D, your third +2D, and your fourth +1D.

Chronovision

All things constantly shed tiny parts of themselves and leave them behind. Chronovision enables you to filter through this molecular debris and build a visual image of what happened in a particular place going back in time, based on temporal evidence. Reconstructing an image in this manner is chancy since you may not have enough debris to make full image. Your *willpower* skill is what helps you fill in the gaps, clear up the clutter, and make sense of the often confusing molecular clues any given location has as to what happened there recently.

Chronovision works out to a 100 foot radius initially, but if you are trying to track the temporal image of a particular person or object, and if you locate that person or object in your initial temporal reconstruction of a particular place, then you can "catch the trail" and track them like a temporal bloodhound, without having to make an additional *willpower* roll, up to the limit of your chronovision mod.

Investigators have found chronovision to be an invaluable tool for reconstructing crime scenes and testing the alibis of criminal suspects.

Combat Intuition (1): You can reconstruct a temporal image from 1D days ago.

Hypervision (2): You can reconstruct a temporal image from 1D weeks ago.

Retrovision (3): You can reconstruct a temporal image from 1D months ago.

Event Plotter (4): You can reconstruct a temporal image from 1D years ago.

Combat Reflexes

Your reflexes have been enhanced and upgraded so that when thrust into a dangerous situation, you will think faster and

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hesitate for a shorter period of time. Soldiers are fond of this mod because it gives them that crucial edge in time at the beginning of a fight that can mean the difference between life and death.

Cool Under Fire (1): Add +1D to all *Perception* rolls for determining initiative.

Quick Draw (2): Add +2D to all *Perception* rolls for determining initiative.

Greased Lightning (4): Add +3D to all *Perception* rolls for determining initiative.

Speed Demon (8): Add +4D to all *Perception* rolls for determining initiative.

Comlink

This mod enables you to send and receive video and audio messages directly into your brainfeed. You can also directly interface with the Datastream or any other computer network, provided you have the access privileges. Audio feeds simply sound like a voiceover in your head. Video feeds can either superimpose over your vision or, more commonly, appear in a small letterbox in some corner of your eyesight, so you can catch your v-mail while keeping an eye on the rest of the world. Audio messaging is all but a thing of the past nowadays and is generally only used by those who do not wish to be seen.

It should be noted that interfacing with any communications node of the system will enable you to interface anybody or any memorybase within the system as well. So they are not bothered by unsolicited coms, many people encrypt themselves so only messages by people who know the code will get through. Likewise, memorybases often have select lists of authorized users, with serious data security protocols in place to prevent unauthorized access.

Network Comlink (1): You can interface up to three miles from your current position.

Local Comlink (2): You can interface up to ten miles from your current position.

Regional Comlink(3): You can interface up to one hundred miles from your current position.

Global Comlink (4): You can interface up to one thousand miles from your current position.

Cortex Vault

This is basically a backup memorybase within your brain for holding onto data, applications, and even proxy upgrades and entire persona matrices. Cortex vaults are the standard for holding on to secure information. To hack into somebody's cortex vault, a hacker must be able to interface with the cortex vault via comlink. Then, the hacker must make his *computer interface* roll at –2D versus the target's *Knowledge* attribute. A failed roll will alert the target to the attempt, and if the target has a comlink himself, he can trace the hacker by making a single intelligence roll. When a hacking target successfully fends off a hacking attempt and traces the assault back to the source, it is called counter-hacking, and it is every data criminal's worst nightmare, because it means they have been compromised. This explains why cortex hacks are considered the riskiest job in the underworld, the kind that only the most desperate, reckless or skilled operatives will undertake.

Data Vault (1): You can hold and access the equivalent of a small memorybase worth raw data in your head.

Systems Vault (2): You can hold and access the equivalent of a medium memorybase in your head. This would be enough to store major systems applications.

Proxy Vault (3): You can hold and access the equivalent of a large memorybase in your head. This would be enough to store a proxy upgrade — the compressed and inactive version of a persona matrix (the digitized version of somebody's non-corporeal self).

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Persona Vault (4): You can hold and access the equivalent of a superlarge memorybase in your head. This would be enough to store a fully expanded and active persona matrix, which would be like having an independent personality in your head able to interface directly with your brain, sense what you sense, and basically tag along as an internal sidekick until the matrix is uploaded to a new body.

Damage Compensator

With this mod, you can shrug off punishing amounts of damage and still keep going.

Pain Throttle (1): You get +1D when making an *Strength*/*stamina* check against pain. This comes in handy when resisting torture or not going into shock when suffering a bad wound.

Shock Throttle (2): You get +2D when making an endurance check against pain. You are immune to shock.

Cellular Memory (3): You are immune to shock and pain. You still have the sense of touch, but when you should be feeling pain, you feel a slight, nonpainful buzz or tingle, almost as if that part of your body fell asleep. More than that, you have cellular memory, which makes it much easier for you to come back from the dead. Whenever you are rejuvenated or reconstituted, reduce the amount of Corruption you would otherwise receive by 1 point.

Molecular Memory (4): You are immune to shock and pain. Your molecular memory is such that whenever you are brought back from the dead, reduce your resulting Corruption by 2 points.

Datalink

This mod enables you to mentally interface directly with any computer, data terminal, or Datastream nexus. Basically it is a means of programming and operating data in a super-fast and super-efficient manner. It is the way for serious data freaks to get connected to the Datastream or to fulfill their datafix whenever, wherever. It is also practically required by the Grayscale underworld that all hackers equip themselves with this mod the moment they decide to embark on a career of datacrime.

There is no limit to how long one may remain interfaced, but it is suspected that staying linked for periods of longer than 24 hours will result in gradual additional Corruption. You have been warned.

Cursorlink (1): You must actually touch the computer to interface it or have a connection cable running from your head (don't worry — they're non-intrusive and they won't take any hair with them when you pull them off) to the machine. Any interface or skill rolls made while connected are at +2D.

Megalink (2): You can interface with any computer remotely from up to one mile away. In the system, there are so many terminals around that your chances of actually maxing out your range are next to zero. Any interface or hacking skill rolls made while connected are at +2D.

Gigalink (3): You can interface with any computer remotely from up to ten miles away. This is used mostly by those venturing outside of the Extent but who still might want to remain connected to the Datastream or any of its memorybases. Any interface or hacking skill rolls made while connected are at +2D.

Tetralink (4): You can interface with any computer remotely from up to one hundred miles away. Any interface or hacking skill rolls made while connected are at +2D.

Density Upgrade

Although the **striomers** mod grants you superhuman strength, there are two other mods you will have to take in order to use your incredible brawn without causing yourself serious injury. The first is **mass enhancer**, which gives you the additional muscular understructure you'll need to lift and move huge weights without ripping your body apart. The second is den-

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sity upgrade, which increases your bodily density to such a degree that you can strike with superhuman force and not smash your body into a bloody pulp. Regardless of your strength, this mod will increase the base injury any hand to hand (HTH) strikes will cause. Some adventurers will take this mod without augmenting their strength just so they can hit harder.

Hard Core (1): Add +1D to any *Strength*-based damage rolls.

Man Of Steel (2): Add +1D+1 to any *Strength*-based damage rolls.

Impregnable (4): Add +1D+2 to any *Strength*-based damage rolls.

Impervious (8): Add +2D to any *Strength*-based damage rolls.

Dermaplating

This series of mods involves transforming your flesh into a sophisticated dermal armor. Most soldiers, spies and outlaws mod themselves with some kind of exoplating; it just makes too much sense not to.

Light Dermaplating (1): Add +1D-1 to any *Strength*-based rolls to resist damage. One can not tell by looking at or by touching you that you have armored up.

Medium Dermaplating (2): Add +1D to any *Strength*-based rolls to resist damage. Only by making an difficult *Perception* roll (20) can somebody tell you have armored up.

Heavy Dermaplating (4): Add +1D+1 to any *Strength*-based rolls to resist damage. By making a moderate *Perception* roll (15), somebody can tell you've armored up. It's kind of obvious. At this stage, your armor is a little bulky, and all *Agility*-based rolls made from here on out suffer a –1 penalty.

Superheavy Dermaplating (8): Add +1D+2 to any *Strength*-based rolls to resist damage. By making an easy *Perception* roll (10), somebody can tell you've armored up. You are a walking tank, and unless you are wearing some sort of bulky clothing or external armor, you are likely to be identified as having major armor modification. All *Agility*-based rolls made from here on out suffer a –2 penalty.

Dominator

This is a form of broadcasted mind control that only works on nanomodified people or robots — things with advanced and mechanical thought processes. It utilizes a special form of comlink that targets the upper brain functions of the victim and suppresses them, making him acutely vulnerable to your suggestions. This mod does not work on dumb robots, but it does work on sentient machines, such as personas and hardcases.

In all cases, you must make a contested *Perception/willpower* roll to successfully carry out any form of domination.

All domination attempts require you to maintain eye contact with your victim until the battle of wills is over. It takes only one second, but if you are interrupted during that second, the domination will fail and the victim will realize you tried to control his mind.

Hypnosis (1): You can hypnotize your victim, getting him to divulge information he normally would not give out. You also can implant subtle suggestions that the victim carry out certain kinds of behavior once you release him from hypnosis. The suggestions must not be too out of character for the victim, or the hypnotic suggestion will break down and chances are the victim will recall that you messed with his head.

Mind Control (2): You can control your victim's mind to such a degree that he will carry out orders that obviously make no sense or that contradict his character. This does not go so far as to inflict harm on himself, close friends and allies, or to carry out an action that will obviously result in his doom.

Brainwash (3): You can control your victim so completely that he will do anything you order him to. Anything.

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Puppet Master (4): This mod is essentially the same as brainwash except that you gain +2d10 on your presence roll when attempting to dominate your victim.

Energy Processor

This series of mods enable you to deflect, absorb, redirect, and synthesize high energy within your body.

Energy Resistance (1): Add 1D to any *Strength*-based rolls against high energy damage (i.e., from a laser or arc gun). If your roll is successful, the incoming attack will essentially be split into two; the energy that is resisted and bounces off your body like a bullet hitting solid steel. The energy that bounces off you is, effectively, a secondary attack that can strike and hurt those standing nearby. Determine randomly who might get hit by the blast, then roll 2D against their *Agility* or *dodge* to see if they get hit.

Energy Absorption (2): This works like energy resistance except instead of the energy bouncing off you, you simply absorb it. Absorbed energy can be used to heal pre-existing damage. Take the points of the damage absorbed and treat them as a medicine roll against your current wound level.

Energy Channelling (3): This mod works like energy absorption, except that you can also immediately redirect any unabsorbed energy right out of your body like an energy blast. You can aim this blast so you have a far better chance of hitting a bad guy than a carom off of the energy resistance mod. To determine if you hit with a channeled blast, make an *Agility* roll as if firing a gun. This counts as a standard action, though, which means you might have to do this as a multiaction depending on how the rest of the round plays out.

Fusion Chamber (8): You are a walking, talking high energy production cell, capable of building up and releasing lethal high energy blasts. Add +2D to any *Strength*-based roll against high-energy attacks. Any attack that is successfully rolled against is absorbed and can be used for healing or channeled into an attack. However, every hour you build up an offensive energy charge of 1D points. You can build this up and release this energy in the form of a directed energy blast from your fingertips, eyes or mouth in increments of up to 4D. You will reach maximum charge within 24 hours, so the most energy you will have in reserve at any given time will be enough for six 4D energy blasts. After that, you'll have to wait a few hours to build your reserves back up. If you are topped out on energy storage, any additional energy attacks will not be absorbed and if resisted, will ricochet off you like they would with the energy resistance mod.

Note: These mods only work at absorbing incoming energy attacks. They can not be used to drain devices of their energy, but devices that have outward displays of energy (e.g., power stations with big arcs of electricity in the open air) can be treated as an energy attack for the purposes of absorption.

Force Projection

To the untrained eye, this mod appears to grant the kind of move normally reserved for some kind of martial arts holorama, but its effects are as real as real gets. This mod entails the installment of numerous monokinesis projectors throughout your extremities so you can actually project the force of a punch, elbow strike, knee, kick, or head butt out from your body as if it were some kind of distance assault. You still need to make an *Agility* roll to see if your projected strike actually connects, but when it does, it will inflict your normal *Strength* damage.

When Morituri use this mod, it is edited often in any holorama playback to look like the fighter actually threw some kind of fireball or lightning bolt, but in reality this attack is invisible. Those with augmented sight will notice a wavy disturbance in the air left by the attack's traveling shockwave, but that's it. One of the biggest perks to

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this kind of attack is that even if its target successfully parries it, he will still take half damage. Better to *dodge*.

There is a drawback to this mod: any attack using it will take two seconds to execute instead of the usual one. In a pitched battle, that extra second can make a big difference.

Long Fist (1): You can project a *brawling* attack out to five feet from your current position. This will extend to just a little beyond your arm or leg's reach.

Alpha Slam (2): You can project a *brawling* attack out to twelve feet from your current position.

Rolling Thunder (3): You can project a *brawling* attack out to twenty-five feet from your current position.

Hyper Strike (4): You can project a *brawling* attack out to fifty feet from your current position.

Genius Module

This mod enables you to focus so completely on the execution of a particular skill roll or attribute roll that you will succeed automatically at it unless you roll a Critical Failure.

Journeyman (1): You may allocate an extra 1D to any one skill roll within a 24 hour period. You may break the 1D into two pips if you like.

Expert (2): You may allocate a total of an extra 2D among your skill rolls within a 24 hour period. You may break the 2D into pips.

Advanced (3): You may allocate a total of an extra 3D among your skill rolls within a 24 hour period. You may break the 3D into pips.

Prodigal (4): You may allocate a total of an extra 4D among your skill rolls within a 24 hour period. You may break the 4D into pips.

Genolock

This mod provides you with a one-time reduction in Corruption but at a permanent price. The moment you activate this mod, you can never again obtain any additional mods, nor may you ever upgrade any of your existing mods. You may use your existing mods without problem, but in essence your genetic structure has been permanently altered, so it simply is unable to accept any further nanomodification of any kind.

After obtaining a genolock, you can still increase your Corruption through things like dying and being brought back to life. Just because you have reduced your total nano at one point does not mean that your Corruption is frozen in place forever. Got it? Good.

Alpha Series: Reduce your Corruption by 2 points.

Beta Series: Reduce your Corruption by 4 points.

Gamma Series: Reduce your Corruption by 8 points.

Omega Series: Eliminate all of your Corruption points. You now are back to having a clean slate.

Note: There is no Corruption cost for getting this particular mod.

Holorama Module

This enables you to project images of yourself, which is useful for distracting others. You are a walking, talking holorama studio, complete with playback, recording, editing and broadcasting capabilities. Given the explosion of holorama popularity in recent years, droves of amateur holo-artists have taken this mod so they might capture the next series of critically acclaimed entertainment imagery. On the flip side, holorama nanotech makes spying and recon an easy job. It's also useful for criminals and operatives who wish to scope a place out and report what they've found to their superiors verbatim.

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Playback Module (1): You can directly interface with any holorama feed, either by hardwire or broadcast, playing the images within your ocular sensorium. When playing holorama in your head, it's like a 3D movie screen filters over your normal vision, treating you to a visual show that tricks your brain into thinking the imagery is what your eyes are actually seeing at that moment, even though you know better. This is mostly an entertainment mod, but it works for playing mission briefings, special messages, and so on.

Recording Module (2): You can record whatever your senses pick up into an integrated holorama file. You can record and store up to 24 hours of feed in your head. You can also interface with a holorama burner and commit your feed to permanent computer memory, either by imprinting it on a memory disc or more commonly by uploading your feed into the Datastream, where it becomes part of the system's vast pool of data.

Editing Module (3): This is where having a good imagination pays off. You can alter any holorama feed in your head by injecting into it your own thoughts, feelings and mental imagery. To do this in such a way that it does not detract from the overall holorama experience, you must make a successful *willpower* roll. In the world of the Extent, this kind of fabricated holorama is known as cogitas, and it is a major form of entertainment. Morituri-based cogitas are far and away the most insanely popular, although cogitas based on actual Cadre and Grayscale mission feeds are coming into their own, too.

Broadcasting Module (4): You can broadcast any holorama feed in your head, either to another holorama-equipped user, or directly to a memorybase or the Datastream. Typically a person must be willing to accept a broadcast holorama feed. If not, the broadcaster must win an opposed *willpower* roll with the target in order to force him to watch the feed.

Hypertouch

Your sense of touch is so acute and finely tuned that you can detect and analyze things on a molecular level.

Microreaders (1): You are able to read and write in microcode, a form of super-small coded Braille that even people with mods to their sense of touch can not pick up. Reading microcode requires this particular mod. Microcode is an increasingly popular method of exchanging sensitive information, plus it allows operatives to hide information in plain sight — one need only know where to look for it. This mod also enables you to write in microcode. All you have to do is press one of your fingertips to the surface where you wish to leave a message, think of the message, and your microcode-enabled fingertip will take care of the rest. The entire process takes only one second.

Scanalyzer (2): This mod works like microreaders, except you can also determine the exact molecular makeup of any object just by running your fingers along it. If you make a successful *willpower* roll, you can also tell what things or people came into contact and left their molecular footprint on the object being scanalyzed.

Molecular Sampler (3): This mod works like microreaders and scanalyzer, except you can also take a molecular sample of any object you run your fingers across. You can then deposit this sample in any nanocompiler and make an exact copy of the object you sampled. This nano has made it virtually impossible for the Hierarchy to keep any of its designs from falling into Grayscale or Scraplander hands.

Stressfinder (4): This mod works like microreaders, scanalyzer and molecular sampler, except you can also run your fingers along a particular inanimate object and get a sense for its molecular strengths and weaknesses. When attacking this object, add +2 to any Wild Die rolls; adjusted rolls of 6 or more allow you to roll another Wild Die. The +2 bonus continues to apply.

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Internal Gyro

Thanks to the latest stabilizing nanotech, you have a superhuman sense of balance. Very few things can truly disorient you, making you a natural for feats of agility and acrobatics.

Spatial Sense (1): Add +1D to any *Agility* roll.

Perfect Balance (2): Add +2Dto any *Agility* roll.

Air Control (3): Add +2D to any *Agility* roll, but make that bonus +3D when making any roll while in midair. Word to the wise: invest in agrav modules and really have some fun.

Momentum Editor (4): You can actually defy physics a little and shift your midair momentum. Add +2D to any *Agility* roll, but make that bonus +4D when making any roll while in midair.

Joint Flexors

This mod augments the flexibility and durability not only of the character's major joint areas but of his body overall.

Arm Flexors (1): The character can bend and rotate his shoulders, elbows and wrists a full 270 degrees, giving him incredible flexibility and also giving him a +1D to escape any kind of handcuffs, manacles, catchtape, or other security bindings. Arm flexors also can lock those same joints, making it almost impossible for somebody to bend the frozen joints any further. This gives the character +1D on any rolls where he must maintain his grip on someone or something.

Leg Flexors (2): The character's hips, knees and ankles have been augmented, giving him increased leaping and landing ability. The character can leap three times as long and as far as he normally can, and he will not take any damage when landing from leaping such incredible distances. Also, the character can land on his feet from a fall of up to his maximum leaping distance and take no damage whatsoever, but only if he lands on his feet; if he lands on his back or his head, he is done for.

Spinal Flexors (3): The character's spinal cord has been augmented, giving the character increased back strength, flexibility, and the ability to roll with damage. The character adds +1D to any *Strength*-related roll that regards being flexible as well as +1D to any *Strength*-related rolls against any kind of blunt force trauma, such as a punch, kick, hit with a blunt weapon, or an explosion shockwave.

Body Flexors (4): The character's entire body can bend and flex with uncanny ability and power. The character gets +2D to any *Strength*-related rolls on tasks requiring great flexibility, as well as against blunt force trauma attack (punch, kick, blunt weapon, explosion shockwave).

Kinesis Module

This mod enables you to lift, carry and move things without actually touching them. By activating a series of tractor/pressor beam projectors within your body, you can reach out and touch something even from far away. An impressive mod with tons of applications for the inventive user. All kenesis modules have a range of 500 feet.

Inflicting kinesis on an unwilling target requires you to make a successful *willpower* roll, usually in opposition with the target's *Agility* roll. If you fail the roll, you failed to maintain a good lock on the target. For every three seconds you maintain a kinesis grip on an unwilling target, make an additional *willpower* roll, but this time against the target's *Strength* as he tries to break free.

Using any kind of kinesis to throw an object grants an additional +2D to your throwing accuracy.

Monokinesis (1): You can only push things around at up to your normal lifting strength.

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Telekinesis (2): You can fully push, pull, lift, carry and manipulate things at up to your normal lifting strength.

Hyperkinesis (3): You can push, pull, lift, carry and manipulate things at up to three times your normal lifting strength.

Ultrakinesis (4): you can push, pull, lift, carry and manipulate things at up to ten times your normal lifting strength.

Mechalink

With this mod, you can mentally interface with any robot, suit of armor, or vehicle. With armor and vehicles, this means you can pilot them with your mind, giving you more precise handling. With robots, this mod acts as the **neurolink** mod (see next mod description) would with humans: a means for connecting mentally with a robot and communicating or sharing data with it directly. Dumb robots can be taken over by a human with mechalinks, but the humans will have to make an intelligence roll to overcome the robot's synaptic defenses. Some robots are specifically protected against this sort of hostile override and can be much more difficult to control. Intelligent robots simply can't be taken over via mechalink. Their brains are simply too advanced. Likewise, however, an intelligent robot can't try to take over a human mind via mechalink. For them, it would be like trying to hack into a clock radio. Sure, it's a little computer, but on a whole different (and lower) plane of binary complexity.

Autolink (1): Any piloting, exo or vehicle skill rolls are made at +2D. When interfacing with robots, this mod behaves exactly like the neurolink mod, touchlink.

Acelink (2): Any piloting, exo or vehicle skill rolls are made at +2D, and you can interface and control armor, vehicles and dumb robots from as far as one mile away. When interfacing with robots, this mod behaves exactly like the neurolink mod, **remotelink**.

Dronelink (3): Any piloting, exo or vehicle skill rolls are made at +2D, but you can interface and control armor, vehicles and dumb robots from as far as ten miles away. When interfacing with robots, this mod behaves exactly like the neurolink mod, **zonelink**.

Robolink (4): Any piloting, exo or vehicle skill rolls are made at +2D, but you can interface and control armor, vehicles and dumb robots from as far as one hundred miles away. When interfacing with robots, this mod behaves exactly like the neurolink mod, **skylink**.

Mediatronics

This technology is what enables virtually any surface of any object to function as a television screen or a text ticker. In some parts of the Septimus world, virtually everywhere you look has some kind of moving image or text on it, leading to a general sense of information overload. It does not help that mediatronic tattooing is a major fashion statement nowadays, and fully 66% of the system's populace have some sort of mediatronics somewhere on their bodies. Those who do can determine the text or imagery that appears on his body simply by pulling something out of his memory or composing it mentally and committing it to mediatronic represenation. Political slogans, works of art, dream sequences, animal skin patterns and dense fields of numbers are all popular mediatronic patterns. This is the Septimus equivalent of body piercing and other forms of body adornment.

Mediatronics are typically a cosmetic modification, but they have been put to more ingenious uses by the adventuresome. Within the Grayscale, for example, encrypted mediatronics that display only when additional nanotech passwords are injected into the carrier's body is a preferred way to courier sensitive information.

When mediatronics are not active, the mediatronic area looks like it is a normal part of whatever larger whole it occupies.

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Thus inactive mediatronics on a countertop simply fade into the background of the tabletop. There is no blank, empty screen taking up space. When mediatronics go active, their imagery superimposes itself on the item on which it has been mounted.

Minor Mediatronics (1): You have a mediatronic window that covers a relatively small part of your body, equivalent to a small to medium-sized conventional tattoo.

Major Mediatronics (2): You have a large mediatronic window covering much of your body, equivalent to a large to full-body tattoo.

Encrypted Mediatronics (3): You can scramble whatever imagery or text your mediatronics broadcast so that only those with decoder mods can see what your mediatronics are really broadcasting. Decoder mods do not cost anything and carry no Corruption with them. They can be spread by you to others simply by touching them or by uploading them via comlink or neurolink.

Concealed Mediatronics (4): You can display mediatronic imagery across your body at a visual frequency invisible to all but those who possess the specific decoder mods for it. This is useful for displaying messages to people in the open without being detected.

Metabolic Engine

Your metabolism has been altered and upgraded so that you can eat virtually anything, supercharge your system with extra energy, and enter a near-death state if and when you need to. Don't snicker—if Morituri champion Harker Hale hadn't gone into deep sleep during the Arctica III campaign, the Battle of Northpoint would have gone an entirely different way.

Caloric Converter (1): You can ingest any organic material and obtain adequate energy and nutrition from it. Even food that is rotten or normally indigestible to humans is proper fare for you. Too bad your taste buds haven't yet gotten the message.

Chemical Converter (2): This mod works like caloric converter, except that you can also transform any harmful chemical (e.g., poison, truth serum, mind control substances, etc.) into your system into something harmless. The transformation only takes a second to neutralize the unwanted compound, and it occurs automatically upon detection of the compound's presence. You will know when this mod is kicking into action, but you will not be adversely affected by the poison or by the transformation of it.

Adrenolizer (3): This mod works like caloric converter and chemical converter except that with a single mental command, you can also supercharge your system into a fight or flight reaction, giving you a tremendous burst of speed and initiative. For one round, you will move at up to twice your normal speed, and your *Perception* roll for initiative will be boosted by +1D. However, once your adrenalized rush ends you will feel fatigued for the next hour, during which time you will move at only half speed and your *Perception* rolls for initiative rolls are at -2.

Hibernation Protocol (4): This mod works like caloric converter, chemical converter and adrenolizer, except that you also can enter into actual hibernation for a number of weeks equal to your *willpower* score. So complete is your stasis that you can survive deeply sub-zero temperatures, lack of food and water, and even a lack of oxygen. There have been reports of Morituri and Cadre enforcers actually surviving vacuum environments by hibernating through them. This mod also enables you to "go cold," making it impossible for most robots to you. Very handy when on the run, huh?

Multivision

The multivision mod is a suite of ocular enhancements originally most common among clandestine operatives, spies and criminals. Now, they are standard fare even for many civilians, for whom augmented sight provides a funky kind of fun.

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Image Enhancement (1): This basic set of opticals grants you thermographic (heat-sensitive), light intensified (night vision), and x-ray vision. You can use only one of these optics at any given time, but you can switch among them once per second.

Microvision (2): You have telescopic sight able to zoom in on a small object from as far away as two miles. This does not negate range modifiers for combat, since your ability to see things from far away and your ability to gauge the flight of a missile from point A to point B are two different things. This mod is useful, however, for spotting targets from far off, sentry tasks, reconnoitering and spying in general. It is best used on an open battlefield, as anywhere in the system is unlikely to have an open space so large you can get the full two miles' out of the mod. The only exceptions are the system's major transport lanes, which stretch on for dozens on miles at a time. Also includes all image enhancement abilities.

Macrovision (3): This mod gives you a 270 degree arc of vision. This means when looking straight ahead, your peripheral vision extends all the way around to the back of your head. There is a blind spot directly behind you, but that is it. This makes it very difficult to sneak up on you; add +1D to *Perception* rolls for detecting an ambush. Also includes all image enhancement and microvision abilities.

Corner Tracking (4): This mod uses image projection sensors that actually allow you to see around corners. You can only look around a single corner at a time, but if you engage microvision mod as well, you can do it from a really long distance. Also includes all image enhancement, microvision and macrovision abilities.

Multivox

This mod allows you to alter your voice to various effects, making it a handy tool for carrying out various kinds of deception, messaging, and even destruction.

Voice Modulator (1): You can change the volume, tone, pitch and treble/bass of your voice flawlessly. You can store up to a dozen preset voice templates, enabling you to change from voice to voice each second.

Voice Editor (2): This mod enables you to listen to a voice, record it in your head, and later write a voice modulator preset for it. In the spy community, secretly copying somebody's voice is called "doping." This mod includes all voice modulator abilities.

High/Low Frequencing (3): You can speak at ultra-high and ultra-low frequencies well outside the normal human vocal range. You can not hear at these frequencies, however; for that you need the high/low frequency hearing mod mentioned earlier in this section. Speaking at high or low frequencies is a simple way of speaking on a secure wavelength, since you can fine tune your vocal frequency to such a degree that unless a listener is tuned in precisely to the degree you are broadcasting at, your message will go unheard. Spies and criminals sometimes use operatives who have this mod but not high/low frequency hearing, as a "mule" to deliver messages they themselves can not hear. The message is typically implanted deep within the mule's subconscious, and he delivers it automatically upon hearing a particular command word, which is known by the person to whom the message is to be delivered. This mod includes all voice modulator and voice editor abilities.

Sonic Focusing (4): Have you ever seen that singer break glass with her voice? Well you can do the same thing, only you can destroy just about anything, if given enough time. For every three seconds you maintain a destructive sonic output, you can inflict 2D worth of damage to an inanimate object and 1D worth of damage to a living object. You can keep this up for only as many seconds as you have points of endurance, or if you have the **O2 processor** mod. The effective range for this is either a 10 foot radius or up to 30 feet when directed at a single spot. This ability can be used against moving

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objects. This mod includes all voice modulator, voice editor and high/low frequencing abilities.

Neurolink

This mod is an interface that lets users communicate and transfer information directly from one mind to another at nearly lightspeed. This is essentially mechanical telepathy, except it can be intercepted, jammed or monitored. In terms of connectivity, users can crossload the entire contents of a small cortex vault (data vault) via neurolink in one second. A systems vault takes two seconds, a proxy vault takes three seconds, and a persona vault takes four seconds.

There is no limit to how many people may be part of a neurolink. Typically most interfaces are between two or three people, but there have been interface parties with more than one thousand people all connected at the same time. There are even interface cults, it is rumored, who have maintained a steady neurolink for years, with individual users coming and going but the link itself never being broken entirely. According to the system, these cult interfaces are dangerous and will almost certainly lead to rapid Corruption of any who partake of them.

Aside from data transfer, neurolinks are the most secure means of communicating between two people. There is no method to date for monitoring or recording a neurolink connection if both parties in the link do not make a record of the interface themselves. Needless to say, this has made the mod very popular with those who have some reason to hide information from the system or who want to communicate without the system knowing about it. Unfortunately for the system, enough law-abiding civilians use neurolinks just to converse privately that the use of a neruolink alone is not enough to justify suspicion of wrongdoing. Criminals love that little loophole and will conspire their deeds in the open if done over a neurolink.

There is no limit on how long people may remain interfaced. However, if somebody dies on the interface, every other person within the interface must make an intelligence roll or else they will die instantly from the lethal feedback caused by the flatline. This grim possibility is one of the things that prevents huge interfaces from becoming more popular than they already are.

Touchlink (1): You actually must touch another person in order to interface with them. Alternately, connection cables that adhere to the surface of your skin may enable tethered users to remain connected but not actually in physical contact. Most personal touchlink cables range in size from five to one hundred feet, though an enterprising compiler user could probably design one longer than that.

Remotelink (2): You can interface with other users from as far away as ten miles. There exists no infrastructure within the system to boost this, but the system says it's working on it. Some think it's just an excuse to find ways to monitor neurolink interfacing.

Zonelink (3): You can interface with other users from as far away as one hundred miles.

Skylink (4): You can interface with other users from as far away as one thousand miles.

O2 Processor

These mods make it possible for you to breathe normally under adverse conditions or to go without oxygen at all for varying periods of time.

Oxygen Reserve (1): Your body has an internal atmosphere reserve of 30 minutes. Since this reserve is parceled into tiny amounts throughout your entire cellular structure, there is no possibility that a wound will rupture your reserve, nor can any set of circumstances cause this reserve breath to "leak out."

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Oxygen Converter (2): You can convert any non-toxic gas into breatheable atmosphere simply by inhaling it. This mod also has the abilities of oxygen reserve.

Oxygen Synthesizer (4): Any gaseous poison, toxin or harmful agent is automatically rendered inert and transformed into breatheable atmosphere. This does nothing to protect you from non-gaseous toxins, however. This mod also has the abilities of oxygen reserve and oxygen converter.

Vaccuum Resistance (8): Your body can survive in an entirely airless environment for up to one hour. After that, you have another 20 minutes to get back into some kind of atmospheric condition before you die a rather gruesome death. This mod also has the abilities of oxygen reserve, oxygen converter and oxygen synthesizer.

Payback Module

This is basically just a high-powered nanobomb distributed throughout your body and slaved to your biometrics. The moment you die, the bomb goes off as a final bit of payback to those who thought they got the last laugh. You always get the last laugh.

Spoilsport (1): The nanobomb is pretty small, doing 6D damage with a blast radius of 50 feet.

Avenger (2): This is a medium nanobomb, doing 9D damage with a blast radius of 100 feet.

Vindicator (3): This is a large nanobomb, doing 12D damage with a blast radius of 250 feet.

Angel Of Death (4): This is a micronuke that does 15D damage with a blast radius of 500 feet. While the overt killing power of this device might appeal to certain frothing-at-the-mouth Morituri who relish the thought of atomizing a few dozen of the enemy with this final act, consider this: you probably will have some friends in that blast radius, too. If they come out of the regen tank or respawn before you do, they may have a little un-welcoming party waiting for you when you get back on your feet.

Persona Transfer

This enables you to upload your entire persona matrix to a proper storage medium outside of your body. This will leave your body behind as if it were dead, since there is no longer any living consciousness inside of it. Typically, one only uploads his persona matrix if he is on death's door already and has nowhere else to go, if he has a better body to upgrade into, or if he is one of the rare breed known as "whispers" who live their lives uploading themselves to unsuspecting victims, overpowering them, and essentially hijacking their bodies.

The way a whisper (or any unwanted persona transfer) works is he finds a target and uploads to him without the target's prior knowledge. A contested *willpower* roll ensues; if the whisper wins, he automatically kicks the victim's consciousness out of its dominant position within the contested host body. If the victim has the persona transfer mod, he will automatically upload to the body the whisper just left behind. If the victim does not have persona transfer, he will be compressed and stored deep in the recesses of the host body's memory.

Every 1D days, the suppressed persona can challenge the whisper to a fresh *willpower* challenge. Eventually, the whisper will tire of the body and will leave it, allowing the suppressed persona to reclaim its rightful place within the host body's mind, thus regaining control of his own body. If the whisper loses a *willpower* duel, he is forced out of the host body altogether, and unless he can upload himself to another body right away, he will perish.

Network Transfer (1): You can transfer your persona only through dedicated hardware built for the purpose. This is often considered "medical transferring," since it is done under controlled circumstances and with prior planning. It is most typically

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employed by older individuals who wish to jump to a younger, cloned version of themselves.

Personal Transfer (2): You can transfer your persona matrix simply by touching another person.

Local Transfer (3): You can conduct a broadcasted persona transfer up to 10 feet away from your current position.

Regional Transfer (4): You can conduct a broadcasted persona transfer up to 100 feet away from your current position.

Polykeratin

Your body has been infused with a memory material that can assume virtually any configuration you want it to. This gives you various shape-changing abilities, such as altering your appearance, forming weapons out of your extremities and so forth.

Alter Appearance (1): You can in the span of a single round completely change your facial appearance as well as make various cosmetic changes to you body (moderate changes in height, apparent weight, age, etc.). Seeing through the disguise will require a very difficult (30) *Perception* roll. This mod makes you an instant master of disguise, and the best way for people to be wise to your tactics is if they publish a list of your known alias appearances.

Form Weapons (2): You can change your hands and feet into cutting weapons (e.g., swords and knives), bashing weapons (e.g., morning star) or chain weapons (e.g., flail). The change takes only a single round to take place. The weapon formed does ordinary damage as if it were a separate melee weapon. Polykeratin is thus far undetectable by any weapons scanner, making this mod very popular with assassins who need to hit targets in secure locations. This mod also includes all powers from alter appearance.

Form Armor (3): You can change your exterior into an armored version of itself with an armor that can be as strong as +1 to +3. On the downside whatever your polykeratin rating is, apply that same number as a negative modifier against all *Agility* rolls while the armor is active. This mod also includes all abilities from alter appearance and form weapons.

Shapechange (4): You can change your entire shape into any configuration you like, providing you maintain your body mass and volume. If you are six feet tall and weigh 240 lbs., you can not shapechange into something the size of a peanut. However, you can mimic virtually any inanimate object, which makes you quite the infiltrator. While you can mimic living things, you do not get their abilities; if you turned into a giant bird, you could not flap your wings and fly. Also, any weapons, armor, clothing and technology on your (excluding mods and internal tech, of course) will not change with you, leaving you buck nekkid once you resume your normal shape. This mod also includes all abilities from alter appearance, form weapons and form armor.

Probability Engine

This mod enables you to take into consideration virtually every detail of your immediate surroundings, cross-referencing it with everything you know or have access to, and extrapolating it to determine the course of future events. This practice is often practiced by system analysts who are constantly trying to divine what is the best course of action for the system to take. Granted, the future is not set, and there is no way any probability engine can take into account 100% of the details that will ultimately determine what will happen next, but these mods are very good at providing a rough picture of what will happen, and danger-seekers of every kind have found good ways to apply these mods to their particular specialty.

Crunching the future requires an intelligence roll, taking into account whatever bonuses your probability engine mod confers. If you make the roll, you will have a reasonably accurate picture of the future.

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The GM is encouraged to make the details of a successful futurecast as vague or as specific as would fit the game in session. As a rule of thumb, those who accurately futurecast should receive some piece of useful information, but at the same time they should not learn the secrets of the universe either. Also, the farther away one crunches events, the less likely they are to transpire as predicted. Thus, those who make long-term futurecasts tend to look for large and general patterns or trends to identify, since they are less likely to prove wrong when the time comes.

Seer Engine (1): You can crunch events up to one minute away.

Oracle Engine (2): You can crunch events up to hour away.

Destiny Engine (3): You can crunch events up to day away.

Chronos Engine (4): You can crunch events up to one week away.

Radar

In the world of Septimus, radar really isn't radar anymore, it is just a generic term for any kind of sweeping sensor array that provides 360-degree object detection. The radar mod enables you to know where everything is within range, making it impossible to surprise you. It also cuts down on negative range modifiers. When fighting opponents within range of your radar, you get to add +1D to any *Perception* rolls on initiative. Radar also adds +1D to all *Agility* rolls applied within range. Radar works in rain, snow, fog and other adverse conditions.

Personal (1) Range: 10 feet

Local (2) Range: 100 feet

Regional (3) Range: 1,000 feet

Universal (4) Range: One mile

Reactive Strength

Whenever you receive a large dose of kinetic energy, a portion of it temporarily channels into your *Strength*, giving you superhuman lifting and striking capabilities. This does not make you immune to kinetic harm; if you get hit by a bullet, you will still bleed. But if you survive, you will have a whole lot more *Strength* with which to get some payback. Every 10 points of damage you sustain (regardless of the wound levels that translates to) turns into 1D of extra *Strength*. Each extra D of *Strength* lasts one hour.

Micro-Reactive Strength (1): When sustaining any kind of physical damage from kinetic sources (punch, kick, deathsaw, bullet, explosive shockwave), the character's *Strength* will be augmented by up to 1D per hit, to a maximum of 5D.

Macro-Reactive Strength (2): When sustaining physical damage, the character's *Strength* will be augmented by up to 2D per hit, to a maximum of 6D.

Hyper-Reactive Strength (3): When sustaining physical damage, the character's *Strength* will be augmented by up to 3D per hit, to a maximum of 7D.

Ultra-Reactive Strength (4): When sustaining physical damage, the character's *Strength* will be augmented by up to 4D per hit, to a maximum of 8D. At this level, 4D of damage will seriously mess up your character, so investing in some kind of personal protective mods might not be a bad idea.

Reflex Recorder

This mod enables you to temporarily learn skills simply by watching others conduct them successfully. You can only record a skill that has been successfully carried out.

This mod enables you to temporarily learn skills simply by watching others conduct them successfully. There is a version of this mod in the works that will grant recorded skills to take permanently, but no release date has yet been publicized, leading many to believe that a "permanent" version is just a rumor, a tantalizing hoax.

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Remember that any unsuccessful skill attempt will yield nothing to the observing character, and you must have been doing no other action while observing the skill. If you already have the skill you are observing, there is no additional effect. This mod is for temporarily learning skills not known by the character.

Copycat (1): You can retain a recorded skill for 1D rounds.

Savant (2): You can retain a recorded skill for 1D minutes.

Mimic (3): You can retain a recorded skill for 1D hours.

Taskmaster (4): You can retain a recorded skill for 1D days.

Reinforced Skeleton

This mod laces your bone structure with a unique nanomolecular alloy that when grafted to organic bones makes them nearly unbreakable. This in turn grants damage resistance and additional *brawling* damage.

Partial Reinforcement (1): Your bones are covered by a loose helix weave of reinforcement alloy, making them unbreakable. Add +2 points of damage to any *brawling* attack only.

Major Reinforcement (2): Your bones are covered by a tight reinforcement helix weave. Add +4 points of damage to any *brawling* attack only.

Total Reinforcement (3): Your bones are encased in reinforcement alloy. Add +4 points of damage to any *brawling* attack only, and double the length of time it takes your opponent to recover from a wound level caused by you.

Double Reinforcement (4): Your bones are encased in and infused with reinforcement alloy. Add +4 points of damage to any *brawling* attack only, and triple the length of time it takes your opponent to recover from a wound level caused by you.

Sensory Catalog

A nanotech sensory catalog preprograms you with the false memory of unexperienced sensory input, giving you a massive sensory encyclopedia. There are millions of pre-programmed memories in each sensory catalog. Each of these mods add +2D to any *Perception* roll in which you are trying to identify a particular sense you remember having experienced once before.

Taste/Touch Catalog (1): Add +2D to any *Perception* roll for identifying a taste or feeling of touch.

Smell ID Catalog (2): Add +2D to any *Perception* roll for identifying a scent or smell. This is particularly helpful when tracking someone or something by smell. This mod includes taste/touch catalog.

Sound ID Catalog (3): Add +4D to any *Perception* roll for identifying any specific sound, noise, music clip, etc. This mod includes taste/touch catalog and smell ID catalog.

Sight ID Catalog (4): Add +8D to any *Perception* roll for identifying any specific visual image. This is particularly useful for identifying somebody's face or the face of their various aliases. This mod includes taste/touch catalog, smell ID catalog and sound ID catalog.

Snipervision

This wildly popular mod superimposes a series of heads-up displays over your normal vision, making it easier for your to hit whatever it is you're shooting at. It essentially duplicates the effects of the Deadshot Boon. Some gladiator clans require their members to get this mod, as do certain Grayscale syndicates.

Retinal Hud (1): Reduce all range increments by one step.

Pipper (2): Reduce all range increments by two steps.

Range Finder (3): Reduce all range increments by three steps.

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Trajectroy Plotter (4): Reduce all range increments by four steps.

Speed Enhancer

This mod revs up how fast you can run. If you are wearing a suit of armor that also boosts your speed, the highest single speed booster takes effect over the other.

Sprint Mod (1): Your maximum running speed is doubled.

Racing Mod (2): Your maximum running speed is tripled.

Hypervelocity Mod (3): Your maximum running speed is quadrupled.

Speed Barrier Mod (4): Your maximum running speed is quintupled.

Strength Surge

The user can channel extra energy into his *Strength*, temporarily boosting his lifting and striking ability. Typically, this is best used for placing that one good shot needed to put a tough enemy down, or to lift or move an object when the character's life (or the lives of others) depend on it. Because of the unique energy channeling that is going on when one fires up a strength surge mod, the user need not have the appropriate support mods to enjoy his temporary burst of super-strength. However, any time this mod is used, it only lasts for a very short period of time, and if the user is still exerting super strength (i.e., lifting something over his head that he ordinarily could not budge) after the mod kicks out, he is likely to receive some serious damage.

Turbo Surge (1): The user's *Strength* increases by +1D for 1D rounds, after which he must rest 2D hours before this mod will work again.

Hyper Surge (2): The user's *Strength* increases by +2D for 1D rounds, after which he must rest 2D hours before this mod will work again.

Mega Surge (4): The user's *Strength* increases by +3D for 1D rounds, after which he must rest 2D hours before this mod will work again.

Ultra Surge (8): The user's *Strength* increases by +4D for 1D rounds, after which he must rest 2D hours before this mod will work again.

Striomers

This mod augments one's lifting strength by actually fabricating synthetic muscle fibers all along your major muscle groups. The end result leaves you far bulkier and more muscular than before, though your actual frame size does not change. While this mod does not necessarily add to *brawling* damage, it does enable you to *lift* huge things and drop them on your opponents, which is just as good, wouldn't you agree?

Cut (1): You can routinely *lift* twice your normal *Strength* limit.

Jacked (2): You can routinely *lift* three times your normal *Strength* limit.

Ripped (3): You can routinely *lift* four times your normal *Strength* limit.

Shredded (4): You can routinely *lift* five times your normal *Strength* limit.

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07: Genotech

As the Seventh Empire grew to distrust technology that too closely mimicked the capabilities of human biology, the nanotech that is so loved and espoused by the Sindavar Extent was thrust aside in favor of something equally advanced but that did not raise the old fears of humanity being replaced by its own machinations. Thus was born the science of genotechnology — the selective mutation of the human genetic code to produce a variety of effects. Genotech had already been used to help Imperial scientists increase food production and advance medical capabilities, but it was when the demand came for human augmentation that genotech really took off and became the galactic phenomenon that it is today.

Cost

For the cost of genomods — which are essentially customized mutagens ingested, inhaled or injected right into the bloodstream — the pricing is pretty uniform and in the same ballpark as nanotech, if just a little cheaper.

- *A one-point genomod requires an easy Resource roll (10) to procure.*
- *A two-point genomod requires a moderate Resource roll (15) to procure.*
- *A three-point genomod requires a difficult Resource roll (20) to procure.*
- *A four-point genomod requires a very difficult Resource roll (25) to procure.*
- *Any genomod more than four points requires a heroic Resource roll (31) to procure.*

Availability

Genomods are freely available throughout the Seventh Empire, and as such, they are also freely available throughout the Archipelago and on the surface of Septimus, where they can be manufactured in the medical facilities of large starships, hospitals and other such facilities. Generally speaking, the procurement and use of genotech is not monitored by the various forces that provide this service in the Archipelago. Genotech manufacture tends to be much more widespread than nanotech because it only requires a decent medlab and the right expertise to make a mod. Fundamentally, making genotech is not that much different than crafting an advanced pharmaceutical, which is why it's less expensive than nanotech. Its supply also is not bottlenecked by compilers, which explains why it is so widespread even among Newcomers who don't have the material wealth of the Extent behind them.

Outside of the Archipelago and the surface of Septimus, genotech can still be had in the Grayscale, but it tends to be a bit more expensive because the spoilsports who peddle them have to do so covertly, just as the medical geniuses who craft them must do likewise. The Cadre frowns on genotech use, seeing it as a way to introduce augmentation into the Extent that cannot be easily tracked or monitored. This, of course, is probably why so many in the Grayscale like it so much.

- *A one-point Grayscale genomod requires a moderate Resource roll (15) to procure.*
- *A two-point Grayscale genomod requires a difficult Resource roll (20) to procure.*
- *A three-point Grayscale genomod requires a very difficult Resource roll (25) to procure.*
- *A four-point Grayscale genomod requires a heroic Resource roll (31) to procure.*
- *Any genomod more than four points is simply impossible to acquire in the Grayscale. Sorry. Try the Archipelago.*

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Within the Extent, genotech cannot be procured legally, and as such it's not worth one's while — usually — to distribute it under the Cadre's watchful eyes. However, in any society, no matter how efficient its tyranny, there will be a market for the illegal and forbidden, and thus there thrives a small and deeply underground genotech black market.

- *A one-point Extent genomod requires a difficult Resource roll (25) to procure.*
- *A two-point Extent genomod requires a very difficult Resource roll (25) to procure.*
- *A three-point Extent genomod requires a heroic Resource roll (31) to procure.*
- *Genomods that are four points or more are simply impossible to acquire in the Extent. Once again, the Archipelago is the best bet for getting such high-end modifications.*

Bear in mind that in both the Grayscale and the Extent, failure to procure a mod means that either the connection selling it failed to show up for the deal or he simply wanted more than the character could afford. Any failed effort at procuring genomods in the Grayscale or the Extent runs the chance of alerting the Cadre. It is up to the GM to determine how likely a genomod deal is to involve an Enforcer ambush, but a general rule of thumb is to take the difference between the difficulty number of the procurement and the failed roll. That is the difficulty number for avoiding the authorities; roll against it with *streetwise* to stay clear of the Enforcers. Failure to do so results in a sticky situation that the GM should determine how to handle.

Installation

Genomods take 1D6 hours to manufacture. After that, they can be injected, ingested or inhaled immediately. They will take effect within 1D6 hours after injection, since they need time to circulate throughout the bloodstream and replicate enough to produce the desired physiological effect.

Corruption

Genomods are rated by points. Each genomod description has a number in parentheses behind it. This is how many points the mod has. One-point mods are generally simple and low-powered whereas four-point mods are the most powerful on the market. These numbers also tell you how many Corruption points you will pick up if you get that mod. A two-point mod gives you two Corruption points. A three point mod gives you three points, and so on. This is why mod-crazy characters typically will put a high priority on getting a good Corruption buffer during character creation, since it will allow for the character to take a bunch of mods without getting badly corrupted.

Bear in mind that mixing genomods and nanomods will result in additional Corruption. In addition to the Corruption points picked up for gaining new mods, whenever a character gets a new mod that is either from the "other side of the fence," (i.e., getting a nanotech mod when currently having genotech mods or vice versa), roll 1D. A result of 1 or 2 means that the character picks up an additional Corruption point as a result of the new mod. However, this only occurs if the character is already picking up Corruption points for that mod. If the character managed to dodge additional Corruption for that particular upgrade, then he does not need to roll for the extra Corruption that comes from crossing the line that separates nanotech and genotech. As a matter of good risk management, however, characters generally stick to either nanotech mods or genotech mods rather than risk the extra Corruption.

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Stacking

Unlike nanotechnology, certain forms of genotechnology can be taken more than once, See individual genomod descriptions for the details. Likewise, certain genomods can be upgraded later on. Upgrading existing genomods still requires the character to make a resource roll at the new genomod's level. No discounts for already having a lower-level version of the mod.

Genomods

Any genomod that gives a bonus to the die roll or the skill total also allows the character to use that skill as if trained. Bonuses received from taking multiple ranks of the same genomod are added together.

Skills gained with a genomod are not improved when that mod is improved. Instead, they are increased as a normal skill.

Unless stated otherwise in the genomod description, it does not count as an action for the character to get the bonus from a mod. However, except for mods like natural armor or combat sense, the character must state that he is relying on the mod in order to receive the bonus.

Accelerated Healing (3)

The character gains a +1D per rank to his *Strength* for all natural healing attempts, and a Critical Failure is treated as 1 rather than having a negative effect on the die roll.

Ambidextrous (2)

The character is equally adept with his right or left hand. He may perform an action with each hand in the same round, and though he takes the multi-action penalty, he receives a +1 per rank to each skill total. The actions must involve the hands and each action must require only one hand. If the character performs only one hand-related action in a round, he does not get the bonus. Some skills that characters could employ with either hand include *brawling*, *sleight of hand*, *firearms*, *throwing*, *lift*, *artist*, *forgery*, and the map-making aspect of navigation, though of course not every task covered by each skill is relevant. A character may take multiple ranks of this genomod for two pairs of hands and multiple ranks for each additional manipulative limb.

Animal Control (3)

This gives the character the ability to control one particular species of animal, bird, or insect. The character gets a +10 bonus to his *survival*: animal handling total for that species. He must generate a survival: animal handling versus the *Knowledge* or *willpower* of the animal (more than one animal can be targeted, although this is a multi-action). If the character gets a high enough success (GM's decision), the animal is controlled for a number of minutes equal to the survival: animal handling skill total times 10. A controlled animal serves its master faithfully, even sacrificing itself on his behalf. The genomod has a range of sight or voice. The character may gain one more species for each rank.

Note: A swarm of insects counts as one animal, as does a school of small fish. Any creature with a *Knowledge* die code of less than 2D could be considered an animal, unless the GM says otherwise.

Armor-Defeating Attack (2)

When a character with natural weapons (the character's fists, claws, teeth, etc.) attacks someone protected by armor, this ability negates the armor value up to +1D per rank. The character must specify how the attack negates the armor: an acidic mist slips through any openings, nanotech claws reach directly to the flesh, and the like. There should be at least one type of armor that is unaffected by this.

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Atmospheric Tolerance (2)

The character can breathe one form of atmosphere (gas or liquid) that would be lethal to most other characters. A character may not have more than one rank in this ability, but he may have different versions for different atmospheres.

Attack Resistance (2)

The character is highly resistant to a certain type of attack. He gains +1D per rank to his damage resistance total against this type of attack.

Kinetic Attacks: Resistant to physical trauma such as punches, kicks, cuts, bullet wounds, explosions.

Energy Attacks: Resistant to blasts of heat, fire, electricity, radiation, light, cold, and so on, but not the ability to survive in extremes of such environments.

Metaphysical Attacks: Resistant to damage from any metaphysical attack.

Attribute Scramble (4)

The character can adjust an opponent's (or a friend's) attributes temporarily. He gains the scramble skill at +1 per rank in a single version of this genomod (it is a *Perception* skill, described only here), which he also can increase as a normal skill. The scrambler must pick as his focus either physical or mental attributes, though never metaphysics, Resources, or nanomods. (Physical attributes encompass *Agility*, *Strength*, and *Mechanical*. Mental attributes include *Knowledge*, *Perception*, and *Technical*.) He only may do both by taking this mod once for each version. When he goes after a target with a *brawling* roll, he may choose (as a multi-action) to also perform a scramble attack versus a roll of his target's *willpower* or *Knowledge* (this is not an action for the target). No close combat attack is necessary for a willing target, though the *willpower* or *Knowledge* roll must still be made. However, the act of scrambling still counts as an action. If the scrambler's total is higher (not equal to), he may shift his target's attribute points around, within certain limits. The close combat attack does no damage. He may increase one or more related attributes by a number equal to the amount he takes away from other related attributes — but he may not decrease or increase any one attribute by more than 2D (6 pips). The change lasts for a number of rounds equal to the difference between the scramble attack and the target's *willpower* or *Knowledge*. A character who has been adjusted cannot be scrambled again until the original adjustment wears off.

Blur (3)

The character can appear indistinct to the naked eye or most visual aids (binoculars, cameras, etc.). Commonly a character with this genomod will only be spotted out of the corner of the eye. This adds 1 to the character's *dodge*, *sneak*, and *hide* totals, as well as +1 to all default *search*, *investigation*, and attack difficulties against the character that the blurring character is not actively trying to defeat. These modifiers are per rank in this genomod. On the character's turn, he may automatically become blurry, without taking an action, and remain so until he chooses otherwise. Blurring also makes it difficult for the character to hold a conversation with others.

Combat Sense (3)

The character can sense danger. He is never surprised. Rather, he and his attacker must determine initiative as normal. Even if the attacker still goes before the character does, any combat modifier from the surprise is reduced by 2. A character may not acquire this ability more than once.

Confusion (4)

The character can hamper at will the thoughts of those with whom he comes into physical contact. He gains the confuse skill at +1 per rank (it is a *Perception* skill, described only here), which he can increase as normal. As a multi-action with a brawling attack, he may also perform a confusion at-

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tack versus his target's *willpower* or *Knowledge* (this is not an action for the target). If his total is higher (not equal to), the target is confused. Characters may not play cards (if the GM is using game-enhancing cards with the adventures) or spend points, and they receive a +5 difficulty modifier to even simple actions for a number of rounds equal to two times the rank of this genomod.

Darkness (3)

The character can project a field of darkness around himself, adding +5 per rank to the difficulty of any sight-based skill totals. The field extends in a half-sphere around the character with a radius equal to one meter per rank. The field can be maintained for a maximum of one minute per rank before dispersing.

Elasticity (1)

The character can stretch, elongate, and compress his body, allowing him to expand his height or become so narrow he can pass through keyholes, cracks, or any other opening he could normally see through. It takes one round or more to slip through small openings, depending on their depth. The character gains +1 per rank to *acrobatics*, *dodge*, or *sleight of hand* totals, in addition to *con* totals when using that skill to disguise his own appearance.

Endurance (1)

The character has great endurance and gains a +3D per rank to *Strength* or *stamina* checks when performing taxing physical tasks (such as holding one's breath underwater for a long period or *running* a long distance).

Enhanced Sense (3)

One of the character's five senses is heightened to abnormal levels. The bonus to the skill total received depends on the sense: sight is +1; hearing is +2; touch, taste, or smell are +3. The bonus is per rank and applies to all skills related to the sense. To have multiple enhanced senses, this genomod must be taken at least once for each sense.

Environmental Resistance (1)

The character is resistant to extremes of heat, cold, and pressure and gains a +3D per rank to *Strength* or *stamina* checks to resist ill effects from these environmental conditions. The character is not resistant to heat or cold attacks, as these come and go too quickly for the genomod to provide protection.

Extra Body Part (0)

The character has an extra limb or organ. If external, these may be secondary arms or legs, a tail, or some more exotic bodily addition, such as fins, tentacles, or antennae. If internal, the parts are organs such as extra eyes, hearts, or mysterious glands. Unless specified by a disadvantage or limitation, the extra parts are included in the hero's body tastefully. Additionally, except in cases where the character has an enhancement or another genomod that uses this one (for example, Extra Body Part: Tail and Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon: Tail), the extra part is nonfunctional. A character may have only one rank in this genomod, but he may have multiple versions to represent multiple additional organs or limbs.

Extra Sense (1)

The character can detect something that a normal human cannot, such as changes in pressure, seismic activity, radiation fluctuations, and so on. He gains a +1D to his search rolls in attempting to detect the specific energy or environmental change and +1D to his investigation rolls in figuring out the source or other relevant information. The GM may also allow a +1 skill total bonus to other activities that would benefit from whatever the extra sense can detect. All modifiers are per rank in this genomod.

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Fast Reactions (3)

The character gains +1D per rank to his *Perception* when determining initiative, and for up to three times during the adventure he may receive one additional action for one round.

Fear (2)

The character can provoke fear in those who can see or hear him. He gains a +1 per rank to all *intimidation* totals and combat defense difficulties against those so affected. The *willpower* or *Knowledge* difficulty to resist a fear attack is 15.

Flight (6)

The character can fly, either by nature or by virtue of having wings. The character's flying rate equals his base Move times 2 times the number of ranks. The *flying/0-G* skill is required to maneuver.

Glider Wings (3)

The character can fly by drifting with air currents, provided there is sufficient wind. The GM decides how much wind there is available and how fast it moves the glider. Characters with this genomod need the *flying/ 0-G* skill to control their passage. A character may not acquire this ability more than once.

Hardiness (1)

The character can take damage better than normal. Add 1 per rank to his damage resistance total against any type of damage.

Hypermovement (1)

The character is extremely fast, adding +2 meters per round per rank to his base Move, which in turn affects all other types of movement.

Immortality (7)

The character is immortal, though he will grow older at a decreased pace compared to the rest of his species. If he is killed outright by unnatural means (combat, grievous accident, vehicular mayhem, chokes on a peanut) he indeed will perish, but medical rejuvenation will not incur any Corruption loss, meaning that the character can be brought back an unlimited number of times and not fear Corruption.

GM Note: Some might think that this mod will unbalance the game. After all, what drama can there be for characters who can not truly die? This is something to bear in mind when a character seeks this mod. Morituri looking to skirt the dangers of the battlefield should probably have a much tougher time finding this mod than a meek Hierarch who is simply afraid of the Big Sleep. As with all special powers and abilities, the risk they pose of throwing the game out of whack lies almost entirely with how the player wants to use the power and how the GM lets that power be used.

Immunity (1)

The character is highly resistant to disease and poisons and receives a +1D per rank to *Strength* or *stamina* checks when determining whether he has contracted an illness or suffering from ingested poisons.

Increased Attribute (2)

Some extraordinary training or physiological trait allows the character to gain +1 bonus per rank to all rolled totals related to that attribute. For *Strength*, this also includes the damage resistance total and Strength Damage. A character may have multiple ranks of this genomod, as well as multiple versions of it.

Note: Instead of the normal cost to increase genomods, to get another rank in this genomod after character creation costs 4 times the number in front of the "D" of the attribute that it affects plus the number of ranks currently in the genomod.

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Infravision / Ultravision (1)

The character gains the ability to see in the dark using either infravision or ultravision. Infravision allows the character to see changes in heat, while ultravision enables the character to make the most of the available light. Each provides a +2 per rank in a single version of this genomod to sight-based rolls while in dim or dark conditions. Obviously, extreme heat or bright light (including daylight) prevent this genomod from working.

Intangiblity (5)

The character can reduce his physical density to virtually zero for one minute per rank. During that time, his damage resistance score against physical and energy attacks is +3D per rank, but his movement rate is halved. An intangible character can pass through solid objects providing they do not contain wards or other spells of protection designed to repel passage of this nature. He may not pass through energy or electrified barriers. While intangible, the character cannot carry any object along (including clothing), nor can he attempt any physical attack. It takes a full round for a character to become intangible or solid, during which he can do nothing else. The character must spend at least one minute solid before attempting intangibility again.

Invisibility (3)

The character can become transparent. This adds 1 per rank to the character's *dodge*, *sneak*, and *hide* totals, as well as +1 per rank to all default *search*, *investigation*, and attack difficulties against the character that the invisible character is not actively trying to defeat. Additionally, no character may take an action to "spot" the character unless the GM feels there is sufficient provocation, such as brushing against others or removing something in a crowded area. The invisibility covers the character's basic clothes only — not any gear he's carrying or anything he picks up. Also, remember that the character is transparent when invisible: he can't hide things behind his back.

Iron Will (2)

The character is highly resistant to all interaction attempts and mental attacks. The character gains a +1D per rank to all *willpower* rolls and +2 to the standard difficulty of any such attempts against this character.

Life Drain (5)

This ability allows the character to drain attribute pips, body points, or wounds from his target. The character must choose one set of attributes to target, either physical (*Agility*, *Mechanical*, *Strength*), mental (*Knowledge*, *Perception*, *Technical*), or wound levels. The player must specify in what manner the character drains these attributes (drinking blood, hypnosis, or another means). It should involve some sort of successful attack result (either physical or mental). When the character wishes to employ life drain, he makes an attack on his target using the relevant skill. For every four points over the target's defense roll, the character drains one pip per rank off each of the target's relevant attributes or one wound for every two ranks. (Remember that there are three pips in each die.) If any of the target's attributes ever go to zero (or the character reaches the dead wound level), the target goes into a coma. He may try once per day to wake up by making a successful moderate *stamina* or *Strength* roll. He regains one attribute point (to each attribute affected) every hour after the attack. Body points and wound levels return at the normal rate. For each attribute pip the character drains, he may add one pip to any attribute in his chosen category. He would get one body point for each body point drained or one wound for each wound drained. Life-drained attributes and unused body points or wounds disappear at a rate of one pip or point per hour. A character may have multiple ranks of this genomod, as well as multiple versions of it.

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Longevity(3)

The character lives longer than the average human. Often, this genomod has a condition attached that governs what the character must do to maintain his life. The character should gain peripheral bonuses during game play because of his "longer outlook." A character may not acquire this ability more than once.

Luck, Good (2)

The character is blessed with unusually good luck. Once per adventure, a character with good luck can receive one of the following benefits just by asking for it: action, breakthrough, haste, or second chance. See the "Luck Benefits" sidebar for details on each of these options. Calling upon one's luck does not count as an action. Good luck can only be declared once per rank during a particular adventure, but it may be declared at any time, and it cannot be cancelled by any other effect. A character may have up to two ranks of this genomod.

Luck, Great (3)

A character with great luck can call on one of the following benefits once per adventure per rank: action, alertness, breakthrough, haste, hero, opponent fails, or second chance. See the "Luck Benefits" sidebar for details on each of these options. Calling upon one's luck does not count as an action. If the character has not used his great luck during an adventure and something really disastrous happens, the GM may choose to counteract the effects and temporarily "burn out" the character's genomod — that is, the character's Great Luck has been used up for the adventure. Usu-

LUCK BENEFITS

Action: Add 2 to all of the character's skill or attribute totals for the round.

Alertness: When the character calls upon this benefit, he gains a special "sixth sense" outside of all other rules and role-playing situations that will help him to spot a previously unseen item, character, or clue selected by the GM. The benefit does not confer omniscience, however – and the GM can select his own time for having it come into effect. It is normally used to allow a character to spot something he missed in a previous search, something that is important to the adventure.

Breakthrough: Add 1D to any one skill die code in which the character has no additional pips or dice (in other words, a skill in which the character is untrained). The benefit also eliminates the unskilled modifier for using that skill.

Haste: Gain one additional action for one round.

Hero: Receive one bonus Fate Point, which must be used on an action immediately after requesting it.

Opponent Fails: After an opponent or enemy has completed an action against the character, this benefit may be called upon to cancel the effects entirely. The opponent's action is then wasted and play continues. This benefit may not be used to cancel an action that is not directed at least partially at the lucky character.

Second Chance: Using this benefit allows the character to reattempt any action he has just tried. Relying on this benefit however may not be used to negate "bad choices" — the action performed must be performed again — nor does it allow the character to "get back" Fate Points, Character Points, or cards (if used) spent on the original action. The character merely gets another chance, immediately following the first attempt, to perform the action again. All effects from the first attempt are negated.

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ally, this is used when the character does something stupid or the player is the victim of incredibly bad luck — die rolling, not the disadvantage — and something "stops" the effect. This is a "last ditch," GM-controlled effort when circumstances get out of control. It is also a nice thing for inexperienced role-players to have; just in case they do something they really shouldn't have, they get another chance.

Example: The character's mission is to turn off the power at a nuclear plant or it will explode and destroy the city that's conveniently downwind. Unfortunately, the character takes too long fighting the minions of the bad guy who set the plant to overload, and, according to the rules, the whole city should go up in a radioactive fireball. The character is too late. The GM might choose to have the character be really lucky — the villain was bluffing, and there's really more time on the clock than anyone thought, or the power plant begins a long meltdown procedure instead of exploding. In any case, the character's great luck is gone for this adventure (his luck ran out), but he has a chance of averting disaster. As with good luck, the character may have up to two ranks of this genomod.

Luck Notes

A character may have up to two ranks each in good luck and great luck. This genomod can be taken with the bad luck disadvantage – sometimes really good things happen, sometimes really bad things happen.

Master Of Disguise (3)

The character has a natural talent for disguise. She gains a +5 per rank bonus to con totals when using that skill to disguise herself and a +1D bonus per rank to any *con*, *intimidation*, or *persuasion* actions while in that disguise.

Multiple Abilities (1)

The character has multiple minor abilities that improve a few different tasks. All bonuses are added to the skill or attribute total, not to the die code. The bonuses should be fairly limited in their applications, pertaining to specific uses of particular skills (like specializations do), but there can be several of them for each selection of this genomod. The maximum total bonus for each rank is +4.

Perception or *search* totals that would negate surprise, the ability to focus his ears on particular types of noises (+1 bonus when listening for particular sounds), and fingers that are sensitive to subdermal motion (+1 bonus to *sleight of hand* against old-fashioned safes with moving tumblers).

Natural Armor (3)

The character has plates, toughened skin, scales, or something similar. His own surface adds 1D per rank to his damage resistance total to physical (not mental) attacks and contact poisons, corrosives, or similar materials.

Natural Melee Weapon (2)

The character has some sort of natural weapon — such as claws, pincers, bone spikes, or stinger — that add 1D per rank to his Strength Damage when determining his damage with the natural weapon. The character uses *brawling* to attack, unless he can detach the weapon from himself or (in the case of a super-scientific weapon) its exists separately. In these latter cases, the character employs *melee combat* to wield it.

Natural Ranged Weapon (3)

The character has some sort of natural ranged weapon, using *missile weapons* (for solid objects) or *firearms* (for energy, gas, or chemical projection or for solid projectiles in cybernetics or super-science weapons) to target it. Long range equals 20 times the number of ranks in this genomod times the character's *Strength*, *lift*,

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or *firearms* (as appropriate) in meters. The damage for physically enhanced projections is the character's Strength Damage plus 1D per rank, while the damage for all other types of blasts is 3D per rank. The projection must have a visible effect (such as bone shards or a glowing ray) and it may not do mental damage. Note that, regardless of the nature of the projection, there are no additional effects from this type of genomod unless an enhancement allows otherwise.

Omnivorous (2)

The character can gain nourishment from any organic substance (though he is not immune to poisons). He can also chew through just about any organic substance with no adverse effects to his teeth or jaws. A character may not acquire this ability more than once.

Paralyzing Touch (4)

The character can freeze his target with the merest touch. When he makes a *brawling* attack he may, instead of doing damage, paralyze his victim, who remains that way until he makes a successful *Knowledge* or *willpower* roll against the *brawling* skill total. He may attempt to do so once per round; the only other actions he may take are mental-based ones and metaphysical or genomod ones that do not require movement.

Note: Characters who are heavily armored or covered will be harder to hit. The GM needs to decide how much skin is exposed and adjust the attack difficulty accordingly. A character may not acquire this ability more than once.

Possession, Limited (8)

The character can possess the body of a living creature or a corpse. The character must be within three times the rank of this genomod in meters of the target in order to take possession. Possessing a corpse doesn't require a roll, but it does take an action. Possessing a living being involves making a *Knowledge* or *willpower* check by the possessor versus a standard interaction difficulty. Exceeding but not equaling the difficulty means the target has been possessed. The target can actively defend if he is aware of the potential danger. To gather knowledge about his host body's life, the possessing character must generate a successful investigation total against the target's *Knowledge* roll; this does not count as an action for the target.

Information the possessor gains depends upon the level of success achieved; see the accompanying chart for details. With limited possession, the character does not gain control of the new form. Instead, he must use *persuasion*, *intimidation*, or other interaction skills to convince his host to do what he wishes. Exiting a host body is commonly a simple action. As long as the possessing character exits before the host dies, he simply moves on to his own or another form. Killing a possessing spirit usually involves taking it completely by surprise with a killing blow to the host form or using a spell to force it to remain in the body until it can be slain.

Possession, Full (10)

The character can possess the body of a living creature or a corpse. This works in the same way as limited possession, save that the possessing character gains his new form's physical attributes (*Agility*, *Mechanical*, *Strength*), retains his own Metaphysical and mental attributes (*Knowledge*, *Perception*, and *Technical*), and gains complete control over the new form.

Needed Knowledge Attained: Result Points

Basic Information: target's name, age, base of operations: 0

More Personal Information: target's job, financial status, any current schedule: 1-4

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More In-Depth Personal Information: identities and backgrounds of family, friends, lovers: 5-8

Very Personal Information: secrets, private likes and dislikes: 9-12

Everything There Is To Know: 13+

Note: Result points equal the difference between the investigation total and the target's *Knowledge* roll.

Quick Study (3)

The character has an ability to learn new skills and improve old ones, limited to one attribute. He always learns new skills as if he had a teacher (even if he doesn't), and he can improve skills he already knows at a cost of one Character Point less than normal. This genomod can be taken once for each attribute.

Sense Of Direction (2)

The character has a good sense of direction. He gains +1D per rank to *navigation* and *search* rolls.

Shapeshifting (3)

The character can manipulate the shape, color, and overall appearance of his body, though mass and body compositions remain the same. The character must chose a specific creature to emulate, gaining one form for every three additional points spent on this genomod. At six ranks in this ability, the GM may allow shifting among one class of creatures or objects (such as birds or furniture) as long as all forms chosen for previous ranks were within the same class. Body points, wounds, and the *Knowledge* attribute remain unaffected by this genomod, but the dice in the *Agility*, *Mechanical*, Strength, *Perception*, and *Technical* are redistributed to match the new form. The minimum *Mechanical* and *Technical* for non-humanoid forms is 1D, because the shapeshifter retains some memory of these attributes. Additional dice in skills above the base attribute score remain the same, though the total dice in each skill changes to reflect the adjustments in the base attribute. Likewise, not all skills will be usable in the new form. Attribute dice can also be used to include special abilities in the new form. One attribute die can be spent to gain one rank in one genomod or to get a +2 skill total bonus (split among up to two skills). The GM may allow a larger skill total bonus or more skills to fall under the bonus if the desired effect is particularly narrow (such as a bonus for a single sense).

Shapeshifting may be done at will, though a limitation may force it to be triggered by stress or environmental factors. If shifting voluntarily, the character must generate a *willpower* total of 11 to bring about the change, and a second total to turn back again. Each change takes one full round in which the character may do nothing else. Failure at the check means the transformation does not occur, and the character cannot try again for at least an hour. It is highly recommended that the hero comes up with some typical forms and their game characteristics before beginning play. The new form need not exactly resemble a "typical" version of the emulated creature or object.

Silence (3)

The character can move in complete silence. He gains +2D per rank to all *sneak* checks and a +1D per rank when attacking from behind.

Skill Bonus (1)

Skill bonus represents a natural talent (a character with the charismatic group might be "friendly and outgoing"), a particular knack (a character with the ranged combat group has a "keen eye"), years of devotion to a profession prior to beginning adventure, or the result of an extended life.

The character chooses a group of three related skills in which he gains +1 to the skill total of any action performed with those skills or specializations of that skill. The skills need not be under the same attribute. The character may or may not

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actually have adds in those skills, and the GM must approve the fact that they are "related."

Some examples of skill groups include:

Acting: *bargain, con, persuasion*

Acute Balance: *acrobatics, climb/jump, sneak*

Athletics: *lift, running, throwing*

Charismatic: *command, con, persuasion*

Close Combat: *brawling, melee combat, dodge*

Investigative: *investigation, search, streetwise*

Leadership: *command, intimidation, persuasion*

Photographic Memory: *languages, scholar, investigation*

Observant: *gambling, investigation, search*

Ranged Combat: *firearms, missile weapons, throwing*

Players may substitute other related skills for the ones listed in the groups above or create their own groups as long as there is a common thread and the GM approves the grouping.

Three specializations may replace one general skill, getting a +1 for three different specializations.

Example: In the close combat group, a character might replace *melee combat* with three specializations — *melee combat*: knives, *melee combat*: swords, and *melee combat*: clubs. While this means the character gains no bonus for "general" melee combat activities (such as using an improvised weapon), he does have a more "detailed" group. This may be done for up to all three skills in the group, choosing six specializations instead of two skills or nine specializations instead of three skills. Additionally, the character acts as if trained in these skills even if he doesn't have any additional pips in them, and so does not get the unskilled modifier. This genomod does not affect the cost of improving the related skills.

GMs may allow a higher bonus for fewer skills (such as a set of two skills where one gets a +1 bonus and the other gets a +2 bonus, or a +3 bonus to a set of three specializations). However, the bonus per rank may total no more than +3.

At each additional rank, the player may increase the bonus by +1 for three of the skills affected by this genomod. A character may have different versions of this ability for different groups of skills, though the skills in each group may not overlap.

Skill Minimum (4)

The character can select three related skills unaffected by any other sort of genomod, and the character will always gain a minimum total of 3 times the number before the "D," even if he rolls a Critical Failure.

Example: If the player selects *persuasion*, *con*, and *intimidation* (all interaction skills) for his character, all of which he has at 4D, and he generates a less than 12, the total automatically becomes 12. That is the character's minimum total. The player may not select skill minimum for any skill that has any other advantage or genomod tied to it. Also, the skills must be related in some way (see the skill bonus genomod for information on related skills). The character may only select general skills, but the specializations underneath that general skill are affected as well. This genomod may be selected only once for each group of skills.

Teleportation (3)

The character can move instantly to another place up to 10 meters per rank away. The character must see his destination clearly. In combat, this action takes an entire round. The character may take along whatever he can carry.

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Transmutation (5)

The character can alter his substance to something else while retaining his form (such as a man who turns to stone). Characters with this ability may only shift into one specific substance, which the player must specify when his character gets the genomod. Generally, this substance gives the character distinct advantages. The player may select up to 4 points (not ranks) in other genomods that relate to the chosen form per rank in this genomod. Thus, two transmutation ranks means 8 points in other genomods. Natural armor, hardiness, and environmental resistance are common ones.

Uncanny Aptitude (3)

This genomod is similar to the skill bonus genomod in that some sort of bizarre ability gives the character added bonuses to certain actions. However, instead of selecting a group of skills that the character gains a bonus to, the player and the GM work out circumstances where these abilities come into play. For instance, a character might gain a +1 bonus to all *Agility*-related skill totals when in sunlight. A character may have several variations of this ability, reflecting different bonuses. Each variation could have several ranks, with the bonuses adding to each other.

Ventriloquism (3)

The character can throw his voice up to three meters away per rank. No skill roll is required to do this, but if it is part of a trick attempt, he receives a +2D bonus per rank to *con* and *persuasion* rolls.

Water Breathing (2)

The character can breathe water and will not drown under water. He gains +1D per rank to all *swim* rolls because he doesn't need to worry about drowning.

Youthful Appearance (1)

The character looks much younger than he actually is and receives a +1D per rank to *persuasion* or *con*. In general, characters should not look more than 10 to 20 years younger than they are, regardless of the number of ranks, though GM discretion and common sense should rule here.

Genomod Enhancements

Enhancements allow genomods to be somehow more than the typical version. Each enhancement may be taken more than once for each genomod, either altering the ability in similar though distinct ways or, for some, through stacking the effects. The cost of the enhancement adds to the associated genomod's total cost (base cost plus the cost for additional ranks).

Additional Effect (1)

The mod produces a useful, though minor, side effect that is a natural extension of the power. The more useful the side effect, the greater the number of ranks. Some examples include a skill bonus when using the ability, doing residual damage (such as reflection with natural armor or radiation with natural ranged weapon), or adding functionality to an extra body part.

Bestow (Varies)

The character may share his genomod with a certain type of target: sentient living, nonsentient living, or nonliving. The player must chose which group when including this enhancement. The cost of this enhancement equals one-half (rounded up) of the genomod total (base cost plus additional ranks cost plus enhancement costs). He may use his genomod on himself and on

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members of his target group with a multi-action penalty. The character may give his genomod to one person per action. Some special abilities will require better stories concerning how the character can manage sharing them than others (such as youthful appearance or ambidextrous), while others may not have this enhancement (such as longevity or immortality). The target has control over the use of the bestowed genomod for as long as the bestowing character allows. A character may only have one rank in this enhancement, but he may have multiple versions of it.

Extended Range (3)

The factor used to determine the range of the character's genomod is increased. Every rank of this enhancement allows the player to add one half of the ranks in the genomod (rounded up) to the factor when determining the range. Thus, to increase the range factor by half the ranks costs three, by the ranks in the ability costs six, by 1.5 times the ranks costs eight, and so on.

Example: The range for natural ranged weapon is 20 times the number of ranks in the genomod times the character's *Strength* or *lift* in meters. With two ranks of extended range, the range would now be 20 times twice the number of ranks in the genomod times the character's *Strength* or *lift*.

Multiple Targets (2)

The character may use the genomod more than once per round without incurring a multi-action penalty. For each rank in this enhancement, the character gains one additional use of the genomod. This adds to any other bonus actions provided by a power; it does not multiply it.

Genomod Limitations

These limitations can be associated with special abilities, restricting their functionality and reducing their total cost (base cost plus the cost for additional ranks plus any enhancements — not the per rank cost). For example, the total cost of two ranks of iron will in a game where special abilities are uncommon is four, and in a game where they are common the cost is three.

Limitations may not lower a genomod's total cost below one, and all limitations must have some sort of effect on play – just like disadvantages. Each of a character's special abilities may have more than one of each limitation, as they can either describe similar but distinct negative situations or, in some cases, stack the effects.

Ability Loss (3 For 1 Rank; 4 For 2 Ranks)

The character temporarily loses his genomod at regular intervals or, when the genomod is used, he loses the ability to use a common skill in which he has experience (that is, additional pips or dice). Examples include a character who cannot shapeshift when the sun is out or a character who cannot use his natural weapons on a particular day of the month or during a certain phase of the moon. The character is aware of what the circumstances are that will cause this. For an additional point and additional rank, the character must undergo some sort of (fairly simple) procedure to regain his ability or skill use. A genomod may have up to two ranks in a single variation of this limitation, but a character may have it multiple times for different special abilities, circumstances, or combinations of special abilities and skills.

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Allergy (3 For 1 Rank; 4 For 2 Ranks)

The character has a somewhat minor allergy. Exposure to a fairly common substance (smoke, sunlight, particular food, etc.) causes the character to lose all Critical Success re-rolls until the condition is removed. For an additional point and additional rank, the effects are worse, and the character loses all actions due to coughing fits, watering eyes, or similar discomfort until he can get away from the allergen. A genomod may only have one rank in this limitation, though it may have several different allergies.

Debt (3)

Someone (or, more likely, some entity) gave the character the genomod along with certain obligations and restrictions. The character must continually beg the giver to retain the genomod, or he must perform certain tasks at the giver's request in exchange for continued use of the genomod. A genomod may only have one rank in this limitation. The genomods are increased by +2 per rank. The greater the rank associated with this limitation, the greater the difficulty modifier.

Minor Stigma (3)

The character cannot use the genomod without performing the "proper rituals" before or after (someone with a natural weapon who must sketch an image of his intended victim before hunting him down; a shapeshifter who must be purified by his cult after killing someone). A genomod may only have one rank in this limitation.

Others Only (2 for 1 rank; 3 for 2 ranks; 4 for 3 ranks)

The character may not use the genomod himself; he may only allow others to use it. The value of this limitation depends on how many groups of "others" he can use it on: For two points and one rank, the character may affect sentient living, nonsentient living, and nonliving targets. For three points and two ranks, the character can affect only two of the three groups. For four points and three ranks, the character can affect only one of the three groups. This limitation may not be taken more than once per genomod. Additionally, like the bestow enhancement, some special abilities may require valid reasons before the GM allows the limitation's inclusion. Some abilities, such as immortality and longevity, may not have this limitation. The target who gets the genomod has control over its use as if he actually had the ability, for as long as the giving character allows. Allowing another person access to the genomod counts as an action for its owner, while using the newfound genomod counts as an action for the one who gets it (though gaining access to it does not). The genomod's owner may only give the genomod to one character per round, but the target may be different each round.

Price (1)

The character must fulfill certain obligations in order to use the genomod. Perhaps when using water breathing, the character must remain in the water for at least 24 hours for every 24 hours out of it or suffer a -4 modifier per rank in this limitation to his damage resistance total. Alternatively, there could be a fee of three Character Points per rank or one Fate Point per rank in the limitation per adventure in which the character uses the genomod.

Restricted (1)

The genomod is hindered in a way not covered by any other limitation. The more restrictive the situation, the greater the number of ranks in this limitation. For instance, a natural weapon (either kind) may only be useful against certain items. A genomod may have multiple variations of this limitation, each representing a different restraint.

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Side Effect (2)

One of the character's special abilities has some sort of annoying side effect that appears with its use, such as constant whistling, a continuous glow, or a terrible stench. Add 4 per rank to the difficulty of all sneak attempts when the genomod is in use, as everyone can figure out he's coming. This will also affect interaction attempts, adding at least a +1 per rank to the difficulty.

Singularity (1 per genomod)

The character may use only one of a group of two or more special abilities each round. It does not take an action to switch special abilities. He may change the genomod in use at the beginning of his turn in a round, and he may rely on the chosen genomod until the next time he changes it. For a second rank (and one additional point per genomod), it does take an action to switch special abilities. A genomod may not have more than two ranks in this limitation and all special abilities in the same group must have this limitation at the same rank. Not all of a character's special abilities need be in the same Singularity group.

Super-Science (2)

The mod will not work on its own within the character's body. Instead it requires an external technological trigger, such as a ring, a bracelet, a stylus, etc. to activate. Since this condition is quite rare, the devices made to counter it are usually custom-made and experimental. The item could be lent to another character or taken away with a successful grab and used by someone else, though at a +5 to the difficulty. On a Critical Failure, the item malfunctions and requires repair. A destroyed item may be recreated in a number of days equal to the total cost of the genomod (including all ranks, enhancements and limitations).

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08: Metaphysics

The powers of the mind have long been a subject of intermittenet interest on the fringes of Imperial science. While large amounts of anecdotal evidence showed that the human mind, when conditioned properly, could develop potent psychic powers, the reality was that no serious scientific effort was ever undertaken to prove the extent of human psionic potential, how that potential could be unlocked, and once unlocked how that power could be harnessed and refined. Thus, metaphysics, the science of psionic ability, remained in the shadows while other sciences such as genotechnology flourished.

However, there were always those who could exhibit psionic powers, which proved that metaphysics was indeed a genuine thing. But too few subjects with measurable metaphysical powers ever came forth to put their abilities on scientific display, and as a result metaphysics has long been considered a rare ability that only the fortunate few who are born with it can ever hope to make use out of. For the rest of us, it would be something out of reach, a topic one might know about but nothing of.

Until now.

As explorers delved deeper into Septimus, they found the bizarre remains of the alien culture that built Septimus scattered across the surface of the worldsphere. The remnants of great and ancient crystal cities contained the accumulated knowledge of a million generations of alien civilization, but these same crystals were shattered, spent and unlockable. Whatever information was within them died too, and the promise of the aliens' combined knowledge remained a cruel temptation to those who would learn from these lost masters. But not all of the alien crystals are useless; for every thousand intact data crystals that are retrieved by scouts, salvagers and scrounges, one remains intact enough to try to extract information out of. Sadly, the technology does not exist to interfae perfectly with these crystals, so extracting useful information from them has remained a frustratingly fruitless endeavor. However, subjecting these crystals to various harmonic frequencies has gotten the crystals to respond, showing that there is some hope of interacting with them. The most intriguing way in which this relationship has manifested itself is when humans with psionic potential engage in harmonizing with a sensurround (an entire array of large crystals in a fixed position) of intact crystals; they sometimes awaken their metaphysical abilities in a manner that forever alters their genetic, and possibly even their atomic structure.

Those who gain their powers this way are forever changed, no longer entirely human but carrying within them a little essence of the alien minds who once ruled the worldsphere but are now gone. The powers one gains from alien sensurrounds can be developed further on one's own. Indeed many powerful metaphysicists have been created by chance encounters with these rare alien devices that, once harmonized, never work again. They are as disposable as they are rare, which had led those seeking metaphysical powers to search doggedly for more of these ruins, while those looking to preserve the knowledge of the ancients will stop at nothing to prevent psionic-seekers from ruining an entire alien array just to serve a personal quest for power.

But metaphysics are not gained solely in this manner. Some are simply born with metaphysical ability and develop it over time. These rare few are often seen as freaks and wonders in the Seventh Empire, and they have long since learned to either keep to company that can appreciate their abilities or to hide their abilities altogether.

Innate Metaphysics

Those born with metaphysical abilities are characters who select the Metaphysics Boon during initial character creation. After a character is finished, the only way he can

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gain metaphysical powers if he does not already have any is by interaction with alien crystal technology.

Obtained Metaphysics

Interacting with alien crystals is a chancy and rare thing. Simply finding an intact crystal array is really difficult. So far, an average of one has been found in a hex of ground territory equal to the total surface area of an average rocky planet. There are plenty of ruined arrays, but these are worthless, as current levels of technology cannot interact with the crystal fragments at all.

Finding an intact array is not something that should be left to a simple skill roll; it is the kind of objective that should be the end goal of an entire adventure or string of adventures. Any knowledge on the whereabouts of an array is going to be held most closely, since the arrays themselves are unspeakably valuable. Enough so that people tend not to pay for information about them, but they kill for it, instead.

When an array is found, then there is the matter of harmonizing with it. Any current mediatronic technology can produce the sound needed to interact with the crystals, but to get a major result it takes a heroic (31) *aliens* skill roll to figure out the right frequency to really make the crystals sing. There is only one shot at this; trying to harmonize on the wrong frequency will crack the crystals and ruin them, so it follows to reason that plenty of these priceless sensurrounds have already been destroyed by botched interface attempts.

Should the *aliens* skill roll be made, the person interfacing with the crystals (only one can stand within the sensurround and try to harmonize with it; any more than that and the crystals will not harmonize at all) will receive 3D in metaphysical skill dice that he can allocate as he chooses. Additional attempts to harmonize with other alien sensurrounds, if successful, will add another 3D on top of the 3D already gained. In the meantime, the metaphysicist can always further his abilities by taking metaphysical Boons or by spending character points on his metaphysical skills (rather than normal skills) at double the usual skill cost.

Enhancing Metaphysics

At present there are no known drugs, nanotech or genotech that can affectively improve metaphysical performance, but that doesn't mean that there aren't a legion of scientists working feverishly on it right now. Whoever can develop an augmentation scheme stands to gain much power indeed from the metaphysicists who will surely pay any price they can for even greater power than what they already possess.

Metaphysics Skills

Attempts to change reality are called manipulations and require one of these skills in order to generate them. When using metaphysical forces, the character generates a *metaphysics* skill total and tries to beat the manipulation's difficulty. If the skill total equals or exceeds the difficulty, then the manipulation's effect works to a greater or lesser extent.

Channel

With this skill a character can focus energy within herself and her surroundings to harm others or to protect herself and others from harm. The most common effects produced with this skill include modifying damage or armor value or generating a new damage or armor value.

Sense

A character who has learned this skill can detect anything in existence, learn about his surroundings, and touch and influence minds. Some effects include: modifying *Knowledge* and general *Perception* attempts; modifying existing or including stand-alone *bargain*, *command*, *con*, *inves-*

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tigation, *persuasion*, *search*, or *Knowledge*-related skills, especially to discern specific information.

Transform

This skill allows a character to alter people and things within the universe temporarily, including moving something from one location to another and changing a target's natural capabilities. Some effects include: modifying a skill or attribute except general *Perception* uses, *bargain*, *command*, *con*, *investigation*, *persuasion*, *search*, *Knowledge*, or *Knowledge*-related skills; adding additional levels of a special ability the target already has; giving a target a new special ability, disadvantage, or skill; placing new limitations or enhancements on an existing special ability; moving targets; and modifying a target's Move value. To move a target, the skill total has to overcome the target's weight value. (Look up the target's mass on the "Lift Difficulties" table.) The target can resist by rolling his *Strength* or *lift* and adding it to his weight difficulty (theoretically, he tries to make himself more difficult to grasp; resisting does not count as an action for the target character). If the *transform* total is equal to or higher than the modified manipulation difficulty, the character is moved. This goes for self-teleportation as well (though the character is not likely to resist).

Designing The Manipulation

At this point, write out what you want the effect to do basically. What sort of effect are you trying to create? How long will it last? What range will you need? Consider all things along these lines. Having some general ideas up front will help you choose the values of the various aspects of your effects. You can keep track of your ideas on the "Manipulation Worksheet" included at the end of this chapter.

Aspects Of A Manipulation

There are four primary and necessary aspects of a manipulation that determine the difficulty to generate it: effect, target size, proximity, and duration. The value of the effect decides the base difficulty, while size, proximity, and duration modify this number.

Effect And Skill Used

The first step in creating a metaphysical manipulation is to decide what it can do. This also helps you generate the initial difficulty. Once you decide what the effect will do – damage, protection, skill bonus, and so on – determine its corresponding value using the "Die Codes" table. Here are some guidelines.

Damage effects affect character health (that is, their body points or wounds). To hurt someone, 6D (which you can determine, by using the "Die Code" table, has a value of 12) is a safe bet. To kill someone outright, 10D (which has a value of 20) is usually necessary. Protection effects work similarly, though obviously they reduce the amount of damage taken. Checking out weapon damage die codes can help you determine the number of dice you need for your manipulation. Effects that increase, decrease, or otherwise alter attributes or skills are determined the same way. For example, taking over someone's mind would give the metaphysicist a *persuasion* of 3D or more with a value of at least 6.

Sometimes a mod, Boon or Bane best reflects what an effect can do. With a mod, the effect's value equals 2 times the mod cost times the number of ranks in that mod, plus the cost of any enhancements and their ranks, minus the cost of any limita-

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ASPECTS

TARGET SIZE: DIFFICULTY MODIFIER	
Small item or handful of tiny items	+1
Person	+2
Few people, personal vehicle	+3
Group, small mass transport, room	+5
Crowd, large mass transport, small building	+10
Horde, huge mass transport, large building	+15

RANGE TO TARGET: DIFFICULTY MODIFIER	
Touching	-2
Point blank (in sight within 3 meters but not touching); self	0
Close (3–100 meters away; out of sight but near)	+5
Long (>100 meters but less than 10 kilometers away)	+7
Extreme (>10 kilometers but less than 1,000 kilometers away)	+10
Atmosphere (>1,000 kilometers away but on same planet/ orbiting vessel)	+15
System (on a different planet/ orbiting vessel within the same star system)	+20
Sector (in a nearby star system)	+30
Galactic (in the same galaxy but different star systems)	+60

DURATION: DIFFICULTY MODIFIER	
2 rounds	0
Each additional round, up to one minute	+1
Each additional five minutes, up to one hour	+1
Each additional hour	+1
(cumulative with other modifiers)	

tions and their ranks. With a disadvantage, the effect's value equals 2 times the cost of the disadvantage. Effects generally do not provide a target with advantages or affect the Resources attribute. Manipulation effects that don't fall into any category should be given a difficulty and the circumstance in which the difficulty can be beat. The difficulty equals the effect's value.

A manipulation may contain more than one effect. Each effect is determined separately and added to the total. All of the effects must fall under the domain of the same skill. You should also list the skill used to create the manipulation at this time. See the skill descriptions for suggestions.

Perceptible Vs. Imperceptible Effects

For nearly all manipulations, the target or the people near the metaphysicist should sense the effect in some way, whether it be hearing the character's voice as he attempts to use an augmented skill that requires

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CHARACTERISTIC TYPE: DIFFICULTY PER 1D	
Damage (Mental Or Physical)*	2
Protection (Mental Or Physical)*	2
Stand-alone Die Code Or Non-metaphysical Skill	2
Non-metaphysical Skill Modifier	5
Non-metaphysical Attribute Modifier	6
Stand-alone Metaphysical Skill	6
Metaphysical Skill Modifier	7
Metaphysical Attribute Modifier	9
* To protect against or do damage as both mental and physical, each type must be purchased separately.	

vocalization, a glow indicating a blast has just gone off, or an aura showing that the character is enhanced. Having a perceivable effect neither adds to nor subtracts from the difficulty. Some effects cannot be detected through taste, physical sensations, hearing, sight, or scent. This includes instantaneous location-to-location movement and direct mind-to-mind communication. This adds 4 per die code or every five points of the effect's value (round up). Thus a manipulation's imperceptible effect with a value of 11 has a +12 to the modifier. The imperceptibility of the effect is in addition to any modifier that may further make the application of the manipulation obvious

Target Size

The size and number of targets is another essential element of a manipulation. Use the accompanying chart to decide on the desired number of targets or a single target's size. Add it to the manipulation's difficulty.

Should the metaphysicist wish to affect a group of people or items at once, all members of a targeted group must be within a meter of another member of that group and they must be of approximately the same size. Otherwise, use a smaller difficulty modifier and determine the effect on each smaller group separately.

Range

Next, determine how far away you want the metaphysicist to be able to affect things with the manipulation. Any manipulation effect reaches its target instantly, but if you want to move it, you also must include the range modifier for the distance you want the target to travel. (This is in addition to the modifier to get to the target.) Use the accompanying chart to pick a level that contains your desired range. Add it to the manipulation's difficulty.

Duration

Finally, decide how long the manipulation will last. Again, the accompanying chart can help you figure out the modifier to the difficulty. Unless otherwise specified by the manipulation (or the GM), a character may rely on a manipulation's effect once per round.

Manipulation Difficulty

Once you have determined all of the aspects of the manipulation, add them together to get the difficulty for using it. The metaphysicist rolls the appropriate *metaphysics* skill against this difficulty to determine success; see "Releasing the Manipulation" later in this chapter for details.

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The skill total can be modified by various circumstances; the "Situation Modifiers" section offers some suggestions.

Design Time

Metaphysical manipulations never require the character to spend time designing a manipulation or going through preparations to use it. However, characters can improve their ability to create the manipulation by concentrating on their desired effect before releasing it. See the concentration modifier later in this chapter for details.

Die Codes

Values are cumulative, so, if the effect has a die code of 3D, the effect's difficulty is 6.

Situation Modifiers

Various situations can change a character's ability to make a manipulation happen. These generic and optional modifiers can further affect the difficulty, generally trading a negative effect on the character for a lower difficulty or a higher skill total. Note that none of these modifiers is required to use any *metaphysics* skill, but they can help.

Community

Unless the GM rules otherwise, characters with metaphysical skills may help each other, using the game mechanics in the "Related Skills" section in the "Game Basics" chapter as guidelines. Metaphysicists also may gain aid from characters with certain other metaphysical attributes, though the bonus is one-half of normal (round up).

Components, Incantations, And Gestures

Metaphysical talents only require the power of the brain, although a person can have a psychological dependency on a certain sort of item to use his gift more effectively. A novice character just beginning his training might require a symbol of his order, for example. This is a psychological crutch, but it has no bearing on the difficulty of the metaphysical attempt. Nonetheless, GMs may allow a modifier to the Metaphysics skill total modifier per type of additional part. There is a limit of one component, one incantation, and one gesture per skill attempt. See the accompanying charts on the next page for skill modifiers. This can be combined with a concentration modifier. Note that using the skill provided by a manipulation does not count as an incantation or gesture.

Concentration

The character spends time preparing herself before releasing her will on the world. For each round in which the character concentrates strictly on his upcoming action (with or without performing related incantations or gestures), the player may add a bonus of +1 to the skill total. Additionally, add the number of rounds in concentration to 6 to get the *willpower* difficulty, which the character rolls at the end of the concentration time. The GM may adjust this based on the circumstances; see the chart on the next page for suggestions. If the character fails the *willpower* roll, the metaphysical attempt fails. A Critical Failure on the *willpower* roll indicates that the character takes any feedback associated with the skill used, even though it didn't work. **Example**: Four rounds of concentration gives a +4 bonus with a *willpower* difficulty of 10. The player must specify, before having his character concentrate, which *metaphysics* skill the bonus will affect and how it will affect that skill. The bonus cannot be transferred to another skill.

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Countenance

Metaphysicists' bodies can undergo changes due to side effects of their reality-altering talents. Some go pale or even blue with a lack of blood flow to their skin, the hair on some stands up as if by static electricity, others shake uncontrollably or foam at the mouth, while others get bulging eyes or swollen, lolling tongues. Illusory changes are also possible, such as glowing eyes or a bright aura. The physical shell can react in unpredictable ways to the effects of extrasensory perception. The corresponding chart lists modifiers to the *metaphysics* skill difficulty.

Feedback

For every -2 to his damage resistance total, the character receives a +1 to the *metaphysics* skill total. Neither protective gear nor any type of special ability may defend against feedback. The damage resistance modifier drops at a rate of one-half of a roll of the character's *metaphysics* per day, with the decrease occurring at the beginning of a new day.

Link To Target

When a metaphysicist wishes to seek out a specific person, the relationship to that person can affect how easy it is to get in touch with the person. Include the link to target skill total modifier when using the relevant skill (see accompanying table). Note that this is different than an astral anchor in that the character and his target need not have been in recent contact. The GM can also use these modifiers for honing in on specific items.

Other

The GM may allow other modifiers to the skill roll. Add to the skill total any modifiers for circumstances that make creating the manipulation easier, but subtract from the skill total any modifiers for situations that make manipulating reality harder.

Result Points

The result points (the difference between the *metaphysics* skill roll and the manipulation's difficulty) can help in a future attempt with that skill or by improving some application of the current use. Add one-half of the result points as the bonus to the effect, range, duration, or other appropriate feature (round fractions up). The GM might also use the result points to determine how effective the manipulation was.

Untrained

Many *metaphysics* skills may be used (or rather, "experienced") even if the character has no dice in the particular skill. For those who have some training (that is, pips or dice in any *metaphysics* skill), the difficulty increases by +5 to implement a manipulation using a skill in which they have no experience. For those who have no training (that is, no pips or dice in any *metaphysics* skill but they do have dice in the metaphysics attribute), the difficulty increases by +10.

Components

SKILL COMPONENT IS...: SKILL MODIFER	
Very common, easily purchased or traded for (match, wooden board, candle)	+2
Common, but must be purchased for reasonable cost (lighter, inexpensive clothing, oil, incense)	+3
Uncommon (rare in some places, common in others: gun, computer chip, prescription medicine)	+4
Very rare (rare in most places or expensive: valuable gem, precious metal, rare drug, exotic herb)	+5
Extremely rare (near-priceless gem, plutonium)	+6
Unique (burial mask of a long-dead king)	+7

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Gestures

COMPLEXITY: SKILL MODIFER	
Simple (point finger, hold out symbol)	+1
Fairly simple (make circles with finger, wave hands)	+2

Incantations

COMPLEXITY: SKILL MODIFER	
A few words or sounds	+1
A complete sentence or lengthy phrase	+2
Must be said very loudly	+1

Concentration Distractions: Examples

LEVEL OF DISTRACTION: MODIFIER*	
Completely isolated chamber	0
Isolated, but some distractions (trees, birds chirping, pictures, white noise)	+2
On a park bench, with a few passers-by	+6
In a room with a few other people who are being quiet	+8
Alone in a booth at a sparsely filled restaurant	+10
Alone at a table in the middle of a sparsely filled restaurant	+14
Alone at a booth at a busy hour; in a telephone booth, with many people passing by	+16
At a restaurant booth with a few other people who are being quiet	+18
Packed ballroom	+20
*Modifier to *willpower* difficulty.	

Countenance

CHANGE IN APPEARANCE: SKILL MODIFIER	
Noticeable (gray pallor, foaming)	+1
Extreme (convulsions, prominent illusion)	+2
Permanently disturbs target (per every +5 to difficulty of future interaction attempts)*	+1
*May only be included if target is intelligent and can see the countenance change.	

Releasing The Manipulation

Roll the *metaphysics* skill for the manipulation in question to get a skill total, adding or subtracting any modifiers appropriate for the user's situation. If the total equals or exceeds the difficulty number, the manipulation has succeeded and the metaphysicist may use the manipulation's effect. Which skill the manipulation requires is either decided when the effect is developed or listed with a pre-calculated manipulation. Remember that players may spend Character and Fate Points to make sure they have sufficiently high skill totals to generate the manipulation in addition to relying on various situational modifiers. The effect is applied differently depending on its purpose. There is no design time for creating a manipulation.

Skill Simulations

Some manipulations provide the target with skills or bonuses to skills or attributes. For instance, a manipulation that heals would give a character a certain number of dice in medicine, and the result of using the manipulation's skill gift would be compared to the normal difficulty for using medicine on a target. Any attribute bonuses affect the skills and specializations under them,

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and any skill bonuses add to the specializations under them (if the target has any). Targets use gifted skills and skill and attribute bonuses normally and as separate actions from the *metaphysics* attempt.

Protection

Characters using protecting manipulations rely on their effect just as they would a piece of protective gear.

General Effects

When the manipulation offers a "general" effect and thus has no targeting or manipulative skill associated with it, the GM will have to make up levels of success for that manipulation. A minimal success, with the roll equal to the difficulty, means that the manipulation was slightly off or less than perfect. A solid success of one to five points over the difficulty usually gets the manipulation to do exactly what the user wants the manipulation to do. A superior success of six points over the difficulty reveals that the manipulation worked better than usual; at this level, the GM might even provide a bonus to its use.

Damage And Targeted Manipulations

If the manipulation focuses on a target (such as a blast or translocation manipulation), the player and GM must decide what skill (such as firearms, melee combat, or throwing) to use to hit, if it's not already built into the manipulation or described with it, as well as the appropriate defense, if any (GMs who prefer to keep activation skills within the metaphysical arts could allow a separate channel roll as the targeting skill). Attack manipulations, for example, would use standard combat difficulties and modifiers for their defense (regardless of the targeting skill). Common sense should be used to determine which skill and defense to use.

Example: With a blast manipulation, the GM decides that the metaphysicist has to generate a firearms skill total to hit his target. Even though the energy will go where he wants it to, there still has to be some way to determine whether or not anybody is hit by it. This keeps effects from being automatic "killers." Granted, most manipulation won't need this – a manipulation that a character uses to take over a target's mind needs no "to hit" total; it is instead the effect versus the target's *willpower* or *Knowledge*.

Releasing a manipulation at the same time as using its targeting or activation skill is not considered a multi-action. However, if the character wishes to release an attack manipulation, which requires a targeting skill roll, and fire a gun in the same round, then the multiaction modifier of -1D (for taking two actions in the same round) is applied to the manipulation activation roll, the manipulation targeting roll, and the weapon targeting roll.

For manipulations targeting groups, the metaphysicist applies the targeting skill once and that number is compared to each target's difficulty to hit it.

In general, any manipulation that works like a weapon requires this kind of control, and a few others might. GMs in doubt may wish to assign a targeting skill check in addition to the manipulation skill difficulty.

Reflux Option

At the GM option, characters who roll a Critical Failure with an abysmally small skill total become disoriented and lose all actions in the next round. The universe rejected the manipulation and hit back.

Increasing Resistance Option

As another option to control metaphysicists, for each additional time the character uses the same manipulation on the same target, the difficulty goes up by +5. It's

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possible that the result point bonus will cancel this difficulty, but the universe continues to try to resist change.

Link To Target

RELATIONSHIP YEARS KNOWN: SKILL MODIFIER	
Constant influence (parents, grandparents, spouse, old friends) 10+ years	+5
Recent influence (friends, roommates, old enemies) 5–10 years	+3
Newer influence (friends, acquaintances) 1–5 years	+2
Sporadic influence (on-and-off relationships) variable	+2
New acquaintances 2–6 months	0
New faces/only just met, but have talked for a while (e.g., at a party)	-2
Personal sight and name recognition (have met in person briefly)	-3
Distant sight and name recognition (celebrities never met in person)	-5
Only a name or face	-8
Complete strangers and not of the same species	-12

Sample Manipulations

These sample manipulations provide a basic idea of what a character can do with the metaphysics ability. They should be each taken as only one example of how such a manipulation of reality could be represented.

Channel

Blast

Skill Used: *channel*

Difficulty: 15

Effect: physical damage 4D (8)

Target Size: person (+2)

Range: close (+5)

Duration: 2 rounds (0)

Description: The metaphysicist draws energy from within herself or her surroundings and focuses it into a blast at a single target. Damage equals 4D. Add the result point bonus to the amount of damage done. She has access to the blast for two rounds, though she may only use it once per round.

Mental Shield

Skill Used: *channel*

Difficulty: 13



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Effect: mental protection 4D (8)

Target Size: person (+2)

Range: self (0)

Duration: 5 rounds (+3)

Description: By hiding his mind behind a curtain of confusing thoughts, the metaphysicist prevents mental harm with an armor value of 4D. The mental shield can also serve in place of *willpower* in interaction attempts or against detect life manipulations. Add the result point bonus to the amount of harm or level of interaction resisted.

Personal Physical Shield

Skill Used: *channel*

Difficulty: 13

Effect: physical protection 4D (8)

Target Size: person (+2)

Range: self (0)

Duration: 5 rounds (+3)

Description: The metaphysicist gathers energy into an aura that absorbs damage with an armor value of 4D. Add the result point bonus to the amount of damage resisted.

Sense

Clairvoyance

Skill Used: *sense*

Difficulty: 44

Effect: search 4D (8), imperceptible (+16)

Target Size: group, room (+5)

Range: self (for effect) (0); long (to target location) (+7)

Duration: 10 rounds (+8)

Description: By casting his mind out, the metaphysicist can examine one location at a distance. Use the effect's *search* skill of 4D to determine how much information the character gets each round.

Detect Life

Skill Used: *sense*

Difficulty: 21

Effect: *search*: detect life 5D (10)

Target Size: few people (+3)

Range: close (+5)

Duration: 5 rounds (+3)

Description: Knowing that all living creatures radiate a kind of psychic energy field, the metaphysicist uses this manipulation to find those hiding near by. Each round the character may look in a new direction without having to reactivate the manipulation, but must roll the manipulation's *search* skill for each new area. The greater the roll with the effect, the more information he learns. Characters may attempt to hide themselves by rolling their *willpower* or *Knowledge* or by creating an appropriate manipulation. The results are then read as points above this difficulty, instead of points rolled with the *search* skill. With a Critical Failure result, add the total normally, including the one on the Wild Die, and use the results of one level less than that total. For totals that would have been minimal, the Critical Failure causes the metaphysicist to lose one round of using this manipulation due to confusion.

RESULT: INFORMATION GAINED	
1–6	Knows that there are life forms in the target area, but not how many
7–11	Knows the number of beings
12–13	Knows whether any of the beings in the area have an metaphysical attribute
14–15	Knows whether she's met each being before, and if yes, who the being is
15–16	Knows the gender and species of the being

Influence

Skill Used: *sense*

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Difficulty: 15

Effect: *persuasion* 5D (10)

Target Size: person (+2)

Range: self (0)

Duration: 5 rounds (+3)

Description: The metaphysicist bends his will command that of another. He relies on his new *persuasion* skill of 5D like a normal interaction skill.

Receive Thoughts

Skill Used: *sense*

Difficulty: 23

Effect: *persuasion* 3D (6), imperceptible (+12)

Target Size: person (+2)

Range: self (for effect) (0); point blank (to target) (0)

Duration: 5 rounds (+3)

Description: The metaphysicist can read the surface thoughts and feelings of one person. Each round, the metaphysicist makes an interaction attempt using the effect's *persuasion* of 3D to determine how much of the target's thoughts he detects.

Send Thoughts

Skill Used: *sense*

Difficulty: 28

Effect: *persuasion* 3D (6), imperceptible (+12)

Target Size: person (+2)

Range: self (for effect) (0); close (to target) (+5)

Duration: 5 rounds (+3)

Description: For five rounds, the metaphysicist can plant thoughts in another character's mind. Each round, the metaphysicist makes an interaction attempt using the effect's *persuasion* of 3D to determine how receptive the target is to the thoughts.

Transform

Heal

Skill Used: *transform*

Difficulty: 10

Effect: *medicine* 5D (10)

Target Size: person (+2)

Range: touching (-2)

Duration: 2 rounds (0)

Description: Through the power of touch, the metaphysicist can heal another character as if he had 5D in *medicine*. He has access to this skill for two rounds, though he may only use it once per round.

Ignore Pain

Skill Used: *transform*

Difficulty: 22

Effect: *stamina* 6D (12)

Target Size: person (+2)

Range: close (+5)

Duration: 5 rounds (+3)

Description: The metaphysicist bolsters another's ability to fight the pain of injuries. For five rounds and as long as the target character remains within range, he receives the benefit of the *stamina* skill at 6D. Using the skill gained from this manipulation does not count as an action.

Physical Enhancement

Skill Used: *transform*

Difficulty: 16

Effect: +1D bonus to any one attribute (*Agility, Strength, Knowledge, Perception, Mechanical, Technical*) (6)

Target Size: person (+2)

Range: close (+5)

Duration: 5 rounds (+3)

Description: The metaphysicist improves another character's physical or mental abilities. For five rounds and as long as the

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target character remains within range, he gets +1D to one attribute of the metaphysicist's choosing.

Telekinesis

Skill Used: *transform*

Difficulty: 20

Effect: Move target of 1 kilogram or less (1)

Target Size: small item (+1)

Range: close (to target) (+5); close (range of movement) (+5)

Duration: 10 rounds (+8)

Description: The metaphysicist reaches out with his mind and grasps a small object within 100 meters. He can bring it to him. To also use the object at a distance, he would need to give himself the appropriate skill, as a separate manipulation attempt.

Translocation

Skill Used: *transform*

Difficulty: 31

Effect: Move target of 100 kilograms or less (12); imperceptible (+12)

Target Size: person (+2)

Range: self (to target) (0); close (to destination) (+5)

Duration: 2 rounds (0)

Description: The metaphysicist shifts herself out of time and space to another location within 100 meters of where she started. It takes one round to dematerialize and one round to rematerialize. **Note**: When adjusting this manipulation to work on another character, unwilling characters get a chance to resist, adding a roll of their *lift* or *Strength* to the base difficulty of the manipulation, making themselves harder to grasp. Resisting does not count as an action for the target.

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Manipulation Worksheet

Skill Used:_____

Difficulty:_____

Effect:_____

Target Size:_____

Range:_____

Duration:_____

Skill Modifiers:_____

Componant:_____

Gesture:_____

Incantation:_____

Concentration:_____

Feedback:_____

Link to Target:_____

Other:_____

_____

_____

Total Skill Modifiers:_____

_____

_____

Description:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Manipulation Worksheet

Total the values for each aspect and put the number on the correct line. If you do not use an aspect, put zero (0) on its line.

Difficulty Calculation	
Effect	+_____
Target Size	+_____
Range	+_____
Duration	+_____
Modifiers	+_____
Total (difficulty)	_____
Skill Modifiers Calculation	
Component	+_____
Gesture	+_____
Incantation	+_____
Countenance	+_____
Feedback	+_____
Link to Target	+_____
Other	+_____
Other	+_____
Other	+_____
Total	_____

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09: Hardware

Much of the equipment and technology detailed in this chapter is what is currently being used and produced by the Extent. Knockoffs and devices of different design but identical performance can be found in the hands of Grayscalers and Newcomers all over Septimus, manufactured on smaller scales by rogue nanofoundries and off-the-grid production facilities. As more and more Newcomer ships enter the worldsphere, they bring with them equipment designs from the outside, but the sad reality is that tech design has stagnated terribly in the Seventh Empire; all of the recent innovation has been by the Extent and those who have copied from it. As such, unique Newcomer designs are usually discarded quickly in favor of Extent designs or copies of the same. In this the Extent can take credit for a lasting victory in the direction of design itself within the sphereworld: if you want to build something right, you need to build it the way the Extent would. The rogue builders and scroungers of the sphereworld are undoubtedly harboring gear of their own design, but such things are very rare and isolated examples of technology in a unspeakably vast world where Extent gear and gear made to look like Extent gear are in use by more than 99% of the total population.

Obtaining Gear

Each piece of equipment has a price difficulty associated with it that expresses how challenging it is for a character to obtain that item. If using Resources as an attribute to purchase an item, the player rolls the attribute against the listed purchase difficulty, (adjusted by the GM for the circumstances around obtaining the item such as seller's stock, item quality, general item availability, and so on). A player may attempt to use *bargain* to haggle over the list price (and thus change the price difficulty). Review the *bargain* skill entry for details. The GM may include modifiers to the seller's roll or value (such as local law, relationship of buyer and seller, and so on). Likewise, GM smay allow players' characters to help each other obtain particularly expensive items (such as spaceships) through complementary Resources rolls.

If the Resources total equals or exceeds the price difficulty, the character gets the item.

Any item with a price difficulty equal to or less than the number in front of the "D" in the character's Resources attribute is an automatic purchase. A character may make several automatic purchases per day. Any item with a price difficulty greater than the number in front of the "D" in the character's Resources attribute but less than or equal to 3 times that number is an average purchase. A character may make one average purchase per day.

Any item with a price difficulty greater than 3 times the number in front of the "D" in the character's Resources attribute is a luxury purchase. A character may make one luxury purchase every seven days. When deciding on the type of purchase, include in the difficulty breakdowns any modifiers due to a Boon or Bane.

Example: A character has 3D+2 in her Resources attribute. Her automatic purchases have a difficulty of 3 or less. Her average purchases have a difficulty of 4 to 9. Her luxury purchases have a difficulty of 10 or more. If the character also had wealth (R1), she would add her bonus of +10 to each of these levels, giving her automatic purchases at 13 or less, average purchases between 14 and 19, and luxury purchases at 20 or more.

Failure on a Resources roll means that the character didn't have the money for some reason (maxing out a credit line, forgetting to transfer money to the correct account, leaving the wallet at home, etc.). Except when the total is abysmal, the character may roll again after a short period of time and attempting to fix the problem (switching credit cards, moving money, getting money from the safe, etc.). Unless the GM

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PRICE DIFFICULTIES	
Cost of Item or Service:	**Difficulty**
Cheap (several credits or less)	Very Easy (5)
Inexpensive (less than 200 credits)	Easy (10)
Nominally expensive (hundreds of credits)	Moderate (15)
Somewhat expensive (a few thousand credits)	Difficult (20)
Expensive (several thousand credits)	Very Difficult (25)
Very Expensive (tens of thousands of credits)	Heroic (30)
Costly (a few hundred thousand credits)	Legendary (30+)
Note: "Costly" is hardly the top end, and GMs should continue adding to the difficulty for higher prices as needed.	

Item or Service Is... :	Modifier
Common; average quality	0
Very common; local market is flooded; of slightly lower technological complexity than commonly available	-5
In high demand; limited availability; of slightly higher technological complexity than commonly available	+5
Not generally available to the public; of significantly higher technological complexity than commonly available	+15
Out of season or from a distant location	+15 or more
Unusually high quality	+5
Damaged or low quality	–5

Relationship with Seller:	Bargain Modifier
Has dealt with rarely or never	0
Pays on time; frequent customer; no complaints by seller	-1 or more
Rarely pays on time; problem buyer	+1 or more

decides otherwise, players may not spend Character and Fate Points on Resources rolls. The price difficulties given in the equipment descriptions in this chapter are suitable for most science fiction settings. They do not take into account any modifiers the GM may wish to include.

Personal Equipment

In a high-tech setting like Septimus, there are certain kinds of technology which have become ubiquitous, something most characters can have access to if they want it. Some examples include:

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Comlink

The standard unit of communication equipment, comlinks come in a number of different forms. The most common is the handset, which has an effective range of 10 kilometers and is widely available on the open market. These also can be purchased as headsets.

Cost: Easy (10)

Comlink, Military

Military comlinks have a greater range (approximately 25 kilometers), and are frequently belt units or built into envirosuit helmets, to allow the soldier to keep her hands free for combat. Many high-tech worlds feature communications satellites that allow comlink signals to reach anywhere on the planet.

Cost: Moderate (15)

Cred-Key

A small plastic card that, when placed in a cred-key receiver, can perform all banking functions. Cred-keys are used by virtually all high-tech worlds, though not all worlds have compatible banking systems. Many frontier worlds do not have the equipment necessary to read the cards and so will only accept hard currency. Standard cred-keys contain the name of the bearer and a personal identification number. Megacorporate-issued cred-keys usually feature the name of the firm and a code for it as well. Military officers, who may have extensive credit limits owing to their status, carry cards with their DNA pattern encoded on them for ease of identification. Cred-keys are not common on worlds with extensive smuggling, piracy, or other criminal activities – they are too hard to steal and use. A character must be able to generate a *forgery*, a *personal equipment repair*, and a *computer interface/repair* skill total of at least 21 each to forge or strip a civilian cred-key. Military and megacorp keys are even harder. Even then, decent detection equipment (not usually found in stores and bars but common in banks and large-purchase retail outlets) will probably be able to detect the *forgery*.

Cost: Very easy to set one up; some fees to transfer money.

Note: Cred-keys are used in the Extent, even though there is no real monetary currency to speak of there. Extent cred-keys include time credits for nanocompilers, which are then used to gain additional time on them. Compilers generally are thumbprint or retina-print enabled, and one's time credit account is accessed on a central mainframe, so keeping a cred-key on hand is unnecessary. However, cred-keys do store additional time credits, and can be used on top of what you are allotted.

Crowbar

Gives a +1D bonus to prying attempts, or does Strength Damage +2 in damage with bashing attacks.

Cost: Very easy (5)

Datamate

The Septimus version of a PDA, these devices are portable terminals for interfacing the Datastream and Holoverse (described below). They take many forms, from small handheld computer screens, to stylus-style pens, to lapel pins, and so on. Datamates can also be used as personal communications devices anywhere within the Sphere. Most come with a port for connection to a neural jack, as well as cable interfaces for connecting to larger terminals. Smaller computers have slots for a few scholarchips, while larger ones have room for several.

Cost: Moderate (15)

Hardsuit

The basic environmental protection gear, the hardsuit is designed for use in hostile climates or worlds whose atmosphere is unsafe. The hardsuit features a helmet and full body suit (the helmet is detachable).

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Air is recycled by the mechanisms in the suit and bodily moisture is also filtered to be stored in pouches inside the suit. Straws run up the suit and into the helmet to allow the user to take a drink.

Hardsuits commonly have comlink units built into the helmet and the belt. A small indicator light in the helmet flashes when in the presence of another comlink is trained to the same frequency. A hardsuit maintains a constant temperature around its wearer that can be adjusted via controls on the belt. A standard hardsuit offers only a single layer of protection (armor value +1), which if torn or pierced renders the entire suit inoperative. More expensive suits offer two layers of protection, with a liquid sealant stored between the interior and the exterior. Damage done to the exterior layer can be sealed within one round (armor value +2). However, extensive damage rapidly exhausts the supply of sealant. (The average outfit comes with enough sealant to repair 20 small tears or 10 large ones.)

Hardsuits can hold enough air, food, and recycled water for several days to several weeks of use; about two weeks is standard. They can be refilled off of shipboard supplies (deducting the life support from the ship's life support) or they can be refilled at stations and similar places for 10% of the base cost of the suit.

Cost of suit: Moderate (15)

Flashlight

Small flashlights reduces darkness modifiers by 2D in a cone-shaped area up to five meters from the user. The internal batteries can be recharged off any local current (the base includes several adapters).

Cost: Very easy (5)

Handcuffs

Low-tech metal adjustable restraints require the key or a moderate *sleight of hand* roll to remove; 18 body points/2 wound levels; damage resistance total 15. Key comes with purchase of handcuffs.

Cost: Very Easy (5)

Hand Scanner

A portable sensor device, the hand scanner has an effective range of 10 kilometers. It can be set to pick up motion, particular types of matter, and even indications of power generation. They are standard equipment for scouts and are frequently used by miners. Use of a scanner provides a +1D to sensors. Use the "Information Difficulties" or "Observation Difficulties" charts in the "Example Skill Difficulties" chapter to determine what the scanner reveals. Most hand scanners can only be blocked by cover over three solid meters thick (several thick concrete walls or the bulkhead of a ship will usually block scanner readings, but only the most dense of forests or jungles will have any effect at all).

Cost: Moderate (15)

Holorama Player

This device provides holographic images drawn from data chips for entertainment or informational purposes. Holovids also can be connected to comlinks to provide for audio and visual contact between parties. Some holovids have the capability to jack into hand computers, projecting the information on scholarchips out for all to read.

Cost: Moderate.

Life-Support Refills

These are "tanks" of atmosphere and food supplies that can be attached to an environment or hardsuit and some portable shelters. They last roughly two weeks and weigh less than 10 kilograms.

Cost: Moderate.

Lockpicking Tools

These provide a +1D bonus to lockpicking attempts only if the user has the *sleight of hand* skill. Otherwise these are useless in the hands of the unskilled.

Cost: Easy (10)

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Medkit

An assortment of medical supplies collected into a lightweight container that allows for easy transport. Medkits normally contain antibiotic patches, a compressed-air hypodermic injector, three doses of pain killers, bandages, and tape. Use of a standard medkit provides a +1D bonus to medicine skill checks. For more on the use of medkits, check out the "Healing" section of the D6 Rules chapter.

Cost: Easy (10)

Nylacord

This synthetic rope is used throughout Septimus and the Seventh Empire. It is light, has a tensile strength of many tons, and is extremely thin. When used as a choking weapon, it inflicts Strength Damage +2; 10 body points/1 wound level; damage resistance total 5.

Cost: Very easy (5)

Scholarchips

Computer chips intended for use with both hand units and larger terminals. These contain available information on sectors, planets, some alien species, equipment, ships, personal data, business transactions, and so on. Use of a computer with a standard scholarchip in place allows the operator to roll as if he possessed a *scholar* or appropriate *Knowledge*-based skill in the subject detailed on the chip. Of course, the broader the range of information and the more encrypted it is, the harder it is to get at what the character needs.

Cost: Very easy (5) for base die code of 1D, +1 to the price for each additional +1D.

Shades

Supertech eyewear provide the user with multi-sensory capability as well as the potential for displaying multiple datascreens at any given time. A must for the media addict who needs to take in multiple strands of the Datastream at once. +1D bonus to sight-based rolls for viewing objects beyond seven feet in daylight and twilight.

Cost: Easy (10)

Shovel

Add 1D to digging attempts, or does Strength Damage +2 in damage with bashing attacks.

Cost: Very easy (5)

Signal Locator

This device, which has a restricted distribution, monitors the signals of tracking devices. It includes a small display to show direction of movement. Pricier ones can pinpoint the location on an electronic map.

Cost: Moderate (15)

Thermo-Disk

Useful gear when traveling in a wilderness area, thermo-disks are spheroid plasticene items, roughly the size of the average human's fist. They contain storage batteries that, when switched on, give off heat in a 25-meter radius. As they do not provide light, they can be used in hostile areas without betraying of one's presence.

Cost: Easy (10)

Tool Kit

Contains tools (and possibly parts or storage containers) necessary to accomplish basic tasks. Add 1D to relevant skill attempts only if the user has the appropriate skill (usually some version of repair, but *investigation* in the case of an evidence or archaeologist's kit, *con*: disguise in the case of a disguise kit, or certain applications of *artist* or *forgery* with artistic supplies).

Cost: Very easy (5) to moderate (15) depending on quality and availability.

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Tracking Device

Used with a signal locator, this miniature transmitter allows whatever is attached to it to be electronically located over a distance. Active devices emit a signal, while passive ones wait for a signal to come before sending out a response.

Cost: Moderate (15)

Weapons

The various hardware listed below represents the designs used most commonly by the Extent and its various imitators. There are other designs, variations, clones and knockoffs of every item in this section in use in the Grayscale, the Scraplands and the various Newcomer factions, although Extent technology remains by far the most prevalent design family to be found within Septimus.

The Extent is reportedly working on new generations of weapons for its soldiers. Rumors conflict as to their progress, however. Some believe that the Extent already has new arsenals at the ready but refuses to deploy them just yet, waiting for the perfect moment, if and when it should arrive. Others believe that the Extent is still putting its various prototypes through the testing process, in which case field models are bound to see action against the Extent's many enemies at some point. When this happens, it will be the Extent's top priority to ensure that these new weapons do not fall into the wrong hands. The Extent will have worked long and hard to gain a new edge in the arms race against its enemies, and it will not take any disruption of that effort lightly. Those who have dreams of stealing prototypical Extent weapons should do so knowing that they will never have a moment's rest afterward, as Cadre Enforcers, Sleepwalkers and even freelance bounty hunters close in from all angles looking to lay the smack down on whomever had the stones to rip the Extent.

Melee & Missile Weapons

Personal weapons are a fixture in the world of Septimus, even in Arcopolis where one would think that things are so safe and comfortable that one could go unarmed. However, the recent Scraplander incursion and the ever-present danger of low-level attacks and threats from the Scraplanders has prompted some residents to carry personal melee weapons for safety and civil defense. To some degree, this trend has led to the widescale study of the fighting arts, such as handling a knife or a whipping weapon. Dueling traditions have also been reported to exist in the Grayscale, but the Cadre has not yet made any serious investigation into the practice, nor will they until a duel goes horribly wrong and an unacceptable amount of collateral damage occurs. That said, there exists a long-standing tradition of dueling and personal combat throughout the Seventh Empire, and many Newcomers come to Septimus both skilled in the use of melee weapons and more than ready to draw at a moment's notice if need be.

Cruncheon / Boomstick

These are superheavy fighting sticks for those with augmented strength, most often found in the form of a club or a staff. Some cruncheons have directional explosive reactors on the surface for super hitting power. These are called boomsticks. Cruncheons generally can not be thrown accurately.

Classification: augmented fighting stick

Damage: 3D for a regular cruncheon, 4D for a boomstick.

Modifiers: Boomsticks are weighted a little weirdly because of their reactor tips, so they are –2 to strike.

Cost: Easy (10)

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Polycarb

These monomolecular weapons feature blades that are virtually indestructible but are so thin they seem invisible when viewed edge-on. They are fitted with autodraw sheathes that instantly retract when the user hits a control button on the handle, effectively arming the weapon for combat. There are three basic kinds of polycarb weapons: knives, swords/axes and spears.

Classification: Personal Melee Weapon; Cutlery With Attitude	
Throwing Range (S/M/L) - Dagger	5/10/20
Throwing Range (S/M/L) – Sword/Axe	3/6/9
Throwing Range (S/M/L) - Spear	5/15/30

Damage: knives: 2D; swords/axes: 3D; spears: 4D; Any polycarb weapon can be used while sheathed as a blunt weapon, but its damage is reduced down to only 1D, regardless of type.

Modifiers: Spears are –2 to hit when attacking any target at or closer than five feet (1.5 m) to the wielder.

Cost: Very easy (5) for daggers, easy (10) for swords/axes and moderate (15) for spears.

Quickstick

These turbo-powered billy clubs can be used equally well as a HTH weapon or as a thrown weapon. Armed with internal gyros, quicksticks are well suited for trick shots and special moves. When throwing a quickstick, the user can make the throw a multiattack if he desires, banking the stick off of opponents and into others in a single strike.

Classification: personal melee weapon; thrown projectile

Throwing Range (S/M/L): 5/10/15

Damage: 2D

Modifiers: Quicksticks get +4 to hit when thrown and +2 to parry. If the user stays in a purely defensive mode, he can whirl the quickstick around really fast, creating a shield-like effect that gives him +4 to parry instead of the usual +2.

Cost: Easy (10)

Stingstring

Laser-augmented fiber-optic microline; a whip or garrotte that can cut through anything. When not laser-augmented, it is still lethal and commonly known as mollywire.

Classification: augmented razorwhip

Range: As a garrotte, stingstring users must be able to reach out and touch their opponents. Stingstring whips can extend out to 5 m.

Damage: 6D for regular stingstring; 3D for mollywire.

Modifiers: A Critical Failure when rolling to hit with these weapons means the user has actually hit himself. Determine damage as normal.

Cost: Moderate (15)

Deathsaw

These are the chainsaws of the future, crafted from super-hard metal alloys and sporting vicious polycarb teeth. This is a shock weapon, designed for huge damage and psychological effect. They can be slow and unweidly, though, and require great strength to use without penalty.

Classification: intimidator; personal overkill device

Range: HTH only. Don't even think about throwing one. You'll just put a gouge in the floor.

Damage: 7D

Modifiers: You must have a *Strength* of at least 3D to use a deathsaw without penalty. If your *Strength* ranges from 3D to 4D,

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you can use a deathsaw but all rolls are at –3. If your *Strength* is higher than 4D, then you can use this without penalty.

Note: Deathsaws will inflict normal damage against any weapon it parries. If you've got a prized family heirloom broadsword, using it against a deathsaw is not smart.

Additional Note: Like stingsting and mollywire, rolling a Critical Failure while using one of these means you have cut yourself by accident. Roll damage as usual.

Powerchain

These nasty weapons are a cross between a whip and a flail. Weighted at the end, a powerchain can thrash, entangle or lacerate its opponents using a series of chain signets linked by user-reactive micro-motors. This means with a subtle twist of the wrist, the user can manipulate the length of these weapons like tentacles, making them very difficult to parry and very easy for pulling off trick shots.

Classification: smartwhip

Range: 15 feet (4.6 m), HTH only. If you throw one, the weapon's safety program kicks in, and unpowers the entire thing. It'll just clunk to the floor.

Damage: 6D

Modifiers: These things are pretty wild, so reduce all melee combat rolls with these by –1D. Like deathsaws, powerchains will inflict damage to whatever weapon they parry. Likewise, a Critical Failure with one of these means you wrapped it around yourself and inflicted normal damage. On the plus side, a Wild Die hit with one of these means that the damage rolled is automatically considered a Wild Die roll, too. Nobody likes to get wrapped up in these things. They tend to make you all fally-aparty.

Cost: Difficult (20)

Knuckle Duster

A modern upgrade of the classic brass knuckles, these weapons use a contact energy projector to deliver world-class hitting power upon contact, much like a boomstick would. Knuckle dusters are often worn by bodyguards, criminals, special ops soldiers, revolutionaries, gladiators, and anybody looking for some extra firepower but not necessarily another weapon to carry around.

Classification: personal melee weapon

Range: HTH only

Firepower: Knuckle dusters add +3 to your *brawling* damage.

Modifiers: none

Cost: Easy (10)

Talons

These look like oversized knuckle dusters, except they cover the entire back of the hand. They feature three cowlings that run the length of the unit. From these, three dagger-like polycarb blades can extend, giving the user an instant set of lethal claws. These blades also can be fired from the base unit and controlled via a kinesis module in the unit itself, making this versatile weapon a knife missile projector as well.

Classification: personal melee and projectile weapon

Shooting Range (S/M/L): 8/16/24

Damage: 3D in either HTH combat or on the fly

Modifiers: When used as missiles talons are very accurate, thanks to their pilot control capabilities. They are +3 to strike.

Ammo: Each talon unit has only three claws to it. Once the claws are fired as missiles, they can be directed back to the base unit and re-housed. The user should take care when shooting the claws, since sometimes they will get lost or broken in the course of missile combat.

Cost: Difficult (20)

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Fletcher

This is a generic term for any projectile weapon that fires its missiles by way of simple mechanical power. This includes all bows, spring-powered launchers, crank-driven disc-throwers and the like. They are almost always either built from scavenged parts by those without access to more sophisticated weaponry or by those looking for something serious but silent. Either way, those adept at using fletchers tend to enjoy their position on the battlefield as silent killers from long distances.

Classification: personal missile weapon; old-school perforation power

Shooting Range (S/M/L/E): 10/25/100/250

Damage: ranges from 2D to 4D depending on size and type

Ammo: Ranges from single-shot to magazines holding up to 50 darts or bladed discs. Single-shot weapons canot be used in a multiattack.

Cost: Ranges from very easy (5) to moderate (15) depending on damage and ammo capacity.

Firearms

These are the most commonly encountered weapons in the world of Septimus. Personal firearms come in a dizzying array of types, models and variations, but the ones below are the official designs of the Extent and are all used by the Cadre and the Morituri. The Grayscale and the Scraplands all manufacture weapons of their own design, but many of them are either direct copies or hastily modified knock-offs of the system's tried and true archetypes. The same is true for most Newcomer factions. As a result, the weapons described below are the basic templates for the vast majority of weapons encountered in and out of Arcopolis.

The average Extent citizen is not allowed to carry or operate a small arm (or any other weapon outside of melee weapons, for that matter) outside of certain designated places (i.e., target ranges, proving grounds, specially outfitted holorama venues, etc.). This law rarely needs enforcing, as the populus of the system have little need for weaponry of any kind.

Small arms have four basic rates of fire: single shot, burst firing, autofire and selective fire. Single shot means just that; the weapon can only fire one shot per action. Burst firing means the weapon can fire three shots with a single pull of the trigger. In game terms, firing a burst adds +1D to the damage of the weapon, but using this option means you'll go through your ammo much faster. Autofire means the weapon can only shoot continuous fire. An autofire attack uses 20 shots at once and inflicts normal damage, but it can be directed at up to three different targets at once. Autofire can be directed entirely at the same target, as well. Each target (even the same one being shot at multiple times) requires a separate roll to hit and to damage. Autofire weapons cannot fire single shots unless they are loaded with only one shot. Selective fire means the weapon can switch to any rate of fire, from single shot to burst firing to autofire.

The basic ammo type for a small arm in Septimus is a needle-like microbullet that has an armored core and a fragmentary outer casing so it creates a pretty big hole when it hits. The main advantage to such a skinny round is that the average magazine can hold enough ammo for a user to get through an entire gunfight without stopping to reload. Certain weapons can accommodate different kinds of ammunition, and there is in development a nanochamber that, once fitted to a weapon, will give its user the ability to modify the weapon's ammo load upon firing to achieve a variety of specialty effects. This is not yet in production, but when it comes out in another

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year or so, it is expected to have serious impact on the battlefields of Arcopolis and beyond.

There are five operational ranges at which all firearms operate: point blank, short, medium, long and very long. Firearms can be shot at targets beyond very long range, but that is considered out of range. At that distance it will take a small miracle to hit what you're aiming at. The difficulty numbers for all ranges are the same regardless of weapon. The difference between weapons is the length in meters of their various range increments. Generally, the heavier the weapon, the better the range. Likewise the heavier the weapon, the larger and bulkier it is. Pistols and personal generally defense weapons can be hidden on one's person. Rifles and larger gear can not. Exactly what can be hidden where is left for the GM to determine, depending on the circumstances.

Holdout

This small, compact sidearm is highly popular with vehicle crews, covert operatives and criminals looking to hide some worthy firepower on their person. It is not exactly the hardest-hitting shooter out there, but it can be easily concealed.

Classification: personal sidearm

Range (PB/S/M/L/VL): 2/5/10/15/25

Damage: 3D

Rate of Fire: single shot

Ammo: 10 shots

Modifiers: None

Cost: Moderate (15)

A-Line

Considered to be the most widely used pistol in circulation, the A-Line is also perhaps the oldest weapons design currently in use by the system. It is known for its good performance and an accommodating design that fits nicely into the user's hand.

Classification: pistol

Range (PB/S/M/L/VL): 10/20/30/40/50

Damage: 3D

Rate of Fire: single shot

Ammo: 30 shots

Modifiers: These weapons possess a slaving chip that makes it easier to use them in conjunction with each other. When firing with an A-Line in either hand, negate the typical penalty for shooting with two weapons at once. This feature makes the A-Line really popular with criminals and Morituri, both of which have a vested interest in looking like badasses when fighting.

Cost: Moderate (15)

Sirius Six

Nicknamed the "Serious Six," this slightly oversized pistol is similar in shape to late-model revolvers, down to a cylindrical ammo drum. In the case of the Sirius Six, however, that drum is an oversized fusion chamber that gives this pistol its extra stopping power (at the cost of range).

Classification: heavy pistol

Range (PB/S/M/L/VL): 5/10/20/30/40

Damage: 5D

Rate of Fire: single shot

Ammo: six shots

Cost: Moderate (15)

Einhander

A strangely popular superpistol, this weapon really requires two hands to use properly, despite what its name suggests. It is really a carbine made to look like a handgun, which encourages plenty of Morituri to one-hand this thing simply because they look really cool while doing it.

Classification: superpistol

Range (PB/S/M/L/VL): 15/30/45/60/75

Damage: 7D

Rate of Fire: single shot

Ammo: 12 shots

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Modifiers: Unless you have a *Strength* of 16 or higher, you must use two hands when firing this weapon. Otherwise reduce your skill roll with this weapon by –1D.

Cost: Moderate (15)

Defender

This popular carbine resembles a miniature rifle with a fixed stock and perforated metal barrel. It is used most often by those with basic weapons skills and who are unlikely to engage their targets at long range.

Classification: personal defense weapon (PDW)

Range (PB/S/M/L/VL): 10/20/30/40/50

Damage: 3D

Rate of Fire: burst firing

Ammo: 100 shots

Modifiers: This weapon is very light and well balanced. Though designed to be fired with two hands, it is short and steady enough to fire one-handed at a penalty of only –1 to strike.

Cost: Moderate (15)

Harlequin

A relatively new design, the Harlequin is quickly proving itself to be a reliable and deadly tool, seen frequently in the Proving Grounds and in service with the Cadre. It is light and well balanced and is preferred by Cadre patrolmen who need extra firepower but don't like to carry big weapons.

Classification: personal defense weapon (PDW)

Range (PB/S/M/L/VL): 15/30/45/60/75

Damage: 4D

Rate of Fire: burst firing

Ammo: 200 shots

Modifiers: Like the defender, this weapon can be fired one-handed with only a –1 penalty to strike.

Cost: Difficult (20)

Polaris

Like the A-Line, this battle rifle has been in use for as long as anybody can remember and is a mainstay weapon in gladiatorial combat, law enforcement, Sector arms, the Downsides, and the Scraplands. Criminals and rebels have made many knockoffs of this particular design, adding extra fusion chambers, rotating barrels and other such acoutrements designed to enhance performance. The extent to which these add-ons really help depends on the skill of the craftsman.

Classification: battle rifle

Range (PB/S/M/L/VL): 25/50/75/100/125

Damage: 5D

Rate of Fire: selective fire

Ammo: 250 shots

Modifiers: none

Cost: Difficult (20)

Taskmaster

To replace the aging Polaris, the system has introduced the cutting-edge Taskmaster to Sector Command and elite units within the Cadre. Gladiators who have proven their unlikeliness to go rogue are also issued this weapon, which not only has tremendous accuracy and stopping power, but it has a sleek, stylish look that the public much enjoys.

Classification: battle rifle

Range (PB/S/M/L/VL): 40/80/120/160/200

Damage: 5D+1

Rate of Fire: selective fire

Ammo: 500 shots

Modifiers: none

Cost: Very difficult (25)

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Support Guns

These heavy weapons range from squad-based suppression firepower to the heavy cannons mounted on vehicles. Generally speaking, these are the big guns that combat junkies like to haul into battle. These are not instruments of subtlety. They are state-of-the-art bang-bang.

Vanguard

This basic squad support weapon remains popular because it is light enough for any combatant to heft easily and fire with little difficulty. It can put down a punishing amount of fire and is utterly reliable in combat. It is an old design, and several efforts have been made to replace it.

Classification: light support gun

Range (PB/S/M/L/VL): 50/100/150/200/250

Damage: 6D

Rate of Fire: autofire

Ammo: 1000 shots

Modifiers: None

Cost: Difficult (20)

Callisto

The Callisto was supposed to be a next-generation squad support weapon that would replace the Vanguard. Named the Harbinger, the weapon tended to explode when switched to autofire and was abandoned. Several years ago a single-shot version was released as the Callisto, touting the weapon's incredible accuracy. As a heavy sniper weapon, the device has met the success it lost as a super-heavy support gun (SSG).

Classification: light support gun; sniper rifle

Range (PB/S/M/L/VL): 100/250/500/1000/2000

Damage: 9D

Rate of Fire: Single shot. These weapons can be modified with a moderate *firearms repair* roll to either burst fire or autofire, but any Critical Failure while shooting on a setting other than single shot means the weapon explodes, inflicting 10D damage to the user.

Ammo: 25

Modifiers: This weapon is so long and heavy, it must be braced against something before firing. It has a built in bipod for prone firing. Firing unbraced lowers your skill roll by –1D.

Cost: Difficult (20)

Reaver

This weapon was also meant to replace the Vanguard, but because it is heavier and bulkier the Vanguard remains an important personal weapon and the Reaver is more of a light crew weapon. It is often mounted on vehicles, used by troopers with serious strength augmentation, or put into place as a point defense device.

Classification: light support gun

Range (PB/S/M/L/VL): 50/125/250/500/1000

Damage: 7D

Rate of Fire: autofire

Ammo: 1500 shots

Modifiers: This weapon requires a *Strength* of at least 4D to fire while carrying. Firing with a *Strength* less than 4D imposes a –2D penalty on the roll to hit unless the weapon is fired from a bipod, tripod or vehicular mount.

Cost: Difficult (20)

Conqueror

Ah, the Conqueror. Easily the most often-used of the high-end small arms. It is produced in vast numbers and routinely mounted on vehicles, used as point defense, and occasionally used as a personal weapon by troopers in the heaviest suits of

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powered assault armor. It's accuracy is not the best, but when rocking and rolling on autofire, you really don't need it. The hitting power of the Conqueror, as any of its many victims will attest, is surely enough to ruin your day.

Classification: light support gun

Range (PB/S/M/L/VL): 75/150/225/300/375

Damage: 8D

Rate of Fire: autofire

Ammo: 2000 shots

Modifiers: This weapon requires a *Strength* of at least 6D to fire while carrying. Firing with a *Strength* less than 6D imposes a –2D penalty on the roll to hit unless the weapon is fired from a bipod, tripod or vehicular mount.

Cost: Difficult (20)

LC100

The lightest of the vehicle-only weapons, the LC100 is typically used to arm heavy unarmored vehicles, light armored vehicles, and light aircraft. It, like any of the weapons after it, is simply too huge for any person to lug about unless it is mounted on suits of heavy armor.

Classification: medium support gun

Range (PB/S/M/L/VL): 500/1000/1500/2000/2500

Damage: 9D

Rate of Fire: burst firing

Ammo: 1000 shots

Modifiers: This weapon can only be carried and fired by gunners with a *Strength* of 8D, meaning that it must either be mounted on vehicles, a suit of heavy armor, or on tripod/fixed mounts.

Cost: Very difficult (25)

MC200

This weapon is used for light tanks and commonly is mounted on aircraft such as fighters and fighter-bombers, because it performs well but is small enough that multiple units can be placed on a single chassis.

Classification: medium support gun

Range (PB/S/M/L/VL): 750/1500/2250/3000/3750

Damage: 10D

Rate of Fire: burst firing

Ammo: 500 shots

Modifiers: none

Cost: Very difficult (25)

HC300

This is considered the main gun for any heavy armor. Lighter vehicles will mount it to fill a tank-killing role, a tactic used with increasing efficiency by Scraplanders and Gladiators. Only the heavier combat aircraft will mount these.

Classification: medium support gun

Range (PB/S/M/L/VL): 750/1500/2250/3000/3750

Damage: 15D

Rate of Fire: single shot

Ammo: 250 shots

Modifiers: none

Cost: Very difficult (27)

Siege Gun Alpha

Too large for any but the mightiest combat chasses, the Siege Gun Alpha (SGA) is designed for use by super-heavy armor, as a form of mobile line-of-sight artillery, or as stationary defense. Sometimes heavy bombers will mount these when converted to a gunship role. The firepower a SGA puts down is ferocious and typically disintegrates whatever it hits. The SGA is the final word in direct-fire weapons technology…for the moment.

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Classification: super-heavy support gun

Range (Pb/S/M/L/VL): 1000/2000/3000/4000/5000

Damage: 20D

Rate of Fire: single shot

Ammo: 100 shots

Modifiers: none

Cost: Very difficult (29)

Firearm Accessories

Here is a sampling of firearm accessories that can make certain weapons more effective.

Gyrostabilization

This can be built into any personal or heavy weapon (except hand grenades) and provides synchronized stabilization for the wielder. The unit supplies that small amount of extra bracing that often makes the difference between a hit and a miss (+1D to hit at any range). This gyrostabilization bonus is not used if the character aims first; aiming provides better stabilization than the gyro can.

Cost: Moderate (15)

Laser Sight

This can be mounted on almost any projectile- or energy-firing weapon (hand grenades are out). The laser sight projects a small, coherent spot of light that can be seen by the weapon's user, though after 100 meters the character using the weapon must be equipped with binoculars or other visual aids (like the telescopic sight). The spot helps the character firing the weapon to see where the round is going to go (+1D to firearms roll). When using this sight to fire at anything other than point-blank or short range, the character must take an action to aim or forfeit the bonus of the laser sight. (The character gets the aiming bonus.) It is simply too hard to see the "dot" at medium or long range with a "quick shot." There are only two disadvantages to the laser sight: (1) certain gases can refract the beam and (2) if the character uses the sight to aim, the target may see the little laser-light as well and be alerted. (Someone who suspects she's being targeted may make a search attempt with a +1D bonus to the roll to spot the location of the hidden attacker during the round in which the aim takes place. The difficulty is the attacker's attempt to hide.)

Cost: Easy (10)

Quick-Draw Holster

A favorite among gunslingers, the springloaded quick-draw holster is only available for nonbulky pistol weapons or melee weapons. With this holster, drawing the weapon does not count as an action, so characters may perform it in the same turn as using the weapon without penalty. In addition, when the character engages in a "quick-draw" contest, she can add 1D to her initiative. It does not provide any special initiative bonus during normal combat.

Grenade Targeting

Range	Difficulty
Point Blank	0
Short	10
Medium	15
Long	20
Very Long	25

Condition	Modifier
Character cannot directly see target area	+6
Target area is not "even ground"	+4
Target area is very hard (grenade will bounce)	+4
Target area is very soft (grenade will sink)	–4

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Cost: Easy (10)

Telscopic Sight

Only an advantage at medium or long range, the standard telescopic sight is equipped to make seeing the weapon's target at those ranges much easier (+2 to hit at medium and long ranges). Individual scopes are fitted to different weapons – so a weapon with a long range of 250 meters would have a different sight than a weapon with a 1,000-meter range. The scope can be adjusted slightly, but the maximum range is always just a little more than the weapon's maximum effective range. When using this sight on a weapon, the character must aim to get the bonus (though the character also gets the aiming bonus as well).

Cost: Easy (10)

UV Sight And Scope

Much more expensive, this sight n' scope (SNS) combination is also much more deadly than the laser sight. The character using the weapon has a UV scope mounted on the weapon (or, less likely, is wearing ultraviolet goggles) and can see the UV laser dot (+1D to firearms roll). No one else can unless they also are so equipped. The UV scope also can be used to track the dot at long distances. This sighting combination only affects shots taken at medium or long range and only if the character takes the time to aim the weapon. The character gets the aiming bonus as well.

Cost: Moderate (15)

Arc Casters

Firearms have been the weapon of choice in the Seventh Empire and within Septimus for an extremely long time because they are relatively simple, they are very effective, and they are both cheap and easy to manufacture. Despite these obvious benefits, there remains an element within the Extent that wants to push things further, and to that end they have designed a series of energy weapons known as arc casters. Also known as "bolt guns," these devices emit what look like bright blue arcs of lightning at their targets. They inflict energy damage rather than kinetic damage, and their super-efficient batteries give these devices a virtually limitless ammo capacity. Unfortunately, all bolt guns are single-shot weapons, though that will probably be remedied in future versions.

So far, bolt guns are still fairly experimental. They are being used most commonly with new generations of military robots within the Extent and with certain Morituri, who appreciate the dramatic visuals these weapons afford when used. While bolt guns are still somewhat uncommon and hard to acquire, the Extent is likely to ramp up production considerably in the next year or two, and pretty soon these will be seen on every battlefield in Septimus.

Arc Pistol

This is the size of a standard sidearm. It is a reliable personal defense weapon and is becoming increasingly popular with those who need a holdout that doesn't run out of shots after a brief exhange of fire.

Classification: personal blaster

Range (PB/S/M/L/VL): 50/100/150/200/250

Damage: 3D

Rate of Fire: single shot

Ammo: effectively infinite

Modifiers: none

Cost: Very difficult (26)

Arc Carbine

This is the size of a standard submachine-gun or personal defense weapon. It provides a decent punch for its size, even if its range is somewhat lacking for a weapon of this level.

Classification: personal blaster

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Range (PB/S/M/L/VL): 50/100/150/200/250

Damage: 4D

Rate of Fire: single shot

Ammo: effectively infinite

Modifiers: none

Cost: Very difficult (27)

Arc Rifle

This is the most commonly encountered kind of bolt gun, installed on military robots, vehicles and exos. It features a sleek, compact design that is surprisingly light and durable. Newcomers and Grayscalers sometimes add extras on to these, like grenade launchers, but the Extent feels that when used properly this weapon requires no such "improvements."

Classification: combat blaster

Range (PB/S/M/L/VL): 100/200/300/400/500

Damage: 5D

Rate of Fire: single shot.

Ammo: effectively infinite.

Modifiers: none.

Cost: Very difficult (28)

Arc Cannon

When bolt guns get to this size, they stop being carried by people and mounted on small robots, and they begin showing up on vehicle mounts, large exos and dedicated warbots. This is just the smallest version of the arc cannon. Much larger versions are under development, but their performance has been spotty, so their field deployment has not occurred just yet. They will make their debut soon, however.

Classification: heavy

Range (PB/S/M/L/VL): 200/400/600/800/1000

Damage: 8D

Rate of Fire: single shot

Ammo: effectively infinite

Modifiers: none

Cost: Very difficult (29)

Grenades

These hand-held bombs are important tools for indirect fire applications. All can either be thrown, or they can be fitted onto the end of a weapon (small arms) barrel and fired for extra range. A single blast from a small arm will ignite a tiny onboard engine in the grenade providing it with the flight power it needs to reach its target. Grenades are dumb bombs, meaning that they universally cannot maneuver or distinguish between friend and foe. Still, gladiators just love them, as do certain soldiers, security and criminal elements.

Using an explosive can get tricky. Even though a thrown grenade uses the *throwing* skill to hit, the character using the grenade should not actually be aiming at a person but rather, a place. A grenade typically does not explode on contact. It explodes after its fuse burns up (usually three seconds), and then it damages anything in a given area. When throwing at a specific area, refer to the "Grenade Targeting" chart. If the grenade misses, the GM determines where it lands. Ranges for explosives and grenades represent how far they can be thrown, which is based on the *Strength* or *lift* of the character modified by an additional value. As with other weapons, accuracy decreases as the distance to the target location increases.

Explosives also have an additional game mechanic: the burst radius. Anyone caught within the burst radius must take damage; the farther a character is from the center of the blast, the less damage he takes. Five values, in meters, are given for each burst radius.

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Since this is a cinematic and not a realistic game, the effects of an explosion can be dodged. It's not easy, though. The difficulties of dodging blasts depend on how close you are to them.

- *To dodge an explosion at point blank range requires a heroic (31) dodge roll.*
- *To dodge an explosion at short range requires a very difficult (25) dodge roll.*
- *To dodge an explosion at medium range requires a difficult (20) dodge roll.*
- *To dodge an explosion at long range requires a moderate (15) dodge roll.*
- *To dodge an explosion at very long range an easy (10) dodge roll.*

If you failed to dodge a blast attack, but you rolled half or more of the difficulty number, you are still hit but take only half damage. Keep in mind that those throwing or firing grenades still must make their roll to hit. Failed rolls mean the grenades go off and hurt nobody. A Critical Failure when throwing or firing a grenade means that you dropped it on yourself or misfired and take full damage from the blast without any chance to dodge or reduce damage. In some games when you fumble, the other team gets the ball. In this game when you fumble, you get reduced to little red giblets.

In addition to being thrown, all grenades can be fitted to the end of any standard single-shot or selective fire firearm and launched from the barrel. This requires one shot from the firearm, which lodges in the grenade's end fuse and ignites a small rocket motor that shoots the grenade long distances. The ubiquitous nature of barrel grenades makes open warfare in Septimus an especially loud and bloody affair

High Explosive Grenade

The standard infantry grenade. It packs a big bang for a small unit, and when barrel launched it becomes a potent anti-mecha and anti-vehicle weapon. A unit armed with a bunch of these can often turn the tide of a low-level engagement.

Range: user's throwing range (thrown); 1000 m (barrel fired)

Damage: 10D/18D/6D/4D/2D

Blast Radius: 10/20/30/40/50

Flechette Grenade

This is the anti-personnel weapon of choice, with a lower firepower but greater range than the high explosive (HE) grenade. These are often remote detonated or barrel fired so the user is not caught within the shrapnel field.

Range: user's throwing range (thrown); 1000 m (barrel fired)

Damage: 12D/10D/8D/6D/4D

Blast Radius: 5/10/15/20/25

Ion Grenade

Nicknamed the "zapper" and the "bolt from the blue," this electrical device is designed specifically to disable machinery (any computer, vehicle, eoskeleton rbot, etc.) but leave organic units unharmed.

Range: user's throwing range (thrown); 1000 m (barrel fired)

Damage: 10D/9D/8D/7D/6D

Blast Radius: 10/20/30/40/50

Plasma Grenade

When you need maximum firepower for a specific target, look no further than the plasma grenade, bane to hardened targets everywhere. So potent is this little device that in some Morituri wargames, they are banned outright. Even certain groups within the Scraplands consider them a dishonorable and cowardly weapon, though Cadre officers report that such reservations do not seem widespread in the Scraplands.

Range: user's throwing range (thrown); 1000 m (barrel fired)

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Damage: 4D, regardless of range. Any hit from a plasma grenade will continue to burn for the next 1D rounds, causing another automatic wound of 4D each round it burns. Most firefighting agents will not put out a plasma fire. Water and smothering will not, either. They have to be left to burn themselves out.

Blast Radius: 5/10/20/30/40

Chemical Grenade

Basically the future's version of tear gas, the chemical grenade was designed specifically to counteract the ubiquitous mods in people's heads to keep their heads clear.

Range: user's throwing range (thrown); 1000 m (barrel fired)

Damage: Chemical grenades do not explode. Instead they release their contents through holes in a canister. The cloud they create quickly fills an area of 10 cubic meters. Armor provides no protection against this kind of attack, unless it affords environmental protection. Both tear gas and smoke grenades give all within the blast area a -1D penalty to all *Agility*, *Mechanical*, and sight-based *Perception* rolls.

Blast Radius: 5/10/20/30/40

Note: Rumors persist that the Extent is working on a wide range of specially designed nanotech grenades that will produce a variety of exotic effects but will deliver their payload like a conventional chemical grenade. Word is there will be two kinds of these new "smoke grenades": chromatic (red, blue, green, etc.) and metallic (gold, silver, platinum, etc.). Stay tuned.

Nocturne Grenade

Ever need to take somebody down without punching a lot of holes in them? So did the geniuses who designed this little darling, the Nocturne anti-riot grenade, guaranteed to knock even the meanest hardcase out of action if the dice fall properly. These are used most often by militants on stealth missions who don't want to trip things off with a lot of messy gunfire or Enforcers seeking to knock out some bad guys but not cause a lot of damage.Nocturne grenades are particularly well-suited for resolving hostage situations.

Range: user's throwing range (thrown); 1000 m (barrel fired)

Damage: This weapon puts out an incapacitating alpha wave that renders its victims asleep. Victims must make a difficult (20) *stamina* check or it's off to dreamland for the next 1D hours.

Blast Radius: 5/10/20/30/40

Demolitions

Demolitions are shape charges for placement or remote detonation only. Generally speaking demo charges can be set to go off up to 72 hours from placement, or they can be remotely detonated from as far away as 1000 m.

Shape Charge

These light charges are for breaching the entryways of strongholds and mecha or vehicular hatches. They are generally safe enough for their detonators to stand close to at the time of detonation, since the blast is specifically angled to such a degree that the sidewash will not cook bystanders.

Classification: light anti-materiel

Damage: 15D/3D all other ranges

Blast Radius: 1/10/20/30/40

Cost: Difficult (20)

Breach Charge

These are more powerful charges meant to take down medium-grade structures, such as thick walls, large support beams, power supplies and the like. They are the lightest general-purpose demo charge available and are commonly used in strings or groups for breaching or weakening large or diversified targets.

Classification: medium anti-materiel

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Damage: 12D/10D/8D/6D/4D

Blast Radius: 50/100/150/200/250

Cost: Difficult (20)

Shatter Charge

These heavy-grade demolitions are used to destroy parked vehicles, small buildings or facilities or to blast the vulnerable spots of larger facilities. Since they are larger than what can be carried and concealed easily, they are typically used for military applications only. Anybody carrying a Class C charge within Arcopolis proper will almost certainly be spotted by law enforcement.

Classification: heavy anti-materiel

damage: 15d

Blast Radius: 100/150/200/250/300

Cost: Very difficult (23)

Crater Charge (Class D Charge)

These are used to demolish large structures and facilities with a single blast. Class D charges are shaped only to the extent that they focus all of their destructive energy inward toward their target. Other than that, they use brute force to destroy the target and do not yield the exact results that smaller charges are known for.

Classification: heavy anti-materiel

Damage: 20D

Blast Radius: 200/250/300/350/400

Cost: Very difficult (25)

Missiles

The last word in propelled weapons technology, the basic design for missles has not changed much over the years, largely because they work so well. Upgrades have been done to targeting and autoevasion hardware, but the fundamentals of these weapons are much the same as when they were first developed so very long ago.

Tactical Missiles

These are man-portable, shoulder-launched weapons that can provide the individual infantryman with enough firepower to level the odds on an armor-laden battlefield. They can also be mounted on light vehicles, although most craft will go with a slightly heavier weapon (such as an SRM or even a support gun) if they're going to use their few hardpoints for armament.

Range: 1 km

Damage: 14D/12D/10D/8D/6D

Blast Radius: 5/10/15/20/25

Modifiers: +1 to strike

Cost: Difficult (20)

Pursuit Missiles

These must be mounted on some kind of fixed shooting platform (which infantrymen hate because they're unmaneuverable) or vehicle. Even the lightest runabouts can accommodate one or two. Larger weapons often will carry clusters of these for salvo launching.

Range: 100 km

Damage: 16D/14D/12D/10D/8D

Blast Radius: 10/20/30/40/50

Modifiers: +2 to strike

Cost: Very difficult (23)

Cruise Missiles

These are the heaviest weapon most light vehicles will carry. They are often mounted on aircraft as their primary air-to-air and air-to-ground weapon.

Range: 3000 km

Damage: 18D/15D/12D/9D/6D

Blast Radius: 20/40/60/80/100

Modifiers: +3 to strike

Cost: Very difficult (25)

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Planetary Missiles

These are essentially larger, heavier cruise missiles. The Extent has considered building missiles with much greater ranges — essentially explosive spacecraft that can hit targets on the far side of Septimus — but to hit enemies at that range, it prefers to send military units to ensure the destruction is carried out properly.

Range: 10,000 km

Damage: 100D

Blast Radius: 10 km

Note: These are essentially nuclear weapons. A planetary missile has a *Strength* of 8D and has a *dodge* skill of 3D. The great distances these are fired from usually give their targets ample time to try to intercept them, which greatly reduces the efficiency of this type of weapon. It also explains why they don't get used all that much but are instead held onto as a last resort. Small-scale insurgents and the like might be tempted to use such a weapon as a one-off kind of assault on a much bigger target, however — a scenario that causes the Extent and certain Newcomer factions a considerable amount of concern.

Cost: Heroic (100)

Armor

Given the lethality of so many weapons systems in Septimus, many combatants turn to armor to keep them going. Almost all forms of armor entail a tradeoff however. Generally speaking, the more protection a suit of armor affords, the greater it reduces your *Agility* — your ability to *dodge* incoming attacks and to hit what you're aiming at. For this reason many fighters eschew armor altogether, figuring that if they get hit, they'll just get rejuvenated. Those with a greater sense of self-preservation however will find themselves deciding exactly how much mobility they are willing to sacrifice for greater durability. On the battlefields of Septimus, it is never a question of whether you'll get it. It is a question of when.

Personal Armor

There are four basic categories of simple armor one can wear in Septimus: suits of synthleather, plastovar, plasteel and reflec. For all types of personal armor the protection statistic measures how much the armor adds to its wearer's *Strength* when making rolls against incoming damage. Encumbrance measures how much the user's *Agility*-based rolls are reduced by because of the bulkiness of the armor.

Synthleather

This is a tough material that can be used to make ordinary clothes and is commonly used by those seeking protection without looking armored up.

Protection: +1

Encumbrance: none

Cost: Easy (10)

Synthleather Mesh

This is a denser and tougher version of ordinary synthleather. It still can be fashioned into clothes, but it is a bit stiffer and less comfortable to wear.

Protection: +1D

Encumbrance: -1

Cost: Easy (10)

Plastovar

This is a flexible plasticine cloth that often is hidden in clothing to provide better protection than synthleather but with the same discretion. It is even more rigid than synthleather mesh and cannot be passed off easily as normal clothing. Plastovar armor is often worn under normal clothes, however.

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Protection: +1D+2

Encumbrance: -2

Cost: Easy (10)

Plasteel

This is a high-strength, rigid form of polymer strong enough to deflect bullets. It is used in obvious, carapace-style armor worn by soldiers, lawmen, bounty hunters and others who make no effort to hide their armor.

Protection: +2D

Encumbrance: -1D

Cost: Easy (10)

Reflec

This is a metallic composite cloth that will provide a degree of protection against any kind of energy attack, including fire, lasers and even the bolts from an arc caster. Reflec is extremely thin and lightweight and usually is applied to another form of armor to provide extra protection at extra cost.

Protection: +2D to all energy attacks

Encumbrance: none

Cost: Moderate (15)

Exoskeletons

Exos are powered suits of that are equal parts robot and personal armor. They are like a vehicle you can wear, providing substantial protection, attribute boosts, sensors and weaponry. They have become a common sight on the battlefield as well as in the peaceful sectors of Septimus, as decommissioned military exoskeletons are pressed into service as industrial equipment and hazardous environment machinery.

Unlike personal armor, exoskeletons do not augment the user's *Strength* for the purposes of resisting damage. Instead the exo user rolls the die code for his exo hull against the damage as if it were a *Strength* attribute. Some exos also have shielding. These are energy barriers designed to lessen the force of incoming attacks. Shielded exos roll their shield die code against incoming damage; the total number rolled by the shields is subtracted from the incoming damage, and after that the hull is rolled against the adjusted damage. If an incoming attack is twice the value of the shield roll, then the shields short out for 1D rounds. If an incoming attack is triple the value of the shield roll, the shields are down for 1D hours, pending repair. If an incoming attack is more than triple the value of the shield roll, the shields are permanently broken and must be fully replaced by a skilled mechanic.

When using an exoskeleton, use your *exoskeleton operation* skill die code for rolling any *Agility*-based skill except for gunfire and other *missile weapons*. For that, use either your *gunplay* skill for handheld weapons or your *gunnery* skill for mounted weapons. Some exos provide flight capabilities; for these use your *piloting* skill rather than your *exoskeleton operation* when off the ground.

Lancer

The Lancer is the most basic of exos, little more than a servo-powered suit of polysteel carapace. Still, it is cheap as exos go, and lots of less-than-wealthy combatants often feel that this is the best they can afford. It often can be found in various peacetime applications, such as construction, exploration, salvage and search and rescue.

Type: civilian/defensive exo

Height: 1.8 m

Move: 10

Shields: none

Hull: 6D

Sensors: +1 to all *search* rolls

Armament: none

Features: The Lancer gives its user a 6D *Strength* for *climb/jump* and *lift* rolls.

Cost: Difficult (20)

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Challenger

The Challenger is a crossover exo used almost equally by civilians and military. Its heavy lifting capabilities and environmental protection…

Type: medium defensive exo

Height: 1.9 m

Move: 12

Shields: none

Hull: 7D

Sensors: +1 to all *search* rolls

Armament: none

Features: 7D *Strength* for *climb/jump* and *lift* rolls.

Cost: Difficult (22)

Vanguard

The Vanguard is a light, agile exo is used primarily for recon and deep insertion missions. It's small size makes theft and illegal export of the Vanguard a simple matter. Once a fairly expensive, the Vanguard availability has spike recently, driving the price down to a managable level, as exos are concerned.

Type: light tactical exo

Height: 2.0 m

Move: 15

Shields: 1D

Hull: 6D

Sensors: +1D to all *search* rolls

Armament: None, but Vanguard pilots can easily use a Reaver or Conqueror firearm.

Features: 7D *Strength* for *climb/jump* and *lift* rolls.

Cost: Difficult (23)

Marauder

The Marauder is the mainstay exoskeleton, in common use throughout the military.

Type: medium tactical exo

Height: 2.4 m

Move: 20/ 200 flight

Shields: 1D+1

Hull: 6D

Sensors: +1D+1 to all *search* rolls

Armament: None, but Marauder pilots can easily use a Reaver or Conqueror small arm.

Features: 8D *Strength* for *climb/jump* and *lift* rolls.

Cost: Difficult (24)

Myrmidon

The Myrmidon is an older exoskeleton design, largely replaced the cheaper and Marauder, or the technologically superior Centurion. A number of Myrmaidon exos remain in heavy use, especially by more remote military units and mercenary forces. The bulky carapace and lower power lifting actuators, compared to the centurion and the heavier executioner have made the myrmidon less fit for both military as well as industrial purposes.

Type: heavy tactical exo

Height: 2.5 m

Move: 25 / 200 flight

Shields: 1D+2

Hull: 7D

Sensors: +2D to all *search* rolls

Armament: LC100 support gun, 4 one-shot grenade launchers

Features: 9D *Strength* for *climb/jump* and *lift* rolls.

Cost: Very Difficult (25)

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Hoplite

The newest and possible most sophisticated exo produced, its small size, speed and agility hides a very resilient carapace, made by layering many dozens of layers plastovar, molecularly bonded together and reinforced with interlocking plasteel plates.

Valued for its speed and toughness, what few Hoplite do manage to make it on the market are very expensive and seldom drop in price.

Type: light assault exo

Height: 3 m

Move: 30/ 200 flight

Shields: 2D

Hull: 7D

Sensors: +2D+2 to all *search* rolls

Armament: MC 200, grenade launcher (8 shots), 2 tactical missiles

Features: 10D *Strength* for *climb/jump* and *lift* rolls.

Cost: Very difficult (27) Sellers gain an additional +5 bonus for any Bargain skill tests.

Centurion

The Centurion represents the more recent replacement to the Myrmidon in combat forces. The Centurion balances strong armor with speed, and comes equipped with a neuro-reactive targeting system. The Centurion was designed for quick target acquisition and high rates of fire, capabile to engaging a target nearly at the speed of thought.

Type: medium assault exo

Height: 4 m

Move: 35/ 200 flight

Shields: 2D

Hull: 8D

Sensors: +3D to all *search* rolls

Armament: twin HC 300s (pilot gets one free gunfire attack without incurring multi-attack penalties) plus 8 tactical missiles

Features: 11D *Strength* for *climb/jump* and *lift* rolls.

Cost: Very difficult (28)

Executioner

The Executioner is the heavy hitting in any exo-equipped squad. It is large and highly armored, with powerful strength actuators allow the Executioner to move shockingly quickly. Armed with the unmatch power of the SGA, the weapons slow rate of fire and difficulty engaging small, fast tagets would leave the Executioner vurnerable to peppering by smaller exos, and armored infantry, the the Execution is equiped to count that as well. The twin LC100's are highly effective versus small vehicles and exoskeletons and a grenade launcher for anti-infantry area of effect attacks.

Since few Executioners are brought into full service, these suits are exceptionally well accounted for. As a result, few Executioners find themselves in black market trade channels.

Type: superheavy assault exo

Height: 5 m

Move: 40 ground / 200 flight

Shields: 3D

Hull: 10D

Sensors: +3D to all *search* rolls

Armament: Siege Gun Alpha, twin LC100s (extra attack), grenade launcher (30 shots) and 4 pursuit missiles

Features: 12D *Strength* for *climb/jump* and *lift* rolls.

Cost: Heroic (30)

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Robots

In Septimus, robots are everywhere. This is especially true in the Extent, where such machines are used for jobs that are not suited for clones or synthients. The Extent would rather not outfit its people with exo suits, so robots get used instead.

Robots are nonsentient automatons with a programmed algorithm they must follow. They can be used for maintenance, security – just about anything. Interaction skills have no effect on them. Movement may be provided by legs, wheels, treads, hoverjets, or something similar and appropriate for the medium the robot most likely travels through or on.

A robot is preprogrammed for each task it can do; its skills represent this programming. Furthermore, most robots don't have dice in attributes, though highly sophisticated ones might. Most robots can only attempt actions for which they have skills. Any action that requires a skill the mechanical construct does not have cannot be done. Robots with any of the attributes can adapt to circumstances covered by that attribute and make limited decisions not necessarily dealt with by their programming (that is, their listed skills). For robots that can do this, skill attempts that default to the attribute are at +7. This accounts for the robot being smart but not terribly creative.

Example: A character and a robot (with no attributes) are challenged with repairing a damaged laser pistol. If neither has the firearms repair skill, the character gets to attempt to roll her *Technical* with +5 to the difficulty of the task. The simply programmed robot would not be able to repair the damaged weapon at all, because it doesn't know how.

A robot can never perform *con*, *willpower*, metaphysics or other extranormal attribute actions. Robots use their *dodge* or *search* to determine initiative; if they have neither, they go last.

Midges

This little robot comes packed with a variety of tools and diagnostic equipment to perform maintenance on just about anything. Its miniature agrav generators allow it to float in the air and go along at a modest pace. It cannot fly more than a few meters off the ground though.

Type: general purpose sidekick

Size: .8 m/10kg

Move: 15 (flying)

DEXTERITY: 1D

KNOWLEDGE: 1D

MECHANICAL: 1D

Exoskeleton Repair 3D

Firearms Repair 3D

Flight Systems Repair 3D

Gunnery Repair 3D

Personal Equipment Repair 3D

Robot Interface/Repair (Damage only) 3D

Vehicle Repair 3D

PERCEPTION: 1D

Search 4D

STRENGTH: 1D

TECHNICAL: 1D

Shields: none

Hull: 1D+2 (they break easily)

Armament: none

Features: Various repair and diagnostic tools, plus parts; laser welder (damage 4D if improperly used).

Cost: Moderate (15)

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Drones

Generally humanoid in appearance, these robotic servitors perform a variety of tasks that prevent their human masters from ever having to any sort of menial labor. This ranges from basic hard labor to fine house chores like cooking and arranging flowers. The extensive reliance on drones is a crucial element in the Extent, maintaining the indolent lifestyle its Proles have become so used to. The Extent also uses drones as disposable soldiers however, and when used for military purposes, they are given an *Agility* skills package that civilian models otherwise do not have. Because drones are so easy for the Extent to manufacture, when they do employ them as soldiers, they tend to send huge numbers of them into battle under the notion that "quantity has a quality all its own."



Type: humanoid friday/disposable robo-mook

Size: 1.2 m (just a bit shorter than the average person)

Move: 10

DEXTERITY: 1D

Dodge 1D+2

Firearms 3D

KNOWLEDGE: 1D

Business 2D

Cultures 3D

Scholar 2D

MECHANICAL: 1D

Computer Interface/Repair 4D

Medicine 3D

All other repair skills 2D

PERCEPTION: 1D

STRENGTH: 1D

TECHNICAL: 1D

Shields: none

Hull: 2D+2

Armament: none; military drones are equipped with standard small arms

Features: none

Cost: Moderate (18)

Proxies

Proxies are mechanical simalcrums of humans meant to work along side them without causing the cultural dissonance that some tasks tend to generate when machines are involved (notably: negotiations, sex and warfare — which according to some

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within the Extent are not so different from each other). At a casual glance, a proxy is almost impossible to tell apart from a real human. Those who spend any appreciable amounts of time around these units pick up on the many subtle flaws in their mimicking and can tell a proxy from a human at the snap of a finger. That said, proxies do look enough like the real McCoy that their integration into society is accepted much more readily around those who are skittish near robots than they are around robots that clearly look mechanical (every other type, at present).

Proxies are sometimes used by the Cadre as infiltrator units outside of Arcopolis, but the easy (10) Perception roll one needs to make to tell that these thing are actually machines makes the proxy's worth as an undercover unit sketchy at best.

Type: Human Interactions Unit

Size: 1.8 m

Move: 10

DEXTERITY: 1D (only in units used as infitrators; otherwise, these skills are not installed)

Brawling 3D

Dodge 3D

Firearms 3D

Melee Combat 3D

KNOWLEDGE: 3D

Bureaucracy 6D

Business 6D

Cultures 6D

Languages 6D

Scholar 6D (usually just one subject pertinent to the unit's mission)

Security Regulations 6D

MECHANICAL: 1D

PERCEPTION: 1D

STRENGTH: 1D

TECHNICAL: 1D

Shields: none

Hull: 2D+2

Armament: none

Features: These look a lot like regular people. Most are fairly attractive and have a toned physique. They generally try to look like everybody else except when instructed otherwise not to.

Cost: Very difficult (25)

Creepers

As the Extent is learning the limits of what it can achieve by sending huge waves of drones at their enemies, they have begun to build a new warbot that combines the drone's simple design and low unit cost with some enhanced combat abilities. The result is the creeper, a strangely insectoid unit that has a distinctly alien appearance, with long, spindly appendages, A shiny, sleek body, and a strange style of movement that almost looks like something from a stop-action animated film.

As the most basic and popular security robots within the Extent, creepers can identify a preprogrammed list of visitors; anyone not on that list is turned away. Those who refuse receive a stunning blast. Those on a kill list are met by gunfire from an onboard battle rifle. Units captured or transferred outside of the Extent have made their way into the private collections of crime lords, mercenaries and the like. This is one technology the Extent really wishes had not flown the coop.

Type: automatic peacekeeper; intimidator

Size: 2 m

Move: 20

DEXTERITY: 3D

Dodge 6D

Firearms 5D

Running 4D

KNOWLEDGE: 1D

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Intimidation 5D

MECHANICAL: 1D

PERCEPTION: 1D

STRENGTH: 2D

TECHNICAL: 1D

Shields: none

Hull: 3D

Armament: Creepers often are fitted with an internal Taskmaster battle rifle. Some are fitted with several one-shot grenade launchers as well.

Cost: Heroic (31)

Juggernauts

Really big, vehicular warbots that the Extent puts into action when they really have no intentions of taking prisoners, preventing collateral damage, or even leaving behind intact corpses. Those are Juggernauts.

Type: anti-everything gun platform; reason for buying life insurance

Size: 3 m

Move: 20 running / 200 flight

DEXTERITY: 2D+2

Dodge 3D

Firearms 3D

KNOWLEDGE: 2D

MECHANICAL: 2D

Gunnery 3D

Shields 3D

PERCEPTION: 1D

STRENGTH: 4D

Lift 6D

TECHNICAL: 1D

Shields: 2D

Hull: 5D

Armament: Any support gun, up to a HC300, is typical. The Juggernaut also, tends to have a loadout of 1 pursuit missile and a grenade launcher (48 shots), 2 pursuit missiles and a grenade launcher (24 shouts) or 4 pursuit missiles (no grenade launcher). Likewise, any one pursuit missile can be substituted with two tactical missiles.

Cost: Heroic (31)

Ground Vehicles

Most ground vehicles in Septimus have both civilian and military applications. While the gravity well technology (more on this at the end of the chapter) enables many vehicles in Arcopolis to hover over the ground, ground vehicles elsewhere typically have wheels, treads or even articulated legs for traversing rough terrain. Generally speaking, vehicles that hover grant a +1D to its user's pilot skill, but outside of a gravity well environment, these craft simply crash to the ground. Vehicles that are wheeled have no bonuses or penalties because of it. Tracked vehicles grant +1 to *piloting* skills when rolling to cross difficult terrain, but their land speed is cut by 25%. Vehicles with articulated legs grant a +2D *piloting* bonus for rolls to cross difficult terrain, but their land speed is cut by 50%. They do look pretty cool, though.

This section introduces a few terms unique to means of conveyance:

Move

This is approximately cruising speed. It is listed first in the number of meters per round the vehicle may move. The rating in parentheses is the speed in kilometers per hour.

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Crew

The number of people required to operate the vehicle as well as however many extra passengers can come along for the ride.

Cargo Capacity

How much stuff the vehicle can hold.

Altitude Range

How high the craft can fly when hovering. All ground vehicles have only one form of locomotion — hovering, wheels, tracks or legs. Hover vehicles add +5 to their cost difficulty, as do legged vehicles.

Cover

How much protection from fire a vehicle affords its occupants. This comes into play when somebody wants to shoot through a window, or portal or other opening and nail an occupant. For rules on cover, see the D6 Rules chapter.

Shields

This is the amount by which incoming damage rolls will be reduced before they are applied to the vehicle's hull code. Shields that sustain 2x more damage than what they roll are shorted out for 1d hours. Shields that sustain 3x more damage than they rolled are burned out and must be replaced, which usually takes at least 2D hours of serious mechanical work.

Hull

This is the vehicle's base damage resistance die code. It also can be used as a reasonable measure of the amount of damage it can inflect. It may not be modified by spending Character or Fate Points on it.

Maneuverability

An indication of how easy the vehicle is to handle. Stunts are easier to perform in vehicles with higher die codes than in those with lower ones. The Maneuverability die code is added to the driver's or pilot's appropriate skill total when that person is attempting to do something fancy. (Vehicle stunts are further explained in the Movement chapter.)

Armament

Occasionally characters might find it necessary to mount or have mounted weapons on their planetary vehicles. All of these weapons require the *gunnery* skill to use them properly. Additionally, a character who must fire a weapon and maneuver the vehicle incurs a multi-action penalty. Each weapon may fire once per round, because they need some time to reload and retarget.

Weapons must be obtained separately and installed if they do not come standard with the vehicle. For militarizing civilian, unarmed vehicles, this can sometimes more than double the cost. All weapons increase the cost by +5 to the price difficulty. For an additional cost the vehicle can be installed with a weapons computer that improves the *gunnery* roll by +1D for each +3 increase in cost.

Monobike

These weird-looking vehicles are pretty popular with sport drivers and combat drivers looking to be dramatic. A monobike is a single, large wheel within which sits the driver. The wheel rotates around the driver seat, but otherwise the thing acts and handles like an ordinary motorcycle.

Type: personal runabout

Size: 2 m/500 kg

Move: (120 kph)

Crew: 1 driver

Cargo Capacity: 10 kg

Cover: none

Altitude Range: when hovering, up to 300 m

Shields: none

Hull: 2D

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Armament: This vehicle can be armed with any small arm or a LC100.

Cost: Moderate (15)

Recon Quad

These wire-frame dune buggies are fast, reliable and can make for great raiding vehicles when armed. Their structure offers riders no protection, though, so they are used most for scouting missions, not open combat.

Type: runabout, scouting vehicle, courier

Size: 2.5 m/1,000 kg (1kton)

Move: 140 (100 kph)

Crew: 1 driver, one passenger/gunner

Cargo Capacity: 100 kg

Cover: none

Altitude Range: when hovering, up to 300 m

Shields: none

Hull: 3D

Armament: This vehicle can be armed with any small arm, an LC100, an MC 200 a grenade launcher, or a tac missile launcher.

Cost: Moderate (17)

Land Runner

The land runner is a vehicle widely used for ground exploration, sport driving, all kinds of military use, you name it. It is the Hummer of the Septimus world: tough, long-lasting and versatile. It also is the heaviest vehicle one is likely to see within the civilian vehicles roster.

Type: all-purpose land transport

Size: 3 m/ 2 ktons

Move: 168 (120 kph)

Crew: 1 driver, 1 passenger/gunner, 2 passengers

Cargo Capacity: 250 kg

Cover: partial

Altitude Range: when hovering, up to 300 m

Shields: none

Hull: 4D

Armament: This vehicle can be armed with any small arm, an LC100, an MC 200 a grenade launcher, or a tac missile launcher.

Cost: Moderate (19)

Armored Car

Somewhere between a land runner and a tank is the armored car. Armored like a light tank but built more for speed, these units are ideally suited for urban combat and security.

Type: light armored fighting vehicle

Size: 4 m / 3 ktons

Move: 140 (100 kph)

Crew: 1 driver, 1 gunner, 1 passenger

Cargo Capacity: 100 kg

Cover: full

Altitude Range: when hovering, up to 200 m

Shields: 1D

Hull: 5D

Armament: typically a HC300 and either a grenade launcher (up to 48 shots) or a tac missile launcher (4 shots)

Cost: Difficult (21)

Armored Personnel Carrier

These vehicles are a little tougher than an armored car, but their primary purpose is to transport soldiers to and from the battle-field. Things are currently in the works to install these vehicles with some kind of mobile farcaster pad so all the vehicle need do is get into place and start transporting in troops.

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Type: armored troop transport

Size: 5 m / 5 ktons

Move: 105 (75 kph)

Crew: 1 driver, 1 gunner, 8 passengers

Cargo Capacity: 1,000 kg

Cover: full

Altitude Range: when hovering, up to 200 m

Shields: 2D

Hull: 6D

Armament: typically a HC300 and either a grenade launcher (up to 48 shots) or a tac missile launcher (4 shots)

Cost: Difficult (23)

Missile Tank

This is a heavy fighting vehicle designed to clobber the enemy from a long way off. They are largely obsolete any place where substantial combat aircraft are to be had, nor do they stack favorably against heavy exoskeletons, which can usually get in close and do the tank in. It can still rain down enough punishment to gut a city from over the horizon.

Type: standoff fighting vehicle

Size: 6 m/ 8 ktons

Move: 84 (60 kph)

Crew: 1 driver, 1 gunner

Cargo Capacity: none; personal effects of the crew only

Cover: full

Altitude Range: when hovering, up to 100 m

Shields: 2D

Hull: 8D

Armament: typically an LC100, and either a tactical missile launcher with 48 shots or a pursuit missile launcher with 24 shots

Cost: Very difficult (25)

Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV)

The IFV is a medium tank variant of the armored personnel carrier. It can haul more troops, fight harder, and take harder hits. IFVs often are found escorting main battle tanks, deploying their troops to deliver infantry support when needed.

Type: mobile troop support

Size: 6 m/ 8ktons

Move: 105 (75 kph)

Crew: 1 driver, 1 gunner, 12 passengers

Cargo Capacity: 1,500 kg

Cover: full

Altitude Range: when hovering, up to 100 m

Shields: 3D

Hull: 9D

Armament: typically an MC100, and either a grenade launcher with 48 shots or a tac missile launcher with 24 shots

Cost: Heroic (31)

Main Battle Tank

This is the big daddy of the battlefield. While not as fast or as versatile as a heavy exoskeleton, their armor and array of weaponry make them combat vehicles to be noticed. Their main weakness is to missile fire, something that all tank drivers fear.

Type: main battle tank

Size: 10 m/ 12 ktons

Move: 84 (60 kph)

Crew: 1 driver, 1 gunner, 1 secondary gunner

Cargo Capacity: none; personal effects of the crew only

Cover: full

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Altitude Range: when hovering, up to 200 m

Shields: 4D

Hull: 12D

Armament: typically a Siege Gun Alpha and a secondary weapon system — either an LC 100, a grenade launcher (48 shots), a tac missile launcher (24 shots) or a pursuit missile launcher (12 shots)

Cost: Heroic (35)

Aircraft

Aircraft are generally speaking antigravity vehicles incapable of reaching orbit or traveling in space. The same descriptors that applied to ground vehicles apply to aircraft as well. When driving aircraft, refer to the *piloting* skill. When firing mounted weaponry, refer to the *gunnery* skill unless firing personal weaponry, in which case refer to the gunfire skill.

Rocket Pod

The rocket pod is a tight-fitting, coffin-like structure that encapsules a single person. The pod is usually fired as an emergency vehicle with a preset destination. They are not piloted so much as ridden; when the pod arrives at its destination, it slows up, lands and pops open, allowing the rider to get out. To program these things, make a *piloting* roll. A Critical Failure means that the pod was so poorly programmed that it simply plowed into its target destination at full speed, turning its occupant into a greasy smear. Needless to say, these things are usually only used by the brave or the desperate, which is probably why they are used so commonly as escape pods on larger vehicles and spaceships. That they are almost impossible to pick up on any scanning equipment because of their size and speed makes them an ideal insertion device for secret agents, commandos and spies. But there is always that "landing at full speed" thing to worry about…

Type: personal transport

Size: 2 m/1kton

Move: 185 (530 kph)

Crew: 1 occupant

Cargo Capacity: personal gear only; no exoskeletons

Cover: full

Altitude Range: 10,000 m

Shields: none

Hull: 3D

Features: These only have life support for 24 **hours**. After that the occupant will perish if he doesn't pry himself loose.

Cost: Difficult (20)

Jumpglider

The jumpglider is a really popular personal flight device that resembles a bat wing that the rider stands on and pilots by shifting his body weight. It is a fast, responsive vehicle that can be used for a variety of applications, from sport flying to covert military action.

Jumpgliders can be armed at extra expense. They also can accommodate a single rider, who is mostly hanging on to the pilot's body. This negates the craft's piloting bonuses.

Type: personal flying board

Size: 1.2 m

Move: 140 (400 kph)

Crew: 1 rider, up to 1 passenger

Cargo Capacity: personal effects of the rider; no exoskeletons

Cover: none

Altitude Range: 10,000 m

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Shields: none

Hull: 1D+2

Features: These craft provide a +2D *piloting* bonus. That is negated if the pilot has a passenger with him.

Armament: Jumpgliders can be equipped with any small arm up to the conqueror light support gun. Alternatively it can be fitted with up to two tactical missiles.

Cost: Moderate (17)

Gun Platform

The gun platform, also known as the "flying bucket," is a seriously beefed up version of the jumpglider. It was designed by military experts who saw a good application for jumpglider capabilities but who wanted better cargo and weaponry options.

Type: aerial assault vehicle

Size: 2 m

Move: 140 (400 kph)

Crew: 1 driver, up to two passengers

Cargo Capacity: up to 100 kg

Cover: partial

Altitude Range: 3,000 m

Shields: none

Hull: 2D

Features: These craft provide a +2 *piloting* bonus. If overloaded that bonus goes away.

Armament: Gun Platforms typically are armed with a single LC100 that the Pilot can fire without penalty. The passengers typically use personal weaponry to provide additional firepower. In lieu of the LC100, the gun platform can be fitted with a grenade launcher (24 shots) or three tactical missiles.

Cost: Difficult (20). Unarmed civilian models are available at moderate (18) cost.

Battle Skiff

The battle skiff is the final extension of the jumpglider/gun platform design tree. It is meant for multiple exoskeletons to ride on and fire from, much like how ordinary combatants might use a gun platform. They are larger, slower and sturdier than gun platforms, but their real value is in bringing several exoskeletons at a time to bear on a single target or group of targets.

Type: aerial assault vehicle

Size: 10 m

Move: 105 (300 kph)

Crew: Up to four exoskeletons (one driver, three gunners). One exo can be swapped out for three ordinary passengers.

Cargo Capacity: 10 ktons, total. This usually is taken up by the mass of the exos.

Cover: partial

Altitude Range: 1,000 m

Shields: none

Hull: 4D

Armament: Battle skiffs typically are armed with a single MC200 mounted on the craft's underbelly and fired by the pilot. The skiff also has three LC100s on turret mounts on the left, right and back of the vehicle for passengers to use. In lieu of the MC200, the skiff can be fitted with a grenade launcher (48 shots), six tactical missiles, or two pursuit missiles.

Cost: Very difficult (25)

Interceptor

This is a single-seat fighter craft meant to engage other fast-flying aerial vehicles, to strike ground targets in close support of friendly ground forces, and to pick off the occasional exo raising hell on the battlefield. Interceptors can take off, hover and land in any direction. They also have mag-

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netized landing pads, so they can station themselves on vertical and inverted surfaces if need be.

Type: single-seat fighter

Size: 10 m

Move: 1,750 (5000 kph/just under Mach 5)

Crew: 1

Cargo Capacity: none except for a few personal effects of the pilot

Cover: full

Altitude Range: 40,000 m

Shields: 1D

Hull: 4D

Features: Interceptors provide +2D to *piloting* rolls. Their high-grade sensors also add +3D to *search* rolls.

Armament: Typical loadout includes twin fire-linked MC200s (roll only once to fire; both will hit or both will miss) and two pursuit missiles.

Cost: Heroic (31)

Strike Bomber

These are larger versions of the Interceptor, designed to shower targets with heavy missile fire from a standoff distance. They usually are given cover by Interceptors, but they are designed to enter enemy territory and strike their targets unescorted if need be.

Type: fighter/bomber

Size: 15 m

Move: 1,400 (4000 kph)

Crew: 1 pilot, 2 gunners

Cargo Capacity: 250 kg

Cover: full

Altitude Range: 40,000 m

Shields: 2D

Hull: 6D

Armament: Typical loadout includes 8 pursuit missiles or a single planetary missile. In addition, the strike bomber has two turreted HC300s for defensive purposes.

Cost: Heroic (35)

Saturation Bomber

These are large, heavily armored flying fortresses meant to completely ruin somebody's afternoon from the upper reaches of the stratosphere. One minute you're enjoying a nice lunch with your squaddies. The next minute, you're all a bunch of confused vapor clouds. You'll have a saturation bomber to thank for that.

Type: heavy bomber

Size: 25 m

Move: 1,050 (3,000 kph)

Crew: 1 pilot, 1 bombardier, 4 defense gunners

Cargo Capacity: 10 ktons, in substitution for its typical loadout

Cover: full

Altitude Range: 50,000 m

Shields: 3D

Hull: 7D

Features: All missile strikes from these craft when fired specifically by the bombardier are at +2D to hit, because of sophisticated targeting technology. These craft also provide a +1D bonus to all *piloting* rolls made to dodge incoming fire, thanks to autoevasion software in the plane.

Armament: Typical bombardier loadout includes either 16 pursuit missiles or 4 planetary missiles. In addition, the craft has four defense turrets each quipped with fire-linked HC300s.

Cost: Heroic (40)

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Skylifter

These are heavy, slow cargo lifters used quite commonly by civilian and military groups to transport large amounts of men and materiel across the surface of Septimus. For the Extent, there are plenty of places to go where farcaster platforms have not yet been constructed, and for this skylifters and their big borther, the stratocarriers, are used.

Type: cargo aircraft

Size: 40 m

Move: 365 (650 kph)

Crew: 1 pilot, up to 128 passengers

Cargo Capacity: 50 ktons

Cover: full

Altitude Range: 30,000 m

Shields: 1D

Hull: 6D

Armament: These are normally unarmed, but a rising incidence of sky piracy by insurgents and outlaws has led some cargo pilots to begin arming their craft. Skylifters have four hardpoints on which any kind of gun can be mounted.

Cost: Very difficult (28)

Stratocarrier

Where the skylifter excels at hauling people and smaller equipment, the mammoth stratocarrier is the vehicle of choice for moving factory gear, squads of exoskeletons, an entire small alien ruin, you name it.

Type: superlifter

Size: 100 m

Move: 365 (650 kph)

Crew: 1 pilot, 1 co-pilot, up to 2,500 passengers

Cargo Capacity: 500 ktons

Cover: full

Altitude Range: 50,000 m

Shields: 3D

Hull: 8D

Features: When both a pilot and co-pilot are present, the craft grants a +1D bonus to all *piloting* rolls. The stratocarrier has eight hardpoints that can accommodate any kind of gun or missile.

Cost: Heroic (40)

Starships

Ships generally arrive by popping into the Sphere from hyperspace, somewhere in the distance between the Sphere's central star and the surface. Most ships remain in space around the Archipelago. A fair number of them simply stay in orbit, becoming the permanent homes to those who arrive in them. The cost of starships is such that most people simply can not ever afford them unless they pool their resources, secure a very large loan, or luck into it by some other means.

In game terms, ships are not that much different from any other kind vehicle except that they have long-term life support so one can live in them indefinitely. They are environmentally sealed and can set down underwater, in a hostile atmosphere, or in no atmosphere at all. They are built on a scale far larger and more powerful than other hardware though, and as such, only starship-level weapons can harm them. Conversely, any hit from a starship weapon will destroy any piece of gear that is less than starship level. This includes all vehicles, exos, and even most buildings. When ships engage in combat, treat it just like regular vehicular combat regarding weaponry, damage and other factors.

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It is worth noting that orbital bombardment is a legitimate military tactic, and in many engagements, blitzing the target from above is the safest way to secure victory. That said, orbital bombardment is not carried out within Septimus because the nanosphere separating the surface atmosphere from outer space — and which regulates the solar emissions coming from Helion to the surface — also intercepts all ship fire. Most ships are not streamlined, meaning they cannot fly in the atmosphere, so they cannot cross that nanosphere threshold and blast the surface. Were it not for this, warfare within the Sphere probably would be quite different — and short. This protection does not exist on Newcomer worlds however, so the Newcomers must constantly work to maintain robust defense fleets that can intercept Extent ships and destroy them before they can hit a Newcomer population center. It only takes a single raid to reduce a city of millions to ruin, and both sides know it.

An additional note: while energy weapons technology has not yet made it on the personal level, it does exist on the ship level. Most ships do battle with high energy cannons that fire tight pulses of light and heat. The technology for this has not yet quite reached miniaturization, but some day it will.

Generally speaking, ships in Septimus serve three principal functions: mobile bases of operation, supply transport, and military platforms. The vast majority of people within Septimus want to find a place to settle down and stay there. Those Newcomers in the Archipelago are usually happy to live on whatever world they have adopted as their new home. Those that are not typically live nomadically in their ships, drifting in the Deep Sky with no place to go. Adventurers always on the go find ships useful because they might not want a fixed address. The military applications of ship technology, however, are obvious and a grim reminder of the unresolved conflict that affects all who live in Septimus.

Hyperdrive stats of these ships is not included, largely because in Septimus they are unimportant. All starships have hyperdrive, and all starships move equally fast in hyperspace. That said, jumping out of Septimus has proven fruitless to virtually all who attempt it, so hyperdrive capability within Septimus is a non-issue for most ship captains. It is more than anything a cruel reminder that they are trapped in the galaxy's biggest cage.

As fans of the *D6 Space* books will see, this is a very brief treatment of starships. For more detailed rules on ship creation, special ship-based equipment and additional designs, please refer to *D6 Space Ships*.

Shuttle

Used for short jaunts between planets, space stations and other orbiting vessels, shuttlecraft can transport people and cargo safely, if not comfortably. This is the most common type used as an auxiliary ship on board large naval vessels as well.

Crew: 2

Passengers: 8

Life-Supporting Modules: standard bridge (2 stations) with +1 gunnery, +2 sensors, and +2 comm upgrades; passenger area with seating for 8, with snack processor upgrade

Cargo Modules: 10kt for miscellaneous, small-scale cargo

Life-Support: @3 days per passenger

Weapons: 1 laser cannon (3/8/16/25/50, 3D damage)

in-system drive: Move: 7 (space), 350 (atmosphere, 1,000 kph); Maneuverability: no bonuses

Streamlined? yes

Hull: 1D+2

Shields: 1D

Total Tonnage: 89

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Length: 24 meters

Cost: Very difficult (27)

Light Freighter

The workhorse of the mercantile industry, light freighters make short runs between established and colony worlds. Unfortunately it's also popular prey for pirate assaults more often than merchant executives care to admit. The primary feature of a freighter is its bays, capable of carrying bulk equipment, fragile wares, and so on. This versatility allows independent freighter captains to find work with virtually any patron. This model of ship also is the most common template for other small- to mid-range vessels: Add some nice paint and luxury upgrades to the interior and a flashy name, and this sample ship serves well as a yacht. Stock the ship with survey equipment and long-term supplies, and it becomes a large research vessel.

Crew: 2

Passengers: 4

Life-Supporting Modules: standard bridge (3 stations) with +2 comm, +1 gunnery, and +1D+1 sensors upgrades, pilot autofunction program (3D each in piloting and gunnery), and ship indentifier; hydroponics; lounge with food processor upgrade; two staterooms, 4 single berths

Cargo: 25kt for variable cargo

Life-Support: @1 month per passenger

Weapons: 1 laser cannon (7/20/30/40/50, damage 3D)

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In-System Drive: Move: 7 (space), 350 (atmosphere, 1,000 kph); Maneuverability: no bonuses

Streamlined? yes

Hull Toughness: 3D+1

Shields: 1D+1

Total Tonnage: 282

Length: 77 meters

Cost: Heroic (32)

Scout

The military depends on scout ships for gathering information and transporting important couriers and some supplies. Merchant guilds and independent adventurers use these ships for much the same reason. They are designed to be quick and agile, able to get their crews out of trouble as quickly as they got into it. Those with interstellar drives and long-term supplies can patrol the wastes of space for years.

Crew: 2

Passengers: 4

Life-Supporting Modules: standard bridge (2 stations) with +1D piloting, comm, sensors, and gunnery upgrades to each station, pilot autofunction program (3D each in piloting and gunnery); laboratory (+1D scholar)

Cargo: 100 kt for equipment, storage, and weapons lockers

Life-Support: @1 month per passenger

Weapons: 1 laser cannon (3/12/25/50/100, 6D damage)

In-System Drive: Move: 13 (space), 650 (atmosphere, 1,850 kph); Maneuverability: +1D to *piloting* rolls

Streamlined? yes

Hull: 2D+1

Shields: 1D+1

Total Tonnage: 181

Length: 40 m

Cost: Heroic (45)

Fighter

These are simple, one-man combat craft that are essentially interceptors for space flight. They are used most often in planetary patrol, since they typically cannot jump into hyperspace on their own. They usually launch from a carrier or, less frequently, a space station zero-atmosphere environment like an asteroid base.

Crew: 1

Passengers: 0

Life-Supporting Modules: compact bridge with +1D piloting and gunnery upgrades; pilot autofunction program (3D each in *piloting* and *gunnery*) and luxury upgrades of converting bridge to cryogenic chamber (in case the ship gets lost in deep space) and ship indentifier (identify friend or foe)

Cargo: 1kt for emergency supplies and small courier loads

Life-Support: @ 1 very uncomfortable month

Weapons: 2 laser cannons (3/12/25/50/100, damage 6D (fire-linked)); 2 torpedo launchers (1 shot each, 2/3/7/9/12, damage 9D)

In-System Drive: Move: 8 (space), Maneuverability: +3D to *piloting* rolls

Streamlined? no

Hull: 3D+1

Shields: 1D

Total Tonnage: 245 tons

Length: 32 meters

Cost: Heroic (46)

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Interceptor Patrol Craft

Patrol craft are the "space cops" of a given planetary system. They are meant to find and capture smugglers, customs violators, and independent pirates. If anything bigger comes their way, the patrol craft are supposed to high-tail it for home or help, depending on their orders. Nonetheless, most patrol craft are deceptively tough and agile, and this version is no different. Though it doesn't have quite the prisoner capacity as a patrol frigate (see its entry herein), the interceptor is fast and dangerous.

Crew: 2

Passengers: 2 passengers, 4 prisoners in brig

Life-Supporting Modules: group airlock; standard bridge (2 stations) with +1D gunnery, shields, and sensors upgrades, pilot autofunction program (3D each in piloting and gunnery), and ship indentifier brig; lounge with food processor upgrade; medical bed; passenger area with seating for 2; two-person stateroom with basic entertainment unit

Cargo: 6kt (weapons and environmental suit lockers; contraband storage)

Life-Support: @1 month per passenger

Weapons: 1 laser cannon (7/20/31/45/60, damage 6D); 1 torpedo launcher (4 shots, 2/3/7/9/12, damage 9D)

In-System Drive: Move: 12 (space); Maneuverability: no bonus

Hull Toughness: 2D+1 (62 tons, 31,000 cr)

Streamlined? no

Armor: +2 (18 tons, 18,000 cr)

Shields: +2D (6 areas, 3 tons, 3 eu, 54,000 cr)

Total Tonnage: 185

Length: 64 meters

Cost: Heroic (75)

Patrol Frigates

Primarily used by military or police organizations for patrol and anti-piracy operations, this small vessel has an 18-person crew that usually operates within a given patrol zone for two to three months at a time. Some other common names for this ship include customs frigate or interdictor.

Crew: 18

Passengers: 4 passengers, 12 prisoners in brig

Life-Supporting Modules: group airlock; boarding tube with single airlocks on both sides; standard bridge (6 stations) with +1D gunnery, piloting, sensors, shields, and flight systems repair upgrades; brig; infirmary with +1D medicine upgrade; lounge with 2 food processor upgrades; 2 single berths; 10 two-person staterooms

Cargo: 12 kt (for equipment and weapons lockers and impound storage); 34 escape pod bays (1 rocket pod each)

Life-Support: @1 month per crew and passenger

Weapons: 5 laser cannons (8/25/38/52/70, damage 5D each); 2 torpedo launchers (4 shots each, 2/3/7/9/12, damage 9D)

In-System Drive: Move: 10 (space), Maneuverability: +1D to *piloting* rolls

Streamlined? no

Hull: 35+1

Shields: 3D

Total Tonnage: 1,212

Length: 377 meters

Cost: Heroic (122)

Carrier

The carrier is a huge military vessel used to ferry sublight fighters via interstellar travel and to launch them into combat. The carrier's flight compliment includes six

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squadrons of six fighters each. The carrier usually also holds four shuttlecraft for administrative duties or ship-to-shore travel (as carriers are too huge to operate within the atmosphere of a planet). Most carriers are not as heavily armed as their massive size would imply, instead devoting more space to hangar and launch facilities and entrusting their defense to the fighters they carry as well as to the escort vessels that usually accompany the carrier in fleet operations.

Crew: 114

Passengers: 24

Life-Supporting Modules: 2 airlocks, bridge (7 stations) with +2D comm, gunnery, navigation, piloting, sensors, and shields upgrades; ship identifier upgrade; 2 ship engineering duty stations each with +1D flight systems repair upgrade; computer engineering station with +1D computer interface/repair upgrade; 12 gunnery duty stations each with +2D gunnery upgrade; brig (8 people, max); hydroponics; infirmary with +2D medicine upgrade; leisure room; mess lounge with 5 food processor upgrades; 24 single berths; 7 two-person staterooms (officers), 25 four-man bunks (crew); 2 workrooms (laundry and kitchen)

lifts, 159 tons, 31.8 eu, 7,950 cr)

Cargo: 50 kt (bulk storage); fighter hangar (36 fighters) and shuttle bay (4 shuttles) each with +1D flight systems repair, gunnery repair, and armor repair upgrades; launch bay (launch 6 ships or 3 shuttles per round); 138 escape pod bays (1 rocket pod each)

Life-Support: @3 months per passenger

Weapons: 12 heavy laser cannons (8/16/32/64/128, damage 6D each); 12 heavy torpedo launchers (6 shots each, 4/6/14/18/24, damage 12D)

In-System Drive: Move: 7 (space); Maneuverability: no bonus

Hull Toughness: 8D

Shields: 3D

Streamlined? no

Total Tonnage: 10,825

Length (6 meters tall): 1,354 meters

Cost: Heroic (240)

Megascale Construction

Not all of the gear in Septimus is the kind of stuff you can carry around, wear or drive. Some of it is just part of the scenery, but that doesn't make it any less useful or important. This technology is part of the scenery of the game, not tech meant to be acquired by any one character, but tech used by the GM as a prop for an adventure, as a part of the background. No hard stats have been given for this class of gear because it is not meant to be incorporated into the game in that way. Having said that, if you do feel the need to assign particulars for this equipment, have fun and try to remember that this is all megascale equipment; it is the future equivalent of magic in technological form. It is the apex of what the human mind might construct.

Farcasters

These are fixed platforms through Arcopolis and across the surface that enable large-scale teleportation. The Extent uses these to send military forces to distant locales at a moment's notice. They are also used by citizens throughout the Extent for instant transport from anywhere to anywhere. It is because of the widespread use of these within Arcoplis that vehicle use there is largely reserved for sport, recreation and military use. Farcasters are also present in the Grayscale and elsewhere on the surface, but those not attached to the

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Extent mainframe tend to operate unreliably. Those that malfunction while jumping a user tend to scramble that user so he arrives looking like a pile of scorched hamburger. Want fries with your friend?

Gravity Wells

These are a network of antigravity superlifters that enable millions of people to move by themselves in three dimensions. Think of them as a 3-D sidewalk that extends through the air but is invisible and intangible. Gravity wells provide this zero-G effect only in very specific places and in very specific tolerances. The typical gravity well enables people, vehicles and suits of armor to fly directly overhead to an altitude of 5000 feet. Gravity wells often are built like roads to allow long-distance flight.

Regen Tanks

The rejuvenation cells that enable the mortally wounded and recently dead to be reconstituted and brought back to life. The Extent uses these to enforce its will; those who break the law are denied access and are condemned to suffer slow degradation and permanent death. For more on the usage of regen tanks, refer to the Healing section of the D6 Rules section. For characters wishing to install a regen tank in a hideout or in a ship, make a heroic (31) Resource roll. Only one regen tank can be installed in a single small or medium ship.

The Holoverse

The artificial realities maintained within the Datastream that allow the Extent's citizens to interface virtually. Any interactions within the Extent that are not conducted face-to-face are typically done through the Holoverse. Needless to say, the Holoverse is also a primary place for the Extent's many enemies to infiltrate the system and try to subvert it through propaganda or outright sabotage. The vast majority of the Extent's population spend most of their time in the Holoverse, engaging in community discussions, group art projects, social media and engaging in a wide variety of various kinds of games. Those who spend more time in the Holoverse than out of it are fairly common, leading the Holoverse's detractors to refer to it as the "hollow-verse."



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Arcologies

The kind of structure for which Arcopolis was named, an arcology is a supermassive residential collective that houses a billion or more people. Arcologies are entirely self-sufficient with industrial complexes, commercial outlets and every other possible amenity, making it possible — and in fact, normal — for Extent civilians to live their entire lives within a single building. This has enabled the Extent's populace to grow to such an enormous size.

Mediatronics

Virtually any surface of anything in the Extent can be the host to moving pictures or words, complete with accompanying sound. These presentations are often 2-D, but can project themselves in 3-D. This makes it possible for just about anything within the Extent to be the carrier for various kinds of media communications, something the Extent government uses with much enthusiasm.

Nanofoundries

These massive nanotech factories compile materials on a molecular level, in turn manufacturing virtually anything that is required by the Extent. The limit to what can be manufactured by the Extent's nanofoundries is determined only by the knowledge contained within the Archive of Design. Nanofoundries are the backbone of the Extent's strength and are guarded heavily against attack or sabotage.

Space Elevators

Using superstring technology, the Extent has built a series of indestructible cables that extend far enough off of the surface to pass the limit of the atmosphere and break into orbital gravity. Vast amounts of machinery and materiel can be sent up the elevators and set in orbit, enabling the large-scale launching of materials into space at very little cost of energy. These are seen as special monuments to the Extent's ingenuity, so when insurgents destroyed one not long ago, it was seen as a major security setback for the Extent.

Warp Fields

Recent advances in spacetime manipulation have allowed the very small-scale penetration of hyperspace, on a level that does not seem to create the dangerous side effects that currently plague starships that enter hyperspace. Should this technology be perfected, warp fields will become a new form of storing things, from warp pockets on armor for storing infinite amounts of ammunition, to miniscule vehicles with internal warp fields that allow for infinite passenger capability. Warp fields are currently only available within highly secured Extent R&D facilities.

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Appendix: Templates

Templates are the stock characters of Septimus. These are the standard sorts of individual adventurers are likely to encounter during their travels and tribulations. When used purely as GM-controlled non-player characters (NPCs), templates are just that — the GM takes the information provided for each template and runs with it. When making your own character based off of a template, however, you can customize that character somewhat to differentiate him from the rest of the pack, as well as to give him a few more heroic capabilities right from the start.

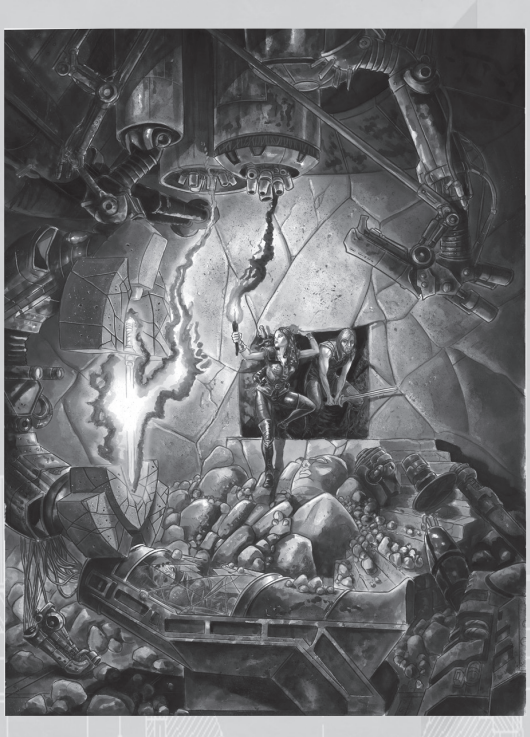
When using the template system of character generation, simply choose a template that suits you and begin playing. Each template has been put through the character creation process and has had its priorities selected for it. If you would like to customize your template further go right ahead, but be sure to get the GM's okay to do so. All templates are given Boons only, no Banes to start. Banes can be added so you pick up additional Boons or upgrade existing ones.

Likewise no template starts off with metaphysical powers. If you want a template character to have metaphysical ability, you are going to have to work with the GM on reducing the template's abilities in other areas to make up for the inclusion of metaphysics. Or you could just buy those powers at a Character Point deficit and have to sink Character Points into your debt until you get back up to zero; only then would you be able to use Character Points to improve your character.

All templates begin with zero or negative Corruption; their Corruption buffers have been used either to buy mods or points have been kept in reserve to stave off Corruption the first few times that characters dies. If you want a template to begin with some Corruption, simply clear it with the GM, determine how much, and decide how your character accrued those extra Corruption points.

All templates have not been given starting equipment, as the GM may wish to decide how much gear the characters initally have. A general rule of thumb is that however many dice a template has in its Resources die code, that is the number of items that character may start out with. All items chosen must still be rolled fo by the Resources die code. Failed rolls mean that selection of starting equipment is unavailable.

There are 24 character templates to choose from, eight each representing character archetypes from the Sindavar Extent, resistance (Scraplands and Grayscale), and the Newcomers. Lists of which templates are affiliated with a particular power bloc within Septimus. Despite the somewhat prefab nature of templates, don't let them be too restrictive. If you want to play a Sleepwalker that is with the Resistance, then come up with a good, story-based rea-



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son for it and see if your GM clears it. Likewise, not every template-based character needs to play exactly according to type. Not all Scouts are quiet loners. Not all Zealots are outspoken crusaders. Especially when it comes to characterization, take the template descriptions more as suggestions than as formal rules. These are meant to encourage and inspire your role-playing as well as make it easier to get into. Templates are not meant to hem you in creatively.

Templates By Allegiance

SINDAVAR EXTENT TEMPLATES

Artifex: the grease monkeys who keep the Extent supertech's running

Avatar: an AI fragment drifting like a ghost through the Sphere mainframe

Enforcer: the peacekeepers and soldiers who enforce the Extent's will

Hyperion: the human computers who lead and manage the Extent

Prole: these are the barcoded braindead bimbos who largely populate the Extent

Sleepwalker: the covert operatives who are everywhere and invisible

Synthient: artificial people who fill the ranks as hyper-specialists

Morituri: gladiators who live lives of constant warfare for fun and profit

GRAYSCALE TEMPLATES

Alpha: the noble savages of Septimus

Bodger: gearheads and scroungers without peer

Flatliner: warriors who only live once, fight hard and die young

Hardcase: sentient robots living among humans as one of them

Helix: nano/genotech mechanics who can make you more human than human

Spoilsport: freelance insurgents looking to hack the Extent

Steeljack: mech experts specializing in hod rodding in power armor

Stringer: rebellious media hacks who are literally dying for a good story

NEWCOMER TEMPLATES

Dragoon: soldiers who fight for money, pride, honor, duty or cheap thrills

Hierarch: nobles from the Seventh Empire, living in exile of some kind

Merchant: the wily tramp freighter captains of the Seventh Empire

Outlaw: the scoundrels of the Seventh Empire

Pathfinder: scouts and explorers for whom Septimus is the final frontier

Settler: humble souls whose struggle is to survive in a cold galaxy

Spacer: hard-bitten voidnauts who live in the depths of deep space

Zealot: religious pilgrims, prophets and pariahs

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Alpha

From the Scraplands to the most remote surface sectors live people who have gone "off the grid" and do not rely on the high-tech wizardry that surrounds them. They focus instead on their natural abilities and their skills. They are the noble savages of Septimus. They have rejected all but the most basic of technologies, meaning they generally have no nanomodifications at all and if possible, they use only unpowered tools. They live a rough and tumble life, typically inhabiting the system's many subterranean access tunnels, crawlways and service areas. There Alpha Tribes build warren-like subcities where they gather in numbers so great that not even the Cadre feels it is worthwhile to go in after them. To the sytem, Alphas are a bit like vermin: an unsightly problem it wishes would go away but one unworthy of devoting heavy resources to eradicating. Besides, the conventional wisdom is that there have always been Alphas in some form, here and there. They can not be driven out entirely, so why bother driving them out at all, especially if they keep to themselves? This is the Alpha's greatest strength, and it explains why they have become so numerous. But with size comes strength and courage, and many Alphas are spilling out into the open mainways of the system, where they raid supply depots for whatever they crave — food, weapons, trophies. Sooner or later, the system will have to take a stand against this growing menace.

Alphas are the noble savages of Septimus. They have rejected all but the most basic of technologies, meaning they generally have no nanomodifications at all and if possible, they use only unpowered tools. They live a rough and tumble life, typically inhabiting the various nooks and crannies of the Grayscale and the ruins and wildlands that can be found all across the surface. Ruined facilities and subterranean passages are their favorite haunts, where they build warren-like sub-cities where they gather in numbers so great that not even the Cadre feels it is worthwhile to go in after them. Despite their barbaric ways, Alphas still manage to infiltrate the Grayscale often, looking for items to scavenge or steal and maybe even looking to raid the people themselves. Some Alpha tribes are known to practice cannibalism, while others practice slavery. Both require the acquisition of fresh blood, and the Extent has what seems to be an endless supply of it.

Connection With Other Characters: Alphas are most likely to know other Grayscale characters prior to the start of the game. They might have had gear fixed or made by a Bodger, fought alongside a Flatliner, feel an outsider's kinship with a Hardcase, conducted an errand for a Helix, cut deals with a Spoilsport to infiltrate Extent-held areas, helped a Steeljack scrounge for parts or acted as a Stringer's bodyguard. Alphas easily could have relationships with Extent or Newcomer characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "They think we're just a bunch of bugs to be stepped on, but we'll show them what kind of damage a swarm can do."

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DEXTERITY	3D+2
Acrobatics	
Brawling	5D
Dodge	5D
Firearms	5D
Flying/0-G	
Melee Combat	5D
Missile Weapons	4D
Riding	
Running	4D
Sleight of Hand	
Throwing	4D
KNOWLEDGE	**2D**
Aliens	
Astrography	
Bureaucracy	
Business	
Cultures	
Intimidation	
Languages	
Scholar	
Security Regulations	
Streetwise	
Survival	
Tactics	
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**2D+1**
Communications	
Exoskeleton Operation	
Gunnery	
Navigation	
Piloting	
Sensors	
Shields	
Vehicle Operation	
PERCEPTION	**3D+2**
Artist	
Bargain	
Command	
Con	
Forgery	
Gambling	
Hide	4D
Investigation	
Know-How	
Persuasion	
Search	
Sneak	4D
STRENGTH	**4D**
Climb/Jump	5D
Lift	5D
Stamina	5D
Swim	5D
TECHNICAL	**2D+1**
Armor Repair	
Computer Interface	
Computer Repair	
Demolitions	
Equipment Repair	
Exoskeleton Repair	
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	
Robot Interface	
Robot Repair	
Security	
Vehicle Repair	

RESOURCES: 2D

HARDWARE: Roll for two

BOONS & BANES: Ambidexterity (1) Heavy Hitter (1) Rapid Healing (1)

MODIFICATIONS: none

DEMEANOR: Eccentric, Social

MOTIVATIONS: Revolution, Revenge

FATE POINTS: 1

CHAR. POINTS: 0

CORRUPTION: -4 (You can take 4 Corruption points before having to roll to resist the effects of Corruption.)

WOUND STATUS: Healthy

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Artifex

The Extent relies heavily on this class of engineers whose ability to work with all kinds of technology — but especially large-scale supertech and megascale construction — plays a crucial role in maintaining the Extent's daily operations. Artifexs are the greasemonkeys of the Extent side of things, and they often are happiest when immersed in the innards of some massive and complicated test of malfunctioning tech, trying to figure out where it went wrong. There is also a strong streak of scientific discovery among Artifexes, and as such they are often called in by Extent exploration teams to decipher new caches of alien technology or some other mechanical surprise found on the sphere's surface. In a less glamorous role, the Artifex is the organic fallback for maintaining the Extent's legions of robots when the robots themselves cannot fix themselves. It is thankless drudgery by Artifex standards, but it must be done. On the flip side, some Artifexes use their access to robot legions to tinker with them and work on their own robot designs in their spare time. Artifexes tend to be somewhat tongue-tied, more comfortable around the predictable nature of machinery than around the inherent instability of fellow humans.

Connection With Other Characters: Artifexes are most likely to know other Extent characters prior to the start of the game. They might have worked on an Avatar's mainframe, partnered with an Enforcer, provided tech support to a Hyperion, made friends with a Prole, gotten involved in the intrigue of a Sleepwalker, lent expertise to a Synthient or worked on the battlefields of the Morituri. Artifexes could easily have relationships with Grayscale or Newcomer characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "Oh, now I see it! The farcasting molecular flux had jumped a line within the transit matrix, and the whole thing just blackshifted back to zero."

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DEXTERITY	2D+1
Acrobatics	
Brawling	
Dodge	
Firearms	
Flying/0-G	
Melee Combat	
Missile Weapons	
Riding	
Running	
Sleight of Hand	
Throwing	
KNOWLEDGE	**4D**
Aliens	
Astrography	
Bureaucracy	
Business	
Cultures	
Intimidation	
Languages	
Scholar	
Security Regulations	
Streetwise	
Survival	
Tactics	
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**2D+2**
Communications	3D+2
Exoskeleton Operation	
Gunnery	
Navigation	
Piloting	
Sensors	
Shields	
Vehicle Operation	
PERCEPTION	**2D+1**
Artist	
Bargain	
Command	
Con	
Forgery	
Gambling	
Hide	
Investigation	
Know-How	
Persuasion	
Search	
Sneak	
STRENGTH	**2D+2**
Climb/Jump	
Lift	
Stamina	
Swim	
TECHNICAL	**4D**
Armor Repair	
Computer Interface	6D
Computer Repair	6D
Demolitions	
Equipment Repair	
Exoskeleton Repair	
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	
Robot Interface	6D
Robot Repair	6D
Security	5D
Vehicle Repair	5D

RESOURCES: 4D

HARDWARE: Roll for four

BOONS & BANES: Minor Inventive Genius (1)

NANOTECH: Comlink (1) Cortex Vault (2) Datalink (1)

DEMEANOR: Rational, Attentive

MOTIVATIONS: Altruism, Duty

FATE POINTS: 1

CHAR. POINTS: 0

CORRUPTION: 0

WOUND STATUS: Healthy

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

Avatar

The fragmentation of the Steel Dream has left the Extent with an increasing number of independent persona constructs roaming the data infrastructure of the Sphere like ghosts. Those who consider themselves part of the Extent must find some way to interact with the world, and they usually do this by inhabiting a Synthient body crafted specifically for them. Once these AI fragments enter their host Synthient, they are known as an Avatar, a unique blending of man and machine.

Not surprisingly, Avatars openly espouse invasive technologies such as nanotech modifications. To them, Corruption is a natural process, like growing old, and as such should not be necessarily vilified. That said, Avatars see Corruption as their true death, and as a result they tend to play life pretty safely for fear of gaining that one little bit of additional Corruption that will push them over the edge.

Avatars tend to make the high-level decisions within the Cadre, as their high intelligence and cold rationality makes them supremely outfitted for a life of political maneuvering, diplomacy, command, control, and strategic vision.

However, the Avatars' place in the Cadre has become less a position of merit and more of entitlement, something that is ruffling some feathers throughout the rest of the organization. Everybody agrees that the Cadre should be the ones to defend the system against its enemies. Not everyone agrees that the Avatars are the ones to do it. The Avatars counter that it was their idea to design the Cadre in the first place, the original concept coming from a tightly knit group of Avatars shortly after the Steel Helix attack was launched, finally gaining the public support it needed after Operation Indigo put the fear of destruction in the public's hearts.

Avatars tend to prefer words to action and are known for negotiating their way in and out of trouble. They can be master manipulators as well as genuine leaders. Not everyone can appreciate the difference between those things, but the average Avatar can, and they will not hesitate to work both elements to their advantage.

Connection With Other Characters: Avatars are most likely to know other Extent characters prior to the start of the game. They might have worked with an Artifex on a supertech project, partnered with an Enforcer, collaborated on a high-end conceptual work with a Hyperion, became an unlikely friend of a Prole, gotten involved in the intrigue of a Sleepwalker, become fascinated by an unusual Synthient or provided help to a Morituri. Avatars could easily have relationships with Grayscale or Newcomer characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "I can hear them, you know. Every other one like me, their voices echo in my mind, like the ghosts of somebody else but whose memory I cannot forget."

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DEXTERITY	3D
Acrobatics	
Brawling	
Dodge	
Firearms	
Flying/0-G	
Melee Combat	
Missile Weapons	
Riding	
Running	
Sleight of Hand	
Throwing	
KNOWLEDGE	**4D**
Aliens	
Astrography	
Bureaucracy	
Business	
Cultures	
Intimidation	
Languages	
Scholar	
Security Regulations	
Streetwise	
Survival	
Tactics	
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**2D+2**
Communications	3D+2
Exoskeleton Operation	
Gunnery	
Navigation	
Piloting	
Sensors	
Shields	
Vehicle Operation	
PERCEPTION	**3D+1**
Artist	
Bargain	
Command	
Con	
Forgery	
Gambling	
Hide	
Investigation	
Know-How	
Persuasion	
Search	
Sneak	
STRENGTH	**3D**
Climb/Jump	
Lift	
Stamina	
Swim	
TECHNICAL	**2D**
Armor Repair	
Computer Interface	4D
Computer Repair	4D
Demolitions	
Equipment Repair	
Exoskeleton Repair	
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	
Robot Interface	3D
Robot Repair	3D
Security	
Vehicle Repair	

Resources: 5D

Hardware: Roll for five

Boons & Banes: Hidden memories (1) One Past Life (1) Robot (1)

Modifications: none

Demeanor: Solitary, Inventive

Motivations: Enlightenment, Curiosity

Fate Points: 1

Char. Points: 0

Corruption: 0

Wound Status: Healthy

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

Bodger



In the Grayscale, the Extent is so frayed at the edges that there is not the seamless provision of anything anybody could want. The nanofoundries often break down, equipment is discarded and left to fall apart, and things are in a general state of neglect and disrepair. Enter the Bodger, for whom these circumstances are the very picture of good living.

Tinkerers, inventors, repairmen and engineers, Bodgers are salvage experts who specialize in repairing and modifying mechanical technology. Since they operate on the fringe of the Extent's influence, they are the go-to guys for acquiring and serving any kind of tech the Extent doesn't want you to get your hands on, whether it be a small arm or a small starship. Whatever kind of hardware can be bought probably can be bought under the table from the local Bodger. And if he can't get it to you, he probably knows somebody who can.

Aside from that, Bodgers also are endlessly fascinated by alien technology and often go exploring for it in the hopes of deciphering it even further. As such, there are a decent amount of Bodgers with psychic abilities given to them by brushes with alien equipment. These powers have a funny way of being used in the Bodger's daily routine, whether it's confronting the Extent or simply finding the next big score of discarded tech. Have wrench, will travel: that's the bodger motto.

Connection With Other Characters: Bodgers are most likely to know other Grayscale characters prior to the start of the game. They might have made or fixed gear for almost any Grayscale character, especially Alphas, Flatliners, Hardcases and Steeljacks. A Bodger might have a craftman's kinship with a Helix, have made deals with a Steeljack, and helped a Stringer score a story. Bodgers could easily have relationships with Extent or Newcomer characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "Hand me that fusion cutter, would you? I'm this close to getting this thing back on its feet, and if this weld doesn't hold, well, it won't be pretty."

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

DEXTERITY	2D+1
Acrobatics	
Brawling	
Dodge	
Firearms	
Flying/0-G	
Melee Combat	
Missile Weapons	
Riding	
Running	
Sleight of Hand	
Throwing	
KNOWLEDGE	**3D+1**
Aliens	
Astrography	
Bureaucracy	
Business	
Cultures	
Intimidation	
Languages	
Scholar	
Security Regulations	4D+1
Streetwise	4D+1
Survival	
Tactics	
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**3D+1**
Communications	
Exoskeleton Operation	
Gunnery	
Navigation	
Piloting	
Sensors	
Shields	
Vehicle Operation	
PERCEPTION	**3D+1**
Artist	
Bargain	**4D**
Command	
Con	
Forgery	
Gambling	
Hide	
Investigation	
Know-How	
Persuasion	
Search	
Sneak	
STRENGTH	**2D+1**
Climb/Jump	
Lift	
Stamina	
Swim	
TECHNICAL	**3D+1**
Armor Repair	4D
Computer Interface	
Computer Repair	
Demolitions	
Equipment Repair	4D
Exoskeleton Repair	4D
Firearms Repair	4D
Flight Systems Repair	4D
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	
Robot Interface	
Robot Repair	4D
Security	
Vehicle Repair	4D

RESOURCES: 5D

HARDWARE: Roll for five

BOONS & BANES: Minor Inventive Genius (1) Light Touch (1)

MODIFICATIONS: none

DEMEANOR: Inventive, Artistic

MOTIVATIONS: Curiosity, Accomplishment

FATE POINTS: 1

CHAR. POINTS: 0

CORRUPTION: 0

WOUND STATUS: Healthy

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

Dragoon

These are the mercenaries of the Seventh Empire who ply their trade at the business end of a gun. Some come to Septimus in the service of a hierarch, merchant or other interest. Others come as members of a free company looking for work. They are likely to find some.

What makes Dragoons special is that they are pure mercenaries. For many years the Seventh Empire, without any external enemies to focus on, slowly allowed its standing armies and fleets to dissolve into units dedicating to keeping the peace within the Empire. However, the nature of the Empire itself was highly decentralized and often at odds with itself. This power struggle actually helped to stabilize the Empire in the long run, since the nobles who ran things were usually too busy contesting each other to run the galaxy directly. This freed the Empire from disastrous policies and whimsical decrees that were likely to come forth in the absence of the Empire's constant state of near civil war.

Dragoons are the professional soldiers on call to settle matters between rival noble houses. They grew out of armies raised specifically to champion a particular noble house, but as the nobles themselves started renting out their armies to fight for non-governmental organizations such as trade guilds, commercial unions, disenfranchised ethinicities and the like, the Dragoons themselves began to take control of their financial futures. Selling their services on a strictly contractual basis, they changed the face of armed conflict within the Empire from ugly, untidy warfare to what essentially amounted to a form of ritualized dueling. Only in many cases the duels would involve massive armies, and they would meet in battle at a prescribed place to limit the collateral damage that might result.

So it has remained even now as the Empire is collapsing. The dueling tradition has survived among military factions, largely because it enables the Empire to fall apart without causing total chaos to break out. The Dragoons themselves, then, are as financially minded as they are mindful about the particulars of their battles. They are not necessarily honor-driven, but they are loathe to deviate from prescribed codes of conduct when it comes to fighting.

This puts them at a big disadvantage within the Sphere, where there is much warfare that adheres to no rules whatsoever. For the freelance warriors of the Seventh Empire, finding a client in the Sphere is difficult enough, but fighting in conditions such as these is just mind-boggling. Those soldiers able to make the cultural shift can survive and even do quite well for themselves as soldiers of fortune. Others simply become armed adventurers willing to use their martial skills to get by any way they can. And there are still those who adhere to the old ways, looking for a proper patron to represent, if only to give themselves the sense that things are still somewhat like how they used to be.

Connection With Other Characters: Dragoons are most likely to know other Newcomer characters prior to the start of the game. They might have fought on behalf of a Hierarch, helped provide security to a Merchant, hunted down or aided an outlaw, worked recon with a Pathfinder, protected a Settler, secured the ship of a Spacer or escorted to free space a Zealot. Dragoons could easily have relationships with Grayscale or Extent characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "There's nothing wrong with you that a bullet can't fix."

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DEXTERITY	3D+2
Acrobatics	
Brawling	
Dodge	5D+2
Firearms	5D+2
Flying/0-G	
Melee Combat	
Missile Weapons	
Riding	
Running	
Sleight of Hand	
Throwing	
KNOWLEDGE	**2D+2**
Aliens	
Astrography	
Bureaucracy	
Business	
Cultures	
Intimidation	3D+2
Languages	
Scholar	
Security Regulations	
Streetwise	
Survival	
Tactics	3D+2
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**2D+2**
Communications	
Exoskeleton Operation	3D+2
Gunnery	3D+2
Navigation	
Piloting	
Sensors	
Shields	
Vehicle Operation	3D+2
PERCEPTION	**2D+1**
Artist	
Bargain	
Command	
Con	
Forgery	
Gambling	
Hide	
Investigation	
Know-How	
Persuasion	
Search	
Sneak	
STRENGTH	**3D+2**
Climb/Jump	
Lift	
Stamina	
Swim	
TECHNICAL	**3D**
Armor Repair	
Computer Interface	
Computer Repair	
Demolitions	
Equipment Repair	
Exoskeleton Repair	
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	
Robot Interface	
Robot Repair	
Security	
Vehicle Repair	

RESOURCES: 2D

HARDWARE: Roll for two

BOONS & BANES: Military Rank (1) Natural Combatant (1) Tactical Mastery (1) Veteran (1)

GENOTECH: Ambidextrious (2) Attack Resistence (2)

DEMEANOR: Aggressive, Rational

MOTIVATIONS: Adventure, Honor

FATE POINTS: 1

CHAR. POINTS: 0

CORRUPTION: 0

WOUND STATUS: Healthy

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Enforcer

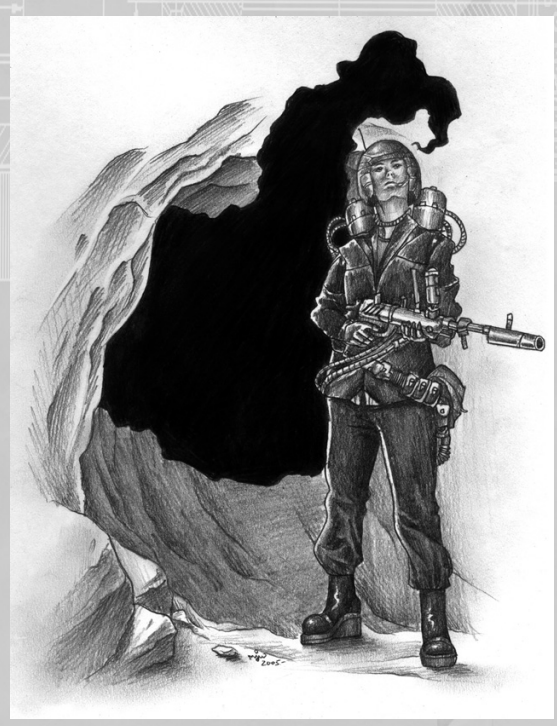
Enforcers are the paramilitary troopers who fight to protect the Extent against its numerous enemies. They are the police, the intelligence agents and the soldiers of the Extent, and as a rule they carry out their jobs with extreme confidence and enthusiasm.

Enforcers are extensively modified and trained for combat. Their Corruption is considerable because of their high number of mods, but most Enforcers will live with it because their mod packages grant them superhuman abilities and a battlefield survivability that is second to none.

Enforcers who primarily work a law enforcement beat stay within Arcopolis and split their time between actually patrolling the city, maintaining and working with the robotic security forces that do most of the street-level security work, and carrying out criminal investigations when needed. With the rise of the Grayscale, criminal investigation is a dead art that is quickly coming back to life, one that the Enforcers must master if they are to maintain control of the System.

Enforcers who act as intelligence agents spend most of their time outside of Arcopolis, either in clandestine missions in the Scraplands or covertly working the Grayscale in search of the kind of information the rest of the Cadre can act upon.

When a pocket of resistance is discovered, it falls to the Enforcers to go into the hot zone and blast the opposition to kingdom come. As such, they must be focused almost entirely on their role as combat experts, and they generally live for the moments when the Extent unleashes them on the opposition. Unsurprisingly, these guys tend to rack up the highest number of complaints for abusive behavior, violating citizens' freedoms and causing high amounts of collateral damage wherever they conduct their missions. But as far as the Cadre is concerned, collateral damage is just a fact of life, and the sooner the Extent gets used to that, the better. After all, you can't make an omelet without killing a whole lot of people, right?



Connection With Other Characters: Enforcers are most likely to know other Extent characters prior to the start of the game. They might have worked with an Artifex on securing a supertech project, consulted with or reports to an Avatar, provided security to a Hyperion, saved the life of a Prole, gotten involved in the intrigue of a Sleepwalker, partnered with a Synthient or provided help to a Morituri. Avatars could easily have relationships with Grayscale or Newcomer characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "Keeping the peace in Arcopolis is the toughest job in this whole crazy world, and it's the only one I could never give up doing."

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DEXTERITY	3D+2
Acrobatics	
Brawling	4D
Dodge	4D
Firearms	4D
Flying/0-G	
Melee Combat	
Missile Weapons	
Riding	
Running	
Sleight of Hand	
Throwing	
KNOWLEDGE	**2D**
Aliens	
Astrography	
Bureaucracy	3D
Business	
Cultures	
Intimidation	3D
Languages	
Scholar	
Security Regulations	3D
Streetwise	3D
Survival	
Tactics	3D+2
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**3D+2**
Communications	
Exoskeleton Operation	
Gunnery	
Navigation	
Piloting	
Sensors	
Shields	
Vehicle Operation	
PERCEPTION	**3D**
Artist	
Bargain	
Command	
Con	
Forgery	
Gambling	
Hide	
Investigation	4D
Know-How	
Persuasion	
Search	
Sneak	
STRENGTH	**2D+2**
Climb/Jump	
Lift	
Stamina	
Swim	
TECHNICAL	**3D**
Armor Repair	
Computer Interface	
Computer Repair	
Demolitions	
Equipment Repair	
Exoskeleton Repair	
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	
Robot Interface	
Robot Repair	
Security	
Vehicle Repair	

RESOURCES: 2D

HARDWARE: Roll for two

BOONS & BANES: Threat Assessment (1)

NANOTECH: Combat Reflexes (2) Probability engine (2) Snipervision (2) Striomers (2)

DEMEANOR: Aggressive, Uptight

MOTIVATIONS: Duty, Loyalty

FATE POINTS: 1

CHAR. POINTS: 0

CORRUPTION: 0

WOUND STATUS: Healthy

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

Flatliner

There are those who refuse to partake of any nanotechnology, preferring instead to hone their natural skills and to rely on their unusually low Corruption level to afford them many trips to the regen tanks. These are Flatliners, and their refusal to partake of the abundant nanotechnology makes them naturally suspect in a society such as the Extent. As such, the Extent tends to profile these individuals as potential criminals and rebels, and ironically by persecuting such folk they often push them into the kinds of behavior they are trying to suppress. As a result, many Flatliners are self-fulfilling prophecies; seen as potential troublemakers by the Extent and punished pre-emptively for it, they oblige the Extent's worst fears and turn to a life in the Grayscale or among Newcomers, figuring out some way to live freely and perhaps get a few shots in at the Extent while they are at it.

On the battlefield, many Flatliners are adept snipers, ambush experts and recon soldiers. Others are simply brilliant tacticians who outthink rather than outshoot, their opponents. Because of their lack of nanomodification, Extent civilians in general and Proles in particular see Flatliners as heroic versions of themselves, and they love them for it. This, of course, is in direct contrast to how the Extent leadership (and the Cadre in particular) view Flatliners, but for some Flatliners, this kind of acceptance has been enough to compel them to try living within the Extent.

Flatliners who live in open conflict with the Extent are sometimes referred to as insurgents. These are the guerillas, the revolutionaries, the breakaways of the Extent who have been its bane since even before the Steel Helix turned everything upside down.

Life as an Insurgent is particularly dangerous because the Extent's Sleepwalkers and Enforcers are on the constant lookout for them. Once caught, most insurgents are simply killed and their bodies are disintegrated, denied access to the regen tank or disposed of in some other fashion. Knowing their lives are bound to be short, most insurgents dream of their one big strike against the Extent, which they all have their seemingly legitimate reasons for hating. Some see it as an engine to destroy humanity. Others see it as merely a tyranny that must fall. Others frankly are whack jobs whose delusions paint the Extent as something evil that must be destroyed. Insurgent tactics trend towards terrorism and guerilla warfare. Some specialize in destroying Extent infrastructure while others prefer to hit live targets (especially members of the Cadre).

Whether they fight for or against the Extent, the reality is that Flatliners with their strange avoidance of modification tend to be highly skilled individuals whose natural cunning makes them especially dangerous opponents. Their willingness to lay their lives on the line matched with their "never say die" attitude makes them frequent fodder for holorama videos throughout Septimus, and it has become common knowledge among all Morituri that a large-scale Flatliner assault is something to treat with the utmost seriousness unless you want to end up a statistic.

Connection With Other Characters: Flatliners are most likely to know other Grayscale characters prior to the start of the game. They might have fought alongside a Alpha, had gear fixed or made by a Bodger, appreciate a Hardcase's experience with death, conducted an errand for a Helix, cut deals with a Spoilsport to infiltrate Extent-held areas, helped a Steeljack scrounge for parts or acted as a Stringer's bodyguard. Flatliner's could easily have relationships with Extent or Newcomer characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "I'm not afraid of dying. I'm afraid of living when I should be dying."

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

DEXTERITY	4D
Acrobatics	
Brawling	5D
Dodge	5D
Firearms	6D
Flying/0-G	
Melee Combat	5D
Missile Weapons	
Riding	
Running	
Sleight of Hand	
Throwing	
KNOWLEDGE	**3D**
Aliens	
Astrography	
Bureaucracy	
Business	
Cultures	
Intimidation	
Languages	
Scholar	
Security Regulations	
Streetwise	3D+1
Survival	4D
Tactics	4D
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**2D**
Communications	
Exoskeleton Operation	
Gunnery	
Navigation	
Piloting	
Sensors	
Shields	
Vehicle Operation	
PERCEPTION	**3D**
Artist	
Bargain	
Command	
Con	
Forgery	
Gambling	
Hide	3D+1
Investigation	
Know-How	
Persuasion	
Search	
Sneak	3D+1
STRENGTH	**4D**
Climb/Jump	
Lift	
Stamina	5D
Swim	
TECHNICAL	**2D**
Armor Repair	2D+1
Computer Interface	
Computer Repair	
Demolitions	2D+1
Equipment Repair	
Exoskeleton Repair	
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	2D+1
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	
Robot Interface	
Robot Repair	
Security	
Vehicle Repair	

RESOURCES: 3D

HARDWARE: Roll for three

BOONS & BANES: Aegis Aura (1) One Extra Life (1) Reflexes (1)

MODIFICATIONS: None

DEMEANOR: Serious, Conventional

MOTIVATIONS: Survival, Discontent

FATE POINTS: 1

CHAR. POINTS: 0

CORRUPTION: 0

WOUND STATUS: Healthy

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

Hardcase

While the effect of Corruption is widely known throughout the Extent and indeed the entirety of Septimus itself, a much less-known affliction that is related to the Corruption is affecting an increasing number of people. It is the disorder of nanorejection, and it affects perhaps only one in a million people, though experts suspect that those rates are on the rise. The disorder is barely understood outside of its root condition: that a genetic quirk in some people reacts poorly with any kind of nanotech interaction, causing a systemic breakdown of the person's biologic functions. These people cannot be revived or reconstructed; their bodies have been irrevocably "zeroed" by any one of the many forms of otherwise innocuous nano encountered on a daily basis. The only hope for these people is to have their personals transferred to another body, a Synthient one that is designed never to have any sentience or awareness at all. These are essentially biologic shells for a nanorejection patient to inhabit. Once transferred inside these new bodies, the patient enjoys a new lease on life. Sadly for the rest of the population the rare condition that forces the personal transfer to another biological body for the patient makes the same process impossible for those not suffering from nanorejection.

Not truly human and not truly artificial, these rare souls are considered second-class citizens (or worse) by the public. They are derisively named "Hardcases," as if to suggest that these people are some form of living robot. Most Hardcases take their low status with a grin and a shrug. Others become bitter and feeling the need to prove themselves embark on careers of extraordinarily dangerous behavior. Hardcases of this sort can be found as auxiliary Cadre agents, gladiators, criminals, and occasionally enemies of the state.

Still, despite their poor standing in the Extent, there is increasing interest in this way of life among the Sindavar populace, many of whom find life as a Hardcase to be a curious if not downright appealing way to live. These people represent a lasting cure to Corruption (or so the optimists think), and perhaps they are deserving of better treatment at the hands of their society. Strangely, nobody ever asks what the Hardcases want, which is usually just to live in peace and in health, even though they are only too aware that eventually, the doom they avoided for now will come calling for them. It is inescapable.

Connection With Other Characters: Hardcases are most likely to know other Grayscale characters prior to the start of the game. They might have fought alongside an Alpha, had a robotic sidekick fixed or modified by a Bodger, appreciate a Flatliner's experience with death, conducted an errand for a Helix, cut deals with a Spoilsport, helped a Steeljack scrounge for parts or acted as a Stringer's bodyguard. Flatliners could easily have relationships with Extent or Newcomer characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "I didn't choose this hard of a body. Whether I wanted it or not, it pretty much chose me."

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

DEXTERITY	3D
Acrobatics	
Brawling	
Dodge	
Firearms	
Flying/0-G	
Melee Combat	
Missile Weapons	
Riding	
Running	
Sleight of Hand	
Throwing	
KNOWLEDGE	**3D**
Aliens	
Astrography	
Bureaucracy	
Business	
Cultures	
Intimidation	
Languages	
Scholar	
Security Regulations	
Streetwise	
Survival	
Tactics	
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**3D**
Communications	4D
Exoskeleton Operation	4D
Gunnery	
Navigation	
Piloting	
Sensors	
Shields	
Vehicle Operation	
PERCEPTION	**3D**
Artist	
Bargain	
Command	
Con	
Forgery	
Gambling	
Hide	
Investigation	
Know-How	
Persuasion	
Search	
Sneak	
STRENGTH	**3D**
Climb/Jump	
Lift	
Stamina	
Swim	
TECHNICAL	**3D**
Armor Repair	
Computer Interface	4D
Computer Repair	
Demolitions	
Equipment Repair	
Exoskeleton Repair	
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	
Robot Interface	4D
Robot Repair	
Security	4D
Vehicle Repair	

RESOURCES: 4D

HARDWARE: Roll for four

BOONS & BANES: Resilience (2)

NANOTECH: Density Upgrade (4) Dermaplating (4) Persona Transfer (4) Striomers (4)

DEMEANOR: Confident, Sensitive

MOTIVATIONS: Longevity, Oblivion

FATE POINTS: 1

CHAR. POINTS: 0

CORRUPTION: 0

WOUND STATUS: Healthy

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

Helix

What the Bodger is for mechanical technology, the Helix is for genotechnology and nanotechnology. They are essentially renegade scientists and technicians who specialize in human modification and who often practice what they know with or without the approval of the Extent. Human modification is a strictly regulated process within the Extent, and for those looking to get a mod without the Extent knowing about it, going to a Helix in the Grayscale is the best option. Running freelance "body shops," Helixes constantly run the risk of being shut down by Cadre agents, and being held complicit in the crimes perpetrated by those whom they have modified. But to the Helix the risk is worth the reward. There is huge money in street mods, and there is a bit of a thrill at doing it under the Extent's nose.

Within Septimus, Helixes are very much valued in the Newcomer community, where they are free to experiment with modification as much as they like. Aside from honing their craft, these characters tend to spend time studying the Corruption phenomenon. It is widely believed that if anybody can figure out a cure for Corruption, it will be a Helix.

The extent to which a Helix modifies himself varies depending on his risk appetite. Few are as keenly aware of the dangers of modification as the helix is. As such, some will ardently refuse to take on any mods themselves. Others are virtually addicted to them, skating on the edge of fatal Corruption, geting a new upgrade or modification for the sake of having it.

It is worth noting that the Helix's expertise in nanotechnology also makes him a potential threat to the Extent, since nanotech can be altered into a weapon of mass destruction. The various acts of nanotech sabotage that have hit the Extent recently, whether it is an entire nanoforge self-assimilating its machinery or dusting entire sectors with nanotech dust that make all units of a certain kind of technology go offline, the first suspect is the Helix community, and with good reason. They have the means and the motive, and they are often only too curious to pull something just to see what will happen.

Connection With Other Characters: Helixes are most likely to know other Grayscale characters prior to the start of the game. They might have fought alongside a Alpha, had gear fixed or made by a Bodger, appreciate a Hardcase's experience with death, cut deals with a Spoilsport to infiltrate Extent-held areas, helped a Steeljack scrounge for parts or acted as a Stringer's bodyguard. Helixes could easily have relationships with Extent or Newcomer characters (especially Newcomers), but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "Everything cam be improved, especially human beings."

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

DEXTERITY	2D+1
Acrobatics	
Brawling	
Dodge	
Firearms	
Flying/0-G	
Melee Combat	
Missile Weapons	
Riding	
Running	
Sleight of Hand	
Throwing	
KNOWLEDGE	**3D+1**
Aliens	
Astrography	
Bureaucracy	
Business	
Cultures	
Intimidation	
Languages	
Scholar	4D+1
Security Regulations	
Streetwise	
Survival	
Tactics	
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**3D+1**
Communications	
Exoskeleton Operation	
Gunnery	
Navigation	
Piloting	
Sensors	
Shields	
Vehicle Operation	
PERCEPTION	**2D+1**
Artist	
Bargain	
Command	
Con	
Forgery	
Gambling	
Hide	
Investigation	
Know-How	
Persuasion	
Search	
Sneak	
STRENGTH	**3D+1**
Climb/Jump	
Lift	
Stamina	
Swim	
TECHNICAL	**3D+1**
Armor Repair	
Computer Interface	4D+1
Computer Repair	
Demolitions	
Equipment Repair	
Exoskeleton Repair	
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	
Genotechnology	5D+1
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	4D+1
Nanotechnology	5D+1
Robot Interface	
Robot Repair	
Security	
Vehicle Repair	

Resources: 4D

Hardware: Roll for four

Boons & Banes: Total Recall (1)

Nanotech: Assimilator (4) Genius Module (4) Hypertouch (4) Sensitivity Catalog (4)

Demeanor: Inventive, Artistic

Motivations: Curiousity, Accomplishment

Fate Points: 1

Char. Points: 0

Corruption: 0

Wound Status: Healthy

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

Hierarch

Noble elites have always existed within the Seventh Empire, sometimes by different names, but their essential nature has always remained the same — that of privileged landowners who rule from afar and on high, detached from those who pay them tribute. In the later days of the Empire, hierarchs diversified from mere aristocrats (though there are still plenty of those) to self-made nobles who are the heads of powerful commercial interests, media celebrities, and pretty much anybody rich enough to be famous (or famous enough to be rich) and thereby able never to have to work again.

Hierarchs are primarily known for having vast resources at their disposal, and being "the money" has a distinct power that few can easily discount. Even as the Empire crumbles and many Hierarchs find the base of their power eroding too quickly to save, the majority have enough assets that they can maintain their personal wealth quite well. Well enough, anyway, to not have to work hard at getting by in a universe that has decreasing need for a privileged ultra-class that rules by decree and gets paid for simply being.

Many Hierarchs deposed from power or whose wealth has largely been destroyed have fled to Septimus in the hopes that somehow they will find safety or new fortunes there. Despite their commonly pampered existences, hierarchs have at least descended from those ruthless enough to build a great family fortune (behind every great fortune is a great crime, they say), and in Septimus, these fat cats are learning the hard way that it might be time for them to re-learn how to use their claws.

Connection With Other Characters: Hierarchs are most likely to know other Newcomer characters prior to the start of the game. They might have hired the services of a Dragoon, sold remaining treasures to a Merchant, chased after a thieving Outlaw (or hired him to do the thieving); retained a Pathfinder to find a safe haven to go to, shipped out to Septimus alongside a Settler, begged or bought his way onto the ship of a Spacer and formerly persecuted (or championed) a Zealot. Hierarchs could easily have relationships with Grayscale or Extent characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "You want me to do what? Do you not know who I am? Get somebody else to do it. Somebody from a less…privileged background."

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

DEXTERITY	3D+1
Acrobatics	
Brawling	
Dodge	
Firearms	
Flying/0-G	
Melee Combat	4D
Missile Weapons	
Riding	
Running	4D
Sleight of Hand	
Throwing	
KNOWLEDGE	**3D+1**
Aliens	
Astrography	
Bureaucracy	4D
Business	
Cultures	4D
Intimidation	
Languages	
Scholar	
Security Regulations	
Streetwise	
Survival	
Tactics	
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**2D+2**
Communications	
Exoskeleton Operation	
Gunnery	
Navigation	
Piloting	
Sensors	
Shields	
Vehicle Operation	
PERCEPTION	**4D**
Artist	
Bargain	
Command	**6D**
Con	
Forgery	
Gambling	**4D+1**
Hide	
Investigation	
Know-How	
Persuasion	
Search	
Sneak	
STRENGTH	**2D+2**
Climb/Jump	
Lift	
Stamina	
Swim	
TECHNICAL	**2D**
Armor Repair	
Computer Interface	
Computer Repair	
Demolitions	
Equipment Repair	
Exoskeleton Repair	
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	
Robot Interface	
Robot Repair	
Security	
Vehicle Repair	

RESOURCES: 5D

HARDWARE: Roll for five

BOONS & BANES: Heir (1) Legal Immunity (1) Noble (1)

GENOTECH: Infravision/ Ultravision (2) Longevity (3) Youthful Appearance (3)

DEMEANOR: Socal, Polite

MOTIVATIONS: Power, Status

FATE POINTS: 1

CHAR. POINTS: 0

CORRUPTION: 0

WOUND STATUS: Healthy

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

Hyperion

Hyperions are living computers tasked with carrying out the Cadre's most intense statistical and socio-military analyses. They are unlike Avatars in that they are not AIs who have been given a living body. They are the converse: they are living people who have transformed their brains into ultra-efficient thinking machines. If the Avatar is a machine trying to become human, the Hyperion is a human trying to become a machine. As such, Hyperions typically possess intense nanotech modifications to their brains and central nervous systems so they can process incredible amounts of data. As a result, they also tend to lack strong personalities because they are, in many ways, more machine than man. While their intellectual abilities are formidable, they are also highly Corrupt as a rule and try to avoid danger.

Hyperions form the uppermost ruling elite of the Extent. As the Extent's primary thinkers, they work in close conjunction with the Steel Dream's persona constructs to administrate the vast Sindavar Extent, to manage its many wars and police actions, and to determine strategies for growing the society to even greater size and sophistication. In their analyses, some Hyperions have deduced that the totalitarian efforts of the Extent have been counter-productive, spawning a generation of rebels bent on escaping and destroying the Extent. These Hyperions advocated that the Extent should relax its policies and become more open to freedom and individuality. Such notions were quashed when a group of Hyperions calling themselves the Cadre took control of the Extent and enforced its traditional policies of repression and enforcement as absolutes. Ever since, Hyperions have either become part of the Cadre or they have figured out a way to operate outside of the Cadre, perhaps leaving it altogether.

Hyperions often live and work in groups, sharing data and analysis between each other at the speed of thought. When not crunching numbers and providing empirically based glimpses of the future to the Cadre's top strategists, Hyperions often busy themselves with scouring the remnants of the world Datastream in an ongoing effort both to repair that network and to salvage whatever data they can from it. The average Hyperion believes that there are vast stores of data throughout the world, especially in the ruins of the Sphere, and they can be easily enticed into getting involved in any escapade that promises the retrieval or gaining of information.

In their search for hidden caches of data, Hyperions sometimes encounter those groups operating outside of the Extent's authority. When this happens, some Hyperions become intrigued by the prospect of life outside of the System, and they go rogue, leaving behind the Extent and its massive stores of data in order to live freely, perhaps in opposition to the Extent, perhaps on the fringes of it searching for illegal or classified secrets, or perhaps living away from the Sindavar influence entirely, living anywhere on the sphere so that the Extent and its troubles are too far away to be a concern, where the search for alien secrets can go forth without distraction.

Connection With Other Characters: Hyperions are most likely to know other Extent characters prior to the start of the game. They might have worked with an Artifex on a supertech project, consulted with an Avatar, partnered with an Enforcer, furnished support to a Morituri in need of an egde, befriended a Prole, gotten involved in the intrigue of a Sleepwalker or become fascinated by an unusual Synthient. Avatars could easily have relationships with Grayscale or Newcomer characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "Information is power. Power is change. Change is freedom. Freedom is life. Life is information."

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

DEXTERITY	2D
Acrobatics	
Brawling	
Dodge	
Firearms	
Flying/0-G	
Melee Combat	
Missile Weapons	
Riding	
Running	
Sleight of Hand	
Throwing	
KNOWLEDGE	**4D**
Aliens	
Astrography	
Bureaucracy	5D
Business	
Cultures	
Intimidation	
Languages	
Scholar	5D
Security Regulations	5D
Streetwise	
Survival	
Tactics	
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**4D**
Communications	5D
Exoskeleton Operation	
Gunnery	
Navigation	
Piloting	
Sensors	
Shields	
Vehicle Operation	
PERCEPTION	**2D**
Artist	
Bargain	
Command	
Con	
Forgery	
Gambling	
Hide	
Investigation	
Know-How	
Persuasion	
Search	
Sneak	
STRENGTH	**2D**
Climb/Jump	
Lift	
Stamina	
Swim	
TECHNICAL	**4D**
Armor Repair	
Computer Interface	5D
Computer Repair	
Demolitions	
Equipment Repair	
Exoskeleton Repair	
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	
Robot Interface	
Robot Repair	
Security	
Vehicle Repair	

RESOURCES: 5D

HARDWARE: Roll for five

BOONS & BANES: Higher Purpose (2) Mastermind (2)

NANOTECH: Genius Module (4)

DEMEANOR: Pragmatic, Serious

MOTIVATIONS: Status, Knowledge

FATE POINTS: 1

CHAR. POINTS: 0

CORRUPTION: 0

WOUND STATUS: Healthy

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

Merchant

For much of its history, the Seventh Empire has depended on its interstellar network of trade and transportation to keep the entire society going. This network was upheld by the numberless merchant captains and their crews who plied interstellar trade lanes, shipping goods, currency and passengers between star systems. Occasionally these ship crews would explore uncharted space in search of a new and faster route or to discover an as-yet untapped market to develop. Life in space is hard however, and to survive one must be tough, resourceful and cool under pressure. You need to be handy with a gun and yet able to talk your way out of trouble. You need to be able to fix a jump drive yet still know how to deal with high-born patrons and hierarchs. It needs a jack-of-all-trades who can excel at any given situation, regardless of what he has to work with at the time.

Naturally, as the hyperspace lanes fell into disuse, merchants all across the Empire found themselves with rapidly dwindling economic opportunities. On one hand, the breakdown was a good thing, since it made it impossible to continue making payments on any outstanding debts on one's ship, cargo and equipment. But aside form that, many merchants found that they had to make do in the system they last jumped to. Since merchants tend to make their ships their homes, a lot of them simply stayed put and worked the local area, but some wanted more, and these are the ones who have gathered whatever cargo and passengers they could and made the trip to Septimus, not knowing it was a one-way deal but more prepared for the possibility than most other Newcomers.

Within the Sphere, Merchants are content to live in the Deep Sky separating the newcomer Archipelago from the Surface and Arcopolis. But they also are the backbone of the Newcomer coalition, since their ships provide much of the firepower and resources needed to battle the Extent. Having a ship within Septimus carries certain expectations, and those captains who don't just take off with their crews and live in isolation can be expected for others to have an unending list of suggestions, requests and demands for ship captains and their crews on how their ship might best be put to use.

Connection With Other Characters: Merchants are most likely to know other Newcomer characters prior to the start of the game. They might have hired the services of a Dragoon, bought valuables from a cash-strapped Hierarch, chased after a thieving Outlaw (or hired him to do the thieving); followed a commercial route plotted by a friendly Pathfinder, sold passage to Septimus to a Settler, shipped out with a Spacer (either as hired crew or as a passenger) and sold religious goods to a Zealot. Merchants could easily have relationships with Grayscale or Extent characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "I've got a hull full of surplus booster components and a market that's run off to who knows where. I don't unload these things soon, I'm ruined."

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

DEXTERITY	2D+2
Acrobatics	
Brawling	
Dodge	3D
Firearms	3D
Flying/0-G	
Melee Combat	
Missile Weapons	
Riding	
Running	
Sleight of Hand	3D
Throwing	3D
KNOWLEDGE	**3D+1**
Aliens	
Astrography	
Bureaucracy	4D
Business	5D
Cultures	
Intimidation	
Languages	
Scholar	
Security Regulations	4D
Streetwise	4D
Survival	
Tactics	
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**2D+1**
Communications	
Exoskeleton Operation	
Gunnery	
Navigation	
Piloting	
Sensors	
Shields	
Vehicle Operation	
PERCEPTION	**3D+2**
Artist	
Bargain	**5D**
Command	
Con	**5D**
Forgery	
Gambling	
Hide	
Investigation	
Know-How	
Persuasion	5D
Search	
Sneak	
STRENGTH	**2D+2**
Climb/Jump	
Lift	
Stamina	
Swim	
TECHNICAL	**3D+1**
Armor Repair	
Computer Interface	
Computer Repair	
Demolitions	
Equipment Repair	
Exoskeleton Repair	
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	
Robot Interface	
Robot Repair	
Security	
Vehicle Repair	

Resources: 5D

Hardware: Roll for five

Boons & Banes: Contacts (1), Wealth (1)

Modifications: None

Demeanor: Selfish, Social

Motivations: Professionalism, Pride

Fate Points: 1

Char. Points: 0

Corruption: 0

Wound Status: Healthy

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

Morituri

In an effort to field test new military advances, keep the general populace entertained and give those with violent tendencies something to do, the Extent created an entire class of people dedicated to constant public warefare. These are the Morituri, the gladiators who are the live-fire celebrities of the entire Extent. Morituri are specialized Synthients and Proles, generally, bred for war. Their exploits desensitize the populace to the violence they will face in the coming war as well as hone the Extent's own military techniques and technology.

As Morituris have emerged as a new substrata of Extent society with lives to lead outside of the free-fire arenas, they also are becoming mercenaries of a sort, plying their martial trade for great monetary gain, either through juicy contracts given to them by entrepreneurs looking for hot new combat footage, or by betting on their own fights. To curb the potential of Morituris becoming an entire class of would-be rebels, many Morituris have had their minds wiped by the Extent, living permanently within massive, planet-sized arenas with no knowledge of anything outside of their immediate war scenario. Eventually a few of these individuals wake up and realize that their suffering was all to alleviate the boredom of the Extent. Morituris who make this realization often become obsessed with getting revenge on those who wiped their minds. In a ironic twist, the mind wiping of the Morituris to forestall their rebellion is actually creating the very insurgency the Extent wishes to avoid. That's totalitarianism for you.

Not all who realize that they are first and foremost, soldiers born and bred into a life of never-ending warfare, get enraged by the revelation. In fact, there is a peculiar subset of the Morituri who is enthralled by it. These are Trenchers, for whom the only thing really worth fighting for is your personal credibility. Status is everything to a Trencher, so they are focused almost to the point of obsession on what their combat standings are, their ratio of kills versus frags (when they are the casualty), and how many fans they have at any given moment. Nearly half of all Trenchers belong to a Crew, Unit or Clan — three different names for a Combat League, that blend of military unit and family with whom the Trencher spends all of his or her time. The other half lives and fights on their own, beholden to no particular group although sometimes making strategic alliances with other solos so they may take on a group in combat. Regardless of their affiliation, Morituris typically live their entire lives within the Proving Ground in which the Extent placed them unless they are exiled by their Clan, recruited by the Cadre, enticed by a life in the Extent proper or have become so Corrupted they leave the Proving Ground on some sort of delusional crusade.

Connection With Other Characters: Morituri are most likely to know other Extent characters prior to the start of the game. They might have fought within a Artifex's supertech project, received tactical oversight from an Avatar, partnered with an Enforcer, befriended a Prole, gotten involved in the intrigue of a Sleepwalker or became fascinated by an unusual Synthient. Morituri could easily have relationships with Grayscale or Newcomer characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "Die like you mean it, punk!"

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

DEXTERITY	3D+2
Acrobatics	4D
Brawling	4D
Dodge	4D
Firearms	4D
Flying/0-G	4D
Melee Combat	4D
Missile Weapons	4D
Riding	4D
Running	4D
Sleight of Hand	4D
Throwing	4D
KNOWLEDGE	**2D+2**
Aliens	
Astrography	
Bureaucracy	
Business	
Cultures	
Intimidation	3D
Languages	
Scholar	
Security Regulations	
Streetwise	3D
Survival	3D
Tactics	4D
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**2D+2**
Communications	
Exoskeleton Operation	3D
Gunnery	3D
Navigation	
Piloting	
Sensors	
Shields	
Vehicle Operation	3D
PERCEPTION	**2D+1**
Artist	
Bargain	
Command	
Con	
Forgery	
Gambling	
Hide	
Investigation	
Know-How	
Persuasion	
Search	
Sneak	
STRENGTH	**3D+2**
Climb/Jump	4D
Lift	
Stamina	4D
Swim	4D
TECHNICAL	**3D**
Armor Repair	
Computer Interface	
Computer Repair	
Demolitions	4D
Equipment Repair	
Exoskeleton Repair	
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	
Robot Interface	
Robot Repair	
Security	
Vehicle Repair	

RESOURCES: 3D

HARDWARE: Roll for three

BOONS & BANES: Fearless (1)

NANOTECH: Autoevasion (2) Autorecovery (2) Battle Matrix (2) Payback Module (2)

DEMEANOR: Daring, Hard-Boiled

MOTIVATIONS: Honor, Status

FATE POINTS: 1

CHAR. POINTS: 0

CORRUPTION: 0

WOUND STATUS: Healthy

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

Outlaw

In a society as large and as diverse as the Seventh Empire, crime and rebellion has always been a problem too big to take care of entirely. When the Empire began to crumble, this problem took on epic proportions. As entire star systems fell out of contact with the Empire, law and order also broke down, especially along the hyperspace lanes that were the last to falter. While local systems struggled to establish peacekeeping forces, thieves, brigands and pirates of every kind enjoyed a brief heyday plundering merchant ships, looting commerce centers and even commandeering entire industrial facilities. Eventually the local systems got things back in line, but by then it was too late. An entire generation of outlaws had been born, most of whom plied their trade from stolen starships that prowled the Empire in search of fresh prey.

As hyperspace crumbled even further the outlaw population, like everybody else in the Empire, found themselves needing to adapt. If they wanted to continue their lives of thievery, they either would have to learn to do it in a single system or find some part of the Empire where they could live beyond the law. For many, Septimus was the perfect place to go, and off they went, flying their pirate ships or as passengers/stowaways on legitimate vessels. However they did it, they gained entry to Septimus and have become an integral part of the Newcomer culture there.

Within Septimus many outlaws simply live as pirates, marauding the Newcomer ships that enter the Sphere from the outside, looting them for all they are worth. Others patrol the surface in search of settlements to raid or ruins to loot. Still others have recognized the potential money to be made from the ongoing war against the Extent and have become privateers for various Newcomer causes, putting their criminal skills to use for not entirely self-serving reasons. In this, the Septimus outlaw sometimes rediscovers his sense of decency and finds himself fighting the good fight and hating himself for it every step f the way.



Connection With Other Characters: Outlaws are most likely to know other Newcomer characters prior to the start of the game. They might have fought alongside (or with) a Dragoon, rebelled against a Hierarch, ripped off a Merchant, outran a bounty-hunting Pathfinder, protected or extorted a Settler, flew armed security (or simply pirated) a Spacer and raided the temple of a Zealot. Outlaws could easily have relationships with Grayscale or Extent characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "I bow to no man, serve no king, and pay heed to no nation. I am a free prince, and the galaxy is my domain. Now hand it over."

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

DEXTERITY	4D
Acrobatics	
Brawling	
Dodge	
Firearms	6D
Flying/0-G	
Melee Combat	
Missile Weapons	
Riding	
Running	
Sleight of Hand	
Throwing	
KNOWLEDGE	**3D**
Aliens	
Astrography	
Bureaucracy	
Business	
Cultures	
Intimidation	5D
Languages	
Scholar	
Security Regulations	
Streetwise	4D
Survival	
Tactics	
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**2D+2**
Communications	
Exoskeleton Operation	
Gunnery	
Navigation	
Piloting	
Sensors	
Shields	
Vehicle Operation	
PERCEPTION	**2D**
Artist	
Bargain	
Command	
Con	
Forgery	
Gambling	
Hide	
Investigation	
Know-How	
Persuasion	
Search	
Sneak	
STRENGTH	**3D+1**
Climb/Jump	
Lift	
Stamina	
Swim	
TECHNICAL	**3D**
Armor Repair	
Computer Interface	
Computer Repair	
Demolitions	
Equipment Repair	
Exoskeleton Repair	
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	
Robot Interface	
Robot Repair	
Security	
Vehicle Repair	

RESOURCES: 3D

HARDWARE: Roll for three

BOONS & BANES: Alternate Identity (1) Deadshot (1) Sixth Sense (1) Unknown (1)

GENOTECH: Natural Armor (3) Natural Melee Weaponry (2) Natural Missle Weapon (1)

DEMEANOR: Hard-Boiled, Selfish

MOTIVATIONS: Revenge, Fear or Injustice

FATE POINTS: 1

CHAR. POINTS: 0

CORRUPTION: 0

WOUND STATUS: Healthy

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

Pathfinder

As the Seventh Empire expanded, it fell to a certain breed of intrepid souls to chart unknown space and brave its many dangers. These were the Pathfinders of the Empire. While many of them worked directly for the Empire, many others were independent of it, either charting courses for commercial interests, working freelance for masterless armies, or simply probing the edges of known space to satisfy a personal curiosity.

As the Seventh Empire crumbled and as hyperspace in particular became too dangerous to jump through regularly, Pathfinders found themselves increasingly cut off from the work they were born to do. That is why, when news of Septimus made the rounds, many Pathfinders decided the chancy trip there was worth the risk so they could spend their days poking around the practically limitless ground surface of the sphere. Still others would come to Septimus specifically to discover the many secrets this world has.

As Newcomers, the average Pathfinder detests the controlling Extent and everything it stands for. That said, Pathfinders tend to be explorers and not soldiers, and they figure that in a world as big as Septimus, why fight the Extent when you can simply move away from it? As such, a large number of Pathfinders live by themselves or in small enclaves far from the major population centers of the Sphere. Some have integrated themselves with primitivie Alpha societies while others live alone, thankful to be free from the interference of their fellow man.

Most Pathfinders travel the surface of Septimus in search of ancient technologies and bits of history. They often are fascinated with compiling a true record of the world's events, since the most complete one to date was authored by the Extent and hence is untrustworthy. The best bet for finding the real history of the world (and thereby try to learn what all of these events really mean) is to uncover any remaining data cores that might have survived Steel Helix but have been cut off from the rest of the Datastream, which is in tatters and does not extend much further than Arcopolis itself. To this end, there can only be one real objective, then: to locate and fully explore the ruins of the Seven Cities and see what they have to offer.

Rumors about the Seven Cities run the gamut from their being totally destroyed to their being back online and resuming normal operations to some small degree (but being unable to establish communications with Arcopolis for some reason). Pathfinders take this all with a grain of salt and have determined the only way to see what it true is to find it for oneself. And so they continue their journey for truth, information, and ultimately, freedom from the fear and uncertainty that this world has spread over its many inhabitants like a death shroud.

Connection With Other Characters: Pathfinders are most likely to know other Newcomer characters prior to the start of the game. They might have scouted for the unit of a Dragoon, searched for escape routes on behalf of a Hierarch, sold a secret commercial route's coordinates to a Merchant, chased down the bounty of an Outlaw, provided initial security for a planetbound Settler, shipped out with a Spacer and traded stories of the beyond with a Zealot. Pathfinders could easily have relationships with Grayscale or Extent characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "I haven't seen anything like this since I crash landed in… ah, it's not important where it was. When you've been to as many places as I have, you kind of lose track of the names."

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

DEXTERITY	2D+2
Acrobatics	
Brawling	
Dodge	
Firearms	
Flying/0-G	
Melee Combat	
Missile Weapons	
Riding	
Running	
Sleight of Hand	
Throwing	
KNOWLEDGE	**4D**
Aliens	5D
Astrography	5D
Bureaucracy	
Business	
Cultures	5D
Intimidation	
Languages	5D
Scholar	
Security Regulations	
Streetwise	
Survival	6D
Tactics	
Willpower	5D
MECHANICAL	**3D**
Communications	
Exoskeleton Operation	
Gunnery	
Navigation	
Piloting	3D+1
Sensors	3D+1
Shields	3D+1
Vehicle Operation	
PERCEPTION	**2D**
Artist	
Bargain	
Command	
Con	
Forgery	
Gambling	4D
Hide	
Investigation	
Know-How	
Persuasion	
Search	
Sneak	
STRENGTH	**3D**
Climb/Jump	
Lift	
Stamina	
Swim	4D
TECHNICAL	**3D+1**
Armor Repair	
Computer Interface	
Computer Repair	
Demolitions	
Equipment Repair	
Exoskeleton Repair	
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	
Robot Interface	
Robot Repair	
Security	
Vehicle Repair	

RESOURCES: 4D

HARDWARE: Roll for four

BOONS & BANES: Well-Traveled

GENOTECH: Atmospheric Tolerance (2) Environmental Resistance (2) Omnivorous (2) Sense of Direction (2)

DEMEANOR: Solitary, Reserved

MOTIVATIONS: Survival, Freedom

FATE POINTS: 1

CHAR. POINTS: 0

CORRUPTION: 0

WOUND STATUS: Healthy

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

Prole

Proles are the backbone of the Extent. Ordinary, docile and unquestioning, the Prole lives a basic life where he has little need for anything he cannot get. Most of the time, Proles life the archetypical populus lifestyle of endless social engagements, holorama consumption, idle interests, and other ways of killing time. They live empty lives, but that's the point. They don't have to do anything, which means they have no drama, no worry, and no pain. Despite their lack of interest in anything in particular, many Proles eventually become experts at one particular skill, if for no other reason than they tend to live very long lives, and the sheer weight of repetition eventually trains them to expert efficiency in one or two areas of interest. Most often, these are simple social skills, or a rudimentary understanding of politics and diplomacy. But sometimes, there are those who cultivate the right package of skills to make them attractive to the Cadre's Sleepwalker Corps. Such individuals invariably disappear for a while and come back with strange holes in their memories that can only be evidence of having been on a terrific adventure on behalf of the Cadre. Most who have undergone this and returned to life as a Prole have done so because they did not excel at being a Sleepwalker. Sadly, in most cases, a Prole's friends will hardly have realized their acquaintance was even gone.

Having said all that, there are always a few Proles here and there who "awaken" from their addled state and are filled with the sense that not only is their life a sham, but the Extent itself is not what it seems, and it becomes their mission to discover the truth behind their surroundings and to defeat the forces of evil they perceive to be lurking in the shadows of their supposedly flawless world. Such individuals should take care to conceal their personalities, for often times they end up learning the kinds of skills and showing the spirit for adventure that makes them ideal candidates to become Sleepwalkers. Still, there are those who simply live an adventurous life without ever running afoul of the Cadre by venturing into the Grayscale and seeing what life on the edge feels like. Most Proles do not fare so well in truly challenging environments, but there is that rare breed sharp mind and quick wits that can navigate trouble even if they don't have the latest combat mods, military-intelligence skillsets or a kit of advanced tactical weaponry. Sometimes, as these courageous Proles show, just having a spirit for adventure, an honest sense of courage, and a head for danger are enough to thrive in any challenging environment.

For all of their drawbacks, Proles do have some special advantages. First, they have a unique ability to absorb lots of nanomods without suffering as much Corruption as usual. Also, they tend to have high attributes as well as be quick learners in skills. And, they have an uncanny knack for anticipating what other Proles are thinking or intend, and can instinctively act in concert with them.

These strengths have made Proles a subject of interest to the Cadre, who would not mind using them as the basis for a new breed of clone soldier. However, given the unreliability of its robot legions, the Cadre is unlikely to resort to battlefield cloning unless they felt they had no other choice. The Cadre feels — contrary to Extent doctrine thus far — that true individuals and not amalgamated patchwork people make the best soldiers. They may be right on that.

Connection With Other Characters: They might have worked on an Artifex's supertech project, served on the support staff of an Avatar, informed for an Enforcer, gotten involved in the intrigue of a Sleepwalker or befriended a Synthient. Proles could easily have relationships with Grayscale or Newcomer characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "I'm going to be somebody someday. Just you watch!"

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

DEXTERITY	3D
Acrobatics	
Brawling	
Dodge	
Firearms	
Flying/0-G	3D+1
Melee Combat	
Missile Weapons	
Riding	
Running	3D+1
Sleight of Hand	
Throwing	
KNOWLEDGE	**3D**
Aliens	
Astrography	
Bureaucracy	3D+1
Business	
Cultures	
Intimidation	
Languages	
Scholar	
Security Regulations	
Streetwise	
Survival	
Tactics	
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**3D**
Communications	3D+1
Exoskeleton Operation	3D+1
Gunnery	
Navigation	
Piloting	
Sensors	
Shields	
Vehicle Operation	3D+1
PERCEPTION	**3D**
Artist	3D+1
Bargain	3D+1
Command	
Con	
Forgery	
Gambling	3D+1
Hide	
Investigation	
Know-How	3D+1
Persuasion	
Search	3D+1
Sneak	
STRENGTH	**3D**
Climb/Jump	
Lift	
Stamina	
Swim	
TECHNICAL	**3D**
Armor Repair	
Computer Interface	3D+1
Computer Repair	
Demolitions	
Equipment Repair	
Exoskeleton Repair	
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	3D+1
Robot Interface	3D+1
Robot Repair	
Security	3D+1
Vehicle Repair	

RESOURCES: 4D

HARDWARE: Roll for four

BOONS & BANES: Fast Learner (1) Instant Karma (1) Jack of All Trades (1)

NANOTECH: Autorecovery (4) Comlink (2) Holorama Module (2) Mediatronics (2) Neurolink (2)

DEMEANOR: Passive, Timid

MOTIVATIONS: Contentment, Socialization

FATE POINTS: 1

CHAR. POINTS: 0

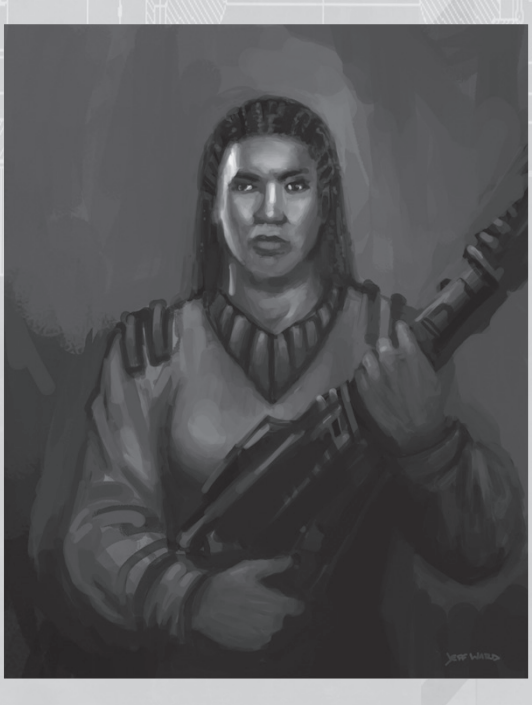
CORRUPTION: 0

WOUND STATUS: Healthy

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

Settler

The planetary colonists of the Seventh Empire are a hardy breed used to picking up and moving across worlds and systems in search for a better life somewhere. These are the nameless and faceless masses who were the bedrock of the Seventh Empire's population, working tough jobs in trying circumstances on the edge of civilized space so they might send their taxes back home to the Aedos Dynasty. Their hard work constantly created a growing source of income for the Empire, but these settlers were the ones who tamed the frontier of known space, often at great risk and cost to themselves, all so that the Empire's hierarchs, mercenaries, industrialists, merchants and others could move in once the hard work was done.



Some might wonder why the Settlers of the Empire would do this: to work hard on wild, unforgiving world and allow themselves to be displaced by high prices, burdensome bureaucracy and oppressive regulation once those worlds had been tamed. The answer: despite the harshness of their lives, settlers are largely free to do what they like. More than anything — more than economic necessity, more than political pressure, more than legal trouble — settlers live on the edge of known space because there they are best able to craft the universe into something they want it to be.

That is why, when the hyperspace lanes collapsed, so many settlers simply packed up and moved on again, only this time they headed to Septimus, ready for whatever challenges the sphere had in store for them. Many of them simply went right to an empty spot on the surface — or less commonly to one of the airless worlds of the Archipelago — and made a life for themselves there. Although the environment on the surface is wild and challenging, compared to many of the worlds settled before, it was a virtual paradise, and most of the Settlers in Septimus are living better than ever before.

More than a few of them have created entire societies for themselves, isolated from the Extent and the Newcomers, glad to live by themselves and encounter the threats of the surface on their own, without anybody's help but their own.

Connection With Other Characters: Settlers are most likely to know other Newcomer characters prior to the start of the game. They might have hired the services of a Dragoon, served or rebelled against a Hierarch, bought passage to Septimus from a Merchant, ran afoul of an Outlaw, followed the trail blazed by an intrepid Pathfinder, stowed away with a Spacer and went on a pilgrimage with a Zealot. Settlers could easily have relationships with Grayscale or Extent characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "Maybe it will be different this time. Maybe this is the place we've been looking for."

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

DEXTERITY	2D+2
Acrobatics	
Brawling	
Dodge	
Firearms	
Flying/0-G	
Melee Combat	
Missile Weapons	
Riding	3D
Running	
Sleight of Hand	
Throwing	
KNOWLEDGE	**3D**
Aliens	4D
Astrography	4D
Bureaucracy	
Business	
Cultures	4D
Intimidation	
Languages	5D
Scholar	
Security Regulations	
Streetwise	4D
Survival	6D
Tactics	
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**3D+2**
Communications	4D
Exoskeleton Operation	4D
Gunnery	4D
Navigation	4D
Piloting	4D
Sensors	4D
Shields	4D
Vehicle Operation	4D
PERCEPTION	**3D+1**
Artist	
Bargain	
Command	
Con	
Forgery	
Gambling	
Hide	
Investigation	
Know-How	
Persuasion	
Search	
Sneak	
STRENGTH	**2D+1**
Climb/Jump	
Lift	
Stamina	
Swim	
TECHNICAL	**3D**
Armor Repair	
Computer Interface	
Computer Repair	
Demolitions	
Equipment Repair	
Exoskeleton Repair	
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	
Robot Interface	
Robot Repair	
Security	
Vehicle Repair	

RESOURCES: 2D

HARDWARE: Roll for two

BOONS & BANES: Alertness (1) common Sense (1) Resilience (1)

GENOTECH: Skill Minimum (4)

DEMEANOR: Confident, Selfish

MOTIVATIONS: Freedom, Fear

FATE POINTS: 1

CHAR. POINTS: 0

CORRUPTION: 0

WOUND STATUS: Healthy

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

Sleepwalker

These are the secret agents and covert operatives of the Extents security apparatus. Their job is to infiltrate the enemies of the Extent and destroy them. While the Enforcers rely on firepower to carry out the Cadre's will, Sleepwalkers masquerade as rebels and outlaws, infiltrating the most dangerous enclaves of the Grayscale and Newcomers to destroy them from within. Sleepwalkers are both feared and hated by the System's enemies, though as Sleepwalkers begin to Corrupt, they show a strange tendency to turn against their masters and try to bring the System down. Maybe it's because Sleepwalkers almost never volunteer for duty; they are civilians the Cadre shanghais, trains and programs with mission parameters and then lets go back into society with a temporary and synthetic personality and set of memories. This "persona template" as the Cadre calls it is supposed to prevent the agent, from accidentally revealing himself as a Cadre operative, to carry out his implanted mission quickly and efficiently so he might return to normal life in a timely manner.

That's the theory, anyway. In practice, often Sleepwalkers either are destroyed during their inaugural mission or they perform especially well. Those who make it become valued assets to the Extent, and usually receive additional training and modification so they can do their jobs better. Before long, the career Sleepwalker is thoroughly entrenched in the business of suppressing whomever the Cadre feels like leaning on. The Sleepwalker is an expendable asset of the Extent, and as such are put directly into super-hazardous situations. If they die, they are simply brought back. If they Corrupt? Then they become the perfect operatives, as far as the Cadre is concerned.

Of course things do not always work out as planned, and Sleepwalkers always run the risk of having their original memories return. When this happens, they realize that they have been turned into pawns by the Extent. Most run and become enemies of the Extent, but there are some who stay on and serve of their own free will. These rare individuals are especially valued by the Cadre and often are given missions of special priority.

Connection With Other Characters: Sleepwalkers are most likely to know other Extent characters prior to the start of the game. They might have enforced the secrecy of an Artifex's supertech project, provided crucial information to an Avatar, partnered with an Enforcer, sought information from a Hyperion, worked covertly with a Morituri, took the confidence of a Prole, or safeguarded a Synthient. Sleepwalkers could easily have relationships with Grayscale or Newcomer characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "I could kill you, or I could just have your memory erased. Which would you prefer?"

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

DEXTERITY	4D
Acrobatics	
Brawling	4D+1
Dodge	
Firearms	4D+1
Flying/0-G	
Melee Combat	4D+1
Missile Weapons	
Riding	
Running	
Sleight of Hand	
Throwing	
KNOWLEDGE	**2D+2**
Aliens	
Astrography	
Bureaucracy	3D
Business	
Cultures	
Intimidation	3D
Languages	
Scholar	
Security Regulations	
Streetwise	3D
Survival	3D
Tactics	
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**2D+2**
Communications	
Exoskeleton Operation	
Gunnery	
Navigation	
Piloting	
Sensors	
Shields	
Vehicle Operation	
PERCEPTION	**3D**
Artist	
Bargain	
Command	
Con	
Forgery	
Gambling	
Hide	
Investigation	4D
Know-How	
Persuasion	
Search	
Sneak	
STRENGTH	**3D+2**
Climb/Jump	4D
Lift	
Stamina	4D
Swim	
TECHNICAL	**2D**
Armor Repair	
Computer Interface	3D
Computer Repair	
Demolitions	
Equipment Repair	
Exoskeleton Repair	
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	
Robot Interface	3D
Robot Repair	
Security	3D
Vehicle Repair	

RESOURCES: 2D

HARDWARE: Roll for two

BOONS & BANES: Concentration (1)

NANOTECH: Chronovision (4) Polykeratin (4) Reactive Strength (4) Snipervision (4)

DEMEANOR: Reserved, Traditional

MOTIVATIONS: Hartred, Power

FATE POINTS: 1

CHAR. POINTS: 0

CORRUPTION: 0

WOUND STATUS: Healthy

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

Spacer

A good deal of the people traveling between the stars have compelling reasons to do so, whether it be a need to travel, shipping goods, executing a mission, exploring, or a host of other motives. Then there are those who live in space simply because they prefer it to living on a planet somewhere. Going by a number of names — spacers, fringers, void hermits — these people are written off as eccentrics by the vast majority of the Seventh Empire, who lives on a planet or moon. Not spacers. These guys either live on a ship that has no real destination or on a piece of real estate one could hardly call a planet (asteroids, planetary rings and extremely small moons all qualify).

Nobody is sure what motivates spacers to live out in the galactic boondocks as they do, but it has bred a group of very hardy people who are even more adapted to the rigors of space life than professional shipdrivers and merchant captains (who are themselves no pushovers). Spacers tend to be loners or recluses, not wanting to be part of a larger social group. Sometimes they are exiles who never wanted to head out into space but had no choice. And sometimes they are just not right in the head, and deep space is the only place that is safe for them.

Spacers of all origins have found their way into Septimus, mostly because local conditions around their homes deteriorated, and if they had to move somewhere, why not move someplace where there is bound to be enough open space for all, right? Spacers in Septimus are most often found within the Archipelago, either living on a lonely outpost on the asteroids or on board a ship drifting through the deep sky, content to float without a port waiting for them. They have no use for the conflict between the Extent and the newcomers, but all too often, conflict finds them, and when it does, that's when the bad guys learn the hard way that an angry spacer is a determined foe indeed.

Connection With Other Characters: Spacers are most likely to know other Newcomer characters prior to the start of the game. They might have hired the services of a Dragoon, served or rebelled against a Hierarch, bought or sold cargo through a Merchant, ran afoul of an Outlaw, followed the trail blazed by an intrepid Pathfinder, and provided passage for a Zealot on a pilgrimage. Spacers could easily have relationships with Grayscale or Extent characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "You know what the best part is about deep space? The fact that it never ends."

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

DEXTERITY	3D+1
Acrobatics	
Brawling	4D
Dodge	
Firearms	4D
Flying/0-G	4D
Melee Combat	
Missile Weapons	
Riding	
Running	
Sleight of Hand	
Throwing	
KNOWLEDGE	**2D+1**
Aliens	3D
Astrography	3D
Bureaucracy	
Business	
Cultures	
Intimidation	
Languages	
Scholar	
Security Regulations	
Streetwise	
Survival	3D
Tactics	
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**3D+2**
Communications	4D
Exoskeleton Operation	4D
Gunnery	4D
Navigation	4D
Piloting	4D+1
Sensors	4D
Shields	4D
Vehicle Operation	4D
PERCEPTION	**3D**
Artist	
Bargain	
Command	
Con	3D+1
Forgery	3D+1
Gambling	3D+1
Hide	
Investigation	4D
Know-How	
Persuasion	
Search	
Sneak	
STRENGTH	**3D**
Climb/Jump	
Lift	
Stamina	
Swim	
TECHNICAL	**2D+2**
Armor Repair	
Computer Interface	
Computer Repair	
Demolitions	
Equipment Repair	3D
Exoskeleton Repair	3D
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	3D
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	
Robot Interface	
Robot Repair	
Security	
Vehicle Repair	

RESOURCES: 3D

HARDWARE: Roll for three

BOONS & BANES: Quick Thinking (1) Starshio (2) Border Crosser (1)

MODIFICATIONS: None

DEMEANOR: Hard-Boiled, Inventive

MOTIVATIONS: Freedom, Contentment

FATE POINTS: 1

CHAR. POINTS: 0

CORRUPTION: 0

WOUND STATUS: Healthy

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

Spoilsport

In the Grayscale is a class of criminal that excels at working the system as well as dodging it. They are criminals who simply want to live beyond the Extent's authority but do not possess the insurgent drive to overthrow the Extent itself. As such, they often can be found playing on both sides of the Extent/Resistance conflict, operating a vast black market as well as an underground for smuggling people, goods, services, and information beneath the Extent's notice.

Most Spoilsports distrust the free and easy life the Extent promises, and wish to escape the System altogether. But that is more easily said than done, however, and the majority of Spoilsports spend the bulk of their time and effort sneaking about restricted areas, hacking into top-clearance Datastreams, and hijacking nanofactories so they can be used without the Extent knowing exactly why. Some Spoilsports are simply thrill junkies who like living on the run from the Extent; these tend to be the most dangerous because they frequently put up a hell of a fight when the Enforcers close in. Most however are self-styled crime lords of mixed motivations and loyalties.

Spoilsports come in all shapes and sizes and specialize in all manner of crime. Some are smugglers, others are thieves, others low-grade rebels, while others are hit men, collectors, or assassins. Some act on their own, while others form large formal structured syndicates to carry out their larcenous bidding and to enforce their will on whomever might oppose them.

A subset of the Spoilsport crowd known as xenomorphs are not so interested in the high-tech run-and-gun resistance to the Extent. These guys are simply into the criminal life because nothing else holds any appeal for them, especially in the hinterlands of the Grayscale. As such, xenomorphs are the gangbangers and hooligans of Septimus, most of whom augment themselves with bizarre nanotech mods so they can be easily identified. Xenomorphs generally take pride in their freakish appearance because it separates them from the bland, sterile look of most everyone who lives in the System. Because they are so easily identified, they are hassled by Cadre agents on general principle, and because it's a fair bet that at any given time, a xenomorph is up to something shady.

In addition to pulling their own jobs, Spoilsports often can be found working as the criminal fixers of the Grayscale. If something is going down, these guys know about it. Heck, they probably arranged it. If there is new talent on the dark market, middlemen act as their brokers, lining up freelancers with whomever might need their services. Like all outlaws in the Grayscale, Spoilsports tend to work for favors; keeping a half-dozen known criminals in your back pocket can come in handy sometimes. However, many of these middlemen lead double lives and front as legitimate civilians too, so they have a homes, resources, and all the things most criminals do without. Sleepwalkers routinely shake down the middlemen and make them give up their criminal contacts, making these unique service providers impossible to trust completely.

Connection With Other Characters: Spoilsports are most likely to know other Grayscale characters prior to the start of the game. They might have fought alongside an Alpha, had gear fixed or made by a Bodger, arranged for the illegal sale of spare parts to a Hardcase or a Steeljack, conducted an errand for a Helix, or acted as a Stringer's bodyguard. Spoilsports could easily have relationships with Extent or Newcomer characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "This is a situation of simple supply and demand. You need to supply me with those extra grenade launchers you've got stashed, and I demand that you're going to knock off 10% from the ridiculous price you're charging."

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

DEXTERITY	3D+2
Acrobatics	
Brawling	
Dodge	
Firearms	
Flying/0-G	
Melee Combat	
Missile Weapons	
Riding	
Running	
Sleight of Hand	
Throwing	
KNOWLEDGE	**3D**
Aliens	
Astrography	
Bureaucracy	
Business	4D
Cultures	
Intimidation	
Languages	
Scholar	
Security Regulations	4D
Streetwise	5D
Survival	
Tactics	
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**2D+1**
Communications	
Exoskeleton Operation	
Gunnery	
Navigation	
Piloting	
Sensors	
Shields	
Vehicle Operation	
PERCEPTION	**4D**
Artist	
Bargain	4D+1
Command	
Con	4D+1
Forgery	4D+1
Gambling	
Hide	
Investigation	4D
Know-How	
Persuasion	
Search	
Sneak	
STRENGTH	**2D+2**
Climb/Jump	
Lift	
Stamina	
Swim	
TECHNICAL	**2D+1**
Armor Repair	
Computer Interface	4D+1
Computer Repair	
Demolitions	
Equipment Repair	
Exoskeleton Repair	
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	
Robot Interface	
Robot Repair	
Security	
Vehicle Repair	

RESOURCES: 5D

HARDWARE: Roll for five

BOONS & BANES: Contacts (3)

MODIFICATIONS: None

DEMEANOR: Selfish, Pragmatic

MOTIVATIONS: Obsession, Power

FATE POINTS: 1

CHAR. POINTS: 0

CORRUPTION: 0

WOUND STATUS: Healthy

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

Steeljack

These are the grease monkeys and hot rodders of Septimus, dedicated to their suits of powered armor. They trick them out and become aces at piloting them, making them formidable opponents whether on the formal racing circuits, in the dangerous street races of the Grayscale, or on the battlefields of Septimus.

Powered armor has become a staple of conflict throughout the Seventh Empire, especially in the wake of widespread disenchantment with using robots as proxy soldiers. Wishing to retain full control of the battles they fight, humanity turned to constructing bulky, robotic warsuits that added a certain thinking quality back to the battlefield that was not there when robots were on the front lines. More than that, it enabled generals ot rely on living, breathing soldiers once more. The thinking was that robotic troops might mutiny more easily due to a malfunction or deliberate interference from the enemy. Even though this never really happened, the fear of it was tangible enough for the widespread military use of robots to fade from the mainstream (while fringe groups like the Sindavar Extent kept using warbots). The widespread use of robots in industrial, commercial and personal application also declined sharply, and engineers turned to developing ways to implement the strengths of robots on organic users. It is from this that nanomodification and genomodification took root, but it is also how the current love of armor came to be.

While armor became the standard hardware on the battlefield, civilian models soon became popular for travel, mech-assisted sporting, labor and other uses. On the Seventh Empire's many worlds without an Earth-like environment, the protective qualities of most enclosed armor meant that everyone living in harsh conditions pretty much lived in their armor.

With this technology so ubiquitous, a culture also surrounded it, and the Steeljack came to be as the armor enthusiast and engineer whose love for the armor's capabilities are only matched by his ability to build, modify, fix and repair the armor itself. In the Grayscale where armor use is prevalent (both for legal and illegal purposes), Steeljacks are the local experts every armor jockey turns to to have their suits serviced. Most Steeljacks are themselves accomplished armor pilots, employing suits as high-speed thrill riders as well as exhibition combat rigs and other such uses.

The average Steeljack tries to stay out of politics and focuses on his armor. Living in the Grayscale gives one the opportunity to play both sides of the fence without getting caught too badly in the crossfire, and the average Steeljack aims to do just that. And if that becomes impossible? Then the Steeljack will pick a side and bring his armor into the fray, and woe betide whomever pushed him into the fight.

Connection With Other Characters: Steejacks are most likely to know other Grayscale characters prior to the start of the game. They might have fought alongside an Alpha, had gear fixed or made by a Bodger, appreciated the combat fatalism of a Flatliner, shared spare parts with a Hardcase, conducted an errand for a Helix, bought or sold gear through a Spoilsport, or acted as a Stringer's bodyguard. Steeljacks could easily have relationships with Extent or Newcomer characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "You see the lines on those knee flexors? You just don't find work like that outside of those high-end shops in Arcopolis, usually. I'm telling you, this suit will outperform everything else in its class once I'm done with her."

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

DEXTERITY	3D
Acrobatics	
Brawling	
Dodge	
Firearms	4D
Flying/0-G	
Melee Combat	
Missile Weapons	
Riding	
Running	
Sleight of Hand	
Throwing	
KNOWLEDGE	**2D**
Aliens	
Astrography	
Bureaucracy	
Business	
Cultures	
Intimidation	
Languages	
Scholar	
Security Regulations	
Streetwise	3D
Survival	
Tactics	
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**4D**
Communications	
Exoskeleton Operation	6D
Gunnery	
Navigation	
Piloting	
Sensors	
Shields	
Vehicle Operation	5D
PERCEPTION	**3D**
Artist	
Bargain	
Command	
Con	
Forgery	
Gambling	
Hide	
Investigation	
Know-How	
Persuasion	
Search	
Sneak	
STRENGTH	**3D**
Climb/Jump	
Lift	
Stamina	
Swim	
TECHNICAL	**3D**
Armor Repair	
Computer Interface	
Computer Repair	
Demolitions	
Equipment Repair	
Exoskeleton Repair	
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	4D
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	
Robot Interface	
Robot Repair	
Security	
Vehicle Repair	4D

RESOURCES: 4D

HARDWARE: Roll for four

BOONS & BANES: Daredevil (1)

NANOTECH: Datalink (2) Internal Gyro (2) Combat Reflexes (4) Mechalink (4) neurolink (2) Reflex recorder (2)

DEMEANOR: Mercurial, Daring

MOTIVATIONS: Adventure, Pride

FATE POINTS: 1

CHAR. POINTS: 0

CORRUPTION: 0

WOUND STATUS: Healthy

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

Stringer



These are the equivalent of journalists in Arcopolis. They take it upon themselves to record the goings-on of the city and make pirate broadcasts of them in order to counteract the propaganda and doublespeak of the Extent. Though not warriors, they live dangerously, the far future equivalent of combat photographers and outlaw bloggers. While there are no real media outlets to speak of, Stringers busy themselves with catching dramatic events — typically criminal acts or whenever gladiator battles spill out into the public — and uploading them to the System's mediatronic database. For a Stringer, there is no greater achievement than having one's imagery displayed in living color on a big mediatronic board or translated into the latest holorama release. Stringers are not paid for their work — there is no real money in this society — but their reward is credibility and reputation. Because they like to be where the action is, Stringers live dangerous lives by civilian standards, and they often find themselves mixed up in pretty risky business.

Connection With Other Characters: Stringers are most likely to know other Grayscale characters prior to the start of the game. They might have hired an Alpha as a bodyguard, had gear fixed or made by a Bodger, appreciated the combat fatalism of a Flatliner, shared spare parts with a Hardcase, conducted an errand for a Helix, bought or sold gear through a Spoilsport, interviewed or profiled a notable Steeljack. Steeljacks could easily have relationships with Extent or Newcomer characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "When people learn what I've got to tell them, there's going to be some flashback like you won't believe. Heads are going to roll and bridges are going to burn. That's if I don't eat a bullet before I finish uploading, of course."

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

DEXTERITY	3D
Acrobatics	
Brawling	
Dodge	
Firearms	
Flying/0-G	
Melee Combat	
Missile Weapons	
Riding	
Running	
Sleight of Hand	4D
Throwing	
KNOWLEDGE	**4D**
Aliens	
Astrography	
Bureaucracy	
Business	
Cultures	
Intimidation	
Languages	
Scholar	
Security Regulations	5D
Streetwise	5D
Survival	
Tactics	
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**2D+2**
Communications	
Exoskeleton Operation	
Gunnery	
Navigation	
Piloting	
Sensors	
Shields	
Vehicle Operation	
PERCEPTION	**3D+2**
Artist	4D
Bargain	4D
Command	
Con	4D
Forgery	4D
Gambling	
Hide	4D
Investigation	4D
Know-How	4D
Persuasion	4D
Search	4D
Sneak	4D
STRENGTH	**2D+2**
Climb/Jump	
Lift	
Stamina	
Swim	
TECHNICAL	**2D**
Armor Repair	
Computer Interface	3D
Computer Repair	
Demolitions	
Equipment Repair	
Exoskeleton Repair	
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	
Robot Interface	3D
Robot Repair	
Security	3D
Vehicle Repair	

RESOURCES: 2D

HARDWARE: Roll for two

BOONS & BANES: Contacts (4)

GENOTECH: Skill Bonus (1) Uncanny Aptitude (3)

DEMEANOR: Attentive, Flamboyant

MOTIVATIONS: Professionalism, Fame

FATE POINTS: 1

CHAR. POINTS: 0

CORRUPTION: 0

WOUND STATUS: Healthy

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

Synthient

Synthients are people who have been genetically engineered from the ground up. Whereas Proles make up some 85% of the Extent's population, Synthients account for only about 5%, since they are a relatively new and untested product of the system's sociologic research and development labs. (The remaining 10% consists of the other kinds of Extent templates described in this section.)

Although their genetic structure has been entirely engineered, there is nothing at first glance that would make a Synthient appear any different than the average Prole. They are not designed for superhuman performance (much to the chagrin of the Cadre, which would like to see them "developed" for more combat-oriented purposes; rumor has it Cadre scientists are already working on their own versions of Synthients with combat and espionage their primary foci. Indeed, most Synthients do not know of their unusual nature until they reach a certain age past their generation date, when a time-release memory capsule in their brains tell them their real origin and whom to contact if they would like any further information.

After awakening to their true nature, most Synthients go through a period of shock, followed by a resumption of their established routine. After enough time, they simply realize that their unusual origin has little to do with their current life, so they go on living. No harm, no foul.

However, some Synthients resent their engineered nature and take it out on the Extent by joining the Grayscale or the Newcomers, fighting the society that spawned them. Renegade Synthients are very dangerous, as they tend to specialize in skills, so what they do know, they know expertly. That goes for nanomods, too. Although garden variety Synthients have minimal modification, some will seek out augmentations, and those who go fugitive often have



a few surprises in store for the local powers as they fight their way through or evade them altogether.

In terms of attributes, mods and skills, Synthients tend to be specialists, so they will have their top abilities bunched together by general category. While they always excel at their chosen fields, they will be simply awful in whatever fields they never really studied.

Connection With Other Characters: Synthients are most likely to know other Extent characters prior to the start of the game. They might have worked as a specialist on an Artifex's supertech project, provided crucial information to an Avatar, partnered with an Enforcer, sought information from a Hyperion, sought covert protection from a Morituri, befriended a Prole, or gotten involved in the intrigue of a Sleepwalker. Synthients could easily have relationships with Grayscale or Newcomer characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.

Famous Last Words: "Don't think of us as fake people. Think of us as an improvement on the original. Besides, it's not like you are totally obsolete…yet."

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

DEXTERITY	3D+1
Acrobatics	
Brawling	
Dodge	
Firearms	
Flying/0-G	
Melee Combat	
Missile Weapons	
Riding	
Running	
Sleight of Hand	
Throwing	
KNOWLEDGE	**2D+1**
Aliens	
Astrography	
Bureaucracy	
Business	
Cultures	
Intimidation	
Languages	4D+1
Scholar	4D+1
Security Regulations	
Streetwise	
Survival	
Tactics	
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**3D+1**
Communications	
Exoskeleton Operation	
Gunnery	
Navigation	
Piloting	
Sensors	
Shields	
Vehicle Operation	
PERCEPTION	**2D+1**
Artist	
Bargain	
Command	
Con	
Forgery	
Gambling	
Hide	
Investigation	4D+1
Know-How	4D+1
Persuasion	
Search	
Sneak	
STRENGTH	**3D+1**
Climb/Jump	
Lift	
Stamina	
Swim	
TECHNICAL	**3D+1**
Armor Repair	
Computer Interface	5D+1
Computer Repair	
Demolitions	
Equipment Repair	
Exoskeleton Repair	
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	
Robot Interface	4D+1
Robot Repair	
Security	
Vehicle Repair	

RESOURCES: 3D

HARDWARE: Roll for three

BOONS & BANES: Savant (1)

GENOTECH: Ansible (2) Comlink (1) Cortex Vault (1) Mediatronics (2) Multivision (2)

DEMEANOR: Devoted, Confident

MOTIVATIONS: Socialization, Professionalism

FATE POINTS: 1

CHAR. POINTS: 0

CORRUPTION: 0

WOUND STATUS: Healthy

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

Zealot

There are a million faiths and religions in the Seventh Empire, and all of these competing forms of mysticism have their own takes on the collapse of the Empire and what it means. Still others are fascinated by the stories of Septimus and whatever metaphysical ramifications such a structure might have. All Zealots who come to Septimus do so on some kind of pilgrimage, whether it is for salvation of their souls or of their skins. But once inside the Sphere, their unique beliefs can drive them into conflict with the Extent as well as others. What drives Zealots most is their faith in the intangible forces that govern the world, and as such they are especially interested in the psychic powers that people gain when accessing alien technology. Scouring the surface of the sphere for alien ruins, entire teams of mysterious Zealots often turn the search for clues about the sphere itself into theological quest, with the mysteries of the ancients who built Septimus at the heart of it all. Extent intelligence reports indicates that there seems to be coalescing plans for a grand temple dedicated to worshipping the mysteries of the ancients, but such a development still seems a long way off. For now, most Zealots are content just to explore the Sphere, spread the word and defend the faith, whatever that faith may be.

Connection With Other Characters: Zealots are most likely to know other Newcomer characters prior to the start of the game. They might have hired the services of a Dragoon, served or rebelled against a Hierarch, bought or sold passage through a Merchant, ran afoul of an Outlaw, followed the trail blazed by an intrepid Pathfinder, and shipped out with a Spacer. Zealots could easily have relationships with Grayscale or Extent characters, but there might be a more complicated story behind it to explain the connection.



Famous Last Words: "Laugh all you want, but there's more to this life than what you see here. There is something Beyond, and I am going to see what it is."

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

DEXTERITY	2D+2
Acrobatics	
Brawling	
Dodge	
Firearms	
Flying/0-G	
Melee Combat	
Missile Weapons	
Riding	
Running	
Sleight of Hand	
Throwing	
KNOWLEDGE	**3D+2**
Aliens	
Astrography	
Bureaucracy	
Business	
Cultures	4D
Intimidation	
Languages	4D
Scholar	4D
Security Regulations	
Streetwise	
Survival	
Tactics	
Willpower	
MECHANICAL	**2D+2**
Communications	3D
Exoskeleton Operation	3D
Gunnery	
Navigation	
Piloting	3D
Sensors	
Shields	
Vehicle Operation	3D
PERCEPTION	**4D**
Artist	5D
Bargain	
Command	
Con	
Forgery	
Gambling	
Hide	
Investigation	
Know-How	
Persuasion	5D
Search	
Sneak	
STRENGTH	**2D+2**
Climb/Jump	
Lift	
Stamina	3D
Swim	
TECHNICAL	**2D+1**
Armor Repair	
Computer Interface	2D+2
Computer Repair	
Demolitions	
Equipment Repair	
Exoskeleton Repair	
Firearms Repair	
Flight Systems Repair	
Genotechnology	
Gunnery Repair	
Medicine	
Nanotechnology	
Robot Interface	
Robot Repair	
Security	
Vehicle Repair	

Resources: 3D

Hardware: Roll for three

Boons & Banes: Divination (1) Empathy (1) Premonitions (1) Visions (1)

Genotech: Enhanced Sense (3) Increased Attribute (2) Quick Study (3)

Demeanor: Devoted, Ethereal

Motivations: Faith, Enlightenment

Fate Points: 1

Char. Points: 0

Corruption: 0

Wound Status: Healthy

Scott Nelson (order #1520939)

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