

DEVIANT

the renegades

Kickstarter Manuscript Preview #2



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Deviant: The Renegades Manuscript Preview #2

Chapter Three: Renegades

I'm not a killer. I'm just someone who wanted to make things right. Can't I just let myself forget what you've told me? Can't I just let myself forget what you've made me do. You think I just want another puzzle to solve? Another John G. to look for? You're John G. So, you can be my John G... Will I lie to myself to be happy? In your case Teddy...yes, I will.

— Leonard Shelby, Memento

In **Deviant: The Renegades**, Deviants are humans who have been given supernatural powers for which they paid a terrible price. The following rules show you how to create Renegades for your **Deviant** chronicle, as well as the effects of the Divergence that forever set the Remade apart from Baselines.

Character Creation

In a **Deviant: The Renegades** chronicle, each player experiences the game through their very own Remade character. This character interacts with the world of the chronicle and the other characters, via the Storytelling game mechanics in this book and the narrative collusion between the players and Storyteller. Together, the group creates a tale of revenge, loyalty, horror and conspiracy.

This section provides the rules for creating the players' characters through the nine steps detailed below. Each player builds a character sheet as they go, either using the pre-made character sheet in the back of this book, creating their own sheet, or just writing the details down with a pencil and a piece of paper.

Getting the players and Storyteller together and going through character creation as a group can help with building a cohesive feel to the cohort of Remade and to the story that follows. This is particularly true in a **Deviant** game because the capabilities of the Remade and their antagonists, the conspiracies that hunt them, are interlinked. The decision of how powerful the Variations that the Remade have access to, and hence the reach and grasp of the conspiracies, should be discussed and agreed on together.

Each step of character creation includes an ongoing example to help illustrate how a player might approach the process. These steps are a guideline, not a straitjacket; it's normal to make adjustments to Attributes or Skills after you've made some decisions about Variations and Scars!

Step One: Determine Chronicle Threat Level

The foundation of a **Deviant** chronicle is the **threat level**. The more powerful the Variations inflicted on the Remade, the more burdened by Scars they are, and the greater the instability they cause in the fabric of society. In turn, the most unstable and powerful Remade attract the attention of the most threatening conspiracies.

It's important to note that the threat level directly impacts character creation by controlling the Magnitude of Variations available to the character and hence, indirectly, the amount of Scars the

Remade will have to suffer in balance. Additionally, it dictates the Standing of each conspiracy, as described later in Chapter Five.

The threat level is a chronicle-wide barometer of the intensity of the protagonists and antagonists. As such, it is the first thing decided during character creation, and should be agreed upon by all participants. If the Storyteller and other players are amenable, some characters might be set at levels above or below that of the chronicle, with corresponding impact on the particular conspiracy connected to them. Everyone should be informed of the potential risks to this approach, though. A Remade with far fewer dots of Variations might lag behind more powerful cohort members. A Remade with far higher threat level than the rest of the cohort will be accompanied by a conspiracy that may be much more powerful than the other characters can cope with.

[TABLE]

Threat Level	Total	Variation Magnitude*	Conspiracy Standing
Mutation	2	1	
Hyperplasia	5	2	
Dysplasia	7	3	
Invasion	10	4	
Metastasis	12	5	
Metamorphosis	15	6	

[END TABLE]

*This is the total Magnitude in dots that the character has available to assign to Variations during character creation and does not include the Scar-free Magnitude dot(s) granted by her Origin.

Example: *Arran, Luke and Monika get together to play a chronicle of **Deviant**, with Alice as the Storyteller. Alice tells the players that she plans a short chronicle of intrigue and spiraling revenge set in a big city, and she's keen on corporation and government conspiracies to contrast against themes of urban decay. The group discusses what threat level to choose. The players want a substantial number of dots to play with when it comes to Variations, and they're happy to face some powerful opposition, so they settle on Invasion level. Alice is quite happy to go along with it — the significant threat level gives her lots to play with when it comes to designing the conspiracies!*

Step Two: Character Concept

Moving on from the chronicle-wide decisions, each character's concept helps shape the rest of the creation process. This doesn't need to be an extensive background. Just a few words can help give you a greater sense of who the character is and what sort of capabilities they should have. A *bitter and disabled veteran* or a *middle-manager trapped in corporate drone hell* or a *repentant criminal* all provide good groundings in who the Remade was before they suffered Divergence; a *chimera struggling with bestial instincts*, a *self-made superman gone horribly wrong*, or a *youth raised from birth to become the god's avatar* say something about how they might be dealing with their new nature as a Deviant.

As the later stages of character creation play out, this initial concept may change or transmute into something different and more interesting. That's absolutely fine. The concept settled on at this point is not a hard or final decision.

Example: *Luke decides his character was a young, local criminal arrested and 'sold' by corrupt cops to a sinister corporation for experimentation. He has an image of a character with spines or other spiky Variations; the researchers did all manner of horrible tests on the Remade before he managed to escape, and now he's back on the streets and seeking vengeance, so an urban legend about a 'needle man' is growing up around his activities. Luke writes 'vengeful urban legend' on his character sheet, and also decides on a first name: Lee.*

Step Three: Select Attributes

Your character now begins to take shape through selecting their attributes, the innate talent and capability that each person possesses. Every character in a **Deviant: The Renegades** chronicle has nine attributes, divided into three categories: Mental (Intelligence, Wits, Resolve), Physical (Strength, Dexterity, Stamina), and Social (Presence, Manipulation, Composure). Every Attribute begins with a single dot in it.

Rank the three categories according to how talented they feel the character is in each. The primary category receives five more dots to allocate freely between its Attributes; the secondary category receives four; and the tertiary category receives three. These dots are in addition to the free dot each Attribute begins with, but cannot be used to take any starting Attribute above five dots.

More information about Attributes can be found on p. XX.

Example: *Luke feels that Lee, having been a fairly minor criminal and street tough before he was Remade, should probably focus on Physical attributes first, Social attributes second, and Mental attributes third — Lee never had a chance at a good education, but learned how to navigate the dangerous maze of trust, loyalty and peer pressure that was life in a gang.*

Starting with one dot in each Attribute, Luke raises each of Lee's Mental Attributes to two — a relatively mundane distribution. Luke brings his Strength and Stamina up to two each and uses the remaining three Physical dots to give Lee a Dexterity score of four. Lee is nimble and wiry. Finally, Luke decides Lee isn't particularly imposing — maybe he's too scrawny, or he's learned to keep his head down and try to avoid notice. He leaves Lee's Presence at one dot, but gives him both Manipulation and Composure scores of three.

Lee is quick, and canny when it comes to dealing with people, but he's not particularly frightening — at least, when his skin isn't sprouting spines. Luke looks back at his original concept now and refines it a bit — he had Lee down as a street thug, but Lee wouldn't actually be very good at the sort of posturing or intimidation he imagines such a gang member to engage in. Instead, Luke now decides that Lee was purely a petty thief, paying a cut to the local gangs for their protection rather than being a gang member himself.

Step Four: Select Skills

Skills represent the specific training and experience that your character possesses, and there are 24 skills in total. Just like Attributes, Skills are divided into three categories — Mental, Physical and Social — but Skills begin with a dot rating of zero. A character who has no dots in a Skill is

considered to be unskilled in that field, which will inflict an additional penalty on her if she attempts to use it. More information about Skills and their use can be found on p. XX.

Prioritize the Skill categories just like with Attributes in the prior stage. The primary category receives eleven dots to distribute among the Skills therein; the secondary category receives seven dots; and the tertiary category receives 4. Again, no Skill can be raised above five dots.

Example: *With a much stronger picture of Lee being a thief, Luke decides how to assign the character's Skills. He picks Physical as Lee's strongest area again, as it includes a lot of Skills that are important to a thief, but he decides that Mental should be the secondary category — Lee achieves his schemes via planning rather than smooth-talking. That puts Social as his tertiary category.*

Luke quickly locks onto Athletics, Larceny and Stealth as the most important Skills for how he envisages Lee. Athletics also has the advantage that it contributes towards Lee's final Defense score. Luke puts three dots into Athletics and Larceny, and four dots into Stealth. That leaves him with one dot free. He wants Lee to have some ability to hold his own in a fight; firearms are too loud and attention-grabbing, so Luke decides on putting the last dot into Weaponry.

In the Mental Skills category, Lee puts two dots each into Computer, Crafts and Investigation. He figures Lee is smart enough to plan well and use what resources are available to him. The last dot goes into Medicine. Luke is further building up the feeling that, prior to becoming Remade, Lee was very self-reliant and that included dealing with the consequences when his schemes and robberies went awry.

Lastly, in the Social Skills category, Luke puts one dot in Empathy and Persuasion, and two dots into Subterfuge. He's tempted to drop either Empathy or Persuasion and increase Subterfuge to three, making Lee very good at lying, but he doesn't want to deal with unskilled penalties on either of the one dot skills, and Luke figures that Lee's high Manipulation should give him a high enough dice pool for dealing with most problems.

Looking round the rest of the table, Luke sees that Arran has built a military veteran who underwent eldritch drug treatments to make him very strong and tough, while Monika's character is a university student with emerging psychic powers. Lee is clearly going to be the nimble problem-solver of the group, next to the other characters' brawn and brains.

Step Five: Select Skill Specialties

Specialties are areas where your character has refined training or expertise, giving them an edge or niche where they are particularly capable. Each Specialty is attached to a specific Skill, and the character receives a bonus when using that Skill in the field of their Specialty. See p.XX for further information on how Specialties and Skills interact.

Distribute three Specialties among the character's Skills. A Specialty cannot be chosen for a Skill with zero dots, but there is no limit to how many Specialties can be placed in each category, and more than one Specialty can be picked for the same Skill. Each Specialty comes as a short description or phrase indicating its nature, so a biologist might have the Specialty of Biology for the Science skill, or an urban explorer might have a Specialty of Climbing for the Athletics skill.

Example: *Luke wants Lee to be a bit more silver-tongued, in line with how he sees Lee navigating dangerous relationships in the criminal underworld and making his living handling stolen goods. He spends two of his Specialties to shore up the weakness in Lee's social skills.*

One goes on Making Deals for the Persuasion Skill, and the other goes on Misdirection for the Subterfuge Skill.

The last Specialty goes into making Lee even better at his main focus. Luke gives Lee a Specialty of Urban Shadows for Stealth. Alice asks what exactly Luke means by this, and he explains that he sees the Specialty applying when Lee is hiding and remaining still in an urban environment, so it wouldn't help if Lee was in the woods or moving through a crowd. This sounds reasonable for a Specialty to Alice, and so the Storyteller agrees.

Step Six: Divergence

This step is the point where you decide on the specifics of the Remade's Divergence and the changes it inflicts.

Origin

Pick the Origin of your Remade character.

Origin represents the specific way that the Divergence happened — was the Remade altered by others, or were the changes self-inflicted? Was the process voluntary, forcible or just random chance? There are five Origins to pick from:

Autourgics wished to be Remade, and may have sought out transformation as an end in and of itself. They chose this path, even if they didn't necessarily get exactly what they wanted. The Elect gain one Scar-free Magnitude of an Overt Variation, and an extra dot of Loyalty.

Epimorphs agreed to be Remade, whether through threats or promises on the part of their Progenitor. They had a secondary goal, with Divergence as the means or gateway to getting there. The Volunteers gain one Scar-free Magnitude of a Subtle Variation, and an extra dot of Loyalty.

Exomorphs never wanted to be Remade. Someone else forced Divergence upon them on purpose, a purpose the Deviant was not party to. The Unwilling gain one Scar-free Magnitude of an Overt Variation, and an extra dot of Conviction.

Genotypal Deviants had Divergence woven into their ancestry or parentage. Whether or not they knew about it, they never really had a choice about their impending transformation. The Born gain one Scar-free Magnitude of a Subtle Variation, and an extra dot of Conviction.

Pathological Remade are victims of pure circumstance. Something bizarre or accidental happened to trigger their Divergence, often without any clear Progenitor involved. The Accidents gain one Scar-free dot of any Variation and one dot of either Loyalty or Conviction. They also begin the chronicle with one medium Instability (p. XX).

Ambiguous Origins

You may encounter edge cases, where a character's Origin seems to fit into two (or more) categories. For example, what if a cancer patient at a VA hospital was mistaken as a volunteer for a program that made no secret that Divergence was the goal? Would that make her an Epimorph (since she underwent the treatment without knowing about what it would do) or a Pathological (because no one intended that she be a test subject in the first place)?

While you might examine the character's origin in greater depth (which would be a great use of your time, since it will help better define her, suggest appropriate Touchstones, and guide your portrayal), remember that the character's relationship with her beginnings is a significant influence on Origin. An Autourgic Deviant and an Exomorph might be torn apart and Remade with the exact same swarm of nanorobots, but if the former was a willing participant and the latter was strapped in and forcibly experimented on, their Origins remain distinct.

Clade

Choose your character's Clade. Clades are the broad categorizations that the changes inflicted by Divergence fall into. Each Deviant belongs to a single Clade, but the variety within each Clade is staggering, and the choice of Clade does not prevent a Deviant from manifesting Variations associated with other Clades. There are five to pick from, each possessing its own unique Adaptations (p. XX):

Cephalists employ psychic powers unleashed by the trauma of Divergence, tapping into the potential of the human mind to impose their will directly onto the world. Through sheer willpower, Psychics can strengthen a Variation.

Chimerics are a mixture of human and *something else*, Remade through commingling with the bodies of animals or other living things. Focused on survival, Hybrids can temporarily suppress a Scar.

Coactives harness and channel energies, whether natural forces or eldritch ones. The Infused can overload their bodies with the power they wield, briefly strengthening a Variation at the expense of flesh and blood.

Invasives wield powers drawn from the intrusive replacement of their flesh by technological or occult materials. Cyborgs are immensely resilient, and can withstand terrible punishment at the expense of their Variations.

Mutants possess aberrant biology that grants them superhuman abilities. Grotesques can briefly manifest surprising and unexpected Variations.

Variations

You can now assign dots of Magnitude to the Remade's Variations. The total Magnitude of Variations cannot exceed that permitted by the chronicle's chosen threat level. Each Remade must begin with at least a single Variation, and at least half of a Remade's Variation Magnitude must be invested in Variations from some combination of their Clade category or the Universal category. You are otherwise free to assign dots across multiple Variations and to choose Variations from other Clades' categories.

See p. XX for a full explanation of Variations.

Scars

Each Variation must be **entangled** with a Scar of equal or greater Magnitude. The Scar is the cost, consequence, or side-effect of the Variations entangled with it. Scars are Controlled, Involuntary, or Persistent (the activation method). A Scar can be entangled with multiple Variations, all of which take the same activation method. When entangling multiple Variations, the Scar's Magnitude cannot be less than the highest Magnitude among the entangled Variations,

plus one per additional Variation. For example, a Magnitude 3 Scar can entangle one Magnitude 3 Variation, two Magnitude 2 Variations, or three Magnitude 1 Variations. A Remade may have several different Scars, each combined with different Variations. A Variation is never combined with more than one Scar, however.

Full details for Scars are found on p. XX.

Forms

Some Deviants possess Forms, oddities that reflect an unusual set of circumstances or capabilities. Forms are not necessary for all — or even most — Remade, and are not an inherent bonus or upgrade. Rather, they're a package of game mechanics allowing for specific concepts that would otherwise be hard to represent. Forms color a Deviant's Scars and Variations, cost no Experiences, and are not mutually exclusive. The most common forms are:

Amalgams are the combination of two or more distinct, sapient beings, whether multiple humans fused together, or direct combinations with supernatural beings. Amalgams can gain access to the communal talents of the gestalt, sacrificing initial Skill dots to give a flexible pool of temporary dots.

Unlike the vast majority of Deviants, the **Self-Made** are their own Progenitors. Lacking the external bond to blame as the cause of their Divergence, the Self-Made possess more agency in establishing Touchstones.

Symbiotes possess Variations with a mind of their own, drawing power from one or more sources with a distinct and separate mind or agenda. If the Deviant is not acting in accordance with the symbiotic entity's traits, they may find their Variations are no longer obedient.

Transmissible Deviants spread their Divergence like a contagion. The Form can infect other human beings during play in much the same way as a disease, with choices made in terms of its transmittable vectors, virulence, and means to resist its advance.

Full details for Forms are found on p. XX, while a fifth form, the Devoted, is detailed on p. XX.

Loyalty and Conviction Touchstones

Each Remade has two conflicting urges pulling at them: Loyalty and Conviction.

A starting Renegade possesses three dots of Conviction and one dot of Loyalty, plus one additional dot of either Conviction or Loyalty based on their Origin.

For each dot, note down a Touchstone — a person (or, more rarely, an object or place) towards whom the Remade feels either hatred or protectiveness, as appropriate. These characters will be significant to the Remade as the chronicle unfolds, so it's important to put some time and thought into who they are and why they matter to the Deviant.

Full details on how Loyalty, Conviction and Touchstones function are found on p. XX.

Acclimation

Every Remade begins with an Acclimation rating of zero dots. This represents the Broken's adaptation to their changed nature, and can improve during the course of the chronicle. A Deviant's player can spend five of his starting Merit dots to begin play at Acclimation 1, or all 10 dots to begin play at Acclimation 2.

Example: *The players' faces light up as Alice announces it's time to pick the characters' powers! Luke already has a pretty strong idea of where he wants to go with the Needle Man theme, but first he needs to decide on Origin and Clade. Origin is easy, as Lee was definitely unwilling and therefore an Exomorph, and Luke notes that this means Lee gets one extra dot of Magnitude in an Overt Variation, and that it's a Scar-free dot, as well as an extra dot in Conviction. Clade is a little harder. Luke goes back and forth between Lee being a Mutant or a Chimeric. He thinks that maybe Lee's spikiness comes from some sort of bizarre fusing or hybridization with sea urchin DNA, but in the end decides that'll probably be a bit silly, so settles on Mutant. He explains that the researchers tried to modify Lee's body to create keratinous natural weaponry and defensive carapace via bio-engineering, and that the spines and spikes are actually the result of the project's failure — it wasn't what the corporation was looking to achieve.*

The chosen threat level gives Luke ten dots to spend on Variations, plus the bonus from Lee's Origin. Several Variations are at the top of Luke's shopping list: he puts three dots into Cutting Weaponry Lash (Envenomed, Grappling, Grave, Piercing) and Enhanced Speed (Fleetness), two dots into Carapace (Leathery) and Hypercompetence (Larceny), and one dot into Brachiation (Wall Crawling). Lee can sprout a coat of barbed, envenomed spines and needles that he can use as weaponry and that protect him. Alice asks where the Enhanced Speed and Hypercompetence come from, and Luke suggests that when the Divergence rewired Lee's nervous system, giving him control over his body's ability to produce the more obvious Variations, it also fine-tuned his reaction speed. The Storyteller points out that Lee is not built as a combat-focused character but has a lot of combat-focused Variations, and wonders whether some of the shape-shifting Variations like Face Thief might work well for him. Luke, though, wants to explore how the character deals with the fact he's been given all these dangerous powers, especially coupled with a Deviant's drive for vengeance. Also, he feels going down the shape-shifting and infiltration route with his powers would result in a very different character to how he sees Lee at the moment.

Luke decides some of Lee's Variations are Controlled — Lee can spend a few moments to make his flesh erupt in these deadly spines, activating Carapace or Cutting Weaponry Lash. Luke figures that the transformation into the Needle Man really hurts, so he takes Perilous Variation at two dots for both Variations (he put his Scar-free dot of Variation from his Origin into Cutting Weaponry Lash). He considers folding both Variations into Hybrid Transformation, instead, but that would either increase the Magnitude of Perilous Variation (which he doesn't want) or decrease the Magnitude of his Lash.

Luke then picks Deterioration at one and two dots for Brachiation and Hypercompetence. He thinks that Lee literally extrudes spikes of strange shapes to help with the Larceny boost, and when he scuttles on walls it can cause some of the spines to break off.

Finally, he picks the Conspicuous Appearance Scar at three dots, combining it with Enhanced Speed. Lee looks unhealthy, maybe oddly mottled and scarred due to the Variations.

With the Variations and Scars done, Luke moves onto Conviction and Loyalty. Due to being an Exomorph Remade, Lee has four dots in Conviction and one in Loyalty, and needs a Touchstone for each dot. Fortunately, the backstory that has emerged as Luke has put the character together makes this easy: he assigns the Conviction Touchstones to the researcher who hit the switch that began the Divergence, the corrupt cop who was the one who arrested Lee and handed him over

to the corporation, and the boss of one of the local gangs who made his life hell and was taking a cut of his profits before Divergence. That leaves one Conviction Touchstone. Luke asks Monika and Arran for ideas as to how he might link up with their characters. Luke ends up assigning his final Conviction Touchstone to one of the esoteric researchers who used occult artifacts to trigger the psychic awakening of Monika's character — he figures Lee stole one of the artifacts from the researcher's home, and so Monika's conspiracy leaned on the police to have Lee picked up and dealt with.

For the Loyalty Touchstone, Luke decides to go with a classic trope and assigns it to Lee's sister. With the parents apparently out of the picture for reasons not yet decided on, Lee sells his stolen goods so that he can pay for the sister to get a better education than he did.

Step Seven: Select Merits

Merits represent additional talents, resources, allies and assets that a character can draw upon. Assign up to ten dots between whichever Merits you choose to round the Remade's capabilities out. Note that Merits classified as Overt are those that are potential vulnerabilities when dealing with conspiracies; the use of such a Merit can help a conspiracy to track the character down.

Additionally, five Merit dots can be spent to raise starting Acclimation to 1, and all 10 can be spent to raise it to 2.

Example: *Luke reads over the Merits list and quickly picks a few out that fit Lee. He grabs Anonymity and Contacts, both at two dots, picking gangs and fences as his connections. Two dots in Safe Place makes sense — Lee has a bolthole for the times the heat gets too much to handle. Finally, he picks three dots in Fleet of Foot, and assigns the last dot to Hypervigilance.*

Step Eight: Determine Advantages

Every character has a set of derived traits that are determined at this stage. These traits are fully defined in Chapter Four. The base values for most advantages are as follows, although some may be modified by merits or other effects:

New Remade begin with a **Stability** of 5 and a **Size** of 5.

Willpower is equal to the character's Resolve + Composure.

Health is equal to the character's Size + Stamina.

Speed is equal to 5 + Strength + Dexterity.

Initiative is equal to the character's Dexterity + Composure.

Defense is equal to the lower of the character's Wits or Dexterity, plus the character's Athletics.

You should also pick a single Aspiration for the character, as described on pg. XX.

Example: *With the rest of the character sheet filled out, Luke runs through the derived traits quickly. He notes Stability and Size of 5; Willpower of 5; Health of 7; Speed of 11, and then increases it to 14 due to Lee's Fleet of Foot; Initiative of 7; and Defense of 5. For Lee's Aspiration, Luke wants an opportunity to explore how Lee's Variations and abilities help him escape his pursuers, so he chooses Escape From A Pursuit.*

Step Nine: Shape Cohort and Conspiracy

At this stage, you should have a character that you are more or less happy with. Further tinkering can yet take place, but now the group as a whole can start talking with more confidence about their cohort. By looking at each others' characters and mulling over how the Remade know each other, what events have dragged them together and what forces prevent them from splitting apart, the group can build a brief background for the cohort that will let them hit the ground running once play begins.

You should also talk to the Storyteller and the other players about the nature of the conspiracy or conspiracies that oppose your characters. You may want to get quite specific about the details of your conspiracy, the kinds of resources they can draw upon and key figures in the organization, but it's fine to work in broad brush-strokes and leave the specifics up to the Storyteller if you desire. You may also want to tie your Remade characters' together through having the same Progenitors or conspiracies. Armed with some ideas from the players about the shape and style of conspiracy they want, the Storyteller can then build each organization with the rules provided on p. XX.

Example: *Luke, Arran, and Monika chat about how their characters know each other. Lee has a tie to Monika's psychic, Amanda, because Lee stole an occult artifact from the conspiracy that inflicted Divergence on Amanda without really knowing what he'd grabbed. Amanda, having escaped her own Progenitor, comes looking for Lee because she hears that a thief had tried to sell the object on the black market — only to find that Lee himself has since been abducted and turned into one of the Remade! Arran, for his part, suggests his character Miguel played a part in Lee's escape. Miguel believed Lee's conspiracy had knowledge about the Progenitor responsible for his own Divergence, and during a break-in to their facilities, freed Lee. Amanda then tracks the two down as they hide in the dark places of the city, using her psychic powers to locate them. Voila — one cohort.*

Discussing the nature of Lee's conspiracy with Alice, Luke thinks they're something of an intermediary — a group of zero-ethics researchers working for a corporation that buys and sells the secrets and results of Divergence with other conspiracies. Luke suggests they're ruthlessly mercantile, interested in profit above all else, and can act as something of a go-between and negotiator between conspiracies — a nexus point in the tangled map of this hidden world. Alice likes the idea, as it gives her an excuse to have the corporation bring in strange resources from other conspiracies, and she can tie Arran and Monika's conspiracies together through it too.

Character Creation Quick Reference

Step One: Determine Chronicle Threat Level

Choose the chronicle's threat level as a group, setting Variation Magnitude and conspiracy Standing.

Step Two: Character Concept

Choose your character's concept.

Step Three: Select Attributes

Prioritize Attribute categories, and spend 5/4/3 dots by category.

Step Four: Select Skills

Prioritize Skill categories, and spend 11/7/4 dots by category.

Step Five: Select Skill Specialties

Choose three Skill Specialties.

Step Six: Divergence

Choose Origin, Clade and any appropriate Forms.

Assign dots in Variations and Scars.

Assign Touchstones (3 Conviction, 1 Loyalty, plus any from Origin).

Set Acclimation to zero.

Step Seven: Select Merits

Assign ten dots of Merits. Five dots can be spent to raise starting Acclimation to 1, or all ten spent to raise it to 2.

Step Eight: Determine Advantages

Stability and Size both begin at 5.

Willpower equals Resolve + Composure.

Health equals Size + Stamina.

Speed equals 5 + Strength + Dexterity.

Initiative equals Dexterity + Composure.

Defense is the lower of Dexterity and Wits, + Athletics.

Pick one Aspiration.

Step Nine: Shape Cohort and Conspiracy

Discuss how the cohort has formed, and the nature of the conspiracies that pursue each character.

Variations & Scars

Start with a number of dots in Variations as set by chronicle threat level and adjusted by Origin. At least half the total Magnitude must be assigned to Universal and Clade Variations. Choose Scars, and note which Variations are combined with which Scars.

Divergence Origins & Clades

[BEGIN TAB TABLE]

Origin Effects

Autourgic / Elect +1 Scar-free Magnitude of Overt Variation, +1 Loyalty

Epimorph / Volunteer +1 Scar-free Magnitude of Subtle Variation, +1 Loyalty

Exomorph / Unwilling +1 Scar-free Magnitude of Overt Variation, +1 Conviction

Genotypal / Born +1 Scar-free Magnitude of Subtle Variation, +1 Conviction

Pathological / Accidental +1 Scar-free Magnitude to any Variation, +1 Conviction or Loyalty, +1 medium Instability

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Clade Effects

Cephalist 1/chapter, +1 Variation Magnitude until the end of the scene (spend Willpower to further increase Magnitude); spend Willpower to reset a 1/scene or 1/chapter Variation or Adaptation.

Chimeric 1/chapter, -2 to a Scar's Magnitude until the end of the scene (spend Willpower to further decrease Magnitude); suffer bashing/lethal damage to reset a 1/scene or 1/chapter Variation or Adaptation.

Coactive 1/chapter, +1 Variation Magnitude until the end of the scene (suffer lethal damage to further increase Magnitude); spend Willpower to reset a 1/scene or 1/chapter Variation or Adaptation.

Invasive 1/chapter, reduce Magnitude of Variations by any amount to heal a like amount of bashing/lethal damage; suffer bashing/lethal damage to reset a 1/scene or 1/chapter Variation or Adaptation.

Mutant 1/chapter, exchange a Variation for a Universal Variation of up to half its Magnitude until the end of the scene; suffer a minor Instability to reset a 1/scene or 1/chapter Variation or Adaptation.

[END TAB TABLE]

Conviction and Loyalty

Divergence damages the part of the Remade's soul that once guided her senses of self and identity, replacing Virtue and Vice with the twin Anchors of Loyalty and Conviction. She defines herself by her interactions with others — specifically those actions driven by love and hate and directed toward a specific person, group, cause, or location.

A Remade's Conviction can run white hot or blisteringly cold. It compels the transformed to do what needs to be done, often forcing her to make hard choices in the pursuit of her designated enemies. It dictates her need to confront anyone who would keep her from pursuing her goals. Conviction is the churning, seething anger that always lurks at the edges of her emotions. It is what makes a Renegade fight, what gives her the courage to escape, and what pushes her to determine her own fate. Conviction serves as a source of Willpower based on her actions.

Where anger and hate guide Conviction, Loyalty represents the Remade's ties to those she cares about deeply and strives to protect — both from herself and from the sinister forces she tangles with. These are those few people who have stood by her since her Divergence, who accepted her how she was before and how she is now. They're the friends and family who refuse to be scared off even when she insists they ought to run, that it's for their own good. They're also the new friends she's made since everything changed. It's hard for a Deviant to maintain relationships, but these ones approach the sacred for her. She'll do anything it takes to protect the people who have earned her trust to this degree. Loyalty restores the Broken's Willpower when she acts to uphold it.

Touchstones

Touchstones invoke strong feelings of hate or love in the Remade, anchoring her to her remaining humanity. Acting for or against a Touchstone helps the Deviant keep her Instabilities from growing worse, while falling short of these obligations shakes her confidence and can trigger disastrous complications.

Whether Conviction or Loyalty, most Touchstones are individual people. Some Broken forge ties with an object, place, or organization, but these are always concrete and localized — something that can be threatened or destroyed by a single actor in a single time and place, whether with a gun or an explosive.

A Deviant hates her Conviction Touchstones with a limitless rage. She recalls them with a passion so deep it always seethes just beneath the surface, ready to boil over. Most are members of the conspiracy that stalks her or created her: her Progenitor, the school administrator who nominated her for the experimental program, the lab tech who injected her with the serum, or the old roommate who invited her along to participate in an obscure ritual. She might even wish to see the lab where she was experimented on destroyed, or the ritual altar smashed. Others have earned her enmity in other ways, such as by threatening a Loyalty Touchstone, standing in the way of the Remade's revenge, or inconveniencing her in other ways: the police officer who keeps hauling her in for questioning, or the neighborhood gang that's always making trouble for the cohort and their allies.

If causing a Conviction Touchstone to suffer is satisfying, killing one outright offers a moment of catharsis. However, resolving a Conviction Touchstone by destroying it does not extinguish the yawning chasm of the Deviant's need to protect or exact vengeance. The Remade who destroys one Conviction Touchstone almost always replaces it with another as soon as possible — or with a Loyalty Touchstone.

The focus of a Loyalty Touchstone is often someone the Deviant knew before her Divergence. This may be an old friend or lover, a partner in crime, or even a former enemy whose past sins now pale in comparison to what her Progenitor did to her. Some Touchstones form after the Renegade goes through her ordeal: the lab assistant who helped her escape, or the member of her cohort who bears an uncanny resemblance to her little sister. They are people who remind her that even though being Remade took away a piece of her humanity, it didn't take all of it. They show the transformed kindness even when — especially when — she's incapable of showing it to herself, and they have her back even if they don't always agree with her choices.

Loyalty Touchstones are the source of both comfort and concern for the Deviant. The Touchstone is the person he goes to when he's troubled, but that means if his enemies are watching, and he's not careful enough, he's putting his friend in the conspiracy's crosshairs. Ruthless conspirators often threaten to harm the Touchstone, following her to work, watching her children on the playground. They make her life difficult, sometimes using bureaucratic frustrations to mask their involvement. Police show up on her doorstep, following up on a tip that she's harboring the fugitive Renegade. Child services pays a visit based on an anonymous call from a concerned party. Some conspirators contact the Touchstone directly, attempting to turn her against the Remade or suggesting they can protect her from him if he grows violent. They try their best to sow seeds of doubt between them.

Upsetting the Broken's loved ones is a combination of a taunt and a threat. The conspiracy wants the Renegade to know they're watching, to know they're keeping tabs on where he goes and who he values. Anything they can do to throw their target off-balance is just fine by the conspiracy. In

extreme cases, the Deviant's enemies kidnap his Touchstones or put them in physical danger. While this can draw the Remade out of hiding or make him come to the table and negotiate, it also serves to fuel his hate and determination against the conspirators involved. Overtly threatening a Touchstone can backfire — a Touchstone is much less likely to be off the grid, and therefore will be missed by other people in her life if she suddenly stops showing up for work or her children don't come to school. Conspirators usually deploy these extreme tactics sparingly, and only when they're certain they can minimize the fallout.

Touchstones and Subplots

Touchstones, it should be noted, usually have lives of their own outside of the Remade's intrigues. Sometimes, the trouble a Touchstone finds herself embroiled in is a mess of her own making and has nothing at all to do with a conspiracy's machinations. Just because they're more mundane matters doesn't mean she isn't threatened or in danger. These types of subplots make for interesting story fodder and offer a chance to explore and develop the relationship between the Deviant and his Touchstone. They can provide something for a Renegade to do between bringing down one part of a conspiracy and discovering the next piece of the web, or can affect the main plot, with the Touchstone's troubles eventually leading back to the conspiracy in some way.

Faltering

Renegades often pick the worst option out of a handful of already bad ones. Their self-destructive tendencies mean they run toward danger or mouth off to the wrong person at the worst time to provoke a fight. It also means they push away the people who care about them, and sometimes lash out rather than accept a hand up out of their dark places.

When a Deviant makes a conscious choice to act counter to her Conviction or Loyalty, she has **Faltered**. Her sense of self is shaken, and she can't help but wonder: if she failed on this, what about all the other truths she's declared for herself since her Divergence? Even when her reasons for turning away are justified, guilt slips into the cracks in her soul and takes root. Her Variations and Scars give her the potential to be monstrous, but her Conviction and Loyalty are what keep her from giving in to it completely. And now she's weakened that resolve. She questions herself: was she ever worthy of that person's love? Is she too weak to take on the conspiracy? Who does she think she's kidding?

Faltering affects her relationships, too. The conspiracy gains ground on her, or gets away with information she could have used to bring them down. Those who know the Renegade is pursuing them feel emboldened by her failure. The person she's Loyal to loses some faith in her, feels hurt and angry and betrayed. Depending on the degree of the Renegade's neglect, the Touchstone might back off from the relationship awhile, or cut ties entirely. Eventually, the Remade's actions — or indifference — toward a target clues them in to the fact something's changed.

Faltering forces the transformed to face her own vulnerability, and her uncertainty is made manifest in increasing Instabilities and worsening Scars. If she suffers from hallucinations, she hears the voice of the person she failed in her head, accusing her of letting them down. The severity of her bane increases, her aversion to the material growing even more painful. Her Variations grow unreliable, firing off when she hasn't activated them or sputtering out when she's reminded of how she's failed her friend.

Conflicting Interests

Conviction and Loyalty occasionally pull the Remade in opposite directions. She receives word of a meeting between her Progenitor and a supplier that night, and on the heels of it answers a desperate phone call from her best friend, who has just been arrested on bogus charges. She can't be in both places at once. The meeting's a once-in-a-lifetime chance to get intel, but she can't let her friend rot at the precinct for hours on end, especially when the Renegade is the friend's alibi.

Either she lets a chance to strike at the conspiracy slip away, or she fails one of the people in the world who cares about her most. Which does she choose?

There are no good options here, and yet she has to actively choose one of them. Acting counter to her Touchstones shakes her carefully curated sense of self to the core. She's worked so hard since her Divergence to define who she is, and now one of those things is untrue.

Failing to go to the meeting goes against her Conviction. Does it mean she's not as dedicated as she should be to bringing down the conspiracy? Has she let her cohort down? Was she a little relieved at not going, and what does that say about her?

Failing to go bail out her friend goes against her Loyalty. If the situation were reversed, her friend would have dropped everything to come get her out of holding — probably has. Probably more than once. What if she gets roughed up in that cell? What if they somehow make the charges stick? How can the Renegade say she'll do anything to protect her friend if she leaves her there, waiting?

All is not necessarily lost. Friendships can sometimes be repaired and reaffirmed, though it might take time and mean eating a healthy amount of crow. The Renegade can recommit to breaking up a conspiracy — if she dig deeps, she'll feel that anger surge once more. Fixing these things steadies her, confirming that she is the person she declared herself to be. It might take time for the Scars to settle down, and some are likely there to stay, but she's adjusted to a new normal before. She can do it again if she has to.

Switching Sides

Touchstones are (usually) human, and that means they lead complex inner lives and make hard choices, just like the Renegade does. Both the Broken's actions and those of the conspiracy she's tangling with can force a Touchstone to act in a way that makes the Remade reassess their relationship, for good or ill.

Deviants live in a near-constant state of paranoia when it comes to other people. With each new encounter, they have to wonder if this person is working for a conspiracy or the cops. Do they recognize the Deviant from that segment on the news a month or so back? Are they going to reach for their cell phone and call the tipline as soon as her back is turned?

When it comes to her Loyalty Touchstone, the transformed lets her guard down a bit. This person understands her struggles and her fears, and may even know the dangers the Renegade faces — whether they're from the conspiracies hunting her, or are situations the Renegade gets herself into out of sheer recklessness. They have the Remade's Loyalty because they're the ones who say "I believe you." Every time.

Which makes it all the worse when that person betrays her.

Loved ones may not even realize they're doing harm — the conspiracies can be frighteningly convincing in their deception, and often play on a family member's concern for the Renegade's well-being to get information out of them. Sometimes, their betrayal comes from trying to protect the Broken from her own self-destructive actions. The phrases "I'm doing this for your own good" and "This is for your own best interests" make a Deviant's blood run cold.

Other times, the Touchstone has simply had enough. The Renegade has brought trouble to her doorstep one too many times, and she has to put her own safety or her family's well-being first.

Love and hate exist on a spectrum for the transformed, and the anger and asperity that goes along with feeling betrayed can flip the Touchstone from Loyalty to Conviction. How can she trust that person again? How could they have sold her out?

Likewise, someone the Deviant has been gunning for might surprise them in the opposite direction. A conspiracy member realizes — through his own digging, or through information the Renegade has exposed — that he's working for the wrong side. He can't change what's been done, but he can help prevent it from happening to other people. Earning the Broken's trust takes time. The Deviant can't help but be skeptical. She second-guesses her former-enemy's motives, expects favors to come with caveats and that every meeting will end in a trap. But eventually, when the source proves himself to be reliable and sincere, he stops being the Renegade's sworn enemy and becomes her trusted friend.

Until, of course, he lets her down.

This push and pull can be exhausting, but Deviants cling to it like a lifeline. Their Convictions and Loyalties tie them to their humanity, and letting go leaves them adrift in dangerous waters. Abandoning or ignoring these drives puts them at risk of going the way of the Ferals — monstrous, uncaring, inhuman, and dangerous.

Systems

- Starting Renegade characters begin with at least three dots in Conviction and one in Loyalty, which Origin then modifies (see Chapter One). The sum of Loyalty and Conviction is never more than five. Each dot has one associated Touchstone, a character toward whom the Renegade feels a particularly strong hatred or protectiveness.
- After a scene in which the Renegade makes progress toward one of her Conviction Touchstones, she gains one Willpower and takes a Beat. Once per chapter, when she risks danger or suffers for her Loyalty Touchstone, she regains all Willpower.
- If a Touchstone is destroyed or killed, or when a Touchstone falls to Wavering, the Broken's Loyalty or Conviction falls by one (depending on which Trait the Touchstone was attached to). If both Loyalty and Conviction reach 0, the Deviant goes Feral (p. XX).
- Once per chapter, the Remade may declare a new Touchstone to fill an open Touchstone slot — the player's choice of Loyalty or Conviction. This Touchstone begins at Wavering, and therefore doesn't increase the character's Loyalty or Conviction, unless it is successfully affirmed (p. XX).
- A Touchstone may switch from Loyalty to Conviction (or vice versa) without Wavering first, as long as the Touchstone itself remains the same. This immediately changes the rating of Loyalty/Conviction — increasing one and decreasing the other. When the Broken's best friend betrays her, for example, her rage is so instantaneous she doesn't pause to consider why her

friend might have done such a thing, increasing Conviction by one and decreasing Loyalty by one, in turn.

- Abandoning an existing Touchstone and replacing it with a new one is a two-step process. First, the Renegade must cut ties with the old Touchstone, therefore losing a point of Loyalty or Conviction. This counts the same as his declaring a new Touchstone action for the chapter. Once the next chapter begins, he may name his new Touchstone, which begins at Wavering.
- Acting counter to his Touchstone — failing to pursue the subject of a Conviction Touchstone or abandoning a Loyalty Touchstone in a time of need — means the Renegade has **Faltered**. The player rolls his current trait rating as a dice pool to determine the severity of the damage to the relationship:
- Supporting or acting against Touchstones also affects the Deviant's long-term Stability (p. XX).

Roll Results

Success: The character's devotion to the Touchstone remains firm, although the strain of Faltering increases his Instability. Both trait and Touchstone remain in place, but he suffers a minor Instability.

Exceptional Success: The character remains both steadfast in his commitment to the Touchstone and grounded. As Success, but the character does not suffer a minor Instability.

Failure: The character partially closes himself off to his commitment to the Touchstone. The Touchstone becomes Wavering, reducing his Loyalty or Conviction trait by one. If the Touchstone was already Wavering, he loses it entirely and cannot reestablish a connection to the same Touchstone during the current chapter. In addition, the character suffers a minor Instability.

Dramatic Failure: The lapse deals serious damage to the character's soul. As Failure, but he instead suffers a medium Instability.

The Renegade can also attempt to **affirm a Wavering Touchstone**, strengthening his friendship or rekindling his hatred for a conspirator. When he acts in support of a Wavering Touchstone such that he would allow him to heal Instability (whether or not he actually has any), he does not receive the normal benefits of acting in support of the Wavering Touchstone. Instead, the Touchstone is no longer Wavering, and the Renegade gains a dot in Conviction/Loyalty (as appropriate).

Example: Chris is playing Peter, who, with the help of his best friend Jack, has conned his way into a private party for the pharmaceutical company that experimented on him. He's nearly close enough to lift the CFO's phone when there's a commotion and a security officer holds Jack at gunpoint. Peter hasn't been found out yet; another couple of minutes and he can have that phone and all the incriminating evidence on it. But they're leading Jack away, and Peter knows what happens to trespassers here. Cursing, he turns away from the CFO and slips out into the corridor after Jack.

Peter has upheld his Loyalty Touchstone for the first time this chapter, so Chris marks all of Peter's Willpower points as restored. However, because Peter failed to get that phone, Chris makes a Faltering test. He rolls three dice for Peter's Conviction. The roll fails, setting the

Conviction Touchstone he was pursuing — the CFO — to Wavering and dropping his dots in Conviction down to two.

- Remade are more likely to trust the instincts and suggestions that come from her Loyalty Touchstones, and look warily on those that her Conviction Touchstones offer up. If a Conviction Touchstone is trying to socially maneuver the Deviant, she suffers a penalty equal to the Deviant's Conviction Trait. Likewise, when the Broken's Loyalty Touchstone is trying to spur her to act a certain way, she receives a number of bonus dice equal to the Deviant's Loyalty. Conviction and Loyalty also impact the Deviant's Doors in social maneuvering (p. XX).
- Having a Touchstone adds a level of solidity to the Renegade's actions concerning that person. All Deviants share the Stubborn Resolve Adaptation (p. XX), which helps them resist supernatural mental influence when acting in support of a Touchstone. In addition, social maneuvering meant to support or
- Renegades with the Progenitor Merit receive a Touchstone that can't be discarded. However, the Renegade's relationship with that Progenitor can fluctuate between Loyalty and Conviction over the course of her story. If the Renegade acts against the trait her Progenitor is associated with, she still rolls Faltering as normal, but may not lose the Touchstone. However, when the Touchstone would become Wavering, she may instead move it to the other trait (Loyalty to Conviction or Conviction to Loyalty) to prevent it from becoming Wavering.

The Devoted

Devoted believe in their conspiracies' aims, and in many ways have opposing goals and experiences than their Renegade kin. This is reflected in how they approach Loyalty and Conviction.

Devoted characters begin with three dots in Loyalty and one in Conviction. However, they apply their Origin's traits the same as Renegades. An Elective Devotee begins with 4 Loyalty and 1 Conviction, for example.

For the Devoted, the benefits of upholding Loyalty and Conviction are the opposite of Renegades. After a scene during which the Devoted pursued his Loyalty, he gains a Willpower and a Beat; upholding his Conviction restores his full Willpower pool once per chapter. Although their Scars and Instabilities still increase the same way Renegades' do when they Falter, Devoted have access to help and treatment from their conspiracies that make those things more manageable.

Touchstones and Stability

The Broken's Touchstones are what keeps the ground under her feet solid, and what sates her soul, either by offering a safe, calm place for her worries, or by letting her fury and frustrations run free. When her actions make her Touchstones waver, or force her to reevaluate her worldview, her stability is threatened. Most events that mete out Instability or heal it are related to the Deviant's interactions with her Touchstones (p. XX).

Sample Touchstones

Below are some sample Touchstones a Renegade might focus on. Though they're divided up between Loyalty and Conviction, they contain elements of story hooks for each, signaling the Touchstone's potential to move between the two traits over the course of the story.

Loyalty

The Childhood Friend: She's known you forever. That awful haircut in second grade? She gave you her hat to cover it up. When your girlfriend dumped you in front of the whole cafeteria, she came to your house and listened to sad songs with you for hours. She knew all your secrets back then, so when they took you and changed you, she's the one you knew would still recognize you despite the things they'd done. She used to say she'd help you hide the bodies. Back then, it was a joke.

The Co-worker: You sat next to each other in the cube farm for years, went out for the occasional post-work drink, but that was about it. When you stopped showing up at the office, you figured the only person who missed you was your boss, and only because he had to do your tedious paperwork until he found a replacement. But when the doorbell rang, your ex-coworker was there with a six-pack in one hand and a laptop in the other, ready to get to work.

The Ex-lover: You were good together, at first. Things were better in bed than out of it, though, and after a while, that wasn't enough to sustain either of you. Still, you stayed in touch, maybe even hooked up a few times. You helped him through bad breakups. He helped you through your Divergence. He tells it like it is, whether you want to hear it or not, and that's exactly what you need from him.

The Frenemy: You were never quite sure if he genuinely liked you, or if he was only nice to you because circumstances made you rivals. Academically, professionally, wherever either of you went, there the other was, climbing the same damned ladder to the top. He knows your habits and your weaknesses, how determined you can be and what distracts you from your goals. Competing with him made you try harder, and you both became experts in your field. When you went to ground, they deactivated all your clearances. His keycard, however, still works.

The Mentee: She's so smart it's painful. She reminds you of yourself when you were her age: young and bright and so optimistic. You try not to let her see too much of what the world — and the conspiracies — have done to you, but. Well. She's so smart. If she hasn't picked up on it already, she will soon enough, and that terrifies you. Curiosity got you into this. You don't want to imagine her being lured down the same path.

The Partner in Crime: If it wasn't nailed down, you two stole it. Hell, even if it was. Didn't matter what — jewelry, cash, weird artifacts from the museum — you could get in, take the prize, and get out undetected. The pay was good, but the thrill was what mattered, and the best part was, you were a team. Since you were Remade, it's been a little different. You're more careful about which jobs you take, but she's willing to let you call the shots. It also doesn't hurt that your Variations make the heists go that much smoother.

The Research Assistant: He did all the boring bits, and you got all the glory. He was right there with you as you made the interesting discoveries, but it was your name that got published in the academic journals. He didn't mind, though; he was in it for the science and the opportunity to learn from one of the best. When you drank the serum, he stood there, clipboard poised. When you came to three days later, he was there, notes in hand.

The Roommate: You pulled a tab off a flyer at the bar: "Roommate Wanted. Requirements: Don't Suck." Apparently you passed muster, because she offered you the room. She keeps odd hours and mostly sticks in her room when she's home, but she keeps the medicine cabinet stocked with migraine medicine for when your headaches get bad, and doesn't complain when

members of your cohort crash on the couch. Last week, she got rid of the Devoted who came knocking, no questions asked.

Conviction

The Company Man: "I just work here," he said, as he helped them strap you down. "You know how it is." Maybe he didn't know what the procedure entailed. Maybe he didn't know what it did to you, after. But he sure as hell knew you didn't want to be there. You were quite vocal about that. What if he'd stood up for you? What if one goddamned person in that goddamned place had said "NO," had said "stop," had done anything other than smile politely and avert their eyes?

The Cultist: You're not sure she even knew your name. She asked for it, sure, along with your date of birth — down to the hour — and whether the sight of blood made you squeamish. Those were the important bits. Maybe if you'd been born under different stars, she'd have moved on to someone else, but you were the one she picked to be a vessel for her god on Earth. You never got her name, but oh, you remember her face.

The Operating Theater: You smell it in your dreams, that gagging antiseptic stench mixed with the acrid smell of bone as the saw bites in. The doctors' faces are blurs in the crowd, looking down on you dispassionately. To them, you were only a thing, like a skeleton or a cadaver, only they needed a specimen whose heart still beat. You never want to go back there, but every time you close your eyes you're on that gurney again. Maybe, if that room was gone, your nightmares would stop, too.

The Progenitor: It doesn't matter that she needed an entire organization and its infrastructure to make her experiments possible. It doesn't matter that a dozen other people witnessed the ritual. Anyone else, they were bystanders or cogs in a machine, but this person, this one, solitary individual — she's the one who did this to you. Maybe she convinced you it was a fantastic idea beforehand, that you'd be yourself-but-better after it was done. Maybe she pointed her heavies at you and said "That one." However it went down, she's the one responsible for your Divergence and all that came after, and you're going to make her pay for what she did to you.

The Recruiter: He had a bright smile and a pocketful of pamphlets. The study offered money at a time when you were strapped for cash, or access to a group of people you could share your worries with and not be judged. He had an answer for every question you asked — honest and smart and informative answers, not hedges and half-truths. He charmed you, just a bit. You let him. Did he buy what he was selling? You don't know. Did he know what they'd do to you, once you signed their forms? You don't care. You're going to find him, and cramming those pamphlets down his throat will just be the start.

The Thief: Her science was at least two years behind yours. There's no way she caught up that fast. She didn't have the resources, and you'd read her white papers — she was on the wrong track, but you weren't going to correct her. Then one day she was breathing down your neck, discovery-wise, and you knew the only way that was possible was if she'd gotten access to your lab and stolen your research. There wasn't time for animal trials or any safety precautions: if she beat you to it, she'd get the patents and the money and the fame, and you'd be a footnote. You went straight to testing on human subjects: yourself. If you'd had time for animal trials and tests, maybe you wouldn't be in such constant agony. But you had to do this. She forced your hand.

Stability

Stability measures the extent and progression of a Deviant's mutations as she retreats farther from human society and loses control of her powers. After her Divergence, a Remade must relearn who she is and what she stands for. Her world has fundamentally changed — not only due to those alterations brought about by her Variations and Scars, but by that part of her soul they've broken as they anchored in.

She also works to control her Variations. Getting a grasp on her powers is essential: she needs to keep them in check to avoid harming innocents and be able to unleash them on the conspiracies that hunt her. When a Variation fails or responds in an erratic manner, the results can be catastrophic. The Deviant's body reacts, her Scars intensifying in response to the power fluctuation or to the Renegade's own panicked reaction. Sometimes, she can get them back under control, by focusing on the things that ground her. She protects her loved ones. She pours her rage into dismantling the conspiracy. If a Deviant is unable to rein in her Instabilities, she risks a horrifying spiral that leads to further mutation, madness, and possibly, death.

When the character neglects her Touchstones or feels her carefully constructed sense of self shaken, her Stability is wounded and she gains an Instability. Instabilities are measured in three degrees of severity: minor, medium, and major.

When the character has taken sufficient levels of Instability, her Scars grow more severe and difficult to control. Minor Instabilities aren't always immediately obvious. Scars flare up more often, and Involuntary Variations (p. XX) rage out of control longer. Most Deviants regard minor Instabilities as an ever-present, if unwelcome, companion. Few remain completely free of Instability for long, if ever.

Medium Instabilities get harder to overlook. Like a mole that is noticeably larger than it was a week ago or a mysterious lump where no lump should be, such Instabilities make themselves a constant source of worry for the Remade. He might try to shrug off the increased frequency of memories glitching on him as simply being distracted. He can hide smaller wounds and subtle changes to his body by dressing carefully to conceal any unusual growths. But no matter how much he tries to pretend everything is normal, the Broken recognizes these are signs that something is seriously wrong.

Major Instabilities are impossible to ignore, representing as they do a truly existential threat to the Deviant. Each such injury to the Remade's fractured soul comes with a new Scar, symptoms that worsen exponentially with each new spiritual tumor. Many Broken never fully recover from a major Instability, for such damage is exceptionally stubborn.

Marking Instability

The character's Stability track contains a number of boxes equal to 5 + his Acclimation.

Instabilities are marked off from left to right, with the most severe injuries in the leftmost box, pushing the least severe further to the right as injuries accrue. When healing Instabilities, the rightmost boxes are healed first, progressing to the left.

At the start of a story, the character marks off a number of minor Instabilities equal to the Magnitude of her highest Variation.

When a character suffers a minor Instability, mark it with a slash (/) in the empty box farthest to the left on her Stability track.

When a character suffers a medium Instability, mark it with an X in the box farthest to the left that doesn't already contain a medium or major Instability. If this marks over a minor Instability, that minor Instability moves one box to the right.

When a character suffers a major Instability, mark it with a large asterisk (*) in the box farthest to the left that doesn't already contain a major Instability. If this marks over a medium or minor Instability, those shift to the right.

Example: Peter has eight boxes in his Stability track (5 plus his Acclimation of 3.) He has failed to help out one of his Loyalty Touchstones, and has to test for Faltering, granting him a minor Instability. His Stability boxes look like this:

[[PLEASE CREATE A LINE OF EIGHT BOXES, WITH A \ IN THE BOX FARTEST TO THE LEFT, LIKE THE HEALTH TRACK EXAMPLE ON P. 95 OF THE CHRONICLES OF DARKNESS CORE BOOK.]]

If he later takes a medium Instability, his Stability boxes look like this:

[[PLEASE CREATE A LINE OF EIGHT BOXES, WITH AN X IN THE THE BOX FARTEST TO THE LEFT AND A \ IN THE ONE NEXT TO IT, AS ON P. 95 OF THE COD CORE]]

If he then takes a major Instability, his Stability boxes look like this:

[[PLEASE CREATE A LINE OF EIGHT BOXES, WITH A LARGE ASTERISK IN THE BOX FARTEST TO THE LEFT, AN X IN THE NEXT BOX, AND A \ IN THE THIRD BOX, AS ON P. 95 OF THE COD CORE.]]

Upgrading Instability

If the character's Stability track is filled with minor Instabilities, each subsequent minor Instability she receives upgrades the leftmost Instability from minor to medium. Turn the slash farthest to the left into an X.

Example: After a particularly bad week filled with setbacks and frustration, Peter has filled his Stability track with minor Instabilities. His boxes look like this:

[[PLEASE CREATE A LINE OF EIGHT BOXES, WITH A SLASH IN EVERY BOX.]]

While chasing after a Devoted, he suffers a Dramatic Failure when he attempts to activate one of his Variations. This gives him a new minor Instability, but since his track is already full, the leftmost minor Instability on the track becomes a medium one:

[[PLEASE CREATE A LINE OF EIGHT BOXES, WITH AN X IN THE FIRST BOX ON THE LEFT AND A SLASH IN THE SEVEN REMAINING BOXES.]]

If the character's Stability track is filled with medium Instabilities, each subsequent Instability she receives upgrades an existing medium Instability to a major one. Turn the X farthest to the left into an asterisk.

Consequences

Unlike Health (p. XX) Stability has no wound penalties. However, the number of Instabilities marked off does have mechanical effects:

- Every minor, medium, or major Instability in the last (rightmost) five boxes imposes a 1-die penalty on Scar Resistance rolls (p. XX).
- Every medium or major Instability in the last five boxes adds one Magnitude to a Scar. This cannot create new Scars.
- For every major Instability in the last five boxes, the player must choose a new, unentangled Scar. This Scar's Magnitude must adhere to the rules for new unentangled Scars (p. XX).
- If the rightmost box is filled with a major Instability, the characters' mutations have progressed too far beyond his ability to adapt or heal, and he gains the End Stage Condition (p. XX).

Stabilizer

A character with the Stabilizer Merit (p. XX) possesses an item or receives a treatment that blunts some of the impact of Instability and helps keep certain Scars under control.

As Instabilities only carry consequences when adding Magnitude to Scars in the last five boxes, dots in Acclimation give the character additional Stability boxes she can fill with no consequences attached.

[[PLEASE CREATE A LINE OF EIGHT BOXES WITH AN ASTERISK IN THE FIRST BOX, XS IN BOX TWO AND THREE, AND SLASHES IN THE LAST FIVE.]]

Example: Peter has suffered a major Instability, two medium Instabilities, and five minor ones. Because he has an Acclimation of three, this means that only his Scars linked to an Involuntary Variation increase by a Magnitude of 1. As all of his medium and major Instabilities are currently in the three boxes on the left, his other Scars stay at the same Magnitude.

Later in the scene, Peter tries to activate one of his Variations and suffers a Dramatic Failure, adding a minor Instability to his Stability track. It now looks like this:

[[PLEASE CREATE A LINE OF EIGHT BOXES WITH AN ASTERISK IN THE FIRST BOX, XS IN BOX TWO, THREE, AND FOUR, AND SLASHES IN THE LAST FOUR.]]

Since his track was full of minor Instabilities, the leftmost minor Instability was upgraded to medium, which places a medium Instability in one of the last five boxes. Peter must now add one Magnitude to a Scar.

Causes

Instability rears its head when the Remade feels her grasp on her humanity slip. It stems from a loss of control, either over her powers or in her ability to navigate her relationships with her Touchstones. The following situations create Instability:

- At the start of a story, the character marks off a number of minor Instabilities equal to the Magnitude of her highest Variation.

- At the end of each chapter during which the character did not further one or more Touchstones, the character suffers a minor Instability.
- A Dramatic Failure on a Scar Finesse or Scar Resistance roll (p. XX) causes a minor Instability.
- A Success or a Failure result on a Faltering roll causes a minor Instability, while a Dramatic Failure causes a medium Instability.
- The death (or permanent destruction) of a Loyalty Touchstone causes a medium Instability.

Additionally, some Scars, Variations, and Adaptations may inflict Instability, leading the Deviant toward a dangerous spiral of Instability and mutation unless she finds a way to halt its progress.

Healing Instability

Instabilities do not simply heal with time. The blows to a Remade's psyche require more than just thinking about what she did, or giving herself some distance from the act. In fact, withdrawing from human contact only exacerbates her Instability. Instead, the transformed must actively work to shore up her relationships with and her approaches to her Touchstones. By acting in support of her Loyalty Touchstones or pursuing her Conviction Touchstones, she pulls herself back toward more stable spiritual ground, and her mind and body respond in kind. The mutations she's suffered recede, and her control over her Variations returns.

- Once per scene, acting in concert with her Conviction Touchstone heals one minor Instability or downgrades a medium Instability to minor.
- Once per scene, acting in support of her Loyalty Touchstone heals one medium or minor Instability.
- Killing or otherwise permanently destroying a Conviction Touchstone heals one major, medium, or minor Instability.
- By gaining a new permanent Scar, the Deviant may downgrade one major Instability to medium, or heal one medium or minor Instability (p. XX). This is limited to once per chapter and is not available once all Stability boxes are filled with major Instability.

Example: Peter's Stability track looks like this:

[[PLEASE CREATE A LINE OF EIGHT BOXES WITH AN ASTERISK IN THE LEFTMOST BOX, AN XS IN THE NEXT BOX, AND A / IN THE NEXT TWO BOXES.]]

Peter has tracked down his hated Progenitor (and Conviction Touchstone) and tailed him to his lab. Peter isn't ready to confront him yet, but he did catch the passcode to the lab's rear door and plans to visit after hours. He's confident he's one step closer to shutting his Progenitor's operation down. Because he's acted against his Conviction Touchstone, he can heal a minor Instability:

[[PLEASE CREATE A LINE OF EIGHT BOXES WITH AN ASTERISK IN THE LEFTMOST BOX, AN XS IN THE NEXT BOX, AND A / IN THE NEXT BOX.]]

Before he has a chance to go to the lab, though, Peter gets a frantic phone call from Carol, his childhood friend and a Loyalty Touchstone. He goes to her aid and resolves the crisis that prompted the call. Because he has acted in support of a Loyalty Touchstone, he heals a medium Instability:

[[PLEASE CREATE A LINE OF EIGHT BOXES WITH AN ASTERISK IN THE LEFTMOST BOX AND A / IN THE NEXT BOX.]]

Peter breaks into the lab, hoping to catch his Progenitor by surprise and kill him, which would heal a major Instability (for destroying a Conviction Touchstone):

[[PLEASE CREATE A LINE OF EIGHT BOXES WITH AN / IN THE LEFTMOST BOX.]]

Matters go poorly, however, and his Progenitor escapes. The Scar the major Instability has been worsening has become difficult for Peter to cope with, though. He wants to eliminate that major Instability. He develops a new Scar, permanently worsening his Broken condition but downgrading the major Instability to medium:

[[PLEASE CREATE A LINE OF EIGHT BOXES WITH AN X IN THE LEFTMOST BOX AND A / IN THE NEXT BOX.]]

The next time Peter helps Carol out of whatever trouble has come to her, he can heal the remaining medium Instability.

[[PLEASE CREATE A LINE OF EIGHT BOXES WITH A / IN THE LEFTMOST BOX.]]

In addition to the Renegade working to uphold his Touchstones, some Variations, Scars, Conditions, and Merits may also grant him the ability to heal an Instability.

Normally, when Instability heals, the increased Magnitude of Scars and any new Scars go away. However, a player may choose to permanently increase the Magnitude of one, some, or all Variations entangled with that Scar (which does not cost Experiences), or to spend Experiences to choose a new Variation to entangle it with (see p. XX). This purchase can be made mid-scene, when the Instability first occurs, or after the dust has settled. In either case, once the Instability heals, the Scar's Magnitude remains at its new rating.

End Stage Condition

The Divergence has reached a terminal stage, as new mutations proliferate and existing ones worsen beyond the capacity of the human mind and body to compensate for them. Any of the Deviant's Magnitude 5 Variations (as well as those of lower Magnitude that represent the maximum Magnitude for that Variation) exceed their usual capabilities and activate immediately. A character with Gigantic 5 might grow to Size 30, for example, or a per-scene, per-chapter, or per-story limit might not apply to a Variation that normally has one. Although this can be potent, it is primarily a narrative effect — the explosive power of a supernova that will leave only a dead star behind.

Unless the character resolves this Condition by the end of the current chapter, he dies. No medical intervention, Variation, or supernatural influence can prevent or reverse this death. The forces at work are too much for the human body to bear, and the Deviant's cracked soul shatters beyond repair.

Possible Sources: Suffering a major Instability in the character's rightmost Stability box.

Resolution: Heal a major Instability by destroying a Conviction Touchstone.

Forms

No two Broken are exactly alike, but some Remade are more unlike their kind than others. By default, a Deviant has a single, nearly human mind, his Variations do not possess a will of their own, his condition is not contagious, and he is a Renegade who is not directly responsible for his Divergence. **Forms** represent cases where some or all of these are not true.

Like Clades, Forms color the Remade's Scars and Variations. They do not cost Experiences, nor are they mutually exclusive. One of the Broken may be both Self-Made and a Symbiote.

However, with a few exceptions handled within the story and subject to Storyteller approval, any Forms must be chosen during character creation. Each Form comes with special rules. The most common Forms are Amalgam, Devoted, Self-Made, Symbiote, and Transmittable. The rules for Devoted are covered in Chapter Five (p. XX).

Amalgam

Before the Divergence, the Broken was two or more distinct, sapient beings, and his memories are a patchwork of their experiences. Most Amalgams consist solely of human partners, but some are people fused with supernatural creatures from this world or stranger ones. Most Amalgams involve the combination of two beings. However, some are a gestalt of three, five, or even a hundred formerly distinct creatures.

Amalgam personalities are usually a seamless fusion of their source material, recombining traits so that the Deviant's temperament resembles a child born of the amalgamated beings. Some can identify whose memories originally belonged to whom, while others find it impossible to tell the difference anymore.

Systems: During character creation, the Amalgam's player may reduce the number of Skill dots available to him by no more than six (from 22 to 16). Each dot sacrificed grants the Amalgam access to a like number of temporary Skill dots each chapter, which can be used to gain a new Skill or raise an existing Skill (to a maximum rating of five dots). Such knowledge fades at the end of the scene. These floating Skill dots can be called upon one at a time, all at once, or anywhere in between, and they can be stacked onto a single Skill or spread out across multiple Skills.

Self-Made

Unlike the vast majority of transformed, the Self-Made has no one but herself to blame for her Divergence. Self-Made are their own Progenitors and so cannot purchase the Progenitor Merit (see p. XX). Some used themselves as a test subject. Others were meddling with forces beyond their understanding and fell victim to accident. Many Self-Made do not immediately come to the attention of a conspiracy, unless they already belonged to one. This means that although the experience of Divergence is as traumatic for the Self-Made as it is for other Broken, they often have an opportunity to shape their response to this singular experience in a thoughtful way. This is very different from other Deviants, who usually begin their new lives with a desperate grasping at any social connection that will keep them from drowning in Instability.

Systems: During character creation, the Self-Made's player may opt to begin play with an alternate distribution of Conviction and Loyalty dots. The Loyalty/Conviction dot granted by the transformed's Origin remains, but she may assign the other four dots in any combination of Loyalty and Conviction. She may even choose not to assign some or all of these starting dots, establishing Touchstones during play (p. XX). The Broken must have at least one Touchstone when play begins.

In addition, the Self-Made will not become Feral as long as she has at least one Wavering Touchstone. However, if she has one or more Wavering Touchstones and only one empty Touchstone slot, her player cannot select a new Wavering Touchstone.

Symbiote

The Deviant's Variations have a mind of their own. He may draw power from a demon that has been bound to him, for example, or maybe his cybernetic implants occasionally override his commands. This consciousness can be an invaluable ally where its goals and personality mesh with the Remade's own, but it can pose a significant liability when he attempts to act contrary to its wishes. Some sapient manifestations of occult power are open with the Deviant regarding these desires. Others are more secretive or simply less able to communicate their needs to him.

Systems: During character creation, the Symbiote's player chooses the complexity of the motives the Deviant's Variations possess — expressed as one or two short-term Aspirations and/or one long-term Aspiration. The Symbiote's player does not choose the specifics of these Aspirations (that is the purview of the Storyteller) — only the number and type. While these resemble the Aspirations of Baseline humans (p. XX), the motives of a Symbiote's Variations can be as alien as the power that grants them.

Once per chapter, when the Deviant makes a roll related to activating or controlling a Variation, the entity may choose to involve itself if doing so would further its motives (or if failing to do so would thwart its desires). This grants a bonus or imposes a penalty based on the type of motive involved:

[BEGIN TABLE]

Furtheres a long-term Aspiration: +/-1

Resolves a short-term Aspiration: +/-3

Resolves a long-term Aspiration: +/-5

[END TABLE]

If multiple motives apply to the situation, use only the most potent. Ordinarily, the Storyteller chooses which roll is affected, but the Symbiote may attempt to convince it to use its influence at a particular time with an appropriate Social action — typically a task of from a single turn to a few minutes.

If the entity successfully resolves an Aspiration, the Storyteller may choose a new one.

Chimeric vs. Amalgam vs. Symbiote vs. Alternate Persona

All of these reflect different beings (or parts of them) coexisting within a single Deviant, but they do so in distinct ways:

A **Chimeric** fusion involves multiple species and is usually physical, although some Hybrids retain elements of the donor's personality or even a few memories. Moreover, the comingling is frequently unequal, capturing a few traits of one species and implanting them into another.

An **Amalgam** fusion involves multiple sapient beings and is usually mental. Their memories are a patchwork, but their mingled personalities are perfectly harmonious.

A **Symbiote** fusion involves multiple motives contained within a single body — sometimes in harmony, sometimes opposed. However, the symbiote does not exercise direct control over the Deviant's body.

The **Alternate Persona Scar** (p. XX) reflects personalities that share control over a body, with each consciousness spending some time in the pilot's seat.

Transmissible

Some forms of Divergence are contagious. They spread like a disease, potentially infecting anyone with whom the Transmissible has contact.

Most Transmissible forms of Divergence pass along ordinary vectors of disease — through transfusions of blood or other bodily fluids. Others pass on their condition through their Scars and Variations, exposing targets or nearby humans to infection each time the Deviant calls upon her occult abilities. In rare cases, the vector is mystical — passing along bonds of sympathy or ties of fate, for example, or exposing to potential Divergence anyone who dreams of the Remade. In cases where Variations are a vector, it can affect one, some, or all of the Deviant's Variations, as determined during character creation. Vectors are not mutually exclusive. A Transmissible can have both claws that carry her disease and infectious blood.

A Transmissible's virulence determines the amount of exposure that is required to carry her disease. In most cases, this Form follows the examples of real world diseases. Casual exposure to the vector is sometimes but not always enough to allow the infection to take root. This includes a successful attack with a Lash (see p. XX) if that Variation is a vector. A minority of Transmissibles are much easier to transmit. A single drop of blood that gets on a papercut is enough, for example. The remainder are barely infectious, such as those requiring a considerable transfusion of blood via I.V. or a nearly fatal attack with a Lash.

In some cases, a Transmissible is not contagious all the time along her usual vectors. It might be that her illness can only be passed during a full moon, or perhaps she is only contagious while submerged in water or when exposed to elevated levels of radiation. Further, these occult diseases sometimes permit countermeasures that allow a potential victim to neutralize them before their symptoms manifest. This could be as straightforward as applying sanitizing lotion to any skin exposed to the disease, but it might instead be an antidote brewed from occult compounds. Such remedies prevent symptoms from manifesting.

Once exposed, most Deviant contagions have an onset period before symptoms manifest. This usually ranges from a few hours to a couple of days, with some variation depending on the victim's natural resistance. In rare cases, symptoms do not appear until months after exposure, or else they manifest almost immediately, within a few seconds of contact with the occult disease.

The symptoms of a Transmissible's contagion vary from one strain to the next. Some resemble cold or flu symptoms, differing from these ordinary-seeming complaints only if a victim suffers spontaneous Divergence. More extreme strains mimic serious diseases or even replicate one or more of the Transmissible's Scars. With very rare exceptions, a victim of this disease is not contagious unless and until he suffers the Divergence.

Once symptoms begin to manifest, a victim has some ability to fight off the infection naturally — whether biologically, psychically, or spiritually. Contagious Divergences vary in the systems they attack in the victim and the difficulty of fighting them off. For most of these diseases, a victim who successfully fends off one infection is forever immune to that strain of transmissible Divergence.

If the victim fails to resist the disease, he suffers Divergence. This typically takes several days or weeks, but the metamorphosis can be more rapid (a few seconds) or gradual (several months). A Remade created in such a way has no inherent loyalty to the Transmissible and is as likely as any potential Deviant to die during or shortly after the Divergence.

Systems: Infection only affects those humans who are capable of Divergence, so most supernatural beings are immune to this occult disease. During character creation, the Transmissible's player details the vector, virulence, and other attributes of her occult contagion. If some but not all the Transmissible's Variations are vectors, her player may decide whether any new Variation the Transmissible later develops is also a vector.

During character creation, the Transmissible's player also decides the dice pool a victim uses to overcome the contagion. This can be any combination of two Resistance Attributes (including duplicate Attributes) or a single Resistance Attribute. In the first case, the roll is usually extended, with an interval and target number determined by the player during character creation — but never more than 15 successes, and five successes is typical. In the second case, a single success prevents Divergence.

Catharsis

Renegade Deviants are largely defined by their enemies. Although they can forge bonds of sentiment to establish Loyalty Touchstones, most Renegades have significantly more Conviction Touchstones — people whose destruction the Broken seeks. Obeying this drive to destroy, to raze to dust the lives of those who have wronged him, allows the Renegade to maintain a grim equilibrium, but doing so is messy, to say nothing of bloody.

Occasionally, and usually by accident (at least initially), one of the Remade bucks this trend. A Renegade successfully destroys all or most of those who have wronged her, for example, leaving her the leisure to focus on the bonds of loyalty she has forged. Alternatively, she still has enemies left on her list of vendettas, but she has accumulated so many people for whose well-being she cares that the drive to protect and serve eclipses her natural inclination to kill and destroy.

Such Renegades have more opportunities to engage with Loyalty Touchstones in ways that push back Instability (see p. XX). Moreover, this arrangement affords the Deviant's Variations greater stability, preventing her Scars from worsening.

Causes and Effects of Catharsis

Whenever a Renegade's Loyalty exceeds her Conviction, she achieves a state of **Catharsis**, becomes a **Guardian**, and enjoys the following benefits:

- The Guardian regains one additional point of Willpower per day, even if she does not get a night of restful sleep.
- The Guardian does not suffer automatic minor Instabilities at the beginning of each story.
- The Guardian heals one minor Instability at the beginning of each chapter.

Returning to Earth

It is difficult for Renegades to remain in a state of Catharsis. Even a Guardian who sincerely wishes to set aside his life of revenge seldom receives that opportunity. Conspiracies watch for such “retired” Remade and take steps to recruit them. Most employ the usual tactics of capture, imprisonment, and coercion to force the Deviant to serve. Others are not so direct. They might abduct the Guardian's Loyalty Touchstones to ensure his cooperation, for example, or else they might convince or coerce these allies into betraying him in large ways or small. More insidiously, a conspiracy might send agents to befriend the Remade such that they become Loyalty Touchstones who can exert pressure on the Guardian to ally himself with the conspiracy — turning him into one of the Devoted.

Guardians fall out of the state of Catharsis in one of two ways:

- If a Guardian's Loyalty is at least two higher than her Conviction, and at least one Loyalty Touchstone belongs to a conspiracy, the Deviant's player may convert her to one of the Devoted, gaining the Devoted Form (see p. XX). A Guardian who becomes Devoted exits the state of Catharsis at the end of the chapter.
- If the Guardian's Conviction equals or exceeds his Loyalty, the Remade loses the state of Catharsis immediately.

Regardless of the impetus, leaving Guardianship causes the Deviant to Falter in both Loyalty and Conviction (see p. XX).

The Devoted and Fury

The Devoted (see p. XX) are mirror twins of their Renegade siblings. They are just as capable of bottomless hatred, but that is not the focus of their desperate need to forge connections with those around them. Rather, it is their obsessive, and at times possessive, love that sustains them from one day to the next.

Like Renegades, some Devoted — usually by happenstance or through the machinations of others — defy this generalization. Some find themselves beset on all sides by enemies and so forge Conviction Touchstones too quickly for the Deviant to resolve them. Others are survivors of attacks that kill all or most of the people they cared about, leaving them hollowed out except for their desire for revenge.

Whenever a Devoted's Conviction exceeds her Loyalty, she attains a state of **Fury** and becomes a **Nemesis**. Although most eventually heed the call to return to the arms of a conspiracy, while the Devoted remains a Nemesis he finds that his hatred insulates him from Instability and hardens his resolve. Mechanically, Fury is attained and provides the same benefits as Catharsis except with Loyalty and Conviction reversed. A Nemesis falls from the state of Fury in one of two ways:

- If one of the Nemesis' Loyalty Touchstones betrays him to the point of becoming a Conviction Touchstone, and if this betrayal leaves him with a Conviction at least two higher than his Loyalty, the Deviant's player may convert her to one of the Renegades. This causes the Nemesis to lose the Devoted Form, and he exits the state of Fury at the end of the chapter.
- The Nemesis' Loyalty exceeds his Conviction. The Remade loses the state of Fury immediately.

Self-Made Guardians and Nemeses

Many Self-Made (see p. XX) — Renegade and Devoted alike — achieve these states not long after their Divergence. Few can maintain their grip on Catharsis or Fury for long, however. Once the conspiracies come calling, this coveted equilibrium is almost certain to slip. The Self-Made Guardian finds herself hounded by people and organizations that refuse to take no for an answer, and eventually some of these wrong her enough to qualify as Conviction Touchstones. The Self-Made Devoted, meanwhile, finds himself courted by a conspiracy, and eventually he forms bonds with enough of his new associates that his Loyalty Touchstones outnumber his Conviction Touchstones.

Losing Everything

A Remade who resolves or loses all his Touchstones becomes a Feral (see p. XX) — regardless of whether he is a Renegade or Devoted. Deprived of any means of healing Instabilities, these wretched beings seldom last long before their Scars consume them.

Acclimation

The Divergence is an extremely traumatic experience — one that taxes the victim's body, mind, and spirit. Most people subjected to this metamorphosis do not survive long enough to live new lives as Deviants. Many simply expire in the face of the intense supernatural power flowing through them. Others rapidly deteriorate as their internal organs rupture, cancerous tumors proliferate, or their brains suffer enough damage to place them in a permanent vegetative state.

Most conspiracies that stumble upon a reliable method of creating transformed only see one success per twenty or twenty-five test subjects, with the remainder either dying on the operating table or simply failing to develop any remarkable talents in exchange for the scars the procedure inflicts upon them. Even those conspiracies that have identified and screen for traits that greatly increase the likelihood of producing a Deviant fall far short of a one hundred percent success rate.

Remade who survive the Divergence without immediately descending into a cascading and ultimately fatal cycle of supernatural instability suffer new challenges. With their souls shattered, their capacity to form ordinary human connections blasted away, and their bodies and minds forever scarred, many new Broken become casualties of the Divergence's secondary effects. Nearly half choose suicide by the most expedient means available within a few months of transformation. Others fail to form bonds with Touchstones and quickly become Ferals (see p. XX). Most of the rest can be compelled to imprint loyalty, joining the ranks of the Devoted. However, there are always a few Deviants in any large batch of surviving test subjects whose anger and thirst for vengeance places them among the Renegades.

The period shortly after the Remade establishes her Touchstones is among the most important of her whole life. Not only is she experimenting with her Variations and testing their limits, she is re-establishing her whole identity and relationship to those around her. She faces fundamental questions about the nature of the world as much of what she took for granted lies shattered.

This is not a comfortable process of self-discovery. It is the lifelong vegetarian finding that he can no longer digest anything but raw meat. It is the jazz musician who one day discovers that all music sounds like noise to her ears. Personality traits the Broken has taken for granted his whole life suddenly feel like they belong to someone else, and continuing to act in accordance with them is the act of an imposter, a fraud. Regaining a new sense of normal after the Divergence demands substantial effort and adequate time for self-reflection. For most Renegades, this is a luxury they are unlikely to enjoy often (if ever), but those who manage to do so can greatly increase their longevity — putting off the madness and death of instability a little bit longer.

Acclimation is a trait that reflects the degree to which the Deviant has explored her new nature — learned how her Variations work, probed the limits imposed by her Scars, and established a means of leaning on Touchstones to prevent further degeneration. Most Remade begin play with no dots in Acclimation, representing just enough familiarity with the arcane forces flowing through them to prevent rapid physical and cognitive deterioration. A Deviant can raise her Acclimation to as high as five dots during play. Acclimation has several important effects:

- A Remade has dots of Stability (see p. XX) equal to five plus Acclimation.
- Whenever the Broken wishes to activate a Controlled Variation (p. XX) or target a Directed Variation (p. XX), the player must succeed on a Scar Finesse roll (p. XX), which includes Acclimation in its dice total.
- Certain Scars allow the Deviant to limit or suppress some of their effects with a successful Scar Resistance roll (p. XX), which includes Acclimation in its dice total and suffers a penalty based on Instability (p. XX).
- The Deviant's Supernatural Tolerance is equal to the rating of her highest-Magnitude Variation plus Acclimation.
- If the Remade engages in a Clash of Wills with another supernatural being, her player's dice pool is equal to the Magnitude of the Variation plus Acclimation.

Increasing Acclimation

Acclimation cannot be improved by simply spending Experiences. The Remade must be in a state of equilibrium with her Divergence and must have begun to explore new capabilities within herself. The Broken must not be suffering from any medium or major Instability and must have at least five Experiences available. A Remade's Acclimation may only increase once per chapter.

Character Advancement

Characters in **Deviant: The Renegades** advance through a system of "Experiences." Players spend Experiences to increase and buy new character traits. Experiences are earned by accruing "Beats," which are small elements of drama in the plot. These Beats come through fulfilling Aspirations, making progress toward a Conviction Touchstone, through good and bad things happening to characters, and resolving minor plot hurdles called Conditions.

Beats

Beats are measures of drama in the Storytelling system. Five Beats become one Experience, one significant moment able to advance your character. You receive Beats for multiple things in the course of the story. Scars, Aspirations, Conviction Touchstones, and Conditions are the most common ways to achieve Beats, but numerous others exist. Here are the main ways this occurs:

- Whenever one of your Scars creates a significant story complication for you or your cohort, take a Beat.
- Any time you resolve an Aspiration, take a Beat.
- Any time you resolve or make progress toward a Conviction Touchstone, take a Beat.
- At the end of every chapter (game session), take a Beat.
- Any time you resolve a Condition, take a Beat.
- When you fail a roll, you can opt to make it a dramatic failure and take a Beat.
- Any major dramatic event the Storyteller deems appropriate can award a Beat.

You can only receive one Beat from a given category in a given scene. If you resolve three Conditions in a scene, for example, you only receive one Beat. However, if the moment is particularly dramatic, or you've made significant sacrifice to trigger multiple Beats, the Storyteller can award multiple Beats.

Beats are pooled with those of other players. At the end of any chapter, each player gets an equal share of the pooled Beats. If there are leftover Beats, the troupe may choose either to carry the remainder to the next chapter or to award these extra Beats to one or more characters based on whatever criteria the players find acceptable. Some troupes might award an extra Beat to a player whose character was particularly important to the chapter. Others might give excess Beats to a player so that her character will be able to purchase a trait, such as a Merit or Skill, that will benefit the whole cohort. Some may simply take turns.

Aspiration

Choose one Aspiration. This is a goal you wish to achieve during the upcoming chapter. If you complete this objective, take a Beat. If you do not resolve the Aspiration before the end of the current chapter, you can keep it for the next chapter or swap it out between chapters for a new Aspiration.

Aspirations exist as a way to measure and express advancement toward goals other than pursuing Conviction Touchstones and suffering from Scars. They also convey the players' intentions to the Storyteller so that he can incorporate the Aspirations into the current chapter. Aspirations can be reasonably specific ("Stake out the warehouse to identify a likely employee to abduct and interrogate."), but general, or even somewhat vague, Aspirations will be more common ("Fortify my base of operations against intruders."). It is easier to fulfill a general Aspiration than a specific one — in part because it gives the Storyteller more latitude in how to provide you with the opportunity to do so.

As a Storyteller, make an effort to give players a chance to fulfill an Aspiration each chapter. If a player chooses an Aspiration that is unrealistic, don't hesitate to say so and let her choose a new one before the chapter begins. And when it comes to the question of whether or not a player fulfilled an Aspiration, always lean towards allowing it.

When an Aspiration is fulfilled, after the scene you can swap it out for another one. Usually in resolving an Aspiration, another one becomes a clear choice. However, the new Aspiration doesn't have to be related to the old one. It can just be a different goal or direction for your character, to keep things dynamic and progressing.

Aspirations also have some other game effects. For example, they can influence Social maneuvering actions (see p. XX).

Baseline Anchors and Aspirations

Baseline humans ordinarily have two Anchors (a Virtue and a Vice) and three Aspirations (two short-term Aspirations and one long-term Aspiration). Anchors describe a major personality trait or motivation that refreshes Willpower similarly to Loyalty (for Virtue) or Conviction (for Vice) Touchstones. Short-term Aspirations are identical to a Remade's Aspiration except in being more numerous. Long-term Aspirations are character goals that require several chapters to achieve and provide Beats when the character makes progress toward or fulfills its objective (similar to Conviction Touchstones).

The experience of Divergence causes irreversible damage to the psyche and soul of the Broken. It obliterates the capacity for both spiritual fulfillment and guilty pleasure and stunts the Deviant's ability to learn and grow through her experiences. The Divergence replaces these touchstones of mental and emotional well-being with an unhealthy abyss of neediness that defines her selfhood by her connections with others. It comes with a driving need to destroy her enemies — one that cannot entertain the possibility that no one wants to harm or use her — or a fierce, jealous loyalty more akin to possession than to love.

Conditions

Conditions are minor dramatic effects that occur in the scope of gameplay and the story. They influence the rules in various ways, often adding or removing dice from a pool.

Every Condition has a Resolution. When that thing occurs in the game (often at your choice as a player), the Condition goes away, and you take a Beat.

Some Conditions are Persistent, which is to say that they last longer than normal Conditions, and offer multiple Beats. These Conditions have a "Beat" entry in their descriptions. When that thing happens, no more than once per scene, take a Beat.

Any time a scene calls for a Condition, the Storyteller can impose one. As well, any time a character achieves exceptional success or dramatic failure on an action, a Condition will occur. Exceptional success grants a positive Condition of the player's choosing, and dramatic failure imposes a negative Condition of the Storyteller's choosing.

You can find a list of example Conditions beginning on p. XX.

Experiences

Whenever you accrue five Beats, those Beats vanish, and you take an Experience. An Experience is a sign of meaningful progress in your character's story and within the greater plot of the chronicle. You can expend Experiences at any time to increase your character traits — including

during a chapter (subject to Storyteller veto). A single dot of a trait may cost one or more Experiences, depending on what it is. Look to the chart below:

[BEGIN TAB TABLE]

Trait	Experiences per Dot
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Attribute	4
-----------	---

Skill	2
-------	---

Merit	1
-------	---

Variation	4*
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Acclimation	5*
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* To develop a new Variation, the Broken must already have a Scar that can be entangled with it. To improve Acclimation, the Deviant must meet all the criteria described above (p. XX).

[END TAB TABLE]

The Beat Economy

Particularly in a long-running game, Beat acquisition is a core part of the Storytelling system, and the Storyteller should always be mindful of it. On average, characters should receive somewhere between three to eight Beats per chapter. If they're not, consider why that is. Are you not applying or enforcing Conditions? Are your players not rolling enough to fail sometimes? Are you not engaging their Aspirations, Conviction, or Scars? These are all things to keep in mind. If you're playing loose with the rules, you may not see as many Beats. In that case, don't hesitate to hand them out any time something cool happens. If two characters butt heads and it becomes a really tense, driving scene, go ahead and award both players with a Beat. If one character has an emotional breakdown thanks to the strangeness around him, give a Beat.

Troupes who play for only two or three hours at a time might also struggle to collect three to eight Beats per player per chapter. One solution to this is to reduce the number of Beats per Experience to four or even three in order to ensure that characters are still advancing at a pace the troupe is comfortable with.

If you're only playing a single-session game, Beats aren't nearly as useful as in an extended game. In these cases, any time the player would get a Beat, instead give them a token. This token can be cashed in to replenish a Willpower point, to offer 8-Again on a single roll, or to add a single success in a Contested action.

Individual Beats

If the players and Storyteller wish, players can "keep" all the Beats they earn, instead of pooling them. This rewards players who take action to engage with the story and game systems. It can punish shy or non-confrontational players and encourage more proactive players to hog the spotlight, however. Moreover, it means that characters may advance at very different rates, leading to a cohort with significant competency gaps between characters.

Merits

Below is a list of Merits Deviant characters can take. Any Merit marked (Overt) means that a character who takes that Merit can more easily be tracked by their Conspiracy. See Chapter Five for more details.

Sanctity of Merits

Merits reflect aspects of your character but are an out-of-game resource. For example, your character may have friends, but you can choose to spend Experiences or Merit dots to purchase the Allies Merit. This gives those friends a direct effect in the game. If something happens to a character's friends, specifically supporting cast not represented by Merit dots, the story goes on and nothing happens in terms of game mechanics. If something happens to Allies, however, those points are not lost. The Allies dots disappear but you receive Experiences equal to the dots lost. This is called the **Sanctity of Merits** rule.

If your character loses a Merit, you may repurchase it in the next chapter of your chronicle. You can't just say, "All right, my Allies died. I'm buying new Allies to call." You'd have to wait until the next chapter. Alternatively, you can spend those Experiences on other traits that are relevant to the situation. Maybe losing those Allies inspired a few trips to the firing range to let off steam, so you spend those points on a dot of Firearms.

For additional Merits available to all characters, see **The Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook**.

Mental Merits

Area of Expertise (•)

Prerequisite: Resolve •• and one Skill Specialty

Effect: Your character is uncommonly specialized in one area. Choose a Specialty to assign to this Merit. This Specialty grants a +2 bonus instead of +1. You can take this Merit multiple times to represent different areas of expertise.

Bleeding Heart (•••)

Prerequisite: Deviant

Effect: Through sheer bloody-minded tenacity, your character has managed to hold on to part of her humanity, allowing her to behave as though she still had a Virtue (chosen at the time you purchase this Merit). Once per chapter, when your character acts in accordance with that Virtue, roll Resolve + Composure. Success means that she regains all her Willpower as though she has acted on a Virtue (p. XX). The character does not otherwise count as having the Virtue.

Blood on My Hands (•••)

Prerequisite: Deviant

Effect: Through spite and ill-will, your character has managed to hold on to part of her humanity, allowing her to behave as though she still had a Vice (chosen at the time you purchase this Merit). Once per scene, when your character acts in accordance with that Vice, roll Resolve + Composure. Success means that she regains a point of Willpower as though she had acted on her Vice (p. XX). The character does not otherwise count as having the Vice.

Direction Sense (•)

Effect: Your character has an innate sense of direction, and is always aware of her location in space. She always knows which direction she faces, and never suffers penalties to navigate or find her way.

Eidetic Memory (••)

Effect: Your character recalls events and details with pinpoint accuracy. You do not have to make rolls for your character to remember past experiences. When making Intelligence + Composure (or relevant Skill) rolls to recall minute facts from swaths of information, take a +2 bonus.

Fight, Flight, Freeze (••)

Effect: Humans share the fight, flight, and freeze response that prey animals have, but your character has been afraid for his life too many times, and it has made it almost impossible for him to respond to violent situations in any other way.

Whenever violence breaks out in the character's presence, immediately before you roll initiative, you may choose to react with one of the prey responses:

- **Fight:** Your fear manifests as a berserk frenzy. You suffer the Insane Tilt.
- **Flight:** You only wish to flee your attackers. You suffer the Beaten Down Tilt. However, you enjoy the 8-again quality on any actions you take to leave the area affected by the violence.
- **Freeze:** Your panic manifests as inaction, whether it freezes you in your tracks or sends you cowering in terror. You suffer either the Stunned Tilt or the Insensate Tilt, but you regain a point of Willpower.

Flashback (•)

Prerequisite: Deviant

Effect: Sometimes Deviants recall their torture and transformation vividly — whether they want to or not. Once per chapter, you can choose to accept the Shaken Condition for your character. She has had a flashback, or vivid traumatic sense memory, to an important part of her transformation. She might recall code phrases, medical diagrams, words exchanged between her tormentors, or something else of importance. While it might not be immediately apparent as to why that particular thing is important, it should reveal itself later in play.

Good Samaritan (••)

Prerequisite: Deviant

Effect: Despite the suffering the Divergence has caused you, or perhaps because of it, your character feels compelled to use his experiences and remarkable abilities to help Baselines and protect them from the Web of Pain. He enjoys a +2 bonus to Intimidation and Persuasion rolls to warn a Baseline away from a conspiracy's agents or projects. Additionally, take a Beat whenever you risk conspiracy attention by using a Variation to aid a Baseline who is not a Loyalty Touchstone.

Hypervigilance (•)

Effect: Your character is constantly on the lookout, scanning her environment for the curling of fingers, the flash of a barrel, a raised voice. You enjoy the 8-again quality on reflexive Wits + Composure rolls for your character to detect an impending ambush, snare, or trap.

Drawback: If you achieve an exceptional success on a roll to detect a source of danger, your character suffers the Spooked Condition (p. XX).

Indomitable (••)

Prerequisites: Resolve •••

Effect: Your character possesses and iron will. Any time a supernatural creature uses a power to influence your character's thoughts or emotions, add two dice to the dice pool to contest it. If the roll is resisted, instead subtract two dice from the manipulator's dice pool.

Interdisciplinary Specialty (•)

Prerequisite: Skill at ••• or higher with a Specialty

Effect: Choose a Specialty that your character possesses when you purchase this Merit. You can apply the +1 from that Specialty on any Skill with at least one dot, provided it's justifiable within the scope of the fiction. For example, a doctor with a Medicine Specialty in Anatomy may be able to use it when targeting a specific body part with Weaponry, but could not with a general strike.

Investigative Aide (•)

Prerequisites: Chosen Skill at •••+

Effect: Your character has one particular knack that can contribute amazingly to an investigation. Choose a Skill when purchasing this Merit; when making rolls to Uncover Clues (p. XX), she achieves exceptional success on three successes instead of five. As well, Clues that come from her use of that Skill start with one additional element. You may purchase this Merit multiple times, to enhance different Skills.

Investigative Prodigy (• to •••••)

Prerequisites: Wits ••, Investigation ••

Effect: Your character investigates instinctively, and can intuit details and connections in a scene without much time. He's a veritable Sherlock Holmes. Instead of simply uncovering Clues or not uncovering Clues when investigating (p. XX), your character discovers multiple Clues in a single action. Your character can uncover Clues equal to his successes or his Merit dots as an instant action, whichever is lower. Only the first Clue benefits from additional elements; other Clues established with this Merit receive only a single element each.

Language (•)

Effect: Your character is skilled with an additional language, beyond her native tongue. Choose a language each time you buy this Merit. Your character can speak, read, and write in that language.

Multilingual (•)

Effect: Your character has a strong affinity for language acquisition. Each time you purchase this Merit, choose two languages. Your character can speak conversationally in those languages. With an Intelligence + Academics roll, he may also read enough of the language to understand context. If you purchase the Language Merit for either of these languages, replace the Multilingual language. For example, if you have Multilingual (French, Italian), and purchase Language: Italian, you may choose to take Multilingual (French, Portuguese).

Patient (•)

Effect: Your character knows how to pace herself and take the time to do the job right the first time. When taking an extended action, you may make two additional rolls, above what your Attribute + Skill allows.

Professional Training (• to ••••) (Overt)

Effect: Your character has extensive professional training in a professional field. When choosing this Merit, decide on a Profession for your character and choose two Asset Skills on your character sheet. The advantages of Professional Training relate directly to those Asset Skills.

• **Networking:** At the first level of Professional Training, your character builds connections within her chosen field. Take two dots of relevant Contacts.

•• **Continuing Education:** Your character tends toward greater successes within her areas of expertise. When making a roll with her Asset Skills, she benefits from the 9-again quality.

••• **Breadth of Knowledge:** As your character has advanced in her field, she has expanded both the depth and breadth of her expertise. Choose a third Asset Skill, and take two Specialties in your character's Asset Skills.

•••• **On the Job Training:** Your character has access to extensive educational tools. Take a Skill dot in an Asset Skill. Whenever you purchase a new Asset Skill dot, take a Beat.

••••• **The Routine:** With such extensive experience in her field, your character makes difficult tasks look easy. Before rolling, spend a point of Willpower to apply the rote quality to a single roll with an Asset Skill.

Shared Suffering (••)

Prerequisite: Deviant

Effect: Your character feels a deep sympathy for her fellow Broken. She enjoys a +2 bonus on Empathy and Medicine rolls to aid a fellow Deviant. In addition, whenever you preserve a Remade who is not in your cohort from destruction, you take a Beat. This includes showing mercy to an enemy Deviant when it would be more expedient not to do so.

Tolerance for Biology (•)

Effect: Most people turn away at the sight of blood, other bodily fluids, or exotic biology, but nothing turns your character's stomach. You do not need to make Composure, Stamina, or Resolve rolls to withstand the biologically strange. This doesn't mean she's immune to fear; she's just used to nature in all its nasty forms.

Note: This is a three-dot Merit for Baseline characters.

Physical Merits

Crack Driver (•• or •••)

Prerequisite: Drive ••

Effect: Your character's an ace at the wheel, and nothing shakes his concentration. So long as he's not taking any actions other than driving (and keeping the car safe), add his Composure to any rolls to Drive. Any rolls to disable his vehicle suffer a penalty equal to his Composure as well. With the three-dot version, once per turn he may take a Drive action reflexively.

Dauntless (•)

Effect: Through years of torture, experimentation, and abuse, your character has learned how to take a beating. Whenever an effect would apply the Beaten Down Tilt to your character, you may opt not to suffer this Tilt.

Demolisher (• to •••)

Prerequisite: Strength ••• or Intelligence •••

Effect: Your character has an innate feel for the weak points in objects. When damaging an object, she ignores one point of the object's Durability per dot with this Merit.

Fleet of Foot (• to •••)

Prerequisite: Athletics: ••

Effect: Your character is remarkably quick, and runs far faster than his frame suggests. He gains +1 Speed per dot, and anyone pursuing him suffers a -1 per dot to any foot chase rolls.

Hardy (• to •••)

Prerequisite: Stamina •••

Effect: Your character's body goes further than it rightfully should. Add the dots in this Merit to any rolls to resist disease, poison, deprivation, unconsciousness, or suffocation.

Iron Stamina (• to •••)

Prerequisites: Stamina ••• or Resolve •••

Effect: Each dot reduces the penalties your character suffers due to fatigue or wounds by one (to a minimum penalty of 0).

Parkour (• to ••••, Style)

Prerequisites: Dexterity •••, Athletics ••

Effect: Your character is a trained and proficient free runner. Free running is the art of moving fluidly through urban environments with complex leaps, bounds, running tricks, and vaults. This is the type of sport popularized in modern action films, where characters are unhindered by fences, walls, construction equipment, cars, or anything else the city puts in their way.

Flow (•): Your character reacts instinctively to any obstacles with leaps, jumps, and scaling techniques. When in a foot chase, subtract your Parkour from the successes needed to pursue or evade. Also, ignore environmental penalties to Athletics rolls equal to your Parkour rating.

Cat Leap (••): Your character falls with outstanding grace. When using a Dexterity + Athletics roll to mitigate damage from falling, your character gains one automatic success. Additionally, add your Parkour rating to the threshold of damage that can be removed through this roll. Parkour will not mitigate damage from a terminal-velocity fall.

Wall Run (•••): When climbing, your character can run upward for some distance before having to traditionally climb. Without rolling, your character scales 10 feet + five feet per dot of Athletics as an instant action, rather than the normal 10 feet.

Expert Traceur (••••): Parkour has become second nature for your character. By spending a Willpower point, you may designate one Athletics roll to run, jump, or climb as a rote action

(reroll all failed dice once). On any turn during which you use this ability, you may not apply your character's Defense to oncoming attacks.

Freeflow (•••••): Your character's Parkour is now muscle memory. She can move without thinking, in a Zenlike state. The character must successfully meditate (p. XX) in order to establish Freeflow. Once established, your character is capable of taking Athletics actions reflexively once per turn. By spending a point of Willpower on an Athletics roll in a foot chase, gain three successes instead of three dice.

Quick Draw (•)

Prerequisites: Wits ••, a Specialty in the weapon or fighting style chosen

Effect: Choose a Specialty in Weaponry or Firearms when you purchase this Merit. Your character has trained in that weapon or style enough that pulling the weapon is his first reflex. Drawing or holstering that weapon is considered a reflexive action, and can be done any time his Defense applies.

Seizing the Edge (••)

Prerequisites: Wits ••, Composure ••

Effect: Your character is always ready for a chase. Whether to escape a threat or hunt down a rival, she's always geared and ready to go. She always has the Edge in the first turn of a chase scene (p. XX). Additionally, the opponent must make a successful Wits + Composure roll, as if being ambushed, or your character does not have to account for her Speed or Initiative when calculating needed successes in the first turn.

Sleight of Hand (••)

Prerequisite: Larceny ••

Effect: Your character can pick locks and pockets without even thinking about it. She can take one Larceny-based instant action reflexively in a given turn. As well, her Larceny actions go unnoticed unless someone is trying specifically to catch her.

Stabilizer (• to •••••)

Prerequisite: Deviant

Effect: Your character possesses an item or receives a treatment that holds off Instability. It may be a device that creates a dampening field around her, or a serum that repairs damaged cells. Not only does it grant her peace of mind, it also allows her some measure of control over her Instability.

Each dot of this Merit reduces the Instability penalty on Scar Resistance rolls by one, to a minimum penalty of 0 (p. XX).

Drawback: If the character loses the item or misses a treatment, she loses the benefits of this Merit until she can retrieve the object or resume treatment. If the object or treatment is lost permanently, the Sanctity of Merits applies normally.

Social Merits

Air of Menace (••)

Prerequisites: Intimidation ••

Effect: Your character has survived dozens of fights, and each one has taken its toll. He carries scars, features that have healed crookedly, and an attitude that unsettles others. The character gains +2 dice to rolls that use fear and menace to force compliance, such as with Intimidation rolls. Opponents less menacing than the character also think twice before provoking him. Opponents with Intimidation dots fewer than the character's must spend a point of Willpower to initiate combat against him.

Drawback: Though people may try to overcome their prejudices, appearance still drives many human opinions. In social maneuvers, the character's first impression is downgraded one step for people who do not know him, and even for those who do, he must overcome an additional Door.

Allies (• to •••••) (Overt)

Effect: Allies help your character. They might be friends, employees, associates, or people your character has blackmailed. Each instance of this Merit represents one type of ally. This could be in an organization, a society, a clique, or an individual. You can take this Merit multiple times to represent different Allies. For example, your character may possess Allies (Police) ••, Allies (Organized Crime) ••, and Allies (Church) •.

Dots in this Merit reflect greater relationships and access. Work with the Storyteller to determine just what your character's dots mean, and what she can request from her Allies reasonably.

When requesting help from Allies, the Storyteller assigns a rating between 1 and 5 to the favor. A character can ask for favors that add up to her Allies rating without penalty in one chapter. If she extends her influence beyond that, her player must roll Manipulation + Persuasion + Allies with a penalty equal to the favor's rating. If the roll is successful, the group does as requested. Failed or successful, the character loses a dot of Allies (but Sanctity of Merits applies).

Drawback: Most Allies won't have your Deviant's back for free. They're going to expect you to have theirs as well. Allies might call at inconvenient times, demand favors, talk to the wrong people, or put themselves in harm's way.

Anonymity (• to •••••)

Effect: Your character lives off the grid. This means purchases must be made with cash or falsified credit cards. She eschews identification. She avoids any official authoritative influence in her affairs. Any attempts to find her by paper trail suffer a -1 penalty per dot purchased in this Merit.

Armed and Extremely Dangerous (•••) (Overt)

Prerequisite: Deviant, Any Fighting Merit, Strength or Dexterity •••

Effect: Your character had an unusually bloody escape from her conspiracy. Whether she gunned her way through legions of guards and scientists with a stolen automatic weapon, or shredded the facility with nothing but a scalpel and a pair of forceps, she is a fugitive in every sense of the word. Her conspiracy treats her at best with extreme caution, and at worst as a bogeyman, a tale that they tell to new recruits and at bars. Any members of the conspiracy your character meets will either call for backup or flee outright.

Drawback: Taking this Merit means your character cannot have a Living Progenitor. It also means that, while your conspiracy will only rarely send agents to collect you, when it does, it will send well-equipped, heavily armed hit squads, ready to bring her in dead or alive.

Contacts (•)

Effect: Contacts provide your character with information. This Merit represents a sphere or organization within which the character can garner information. Contacts do not provide services, only information. This may be face-to-face, email, by telephone, or even by séance, in some strange instances.

Garnering information via Contacts requires a Manipulation + Social Skill roll, depending on the method the character uses and the relationship between the characters. The Storyteller should give a bonus or penalty depending on how relevant the information is to that particular Contact, whether accessing the information is dangerous, and if the character has maintained good relations or done favors for the Contact. These modifiers should range from -3 to +3 in most cases. If successful, the Contact provides the information.

You may purchase this Merit multiple times to reflect different sources.

Fast-Talking (• to ••••, Style)

Prerequisites: Manipulation ••, Subterfuge ••

Effect: Your character talks circles around listeners. He speaks a mile a minute, and often leaves his targets reeling, but nodding in agreement.

Always Be Closing (•): With the right leading phrases, your character can direct a mark to say what he wants, when he wants. This trips the mark into vulnerable positions. When a mark contests or resists your character's Social interactions, apply a -1 to their Resolve or Composure.

Jargon (••): Your character confuses his mark using complex terminology. You may apply one relevant Specialty to any Social roll you make, even if the Specialty isn't tied to the Skill in use.

Devil's Advocacy (•••): Your character often poses arguments he doesn't agree with, in order to challenge a mark's position and keep him from advancing the discussion. You can reroll one failed Subterfuge roll per scene.

Salting (••••): Your character can position himself so a mark pursues a non-issue or something unimportant to him. When your character opens a Door using conversation (Persuasion, Subterfuge, Empathy, etc.) you may spend a Willpower point to immediately open another Door.

The Nigerian Scam (•••••): Your character can take advantage of his mark's greed and zeal. When the mark does particularly well, it's because your character was there to set him up, and to subsequently tear him down. If a target regains Willpower from his Vice while your character is present, you may immediately roll Manipulation + Subterfuge to open a Door, regardless of the interval or impression level.

Lifeline (•• or ••••)

Prerequisite: Deviant

Effect: The Deviant can divide his passion between more people than can most Broken. At two dots, the Remade may have a maximum of six Touchstones (and associated Conviction and Loyalty traits) at a time, instead of five. At four, this is instead seven Touchstones. If purchasing this Merit during character creation, the character's player may assign an additional Conviction or Loyalty Touchstone to each of these bonus slots, increasing Conviction/Loyalty accordingly. Otherwise, the character must establish and affirm a new Touchstone to fill them.

Living Progenitor (••• or •••••)

Prerequisite: Deviant

Effect: Deviants often have complicated relationships with their Progenitors, ones that frequently mimic that of child with parent, created with creator, or victim with abuser. Your character's Progenitor still lives, and he knows it. Work together with your Storyteller to decide what sort of person your Progenitor is — how often he worked on you, if he spoke to or cared for you, etc.

You must assign the Progenitor as one of your character's Touchstones.

At three dots, the Broken cannot sever this connection to his Progenitor. The Touchstone may fluctuate between Loyalty and Conviction, but it never becomes Wavering or fades, no matter how many times the Deviant Falters. Only death can end this relationship, but neither the Storyteller nor other members of the cohort may kill your Progenitor without your express permission. He is your character's tormentor to spare or slay.

At five dots, your love/hate relationship intensifies:

- If your Progenitor was one of your Conviction Touchstones at the beginning of the chapter, and you have him at your mercy, you may let him go free (or preserve him from certain death) instead of killing him. This still counts as Faltering, but you heal a minor, medium, or major Instability after resolving the Faltering roll.
- If your Progenitor was one of your Loyalty Touchstones at the beginning of the chapter, and you healed at least one minor or medium Instability during the chapter by coming to his aid, you heal an additional minor or medium Instability at the end of the chapter. However, if he died during the chapter, you suffer a major Instability.

Restriction: This Merit is only available at character creation except with an in-character explanation and Storyteller approval — such as if your character only learns the identity of her Progenitor after the chronicle begins.

Manticore Companion (• to •••••) (Overt)

Prerequisite: Deviant

Effect: Manticores (pg. XX) are the animal versions of Remade, the lab rats on whom different Divergences are tested. Mostly, they work for conspiracies, serving as spies, pets, or hunters of particularly troublesome or valuable Renegades. Sometimes, though, things don't go as planned. Sometimes a Renegade takes a Manticore with her, busting out the dog or parrot who was incarcerated in the same lab. Other times a Manticore who escaped on its own finds a Deviant simply by sniffing around long enough. For whatever reason, your character has a Manticore that follows her around and that she cares for.

Work together with your Storyteller to decide what sort of Manticore companion your character has. A one-dot Manticore is basically a pet parakeet — it can do tricks and even talk, but isn't sentient and screams at the most inconvenient times. A three-dot Manticore is a smart parrot who understands nuance and meaning and may even speak several different languages and do a perfect mimicry over the phone. A five-dot Manticore is a sun conure who is nearly sapient and devoted to the Deviant.

Manticores manifest one or more Variations. As a rule of thumb, purchase Variations for the Manticore as though its Merit dot rating were a Scar being used to support those Variations. A three-dot Manticore could have one Magnitude 3 Variation, two Magnitude 2 Variations, or three Magnitude 1 Variations, for example. Manticores do not have Scars, although some have strange appearances or habits that are not typical for their species.

Drawback: This Merit is distinct from Allies in that the Manticore is a particularly smart animal and is not truly sapient. Your character may need to take care of it with special equipment, feed it, and clean up its droppings. It cannot sign for its own apartment or take itself to the doctor without attracting major attention.

Mentor (• to •••••)

Effect: This Merit gives your character a teacher that provides advice and guidance. He acts on your character's behalf, often in the background, and sometimes without your character's knowledge. While Mentors can be highly competent, they almost always want something in return for their services. The dot rating determines the Mentor's capabilities, and to what extent he'll aid your character.

When establishing a Mentor, determine what the Mentor wants from your character. This should be personally important to him, and it should reflect on the dot rating chosen. A one-dot Mentor might want to live vicariously through your character's stories of her exploits. A five-dot Mentor could want something astronomical, such as the downfall of a powerful, global conspiracy.

Choose three Skills the Mentor possesses. You can substitute Resources for one of these Skills. Once per chapter, the character may ask her Mentor for a favor. The favor must involve one of those Skills, or be within the scope of his Resources. The Mentor commits to the favor (often asking for a commensurate favor in return), and if a roll is required, the Mentor is automatically considered to have successes equal to his dot rating. Alternately, you may ask the Storyteller to have the Mentor act on your character's behalf, without her character knowing or initiating the request.

Mystery Cult Initiation (• to •••••)

Effect: Your character is a member of a secret society, which can represent anything from a fraternity house, to a scholarly group, to a fringe religion. Dots in this Merit act as Status for other members, as well as additional benefits defined when the Merit is first purchased. The following are guidelines; use them to craft your own cults:

- A Skill Specialty or one-dot Merit pertaining to the lessons taught to initiates.
- A one-dot Merit
- A Skill dot or a two-dot Merit
- A three-dot Merit
- A three-dot Merit or a major advantage not reflected in game traits

Prized Experiment (•••) (Overt)

Prerequisite: Deviant, Living Progenitor

Effect: Maybe your character was her creator's child, who he was forced to experiment on to save her from a rare disease. Maybe he just grew attached to her as he drowned and revived her

regularly, asking her to tell him what she saw “on the other side.” For whatever reason, your character’s Progenitor does not want her dead or harmed. Members of the conspiracy take great care not to hurt her, handling her with all the delicacy of a Ming dynasty vase. Work with your Storyteller to determine why this might be (if you don't want to be surprised, that is).

Drawback: The conspiracy will still come after your character, and it will expend considerable resources into catching her without damaging her.

Resources (• to •••••) (Overt)

Effect: This Merit reflects your character’s disposable income. She might live in an upscale condo, but if her income is tied up in the mortgage and child support payments, she might have little money to throw around. Characters are assumed to have basic necessities without Resources.

The dot rating determines the relative amount of disposable funding the character has available, depending on your particular chronicle’s setting. The same amount of money means completely different things in a game set in Silicon Valley compared to one set in the Detroit slums. One dot is a little spending money here and there. Two is a comfortable, middle class wage. Three is a nicer, upper middle class life. Four is moderately wealthy. Five is filthy rich.

Every item has an Availability rating. Once per chapter, your character can procure an item at her Resources level or lower, without issue. An item one Availability above her Resources reduces her effective Resources by one dot for a full month, since she has to rapidly liquidate funds. She can procure items two Availability below her Resources without limit (within reason). For example, a character with Resources ••• can procure as many Availability •• disposable cellphones as she needs.

Retainer (• to •••••) (Overt)

Effect: Your character has an assistant, sycophant, servant, or follower on whom she can rely. Establish who this companion is, and how he was acquired. It may be as simple as a paycheck. He might owe your character his life. However it happened, your character has a hold on him.

A Retainer is more reliable than a Mentor, and more loyal than an Ally. On the other hand, a Retainer is a lone person, less capable and influential than the broader Merits.

The Merit’s dot rating determines the relative competency of the Retainer. A one-dot Retainer is barely able to do anything of use, such as a pet that knows one useful trick, or a homeless old man that does minor errands for food. A three-dot Retainer is a professional in their field, someone capable in his line of work. A five-dot is one of the best in her class. If a Retainer needs to make a roll, and it’s within her field, double the dot rating and use it as a dice pool. For anything else, use the dot rating as a dice pool. This Merit can be purchased multiple times to represent multiple Retainers.

Restrictions: Renegades rarely have this Merit, and very few of them have a Retainer rated at more than three dots.

Safe Place (• to •••••)

Effect: Your character has somewhere she can go where she can feel secure. While she may have enemies that could attack her there, she’s prepared and has the upper hand.

The dot rating reflects the security of the place. A one-dot Safe Place might be equipped with basic security systems or a booby trap at the windows and door. A five-dot could have a security crew, infrared scanners at every entrance, or trained dogs. Each place can be an apartment, a mansion, or a hidey-hole.

Unlike most Merits, multiple characters can contribute dots to a single Safe Place, combining their dots into something greater. A Safe Place gives an Initiative bonus equal to the Merit dots. This only applies to a character with dots invested in the Safe Place.

Any efforts to breach the Safe Place suffer a penalty equal to the Merit dots invested. If the character desires, the Safe Place can include traps that cause intruders lethal damage equal to a maximum of the Merit rating (player's choice as to how much damage a given trap inflicts). This requires that the character has at least one dot in Crafts. The traps may be avoided with a Dexterity + Larceny roll, penalized by the Safe Place dots.

Drawback: Just because a Deviant feels safe doesn't mean she is safe. Neighbors talk. Police arrest or evict squatters. Her conspiracy may even know what to look for. If a Deviant's Safe Place is invaded, the Merit becomes Overt for the rest of the story, but her player gains a Beat.

Status (• to •••••) (Overt)

Effect: Your character has standing, membership, authority, control over, or respect from a group or organization. This may reflect official standing, or informal respect. No matter the source, your character enjoys certain privileges within that structure.

Each instance of this Merit reflects standing in a different group or organization. Each affords its own unique benefits. As you increase your dot ratings, your character rises in prominence in the relevant group.

Status only allows advantages within the confines of the group reflected in the Merit. Status (Organized Crime) won't help if your character wants an official concealed carry firearms permit, for example.

Status provides two major advantages: First, your character can add her Status to any Social roll involving those over whom she has authority or sway. Second, she has access to group facilities, resources, and funding. Dependent on the group, this could be limited by red tape and requisitioning processes. It's also dependent on the resources the particular group has available.

Drawback: Status requires upkeep, and often regular duties are required. If these duties are not upheld, the Status may be lost. The dots will not be accessible until the character re-establishes her standing. In our Organized Crime example, your character may be expected to pay protection money, offer tribute to a higher authority, or undertake felonious activities.

Striking Looks (• or ••) (Overt)

Effect: Your character is stunning, alarming, commanding, repulsive, threatening, charming, or otherwise worthy of attention. Determine how your character looks and how people react to that.

For one dot, your character gets a +1 bonus on any Social rolls that would be influenced by his looks.

For two dots, the benefit increases to +2. Depending on the particulars, this might influence Expression, Intimidation, Persuasion, Subterfuge, or other rolls.

Drawback: Attention is a double-edged sword. Any rolls to spot, notice, or remember your character gain the same dice bonus. Sometimes, your character will draw unwanted attention in social situations. This could cause further complications, especially for a Deviant.

Voice of the Wild (•• or •••)

Prerequisite: Deviant

Effect: Your character feels more at home communicating with animals than with other humans. Your character receives a +2 bonus to Animal Ken rolls to soothe animals and Manticores.

At three dots, your character can also communicate with Manticores as though she and they shared a common language, even if the Manticore is neither sapient nor capable of speech.

Fighting Merits

Choke Hold (••)

Prerequisites: Brawl ••

Effect: When grappling, your character can use the Choke move:

- **Choke:** If you rolled more successes than twice the victim's Stamina, he's unconscious for (six - Stamina) minutes. You must first have succeeded at a Hold move. If you don't score enough successes at first, you can Choke on future turns and total your successes.

Defensive Combat (•)

Prerequisite: Brawl • or Weaponry •; choose one when this Merit is selected

Effect: Your character is trained in avoiding damage in combat. Use her Brawl or Weaponry to calculate Defense, rather than Athletics. Your character can learn both versions of this Merit, allowing you to use any of the three Skills to calculate Defense. However, you cannot use Weaponry to calculate Defense unless she actually has a weapon in her hand.

Fighting Finesse (••)

Prerequisites: Dexterity •••, a Specialty in Weaponry or Brawl

Effect: Choose a Specialty in Weaponry or Brawl when you purchase this Merit. Your character's extensive training in that particular weapon or style has allowed them to benefit more from their alacrity and agility than their strength. You may substitute your character's Dexterity for her Strength when making rolls with that Specialty.

This Merit may be purchased multiple times to gain its benefit with multiple Specialties.

Firefight (• to •••; Style)

Prerequisites: Composure •••, Dexterity •••, Athletics ••, Firearms ••

Effect: Your character is comfortable with a gun. She's been trained in stressful situations, and knows how to keep herself from being shot, while still shooting at her opponents. This Style is about moving, strafing, and taking shots when you get them. It's not a series of precision techniques; it's for using a gun practically in a real-world situation.

Shoot First (•): In a firefight, the person shot first is usually the loser. Your character has trained herself to fire first in an altercation. If her gun is drawn, add her Firearms score to her Initiative.

If she has Quick Draw (p. XX), she can use Shoot First to draw and fire with increased Initiative in the first turn of combat.

Suppressive Fire (••): Sometimes, the purpose of a shot is to distract, not necessarily to hit. Your character is trained to fire off a handful of rounds with the intent to startle opponents and force impulse reactions. When using the Covering Fire maneuver (p. XX), her opponents cannot benefit from aiming against her. She can apply her Defense against incoming Firearms attacks, in addition to any cover bonuses. Additionally, her training allows her to use Suppressive Fire with a semi-automatic weapon.

Secondary Target (•••): Sometimes, shooting an opponent behind cover is all but impossible. However, a bullet can knock objects off balance, or cause ricochets. By using Secondary Target, your character opts not to hit her target, but instead strike them with any collateral objects that might be nearby. She causes bashing damage instead of lethal, but ignores all cover penalties to the roll. The weapon's damage rating does not add to the damage in this case.

Grappling (• to •••; Style)

Prerequisites: Stamina •••, Strength ••, Athletics ••, Brawl ••

Effect: Your character has trained in wrestling, or one of many grappling martial arts.

Sprawl (•): Your character can defend himself in a grapple. While in a grapple, the character's opponent cannot apply the Drop Prone or Take Cover moves.

Takedown (••): Your character can take an opponent to the ground rapidly. With a normal roll, you may choose to render an opponent prone instead of establishing a grapple. Also, you may choose to cause bashing damage equal to the successes rolled.

Joint Lock (•••): Your character can use joint locks and immobilizing tactics to limit her opponent's movement. She can use the Joint Lock move in a grapple. Next turn, her opponent suffers bashing damage equal to your successes. She can use Joint Lock as a lead-in to the Restrain move. In addition, any successful overpowering maneuvers your character uses cause 1L damage in addition to their normal effects.

Heavy Weapons (• to •••••; Style)

Prerequisites: Stamina •••, Strength •••, Athletics ••, Weaponry ••

Effect: Your character is trained with heavy weapons which require strength, wide range, and follow through more than direct speed and accuracy. This Style may be used with a two-handed weapon such as a claymore, chainsaw, pike, or an uprooted street sign.

Sure Strike (•): Your character doesn't always hit the hardest or the most frequently, but she guarantees a deadly strike when she does hit. You can reflexively remove three dice from any attack dice pool (to a minimum of zero) to add one to your character's weapon damage rating for the turn. These dice must be removed after calculating any penalties from the environment or the opponent's Defense.

Threat Range (••): Your character's weapon is immense and keeps opponents at bay. If you opt not to move or Dodge during your turn, any character moving into your character's proximity suffers one lethal damage and a penalty to their Defense equal to your character's weapon damage rating. This penalty only lasts for one turn. This cannot be used in a turn the character is Dodging.

Bring the Pain (••): Your character's strikes stun and incapacitate as well as causing massive trauma to the body. Sacrifice your character's Defense to use Bring the Pain. Make a standard attack roll. Any damage you score with Bring the Pain counts as a penalty to all actions the victim takes during their next turn. So, if you cause four lethal damage, the opponent is at -4 on their next attack.

Warding Stance (•••): Your character holds her weapon in such a way as to make attacks much harder. If her weapon's drawn, spend a point of Willpower reflexively to add her weapon's damage rating as armor for the turn. This will not protect against firearms.

Rending (••••): Your character's cuts leave crippling, permanent wounds. By spending a Willpower point before making an attack roll, her successful attacks cause one level of aggravated damage in addition to her weapon's damage rating. This Willpower point does not add to the attack roll.

Improvised Weaponry (• to ••; Style)

Prerequisites: Wits ••, Weaponry •

Effect: Most people don't walk around armed. While someone pulling a knife or a gun can cool a hostile situation down, it can also cause things to boil over — an argument that wouldn't be more than harsh words suddenly ends up with three people in the morgue. If your character is on the receiving end of someone pulling a knife, it helps to have something in his hand as well.

Your character is good at making do with what he's got. Sometimes he's lucky — if your character's in a bar, he's got a lot of glass bottles, or maybe a pool cue, to play with. If he's in the lab, he can wield beakers and cables with a deadly precision. However, he's got something like a sixth sense, and can find a weapon almost anywhere.

Always Armed (•): Your character can always get his hands on something dangerous, and he has an instinctive understanding of how to put it to good — and deadly — use. At the start of your turn, make a reflexive Wits + Weaponry roll to grab an object suitable for use as a weapon in pretty much any environment. (The player is encouraged to work with the Storyteller to determine an appropriate item — a large, jagged rock in the wilderness, for example, or a heavy glass ashtray with one sharp, broken edge in a dive bar.) Regardless of what he picks up, the weapon has a +0 weapon modifier, -1 initiative penalty, Size 1, Durability 2, and Structure 4. On an exceptional success, increase the weapon modifier and Size by 1, but the initiative penalty increases to -2. Whatever your character grabs doesn't cause you to suffer the normal -1 penalty for wielding an improvised weapon.

In Harm's Way (••): Your character's got a knack for putting his weapon in the way of an oncoming attack, no matter how small or inappropriate for blocking it might be. While he's wielding an improvised weapon acquired with Always Armed, you can treat the Structure of your character's weapon as general armor against a single Brawl or Weaponry attack. Any damage he takes inflicts an equal amount of damage to the improvised weapon, bypassing Durability. Your character can use the weapon to attack later in the same turn, but can only use this ability when applying his Defense to an attack.

Breaking Point (•••): One sure way to win a fight is to hit the other guy so hard that he doesn't get back up, even if that means losing a weapon in the process. When making an all-out attack with an improvised weapon acquired with Always Armed, you can reduce the weapon's Structure by any amount down to a minimum of 0. Every 2 points of Structure spent in this way

adds 1 to the weapon modifier for that one single attack. Declare any Structure loss before making the attack; this Structure is reduced even if the attack does no damage. If the weapon is reduced to 0 Structure, it is automatically destroyed after the attack. You can use this technique in conjunction with In Harm's Way, allowing your character to parry an attack made on a higher Initiative and then go on the offensive, provided that the weapon wasn't destroyed

Iron Skin (•• or ••••)

Prerequisites: Martial Arts •• or Street Fighting ••, Stamina •••

Effect: Through rigorous conditioning, or extensive scarring, your character has grown resistant to harm. She can shrug off shots that would topple bigger fighters. She knows how to take a strike, and can even move into a hit from a weapon to minimize harm. She gains armor against bashing attacks; one point of armor with ••, and two points of armor with ••••. By spending a point of Willpower when hit, she can downgrade some lethal damage from a successful attack into bashing. Downgrade one damage at ••, two with ••••.

Marksmanship (• to ••••; Style)

Prerequisites: Composure •••, Resolve •••, Firearms ••

Effect: When prepared and aimed, a gun is an ideal killing machine. Your character has trained to take advantage of the greatest features of a gun, usually a rifle, but this Style can be used with any gun. Because of the discipline and patience required for Marksmanship, your character cannot use her Defense during any turn in which she uses one of these maneuvers. These maneuvers may only be used after aiming for at least one turn.

Through the Crosshairs (•): Your character is a competent sniper, able to sit in position and steel her wits. Usually, the maximum bonus from aiming is three dice. With Through the Crosshairs, it's equal to her Composure + Firearms.

Precision Shot (••): With this level of training, your character knows how to effectively disable a victim instead of focusing on the kill. When attacking a specified target, you may reduce your weapon's damage rating one-for-one to ignore penalties for shooting a specified target (p. XX).

For example, if your character is using a sniper rifle (four damage weapon), and attacking an arm (-2 to hit), you could choose to use three damage for -1, or two damage to eliminate the penalty entirely.

A Shot Rings Out (•••): A master sniper, your character has no worries or lack of confidence. She can fire into a crowd and strike a specific target without penalty. If she misses, it's because her shot goes wide. She will never hit an unintended target.

Ghost (••••): Your character has trained to shoot unseen, and vanish without a trace. Her Firearms score acts as a penalty on any roll to notice her vantage point, or any Investigation or Perception roll to investigate the area from where she was shooting.

Shiv (• or ••)

Prerequisites: Street Fighting ••, Weaponry •

Effect: Your character carries small, concealable weapons for use in a tussle. Rolls to detect the concealed weapon suffer your character's Weaponry score as a penalty. With the one-dot version, he can conceal a weapon with a zero damage rating. The two-dot version can conceal a one damage rating weapon. Your character may use the Brawl Skill to use this weapon.

Street Fighting (• to ••••; Style)

Prerequisites: Stamina ••, Composure ••, Brawl ••, Streetwise ••

Effect: Your character learned to fight on the mean streets. She may have had some degree of formal training, but the methodology came from the real world, in dangerous circumstances. Many Deviants attained this Merit during their escape or while fighting off pursuers months or even years later. Street Fighting isn't about form and grace, it's about staying alive. These maneuvers may only be used unarmed, or with weapons capable of using the Brawl Skill, such as punch daggers, or weapons concealed with the Shiv Merit (above).

Duck and Weave (•): Your character has been beaten all to hell more than a few times. Now she dodges on instinct, not on skill. You can reflexively take a one-die penalty to any actions this turn to use the higher of her Wits or Dexterity to calculate Defense. If you've already made a roll without penalty this turn, you cannot use Duck and Weave.

Knocking the Wind Out (••): Shots to the center mass can shake an opponent, and your character knows this well. When your character makes a successful unarmed attack, the opponent suffers a -1 to his next roll.

Kick 'Em While They're Down (•••): The best enemy is one on the ground. Your character topples opponents, and keeps them down. Any time your successes on an attack roll exceed an opponent's Stamina, you may choose to apply the Knocked Down Tilt. Additionally, any time your character is close enough to strike when an opponent attempts to get up from a prone position, she can reflexively cause two bashing damage.

One-Two Punch (••••): Your character hits fast, and she follows through with every hit. Whenever she makes a successful attack, you can spend a point of Willpower to cause two extra points of bashing damage.

Last-Ditch Effort (•••••): In a street fight, every second could mean the loss of your life. A proficient street fighter is a remarkable survivalist. She bites, headbutts, trips, or does whatever it takes to prevent that last hit. Any time a character with this level of Street Fighting is about to take a hit or get overpowered when she's already suffering wound penalties, she can reflexively spend a Willpower point and sacrifice her Defense for the turn to make an attack against her would-be assailant. This can occur even if she's already acted in a turn, so long as she's not already spent Willpower. Resolve this attack before the opponent's action.

Variations and Scars

Divergence is an ugly and broken form of evolution — an imperfect transformation that warps its subjects through thoroughly unnatural selection. Every Remade is mutilated physically or spiritually by a Scar, and expresses an adaptation or mutation in the form of a Variation. Together, these changes form the core of what separates the Deviant from Baseline humanity.

Every Variation is a power, or set of powers, that manifests in a manner reflective of the Deviant's Clade. A Chimeric Deviant with the Flight Variation might extrude leathery wings from her back, or iridescent insect-wings, or stay aloft through grotesque air-sacs and spasming fronds. An Invasive Remade with the same Variation is borne on thrusters built into her back, a Cephalist by telekinetic energy, or a Coactive by squirming ephemera. Likewise, each Scar is a

drawback or disadvantage that impedes the Remade or hinders use of her Variations in some way.

The dot rating of a Scar or Variation is referred to as its **Magnitude**. Magnitude runs from one to five dots, with higher ratings indicating greater intensity of effect. Most can be acquired at various Magnitudes, but some are set at a specific dot rating that cannot be changed. It is not possible to acquire a Variation or Scar with a Magnitude of zero.

Entangling Variations with Scars

A Remade always possesses at least one Scar and one Variation. Every Variation must be combined or “**entangled**” with a Scar. A Remade with several Variations may possess multiple Scars to match, but it is also possible to entangle several Variations with each other through a single Scar.

The exception to this entanglement is the Scar-free dot of Magnitude granted to a character by their Origin. This can be used to increase the Magnitude of an existing Variation without raising the Magnitude of the entangled Scar. Alternatively, a character could use it to possess a one-dot Variation with no entangled Scar at all.

Both Variations and Scars come in three **activation methods**, depending on the extent to which the Remade can control their expression:

- **Controlled** Variations activate when the Remade calls upon them, and their Scars determine the price the Broken pays for doing so.
- **Involuntary** Variations activate when the Deviant calls upon them, but they sometimes activate of their own accord, obeying the parameters of their Scars.
- **Persistent** Variations are either active all the time or can be activated at will, and their Scars reflect permanent changes wrought upon the Deviant by his unnatural power.
- The activation method of a Variation is the same as the activation method of the Scar entangled with it. However, some **Deviations** can alter the manner in which a Scar and its associated Variations activate, changing them to another category or adjusting them in some way. A Deviation will state what types of Scar it can modify.

Scars come with specific hindrances, as noted in their entry. If this hindrance restricts or affects Variation use, it applies to all Variations combined with the Scar in question. In the case of Controlled Variations, the penalties from an entangled Controlled Scar only weigh in if the Deviant successfully activates the power. A Remade with Tribulation (p. XX), for example, only expends Willpower points if the roll to activate the entangled Variation succeeds. If it fails, she retains any Willpower points that would otherwise have gone towards fueling the power.

The choice of Scar also defines the Attributes used to determine dice pools and numerical effects of combined Variations. Scars are divided into Mental, Physical, and Social, and are associated with the following Attributes:

- **Mental:** Intelligence (Power), Wits (Finesse), and Resolve (Resistance)
- **Physical:** Strength (Power), Dexterity (Finesse), and Stamina (Resistance)
- **Social:** Presence (Power), Manipulation (Finesse), and Composure (Resistance)

Where a Variation makes use of these Attributes, it refers to them as **Scar Power**, **Scar Finesse**, or **Scar Resistance**. For example, a Remade with the Enhanced Speed Variation combined with Bane (a Physical Scar) would use Strength as his Scar Power, while one with Phobia (a Mental Scar) would use Intelligence as his Scar Power.

Most Variations and Scars use the same dice pools derived from Scar Power, Finesse, and Resistance.

- A **Scar Finesse roll** is always Scar Finesse + Variation Magnitude + Acclimation. If the Variation targets an unwilling character or one who doesn't know they are being targeted, the intended victim makes a contested Resistance + Supernatural Tolerance roll to avoid its effects. The Resistance Attribute often matches that of the Variation's Scar Resistance, but the Deviant's player may choose another, more appropriate Resistance Attribute when purchasing the Variation.
- A **Scar Resistance roll** is always Scar Resistance + Acclimation - Instability Penalty (p. XX). Scar Resistance rolls are used to resist or limit the effects of a Scar.

A Variation's Magnitude cannot exceed the Magnitude of its entangled Scar. A Scar can be entangled with multiple Variations as long as the Scar's Magnitude is *higher* than the highest-Magnitude, entangled Variation. The number of Variations entangled with a single Scar cannot exceed 1 + the difference between the Scar's Magnitude and the highest-rated Variation's Magnitude.

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Scar Magnitude	Maximum Number of Variations by Highest-Magnitude Variation				
	Mag 1	Mag 2	Mag 3	Mag 4	Mag 5
1	1 Variation	-	-	-	-
2	2 Variations	1 Variation	-	-	-
3	3 Variations	2 Variations	1 Variation	-	-
4	4 Variations	3 Variations	2 Variations	1 Variation	-
5	5 Variations	4 Variations	3 Variations	2 Variations	1 Variation

[END TABLE]

For example, a Remade with the Conspicuous Appearance Scar at Magnitude ••• could combine it with a single Variation of up to Magnitude •••; or with a Variation of Magnitude ••, plus an additional Variation of Magnitude •• or less; or a Variation of Magnitude ••, plus two more Variations of Magnitude •• or less; or four Variations each at Magnitude •.

A Scar-free Magnitude • Variation provided by the Deviant's Origin is not tied to a specific Scar. The Remade's player must choose whether the Variation is Mental, Physical, or Social, and whether its activation method is Controlled or Persistent.

Combining multiple Variations in a single Scar can keep the total Magnitude of Scars that the Broken carries to a minimum, and allows several Variations to conveniently key off the same

Attributes. However, it comes at the cost of linking all those Variations to a more formidable disadvantage.

While several Variations can be entangled together through combination with a single Scar, the reverse is not possible. A Variation cannot be combined with multiple Scars, except through the use of Deviations applied to the Scar.

Acquiring Variations

Deviants begin with a total Magnitude of Variations allocated by the chronicle threat level, plus any dots of Scar-free Variation from their Origin. These Variations are assigned during the character creation process, and represent the initial mutations, alterations, and changes inflicted by Divergence.

Variations are divided into six categories: Cephalist, Chimeric, Coactive, Invasive, Mutant, and Universal. Variation categories have the following effects:

- A Deviant must always have at least half of her total Magnitude assigned to Variations from her Clade and/or the Universal categories. A Cephalist with 5 Magnitude of Variations, for example, must have at least 3 Magnitude assigned to some combination of Universal and Cephalist Variations. Apart from this restriction, a Remade may possess Variations from any category.
- Broken of some Clades may temporarily increase or decrease the Magnitude of a Variation or Scar through a Clade Adaptation. These changes are always of limited duration, reverting back once the Adaptation's effects have ceased. See p. XX for further details.
- Instability can increase the Magnitude of Scars or cause an entirely new Scar to manifest. Usually, the new Scar or additional Magnitude fades away when the Instability heals, but the Remade's player may choose to make it permanent in order to increase the Magnitude of one or more Variations already entangled with the Scar (at no cost in Experiences) or to purchase a new Variation entangled with the Scar (by spending four Experiences). In this case, the new Scar or additional Magnitude of a Scar does not fade when the Instability heals. See p. XX for further details.

Variation Basics

- A **Controlled Variation** only activates when the Deviant wishes to use it but requires a successful Scar Finesse roll. Once activated, it remains active until the end of the scene or until the Remade deactivates it as an instant action.

Dice Pool: Scar Finesse + Variation Magnitude + Acclimation. If the Variation targets an unwilling character or one who doesn't know they are being targeted, the intended victim makes a contested Resistance + Supernatural Tolerance roll to avoid its effects. The Resistance Attribute often matches that of the Variation's Scar Resistance, but the Deviant's player may choose another, more appropriate Resistance Attribute when purchasing the Variation.

Action: Instant, unless otherwise noted

Roll Results

Success: The Variation activates. The Broken also suffers the effects of the entangled Scar.

Exceptional Success: As a success, but the transformed also heals a minor Instability.

Failure: The Variation fails to activate.

Dramatic Failure: The Variation fails to activate, and the Remade suffers a minor Instability.

- An **Involuntary Variation** can be activated with a Scar Finesse roll, but certain stimuli, based on the Scar, cause it to activate reflexively without the Deviant's permission or to behave without his direction. See p. XX for details.
- A **Persistent Variation** is available at any time and does not require a roll to activate. Some Persistent Variations (**Perpetual**) are permanently active and are only suppressed if an Adaptation or another Variation temporarily removes its entangled Scar. Others (**Toggled**) are only active when the Broken chooses to activate them as an Instant action and remain active until the end of the scene or until the Deviant deactivates them as an instant action.

Directed Variations

Directed Variations (or specific effects of certain Tiered Variations), follow special rules. Unless otherwise specified by a Variation's description, a Directed Variation works as follows:

- Once activated, the Variation remains active until the end of the scene. While it is active, the Deviant may direct the power of the Variation each turn as an instant action.
- Directing the Variation targets a character or object other than the Deviant herself. The initial target may be chosen as part of a Controlled Variation's activation roll. If the Variation is Persistent and Perpetual, it always requires an instant action to choose a target. If the Variation is Involuntary (or Persistent and Toggled), and the Deviant used an instant action to activate it, the target may be chosen as part of that action; if the power triggered as a result of events outside the Deviant's control, it requires an instant action to choose a target.
- The Remade may choose one new target each turn, as an instant action, which always requires a successful Scar Finesse roll. The maximum number of targets the Broken may have under the influence of a Directed Variation at a time cannot exceed Scar Power. If he would exceed this target limit, the Variation's effects end on enough previous targets to bring him back within this limit.
- A Directed Variation has a range of 10/20/40 yards/meters. The Deviant's player suffers a penalty on the Scar Finesse roll if the target is at medium or long range or is obscured by concealment (p. XX and XX). Directed Variations cannot ordinarily penetrate cover (p. XX).
- Unless targeting a willing target (one who is aware of the incoming Variation and wishes to be a target of it), the victim may make a reflexive Scar Resistance + Supernatural Tolerance roll to contest the Variation's effects.

Variation Keywords

Variations possess specific keywords that come with associated effects or limitations. Every Variation *always* has one of the Overt or Subtle keywords.

- **Directed:** The Variation targets a character or object other than the Deviant herself.
- **Discrete:** The Variation only grants the specific abilities of its current Magnitude rating, and does not grant lower-Magnitude benefits. It can often be bought multiple times at different ratings to access those further capabilities.

- **Overt:** The use of the Variation is particularly blatant or obvious. The use of this power increases the likelihood of a conspiracy noting the Deviant's activity. See p. XX for more details.
- **Perpetual:** If the Variation is Persistent, it is always active. If Overt, it attracts conspiracy attention even if the Remade didn't derive a benefit from it during the chapter. In addition, a Persistent Variation with this keyword grants the Deviant a +5 bonus on any Clash of Wills roll involving it.
- **Reflexive:** The Variation can be activated with a Reflexive action rather than an Instant action.
- **Subtle:** The use of the Variation is easy to conceal. The use of this power does not increase the likelihood of a conspiracy noting the Deviant's activity. See p. XX for more details.
- **Tiered:** The Variation grants the Deviant all its listed benefits up to the Variation's current Magnitude rating. In some cases, activating the Variation grants all of these abilities at once. In others, each effect requires a separate activation.
- **Toggled:** If the Variation is Persistent, it is only active when the character chooses to activate it, which requires an instant action (unless it is also Reflexive). Once activated, it remains active until the end of the scene.

Scar Basics

- Once per scene per Scar, a character's Scars grant her player a Beat whenever they cause her or her allies significant harm or setbacks. This is the primary purpose of Magnitude 1 Scars; the Scar only hinders the Deviant when it would be dramatically appropriate, so the Storyteller may *offer* the player a Beat at opportune moments to have the Scar kick in and make things harder for the character in a fun way if the player accepts. Similarly, the Storyteller may award a Beat to a player who plays his character's Scar in a way that creates a significant complication for the character or his cohort.
- Scars of higher Magnitude still grant Beats when they cause the character problems, but their impact is also governed by systems, noted in each Scar's text.
- Some Scars have effects that are mitigated either by the Remade's Scar Resistance or by a Scar Resistance roll (p. XX):

Dice Pool: Scar Resistance + Acclimation - Instability Penalty.

Action: Reflexive, unless otherwise noted

Roll Results

Success: The Broken mitigates or neutralizes the Scar's effects.

Exceptional Success: As a success, but the transformed also heals a minor Instability.

Failure: The Scar manifests at its full effect.

Dramatic Failure: The Scar manifests at its full effect, and the Remade suffers a minor Instability.

Unentangled Scars

Every Variation must be entangled with a Scar, but the reverse is not true. If a Deviant develops a new Persistent Scar during play as the result of Instability (p. XX), it need not be entangled

with a Variation. The Remade can entangle it with a Variation he develops later by spending Experiences. However, in order to develop a new Controlled or Involuntary Scar, the Deviant must immediately purchase a new Variation to entangle with it.

If the Deviant already has an unentangled Scar when he would manifest a new one due to healing or downgrading existing Instability (p. XX), any new, unentangled Scar must have a Magnitude at least equal to the total number of unentangled Scars (or a maximum of Magnitude 5). So, the player of a Deviant with two unentangled Scars who chooses to gain a third unentangled Scar in order to downgrade some of his Instability would have to choose a Persistent Scar of Magnitude 3 or higher.

During character creation, a Remade may have Scars whose Magnitude could potentially entangle additional Variations and may have one or more unentangled Scars, subject to the limits above.

Fused and Shifting Scars

If the player feels her character has too many Scars to reasonably play, or if a Scar that seemed interesting at the time impedes her ability to have fun (or makes it less fun for everyone in the troupe), the Storyteller may allow her to replace a Scar with one of equal Magnitude or to fuse two or more Scars into a single Scar. This must always result in a legal number of entangled Variations attached to each Scar.

Scar Keywords

Each Scar has several keywords defining its properties, as follows:

- The first keyword indicates whether a Scar falls into the **Mental**, **Physical**, or **Social** Attribute categories, or whether they're flexible enough for Variations in **any** category. In the latter case, the player chooses the Attribute category when the character acquires the Scar. A Scar's Attribute category determines the Power, Finesse, and Resistance Attributes of it and its entangled Variations.
- The second keyword indicates whether the Scar is **Overt** or **Subtle**. Overt Scars, like Overt Variations, attract conspiracy attention whenever they manifest during a chapter (p. XX). If a Scar has a Deviation that would apply secondary Scars, the primary Scar is considered Overt if *any* of the secondary Scars are Overt.

Some Scars also have one of the optional keywords:

- **Directed:** The Scar may only entangle Directed Variations (p. XX).
- **Repeatable:** A player can develop the Scar more than once. This allows several Controlled Variations to exact the same price even if entangled with different Scars. Some Repeatable Scars must apply different criteria each time. Each Repeatable Scar defines its criteria details.
- **Toggled:** The Scar may only entangle Toggled Persistent Variations (p. XX).

Deviations

A **Deviation** modifies a Variation or Scar in a particular way. Most Deviations are specific to a single Variation or Scar and are included in those entries. Those Deviations that can apply to multiple Scars are listed separately, beginning on p. XX.

A Deviation adds its rating to the Variation's or Scar's effective Magnitude for the purposes of entanglement. The Variation or Scar continues to function at its pre-Deviation Magnitude, but it also features the additional effects detailed by the Deviation. For example, a Magnitude •• Scar with a +1 Magnitude Deviation would count as Magnitude ••• for determining the maximum Magnitude of the Variations entangled with it.

A Deviation cannot increase the Magnitude of a Variation or Scar above •••••.

As well as further customization of a character, Deviations offer a straightforward method for modifying Variation or Scar Magnitude in the short-term due to the effects of Instability or Adaptations.

Supernatural Conflict

In the occult world of the Chronicles of Darkness, a Deviant may encounter strange and supernatural beings that are not Remade. When a Deviant is targeted by a supernatural ability that calls for a contested roll and would allow a victim to add a supernatural trait such as Blood Potency, Primal Urge, or Gnosis to the roll, the Deviant may instead add dice equal to her highest-Magnitude Variation + Acclimation.

Clash of Wills

When the supernatural powers of two Deviants conflict over the particular aspect of a target they're both affecting, situations can arise where it is unclear which will overcome the other. When the effects of Variations clash directly in this manner, a Clash of Wills takes place.

The players of all characters using conflicting powers enter a contested roll-off, each using a pool of her Variation's Magnitude plus her Acclimation. Ties reroll until one player has accrued more successes than all others. The effect invoked by that player's character wins out and resolves as usual, while all others fail. The victory of one Variation in a clash does not mean the immediate cancellation of the others, except in cases where only one power can possibly endure.

Clash of Wills also applies to power conflicts with other supernatural creatures. The traits involved depend on the creatures in question. Vampires use Blood Potency in the contest, for example.

A Persistent Variation with the Perpetual keyword grants the Deviant a +5 bonus on any Clash of Wills roll involving it.