

TRUE 20 companion



FOUR HEROIC GENRES FOR
TRUE20 ADVENTURE ROLEPLAYING

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TRUE 20 COMPANION

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INTRODUCTION

The *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* game provides a complete set of rules for roleplaying adventure gaming, as well as four sample settings. *True20 Worlds of Adventure* adds five more settings for adventure in a variety of different worlds. Both books provide specific setting options, while the *True20* rulebook provides rules for handling heroic-level characters in almost any world.

The *True20 Companion* is for Narrators interested in creating their own worlds of adventure, or simply expanding upon the material found in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* and *Worlds of Adventure*. This book is a guide to four popular roleplaying genres for the *True20* system: fantasy, space-based science fiction, horror, and modern action-adventure. With the material contained in this book, you can create and run adventures for countless different worlds.

The *Companion* takes more of a “do-it-yourself” attitude than previous *True20* books, giving you the tools to create your own settings rather than providing pregenerated ones. You can also use the information in this book alongside existing *True20* settings to expand and refine them. You can even use the *Companion* as a guide to help you adapt your favorite roleplaying adventure setting for use with *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*, using the guidelines for the appropriate genre(s).

OVERVIEW

The *True20 Companion* provides a short chapter on custom-designing your own heroic roles, followed by four chapters on the major adventure roleplaying genres and suggestions for using the *True20* system to create and run games set in them.

CHAPTER ONE: ROLE CREATION

This chapter breaks down the structure of the heroic roles from *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* and provides guidelines for creating your own roles from scratch. You choose the role’s Combat bonus, saving throws, skill progression, feats, and access to powers as well as defining the core ability to fill any niche in your game. The chapter also provides some sample roles, such as martial artist and priest.

CHAPTER TWO: FANTASY ADVENTURES

The second chapter of the *True20 Companion* looks at the most popular genre of adventure roleplaying. With *True20*, you can create worlds of high magic, myth, and adventure, where heroes struggle against the forces of evil or simply try to survive from day to day. **Chapter Two** shows you ways to vary backgrounds, races, and magic in a fantasy setting to get the feel you want for your game. It provides new heroic archetypes for legendary heroes, supernatural philosophies for fantasy powers, and a wide selection of weapons and equipment, including magical items.

CHAPTER THREE: SPACE ADVENTURES

This next section takes your *True20* game to the stars with the science fiction genre. Here you can find varying technology levels, backgrounds and rules for alien heroes, expanded skills, and a detailed equipment-design system. It also looks at spaceships and other vehicles, as well as designing your own alien species and strange new worlds.

CHAPTER FOUR: HORROR ADVENTURES

Chapter Four takes *True20* down a dark path, showing you how to run horror-themed adventures in the *True20* system and pitting the heroes against their worst nightmares. It offers backgrounds and roles such as the arcanist and the blessed, supernatural rituals, and rules for handling all the fear, terror, corruption, and madness you can throw at the heroes. It concludes with a set of frameworks for starting up your own horror series.

CHAPTER FIVE: MODERN ADVENTURES

This final chapter concludes the book by returning to the modern world. Here heroes can take on roles from action-adventure movies, going up against organized crime or working together as an elite commando unit. This chapter provides modern backgrounds and customized roles, rules for bartering on the black market,

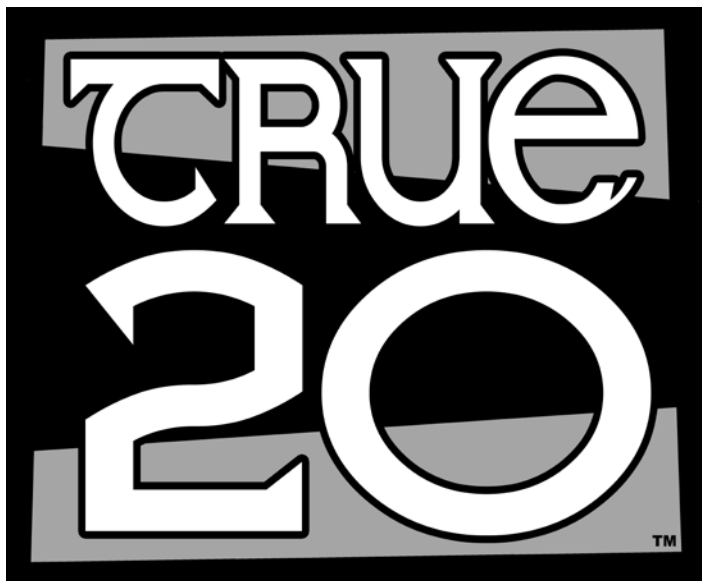
and guidelines for creating specialized equipment and building cutting-edge gadgets for spy and agent heroes.

USING THIS BOOK

The *True20 Companion* is intended as a supplement to the basic game systems in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*. This book contains a lot of optional material, rules you can add on to the *True20* system to achieve a particular style or to suit a particular genre. Don’t feel you have to use any of the options presented in this book—you certainly don’t have to use all of them! In fact, you’ll find some options are mutually exclusive.

Sometimes the *Companion* does the same thing in different ways in order to suit a particular genre. For example, the equipment-building system in **Chapter Three** is intended for advanced technology of the sort you’ll find in space adventures, while the customization system in **Chapter Five** is aimed at modern technology and the gadgets from espionage fiction. Use whichever approach best suits your game.

One of the benefits of *True20* is its versatility. If you want a space adventure series with fantasy races and supernatural rituals, by all means, go right ahead! Mix and match options from this book to create the setting you want. The same is true if you want fantasy heroes going up against eldritch, sanity-blasting horrors from the dawn of time, or modern adventures within a secret world of fantasy beings and magic. It’s your world, so have fun with it!





CHAPTER ONE: ROLE CREATION

The three heroic roles in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*—adept, expert, and warrior—are intended to provide simple and easy-to-use frameworks for creating heroic characters. Much of the work of determining the hero's traits is already done for you: simply choose the starting level, assign skill ranks, choose feats (and powers, for adepts), equip your hero, and you're done.

Although *True20* offers a lot of flexibility in terms of hero creation, some traits are relatively fixed, based on role. Two warriors of the same level, for example, share the same basic Combat bonus before things like ability scores and feats are taken into account. Likewise, two experts of the same level can be expected to have similar skill ranks, albeit modified by their respective Intelligence scores and choices in assigning those ranks to different skills. Options for mixing role levels provide more

ways to customize, but only at higher levels where players have more than just one or two levels to apply.

For those who desire more individuality in their heroes, this chapter opens up the basic *True20* roles, going “under the hood” to provide players and Narrators with the tools to create their own custom-designed roles. By following just a few simple steps, you can create virtually any role your concept or setting requires, giving you as many or as few roles as you want!

Note that the guidelines in this chapter are an *optional* expansion for *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*. Narrators who prefer the simplicity of using the three basic heroic roles can continue to do so. For those interested in the expanded options of role creation, read on.

ROLE COMPONENTS

A role is made up of several components, including: the role's core ability, Combat Progression, Skill Progression, Saving Throw Progression (in each of three saves: Fortitude, Reflex, and Will), Power Progression (if the role has access to supernatural powers), and access to feats. We'll look at progressions first in terms of building new roles, and then at core abilities.

To create a role, choose Combat, Skill, Saving Throw, and Power Progressions that add up to a total cost of 5 points. Any fractional points

left over from this starting amount are discarded, so try to spend as much of the starting progression points as you can.

COMBAT PROGRESSION

Combat Progression determines how quickly the role's Combat bonus improves. There are four progressions: Fast, Medium, Slow, and Very Slow.

- *Fast Progression* sets Combat bonus equal to the role's level, like a warrior (so a 4th-level character in that role has Combat +4, for example).
- *Medium Progression* sets Combat bonus at three-quarters of the role's level, rounded down, like an expert (so a 4th-level character in that role has Combat +3).
- *Slow Progression* sets Combat bonus at half the role's level, like an adept (so a 4th-level character in that role has Combat +2).
- *Very Slow Progression* sets Combat bonus at one-quarter the role's level (so a 4th-level character in that role has Combat +1).

These progressions are shown on the **Combat Progression Table**, while the cost of each type is shown on the **Combat Progression Cost Table**.

SKILL PROGRESSION

Skill Progression determines how many skills the role provides at 1st level, as well as how many skill ranks it provides each level thereafter. The starting skill, skill ranks, and their respective costs are shown on the **Skill Progression Cost Table**.

A role's starting skills and skill ranks per level are always modified by the character's Intelligence score, with a minimum of 1 starting skill and

COMBAT PROGRESSION COST

Progression	Cost
Fast	4 points
Medium	3 points
Slow	2 points
Very Slow	1 point

COMBAT PROGRESSION

Level	Fast	Medium	Slow	Very Slow
1	+1	+0	+0	+0
2	+2	+1	+1	+0
3	+3	+2	+1	+0
4	+4	+3	+2	+1
5	+5	+3	+2	+1
6	+6	+4	+3	+1
7	+7	+5	+3	+1
8	+8	+6	+4	+2
9	+9	+6	+4	+2
10	+10	+7	+5	+2
11	+11	+8	+5	+2
12	+12	+9	+6	+3
13	+13	+9	+6	+3
14	+14	+10	+7	+3
15	+15	+11	+7	+3
16	+16	+12	+8	+4
17	+17	+12	+8	+4
18	+18	+13	+9	+4
19	+19	+14	+9	+4
20	+20	+15	+10	+5

SKILL PROGRESSION COST

Skills/Ranks	Cost
2	0.5 points
4	1 point
6	1.5 points
8	2 points
10	2.5 points
12	3 points
14	3.5 points
16	4 points

OPTION: SPLIT COMBAT PROGRESSIONS

You can choose to split up Combat Progression into Attack and Defense Progressions, allowing different progressions in each so you can create a role that's strong on attack and weak on defense, for example, or a primarily defensive role that's defensively strong, but doesn't pack a big punch (weak offense). Simply divide the costs on the **Combat Progression Cost Table** in half (2 points for Fast, 1.5 points for Medium, 1 point for Slow, and 0.5 points for Very Slow) and pay for each progression separately.

You can also split Combat Progression into melee and ranged or armed and unarmed if you wish (note that "unarmed" is melee range by default—don't split the progression twice), so a role can have a Fast Ranged Progression, but a Medium or even Slow Melee Progression. This might be suitable for an archer or marksman role, for example.

Don't get caught up in splitting Combat Progression into too many categories. Be careful to watch out for players looking to "optimize" by giving their hero a split Fast Progression with a point-saving Slow or Very Slow Progression, then carefully avoiding any circumstance where the slower Progression would come into play.

OPTION: NO COMBAT PROGRESSION

It's assumed that *True20* heroes always have at least *some* ability in combat—even the bookish scholarly types. You therefore normally have to choose at least Very Slow Combat Progression for a heroic role; only ordinaries completely lack one (*True20*, page 118). The Narrator may allow the option of having No Combat Progression (and therefore a Combat bonus of +0 at all levels of the role) for a cost of 0 points, however, just like an ordinary.

OPTION: FINER SKILL PROGRESSION

If desired, you can split Skill Progression into even finer categories: each interval in between the steps on the **Skill Progression Cost Table** is a 0.25 points increase. So 5 + Int skill ranks is 1.25 points, for example, 7 + Int is 1.75 points, and so forth. This allows for some "fine tuning" of individual progressions.

You can also potentially extend the Skill Progression, if you want, to create roles with a wealth of skill ranks (true jacks-of-all-trades). *True20* has 28 base skills altogether; creating a role that can master virtually *every* skill (discounting skills with numerous specialties like Craft and Knowledge) with a Skill Progression of 20 (+ Int) is possible, but it would be all the role could do, since it would have no Combat or Power Progression!

1 skill rank per level. You may wish to require a minimum Progression of 4 (for 1 point) for heroes with Int –3 or lower in order to prevent min-maxing. In such cases, of course, you can argue that an Int –3 hero is going to need all the help he can get....

SKILL PROGRESSION AND MIXING ROLES

Mixed-role heroes with different Skill Progressions simply add them together to determine their total skill ranks. A hero who starts out in a role with eight starting skills, then switches to a role with a Skill Progression of 4 gets four skill ranks to improve those skills, meaning she's not going to be able to improve them all equally. Likewise, a hero who starts out with two skills and adds a level of a role with a Skill Progression of 8 gets eight more skill ranks and can definitely learn some new skills, since her level limits how much she can improve her existing ones.

SAVING THROW PROGRESSION

Saving Throw Progression determines the improvement of your Fortitude, Reflex, and Will save bonuses. Toughness save bonus does not increase by role or level, only by the application of feats like Defensive Roll and Tough. There are four options for Save Progression; the first two have no cost and are the default for most roles. The other two options costs 0.25 points.

ONE GOOD, TWO NORMAL

One of your saving throws follows the Good Progression, while the other two follow the Normal Progression. This option costs 0 Progression Points.

TWO MEDIUM, ONE NORMAL

Two of your saving throws follow the Medium Progression, while the third follows the Normal Progression. This option costs 0 Progression Points.

THREE MEDIUM

All three of your saving throws follow the Medium Progression. This option costs 0.25 Progression Points.

TWO GOOD, ONE NORMAL

Two of your saving throws follow the Good Progression, while the third follows the Normal Progression. This option costs 0.25 Progression Points.

SAVING THROW PROGRESSION

Level	Good	Medium	Normal
1	+2	+1	+0
2	+3	+1	+0
3	+3	+2	+1
4	+4	+2	+1
5	+4	+3	+1
6	+5	+3	+2
7	+5	+3	+2
8	+6	+4	+2
9	+6	+4	+3
10	+7	+5	+3
11	+7	+5	+3
12	+8	+6	+4
13	+8	+6	+4
14	+9	+6	+4
15	+9	+7	+5
16	+10	+7	+5
17	+10	+8	+5
18	+11	+8	+6
19	+11	+9	+6
20	+12	+9	+6

SAVE PROGRESSION AND MIXING ROLES

When determining the saving throw bonuses of a mixed-role character, use the base bonuses of the characters' first role. For additional roles, subtract 2 from the role's Good Save Progression and 1 from its Medium Save Progression to determine the amount to add. Normal Save Progressions add their full amount.

Example: A 4th-level adept (Good Will, Normal Fortitude and Reflex) also has two levels of warrior (Good Fortitude, Normal Reflex and Will). The adept role's base save bonuses are Fortitude +1, Reflex +1, Will +4 for 4th-level. The warrior role's are Fortitude +3, Reflex +0, Will +0 for 2nd-level. However, the Good Save (Fortitude) has its bonus reduced by 2 (to +1) before it is added. The Normal Reflex and Will saves are unaffected. The hero's final base save bonuses (before factoring in ability scores) are Fortitude +2 (+1 adept, +1 warrior), Reflex +1 (+1 adept, +0 warrior), and Will +4 (+4 adept, +0 warrior).

If the same 4th-level adept also had two levels of a role that provided Medium Fortitude and Reflex saves and Normal Will saves, there would be no saving throw increase at all, since the two medium saves would be reduced from +1 to +0 and the normal save would be at +0. The hero would need a third level in the additional role to improve saves (adding +1 to each, after modifications).

POWER PROGRESSION COST

Progression	Cost
Fast	2 points
Medium	1.5 points
Slow	1 point
Very Slow	0.5 points
None	0 points

POWER PROGRESSION

Level	Fast	Medium	Slow	Very Slow
1	4	3	2	1
2	5	3	2	1
3	6	4	3	1
4	7	5	3	1
5	8	5	4	2
6	9	6	4	2
7	10	7	5	2
8	11	7	5	2
9	12	8	6	3
10	13	9	6	3
11	14	9	7	3
12	15	10	7	3
13	16	11	8	4
14	17	11	8	4
15	18	12	9	4
16	19	13	9	4
17	20	13	10	5
18	21	14	10	5
19	22	15	11	5
20	23	15	11	5

POWER PROGRESSION

Power Progression determines a role's ability to use supernatural powers, and how effective those powers will be. The default (for 0 points) is a Power Progression of None, or no access to powers at all. There are four Progressions allowing access to powers and determining power rank, as described on page 54 of *True20*, they are Fast, Medium, Slow, and Very Slow, similar to the Combat Progressions. Each Progression's cost is shown on the **Power Progression Cost Table** while each Progression's rank per level is shown on the **Power Progression Table**.

POWER PROGRESSION AND POWERS

Anyone with a Power Progression other than None can acquire a supernatural power in place of a feat in the same way the adept role does (*True20*, page 19). The power's rank is determined by the role's Power Progression, as given on the **Power Progression Table**.

POWER ACCESS

The adept role has access to potentially any supernatural power given in **Chapter Four** of *True20*, provided the character meets the prerequisites of having and using the power. Power Progression is priced on the assumption of complete (or near-complete) access to powers in exchange for feats.

This option restricts the list of powers available to the role in exchange for an improved Progression with those powers. There are four categories of power access:

- **Unlimited:** This is the default (no adjustment in Power Progression); the role has complete access to the powers available in the setting, barring only those powers the Narrator restricts or chooses to make available on a case-by-case basis. Choose role's Power Progression normally from the **Power Progression Cost** table.
- **Broad:** The role is limited to a broad group of no more than half the available powers, approximately 30 to 35 of them, with a unifying theme. A "psychic" role might be limited to powers that suit real-world ideas of telepathy and extra-sensory perception, for example. Shift Progression costs down one level on the **Power Progression Cost** table, so Fast Progression costs 1.5 points, and so forth, with Very Slow Progression costing 0.25 points.
- **Narrow:** The role is limited to a narrow group of no more than a quarter of the available powers (about a dozen or so). A "shaper" role might be limited to powers with "Shaping" in their name, for example. Shift Power Progression costs down two levels on the table, so Fast Progression costs 1 point while Slow Progression costing 0.25 points. Very Slow Progression is unavailable for Narrow power access.
- **Singular:** The role is limited to a single power, or perhaps two very strongly related powers. Shift Power Progression costs down three levels on the table, so Fast Progression costs only 0.5 point, and Medium Progression costs 0.25 points, with slower Progressions unavailable for Singular power access.

If a power has a prerequisite the role's Progression doesn't include, then that power is generally unavailable to that role as well without specific permission from the Narrator.

Generally, power access limits should be imposed by the Narrator, thus preventing players from choosing to "limit" their heroes to a Power Progression exactly like the set of powers they'd choose anyway. Keep in mind that *True20* heroes are already somewhat limited in their Power Progression by the presumption that any heroic role has a maximum of 23 feats (4 at 1st level, plus one per additional level)

OPTION: CUSTOM FEAT ACCESS

An alternative option for feat access is to create a customized feat list for each role. This can become rather involved and it makes role creation more difficult. It can also be harder to balance, since it offers the opportunity to “cherry-pick” the very best feats and give the new role access to all of them at a bargain price. Narrators should consider carefully before allowing it, and may wish to come up with customized feat lists themselves rather than delegating it to the players.

OPTION: FEAT PROGRESSION

The default for *True20* roles is four starting feats plus an additional feat per level. If desired, the Narrator can allow a “Feat Progression” when designing roles, providing more feats than usual in exchange for deficiencies in other Progressions. The progression point costs for this are shown on the **Feat Progression Cost Table**. This adds some complexity and should be considered carefully. In particular, Narrators may wish to limit all roles with Power Progression to no more than one new power per level after 1st regardless of the number of available feats, in order to keep those roles from becoming too powerful too quickly.

over the span of 20 levels, making it impossible to learn *all* the powers of a broad group.

POWER PROGRESSION AND MIXING ROLES

There are two options when mixing roles that have Power Progressions. The Narrator decides which option applies.

The first and simplest option is that each role has its own *unique* Power Progression and power access that do not stack or operate together, even for mixed-role heroes. A hero who’s 5th-level in a Fast Power Progression role and 4th-level in a Medium Power Progression role has two power ranks: rank 8 for the first role and rank 5 for the second. The powers of the first role operate at rank 8 while the powers of the second operate at rank 5. They may even have different key abilities or lists of available powers (suitable for characters who mix power-types, such as a psychic/sorcerer or a priest/wizard). This option works best when each Power Progression role has its own distinct power-set.

The other option is to allow some or all of a mixed-role hero’s Power Progressions with access to the same powers to stack. When determining the total power rank for a mixed-role hero with stacking Power Progressions, use the base Power Progression of the first role. Reduce the Power Progression rank of any additional roles by 3 for Fast, 2 for Medium, and 1 for Slow before adding their ranks to the first role, leaving Very Slow Progression as-is. Using the aforementioned 5th-level Fast/4th-level Medium hero as an example, the base would be rank 8 (for the first, Fast Progression, role). The rank 5 for the second role is reduced to 3 (minus 2 for Medium Progression) then added to 8 for a total power rank of 11, slightly less than a 9th-level Fast Progression hero would have, but better than a 9th-level Medium Progression.

FEAT ACCESS

The three core roles in *True20* each have access to their own specific types of feat: adept, expert, or warrior. All roles have access to general feats. During role creation, Narrators need to decide what types of feats customized roles can acquire.

The default (costing 0 points) is general and one other category as best suits the role. A priest role with supernatural powers, for example, best suits the adept category, while an adventuring archeologist role is probably best suited to expert feats.

Each additional category of feats costs 0.5 points, with access to all categories costing 1 point. Note that access to adept feats does *not* grant the ability to exchange a feat for a supernatural power; that requires a Power Progression (as described previously). Many adept feats are essentially useless to roles lacking a Power Progression. There’s no “discount” for this, it’s just how those feats work.

FEAT PROGRESSION COST

Progression	Cost
One feat per level	0 points
Bonus feat every fourth level	0.25 points
Bonus feat every other level	0.5 points
Two feats per level	1 point

CORE ABILITIES

Each role in *True20* has a *core ability*, available only to those who take their first character level in that role. A hero who starts out as a 1st-level warrior has the warrior core ability; if she later acquires a level of adept, she doesn’t gain the adept core ability, because she didn’t start out as an adept.

Core abilities provide a reason to choose one role over another as a starting role and help to differentiate mixed-role heroes; the warrior/



adept does not have the same in capabilities as an adept/warrior, for example, since they have different core abilities. The warrior/adept has Determination and can fight on against difficult odds while the adept/warrior has the Talent and greater flexibility in the use of powers.

The easy way of handling core abilities for custom created roles is to simply choose one of the three core abilities of the *True20* heroic roles when you create a new role, as best suits the role's concept. A mystic warrior might have Determination like the warrior role, while a martial artist has Expertise like the expert role, and so forth. This lessens the value of core abilities somewhat because they're no longer unique. In *True20* no two roles have the same core ability, but under this system, it's quite likely multiple roles will provide the same one, providing less incentive to choose your first level in that role.

NEW CORE ABILITIES

Alternatively, you may wish to create a new core ability for the new role. There's no exact system for the design of core abilities. Instead, use the following guidelines and examples to help you design a suitable core ability.

- Core abilities generally enhance the use of Conviction, either improving a normal use or allowing the hero to spend Conviction for an additional effect. This help to set a limit on how often the core ability can be used.
- Core abilities are slightly more effective than feats since each hero only gets one, whereas roles accumulate many feats. A core ability generally shouldn't do something that a feat already does.
- Core abilities tend to focus on the role's *core*, what that role is about. For example, warriors have Determination because a warrior is all about being able to fight and win. Experts have Expertise because they're all about being skilled. Try to fit the core ability to the role's core concept.
- Core abilities that do not require the spending of Conviction are possible, but should be more limited and not generally under the player's control. This allows the Narrator to decide how often the core ability comes into play and prevents it from being abused. Such "passive" core abilities usually involve resistance to some effect or condition. If it's something the player can choose to "activate" in play, it should probably require the spending of Conviction.

SAMPLE CORE ABILITIES

Here are some sample new core abilities you can use in building new roles, or as examples when creating new core abilities of your own.

AMAZING SAVE

Choose your Fortitude, Reflex, or Will saving throw; when rolling saves for the chosen saving throw, roll two dice and use the better of the two

rolls. This core ability *cannot* apply to Toughness saves. If you spend Conviction to re-roll a save, roll only *one* die and compare it to the better of your original two rolls.

COMMON SENSE

It may not be that common, but you've got it. Whenever you're about to do something foolish or downright *stupid*, the Narrator *must* warn you, usually with something along the lines of "Are you sure you *really* want to do that?" Based on this, you may choose a different course of action. Common Sense doesn't cost Conviction, but it's also not under your control.

EXTRAORDINARY EFFORT

By spending a point of Conviction when you use extra effort, you gain any *two* benefits rather than having to choose just one. If you choose the same benefit twice, its effectiveness increases by 50%, giving +3 to a check bonus or tripling your carrying capacity or movement speed. For the Willpower benefit, you make two additional saves rather than one. You still suffer the fatigue of the extra effort normally.

HIGHER GUIDANCE

Sometimes you just know things; there seems to be a higher power watching over you. You can spend a point of Conviction to ask the Narrator a direct question and get a truthful answer, although the Narrator's reply may be brief (often just a "yes" or "no"). The Narrator may choose not to answer if it would adversely affect the flow of the game, in which case you get your Conviction point back.

HIGHER PURPOSE

You serve a higher purpose or calling. It might be a nationality, religion, philosophy, or anything else approved by the Narrator but it cannot be an achievable goal, such as "destroy the Lich King" or "wipe out crime in the city." When faced with a challenge directly related to your Higher Purpose, you may spend a Conviction point to gain either two feats or a single power (with a Fast Power Progression equal to your total level) you can use for the duration of the encounter or scene. The feats or power are chosen when you acquire this ability and cannot be changed. If you ever abandon your purpose, you lose the use of this core ability. The Dedicated feat (*True20*, page 45) is quite common for heroes with this core ability. Once chosen, your Higher Purpose cannot be changed.

FEARLESS

You are completely immune to effects that cause fear (including supernatural powers like Heart Shaping) and to the effects of the Intimidate skill, unless the user's total level is at least four greater than yours. You can also eliminate a fear-induced condition from an ally at any time by spending a point of Conviction and standing up to the

OPTION: ABILITY PROGRESSION

As with feat progression, *True20* assumes a standard progression in ability bonuses by level. This progression does not vary according to role in the core rules; all heroes progress at the same rate. You may wish to allow different ability bonus progressions for roles strongly focused on self-improvement, such as athletes who gain in Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution, rigorous scholars or academics who improve Intelligence and Wisdom, or public figures who focus on improving Charisma. The ability progression options are:

Even if variable ability progressions are available, heroes are still limited to a maximum of +5 in an ability, modified by their background. Even a role that offers a +1 ability bonus per 3 levels, for example, can't add the entire +6 bonus over 18 levels to a single ability! The Narrator may wish to impose other restrictions on ability progression bonuses to suit the game.

ABILITY PROGRESSION COST

Progression	Cost
+1 per six levels (default)	0 points
+1 per five levels	0.25 points
+1 per four levels	0.5 points
+1 per three levels	1 point



source of the fear (often with a rousing speech or a simple statement like “We’re not afraid of you!”).

ULTIMATE TRAIT

Choose an ability score, skill, or saving throw; when making a check using that trait, you can spend a point of Conviction and automatically treat your die roll as a 20. Note this is not considered a “natural” 20, but otherwise works like a die result of 20. For example, if you have Ultimate Strength, you can spend a point of Conviction on a Strength check and just add 20 to your Strength bonus rather than rolling the die. Ultimate Abilities do *not* improve the use of skills based on those abilities; having Ultimate Strength doesn’t affect your Climb or Swim skill checks, for example, just raw Strength checks. This is true even when using a skill untrained, applying just the ability modifier.

ORDINARIES AND ROLE CREATION

The Ordinary role (*True20*, page 118) is limited to Narrator characters and is not designed for balance compared to the heroic roles. In essence, Ordinary grants only a Skill Progression of 4 per level and doesn’t have a Combat, Normal Save Progression, (since Ordinary saves don’t improve with level) or Feat Progression.

At the Narrator’s option, an Ordinary may choose to exchange a level of the usual Skill Progression for a different trait with a value of 1 Progression Point (that of the 4 + Int Skill Progression). So, for example, an Ordinary attaining 3rd-level could trade the usual skill ranks for that level for a general feat (the only category Ordinaries can access by default), a level of Slow Combat Progression, Good Save Progression, or Slow Power Progression (although the character would also need to exchange a level of Skill Progression for one or more powers to make use of this). This allows higher-level Ordinaries to

gain some variety and one or two interesting “tricks” they may have picked up along the way.

Note that you can achieve this effect just as easily (and more effectively) by giving the Ordinary one or more heroic role levels, as mentioned in the *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* rulebook; this option is intended for minor tweaks to Ordinary progression. For an ex-soldier turned ordinary citizen, you’re still best off with a mixed-role Warrior/Ordinary character.

Some settings might even call for applying the Ordinary role to heroes, in order to limit their progression and make them less heroic and more, well, ordinary. This particularly suits genres like horror, where heroes are often otherwise ordinary people thrust into extraordinary circumstances (see **Chapter Four** for details) and later acquiring levels in one or more heroic roles.

THE HEROIC ROLES

Here’s a breakdown of the three heroic roles according to the Progressions in this chapter, showing how they are constructed. Use them as examples for creating new roles:

ADEPT

Combat Progression: Slow (2 points)

Skill Progression: 4 + Int (1 point)

Save Progression: Good Will, Normal Fortitude and Reflex (0 points)

Power Progression: Fast, Unlimited (2 points)

Core Ability: The Talent (*True20*, page 19)

The adept role’s clear focus is on powers, the role’s highest Progression, and on breadth of powers as well, since adepts have the entire power list to choose from by default. Their core ability supports this too, allowing them to use powers untrained and shrug off the fatigue of wielding their various abilities.

EXPERT

Combat Progression: Medium (3 points)
Skill Progression: 8 + Int (2 points)
Save Progression: One Good, Two Normal (0 points)
Power Progression: None (0 points)
Core Ability: Expertise (*True20*, page 20)

The expert is a good overall role. Its focus is on Skill Progression, which is good but not so high that the other Progressions suffer. A variant expert who's more bookish and less of an adventurer might trade a Slow Combat Progression for an even better Skill Progression (12 + Int) or a Slow Power Progression (for a "dabbler" in supernatural powers with a lot of knowledge and supporting skills).

WARRIOR

Combat Progression: Fast (4 points)
Skill Progression: 4 + Int (1 point)
Power Progression: None (0 points)
Core Ability: Determination (*True20*, page 21)

It's no mystery where this role's focus lies: the Fast Combat Progression says it all. The warrior has the ability to fight well, with a point invested in a decent Skill Progression to provide adventuring skills needed in the field. The warrior's core ability is all about surviving the next fight and having an edge over less determined foes.

SAMPLE CUSTOMIZED ROLES

The following are examples of custom-built roles using the guidelines in this chapter. They are suitable for use alongside existing *True20* roles. By way of example, these roles use some of the new core abilities described previously.

PRIEST

Combat Progression: Medium (3 points)
Skill Progression: 4 + Int (1 point)
Save Progression: Medium Fortitude and Will, Normal Reflex (0 points)
Power Progression: Medium, Broad (1 point)
Feat Access: Adept
Core Ability: Higher Guidance

The priest is a kind of fantasy generalist: a decent combatant with solid Fortitude and Will saves and access to a broad selection of supernatural powers suitable to the priest's patron god or pantheon, usually including powers like Cure and Ward (against the faith's enemies). Traditionally, priestly powers rely on Wisdom; priests use their Higher Guidance to help make wise choices for themselves and their allies.

MARTIAL ARTIST

Combat Progression: Unarmed Fast (2 points), Armed Medium (1.5 points), using the option for Split Combat Progressions.
Skill Progression: 4 + Int (1 point)
Save Progression: All Medium (0.25 points)
Power Progression: Slow, Narrow (0.25 points)

Feat Access: Expert, with Improved Strike as a standard feat at 1st level.

Core Ability: Amazing Reflex Save

The martial artist is a specialized warrior focusing on unarmed combat, becoming a kind of "living weapon." The role's unarmed Combat bonus equals that of a warrior, although its skill with weapons lags behind. The role also has access to a narrow set of powers involving enhancing the body and unarmed abilities, including Body Control, Enhance Ability, Enhance Senses, Supernatural Speed, and Supernatural Strike.

HOLY WARRIOR

Combat Progression: Fast (4 points)
Skill Progression: 2 + Int (0.5 points)
Save Progression: Medium Fortitude and Will, Normal Reflex (0 points)
Power Progression: Medium, Narrow (0.5 points)
Feat Access: Warrior
Core Ability: Higher Purpose

The holy warrior combines the martial skills of a warrior with access to a narrow set of powers suited to the role's devotion to a particular deity or pantheon—essentially a narrow subset of the priest's broad powers. Holy Warriors are better fighters than priests, but have fewer skills and less access to powers overall. They also lack access to power-modifying adept feats, having combat-oriented warrior feats instead. They're front-line fighters against the enemies of their Higher Purpose.





CHAPTER TWO: FANTASY ADVENTURES

The clash of steel, the chanting of sorcerers, and the roar of dragons: these are the hallmarks of the fantasy genre. Fantasy is distinguished from other genres by the inclusion of a supernatural element such as magic as a key part of the story's plot, theme or setting. This supernatural element has profound effects on the setting, making it different from our own world in fantastic ways. This genre allows you to explore your imagination. Virtually anything can be possible in a fantasy setting. You can tell stories filled with wonder and magic, from timeless tales about the struggle of the

human spirit and the search for identity to a bloody kick-in-the-door high-adrenaline hackfest. Fantasy often overlaps with science fiction and horror genres, but even then, it maintains a distinctive feel. More than any other genre, fantasy makes use of a number of recognizable symbols and archetypes in order to tell a story. Each archetype serves as a framework from which a myriad of variations can be built while retaining the same core idea. In the following pages you will find guidelines for using these symbols, themes and archetypes as tools with which to build or enrich your own setting.

SUBGENRES

The fantasy genre can be broken down into any number of overlapping subgenres. Brief descriptions of the more common fantasy subgenres are provided here.

MYTHOLOGY, FAIRYTALES AND FOLKLORE

Mythology is rooted in the belief systems of ancient cultures. It serves as a foundation for most fantasy subgenres. It is in mythology and folklore that we find the origins of most of fantasy's themes and archetypes. Myths that have molded and shaped the fantasy genre include the epic of Gilgamesh, the Odyssey, the Iliad, Beowulf, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, Dante's Inferno and the legends of King Arthur.

HIGH FANTASY

When most people think of fantasy, they think of fantasy as seen in J.R.R. Tolkien's writings. Many consider Tolkien to be the father of the high fantasy genre. His work in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy is one of the primary inspirations for high fantasy.

In high fantasy, the plot often revolves around an epic conflict between good and evil (or occasionally between order and chaos) taking place in

a magical world. The stakes are high, and the protagonists often find the fate of the world rests upon their shoulders. The heroes usually begin the story as outcasts, operating outside of regular society. They must struggle to overcome their weaknesses before they can prevail against the overwhelming forces of evil. High fantasy depicts morality in an objective way rather than relative to the individuals involved. This moral tone is a strong theme in high fantasy. In addition to Tolkien, other prominent examples of high fantasy can be seen in C.S. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*, the *Chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever* by Stephen R. Donaldson, and the *Wheel of Time* series by Robert Jordan.

HISTORICAL FANTASY

Historical fantasy often takes a given time or place in the history of the real world, then speculates how things might have been if magic had existed and played a role in shaping events leading up to that time period. Alternatively, historical fantasy can be set in a fantasy world closely analogous to our own, with various fantasy cultures recognizably derived from different real-world cultural groups and ideologies. Like high fantasy, historical fantasy often draws heavily upon mythology, possibly including mythological creatures living among the people who historically believed in their existence.

ROMANTIC FANTASY

The "romance" in romantic fantasy does not just deal with relationships, but also deals heavily with idyllic visions of what the world could be like. As with high fantasy, many heroes begin as outcasts from society, but over the course of the story they often find a place in society that accepts them for who they are. Other themes present throughout this genre are the empowerment of women, the acceptance of same-sex relationships, harmony between humans and nature, psychic bonds, and the enlightened society. Romantic fantasy often features a strong theme of enlightenment and acceptance fighting against evil and intolerance. This genre was shaped primarily by writers such as Diane Duane, Mercedes Lackey and Tamora Pierce. Anyone interested in playing *True20* using the romantic fantasy subgenre should check out *Blue Rose*, the *Roleplaying Game of Romantic Fantasy*, also available from Green Ronin Publishing.

SWORD AND SORCERY

Sword and sorcery is a subgenre in which swashbuckling heroes engage in exciting and extremely violent plots as they quest after glory, wealth and power. Sword-and-sorcery heroes often act in amoral ways. Even when they perform good deeds, they are usually acting in their own self interest. There is an element of romance in this subgenre, but it is not as prominent here as it is in romantic fantasy. This subgenre avoids the objective moral values of high fantasy and has no sense of cosmic justice. Common folk are often distrustful of the heroes of this genre, describing them as "adventurers" in a sense that is often synonymous with "thieves." The sword-and-sorcery subgenre is also marked with an emphasis on intense action and immediate physical threats. The "Conan the Barbarian" stories of Robert E. Howard are a primary inspiration for this genre.



In a sword-and-sorcery game, heroes should be allowed to indulge their vice nature as often as their virtue nature without incurring many penalties. Adventures will often focus on the acquisition of treasure and magical items. In order to move the story forward, the Narrator may wish to ensure the treasures are soon spent or the magical items become lost or destroyed, thus necessitating the heroes to go out and seek the next artifact or treasure trove. Unsavory acts, such as looting the corpses of fallen enemies, may become commonplace in such a game.

CONTEMPORARY FANTASY

Contemporary fantasy takes place in a modern world, much like our own. The major difference is a strong supernatural element somewhere in the

world, whether it is the existence of magic or of supernatural beings such as zombies, vampires, werewolves, ghosts, fairies and immortals. This element is often hidden from the public eye, and may introduce elements of conspiracy into the setting. Examples of contemporary fantasy can be seen in the works of Joss Whedon, Neil Gaiman, H.P. Lovecraft, and J. K. Rowling. For more information on running a *True20* game in a contemporary setting, refer to **Chapter Five**.

DARK FANTASY

Dark fantasy takes the high fantasy or swords-and-sorcery subgenres and mixes them with elements of the horror genre. For more information on how to use horror elements in your game, see to **Chapter Four**.

GENRE CONVENTIONS

In addition to the presence of supernatural elements, fantasy settings usually contain a source of evil the heroes must overcome. They often use recognizable character archetypes to build and advance the plot.

SUPERNATURAL RATINGS

Since fantasy is defined by its supernatural elements, it is important to define the degree of influence supernatural forces have in the setting. This can be achieved by assigning one of the following supernatural ratings (SRs) to the setting.

SR 0: NON-FANTASY

A campaign with this SR has no supernatural powers, dragons, elementals, fey, outsiders, supernatural beasts, undead, or any other element of the supernatural. If gods exist in this world, they are distant and do not intervene in the affairs of mortals in any obvious way. If there are constructs in the setting, they are entirely technological in nature. SR 0 campaigns are typically not considered fantasy, but might have a place in a pulp-inspired setting.

SR 1: FORGOTTEN LORE

At this level, heroes are not allowed to acquire or use supernatural powers—such powers restricted to a very few elite Narrator characters. No one can achieve more than 7 levels of adept, thereby capping power ranks at +10. Aberrations, dragons, elementals, fey, monstrous humanoids, outsiders, supernatural beasts, and undead are rare or nonexistent. Few people in this campaign are aware the supernatural exists, possibly not even the heroes. Any encounter with the supernatural will be extremely unnerving, and onlookers may risk terror or even insanity. Some of the flashier supernatural powers such as Apport, Blink Teleport, Elemental Aura, Elemental Strike, Imbue Life, Self Shaping and Teleport do not exist.

SR 2: EMERGING ARCANA

Heroes cannot begin as adepts at 1st level. At least half their character levels must be in a heroic role other than adept. Some Narrator characters may be exempt from this restriction. Nobody can achieve more than 10 levels of adept. Most people are unaware the supernatural exists, but the heroes and other knowledgeable Narrator characters know of it, even if they do not understand it. Those who use supernatural powers may risk corruption, mutation or madness. Some of the flashier supernatural powers such as Apport, Blink Teleport, Elemental Aura, Elemental Strike, Imbue Life, Self Shaping and Teleport do not exist.

SR 3: LOW MAGIC

In a low magic setting, the Narrator should discourage more than one or two of the heroes from becoming adepts. He may choose to require them to take at least one level of expert before gaining any levels as adepts. Most people in such a setting are aware magic exists, but few

truly understand it. Your average Narrator character will be extremely distrustful of anyone who displays supernatural powers or traits.

Nobody can achieve more than 13 levels in the adept role. Those who use supernatural powers may risk corruption, mutation or madness. Some of the flashier supernatural powers such as Apport, Blink Teleport, Elemental Aura, Elemental Strike, Imbue Life, Self Shaping and Teleport are unavailable to the heroes, if they exist in the setting at all. All power check Difficulties for these powers are increased by 10.

SR 4: RISING TIDE

In an SR 4 campaign, supernatural things and events are common enough that not everyone fears them automatically. Nobody can achieve more than 16 levels in the adept role. Some of the flashier supernatural powers such as Apport, Blink Teleport, Elemental Aura, Elemental Strike, Imbue Life, Self Shaping and Teleport have their power check Difficulties increased by 5, if they exist in the setting at all.

SR 5: DAWN OF MAGIC

In an SR 5 setting, there are no restrictions on the number of adept levels any character may achieve. Travel to other planes of existence may be possible, but is rare. This is the default assumption of the *True20* core rulebook for any campaign with adepts and supernatural powers.

SR 6: HIGH ARCANA

In an SR 6 setting, non-adepts may use feat slots to purchase 4 ranks worth of supernatural powers in a similar manner to the Skill Training feat. Ranks in various supernatural powers may be purchased in this way up to a maximum rank equal to the hero's total level + 3, divided by 2. Supernatural items and creatures may become fairly common in such a setting, possibly even being bought and sold in stores or markets for a high price. Divine intervention in mortal affairs may occur on a semi-regular basis, including relationships and even procreation with mortals.

SR 7: EVERYDAY SUPERNATURAL

This level of supernatural influence allows non-adepts to use feat slots to purchase supernatural powers at a rank equal to the hero's total level + 3, divided by 2. Lower the Difficulty of all fatigue saves for supernatural power use by adepts by 5. In such a setting, magic may have evolved right along with technology or replaced technology altogether. Divine intervention in mortal affairs is fairly commonplace, and the descendants of gods are many. Many adventures may involve traveling to other worlds or planes of existence.

SR 8: WORLD OF WONDERS

In a world of wonders, astonishing sights punctuate the landscape. It is not uncommon to see castles built on the tops of clouds, to have the dead come back to life, or to meet a divine being during a casual walk. Heroes may be on a first name basis with gods and perform unimaginable feats.



As with SR 7, non-adepts may use feat slots to purchase supernatural powers at a rank equal to the hero's total level + 3, divided by 2. The Difficulty of all power checks and fatigue saves for supernatural power use are lowered by 5 for adepts. Fantastical possibilities such as time travel may be possible at this stage.

SR 9 AND HIGHER

This level of supernatural activity reaches beyond comprehension. The laws of nature are bent and broken through supernatural means, to the point where they have become largely irrelevant.

SITUATIONAL ARCHETYPES AS ADVENTURE HOOKS

Situational archetypes are recurrent themes in fantasy literature that can be used as generic frameworks for adventures. A list of situational archetypes is provided along with a sample adventure hook for each.

THE INITIATION

One or more beginning-level heroes are faced with some test to prove their worth or make a name for themselves. This often involves some form of ritual to signify the coming of age of the initiate(s).

Example: Before the heroes are granted knighthood, access to weapons and armor and the freedom to come and go on adventures, they must prove themselves worthy of bearing arms in the annual jousting tournament.

THE FALL

One of the heroes has committed some transgression or act of disobedience that leads to their expulsion from their family, society, religious order or some other group, until they can find some way to redeem themselves.



Example: After removing the helmet of a slain adversary, one of the heroes finds to his horror that the enemy he just killed was actually his brother, acting under magical compulsion. The hero's family is distraught and invokes the curse of the kinslayer. The hero is doomed to never return home until he has somehow made amends.

THE ODYSSEY

The heroes are sent in search of some secret knowledge necessary to restore fertility and prosperity to the kingdom. Along the journey, the heroes and their companions become isolated or lost and enter into a literal or figurative hell, where they are forced to face their own dark sides and vice natures. The heroes must accept personal responsibility to return to the land of the living.

Example: The heroes find they need information they can only get from an old ally and mentor of theirs who has since passed away. They must journey into the underworld and locate their friend's spirit to question him, and find some way to return from the nether realm with this knowledge and their lives.

THE MAGIC WEAPON

The heroes must journey to find a supernatural weapon of great power. Only one of the heroes can use it to its fullest potential, however, due to some special quality that only she possesses.

Example: The heroes hear rumors that the holy sword of the sun-god has been located in an ancient ruin, but only the pure of heart may wield its might.

THE QUEST

The heroes must search for a person or talisman. If found, it will restore fertility to a wasted land whose desolation may be mirrored in the disability or illness of its ruler.

Example: *The land has fallen under a terrible drought and locust plague the countryside, causing a great famine. The king appears possessed by some devil, and is in no condition to lead his people to a solution to this grave threat. The heroes must locate and return with the Book of Days, using its ancient knowledge to drive away the evil spirits that have plagued the land with misfortune.*

THE REBIRTH

After one of the heroes suffers a debilitating disease, fatal wound, or death, the other heroes must search for a way to restore their companion to life and good health.

Example: *A fiendish adversary poisons one of the heroes with a deadly toxin brewed in the depths of the netherworld. There is no known antidote. According to legends, only immersion in the healing waters of the mountain spring of destiny can save their companion now.*

THE RISE OF EVIL

The forces of evil are gathering in great strength. It is up to the heroes to fight against the odds to preserve what good there is left in the world.

Example: *A long forgotten demigod of chaos and destruction has emerged from hiding. He is amassing his hordes of loyal cultists and monstrous servants into an army the likes of which has not been seen for ages. This demigod seeks to topple the established order and remake the known world in his own image.*

THE TASK

One or more of the heroes must perform a difficult task, such as slaying a great monster in order to save a kingdom, win the affections of their true love, or identifying themselves so they may claim their rightful position, title or heritage.

Example: *One of the heroes discovers he is actually the bastard son of the king and the only true heir to the throne. When confronted, the aging king asks the hero to prove his lineage by finding the long lost “sword of kings” and use it to slay the dragon plaguing the kingdom.*

THE HERO’S JOURNEY

According to Joseph Campbell, author of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, everyone has the potential to become a hero. What makes heroes unique is their fearlessness in their search for identity. Heroes are the people who dare to do what nobody else can. They are the characters who define themselves in the context of great challenges, and thus discover great destinies.

The following is an overview of Campbell’s “hero’s journey” and advice for using it as a framework to build your own adventures. The hero’s journey is split into three basic segments: the departure, the descent, and the return. Each of these segments is broken into its basic components and explained in the context of a *True20* game. The elements of the journey are not absolute and manifest differently (even in a different order) from one journey to the next.

PROLOGUE

At the beginning of a campaign, the players and their heroes may be somewhat disoriented, particularly if they are new to roleplaying or the *True20* system. Disorientation tends to lead to suggestibility, and it is in the Narrator’s hands to get the story rolling.

Before setting out on the adventure, the heroes enter the story and are introduced to each other in such a way that they may identify with one another. The Narrator should work with each character to develop both an internal and an external problem or conflict. This may take the form of a tragic flaw, a deep emotional or physical wound, or some other

need. Often these conflicts will be expressed in the hero’s selection of a virtue and a vice.

At this time, the heroes can each be given a chance to reveal something about their back story and how they came to be here. Meanwhile the Narrator must establish the mood and theme of the setting. The Narrator may also reveal some of the overarching conflicts of the campaign setting, and what is at stake. This step need only be performed at the beginning of a campaign, and need not be repeated before each adventure.

THE DEPARTURE

The departure involves the heroes leaving behind all that is familiar to embark on a quest into the unknown. This usually takes up about the first fourth of an adventure, and takes the heroes from the adventure hook that began the journey to right before the adventure’s major ordeal.

THE CALL TO ADVENTURE

Once the theme is set, the Narrator introduces an “adventure hook,” or an incident that initiates the story and gets the plot moving forward. This hook presents the heroes with a problem or challenge. It could take the form of a temptation, such as finding the location of an ancient treasure; a loss that must be avenged; or the appearance of a herald who brings news of some mission or warns them against an impending tragedy. A well-crafted adventure hook will have something each hero can gain or a misfortune that can be averted by participating in the adventure. Some of the heroes may be in desperate situations, such as being in great debt or grave danger, so they will have little choice but to accept the call to adventure.

REFUSAL OF THE CALL

Once the call to adventure has been issued, it is up to the heroes to act. They may go along with the adventure hook or resist with excuses as to why their characters would avoid the call. After each hero has had a chance to accept the call, the Narrator may wish to add incentive by playing off the reluctant heroes’ internal and external conflicts or their virtues and vices, or foreshadow that continued refusal leads to impending tragedy. If few of the heroes seem interested in the call to adventure, the Narrator may want to try a different adventure hook. This could lead to the same adventure or an entirely different journey altogether.

SUPERNATURAL AID

Once the call has been answered, the heroes must often search for a source of wisdom. This source may be personified in a Narrator character serving as a mentor to the heroes, such as an older (and higher level) heroic character, a wise man, or a seer. Alternatively, the source of wisdom may be a dream, vision, prophecy, or knowledge gained from an ancient tome. This wisdom is meant to provide the heroes with important guidance on their adventure, give them the clues they need to succeed in the trials ahead and assist them in overcoming any fears they may have. The heroes might also be gifted with special weapons or supernatural items to aid them in their journey.

CROSSING THE FIRST THRESHOLD

After finding a source of wisdom, the heroes must face their first challenge. This often takes the form of a low level adversary in a conflict meant to test their resolve and build their confidence. This first threat may even be a bluff or an illusion, in which case all the heroes need to do is bravely press onward. If the first challenge is an adversary, the heroes may be able to turn them into an ally.

After the first challenge has been overcome the heroes set off on the beginning of their journey, entering an unknown part of the world. From this point on there is no turning back. The beginning of the journey is often exhausting, frustrating and disorienting. Depending on where their journey takes them, the heroes may risk fatigue and getting lost.

TESTS, ALLIES & ENEMIES

The Narrator should tailor descriptions of the new world the heroes are experiencing so it contrasts sharply with their comparatively ordinary origins. The heroes find themselves tested by the Narrator with a number of challenging encounters, but have a low risk of character death. This allows the players to get used to their hero's abilities and weaknesses, and gives the Narrator a chance to feel out what kinds of challenges the heroes can handle.

This is a time for the heroes to form friendships and rivalries between themselves and the Narrator characters they meet along the way, as well as learning any special qualities of the region such as risks of avalanches, traps, quicksand or bandits. Finally the heroes find themselves at a waystation of some sort, such as a bar, inn or tavern. Their visit may involve food, music, information gathering, flirtations, gambling, and danger. While not entirely safe, this is a place to rest for a short while.

THE BELLY OF THE WHALE

After a short rest, the heroes must make preparations for the central ordeal of the adventure. This may be their last chance to buy supplies, sharpen weapons, and polish armor before heading into the thick of things.

Once the heroes set off again, the Narrator can test them with a variety of complications such as lame horses, leaking boats, bad weather, perusing enemies, hostile natives, and dangerous terrain. The heroes encounter a number of situations where all is not as it seems. They must learn to beware of tricks, traps and illusions.

Finally, the heroes risk death as they find themselves faced with their first major challenge. The heroes enter the underworld (either literally or figuratively), going down into an abysmal place from which there seems to be no exit or escape route. In many adventures, this location may be a dungeon of some kind. The heroes start to understand their main adversary and learn about his plans and motives.

THE DESCENT

The descent makes up the bulk of the adventure. It encompasses the major ordeal of the journey as well as the rising action, ending with the adventure's climax. The descent usually takes up a little over half of the adventure.

THE ROAD OF TRIALS

The road of trials is the main bulk of the adventure. The heroes encounter a series of tests, tasks, monsters, traps, and other challenges, which have a tendency to occur in threes. During this time the heroes brush with death; one of them or their companions may die or become disfigured.

The Narrator may somehow confront the heroes with their own dark sides. This may take the form of internal struggles, struggles between the heroes or a confrontation with adversaries representing darker versions of themselves. The heroes must face their fears, often personified in the form of a dragon or a creature of nightmare.

TEMPTATION FROM THE TRUE PATH

The Narrator confronts the heroes with a compelling reason to abandon their quest. Heroes with religious convictions may have their faith tested and be tempted to stray from the path of spiritual purity. Other temptations may include indulgence in the heroes' respective vices.

ATONEMENT

The Narrator may give the heroes an opportunity to atone for their past transgressions, whether they gave in to temptation, lost their faith, or betrayed their companions earlier in the adventure. If applicable, this atonement may be witnessed and recognized by a father-figure such as the hero's patron deity or the presence of one of their parents in physical or spiritual form. The atonement may also exact a price from

the hero, ranging from loss of a special item to the ultimate sacrifice of a hero's life.

CONFRONTATION WITH THE ENEMY

The heroes have their first direct confrontation with the adventure's main adversary. The full extent of the Enemy's plans or powers may become apparent for the first time. They discover the full threat posed by their adversary and realize there is more at stake than they had thought. The heroes may need to use special knowledge and resources they have gained along the way to defeat the Enemy. While there is a chance the Enemy may die in this encounter, it should be difficult for the heroes to achieve this. Instead, the Enemy may retreat to be encountered again at a later time. The Enemy is not always an individual and may be a more abstract adversary, such as death itself.

THE REWARD & THE ULTIMATE BOON

After the heroes have traveled the road of trials and defeated the main adversary, the Narrator should take the opportunity to reward the heroes for their efforts. They may find treasure or supernatural items. Alternative rewards may be important information or advancement in level to reflect personal growth. The heroes also find whatever item or information they initially set out on the journey to discover.

THE RETURN

The return encompasses everything that happens from the adventure's first climax to its resolution. In some cases, the first climax experienced in the Descent was a false climax, and the real climax awaits the heroes on the Road Back.

THE ROAD BACK

Now that the heroes have obtained the boon, they must escape with it and their lives intact. The return can be just as dangerous as the initial journey, particularly if the Enemy is still active, if there are still guardians that have not been defeated, or if the heroes have awakened new and vengeful forces.

RESCUE FROM WITHOUT

While escaping with the boon, the heroes may receive guidance or assistance from rescuers who help them escape from the abyss and back to the normal world. This may particularly be the case if one or more of the heroes is badly wounded or otherwise weakened.

RETURN WITH THE BOON & FINAL MASTERY

After the climax, it is time to wrap up loose ends. The heroes have successfully retrieved what they came for, whether treasure, revenge, justice, a talisman, an elixir, secret knowledge, or a supernatural item, or else they are doomed to repeat the ordeal before victory can be claimed.

The heroes may wish to return to areas left unexplored or rest before returning home with the boon, a literal or figurative form of healing and restoration. Captured adversaries may be imprisoned, interrogated or otherwise punished. The heroes may have leveled-up, gained Conviction, or received some other reward proportional to the ordeal they have gone through. The Narrator may choose to use any loose ends left unresolved as adventure hooks, leading to an entirely new adventure cycle, and a new hero's journey.

NARRATOR CHARACTER ARCHETYPES

A number of archetypes are common to the fantasy genre. Narrators may want to consider including them in *True20* fantasy adventures in order to meet players' expectations.

PROTAGONIST ARCHETYPES

- **Beast Friend:** This is an animal companion who represents the hero's relationship with nature. This archetype can be introduced into your game through the Familiar or Companion feats, or if one of the heroes chooses to play an awakened beast. Beast Friends are common in romantic fantasy.
- **Changeling:** This is a heroic character spirited away in her youth to be fostered by strangers. She is later returned to her true home and heritage, but as an outsider. Here, she can see new problems and solutions others cannot. This concept may be worked into any hero's backstory.
- **Hunting Group of Companions:** Heroes often have a loyal group of companions willing to face any number of perils at their side (Robin Hood's Merry Men, or the Knights of the Round Table). A hero may gain such companionship with the other heroes, or may gain his own group of loyal companions through the Leadership feat.
- **Initiate:** Initiates are beginning (1st level) heroic characters who, prior to their first real quest, must go through some sort of training, test, or ceremony. In fantasy literature they are often portrayed as innocent, and often wear white. The heroes themselves may be the initiates, or they may meet or be required to protect a young initiate.
- **Loyal Retainer:** Many heroes have a loyal sidekick or servant who is heroic in their own right. They serve as protectors of the hero and reflect the hero's capacity for honor, nobility and companionship. This archetype can be introduced into your game through the Companion feat.
- **Tutor:** Much like the heroic mentor, these Narrator characters serve as teachers to the initiates. They may be role models to the heroes or even a father or mother figure. The tutor imparts the knowledge and skills necessary to survive the quest.

ANTAGONIST ARCHETYPES

- **Devil Figure:** These characters represent evil incarnate. They pretend to be on the heroes' side and may offer riches, fame or knowledge in exchange for something the heroes know they must never give up such as loyalty to their lord or companions, their code of honor, or their very soul. These characters may be mortal or fiendish and use honeyed words to weave a complicated web of lies to sow distrust. Devil figures usually have maximum ranks in the Bluff skill and the Skill Focus (Bluff) feat.
- **The Creature of Nightmare:** This is a monster summoned (literally or metaphorically) from the darkest parts of the human psyche. It often takes the form of a perversion or desecration of the human body (examples might include lycanthropes or undead). This creature is terrible in its power, often exceeding any single hero in level. The Narrator may want to give such a creature the Frightful Presence trait to represent its fearsome nature.
- **The Evil Villain with the Ultimately Good Heart:** Many stories include a redeemable villain that can be saved by the nobility or love of one or more of the heroes. This often occurs after the villain has been beaten, when the heroes choose to show mercy or appeal to the villain's inner virtue, causing their beaten foe to shift away from his vice nature. Whether or not this character is ultimately redeemed and joins the side of good hinges upon the actions of the heroes, but the Narrator can provide clues that such a villain still has some good left inside, along with an idea of what his virtue nature might be. If the heroes manage to redeem this villain, they may gain a powerful and loyal ally (see the **Corruption** rules for more on corruption and redemption).



OTHER NARRATOR CHARACTER ARCHETYPES

- **Damsel in Distress:** This is a vulnerable character (often female) that the heroes must rescue. She may become the bait for a trap to ensnare the heroes.
- **Earth Mother:** This character is symbolic of the earth's fruition, abundance and fertility. She offers spiritual, emotional and physical succor to those she meets. She is often depicted as a wide hipped, large bosomed, kindly natured woman dressed in earth tones. Occasionally she may secretly be an avatar of a god or spirit of nature.
- **Martyr:** This is a character (usually humanoid, but occasionally an animal) that must ultimately die or be destroyed in some fashion in order to cleanse the corruption and sin visited upon the community, or to redeem an important individual.
- **Outcast:** This is a character banished from a community or social group for some crime (real or imagined) against his peers. The outcast is usually destined to become a wanderer.
- **Platonic Ideal:** This character represents a spiritual ideal of purity and may serve as a source of inspiration and intellectual rather than physical attraction for one of the heroes (such as Dante's Beatrice). Such a character may have the Dedicated feat focused on a virtuous religion, philosophy or deity.
- **Star-Crossed Lovers:** Two characters are engaged in a love affair that is fated to end badly for one or both of them due to some tragic situation, often the disapproval of their love by society, friends, or family.
- **Tempter/Temptress:** This is an individual characterized by sensuous beauty who may well prove to be the downfall of one or more of the heroes. Such characters always have the Attractive feat and may use the Bluff skill for seductive purposes.

FANTASY HEROES



Fantasy heroes run the gamut from epic to tragic. They can be noble and chivalrous or grim, gritty antiheroes. In this section, we'll look at the nuts and bolts of creating *True20* fantasy heroes.

BACKGROUNDS

Fantasy heroes can come from a wide variety of backgrounds. There are often several human cultures in a fantasy setting, each with their own cultural background. Settings with a stronger dose of supernatural involvement (SR 4+) may have a variety of humanoid racial backgrounds as well, possibly including dwarves, elves, and halflings, among others. Players may even be able to pick from a variety of awakened animals. This section includes sample backgrounds to get you started.

MYTHIC RACE BACKGROUNDS

In a fantasy setting there is no particular reason to limit characters to being human. This section provides sample backgrounds for mythic creatures to be used as characters.

CENTAUR

Centaurs are a race of extremes. Many are wild, bawdy and uncivilized, yet they have a great capacity for heroism, knowledge, and wisdom.

- **Initial Size:** Medium
- **Speed:** 50 ft.
- **Initial Ability Adjustments:** +2 Strength, +1 Constitution, -1 Intelligence.
- **Bonus Feats:** Armor Training (light and heavy), Weapon Training
- **Darkvision:** 60 ft.
- **Natural Weapons:** Centaurs can kick opponents, dealing +1 lethal damage.
- **Favored Feats:** Cleave, Spirited Charge.
- **Racial Levels:** 4. Before a centaur can take any levels in a heroic role, it must attain all 4 racial levels.
- **Level Lag:** 1
- **Special:** Note that while centaurs do grow to be Large in size, their torsos are still human sized, so they can only use weapons sized for a Medium creature. Also note that centaur ability adjustments include their increased size.

ELF, ALFAR (FROST ELF)

Alfar are elves of the icy mountain forests and the cold and unforgiving arctic regions.

- **Ability Adjustments:** +2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, +1 Charisma
- **Bonus Feats:** Animal Empathy, Night Vision, Talented (Performance (any two)), Trackless, Weapon Training

CENTAUR RACIAL LEVELS

Level	Combat	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Feats	Traits
1	+1	+0	+2	+2	1	Darkvision 60 ft., Hooves, +1 damage
2	+2	+0	+3	+3	0	+1 Dex, +1 Con, +1 Wis
3	+3	+1	+3	+3	1	+2 Str, Large Size, Hooves +2 damage
4	+4	+1	+4	+4	0	+1 Dex, +1 Natural Armor

- **Ageless:** Elves do not grow old once they reach adulthood. They gain the benefits of advancing in age without accumulating any of the penalties.
- **Eagle Eyed:** Elves can see twice as far as a human in good light.
- **Cold Resistance:** +2
- **Favored Feats:** Choose 1 supernatural power (Elves treat their total level as their adept level for this power).
- **Level Lag:** 2

ELF, LLEDRITH SIDHE (FOREST ELF)

Lledrith Sidhe are elves of the deepest forests.

- **Ability Adjustments:** +1 Dexterity, +1 Wisdom
- **Bonus Feats:** Animal Empathy, Night Vision, Skill Focus (Survival), Trackless
- **Ageless:** Elves do not grow old once they reach adulthood. They gain the benefits of advancing in age without accumulating any of the penalties.
- **Eagle Eyed:** Elves can see twice as far as a human in good light.
- **Favored Feats:** Choose 1 supernatural power (Elves treat their total level as their adept level for this power).
- **Level Lag:** 1

ELF, DAOINE SIDHE (ELF LORD)

Daoine Sidhe are the immortal predecessors of all lesser elven races.

- **Ability Adjustments:** +1 Dexterity, +1 Intelligence, +2 Wisdom, +2 Charisma
- **Bonus Feats:** Animal Empathy, Iron Will, Night Vision, Talented (Craft (metalworking), and Knowledge (supernatural)), Trackless, Trailblazer, Weapon Training
- **Ageless:** Elves do not grow old once they reach adulthood. They gain the benefits of advancing in age without accumulating any of the penalties.
- **Eagle Eyed:** Elves can see twice as far as a human in good light.
- **Damage Reduction:** 2/cold iron
- **Favored Feats:** Choose 1 supernatural power (Elves treat their total level as their adept level for this power).
- **Level Lag:** 3

FAUN

Fauns are a race of fey closely related to centaurs. Like their satyr cousins, fauns have human-like bodies with goat legs, hooves and small goat-horns. Fauns are curious, thrill-seeking individuals, but more moderate than their satyr cousins in the pursuit of hedonistic pleasures.

- **Ability Adjustments:** -1 Strength, +1 Dexterity, -1 Wisdom, +1 Charisma
- **Bonus Feats:** Fascinate (Perform), Night Vision, Talented (Perform (dance), Perform (musical instruments))
- **Natural Weapons:** Fauns can strike in combat with their horns or hooves, doing +1 lethal damage.
- **Favored Feats:** Fascinate (other skills), Suggestion

HUMAN CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS

As detailed in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*, various human cultures can also serve as backgrounds. This section looks at some cultural backgrounds appropriate to the fantasy genre.

AMAZON

Amazons are a group of humans renowned for their women warriors. Their society is matriarchal. The women work and fight while the men perform household chores and care for the children.

- **Bonus Feats for Amazon Women:** Attack Focus (bow), Skill Focus (Ride), Weapon Training

POWERFUL BACKGROUNDS, LEVEL LAG AND RACIAL LEVELS

More powerful backgrounds in *True20* may include a “Level Lag.” This is the suggested number of levels a character with this background should lag behind the rest of the heroes in order to remain at the same relative power level. Other backgrounds have a number of “Racial Levels” listed. These racial levels must be completed before the hero begins progression in a heroic role in order to gain the full benefits of the racial background to which they are attached. The hero is then free to begin acquiring levels in a heroic role using the rules for multi-role heroes, except they also gain the core ability of the first heroic role in which they take a level.

Example: A group of 2nd level heroes could include a 1st level centaur hero (the centaur is one level behind the others due to his level lag). The centaur character must use his next three levels to complete the four racial levels all centaurs must take. Once the centaur reaches fifth level (at which point the other heroes in the group would be 6th level) the centaur character may take its first level in a heroic role, gaining that role’s core ability.

EXTRAPLANAR ELVES

In some campaigns, nonhuman races such as elves may be farie-folk from another realm. In this case, all elves have the fey type instead of the humanoid type, and gain the extraplanar subtype while retaining the elf subtype.

- **Bonus Feats for Amazon Men:** Endurance, Skill Focus (Craft (cooking)), Skill Focus (Diplomacy)
- **Favored Feats:** Attack Specialization, Greater Attack Focus

ATLANTEAN

Atlanteans are a race of sea-people who can commune with the creatures of the ocean’s depths. They are held in awe and fear by many seagoing cultures, ruling the waterways when they so choose.

- **Skills:** Atlanteans have a +8 bonus on Swim checks. They can always take 10 on Swim checks, even if rushed or threatened.
- **Aquatic empathy:** Atlanteans have the benefits of the Wild Empathy feat, but only with aquatic creatures.
- **Bonus Feats:** Night Vision
- **Hold breath:** Atlanteans can hold their breath for 60 rounds, plus 6 x their Constitution score in rounds before they risk drowning.
- **Water dependency:** Atlanteans dehydrate more easily than land-dwellers. They must be immersed in water once per day or consume twice as much water as a normal human. An Atlantean with no immersion and limited to normal human water consumption or less suffers from dehydration (see **Starvation and Dehydration** in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*).

EASTERNER

Easterners are the undisputed masters of unarmed combat, a skill developed after weapons were forbidden to all by the soldiers of the emperor.

- **Bonus Feats:** Improved Strike, Prone Fighting, Talented (Acrobatics and Jump)
- **Favored Feats:** Chokehold, Stunning Attack

HIGH MAN

High men were the first men to be created. They are perfectly formed and godlike. Their bearing is both regal and terrifying.

- **Ability Adjustments:** +1 Wisdom, +1 Charisma
- **Bonus Feats:** Attractive, Endurance, Leadership, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Weapon Training
- **Favored Feats:** Greater Weapon Focus, Inspire
- **Level Lag:** 1

HIGHLANDER

Highlanders are a members of a ferocious warrior race that lives in a mountainous region. They are known for their ferocity in combat, their passion in artistic performance and their intimate connection to nature.

- **Bonus Feats:** Startle, Taunt, Talented (Knowledge (nature), Survival)
- **Favored Feats:** Fascinate, Rage

HORSE LORD

The Horse Lords are a nomadic people who roam the plains, taming the wild horses that live there. From a very young age they learn to ride, and their cavalry are the finest the world has ever known.

- **Bonus Feats:** Animal Empathy (only applies to horses), Skill Focus (Handle Animal), Skill Focus (Ride)
- **Favored Feats:** Attack Focus, Spirited Charge

NOMAD

Nomads are a people of the desert. They are skilled at surviving in such harsh terrain, subsisting as traders and herders.

- **Bonus Feats:** Skill Focus (Survival), Talented (Handle Animal and Ride), Weapon Training
- **Favored Feats:** Diehard, Evasion

NORSEMAN

Norsemen are a fierce race of raiders from the icy north. They are known for their skill at sea and feared for their berserker warriors.

- **Bonus Feats:** Talented (Drive (water vehicles only) and Navigate), Skill Focus (Survival), Weapon Training
- **Favored Feats:** Rage, Tough



ROAMER

The roamers are an often persecuted and misunderstood race of wandering entertainers, acrobats and musicians. Few know where these folk originated from, but they are rumored to be gifted with second sight. Some say they are cursed to never cross the same river twice in the same year.

- **Bonus Feats:** Talented (Acrobatics and Slight of Hand), Skill Focus (Perform (pick any two))
- **Favored Feats:** Evasion, Sneak Attack

TRIBESMAN

Tribesmen come from any number of hunter-gatherer tribes. Their ability to track and bring down their quarry is unsurpassed.

- **Bonus Feats:** Skill Focus (Survival), Track, Trackless
- **Favored Feats:** Hide in Plain Sight, Tough

WILD MAN

Wild men are a barbaric and degenerate race of humans. They have no interest in the trappings of civilization, and often pose a grave threat to those who encroach on their territory. Many consider them little better than animals.

- **Bonus Feats:** Endurance, Track
- *Scent Trait*
- **Favored Feats:** Rage, Tough

SAMPLE AWAKENED BEAST BACKGROUNDS

Awakened beasts are gifted with intelligence and supernatural abilities. They are still creatures of the wild rather than of civilization. Awakened beasts have little need of cities, wealth, or agriculture, for example. They are close to nature and its cycles. Some of them are quite fond of humans while others are more wary, but in general they are cautious in their dealings with the “two-legged races.”

All awakened beasts have the following traits:

- **Abilities:** Awakened beasts have only 4 points to distribute among their abilities, rather than the 6 of other heroes.
- **Night Vision:** All awakened beasts gain Night Vision as a bonus feat.
- **Limited manipulation:** Awakened beasts have no hands or opposable thumbs, so they cannot easily manipulate objects. They are generally limited to the simple manipulations they can perform with their mouths and forelimbs. This means awakened beasts suffer a –20 penalty on checks involving manual dexterity, such as Craft, Disable Device, and Sleight of Hand. The Narrator may simply rule many tasks involving those skills impossible for awakened beasts (meaning they automatically fail when attempting them). This penalty does *not* apply to awakened beasts using the Manipulate Object power.
- **Cannot speak:** Awakened beasts cannot speak in humanoid tongues, although they are capable of communicating through the Mind Touch power. They are limited to the normal vocalizations of their animal type. This may limit their ability to use interaction skills in some situations.
- **No wealth:** Awakened beasts have a starting Wealth score of +0. They have a limited ability to carry money, and many items made for humanoids are of no use to them. Awakened beasts operating in human society accumulate Wealth normally from advancing in level.

AWAKENED BEAR RACIAL LEVELS

Level	Combat	Fort save	Ref Save	Will Save	Feats	Traits
1	+1	+2	+2	+0	1	Bite/claw +2 damage, Scent
2	+2	+3	+3	+0	0	+1 Str, +1 Wis
3	+3	+3	+3	+1	1	+1 Str, +1 Con
4	+4	+4	+4	+1	0	+1 Str, Large Size, Bite/claw +3 damage
5	+5	+4	+4	+1	0	+1 Str, +1 Con
6	+6	+5	+5	+2	1	+1 Str, +1 Con

AWAKENED HORSE RACIAL LEVELS

Level	Combat	Fort save	Ref Save	Will Save	Feats	Traits
1	+1	+2	+2	+0	1	Hooves +1 damage, Scent
2	+2	+3	+3	+0	0	+1 Wis, +10 ft. speed
3	+3	+3	+3	+1	1	+1 Str

AWAKENED LEOPARD RACIAL LEVELS

Level	Combat	Fort save	Ref Save	Will Save	Feats	Traits
1	+1	+2	+2	+0	1	Bite +2 dmg, claw +0 dmg, Pounce, Scent
2	+2	+3	+3	+0	0	+1 Dex, +1 Con, Rake
3	+3	+3	+3	+1	1	+1 Str, +1 Dex

AWAKENED WOLF RACIAL LEVELS

Level	Combat	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Feats	Traits
1	+1	+2	+2	+0	1	Bite +2 damage, Scent
2	+2	+3	+3	+0	0	Howl, +1 Wisdom

AWAKENED BEAR

Awakened bears are reclusive creatures, quick to anger when they or their young are threatened.

- **Initial Abilities:** +3 Strength, +1 Dexterity, +1 Constitution
- **Initial Size:** Medium
- **Speed:** 40 ft.
- **Skills:** Awakened bears have a +4 bonus on Swim checks.
- **Bonus Feats:** Improved Grab, Power (Mind Touch), Track
- **Natural Weapons:** Awakened bears attack by biting or clawing, causing Str+2 lethal damage.
- **Scent Trait**
- **Favored Feats:** Rage, Improved Critical
- **Level Lag:** 2

AWAKENED HORSE

Masters of the plains, awakened horses look much like normal horses and have the same ranges of coloration. They are fiercely independent; they allow no one except a trusted companion to ride them. They consider any attempt to break them as mounts as a form of enslavement.

- **Initial Abilities:** +2 Strength, +1 Dexterity, +2 Constitution
- **Size:** Large
- **Speed:** 40 ft.
- **Bonus Feats:** Endurance, Power (Mind Touch), Skill Focus (Notice)
- **Natural Attacks:** Awakened horses attack with their hooves, causing Str+1 lethal damage.
- **Scent Trait**
- **Favored Feats:** Diehard, Improved Critical (hoof)

AWAKENED LEOPARD

Awakened leopards are fiercely independent. These jungle cats are about four feet long and weigh about 120 pounds. They usually hunt at night.

The background presented here can be used to describe any feline of similar size, such as jaguars, panthers and mountain lions.

- **Initial Abilities:** +2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, +1 Constitution
- **Size:** Medium
- **Speed:** 40 ft., Climb 20 ft.
- **Skills:** Awakened leopards have a +8 bonus on Jump checks and a +4 bonus on Stealth checks. Awakened leopards have a +8 bonus on Acrobatics and Climb checks. An awakened leopard can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened. In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, the Stealth bonus improves to +8.
- **Bonus Feats:** Improved Grab, Power (Mind Touch)
- **Natural Weapons:** Awakened leopards attack with their claws, causing Str+0 lethal damage, or by biting, causing Str+2 lethal damage.
- **Scent Trait**
- **Favored Feats:** Critical Strike, Sneak Attack

AWAKENED WOLF

Awakened wolves live in tight knit packs. A friend of theirs is a friend for life, but they do not bond easily. They are eminently practical, sometimes ruthless, but also proud and honorable.

- **Initial Abilities:** +1 Strength, +2 Dexterity, +2 Constitution
- **Size:** Medium
- **Speed:** 50 ft.
- **Skills:** Awakened wolves have a +4 bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.
- **Bonus Feats:** Improved Trip, Power (Mind Touch), Track
- **Natural Weapon:** Awakened wolves attack by biting, causing Str+2 lethal damage.
- **Howl:** By letting out a howl as a move action, an awakened wolf of 2nd-level or greater gets a +4 bonus to Intimidate checks for the rest of that round.
- **Scent Trait**
- **Favored Feats:** Crippling Strike, Rage, Surprise Attack

HEROIC ROLES

The fantasy genre is one of the least limiting with respect to heroic roles. Warriors and experts brush shoulders on a regular basis and adepts are far more common in fantasy than in any other genre, particularly in high magic settings. Fantasy warriors include barbarian berserkers, tribal defenders, soldiers, crusaders, assassins, knights, archers, rangers, weapon-masters, musketeers, and paladins. Fantasy experts include bards, thieves, blacksmiths, herbalists, alchemists, lore masters, and scouts. Adepts include evil sorcerers, wizards, necromancers, druids, summoners, seers, and mystics.

Even the new roles presented in **Chapter One** can easily fit into a fantasy setting. The exact types of roles available vary based on the setting's flavor and Supernatural Rating. For example, adepts are less common in low-magic settings, and martial artists are less common in western European fantasy settings as compared to those with a more Asian flavor.

OPTIONAL RULE: HEROIC CHARACTER ARCHETYPES

These heroic archetypes represent symbolic characters of story and song, adding a mythic feel to your campaign. At the beginning of a campaign, each player chooses a heroic archetype for his or her hero. As the hero gains levels, they also gain levels and the associated benefits (called mythic gifts) of their heroic archetype. There is no reason two or more characters cannot have the same archetype at the same time.

CHANGING HEROIC ARCHETYPES

As the campaign unfolds, a player may wish to change heroic archetypes to explore a new aspect of their hero and add depth to their character. Each heroic archetype has certain exit points labeled "the unfolding myth" which allow the character to cease all progression in the previous heroic archetype and begin progressing in another, beginning at 1st level. With the Narrator's consent, a player may also change archetypes at any dramatically appropriate time in the story.

THE CHAMPION	
Level	Champion's Mythic Gifts
1	First Mythic Skill
2	Hero's Blade
3	Last Best Hope
4	Heroic Smite +2
5	Second Mythic Skill
6	<i>The Unfolding Myth</i>
7	Heroic Immunity (3 rounds)
8	Heroic Smite +3
9	Heroic Resolve I
10	The Elixir I
11	Heroic Immunity (4 rounds)
12	<i>The Unfolding Myth</i>
13	Heroic Smite +4
14	Third Mythic Skill
15	Heroic Immunity (5 rounds)
16	Heroic Resolve II
17	Heroic Smite +5
18	<i>The Unfolding Myth</i>
19	Heroic Immunity (6 rounds)
20	The Elixir II

The hero retains the abilities from the character levels assigned to the old archetype.

When changing heroic archetypes, there are limits to which ones you can switch to based on your current heroic archetype.

CHANGING HEROIC ARCHETYPES	
Heroic Archetype	May become
Champion	Fated or Mentor
Shadow	Champion or Trickster
Mentor	Maiden or Oracle
Oracle	Fated or Maiden
Trickster	Shadow or Mentor
Maiden	Oracle or Trickster
Fated	Champion or Shadow

MYTHIC SKILLS

Several of the following heroic archetypes provide the hero with a number of Mythic Skills. Such a character may choose one of their existing skills to become a Mythic Skill. You can take 10 on a Mythic Skill even if rushed or threatened. When you spend a Conviction point on performing this skill, you treat the roll as a 20 (meaning you don't need to roll the die at all, just apply the result of 20 to your skill modifier).

THE CHAMPION

Your heroic journey has a single purpose: To find and defeat "The Enemy."

HERO'S BLADE

Any weapon you wield has its Toughness increased by an amount equal to half your Champion archetype level.

LAST BEST HOPE

Once per game session, you gain a Conviction point at the beginning of your turn if you and all of your allies have expended all of your Conviction points.

HEROIC SMITE

You may spend a Conviction point after you successfully strike an opponent to increase the damage dealt by +2. You may even apply this bonus to damage from supernatural powers, provided the power requires an attack roll. The damage bonus for Heroic Smite increases to +3 at 8th level, +4 at 13th level, and +5 at 17th level.

THE UNFOLDING MYTH

You may change archetypes to the Fated or the Mentor and immediately gain the first Archetypal Gift listed there. If you instead choose to remain with your current archetype, you gain a bonus Conviction point.

HEROIC IMMUNITY

Choose any one supernatural power or offensive trait possessed by your Enemy. Spend a Conviction point to gain immunity to this ability for 3 rounds. You can only have one heroic immunity in effect at any given time, and it does not prevent damage from other opponents using that same power or trait. The duration of heroic immunity increases to 4 rounds at 11th level, 5 rounds at 15th level, and 6 rounds at 19th level.

HEROIC RESOLVE I

You may spend a Conviction point to gain immunity to fear effects for 6 rounds.



THE ELIXIR I

You may spend a Conviction point to gain a single non-fatiguing use of the Enhance Ability supernatural power with ranks equal to your Champion archetype level + 3, divided by 2.

HEROIC RESOLVE II

As Heroic Resolve I, but you also gain immunity to mind-influencing effects.

THE ELIXIR II

You may spend a Conviction point to gain a single non-fatiguing use of the Enhance Ability supernatural power with ranks equal to your Champion archetype level + 3.

THE SHADOW

Your destiny is tied to the Champion, but it is not yet clear whether your fate is to aid him or to supplant him.

SELECT CHAMPION

Upon assuming the shadow archetype, a hero must select a specific companion with the Champion archetype to whom they wish to tie their mythic gifts. If there is no champion amongst the Shadow's allies, the Shadow may instead select any hero with which they are traveling until one or more Champions are available to choose from. Once a Champion is selected, the selection cannot change until they die or otherwise part company with you.

THE ENEMY REVEALED

If the Narrator has revealed the Enemy, you may spend a Conviction point to sense the direction to the Enemy (regardless of distance). This ability lasts for 3 rounds.

SHADOW'S EDGE

When the Champion spends a Conviction point, if you have fewer Conviction points than the Champion's new total, you gain a Conviction point.

SHADOWFEAR I

You may spend a Conviction point to reveal your inner shadow in combat. All opponents within 30 feet must succeed at a Will saving throw (Difficulty = 10 + 1/2 your Shadow archetype level + your Charisma score) or be shaken for 3 rounds. You may not affect opponents with more levels than you.

THE UNFOLDING MYTH

You may change archetypes to the Champion or the Trickster and immediately gain the first Mythic Gift listed there. If you instead choose to remain with your current archetype, you gain a bonus Conviction point.

SHADOW BOON I

You may spend a Conviction point to gain a single non-fatiguing use of the Enhance Ability supernatural power as though you were a 1st-level adept.

SHADOWFEAR II

As Shadowfear I, but opponents who fail their save are frightened instead.

CHAMPION'S SHADOW I

When you and the Champion both spend Conviction points to independently attempt the same task, you gain a bonus to your roll as though the Champion were using the Aid action to help you. This does not increase the bonus you get when the Champion actually uses the Aid action, but rather provides you with an aid bonus when you are both performing the same action separately.

THE SHADOW

Level	Shadow's Mythic Gifts
1	Select Champion, First Mythic Skill
2	The Enemy Revealed
3	Shadow's Edge
4	Shadowfear I
5	Second Mythic Skill
6	<i>The Unfolding Myth</i>
7	Shadow Boon I
8	Shadowfear II
9	Champion's Shadow I
10	Shadow's Price I
11	Shadow Boon II
12	<i>The Unfolding Myth</i>
13	Champion's Shadow II
14	Third Mythic Skill
15	Shadow Boon III
16	Shadowfear III
17	Champion's Shadow III
18	<i>The Unfolding Myth</i>
19	Shadow Boon IV
20	Shadow's Price II

SHADOW'S PRICE I

At the beginning of your turn, if you have 0 Conviction points, you may take a Conviction point from the Champion (if he has any). You can either do this any number of times so long as you have the Champion's expressed consent on each occasion, or once per game session without the Champion's consent.

SHADOW BOON II

As Shadow Boon I, but it operates as though you were a 2nd-level adept.

CHAMPION'S SHADOW II

When you and the Champion both spend a Conviction point to attempt the same task, you may use the Champion's final result on the die if it is higher than your own.

SHADOW BOON III

As Shadow Boon I, but it operates as though you were a 3rd-level adept.

SHADOWFEAR III

As Shadowfear I, but opponents who fail their save are panicked instead.

CHAMPION'S SHADOW III

When you and the Champion both spend a Conviction point to attempt the same task, if the Champion succeeds on the roll, you succeed as well, achieving the same result.

SHADOW BOON IV

As Shadow Boon I, but it operates as though you were a 4th-level adept.

SHADOW'S PRICE II

As Shadow's Price I, but you may take a Conviction point from any ally. This can be done any number of times with the appropriate ally's consent, or once per ally per game session without their consent.

THE FATED

Fate toys with you as a cat toys with a mouse. Though it seems clear you are destined for greater things, you often wonder if the suffering along the journey will be worth the prize.

DAMAGE CONVERSION

Once per combat, you may spend a Conviction point to gain 2 points of Damage Conversion until the end of the current combat. Damage Conversion allows you to ignore up to its rating in non-lethal damage, or convert up to its rating in lethal damage to non-lethal damage. The amount of damage conversion gained increases to 4 points at 5th level, 6 points at 9th level and 8 points at 14th level.

LONG-SUFFERING

When you spend a Conviction point to gain a recovery check while outside of combat, you gain a +2 bonus to your check. This bonus increases to +4 at 10th level and +6 at 17th level.

FICKLE FATE

When you use a Conviction point to re-roll a die roll, you get the conviction point back if the final result fails.

REVERSAL OF FORTUNE I

When you roll a natural 1 on any check, and spend a Conviction point to re-roll, you may spend another Conviction point to roll a third time if you are unhappy with your second result. You must accept the result of this third and final roll.

THE UNFOLDING MYTH

You may change archetypes to the Champion or the Shadow and immediately gain the first Mythic Gift listed there. If you instead choose to remain with your current archetype, you gain a bonus Conviction point.

FATE INTERVENES I

If you have just been struck unconscious, you may spend a Conviction point to change your status to staggered. You may also use this ability to awaken from sleep (either supernatural or mundane) just in time to defend yourself from an attack. You awaken at the beginning of the round in which you are to be attacked and may roll initiative and act normally, though you may be beginning the round in a prone position.

REVERSAL OF FORTUNE II

When you roll a natural 1 on any die roll and spend a Conviction point to re-roll, you may spend another Conviction point to treat the roll as a 15 if both rolls were 14 or less. You must accept the result of this third and final roll.

RENEWED VITALITY

You can spend a Conviction point to immediately erase all hurt and bruised conditions and any penalties associated with them. If you have the warrior Core Ability, you can also erase up to 2 dazed and 2 wounded conditions as well.

FATE INTERVENES II

If you are struck and killed by a single attack, you may spend a Conviction point to revert back to dying, stabilizing automatically.

BATTLE-HARDENED I

If you are struck in combat, you may spend a Conviction point to convert all lethal damage dealt by the attack into non-lethal damage.

REVERSAL OF FORTUNE III

When you roll a natural 1 on any check and spend a Conviction point to re-roll, you may spend another Conviction point to treat the roll as a 20.

SUDDEN BOON

When you roll a natural 20 on the die, you may spend a Conviction point to roll it again and add the result of the second roll to the first.

BATTLE-HARDENED II

As Battle-Hardened I, but you may spend a Conviction point to convert all damage dealt by all sources in a single round to non-lethal damage.

THE MENTOR

You are not destined for greatness. You are destined to bring out the greatness in others.

WATCH AND LEARN I

When you and an ally both spend a Conviction point to independently attempt the same task requiring a die roll, you both gain a bonus as though you and your ally were each using the Aid action to help each other, even though your actions are separate.

MENTOR'S GIFT I

When an ally spends a Conviction point on any task requiring a die roll, if you have more Conviction points than that ally, you may give them the Conviction point to spend from your own total. This can only be used once per session.

MENTOR'S INFLUENCE

You can spend a Conviction point to give an ally a +3 bonus on any die roll. This bonus increases to +4 at 11th level, and +5 at 17th level.

MENTOR'S LESSON I

When you and an ally both spend a Conviction point to attempt the same task requiring a die roll, you may switch rolls with your ally after rolling the dice (but before determining whether or not the check succeeds).

WATCH AND LEARN II

When you and an ally both spend a Conviction point to attempt the same task requiring a die roll, you may use your ally's final result on the die if it is higher than your own.

THE UNFOLDING MYTH

You may change archetypes to the Maiden or the Oracle and immediately gain the first Mythic Gift listed there. If you instead choose to remain with your current archetype, you gain a bonus Conviction point.

HIDDEN TALENT

Add any one feat to your favored feat list.

MENTOR'S GIFT II

As Mentor's Gift I, but you may use Mentor's Gift once per session per ally.

MENTOR'S BOON

When you use Mentor's Influence to give an ally a bonus on a check and their check succeeds because of the bonus you provided them with, you gain a Conviction point.

HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

When you are called upon to make a skill check for a Knowledge skill you have no ranks in, you may spend a Conviction point. For this single

THE FATED

Level	Fated Mythic Gifts
1	Damage Conversion 2
2	Long-suffering +2
3	Fickle Fate
4	Reversal of Fortune I
5	Damage Conversion 4
6	<i>The Unfolding Myth</i>
7	Fate Intervenes I
8	Reversal of Fortune II
9	Damage Conversion 6
10	Long-suffering +4
11	Renewed Vitality
12	<i>The Unfolding Myth</i>
13	Fate Intervenes II
14	Damage Conversion 8
15	Battle-Hardened I
16	Reversal of Fortune III
17	Long-suffering +6
18	<i>The Unfolding Myth</i>
19	Sudden Boon
20	Battle-Hardened II

THE MENTOR

Level	Mentor Mythic Gifts
1	Watch and Learn I
2	Mentor's Gift I
3	Mentor's Influence +3
4	Mentor's Lesson I
5	Watch and Learn II
6	<i>The Unfolding Myth</i>
7	Hidden Talent
8	Mentor's Gift II
9	Mentor's Boon
10	First Mythic Skill
11	Mentor's Influence +4
12	<i>The Unfolding Myth</i>
13	Desperation
14	Second Mythic Skill
15	Watch and Learn III
16	Mentor's Lesson II
17	Mentor's Influence +5
18	<i>The Unfolding Myth</i>
19	Heroic Example
20	Mentor's Passing

check, you are considered to have at least as many ranks in this skill as your Mentor archetype level.

WATCH AND LEARN III

When you and an ally both spend a Conviction point to attempt the same task, if you succeed on the roll, your chosen ally automatically succeed as well, achieving the same result.

MENTOR'S LESSON II

As Mentor's Lesson I, but you gain a Conviction point if you both succeed at the task.

HEROIC EXAMPLE

When an ally spends a Conviction point to re-roll, you can spend a Conviction point to allow them to instead treat the roll as a 20. This does not count as a natural 20—you simply add 20 to your modifier in place of the die roll.

MENTOR'S PASSING

If you die, each of your allies has his or her Conviction points refreshed or gains +1 Conviction point, whichever is higher.

THE ORACLE

Though you do not know where fate will ultimately lead you, the journey's path is revealed to your gifted sight.

AUGURY

You may spend a Conviction point to determine the best course of action, determined as simply asking the Narrator a "yes/no" or "weal/woe" question.

REVELATION

You gain a bonus supernatural power. You must have any prerequisites the power requires. If you have no adept levels, you may still use the power at rank 3.

PRESCIENCE I

You may spend a Conviction point to allow an ally to spend a Conviction point even after the Narrator informs them of the success or failure of the action. (Normally, a player may only spend a Conviction point *before* the Narrator informs him of the success or failure of an action.)

THE ORACLE	
Level	Oracle Mythic Gifts
1	First Mythic Skill
2	Augury
3	First Revelation
4	Prescience I
5	Second Mythic Skill
6	<i>The Unfolding Myth</i>
7	Second Revelation
8	Prescience II
9	Mythic Adept I
10	True Sight
11	Irresistible Power
12	<i>The Unfolding Myth</i>
13	Third Revelation
14	Third Mythic Skill
15	Mythic Adept II
16	Prescience III
17	Mythic Adept III
18	<i>The Unfolding Myth</i>
19	Fourth Revelation
20	Prophecy

THE UNFOLDING MYTH

You may change archetypes to Fated or Maiden and immediately gain the first Mythic Gift listed there. If you instead choose to remain with your current archetype, you gain a bonus Conviction point.

PRESCIENCE II

As Prescience I, but after you spend your Conviction point, your ally may treat the second die roll as a 15. In this case, they do not roll the die. They simply add 15 to their modifier in place of adding a random die roll.

MYTHIC ADEPT I

You may spend a Conviction point to take 10 on a power check or adept level check, even when rushed or threatened.

TRUE SIGHT

You may spend a Conviction point to gain the benefits of a successful use of either the Second Sight or True Vision supernatural power for 3 rounds. This does not cause you fatigue.

IRRESISTIBLE POWER

Spend a Conviction point when you use a supernatural power, increasing the save Difficulty of that power by 3.

MYTHIC ADEPT II

You may spend a Conviction point to treat your roll on a power check or adept level check as a 15. You do not need to roll the die; simply add 15 to your modifier.

PRESCIENCE III

As Prescience I, but after you spend your Conviction point, your ally may treat their re-roll as a 20.

MYTHIC ADEPT III

You may spend a Conviction point to treat your roll on a power check or adept level check as a 20. This does not count as a "natural 20" but merely allows you to add 20 to your modifier instead of adding a random die roll.

FOURTH REVELATION

You gain a fourth bonus supernatural power for which you have the prerequisites for. If you have no adept levels you may still use the power at rank 3.

PROPHECY

You may spend a Conviction point to ask the Narrator a number of yes/no questions equal to either three or your Wisdom score (whichever is higher). The Narrator answers only "yes" or "no."

THE TRICKSTER

Though you travel with the heroes on their mythic journey, your true motives remain hidden from sight. Do you work with the heroes to succeed or will you be a source of strife?

MYTHIC DEFENSE I

You may spend a Conviction point to gain a +3 bonus to defense for 1 round. This bonus increases to +4 at 9th level and +5 at 17th level.

TRICKSTER'S AID I

When you use the Aid action, you may spend a Conviction point to add or subtract your Charisma score (if positive) to the aided character's check instead of the normal +2 bonus. A character may refuse your



aid, but only before you declare whether you are actually helping or hindering them. If you are using this Mythic Gift to hinder the person you are “aiding,” you may attempt to disguise your sabotage as an honest attempt to help them with a successful Bluff check.

DEVIL’S LUCK I

If you and all of your allies fail a saving throw, you may spend a Conviction point to roll your own save again as though you were making a new check. The result from your second roll stands.

THE UNFOLDING MYTH

You may change archetypes to the Shadow or the Mentor and immediately gain the first Mythic Gift listed there. If you instead choose to remain with your current archetype, you gain a bonus Conviction point.

ILL-WILL

When any other player spends a Conviction point to improve a check, you may spend a Conviction point of your own to gamble on their failure. If your ally’s check fails despite their Conviction point, you gain 2 Conviction points. (You cannot benefit from both Ill-Will and Goodwill on the same action.)

DEVIL’S LUCK II

If you and at least one of your allies fail a saving throw, you may spend a Conviction point to roll your own saving throw again (even if some of your allies succeeded). This ability is otherwise the same as Devil’s Luck I.

OPPOSITION

When you spend a Conviction point on an opposed roll, you may add either your Charisma or your Intelligence score to the roll (chosen when you get this ability).

TRICKSTER’S AID II

As Trickster’s Aid I, but you may choose to use either your Intelligence or your Charisma score (if positive).

GOODWILL

When any other player uses a Conviction point to re-roll, if the check still fails despite the use of a Conviction point, you may spend a Conviction point to allow them to re-roll the check once again. Your ally can spend yet another Conviction point on the new check, if he chooses. (You cannot benefit from both Ill-Will and Goodwill on the same action.)

THE TRICKSTER

Level	Trickster Mythic Gifts
1	First Mythic Skill
2	Mythic Defense +3
3	Trickster’s Aid I
4	Devil’s Luck I
5	Second Mythic Skill
6	<i>The Unfolding Myth</i>
7	Ill-Will
8	Devil’s Luck II
9	Mythic Defense +4
10	Opposition
11	Trickster’s Aid II
12	<i>The Unfolding Myth</i>
13	Goodwill
14	Third Mythic Skill
15	Trickster’s Aid III
16	Devil’s Luck III
17	Mythic Defense +5
18	<i>The Unfolding Myth</i>
19	Trickster’s Twist
20	Final Betrayal

TRICKSTER'S AID III

As Trickster's Aid I, but if you are helping your ally you may add both your Intelligence and Charisma to their roll (provided both are positive).

DEVIL'S LUCK III

If you and any of your allies attempted the same saving throw (whether they succeeded or failed), you may spend a Conviction point to roll your own saving throw again, with a +1 bonus per ally who failed the roll (if any). This ability is otherwise the same as Devil's Luck I.

TRICKSTER'S TWIST

You may spend a Conviction point to allow any other character (hero or Narrator character) to re-roll any check, attack roll, opposed roll, or saving throw they just rolled. Their first roll is discounted and the second roll stands.

FINAL BETRAYAL

When an ally spends a Conviction point to re-roll, after seeing the new result of your ally's roll, you may spend a Conviction point to take that die result for yourself, which you must use for a die roll before the end of your next action. Your ally's Conviction point is still considered spent; unless they spend another Conviction point they are stuck with their original roll. When you use this gift you may not use Ill-Will to gain a Conviction point if it causes your ally to fail.

THE MAIDEN

Your fate is that of the archetypal Maiden, one who embodies the promise of the future and the vulnerability of youth.

PROTECTED I

If you are attacked (melee or ranged) and there is an ally within 5 feet, with that player's permission, you may spend a Conviction point to switch places with your ally. Your ally suffers the attack instead.

THE MAIDEN

Level	Maiden Mythic Gifts
1	First Mythic Skill
2	Protected I
3	Mythic Healing I
4	Desperation +2
5	Second Mythic Skill
6	<i>The Unfolding Myth</i>
7	Mythic Healing II
8	Desperation +4
9	Protected II
10	Maiden's Lure I
11	Mythic Healing III
12	<i>The Unfolding Myth</i>
13	Protector's Boon
14	Third Mythic Skill
15	Maiden's Lure II
16	Desperation +6
17	Protected III
18	<i>The Unfolding Myth</i>
19	Mythic Healing IV
20	Ultimate Sacrifice

MYTHIC HEALING I

You may spend a Conviction point to remove all hurt and bruised conditions from any ally you can touch.

DESPERATION

If you are helpless, unconscious, or dying, your allies gain a +2 bonus on all saving throws and checks related to coming to your aid and protecting you. When they spend Conviction to re-roll a die result, treat the new result as a 20 (but not a natural 20). Treat this ability as if they had temporarily gained the Dedicated feat, with you as the object of their dedication. The bonus provided by desperation increases to +4 at 8th level, and +6 at 16th level.

THE UNFOLDING MYTH

You may change archetypes to Oracle or Trickster and immediately gain the first Mythic Gift listed there. If you instead choose to remain with your current archetype, you gain a bonus Conviction point.

MYTHIC HEALING II

As Mythic Healing I, but can also remove up to 2 dazed and 2 wounded conditions.

PROTECTED II

As Protected I, but when you spend a Conviction point to switch places with an ally, add your Charisma score to your ally's Defense. This Defense bonus lasts until the start of your ally's next turn.

MAIDEN'S LURE I

Once per game session, you may take 1 of your ally's Conviction points if you have fewer Conviction points than they do. Deduct the point from their total and add it to your own. If the ally is unwilling, they may attempt a Will save to resist. The Difficulty is equal to 10 +1/2 your Maiden archetype level plus your Charisma score.

MYTHIC HEALING III

As Mythic Healing I, but you can remove all dazed and wounded conditions.

PROTECTOR'S BOON

When you switch places with an ally in combat and your ally is struck by the attack meant for you, your ally gains a Conviction point.

MAIDEN'S LURE II

Once per game session per ally, you may take one of your ally's Conviction points if you have fewer than they do. Deduct the point from their total and add it to your own.

PROTECTED III

As Protected I, but when you spend a Conviction point to switch places with an ally, add your Charisma score to your ally's Defense and Toughness. These bonuses last until the start of your ally's next turn.

MYTHIC HEALING IV

As Mythic Healing I, but you may also restore all dazed, wounded, staggered, disabled and dying conditions.

ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

As long as you are alive, you can restore one ally full life, removing all damage conditions from anyone who died or was otherwise incapacitated within the last round—but your own life is forfeit in exchange.

SKILLS

Virtually any of the skills presented in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* are suitable for a fantasy campaign. The only major exceptions are the Computers and Pilot skills, which will not be available in fantasy settings lacking the necessary technology.

Craft sub-skills in a fantasy setting may include alchemy, bowyer/fletcher, metalworking, scribing, stonemasonry, and trap making. Disable Device sees widespread use for disarming traps and picking locks. The Drive skill can be used to control chariots, wagons and watercraft. Knowledge sub-skills may include architecture and engineering, astronomy, nobility and planar cosmology. Knowledge (theology and philosophy) can be used to discover information about deities, outsiders and undead while Knowledge (supernatural) may provide information on supernatural beasts, dragons and fey, or allow a hero to determine which supernatural power an adept is currently using (Difficulty 20). Knowledge (linguistics) can be used to decipher ancient hieroglyphs.

FEATS

Most feats presented in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* will see widespread use in a fantasy setting. The only major exception is Firearms Training which is not available in settings lacking firearms. In addition, the following section provides new feats for fantasy heroes to be used at the Narrator's discretion.

COMPANION (GENERAL)

You have a loyal sidekick who follows you on your adventures, whether an animal companion, squire, shield bearer, accompanying bard, apprentice adept, apprentice thief or beginning craftsman. If your companion is an animal, it may be any kind of animal with a number of animal levels equal to or less than your own character level – 2. Otherwise your companion may be of any role and heroic background available in the setting. Your companion begins play with a total number of levels equal to your own level – 2. Your companion gains levels as you do, but it is always at least 2 levels lower than you.

CLOAK DANCE (GENERAL)

PREREQUISITES: STEALTH RANK 10, PERFORM (DANCE) RANK 2

You are skilled at using tricks to make yourself seem to be where you are not. You can take a move action to use a cloak or similar sheet-like object to obscure your exact position. Until your next turn, you have the benefits of concealment. Alternatively, you can take a full-round action to entirely obscure your exact position. Until your next action, you have total concealment.

FEATHER STEP (GENERAL)

PREREQUISITES: ACROBATICS RANK 4, MUST BE IN A CAMPAIGN OF SR 5 OR GREATER (SEE SUPERNATURAL RATINGS EARLIER IN THIS CHAPTER).

You can make a Difficulty 15 Acrobatics check to run across objects that could not normally hold your weight.

GAIN POWER (EXPERT OR WARRIOR)

PREREQUISITES: IMPROVED STRIKE

The Narrator may wish to allow warriors and experts to be able to take feats that duplicate the effects of a supernatural power. For example, a “Chi” feat could allow limited access to the Enhance Ability power to a character specializing in the martial arts, or a “Dim Mak” feat could simulate the legendary death touch by allowing limited access to the Harm power.

The power rank provided by these feats may depend on the campaigns Supernatural Rating. Generally, campaigns with an SR of 5 or less

provide the user of this feat with access to a power as though they were a 1st level adept, and may allow them to increase their power rank by one per additional feat slot expended. SR 6 campaigns may allow the hero to use this feat to purchase up to four ranks in a supernatural power each time the hero takes this feat, much like Skill Training. See **Supernatural Ratings** for more details on how the SR effects the power ranks gained by this feat.

Special: You cannot spend Conviction to gain access to this feat.

IMPROVED TAUNT (GENERAL)

PREREQUISITES: 4TH LEVEL, TAUNT

You may apply the effects of your Taunt feat to a number of targets equal to 1/2 your level (round down). Make one Bluff check; each target makes a separate resistance check.

IMPROVISED WEAPONS PROFICIENCY (GENERAL)

You can use an improvised weapon (an ordinary object reasonably sized and shaped for use as a weapon) without penalty. Characters without this feat take a –4 penalty on attack rolls made with improvised weapons.

INTANGIBLE ARMOR (WARRIOR)

PREREQUISITES: ARMOR TRAINING

Fate smiles kindly upon you. Even when you are without armor, you have some protection against harm. Your character gains an additional +2 bonus to their Toughness saves when not wearing armor of any variety (including natural armor).

INSIGHTFUL STRIKE (WARRIOR OR EXPERT)

You may add your Intelligence score to the damage you inflict with a melee attack in place of your Strength score while fighting an opponent that is vulnerable to critical hits.

INTUITIVE STRIKE (WARRIOR OR EXPERT)

You may add your Wisdom score to the damage you inflict with a melee attack in place of your Strength score while fighting an opponent that is vulnerable to critical hits.

KEEN SENSE OF SMELL (GENERAL)

You possess an animalistically keen sense of smell. You gain the Scent trait (*True20*, page 130).

LION HEARTED (GENERAL)

You possess great courage and continue onward where others would cower in fear. You gain a +4 bonus to all Will saves against fear effects.

MENTAL BOND (GENERAL)

PREREQUISITES: BOTH MEMBERS OF THE BONDED PAIR MUST TAKE THIS FEAT.

You share a mental bond with one of your companions, either a fellow hero or a sidekick acquired through the Companion feat. The two of you are always in mental contact (like a use of the Mind Touch supernatural power). If some outside force interferes, such as the Ward power, you can make a Mind Touch or Wisdom check to overcome it. If your psychic link is broken, it is automatically reestablished as soon as possible.

RENOWN (GENERAL)

Your reputation precedes you. Increase your reputation bonus by +3. You can take this feat multiple times, gaining a +3 increase each time.

RIASTRADH (WARRIOR)

PREREQUISITES: RAGE, BASE COMBAT BONUS +5 OR MORE, MUST BE IN A CAMPAIGN OF SR 5 OR GREATER (SEE SUPERNATURAL RATINGS).

When you rage, you become filled with supernatural power. Your body swells into a hulking, monstrous form that literally burns with wrath. While raging, make a Difficulty 15 level check. If successful, you increase 1 size category (so a Medium creature would become Large). Any who touch or are touched by you through unarmed attacks, grappling or any other physical contact suffer +1 fire damage. You gain an additional +2 bonus to Strength and Constitution, suffer a -1 penalty to Dexterity, and gain a +4 bonus to Intimidate skill checks while raging. You also gain the bonuses to Toughness and penalties to combat associated with your increased size. Wearing Medium-size armor prevents the use of this feat as it restricts the character's body from expanding to monstrous size.

SMASHING BLOW (WARRIOR)

You may add 1/2 your Strength bonus (rounded up) in place of your Dexterity bonus on attack rolls with any melee weapon at least one size category larger than you are, requiring two hands to wield it. If your target attempts to block, you may add your full Strength bonus.

POWERS

Supernatural powers are bound to play a heavier role in a fantasy game than in any other genre. This section provides you with a number of options and guidelines for handling of supernatural powers in your game.

SUPERNATURAL PHILOSOPHIES

In the fantasy genre, supernatural elements such as magic can have a profound influence on both the setting and the plot. Nowhere is the influence of the supernatural more obviously manifested than in the ways adepts in the setting interact with it. In many fantasy stories, those who wield supernatural power attach a particular philosophy to it. This supernatural philosophy will often guide their choice of powers and influence how the adept chooses to use them. Supernatural philosophies vary widely between fantasy settings, but often have similarities that can be useful as guidelines for constructing your own.

CORE CONCEPT

First, establish the core beliefs that define a supernatural philosophy and distinguish it from the others in your setting. This often includes some notion of where the adept's powers come from, be it manipulation of a cosmic force, a divine gift showing the favor of a god, the power of the mind over reality, or the result of special knowledge and arcane study.

PREREQUISITES

Some arcane philosophies require adepts to fulfill certain requirements. These requirements often include being trained in one or more relevant Knowledge skills, such as Knowledge (physical sciences), Knowledge (behavioral sciences), Knowledge (life sciences), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) or Knowledge (supernatural).

CHOOSING A KEY ABILITY

An adept's supernatural philosophy usually determines what their key ability will be. Adepts who believe they derive their powers from their religious beliefs or the result of divine favor use Wisdom as their key ability. Adepts who believe they learn their powers through intense study of magical words and arcane symbols use Intelligence. Adepts who believe their powers are an innate extension of their force of personality use Charisma. Some supernatural philosophies require different powers to have different key abilities.

CANONICAL POWER LISTS

Once you have your core concept, establish a list of supernatural powers that best fit this supernatural philosophy. This list of *canonical powers* is usually around 10 powers long. For each additional power added to the list, an additional barred power must be chosen. An adept with a particular supernatural philosophy casts all powers on the list of canonical powers as though they were 1 level higher than their actual adept level. They cast any powers that are neither canonical powers nor barred powers as though they were 1 adept level lower.

BARRED POWERS

Just as there are supernatural powers that compliment any given supernatural philosophy, there are also powers that either contradict it, or which someone of that philosophy would never conceivably learn or use. These powers become barred to anyone of that particular supernatural philosophy. Each supernatural philosophy has 2 barred powers plus 1 barred power per extra canonical power.

ADDITIONAL PERKS AND DRAWBACKS

You may wish to add additional abilities to your supernatural philosophy. The possibilities here are far too numerous to list as they are limited only by your imagination. Just be sure any added bonus you throw in is balanced out by a corresponding weakness or drawback.

SAMPLE SUPERNATURAL PHILOSOPHIES:

Here are three sample supernatural philosophies to use as models while making your own. Powers marked with an asterisk are from the *True20 Bestiary*.

DRUIDISM

Prerequisites: Trained in Knowledge (life sciences)

Key Ability: Wis

Canonical Powers: Beast Link, Cure, Cure Disease, Earth Shaping, Enhance Senses, Enhance Self, Nature Reading, Plant Shaping, Self-Shaping, Summon Animals*, Wind Shaping, Weather Shaping

Barred Powers: Imbue Unlife, Mind Probe, Mind Shaping, Shadow Shaping

NECROMANCY

Prerequisites: Trained in Knowledge (anatomy and physiology) and Knowledge (supernatural)

Key Ability: Int

Canonical Powers: Body Control, Cold Shaping, Dominate, Drain Vitality, Enhance Self, Flesh Shaping, Ghost Touch, Harm, Heart Shaping, Imbue Life, Imbue Unlife, Pain, Shadow Shaping*

Barred Powers: Bliss, Calm, Light Shaping, Purifying Light

Perk: Necromancers can use Mind Touch on undead and on the recently dead. When using Mind Touch on a recently dead target, the Difficulty increases by 1 for every day the target has been dead.

Drawback: Necromancers can only use the Dominate power on undead and outsiders.

PSIONICS

Prerequisites: Trained in Knowledge (behavioral sciences).

Key Ability: Cha.

Canonical Powers: Body Control, Calm, Combat Sense, Dominate, Heart Reading, Heart Shaping, Manipulate Object, Mind Probe, Mind Touch, Mind Reading, Mind Shaping, Move Object, Object Reading, Psychic Blast, Sense Minds, Suggestion

Barred Powers: Enhance Other, Elemental Weapon, Flesh Shaping, Imbue Life, Imbue Unlife, Nature Reading, Weather Shaping, Wood Shaping

DIVINE ASPECTS: THE ROLE OF THE GODS

Each fantasy world is molded and shaped by the gods who rule it. All deities have a portfolio of one or more aspects of reality over which they rule. An adept who gains supernatural powers from a god may exchange their Core Ability for any 2 divine aspect core abilities chosen from their god's list of divine aspects. Demigods have only 2 divine aspects, lesser deities have 3, intermediate deities have 4 and greater deities have 5. The exact gods available, their rank, and specific aspects depend on the setting. The following is a list of sample aspects a god might have, along with the corresponding core ability the deity can grant to worshipers and guidelines for atonement.

ATONEMENT

These are the conditions under which the adept loses the benefits of a specific divine aspect until they have somehow made atonement to their patron deity.

ART OR CRAFT

An adept who worships the god of a specific art or craft can spend a Conviction point to gain a +10 bonus on any corresponding Craft or Perform skill check.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she willingly goes for more than a week without practicing her chosen craft.

ABILITY

An adept who worships the god of a specific ability (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom or Charisma) can spend a Conviction point to gain a +4 bonus to the specified ability for purposes of completing a single task (fighting a single foe, moving a heavy object, solving a riddle).

Atonement: The adept must atone if she willingly abuses her ability, using it for personal gain rather than to further the god's agenda.

ANIMALS

Adepts who worship a god of animals may spend a Conviction point to gain a +5 bonus to any Beast Link power check.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she willingly abuses or mistreats an animal.

CHAOS

An adept who worships a god of chaos can spend a Conviction point to have a random and otherwise unexpected event come out in their favor. The Narrator is the sole arbiter of the exact result.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she participates in routine behavior, such as purposefully doing any one thing at the same time two or more days in a row.

CREATION

Adepts who worship a god of creation may spend a Conviction point to create any object they could buy using their Wisdom score as their Wealth bonus. This object appears either in their hands or at their feet.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she willingly participates in needless and wanton destruction.

DEATH

Adepts who worship a god of death may spend a Conviction point to gain a +5 bonus to any Sleep power check.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she willingly attempts to bring someone back to life or prevents the death of anyone whose condition is Dying.



ELEMENT

Adepts who worship a god embodying an elemental force (Air, Cold, Earth, Fire, Water) may spend a Conviction point to gain a +5 bonus to the appropriate Elemental Shaping power check.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she willingly makes use of the element to which her god is opposed.

HEALING

Adepts who worship a god of healing may spend a Conviction point to gain a +5 bonus to any Cure, Cure Poison, or Cure Disease power check.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she willingly refuses healing to someone who requests it of her.

HEARTH/LIFE

Adepts who worship a god of the home, hearth or childbirth may spend a Conviction point to gain a +5 bonus to any Imbue Life power check.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she willingly endangers someone in his own home.

HUNTING

Adepts who worship a god of hunting or archery may spend a Conviction point to gain a +10 bonus to their next ranged attack roll.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she willingly declines an invitation to a hunting party or archery contest.

KNOWLEDGE

Adepts who worship a god of knowledge may spend a Conviction point to gain a +10 bonus to any Knowledge skill check.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she fails to put the knowledge she has been granted by this aspect to use.

LOVE

Adepts who worship a god of love may spend a Conviction point to cause a target creature to fall deeply in love with the next member of the appropriate race and gender they lay eyes upon. If the subject is unwilling, he may resist this effect with a Will save with a Difficulty equal to 10 + 1/2 the adept's level plus the adept's Charisma score.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she refuses aid to or mistreats a loved one, or if she does not love another.

MAGIC

Adepts who worship a god of magic may spend a Conviction point to retry any fatigue save or power check after it is known that the original check failed to produce the desired result.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she destroys a magical item or uses the Severance power.

MOON

Adepts who worship a moon god may spend a Conviction point to gain a +5 bonus to any Self-Shaping power check.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she does not make a sacrifice on a night of the full moon.

ORDER

Adepts who worship a god of order may spend a Conviction point to gain a +5 bonus to any Dominate power check.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she knowingly and willingly breaks the law or directly causes someone else to do so.

PROTECTION

Adepts who worship a god of protection may spend a Conviction point to give a +5 bonus to Toughness for five rounds to any target within their line of sight.



Atonement: The adept must atone if she willingly refuses to protect the weak and helpless.

NATURE

Adepts who worship a god of nature may spend a Conviction point to gain a +5 bonus to any Nature Reading power check.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she willingly despoils nature, or refuses to protect a natural area from harm.

PLANTS

Adepts who worship a god of plant life may spend a Conviction point to gain a +5 bonus to the appropriate Plant Shaping power check.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she willingly and needlessly destroys plant life.

RACE

Adepts who worship the god of a specific race (dwarves, elves, orcs etc.) may spend a Conviction point to shift the attitude of a member of that race toward them up to two levels closer to "Helpful" on the influence table (See *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*, page 92).

Atonement: The adept must atone if she denies aid to any member of the god's chosen race who asks for it.

SUN

Adepts who worship a sun god may spend a Conviction point to gain a +5 bonus to any Light Shaping power check.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she goes 24 hours without being touched by the sun's rays.

THIEVERY

Adepts who worship a god of thieves may spend a Conviction point to gain a +10 bonus to any skill check being used to commit theft.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she aids authorities in the apprehension of a thief.

TRICKERY

Adepts who worship a god of trickery may spend a Conviction point to gain a +10 bonus to any Bluff or Disguise skill check.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she knowingly and willfully passes up an opportunity for a good prank.

UNDEATH

Adepts who worship a god of undeath may spend a Conviction point to gain a +5 bonus to any Imbue Unlife power check.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she prevents the creation of undead.

VICE

Adepts who worship a god of vice may spend a Conviction point to gain a +5 bonus on any check to perform an evil act in accordance with their vice.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she gains Conviction through her virtue nature.

VIRTUE

Adepts who worship a god of virtue may spend a Conviction point to resist any compulsion (supernatural or otherwise) that would make them act in an evil manner, or in a manner according to their vice.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she acts in an evil way or willingly gives in to her vice nature.

WAR

Adepts who worship a god of war may spend a Conviction point to gain a +5 bonus to their combat score for 1 round.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she willingly declines a challenge to personal combat.

WEATHER

Adepts who worship a weather god may spend a Conviction point to gain a +5 bonus to any Weather Shaping power check.

Atonement: The adept must atone if she seeks shelter from a storm.

EQUIPMENT

This section provides you with expanded rules for weapons, armor and supernatural items likely to be available in most fantasy games.

EXPANDED ARCHAIC WEAPONS

Chapter Five of *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* provides some common archaic weapons found in low-tech fantasy and historical settings. The following section offers information in an expanded format on additional archaic weapons useful in a fantasy setting, with the weapons from *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* also reprinted here for easy reference.

The weapons have the following qualities listed on the tables:

CATEGORY

Melee weapons are categorized as simple, martial, or exotic. Martial weapons require the Weapon Training feat to use proficiently, while each exotic weapon requires its own Exotic Weapon Training feat to use proficiently.

DAMAGE

This is the damage dealt by the weapon on a successful hit. Melee and thrown weapons add the wielder's Strength score to this damage.

CRITICAL

This notes how the weapon is used with the rules for critical hits.

20: The weapon scores a threat on a natural roll of 20, as usual for critical hits.

19–20: The weapon scores a threat on a natural roll of 19 or 20 (instead of just 20).

18–20: The weapon scores a threat on a natural roll of 18, 19 or 20 (instead of just 20).

When the weapon scores a critical hit, increase the damage as indicated.

+3: The weapon deals +3 damage on a critical hit.

+4: The weapon deals +4 damage on a critical hit.

+5: The weapon deals +5 damage on a critical hit.

DAMAGE DESCRIPTOR

Melee weapon damage is generally classified as bludgeoning (weapons with a blunt striking surface, like a club), piercing (weapons with a sharp point), and slashing (weapons with a sharp edge). Some foes may be resistant or immune to some types of damage.

RANGE INCREMENT

Melee weapons designed for throwing can also be used to make ranged attacks. Thrown weapons have a range increment just as other ranged weapons do—but the maximum range for a thrown weapon is five range increments. Any attack at less than the given range increment is not penalized for range. However, each full range increment causes a cumulative –2 penalty on the attack roll.

SIZE

Size categories for weapons and other objects are defined differently from the size categories for creatures. The relationship between a weapon's size and its wielder's size defines whether it can be used one-handed, if it requires two hands, or if it's a light weapon. A Medium or smaller weapon can be used one-handed or two-handed. A Large weapon requires two hands.

Larger and Smaller Weapons: In some cases, creatures larger or smaller than Medium may wield versions of weapons scaled to their size. A "sword" wielded by a Tiny creature is barely a knife for a Medium creature. Likewise a giant's "knife" may be the size of a human's sword.

As a general guideline, normal sized weapons adjusted for larger or smaller creatures increase their damage by +1 per size category above Medium and lower it by –1 per size category below Medium. So a knife (+1 damage) sized for a Huge creature does +3 damage, the equivalent of a sword for a Medium creature.

COST

The number before the slash is the weapon's purchase Difficulty. The number after the slash is the weapon's coin value.

WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

ANKUS

Sometimes called a bullhook, elephant hook, or elephant goad, this tool is used in the training of elephants but can also be used as a weapon. It consists of a 2- or 3-foot handle with a metal head (usually bronze or steel) with two pointed tips, one coming straight out of the handle, and the other curving to one side.

ARROWS AND BOLTS

An arrow used as a melee weapon is treated as a small, improvised weapon (–4 to attack rolls), doing damage like a knife. An arrow that hits its target is considered destroyed; one that misses has a 50% chance (11 or better on the d20) of being broken or lost. The same guidelines apply to crossbow bolts.

AXE, THROWING

A small, light axe balanced for throwing.

BAGH NAKH

Also known as the "tiger's claw" this hand weapon is designed to be held in the fist by placing fingers through individual holes; three or more small spikes or blades curve from the handpiece. The bagh nakh can be used in a grapple or in conjunction with the Improved Strike feat. The bagh nakh grants a +10 bonus to resist disarm attempts.

BATTLEAXE

This is a heavy-bladed axe that can be wielded with one or two hands.

BOLO

A bolo is a set of weighted cords intended to entangle an opponent. If the bolo hits, the target makes a Difficulty 14 Reflex save. A failed save means the target is entangled. See the **Condition Summary** in **Chapter 6** of *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* for the effects of entanglement.

BOOMERANG

A thrown boomerang that misses returns to the thrower's hand, ready to be thrown again on the next round. A boomerang that hits does not return. Boomerang wielders with the Exotic Weapon Training feat can throw the weapon so it hits the target on the return arc as a surprise attack (see the **Surprise Attacks** section of **Chapter 6** in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*).

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Damage Descriptor	Range Increment	Size	Cost	Weight
Simple Weapons							
Ankus	+1	20/+3	Piercing and bludgeoning	—	Med	5	4 lb.
Club	+2	20/+3	Bludgeoning	10 ft.	Med	4	3 lb.
Gaff/Hook	+1	20/+3	Piercing	—	Tiny	2	2 lb.
Gauntlet	+0	20/+3	Bludgeoning	—	Tiny	5	1 lb.
Gauntlet, spiked	+1	20/+3	Piercing	—	Tiny	5	1 lb.
Knife/Dagger	+1	19–20/+3	Piercing	10 ft.	Tiny	7	1 lb.
Longspear	+3	19–20/+4	Piercing	—	Large	6	9 lb.
Mace, heavy	+3	20/+3	Bludgeoning	—	Med	7	8 lb.
Mace, light	+2	20/+3	Bludgeoning	—	Small	6	4 lb.
Morningstar	+3	20/+3	Bludgeoning and piercing	—	Med	7	6 lb.
Pitchfork	+2	20/+4	Piercing	—	Large	4	6 lb.
Punching Dagger	+1	20/+4	Piercing	—	Tiny	8	1 lb.
Quarterstaff	+2	20/+3	Bludgeoning	10 ft.	Large	4	4 lb.
Sap	+2	20/+3	Bludgeoning	—	Small	2	1 lb.
Sickle	+1	20/+3	Slashing	—	Small	7	2 lb.
Spear	+3	19–20/+4	Piercing	20 ft.	Large	6	6 lb.
Staff-sling	+2	20/+3	Bludgeoning	20 ft.	Med	5	2 lb.
Stiletto	+0	19–20/+3	Piercing	—	Tiny	3	1/2 lb.
Tonfa	+1	20/+3	Bludgeoning	—	Med	6	2 lb.
Unarmed Attack	+0	20/+3	Bludgeoning	—	—	—	0 lb.

BOW

Bows add the wielder's Strength bonus to their damage, although most bows are only designed to add up to a +5 Str bonus at best.

CHAKRAM

The chakram is a metal ring about one foot in diameter; the exterior is sharp while the interior edge is dull, providing a place to hold and spin the chakram before throwing it.

CHAIN

You can wield a weighted chain to strike a target up to 10 ft. away. You can use it to make trip attacks and to disarm opponents with a +2 bonus, like the Improved Trip and Improved Disarm feats (and its benefits stack if you already have those feats). A spiked chain inflicts piercing rather than bludgeoning damage due to the spikes along the chain's length.

CLAYMORE

Slightly smaller, lighter and far more maneuverable than the great sword. A proficient wielder gains a +1 bonus to parry attempts and can choose to add half their Strength score (rounded up) to attack rolls in place of their Dexterity. If the wielder has the Smashing Blow feat, they may instead add their whole Strength score to their attack roll.

CLUB

Any of a number of blunt weapons used to strike, including nightsticks, batons, and similar bludgeoning weapons.

CROSSBOW

A crossbow is similar to a bow and used for the same reasons. A crossbow does not add the user's Strength bonus to its damage.

CROSSBOW, REPEATING

The repeating crossbow holds five crossbow bolts. As long as it holds bolts, you can reload it by pulling the reloading lever (a free action). Loading a new case of five bolts is a full-round action.

You can fire a repeating crossbow with one hand or fire a repeating crossbow in each hand in the same manner as you would a normal crossbow of the same size. However, two hands are required to use the reloading lever or to load a new case of bolts.

CUTLASS

This short thick sword has a slightly curved blade that can be used for either thrusting or slashing, and often has a basket hilt. This is the weapon favored by pirates and buccaneers.

FALCHION

This weapon combines the versatility of a sword with the chopping power of an axe.

FLAIL

With a flail, you can make trip attacks and disarm opponents with a +2 bonus, like the Improved Trip and Improved Disarm feats. Its benefits stack if you already have those feats.

GAFF/HOOK

This metal hook is used by sailors to load and unload ships. Occasionally a prosthetic one is used to replace a severed hand.

GAUNTLET

This metal glove protects your hands and lets you deal lethal rather than non-lethal damage with unarmed strikes. Spiked gauntlets inflict piercing damage. You cannot lose a gauntlet to a disarm action (see the description of the Disarm action in **Chapter 6** of the *True20 Adventure Roleplaying book*).

GREATAXE

A big, heavy axe favored by barbarians and those looking to dish out a lot of damage.

GREATCLUB

A two-handed version of a club, often studded or spiked with metal.

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Damage Descriptor	Range Increment	Size	Cost	Weight
Martial Weapons							
Axe, throwing	+1	20/+3	Slashing	10 ft.	Small	5	2 lb.
Bagh Nakh	+1	20/+3	Piercing and slashing	—	Tiny	3	2 lb.
Battleaxe	+3	20/+4	Slashing	—	Med	9	6 lb.
Claymore	+3	19–20/+4	Slashing	—	Large	12	6 lb.
Cutlass	+3	20/+4	Piercing and slashing	—	Med	9	3 lb.
Falchion	+3	18–20/+4	Slashing	—	Large	10	8 lb.
Flail	+3	20/+3	Bludgeoning	—	Med	8	5 lb.
Flail, heavy	+4	19–20/+3	Bludgeoning	—	Large	11	10 lb.
Greataxe	+5	20/+3	Slashing	—	Large	11	12 lb.
Greatclub	+3	20/+3	Bludgeoning	—	Large	5	8 lb.
Greatscimitar	+3	18–20/+3	Slashing	—	Large	9	8 lb.
Greatsword	+4	19–20/+3	Slashing	—	Large	11	8 lb.
Handaxe	+1	20/+4	Bludgeoning	—	Small	4	3 lb.
Khopesh	+3	20/+3	Slashing	—	Med	10	7 lb.
Kukri	+1	18–20/+3	Slashing	—	Small	7	2 lb.
Lance	+3	20/+4	Piercing	—	Large	9	10 lb.
Lance, jousting	+0	20/+3	Bludgeoning	—	Large	6	10 lb.
Machete	+3	20/+3	Slashing	—	Med	8	5 lb.
Main-gauche	+1	20/+3	Piercing and slashing	—	Small	7	2 lb.
Maul	+4	20/+4	Bludgeoning	—	Large	10	10 lb.
Polearm	+3	20/+4	Piercing or slashing	—	Large	8	12 lb.
Pike	+3	20/+4	Piercing	—	Large	7	12 lb.
Rapier	+2	18–20/+3	Piercing	—	Med	9	2 lb.
Saber	+2	19–20/+4	Slashing	—	Med	9	5 lb.
Scimitar	+2	18–20/+3	Slashing	—	Med	10	4 lb.
Scythe	+3	20/+5	Piercing or slashing	—	Large	10	10 lb.
Sword	+3	19–20/+3	Slashing	—	Med	10	4 lb.
Sword, short	+2	19–20/+3	Slashing	—	Small	7	2 lb.
Trident	+3	20/+4	Piercing	—	Med	7	4 lb.
Warhammer	+3	20/+4	Bludgeoning	10 ft.	Med	6	5 lb.
Warhammer, light	+1	20/+3	Bludgeoning	20 ft.	Small	4	2 lb.
Warpick, heavy	+3	20/+5	Piercing	—	Med	8	6 lb.
Warpick, light	+1	+5	Piercing	—	Small	6	3 lb.
Exotic Weapons							
Chain	+2	20/+3	Bludgeoning	10 ft.	Large	5	10 lb.
Chain, spiked	+2	20/+3	Piercing	10 ft.	Large	8	10 lb.
Nunchaku	+2	20/+3	Bludgeoning	—	Small	3	2 lb.
Sword, bastard	+4	19–20/+3	Slashing	—	Med	14	6 lb.
Whip	+0	20/+3	Bludgeoning	15 ft.	Small	4	2 lb.

GREATSCIMITAR

A massive two-handed version of the scimitar.

GREATSWORD

A large, two-handed, wide-bladed sword.

HANDAXE

A handaxe is a small axe, like a hatchet, designed for use in combat.

JAVELIN

This is a light, flexible spear intended to be thrown. Javelins can also be used in melee combat.

KHOPESH

This large blade has a hook at the end. It is particularly useful for making trip attacks or sundering attempts, providing you with a +2 bonus. Its benefits stack with the Improved Trip and Improved Sunder feats.

KNIFE

A knife is a bladed weapon with a length of less than 18 inches. This includes knives, stilettos, sais, switchblades, bowie knives, and hunting knives, among others.

KUKRI

This heavy, curved knife has its sharp edge on the inside of the curve, making it a useful weapon for stealth and assassination.

RANGED WEAPONS

Weapon	Damage Bonus	Critical	Damage Descriptor	Range Increment	Size	Cost	Weight
Simple Weapons							
Blowgun	+0	20/+1	Piercing	20 ft.	Medium	2	2 lb.
Crossbow, heavy	+3	19–20/+3	Piercing	120 ft.	Medium	11	8 lb. +1 lb./10 bolts
Crossbow, light	+2	19–20/+3	Piercing	80 ft.	Medium	10	4 lb. +1 lb./10 bolts
Dart	+1	+2	Piercing	20 ft.	Tiny	3	1/2 lb.
Javelin	+2	20/+3	Piercing	30 ft.	Medium	4	2 lb.
Sling	+1	20/+3	Bludgeoning	50 ft.	Small	3	0 lb. +5 lb./ stone
Martial Weapons							
Bow	+3	20/+4	Piercing	100 ft.	Large	10	3 lb. +3 lb./20 arrows
Bow, short	+2	20/+4	Piercing	60 ft.	Medium	9	2 lb. +3 lb./20 arrows
Shuriken	+1	20/+3	Piercing, Autofire	10 ft.	Tiny	3	1/10 lb.
Exotic Weapons							
Bolo	—	—	—	40 ft.	Small	3	2 lb.
Boomerang	+2	20/+4	Bludgeoning	20 ft.	Small	2	1 lb.
Chakram	+2	20/+4	Slashing	30 ft.	Small	6	1 lb.
Crossbow, repeating	+3	19–20/+3	Piercing, Autofire	80 ft.	Med	21	6 lb. +1 lb./10 bolts
Net	—	—	—	10 ft.	Med	12	6 lb.

LANCE

A lance deals +3 damage when used from the back of a charging mount. It has reach so you can strike opponents 10 feet away with it, but you can't use it against an adjacent foe. While mounted, you can wield a lance with one hand.

LONGSPEAR

A longspear has reach. You can strike opponents 10 feet away with it, but you can't use it against an adjacent foe. If you use a ready action to set a longspear against a charge, you deal +4 damage on a successful hit against a charging character.

MACE

A mace has a sturdy wooden handle capped by a flanged metal head.

MAIN-GAUCHE

This specialized fencing dagger is often used in the off-hand to parry while attacking with a longer weapon, providing a +2 bonus to parry attempts.

MANOPLÉ

A gauntleted sword with two smaller curved blades extending on either side of the main one, the manoplé grants a +10 bonus to resist disarm attempts. In addition, it has a +2 bonus on disarm check, including the roll to keep from being disarmed if the disarm fails.

MAUL

A massive hammer, the maul grants a +2 bonus to sunder and trip attempts. These bonuses stack with the improved sunder and improved trip feats. In order to even lift the maul, a character must have Strength +1 or greater.

MORNINGSTAR

This weapon combined the impact of a club with the piercing power of metal spikes.

NET

A net is used to entangle enemies. When you throw a net, you make a ranged attack against your target. A net's maximum range is 10 feet. If you hit, the target is entangled. An entangled creature takes a –2

penalty on attack rolls and a –4 penalty on Dexterity, can move at only half speed, and cannot charge or run. If you control the trailing rope by succeeding on an opposed Strength check while holding it, the entangled creature can move only within the limits of the rope. If the entangled creature attempts to use a supernatural power, it must make a Difficulty 15 Concentration check or be unable to use the power effectively.

An entangled creature can escape with a Difficulty 20 Escape Artist check (a full-round action). The net has +2 Toughness and can be burst with a Difficulty 25 Strength check (also a full-round action).

A net is useful only against creatures within 1 size category of you.

A net must be folded to be thrown effectively. The first time you throw your net in a fight, you make a normal ranged touch attack roll. After the net is unfolded, you take a –4 penalty on attack rolls with it. It takes 2 rounds for a proficient user to fold a net and twice that long for a non-proficient one to do so.

NUNCHAKU

This is a popular martial arts weapon, made of two wooden shafts connected by a short length of rope or chain.

PIKE

This long sharpened pole provides a Medium-size wielder with a 15 ft. reach but cannot be used in close quarters.

PITCH FORK

This farming tool can make a handy improvised weapon.

POLEARM

Any of a number of weapons consisting of a bladed metal head atop a long wooden pole.

PUNCHING DAGGER

These piercing daggers can be used in conjunction with the improved strike feat.

RAPIER

A light fencing sword with a sharp point, usually used for thrusting attacks.

QUARTERSTAFF

This is any fighting staff between 4 and 6 feet long, including the bo staff used in martial arts.

SABER

This slightly curved fencing blade is designed for slashing and chopping strikes rather than thrusts.

SAP

A sap is a bludgeoning weapon intended to knock out targets without permanently injuring them. Saps inflict non-lethal damage.

SCIMITAR

A scimitar is a long, single-edged sword with a curved blade.

SCYTHE

A scythe can be used to make trip attacks. If you are tripped during your own trip attempt, you can drop the scythe to avoid being tripped.

SHURIKEN

These are flat metal stars or spikes for throwing. Shuriken can be thrown in groups (making them autofire weapons). Although they are thrown weapons, shuriken do not add the thrower's Strength bonus to damage due to their lightness.

SICKLE

This curved bladed weapon can be used to make trip attacks with a +2 bonus, like the Improved Trip feat. Its benefits stack if you already have the feat.

SLING

Your Strength modifier applies to damage rolls when you use a sling, just as it does for thrown weapons. You can fire, but not load, a sling with one hand. Loading a sling is a move action that requires two hands and provokes attacks of opportunity.

You can hurl ordinary stones with a sling, but stones are not as dense or as round as bullets. Such an attack deals 1 point less damage and you take a –1 penalty on attack rolls.

SPEAR

A spear is a bladed pole-arm. Most spears can also be thrown.

STAFFSLING

A staff sling can be used to hurl stones and bullets or be wielded as a quarterstaff in close quarters.

STILETTO

You get a +5 bonus on Sleight of Hand checks made to conceal a stiletto on your body (see the Sleight of Hand skill).

SWORD

A sword is a blade between 18 and 30 or more inches in length, single or double-edged. This category includes longswords, katanas and similar weapons.

SWORD, BASTARD

A bastard sword is an exotic weapon, too large to use in one hand without special training. A character can use a bastard sword two-handed as a martial weapon.

SWORD, SHORT

A short sword is similar in construction to a sword, but it has a shorter blade. This category includes the gladius and other long knives.

TONFA

These versatile weapons consist of two parts: a handle and a perpendicular clublike shaft that lies along the hand and forearm. They are a common martial arts weapon.

TRIDENT

A three-tined piercing weapon similar to a spear.

WARHAMMER

A warhammer is a heavy hammer that can be wielded with one or two hands. Warhammers can also be thrown.

WHIP

A whip can strike targets up to 15 ft. away. You can use it to make trip attacks and to disarm opponents with a +2 bonus, like the Improved Trip and Improved Disarm feats. Its benefits stack if you already have those feats.

UNARMED ATTACK

An unarmed attack has a damage bonus of +0, modified by the attacker's Strength. Unarmed attacks inflict non-lethal damage.

EXPANDED ARCHAIC ARMORS

Chapter 6 of *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* provides some basic archaic armors found in low-tech fantasy and historical settings. The following section offers information on additional archaic armor in an expanded format, with the armors from *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* reprinted here for easy reference.

ARCHAIC ARMOR

Heroes in low-tech settings still wear armor of leather or metal to protect them, and may carry wooden or metal shields.

LEATHER

Heavy leather plates covering the torso and other vital areas.

STUDDED LEATHER

Leather armor augmented with metal studs and rivets.

HIDE

Crude armor made from thick animal hides and furs.

SCALE MAIL

A shirt of interlocking metal scales.

CHAINMAIL

A shirt of heavy metal chain, often with a hauberk (hood) to cover the wearer's head.

ARCHAIC ARMOR

Armor	Toughness Bonus	Cost	Weight
Leather (light)	+1	12	15 lb.
Studded leather (light)	+2	13	20 lb.
Hide (medium)	+2	11	25 lb.
Scale Mail (medium)	+3	15	30 lb.
Chainmail (medium)	+3	18	40 lb.
Breastplate (medium)	+4	19	30 lb.
Splint Mail (heavy)	+4	19	45 lb.
Banded Mail (heavy)	+4	19	35 lb.
Plate-mail (heavy)	+5	21	50 lb.
Full plate (heavy)	+6	23	55 lb.

BREASTPLATE

Chainmail augmented with a metal breastplate.

SPLINT MAIL

Leather armor with narrow vertical strips of metal riveted to it.

BANDED MAIL

Chain and leather armor with horizontal bands of metal sewn over top.

PLATE-MAIL

This is chainmail augmented with a metal breastplate, greaves (leg-guards) and arm-guards.

FULL PLATE

A full (and heavy!) suit of articulated metal plates, like that worn by medieval knights.

SUPERNATURAL ITEMS

Supernatural items are masterwork items imbued with one or more feats or supernatural powers. These items may be single use, multiple use, or permanent.

SINGLE-USE SUPERNATURAL ITEMS

Single-use supernatural items are essentially supernatural powers temporarily imbued into an item such as a scroll, charm or potion from

which effects can be released at a later time. The power check is made, the save Difficulty is set and the specific effect (if the power has more than one potential effect) is chosen at the time of the item's creation.

To create a single-use supernatural item, a character must have the Imbue Item feat and the appropriate supernatural power. First, the proper components must be purchased. The components to make a single-use item have a purchase Difficulty of 6 +1 per 5 ranks of power check bonus that the adept wishes to imbue. Next, a Difficulty 15 Craft check of the appropriate type is necessary to create the item. Potions require a Craft (alchemy) check, and scrolls require a Craft (calligraphy) check. The enchanting of the item takes an hour or the use time of the power (whichever is longer). After this, the adept must make a power check, including a +5 power challenge, to imbue the power's effect into the item. Finally the adept must make a Knowledge (supernatural) check (Difficulty 15) and spend a Conviction point to seal the effect into the item until it is released. The adept may choose to take 10 on the Craft, Knowledge (supernatural), and power checks. If any of these checks fail, the process must begin anew.

SAMPLE SINGLE-USE SUPERNATURAL ITEM: HEALING POTION

Single use of Cure with a pre-set power check of 10.

MULTI-USE SUPERNATURAL ITEMS

Multi-use supernatural items are similar to permanent magical items, except the masterwork item may only be imbued with a single supernatural power and any number of adept feats that modify that power. In addition, multi-use supernatural items are limited to a certain number of uses or "charges" of the effect. The item's wielder may use a standard action to activate one of the item's charges and gain the benefits of the imbued power as though they had just made a power check equal to their level +10. The save Difficulty for the powers of a multi-use item is equal to 10 +1/2 the wielder's level (adepts may also add their key ability). Once these charges are expended, the item loses its supernatural qualities.

The construction of these items is similar to that of permanent supernatural items, except the enchantment process for a multi-use supernatural item takes one hour plus an additional hour per 5 charges being imbued. At the end of this time, the adept makes a power check with the imbued power (Difficulty 15 + 1 per charge to be imbued). Any fatigue save the power may require also has its Difficulty increased by +1 per charge to be imbued. The adept must then spend a number of Conviction points equal to 1 + the number of feats being imbued. The Knowledge (supernatural) check required to seal the enchantment has a Difficulty of 10 +1 per feat the item is imbued with. If any of these checks fail, the process must begin over again. This same process may be used to re-charge an item (minus the Conviction cost), but it can never be imbued with more charges than the initial total of charges the item was created with.

SAMPLE MULTI-USE SUPERNATURAL ITEM: STAFF OF THE TRUE FLAME

Masterwork staff with 10 charges of Enlarged Elemental Strike (Fire).

PERMANENT SUPERNATURAL ITEMS

Anyone wielding a permanent supernatural item gains the benefits of the feats and powers with which the item is imbued. When a non-adept accesses a power through a supernatural item, they do not risk fatigue or make a power check. Instead, they gain benefits from the power as though their power check had been equal to their level + 5. This means certain effects of any given power may not be accessible by lower level characters using the item. Adepts may choose to use a supernatural item this way, or they may risk fatigue to make their own power check normally, just as though they were using one of their own supernatural powers. The wielder of a supernatural item may spend a Conviction point to gain a +3 bonus to their power check as though they were using the Empower feat. The save Difficulty for any powers within a permanent supernatural item is 10 +1/2 the wielder's level (adepts may also add their key ability).

ALTERNATE MATERIALS

BRONZE, IRON, STEEL, ADAMANTINE AND MITHRIL

Metal armor gains damage reduction against all non-supernatural weapons made of a softer metal.

- Armor made from iron provides Damage Reduction 2/iron.
- Armor made from steel provides Damage Reduction 2/steel.
- Armor made from adamantine provides Damage Reduction 2/adamantine or mithril.
- Armor made from mithril provides Damage Reduction 2/adamantine or mithril.

Weapons made from bronze or iron have a chance of bending when your opponent rolls a natural 20 on their Toughness save. The weapon is considered to have a Toughness bonus equal to its damage rating, and must make a successful Difficulty 15 Toughness save to avoid bending.

When such a weapon bends, it suffers a -1 penalty to hit and a -1 penalty to damage. The wielder can take a full round action to straighten the weapon and eliminate the penalty to hit (but not the penalty to damage). Straightening such a weapon requires a Strength check with a Difficulty equal to 10 plus the weapon's damage bonus. Completely restoring the weapon and eliminating all penalties will require a Difficulty 10 Craft (metalworking) check. Bronze and iron weapons must be sharpened after every combat encounter in which they were used, or they will become dulled. Dull weapons suffer a -1 penalty to damage cumulative with any penalties for bending.

STONE AND BONE

Weapons made from stone or bone have a chance of shattering whenever your opponent rolls a natural 20 (19 or 20 for stone weapons) on their Toughness save. The weapon is considered to have a Toughness bonus equal to its damage rating, and must make a successful Difficulty 15 Toughness save to avoid shattering. A shattered weapon immediately becomes useless. Stone weapons made from obsidian gain a +1 bonus to damage, but have a -2 on saves to avoid shattering.

Creating a permanent supernatural item is an expensive and difficult process, and requires the creator to have the Imbue Item feat and the appropriate power(s). Creation of these powerful items first requires a masterwork item specially created to serve as the receptacle for the imbued powers (See the description of the Craft skill on pages 32-33 of *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* for more on creating masterwork Items). The Narrator may also decide special components are required that can only be acquired through some special quest.

The enchanting process takes 1 day per power or feat the adept wishes to imbue the item with. The adept must then succeed on a Difficulty 25 check with each power to be permanently imbued into the item. If the item being imbued is a weapon, "Supernatural Weapon" must be one of the powers given to it. Finally the adept must spend a number of Conviction points equal to the number of powers and feats imbued, and succeed on a Knowledge (supernatural) check (Difficulty 20 +2 per imbued power and +1 per imbued feat).

After the ordeal is over, the adept automatically acquires 1 level of fatigue, plus any additional fatigue resulting from the use of fatiguing supernatural powers. If any of the required checks fail, the process must begin over again.

SAMPLE PERMANENT SUPERNATURAL ITEM: CALIBURN

Masterwork Sword, Imbued with Attack Specialization (Caliburn), Cleave, Combat Sense, Great Cleave, Greater Attack Specialization (Caliburn), Improved Critical, and Supernatural Weapon

CONVERTING PURCHASE DIFFICULTIES TO SILVER PIECE PRICES

Purchase Difficulty	Item's Price (in silver pieces)
2	Up to 10 sp
4	20 sp
7	50 sp
10	100 sp
12	200 sp
15	500 sp
18	1000 sp
20	2000 sp
23	5000 sp
26	10,000 sp
28	20,000 sp
31	50,000 sp
34	100,000 sp
36	200,000 sp
39	500,000 sp
42	1,000,000 sp
44	2,000,000 sp
47	5,000,000 sp
+8	Each additional x10

OPTIONAL RULES

The following section provides a number of optional rules you can mix and match to add flavor and depth to a fantasy setting. Remember that not all of these rules will be appropriate for all fantasy settings.

CORRUPTION

Some fantasy characters, particularly those in high fantasy of romantic fantasy, suffer from progressive problems caused by some sort of taint, whether it is the corruption of pure evil, uncontrolled magic, or the distorting powers of chaos. The corruption rules presented in **Chapter Four** can be integrated into a fantasy game to serve this purpose.

The causes of corruption in a fantasy setting can be many and varied. Corruption may be caused by committing morally repugnant actions. It might be the result of prolonged exposure to evil artifacts, demon lords, or unhallowed ground; the consequence of pushing one's supernatural powers beyond its limits; of casting supernatural powers such as Harm, Pain or Imbue Unlife; or even the acquisition and utilization of forbidden knowledge. Whether a devotion to vile gods or the price for accessing the darkest parts of one's own psyche, the exact conditions under which a character risks corruption will depend on the nature and tone of the setting.

HARD COINAGE

The wealth system in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* is a fine abstract system for tracking resources, particularly when the complexities of credit or bartering are involved. Some fantasy settings may be better served, however, by a more concrete wealth system that tracks actual coinage.

In the hard coinage system, the standard currency is measured in pieces of silver. Copper and gold coins may also exist. In this case, treat one gold piece as approximately equal in value to 10 silver pieces, and one silver piece being equal in value to 10 copper pieces.

STARTING COINAGE

Heroes begin the game with 500 silver pieces, plus 200 sp per point of Charisma (if positive), plus 40 sp per rank in a professional skill. The Wealthy feat adds 800 silver pieces to this total each time it is taken.

HIGH LIVING

High Living is an optional rule the Narrator can invoke to reflect the penchant of many heroic characters to spend their wealth like there is no tomorrow. As a result, enormous quantities of coin can be spent on fine food and drink, clothing, gambling, entertainment, and pleasant company.

Any hero with a Wealth score over +5 who is not specifically saving up for a large purchase and has no other specific plans for spending it finds their wealth score drops by 1 point per week until it reaches +5 or less. If your game is using the coinage system for tracking wealth the hero instead loses 50% of their wealth each week they possess more than 500 silver pieces.

HONOR

Whether it involves serving king and clan or adhering to a knightly code of conduct, honor is something many fantasy characters strive to achieve. The following guidelines provide you with rules for tracking the honor of heroes and major Narrator characters, as well as suggested game effects. These rules may be most appropriate for classical or romantic fantasy games, or in settings with an Oriental flavor.

ACQUIRING HONOR

Honor is measured in terms of points, similar to an ability score. The normal range for honor scores is between +5 and -5, with +0 being average. Unlike ability scores, these maximum and minimum values are absolute and cannot be affected by a character's background.

Honor comes from action, not inaction. While a character can lose honor by not acting, he cannot gain honor by refusing to act. Generally a character gains a point of honor when they act in a particularly honorable fashion. Actions that increase one's honor score vary. Some examples of actions that can increase a character's honor score are:

- Avenging the murder of a friend or family member
- Successfully completing an assigned quest of great difficulty
- Completing a great deed
- Defeating an enemy at least 2 levels higher in single combat
- Fulfilling a family debt
- Leading an army to victory
- Dying heroically

LOSING HONOR

Depending on the character's code of honor, dishonorable actions—those that reduce one's honor score—may include any of the following examples. Unless otherwise noted, each of these actions results in the loss of 1 honor point.

- Accused of a crime
- Banished or excommunicated
- Breaking an oath
- Convicted of a crime (–2 pts)
- Failing an assigned quest or task
- Killing an unarmed or helpless foe
- Losing a contest
- Losing a supernatural or masterwork item
- Losing to an enemy 2 or more levels lower than oneself
- Failing to protect one of your family members from being murdered

HONOR SCORE

–5 (Traitorous)
–4 (Treacherous)
–3 (Dastardly)
–2 (Dishonorable)
–1 (Ignoble)
+0 (Average)
+1 (Noble)
+2 (Honorable)
+3 (Praiseworthy)
+4 (Virtuous)
+5 (Paragon)

- Rash or improper social behavior
- Refusing a fair challenge
- Refusing your lord or master
- Being taken prisoner (–2 pts)
- Accepting a bribe
- Treason (–6 pts)

EFFECTS OF THE HONOR BONUS:

- Your honor bonus applies to all Will saves to resist the effects of any compulsion that would otherwise cause you to perform an ignoble or dishonorable act.
- You honor bonus applies to all Diplomacy checks made with anyone who owes allegiance to the same lord, country, or clan as yourself.

- Your honor bonus is applied directly to your Leadership score.
- Your honor bonus or penalty is added as a bonus to your Reputation score.
- Your honor bonus (if positive) applies to Sense Motive checks against anyone with a negative honor score.
- If your honor bonus is negative, that penalty is added as a bonus to Bluff checks against anyone with a positive honor score.
- If your honor bonus is negative, that penalty is added as a bonus to your Intimidate checks.

WERGILD (HONOR PRICE)

In many societies, fines for minor crimes are proportional to the honor of the victim. A person's wergild, or honor price, has a purchase Difficulty equal to 15 + their honor score.

ADVERSARIES & CHALLENGES

When looking for adversaries to throw at your heroes in a fantasy game, the options are virtually limitless. Just about any creature found in the **Adversaries** section of *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* or in the *True20 Bestiary* is suitable for use in a fantasy adventure. A few additional creatures and hazards are presented here.

ANTHROPOMORPHIC ANIMALS

Many fantasy tales include anthropomorphic animals, or “beast men,” either as ferocious monsters or somewhat more civilized folk. This template allows you to quickly and easily create such humanoid animals.

Anthropomorphics created by this template are usable as heroes, if desired, although the Narrator may wish to apply a measure of level-lag for creatures with significant ability bonuses, since most animals do not advance by heroic role. The Narrator may also wish to limit the application of this template to creatures within two size categories of medium to avoid especially large or small anthropomorphics, at least for use as heroes in the game.

ANTHROPOMORPHIC ANIMAL

“Anthropomorphic Animal” is an inherited template added to any animal (referred to as the base animal). It uses the base animal's statistics and abilities except as noted here.

ANTHROPOMORPHIC ANIMAL (TEMPLATE)

Level: Increase the base animal's level to a minimum of 1st level.

Type: The creature's type changes to humanoid, and gains “anthropomorphic animal” as a subtype.

Size: Shift the base animal's size 1 size category towards Medium.

Speed: If its base land speed is below 20 ft., then increase it to 20 ft.

Abilities: The base animal's Intelligence is increased by +4, and its Charisma is increased by +3. If it gained a size category, increase its Strength by +2 and decrease its Dexterity by +1. If it lost a size category, decrease its Strength by 4 and its Constitution by 1, and increase its Dexterity by +1.

Skills: As base animal, adjusted for increased Intelligence.

Feats: As base animal.

Traits: As base animal.

Combat: If the base animal has lost a size category with this template, decrease the base damage for all of its natural weapons by 1 point. If it has gained a size category with this template, increase the base damage for all of its natural weapons by +1.

Saving Throws: As base animal, adjusted for its new size.

Advancement: By heroic role.

Level Lag: None



CHAPTER THREE: SPACE ADVENTURES

Imagine a world where the limits of time, space and technology are put to the test. What would be possible as humanity approached those limits? What wonders might we uncover and what dangers might we face? What might humanity find out there in the infinite reaches of space? Welcome to science fiction.

In science fiction, stories are based on the effects of scientific discoveries, environmental changes, or technological advancements. These are often

extrapolated from current trends in the scientific community. The impact of science on civilization may be the main focus of the story, or it may serve just as a backdrop, providing the setting in which the story unfolds. In some cases the stories may be set “one step ahead” of current technology, while others posit science so far advanced that it borders on the magical. Science fiction has heroes, yet the story does not often focus on them to the exclusion of the current state of the society or civilization they live in.

SUBGENRES

Science fiction is a very fluid genre. The following list covers some of the more prominent subgenres of science fiction, particularly those involving interplanetary or interstellar space travel.

ALIEN INVASION

The alien invasion subgenre revolves around the invasion of the earth by one or more space faring alien races. These aliens may seek to exterminate us and take the Earth for themselves, to enslave us, or to use us as a source of food. The invasion could be anything from a full military onslaught to a covert infiltration of human society. Examples of the alien invasion subgenre include *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, *Independence Day*, *The Liberation of Earth*, and *War of the Worlds*.

MILITARY SCIENCE FICTION

This subgenre is set against a backdrop of interstellar warfare. This galactic conflict may take place between star-spanning human nations, or between humans and one or more alien races. These stories are often told from the point of view of the soldiers fighting the war. Such a campaign emphasizes military ideals such as discipline, honor, duty, loyalty, and courage. The Narrator may want to encourage the heroes to take appropriate virtues. Examples of this subgenre can be found in David Drake's *Counting the Cost*, Joe Haldeman's *The Forever War*, and Robert Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*.

SCIENCE FANTASY

Science fantasy is a subgenre combining elements of science fiction and fantasy. Technology may have advanced in ways resembling magic, such as the development of psionic powers or the use of nanotechnology to perform seemingly magical feats. There is speculation about the future and the impact of science, but it's not overly concerned with realism. Science fantasy focuses more on heroic characters than other types of science fiction and often makes use of classical fantasy archetypes. It may even go so far as to include space-faring dragons, biologically engineered zombies, or techno-mages. For more information on the fantasy genre, refer to **Chapter Two**.

SPACE OPERA

Space opera is an epic subgenre of science fiction. It features larger than life heroes journeying across the galaxy on romantic adventures to some of the most exotic locations the universe has to offer. Heroes in such stories often have access to spaceships capable of traveling at incredible speeds. Planets usually have earthlike atmospheres and intelligent alien inhabitants. Various sorts of powers (particularly psychic or mental powers) are common, and there may be orders or organizations of adepts wielding them. Examples of space opera include *Babylon 5*, *Dune*, *Farscape*, *Star Trek*, and *Flash Gordon*.

TECH RATINGS

Technology is a driving force behind the plot of any science-fiction story. The heroes and antagonists of science fiction make use of a wide range of technological weapons, defenses, and tools. Devices shape the setting in which these characters live, influencing travel, trade, business, communications, and virtually every other area of life. Your choices regarding which technologies are widely available and which are limited or unavailable will have a significant impact on your science-fiction setting.

The tech rating (TR) indicates the technology available in a particular society or civilization. Technological development pervades all aspects of a culture, particularly at higher levels (TR 5 and beyond) when long-range communication is virtually instantaneous. Even at lower levels, it's unlikely—but not impossible—for a group of humans (or other sentient beings) to be at one tech rating in some respects but not in others. Tech ratings may vary wildly from place to place on the same world or even the same continent.

Tech ratings are a measure of technological progress only. A society may be very advanced technologically, but still be fairly backwards with regard to its social development. Likewise, a society with stone-age technology could be socially or spiritually advanced.

TR 0: STONE AGE

The major achievements of a Stone Age society are the use of fire, the domestication of animals, and the invention of agriculture. An individual living in a Stone Age society is primitive, but isn't necessarily gullible, stupid, or easily frightened by advanced technology. Common

weapons in a TR 0 civilization include the club, the dagger, the spear, and the bow. Armor made from hide or leather is possible, as are wicker shields. Communication beyond the local tribe or settlement doesn't exist. Travel is accomplished by foot or by simple rafts or canoes. Simple pottery, stone-working, and woodworking are possible.

TR 1: BRONZE/IRON AGE

Early human civilizations learned to work metal toward the end of the Stone Age. The malleability of copper made it the first metal to be “tamed.” Adding tin to copper created bronze, which allowed tools and weapons of great durability to be crafted. In turn, those improved tools made ironworking possible, replacing bronze as the metal of choice for tools and weapons.

In a Bronze/Iron Age society, advances in pottery, construction, and agriculture allow for the concentration of populations into larger groups, with a corresponding upswing in the accumulation and sharing of knowledge. The rise of nations, city-states, and empires begins in the Bronze Age. Organized efforts to improve communications allow regional societies to exist. Galleys and small sailing vessels are capable of longer voyages; some cultures build extensive road or canal networks to link distant places. Improvements in agriculture permit the rise of artisans, craftsmen, professional soldiers, and other occupations not directly concerned with gathering food.

The sword replaces clubs and daggers as the preferred infantry weapon. Chariots briefly dominate warfare before cavalry (aided by the introduction of the stirrup) renders them obsolete. The first true



military forces and tactical systems appear. Armor can now be made from sewn plates or scales, metal links, or even forged breastplates. A variety of metal melee weapons dominate the battlefield.

TR 2: MIDDLE AGES

Maturing civilizations experience a period of turmoil and adjustment during the Middle Ages. Developments continue in architecture, commerce, metallurgy, and mathematics. Wider dissemination of information becomes possible thanks to advanced printing techniques. Sturdy seafaring carracks and galleons open the door to future advances.

As population grows and knowledge of agriculture evolves, cities and towns grow larger. Toward the end of this age, feudal systems begin to collapse. Specialized crafts develop, universities appear, and the middle class is born. The first corporations emerge in the form of trade guilds. The evolution of strong systems of trade and finance distribute a society's wealth more evenly, diluting the power of the nobility.

Tools of warfare undergo a significant revolution. Sophisticated chain and plate armors protect warriors from harm, and elaborate fortifications become both art and science. Toward the end of the Middle Ages, the introduction of simple gunpowder weapons signals the end of knights, heavy armor, and organized armies of swordsmen.

TR 3: AGE OF REASON

The Age of Reason is an era when the development of ideas takes precedence over technological invention. Experimentation becomes the means by which the physical properties of nature are systematically examined. The study of scientific disciplines—chemistry, electromagnetics, medicine, biology, and astronomy—flourishes. Instruments such as microscopes and telescopes enable scientists to greatly extend the range of their observations and discoveries.

The new reliance on science generates waves on all levels of society. Superstition falls away world exploration reaches its apex. Society

begins to experiment with new forms of government. Corporations and economic alliances continue to evolve.

The cannon becomes the dominant factor in naval warfare, while massed musket fire and horse-pulled field pieces rule the battlefield. The bow vanishes, replaced by the flintlock. Light melee weapons remain common.

TR 4: INDUSTRIAL AGE

At this tech rating, the theoretical knowledge of the previous era matures into widespread practical applications. The harnessing of hydraulic, steam, and electric power creates an explosion of commerce and industry. Developments such as the telegraph, telephone, and radio make global communication possible. Breakthroughs in manufacturing techniques allow the construction of heavy ironclad vessels, rail transportation, and architecture of previously unimaginable size. Pioneers venture high into the atmosphere and descend into the sea's depths.

Urbanization is complete as individuals gather in smaller environments where they can more easily exchange goods and information. Corporations expand in power, many establishing themselves throughout the explored world. Governments are based on political and economic factors.

Warfare changes swiftly through the period. Aircraft and submersibles join the list of military assets. Reliable and accurate rifles, pistols, and machine guns become common. Mechanized war machines herald the first great change in the art of battle since the end of the knight.

TR 5: INFORMATION AGE

In the Information Age, computer technology and electronics rule supreme. Satellite information systems and the Internet connect the globe digitally. This era also sees the introduction of fission power, reducing the importance of fossil fuels. The automobile replaces the locomotive as the common form of travel. The first steps toward

space travel involve massive chemical rockets, unmanned probes and satellites, and short-term manned missions.

The technology of the era also allows greater citizen participation in government. The emergence of international alliances begins to dissolve borders between nations. Corporations gather power and threaten government authority.

Most weapons at this time are refined versions of Industrial Age equipment. Rifles, machine guns, and heavy howitzers are still used by the world's soldiers. Computerized targeting systems and guided weapons make warfare much more precise and efficient. Strategic weapons of mass destruction, tested but never used, exhibit the species' power to exterminate itself in minutes.

TR 6: FUSION AGE

The development of fusion power provides an efficient, nonexpendable energy source that almost obliterates the need for chemical fuel sources. Advanced space exploration and colonization become possible. Computers become even more accessible, reliable, and powerful, leading to the development of virtual systems and widespread access to the global Internet.

Slowly, individual nations are replaced by world powers including megacorporations, as the line between national citizen and corporate employee is rendered indistinct. Armed with the means to eradicate the entire species, world powers keep conflicts to the level of skirmishing and posturing. Integration of the Information Age's improvements proceed peacefully.

Scientific advances in genetic engineering lead to the first attempts to genetically manipulate human beings. Early results are encouraging, with the manifestation of positive and negative mutations in the species toward the end of the age. Scientists also perfect cloning technology; the first human clones are created. In the later years of this age, the first crude applications of gravity induction technology appear, in the form of vehicles that can move through the air without using physical propulsion or consumption of fuel.

Chemical-powered explosives and firearms remain the weapons of choice; fusion technology can't be effectively miniaturized for personal combat. Nevertheless, advanced chemistry and superconducting technology change the materials and capabilities of many weapons. True spaceships become possible, propelled by powerful fusion drives, but still requiring a reaction mass to traverse space. The age sees the tenuous settlement of other planets and asteroids within the same star system.

TR 7: GRAVITY AGE

At this tech rating, two key technologies herald humanity's climb to the stars. The gravity induction reactor replaces fusion power as a more efficient source of energy that can be miniaturized with ease. World

powers explore, divide, and colonize the entirety of the local star system. At the same time, however, life on the home planet is unchanged.

The second advance of the era brings perhaps the greatest upheaval in the history of human civilization. The introduction and integration of gravity induction technology leads to the creation of the induction engine, which allows starships to bridge the gap between the stars. Political and economic reorganization occurs as the species spreads far from home.

Projectile firearms are in their last days as crude energy weapons become available. Powered armor is available to warriors of this age. Personal (melee) weapons enjoy a resurgence, due in large part to a shift in military tactics—armed conflict between individuals seldom occurs on an army scale, but more frequently involves engagements of small units in conditions where ranged weapons are not effective.

Computer technology links every society, settlement, and outpost of a star system in a single information net, creating an unparalleled exchange of data for business, entertainment, and research.

TR 8: ENERGY AGE

The continuing miniaturization of induction engine technology allows power plants the size of marbles to harness the basic forces of creation. Powerful personal force screens and energy weapons dominate the battlefield, as projectile weapons finally disappear after ruling the battlefield for a thousand years. Miniaturized sensors, shields, and engines allow mass production of small, practical starfighters. At the other end of the spectrum, advanced construction techniques allow humans to build enormous, self-sustaining cities in space.

TR 9 AND HIGHER

These tech ratings are beyond reach or comprehension, although isolated worlds or undiscovered species may exist that have access to them. Practical control of matter at the subatomic level, the ability to travel through time, or the power to "fold space" to shorten travel distances may be possible at this stage of technological development.

PURCHASING ITEMS OF VARYING TECH RATINGS

Depending on the economics of a campaign, a Narrator may choose to make items of a different tech rating unavailable, cheaper, or more expensive to purchase. For the sake of game balance, Narrators who want to make lower-TR and higher-TR items available to characters should adjust the purchase Difficulties of items as follows.

- -2 to Purchase Difficulty for each TR lower than the current one, except in the case of valuable antiques.
- +5 to Purchase Difficulty for equipment from the next highest TR (the limit for purchasing cutting-edge technology), assuming the technology is available at all.

GRAVITY INDUCTION

Control of gravity is one of the key features of TR 7. The development of gravitonic science and gravitonic engineering leads to a host of miraculous devices: levitating cars, interplanetary drives requiring no reaction mass, and a wide range of military tools. Just as the application of electricity was spurred by the discovery of the induction principle, the creation of devices that induce gravitational energy leads to an effective control over weight.

Gravity induction relies on the phenomenon first set forth in Einstein's Theory of Special Relativity: An object's mass approaches infinity as the object's velocity approaches the speed of light. By using a cyclotron to accelerate a tiny particle to near-light speed, the gravity generator creates gravitons between the particle and the surrounding mass. These gravitons can be siphoned off, redirected, or stored by use of the induction coil.

At TR 7, gravity inducers can be miniaturized to the size of hockey pucks for special applications. An inducer powerful enough to negate a human's gravitational attraction to the Earth is about the size of a discus, while the induction motor in a flying car requires a gravity generator about the size of a spare tire.

SPACE HEROES

Heroes in science-fiction space adventures are many and varied. This section looks at options for creating heroes for a space adventure campaign.

OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUNDS

In a modern or futuristic *True20* campaign, you may wish to use heroic backgrounds based off of the character's education and job training rather than the culture to which they belong.

ASTRONAUT TRAINEE

As scientists and pioneers, astronaut trainees have prepared their minds and bodies for the rigors of space travel and life in space. They are elite members of a sophisticated space program, waiting for the opportunity to hurl themselves into the void to shed light on the mysteries of the universe.

- **Bonus Feats:** Skill Focus (Pilot), Talented (Navigate and Survival), Zero-G Training
- **Favored Feats:** Skill Mastery, Tough

COLONIST

Colonists are wayfaring pioneers who set the foundations of new societies on far-flung continents, planets, or moons. To survive in their new surroundings, they must live off the land and defend themselves against indigenous predatory life forms and hostile forces of nature.

- **Bonus Feats:** Endurance, Planetary Adaptation, Skill Focus (Survival)
- **Favored Feats:** Diehard, Tough

DOCTOR

A doctor can be a physician (general practitioner or specialist), a surgeon, or a psychiatrist.

- **Bonus Feats:** Skill Focus (Medicine), Talented (Knowledge (sciences)) and Knowledge (physical sciences)), Talented (Knowledge (behavioral sciences) and Knowledge (technology)),
- **Favored Feats:** Jack-of-All-Trades, Skill Mastery

DRIFTER

Drifters are aimless, world-wise wanderers who move between cities or star systems, working odd jobs until boredom or fate leads them elsewhere.

- **Bonus Feats:** Contacts, Jack-of-All-Trades, Tireless
- **Favored Feats:** Jack-of-All-Trades, Tough

ENTREPRENEUR

Entrepreneurs are obsessed with being financially independent. They believe in themselves, have an abundance of confidence, and the ability to acquire the necessary funds to bankroll their newest moneymaking venture.

- **Bonus Feats:** Master Plan, Skill Focus (Knowledge (business)), Wealthy
- **Favored Feats:** Inspire, Skill Mastery

HEIR

Heirs are the elite sons and daughters of powerful magnates, influential nobles, and imperial monarchs.

- **Bonus Feats:** Connected, Renown, Wealthy
- **Favored Feats:** Inspire, Jack-of-All-Trades

INVESTIGATIVE

This occupation includes investigative reporters, photojournalists, private investigators, police detectives, criminologists, criminal profilers, espionage agents, and others who use their skills to gather evidence and analyze clues.

- **Bonus Feats:** Firearms Training, Improved Strike, Talented (Gather Information and Search).
- **Favored Feats:** Skill Mastery, Well-Informed

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law enforcement personnel can include any sort of police force, or special law enforcement training.

- **Bonus Feats:** Firearms Training, Improved Strike, Talented (Gather Information and Intimidate)
- **Favored Feats:** Chokehold, Stunning Attack

MILITARY

You are trained as a member of the armed forces.

- **Bonus Feats:** Armor Training (Light), Improved Strike, Firearms Training
- **Favored Feats:** Attack Specialization, Improved Attack Focus

OUTCAST

"Outcast" is not so much an occupation as a forced way of life. Persecuted and exiled for being different, outcasts are lone pariahs or shunned members of a culture society finds deviant or abhorrent.

- **Bonus Feats:** Skill Focus (Stealth), Skill Focus (Survival), Tough
- **Favored Feats:** Diehard, Tough

SCAVENGER

Scavengers turn society's wreckage and discarded trash into useful tools or items for trade. If they're lucky, their endeavors might even yield one or two objects of special value.

- **Bonus Feats:** Improvised Weapon Training, Salvage, Skill Focus (Search)
- **Favored Feats:** Improvised Tools, Jack-of-All-Trades

TECHNICIAN

Scientists and engineers of all types fit within the scope of this starting occupation.

- **Bonus Feats:** Inventor, Skill Focus (Knowledge (one of business, earth and life sciences, physical sciences, or technology)) Skill Focus (Craft (one of chemical, electronic, mechanical, or structural))
- **Favored Feats:** Skill Mastery, Well-Informed

TRANSPORTER

Skilled drivers and pilots, transporters move people, information, and precious cargo safely from one destination to another.

- **Bonus Feats:** Talented (Computers and Pilot), Skill Focus (Craft (any)), Skill Focus (Navigate)
- **Favored Feats:** Master Plan, Skill Mastery

DESIGNING ALIEN BACKGROUNDS

Science fiction covers a near infinite number of alien species, variant human races or other character backgrounds. This chapter cannot possibly cover all the possibilities, so we have presented you with rules for creating your own species backgrounds tailored to your specific campaign.

Each background begins with 3 background points to spend and either two favored feats or one favored power. Refer to the **Background Modifications** table to see options for spending your background points.

BACKGROUND MODIFICATIONS	
Modification	Background Point Costs
Natural Armor Bonus	1 pt / +1 bonus
Ability Increase	2 pts
Ability Decrease	2 pts
Additional Favored Feats	1 pt / 2 feats
Additional Favored Power	1 pt / power
Blindsense 60 ft.	3 pts
Blindsight 60 ft.	2 pts
Bonus Feat (pre-selected)	1 pt
Bonus Feat (player's choice)	2 pts
Bonus Power	1 pt
Bonus Skill (player's choice)	1 pt
Burrow 10 ft.	1 pt
Burrow 20 ft.	2 pts
Climb 20 ft., +8 to Climb (can take 10)	2 pts
Climb speed increase	1 pt / 10 ft.
Darkvision 60 ft.	1 pt
Darkvision 90 ft.	2 pts
Energy Resistance 2	1 pt
Fly 30 ft. (poor)	2 pts
Fly speed increase	1 pt / 30 ft.
Fly maneuverability class increase	1 pt / class
Glide 30 ft. (average)	1 pt
Glide Speed Increase	1 pt / 30 ft.
Initiative Bonus	1 pt / +4 bonus
Land speed increase	1 pt / 10 ft.
Large Size	0 pts
Level Lag	7 pt bonus/level
Natural Attack +1 or less	0 pts
Natural Attack +2	1 pt
Natural Attack +3	2 pts
Natural Attack +4	3 pts
Scent Trait	1 pt
Small Size	0 pts
Skill Bonus	1 pt / +4 bonus.
Swim Speed 20 ft., +8 to Swim (Can take 10)	2 pts
Swim speed increase	1 pt / 10 ft.
Tremorsense 60 ft.	1 pt.

SAMPLE ALIEN BACKGROUNDS

The following alien backgrounds are drawn from UFO mythology and are presented as examples you can build, modify or drop directly into your science-fiction setting.

GREY

Greys, also known as zetas or reticulians, are a psionic alien race with a history of interaction with and abduction of humans. They look like short, slender and hairless grey humanoids with large heads and bulbous black eyes. Some believe these aliens conduct elaborate scientific experiments on humans.

- **Ability Adjustments:** -1 Str, -1 Con, +1 Int, +1 Wis
- **Bonus Feats:** Adaptation (Low Gravity), Iron Will
- **Bonus Power:** Mind Touch
- **Favored Power:** Mind Touch (Treat total level as adept level for this power)

NORD

Also called "nordics," the nords are a psionic species that appear much like beautiful human beings. This is either the result of a remarkable case of convergent evolution, the result of genetic engineering, or perhaps they are descended from abducted human ancestors. Nordics claim to be from the Pleiades, even though that star cluster is far too young for them to have evolved there.

- **Bonus Feats:** Attractive, Iron Will
- **Bonus Power:** Mind Touch
- **Favored Power:** Mind Touch (Treat total level as adept level for this power)

REPTOID

Reptoids (also known as saurians or sauroids) are a race of reptilian humanoids. Many scientists theorize they evolved on an earthlike planet where reptiles dominated and mammals never evolved. Reptoids are incredibly fast and possess a cold intellectual curiosity. Reptoids show little emotion by human standards.

- **Ability Adjustments:** -1 Str, +1 Dex, -1 Con, +1 Int
- **Natural Armor:** Reptoids gain a +2 natural armor bonus to Toughness.
- **Bonus Feat:** Improved Initiative
- **Favored Feats:** Evasion and Seize Initiative
- **Natural Attacks:** Reptoids have natural claw and bite attacks that inflict 1+ Str damage with a successful unarmed attack.

ROLES

In a science-fiction setting, experts and warriors will take center stage. Adepts may not even exist in a science fiction campaign, or perhaps their "supernatural" powers are explained through quasi-scientific means. Experts include all manner of scientists, inventors, engineers, and doctors, as well as traders, explorers, and diplomats. Warriors include space marines, soldiers, law enforcers, bounty hunters, gunners and fighter pilots. If there are adepts in the setting, they might be psions, superscience gadgeteers, or technomages.

EXPERT VARIANT: THE SPECIALIST

Experts are the "skill users" of *True20*. Their broad range of skills, however, may not reflect the degree of specialization that can occur in technologically advanced societies. Specialists are experts with a narrower focus to their skills, able to achieve higher ranks in their "specialized skills" than other heroes of equivalent level. Specialists



gain 6 starting skills and 6 skill points per level. They may pick two related skills from their starting skills to be their “specialized skills.” The specialist begins with 6 ranks in each of their starting specialized skills; their maximum rank for these two skills is equal to their level + 5.

Specialist Core Ability: A specialist may always take 10 on their two “specialized skills,” and may spend a Conviction point when making a specialized skill check to treat the roll as a 20 (meaning you don’t need to roll the die at all, just apply the result of 20 to your skill modifier).

SKILLS

With the possible exception of Knowledge (supernatural) most of the skills presented in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* can be put to good use in a space adventure campaign. The Computers skill increases in importance as it is used throughout society. The Craft (mechanical), Craft (electronic) and Craft (chemical) skills also gain new importance for building and maintaining high-tech equipment. The Survival skill remains useful for navigating terrestrial environments, but is not well suited for being used to navigating the vast outer reaches of space. A new “Navigate” skill has been added to serve this purpose, along with new uses for other skills.

COMPUTERS (INT)

In addition to all the standard uses, this skill can be used to operate shipboard sensors as well as send, jam, scramble, and unscramble transmissions sent through space or across dimensions.

Check: The following applications of the Computers skill can be used untrained:

Conduct Active Sensor Scan: Using a starship’s sensors to analyze another ship or object in sensory range requires a Computers check (Difficulty 15). An active sensor scan conducted over a vast distance (for example, across a star system) or subjected to some form of disturbance (such as interference from a solar flare) applies a –5 or higher penalty on the check.

Send Transmission: Routine communications (hailing a nearby ship, using a subspace or dimensional transceiver, and so on) are accomplished with a Computers check (Difficulty 10). Communications sent over incredibly long distances (such as between star systems) are subject to distortion; correcting that distortion to ensure a message reaches its intended destination requires a successful Computers check (Difficulty 20).

The following applications of the Computers skill can’t be used untrained:

Jam Transmission: This skill can be used to prevent a ship or facility from receiving an incoming transmission. An opposed Computers check between the individual receiving the message and the individual attempting to jam the message determines whether or not the message gets through. If an unmanned computer receives the transmission, jamming the transmission requires a Computers check (Difficulty 15).

Scramble/Unscramble Transmission: Computers can be used to scramble a transmission. This is done with an opposed Computers check between the individual sending the message and anyone attempting to intercept or unscramble it.

Time: Scrambling or unscrambling a transmission are all full-round actions. Conducting an active sensor scan or sending/ jamming a transmission is a move action.

CRAFT (INT)

You can use the appropriate Craft skill to repair vehicles, starships, and constructs (including robots).

Check: Repairing damage to a vehicle or starship takes one hour of work, a mechanical tool kit, and a proper facility such as a workshop or hangar bay. (Without a tool kit, you take a –4 penalty on your Craft check.) At the end of the hour, make a Craft check (Difficulty 20). Success repairs the most severe damage condition. If damage remains, you may

continue to make repairs for as many hours as it takes to completely restore the vehicle or starship.

The same rules apply to robots and other constructs, except the Craft check is more difficult to achieve (Difficulty 30).

Special: A vehicle, starship, robot, or other construct reduced to “dying” on the damage track cannot be repaired. It can be salvaged for parts, however (see the Salvage feat description).

DISABLE DEVICE (INT)

You can use this skill to disable a robot.

Check: Disabling a robot is a full-round action and requires a successful Disable Device check (Difficulty 30). The robot must be pinned before the check can be made.

Special: A disabled robot or disabled external cybernetic attachment can be re-enabled with a successful Craft check (see Craft).

KNOWLEDGE (TECHNOLOGY) (INT)

You can make a Knowledge (technology) check to correctly identify starships, robots, and vehicles, as well as identify unfamiliar technological devices.

Check: The Difficulties for identifying technological items vary depending on the type of information required:

- Identifying a robot or vehicle by its general type or classification: Difficulty 10
- Determining the function or purpose of a particular mechanical system: Difficulty 15
- Recalling the standard, factory-model design specs of a particular type or class of starship, vehicle, or robot: Difficulty 20

When confronted with an unfamiliar piece of technology or alien artifact, you can make a Knowledge (technology) check to correctly

surmise the primary purpose of the device. A success does not enable you to activate the item, nor does it make you proficient with the item. The base Difficulty of the Knowledge (technology) check is 10 for simple tools and instruments and 20 for more complex devices such as weapons or vehicles. This Difficulty is increased by 5 for every progress level the alien technology differs from your own.

NAVIGATE (INT)

You're trained in finding directions and plotting courses from place to place.

Check: Make a Navigate check when trying to find your way to a distant location without directions or other specific guidance. Generally, you do not need to make a check to find a local street or other common urban site, or follow an accurate map. You might make a check, however, to find your way through a dense forest or a labyrinth of underground storm drains.

For movement over a great distance, make a Navigate check. The Difficulty depends on the length of the trip: Difficulty 20 for a few hours, 22 for a few days, 25 for up to a week, and 28 for more than one week. If you succeed, you follow the best reasonable course toward your goal, but it takes twice as long, since you lose time backtracking and correcting your course. If you fail by more than 5, you travel the expected time, but only get halfway to the destination at which point you become lost.

You can make a second Navigate check (Difficulty 20) to find the right path. If you succeed, you continue on to your destination; the total time for the trip is twice the normal time. If you fail, you lose the normal time for the trip before you can try again. You can keep trying until you succeed, losing the normal time for the trip each time.

When faced with multiple choices, such as a branch in a tunnel you can make a Navigate check (Difficulty 20) to intuit the right choice. If unsuccessful, you choose the wrong path, but at the next juncture, with a successful check, you realize your mistake and can correct it. You cannot use this function of Navigate to find a path to a site if you have no idea where the site is. The Narrator may choose to make the Navigate check in secret.

You can use Navigate to determine your location without the use of any high-tech equipment by checking the constellations or other natural landmarks. You must have a clear view of the night sky to make this check. The Difficulty is 15.

Time: A Navigate check is a full round action.

Special: You can take 10 when making a Navigate check. You can take 20 only when determining your location, not when traveling.

PILOT (DEX)

You can use the Pilot skill to feint in starship combat.

Check: You can use a Pilot check to feint in starship combat just like you would use a Bluff check to feint in regular combat. With a successful check, you mislead another starship so it can't dodge your attack effectively. This check is opposed by the target pilot's Sense Motive check. If you succeed, the next attack your starship makes against the target ignores its pilot's Dexterity bonus to Defense (if it has one), thus lowering the target's Defense score.

Feinting in starship combat is an attack action.

MEDICINE (WIS)

This skill can be used to treat members of other species.

Check: Using Medicine on creatures of a species that evolved on a different home planet carries a -4 penalty. The Xenomedic feat negates the penalty.

Special: The Medicine skill cannot be used on nonliving or inorganic creatures, such as constructs or undead.



FEATS

Most of the feats in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* are suitable for a science-fiction campaign, though the usefulness of adept feats depends on the status of adepts in the game.

Some feats gain new uses in a science fiction setting. Exotic Weapon Training can be used to learn how activate and wield alien weaponry. Catch Arrows may be of limited usefulness, but the Deflect Arrows feat may be used to deflect incoming energy beams with a “plasma sword,” or similar melee weapon made of pure energy. The Vehicular Combat feat becomes critical for any pilot who wants to survive a starship dogfight, and the Animal Empathy feat may be used to interact with any alien creature with an Intelligence of –4 or –5.

The following new feats are suited to *True20* science-fiction settings:

ARMOR TRAINING, POWERED (GENERAL)

PREREQUISITES: ARMOR TRAINING (LIGHT), ARMOR TRAINING (HEAVY).

You are trained to move and fight while wearing powered armor. You only apply your powered armor’s check penalty to Acrobatics, Climb, Escape Artist, Jump, Sleight of Hand, Stealth, and Swim checks. See Armor Construction for powered armor values.

Normal: Characters without the appropriate Armor Training feat apply their armor’s check penalty to all physical rolls and checks while wearing it, including attack rolls.

DEADLY AIM (WARRIOR OR EXPERT)

You may add half your Dexterity score (rounded up) to the damage you inflict with all crossbows and guns.

INVENTOR

You can use the Knowledge (technology) and Craft skills to create inventions and temporary devices. See **Equipment Invention & Construction** in this chapter for more details.

LIGHTNING CALCULATOR (GENERAL)

PREREQUISITES: INT +1

You can perform mathematical functions in your head 10 times faster than normal, like a human calculator. You also gain a +4 bonus to Bluff, Computers and Navigate checks where complex calculations must be made.

PLANETARY ADAPTATION (GENERAL)

Your physiology has been altered by life on a planet with adverse environmental conditions. You gain one of the benefits listed here, depending on your planet of origin.

- *Barren World:* You gain a +4 bonus on Survival checks and a +4 bonus on Constitution checks against starvation and thirst.
- *Cold World:* You gain a +4 bonus on Fortitude saves against extreme cold, as well as cold resistance 2.
- *Dark World:* You gain Darkvision out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but otherwise works as normal sight.
- *High-G World:* You gain a +1 bonus to all Strength checks. Reduce your height by 6 inches.
- *Hot World:* You gain a +4 bonus on Fortitude saves against extreme heat, as well as fire resistance 2.
- *Low-G World:* You gain a +1 bonus to all Dexterity checks. Increase your height by 6 inches.
- *Water World:* You gain a +4 bonus on Swim checks and can hold your breath for a number of rounds equal to twice your Constitution score.

Special: You may only take this feat at 1st level. You may select this feat more than once, however, if you get multiple feats at 1st level; each time you choose this feat, you gain a different benefit.

SALVAGE (GENERAL)

You can salvage parts from destroyed vehicles, mecha, starships and robots. Salvaging a destroyed vehicle, mecha, or robot takes time, as noted on the **Salvage** table. At the end of this time, make a Search check. If the check succeeds, you may increase your Wealth score by the amount indicated on the table, either by selling the salvaged parts for scrap or using them to offset the cost of future building projects.

SALVAGE

Salvaged Machine’s Size	Time Required	Search Check Difficulty	Wealth Increase
Tiny or smaller	10 min	15	+1
Small, Medium, and Large	30 min	20	+2
Huge	1 hr	25	+3
Gargantuan	3 hr	30	+4
Colossal	6 hr	35	+6
Awesome	12 hr	40	+8

Special: A particular vehicle, mecha, or robot can be successfully salvaged only once. Any further attempts to salvage the wreckage fail automatically.

TIME SENSE (GENERAL)

You always know what time it is and have an accurate idea of the passage of time. You also gain a +4 bonus to Acrobatics, Drive and Pilot skill checks when performing maneuvers that require precise timing.

ULTRA IMMUNE SYSTEM (GENERAL)

PREREQUISITE: CONSTITUTION +1

You are less susceptible to the ravages of poison, disease, and radiation poisoning. You gain a +2 bonus on Fortitude saving throws to resist poisons, diseases, and radiation sickness. Furthermore, any permanent ability drain inflicted upon you is treated as temporary ability damage instead.

URBAN TRACKING (GENERAL)

You can track down the location of missing persons or wanted individuals. To find the trail of an individual or to follow it for one hour requires a Gather Information check. You must make another Gather Information check every hour of the search, as well as each time the trail becomes difficult to follow, such as when it moves to a different area of town.

The Difficulty of the check and the number of checks required to track down your quarry depend on the community population and the conditions.

URBAN TRACKING

Population	Difficulty	Checks Required
Fewer than 2,000	5	2
2,000–9,999	10	3
10,000–49,999	15	4
50,000–99,999	20	5
100,000–499,999	25	6
500,000+	30	7

Condition	Difficulty Modifier
Every three creatures in the group being sought	-1
Every 24 hours the quarry has been missing or sought	+1
Tracked quarry “lies low”	+5

If you fail a Gather Information check, you can retry after one hour of questioning.

Normal: A character without this feat can use Gather Information to find out information about a particular individual. Each check takes around three hours and does not allow effective trailing.

Special: You can cut the time per Gather Information check in half (to 30 minutes per check rather than one hour per check), but you suffer a -5 penalty on the check.

XENOMEDIC (EXPERT)

PREREQUISITES: KNOWLEDGE (EARTH AND LIFE SCIENCES) 6 RANKS, MEDICINE 6 RANKS.

You know how to provide safe medical treatment to alien life forms. You can, without penalty, use the Treat Injury skill to perform surgery on a living creature regardless of its type.

Normal: Characters without this feat take a -5 penalty on Medicine checks on alien species.

Special: This feat cannot be used to heal or repair nonliving or inorganic creatures, such as constructs or undead.

ZERO-G TRAINING (GENERAL)

You can function normally in low gravity or zero gravity. You take no penalty on attack rolls in low-gravity or zero-gravity environments. In addition, you do not suffer the debilitating effects of space sickness.

Normal: Without this feat, you take a -4 penalty on attack rolls while operating in zero-gravity environments, or a -2 penalty on attack rolls while operating in low-gravity environments. In addition, you are subject to the effects of Space Adaptation Syndrome, also known as space sickness. (See **Zero Gravity Environments** for more information.)

POWERS

Supernatural powers do not often see use in science-fiction settings. When they do appear in the genre, they are typically rare and have some sort of quasi-scientific explanation behind them. Supernatural powers may be used to represent psionic powers (see **Psionics** in **Chapter Two**), bizarre mutations, manipulation of some cosmic force connecting all living beings, or even the effects of controlling nanites or using superscience gadgets to produce seemingly magical effects. In each of these cases, the supernatural powers available are limited to ones that can be logically explained by the adept’s pseudoscientific abilities.

EQUIPMENT

This section provides you with guidelines for designing your own futuristic weapons, armor, and vehicles tailored to your science fiction setting. Rules are also provided for allowing heroes to build and invent their own equipment in play.

TECH RATING (TR)

When creating a piece of equipment, first determine the available technology. This is generally the TR of the setting (see the general **Tech Ratings** section for details), although TRs may vary locally within a setting, such as some worlds or nations on a world having a lower (or even higher) TR than average.

At the Narrator’s option a character with the Inventor feat may be able to build an item one TR higher than normal as a skill challenge, applying a -5 penalty to all checks associated with designing/building the invention.

CONSTRUCTION POINTS

The equipment design rules in this section use *construction points* (CP) and *construction point capacity* (or CPC) to determine the limits of an item’s capabilities at any given tech rating and generally how difficult and expensive that item is to build.

If you’re just designing a new piece of equipment for use in the setting, the CP total just provides a guideline for how expensive the item should be: a purchase Difficulty of 8 + total CP is a good starting guideline, modified based on how common and accessible you want it to be. Items with very high CP totals (particularly vehicles) may have a much lower purchase Difficulty, but such items are largely beyond the capability of individuals to build on their own.

If a player is designing the item in order to build or invent it, the CP cost also affects the Difficulty of associated skill and Wealth checks to produce the item. See **Equipment Construction and Invention** at the **Equipment** section for details.

WEAPON CONSTRUCTION

Science fiction heroes often have a wide array of weaponry to help them out when diplomacy is not an option. This section provides you with basic guidelines for designing your own weapons and other handheld tools.

STEP 1: DETERMINE CONSTRUCTION POINT CAPACITY (CPC)

Once the tech rating of the weapon or other piece of equipment you are constructing has been set, refer to the following table to set the number of CP this item can contain.

WEAPON CONSTRUCTION POINTS
BY SIZE AND TECH RATING*

Size	TR 0	TR 1-3	TR 4-5	TR 6	TR 7	TR 8	Base Reach
Tiny	1	2	3	4	5	6	5 ft.
Small	2	3	4	5	6	7	5 ft.
Medium	3	4	5	6	7	8	5 ft.
Large	4	5	6	7	8	9	5 ft.
Huge	5	6	7	8	9	10	10 ft.
Gargantuan	6	7	8	9	10	11	15 ft.
Colossal	7	8	9	10	11	12	20 ft.

* Simple melee weapons have their maximum CP value lowered by 1. Exotic and heavy weapons have their maximum CP value raised by 1.

STEP 2: DETERMINE DAMAGE

Next, purchase the damage rating for the weapon you wish to construct. All weapons begin with a default base damage rating of +0. Each +1 lethal damage costs 1 CP. Every +2 non-lethal damage cost 1 CP. If the weapon is a single-use weapon that is destroyed when it is used (such as a grenade) halve the CP cost of damage. Choose one type of damage you

want the weapon to do from the following list: Acid, Autofire, Ballistic, Bludgeoning, Cold, Concussion, Disintegration, Electricity, Energy, Fire, Piercing, Radiation, Slashing, Sonic, or Vibration.

STEP 3: DETERMINE RANGE

If the weapon is a melee weapon, 10 ft. of throwing distance can be purchased for 1 CP. If the weapon is a ranged weapon, it has a base range of 10 ft. per point of damage. Additional range for a ranged weapon can be purchased as indicated on the **Extended Range** table.

EXTENDED RANGE	
Range Extension	Cost
+100 ft.	1 CP
+1000 ft.	2 CP
+1 mile	3 CP
+5 miles	4 CP
+20 miles	5 CP
+200 miles	6 CP
+2,000 miles	7 CP
+20,000 miles	8 CP

STEP 4: PURCHASE FEATURES

Features enhance a weapon or alter how it works, similar to feats. The following features can be added to any weapon or similar piece of equipment.

BREAKDOWN

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 4 OR HIGHER

A weapon with this feature is designed to be easily taken apart and put back together, making it easy to transport and hide. When separated into its component pieces, it is almost impossible (Difficulty 30 Search check) to recognize as a weapon. Taking the weapon apart is a full action; putting it back together requires 5 rounds.

FEAT BONUS

COST: 1 CP

Some weapons or pieces of equipment offer their user the benefits of a particular feat. If they already have this feat, the benefits of the actual and virtual feats are added together. Weapons can have the following virtual feats; Improved Defense, Improved Disarm, Improved Grab, Improved Sunder, Improved Trip and Precise Shot. Handheld equipment can have any virtual feat that is not combat oriented.

IMPROVED CRITICAL BONUS

COST: 1/2 CP

This feature increases the weapon's critical hit damage bonus by +1. It can be purchased up to three times.

IMPROVED CRITICAL RANGE

COST: 1 CP

This feature increases the weapon's critical threat range by 1 point. It can be purchased up to three times.

INTEGRATED EQUIPMENT

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: THE INVENTOR MUST INDEPENDENTLY BUILD OR PURCHASE THE PIECE OF EQUIPMENT BEFORE IT CAN BE INTEGRATED INTO THE WEAPON AS A FEATURE.

A particular piece of equipment (weapon or nonweapon) has been integrated into the weapon and can be used by the weapon's bearer at

any time. This feature is often used to give ranged weapons features like glow-lamps or flares, though it is not limited to those applications. Some weapons may use the integrated equipment feature to incorporate a small computer or sensor module, reducing the amount of equipment the character has to carry.

When selecting the integrated equipment feature, choose a piece of equipment. That equipment is integrated into the base weapon and can be used at any time. Additionally, you must choose whether or not the equipment may be physically separated from the base weapon or not at the time of purchase. This feature may be selected multiple times, each time adding a single additional piece of equipment to the base model.

KNOCKBACK

COST: 2 CP

This weapon knocks a target back 1 ft. per point by which they failed their Toughness save. They must also make a Dexterity Check with a Difficulty equal to the number of feet they were thrown back in order to avoid falling prone.

SENSOR BAFFLING

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 5 OR HIGHER

From simple metal detectors to advanced X-ray scanners, there's a way to detect every weapon. As the tech rating increases, so does the accuracy of weapon-sensing devices. The ability to confuse these sensors can be invaluable, especially when smuggling weapons past security. Any weapon with the sensor baffling feature grants a +4 bonus on any checks made to conceal the weapon from sensors or other detection devices.

SPRING-LOADED

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITE: WEAPONS OF SIZE SMALL OR SMALLER ONLY

Some weapons are designed to be concealed from sight, then drawn into the hand at a moment's notice. The spring-loaded feature ensures that small weapons can remain hidden under layers of clothes or armor and still be called to action at any time. The bearer of a spring-loaded weapon automatically gains the benefits of the Quick Draw feat with this specific weapon, even if the weapon is hidden from sight on that hero's person.

SKILL BONUS

COST: 1 CP/+4 BONUS

Some weapons or pieces of equipment offer their user a bonus to a particular skill check. For example, a particularly large or daunting weapon might offer a bonus to Intimidate checks.

FEATURES FOR MELEE WEAPONS

The following features can be added to most varieties of melee weapons.

BRACE VS. CHARGE

COST: 1/2 CP

PREREQUISITES: HAFTED WEAPON OF MEDIUM OR LARGER SIZE

You can brace this weapon against a charge as a full action. You get a +2 bonus to damage against the next opponent to charge you.

DOUBLE WEAPON

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: EXOTIC WEAPON

This feature for melee weapons allows a single armament to be used as if its wielder held two of the same weapon, granting him an extra

attack at a penalty (see **Two-Weapon Fighting** in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*, page 106). A skilled fighter using this weapon can strike an opponent twice, once with each end. If used to make a single attack as normal, this weapon confers no special bonuses or penalties.

REACH

COST: 1/2 CP/+5 FT.

This is a long weapon designed to strike opponents before they can close to melee range. A weapon with this feature can be used to attack opponents up to 10 feet away.

BARBED

COST: 1 CP

A barbed weapon has hooks and flanged blades designed to impale a foe. Anyone hit by a barbed weapon must make a Strength check with a Difficulty equal to the weapon's damage rating. On a failed check, the victim is caught on the barbs and cannot move without suffering additional damage equal to the weapon's normal damage in order to pull free. The wielder of the weapon can also tear it free as a move action, causing damage equal to the weapon's normal damage. An aid action can also free a victim from a barbed weapon, provided the weapon's weapon does not take action to oppose it.

FEATURES FOR RANGED WEAPONS

The following features can be added to most types of ranged weapons, though the Narrator can overrule any nonsensical combination.

CLOSE QUARTERS

COST: 1 CP

Designed with a thick stock, built from exceptionally durable materials, or created with a bayonet mount, a close quarters weapon can be used as a club or spear without penalty, in which case it counts as a melee weapon with a +2 damage rating.

HEAVY RECOIL COMPENSATION

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 5 OR HIGHER

This weapon is exceptionally easy to handle when emptying a clip at a target. This feature is available only to weapons that do Autofire damage. It reduces all penalties for using autofire to attack multiple targets by -1.

LOCK SYSTEM

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 6 OR HIGHER

This weapon verifies its user's identity in some way before functioning (such as checking fingerprints or scanning DNA). The weapon checks a user as a free action, allowing you to draw and use it without spending any additional actions. If someone other than you tries to use it, she must overcome the device's security system. Defeating this system requires Disable Device check with a Difficulty equal to 10 + the weapon's TR.

Special: You can take this feature more than once, increasing the Disable Device Difficulty by +2 each time.

HEADS-UP DISPLAY (HUD)

COST: 2 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 6 OR HIGHER

This extra includes a helmet and visor that transmits data to and from the weapon. It includes targeting information, shot paths, and other useful information. A weapon with this feature grants you a +1 bonus per missed shot against a single target until you hit. Once you hit, you

maintain that bonus until the end of the current encounter. If you change targets, your bonus resets to 0; you may begin anew against your new target should you miss.

INDIRECT FIRE

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 8 OR HIGHER

This weapon can strike targets its user cannot see or trace a direct line to. There must still be a clear path between the weapon and its target, but this route could be from any direction. The weapon's user must have some way of knowing his target's location. He can either guess or he can receive information via radio, psychic link, or some other means.

When using the weapon, the attacker targets a spot within range. He then makes an attack against Defense 20. On a hit, his attack lands in the spot he targeted. Otherwise, it scatters 5 feet x (20 - your attack result), to a maximum of half the distance between the attacker and his target. For example, if you rolled a total of 18, the shot scatters 10 feet.

To resolve a scattered attack, roll a die to determine the direction the shoot scatters. To find the direction, pick out a 5-foot square next to the intended target and count in the nine spaces around the target until you reach the result of the die roll. Pick the square you want to count as one before rolling. You can re-roll any result of 19 or 20 to ensure that all the squares have the same chance of being selected.

MULTI-AMMO

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 5 OR HIGHER

Ranged weapons are designed to accept different types of ammunition, from bullets that explode into thick banks of fog, to beams of energy that stun rather than kill. A multi-ammo weapon can use any of the ammunition types described later in this section.

When you buy this feature, you can select a single use of one type of ammo. You can purchase this feature multiple times; choosing a single ammo type more than once gives you additional uses of that type of ammunition. You can replenish your ammo supply when you reload between encounters. Your Narrator has final authority on whether you have the opportunity to restock. Once you have chosen the ammunition you want to use, you cannot change your choice unless your Narrator allows you to do so.

SCATTER GUN

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 5 OR HIGHER

This weapon delivers a spread of fire across a wide area, much like a shotgun or similar weapon. When fired, this weapon projects a cone that is 5 feet x the weapon's damage rating. Normally, you cannot choose to change between a cone and a normal attack. If you increase this feature's cost to 2 points, you can change between firing modes as a free action.

TARGETING SYSTEM

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 5 OR HIGHER

You can use your weapon to ignore a target's cover bonus to Defense. As a half action, you can aim at a target and opt to ignore his cover bonus to Defense. You suffer a penalty to your attack's damage equal to the cover's Toughness.

TRACKING SYSTEM

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 6 OR HIGHER

By acquiring and locking on to a single target, your ranged weapon helps you aim. If you spend a full action aiming at a single target, you gain a +2 bonus to all attacks against him. You suffer a -4 penalty to attack anyone or anything else, however, as your weapon is locked onto your chosen target and will continually try to return to that target until it is deactivated. You can deactivate the targeting computer as a half action. If you turn off the tracking system, you neither gain the bonus nor suffer the penalty.

VISUAL SENSOR ARRAY

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 7 OR HIGHER

This weapon incorporates a series of visual sensors which allow it to sense potential targets before its user notices them. The Narrator may allow the weapon to make a Notice check as a free action to notice an opponent independent of its user. For the purposes of this check, the weapon has 10 ranks in Notice. If it succeeds, the weapon warns the user, who may then spend a half action to gain the benefits of the successful check.

STEP 5: PURCHASE ACCESSORIES

Accessories are additional qualities your weapon can have that *do not* count against its maximum CP total. They do apply, however, to the item's CP total for figuring its cost and relevant Difficulties for constructing or designing it.

The following weapon accessories are available for addition to most firearms.

LASER SIGHT

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 5 OR HIGHER

A laser sight projects a non-damaging laser beam showing where the weapon is aimed. This grants a +1 bonus on attack rolls with that weapon.

TARGETING SCOPE

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 5 OR HIGHER

When you take a full action to aim a weapon with a targeting score, double the normal benefits of aiming: a +4 attack bonus, or +8, if you're aiming at a stationary object.

SUPPRESSOR

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 5 OR HIGHER

A suppressor muffles the noise of a ballistic weapon, making it Difficulty 10 for normal hearing to detect it.

AMMUNITION TYPES

Ammunition alters how a weapon works. It only works with weapons that have the multi-ammo feature, as most guns and other ranged weapons are designed to work with specific types of ammo. Keep in mind most ranged weapons must draw on some sort of supply, be it arrows, bullets, or energy packs. Alternative forms of ammunition often provide a bonus to an attack balanced out by some penalty, such as a bonus to hit with an attack that deals reduced damage. Other ammunition types give your attack some other effect, such as creating a smoke cloud at the point of impact. Note that your Narrator may rule that certain types of ammo are impossible to use with the type of weapon you want to use. If you cannot reasonably describe how the weapon functions with an ammo type, it might not be a good fit for the weapon.



ALTERNATIVE DAMAGE TYPE

An alternative ammunition variety may simply deal a different type of damage.

BINDING

When this ammo strikes its target, it bursts into a grasping set of wraps or mechanical arms, allowing it to grapple an opponent and hold him in place. This ammunition is considered to have a grapple bonus equal to the weapon's damage rating.

CLOUD

When this shot hits, it bursts into a thick cloud of smoke. The shot deals no damage. It lingers for a number of minutes equal to the weapon's damage rating. The cloud fills a roughly spherical area with a diameter of five feet per point of the weapon's damage rating. The cloud provides total concealment to all within its radius.

DAZZLE

The shot produces a flash of light, a sonic burst, or some other effect to overwhelm the target's senses. Any target stuck by this attack suffers no damage, but instead must make a Fortitude save with a Difficulty of 15 + the weapon's damage rating or become dazed for a number of rounds equal to the weapon's damage rating. If they fail their saving throw by 5 or more, they are blinded instead of dazed.

DISARMING

This ammunition is specifically designed to knock a weapon from an opponent's hand. You may use it to make ranged disarm attacks. You must make an attack to hit your target. If you succeed, follow the rules for disarming (see *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*, p. 99). If he fails, he is disarmed. His weapon falls to the ground in his current space.

EMP

Designed to defeat mechanical devices, this ammunition has no effect on non-machine targets. This ammunition type deals no damage to living or biological organisms, but gains a +2 bonus to damage to constructs, computers or vehicles. This damage is considered an electrical attack.

NON-LETHAL

Ballistic weapons can fire rubber bullets, while bows can fire blunt-tipped arrows or quarrels. This ammunition inflicts non-lethal rather than lethal damage.

SLOW

This ammunition bursts into a thick glue or similar substance, hindering its target's movement. The target suffers no damage, but must succeed in a Fortitude save with Difficulty equal to 15 + the weapon's damage rating or only be able to take partial actions. Slowed characters gain a new Fortitude save each round to recover, with a +1 bonus per successive save.

STAPLING

This ammo traps a target in place. It might pin his arm to a nearby wall or skewer his foot to prevent him from moving. Alternatively, it could spray an area with glue to trap the target. On a successful hit, the target must make a Reflex saving throw. A failed save means the target is bound and helpless, need a Difficulty 20 Strength or Escape Artist check to get free. A successful save means the target isn't trapped, but must still contend with the primary effect of the weapon (impaled limbs, sticky ground, and so forth).

STUN

On impact this ammunition releases a powerful electric charge, requiring a Fortitude save (Difficulty 15 + the weapon's damage rating) to avoid being stunned. Stunned characters gain a new Fortitude save each round to recover, with a +1 bonus per successive save.

TRANQUILIZER

Coated with powerful sedative or poison, these shots are capable of weakening or befuddling a target. This ammunition works like a normal attack, but instead of inflicting damage it inflicts levels of fatigue. A target that is struck must make a Fortitude save. The Difficulty is equal to 15+ the weapon's damage rating. If the target fails her saving throw, she suffers one level of fatigue plus an additional level of fatigue for every 5 points by which she missed the saving throw.

ARMOR CONSTRUCTION

Steady advancements in weapon technology and the exploration of increasingly hostile environments necessitate advancements in armor to protect against them. The following section provides rules for designing your own protective equipment.

STEP 1: DETERMINE CONSTRUCTION POINT CAPACITY (CPC)

Once the tech rating of the item you are constructing has been set, refer to the following table to set the number of CP this weapon can contain.

ARMOR CONSTRUCTION POINTS

Size	TR 0-1	TR 2-4	TR 5	TR 6	TR 7	TR 8
Light	1	2	3	4	5	6
Medium	3	4	5	6	7	8
Heavy	5	6	7	8	9	10
Powered	—	—	—	10	11	12

POWERED ARMOR

Powered armor contains a power supply that allows it to purchase other features that require power to use. The power supply must be kept charged in order for the armor to give the character its benefits beyond its defense bonus. Characters who wish to use powered armor without penalty must have the Powered Armor Training feat.

STEP 2: DETERMINE TOUGHNESS BONUS

Each point of Toughness bonus costs 1 CP.

STEP 3: PURCHASE FEATURES

The following is a list of features that may be built into a suit of armor.

ABLATIVE SHIELD

COST: 2 CP/1 CP OF TOUGHNESS BONUS

PREREQUISITES: TR 7 OR HIGHER

Your armor generates an ablative shield which has its own damage track. Attacks directed at you are absorbed by your shield. The shield dissipates once it reaches disabled status on the damage track; any further damage is handled normally. The ablative shield gains a recovery check with a +3 bonus to the die roll every other round.

ABSORPTION SHIELD

COST: 1 CP/+1 TOUGHNESS

PREREQUISITES: TR 6 OR HIGHER

Your armor generates an energy shield which helps absorb attacks. It provides a +1 bonus to your Toughness saves for every CP spent for the shield. This feature can be purchased up to a maximum of eight times.

CLOSE QUARTERS DEFENSE SYSTEM

COST: 1 CP

Your armor is covered with sharp spines, electrical outlets, and similar hazards that can burn, cut, or impale anyone who comes too close to you. Anyone who attempts to grapple or grab you automatically suffers +2 damage of a damage type picked at the time of the armor's creation. Your opponent continues to suffer this damage each round if he maintains a grapple against you.

CONCEALED WEAPON

COST: 1 CP (TINY OR SMALL), OR 2 CP (MEDIUM)

PREREQUISITES: RANGED WEAPONS CAN ONLY BE PLACED IN POWERED ARMOR. THE INVENTOR MUST EITHER BUY OR BUILD THE ADDED WEAPON SEPARATELY BEFORE IT CAN BE INTEGRATED INTO THE ARMOR.

Your suit is designed to hold and conceal an extra piece of armament. It pops out of a hidden compartment or looks like a harmless piece of equipment when not in use. The first time you use this weapon during an encounter, you can make a Bluff check as a free action against your target. If you win, your opponent is considered flat-footed against the weapon's first attack. Your Narrator can judge that opponents you have faced before expect the attack and thus are not affected.

DEFLECTION SHIELD

COST: 1 CP/+1 DEFLECTION BONUS

PREREQUISITES: TR 7 OR HIGHER

Your armor generates a deflection shield that provides a +1 bonus to your defense for every CP spent on this feature. Deflection shield can be purchased no more than ten times.

ENERGY RESISTANCE**COST:** 1 CP/+2 ENERGY RESISTANCE**PREREQUISITES:** TR 4 OR HIGHER

This feature gives the hero 2 points of energy resistance per CP. Each time this feature is purchased, it affects a new energy type chosen from the following list: Acid, Cold, Electricity, and Fire.

ENVIRONMENTAL SEAL**COST:** 1 CP**PREREQUISITES:** MEDIUM OR HEAVY ARMOR, TR 5 OR HIGHER

The environment seal feature transforms any armor into a stable and insulated artificial environment. This provides the wearer with breathable air and external pressure to assure comfort and survival for up to eight hours, ensuring that the armor can function in deep sea, deep space, or anywhere in-between. Only armor with an integrated sealed helmet, body glove, and emergency air tanks to generate internal atmosphere can handle this feature.

EXTERNAL WEAPON MOUNT**COST:** 1 CP (TINY, SMALL OR MEDIUM), 2 CP (LARGE)

PREREQUISITES: RANGED WEAPONS CAN ONLY BE USED WITH POWERED ARMOR. THE INVENTOR MUST BUY OR BUILD THE ADDED WEAPON SEPARATELY BEFORE IT CAN BE INTEGRATED INTO THE ARMOR.

Your armor contains an attached ranged weapon system. This weapon may be up to 1 size larger than the size of the armor (armor designed to fit a Medium humanoid can hold up to a Large weapon).

HOLOSCREEN**COST:** 3 CP**PREREQUISITES:** POWERED ARMOR, TR 7 OR HIGHER

A holoscreen unit projects a holographic image around the suit of armor, making it appear as something else of roughly similar proportions occupying the same amount of space. For instance, it could make a Medium creature look like a small tree or outcropping of rock.

Although the holographic projection appears real, physical objects can pass through it without difficulty. If the wearer moves, the holographic image moves as well. Attacks made against the wearer are treated as though it had 20% concealment, since the projected image may not perfectly match the creature's true proportions. A holoscreen is powered by the armor's internal power source.

INTEGRATED EQUIPMENT**COST:** 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: THE INVENTOR MUST EITHER BUY OR BUILD THE ADDED PIECE OF EQUIPMENT SEPARATELY BEFORE IT CAN BE INTEGRATED INTO THE ARMOR.

A particular piece of nonweapon equipment has been integrated into the armor and can be used by the armor's wearer at any time.

When selecting the integrated equipment gadget, choose a piece of equipment. That equipment is integrated into the base armor and can be used at any time. Additionally, you must choose whether or not the equipment may be physically separated from the base armor at the time of purchase. This gadget may be selected multiple times, each time adding a single additional piece of equipment to the base model. Should the armor be destroyed or lost, the integrated equipment is destroyed or lost as well.

MAGNETIC FEET**COST:** 1 CP**PREREQUISITES:** TR 6 OR HIGHER

This armor comes with electromagnetic grippers, allowing it to cling to ferrous substances such as iron and steel. The wearer gains a Climb speed of 20 feet and does not need to make Climb checks to scale ferrous surfaces. This feature can be used to anchor someone in a zero-g environment.

PERSONAL FLIGHT JETS**COST:** SEE TABLE**PREREQUISITES:** POWERED ARMOR, SEE TABLE FOR TR REQUIREMENTS

Personal flight jets consist of a wearable set of propulsion jets attached to powered armor, allowing the wearer to fly. The CP cost and flight speed of the jets depend on their quality as indicated in the following table. The basic maneuverability class for jets is Poor. Maneuverability can be improved by spending an additional 1 CP per maneuverability class raise.

PERSONAL FLIGHT JET COSTS

Flight Jet Class	Minimum TR	Max Speed	Cost
Class I	5	30 ft. /round (3 mph)	1/2 pt
Class II	5	60 ft. /round (6 mph)	1 pt
Class III	5	100 ft. /round (10 mph)	2 pts
Class IV	6	250 ft. /round (25 mph)	3 pts
Class V	6	500 ft. /round (50 mph)	4 pts
Class VI	6	1000 ft. /round (100 mph)	5 pts
Class VII	6	2500 ft. /round (250 mph)	6 pts
Class VIII	7	5000 ft. /round (500 mph)	7 pts



PERSONAL WATER TURBINES

COST: SEE TABLE

PREREQUISITES: POWERED ARMOR, SEE TABLE FOR TR REQUIREMENTS

Personal water turbines allow the wearer of the attached suit of armor to propel themselves through water or a similar liquid environment. The CP cost and flight speed of the turbines depend on their quality, as indicated in the following table. The environmental seal feature is required in order to breathe underwater.

PERSONAL WATER TURBINE COSTS

Turbine Class	Minimum TR	Max Speed	Cost
Class I	5	20 ft. /round (2 mph)	1/2 CP
Class II	5	30 ft. /round (3 mph)	1 CP
Class III	6	50 ft. /round (5 mph)	2 CP
Class IV	6	100 ft. /round (10 mph)	3 CP
Class V	6	250 ft. /round (25 mph)	4 CP
Class VI	6	500 ft. /round (50 mph)	5 CP
Class VII	7	1000 ft. /round (100 mph)	6 CP
Class VIII	7	2500 ft. /round (250 mph)	7 CP

PERSONAL RADAR

COST: 3 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 6 OR HIGHER

Adding personal radar to a suit of armor gives the armor's wearer Blindsight out to 90 ft.

PHOTON SCREEN

COST: 4 CP

PREREQUISITES: POWERED ARMOR, TR 8 OR HIGHER

Using a series of light reflectors molded to the armor's frame, this unit bends light around the armor, rendering it and its wearer invisible (see *True20*, page 109, for the effects of invisibility).

RADIATION SHIELDING

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 5 OR HIGHER, ENVIRONMENTAL SEAL

This feature provides the armor's wearer with a +5 bonus to saves against radiation.

RECOVERY SYSTEM

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: POWERED ARMOR, TR 6 OR HIGHER

If you are knocked unconscious, the armor's systems activate an autopilot feature that attempts to return you to a previously chosen location. The recovery system can only store one location at a time. You can toggle this feature on and off as a free action. Your armor uses the full range of its movement abilities to move you to safety.

SKILL BONUS

COST: 1 CP/+4 BONUS

Some suits of armor offer their user a bonus to a particular skill check. A particularly daunting looking suit of armor might offer a bonus to Intimidate checks. Other possibilities include jump jets, stealth devices or climbing spikes. This feature may be purchased twice for any given skill.

STRENGTH ENHANCEMENT

COST: 2 CP/+1 STR BONUS

PREREQUISITES: POWERED ARMOR, TR 6 OR HIGHER

This feature gives the armor's wearer a +1 bonus to Strength for every time this feature is purchased. The bonus only lasts as long as the armor is worn and the power supply is charged. This feature can be purchased up to five times.

SUBTLE

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: LIGHT OR MEDIUM ARMOR, TR 4 OR HIGHER

This feature allows the suit of armor to be hidden under clothing. Spotting it takes a Difficulty 10 Notice check.

TARGETING COMPUTER

COST: 2 CP

PREREQUISITES: POWERED ARMOR, TR 6 OR HIGHER

This is a computer system built into a suit of armor that gives the wearer a +1 bonus to all attack rolls using ranged weapons. The bonus does not stack with any bonuses to accuracy the weapon itself may have (from a scope or laser sight, for example).

VOICE MODULATOR

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 5 OR HIGHER

This sound system alters your voice, making it impossible to identify you and giving you a more majestic, commanding (and intimidating) tone. While wearing this armor, you gain a +2 bonus to Intimidate checks and can boost your volume so others can hear you clearly from up to a mile away.

STEP 3: PURCHASE ACCESSORIES

Armor accessories do not count against its maximum CP cost, although they do modify its CP total for determining purchase, design, and construction Difficulties.

COMMUNICATION UNIT

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 4 OR HIGHER

This accessory provides your armor with a built-in two-way radio or other form of verbal communication unit. It can be used to communicate with anyone who is equipped with a similar type of gear. The effective range of this unit depends on its TR.

TR	Effective Range
5	Within orbit of the same planet
6	Within the same star system
7	Within 1 light year
8	Within 5 light years

GPS UNIT

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 5 OR HIGHER

This suit of armor includes a Global Positioning unit that can record the user's position on any given planet along with the paths they have previously taken. It grants a +2 to land-based Navigate and Survival checks and prevents the hero from getting lost.

INFRARED GOGGLES**COST:** 1 CP**PREREQUISITES:** PL 5 OR HIGHER

Your armor is equipped with specialized goggles that provide you with the benefits of the Night Vision feat.

STORAGE COMPARTMENTS**COST:** 1 CP

You have enough space in your armor to securely hold up to four items, each of which can be no larger than your hand, pistol, or other Small item. You can secure these compartments, forcing thieves to make an Disable Device check (Difficulty 15) to open them.

VEHICLE CONSTRUCTION

Sometimes heroes make use of various vehicles to get around. Vehicles are used primarily for transportation, although they may come with additional capabilities—including weapons—that make them useful in other situations as well.

STEP 1: DETERMINE VEHICLE SIZE AND STANDARD FEATURES

Once you have determined the TR of the vehicle you are constructing, you must decide how big the vehicle is going to be. The vehicle's size will determine some of the vehicle's basic stats, such as its base Strength, Defense and Toughness values. In addition to those values, most vehicles have a number of standard features depending on their progress level. Standard features are the beginning attributes and traits of any vehicle before any other features have been built or purchased.

TR 0–3: No additional standard features

TR 4: Headlights, seating, radio receiver, seatbelts

TR 5: As TR 4 plus air conditioning, heating, air bags, cruise control

TR 6–8: As TR 5 plus communication gear, breathalyzer, flatscreen digital TV monitor with basic internet browsing capabilities, remote shutdown system

Strength: A vehicle's Strength, much like a character's, determines its carrying capacity. Medium vehicles have a base Strength of +0. Each increase in size category increases a vehicle's base Strength by +5. A vehicle can move at normal speed carrying up to its medium load, 2/3 speed with a heavy load. It can also pull up to five times its heavy load at 1/2 speed (up to 10 times, if equipped with the proper hauling equipment and given an unobstructed area in which to move).

Defense: A vehicle's base Defense is 10 + its size modifier.

Toughness: This is the vehicle's base Toughness rating, which starts out at 5 for a Medium vehicle. Each increase in size category also increases a vehicle's base Toughness by +2.

STEP 2: DETERMINE CONSTRUCTION POINT CAPACITY (CPC)

The number of CP used to build a vehicle depend on its size and TR, as shown in the following table:

Vehicle Size	TR 0–3	TR 4	TR 5	TR 6	TR 7	TR 8
Awesome	100	110	120	130	140	150
Colossal	80	90	100	110	120	130
Gargantuan	60	70	80	90	100	110
Huge	40	50	60	70	80	90
Large	20	30	40	50	60	70
Medium	5	10	20	30	40	50
Small	2	5	10	20	30	40

STEP 3: PURCHASE MOTIVATORS

The means of propulsion or motion for a vehicle is called its motivator. When designing a vehicle, it's important to choose a motivator that is in keeping with its intended use and terrain.

PROPELLERS/ROTORS**COST:** SEE TABLE**PREREQUISITES:** SEE TABLE

Propellers and rotors were one of the first motivators developed that can allow a vehicle to fly. The exact cost and speed of the propellers/rotors are listed in the following table.

Propeller Class	Minimum TR	Max Speed	Cost
Class I	4	50 mph	6 CP
Class II	4	100 mph	8 CP
Class III	4	250 mph	10 CP

JET ENGINES**COST:** SEE TABLE**PREREQUISITES:** SEE TABLE

Jet engines can include any type of propulsion system meant for flight. The exact prerequisites, costs and speeds of the jet engine depend on its quality and are listed in the following table.

Engine Class	Minimum TR	Max Speed	Cost
Class I	5	500 mph	12 CP
Class II	5	1000 mph	14 CP
Class III	5	2500 mph	16 CP
Class IV	6	5000 mph	18 CP

VEHICLE SIZE AND STANDARD FEATURES

Vehicle Size	Modifier	Size	Examples	Str	Toughness	Defense
Awesome	–12	128–250 ft.	Space transport	+25	+15	–2
Colossal	–8	64–128 ft.	Passenger jet	+20	+13	+2
Gargantuan	–4	32–64 ft.	Semi, yacht, fighter jet	+15	+11	+6
Huge	–2	16–32 ft.	Stretch limo, SUV, tank	+10	+9	+8
Large	–1	8–16 ft.	Car, truck	+5	+7	+9
Medium	+0	4–8 ft.	Motorcycle	+0	+5	+10
Small	+1	2–4 ft.	Skateboard	–1	+3	+11

TANK TREADS

COST: SEE TABLE

PREREQUISITES: SEE TABLE

Tank treads include a set of treads, a suspension system and an appropriate motor. The exact prerequisites, costs and speeds of the treads depend on their quality and are listed in the following table.

Tread Class	Minimum TR	Max Speed	Cost
Class I	4	25 mph	2 CP
Class II	4	50 mph	3 CP
Class III	5	100 mph	4 CP

AUTOMOTIVE WHEELS

COST: SEE TABLE

PREREQUISITES: SEE TABLE

Automotive wheels include a number of wheel axles a suspension system and an appropriate motor. The exact prerequisites, costs and speeds of the wheels depend on their quality and are listed in the following table.

Wheel Class	Minimum TR	Max Speed	Cost
Class I	4	25 mph	2 CP
Class II	4	50 mph	3 CP
Class III	5	100 mph	4 CP
Class IV	5	250 mph	5 CP
Class V	5	500 mph	6 CP
Class VI	6	1,000 mph	7 CP

HOVER UNIT

COST: SEE TABLE

PREREQUISITES: SEE TABLE

A hover unit allows a vehicle to hover just above the surface, whether that surface is solid ground or water or a similar liquid. The exact prerequisites, costs and speeds of the hover unit depend on its quality and are listed in the following table.

Hover Unit Class	Minimum TR	Max Speed	Cost
Class I	5	25 mph	3 CP
Class II	5	50 mph	4 CP
Class III	6	100 mph	5 CP
Class IV	6	250 mph	6 CP
Class V	7	500 mph	7 CP
Class VI	7	1,000 mph	8 CP
Class VI	7	2,500 mph	9 CP

WATER TURBINES

COST: SEE TABLE

PREREQUISITES: SEE TABLE

Water turbines allow a vehicle to move over or through a body of water or a similar liquid. The exact prerequisites, costs and speeds of the turbines depends on their quality and are listed in the following table. This feature does not specifically allow the crew to survive underwater unless you also purchase life support.

Turbine Class	Minimum TR	Max Speed	Cost
Class I	4	25 mph	4 CP
Class II	4	50 mph	5 CP
Class III	5	100 mph	6 CP
Class IV	5	250 mph	7 CP
Class V	6	500 mph	8 CP

SPACESHIP DRIVE

COST: SEE TABLE

PREREQUISITES: SEE TABLE

A spaceship drive allows slower-than-light travel through the vacuum of space. The exact prerequisites, costs and speeds of the spaceship drive depends on its quality and are listed in the following table. This feature does not specifically allow the crew to survive the vacuum of space unless you also purchase life support.

Drive Class	Minimum TR	Max Speed	Cost
Class I	5	10,000 mph	10 CP
Class II	5	25,000 mph	11 CP
Class III	6	50,000 mph	12 CP
Class IV	6	100,000 mph	13 CP
Class V	6	250,000 mph	14 CP
Class VI	6	500,000 mph	15 CP

STARSHIP DRIVE

COST: SEE TABLE

PREREQUISITES: SPACESHIP DRIVE (ANY), NARRATOR'S APPROVAL, SEE TABLE

A starship drive allows a ship to travel through the vacuum of space at speeds equal to or exceeding the speed of light. The exact prerequisites, costs and speeds of the spaceship drive depends on its quality and are listed in the following table. This feature does not specifically allow the crew to survive the vacuum of space unless you also purchase life support. It takes 10 rounds and a Difficulty 15 Knowledge (technology) check to engage a starship drive. This time may be halved by adding 5 to the Difficulty.

STEP 4: PURCHASE FEATURES

In addition to the vehicle features listed here, a vehicle can be outfitted with the following armor features listed in the previous section: absorption shield, communication unit, deflection shield, energy resistance, environmental seal, GPS unit, holoscreen, photon screen, radiation shielding, and targeting computer.

ALARM

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 5 OR HIGHER

The vehicle has an alarm system that goes off when an unauthorized access or activation attempt is made. A Disable Device check (Difficulty 20) overcomes the alarm. For each additional CP, the Difficulty increases by 5.

ANTI-ACCIDENT SYSTEM

COST: 2 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 5 OR HIGHER

Anti-accident systems use airbags, fire-retardant foam, no-skid brakes, gyroscopic stabilizers, and other safety features to improve a driver's chances of surviving or averting accidents. The system reduces collision damage by half, though this only applies to the vehicle equipped with an anti-accident system. Further, the operator of a vehicle so equipped gains a +2 bonus on Drive or Pilot checks to make hard-brake or hard-turn maneuvers.

AUTOCOMP, GUNNER

COST: 2 CP + 2/+1 ATTACK BONUS

PREREQUISITES: TR 6 OR HIGHER

STARSHIP DRIVE

Drive Class	Minimum TR	Max Speed	Cost
Light speed	7	1 light yr/yr	1 CP
Class I FTL	7	2 light yrs/yr (approx 1 light yr/183 earth days)	2 CP
Class II FTL	7	5 light yrs/yr (approx 1 light yr/73 earth days)	3 CP
Class III FTL	7	10 light yrs/yr (approx 1 light yr/37 earth days)	4 CP
Class IV FTL	7	25 light yrs/yr (approx 1 light yr/15 earth days)	5 CP
Class V FTL	7	50 light yrs/yr (approx 1 light yr/week)	6 CP
Class VI FTL	7	100 light yrs/yr (approx 1 light yr/3.5 earth days)	7 CP
Class VII FTL	7	250 light yrs/yr (approx 1 light yr/35 hours)	8 CP
Class VIII FTL	7	500 light yrs/yr (approx 1 light yr/17.5 hours)	9 CP
Class IX FTL	8	1,000 light yrs/yr (approx 1 light yr/9 hours)	10 CP
Class X FTL	8	2,500 light yrs/yr (approx 1 light yr/3.5 hours)	11 CP
Class XI FTL	8	5,000 light yrs/yr (approx 0.5 light yr/hour)	12 CP
Class XII FTL	8	10,000 light yrs/yr (approx 1 light yr/hour)	13 CP
Class XIII FTL	8	25,000 light yrs/yr (approx 3 light yrs/hour)	14 CP
Class XIV FTL	8	50,000 light yrs/yr (approx 6 light yrs/hour)	15 CP
Class XV FTL	8	100,000 light yrs/yr (approx 12 light yrs/hour)	16 CP
Class XVI FTL	8	250,000 light yrs/yr (approx 29 light yrs/hour)	17 CP

A gunner autocomp is an onboard computer with AI software capable of automatically aiming and firing all of a vehicle's mounted weapons, thereby removing the need for one or more gunners. Most vehicles equipped with a gunner autocomp still allow the vehicle's weapons to be controlled manually if the autocomp is deactivated or disabled. Disabling a gunner autocomp requires a successful Disable Device check (Difficulty 15).

The gunner autocomp's attack bonus, depends on the quality of the system's AI software.

Special: Additional weapons can be connected to the vehicle's gunner autocomp at a cost of 2 CP each. A maximum of three weapons may be connected to a single gunner autocomp.

AUTOPILOT COMP

COST: 1 CP +1/4 RANKS IN DRIVE OR PILOT

PREREQUISITES: TR 6 OR HIGHER

A driver autocomp consists of an onboard computer with AI software capable of operating a vehicle, thereby removing the need for a driver or pilot. Most vehicles equipped with a driver autocomp still retain a driver's seat, allowing the vehicle to be controlled manually if the autocomp is deactivated or disabled. Disabling a driver autocomp requires a successful Disable Device check (Difficulty 15).

The autopilot comp has a maximum Drive or Pilot bonus of +4 per TR above 5. This feature may be purchased a number of times equal to the vehicle's progress level minus five.

ENGINE STRENGTH BOOST

COST: 1 CP/+2 STR

Raise your vehicles base Strength score (as determined by its size) by 2 points each time you buy this feature.

HIDDEN COMPARTMENTS

COST: 1 CP

The vehicle has hidden compartments or cargo areas holding up to a tenth of the vehicle's medium load in cargo. A Search check (Difficulty 20) allows the searcher to find the hidden compartment. For each additional CP spent on building hidden compartments, increase the Difficulty by 5.

LIFE SUPPORT

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITE: ENVIRONMENTAL SEAL, TR 5 OR HIGHER

This feature provides the necessary life support systems to keep the vehicle's crew alive in the depths of the ocean or the vacuum of space.

NAVIGATION SYSTEM

COST: 1 CP/+5 BONUS

PREREQUISITES: TR 5 OR HIGHER

The vehicle has a navigation computer, granting a +5 bonus to Navigation skill checks. This bonus can be increased by +5 each time this feature is purchased to a maximum of +20.

REMOTE CONTROL

COST: 1 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 5 OR HIGHER

The vehicle's owner can operate it remotely using a transmitter and control device. Remotely controlling a vehicle requires the same kind of action (usually a move action) as if you were actually behind the wheel of the vehicle.

SENSORS

COST: 1PT/+5 BONUS

PREREQUISITES: TR 5 OR HIGHER

Each time you purchase this feature, it provides a +5 bonus to Computers skill checks to detect nearby or incoming vehicles and objects or perform active sensor scans.



SENSOR CLOAK/JAMMER

COST: 1PT/+5 TO DIFFICULTY

PREREQUISITES: TR 6 OR HIGHER

Each time you purchase this feature, it makes it more difficult to detect your vehicle or run active sensor scans on it. Computers skill checks with those goals have their Difficulty increased by 5.

SMOKESCREEN/DISPLACER

COST: 2 CP

PREREQUISITES: TR 4 OR HIGHER

The vehicle can generate a smoke screen, creating an area of total concealment behind it 10 feet wide and up to 50-feet long. Activating the smoke cloud is a standard action.

Special: At TR 7 and above, this feature displaces the vehicle, fooling electronic sensors as well as visual detection.

TRACTOR BEAM

COST: 4 CP

PREREQUISITES: SPACE VEHICLE, TR 6 OR HIGHER

This feature allows your vehicle to perform grappling checks to immobilize and/or draw in other space vehicles. The target vehicle's pilot may oppose this grapple check with a Pilot skill check.

STEP 5: PURCHASE ARMOR

Any vehicle intended for combat may need additional protective plating to survive battle.

VEHICULAR ARMOR

COST: 1PT/+1 TOUGHNESS

Each CP spent on vehicular armor gives the vehicle an additional +1 to its Toughness bonus up to the limit determined by its TR.

Tech Rating	Armor Bonus	Examples
1	+2	Copper plating, bronze plating, iron plating
2–3	+3	Steel plating
4	+4	Carbon-steel plating
5	+5	Alumisteel, duraplastic, Kevlar, titanium
6	+6	Duralloy, resilium, tritanium
7	+8	Crystal carbon, neovulcanium
8	+10	Megatanium, nano-adaptive, reactive

STEP 6: PURCHASE WEAPONS

A vehicle intended for combat may be outfitted with weapons from the **Weapons** section. A vehicle can typically be outfitted with weapons of up to two size classes larger than itself.

EQUIPMENT CONSTRUCTION AND INVENTION

Characters with the necessary Knowledge and Craft skills can build equipment from component parts, while characters with the Inventor feat can also create entirely new pieces of equipment using the guidelines in the previous sections.

To create an invention, the inventor works with the Narrator to define its traits, tech rating, and total cost in CP. This cost is used for the necessary skill checks, and determines the time required to create the invention. The tech rating of the invention is determined by the Narrator based on the available technology and the descriptions of what is possible at each tech rating.

DESIGN CHECK

First, the inventor must design the invention. This is a Knowledge (technology) skill check. The Difficulty is 10 + the invention's CP cost. It requires an hour's work per CP. The character can take 10 or 20 on the check. In the latter case, the design process takes 20 times longer (20 hours per CP). You can halve the design time by taking a –5 on the Knowledge check.

If the check is successful, you have a design for the invention. If the check fails, the design is flawed and you must start over. If the check fails by 10 or more, the character is not aware of the design flaw; the design *seems* correct, but the invention won't function (or at least won't function properly) when it's used. For this reason, the Narrator should make the design check secretly and only inform the player whether or not the character appears to have succeeded.

If the inventor is simply making an existing piece of equipment from scratch and has access to blueprints or directions, skip this step of the invention process and proceed to acquire the proper materials. If the inventor is building an existing piece of equipment, but has no access to blueprints or plans, a design check is still necessary to "reinvent" the item.

MATERIALS

Before construction can begin, the inventor must acquire the necessary parts or materials. In most cases this means purchasing equipment with a purchase Difficulty equal to 2 + the item's total CP cost. The rules for purchasing items of a lower or higher Tech Level apply.

In certain circumstances the inventor may be able to get some or all of the parts by scavenging them from a junkyard, derelict spaceship, or similar source (See the **Salvage** feat in this chapter). Generally you cannot gain materials to build an invention with a tech rating more than one level higher than the TR of the materials you have available.

CONSTRUCTION CHECK

Once the design and materials are in-hand, the character can construct the invention. This requires four hours of work per CP, so an invention costing 10 construction points takes 40 hours (about a week's work normally, or working two days straight without rest) to construct.

When the construction time is complete, make a Craft skill check using the Craft specialty appropriate to the invention (generally chemical, electronic, or mechanical). The Difficulty is 10 + the invention's CP cost. You can't take 20 on this check, but you can take 10. You can halve construction time by taking a -5 on the Craft check. Success means the invention is complete and functional. Failure means the invention doesn't work.

Failure by 10 or more may result in a mishap, at the Narrator's discretion. Exactly what depends heavily on the invention. Inventing mishaps can become a source of adventure ideas and put the heroes in some difficult situations.

OPTION: JURY-RIGGING DEVICES

Assuming the proper materials are available or have already been acquired, an inventor can choose to spend a Conviction point to jury-rig an invention. This is ideal for when a particular device is needed *right now*.

When jury-rigging an invention, skip the design check and reduce the time of the construction check to 1 *round* per CP of the item's cost, but increase the Difficulty of the Craft check by +5. The inventor makes the Craft check and, if successful, has use of the jury-rigged item for one encounter before it burns out, falls apart, blows up, or otherwise fails.

You can't take 10 or take 20 when jury-rigging, nor can you speed up the process any further by taking a skill check penalty. You can jury-rig an invention again for another use by spending another Conviction point and making another skill check.

Jury-rigging devices is highly cinematic, and the Narrator should only allow it for appropriate styles of play. More realistic settings should ignore this option, sticking with the more time-consuming normal requirements of inventing.

SAMPLE WEAPONS

The following sample weapons follow the same format as those found in **Chapter Five** of *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* with the addition of information about weight and tech rating (TR).

CHAIN SWORD

This sword has a chainsaw-like blade that contains rapidly rotating metal teeth.

CONCUSSION ROD

This mace-like weapon has a miniature artificial gravity generator embedded in its alloy head, which increases in mass at the instant of impact.

HIGH FREQUENCY SWORD

This sword is made of a durable metal alloy. Microscopic machines cause the blade to vibrate at high speeds, giving the blade extra cutting power.

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Damage Descriptor	Range Increment	Size	Cost	Weight
TL6 Simple Weapons							
Stun Baton	+2 +Stun	20/+3	Bludgeoning	—	Med	16	1 lb.
TR 6 Martial Weapons							
Chainsword	+5	20/+4	Slashing	—	Med	13	3 lb.
High Frequency Sword	+6	19–20/+3	Slashing	—	Large	15	2 lb.
TR 7 Simple Weapons							
Concussion Rod	+5	20/+3	Bludgeoning/Concussion	—	Med	17	3 lb.
TR 8 Martial Weapons							
Plasma Sword	+7	19–20/+3	Energy	—	Med	5	1 lb.

RANGED WEAPONS

Weapon	Damage Bonus	Critical	Damage Descriptor	Range Increment	Size	Cost	Weight
TR 6 Ranged Weapons (Fire Arms)							
Laser pistol	+5	20/+3	Energy	50 ft.	Medium	17	3 lb.
Laser rifle	+6	20/+3	Energy, Autofire	60 ft.	Large	19	8 lb.
Laser sniper rifle	+6	20/+3	Energy	160 ft.	Large	21	14 lb.
TL7 Ranged Weapons (Fire Arms)							
Concussion rifle	+6 plus Knockback	20/+3	Concussion	60 ft.	Large	22	6 lb.
Plasma pistol	+6	20/+3	Energy	60 ft.	Medium	17	3 lb.
Plasma rifle	+8	20/+3	Energy	80 ft.	Large	19	8 lb.
Rail gun	+7	20/+3	Ballistic	170 ft.	Large	24	18 lb.
TL8 Ranged Weapons (Fire Arms)							
Cryonic rifle	+7	20/+3	Cold	70 ft.	Large	21	8 lb.
Disintegrator	+9	20/+3	Disintegration	90 ft.	Large	23	6 lb.
Lightning gun	+8	20/+3	Electricity, Autofire	80 ft.	Large	19	30 lb.
Pulse rifle	+7	20/+3	Energy, Autofire	170 ft.	Large	21	11 lb.
Sonic beam	+5 plus Stun	20/+3	Sonic	50 ft.	Medium	18	3 lb.

PLASMA SWORD

This sword's small metal handle generates a solid beam of plasma contained by a gravity-induced force field.

STUN BATON

The stun baton is a long rod similar to those carried by modern-day police officers, though it emits a pulse of stunning energy when it strikes a target, stunning them (see the **Stun** ammunition type on page 56).

CRYONIC RIFLE

A cryonic rifle fires beams of freezing energy. A target reduced to dying status by this weapon automatically stabilizes.

DISINTEGRATOR

Resembling a laser rifle, a disintegrator fires a micro-singularity that obliterates the target's molecular structure on impact. Anything killed or destroyed by the weapon completely disintegrates.

LASER WEAPONS

Laser weapons come in many shapes, sizes, and types. All lasers strike with a concentrated blast of light and heat energy.

LIGHTNING GUN

The lightning gun fires a crackling ray of electricity capable of sweeping quickly through large areas.

PLASMA WEAPONS

Plasma occurs when gases become electrically charged after losing electrons. Plasma weapons condense this electrically charged gas into a destructive force that can eat through solid objects and cause severe damage.

PULSE RIFLE

The pulse rifle is a fully automatic laser assault rifle capable of firing a rapid barrage of laser rounds.

RAIL GUN

A rail gun uses gravity pulses to propel a projectile at high velocities. Metal shards are accelerated along the rail gun's length, leaving the barrel at an extremely high velocity.

SONIC BEAM

The sonic blaster fires a pulse of destructive sound at the target. In addition, any creature damaged by the sonic pulse may be stunned (see the **Stun** ammunition type on page 56).

ADVENTURES

Science fiction adventures commonly take the heroes into environments and situations that are lethal. A variety of hazards and challenges heroes face in a general sci-fi or space adventure are outlined here, as well as guidelines for generating star systems and star sectors for these heroes to explore.

ENVIRONMENTS

From the coldest reaches of space to the star-scorched surface of an irradiated planet, space adventures can take heroes into some of the most inhospitable environments imaginable.

RADIATION SICKNESS

Radiation can be naturally or artificially produced. All stars produce radiation in some variety, and planets closer to these stars typically suffer more severe effects than worlds farther away. Many starships and other pieces of technology incorporate radioactive parts and fuel cells that can flood an area with harmful radiation when ruptured or exposed. Ancient alien civilizations might leave behind powerful artifacts that emit harmful radiation. Whether the source is natural or artificial, any character in an environment rich with radiation may suffer some negative effects for exposure.

When characters are exposed to radiation, they may be afflicted with radiation sickness. Radiation sickness functions exactly like exposure to any other disease, following the normal rules for diseases. The Fortitude save Difficulty and the effects of radiation sickness vary according to the level of radiation and the length of time the hero has been exposed to it.

Radiation exposure has five degrees: mild, low, moderate, high, and severe. To determine the degree of exposure, determine whether the character has encountered an irradiated area (the former site of a nuclear explosion) or a radioactive source (a lump of radioactive material). Determine how long the characters were exposed to the radiation within a given 24-hour period (rounding up) and consult the Radiation Exposure table to determine the degree of exposure.

The degree of the exposure determines the severity of the radiation sickness, as indicated on the **Radiation Sickness** table. At low levels, radiation sickness is a slow disease.

TREATING RADIATION SICKNESS

Radiation sickness can be cured using the Medicine skill. Treating radiation sickness requires a medical kit. Advanced medicine and advanced technology can eliminate radiation sickness or obviate its harmful effects.

GRAVITY

Gravity determines how easily a person performs certain actions as well as the amount of damage a character takes from falling. For ease of play, these rules present four simplified gravity environments: normal gravity (1.0 g), low gravity (<1.0 g), high gravity (>1.0 g), and zero gravity (0 g).

NORMAL GRAVITY

"Normal gravity" equates to gravity on Earth. Environments with normal gravity impose no special modifiers on a character's ability scores, attack rolls, or skill checks. Likewise, normal gravity does not modify a creature's speed, carrying capacity, or the amount of damage it takes from a fall.

LOW-GRAVITY ENVIRONMENTS

In a low-gravity environment, the pull of gravity is significantly less than what we experience living on Earth. Although an object's mass doesn't change, it becomes effectively lighter.

- **Speed:** A creature's speed increases by +5 feet in a low-gravity environment. This bonus applies to all of the creature's modes of movement.
- **Carrying Capacity:** A creature's normal carrying capacity (See page 91 of *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*) is doubled in a low-gravity environment. In addition, the creature gains a +10 bonus on any Strength check made to lift or move a heavy unsecured object.
- **Skill Check Bonuses:** Creatures in a low-gravity environment gain a +10 bonus on Strength-based skill checks (including Climb, Jump, and Swim checks).
- **Attack Roll Penalty:** Creatures take a –2 penalty on attack rolls in a low-gravity environment unless they are native to that environment or have the Zero-G Training feat.

RADIATION EXPOSURE

Situation	Time of Exposure (Minimum)				
	1 round	1 minute	10 minutes	1 hour	1 day
Character in irradiated area:					
Lightly irradiated	Mild	Mild	Mild	Mild	Low
Moderately irradiated	Mild	Mild	Low	Low	Moderate
Highly irradiated	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High
Severely irradiated	Moderate	Moderate	High	High	Severe
Character exposed to radiation source:					
Lightly radioactive materials	Mild	Mild	Low	Low	Low
Moderately radioactive materials	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Highly radioactive materials	Moderate	Moderate	High	High	High
Severely radioactive materials	High	High	Severe	Severe	Severe

- **Damage from Falling:** Creatures do not fall as quickly in a low-gravity environment as they do in a normal or high-gravity environment. Falling damage is halved.
- **Long-Term Effects:** Long-term exposure to low-gravity conditions can cause serious problems when returning to normal gravity. A creature that spends 120 hours or more in a low-gravity environment takes 2 points of temporary Strength damage upon returning to normal gravity.

HIGH GRAVITY ENVIRONMENTS

In a high-gravity environment, the pull of gravity is significantly greater than we experience living on Earth. Although an object's mass doesn't change, it becomes effectively heavier. Even the simple task of walking or lifting one's arms feels more laborious.

- **Speed:** A creature's speed decreases by –5 feet (to a minimum of 0 feet) in a high-gravity environment. This penalty applies to all of the creature's modes of movement.
- **Carrying Capacity:** A creature's normal carrying capacity (See page 91 of *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*) is halved in a high-gravity environment. In addition, the creature takes a –10 penalty on any Strength check made to lift or move a heavy unsecured object.
- **Skill Check Bonuses:** Creatures in a high-gravity environment take a –10 penalty on Strength-based skill checks (including Climb, Jump, and Swim checks).
- **Attack Roll Penalty:** Creatures take a –2 penalty on attack rolls in a high-gravity environment unless they are native to that environment.
- **Damage from Falling:** Creatures fall more quickly in a high-gravity environment than they do in a normal- or low-gravity environment. Falling damage is doubled.
- **Long-Term Effects:** Long-term exposure to high-gravity conditions can cause serious problems when returning to normal gravity. A creature that spends 120 hours or more in a heavy-gravity environment takes 2 points of temporary Dexterity damage upon returning to normal gravity.

ZERO-GRAVITY ENVIRONMENTS

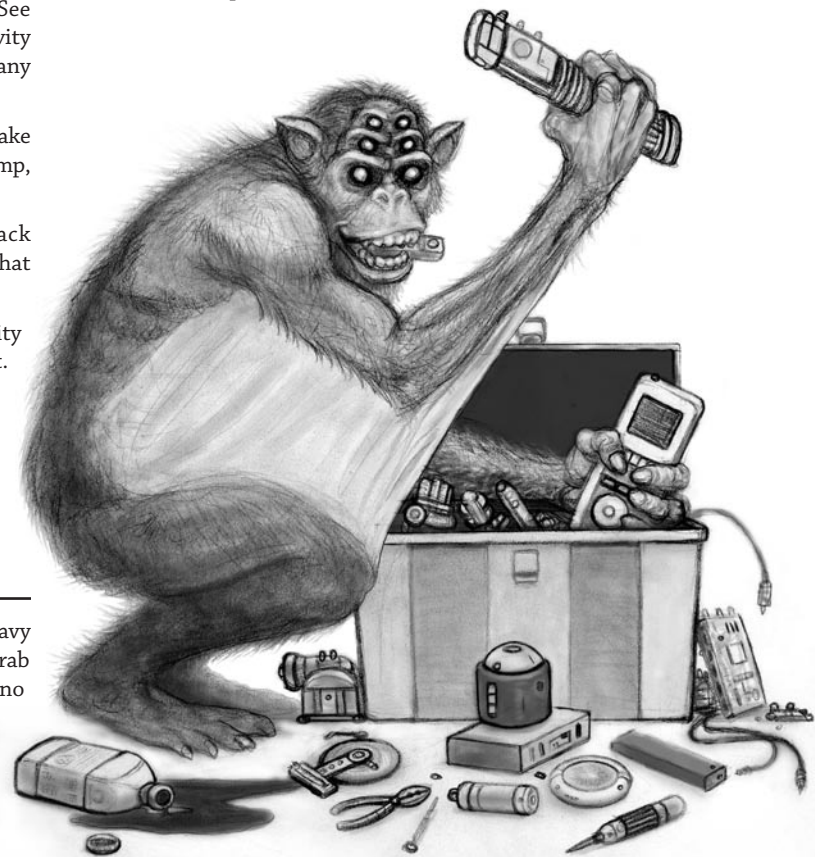
Creatures in a zero-gravity environment can move enormously heavy objects. As movement in zero gravity requires only the ability to grab onto or push away from larger objects, Climb and Jump checks no longer apply.

Most creatures find zero-gravity environments disorienting, taking penalties on their attack rolls and suffering the effects of Space Adaptation Syndrome (space sickness). In addition, creatures in zero gravity are easier to bull rush than in other gravity environments.

RADIATION SICKNESS

Degree of Exposure	Fortitude Save Difficulty	Incubation Period	Initial and Secondary Damage
Mild	12	1 day	Nauseated for 24 hours
Low	15	12 hours	1 Con
Moderate	18	9 hours	2 Con
High	21	6 hours	3 Con
Severe	24	3 hours	4 Con

- **Space Adaptation Syndrome:** A creature exposed to weightlessness must make a Fortitude save (Difficulty 15) to avoid the effects of space sickness. Those who fail the save are shaken; those who fail by 5 or more are also nauseated. The effects persist for eight hours. A new save is required every eight hours the creature remains in a zero-g environment. Creatures with the Zero-G Training feat do not suffer the effects of space sickness.



- **Speed:** While in a zero-gravity environment, a creature gains a fly speed equal to its base land speed or retains its natural fly speed (whichever is greater). However, movement is limited to straight lines only; a creature can change course only by pushing away from larger objects (such as bulkheads).
- **Carrying Capacity:** A creature's normal carrying capacity increases by 10 times in a zero-gravity environment. In addition, the creature gains a +20 bonus on any Strength check made to lift or move a heavy unsecured object.
- **Attack Roll Penalty:** Creatures take a –4 penalty on attack rolls and skill checks while operating in a zero-gravity environment unless they are native to that environment or have the Zero-G Training feat.
- **Long-Term Effects:** Long-term exposure to zero-gravity conditions can cause serious problems when returning to normal gravity. A creature that spends 120 hours or more in a zero-gravity environment takes 3 points of temporary Strength damage upon returning to normal gravity.
- **Weight vs. Mass:** While an object in zero gravity loses weight, it does not lose mass or momentum. Thus, while a character could push a 10-ton piece of equipment around in space, albeit slowly, getting it to stop is a bit more difficult. If a character were to come between that piece of equipment and a solid object, that character would be crushed just as if he were in full gravity—just more slowly.

For simplicity, assume a Strength check to lift or move an object in zero gravity gains a +20 circumstance bonus. Stopping an object already in motion does not.

ATMOSPHERIC CONDITIONS

As with variants in gravity, a change in atmospheric conditions can cause major problems for characters. Not every planet will have the same atmospheric density or chemical composition as Earth, meaning that worlds otherwise hospitable to human life may not be ideal for humans born and raised on Earth.

CORROSIVE ATMOSPHERE

Some atmospheres (breathable or not) contain corrosive chemicals and gases. Corrosive atmospheres slowly eat away at equipment and can cause significant equipment failure. The corrosion can be particularly troublesome in atmospheres that demand special survival gear, as any breach in a protective environmental suit renders it useless. Unprotected equipment exposed to a corrosive atmosphere takes +1 acid damage per hour of exposure. This damage ignores hardness and deals damage directly to the equipment, eating away at it slowly.

Creatures not wearing protective gear in a corrosive atmosphere take +1 acid damage per round of exposure.

THIN ATMOSPHERE

Planets with thin atmospheres have less oxygen per breath than the standard Earth atmosphere. Many thin atmospheres are the equivalent of being at a high elevation on Earth, such as on top of a mountain or in the upper atmosphere. A creature exposed to a thin atmosphere must succeed on a Fortitude save (Difficulty 20) every hour. On the first failed save, the creature is fatigued. A fatigued creature that fails a subsequent save becomes exhausted for as long as it remains in the thin atmosphere. After one hour of complete, uninterrupted rest in a normal atmosphere, an exhausted creature becomes fatigued. After eight hours of complete, uninterrupted rest, a fatigued creature is no longer fatigued.

THICK ATMOSPHERE

Thick atmospheres contain a more dense concentration of certain elements, like nitrogen, oxygen, or even carbon dioxide, than the standard Earth atmosphere. These dense atmospheres sometimes

contain a different balance of elements, while others simply contain a higher number of gas particles in each breath. The effects of exposure to a thick atmosphere are similar to those of a thin atmosphere, except the Fortitude save Difficulty is 15 instead of 20.

TOXIC ATMOSPHERE

Some atmospheres (breathable or not) contain toxic gases that are debilitating or lethal to some or all forms of life. The atmosphere is treated as always containing a type of inhaled poison.

VACUUM

Despite some popular myths, moving into a vacuum does not cause the body to explosively decompress, nor does it cause instant freezing as heat bleeds away from the body. Rather, the primary hazards of surviving in the vacuum of space are the lack of air and exposure to unfiltered ionizing radiation.

On the third round of exposure to vacuum, a creature must succeed on a Constitution check (Difficulty 20) each round or suffer from aeroembolism ("the bends"). A creature that fails the save experiences excruciating pain as small air bubbles form in its bloodstream; such a creature is considered stunned and remains so until returned to normal atmospheric pressure. A creature that fails the Constitution check by 5 or more falls unconscious.

The real danger of vacuum comes from suffocation, though holding one's breath in vacuum damages the lungs. A character who attempts to hold his breath must make a Constitution check (Difficulty 15) every round; the Difficulty increases by 1 each round, and on a successful check the character takes 1 point of Constitution damage (from the pressure on the linings of his lungs). If the check fails, or when the character simply stops holding his breath, he begins to suffocate. In the next round, he falls unconscious. The following round, he begins dying. On the third round, he is dead.

Unfiltered radiation bombards any character trapped in the vacuum of space without protective gear. A creature exposed to this ionizing radiation suffers from severe sunburn as well as the effects of radiation exposure; the degree of exposure depends on the nearest star's classification (see **Star Systems** for more information).

DECOMPRESSION

The sudden decompression of a starship, vehicle, or other object can be dangerous to creatures inside. Whenever a sealed environment within a vacuum is breached, all of the air inside rushes out quickly to equalize the air pressure. Creatures within the decompressing environment must succeed on a Reflex save (Difficulty 15) or be thrust toward the breach (and possibly beyond it) at a speed of 60 feet per round. Creatures three size categories larger than the breach's size category are big enough not to get dragged toward the breach (no Reflex save required). For example, a Fine breach pulls only Fine, Diminutive, and Tiny creatures toward it; creatures of Small size or larger are unaffected.

If the breach's size category is larger than the creature's size category, the creature passes through the opening and is blown out into vacuum. If the breach's size category is the same as the creature's size category, the creature is blown out into the vacuum and takes +2 damage as it gets pushed through the breach. If the breach is one or two size categories smaller than the creature's size category, the creature isn't thrust into the vacuum but takes +4 damage as it slams against the area around the breach. It takes another +4 damage each round until the air completely evacuates from the decompressed compartment or until the creature pulls itself away from the breach with a successful Strength check (Difficulty 20).

The time it takes for all of the air to evacuate from a compartment depends on the size of the breach and the volume of the decompressing

compartment, as shown on the Decompression Times table. Once the air has completely rushed out through the breach, the pressure equalizes and the interior environment becomes a vacuum.

DECOMPRESSION TIMES	
Breach Size	Decompression Time
Fine (1-inch square)	3 rounds per 10-foot cube of air
Diminutive (3-inch square)	3 rounds per 10-foot cube of air
Tiny (6-inch square)	2 rounds per 10-foot cube of air
Small (1-foot square)	2 rounds per 10-foot cube of air
Medium (2 1/2-foot square)	1 round per 10-foot cube of air
Large (5-foot square)	1 round per 10-foot cube of air
Huge (10-foot square)	1 round per 20-foot cube of air
Gargantuan (15-foot square)	1 round per 30-foot cube of air
Colossal (20-foot square)	1 round per 40-foot cube of air

UNIVERSE BUILDING

The exploration and settlement of our universe is a major theme in many science fiction stories, as are alien visitors from another planet, star system or galaxy. This chapter sets forth some guidelines to help you create your own science fiction universe.

THE SCALE OF YOUR CAMPAIGN

The first question to consider when designing a science fiction setting is its scale. In a modern-day or near-future campaign, the heroes may never set foot outside of their home world. In a far-future space-opera or military campaign, however, the heroes may visit hundreds of worlds during the course of their adventures.

PLANETARY CAMPAIGNS

In a planetary campaign, the plot and level of available technology confine the heroes to a single reasonably habitable planet or moon. In this kind of campaign, you probably don't need to put much detail into the rest of the universe. It may be a good idea to make note of how many other planets are in the same star system, and how many moons or other satellites the heroes' home world has. You won't need much information about these heavenly bodies aside from their numbers and possibly a brief description of their size, climate and any religious significance the planet's inhabitants might attach to them.

STAR SYSTEM CAMPAIGNS

A star system campaign is a setting where technology allows the heroes to travel to other planets and moons within the star system their home world resides in. The plot of such a campaign will often give the heroes reasons to travel between planets and visit moons. If you are running a star system campaign, you can skip to the **Star System Generation** section of this chapter.

STAR SECTOR CAMPAIGNS

In a star sector campaign, the heroes have access to technology that allows them to visit other nearby stars. Such a campaign often includes multiple human colonies in different star systems. When running a star sector campaign, you are going to want to map out the star sector the heroes are adventuring in.

MAPPING A STAR SECTOR

When mapping a star sector, you will first want to determine the size of the area you want to map. First, deciding the approximate number of star systems you want to have in the sector. We suggest the use of graph paper for mapping your star sector. The scale of the map will most

likely be in light years, and the recommended scale is for one square (or hex) to equal one light year. For every ten or so star systems you want to place in the sector, map out a 10 light year by 10 light year area. In each 10x10 light year square, place 1d20/2 stars (round up), making sure no two star systems are less than one light year apart. This is as far as you need to go for a simple or soft science fiction star map. For a more realistic three dimensional map, continue with the following steps.

To add a third dimension to your map, you are going to have to define the distances the star systems are above and below the two dimensional plane that the graph paper represents. Somewhere near the center of your star cluster, pick a star system of particular importance to your campaign. This star will be considered to exist in the same physical plane of the graph paper. The other stars on the map will be marked as being above or below this plane. To determine the distance above or below, roll 2d20 for each star system and subtract 21 from the total. This will result in a range between +19 and -19. If you rolled doubles, roll another d20, adding the result if your current value is positive, and subtracting it if it is negative. Positive numbers represent the number of light years the star system is above the plane of the graph paper, and negative numbers are below. Write this number next to each star system you marked on the graph paper. Once you have your star sector map made, you may want to add further detail to the more important star systems using the **Star System Generation** guidelines later in this chapter.

GALAXY-SPANNING AND MULTI-GALAXY CAMPAIGNS

A galaxy-spanning campaign can be an intimidating proposition. Our own galaxy, the Milky Way, spans some 50,000 light years in diameter and contains roughly 100 billion stars. Even the most ambitious Narrator could never hope to develop that many locations in any kind of detail. The key to such a campaign is to only develop the parts of the galaxy your heroes have a high chance of visiting. Inevitably, the heroes will sooner or later get off any course you could have foreseen. In this case you will have to improvise and develop details of the places they visit as needed. Instead of mapping out entire galaxies, simply map out the star sectors that will be the most important to your campaign.

STAR SYSTEM GENERATION

A star system can contain one star or multiple stars. Humans are more likely to find habitable planets in systems with single stars. In reality, more than half of all star systems have two or more stars; these systems typically contain planets that are inhospitable to human life.

NUMBER OF STARS	
D20	Number of Stars
1-10	1 star
11-16	2 stars (Binary system)
17-19	3 stars (Trinary System)
20	4 stars (Quaternary System) or more at the Narrator's option.

STAR TYPE

Depending on their initial mass, stars may vary widely in color, surface temperature, brightness and lifespan. Stars are classified using a lettering system that describes the star and gives information about its type. Known as the spectral class of a star, a designation of O, B, A, F, G, K, or M is given to the star based on its mass and energy output. Class O stars are the hottest, largest, and brightest stars, and class M stars as the smallest and coldest, with a gradual scale between them. Since a star's mass determines how hot it burns (as well as how strong its gravitational pull is), the star's classification actually helps extrapolate the kinds of planets that might be in that star's system. Since larger stars

burn hotter and smaller stars burn cooler, the mass of a star determines the climate of the worlds that orbit it.

In addition to the standard array of star types, several other types of stars (or what were once stars) might be found at the center of a star system. Most of these stars (called “non-main sequence stars”) have characteristics that make certain planetary conditions impossible. No type of non-main sequence star is likely to support worlds hospitable to human life. Types of non-main sequence stars include black holes, neutron stars, white dwarf stars, black dwarf stars, brown dwarf stars, and red supergiants.

DEGREE OF IONIZING RADIATION

Ionizing radiation—radiation that breaks down atoms within living tissue—is common in space. All stars produce and emit harmful levels of ionizing radiation; a star system is considered an “irradiated area” for the purposes of determining radiation exposure, particularly in the vacuum of space. (Planetary atmospheres and protective environment suits can protect a creature from ionizing radiation.)

The degree of radiation exposure depends on the nearest star’s classification, as shown in the Star Systems table. For systems with two or more stars, increase the degree of radiation by one grade (light becomes moderate, moderate becomes high, and highly becomes severe).

NUMBER OF PLANETS

The number of planets in a given star system can be determined by rolling on Table: Star Systems. For systems with multiple stars, use the star with the fewest planets allowable to determine the number of planets in the system.

HOSPITABLE STARS

The chief classifications of hospitable stars are F, G, and K. These stars produce the right amounts of heat and the right types of radiation to allow

human-compatible worlds to exist. Not every world around a Class F, G, or K star is hospitable; however, even inhospitable worlds within such systems could be made to support human life with artificial modifications to their ecosystems (a long a painstaking process called “terraforming”).

INHOSPITABLE STARS

Class O, B, A, and M stars are the least likely to support planets capable of hosting human life. The stars toward the hotter end of the spectrum produce too much heat to allow living, breathing organisms to thrive. Class M stars do not give off enough heat to support life. These stars are also known to be violently unstable and prone to bursts of stellar activity.

STAR SYSTEMS

D20	Star Classification	Degree of Radiation*	Number of Planets (round up)
1	Class O (blue-white)	High	2–5 (d20/5 + 1)
2	Class B (blue-white)	Moderate	3–6 (d20/5 + 2)
3	Class A (blue)	Moderate	1–10 (d20/2)
4–7	Class F (green)	Light	2–11 (d20/2 + 1)
8–11	Class G (yellow)	Light	3–12 (d20/2 + 2)
12–15	Class K (orange)	Moderate	4–13 (d20/2 + 3)
16–19	Class M (red)	High	2–11 (d20/2 + 1)
20	Roll again on Non-Main Sequence Star Systems table.		

* Refer to the Radiation Exposure table for details.

NON-MAIN SEQUENCE STAR SYSTEMS

D20	Star Classification	Degree of Radiation*	Number of Planets (round up)
1	Black hole	High	None
2–5	Neutron star	Severe	0–3 (d20/5 – 1)
6–9	White dwarf	Moderate	2–5 (d20/5 + 1)
10–13	Black dwarf	Light	3–6 (d20/5 + 2)
14–17	Brown dwarf	Light	2–5 (d20/5 + 1)
18–20	Red supergiant	High	0–3 (d20/5 – 1)

* Refer to the Radiation Exposure table for details.

BLACK HOLES

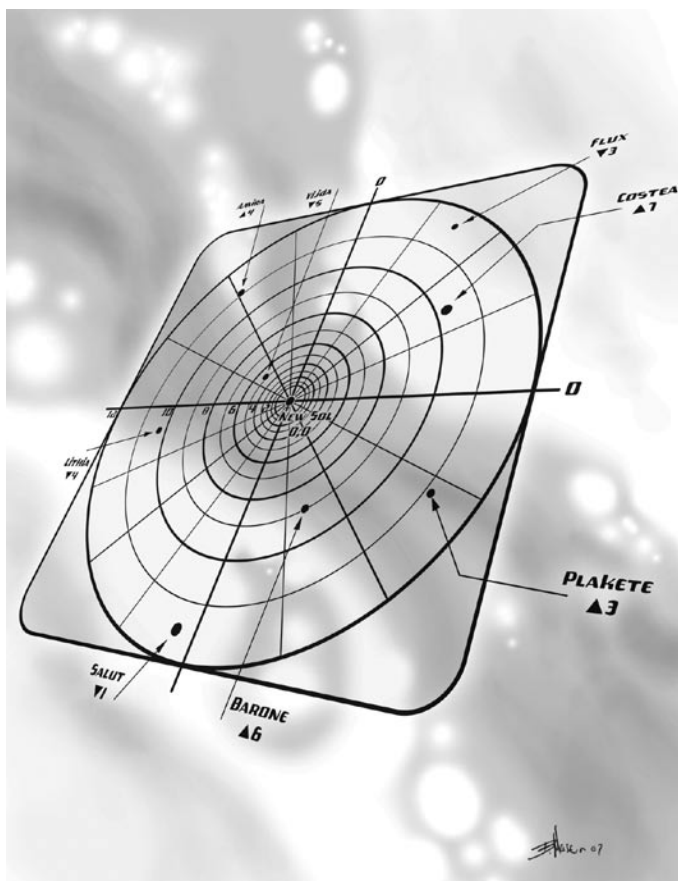
Black holes are stars that have expended their fuel sources and exploded in a massive supernova. Few, if any, planetary bodies survive the initial death of such a star. Once the star has exploded, its gravity is so great that it collapses in on itself and warps light, time, and space around it. Black holes drag all nearby matter into its center, collecting rings of cosmic debris called accretion discs that can be seen at great distances. Some planets and asteroids might survive being pulled into a black hole long enough for some adventuring, but they are incredibly dangerous places to explore.

NEUTRON STARS

A neutron star is a large star that has exhausted its fuel source but hasn’t collapsed in on itself. Instead, the entire star’s remaining matter compresses into a much smaller body, mere kilometers in diameter. Within this tightly packed core, the star’s density crushes the atoms into an object composed entirely of subatomic particles known as neutrons. Planets orbiting a neutron star are typically cold, lifeless, and severely irradiated. Another type of neutron star is the pulsar, which emits severe levels of radiation at great distances.

WHITE DWARF STARS

A white dwarf star is so much smaller than a neutron star that it does not have the mass to collapse in on itself. Instead, white dwarfs are



typically small, dense and surrounded by rings of wreckage that were once planetary bodies in its system. White dwarfs emit very little light or energy. The rings that surround them are usually cold and dark. These rings are not bombarded by as much radiation as in a neutron star and could potentially support life, assuming enough heat could be generated.

BLACK DWARF STARS

Black dwarf stars completely burn out after expending their fuel. The most stable of dead stars, black dwarfs consume their fuel supply and then cool into a cinder that emits no light or heat. Any planetary systems that existed around a black dwarf will remain intact but usually become barren and frozen.

BROWN DWARF STARS

In many ways, the brown dwarf is not even a star. Brown dwarf stars are stellar bodies that almost coalesced into true stars but never managed to form completely. Brown dwarfs are dim and small. They may have planets in their system, but these worlds almost never support life due to the lack of heat and light.

RED SUPERGIANTS

Most red supergiants begin their lives as average-sized stars. However, they burn hot and expend their hydrogen fuel supplies quickly. When its hydrogen supply is depleted, a red supergiant begins burning other, heavier elements such as helium, causing the star to expand to enormous size. An expanding red supergiant consumes its innermost planets and then burns so hot and bright it renders all other planets in its system incapable of supporting life naturally.

STELLAR HAZARDS

Two types of stellar hazards can create higher-than-normal levels of ionizing radiation: solar flares and cosmic rays.

SOLAR FLARES

Solar flares release tremendous amounts of electromagnetic energy (including harmful ultraviolet rays and X-rays), as well as highly charged protons and electrons. The effects are comparable to a radioactive blast from one hundred million billion tons of TNT (compared to the 20,000-ton equivalent blasts that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki). Fortunately, while solar flares aren't rare, they are predictable.

Radiation from a solar flare is treated as "severe" for the purposes of determining the radiation's effects (see the Radiation Exposure table in this chapter).

COSMIC RAYS

Cosmic rays, unlike solar flares, cannot be predicted. Consisting of high energy subatomic particles moving at relativistic speeds, these rays can penetrate miles of solid mass (though extremely few get through the Earth's atmosphere without colliding with other atoms or molecules, effectively rendering them harmless). In space, these subatomic particles can cause severe cell damage, even genetic mutation.

Radiation from a cosmic ray shower is treated as "high" for the purposes of determining the radiation's effects (see the Radiation Exposure table).

FILLING IN A STAR SYSTEM

The following tables are meant to help you fill in the details of the more important star systems.*Since planetary orbits are often elliptical, the AU measurements listed here are merely the average distances for single-star systems. For multi-star systems, this is the minimum distance between the planet and any of the stars it is orbiting.

INTERNAL PLANETARY ORBITS

d20	AU from star*	Average Thermal Environment**
1	0.2	Extreme heat
2	0.3	Extreme heat
3	0.4	Extreme heat
4	0.5	Extreme heat
5	0.6	Very hot
6	0.7	Very hot
7	0.8	Hot
8	0.9	Hot
9	1.0	Normal
10	1.1	Normal
11	1.2	Cold
12	1.3	Cold
13	1.4	Cold
14	1.5	Extreme cold
15	1.6	Extreme cold
16	1.7	Extreme cold
17	1.8	Extreme cold
18	1.9	Extreme cold
19	2.0	Severe cold
20	2.1	Severe cold

* There is a minimum distance of 0.2 AU between planets. If a die roll places a planet less than 0.2 AU from its nearest neighbor, then either move it to where it will be 0.2 AU from any other planets or re-roll. In a hard science-fiction setting, the planets in these inner orbits will almost exclusively be Terran planets or asteroid belts. Since planetary orbits are often elliptical, the AU measurements listed here are merely the average distances for single-star systems. For multi-star systems, this is the minimum distance between the planet and any of the stars it is orbiting.

These temperatures are for satellites surrounding a class F, G, or K star. Treat satellites around O, B, and A class stars as if they were 0.5 AU closer for purposes of determining temperature. Treat satellites of class M stars as if they were 0.5 AU farther away when determining temperature. See the **Cold and **Heat** sections on pages 110 and 112 of *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* for details regarding temperature rules.

EXTERNAL PLANETARY ORBITS

D20	AU from star*	Temperature
1	4	Severe cold
2	6	Severe cold
3	8	Severe cold
4	10	Severe cold
5	12	Severe cold
6	14	Severe cold
7	16	Severe cold
8	18	Severe cold
9	20	Severe cold
10	22	Severe cold
11	24	Severe cold
12	26	Severe cold
13	28	Severe cold
14	30	Severe cold
15	32	Severe cold
16	34	Severe cold
17	36	Severe cold
18	38	Severe cold
19	40	Severe cold
20	42+	Severe cold

PLANETS AND OTHER STELLAR SATELLITES

D20	Satellite	# of Moons*	Low Density (1–6)	Medium Density (7–14)	High Density (15–20)	Examples
1–2	Planetoid	d20/5 – 2	Low Gravity	Low Gravity	Normal Gravity	Pluto
3–6	Sub-Terrestrial	d20/5 – 1	Low Gravity	Normal Gravity	Normal Gravity	Mars, Mercury
7–10	Terrestrial	d20/5 – 1	Low Gravity	Normal Gravity	High Gravity	Earth, Venus
11–13	Super-Terrestrial	d20/5	Normal Gravity	Normal Gravity	High Gravity	—
14–15	Mega-Terrestrial	d20/5 + 1	Normal Gravity	High Gravity	High Gravity	—
16–17	Asteroid Belt	None	Zero Gravity	Zero Gravity	Low Gravity	‘The Main Belt’
18	Lesser Gas Giant	d20/2 + 1	High Gravity	High Gravity	High Gravity	Uranus, Neptune
19	Gas Giant	d20/2 + 4	High Gravity	High Gravity	High Gravity	Saturn, Jupiter
20	Gas Supergiant	d20/2 + 6	High Gravity	High Gravity	High Gravity	—

*Treat moons of terrestrial planets as Planetoids. Moons of a Gas Giant are treated as Planetoids, Sub-Terrestrial or Terrestrial-sized planets. Their characteristics may be rolled on the above table by rolling 1d20/2 (rounded up).

Planetoids are between 2,000 and 4,000 km in diameter. Sub-Terrestrial Planets are between 4,000 and 8,000 km in diameter. Terrestrial Planets, such as Earth and Venus, are between 8,000 and 16,000 km in diameter. Super-Terrestrial Planets are between 16,000 and 36,000 km in diameter. Mega-Terrestrial planets are over 36,000 km in diameter. Lesser Gas Giants are Jovian planets that measure between 36,000 and 72,000 km in diameter. Gas Giants are Jovian planets that measure between 72,000 and 144,000 km in diameter. Gas Supergiants are Jovian planets that measure over 144,000 km in diameter.

VEHICLE COMBAT

Science fiction often includes battles between spaceships and other similar vehicles. The following template is meant to help simplify combats involving one or more vehicles manned completely by Narrator characters.

MANNED VEHICLE

A manned vehicle is simply a vehicle controlled by one or more Narrator characters.

Manned vehicle is an acquired template that can be used to combine a vehicle (referred to hereafter as the base vehicle) and its crew (referred to hereafter as the pilot, captain, gunners, and/or technicians) into a single stat block. In the case of a single crew member, use their statistics for all crew positions.

If you don’t already have statistics for the crew, you can simply pick a crew level. Treat the crewmembers as having skill bonuses equal to their level + 5 in all relevant skills, and combat bonuses equal to their level + 2.

MANNED VEHICLE TEMPLATE

Size: As base vehicle

Type: A manned vehicle is considered a construct.

Level: As Pilot or Captain

Speed: As base vehicle

Abilities: Strength as base vehicle and Dexterity as base Pilot. No Constitution score. Other attributes are effectively zero.

Skills: A manned vehicle uses the pilot’s Notice, Computers and Drive or Pilot skill bonuses, the Captain’s Bluff, Diplomacy and Sense Motive skill bonuses and the technician’s Craft (electronics), and Craft (mechanics) skill bonuses. Vehicles with radar may use the Computers skill in place of Notice and Search checks to detect incoming objects.

Feats: None

Traits: As base vehicle plus construct traits. A manned vehicle also gains the following trait if its pilot has the Vehicular Combat feat:

Vehicular Combat: Once each round, a manned vehicle may attempt to avoid an attack that would normally have hit by opposing the attack roll with either a Drive or a Pilot skill check, as appropriate for the base vehicle’s type. A manned vehicle may also substitute this skill check for its Defense for the rest of the round, but doing so requires a full round action if there is only one crew member.

Combat: A manned vehicle has the attack bonuses of its gunners and gains one attack for each gunner on board (provided it is outfitted with enough weapons). Defense is as base vehicle. Initiative as Pilot or Commander, or +0, whichever is higher.

Saves: Toughness as base vehicle, Reflex as base pilot and Will as base captain. A manned vehicle has no Fortitude save.

VEHICLES AND THE DAMAGE TRACK

Vehicles are immune to non-lethal damage.

- **Disabled:** A vehicle that becomes disabled can only take a single move or attack action each turn (not both); it cannot take any full-round actions. If it attacks, attempts to escape at cruising speed, or performs any other action that would strain its systems, it suffers +5 damage after completing the act. A disabled starship is considered helpless. It has a Defense of 5 + its size modifier. Repairs that remove the disabled condition make it fully functional again.
- **Dying:** A vehicle that is “dying” is beginning to break apart. The vehicle is immobilized, helpless and beyond repair. While a vehicle is dying, its crew may attempt to evacuate. The vehicle suffers +5 damage each round. Armor does not protect against this damage.
- **Dead:** A ‘dead’ vehicle explodes, dealing damage equal to its base Toughness bonus due to size to any crew left onboard. The vehicle is completely destroyed.



CHAPTER FOUR: HORROR ADVENTURES

Being scared is fun. Whether it's a movie, graphic novel, or video game, we all enjoy the frisson created by fear. Why? Because being scared allows us to experience one of the strongest emotions we have and at the end of the day, we can turn off the television, put away the book, or turn off the video console with the full confidence that it is all just make believe.

"The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown."

— H.P. Lovecraft, "Supernatural Horror in Literature"

Horror adventures allow you the opportunity to even more fully immerse yourself in a world where something is askew. There are many different flavors of horror, so it is important for the Narrator to determine what type of horror adventure or campaign he wishes to run. While he may take input from the players, the unknown elements of the setting are often important components in creating fear in a horror game, so such suggestions may be integrated or ignored at the Narrator's whim.

FLAVORS OF FEAR: GENRE CONVENTIONS

Horror is a broad genre with many subgenres in its expansive domain, but at its dark heart, horror is about evoking fear. If you don't think that's enough to hang an adventure on, think again. Horror can range as widely as one's dark imagination allows. Some specific subgenres of horror help to further define and refine how this whole business of how creating fear is generally handled.

BLOOD AND GORE

Splatter horror, often referred to as *slasher* horror, is one of the simpler styles of horror to handle. Most often the characters are ordinary individuals, such as camp counselors or college students, and must contend with a psychotic serial killer whose cleaver has decided to lay claim on the characters. This style is most suitable for one-shot adventures, as the casualty rate could be a bit high for any type of sustained campaign.

THINGS FROM THE OTHER SIDE

Supernatural horror, on the other hand, is ideal for both short adventures and campaigns, lasting as long as the collective sanity of the characters allows. Characters can range from ordinaries to experts, warriors, and, though quite unusual, even adepts. Encounters can vary from cultists to aliens to things-man-was-not-meant-to-know. The most important elements for this style of play is that true evil is alive and well, and monsters exist in whatever capacity you wish to present them.

UNKNOWN TERROR

Suspense is a staple of the horror genre and can stand on its own, although it rarely does. Typically, this is handled by the Narrator through pacing techniques, primarily by revealing only a little of the story at a time. There are a few subtypes of suspense that can be fully explored and developed, particularly mysteries and conspiracies. Mysteries can

range from, "Why does the Hobbs House have flickering lights in its windows?," to complex conspiracies that typically develop over a campaign's lifetime, such as, "Why is the United States concealing the fact that extraterrestrial life exists?"

MAKING IT THROUGH THE NIGHT

Survival horror comes in two flavors, is simple and straightforward to run, and can lend itself to either a sustained campaign or an evening's entertainment. Typically, in this scenario, something in the overall setting has gone terribly wrong. An element of the supernatural usually plays a key part in survival horror. Rather than the horror being hidden away, as in suspense or supernatural horror, the monsters, zombies, or whatever are very much at work in the neighborhood, eating their way through the populace and hoping to have a bit of the heroes' brains for dessert.

The goal of the characters is simple: survive the night, the week, or the journey to a safe destination. When the characters complete this initial goal, continued game play can continue in this style or take on a more strategic aspect, wherein the characters may search for other survivors or mount a campaign against the threat in the hopes of driving it back. Characters are most often ordinaries, but can also have the expert or warrior roles. Adepts are almost never seen in survival horror, but that doesn't mean your game can't be different.

IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT

A variant on the survival horror theme is *apocalyptic* horror, wherein some catastrophic event has irrevocably modified the world, such as a viral strain that has turned ninety percent of the world into vampires. It is up to the heroes to find a way to survive in a world gone mad.

This is like survival horror, only rather than making it through the night, the heroes are in an ongoing struggle for survival. They might have a slim hope of reaching or creating some kind of haven for themselves and others, but otherwise their job is to live to fight another day. Apocalyptic horror becomes less horror over time and more of a shoot-'em-up survival game.

NOTES ON HORROR NARRATION

Invoke the senses in a horror story: a sickly sweet perfume wafting up from beneath the rotted door, the sudden chill that whips up from nowhere and mysteriously vanishes, or the lone, mournful cry of some anguished animal echoing across the bay: these are all ways to pull the players more fully into your story. A successful horror game relies on the suspension of disbelief, of leading the characters into closely identifying with their characters. Appealing to their senses, particularly smell, touch, and sound, is a key part of drawing players in.

Pay attention to pacing. Preparation is essential to narrating a solid horror adventure. Some of the best scenarios are built on suspense; it falls upon you, as the Narrator, to be fully familiar with the story you want to tell.

Set the mood. Horror games can be run anytime, but like a scary movie, they are best run at night even if where you are playing is well lit. Why? The fear of the dark is in the very bones of man; unless you are playing in the basement, you have the constant dark lurking just outside the windows. (The basement, on the other hand, provides countless other opportunities to exploit.)

Take your game seriously. Certainly, you're playing a game, but it is especially important to maintain a level of seriousness in horror games, even more so than in other genres. Humor may arise naturally during the course of play among your players; it is a natural defense mechanism, and should be allowed to run its course. If you allow it to take a central focus in your games, however, the horrific illusion will be dispelled.

HORROR HEROES

As previously mentioned, heroes in horror stories often come from a variety of backgrounds and life experiences. In this section, we'll examine the various backgrounds and roles associated with the archetypes we so often find in horror literature and cinema.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS: BACKGROUNDS

Regardless of whether the characters end up in a fistfight with a fury or running from a wraith, heroes of horror adventures are typically examples of the "common man" or woman, with family and jobs and concerns just like everyone else.

ACADEMIC

Who they are: Academics are people who have dedicated their lives to furthering their understanding of the world. They are librarians, archaeologists, scholars, professors, students, teachers, and other education professionals.

Bonus Feats: Talented (Bonus Skills), Well-Informed

Bonus Skills (choose any two): Computers, Knowledge (any), Gather Information, Language, Medicine

Favored Feats: Skill Mastery, Well-Informed

ATHLETE

Who they are: Athletes include amateur athletes of Olympic quality and professional athletes of all types, including personal trainers, gymnasts, weight trainers, wrestlers, boxers, martial artists, swimmers, skaters, and those who engage in any type of competitive sport.

Bonus Feats (choose any two): Assessment, Endurance, Lightning Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Run, or Tireless

Bonus Skills (choose any two): Acrobatics, Climb, Concentration, Jump, Swim

Favored Feats: Skill Mastery, Tough

BLUE COLLAR

Who they are: The blue collar background includes factory work, farming, food service jobs, construction, service industry jobs, taxi drivers, postal workers, and other jobs that are usually not considered to be desk jobs.

Bonus Feats (choose any two): Endurance, Skill Focus, Talented, Tireless

Bonus Skills (choose any two): Craft (any), Drive, Handle Animal, Knowledge (popular culture)

Favored Feats: Improvised Tools, Jack-of-all-Trades

CREATIVE

Who they are: The creative background covers artists of all types who fan their creative spark into a career. Illustrators, copywriters, cartoonists, graphic artists, novelists, magazine columnists, actors, sculptors, game designers, musicians, screenwriters, photographers, and web designers all fall under this occupation.

Bonus Feat: Any one feat normally available to your role.

Bonus Skills (choose any two): Computers, Craft (visual arts or writing), Knowledge (art or supernatural), Perform

Favored Feats: Jack-of-all-Trades, Skill Mastery

CRIMINAL

Who they are: This illicit background reveals a life from the wrong side of the law. This background includes con artists, burglars, thieves,

crime family soldiers, gang members, bank robbers, and other types of career criminals.

Bonus Feats: Connected, Contacts

Bonus Skills (choose any two): Disable Devices, Firearms Training, Knowledge (streetwise), Weapon Training

Favored Feats: Improvised Tools, Master Plan

DILETTANTE

Who they are: Dilettantes usually get their wealth from family holdings and trust funds. The typical dilettante has no job, few responsibilities, and at least one driving passion that occupies his or her day. That passion might be a charity or philanthropic foundation, an ideal or cause worth fighting for, or just a lust for living.

Bonus Feats: Connected, Wealth

Bonus Skills: Diplomacy, Knowledge (any)

Favored Feats: Jack-of-All-Trades, Skill Mastery

INVESTIGATIVE

Who they are: There are a number of jobs that fit within this background, including investigative reporters, photojournalists, private investigators, police detectives, criminologists, criminal profilers, espionage agents, and others who use their skills to gather evidence and analyze clues.

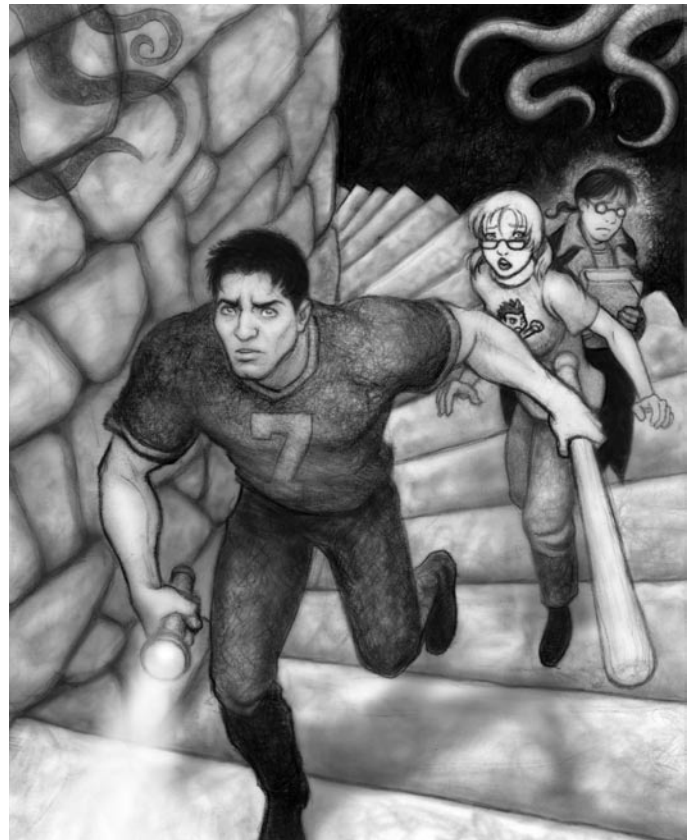
Bonus Feats: Contacts, Firearms Training

Bonus Skills (choose any two): Gather Information, Knowledge (streetwise), Notice, Search, Sense Motive

Favored Feats: Jack-of-All-Trades, Well-Informed

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Who they are: The law enforcement background includes uniformed police, state troopers, federal police, federal agents, SWAT team members, and military police.





Bonus Feats: Firearms Training, Improved Disarm

Bonus Skills (choose any two): Drive, Intimidate, Knowledge (civics), Notice

Favored Feats: Attack Specialization, Stunning Attack

MEDICAL

Who they are: A character with a medical background can be a physician (general practitioner or specialist), a nurse, a surgeon, a psychiatrist, or an EMT.

Bonus Feats: Skill Focus (Medicine), Second Chance (Provide Care)

Bonus Skills (choose any two): Computers, Craft (pharmaceutical), Knowledge (behavioral science), Medicine, Search

Favored Feats: Improvised Tools, Master Plan

MILITARY

Who they are: The military background covers any of the branches of the armed forces, including army, navy, air force, and marines, as well as the various elite training units such as Seals, Rangers, and Special Forces.

Bonus Feats (choose any two): Endurance, Firearm Training, Improved Critical

Bonus Skills (choose any two): Demolitions, Knowledge (tactics), Stealth, Survival

Favored Feats: Master Plan, Seize Initiative

RELIGIOUS

Who they are: Religious characters are ordained clergy of all persuasions, as well as theological scholars and experts on religious studies.

Bonus Feats: Dedicated, Skill Focus: Knowledge (theology and philosophy)

Bonus Skills: Diplomacy, Knowledge (theology and philosophy)

Favored Feats: Empower, Imbue Item

TECHNICAL

Who they are: The technical background is similar to the academic but is much more “hands-on.” Engineers, mechanics, and physical scientists fit within the scope of this background.

Bonus Feats: Contacts, Talented

Bonus Skills (choose any two): Computers, Craft (chemical, electronic, mechanical, or structural), Knowledge (behavioral sciences, business, physical sciences, or technology)

Favored Feats: Improvised Tools, Jack-of-All-Trades

WHITE COLLAR

Who they are: The white collar background represents office workers and desk jockeys, lawyers, accountants, insurance agents, bank personnel, financial advisors, tax preparers, clerks, sales personnel, real estate agents, and a variety of mid-level managers.

Bonus Feats: Connected, Talented

Bonus Skills (choose any two): Computers, Diplomacy, Knowledge (any)

Favored Feats: Fascinate, Well-Informed

ROLES

While *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* has three main roles for characters to select from, we recommend the following six:

Arcanist: Someone with a keen intellect and knowledge of the arcane arts whose powers often come through rituals, bargains with supernatural powers, and deeds.

Blessed: Someone with shrewd awareness and self confidence whose powers are based in her faith.

Expert: Someone experienced in a wide range of skills.

OMITTING ADEPTS

While the supernatural plays an important role in horror, the nature of horror demands that the heroes not have the upper hand in this area. As a general rule, access to powers should be limited in scope and restrictive in nature. To that end, four new roles have been introduced (the Arcanist, Blessed, Intellectual, and Psychic) in lieu of the more general adept role in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*.

If you opt to allow adepts, do so sparingly. Adepts have the full gamut of supernatural abilities to draw upon and can quickly change the tone of the campaign from horror to modern fantasy. The best choice is to relegate adepts to the realm of adversaries, such as witches, mad sorcerers, and warlocks—making the level of supernatural power associated with adept something that requires a pact with infernal or otherworldly forces that extract a hideous price.

Restricting the adept role to Narrator characters preserves its rightful place in a horror campaign. Other recommendations and considerations are found in the **Powers** section of this chapter.

Intellectual: Someone who is highly skilled and possesses uncanny deductive ability.

Psychic: Someone with mental agility and social grace whose powers come from within.

Warrior: Someone with skill at arms and various combat techniques.

ARCANIST

Some characters are able to decipher ancient writings and piece together fragments of knowledge found in books of forgotten lore. With such knowledge, they are able to command the forces of earth and sky and beyond, should they so choose. Others seek power more directly through bargaining and rituals, while others still prefer to keep their knowledge in the realm of the purely theoretical.

The arcanist role has the following features:

Role Type: Adept

Combat Progression: Slow (2 points). The combat bonus is equal to 1/2 the character's arcanist levels.

Skill Progression: 8 + Int (2 points)

Feat Access: 4 from Adept or General (0 points)

Save Progression: Good Will, Normal Fortitude and Reflex (0 points)

Power Progression: Slow, Unlimited (1 point). The character's power rank is equal to half his adept levels (rounded up) + 1.

Great Resolve (Core Ability): Through your years of study you have detailed knowledge of folklore, mystical and alchemical formulae, and magical creatures. You can draw on this knowledge to strengthen your resolve in the face of the supernatural. When making a Will save, you can spend a point of Conviction and automatically treat your die roll as a 20. Note this is not considered a "natural" 20, but otherwise works like a die result of 20.

ARCANIST PATHS

The following sets of starting skills and feats show some of the more common paths taken by the arcanist. (The paths assume an Intelligence score of +0).

MYSTIC

The mystic is a character who has abandoned traditional sciences to pursue the ephemeral studies of the Unseen World and the mysteries of the supernatural. He constantly travels in pursuit of enlightenment.

Key Abilities: Intelligence, Charisma

Starting Skills: Concentration, Knowledge (behavioral sciences), Notice, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Second Chance (Fatigue saves)

OCCULTIST

The occultist dabbles in the supernatural as an academic pursuit, hoarding old books and scrolls as a personal storehouse of arcane lore. A lifetime of poring over forbidden secrets has given the Occultist unnatural insights, teaching him a trick or two that just might be the difference between life and death.

Key Abilities: Intelligence, Wisdom

Starting Skills: Concentration, Knowledge (life sciences), Knowledge (supernatural), Knowledge (physical science), Gather Information, Languages (choose four), Notice, Search

Starting Feats: Eidetic Memory, Second Chance (Sanity Saves), Skill Focus: Knowledge (Supernatural), Ward

BLESSED

Some characters are touched by the divine in such a way they are able to perform miracles. Others achieve this state through strict discipline and adherence to their faith. In either case, they use their abilities to actively further their cause's agendas whenever possible. The parameters of characters taking this role need to be carefully worked out and defined with the Narrator as it pertains to the source of their powers and their access to them.

The blessed role has the following features:

Role Type: Adept

Combat Progression: Slow (2 points). The combat bonus is equal to 1/2 the character's acolyte levels.

Skill Progression: 6 + Int (1.5 points)

Feat Access: 4 from Adept or General (0 points)

Save Progression: Good Will, Normal Fortitude and Reflex (0 points)

Power Progression: Fast, Broad (1.5 points). A blessed hero can only choose powers from the broad list of powers provided below.

Higher Purpose (Core Ability): You serve a higher purpose or calling, inspired by your faith. When faced with a challenge *directly* related to your Higher Purpose, you may spend a Conviction point to gain either two feats or a single power (with a Fast Power Progression equal to your total level) you can use for the

NEW CORE ABILITY: BRAVE

A Narrator can incorporate this new core ability into his campaign either by allowing players to swap out their character's normal core ability, or by creating a new role (using the method detailed in **Chapter One**) and using this as the core ability.

Brave: You can spend a point of Conviction to immediately erase all startled, spooked and scared conditions (and their associated penalties).



duration of the encounter or scene. Choose the feats or power when you acquire this ability, they (and your higher purpose) cannot be changed. If you ever abandon your purpose, you lose the use of this core ability. The Dedicated feat (*True20*, page 45) is quite common for heroes with this core ability.

Fall from Grace: Should you not adhere to the tenets of your higher purpose, you are incapable of using your core ability or your supernatural powers until such time as you have made recompense for your misdeeds. Alternately, if you are using the Corruption rules, if you have one or more points of Corruption, you are incapable of accessing your core ability or powers.

BLESSED PATHS

The following sets of starting skills and feats show some of the more common paths taken by acolytes. (The paths assume an Intelligence score of +0).

AVENGING ANGEL

This character is gifted with offensive powers enabling them to further their cause. Often, a character taking this role improves its effectiveness by combining it with one or more roles of warrior, making them more effective combatants. Wisdom is especially important for channeling their divine powers, while Dexterity and Constitution enables them to mix it up.

Key Abilities: Wisdom, Dexterity

Starting Skills: Concentration, Knowledge (theology and philosophy), Notice, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Dedicated, Supernatural Strike, Supernatural Weapon, Weapon Training

THE CHOSEN

This character fills the traditional role of his chosen faith, be it ascetic monk, priest, or rabbi. His dedication and devotion has brought to him divine gifts that he must somehow understand and use for the good of humanity. These chosen become known as saints, faith healers, and holy men and women of all colors and creeds. Wisdom and Intelligence are paramount for putting these divine gifts to best use.

Key Abilities: Wisdom, Intelligence

Starting Skills: Concentration, Knowledge (theology and philosophy), Notice, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Cure, Dedicated, Skill Focus: Knowledge (theology and philosophy), Ward

EXPERT

The expert role is focused on skill and interaction but is also a capable fighter when need be. In a horror campaign, an expert can be an adventurous college professor, a hard-boiled private eye, or even a member of the criminal underworld.

EXPERT PATHS

The following sets of starting skills and feats show some of the more common paths taken by this role. (The paths assume an Intelligence score of +0).

DETECTIVE

Investigating murder and mayhem are all in a day's work for a detective. His knowledge of the criminal mind and the streets can serve him in good stead in a variety of campaign types.

Key Abilities: Charisma, Intelligence

Starting Skills: Gather Information, Knowledge (life sciences), Knowledge (streetwise), Notice, Search, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Benefit (Detective), Firearms Training, Jack-of-All-Trades, Skill Mastery (Gather Information, Notice, Search, Sense Motive)

REPORTER

A man who wants to get his story at any cost, the reporter often finds himself drawn into situations far greater than he could ever believe possible.

Key Abilities: Charisma, Intelligence

Starting Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Notice, Perform (acting), Search

Starting Feats: Benefit (Press Pass), Improvised Tools, Skill Mastery (Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Search), Well-Informed

BLESSED POWER LIST

Bliss	Body Control	Calm	Cure	Cure Blindness/ Deafness	Cure Disease	Cure Poison	Earth Shaping
Elemental Resistance	Enhance Senses	Fire Shaping	Heart Reading	Heart Shaping	Imbue Life	Imbue Unlife (vice)	Light Shaping
Nature Reading	Object Reading	Purifying Light	Second Sight	Severance	Sleep	Suggestion	Supernatural Strike
Supernatural Weapon	Teleport	True Visions	Truth-Reading	Visions	Ward	Water Shaping	Weather Shaping
Wind Shaping	Wind Walk						

INTELLECTUAL

Intellectuals are highly educated people possessing very keen powers of observation and deduction. Their ability to pick up on subtle clues borders on the uncanny, giving them almost superhuman problem-solving capability.

The intellectual role has the following features:

Role Type: Expert

Combat Progression: Slow (2 points). The combat bonus is equal to 1/2 the character's intellectual levels.

Skill Progression: 8 + Int (2 points)

Save Progression: Good Will, Normal Fortitude and Reflex (0 points)

Feat Access: Any 4 from General or Expert (0 points). Since an intellectual has Power Progression, you can swap out a feat in exchange for a supernatural power on the Intellectual Power List.

Power Progression: Fast, Narrow (1 point). The intellectual can only choose powers from the narrow list below. Rather than being true supernatural powers, these abilities represent the intellectual's extraordinary talent for deduction, understanding of human nature, and logic. The Narrator may allow you to include other powers on a case-by-case basis provided they can be described as natural abilities rather than supernatural powers.

Common Sense (Core Ability): It may not be that common, but you've got it. Whenever you're about to do something foolish or downright stupid, the Narrator *must* warn you, usually with something along the lines of "Are you sure you really want to do that?" Based on this, you may choose a different course of action. Common Sense doesn't cost Conviction, but it's also not under your control.

INTELLECTUAL POWER LIST

Enhance Ability	Enhance Senses
Heart Reading	Heart Shaping
Nature Reading	Psychic Shield
Second Sight	Suggestion
True Vision*	Truth-Reading

*True Vision is from the *True20 Bestiary*

INTELLECTUAL PATHS

The following sets of starting skills and feats show some of the more common paths taken by intellectuals (The paths assume an Intelligence score of +0).

ANTIQUARIAN

Practical professors, antiquarians often offer their services as appraisers and experts in the world of art history to a broad and eclectic range of clientele. Over time, they often accumulate great storehouses of knowledge, both practical and esoteric. Sometimes, innate curiosity or greed gets the better of them and they leave their positions as resident expert and journey into the realms of the strange and mysterious, in search of artifacts, knowledge, or both.

Key Abilities: Intelligence, Charisma

Starting Skills: Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (art), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (supernatural), Languages (French, Italian, Latin), Notice, Search

Starting Feats: Contacts, Enhance Senses, Fascinate, Suggestion

MAKING A NON-COMBAT EXPERT

Face it: a studious, absent-minded professor wouldn't necessarily know how to use a firearm effectively, and he certainly wouldn't be very effective in a fistfight. The expert role seems tailor-made for a highly skilled academic, however, so how does one reconcile the combat capability of the role with a character concept that doesn't include such capability? Players and Narrators have a few options available to them to resolve this dilemma.

STAY ON CONCEPT

At the simplest, all one must do to make a non-combative expert is to stay on concept and stick with skill-based feats, not take the Firearms Training or Weapon Training feats. Lacking a Weapon Training feat imposes a -4 penalty attack rolls with firearms and martial weapons. Without a weapon feat, an expert needs to be 7th level in order to have a +1 to hit (not including Dexterity, of course). Although an expert without a weapon feat is not as capable in combat, it does not affect his Defense. The character lacks basic skill in combat but he can still effectively dive for cover when he needs to.

SIMPLE WEAPON TRAINING AS A VIRTUAL FEAT

All roles provide proficiency in simple weapons. This can be considered a "bonus feat" that all characters receive regardless of role; even ordinaries get free proficiency in simple weapons. If one considers Simple Weapon Training as a feat, it further solves the problem of combat-capable experts. A player who wants to make an expert with absolutely no training in combat can voluntarily give up this "virtual feat" in exchange for any other General or Expert feat. In this case, Simple Weapon Training is considered to be a prerequisite for Weapon Training. Without it an expert has a -4 penalty when using simple weapons. The expert can pick up the Simple Weapon Training and Weapon Training feats later on as the studious professor grows into a skilled monster-hunter.

THE POINT-BUY ROLE SYSTEM

Players and Narrators can use the point-buy role creation system presented in **Chapter One** to create a highly-skilled role with little or no ability in combat. One such "non-combat expert" role, the Intellectual, is provided here as an example.

DESCRIBING THE INTELLECTUAL'S POWERS

The powers of the intellectual are not actually supernatural. Rather, they are observational abilities gained through deductive reasoning and keen insight. Players and Narrators can use the explanations below to describe an intellectual's powers, or invent their own.

Enhance Ability: You have an innate understanding of the principles of applied force and leverage, which manifests itself as a temporary boost in Strength or Dexterity.

Enhance Senses, True Vision: Your skill with deductive reasoning naturally augments your Notice skill and makes you difficult to Bluff.

Heart Reading, Truth-Reading: You have the ability to detect the emotions of others through the interpretation of subtle body language and micro-expressions.

Heart Shaping, Suggestion: Your detailed understanding of human nature enables you to subtly manipulate the emotions of others.

Nature Reading: Your understanding of the natural world allows you to make educated guesses about your environment.

Psychic Shield: Your logical mind makes it difficult for psychic power to affect you.

Second Sight: You have a knack for making assumptions about the use of supernatural powers based on their lingering influences on the environment.

PSYCHIC POWER LIST

Beast Link	Bliss	Body Control	Calm	Cure	Enhance Senses	Fire Shaping	Heart Reading
Heart Shaping	Manipulate Object	Mind Probe	Mind Reading	Mind Shaping	Mind Touch	Move Object	Nature Reading
Object Reading	Pain	Psychic Blast	Psychic Reflection	Psychic Shield	Psychic Trap	Scrying	Second Sight
Sense Minds	Suggestion	True Visions*	Truth-Reading	Visions	Ward		

CRIMINOLOGIST

An expert analyst and forensic specialist, a criminologist studies normal social behaviors and how certain factors influence deviation from the norm. Combining elements of statistician, psychologist, and sociologist, this highly trained academic is invaluable for their practical creativity and logical thinking. Their keen understanding of the human psyche enables them to trigger emotional states in potential suspects as well. Criminologists are often drawn into cases through the discovery of bizarre deaths and their drive to find the underlying truth of a mystery.

Key Abilities: Intelligence, Wisdom

Starting Skills: Concentration, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences), Knowledge (Forensics), Notice, Sense Motive, Search

Starting Feats: Heart Shaping, Improvised Tools, Talented (Knowledge (behavioral sciences) and Knowledge (forensics)), Well-Informed

PSYCHIC

Psychic characters are those that have had their inner core awakened and are capable of performing feats of extrasensory perception, psychokinesis, or both.

The psychic role has the following features:



Role Type: Adept

Combat Progression: Slow (2 points). The combat bonus is equal to 1/2 the character's psychic levels.

Skill Progression: 6 + Int (1.5 points)

Feat Access: 4 from Adept or General (0 points)

Save Progression: Good Will, Normal Fortitude and Reflex (0 points)

Power Progression: Fast, Broad (1.5 points). The Psychic can only choose powers from the Psychic Power List. Certain overt powers, such as Psychic Blast and the fatiguing version of Move Object, may be further restricted at the Narrator's discretion if they do not fit the campaign.

Higher Guidance (Core Ability): You just know things sometimes and there seems to be a higher power watching over you. You can spend a point of Conviction to ask the Narrator a direct question about something and get a truthful answer, although the Narrator's reply may be brief (often just a "yes" or "no"). The Narrator may choose not to answer if it would adversely affect the flow of the game, in which case you get your Conviction point back.

*True Visions is from the *True20 Bestiary*

PSYCHIC PATHS

The following sets of starting skills and feats show some of the more common paths taken by psychics (The paths assume an Intelligence score of +0).

CLAIRSENTIENT

A clairsentient is an empathic character capable of sensing and interpreting energies around people, places, and/or things. As she progresses, she grows in understanding these energies and frequently expands her abilities and powers.

Key Abilities: Charisma, Wisdom

Starting Skills: Concentration, Gather Information, Knowledge (supernatural), Notice, Sense Motive, Search

Starting Feats: Heart Reading, Object Reading, Truth-Reading, Visions

PSYCHOKINETIC

This type of psychic does not deal with the gentle subtleties of the mind, but learns to use sheer force of personality to affect the world. This mind-over-matter ability can manifest in a variety of ways.

Key Abilities: Charisma, Constitution

Starting Skills: Concentration, Knowledge (supernatural), Notice, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Cure, Fire Shaping, Manipulate Object, Move Object

WARRIOR

The warrior's strengths involve combat and physical toughness. Warriors are hardy men and women who are capable of handling themselves in a fight and can more easily resist poison and disease.

WARRIOR PATHS

The following sets of starting skills and feats show some of the more common paths taken by Warriors. (The paths assume an Intelligence score of +0).

GOVERNMENT AGENT

Often sent into situations to observe and investigate, an agent may have a secret agenda or be quite the company man. Wisdom and Intelligence are essential in helping analyzing data and perform due diligence in his primary fields of expertise, while Dexterity enables him to aim accurately should such situations arise.

Key Abilities: Wisdom, Intelligence

Starting Skills: Gather Information, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences), Notice, Search

Starting Feats: Benefit (Security Clearance), Firearms Training, Skill Focus: Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences), Talented (Notice, Search)

SOLDIER

The soldier is the modern warrior, trained to fight (usually for a nation, but sometimes on a freelance basis) in myriad situations and circumstances around the world. The soldier is hardened by combat and conflict, and ready to deal with any threat—usually with violence. Dexterity and Wisdom are important for selecting and striking the best targets, while Constitution and Intelligence aid in all-around survivability.

Key Abilities: Dexterity, Wisdom

Starting Skills: Climb, Disable Device, Stealth, Survival

Starting Feats: Accurate Attack, Endurance, Firearms Training, Tough

SKILLS & FEATS

The skills and feats detailed in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* suit most horror games, but some more subtle skills and unique feats also fit into the genre, as described here.

SKILLS

Following, you will find refinements of two existing skills for use in your horror campaign and the introduction of a new skill, Research.

KNOWLEDGE (SUPERNATURAL) (INT)

The occult, magic and the supernatural, astrology, numerology and similar topics including:

- Clues about a creature's weakness or origin.
- Insights into the cultural origins of magic, cults or rituals based upon evidence as varied as an inscription, an offering or a chant echoing down a hallway.
- The link between current strange occurrences and those in the past.

LANGUAGE

TRAINED ONLY, REQUIRES SPECIALIZATION

Language is an unusual skill. Each rank in this skill gives you the ability to read, write and speak another language at its basic level.

- **Basic Level:** Taking a language once grants you literacy and fluency in a language. You have a regional accent as well. This is the level that all characters speak their Native tongue at, unless they elect to take another level of proficiency.
- **Expert Level:** Taking two ranks in the same language grants the character complete and utter fluidity. The character copies slang, local dialects and cultural body language with ease. (A character with English at this level may emulate regional American accents, as well as British, Cockney, Irish and other English accents, for example.).
- **Dead or Exotic Languages:** These languages require the assignment of two skill ranks to have at the *basic level* and three skill ranks to have at *expert level*.

Dead Languages (Common)	Dead Languages (Exotic)
Aramaic	Enochian (Angelic)
Gaelic	Incant (Blasphemer's script, cryptographic, written only)
Greek	Lethe (The forgotten tongue)
Hieroglyphics (Written only)	Mortis (Corpse tongue)
Latin	Lucent (Corrupted Enochian)

RESEARCH (INT)

INTELLIGENCE

Even if you don't know something off the top of your head, a good researcher can often turn up answers. Given enough time (usually a few hours) and proper information sources like libraries, newspaper morgues, microfilm, microfiche, and computer records, you get a general idea about a given topic. The Difficulty of a Research check is 10 for basic knowledge, 15 for more obscure data, and 20 to 30 for very obscure bits of lore. This assumes that no obvious reasons exist why such information would be unavailable, and that you have a way to acquire restricted or protected information. The Narrator determines how obscure a particular topic is (the more obscure, the higher the Difficulty) and what kind of information might be available depending on where you are conducting your research.

Challenges: You can accept the following challenges when making a Research check.

Scanning the Headlines: You may add +5 or +10 to the Difficulty to reduce Research time by half or one quarter respectively.

Time: A Research check normally takes an hour.

Topic	Difficulty	Example Source
General	10	Textbooks
Specific	15	Computer records
Obscure	20	Newspaper morgues
Disorganized	+5	Scattered notes
Restricted	+5	Police case files
Protected	+10	Government documents

FEATS

In this section we present new feats to aid your heroes in their battles against the horrors of the night.

ALTERNATE APPROACH (GENERAL)

Instead of relying on willpower and discipline, you handle the mind-bending and sanity-stretching effects of horror with either sheer guts or incredible mental flexibility.

Benefit: Select either your character's Intelligence or Constitution score. Use that ability score's modifier for all Sanity saves (see **Fear and Terror** later in this chapter).

BRUTE FORCE (GENERAL)**PREREQUISITES:** STRENGTH +1, COMBAT BONUS +1

Your fighting style takes advantage of your impressive strength.

With a battleaxe, club, quarterstaff, sword or warhammer (or any other melee weapon your Narrator allows), you may add your Strength instead of your Dexterity to attack rolls.

You cannot make a finesse attack while using the Brute Force feat.

COLD-BLOODED (GENERAL)

You get +1 to Sanity saves and +1 to Intimidation attempts. Also, you gain +2 on saving throws to resist the Mind Touch power—your mind is a cold, dark place where few go willingly.

FALSE ATTACK (WARRIOR)**PREREQUISITE:** IMPROVED FEINT

You can make a feint to set your opponent up for a devastating attack on a vital area. By taking the full round action, you can make a single false attack. If you miss, you have a –2 penalty to your defense the following round. If you hit, you deal +2 damage.

IMPROVED FEINT (EXPERT)**PREREQUISITES:** DEFENSIVE ATTACK

You can make a Bluff check to feint in combat as a move action.

IMPROVED KNOCKOUT PUNCH (WARRIOR)**PREREQUISITES:** IMPROVED STRIKE, KNOCKOUT PUNCH

When your first unarmed attack is against a flat-footed opponent, treat a successful attack as a critical hit. This critical hit deals +4 damage instead of +3.

IMPROVED OVERRUN (GENERAL)**PREREQUISITES:** STRENGTH +1

When you attempt to overrun an opponent, the target may not choose to avoid you. You also gain a +2 bonus on your Strength check to knock down your opponent.

IMPROVED RUSH (GENERAL)**PREREQUISITES:** STRENGTH +1

When you perform a rush, you gain a +2 bonus on the opposed Strength check to push back the defender.

INSPIRE (EXPERT)

The following is a new use of the Inspire feat (*True20*, page 47).

Commanding Voice: You are especially good at snapping people out of a freeze and reassuring them that things aren't as bad as they seem. If you shout at someone who has a failed Sanity save, they can immediately reroll their Sanity save using your Charisma bonus to determine the new result. Doing this counts as a standard action and is considered the use of an interaction skill, even though no skill check is required. This means your subjects have to be able to hear and understand you. You can affect a number of subjects equal to half your expert level (with a minimum of one). You can use this feat once per day per expert level. You can spend a Conviction point for an additional use that day.

IMPROMPTU WEAPON PROFICIENCY (GENERAL)

Household items are lethal weapons in your hands. You take only a –2 penalty on attack rolls when using any kind of improvised weapon.

Additionally, Impromptu Weapons count as a weapon type for you, allowing you to acquire additional feats such as Attack Focus, which are normally unavailable for Impromptu Weapons.

JADED (GENERAL)

You've seen it all. You receive a +2 bonus on all Sanity saves.

KNOCKOUT PUNCH (GENERAL)**PREREQUISITES:** IMPROVED STRIKE

When your first unarmed attack is against a flat-footed opponent, treat a successful attack as a critical hit. This damage is non-lethal damage.

LONER (GENERAL)

You have few connections to other people or ideals. You do not suffer any penalties to Sanity saves for being alone or only having one other person present.

RITUAL KNOWLEDGE (GENERAL)**PREREQUISITE:** YOU MUST HAVE DISCOVERED A RITUAL IN WRITTEN FORM AND HAD AT LEAST A WEEK TO STUDY AND PRACTICE IT.

Pick one supernatural power. You can perform that power as a ritual without requiring access to the written form of the ritual. You must still meet all other requirements of the ritual, such as special materials and conditions. See **Rituals** for further details and examples.

URBAN TRACKING (GENERAL)

You can track down the location of missing persons or wanted individuals.

To find the trail of an individual or to follow it for 1 hour requires a Gather Information check. You must make another Gather Information check every hour of the search, as well as each time the trail becomes difficult to follow, such as when it moves to a different area of town.

The Difficulty of the check and the number of checks required to track down your quarry depend on the community population and the conditions:

Population	Difficulty	Checks Required
Fewer than 2,000	5	3
2,000–9,999	10	4
10,000–49,999	15	5
50,000–99,999	20	6
100,000–499,999	25	7
500,000+	30	8

Condition	Difficulty Modifier
Every three creatures in the group being sought	–1
Every 24 hours the quarry has been missing or sought	+1
Tracked quarry “lies low”	+5

If you fail a Gather Information check, you can retry after one hour of questioning. You can cut the time per Gather Information check in half (to 30 minutes per check rather than one hour per check), but you suffer a –5 penalty on the check. This is the same as a challenge on your Gather Information skill check (limited to urban tracking) and you can take the Challenge feat (*True20*, page 44) in order to cut the time for urban tracking in half without any penalty on your skill check.

POWERS

Supernatural powers are common in horror stories, but most often in the hands of the heroes' adversaries! The Narrator should decide what, if any, powers are available to heroes (including the existence of the other power-wielding heroic roles described on pages 75–76). If powers are available to the heroes, they may include some or all of the following, originally presented in the *True20 Bestiary*.

PURIFYING LIGHT

FATIGUING, CONCENTRATION

You can wield the power of pure light as a weapon against the forces of evil. This power allows you to do two things.

Light Blast: First, you can cast a supernatural bolt of light like an Elemental Blast (see the **Powers** chapter of the *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* book), except it only affects undead and supernatural creatures of innate evil (creatures with the vice subtype), such as fiends.

Shining Ward: Second, you can call forth a shining light to fill an area up to 60 feet across. Maintaining the area of pure light requires concentration. Any undead or supernatural creature with the vice subtype must make a Will save in order to enter the area of light, and another Will save each round to remain there. A failed save means the creature cannot enter the area and must leave immediately if it is already inside it.

Both uses of Purifying Light are fatiguing. You make the fatigue save after each Light Blast and after you stop maintaining a Shining Ward.

Time: Both uses of Purifying Light require a standard action.

SUMMON OUTSIDER

FATIGUING

PREREQUISITE: 6TH-LEVEL ADEPT OR HIGHER, TRAINED IN THE KNOWLEDGE (SUPERNATURAL) AND KNOWLEDGE (THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY) SKILLS.

You can summon outsiders, beings from other planes of existence, to serve you. This requires a check of d20 + adept level + your key ability with a Difficulty of 10 + twice the outsider's level. Summoning a 5th level outsider is Difficulty 20, for instance. Summon Outsider is fatiguing (Difficulty 10 + the outsider's level). The summoned creature does your bidding for a number of days equal to your adept level before returning to its home plane.

Time: Summon Outsider is a standard action.

TRUE VISION

FATIGUING, CONCENTRATION

Your insight is difficult to fool. You can use your True Vision bonus in place of your Sense Motive bonus to resist Bluff attempts. You can also use it in place of your Will save bonus to overcome Illusions and other supernatural powers that fool your senses. These benefits operate automatically for you once you have learned this power.

If you take a full-round action, you can make a True Vision check, opposed by the bonus of any illusory or concealing ability or the Disguise or Stealth bonus of any creature. If you win the check, you see the subject as it truly is, ignoring the effects of any disguise, illusion or concealment. This effect is fatiguing and requires concentration to maintain.

Time: True Vision normally requires no effort to use, operating automatically.

EQUIPMENT

More so than many other genres, horror is a feeling that transcends time and space. As such, Narrators may well to take players back in time to some of the more popular periods for horror, such as the Victorian era, the 1920s or the 1950s. Many are content to blend their horror with the contemporary era, while others prefer their horror in the cold depths of space. As such, rather than present you with a laundry list of goods, we'd prefer to present the Narrator with some guidelines to keep in mind.

First off, consider the Wealth score your friend. Regardless of the period in which you elect to play, you can still use it as a rule of thumb. Just be aware of items that did not exist in the period in which you wish to game as it can break the atmosphere. If your party is sneaking through a foggy street in 1840s London and a rough pops out with an Uzi, you've probably lost their attention (and respect) unless you have an awfully good reason.

True20 Adventure Roleplaying covers a lot of the basics, especially if you're not overly concerned with details such as specific gun types and keeping up with ammunition variances. Should you find resource management an integral part of a horror experience and that sweating where your next bullet is going to come from really attenuates the horror, we'd like to recommend the exhaustive weapons list found in *True20 Worlds of Adventure*.

Certain other items are of particular use to explorers of the dark and a sampling of such staples follows:

DIGITAL I/R THERMOMETER

A hand-held, pistol-grip device, a digital infra-red thermometer can detect the surface temperature of an object at a distance of 20 feet. It can even detect ambient temperatures if aimed at a point in the air. When an



apparition manifests or uses any of its powers, it draws energy from the environment. This draw of energy results in a rapid decrease in temperature around the entity. A digital thermometer can detect and record this change, but the results are often open to interpretation. For example if a reading is taken near an air conditioning vent or by a window at night, one would expect the ambient temperature of that area to be lower than the rest of the room. Only significant and abnormally rapid decreases in temperature are possible indications of a supernatural presence. *Purchase Difficulty: 13.*

EMF DETECTOR

An EMF Detector is a device that can measure fluctuations in the ambient electromagnetic field (EMF) of an area approximately 30 feet across. Although EMF Detectors are normally used to locate power leaks and electrical wiring, paranormal investigators have also discovered that they can also detect the presence of supernatural entities. If an invisible creature of any kind is within 30 feet of an EMF Detector, the device will register an increase in the ambient EMF. Of course, a similar increase will occur if the detector is within 30 feet of an electrical device or power source, so great care must be used in interpreting the readings. Getting an accurate reading usually requires measuring the normal ambient EMF in every room in a house to get an idea of what is baseline for the area; baseline EMF is usually between .5 and 1.5. Any reading significantly above that baseline may indicate the presence of an invisible supernatural force. *Purchase Difficulty: 10.*

SPECIAL MATERIALS

There are a few special materials that often crop up in the horror genre.

IRON

Cold-wrought iron is a powerful ally in the fight against supernatural creatures. Its mystical properties include the ability to hold ghosts at bay, and to cause great injury to mischievous faeries and goblins. A weapon of cold-wrought iron ignores the DR of fey creatures and certain fiends. An apparition is unable to cross a complete circle of cold iron, which is why old cemeteries were encircled wrought iron fences; if a ghost wanted to wander, it was confined to the cemetery grounds. An apparition (see the *True20 Bestiary*) must succeed on a Difficulty 20 Will save to cross an enclosed circle of iron.

SALT

Salt is believed by many cultures to hold magical properties. It can be used to keep spirits at bay and even ward off the devil himself. Spilled salt cast over the left shoulder fends off bad luck, and a circle of salt is often a component of summoning rituals to fence in the summoned entity. In a horror game, pure salt can be used in a variety of ways.

AGAINST ZOMBIES

A zombie animated by the Zombie ritual—but not one animated by the Imbue Unlife supernatural power or by other means—can be de-

animated if it tastes salt. The usual means of defeating a zombie is by filling its mouth with salt and sewing it shut so it can never rise again. In more desperate situations, a handful of salt can be thrown into a zombie's mouth to de-animate it. A human mouth is a Fine target, so getting salt into a zombie's mouth is an attack roll with a Difficulty equal to 10 + the zombie's Defense + 8.

IN SHOTGUN SHELLS

A character who succeeds on a Difficulty 10 Craft (Gunsmith) check can open a shotgun shell and replace the shot with rock salt. Farmers often use this technique to scare off trespassers without inflicting serious injury on them. Rock salt counts as shot for damage purposes (see **Chapter Five** of *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*), and the range increment is only 10 ft. Used against the living, rock salt converts the shotgun's damage from lethal to non-lethal. An interesting side effect of a rock salt shotgun blast is that it can temporarily disrupt an apparition's ability to manifest. An apparition (see the *True20 Bestiary*) hit by rock salt must succeed on a Will save with a Difficulty equal to 15 + the shotgun's damage. On a failed save, the apparition cannot manifest for 1 round. If it fails the save by 5 or more, the apparition cannot manifest for one minute (10 rounds); if it fails the save by 10 or more, it cannot manifest for one hour. This is only a temporary solution, of course, and other means must be followed in order to truly banish an apparition.

IN WARDS AND SUMMONING

A circle of pure salt aids in keeping spirits at bay. An adept using the Ward or Summon Outsider supernatural powers receives a +2 bonus on the power check after spending a full round drawing a circle of salt. The salt must surround the area to be protected or where the entity will appear once summoned.

SILVER

Silver is a common material for weapons in the fight against the supernatural. It is a metal associated with purity and with the moon, and its properties when used against lycanthropes are well known. A silver weapon ignores the Damage Reduction of a lycanthrope. Silver was also once used as a backing for mirrors, and this may be why a vampire casts no reflection in a mirror—the purity of the silver “rejects” the vile image of the undead creature. In the modern day when mirrors no longer have silver backings, carrying a silver mirror is a simple means of verifying whether or not a person is indeed a vampire.

WOODEN STAKE

The most common weapon of a vampire hunter, a simple wooden stake can be used to keep a vampire from rising from the grave. In order to be effective, a stake must be made of a wood with certain innate magical properties, such as oak, mistletoe, or dogwood. Just jabbing a stake into the heart of a vampire is not enough to disable it: the creature must be nailed to the ground in order to keep it from rising.

OPTIONAL RULES

In this section and the next, we present you with a lot of ways to season your horror setting to taste. You'll find guidelines for using ordinaries as adventurers, a discussion on group dynamics, ways to incorporate rituals neatly into your game, options for mental disorders, variable sanity systems, and directions in which to take your campaign.

ORDINARY HEROES

In a typical *True20* campaign, the characters are created using heroic roles. This assumes a certain level of competence and expertise above and beyond most people; indeed this is why they are called “heroes” in the first place.

Heroes are not ordinary people. They are more skilled, more capable, and in general more powerful than the average “man on the street.”

In a horror adventure, however, a Narrator might not want the characters to be quite so heroic. Part of the attraction of horror is pitting the common person against supernatural threats. Mixing heroic levels and ordinary levels allows a Narrator to run games where the characters are not quite as heroic as the normal roles allow. The Narrator can also use the mixed heroic/ordinary option to represent characters who originally know nothing of the supernatural but learn of it and eventually become heroic in their battles against it.

Ordinary levels can be further modified using the role creation system (see **Ordinaries and Role Creation** in **Chapter One**). Using that method, the players have a little more leeway in advancing their characters by swapping their skill points for a General feat, a Slow combat progression, or a Good save progression.

OPTION 1: STRICTLY ORDINARY

In a strictly ordinary game, the characters are not allowed to take levels in heroic roles. This approach has some significant pitfalls a Narrator should take into consideration. First, the only benefit the characters receive when they go up in level is skills. They get no Conviction, no Combat bonus, no increase in saving throws, and, most significantly, no feats and no core ability. The lack of feats is perhaps the most limiting factor of a strictly ordinary series. Without feats, a character can only wield simple weapons without suffering a -4 penalty. They have no way to increase their Toughness except through the use of armor, which in turn is limited by the fact they cannot take Armor Training feats to offset the armor check penalty.

Because of all the disadvantages of the ordinary role, a strictly ordinary game is best left to one-shot scenarios where the characters are not expected to engage in a career of adventure.

OPTION 2: START AS AN ORDINARY, ALTERNATE WITH HERO

A Narrator who wants to run a less heroic game can require a character's first level be taken as an ordinary. Once characters attain 2nd level, they

can select heroic roles and advance normally as a mixed-role heroes. Characters made using this option can be even further diluted from the heroic by requiring the player to take the ordinary level at every odd-numbered level.

The biggest disadvantage for characters made using this option is that they lack the four starting feats heroic roles provide. They also lack Conviction, at least until they attain 2nd level and can take a heroic role. Furthermore, as mixed-role heroes whose first level is not a heroic role, such characters lack core abilities. These factors make for a character significantly disadvantaged when compared to purely heroic characters. However, some Narrators desire a grittier atmosphere in which to weave their horror; it certainly lends an air of quiet desperation to a scenario when the players know their characters have no Conviction to rely upon initially. Kind Narrators may allow characters who attain 2nd level the core ability associated with their selected heroic role, since they didn't start with one.

OPTION 3: START AS A HERO, ALTERNATE WITH ORDINARY

This is perhaps the best option for Narrators who want the characters to be a little less heroic. Rather than starting out as ordinaries, the characters take on heroic roles at 1st level, but they must take the ordinary role on every even-numbered level (or even more infrequently, such as every third level). This slows the rate at which the character's number of feats, Combat bonus and saving throws increase, while still allowing for some growth in terms of skill.

RITUAL MAGIC

A curious teenager recites an incantation she found in an old book of magic and accidentally calls forth a demonic entity. A business tycoon who is secretly a powerful cult leader erects monuments that enable him to call down his alien god. A brave priest and his assistant face off in an exorcism against an evil spirit inhabiting the body of an innocent child. Rituals are a way for Narrators to enable adversaries and even ordinaries to wield some control over supernatural forces.

Access to ritual magic should be tightly controlled by the Narrator. Power should not be so easy to come by that it becomes commonplace. A would-be ritualist may have to track down multiple ancient texts in order to piece together the various parts of a ritual, or the book in which the ritual can be found may be closely guarded in the archives of a museum or university.

The heroes should not be given free and regular access to ritual magic, as that takes some of the mystery away from the horror genre. More than anything, ritual magic should be a plot device that begins or ends an adventure. The heroes may have to fight against a creature called to this world by a ritual, or, more dramatically, they have to interrupt a ritual in progress to prevent the creature from being summoned. Furthermore, many rituals have drastic and lasting consequences. The heroes must be aware of the ramifications of their actions; one who engages in the forbidden art of ritual magic risks corruption, his mind, his soul, and even the fate of the world itself.

GUIDELINES FOR RITUALS

A ritual always requires some form of incantation, usually accompanied by gestures. Most rituals also require certain material components such as incense, a circle containing mystic symbols, or sacrifices of blood from a living victim.

During a ritual the ritualist must make an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma check depending on the nature of the ritual. Rituals with more powerful effects have much higher Difficulties, with the most

powerful among them having a Difficulty so high the ritualist must rely on assistants to have any chance of success.



SUPERNATURAL POWERS AS RITUALS

The easiest way to create a new ritual is to base it on one of the supernatural powers in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* or the *True20 Bestiary*. Not all supernatural powers are appropriate for conversion to rituals; usually rituals involve calling or driving away supernatural creatures, empowering one's self, or altering some feature of the local environment (i.e. causing earthquakes or controlling weather).

Narrators can use the following general guidelines to convert a supernatural power into a ritual.

- **Difficulty:** The base Difficulty to perform a ritual is equal to 10 + the power's normal power check Difficulty. If the effect of a power depends on the result of a power check, the ritualist chooses the Difficulty that will achieve the desired result.
- **Adept Levels:** Use the ritualist's total level as the adept level for any calculation relying on adept level (but not for powers in which the adept level is part of a d20 roll). For example, the Ward power would use the ritualist's total level to determine its area of effect.
- **Fatiguing:** If the supernatural power is fatiguing, increase the base Difficulty by +2. Furthermore, the ritual is fatiguing as well, requiring a successful Will save with a Difficulty equal to half the ritual's Difficulty to avoid fatigue.
- **Maintenance/Concentration:** If the supernatural power requires maintenance or concentration, increase the base Difficulty by +2. If it requires both, increase the base Difficulty by +4.
- **Prerequisites:** If the power has another power as a prerequisite, increase the base Difficulty by +2 for each required power. If the power has a level-based prerequisite—which includes powers with a power rank prerequisite—increase the base Difficulty by 1/2 the required level (rounded up). For example, Imbue Life has a prerequisite of Cure rank 12, which translates to at least 9 adept levels since power rank is equal to level + 3. This results in an increase of +7 to the base Difficulty: +2 for the power requirement and +5 for the level requirement.

DEMONIC POSSESSION

In the Horror genre, fiends rarely manifest physically unless they are specifically summoned via the Summon Outsider power or the Summon Demon ritual. Instead, fiends prefer to rely on more subtle approaches to influence mortals; they tempt those who contact them, spreading corruption and vice through suggestions and promises of power. Usually, the most overt actions a fiend takes involve possession of a living host. To reflect this, all fiends with the Mind Touch power have the Malevolence trait:

MALEVOLENCE

A fiend can possess a living creature through the use of the Mind Touch power. The target can resist the attack with a successful Will save (Difficulty of 10 + 1/2 the fiend's level + the fiend's Charisma). A creature that successfully saves is immune to that fiend's Malevolence for 24 hours. If the save fails, the fiend vanishes into the target's body and controls it as if using the Dominate supernatural power. While in possession of a mortal body, the fiend uses its own mental ability scores and Will save and has access to all of its Intelligence-, Wisdom-, and Charisma-based skills, all of its adept feats and skill-based feats, and all of its supernatural powers and traits except the ability to summon other fiends. It does not have access to its physical ability scores, skills, feats, or traits (such as DR).

If you are using the Corruption rules, a character possessed by a fiend automatically gains a point of Corruption. If the character willingly allowed the fiend to possess him, he gains two points of Corruption.

- **Effects:** A ritual normally only allows the ritualist to perform a single effect. To allow a single ritual to have multiple effects, increase the base Difficulty by +2 per extra effect. For example, the Ward power entails an area effect and a creature ward. A single ritual that does both has its base Difficulty increased by +2.
- **Time:** Multiply the time required to use a supernatural power by 10. The result is how long it takes to perform the ritual. A supernatural power that is a move action or a standard action requires five rounds (30 seconds) to perform as a ritual, and a power that is a full-round action takes at least one minute (10 rounds). This time cannot be reduced, but it can be increased as the ritualist takes time and makes absolutely certain everything is being done correctly. Increasing the time required to perform a ritual reduces the Difficulty by an amount equal to the multiple minus 1. Therefore twice as long to perform the ritual reduces the Difficulty by 1, three times as long reduces it by 2, and so on to a maximum of -19 (20 times as long).

RITUAL ELEMENTS

Each ritual description has the following elements:

- **Power:** The supernatural power upon which the ritual is based, if any. Other than the ritual requirements, the power functions as written when used as a ritual.
- **Difficulty:** The ability check required and the Difficulty. During a ritual, the ritualist must usually make an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma check against a set Difficulty. Each assistant must also make a check of some sort, usually similar in nature to the check required by the ritualist. For each assistant who succeeds, the ritualist gets a +2 bonus to her roll as per Aid. A character involved in a ritual cannot take 10 or 20 on any check required by the ritual.
- **Ritualists:** Each ritual has a ritualist who leads the ceremony and usually one or more assistants who aid the ritualist.
- **Components:** Any special items or materials required for the ritual.
- **Aids:** Any special qualities the ritualist and her assistants must possess, as well as certain qualities that provide a bonus to the ritualist's check. One aid consistent for all rituals is adept levels. The ritualist adds half her adept level (rounded down) to her ability score check to perform the ritual.
- **Time:** How long it takes to perform the ritual.
- **Costs:** Some rituals inflict injury or ability damage, or negatively affect some other aspect of the participants.
- **Success:** What effect the ritual has if successful. Usually, success means the power works as written.
- **Failure:** What happens if the ritual fails. Unlike normal supernatural powers, rituals usually have some drastic consequence for failure.

SAMPLE RITUAL: EXORCISM

This ritual drives out demons or evil spirits possessing a victim or inhabiting a building.

Power: Ward (creature ward vs. Outsiders), fatiguing

Difficulty: Charisma check Difficulty 32 (10 + base Difficulty 20 +2 for fatiguing). Each assistant must succeed on a Difficulty 10 Charisma check to aid the ritualist. Will save Difficulty 11 to avoid fatigue.

Ritualists: An exorcism requires a ritualist and usually at least one assistant.

Components: No components are required, but religious exorcists generally use symbols and texts sacred to their religion as well as other substances symbolizing purity, such as holy water, salt, or white candles.

Aids: The ritualist must be trained in either the Knowledge (theology and philosophy) or Knowledge (supernatural) skills. The ritualist must also be pure of heart and faith: he must have no Corruption and must not have gained Conviction by giving in to his vice for at least a week prior to the exorcism. Other requirements may be enforced by the Narrator depending on the ritualist's religion, such as a Catholic priest needing the approval of the church before attempting an exorcism. The Difficulty of the Charisma check increases by +2 for each condition he fails to meet.

The ritualist receives a +1 bonus if he has 6 or more ranks in Knowledge (supernatural) or Knowledge (theology and philosophy), and a +2 bonus if he has 6 or more ranks in both skills. The ritualist gets an additional bonus of +1 to +4 if he has some sway over the entity, such as having knowledge of a spirit's past life or knowing a demon's true name. The amount of this bonus (if any) is up to the Narrator. Assistants with 6 or more ranks in Knowledge (supernatural) or Knowledge (theology and philosophy) provide a bonus of +3 to the primary ritualist rather than the usual +2.

Time: 5 rounds

Costs: The ritualist and each assistant may have to make Sanity saves depending on what the entity does during the exorcism. Anyone who fails a Sanity save automatically fails any other check she must make during the ritual. Any character present at an exorcism can offer himself to the entity to spare the body of the possessed victim. This is usually an act of desperation when an exorcism has gone wrong and the entity threatens to hurt its current victim. In this case, the martyr automatically gains a point of Conviction because of the sacrifice. Of course, the entity can always choose not to accept the offer. The exorcism must begin anew to confront the entity in the new victim.

Success: If the ritualist succeeds on his Charisma check, the entity must succeed on a Will save or be forced from its host. The save Difficulty is equal to the base Difficulty chosen by the ritualist. (In this sample exorcism, the base Difficulty is 20, so that is the fiend's Will save Difficulty). If the entity is an outsider, it is forced to return to its plane of origin and may not return unless specifically summoned. If the entity is a ghost it is disrupted and cannot manifest for d20 months. A ghost with a number of levels equal to less than half of the ritualist's adept levels (rounded down) is destroyed.

Failure: If the ritualist fails the Charisma check or the entity succeeds on its Will save, the entity remains in place and the exorcism must be started anew. The entity may also choose to possess any character present instead. The victim and the entity must make opposed Will saves, with the entity taking possession of its victim if it succeeds.

SAMPLE RITUAL: SÉANCE

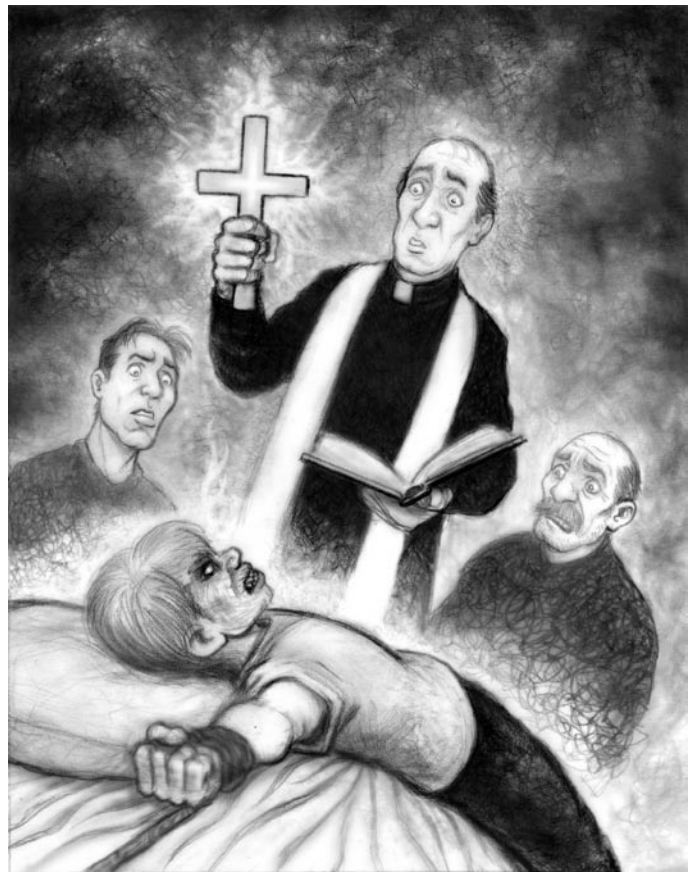
This ritual enables the ritualist to force an apparition to manifest in order to communicate with it. (See the **Apparition** template in the *True20 Bestiary*).

Power: Mind Touch

Difficulty: Charisma check Difficulty 20 (10 + base Difficulty 10) if the spirit is in the location where the séance is taking place. If the spirit is being called from another location, the Difficulty is modified by the ritualist's familiarity with the spirit. Most ritualists are at least slightly familiar with the spirits they try to contact either through personal research or by having them described in detail before the séance. Likewise, prior use of other powers such as Sense Minds and Second Sight may allow a ritualist to learn enough about a local spirit to be considered casually familiar. Each assistant must succeed on a Difficulty 10 Charisma check to aid the ritualist.

Ritualists: A séance requires a circle of at least two people, one of whom is the ritualist.

Components: None. The ritualist and each assistant need only link hands and concentrate.



Aids: The ritualist needs only to have some knowledge of the supernatural; she must be trained in the Knowledge (supernatural) skill. The ritualist gets a +2 bonus if she has 6 or more ranks in Knowledge (supernatural).

Time: 1 minute (10 rounds)

Costs: The ritualist and all assistants may have to make Sanity saves if an apparition does appear, and may have to make more Sanity saves depending on what it does during the séance. A character involved in the ritual who fails a Sanity save automatically breaks the séance chain, which might dismiss the apparition.

Success: If the primary ritualist succeeds on her Charisma check, an apparition responds to her call. Depending on its whims, it can manifest and communicate with the ritualist or anyone present in the room. If the séance is held in a place known to be haunted, the answering apparition will be the most powerful entity in that area (measured by level + Charisma) or the specific entity named, whichever condition applies. If a séance is held in a place that is not haunted or where a haunting is only suspected, the ritualist must call a specific entity by name. Otherwise, any entity may answer the call. The latter is a potentially dangerous situation and should only be attempted by a ritualist who is certain she can control the answering entity.

Once called, an apparition remains for a number of minutes equal to its Charisma (minimum of one minute). The ritualist can dismiss an apparition before that time expires by making a Charisma check opposed by the apparition's Will save. Dismissing an apparition is a standard action. If the séance chain is ever broken, such as by a member of the chain releasing her partners' hands, the apparition can try to possess that person as a free action if it has the Malevolence trait. If it does not possess the trait or cannot possess the person, it must succeed on a Difficulty 20 Will save or be instantly dismissed. A dismissed apparition cannot be summoned by a séance or manifest for 24 hours.

Failure: If the ritualist fails the Charisma check by 4 or less, no apparition is called and the séance is a failure. If the ritualist fails by 5 or more, the results can be disastrous. The narrator is free to interpret the consequences of a failed séance as he sees fit. One possible consequence is that a hostile entity—such as an evil apparition or even a demon—answers the call.

SAMPLE RITUAL: SUMMON DEMON

This ritual allows the ritualist to call forth a fiend to do his bidding. (See **Fiends** in the *True20 Bestiary*.)

Power: Summon Outsider, fatiguing

Difficulty: Charisma check Difficulty 37 (10 + base Difficulty 22 + 2 for fatiguing + 3 for level prerequisite). Assistants must succeed on a Difficulty 10 Charisma check to aid the ritualist. Will save Difficulty 12 to avoid fatigue.

Ritualists: Only a ritualist is required, but assistants are usually utilized due to the high Difficulty.

Components: The ritualist must perfectly inscribe a summoning circle into which the summoned fiend will appear. The ritualist gets a +1 bonus for each of the following additional components used: an altar specifically dedicated to the summoning of fiends, special incenses and candles, an animal sacrifice (of an animal or animals with a total level of 5 or greater), ritual performed on an unholy day.

Aids: The ritualist receives a +1 bonus if he has 6 or more ranks in Knowledge (supernatural) or Knowledge (theology and philosophy), and a +2 bonus if he has 6 or more ranks in both skills. The ritualist gets an additional bonus of +1 to +4 if he has some sway over the entity, such as knowing a demon's true name. The amount of this bonus (if any) is up to the Narrator. The sacrifice of an intelligent creature (Int –2 or greater) provides a +10 bonus.

Time: 1 minute (10 rounds)

Costs: When the fiend appears in the summoning circle, everyone present must make a Sanity save with a Difficulty equal to the Terror level of the fiend. Witnesses not subject to Sanity saves are immune. If you are using the Corruption rules, the ritualist and all assistants automatically gain a point of Corruption for participating in summoning a fiend.

Success: If the ritualist succeeds on the Charisma check, a fiend of the desired type (or the specific fiend named) appears in the summoning circle and awaits its orders. The base Difficulty of this sample summoning ritual is 22; using this ritual, the ritualist can summon a 6th-level fiend (such as a bearded fiend or a succubus from the *True20 Bestiary*).

Failure: If the ritualist fails his Charisma check, no fiend is summoned. The ritual is a failure and must be restarted. If the ritualist fails by more than 5 or more, a fiend of 2nd level or lower may appear for no other purpose than to wreak havoc among those involved in the ritual. It obeys no one and attacks everything in sight for five rounds before returning to its home plane.

SAMPLE RITUAL: ZOMBIE

This ritual allows the ritualist to transform a corpse into a zombie slave.

Power: Imbue Unlife, fatiguing

Difficulty: Wisdom check Difficulty 12 (10 + 2 for fatiguing). Each assistant must succeed on a Difficulty 10 Wisdom check to aid the ritualist. Will save Difficulty 6 to avoid fatigue.

Ritualists: The zombie ritual requires only a ritualist.

Components: A fresh corpse, grave dirt, at least one pint of animal blood.

Aids: A ritualist with at least 6 ranks in the Knowledge (supernatural) skill receives a +2 bonus on her Charisma check.

Time: 10 minutes

Costs: When a zombie rises, everyone present must make a Sanity save with a Difficulty equal to the Terror level of the zombie. Witnesses not subject to Sanity saves are immune. Creating If you are using the Corruption rules the ritualist automatically gains a point of Corruption for creating a zombie.

Success: If the ritualist succeeds on her Wisdom check, the corpse animates as a zombie. The zombie is animated indefinitely (until it is destroyed) and is fanatically loyal to the ritualist. The zombie can be destroyed by physical means, or de-animated by filling its mouth with salt.

Failure: If the ritualist fails her Wisdom check, the corpse is not animated and can never again be subject to any form of the Imbue Unlife power or any rituals dealing with necromancy.

FEAR AND TERROR

Whether it's called a Horror Check, a Fear Save, or Sanity, one of the staples of Horror gaming is some mechanic to represent the character's "fight or flight" reaction to supernatural events. Although some players claim that such mechanics unfairly deny them control of their own character, it does bring an element of fear into the game itself. You never know how badly you're going to roll on a Sanity save, and it could mean the difference between fighting bravely and curling up into a terrified ball. That uncertainty helps bring the drama to the player more than just straight roleplaying alone. Certainly, no one wants their character to be the one paralyzed with fear when the monster rears its ugly head, but likewise no one wants their character to be injured in a battle. Having heroes who are subject to fear and terror isn't all that different from heroes subject to injury and death—it's just a matter of game mechanics. Physical trauma damages the character's body, and psychological trauma damages the character's mind.

THE SANITY SAVE

Anyone encountering a sudden shock or horror must make a Sanity saving throw. This is a roll of d20 + the character's Sanity bonus, plus any relevant feats and represents the mind's ability to deal with scary situations and reality-bending encounters. Think of it as a kind

of "psychological Toughness saving throw." In fact the Sanity save mechanic uses a system almost identical to the Toughness save mechanic described in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*. A character's Sanity bonus varies, depending on which method the Narrator chooses for the series (see **Sanity Bonus Variants** for details).

A Sanity save has a base Difficulty of 15 plus a modifier equal to the Fear/Terror Level of the encounter. For example, a ghoul springs out of the dark. It has a Fear Level of 3, so the Difficulty is 18 (15+3).

**Sanity Saving Throw = d20 + Sanity Bonus + Feats
vs. Difficulty 15 + Fear Level**

If the Sanity save succeeds, the target suffers no significant effect, nothing more than a slight scare or jolt. If the Sanity save fails, the target suffers mental health damage. The effects depend on the degree of the encounter (Fear or Terror) and the amount the Sanity save result is below the Difficulty.

Fear is instilled by lesser horrors and scares: a sudden cry, a gunshot, a man leaping out of a dark alley, etc.

A failed Sanity roll against Fear means the target is *startled*, imposing a –1 penalty on further saves against Fear, but not affecting saves against

terror. If the Sanity save fails by 5 or more, the target is *spooked*; mark down a spooked condition on the Mental Health Track. A spooked condition also imposes a –1 modifier on further saves against Fear. If the Sanity save fails by 10 or more, the target is *frightened*; check off the frightened box on the Mental Health Track. If the Sanity save fails by 15 or more, the target is *terrified*; check off the terrified box on the Mental Health Track. If a target suffers a result that is already checked off, check off the next highest result. So, if a target is already frightened and suffers another frightened result, check off the terrified box. If the terrified box is checked and the character suffers another effect from Fear, check off the first available Terror box (so, go to confused, unhinged and so forth.)

Terror is inflicted by great horrors and shocks that question the viewer's perceptions of reality: a window frosting over in the middle of summer, a ghost walking through the wall and so on.

A failed Sanity roll against a terror means the target is *scared*. Each scared result imposes a –1 penalty on further Sanity saves. If the Sanity save fails by 5 or more, the target is *confused*; mark down a confused condition on the Mental Health Track. A confused result also imposes a –1 modifier on further Sanity saves. If the Sanity save fails by 10 or more, the target is *unhinged*; check off the unhinged box on the Mental Health Track. If the Sanity save fails by 15 or more, the target is *psychotic*; check off the psychotic box on the Mental Health Track. If a target suffers a result that is already checked off, check off the next highest result, so if a target is already confused and suffers another confused result, check off the unhinged box. If that's already checked off, check off the psychotic box. A character can only be pushed immediately over the brink of sanity by being exposed to a great shock or a series of shocks while already in a mentally unstable condition.

MENTAL ANGUISH

Terror effects cause fear effects as well. Whenever your hero suffers a terror effect, check off the corresponding Fear box, too. So, a hero who is confused is also spooked, a hero who is scared is also startled. The effects of the mental health conditions are cumulative, except for startled and scared conditions, where only the highest value applies.

MENTAL HEALTH TRACK				
0	5+	10+	15+	
Startled	Spooked	Frightened	Terrified	
	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	☐
Scared	Confused	Unhinged	Psychotic	Insane

IMPOSSIBLE SANITY SAVES

If the Difficulty of a Sanity save is so high the hero cannot possibly succeed, even with a 20 on the die roll, the Sanity save is still rolled to determine the effect (the amount by which the character misses the Difficulty). A natural 20 means the character is only startled or scared, regardless of the Difficulty. Fate intervenes to shield the character's mind from otherwise certain trauma.

Narrators interested in more realistic consequences for fear and terror should ignore this rule.

MINIONS AND SANITY

A minion makes a Sanity save against mental health damage as usual; however, if the save fails, the minion suffers the maximum possible result for the Fear/Terror in question. For Fear, this usually means terrified, while for Terror, this usually means psychotic. This is, of course, subject to the Narrator's discretion.

MODIFIERS TO SANITY SAVES

Situation	Modifier
A loved one is endangered.	+4
You possess something proven to be useful against the threat.	+4
A loved one is clearly endangered by the threat.	+4
A friend or ally is clearly endangered by the threat.	+2
You possess something believed to be useful against the threat.	+2
You have been warned about what you're about to see.	+2
You are with several (4+) allies.	+2
You defeated a similar threat in the past.	+1
You are in close quarters (no place to run).	–1
You have faced and been defeated by a similar threat in the past.	–1
An innocent is participating in the scene (but not threatened).	–1
Each previously failed Sanity save	–1
You are accompanied by only 1 other person.	–2
A friend or ally is participating in the scene (but not threatened).	–2
Dim light.	–2
You are alone.	–4
Total darkness.	–4
You are at "wounded" or worse on the damage track.	–4

FEAR EFFECTS

- **Startled:** A startled character receives a –1 penalty to further Fear saves.
- **Spooked:** A spooked character receives a –1 penalty to further saves against Fear. The character flees as fast as possible for one full round or cowers, dazed, if unable to get away. He defends normally, but cannot attack. The following round, he can act normally.
- **Frightened:** A frightened character loses one full round action. They can take no action, lose their dodge bonus to Defense, and have a –2 penalty to Defense. In the following rounds, frightened characters can only take a standard or move action.
- **Terrified:** A terrified character falls to the floor, catatonic and helpless until he recovers.

TERROR EFFECTS

- **Scared:** A scared character receives a –1 penalty to further Sanity saves.
- **Confused:** A confused character is *shaken*. They receive a –2 penalty on all checks, including attack rolls and Fortitude, Reflex and Will saving throws. This persists until the confused condition is lifted. Additionally, a confused character is *stunned* for one round after being confused. They can take no actions, lose their dodge bonus to Defense, and have a –2 penalty to Defense.
- **Unhinged:** An unhinged character suffers –2 penalty to effective Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma until this condition is lifted.
- **Psychotic:** Psychotic characters suffer a –3 penalty to effective Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma until this condition is lifted and may only take a single action each turn. If a character was previously unhinged, these penalties replace those.
- **Insane:** This character is unable to interact meaningfully with the world. This usually means the end for the character, as he is a gibbering shadow of his former self. Powerful sorceries or long-term counseling can restore sanity in some, but not all, cases.

REGAINING YOUR WITS

Recovering from mental health damage requires a Wisdom check (Difficulty 10). A successful check erases the mental condition, while an unsuccessful check means there is no significant improvement for that time period.

You can make a recovery check once per minute for frightened and terrified, once per hour for confused, once per day for unhinged and once per week for psychotic. Insane characters are over the brink and can only be returned to sanity (and to play) by special dispensation of the Narrator.

You can spend a Conviction point to get an immediate recovery check from Fear effects, rather than having to wait a minute. You can also spend Conviction on your recovery check.

Startled and spooked conditions fade automatically at a rate of one per minute. Scared conditions do the same at a rate of one per hour.

Characters may use Knowledge (behavioral science), Profession (psychology), or an interaction skill as deemed appropriate by the Narrator to use the Aid action to assist the target's recovery. A character may only benefit from one person's help at a time in this manner.

THE BASIS OF SANITY

When planning the type of horror setting you want to create, it's essential to consider how you want to handle one of the more aspects of the game, Sanity. Following, you will find three Sanity variations for your perusal. Consider them carefully as each will have a varying impact on your game and how your players will approach your adventures. The effects of each are listed in their individual descriptions. Once you select a Sanity system, you should naturally use the same method for all characters in a campaign.

SANITY AS AN ABILITY CHECK

The character's Sanity bonus is equal to an ability score, such as Wisdom or Charisma.

SANITY SAVE BASE VALUE		
Total Level	Hero Base Sanity Bonus	Ordinary Base Sanity Bonus
1	+2	+0
2	+3	+0
3	+3	+1
4	+4	+1
5	+4	+1
6	+5	+2
7	+5	+2
8	+6	+2
9	+6	+3
10	+7	+3
11	+7	+3
12	+8	+4
13	+8	+4
14	+9	+4
15	+9	+5
16	+10	+5
17	+10	+5
18	+11	+6
19	+11	+6
20	+12	+6

With this option, the character's Sanity bonus does not increase with level. The bonus only increases through the selection of certain feats and when the character's ability bonus increases. Since the Sanity bonus does not increase with level, there is no way to model characters growing accustomed to the supernatural. A character is just as susceptible to Fear and Terror at high levels as at lower levels.

When using this method with Charisma as the key ability, the benefit of the Lucky feat does not apply to the character's Sanity save bonus (since it's already a Charisma-based save).

This method, using Wisdom, is the default method in the **Agents of Oblivion** campaign setting in *True20 Worlds of Adventure*.

SANITY AS A WILL SAVE

The character's Sanity bonus is equal to her Will save bonus.

As a Will save, the character's Sanity bonus increases with level and is explicitly tied to Wisdom. The character can be assumed to be growing more accustomed to the unnatural as she progresses in level, thanks to the increasing Will save. Naturally, adepts and experts who select Will as their good save have a distinct advantage over other characters when using this method. Furthermore, since the effects of the Iron Will, Jaded, and Lucky feats stack, it is easy to build up a character's bonus to Sanity saves.

SANITY AS A NEW SAVE

Sanity is a new saving throw in addition to Toughness, Fortitude, Reflexes, and Will.

Like Will save-based Sanity saves, this method has the advantage that it increases with level and can be further augmented through the use of feats designed to counter fear and terror. A Sanity save using this method is made like any other saving throw. A character's Sanity save bonus is equal to base Sanity save value from level plus Wisdom or Charisma modifier.

The Narrator chooses whether to use Wisdom or Charisma as the key ability for Sanity saves. When using this method with Charisma as they key ability, the benefit of the Lucky feat does not apply to the character's Sanity save bonus (since it's already a Charisma-based save).

Unlike other saving throws, which are role-dependent, all heroic characters have Sanity as a good save. The reason for this is that heroes are braver and more resistant to fear and terror than normal people; this is part of what makes them heroes. A hero can stand in the face of fear and be relatively unshaken by horrible things that would send a normal person into fits of hysteria.

DETERMINING THE SANITY SAVE DIFFICULTY

Narrators should keep a few key concepts in mind when setting the Difficulty for a Sanity save. Firstly, they must decide which effect is most appropriate for the save: Fear or Terror. A Sanity save results in a Fear effect if it is caused by frightening but otherwise normal events. A Sanity save results in Terror if it is triggered by supernatural events or events that can cause psychological trauma. A supernaturally inspired Sanity save should only have a low Difficulty if it can somehow be explained away through odd coincidences or natural forces.

FEAR/TERROR LEVEL FOR CREATURES

With the introduction of Sanity saves into the game, it is necessary to add the traits of Fear and Terror to existing Adversaries found in such

reference works as the *True20 Bestiary*. Any creature listed with a Fear or Terror Level forces an appropriate Sanity save and is immune to the effects of Fear and Terror.

Adding a Fear/Terror Level to a creature is easy: it is equal to its total levels. Consult the chart below to determine the appropriate classification, either Fear or Terror. You can add situational modifiers as you see fit. It is suggested you reserve assigning Fear for animals and vermin to those especially scary ones, like giant cockroaches and hungry wolves, not the neighborhood dog or an individual rat. Likewise, normal animals that are dangerous but which have been rendered harmless (or at least seemingly so) would not trigger a Sanity save; looking at a tiger in a zoo is not nearly the same as encountering one in the wild with no fence between you and it.

A creature's Fear/Terror level can be reduced by virtue of its appearance or reputation. For example, unicorns and true gargoyles are each 4th-level creatures, which gives them a Fear level of 4. Unicorns are less fearsome-looking than gargoyles and are more likely to inspire awe than fear, so it wouldn't be out of line to reduce the unicorn's Fear level to 2 or even 0.

*A monstrous humanoid or supernatural beast provokes Fear or Terror depending on its appearance.

OPTIONAL RULE: DISORDERS

Characters reduced to "unhinged" or worse on the mental health track suffer from severe penalties as a result of the mental trauma they have experienced. Depending on how well those characters roll on their recovery checks, the more severe penalties could last for days or even weeks.

Rather than dealing with those penalties, a character can wipe out all mental health conditions in exchange for a disorder selected by the Narrator or rolled on the **Random Disorder Table**. A Narrator can also automatically give a character a Disorder if the player rolls a natural 1 on the Sanity save or recovery check.

A disorder comes into effect within one day of the event that triggered it.

If a character develops a mania or a phobia, the disorder should be tailored to fit the circumstances of the event that triggered it. For example, a character who avoided a ghoul in a cemetery by hiding behind a tree might develop Dendromania—the overwhelming desire to be around trees. Without a tree to hide behind, he feels vulnerable and exposed. Likewise he could just as easily develop coimetrophobia (ghouls dwell in cemeteries, after all) or necrophobia (dead things attract ghouls).

ADDICTION

The character turns an addictive substance to banish the memories that haunt him. While under the influence of the substance he suffers a -1 penalty on all attack rolls, saves, ability score checks, and skill checks. This penalty lasts for 24 hours. He can go a maximum number of days equal to his Charisma or his Constitution (whichever is greater) before entering withdrawal. When in withdrawal, the character must succeed on a Difficulty 10 Fortitude save each day or be shaken until a new fix is gained. A character who is tempted by his addiction (e.g. someone offers him a drink) must succeed on a Difficulty 10 Will save to resist. A character addicted to an illegal substance also risks arrest.

Stacking Effects: Increase the penalty while under the influence by 1, or increase the Fortitude save Difficulty to resist withdrawal by 2, or select an additional substance to which the character is addicted. A character with multiple addictions must satisfy each addiction to avoid withdrawal. Every time a character receives the Addiction disorder, his Wealth bonus decreases by 1.

STATIC SANITY SAVE DIFFICULTIES

Difficulty	Sample Causes for a Situational Sanity Save	Fear/Terror Effect
5	Hearing a distant gunshot.	Fear
5	Finding a human skeleton.	Terror
10	Trapped in a potentially deadly situation.	Fear
10	Finding a human corpse.	Terror
15	Hearing a sudden scream very close by.	Fear
15	Witnessing a scene of great pain or suffering.	Terror
20	A large explosion happens nearby.	Fear
20	Seeing someone sacrificed in a dark ritual.	Terror

CREATURE FEAR/TERROR

Creature Type	Fear	Terror
Aberration	—	Y
Animal	Y	—
Construct (robotic)	Y	—
Construct (supernatural)	—	Y
Dragon	—	Y
Elemental	—	Y
Fey	Y	—
Humanoid	Y	—
Monstrous humanoid*	Y	Y
Ooze	—	Y
Outsider	—	Y
Plant	Y	—
Supernatural beast*	Y	Y
Undead	—	Y
Vermin	Y	—

RANDOM DISORDER TABLE

d20	Disorder
1	Weakened mind
2	Depression
3	Sociopathic tendencies
4	Obsessive-compulsive disorder
5–6	Addiction
7	Psychotic episodes
8	Paranoia
9–11	Phobia
12–13	Generalized anxiety disorder
14–15	Delusions and hallucinations
16–17	Night terrors
18	Obsession
19	Mania
20	Amnesia

AMNESIA

The character mentally blocks out the memories of whatever caused the trauma, but suffers from occasional flashbacks. If this disorder is selected, take note of the event that triggered it and the Sanity save Difficulty. If reminded of the event in the future, the character must succeed on a Sanity (Terror) check with a Difficulty equal to that of the original event as the repressed memories flood back in. If the character

succeeds on the Sanity save, her denial is still in effect and she can lock out the memories once more.

Stacking Effects: If this disorder is caused by a similar event or memories of the original event, increase the Sanity save Difficulty by 1 as the memories become harder and harder to shut out.

DELUSIONS AND HALLUCINATIONS

The character begins to hear voices, catch movement out of the corner of her eye, and see fleeting glimpses of things when nothing is present. She cannot be certain if what she is seeing is real or just the product of her own troubled mind. She has a –1 penalty on all Notice and Search checks and on Sanity saves.

Stacking Effects: Increase the penalty on Notice and Search checks and Sanity saves by 1.

DEPRESSION

The character loses hope for the future and ceases attaching emotional importance to certain aspects of life. He suffers a –2 penalty on Will saves and a –1 penalty on all other saves and checks due to a lack of motivation. This penalty does not apply to Sanity saves; the character simply does not care enough to be particularly bothered by anything he sees.

Stacking Effects: Increase the penalty by 1 each.

GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER

The character suffers from a variety of physical and emotional symptoms such as jumpiness, twitches, expectations of doom, and hyper-vigilance. He jumps at shadows and is always looking for danger. All attack rolls, saving throws, ability checks, and skill checks (except for Notice checks) suffer a –1 penalty. Notice checks have a +1 bonus.

Stacking Effects: Increase the penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, ability checks, and skill checks (as well as the bonus on Notice checks) by 1.

MANIA

The character has a strong, unnatural desire for some particular object or situation and feels comforted by its presence. In situations where the subject of his mania is not present, he must succeed on a Difficulty 10 Will save or be shaken until he can obtain it.

Stacking Effects: Select an additional mania or increase the Will save Difficulty by 2 for an existing mania.

NIGHT TERRORS

The character's sleep is frequently plagued with nightmares. Each time the character sleeps, she must succeed on a Difficulty 10 Will save or suffer a nightmare so vivid she wakes up screaming and cannot sleep for at least 8 hours. The character is automatically fatigued for the next 24 hours due to lack of sleep. The only way to alleviate this penalty is through a full 8 hours of sleep. A character who resorts to pharmaceutical means to achieve her needed rest may become addicted to the medication.

Stacking Effects: Increase the Will save Difficulty by 2 to avoid having a night terror.

OBSESSION

The character becomes obsessed with something, investing strong emotional bonds in it or gaining a sense of security from possessing it. The object of the obsession could be a sentimental trinket of some kind or something the character insists can protect or shield them from danger (such as a crucifix or good luck charm). The character must keep the object of her obsession with her at all times. She frequently checks to see if the item is on her person, and absentmindedly fondles

the item in times of stress. If the item is removed from the character, she becomes frantic and suffers a –1 penalty on all attack rolls, skill checks, ability checks, and saving throws until the object is returned or the disorder is removed.

Stacking Effects: Increase the penalty on all attack rolls, skill checks, ability checks, and saving throws by 1.

OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER

The character develops a set of rituals and nervous responses that he must perform. This unsettles people around him, giving the character a –1 penalty on all Charisma-based checks. If the character is prevented from performing his rituals, he suffers a –1 penalty on all skill checks.

Stacking Effects: Increase the penalty on Charisma-based skill checks by 1.

PARANOIA

The character becomes convinced that enemies are everywhere. He suffers a –2 penalty on Sense Motive checks and always believes that others are plotting against him if he fails a Sense Motive check.

Stacking Effects: Increase the penalty on Sense Motive checks by 2.

PHOBIA

The character has a strong, unnatural fear of some particular object or situation. If confronted with the subject of her fear, she must succeed on a Difficulty 12 Sanity (Fear) check. If the Sanity save is triggered by a creature, the creature's Sanity save Difficulty is increased by +2.

Stacking Effects: Select an additional phobia or increase the Fear (panic) save Difficulty by 1 for an existing phobia.

PSYCHOTIC EPISODES

The character suffers occasional psychotic episodes during which he becomes mentally detached from reality. He may become delusional and see terrifying hallucinations, or he may become manic and rant wildly about the horrors that he has seen. Before each game session, the character must succeed on a Difficulty 15 Will save or suffer a psychotic episode at some point during the game session. The Narrator decides when the psychotic episode occurs. During a psychotic episode, the character is shaken.

Stacking Effects: Increase the Will save Difficulty to avoid having a psychotic episode by 1.

SOCIOPATHIC TENDENCIES

A character who becomes a sociopath slowly loses the capacity to connect with anything he experiences or is involved in. He suffers 1 point of Charisma drain as his emotions deaden and he stops caring about the world around him. The only Charisma skill not affected by the Charisma drain is Intimidate. A character whose Charisma drops to less than –3 by taking this Disorder becomes an incurable sociopath and is taken over by the Narrator.

Stacking Effects: 1 additional point of Charisma drain.

WEAKENED MIND

A character with this disorder gains a permanent –1 penalty to all Sanity saves and a –2 penalty to Will saves to recover from disorders. This condition must be eliminated before any hope exists of curing other mental disorders the character may have.

Stacking Effects: An additional –1 Penalty to Sanity saves and an additional –2 to Will saves to recover from disorders. For every two instances of this disorder, the character's Charisma is reduced by 1 as he exhibits nervous twitches and erratic behavior.

SAMPLE MANIAS AND PHOBIAS

Prefix	Desire for (-mania)/Fear of (-phobia)	Prefix	Desire for (-mania)/Fear of (-phobia)
Acro-	Heights	Hemo-	Blood
Aero-	Air	Herpeto-	Reptiles
Agora-	Open spaces	Hydro-	Water
Ailuro-	Cats	Iatro-	Doctors
Andro-	Men (males)	Ichthyo-	Fish
Anthropo-	People or society	Insecto-	Insects
Arachno-	Spiders	Ligyro-	Loud noises
Astro-	Stars	Mechano-	Machines
Auto-	Being alone or by oneself	Motor-	Automobiles
Automatono-	Things that falsely represent a sentient being	Muso-	Mice and rats
Automyso-	Being dirty	Necro-	Death or dead things
Aviato-	Flying	Nelo-	Glass
Bacterio-	Germes	Nocti-	The night
Ballisto-	Missiles or bullets	Nosocome-	Hospitals
Baro-	Loss of gravity	Nycto-	Night or nightfall
Batho-	Depth or deep places	Odonto-	Teeth
Biblio-	Books	Oneiro-	Dreams
Blenno-	Slime	Onomato-	A certain name, word, or phrase
Botano-	Plants	Ophidio-	Snakes
Bronto-	Thunder and lightning	Ornitho-	Birds
Bufono-	Toads	Osse-	Bones
Caco-	Ugliness	Pago-	Ice or frost
Ceno-	Emptiness, empty rooms	Pedi-	Children
Chiono-	Snow	Phago-	Eating
Chronomentro-	Clocks	Phono-	Noise, including one's own voice
Claustro-	Confined spaces	Pyro-	Fire
Coimetro-	Cemeteries	Scoto-	Darkness
Coulro-	Clowns	Somni-	Sleep
Cyno-	Dogs	Spectro-	Mirrors
Daemono-	Demons	Taphe-	Being buried alive
Demo-	Crowds	Terato-	Monsters
Dendro-	Trees	Thalasso-	The sea
Dipso-	Drinking	Thanato-	Death or dying
Entomo-	Insects	Tomo-	Surgery
Gephyro-	Crossing bridges	Urano-	The heavens, the sky
Geronto-	Old people or of growing old	Vermi-	Worms
Gyne-	Woman (females)	Xantho-	The color yellow
Hamarto-	Sin or making an error	Xeno-	Strangers
Haphe-	Being touched	Xylo-	Wood or wooden objects
Helio-	The sun	Xyro-	Razors
Hemato-	Bleeding	Zoo-	Animals

A BAG FULL OF BONES

The list of manias and phobias on the **Sample Manias and Phobias** table is included as a handy reference and as a source of inspiration for Narrator's crafting their adventures. Many great works of horror, both cinematic and written, pare down their themes to the essence of one idea and use it as a motif in their work. You, as the director of your own nightmares, can pluck out a bone, such as Automysomania, the desire to be dirty, and easily flesh it out for an evening's entertainment.

ELIMINATING DISORDERS

Regardless of the time period, mental disorders are not easy to eliminate. At best, a patient with a single disorder can recover in a month's time with proper care and intensive counseling. In less prosaic

conditions, the character can be subjected to extremes of physical and psychological trauma, possibly resulting in further withdrawal into the dark recesses of the mind.

LEVEL GAIN

When a character goes up a level, she can make a Difficulty 15 Will save for each disorder she has. On a successful save, she eliminates the disorder.

PERSONAL PSYCHIATRIC CARE

Prolonged one-on-one psychiatric care of at least 1 month, with no odd occurrences during the therapy, allows the character to make a Difficulty 15 Will save to remove a single disorder. The psychiatrist may make a Knowledge (behavioral science) check to assist the character using the Aid rules (*True20 Adventure Roleplaying*, page 9).

PRE-1950 SANITARIUM CARE

While the purpose of a sanitarium is to cure mental disorders, in earlier times they more often simply served as prisons for the insane. The sad truth is that a patient in a sanitarium is unlikely to receive the careful attention she requires. In addition, the very conditions in early sanitariums lead themselves to Sanity saves. There is rampant abuse and harsh therapies such as shock treatment. Patients are strapped into straitjackets at the first sign of unrest with little or no concern for their comfort or well-being. Inmates are chained to walls, strapped down, poked, prodded, and humiliated by the orderlies and even the doctors.

Recovery in a sanitarium works as described above, but because of the lack of proper treatment, the character can only roll for recovery once every two weeks. Furthermore, because of the horrific living conditions the character has a modifier of between -1 to -5 (Narrator's choice) to all Will saves made on the road to recovery in a sanitarium. As the modifier indicates, many patients in sanitariums would be better off locked in their nephews' attics.

CORRUPTION

In the horror genre, characters can acquire both moral and mental decay quite readily. You've already seen the various options provided through the Sanity systems. Now we present you with an additional option you can either use in lieu of the above system or integrate into the Sanity system of your choice.

Corruption represents moral decay and the slippery slope of a character's descent into evil thought and deed. In some circumstances, subject to the Narrator's discretion, evil influences can be so overwhelming that characters automatically gain Corruption. Examples of this can be seen in the Rituals section.

The possibility of gaining Corruption occurs whenever a character performs one of the following corrupt acts:

- Using any power in a corrupt place.
- Using any power while in contact with a corrupt item.
- Using a power to take life.
- Using a power to directly control someone.
- Using a power to read someone's mind.
- Succumbing to one's vice nature while in a corrupt place.
- Succumbing to one's vice nature while in contact with a corrupt item.
- Summoning a creature from beyond the void.
- Necromancy.
- Killing in a corrupt place.
- Performing any other transgression listed on the table below.

Please note the above list is not comprehensive and the Narrator has final authority on what constitutes a corrupt act.

When a character commits a corrupt act, make a Charisma saving throw for the character. The difficulty is 10 plus half the rank of the power used for supernatural powers, or according to the following chart for other transgressions.

Difficulty	Act
10	Minor Transgression (Lying, petty theft)
15	Significant Transgression (Deliberately hurtful actions)
20	Major Transgression (Murder, rape)
30	Mortal Transgression (Conscious betrayal of companion, murder of innocents)

A successful save means there is no effect other than the consequences of the character's action. A failed save means the character acquires 1 point of Corruption.

CORRUPT PLACES

Places can become tainted with Corruption over time. Classic examples are houses where multiple murders occurred, apartments of serial killers, graveyards where dark rituals took place and so on. It is as though the dark soul of the demented took root and darkened the place for all times. Such corrupt places can spread their evil to those who spend their time there. The amount of evil a place has is reflected by its Corruption score, which can scale from 1 to 10.

THE EFFECT OF CORRUPT PLACES

Characters that do not have Corruption are not subject to the effects of corrupt places unless they willingly commit any of the acts listed under Corruption above. Characters with Corruption, however, are vulnerable to dark influences and add the Corruption score of such a place up to their own Corruption level. For example, three characters move through a haunted graveyard (Corruption: 2). One character has no corruption, the second has 1 point of Corruption, and the third has 3 points of Corruption. While in the tainted place, the first character is unaffected, the second has an effective Corruption of 2, and the third an effective Corruption of 4. The effects of Corruption then apply normally. Characters that have embraced Corruption gain the additional benefits of an enhanced Corruption.

CORRUPT ITEMS

A corrupt item is much like a corrupt place, except it only affects individuals in contact with the item. Anyone carrying a corrupt item is subject to Corruption checks. Some corrupt items bestow benefits to their possessor, which makes them darkly attractive.

EFFECTS OF CORRUPTION

A character's Corruption score applies as a penalty to the character's Constitution and Wisdom scores. This means a character with Constitution +2, Wisdom +1, and 2 points of Corruption has an effective Constitution +0 and Wisdom -1. These penalties reflect the impact of Corruption on the character's physical and mental well-being. Victims of Corruption experience these losses of Constitution and Wisdom as physical and mental symptoms. Physically she suffers fatigue, weakness, nausea, and gnawing hunger. Psychologically, she experiences growing fear, anger, paranoia, and mistrust.

DISORDERS AND CORRUPTION

Disorders and Corruption present additional opportunities for the Narrator to further define and refine their horror setting. If you want to limit the effectiveness of a power like Mind Touch or Vision, for example, attach a "price tag" with an attached disorder or Corruption to it. Maybe reading someone's mind without permission (the most useful application of that power) leads to corruption. Seeing into the future might expose precogs to things "outside of time" the mortal mind wasn't meant to see and possibly cause a Sanity save or a weakened mind. You don't have to ban the troublesome powers outright, but you can ensure that players have good reason to use them with caution. Alternatively, you can make Corruption or a certain disorder a prerequisite for even *having* certain powers, limiting them to tainted characters only (which is a good way to limit them to the bad guys without flatly saying so).



The character begins losing control over her vice nature. When presented with an opportunity to regain Conviction by acting in accordance with her vice nature, the character must succeed on a Will save (Difficulty 10 + total corruption) to resist. Otherwise, she gives in and follows her vice nature for the scene. Characters who have a Wisdom score of 0 or greater can spend a point of Conviction to automatically overcome this urge. Characters with negative Wisdom cannot. A victim of Corruption whose Wisdom is debilitated goes mad in accordance with her vice nature, completely.

REDEMPTION

Eliminating Corruption takes time and Conviction. Characters may take the Conviction point they would normally earn each day and apply it towards their Corruption. Additionally, they may take any Conviction points earned by embracing their virtue during the course of play and apply those toward their Corruption as well. It takes ten applied points of Conviction to eliminate one point of Corruption. Dealing with the dark forces comes with a price.

Note that characters can still gain Corruption while working toward eliminating it, so it is often a struggle against the character's darker impulses. Characters may also find themselves in need of additional Conviction on occasion, taking an awarded Conviction point rather than applying it toward their redemption. This slows, but does not interrupt, the process.

ADVERSARIES

In horror, you have free rein to use any creature your dark heart desires. Whether it is goblins in a closet, ghosts in a graveyard, or vampires in the vineyard, you can easily pull such creations out of *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* or the *True20 Bestiary*. Simply add the Fear/Terror levels as mentioned in the Sanity section, wrap an adventure around it, and you're ready to scare your gaming group for hours. It is suggested you build the atmosphere up to the key creature slowly, having several false scares and encounters with more mundane threats before the culminating moment of confrontation with the central abomination!

EMBRACING CORRUPTION

If not stopped early on, Corruption eventually leads to insanity. A character is therefore faced with two choices: either find ways to eliminate it through conscious effort and virtuous acts, or embrace it. Most characters will obviously choose the path of the light, but some cannot, for whatever reason. They choose to embrace the darkness and dive into its depths. Characters embracing corruption become NPCs under the Narrator's control and gain the following benefits:

- The character no longer suffers any Constitution or Wisdom penalties from accumulated Corruption.
- The character cannot benefit from Cure powers used by a non-corrupt healer. The powers simply have no effect. A healer who has embraced Corruption can use Cure on other corrupt characters, including himself.
- A corrupt adept changes the key abilities of all his powers to his Corruption score. Instead of applying his Intelligence score to Move Object, for example, the adept applies his Corruption score. This means adepts who have embraced Corruption wield considerable power. The maximum Corruption score is normally 10; characters who have embraced Corruption, however, continue to gain Corruption points, although they add their Corruption score to all future saves to resist gaining additional points.

CREATING A SERIES: APPROACHES TO HORROR

One of the more difficult aspects of gaming in the horror genre is getting the heroes together in the first place. Unlike a typical fantasy series kick-off, it's somewhat difficult in a modern-era setting to simply have everyone "meet in a tavern and decide to go adventuring." There has to be some unity of purpose to a group of monster-hunters, a common thread tying them together and providing a motivation to go out and do what they do.

This section discusses some ideas for how to bring the characters together, united against the dark horrors that threaten the innocent souls of the world. All groups have an advantage, which sets them apart from the others and determines the tone of the campaign, and a disadvantage, which are drawbacks the Narrator can use to heighten suspense or otherwise throw obstacles into the heroes' paths. Also provided are suggested skills and feats appropriate for members of a particular group. Not all members of the group have to have these skills and feats; they are just suggestions that mesh well with the group dynamic. These breakdowns along with the example sources should put you well on the road to dark adventure.

ACCIDENTAL TOURISTS

This was a quiet little suburb a few years ago. Now, things are just... scary. In a horror game of Accidental Tourists, the characters aren't even heroes: they are everyday people thrust into horrifying situations from which there appears to be no escape. Normal folks square off against unstoppable serial killers, alien invaders, and suave vampires right in their own backyards. A group consisting of these characters is best run as a one-shot scenario.

Advantage: None. Accidental tourists have no advantage, really. They are outclassed by nearly every monster out there. The fun of a group of Normal folks comes from playing scenarios reminiscent of classic splatter films where the characters are hunted down and killed one by one.

Disadvantage: Non-heroic. A group of tourists do not use any of the heroic roles. They are ordinaries, meaning they get no feats and no combat bonus. They don't even get Conviction! They are run-of-the-mill men and women who have to rely on wits and sheer luck to survive. An enterprising Narrator might want to allow the survivors to become heroes eventually, molding them into one of the other types of groups as they progress (see **Ordinary Heroes** in the **Optional Rules** section).

Examples: *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, *Friday the 13th*, *Halloween*

Suggested Backgrounds: Any

Suggested Archetypes: Any

GOVERNMENT AGENTS

Clad in dark suits and flashing badges in the faces of townspeople and local authorities alike, government agents scour the countryside to uncover the truth—or perhaps to conceal it.

Government agents are the easiest type of group to assemble and run in a horror campaign—after all, it's their job. The characters are agents with the FBI, the CIA, the NSA, the DHS, or a fictitious government organization created by the Narrator. They were recruited for their special talents and interests and given the task of investigating (or covering up) claims of the supernatural.

Advantage: Resources. The primary advantage of a group of government agents is resources. They have access to all the latest technology, from cell phones to laptops to crime databases to other knowledgeable agents

they can consult with on a moment's notice. Government agents can also look into files and records off-limits to others, and can usually count on the assistance—however begrudging—of local law enforcement.

Disadvantage: Mistrust. Government agents are the least trusted group of all. When mysterious people in dark suits and black cars pull into a small town, the people talk... to everyone but them. With rumors of black helicopters, mind-control techniques, and other conspiracy theories running rampant, a government agent could easily find the people she needs to talk to the most unwilling to even look in her direction. Government agents also have to contend with internal politics of their own agency. If Senator So-and-So wants a quiet resolution to that problem in Roswell, he gets it or you get reassigned. It's also likely not everyone at the Agency has your best interests at heart—you always have to watch your step.

Examples: Project Blue Book, *Hellboy*, *The X-Files*

Suggested Backgrounds: Academic, Investigative, Law Enforcement, Military, Technician

Suggested Archetypes: Government Agent, Detective, Soldier

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTERS

Looking for the truth even if they have to bend the law to do it, investigative reporters dig through old document morgues, interview everyone remotely associated with a mysterious event, and sometimes even fast talk their way into restricted areas to find that precious kernel of truth.

A group of investigative reporters could be employed by some form of media: a newspaper, magazine, tabloid, or even a television show. It is their job to research and investigate reports of paranormal activities and report them to the world. Since most serious publications tend to scoff at tales of ghosts and aliens, the publication most likely has a disclaimer somewhere that it is "for entertainment purposes only." That doesn't matter, though. People have the right to know the truth! More often than not, this group butts heads with the government agents trying to cover it up.

Advantage: Freedom of the Press. As investigative reporters, the characters are journalists and by law cannot be impeded from reporting what they uncover. Important people and authorities may threaten or otherwise try to coerce the heroes, but when all is said and done, the heroes have the advantage of free speech. Freedom of the Press can be powerful leverage to get people to loosen their tongues when they are reticent. If they don't tell you everything, you can print what you do know and let the people decide what happened. In many cases, the truth is less damaging than rampant speculation by an underinformed public.

Disadvantage: Credibility. Because the a group of investigative reporters write articles involving conspiracy theories and things that go bump in the night, they may lack credibility in the journalistic community. Who believes that stuff anyway? Other media outlets may be hesitant to deal with them, and local authorities are likely to dismiss them as crackpots and refuse to tell them anything. There are certainly some people out there who believe every word printed in supermarket tabloids, but most laugh them off as ludicrous. The investigative reporter's "freedom of the press" doesn't count for much when what you report is thought of as journalistic garbage.

Examples: *Kolchak the Nightstalker*

Suggested Backgrounds: Academic, Creative, Criminal, Investigative, White Collar

Suggested Archetypes: Criminologist, Detective, Reporter



MILITARY/ PARAMILITARY SQUAD

Highly trained, lethally efficient, and expertly coordinated, the military squad deploys to danger zones around the world to fight the enemies of the state and defend citizens with duty, honor, and bravado.

Whether members of a national army, a local militia, or a police department, the heroes are crack combat troops more than capable of dealing with threats in a precise manner. This type of group lends itself best to one-shot scenarios pitting the heroes' training and weapons against an onslaught of supernatural creatures.

A military squad can be part of a series, but it can be a challenge for the Narrator to come up with scenarios in which such a group could be believably involved. In most cases, this type of group is best treated as a subset of one of the other groups in an ongoing campaign, such as government agents or survivalists. As the former, they are the combat arm of a government agency trained to deal with supernatural threats. In the latter, they are the remnants of a military squad trying to make their way in a world gone mad.

Advantage: Weapons and Training. Members of a military or paramilitary squad have one major advantage most other groups do not: hardware. Every member of the group has weapons, perhaps some body armor, and even a handful of frag grenades. In a strictly military campaign, the group may have a Hummer or a helicopter or even an APC to carry them around. Along with their ordinance, the members of a military group also have the training and discipline to use them well.

Disadvantage: Chain of Command. As a member of a combat unit, you are subject to the orders of superior officers who may not fully understand your position. Members of a military squad are required

to stay within the proper chain of command and follow orders without question. Although it is the duty of those in the field to inform their commanders of the situation so they can issue proper orders, the brass might not want to hear about it when facing supernatural opponents. Another disadvantage of the military group is that, despite the hardware, all those weapons are of little use against monsters that are immune to bullets.

Examples: *Dog Soldiers*, *Predator*

Suggested Backgrounds: Athlete, Blue Collar, Military, Technician

Suggested Archetypes: Government Agent, Soldier

MONSTER HUNTERS

Ornated by some higher power to defend mankind from the creatures of the night, the monster hunters walk the twilight between reality and the supernatural. Monster hunters are not exactly normal people. They are empowered, by birth, destiny or even technology, to track down and dispatch supernatural creatures. Secretive Vatican agents, teenagers given awesome powers by forces beyond, and psychics who take the fight to the source of evil are all examples of monster hunters. This group is perhaps the freest group of all, since they aren't subject to government policies, chains of command, or (in some cases) codes of ethics.

Advantage: Power. Monster hunters, by their very definition, have the power to confront and defeat monsters on their own terms. Of all the groups, monster hunters are also the easiest in which to play adepts. Sometimes you need a little supernatural ability of your own when you fight vampires on quiet suburban streets.

Disadvantage: Supernatural magnet. Monster hunters have a lot of power and ability—and the monsters know it. Because they are so effective in hunting down and exterminating supernatural threats, the heroes attract all manner of ghoulies and ghosties and long-legged beasts who want

nothing more than to exterminate them back. With great power comes great responsibility, but also great enemies. A group of monster hunters is frequently assailed on all sides by the forces of darkness.

Examples: *Angel*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Ghostbusters*, *Supernatural*, *Van Helsing*

Suggested Backgrounds: Academic, Creative, Dilettante, Investigative, Religious, Technician

Suggested Archetypes: Antiquarian, Avenging Angel, Clairsentient, Criminologist, Occultist

PERSONAL HORROR

In a setting of personal horror, the roles are reversed. The heroes are the monsters, hiding from human persecution or dealing with the tragedy of what it means to be a monster. Because they are outnumbered by the teeming masses of humanity, the heroes of a game of personal horror must act carefully lest they draw attention to themselves. The heroes may belong to a society of monsters living right under the humans' noses, closely following a rigid set of guidelines designed to keep their existence a secret, or they may be in hiding somewhere in the wilderness, only occasionally visiting areas of human habitation. Although players may be strongly tempted to run "evil" characters in a game such as this, Narrators should stress the fact that the characters are still supposed to be heroes. Perhaps they are trying to restore their humanity or protect innocents from the depredations of other monsters who are not so kind. This serves to enhance the roleplaying opportunities and caters to the tragedy inherent to the genre. Even "good" monsters are still seen as monsters no matter how hard they try; therein lies the real horror.

Advantages: Power. Because they aren't human, the heroes in this type of game aren't bound by the normal restrictions of character design. They can possibly have abilities above +5, bonus supernatural powers, and non-human traits (such as Scent or Flight). Narrators who want to run a game of personal horror should be aware of the imbalance that such powerful characters bring to the game. They will likely be stronger, faster, and more capable in combat than most human adversaries. In light of this possible imbalance, it is recommended that Narrators either tone down the abilities of the creatures in the *True20 Bestiary* before allowing them as heroic backgrounds, or make up their own versions using the rules for creating new backgrounds in *True20*.

Disadvantages: Persecution. When you're a monster, you are feared. There's no getting around that. Even the best of intentions can be misinterpreted when you're obviously inhuman. A hero in a game of personal horror must tread lightly, not attract too much attention, and know when to run. Even powerful creatures can be hunted and killed by skilled humans, and that includes powerful supernatural creatures

like you. Certain humans might also know of your weaknesses and will certainly take advantage of them to bring you down.

Examples: *Nightbreed*, *Interview with the Vampire*, *An American Werewolf in London*

Suggested Backgrounds: Any

Suggested Archetypes: Any

SURVIVALISTS

Life is a daily struggle against things that yesterday were strictly unheard of outside of video games and horror stories. Survivalist horror depends on some world-altering event that destroyed civilization and forced people to find ways to survive. The End could have been caused by a hideous sea god rising from the ocean floor and sending forth masses of cosmic horrors against the world, the Biblical Revelation coming to pass with demons and monsters erupting from fiery cracks in the earth, or a bizarre plague that turns the bodies of the recent dead into cannibalistic ghouls. This is the horrible world in which the Survivalist group must make their way. It is a bit of a departure from the "investigate and defeat" motif of the other groups and often crosses over completely with other genres, such as post-apocalyptic and science fiction. Elements of horror still exist, however, but they are blatant and commonplace and more often dealt with using outright combat.

Advantage: Freedom. In a survivalist horror campaign, the characters have no laws to restrict them. They can go guns blazing into almost any situation if they want to. There is no authority to oppose them or to prevent them from ransacking a military laboratory for the information they need. They won't be arrested for harassing or killing those that try to impede them.

Disadvantage: Lack of resources. With society either completely gone or in a rapid downward spiral, the hardest thing for a group of Survivalists is to find what they need to survive. Weapons are important, certainly, but now that mass-produced food is a thing of the past, where will the group find sustenance to keep them healthy enough to use those weapons? Not only are common necessities at a premium, but the heroes may also encounter a dearth of research materials. When a tentacled horror is eating its way through the huddled refugees of a city in ruins, where do you go to find out what can kill the thing? Another major disadvantage of this style is a high mortality rate. With monsters everywhere, it can be quite a challenge just to survive the night.

Examples: *Dawn of the Dead*, *I Am Legend*, *28 Days Later*

Suggested Backgrounds: Any

Suggested Archetypes: Any

HORROR THROUGH THE AGES

Another important element of a horror game is the era in which it is set. The era in which a horror game is set determines the overall tone of the game. Certain themes are more prevalent in some eras and less prevalent in others. For example, most horror in the 1950's deals with subversive aliens and giant bugs. The horror of the Victorian Era is primarily philosophical in nature and deals with pseudoscience. In addition to the tone, naturally the era in which a horror game is set restricts the heroes in their choice of equipment. In some cases, the era even restricts the heroes' choice of skills and feats. Although a Narrator can run a horror game in any era, the following times tend to be the most popular. This section looks at the major eras of horror, from the Victorian Age up to the present, and how to create stories that evoke their particular styles in your *True20* game. These aren't the only approaches but they're the ones that capture the style of horror fiction from each era.

THE VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN ERAS

The Victorian Era begins in the mid-19th century with the coronation of the woman for whom the era is named: Alexandrina Victoria, Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. After her death in 1901, the Edwardian Era began with the coronation of Prince Albert Edward.

The Victorian and Edwardian Eras are times of change and rapid scientific advancement. The people of these eras saw the rise of industrialization, the birth of the middle class, and the first significant advances in the fields of medicine, forensic science, and biology. Unfortunately, they also witnessed advances in the art of

war, culminating in the so-called “Great War” in 1914. This roughly 70-year period is also a time of rigid social mores and strict rules of behavior that dictated “propriety” in thought and deed. This is the age of Nikola Tesla, Thomas Edison, Pierre and Marie Curie, Wilbur and Orville Wright, and Charles Darwin... but it is also the age of Aleister Crowley, Bram Stoker, and Edgar Allan Poe.

Despite the great advances in science and society—or perhaps because of them—the people of this time developed a strong interest in matters of the occult. Spiritualism and mesmerism were all the rage. People consulted psychics and fortunetellers, and occultists gathered in arcane societies to further their understanding of the world beyond that of the living. Even as men and women of vision looked towards the future and created inventions that were thought impossible only years before, others cast their gazes into the past and dreamed of fantastic things even science couldn’t explain.

The Victorian and Edwardian Eras are excellent settings for a horror game because they are an age in which the beliefs of humanity existed in a strange no-man’s land between science and the supernatural. The horrors of this time include creatures of myth and folklore (*Dracula*), human horrors (Jack the Ripper), and the tragic results of poorly understood science (*Frankenstein*, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*).

THE PROHIBITION AND DEPRESSION ERAS

The Victorian and Edwardian Eras gave way in the early part of the 20th century as society rebelled against the inflexible rules of propriety in the face of global unrest. The Prohibition and Depression Eras comprise the “Interwar” period between 1919 and 1939. The boys were home from the war, the horrible Spanish Influenza epidemic was finally over, and it was time to get back to basics and rebuild. Alcohol was outlawed much to the chagrin of many people in the nation, but that didn’t stop them. What couldn’t be bought in the stores and pubs was easily available through other less legitimate means, making many people wealthy.

The middle class, born of the industrialization of the Victorian Era, grew by leaps and bounds as more and more people found themselves with disposable income and that most precious of resources: free time. People were well fed and happy. There was enough to go around. And if there wasn’t enough, you could easily take out loans or play the stock market, which seemed to get better every day and make men millionaires overnight.

That all changed on Tuesday, October 29th, 1929. The high times of the Prohibition Era collapsed into the Depression Era. The Crash of ’29, “Black Tuesday,” ushered in an economic depression that lasted over 10 years and only ended with wartime production in the early years of World War II. In stark contrast to the previous decade, the 30’s were a time of great upheaval and poverty. Bread lines extended around the corner as fortunes were lost overnight.

During this time, the inventions of men like Robert Goddard and advances in telescopes and astronomy caused greater and greater interest in what lay beyond the atmosphere. The Prohibition and Depression Eras also brought about unparalleled advances in travel with mass produced automobiles, extensive rail lines, and even commuter airlines. The fanciful ideas of the Victorian “natural philosophers” faded away to true scientific speculation of the natural world. Much of the speculation was dark, however. This is the age of H. P. Lovecraft, Robert Bloch, Clark Ashton Smith, and August Derleth, who imagined ancient beings with forms and motives unfathomable by humankind.

The Prohibition and Depression Eras are excellent settings for a horror game because they are an age of discovery and mystery. Much of the world is still unexplored; it was still possible for ancient secrets and arcane lore to come face to face with modern science wielded by men and women of adventure. The horrors of this time include the same threats as the Victorian and Edwardian eras, in addition to alien entities beyond the imaginings of humanity (*The Call of Cthulhu*) and the mysteries of lost civilizations (King Tut’s curse).

WORLD WAR 2 AND THE ATOMIC AGE

World War 2 began in 1939 with Hitler’s invasion of Poland and the Sudetenland. America stayed out of the “European conflict” until 1941, when Japan launched a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. The war soon raged from one end of the globe to the other, engulfing nation after nation. Millions died in Nazi death camps and the stalemate of the eastern front in Russia.

The Depression Era came to an end in America as wartime production created jobs for millions. Even women entered the workforce, taking up jobs that were traditionally held by men. Eventually the Allied Forces prevailed; the war in Europe officially came to an end on May 7, 1945. The war in the Pacific ended on August 14 of the same year when Japan surrendered to the United States. This war, even more so than the Great War that preceded it, saw terrible advances in military technology. Jet planes, rocket-propelled bombs, submarines, RADAR, and even early computers were brought into the war effort on all sides. Most horrifying, however, was the development of the atomic bomb. The destruction of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki ushered in the Atomic Age.

After World War 2, the world entered a so-called “Cold War” between the superpowers. The United States and the Soviet Union each



developed atomic weapons. Mistrust grew on each side and paranoia escalated. Never before did humanity have the means of destroying the world, and now this power was in the hands of two antagonist nations teetering on the brink of war. In the United States, paranoia was at an all-time high as Senator Joseph McCarthy launched a witch hunt to weed out “Communist Influences.”

Aside from the nuclear escalation of the Atomic Era, the world at large saw other advances in science. The first true computers were invented, and that technology grew by leaps and bounds from vacuum-tubed behemoths that filled entire rooms, to refrigerator-sized consoles that ran on magnetic tape, to tabletop units filled with microchips. At the end of the sixties, a man even walked on the moon.

World War 2 and the Atomic Age are excellent eras for a horror game because this is the time in which horror became almost entirely scientific and psychological in nature. Nazi scientists researched genetics, eugenics, and the occult. This is also the time in which UFO lore got off to a strong start with Kenneth Arnold’s sighting of “flying saucers” near Mt. Rainier, not to mention the alleged crash of an actual alien spacecraft in Roswell, New Mexico just 2 weeks later. Furthermore, the Atomic Age saw the birth of radioactive horrors. The perils of radiation and tinkering with the very building blocks of the Universe became the new nightmares (*Them!*, *The Amazing Colossal Man*). In addition to the perils of atomic energy, the rampant paranoia of the age gave rise to the horror of alien creatures bent on world domination and the subjugation of humanity (*The Thing From Another World*, *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers*).

MODERN DAY

The Modern Day era spans the early 1970’s to the current day. The Vietnam Conflict came to a close; the Cold War got even colder before finally finding its own conclusion and fading from the public mind. The United States and the U.S.S.R. rattled their sabers at each other

from time to time, but overall they settled for using other nations as pawns in a potentially explosive chess game.

Computer and space science grew by leaps and bounds during this time. Just 10 years after landing on the moon, America had an orbital shuttle that could launch and return to Earth like an airplane. The Internet, born in the mid-60’s, also grew by leaps and bounds as computers continued to get smaller, faster, and cheaper. By the early 1990’s, almost the entire world was connected to the global information grid.

This was a time of relative peace in the world, a time of social and scientific advancements and prosperity. Ultimately, the Soviet Union collapsed and the Iron Curtain came crashing down. The Cold War was finally over. Unfortunately, at the dawn of the new millennium, a new war was about to begin. Terrorists aligned in global organizations unlike any that had been seen before. On September 11, 2001, the World Trade Center towers in New York City and part of the Pentagon in Arlington, VA, were felled by terrorist attacks. Another plane crashed in Pennsylvania, brought down by the heroic actions of its passengers.

The Modern Day is an excellent setting for a horror game because it is the era most gamers are familiar with. The social mores and historical events of the previous eras are sometimes difficult to effectively work into a game, so the Modern Day makes the Narrator’s job a bit easier. As far as horror itself, gone were the giant radioactive bugs and conquering aliens. Instead, horror became gory and graphic (*Halloween*, *Friday the 13th*). This time saw some of the earliest instances of new sub-genres of horror: survivalist horror (*Dawn of the Dead* and *Day of the Dead*) and backwoods horror (*The Hills Have Eyes*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*). The Modern Day also saw the return of supernatural threats as people experienced a renewed interest in the occult (*Rosemary’s Baby*, *The Exorcist*, *The Omen*). The horror of the Modern day likewise mixes in equal amounts of action and adventure; vampire hunters are just as likely to use shotguns and grenades as mallets and holy water (*John Carpenter’s Vampires*, *From Dusk til Dawn*).





CHAPTER FIVE: MODERN ADVENTURES

So what is a modern adventure anyway? Good question. First things first. Let's talk about what it *isn't*. A modern adventure isn't paying your taxes and dealing with your boss or the ongoing water-cooler soap opera that is your job. A modern adventure isn't dealing with traffic jams, or mowing the lawn and fixing that pesky water leak in the bathroom sink. It isn't minivans, soccer games, Friday night sleep-overs or report cards.

In short, a modern adventure isn't the world you live in.

A modern adventure is a hyper-real, mind-bending journey into the world of espionage, organized crime, modern warfare, counter-

terrorism, the war on drugs, gritty urban-punk and martial arts action. It's a non-stop, heart-pounding adrenaline rush filled with high-speed car chases, dogfights 35,000 feet above the earth, and HALO drops into war-torn Chechnya or a dozen other hot spots around the world. It's being jettisoned out the torpedo tube of a ballistic missile submarine a quarter mile off the coast of Iran to get intel on a suspected plutonium enrichment facility. A modern game is filled with political intrigue, shadow governments, weapons dealers, drug czars, crooked cops, and homicidal maniacs.

In short, a modern adventure is the world you live in.

OVERVIEW

As heroes in a modern series, you might be apart of an elite black-ops division of the CIA. Your division is tasked with bringing down various international organizations bent on acquiring chemical weapons, deadly viruses, nuclear weapons and other top secret technologies which serve to further the agendas of these nefarious groups. This is a game of ultra-modern cloak and dagger with exotic next-generation gear only available to people in your line of work; people that, for all intents and purposes, *don't exist*. Stories are filled with exciting plot twists, betrayal and high tension. Time is always working against you and you never know exactly who you can trust; that includes your fellow heroes.

Your characters might be apart of the special forces, operating behind enemy lines on recon missions or covertly smuggling guns into a third-world country. Your characters are elite, the tip of the spear. Your operations have saved the lives of countless men and women in the armed forces. Adventures in this genre can be straightforward military operations in war zones across the world, covert ops or even rogue adventures in which you play mercenaries hired to do extractions and any number of other missions.

If saving the world in a more direct way is your style, then your heroes can hunt down nefarious terrorist cells around the world as you wage the war against terror. Your team might be comprised of spec-ops forces with varying skill sets and CIA operatives or even FBI agents. These types of games merge the best of military and espionage adventures. You'll need a wide range of skills and extreme patience as you infiltrate these highly secretive militant groups if you want to prevent another major terrorist attack on U.S. soil. Games like these aren't always "kick down the door with guns blazing" operations. Many times you'll risk your life just to get a name, a photograph or some other tiny clue in your ongoing quest to bring down major terrorist organizations. That's all part of this high-stakes game you play.

Looking for something with a little bit of dirt on it? How about organized crime? Plunge your characters deep into the underbelly of

criminal organizations such as the mafia, the Japanese yakuza, the Chinese triad, the Russian mafia and myriad lesser criminal groups. Your characters might be hit men, bodyguards, or running a small-time crew who engages in racketeering, blackmail, extortion, or armed robbery. These heroes get to act with relative impunity so long as they kickback a percentage of the profits to the organization that controls the town you are operating in. The heroes might even be made-men, brought into the family and entrusted with larger operations, such as running a casino in Atlantic City or Las Vegas.

If being the bad guy isn't to your liking, you might choose an undercover cop, playing a dangerous game of cat and mouse as you secretly gather information. These types of games are extremely dangerous and veritably ooze with suspense. Your characters have to continuously prove themselves to the individuals they are trying to bring to justice. You have to *live* your cover identity. One miss-step, one lie that doesn't jive with every other lie you've told these dangerous people and you go swimming in the closest river with a concrete pair of shoes. Expanding on the crime-theme prevalent in many modern games, you might play a detective, hunting down notorious felons and sifting through clues. You might be tasked with investigating a suspected group of cops who have crossed the line, abusing their power for personal gain.

Want to play adventures involving SWAT? We've got you covered there, too. Bomb threats, bank robberies, hostage situations, stand-offs with a lunatic packing more heat than the local chapter of the NRA: these and many other high-tension adventures await your characters should they choose to join this elite branch of law enforcement.

Martial arts adventures are also a fun part of the modern genre. Defend your neighborhood against roving gangs using your mastery of kung fu, or fight against a rival school who seeks to show the dominance of their fighting style. Compete in tournaments to earn fame for your dojo. Take it to the streets, blending genres as you fight against the triad and the yakuza in Hong Kong, Bangkok, Tokyo, Nepal and Shanghai.

GENRE CONVENTIONS

The modern world is all about realism. Pain is raw and doesn't simply go away. Wounds take time to heal, and when you die, that's it—game over. Generally speaking, there are no mystical spells to bring the dead back to life, no powers that spray blasts of flame from your fingers. There are no energy pistols or force fields, no dragons to slay, and no beasties hiding in sewers or under your bed. The real monsters sell drugs to kids, murder people, commit rape, steal babies, rob banks and carry out cowardly acts of terrorism. They are crooked cops, ruthless dictators, rogue spies and serial killers. They are insurgent groups who attack your squad with rocket-propelled grenades and mortars, firing off a few quick rounds to cause chaos before disappearing into the crowds from whence they came. This section takes a look at various aspects of the modern world and how they might affect your game.

WEAPONS

The weapons you use are varied, but the vast majority of them were created within the past 50 years, many within the last decade. Hand guns, grenades, shotguns, assault rifles, .50 caliber machine guns, sniper rifles, cement, dynamite, satchel charges, knives, aluminum baseball bats: these weapons are the core of a modern game. Some might even use weapons such as a katana, a compound bow or a modernized crossbow. Others might prefer hand to hand combat and invest part of their lives learning martial arts, becoming lethal weapons themselves. The weapons your characters use are a big part of the modern game, but sometimes what you use isn't as important as how you get it.

CONVENTIONAL ACQUISITION

It isn't difficult for characters to obtain a firearm through conventional channels. Most common firearms (and weapons permits) can be bought at gun or pawn shops. Even large retail outlets sell hunting rifles. A character can get a .357 Magnum or a Glock .9mm hand gun at any sporting goods outlet. It's not as if buying a gun is illegal.

The problem for characters who choose to buy a gun through conventional means is that they will leave a paper trail for people such as police officers, private detectives etc. to follow. Forms authorizing a background check have to be filled out and processed before a person actually receives the weapon, which can take up to three days in most cases. In addition to leaving a record of the purchase, fingerprints and a photocopy of the character's ID, the character has to wait for his gun. You might be wondering what the big deal is? There isn't, really, unless your character happens to be planning to use the weapon in an illegal operation of some sort. For these types of characters, the best option when considering obtaining a weapon is to hit the black market.

THE BLACK MARKET

The black market is a shadow community existing to provide people with anything and everything they might want, whether it be ripped dvd's, illegal drugs, guns or suitcase nukes. Much like an onion, there are a number of layers to the black market. Which layer(s) your characters will be exposed to ultimately depends on what your characters are trying to acquire.

The following is an examination of the various levels of the black market. Guidelines are provided for gathering information about the black market. This is particularly important, as the black market doesn't advertise. Characters are going to need to do some legwork to even find a black market contact and setup a meet. It's also inherently dangerous. One shouldn't simply assume a given encounter with people dealing on the black market is going to go smoothly. Also included are suggested modifiers to purchase Difficulties for items at a given level, availability suggestions, and information about hazards characters might encounter when dealing on the black market.

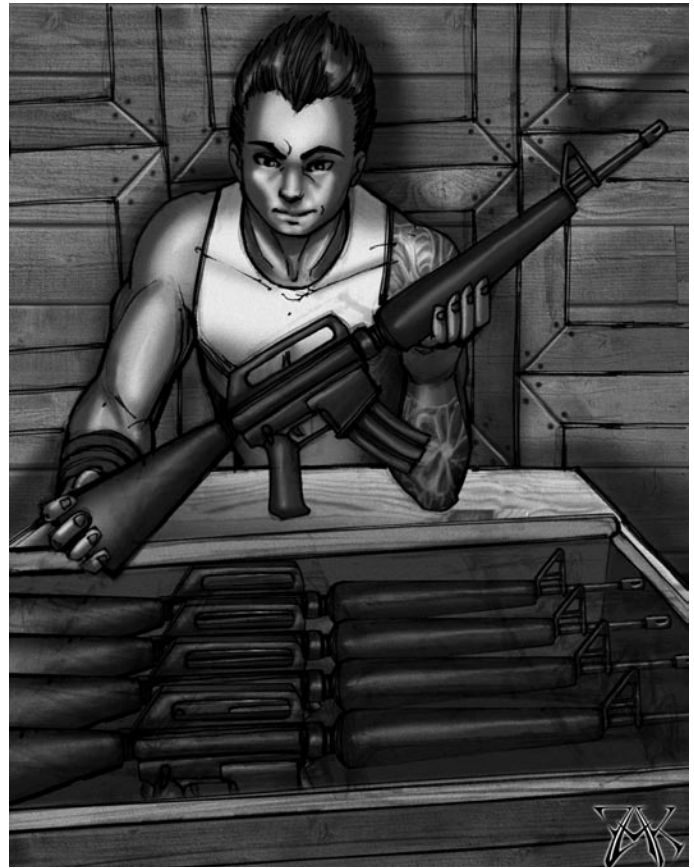
GATHER INFORMATION CHECKS

As a general rule of thumb, heroes should not be allowed to take 10 or 20 when making initial Gather Information checks to learn about the black market. As stated before, dealing on the black market is a highly dangerous undertaking. There are a number of variables involved. Will a paranoid gang banger or fence simply decide to shoot the heroes and take their money? Will the police raid a meet? If a Gather Information check fails, the characters might have tipped off an undercover cop instead of a dealer. They might have contacted someone who works for a rival organization rather than the intended organization. The FBI might have the heroes or their contacts under surveillance and record the meet. Many problems can crop up if the heroes aren't careful.

As the heroes gain more experience dealing with these shady individuals, however, it should naturally become easier, allowing them to take 10 on subsequent checks to deal with organizations with whom they have previous experience. Contacting new people and organizations should be handled as if the heroes have never dealt with the organization before. Above all, it should never be so safe that heroes can take 20 when dealing with people who work in the black market, regardless of who they are dealing with.

GATHER INFORMATION CHECKS AND TIME

Normally a Gather Information check can take one or even several hours, at the discretion of the Narrator. The Contacts feat can reduce this time to minutes. This is appropriate only if heroes have an existing, ongoing relationship with a criminal organization. If the characters are



just beginning to get involved in the black market, the process should take much longer. It is suggested that Narrators increase the base time involved in researching the black market to days rather than hours.

Let's face it. Criminals are paranoid people, sometimes justifiably so. When a person new to the scene goes snooping around, it raises alarms. People start talking. News spreads around the streets, and suddenly the heroes have a bunch of goons busting through doors with baseball bats and shotguns wanting to know why they're getting so nosy. While news can spread fast on the streets, there's no guarantee the characters will get the information they need when they need it.

WEALTH CHECK DIFFICULTIES

As previously stated, buying on the black market is illegal. Prices for illicit items such as drugs and weapons are marked up to reflect the risk involved in selling them. Heroes won't be able to pay by check or credit card when dealing with these people. They either have cash on hand or the deal is off.

On the international black market, increases to Wealth check difficulties reflect not only the dangers involved, which are considerable, but also the processes involved. These types of transactions involve at least upper-end six-figure dollar amounts and can rise into the tens of millions, depending on what is being bought and sold. For the most part, that kind of currency doesn't simply change hands. It has to be funneled through dummy corporations, smuggled out of the country or be transferred through multiple bank accounts in order to avoid raising the attention of various world governments and agencies like Scotland Yard, INTERPOL, the FBI and the NSA.

Consider that in the United States, customs agents can automatically seize cash in excess of \$10,000. Those caught with that much cash are detained and questioned by federal agents. With this in mind, the heroes risk being flagged by INTERPOL, the FBI, NSA and the Department of Homeland Security as possible terrorists. Even if the heroes are

released (which, thanks to the Patriot Act, isn't guaranteed), they will be watched constantly. Aside from the obvious problems this causes, the people who were supposed to get that money in the first place may just decide to kill the heroes rather than risk exposure. Each level of the black market will have suggestions for Wealth Check modifiers. Feel free to adjust them as you see fit.

STREET LEVEL

The street level of the black market is pretty much what the name says; Street level activity. At this level the average black market items include small quantities of illegal drugs and stolen electronics such as tv's, stereos and dvd players. Heroes can also find bootlegged DVDs, snuff films, handguns, rifles, sawed-off shotguns and the occasional assault rifle. Cheap prostitution is a common black market service available on any inner-city street corner. Characters can fence stolen watches, jewelry or guns and other similar items at this level.

Information is usually limited to rumors and news about what's happening in the city, things that directly relate to neighborhood criminal activity. Local snitches, fences and bartenders who are connected to the underground scene will have general information about specific individuals, recent high-profile jobs, gangs and their territory, etc.

LEVEL OF ORGANIZATION

There isn't any real organization at this level. Most dealers working at street level are amateurs who have no real sense of purpose, no direction, no goals beyond making enough money to continue their seedy lifestyle. These people have no real head for business, a fact reflected in how they live. Their influence in the underworld is marginal at best. The major players in a typical city give these people an illusion of importance, but the truth of the matter is any one of these street dealers can be easily replaced.

TYPICAL HAZARDS

The streets are filled with all sorts of dangers. Roving gangs, con artists, petty criminals and the police are always concerns when heroes are involved in illegal activity. Paranoia runs high when meeting with the average street-level dealer. These individuals are always suspicious of newcomers looking to buy items. Heroes will likely need to "prove" they aren't undercover cops before any business can begin.

GETTING INFORMATION

Knowledge about the black market at the street level is common. If characters are performing Gather Information checks, it is suggested that the base Difficulty be 5 for general knowledge and 10 for specific knowledge about individuals or groups, such as known drug dealers, fences and notable gangs. The time involved in acquiring this information is standard, with appropriate outcomes for failed Gather Information checks.

Gather Information checks assume characters are paying bribes to their contacts. Characters may also use Knowledge (streetwise) to find black market dealers using the same Difficulty as for Gather Information checks, with the hero relying on her knowledge of the streets to get the informations she needs.

ACQUISITION TIME

Acquiring illicit items and services on the street is almost immediate. In most cases the contraband is readily available and deals are done on the spot. For this reason, Narrators should feel free to ignore the guidelines for purchase times when characters are buying gear on the streets.

COST MODIFIERS

The prices of street-level black market items vary greatly depending on what you want, but typically run from \$10 (a dime bag of weed or

a bootlegged dvd) to \$2000 (a pound of cocaine, a stolen car, or guns and ammunition for you and your crew). Street-level black market items have a +3 modifier to the cost, but only if they are considered highly illegal (guns, drugs, etc). Items like bootlegged DVDs and electronics are generally sold at a lower price than the base cost. For these items, apply a -3 modifier to the base cost of the item. The cost of an item may never drop below 1.

ORGANIZED CRIME

At this level, the black market branches out into areas where serious money is made. Professional hits, drug smuggling, coercion, blackmail, fraud, racketeering, loan sharking, gambling, money laundering and low-to-mid level arms deals are trademarks of organized crime. Everything you find on the streets is put there by crime rings such as the yakuza, mafia, triad and other freelance outfits.

Freelancers are groups of people who run organized operations but are independent of any ethnic affiliations. Many of these are tightly knit crews who have been working together for years. These individuals likely met in prison, making plans to work together after their release. Whatever the case, these criminals are hard core, dangerous people, dedicated to a life of crime. Freelance crews are usually at odds with more traditional criminal organizations, who view them as upstarts looking to muscle in on their action.

SERVICES

Any illicit drugs or weapons you find on the streets have been put there by people involved with organized crime. So what's the point of risking contacting these organizations directly? Criminal organizations have influence and power not measured by the weapons, equipment or drugs they can provide. These groups employ tactics such as bribery, coercion and favors to get what they want. They blackmail people, increasing their power and influence. The lure of these groups lies in what they can do for you.

ASSASSINATIONS

Otherwise known as "hits" or "contracts," assassinations are regularly performed by organized crime syndicates. Some targets are eliminated for personal reasons while others are killed because of the threat they pose to the continued existence of the organization. Sometimes highly proficient hit men will be called in to take the target out, but generally speaking, the contract will be handled "in house," with the organization using their own muscle to get the job done.

The average cost of a contract varies from target to target, depending on the complexity of the hit and how "high profile" the target is. The base cost of an assassination is 25 + half the total level of the target. To find the total cost of the hit, add the reputation score of the target. The Narrator is free to choose the fame or infamy rating of the target as he sees fit.

Example: *A contract is put out on a local district attorney. The district attorney is an 8th level expert with a Reputation (fame) score of 3. The total cost of the hit is 32 (25 + 4+3).*

BRIBERY

Criminal organizations play heavily upon greed as a way of getting people to do what they want. They get people like union officials, cops, lawyers and judges in their pocket and then use these people to make certain that various issues play out in their favor. For instance, a detective on the take might be used to remove certain key pieces of evidence from a crime scene. A judge in the mob's pocket can be very handy when a high profile trial might send a mob boss to prison.

Heroes rarely have the clout and resources that a criminal organization has. Crime rings can influence people and groups the characters

otherwise might not have access to. When some situation absolutely needs to play out in the favor of the heroes, one option will almost always be to go to the mob and get them to pay off the person or persons in question.

The cost of a bribe depends on who is being bribed, the length of time, and how much extra the organization charges. There is no hard, fast way of determining the price of a bribe. The prices can change from person to person. A street cop might only need \$1000 a month, while a Judge would require \$10,000 on a case-by-case basis. Narrators should factor the above information into the cost and set the cost at what they think is best.

BLACKMAIL

Sometimes bribery won't work but the problem still needs to be taken care of. In situations like this, blackmail is an effective option.

Blackmail generally takes a while to get the target to "play ball" and can often come to violence. For these reasons costs can be much higher due to the risks involved. Narrators should use the guidelines for bribery when determining how much it will cost the heroes to get the organization to blackmail someone.

LOANS

Heroes in need of quick cash can always contact a loan shark for help financing a purchase. The danger here is that the money has to be paid back, with interest. If the characters can't pay back the loan on time, they risk bringing the full weight of the organization down on their heads.

If the characters need a specific item, the base cost of a loan is equal to the cost of whatever it is the heroes need the money for. When using a loan to get a specific item, the Narrator can, at his discretion, choose to forgo any Wealth checks involved in purchasing said item. If the characters just want money to finance a number of unspecified future purchases, find the dollar amount and apply the relevant cost. The interest on any given loan is +3 (weekly) to the base cost of the loan. Successful Diplomacy checks can reduce the interest by 1 for every 5 points by which the character succeeds on the Diplomacy check.

Eventually the heroes are going to need to pay back the loan. Each week that goes by without the loan being paid back increases the total cost by 3. This means that a loan with a total cost of 29 that hasn't been paid back after 2 weeks jumps to 35! If more than 3 weeks pass without the loan being paid (in part or in full), it is suggested that the Narrator send goons to attack the heroes.

LEVEL OF ORGANIZATION

Unlike the fast-paced chaos of street level black market activity, organized crime is, well, organized. Operations are run much like any business. To acquire an item or service, characters will need to setup a preliminary meeting with representatives of the organization in question. The following guidelines are presented to give Narrators insight into the process involved in dealing with criminal organizations.

THE PRELIMINARY MEET

The preliminary meeting is apart of a process where the organization begins to get an idea of who the characters are, what they want and most importantly, whether or not they can be trusted. Criminal organizations at this level don't do business with just anyone. The meeting won't happen anywhere near the mob's places of business. It might be in a park, along the waterfront, or in some other place not affiliated with the organization.

They'll contact the people they have in their pocket in at the police station to find out if the heroes have a criminal record. They'll send out goons to hit up their contacts on the streets to see if the characters have a reputation. In short; the bosses will look for anything out of the



ordinary. Afterwards, they'll think about it for a few days before deciding whether or not to setup a second meeting.

THE SECONDARY MEET

This meeting is traditionally more formal, taking place in one of the organization's fronts such as a bar, a casino, a restaurant, or a warehouse: somewhere the two parties can discuss business without worrying about police or federal agents listening in. At least one mid-level boss will be at this meeting, accompanied by no less than four body guards of an appropriate level. At this time the characters will be expected to discuss exactly what it is they want and why they want it. Depending on how negotiations go, the bosses will either refuse to deal with the characters or they will agree to a final meet. Characters will be sent away with instructions to wait until they are contacted.

THE FINAL MEET

Heroes will be contacted by representatives of the organization and told the location and time of the next meeting. This is generally a highly tense situation; the culmination of days (sometimes weeks) of negotiations and information gathering. One boss and at least four bodyguards will be at the point of contact, with more mooks within a block's distance from the meet. The characters will be searched for bugs and weapons. Once everything checks out, the meet will begin. Barring any unforeseen events (double-crosses, police raids, assassination attempts by rival organizations), the characters will obtain what they want.

TYPICAL HAZARDS

At this level, the dangers of dealing with criminal organizations depend largely on how the characters are perceived by the organization in question. If the characters have developed a good reputation with the people they are dealing with, they might be brought into the organization, consequently inheriting the enemies of said organization. This can include rival groups and even government agencies, such as the FBI.

Should the heroes cross an organization, things become much more dangerous. Contracts will be taken out on the characters, leading to encounters with various henchmen including mooks and professional hit men. Gangs and other seedy groups looking to up their street rep might also get involved in the hunt for the heroes.

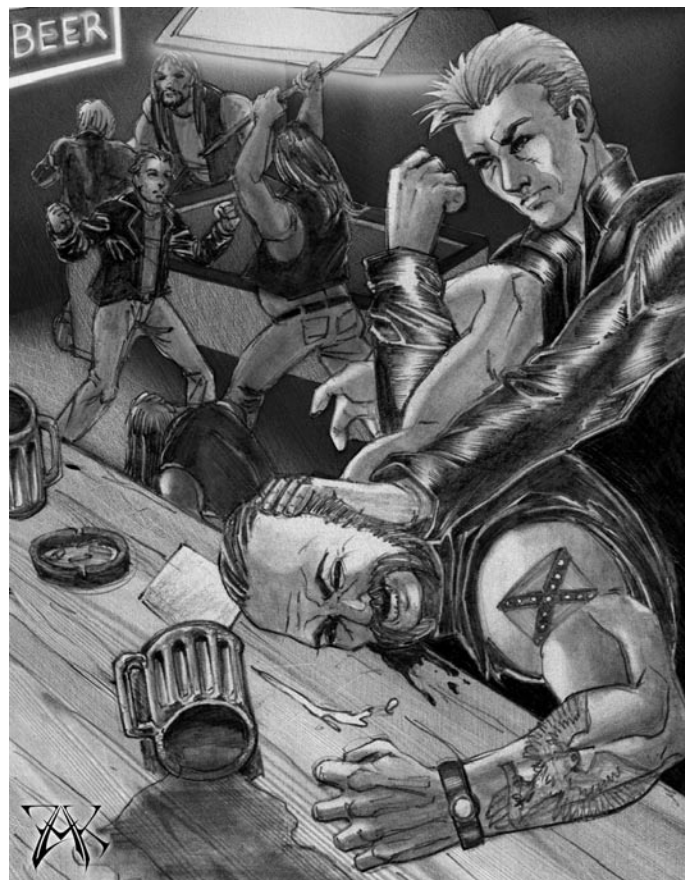
GETTING INFORMATION

Criminal organizations don't exactly advertise their operations, but they don't try and hide their presence either. In many cases, criminal organizations tend to flaunt their ability to operate with relative impunity. The reason is because people don't talk about the organization, period. Whether this is out of fear of reprisal, blackmail or bribes, it's very difficult to obtain anything more than general information about criminal organizations.

It is suggested that the base difficulty for Gather Information and Knowledge (streetwise) checks pertaining to general information about these organizations is 10. Specific details, such as names of bosses, bases of operation and such for Gather Information and Knowledge (streetwise) checks are more difficult to obtain. The base difficulty for checks to acquire specific knowledge be 15–20, at the Narrator's discretion. Gather Information checks assume bribes are employed in the process of obtaining information, and Knowledge (streetwise) checks assume the characters have been around the block enough times to know who's who.

ACQUISITION TIME

The availability of black market items and services at this level can vary greatly depending what the heroes want and how long it takes to earn enough trust with an organization. Newcomers are going wait longer than people who dealt with the organization before. It is suggested that initial acquisition times start at a minimum of 1 week and scale down as the heroes build a reputation with the organization in question. This process can go as slow or as fast as the Narrator feels is appropriate for the series.



COST MODIFIERS

Black market items and services acquired through a criminal organization vary greatly depending on what the heroes want. Gangsters and their ilk don't deal in small-time operations. That's what the street gangs and common thugs are for. Heroes looking to deal with the mob or some other crime ring should expect to spend at least ten grand for a particular service. Cost modifiers are typically +5 and higher at the Narrator's discretion. Alternatively, the criminal organization might forgo costs in favor of having the characters perform favors.

FAVORS

Favors are the quickest way for criminal organizations to get someone "in their pocket." This is how it works. Oftentimes, a person such as a small business owner or someone with a gambling problem will come to a criminal organization such as the local mafia looking for help. Maybe the business owner is having trouble with local gangs breaking into his store and vandalizing the place. Maybe the gambler is into the mob for 50 grand and can't pay the money back.

In either case, crime bosses sometimes choose to assist these people with their problems. The gambler might be offered a chance to work off his debt by performing various jobs, like breaking legs, dumping bodies, or giving them something that is of value, such as the security codes to his workplace or company secrets. The business owner can get the issue with the gangs taken care of and have continued protection, provided he kicks back a hefty percentage of his profits for the rest of his career. The mob owns these people from that point on. This is what can happen to heroes who deal with organized crime and don't pay their debts.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

International organized crime is a world apart. It's filled with terrorist groups, international drug cartels and multi-national arms dealers. It's a vast array of informant networks who deal in information-brokering and blackmail. International organized crime involves governments and shadow organizations who launder money through countless shell companies, selling weapons to third-world countries and terrorist groups

Such groups buy and sell secrets, cutting-edge technology and dangerous biological, chemical and even nuclear weapons. International criminal organizations also deal in human trafficking. They smuggle people into countries such as the United States with the promise of a better life, only to sell them to corrupt individuals who keep them as slaves—or worse.

LEVEL OF ORGANIZATION

International organized crime is incredibly sophisticated. The men and women who run the various facets of the underworld have operations that span the globe, thanks to the Internet and global telecommunications. The world has grown smaller, enabling criminal organizations to communicate with each other over long distances in minutes rather than weeks or months.

An opium dealer in Turkey can contact his partners in Europe and arrange for them to setup shipments with dealers in New York City in a day's time. A week later (depending on how the shipment is being transported) the product has been distributed to dealers and is being sold on the streets. Fifty years ago this level of organization and the speed at which plans are implemented would have been very difficult to achieve.

Unlike legitimate governments, international criminal organizations have no red-tape to deal with, making the process that much easier. Indeed, trade agreements with nations such as Mexico work in the favor of smugglers who operate under the guise of legitimate companies. They

simply transport their product right through ports of entry, with little or no worry about being hassled by border patrols or DEA agents.

SERVICES

The vastness of the international black market is such that heroes can conceivably get anything they can think of, if they can afford it. The items and services at this level of the black market can easily cost millions of dollars. This is the deep end of the pool, so to speak. For the most part, heroes won't have access to that kind of capital. They'll likely need to be affiliated with these organizations in some fashion. This effectively negates any need for Wealth Checks, unless you happen to be narrating a high-level series of adventures where the characters are running their own black market organization. If this is the case, feel free to apply whatever modifiers to the cost you feel are appropriate for the following types of services:

ASSASSINATIONS

These contracts are carried out by highly proficient individuals: professional assassins, military special forces or government black-ops teams—people who, for all intents and purposes, don't even exist. The targets are high profile men and women: oil barons, senators, congressmen and other elected officials. They are leaders of terrorist organizations, arms brokers and drug kingpins. These targets must go down and stay down.

KIDNAPPING

Kidnappings happen all the time. Many companies insure their workers against the possibility of an organization snatching them off the streets and holding the victim ransom until the companies pay up. Other groups don't want money; they want information, technology, weapons or the release of a political prisoner. Kidnapping someone's spouse or child is an effective way to get people to play ball.

SMUGGLING OPERATIONS

Smuggling operations are commonplace among the various organizations that comprise the international black market. To say that selling weapons in the international arms bazaar is lucrative would be a gross understatement. Billions of dollars are spent on weapons each year. After all, wars cost money. It's not just about war and weapons, however—drugs and people are also smuggled across the borders of every country in the world. So long as human beings have a desire to get high or force others into servitude, there will be people who are willing to hazard the risks involved in getting them what they want.

TYPICAL HAZARDS

One of the most important functions of federal and international agencies such as INTERPOL and the FBI is hunting down anyone involved with illegal activities such as those mentioned above. Beyond that, however, simply dealing with terrorist organizations, drug smugglers and arms dealers carries an inherent risk of death. These people will shoot you, chop you up and feed you to a pack of pigs if you so much as look at them sideways. They may be planning to kill you even if you do everything right. Money is, after all, money.

Of course, things can get much worse than taking a bullet in the head. These people may decide you know more than you're telling them. They might suspect you are double-crossing them or working for a rival organization. If this is the case, you are probably going to be interrogated—the hard way. Torture is a brutal yet effective way of getting information, and these criminal organizations have no qualms about doing it.

GETTING INFORMATION

The international black market is interesting in that it has a place in popular culture. We see movies and television shows that deal with this subject matter all the time. We are bombarded with news broadcasts about

global instances of terrorist activity, drug seizures, kidnappings, murder, and war. It isn't hard to formulate some basic ideas about the international black market because we see evidence that it exists every day.

It certainly isn't far-fetched to assume that the heroes are exposed to the same media that we are. With this in mind, it is suggested that Gather Information checks to obtain general information on the international black market have a Difficulty between 10 and 15, depending on what information the characters are attempting to uncover. This modification to standard rules on Gather Information checks reflects the inherent dangers involved in researching these groups.

Specific knowledge is an entirely different matter. Though heroes may have ideas about what the international black market is, they are going to be hard-pressed to get actual names and places without appropriate contacts. In many cases, the heroes will need to be affiliated with an organization such as INTERPOL, the FBI, CIA or NSA to be able to obtain credible information about the international black market. For these reasons, it is suggested that specific information be treated as either restricted or protected information with Difficulties ranging between 20 and 25.

CONTACTS

A modern adventure isn't just about what you know—it's also who you know. Whether you're a detective putting the squeeze on a local snitch, an up-and-coming player in the mob, a professional thief looking to fence his loot or a spy working deep cover in Berlin, you need to have contacts. Let's say you are preparing to extract a nuclear physicist from a research facility. Five hours before the extraction, you find out the intel you have on the security systems is false. What do you do? Is there an asset close enough to get you the tech you need? Do you have a local black market contact? It's the little things that sometimes get you killed. Having the right contacts can often mean the difference between life and death.

Contacts immediately inject flavor into the game. They are the Narrator characters we interact with when investigating a crime or tracking down a wanted felon. A contact can help you find a place to lay low if all your normal safe houses have been compromised, or they can get you out of town when all hell breaks loose. Of course, they can also drop you flat if things get too hot, but everybody needs a little dramatic challenge now and then.

MAINTAINING CONTACTS

Contacts are more than just a feat; they are Narrator characters that have their own agendas, their own sets of problems and personalities which must be taken into consideration when the heroes need to use them. Heroes who have established a network of contacts such as fences, suppliers, informants etc. need to maintain a positive relationship with these individuals to keep using them. The heroes must be willing to expend time and resources to keep those relationships strong, or they may find themselves without help at a critical juncture.

While the Connected and Contacts feats listed in True20 Adventure Roleplaying are fairly general, it can add a lot to the game to give those bonuses specific faces, names, and areas of expertise. In a modern setting, dealing with such capable and illicit organizations means that information is at a premium. You can capitalize on this aspect of the game by requiring that time the Contacts feat is taken, it refers to a specific location, group, or level of criminal activity, possibly personified by a specific individual. This will give the Narrator additional dramatic license, adding considerably to the realistic feel of the gritty modern setting. It is suggested that you have the players write out basic information on contacts so that they will have a solid idea of what contacts they are dealing with.

If you use this method, remember that not every contact is relevant to a particular series. For instance, contacts with fences and street level

informants in Los Angeles will do the characters no good when trying to obtain information about a criminal organization in London or a terrorist cell operating out of Lebanon.

If a character loses her contacts through the course of the game, the Narrator must decide whether or not that Contact can be salvaged. At the Narrator's discretion, the player may be able to build a new relationship with an individual who had the type of information her former associate provided, thus preserving that instance of the feat. If the focus of the game shifts and her existing contacts are no longer relevant, however, she will need to pick the Contacts feat up again, building a new network to call upon that provides the needed information. Narrators should use their best judgment in determining whether or not the player's existing Contact and Connected feats are still relevant to the task at hand.

HOW MANY CONTACTS?

The Contacts, Connected and Well-Informed feats grant heroes access to an informant network which can be quite useful in investigation-oriented adventures. With a potential wealth of information only a phone call away, however, the temptation is to abuse the feat can be powerful. Remember, contacts aren't simply tools a character can use but living, breathing Narrator characters with whom heroes interact. Narrators might want to consider allowing only a small number of contacts at the beginning of an adventure series and players to role-play acquiring new contacts as the game progresses.

While the number of contacts a hero should have access to is entirely up to the Narrator, the number shouldn't exceed the character's reputation score, modified by her Charisma bonus.

MODERN HEROES

Your characters have families. They grew up, went to high school (or may still be in high school) and went out into the world. How did they become heroes, though? What life choices did they make to get where they are now? This section takes a look at individual roles and how they manifest in context with your characters' modern-day lives.

WARRIORS

What does it mean to be a warrior in the modern world? We're not talking about hulking, axe wielding barbarians in full plate mail, after all? That said, there is a connection between the modern day warrior and the fantasy warrior. They both share a primal lust for combat, a desire to prove themselves by defeating their foes on the battlefield, in the fighting ring, or simply in some dark alley. For warrior heroes, honor is earned on the battlefield, whether in blood, accomplishments, or attitude.

BACKGROUNDS

The warrior thrives on conflict—it's in his blood. Many people strive to avoid physical conflict in their day to lives, but the warrior is constantly looking for some physical challenge to overcome. The traits of warrior might manifest in athletic activities such as weight lifting, football, gymnastics, basketball, etc. On the other hand, the traits of a warrior might be born out of a desire to emulate role models, such as professional athletes or war heroes.

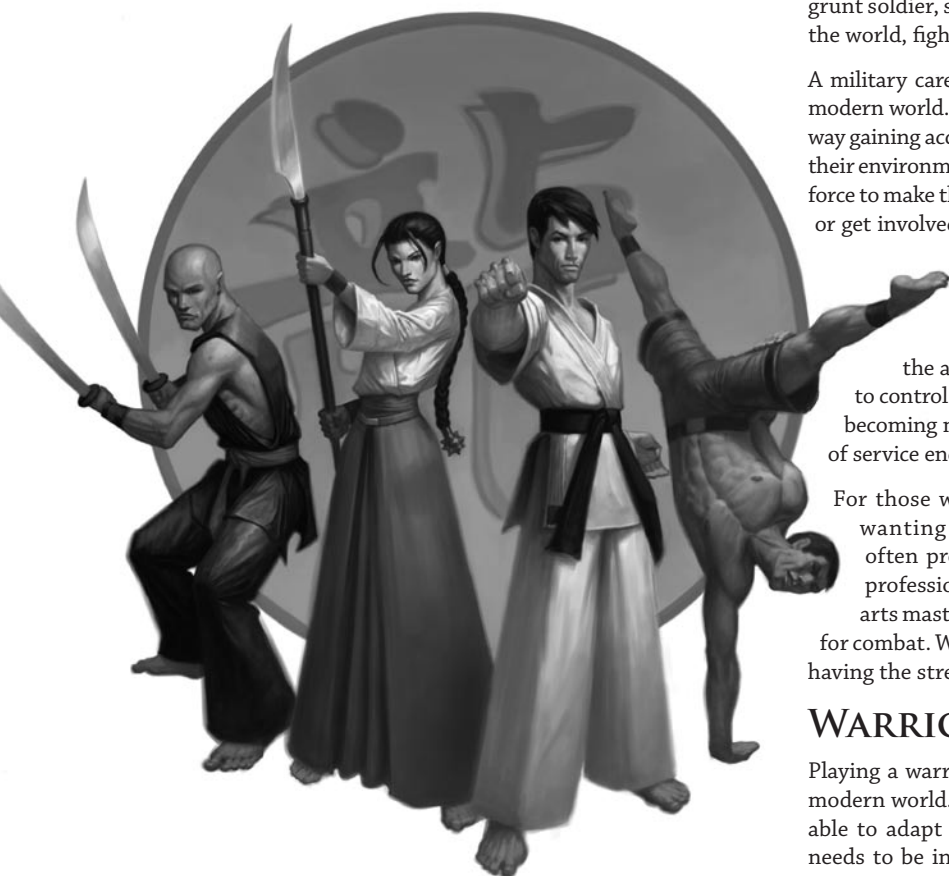
The average warrior might have joined the military right out of high school. From there, the character could qualify for any number of special operations teams, such as the Green Berets, Navy SEAL training, EOD (explosive ordinance disposal), Army Rangers, Marine Force Recon or sniper training. They might skip the military and go straight into civilian law enforcement, providing their home with its policing, SWAT officers, or firemen. Of course, a warrior could just as easily be a grunt soldier, serving his country on the front lines of conflicts around the world, fighting and dying alongside his brothers-in-arms.

A military career isn't the only way the warrior role manifests in the modern world. Other would-be warriors turn to violence and crime as a way gaining acceptance and establishing a some measure of control over their environment. These characters often resort to physical, often lethal force to make their place in the world. Criminal warriors often join gangs or get involved with organized crime, seeking a social support system more in line with their own ideas on what it means to be a man. Some join the military, but their reasons for becoming soldiers are less noble than the average man or woman who joins up. They learn to kill because the act of doing so gives them a rush or reinforces their need to control situations. These warriors are the most dangerous, often becoming mercenaries, hit men and hired muscle when their terms of service end.

For those who embrace the need for physical challenge without wanting to be on a first-name basis with death, athletics often proves the key. Warriors could be boxers, cage fighters, professional wrestlers or even stunt men. They might be martial arts masters or play professional sports, using the game as a proxy for combat. Whatever their background, you can count on the warrior having the strength and skill necessary to get the job done.

WARRIOR SKILLS

Playing a warrior requires more than muscle, especially in the gritty modern world. This type of hero needs to be intelligent, cunning, and able to adapt to his environment. In social situations, the warrior needs to be intimidating, yet have enough tact to avoid provoking everyone he meets. He doesn't necessarily need to know how to hack



into a computer, encrypt/decipher a message, identify a new disease, or analyze a chemical compound—after all, somebody has to know how to keep those guys alive when the chips are down.

Suggested skills: Climb, Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Gather Information, Knowledge (physical sciences), Knowledge (earth sciences), Knowledge (tactics), Notice, Search, Sense Motive, Stealth, Survival, Swim

THE EXPERT

A modern group needs to fill particular roles to be successful in the same way an adventuring party in a fantasy or science fiction game needs certain roles to be effective. The main difference between role selection for a modern game as opposed to a fantasy game is that the modern expert is likely to need to be able to handle a very broad range of highly technical tasks. A group of heroes in a modern series could be comprised entirely of experts and work out just fine. Indeed, it is suggested that each member of the team have at least one or two levels in the expert role so as to bring the widest possible range of skills to the table.

The expert is the most wide-ranging role in the modern setting. An expert might be someone who is trained in a number of highly technical fields of study, such as computer programming, telecommunications, cryptography, electronics, surveillance techniques and a multitude of other skills. Experts might be CIA analysts, field agents (but not necessarily operatives), or computer hackers. These types of experts achieve their goals through the use of technology, usually playing a backup role in a given adventure. They might handle surveillance, keeping the group informed of any developments in the operation. Known as “operators,” these men and women play a key role in the success of any covert operations.

Experts aren’t necessarily tech-savvy. They might be con-artists, actors, journalists, private investigators, survivalists, hostage negotiation experts, politicians, detectives, undercover narcotics agents, or even old-school spies. These characters achieve their goals through a combination of social interaction and use of technology, depending on the objective. They engage in intelligence and counter-intelligence missions, knowing how to remain inconspicuous in any situation and exploit their environment.

Fixers are another type of expert, specializing in getting a team whatever it needs. They have a thorough knowledge of the black market, often freelancing by fencing stolen goods. Contacts are the name of the game for these individuals. Fixers can get you fake passports, high-tech gear, a stolen car, automatic weapons, cement, building plans, dirt on a corrupt politician, or just about anything else you can think of.

For those games where the experts have to take care of themselves in the field, there are commandos. The commando is really a hybrid role, combining elements of both the warrior and expert to provide tactical support for a team using a wide range of military-based skills. The commando knows how to use nearly every type of modern firearm available, has ample experience with a wide range of explosives, and is easily able to create his own homebrew demolitions and improvised traps. Special forces members, hit men and high-threat response teams (SWAT and Delta Force) are examples of commandos.

On the criminal side of things, cat burglars are also another type of expert, relying on a combination of athletic ability, traditional thieving skills and a detailed knowledge of current technologies employed in various types of alarm systems including biometric security, infrared, thermographic and ultraviolet motion detection systems. Cat burglars (or professional thieves, if you prefer) know how to hack into security cameras and cut the feed without alerting security guards. They know the best ways to enter a building and can trick an alarm system into shutting down when needed. No vault is safe from these individuals. Professional thieves are a valuable asset in a wide variety of missions, especially those requiring

physical penetration of an installation such as a chemical weapons facility, a government office or military compound.

BACKGROUNDS

The CIA opens the door for characters to begin a career in the highly dangerous field of espionage. Characters might be field operatives working to bring down the international black market, or they may work in counter-intelligence, laying traps for the spies of other nations. This line of work pits characters against the resources of other intelligence groups, resulting in a game of cat-and-mouse in which one wrong move could bring their careers to a short and tragic end.

For those with more local aspirations, a career in law enforcement might be in order. Characters can begin as beat cops, possibly one day transferring to detective, joining CSI, or switching to the DEA—perhaps even going federal and joining the FBI. A career in the FBI could also lead to a wide range of assignments, including tracking down the country’s most dangerous criminals, apprehending serial killers, and investigating kidnappings or government cover-ups.

A government career could also lead to recruitment by the CIA or NSA, where heroes would likely work to counter domestic terrorist activity by right-wing militia and extremist groups. Alternatively, your characters might choose to fight the war on drugs both at home and abroad, raiding cocaine farms in Columbia and taking out key locations in the Far East opium trade along the Silk Road.

In a gritty modern setting focusing on the characters’ involvement with organized crime, the expert role manifests in the aforementioned hit men, fences, professional thieves, con artists and much more. Criminal organizations employ people who have specific areas of expertise just as other organizations do. A standard “crew” of professional thieves needs to have people who can handle security, operate police scanners, drive, or any other technical proficiency required to get the job done. Weapons experts trained in the use of demolitions play a key role in any job dealing with breaking into vaults, unless of course there is a character capable of using high-tech anti-security devices.

Suggested Skills: Climb, Computer, Bluff, Diplomacy, Disable Device, Gather Information, Knowledge (behavioral sciences), Knowledge (streetwise), Knowledge (physical sciences), Knowledge (earth sciences), Knowledge (life sciences), Knowledge (technology), Knowledge (tactics), Notice, Perform, Search, Sense Motive, Stealth, Survival, Swim

THE ADEPT

At first glance, today’s world is devoid of the supernatural. The modern world burned its witches long ago, banishing society’s belief in magic to fairy tales and tabletop games. This setting is all about the material world: real guns, real crime, real action, real consequences. One doesn’t see true psychics reading the deepest thoughts of others, or supreme arcanists tossing fireballs at their foes. Very little scientific evidence of the supernatural exists, making it easy to conclude that there is nothing supernatural in the modern age—or if there is, it is hidden very carefully hidden.

In a realistic modern setting, the supernatural doesn’t seem to belong at all. Narrators might consider eliminating powers and the adept role entirely. There are other options, however, which help the adept can find new significance in a modern setting.

The *True20 Adventure Roleplaying Game* describes powers as supernatural abilities. They do not, however, have to represent anything so spectacular. Some powers are well-suited to representing extraordinary abilities. For example, the Combat Sense power could simply be a well-trained soldier’s ability to assess a combat situation and react to it in a superior manner. The bonus earned from the power is a result of the soldier’s ability to turn assessment into action. The Enhance Ability

power could be a martial artist focusing his willpower to increase his physical prowess. Not every power can be treated as extraordinary natural abilities, but a few can. Narrators should feel free to design new powers with this approach in mind.

The adept is not completely forsaken in the Modern world. Warriors and experts can certainly dabble in the role to pick up some of the extraordinary abilities adepts have access to. What about a hero who starts as an adept, however? Luckily, even that approach doesn't have to make them seem out of place. For one, adepts can be played as "savants", utilizing extraordinary natural abilities to do incredible things. Powers such as Body Control, Combat Sense, Elemental Resistance, Enhance Ability, Enhance Senses, Nature Reading, and Truth Reading are believable as impressive feats. An adept may simply be an amazingly talented person who naturally excels in certain areas.

There are also a number of societies (public and secret) who claim to understand certain arcane arts. What if they actually do possess practical knowledge of the supernatural? A modern adept might be a member of

the Order of the Golden Dawn, the Aetherius Society, the Rosicrucian Order, or any other society of supernatural practitioners. Adepts among such ranks can reasonably possess several powers that they are forbidden from using in the open. Healing powers are especially common among secret societies, as well as psychic abilities and "transmutation" powers that resemble classic alchemy. The various Cure, Psychic, and Shape powers would be appropriate for such modern adepts.

A third option is to treat the adept as the standard fantasy mage, capable of reshaping reality with a flick of the wrist. The modern world is a cruel place to those with such talents, however, so adepts of this style have to keep their abilities well-hidden. The Synchronicity core ability detailed later in this chapter provides a way for adepts to wield their flashier powers without attracting attention.

Suggested Skills: Bluff, Concentration, Disguise, Gather Information, Knowledge, Language, Medicine, Notice, Sleight of Hand, and Stealth. These skills emphasize the adept's need for discretion and worldly awareness, as well as common areas of focus (such as healing and meditation).

BACKGROUNDS

In the previous section we examined what heroes do in the modern game and the ways in which a character's background facilitates their role in a given series. Some characters might even be antiheroes, choosing a life of crime in order to achieve their base goals. Whether criminal or agent of the law, however, a background that explains how the hero got from point A to point B will add depth and realism to a modern game.

CREATING BACKGROUNDS FOR MODERN ADVENTURES

What does it mean to be a warrior or an expert in the modern world? Unlike backgrounds in a fantasy setting, where the roles encapsulate a character's chosen profession, a background for a modern game provides more specific information. This is largely because all of the heroes in the modern world are human. Lacking other metahuman or monstrous races, we must take our cues from the role selection (adept, expert, warrior), further expanding on those roles by choosing relevant backgrounds that provide focus. Indeed, backgrounds could be better described as jobs or professions, in that they directly relate to the specific functions heroes will perform within the context of a modern adventure.

When creating your own backgrounds, consider the three core roles (and the new ones provided in the next section of this chapter) and how they might be expanded. Are there any professions in the modern world which might make an interesting heroic background? Also, consider the type of series you are involved in and how a hero with this new background will interact with other heroes.

Here are some suggestions for specific aspects of backgrounds for you to consider when creating your own.

ABILITY ADJUSTMENTS

Normally, race determines the relevant ability adjustments that come with background selection. In the modern genre, however, human is the only character race. Arguments can be made that certain professions require characters to be physically fit or highly intelligent. While this may or may not be true, the problem with this line of thinking is that we run the risk of stereotyping our heroes. With this in mind, it is suggested that no modern heroic background have any ability modifiers.

BONUS FEATS

When determining bonus feats for your backgrounds, choose feats the heroes are likely to take anyway if they are germane to the profession.

For instance, a warrior may want an armor proficiency and firearm training, so feel free to grant those as bonus feats since they are basic building blocks for that role. This frees up future slots for feats that have prerequisites.

BONUS SKILLS

Modern backgrounds are almost always defined by one or two skills. Make sure those are used as bonus known skills for the background. There are a few instances when no skills are appropriate; in these cases, provide the background with a third bonus feat in lieu of bonus known skills. This also applies to backgrounds representing a highly advanced level of training, as they often warrant an additional feat instead of new known skills.

FAVORED FEATS

With the exception of explicitly supernatural backgrounds, no modern background should have access to powers or adept feats. Nearly all modern backgrounds draw from both warrior and expert feat categories, with expert feats being the more common of the two.

The following categories provide some general guidelines and examples for creating new backgrounds. If you disagree with the choices made for a particular background, feel free to craft your own.

ARCANE BACKGROUNDS

The supernatural can manifest in many forms, from occult demonology to psionic powers to reality-bending magic. If your heroes are involved in the supernatural, then they may need a background to represent their familiarity with or access to these strange powers.

Arcane backgrounds can take almost anything for bonus feats, depending on the particular milieu. Knowledge (supernatural) is a universal bonus known skill; if the hero believes he draws power from a divine source, then Knowledge (theology & philosophy) might also be warranted. Arcane backgrounds are the only ones with access to adept feats or powers as their favored feats.

MIRACLE WORKER

Often called faith healers, saints, or angels, these rare few possess inexplicable healing powers. They may be of divine origin or they may stem from a purity of heart; wherever they come from, the results are nothing short of miraculous. These gifted individuals can heal a variety of ailments and conditions with a mere touch. Some work discreetly,

helping others in a humble fashion. Others use their abilities to achieve fame or spread the word of a divine power.

Bonus Feats: Lucky, Talented (Knowledge (supernatural) and Knowledge (theology & philosophy))

Bonus Skills: Knowledge (supernatural), Knowledge (theology & philosophy)

Favored Feat (choose one): Cure, Cure Blindness/Deafness, Cure Disease, or Cure Poison

OCCULTIST

Those who delve into dark, obscure lore such as demonology often discover hidden mysteries and secret powers. Though they have learned powerful secrets, they cannot practice openly, lest they risk exposure and repercussions. Instead they wield their dark arts in the shadows, using their powers to influence world events or serve the agenda of evil, otherworldly forces.

Bonus Feats: Eidetic Memory, Night Vision

Bonus Skills: Knowledge (supernatural), Language (any ancient)

Favored Feats: Choose any one power.

SHADOW SORCERER

Shadow sorcerers are individuals who can tap into an ancient source of power, the stuff fairy tales are made of. Unable to operate openly, these magi hone their abilities with an eye toward discretion and concealment. They affect the world without making anyone aware of the supernatural forces at work. Some even gather together into secret societies and shape global events as a united cabal. Heroes may adventure with a shadow sorcerer and never discover his true nature.

Bonus Feats: Iron Will, Skill Focus (Knowledge (supernatural))

Bonus Skills: Knowledge (supernatural), Stealth

Favored Feats: Choose either Erase Signature and Subtle Signature, or one power of your choice.

GOVERNMENT BACKGROUNDS

World governments of all types are composed of people doing very specialized jobs. Many of these jobs are of a menial sort, however, some interesting background choices are available. Want an exciting job in espionage, investigations, or diplomatic intrigue? Look no further than your local government.

Government backgrounds typically center around social interaction, so they should receive some as bonus skills; bonus feats focused on boosting those skills are also appropriate. Some of the “agent” backgrounds also warrant Firearms Training. Favored feats are commonly drawn from the expert category, but warrior feats may also be applicable (especially Seize Initiative).

DEA AGENT

Members of the Drug Enforcement Agency forward America’s “war on drugs” agenda. Their job is to stem the flow of narcotics into the US and arrest those involved in drug trafficking. This is a complicated job; their assignments take them from suburban neighborhoods to foreign countries and everywhere in between. DEA Agents have strong knowledge of the criminal underground, often working alongside small-time crooks to take down more important ones. Because they operate so close to (and sometimes with) illegal groups, they are well-trained in self-defense.

Bonus Feats: Firearms Training, Skill Training

Bonus Skills: Knowledge (streetwise), Search

Favored Feats (choose two): Sneak Attack, Stunning Attack, Weapon Bind

DIPLOMAT

Governments around the world need people to handle international relations—or to smile politely while waiting to stab one another in the back. Such a person needs to have impeccable social skills to forward his nation’s agenda. Many diplomats are neutral representatives of their nation’s interests, but some may be ordered to forward those interests through more covert channels. Regardless of their official duties, diplomats enjoy the full benefits of immunity to legal ramification on foreign soil; a convenience to some, an essential tool to others.

Bonus Feats: Benefit (diplomatic immunity), Skill Focus (Diplomacy)

Bonus Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy

Favored Feats: Fascinate, Suggestion, Well-Informed

FBI AGENT

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is the national investigation agency of the United States. It is concerned with crimes spreading across the nation, and thus deals with very prolific, dangerous criminals. The FBI deals with several threats to America, such as terrorism, espionage, cyber-crime, corruption, and white-collar crime. Agents are trained to be proficient in a variety of areas, since they have to deal with situations as varied as the criminal mind.

Bonus Feats: Eidetic Memory, Firearms Training, Skill Training

Favored Feats (choose two): Elusive Target, Skill Mastery, Stunning Attack

SECRET AGENT

World governments employ spies for a variety of missions. Intelligence-gathering, assassinations, embarrassing enemy nations, sabotage... there are as many missions for a secret agent as there are ways to die horribly in the clutches of a ruthless foreign power. Secret agents lead dangerous lives and are typically disavowed by their nations if discovered. Masters of stealth, they are assigned a variety of missions



from simple intelligence gathering to complicated sabotage and assassination assignments.

Bonus Feats: Benefit (alternate identity), Benefit (security clearance), Contacts

Favored Feats (choose two): Hide in Plain Sight, Master Plan, Seize Initiative

INVESTIGATIVE BACKGROUNDS

There are quite a few independent types of snoops, from private eyes, to journalists, to bounty hunters and more. While all these folks have diverse purposes, they each share an inquisitive, questing method which they use to achieve their goals. Whether documenting a husband's infidelity for a wealthy client, grabbing the biggest scoop of the century, or tracking a bail runner across state lines, the investigative field is full of adventurous opportunities.

Investigative types vary, but all fundamentally deal with people on some level. Diplomacy and Gather Information are common bonus skills, and most bonus feats will boost these skills. Favored feats such as Fascinate and others of the expert category are popular.

BOUNTY HUNTER

So long as governments can put a price on a criminal's head, there will always be someone willing to hunt him down and collect the reward. Bounty hunters are legally entitled to work in the United States as bail bondsman, tracking down folks who skip their court dates. Other bounty hunters track down anyone who's worth something to someone, whether sanctioned by law or not. They need to be able to apprehend their target and keep them secured until delivery is arranged.

Bonus Feats: Improved Grab, Track



Bonus Skills: Notice, Survival

Favored Feats (choose two): Chokehold, Grappling Finesse, Weapon Bind

GUMSHOE

The private investigator is a detective for hire. Fond of trenchcoats, fedorahs, and large amounts of bourbon, gumshoes are finders and getters. They work for themselves or an independent agency, relying on their contacts and their deductive skills to solve whatever quandary is put in their path. Unlike police detectives, who are hindered by official procedures, gumshoes go about their investigations however they see fit, bending or breaking the law to suit their needs.

Bonus Feats: Contacts, Skill Focus (Knowledge (streetwise))

Bonus Skills: Gather Information, Knowledge (streetwise)

Favored Feats (choose two): Elusive Target, Redirect, Well-Informed

LAW ENFORCEMENT BACKGROUNDS

Laws keep society stable, but only if they are enforced. The men and women who take it upon themselves to enforce those laws have dedicated themselves to upholding the legal infrastructures of their communities, regions, and nations. They each do whatever they can to help make their world a better place. Of course, there is a certain prestige that comes from carrying a badge that one cannot help but enjoy on occasion; it can often allow a hero access to areas and information from which he would otherwise be barred.

Law Enforcement backgrounds often receive Firearms Training as a bonus feat, but not always. Gather Information, Knowledge (civics), and Notice are common bonus known skills. Weapon Bind is a ubiquitous favored feat, as are Stunning Attack and Seize Initiative.

BEAT COP

These are the grunts of the law world, the uniform-wearing police officer who patrols the streets. They deal with crime right at the street level, responding first to emergency calls and putting themselves directly in the line of fire. They take this risk willingly as part of their job to uphold the law and protect the innocent. They are also called upon to be role models in the community, and may spend as much time delivering speeches to the young as they do patrolling their beats.

Bonus Feats: Endurance, Firearms Training

Bonus Skills: Drive, Knowledge (civics)

Favored Feats (choose two): Defensive Roll, Stunning Attack, Weapon Bind

BOMB SQUAD OFFICER

These specialized officers are explosives experts. Their job is to disable any explosive devices found at a crime scene or investigate suspicious packages in public places. They require steady hands and strong knowledge of explosive technology. Bomb scenarios are equal parts waiting game and white-knuckle adventure, with life and death riding on a single split-second decision. Those who take up this job do so at great risk, but with the knowledge that their skills (and sometimes sacrifice) helps protect countless people.

Bonus Feats: Armor Training, Talented (Craft (demolitions), Disable Device)

Bonus Skills: Craft (demolitions), Disable Device

Favored Feats (choose two): Diehard, Master Plan, Skill Mastery

DETECTIVE

The investigative branch of law enforcement, these men and women pick up the clues left after the crime to ascertain who, what, where, when,

why, and how. Detectives don't wear a uniform but still carry a badge, granting them access to many places with a simple flash. Still, they must know the legal limits to their investigative access in order to ensure the evidence they collect is admissible in court. Their job is essential to solving crimes where the culprit is not readily apparent, making sure no one is able to break the law without facing justice.

Bonus Feats: Contacts, Skill Focus (Gather Information)

Bonus Skills: Gather Information, Notice

Favored Feats (choose two): Skill Mastery, Stunning Attack, Well-Informed

S.W.A.T. OFFICER

Special Weapons And Tactics personnel are the elite of law enforcement. They perform highly dangerous jobs serving high-risk warrants, rescuing hostages, preventing terrorist attacks, and engaging heavily-armed criminals. SWAT training focuses on close-quarters battle (CQB) tactics and equipment, specifically for urban environments. They generally receive the best equipment available to law enforcement, including full body armor, riot shields, automatic rifles, shotguns, tear gas, and more.

Bonus Feats: Armor Training, Attack Focus (firearms), Firearms Training

Favored Feats (choose two): Attack Specialization (firearms), Greater Attack Focus (firearms), Seize Initiative

MILITARY BACKGROUNDS

Heroes from military backgrounds are combat-focused characters who hold (or have held) an allegiance to a nation or cause. In exchange for years of service, they receive weapons training and access to military-level equipment. Military heroes are the ones you want on your side in a firefight. They are not typically suited for civilian work, and don't often possess strong social skills.

Military backgrounds should always get Firearms Training as a bonus feat and should be considered for Armor Training as well. Knowledge (tactics), Notice, Stealth, and Survival are common military skills. Favored feats can be drawn from both the warrior and expert feat groups; important ones are Favored Opponents, the Attack Focus / Attack Specialization trees, and Sneak Attack.

GROUND POUNDER

Trained combatants are the heart of nearly every military force in the modern world. This background represents grunts from organized national armies or similar forces. Common training includes the proper use of firearms and armor, as well as specialized ordinance like grenades. Unit organization and teamwork are key skills crucial to the success of a ground pounder. Working together, units of ground pounders have the equipment and skills necessary to overcome any foe.

Bonus Feats: Armor Training, Firearms Training

Bonus Skills: Knowledge (tactics), Survival

Favored Feats: Attack Specialization (firearms), Favored Opponent, Tough

GUERRILLA FIGHTER

Masters of uncommon tactics, guerrillas fight fervently for a cause, using whatever methods they can to achieve victory. They became increasingly more common during the last half of the 20th century, and are the predominant type of soldier in modern conflicts. Guerrillas are not often above methods deemed uncivilized, such as suicide bombing, biological or chemical warfare, or using weapons of mass destruction. Many others do uphold a certain code of honor, however, fighting under self-imposed constraints to harm their enemy without hurting innocents. Whether called "terrorist" or "freedom fighter," these loosely-organized soldiers uphold their cause above all else.

Bonus Feats: Devotion, Firearms Training

Bonus Skills: Craft (traps), Stealth

Favored Feats (choose two): Favored Opponent, Hide in Plain Sight, Sneak Attack

MERCENARY

These hired guns are increasingly common in the modern age; as in the corporate world, employing independent contractors can often be cheaper than maintaining a standing military. Mercenaries work for the highest bidder and fetter themselves with ideals in only the rarest of examples. They gain combat experience all over the world, traveling wherever the fighting (and, therefore, the work) may be.

Bonus Feats: Armor Training, Firearms Training, Quick Draw

Favored Feats (choose two): Favored Opponent, Sneak Attack, Tough

SPECOPS

Special operatives fill unconventional combat roles. They are masters of situational awareness, often scouting locations before larger military assaults or providing valuable intelligence from behind enemy lines. They may also be the ones called upon to eliminate high profile targets. They are peacekeepers, scouts, assassins, or whatever other role is called for by their mission objectives.

Bonus Feats: Armor Training, Assessment, Firearms Training

Favored Feats (choose two): Attack Specialization (firearms), Favored Opponent, Sneak Attack

URBAN-PUNK BACKGROUNDS

The city streets are home to numerous slums, ghettos, and underworlds. The best and the worst of humanity live in these areas. Poverty and violence are common. Gangs and organized crime battle against the police and each other for dominance. The urban-punk scene is a world unto itself, fraught with danger.

Bonus feats for urban-punk backgrounds focus on improving combat abilities (such as Accurate Attack) or developing proficiency in key skills (such as Skill Focus). Bluff, Disguise, and Knowledge (streetwise) are popular bonus known skills. Warrior-category favored feats are the most common.

CAT BURGLAR

Cat burglars are modern swindlers with the agility and know-how to defeat most locks, alarms, and other forms of security. They are able to consistently outwit law enforcement, and their keen reflexes help them get out of tight binds. No house, bank, or vault is safe from these able thieves.

Bonus Feats: Improved Speed, Uncanny Dodge

Bonus Skills: Acrobatics, Climb

Favored Feats (choose two): Acrobatic Bluff, Evasion, Master Plan

GRIFTER

Grifters practice the time-honored art of the con, making a living by depriving fools of their money. They spin lies like a turntable and have hands so fast they make professional magicians jealous. They always run the risk of conning someone smart enough to see through their game, but that doesn't deter many.

Bonus Feats: Skill Focus (Bluff), Skill Focus (Sleight of Hand)

Bonus Skills: Bluff, Sleight of Hand

Favored Feats (choose two): Fascinate, Jack-Of-All-Trades, Suggestion

FIXER

Need some cutting-edge gear for an upcoming mission? How about dirt on a politician or the location of a safe house? A fixer can get what you need, when you need it. With an array of contacts and informants rivaling the intelligence-gathering capabilities of the CIA, fixers have their fingers on the pulse of the city. They can get anything—for a price.

Bonus Feats: Skill Focus (Gather Information), Master Plan

Bonus Skills: Diplomacy, Knowledge (streetwise)

Favored Feats (choose two): Well-Informed, Squeeze Initiative, Suggestion

HACKER

Computers are the key that makes the modern information age possible. Hackers are the savants of that digital environment, able to seamlessly create, modify, and destroy software. They often do little else besides operate a computer, leading them to have trouble in social situations. They almost always lack martial ability. Their ability to do nearly anything in the digital environment, however, more than makes up for their deficiencies.

Bonus Feats: Skill Focus (Computers), Tireless

Bonus Skills: Computers, Knowledge (technology)

Favored Feats (choose two): Improvised Tools, Master Plan, Skill Mastery

HIT MAN

Anything can be bought for a price, including death. Like bounty hunters, hit men (who can be male or female) hunt down others for the price on their heads. Unlike bounty hunters, however, their targets have an alarming tendency to end up dead. Hired by criminal organizations, government officials, jealous spouses, or anyone else with enough

money, these people conduct themselves as professionals; others often mistake them for businessmen or white-collar workers.

Bonus Feats: Accurate Attack, Firearms Training, Weapons Training.

Favored Feats: Chokehold, Crippling Strike, Sneak Attack

MOOK

These tough guys are the muscle and enforcers of mobs, gangs, or other organizations. Relying on intimidating presence and strength, these men and women get things done in the underworld. Most make a good living working for crime bosses and drug dealers. They collect extortion money, put the squeeze on rivals, even carry out hits or “disappear” inconvenient obstacles. Not all mooks are bad people, but their line of work is certainly of questionable legality.

Bonus Feats: All-Out Attack, Improved Initiative, Improved Strike

Favored Feats (choose two): Crippling Strike, Chokehold, Rage

THE VANISHED

Some people choose to live “off the grid,” leaving no paper or electronic evidence of their existence. They have no bank accounts, no medical records, no permanent address, take all payments in cash... everything they can to avoid detection through modern means. They learn to be quite skilled at avoiding surveillance cameras and disappearing from plain sight. Whether motivated by paranoia or simply sick of an information-deluded culture, the vanished may be many or few; without any records of their existence, one may never know.

Bonus Feats: Jack-of-All-Trades, Low Profile

Bonus Skills: Disguise, Stealth

Favored Feats (choose two): Elusive Target, Evasion, Sneak Attack

ROLES

The roles we choose in the modern game all have their basis in the world around us. The ways in which roles manifest in the game are numerous. A modern game allows for many variations on existing roles. This section takes a look at the core roles in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*, discussing each role and how it manifests in the game. Background suggestions are included in this section, along with new roles and new core abilities for you to choose from.

WARRIOR

When one thinks about the warrior in the modern game, the military soldier is likely the first thing which comes to mind. Soldiers are a key component of every military fighting force on the planet, so it's only natural that the warrior role be selected for adventures involving the military. A soldier isn't simply a ground-pounding grunt, however. Consider choosing military-based backgrounds such as SpecOps or even the guerrilla fighter. Other options for the warrior role include bounty hunters, gang bangers, bodyguards, mercenaries, beat cops, members of SWAT teams, security force team members, hit men or even mooks.

EXPERT

The expert role has the widest range of applications in the modern game. Experts are essentially anyone proficient in a certain field of study, whether that be diplomacy, crime scene investigation, profiling, running scams, computer hacking, electronics, telecommunications or any number of other specializations.

Experts might focus on an agent background, choosing to become a data analyst for the CIA or an espionage agent. They might be police

detectives or private detectives. Experts might choose work in the FBI or the DEA, or perhaps work the other side of the street and become professional thieves or computer hackers.

ADEPT

Of all the roles, the adept is perhaps the most difficult to fit into a modern setting. As mentioned before, magic generally doesn't exist in the modern world. Too many people don't believe in it. Most gritty modern games deal with police dramas, military adventures, or espionage. When magic is brought into the modern world, the game takes on a supernatural aspect which might be better left in the realm of horror or science fiction.

That said, we have provided three new roles that contain adept powers: the commando, the operator and the brawler. While these hybrid roles aren't necessarily adepts, they do allow for one adept power each, adding additional flavor to the role.

NEW ROLES

The following roles provide you with additional options when creating heroes for your *True20* modern game.

AGENT

Combat Progression: Slow (2 points)

Skill Progression: 7 + Int (1.75 points)

Save Progression: Medium Fort, Ref, and Will saves (0.25 points)

Feat Progression: General, expert, and warrior feats (0.5 points)

Feat Progression: Bonus feat every other level (0.5 points)

The agent is the quintessential government operative. Whether she is working in the FBI, NSA, DEA or the CIA, she is a highly trained hero tasked with the protection of the citizens of the United States. She advances a bit slower in combat than a normal warrior would, but she benefits from advanced training, decent saves across the board, access to three feat categories and even an extra feat every other level. Her high level of training ensures that she will prove to be an asset to the group in any situation.

OPERATOR

Combat Progression: Very slow (1 point)

Skill Progression: 10 + Int (2.5 points)

Save Progression: Good Will, Normal Fort and Ref saves (0 points)

Power Progression: Fast, Singular power (Information Sense) (0.5 points)

Feat Progression: 2 feats per level. Has access to general and expert feats. (1 point)

Need someone who can crack a heavily encrypted database in her sleep? Need to dig up dirt on a local mafia don? How about someone who can trick out an alarm system, hijack the video monitors and guide you past physical security, all at the same time? If the answer was yes to any of the above questions, then the operator is the chica for you. She may not be able to catch a bullet with her teeth or take down a navy seal with a toothpick, but her brainiac-like intelligence ensures you'll have someone on your team who can perform all the technical aspects of the job. The operator's information sense ability makes her the guru of computer gurus; additional feats allow her to branch out into other areas of expertise.

BRAWLER

Combat Progression: Medium, Melee (1.5 points)

Combat Progression: Very Slow, Ranged (0.5 points)

Skill Progression: 4 + Int (1 point)

Save Progression: Good Reflex, Normal Fort and Will saves (0 points)

Power Progression: Fast, singular power (Enhance Ability) (0.5 points)

Feat Progression: General and warrior feats (0 points)

Feat Progression: Bonus feat every other level (0.5 points)

The brawler is an old-fashioned ass-kicker, plain and simple. He doesn't need any weapons but the two he was born with. He gains a bonus feat every other level, which helps him hone his fighting skills, rounding out average Intelligence and saves. If you want a warrior who can handle himself in a brawl or take out a guard quietly, this is the man for you.

COMMANDO

Combat Progression: Medium Ranged (1.5 points)

Combat Progression: Slow Melee (1 point)

Skill Progression: 6 + Int (1.5 points)

Save Progression: Medium Fort and Ref, Normal Will saves (0 points)

Power Progression: Medium, Singular power (Combat Sense) (0.25 points)

Feat Progression: General, warrior, and expert feats (0.5 points)

Feat Progression: Gains a bonus feat every four levels (0.25 points)

The commando has trained for war his entire life. He learned to hunt by the age of eight, became an Eagle Scout in high school and has probably seen *Full Metal Jacket* a thousand times (not to mention every movie Sylvester Stallone ever made). After high school, he realized his dream and joined the army, where he learned to use any and every weapon he could get his hands on. His medium ranged combat progression and combat sense ability reflects that dedication. Additionally, the commando has access to three feat categories and gains an additional feat every four levels.

NEW CORE ABILITIES

The following core abilities are provided for you to use when creating new roles for your modern game.

CALL YOUR BLUFF

You can spend a Conviction point to treat the roll for any Bluff, Sense Motive and Sleight of Hand check as a 20, although this roll is not considered a "natural" 20. Instead of rolling the die, just add 20 to your skill check modifier.

CHECK THE SIGHT LINES

You can make a Difficulty 20 check using the highest-ranked skill from the following list: Notice, Sense Motive and Search. If you succeed, treat the result as if you succeeded on a Gather Information check, gaining specific knowledge about your surroundings.

FEARSOME PRESENCE

You can spend a point of Conviction to inspire fear in his nearest foe as a standard action. The foe must make a successful Will save (Difficulty = 10 + your level + your Intimidate ranks) or be shaken. This condition lasts for one round, plus an additional round for every 5 points by which the save failed.

STYLE ADAPTATION

If you spend one round studying your opponent and make a successful Notice (Difficulty 20) check, you gain a bonus to defense equal to your Wisdom score. This bonus lasts for the entire combat and only affects melee combat with the Narrator character in question. This bonus stacks with Canny Defense.

SYNCHRONICITY

You can spend a point of Conviction to make an overt Power manifestation appear to be a natural occurrence. For example, you can strike a foe with an energy Elemental Blast and spend Conviction to make it appear to be bolt of lightning from the clouds overhead. In any instance where even synchronicity cannot conceivably make a Power appear natural, witnesses must make a Will save (Difficulty = 10 + the adept's power rank). On a failed save, the witness' minds develop their own rationalization for the Power's occurrence. Success indicates witnesses see the power for what it truly is. Synchronicity does not mask supernatural signatures.

TEAMWORK

You are trained to coordinate your actions with your team. When working with a group designated as your "team," you gain a +2 bonus to aid checks. This bonus increases by +1 every four levels. By spending a point of Conviction, you can transfer this bonus to a teammate for one round. You do not benefit from this ability while one of your teammates does.

TRIVIA MASTER

You have absorbed so much knowledge that you've got a bit of useful information for just about any situation. By making a check (d20 + the Operator's level) as a full-round action, you may ask the Narrator for any potentially useful information pertinent to the current situation. On a result of 9 or lower, no information is gleaned. On a roll of 10–19, the Narrator imparts only common knowledge about the situation. On a roll of 20–29, the Narrator reveals something uncommon, information known to only a few people. On a roll of 30 or above, the Narrator communicates a very rare fact or a piece of obscure knowledge.

SKILLS

Skills are an important part of the modern game. With few exceptions, every skill in the *True20* gaming system has relevance in the modern world. What follows is an examination of skills which are especially relevant to the genre, providing ideas for ways in which you can use them in the game as well as new challenges where appropriate. At the end of the section you will find new skills, such as Profession (cryptography), a must have for any espionage-oriented character.

BLUFF

Being able to pull off a good con job, or simply needing to lie at an appropriate time, can be a necessity in modern adventures. Heroes who deal in espionage often need to use subterfuge in order to get the job done.

Challenges: You can take the following challenges with Bluff.

Distracting Lie: In exchange for a -5 penalty on your check, your bluff sends the target off on a wild goose chase. The target will move 10 feet away from you for every 5 points by which you succeed on the Bluff check.

COMPUTERS

Knowing how to use a computer is almost mandatory in the modern game. The Computers skill allows your heroes to store valuable information such as contact lists, job information and addresses. Accessing the Internet requires a computer and can cut down research times considerably.

Challenges: You can take the following challenges with Computers.

Program on the Fly: Sometimes you might need to quickly modify a program to address unforeseen developments in a hack, such as

an upgrade in computer security. You may add a +5 to the difficulty to quickly write a new piece of code on the fly. Success on the write program check indicates the time to create the program is reduced to one half hour rather than an hour. Adding +10 to the check further reduces the time to write the program to 15 minutes.

Trace IP Address: Sometimes a hacker will attempt to defeat your computer's security. You may add a +5 difficulty to your Computers check when attempting to trace an IP back to its source. Success on the defend security check grants a +2 bonus to Gather Information checks for purposes of finding information about the person or persons who attempted to hack your system.

Bounce IP: You may add a +5 difficulty to your defend security check to negate an IP trace on your system.

Logic Bomb: You may add a +10 difficulty to your defeat computer security check and drop a logic bomb into the target system. Success on this check provides access to the sysadmin control panel, allowing you to perform all the functions the system administrator would normally be able to do. You gain +5 to find file checks and can shut down the system, change passwords and write a back door into the system.

CRAFT

The Craft skill has less utility in the modern game than, say, a fantasy setting, but you can still find some interesting uses for it. Military heroes have training in the use of explosives and can improvise detonators and craft explosives from seemingly innocuous chemicals. Professional hit men, mercenaries, insurgents and espionage heroes also use Craft to obtain similar results. Beyond explosives, however, there are other applications of the skill you might consider. For instance, a hero could use the Craft skill and modify a cell phone and laptop to monitor conversations. Heroes might use Craft to improvise weapons or tools. Being able to repair items in the field is also a useful aspect of the Craft skill.

DISABLE DEVICE

The Disable Device skill can be used in a number of ways. You can use it to disable security cameras, cut phone lines and deactivate explosive devices such as bombs or land mines. You can also use Disable Device to manually override security cameras (reroute them to a monitor controlled by another team member) and other electronic alarm systems.

You can also use Disable Device to perform sabotage on various devices. For instance, you might use this skill to rig pressure relief valves on a piece of machinery to fail, causing the device to blow up after a certain amount of time.

DISGUISE

Being able to alter one's appearance can be an invaluable skill in the modern game, especially if heroes are taking part in an espionage series. It's a big part of trade craft—a set of skills that field agents learn during their training in order to be more effective spies. Looking like you fit into a certain demographic is important when operating undercover in another country.

It's not always about looking like a specific individual; sometimes it's more important to simply not stand out in the crowd, to look like you belong. Certainly, needing to look like a certain person can be an issue as well, especially if you have to obtain information that only one person can access. In either case, having ranks in Disguise can be very useful indeed.



GATHER INFORMATION

Characters often need to make use of contacts to gain leads on important cases or obtain exotic equipment. It's recommended that all heroes get at least a few ranks in Gather Information in order to make this easier.

KNOWLEDGE

With the vast wealth of information available to characters, having a number of Knowledge skills can be quite useful. One subset of Knowledge—Knowledge (supernatural)—isn't appropriate for the modern game, as the supernatural world takes a back seat to espionage or military games. That said, if you are running a series dealing with these elements, then ranks in that skill will be very helpful.

PROFESSION (CRYPTOGRAPHY)

Profession (cryptography) deals with writing and decrypting messages written in code. Heroes with this skill are able to decipher and write coded messages which incorporate various types of encryption, such as one-time-pads, running key ciphers, null ciphers, polyalphabetic ciphers and polygraphic substitution ciphers. The difficulty and length of time it takes to accurately decipher/write a given piece of code depends on the complexity (length) of the message. See the table below for more information.

Difficulty	Message Length	Time
10	1 sentence	1 minute
15	Up to one paragraph	10 minutes
20	2 paragraphs or more	30 minutes

FEATS

The *True20* core rules contain a great selection of feats. It's difficult to expand upon this list for a modern campaign without becoming redundant, so we have not included any new feats in this chapter. The existing selection is comprehensive enough that you will find many options when choosing feats for your modern heroes.

Which feats are particularly relevant to the modern game? Simple answer: nearly all of them. But before we get into that, let's look at the shorter list: the feats that aren't especially useful in the modern day setting.

Shield Training won't be very useful unless your characters are acting as riot police or taking part in an SCA event or renaissance festival. Adept feats are also not relevant unless you happen to include powers in your game. Ranged Pin is only really useful if your characters are using modern versions of bows, such as a compound bow or crossbow. Bolas or thrown knives also work nicely with the Ranged Pin feat.

Track, Trackless, and Trailblazer may or may not be useful, depending on the campaign. Ground pounders, guerrillas, and SpecOps characters who spend a great deal of time in the wilderness can really benefit from these feats. If you're running a city-oriented series which involves espionage or organized crime, players should be discouraged from choosing these feats. If you do want Track but aren't going to be playing in a wilderness environment, you might consider getting together before with your Narrator before the series starts to discuss modifying the Track feat to reflect an urban environment.

The Deflect Arrows and Snatch Arrows feats apply to all thrown weapons. While this is especially handy in a fantasy game, in the modern setting these feats are so limited in scope that you would be better off grabbing the Dodge Focus and Lightning Reflexes feats instead. Spirited Charge is also less useful since ranged weapons tend to take precedence over swords and daggers, as is Rage.

The various melee combat feats only gain relevance in situations where your characters are using hand held weapons like daggers, or machetes, so be sure this is the type of character you are wanting to play before you start picking feats like Cleave, Great Cleave, Weapon Break and Weapon

Bind. Remember, your opponents aren't likely to toss away their guns and pull melee weapons just because you are using one. The phrase "Don't bring a knife to a gun fight" is especially relevant here. For these types of characters, you might want to choose the brawler optional role. See the **Roles** section of this chapter for more information.

Okay, so what feats are especially important for the modern game? Firearms training has to be at the top of the list for any warrior wanting to hold her own in a fight, as well as Armor Training. The latter depends largely on the series; Light Armor Training allows for the use of bulletproof vests, which are more easily concealed than, say, riot armor. This is an important consideration if you aren't playing a military-oriented series. It is highly recommended that characters start play with these two feats; you can always grab Exotic Weapon Training and upgrade Armor Training at higher levels.

Continuing our examination of combat related feats, Point Blank Shot and Far Shot are useful for any marksmen, especially if you are looking to put your skills to use as a sniper or hitman. Attack Focus, Favored Opponent and Critical Strike are also very handy. Using Favored Opponent in the modern game requires your hero to pick professions rather than race or species, so you'll need to consider what types of antagonists you want your hero to focus on. Examples might include actors, hit men, police officers, politicians, soldiers, or yakuza. Saying "humans" is too broad a category.

The expert role manifests in a wide variety of character concepts. With this in mind, feat selection for this role tends to vary depending on what hero you are creating. A computer hacker will benefit greatly from Eidetic Memory, Talented, Skill Focus, Skill Training and Skill Mastery.

Heroes involved in espionage games do well to take the Benefit feat as well as the aforementioned skill-related feats. Connected, Contacts, and Well-Informed are essential to espionage characters as well as fixers, police officers and detectives. Indeed, it can be argued that any character in the modern game should have these feats. Low Profile is also a good choice for espionage-oriented characters.

POWERS

At first glance, adepts and magic are more subdued in a world of high-tech gadgets, worldwide telecommunications, the internet, military weapons and equipment. It has been said previously in this chapter that magic isn't a hallmark of the traditional modern series—for instance, you probably won't see the adept playing a major role in a classic military-oriented series of adventures.

Does this mean you *can't* have adepts in a modern game? Of course not.

Before you disregard the adept role entirely, consider that heroes don't necessarily have to be gun-toting, gadget-wielding superspies or battle-hardened soldiers. Powers don't necessarily have to be "supernatural," either. They might be presented as latent mutations or psychic abilities that manifest in heroes right around the time they start their adventuring careers. The movie *Firestarter* is a good example of a character born with latent psychic abilities, along with nearly any modern superhero series.

Narrators might consider having powers manifest in heroes who have volunteered for government experiments, such as MKULTRA, an alleged mind control program which took place during the Vietnam conflict. What about genetic modifications, innate abilities, or “gifts” from some higher power? You might consider going the traditional route and allowing modern-day witches and warlocks. While the latter suggestion tends to bleed into the realm of horror, there is certainly nothing inherently wrong with a modern game having supernatural elements. Consider watching movies such as *The Warlock*, *Constantine*, *The Prophecy* and *Hellboy* for inspiration on how you might run a series of adventures with these types of adepts.

Another option is for martial artists who have trained all their lives, learning to control their bodies and harness inner “chi” to perform fantastic feats of physical prowess. Many movies and television shows present these types of characters in very cool and interesting ways. Movies such as *Bulletproof Monk*, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, *Rumble in the Bronx*, *Lethal Weapon 4* and even *The Matrix* provide great examples of how you might use the adept role to create a martial arts hero.

So what powers are especially well suited for a modern game? For a low-powered adventure series, Narrators might consider allowing powers with no overtly spectacular effects (explosions, etc.). These powers include Bliss, Body Control, Computer Link, a limited form of Cure, Elemental Resistance, Enhance Senses, Harm, Heart Reading, Mind Probe, Mind Reading, Mind Shaping, Object Reading, Psychic Blast, Psychic Shield, Sense Minds, Suggestion and Vision. High-powered games pretty much take the gloves off, shedding commonly accepted paradigms in favor of a setting where anything and everything is

possible. In such a series, there really is no restriction to what an adept might achieve.

NEW POWERS

The following power has been provided for the operator role enhancing the heroes’ ability to find information on the Internet. The idea behind this power is there are computer users out there who have a kind of innate understanding of how computers work. They just “get it,” whereas other people need to struggle to hone their computer skills.

INFORMATION SENSE

FATIGUING

You can improve your ability to sense the connections between bits of information or data. An Information Sense check grants you a bonus to your Computers and Knowledge checks (see the accompanying table). Each round you choose which skill to apply it to. You can select a bonus lower than the result you get on the table to reduce fatigue Difficulty, which is 10 + the bonus gained.

Result	Bonus
Up to 4	+1
5–14	+2
15–24	+3
25–34	+4
35+	+5

Time: Activating Information Sense is a move action. The bonus lasts for 10 rounds (one minute) per use.

EQUIPMENT

This section introduces new items for use in the modern game. More importantly, it provides the tools you need to create your own customized equipment.

CUSTOMIZING GEAR

The modern game provides many opportunities for adventure. Whether it’s a high-tech game of espionage or a fast-paced game of hard core military conflict, one thing is certain: you need equipment to get the job done. The style of game often dictates the type of gear heroes will need. Military adventures focus on survival gear, high-tech weapons, communications equipment, etc. Espionage adventures use a wide range of neat spy gadgets and equipment.

Now, we could inundate you with a plethora of tables and list after list of specific items, but it’s easier to provide a simple set of guidelines for creating nearly any type of spy-gadget or piece of equipment you can think up.

This system breaks gear down into three basic categories: the core component, add-ons, and the casing. Let’s take a look at each of these categories in turn.

THE CORE COMPONENT

Core components determine the primary function of a piece of equipment. For instance, the core component of a cell phone is a communications system, while an RF (Radio Frequency) scrambler’s primary function would be an ECM (Electronic CounterMeasures) component. Every piece of equipment has a primary function. Any bonuses to relevant skill checks are discussed in the component’s description along with information about damage (if the device has a weapon feature). This component also determines the base cost of a given piece of equipment.

ADD-ONS

Add-ons are peripheral devices which can be used to further augment a core component. These aren’t mandatory and increase the cost of the piece of gear. An example of a typical add-on would be a satellite uplink. Satellite uplinks allow any core component capable of digitally sending or receiving information the ability to do so via a satellite. Each add-on has its own description that provides details on relevant bonuses to skill checks, as well as any pertinent information about damage (if the add-on has a weapon feature).

CASING

This category determines what the end product is going to look like. Generally speaking, the equipment’s casing is determined by the parameters of the mission. In the following mission example, the hero will need an appropriate casing for 4 pieces of gear; a fingerprint scanner, a fingerprint generator, a combination diskdrive/databomb drive and a micro-transceiver.

Example: You are attending a black tie affair at a politician’s mansion in order to break into his private office and download personal financial records off his computer. You’ll be going in through the front door, which means you won’t be able to carry a backpack with all your gear. You’ll need to have your gear look like something else in order to maintain your cover.

In order to get past the level 1 biometric security, you need use your fingerprint scanner (neatly disguised as a pair of prescription glasses) to obtain a digital scan of the governor’s left index fingerprint so that you can have a latex copy made in the handy-dandy fingerprint generator, which, you’ve decided, looks like an ordinary beeper. Once inside the governor’s office, you need to hack into his computer to retrieve the financial records, not an easy feat considering you don’t have the time to sit down and start throwing code at it yourself. Luckily, your operator

wrote some autoexecutable programs and encrypted them onto a mini USB drive that looks like a cigarette lighter. All you need to do is plug the lighter into the computer and it will automatically attempt to defeat the computer security, allowing you to download the information into the free memory on the concealed disk drive.

All the while, you'll need to maintain comms with your team, a task easily accomplished thanks to the fake rose in your lapel that doubles as a two-way microtransceiver with a 2 mile range.

Each of the casings for the devices in the previous example adds a modifier to the cost of said device. A device's casing provides a base difficulty for any Notice checks performed by the Narrator, modified (if relevant) by the character's Sleight of Hand check. Casings also determine the final size of the device. No device can have more than one casing.

GEAR CREATION PROCESS

Creating a piece of gear is simple. Just follow these steps:

1. Choose your core component.
2. Choose any relevant add-ons.
3. Choose a casing.
4. Add base cost and all cost modifiers.
5. Make a Wealth check to purchase the device.

CORE COMPONENTS

The following section lists components that are used as a base to create specific types of gear. Many of these devices can be used as-is, or you can modify them with add-ons and casings. Components that cannot be modified with add-ons or casings will show it in their descriptions.

ANTI-SECURITY COMPONENTS

Anti-security components are devices used to bypass various locking mechanisms and other elements found in most commercial and privately owned security systems. This category also includes clothing worn in operations involving heists or infiltration missions.

CLIMBING SUIT

A climbing suit consists of a pair of shoes, gloves and a black spandex body suit with a hood. The gloves and shoes are lined with a special adhesive which bonds with concrete, steel and other materials used in the construction of buildings. The suit will hold up to 300 lbs. without losing any of its adhesive properties, providing a +5 bonus to Climb checks.

Size: Medium

Available Add-ons: None

Casing: No

Base Cost: 11

CONTACT LENS GENERATOR

The contact lens generator creates a set of lenses which can be used to fool a retinal scan. When the hero uses contact lenses created by the generator, the Narrator makes a Notice check for the biometric security system at a base difficulty of 10 + the score of the optical scanner's Gather Information check to create the scan used by the contact lens generator. If the security system succeeds on the Notice check, the system refuses to accept the retinal information. If the Notice Check fails, the system accepts the fake retina as valid.

Size: Tiny

Available Add-ons: Decrease Size, Data Transfer Capabilities, Performance Enhancement, Intuitive, Additional Storage, Wireless

Casing: Yes

Base Cost: 25

DATA CARD

Data cards are used to gain access to various parts of a building, such as restricted areas of a research facility or even a room in a hotel. The level of access granted to the owner of a data card depends on the security clearance of the owner. Heroes can access any locked room in a building allowed by the data card without needing to make any Disable Device checks.

Size: Diminutive

Available Add-ons: None

Casing: No

Base Cost: 10

DATA CARD READERS/Writers

These devices will scan a working data card, copy the security information it contains to a storage drive, attempt to decrypt the security clearances, and download the information to a blank data card with the needed authorizations approved. To determine whether or not a data card reader/writer successfully obtains the required information, make a Gather Information check. The base difficulty to analyze and decrypt the information on a data card is a base 10. Consult the table below for additional modifiers.

SECURITY CLEARANCE	
Desired Security Clearance	Modifier
General access	5
Administrative access	10
Total access	15

Size: Tiny

Available Add-ons: Decrease Size, Performance Enhancement, Additional Storage, Satellite Uplink

Casing: Yes

Base Cost: 12

GLASS CUTTER (LASER)

Much like a manual glass cutter, a laser glass cutter is used to cut quickly and effectively through regular glass, storm windows, and security-grade glass (bulletproof glass). Typical use of a laser glass cutter involves a hero attaching the glass cutter to the window, programming the diameter of the intended hole into the device and then activating it. The laser makes the cut. All that is left is for the hero to remove the glass. The device takes one round to cut a hole large enough for a Medium-size person to fit through.

Size: Tiny

Available Add-ons: Muffled, Ranged Use, Masterwork

Casing: Yes

Base Cost: 20

GLASS CUTTER (MANUAL)

A manual glass cutter is a circular hand-held device used to cut through regular glass found on the outside of most homes and businesses. If used in combat, the device is considered a one-handed improvised melee weapon and does +1 slashing damage due to the sharpness of the blade. The device takes 2 rounds to cut a hole large enough for a Medium-sized person to fit through.

Size: Diminutive

Available Add-ons: Muffled, Masterwork

Casing: Yes

Base Cost: 5

GRAPPLER GUN

A grappler gun fires a grappling hook and an attached cable up to 150 ft. away. Alternately, the grappling hook can be swapped out with a dense magnet which will hold up to 300 lbs. without slipping. To use a grappler



gun, make a Ranged touch attack (Difficulty 10). Success indicates you have affixed the grappling hook or magnet to its intended position.

Size: Small

Available Add-ons: Decrease Size, Masterwork, Muffled

Casing: Yes

Base Cost: 10

GRAVITY HARNESS

A gravity harness allows a character to hang from two thick nylon cords (one on either side of the torso) while keeping their hands free to perform necessary tasks. The harness is powered by a small motor which allows the character to lower herself up to 100 ft without making a climb check. The cords can be retracted by remote control. When using a gravity harness, the character must make an Acrobatics check (Difficulty 10) to remain in the desired position.

Size: Medium

Available Add-ons: Decrease Size, Masterwork, Muffled

Casing: Yes

Base Cost: 15

FINGERPRINT SCANNER

The fingerprint scanner is used to digitally scan fingerprints into a storage media where they are then transferred to a fingerprint generator and prepared for output in latex form. The effectiveness of a fingerprint scanner is determined by the quantity of the print obtained. To determine if the device functioned properly, make a Gather Information check. Use the following chart to determine the difficulty of the fingerprint scanner's Gather Information check.

Fingerprint Information	Fingerprint Difficulty
Full	5
Partial	10
Negligible	15

Size: Diminutive

Available Add-ons: Decrease Size, Data Transfer Capabilities, Performance Enhancement, Additional Storage, Wireless Access.

Casing: Yes

Base Cost: 25

FINGERPRINT GENERATOR

The fingerprint generator creates a clear latex fingerprint which can be used to access rooms, vaults, safes and even various types of technology protected by biometric security systems which require a fingerprint identity scan. When the hero uses the latex print, the Narrator makes a Notice check for the biometric security system at a base difficulty of 10 + the score of the Fingerprint scanner's Gather Information check to create the scan used by the fingerprint generator. If the security system succeeds on the Notice check, the system refuses to accept the fingerprint. If the Notice Check fails, the system accepts the fingerprint as valid.

Size: Tiny

Available Add-ons: Decrease Size, Data Transfer Capabilities, Performance Enhancement, Intuitive, Additional Storage, Wireless Access

Casing: Yes

Base Cost: 25

LOCK PICK

Lock picks are used to open common locks such as pin tumbler locks, tubular pin tumbler locks, lever locks and wafer locks. They are comprised of a number of picks and tension wrenches. Disable Device checks used to open these types of locks require that heroes have lock picks. Manually picking a lock takes one round to accomplish.

Size: Diminutive

Available Add-ons: Masterwork, Decrease Size

Casing: Yes

Base Cost: 5

OPTICAL SCANNER

The optical scanner is used to digitally record a target's retinal information into a storage media for use in a contact lense generator. The effectiveness of an optical scanner is determined by the amount of retinal data obtained by the device. To determine if the device functioned properly, make a Gather Information check. Use the following chart to determine the difficulty of the optical scanner's Gather Information check.

Retinal Information	Retinal Data Difficulty
Full	5
Partial	10
Negligible	15

Size: Diminutive

Available Add-ons: Decrease Size, Data Transfer Capabilities, Performance Enhancement, Additional Storage, Wireless Access

Casing: Yes

Base Cost: 30

PORTABLE CUTTING TORCH

A portable cutting torch is used to burn through various materials such as concrete, iron, and steel. If used in combat, the device is considered a one-handed improvised melee weapon and does +2 fire damage due to intense heat.

Size: Small

Available Add-ons: Decrease Size, Additional Storage, Submersible

Casing: Yes

Base Cost: 10

COMPUTER COMPONENTS

Computer hardware components modify or otherwise affect a given computer system. The system in question might be a desktop computer, a laptop, or even a server. The following are just a few examples of the possible types of components you can create for your computer systems.

DATABOMB DRIVE

This special USB flash drive is the hottest thing on the streets for the modern hacker. It contains a plethora of premade hacking programs, from Trojan horses to logic bombs to password sniffers. They run automatically upon insertion into a USB slot, requiring no input to go about their programmed tasks. With one of these in hand, even relatively inexperienced computer user becomes a hacker to reckoned with.

The databomb drive has an effective Computers bonus of +20; the Narrator rolls the databomb drive's Computers check as soon as it is connected to a system. Each upgrade increases the effectiveness of the program, adding +1 to Computers checks.

- **Skeleton Key:** The databomb drive attempts to open up full system access, including any networks the computer may be connected to. This is a defeat computer security task.
- **Annihilation:** The databomb drive attempts to eliminate all data on the system. This is a degrade rogramming task.

Databomb drives require at least a full-round action to work, and may take longer depending on how well-defended the system is. Each upgrade increases the effectiveness of the installed programs, adding a +2 bonus to the relevant Computers check.

Size: Tiny

Available Add-ons: Decreased size, Intuitive, Upgrade, Satellite Uplink

Casing: Yes

Base Cost: 30

DATA LEECH

When placed in close proximity to a computer hard drive, a data leech is a piece of hardware that will attempt to syphon all the computer files and programs from the computer and place them into an onboard storage drive. The device has an effective Computers bonus of +10. The Narrator rolls the data leech's Computers check against a Difficulty 20 plus any relevant bonuses provided by the target system's security. Success indicates the data leech has copied the hard drive's information. Each upgrade adds a +5 bonus to the data leech's Computers check.

Size: Tiny

Available Add-ons: Decreased size, Intuitive, Upgrade, Performance Enhancement, Satellite Uplink

Casing: Yes

Base Cost: 30

FIREWALL

A firewall is the main line of defense against attempts to hack into a computer. Firewalls grant the user a +5 bonus to defend security checks. Each upgrade grants another +2 bonus to defend security Checks.

Size: Small

Available Add-ons: Upgrade

Casing: No

Base Cost: 10

RANDOM ACCESS MEMORY

Random access memory (otherwise known as RAM) increases the computer system's speed for loading, displaying and allowing manipulation of applications (computer programs) and data. Every stick of RAM increases the speed at which a user can perform Computers checks. Each upgrade reduces the time required to write programs by 5 minutes for every additional stick of RAM added to the system.

Size: Fine

Available Add-ons: Upgrade

Casing: No

Base Cost: 11

COMMUNICATIONS COMPONENTS

Core communications components are devices which facilitate communication between one or more individuals.

CELL PHONE

A cell phone is a small handheld device used for communication.

Size: Diminutive

Available Add-ons: Additional Storage, Data Transfer Capabilities, Interface Capabilities, Programmable, Secure Line

Casing: Yes

Base Cost: 9

MICROTRANSCIVER

A microtransceiver is a miniature microphone that allows the wearer to communicate with another person or persons.

Size: Fine

Available Add-ons: Data Transfer Capabilities, Satellite Uplink

Casing: Yes

Base Cost: 15

ECM (ELECTRONIC COUNTERMEASURE) COMPONENTS

Electronic CounterMeasure (ECM) components are used to affect the functionality of other electronic devices, such as radio transmitters, security cameras, and listening devices.

DIGITAL SIGNAL SCRAMBLER

A digital signal scrambler is a device which scrambles digital signals, blacking out security cameras and monitors in a three block radius. A digital signal scrambler initiates an opposed test between the operator of the device and the operator or the targeted piece of equipment. Both the hero and the Narrator make a die roll, adding the technology rating (cost) of their respective pieces of equipment to the result. The highest result wins the test. Each upgrade increases the power of the digital signal scrambler's signal, adding a +1 bonus to any opposed tests.

Size: Small

Available Add-ons: Decreased Size, Upgrade

Casing: Yes

Base Cost: 25

RF SCRAMBLER

An RF scrambler is a device that scrambles radio signals, preventing the targets from sending or receiving information through radio transmissions. An RF scrambler will attempt to jam any transmissions within a 500 yard radius, initiating an opposed test between the operator of the RF scrambler and the person sending the message being jammed. Both the hero and the Narrator roll a d20, adding the technology rating (cost) of their respective pieces of equipment to the result. Whoever rolls the highest wins the test.

Each upgrade increases the power of the RF scrambler's signal, adding a +1 bonus to any opposed tests.

Size: Small

Available Add-ons: Decreased size, Upgrade

Casing: Yes

Base Cost: 25

PHARMACEUTICAL COMPONENTS

Pharmaceutical components are drugs commonly used to incapacitate the target or lower his ability to resist interrogation.

SODIUM PENTOTHAL

Sodium pentothal, more commonly known as "truth serum," is used by spies and other federal agents during interrogations. It is a powerful tranquilizer, capable of quickly rendering a target unconscious. A barbiturate, sodium pentothal works by decreasing the subject's ability for higher cortical brain function, consequently making it more difficult to tell a lie.

People who have been injected with a standard dose of sodium pentothal must make a Fortitude save (Difficulty 20) or lose initial and secondary damage of 2 Charisma. The duration of a typical injection is one hour. Highly concentrated dosages of sodium pentothal will knock a character out, while overdosing can cause coma and death. Targets must make a Fortitude save (Difficulty 25) or be rendered unconscious for 10 minutes.

Size: Fine

Available Add-ons: Concentrated Dosage, Multiple Delivery Systems

Casing: Yes

Base Cost: 17

ADD-ONS

Add-ons are additional modifications you can make to core components in order to increase the performance of your equipment. Once you have chosen a core component, add the cost modifier of the add-on(s) you wish to purchase to the base cost of the core component. The number of add-ons you may purchase for your device is limited only by the cost and what is available for a given core component. The following are just a few possibilities of add-ons that can be created for core components:

ADDITIONAL STORAGE

This add-on increases the data storage component by an amount equal to its original storage capacity. For example, a fingerprint scanner with additional storage can store data for two fingerprints. The same component with two additional storage add-ons can store three fingerprints.

Cost Modifier: +2

CONCENTRATED DOSAGE

Certain drugs can be concentrated for increased effect, as listed in their descriptions.

Cost Modifier: +3

DATA TRANSFER CAPABILITIES

This core component is able to transfer its data to another device using a common data format. It requires a physical connection to do so unless the components both have the wireless access or satellite uplink add-ons.

Cost Modifier: +1

DECREASED SIZE

Advances in miniaturization allow complex devices to be offered in smaller package. Each time this add-on is applied to a core component, it becomes the next smaller size (a Small object becomes Tiny, etc).

Cost Modifier: +4

INTERFACE CAPABILITIES

A component with this add-on can interface with other devices for added functionality. For example, a laptop computer and cell phone with interface capabilities can allow the computer to connect to a cellular network. Interfacing requires a physical connection unless both components also have the wireless access or satellite uplink add-ons.

Cost Modifier: +1

INTUITIVE

The more advanced the technology, the more complicated it is to use... unless it is designed to be intuitive. By simplifying as much of the operation as possible, the core component can be activated and used as a free action.

Cost Modifier: +1

MASTERWORK

This core component is finely made, providing a +1 bonus on rolls made to use it.

Cost Modifier: +5

MUFFLED

This component works more quietly than normal, requiring a Notice check (Difficulty 10) to hear. Each time this add-on is applied beyond the first, the Notice Difficulty is increased by 5 (to a maximum of 30)

Cost Modifier: +2

MULTIPLE DELIVERY SYSTEMS

In the field, not every drug can be injected into its desired target. A multiple delivery system drug is available in a form that can be quickly converted into any mode of delivery: inhaled, ingested, contact, or injected. The drug must be converted to one of these forms to be usable; doing so is a full-round action. Once converted, the drug is stuck in that delivery form. This add-on can also be used in chemical components to create weaponized versions.

Cost Modifier: +2

PERFORMANCE ENHANCEMENT

The core component has been improved to work faster. The device's operation takes less time, going from a full-round action to a move action.

Cost Modifier: +5

PROGRAMMABLE

A programmable component has a wealth of additional functionality. The user is able to preset a number of automatic conditions for the device's operation. For example, the user can set the device to activate after a time delay, activate automatically under certain conditions, deactivate under certain conditions, or anything else the device is able to do within the limits of its design.

Cost Modifier: +4

RANGED USE

This component can now be used up to 5 ft. away from the objects it affects.

Cost Modifier: +2

SATELLITE UPLINK

Hundreds of satellites orbit the Earth, making satellite connections one of the most reliable forms of uplink. Items with a satellite uplink are able to connect to the Internet or communicate with other connected systems regardless of their location, without the need for a hardwired connection or a wireless area network.

Cost Modifier: +3

SECURE LINE

This component's connection is hardened against interception and tapping. The difficulty of cracking a secure line is increased by +5 each time this add-on is applied

Cost Modifier: +2

SUBMERSIBLE

The core component can function even if submersed in water or other liquids.

Cost Modifier: +1

UPGRADE

Core components are improved by a generic upgrade to performance and design as listed in their descriptions.

Cost Modifier: +1

WIRELESS ACCESS

The component can access wireless networks, allowing it to connect to other systems or the Internet without a physical connection. A wireless network must be present, however, for a component with wireless access to be able to connect to anything.

Cost Modifier: +2

CASINGS

A casing is a cover for a device that makes it look like something it's not. Being able to sneak equipment into a research facility is often critical to a mission. Walking through the door with a bunch of high-tech gadgets in plain sight just isn't going to cut it.

The types of casings you can use for your gear are endless. You might modify a data leech to look like a pack of gum or a compact. A

microtransciever might be fashioned to look like earrings, a cufflink or a watch. Apply a couple of decrease size add-ons to your RF scrambler and make it look like an MP3 player. With this system, you're only limited by your imagination.

The size of the casing you choose determines the final cost of your piece of gear. Consult the following table to find cost modifiers based on size.

CASING SIZES	
Size	Cost Modifier
Large	—
Medium	+1
Small	+2
Tiny	+3
Diminutive	+4
Fine	+5

SAMPLE CASINGS

The following examples of potential casings are by no means exhaustive. We encourage you to get with your Narrator and develop new and interesting casings for your gear.

- **Large:** Vending machine, refrigerator, desk, box, washing machine, dryer, stereo components, speakers, suitcase, television
- **Medium:** Briefcase, clothing, laptop, backpack, pants, shirt, shorts
- **Small:** Video camera, paperback book, toolbox, pencil sharpener, tie, shoes
- **Tiny:** Camera, can of shaving cream, thermos
- **Diminutive:** Dental floss, beeper, cell phone, lipstick, breath spray
- **Fine:** jewelry, business card, coin



OPTIONAL RULES

The following are optional rules provided for you to use in your series.

ARMOR DEGRADATION

In a modern game, your characters have access to various types of armor. While the armor protects us, though, it takes a beating. In an average gun battle, it is likely that heroes are going to get shot at least once or twice. After all, that's why we wear armor in the first place! How long can our armor take that kind of abuse? The answer: Not long. What follows is a simple way of handling armor degradation.

On a failed Toughness save, the Toughness bonus of your armor will degrade by 1 point for a number of points below the difficulty in the same way that you take damage. Light Armor degrades 1 point for every 5 points below the difficulty of the Toughness save. Medium armor degrades 1 point for every 10 points below the difficulty of the Toughness save, and heavy armor degrades 1 point for every 15 points below the difficulty of the Toughness save.

The rate at which your armor degrades is dependant upon the type of armor you wear. A light vest certainly isn't designed to take as much punishment as a tactical vest and this system reflects that by scaling the Toughness saves based on the type of armor you wear. So, a character wearing a tactical vest who fails his Toughness save by 15 points will see the Toughness bonus of his vest degrade by 1 point, whereas a character wearing a leather jacket who fails his Toughness save by the same amount will lose what little protection the jacket offered altogether!

OPPOSED TECHNOLOGY CHECKS

When playing a modern adventure (especially one centered on espionage) your characters will have access to cutting-edge technology: image recognition software, parabolic microphones, burst transmitters, computer programs, sound filters, voice modulation devices, tracking devices, electronic lock picks, miniature cameras and a host of other intelligence gathering devices. Normally, using a device would give your character a bonus to a certain skill such as Computers, Disable Device, Gather Information or Notice (just to name a few). When we apply a bonus to a skill check, however, we assume that the piece of equipment automatically works. This minimizes the role of anti-security devices that may be employed by your adversaries.

A simple skill check, however, doesn't add drama to the scene in the same way that it would if there was a measure of uncertainty with regards

to how well your gear will actually function in the field. So what to do? You can opt to use opposed technology tests.

Opposed technology tests pit one device against another in an opposed check. The goal of the opposed check is to determine whether or not a device the character is using can defeat various countermeasures employed by your adversaries. Here's how it works.

Every device has a technology rating. This rating reflects the complexity of the device and how well it performs its intended function. The technology rating is equal to the purchase Difficulty for a given device. For example, a slim jim has a technology rating of 1, while a lap top with a connection to a satellite in geo-synchronous orbit, EMP protection on the hard drive and installed XLS decryption software would have a technology rating of 34. When your character is using this technology on another device, an opposed check is performed.

The player rolls a d20 and adds the technology rating of the device she is using. The narrator also rolls a d20, adding the technology rating of the device which is considered to be under attack. Whoever rolls highest wins the test. If the character's device wins the opposed technology test, she gains a bonus to the relevant skill check equal to the difference between the results of the opposed test.

If the Narrator wins, the Difficulty of the character's skill check is raised by a number equal to the difference of the results. The time it takes for the test is 1 round plus a number of rounds equal to the difference between the pieces of technology. An opposed technology test always takes a minimum of one round to resolve.

For example, your group might need to hack into a server to obtain intelligence about an upcoming meeting between two individuals, but the server can't be accessed through regular channels. A team needs to break into the building containing the server and place a miniature wireless modem with a satellite uplink onto the server. The modem will automatically attempt to breach the firewall of the server and connect with the host, allowing a hacker to access the server remotely.

The server has a technology rating of 36. Your wireless modem has a technology rating of 34. The opposed check is performed with both the player and the narrator rolling a d20, adding the technology rating of their respective devices to the check. The Narrator scores a 46, while the character scores a 48. Success! After 3 rounds, the wireless modem has successfully negotiated with the host, allowing the hacker to attempt to locate the proper file, defeat the encryption and gain the required information. The hacker gains a +2 bonus to his Computers check to defeat the security of the server and any other relevant Computers checks, such as finding a file or attempting to erase information on the system.

ADVERSARIES

The following are just a few examples of the types of organizations and adversaries you might encounter in a typical modern adventure.

GOON

Type: 1st-level Warrior

Abilities: Strength +2, Dexterity +3, Constitution +2, Intelligence -1, Wisdom +0, Charisma +0

Skills: Intimidate 4 (+4), Knowledge (streetwise) 4 (+4), Sense Motive 4 (+4)

Feats: All-Out Attack, Chokehold, Firearms Training, Improved Initiative, Improved Strike, Rage, Startle

Core Ability: Fearsome Presence

Combat: Attack +1, Defense +1, Initiative +7

Saves: Toughness +2, Fortitude +4, Reflex +3, Will +0

Conviction: 3, **Wealth:** +5, **Reputation:** +0, **Virtue:** Determined, **Vice:** Insensitive

Weapons: Heavy pistol (+4 damage), baseball bat (+1 damage)

Equipment: Cell phone, car, suits, spare ammunition, extra guns

Arm-breakers, gorillas, mooks, gombahs: they have a dozen different names but they're all the same—hired muscle. Goons are there to make sure you don't cross the line when you're dealing with their boss. If you do, they'll come after you with baseball bats, looking to make your fingers and kneecaps bend the wrong way—if you're lucky.



MOB BOSS

Type: 4th-level Expert, 2nd-level Warrior

Abilities: Strength +1, Dexterity +0, Constitution +1, Intelligence +2, Wisdom +1, Charisma +2

Skills: Bluff 9 (+11), Diplomacy 9 (+11), Drive 7 (+7), Gather Information 7 (+9), Intimidate 9 (+11), Knowledge (civics) 9 (+11), Knowledge (streetwise) 9 (+11), Notice 7 (+9), Search 7 (+9), Sense Motive 9 (+11)

Feats: All-Out Attack, Chokehold, Diehard, Firearms Training, Improved Initiative, Improved Strike, Influential, Point-Blank Shot, Rage, Renown, Startle, Wealthy

Core Ability: Call Your Bluff

Combat: Attack +5, Defense +5, Initiative +4

Saves: Toughness +1, Fortitude +6, Reflex +1, Will +2

Conviction: 5, **Wealth:** +11, **Reputation:** +5, **Virtue:** Industrious, **Vice:** Miserly

Weapons: Hold-out pistol (+2 damage)

Equipment: Cell phone, PDA with various contact information, luxury cars, expensive suits, nickel-plated hold out pistol, extra ammunition, flashy jewelry

The mob boss is a dangerous man who worked his way up to the top by being more cunning, more ruthless and more intelligent than his fellow mooks. He's got everyone who matters in his hip pocket. Cops, lawyers, politicians, judges; they all want a piece of what the mob boss is selling and they don't care if a few innocent people suffer because of it. The city is his playground; if you cross him, he'll make sure the last thing you see is his smiling face.

SUPER-SPY

Type: 9th-level Federal Agent

Abilities: Strength +0, Dexterity +3, Constitution +0, Intelligence +1, Wisdom +1, Charisma +2

Skills: Acrobatics 12 (+15), Bluff 12 (+14), Disable Device 12 (+13), Disguise 12 (+14), Gather Information 12 (+14), Notice 12 (+16), Sleight of Hand 12 (+15), Stealth 12 (+18)

Feats: Benefit (alternate identity), Benefit (security clearance), Contacts, Evasion, Firearms Training, Improved Evasion, Master Plan, Move-By Action, Quick Draw, Point Blank Shot, Ranged Pin, Redirect, Seize Initiative, Skill Focus (Notice), Skill Focus (Stealth), Sneak Attack, Stunning Attack, Uncanny Dodge, Well-Informed

Core Ability: Check the Sight Lines

Combat: Attack +4, Defense +4, Initiative +3

Saves: Toughness +0, Fortitude +4, Reflex +7, Will +5

Conviction: 7, **Wealth:** +7, **Reputation:** +2, **Virtue:** Courageous, **Vice:** Impulsive

Weapons: Masterwork heavy pistol (+1 attack bonus, +4 damage), assault rifle (+5 damage) masterwork knife (+1 attack bonus, +1 damage)

Equipment: Multiple fake passports, fine clothing, formal clothing, cell phone with secure line, satellite uplink and data transfer capabilities, PDA, EMP-hardened laptop, luxury sports car, lock picks

The super-spy is a master of deception, a highly trained ghost capable of penetrating the most heavily protected complexes on the planet. No secret is safe from the super-spy; her contacts are far-reaching and the organizations she works for are wealthy, capable of providing her with anything she might require to perform her mission.

CROOKED COP

Type: 1st-level Ordinary

Abilities: Strength +1, Dexterity +2, Constitution +2, Intelligence +0, Wisdom +1, Charisma +0

Skills: Bluff 4 (+7), Gather Information 4 (+4), Medicine 4 (+5), Notice 4 (+5), Sleight of Hand 0 (+5)

Feats: Skill Focus (Bluff), Skill Focus (Sleight of Hand)
Combat: Attack +0, Defense +0, Initiative +2
Saves: Toughness +2, Fortitude +2, Reflex +2, Will +1
Conviction: 0, **Wealth:** +5, **Reputation:** +0, **Virtue:** Generous,
Vice: Cowardly
Weapons: Masterwork heavy pistol (+1 attack bonus, +4 damage),
 stun gun (Stun), tonfa (+1 damage)
Equipment: Badge, extra ammunition, police cruiser, walkie talkie

This is the guy who makes all the other cops look bad. He takes bribes from the mob in return for looking the other way when they shake down a small business owner. He takes drugs from street gangs and uses it as collateral when dealing with his snitches. He removes evidence from crime scenes and murders people who cross him.

GANG-BANGER

Type: 1st-level Ordinary
Abilities: Strength +3, Dexterity +0, Constitution +3, Intelligence +0, Wisdom -1, Charisma +1
Skills: Drive 4 (+4), Intimidate 4 (+5), Knowledge (streetwise) 4 (+4), Search 4 (+4)
Feats: None
Combat: Attack +0, Defense +0, Initiative +0
Saves: Toughness +3, Fortitude +3, Reflex +0, Will -1
Conviction: 0, **Wealth:** +6, **Reputation:** +0, **Virtue:** Bold, **Vice:** Arrogant
Weapons: Heavy pistol (2) (+4 damage)
Equipment: Extra ammunition for pistols, drugs, a tricked-out car, street clothes

The gang banger is an urban warrior who goes to war with those who cross him and his set every night. His territory is marked by gang symbols; the colors he wears are a badge of honor. If you don't respect this man, he'll pull out his 'nines, smoke you and leave you bleeding in the streets.

ORGANIZATIONS

The following organizations are provided for you to use in your modern adventure series.

X-CON

Professional international espionage became something of a "boom industry" during the Cold War. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, several ex-KGB members and others in the intelligence community formed an organization that could spy on any nation while holding allegiance to none: X-con, a group of black ops and wetwork experts who sell their expertise to the highest bidder. X-con gathers intelligence, plants moles and sleepers, performs complex sabotage, and even carries out assassinations, all for the right price. Members of X-con are the best spies in the world, period; running afoul of them is a death sentence, though working for them can be equally dangerous.

- **Agenda:** To earn lucrative amounts of money performing espionage services for the international community; to destabilize key nations and foster a global environment where their services are needed.
- **Membership:** No more than 150 agents and affiliates (non-agent personnel). Five figures make up X-con's "Upper Management." Their identities are unknown to other X-con personnel, perhaps even to each other.
- **Resources:** Billions of dollars in slush funds and secret accounts. X-con agents have access to the latest in high-tech gadgetry but are assigned only what is necessary on a per mission basis. Agents also have all travel arrangements taken care of, and my receive backup from other agents if requested.

PALLADINO INVESTIGATIONS

This small family firm operates out of Seattle, Washington. Joseph Palladino, a discharged police detective, was determined to clear his name following his dismissal from the force. With the help of his sister Elizabeth, the pair discovered who had framed Joseph for the brutal beating and eventual death of a police informant. After his name was cleared, Joseph decided he enjoyed the life of a private eye more than that of a police detective.

Palladino Investigations takes cases of any kind, from suspicious wives wanting proof of a husband's infidelity to high-profile kidnappings that need to stay out of the headlines. Elizabeth, her husband Frank, and their child Julie all work at the firm under the mentorship of "Uncle Jo."

- **Agenda:** To solve any crime; no mystery is too tough, no bill is too big.
- **Membership:** Four, the Palladino family.
- **Resources:** An office, a computer that works most of the time, Elizabeth's camera, and Julie's moped. They also maintain various contacts among Seattle's police force and the criminal underworld.

OMERTA

"The Law of Silence" is a vast criminal organization with worldwide connections. Originating in Italy, Omerta has gone beyond any nationality, becoming a nation unto itself where crime is the currency. The mafia is the backbone behind much of the world's drug trade and has a hand in illegal weapon smuggling as well. Its members pledge their honor and loyalty to the group, becoming one of an enormous gang-family. Despite the occasional feud and outside rivalry, Omerta has managed to thrive for the past thirty years, becoming a vast criminal empire.

- **Agenda:** To protect Omerta and its members; to uphold the "family" honor; to profit from activities both legal and illegal.
- **Membership:** Several thousand, perhaps over one million; it is impossible to determine or even estimate.
- **Resources:** An undefinable amount of wealth and influence, including power over law enforcement, the judicial branch and high-ranking politicians.

ADVENTURES

The possibilities for adventures in the modern genre are nearly endless. Pick up a newspaper and you'll find a wealth of plot hooks which, with a little work, can be used to spark an adventure or series of adventures. What follows is a series of plot hooks based on the different modern games represented in this book. These should get you started and hopefully provide fuel for future adventures.

LADY LIBERTY

The characters gain information indicating a terrorist cell may have been activated in New York City. A Mossad agent contacts the characters' boss with information suggesting a shipment of weaponized sarin gas has made it into the country via a cargo vessel which left Athens three weeks ago.

A contact at the New York Port Authority was murdered two nights ago. The man had a note in his personal possessions. On it, was a name—Harik Mosanni—and the following message: 5947833, *Alpha protocol enacted*. What does the message mean? Who was Harik Mosanni? Where is the sarin gas now, and can the characters find it before more innocent lives are lost?

ONE NIGHT IN BRUSSELS

One of the heroes' contacts in Brussels has obtained information indicating an emergency meeting between at least two high-level members of X-con will be taking place within the next 24 hours. The team needs to fly to Brussels, meet with the contact and obtain intelligence on the X-con members. Their objective is to get photos of each member and obtain audio of the meeting without being detected by security.

DEEP COVER (SERIES HOOK)

In this adventure, heroes are tasked with infiltrating an arms-smuggling organization based in Chechnya. They are to gather intel on the major players in the organization, the types of weapons that are being bought and sold, as well as information on who the buyers are. This should be a long-term series, filled with suspense and ever-increasing danger as the characters become immersed in the world of the smugglers.

THE VIGILANTE

Someone is hunting down and killing street crooks and low-level members of various crime syndicates in the city. Your team of detectives has been tasked with bringing this vigilante to justice. This type of adventure is a morality tale. The vigilante is technically doing the city a favor by killing these seedy individuals, but at what point does justice become revenge? Do evil people have the same rights as law-abiding citizens?

Who is this person and what is his (or her) background? The vigilante appears to be highly proficient, indicating he might have some formal training with weapons and explosives, as some criminals have been victims of car bombings. Can your team stop the vigilante before more people die? Will his actions cause further violence as the criminal world takes the matter into its own hands?

AWOL

A SpecOps unit has gone missing somewhere in the infamous "Triangle of Death" sector of Northern Iraq. The heroes have been tasked with finding these soldiers and bringing them back to base. As the search progresses however, the team of heroes begin to find clues indicating that the unit they are searching for has gone rogue.

What is their mission? Are they turncoats? Do they answer to some other branch of the military? These and more questions plague the squad as the heroes move through this district, risking attacks from insurgents as they struggle to find the missing team.

MOB WAR (SERIES HOOK)

A high level Mafia boss was killed by a Triad assassin. Now the streets run red with blood as the two organizations have gone to war. Your heroes are involved with one of the factions and are tasked with performing various jobs. They might be bodyguards, charged with protecting a high level boss, or they may be assassins, tasked with finding and killing high-ranking members of the rival organization.

While this series hook can directly involve organized crime, Narrators can easily tweak it to involve rival spy organizations or street gangs, depending on what roles your players have chosen.

VENDETTA

Someone is hunting one of the heroes, playing a game of cat-and-mouse as he seeks to cause as much trouble for the character as possible before finally killing him. Can the hero find out who the person is and why they are seeking revenge? This type of adventure carries many assumptions. It assumes the heroes have a history in which they made enemies. It assumes that family members might be hurt as the antagonist looks for ways to make the character suffer. Be creative when thinking up ways to motivate your heroes to bring this nasty business to an end.

PROJECT DOPPLEGANGER

The heroes are tasked with the recovery of an X-con program; a worm designed to sniff multiple government databases and download personal information of various under cover agents and government officials. The program retrieves specific information; addresses, photographs, copies of finger prints, etc. The agency the characters work for believes that this program will be used by criminal organizations to facilitate a massive attack on the intelligence capabilities of the U.S and British governments.

This information could be used to assassinate individuals or even replace them with moles. The most recent intelligence places the program in the vault of a casino in Monte Carlo. Heroes will have to break in, recover the disk containing the program, and replace it with a modified copy that will give X-con false information leading to dead ends.



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