An Action–Adventure Roleplaying Game

VISKARA

Vanguard Certification Manual

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An Action-Adventure Roleplaying Game

IP
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It's common knowledge on the planet Aidalon that you get what you want by being proactive, and through the unshakeable faith that *you can do it*. Those with the drive to dream big and push forward are the ones that change the world, for better or for worse; and when diplomacy isn't an option, they resolve conflicts through battle. The rules and setting of Viskara are designed to encourage the following concepts in character design and in gameplay:

Big Personalities: Characters are the reason the story happens, and memorable characters create memorable stories. Mannerisms can be exaggerated, characters can wear outfits that would give a tailor nightmares, and villains can have grand schemes in the service of equally grand goals. These traits don't have to be true for everyone; it remains perfectly reasonable to be shy or have subtle details, or to have a character's standout quality be how grounded their traits are.

Tactical Action: Combat is the major focus of the game. Characters display their true colors in battle, and they'll be in battle a lot. Clever use of positioning, resource management, and customized abilities are key to victory against a wide array of enemies that each have their own abilities.

Determination and Teamwork: You can do anything you set your mind to, as long as you have the willpower to keep pushing toward your goals and especially with allies at your back. By working together and supporting each other, characters can eventually overcome even the largest obstacles. Note that this doesn't mean every fight is winnable; sometimes you overcome an obstacle by trying again when you're stronger, or by finding a way around it.

A Focus on the Battles and Story: If it's not part of battle and it won't lead to an interesting story or adventure, you can afford to skip the details. Concepts such as currency and time are encouraged to be thought of less as gameplay elements that need exact tracking, and more as story elements that can be referred to only by how they factor into the plot.

Example 1:The grizzled detective sits at the bar and orders a drink, deep in thought about the details of his case. This type of scene typically wouldn't be interrupted by the detective counting up exact change to pay for the drink, or taking note of how much money he has left; the mechanics of paying for a drink don't contribute to the story, so they can be reduced to a small narrative comment about the detective putting a few coins on the table.

Example 2:
The player characters need a ticket for the boat to another city, but each ticket costs THREE THOUSAND rien! In most stories, the number is only used to communicate that it's more than the characters can currently afford; the exact amount doesn't matter nearly as much as the story significance that *the characters need to get more money* (and that sets up the next mission or story arc).

Example 3: A villain has set two bombs to explode in different parts of a city, and the player characters can only stop one of them. The exact details of how much time is left on the bombs and how much time it takes to travel from one location to another doesn't matter nearly as much as the story significance that *the characters must choose one thing to do.*

SHADOWS

Shadows are supernatural powers that appear within an exceedingly small proportion of the population; the common religious view is that shadows are gifts from a god, to guide extraordinary people toward defending others. Many shadow-users recall that they gained their powers in a moment of need such as when they're in danger, but experiments have been unable to grant shadows through manufactured danger.

Shadows can have nearly any physical manifestation, but regardless of form they can always aid in combat. A shadow can be classified as an Aura, as Shadow Arts, or as a Signature Move based on the details of how they function:

- Auras passively allow their wearer to store power that they can unleash at key moments
- Shadow Arts are a collection of shadow-empowered combat tactics, used consistently throughout battle
- Signature Moves are customized maneuvers or sequences of maneuvers, which are more powerful than shadow arts but performed less frequently

The term "shadow" name originates from the tendency of the powers to give a symbolic representation of some aspect of their user's personality, the same way that sunlight creates a shadow in the shape of that person. Shadows can have wildly different functions within the same type, and even two shadows with the same functions can take on wildly different appearances. Examples of ways that shadows have manifested include:

Aura

An armored or decorative outfit that user wears

A swarm of insects flying around the user

Music coming from the user's location
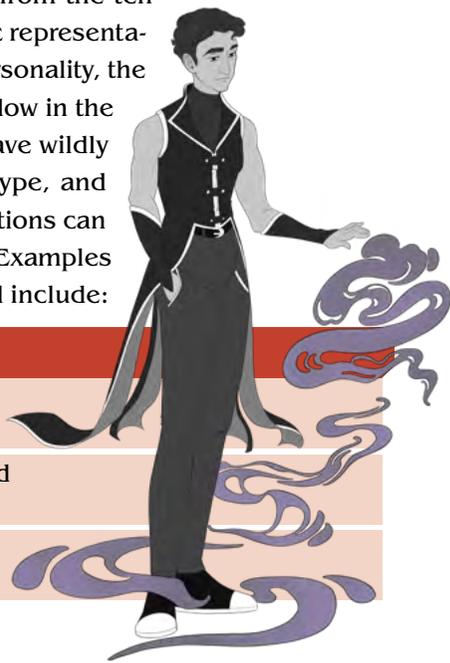
Shadow Arts

A gun or set of guns that operate through technology too advanced to be replicated with non-shadow objects

A companion that the user commands

Magic spells that the user casts

Signature Move

A single extra-powerful attack, growing the user's axe to massive proportions before crashing it down on a target

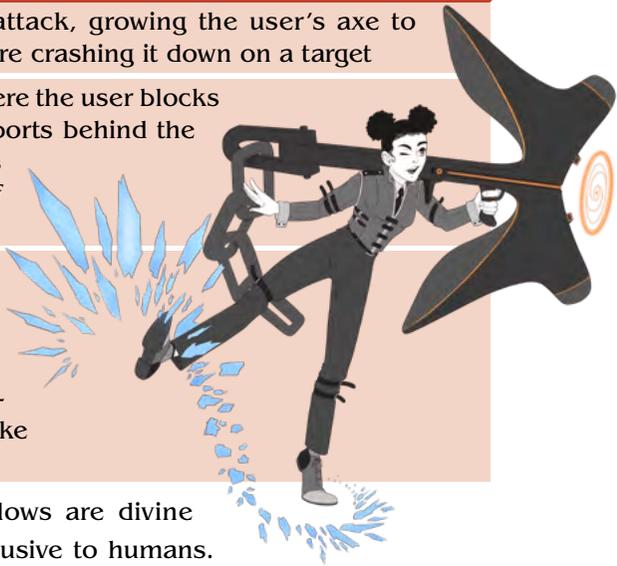A series of maneuvers where the user blocks an incoming attack, teleports behind the attacker, then surrounds them with a wall of screaming ghosts

Creating a tiny clone of the user that sits on the shoulder of an ally and commands them to attack an enemy, empowering that attack to strike with additional force

Despite the view that shadows are divine gifts, the powers aren't exclusive to humans. Human-sized dragonfly-like creatures called teyos *all* have extremely powerful shadows, and the somac parasite is somehow able to grant shadows to its host. The existence of multiple species that all have access to shadows is a source of great theological debate, as many have trouble reconciling their belief that shadows are a god's favor with the fact that only 0.02% of humans gain that favor while 100% of teyos and somacs have that favor from birth. The official church opinion tends to shift over time, but largely remains along the lines of a stance that humans don't need shadows like others do, and are therefore special for receiving them as gifts rather than requirements.

Technology
Viskara

When lightning strikes the ground, it leaves behind a crystal called viskara that has multiple valuable traits.

Electricity: Viskara creates an endless but weak stream of energy. The strength of the electricity is directly linked to the size of the crystal, as well as whether it's been "treated" via prolonged exposure to powerful magnetic fields. Untreated viskara is typically used for smaller devices such as portable communication radios (powered by viskara in a housing the size of a bow's quiver, which is slung across the back), while many large machines such as trains are powered by masses of treated viskara that can still easily take up huge amounts of space. Most large cities have cavernous underground facilities with a "neighborhood" of house-sized treated viskara to supply the entire city's power.

Indestructibility: Viskara cannot be bent or broken, except while submerged in liquid refined sugar. Viskara "manufacturers" mold viskara inside sugar vats to create more convenient shapes such as blocks or rods, which then allows them to be stored more efficiently and to be used in construction as indestructible reinforcement. Many cities build their walls with thin sheets of viskara running throughout the structure, creating an impenetrable support frame while also powering the lighting and radios installed within. Some cities have experimented with using viskara to line individual suits of armor, and Prudomma has developed a small supply of mechs that include viskara-lined plating, but both are currently considered too costly for the benefit and therefore unsuitable for mass production. Many modern buildings are much taller and more artistically-designed than pre-viskara buildings, due to their indestructible beams allowing for architecture that would otherwise be considered too unstable to attempt.

Quirks: Viskara is constantly being researched, but it often seems that scientists find more questions than answers:

↗ Any viskara that makes contact with other viskara will instantly and permanently attach to it, functionally becoming a single larger crystal with the combined power output of both.

↗ Treated viskara cannot be un-treated, nor can it be further treated with exposure to even stronger magnetic fields.

↗ The source of the electricity itself is unknown; viskara has no chemical reactions with its surroundings, does not change over time, and has no detectable inner workings. One popular hypothesis is that the electricity is created from a cosmic force that fills the universe, another is that it must be from forces too small to examine, and a third maintains that the electricity must be coming from somewhere else altogether.

The Name of The Game: For most of human history, viskara was just a jagged rock that felt strange to touch. Eventually it was discovered that the crystals have strange interactions with a select few materials, and now viskara is the backbone of every city on the map. Nearly every government is constantly collecting viskara to continue developing their infrastructure, and as a result the crystals are incredibly rare and valuable with "lightning chasers" that race to find viskara as soon as it's formed. When a big storm rolls through open land, odds are high that nearby cities will attempt to lay claim over that territory with the threat of full-scale battle.

Technology

Viskara has led to many inventions that influence the world on a grand scale. The largest of which include:

The Electric Motor: Converting the electrical output of viskara into physical motion forms the basis of most modern technology. Development of motorized devices has to allow for a safe means of discharging the electricity into the surrounding environment (commonly the ground), otherwise the electricity builds up and will reduce the motor's output until the built-up electricity releases in an unpredictable direction.

Ground Transport: Motor vehicles were invented shortly after the electric motor, with a large fan to pull them forward; however, personal vehicles require a lot of viskara which very few people can afford so their usage remains limited to the wealthy. Trains are the popular alternative, assembled by the government and maintained at virtually no cost. The trains that connect cities still use the fan propulsion system designed for cars, with double-decker seating and the width to match so that a large enough fan can be mounted at the front; the smaller trams that provide transport within each city typically use a weak axle motor instead
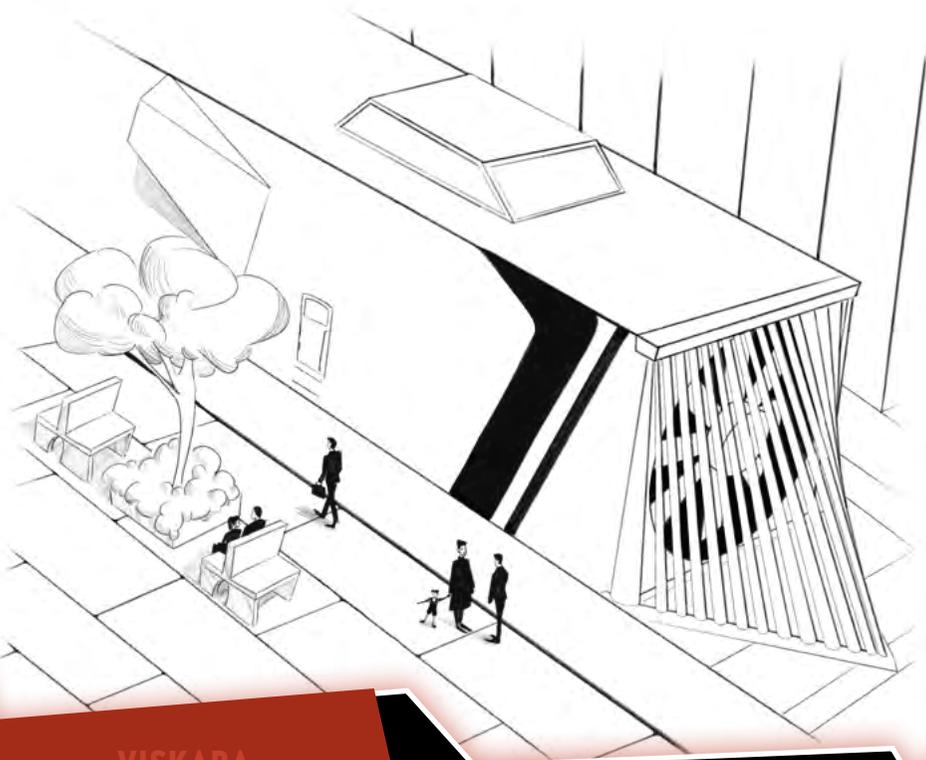
since top speed is less of a concern. Prudomma has recently discovered a technology that allows them to create much faster trains, using viskara-powered magnetic rails that simultaneously lift and push the train to quickly and easily reach triple the top speed of a normal fan train. At the moment, these magnetic trains exclusively connect Prudomma to other cities within its empire.

Air Transport: While air transport is rare, zeppelins do see use for reaching cities detached from the rail network . Zeppelins feature massive envelopes of oven-hot air above the cabins, driven and steered by propellers. While the threat of creature attack is reduced by avoiding the ground, the potential disaster from an airborne attack means zeppelins typically require an escort of smaller armored "interceptor" zeppelins to distract and combat threats; the crew and logistics both making for a somewhat costly trip. Cities have used zeppelin technology to create floating repeater stations for radio communication, and Antaon has created a floating bank. Shortly after the technology of flying buildings was first developed, several governments began research into combat tactics against airborne fortresses. A fan-propelled plane has also been developed, featuring rotating wings that allow the craft to take off and land vertically while boasting a well-armored body and high speed to avoid attacks; it currently operates under the ownership of Antaon, serving high-profile visitors and residents.

Communication: Radios serve as the primary means of long-distance communication. With a repeater station floating in place at each of the planet's six poles, frequencies can be picked up and spread across the world. However, portable radios don't have enough power to transmit a signal the repeaters can pick up unless the radio itself is within visible range of a station. The vast majority of radio channels are ignored by the repeaters, allowing each city to have a range of local channels that citizens can use. The technology has also been developed for telephone wire to enable private conversations, although it currently only serves to connect key facilities such as military bases within a city.
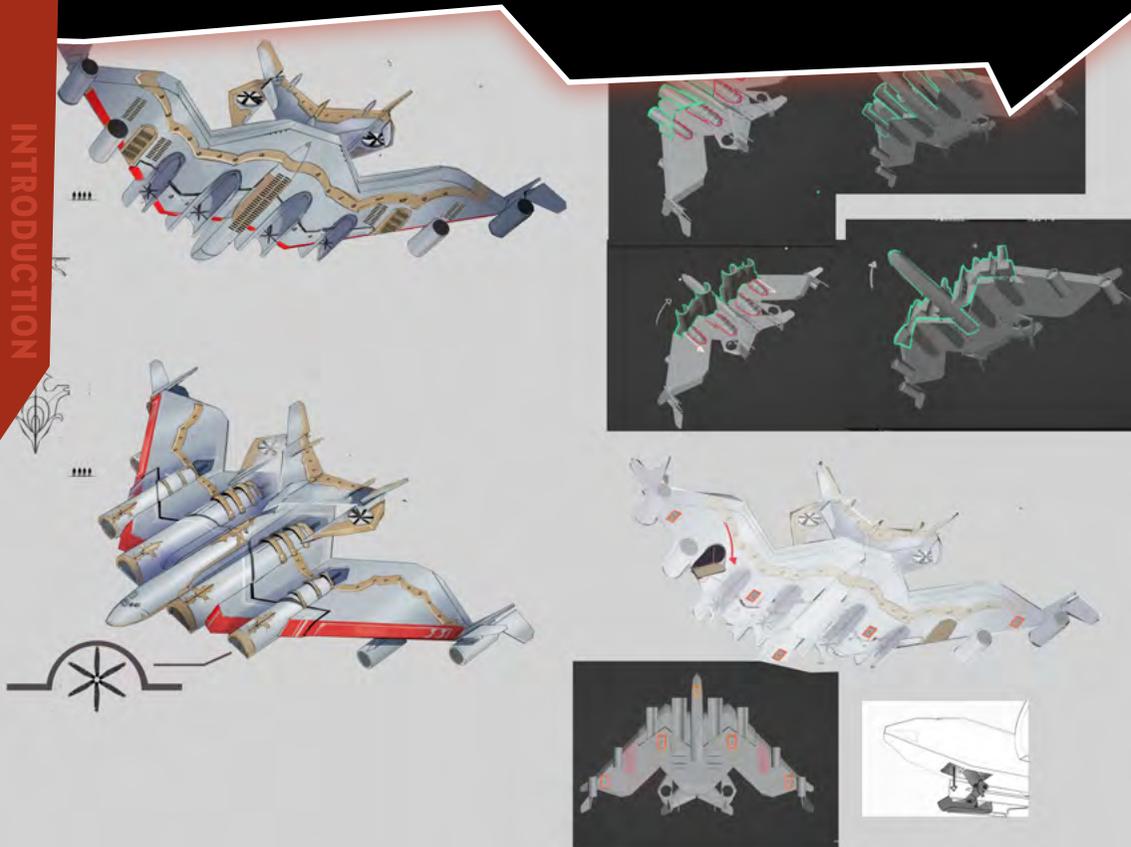
The Kinetic Battery: A massive advancement in compact power supply takes advantage of a specialized construction to store power: a flywheel is placed with a disk-shaped enclosure that is itself enclosed within a hollow frame, and as much air as possible is removed from within the enclosures. Viskara sends electricity through the flywheel's axle, creating a force that spins the flywheel in one direction while its enclosure spins in the other. This system can reach incredible speeds as it converts the electrical force to physical rotation, limited only by the craftsmanship of the device when removing air and perfecting the symmetry; most kinetic batteries have a maximum capacity matching a day's output from a viskara crystal of the battery's size. A kinetic battery can be attached to a generator that siphons energy through the battery's magnetic field, draining its speed to gain increased power outputs until the battery comes to a stop or the generator is removed; generators can siphon small amounts of speed just to gain a small boost to efficiency, or it can instantly drain a significant amount of battery's speed

to create a massive surge of power at the cost of long recharge times. The kinetic battery allows for devices to have a smaller form if they don't require constant power, such as electric guns and flashlights. Prudomma's mechs rely on kinetic batteries to supply the power needed for them to operate, and are designed as small fortresses so that they can buy time to recharge even during battle. Kinetic batteries often feature a device connected to the shell that can roughly measure the strength of the magnetic field, serving as a battery level indicator. Kinetic batteries are among the most expensive objects on the planet for their size, requiring cutting-edge technologies to expand on the power of the world's most valuable resource.

The Power Grid: Cities that stockpile viskara tend to create the infrastructure for its power to be shared throughout the city, typically for free but with limits on how much energy a single household can use during peak hours. The free energy also allows for conveniences such as electric trams, public radio communications booths, and street lighting.
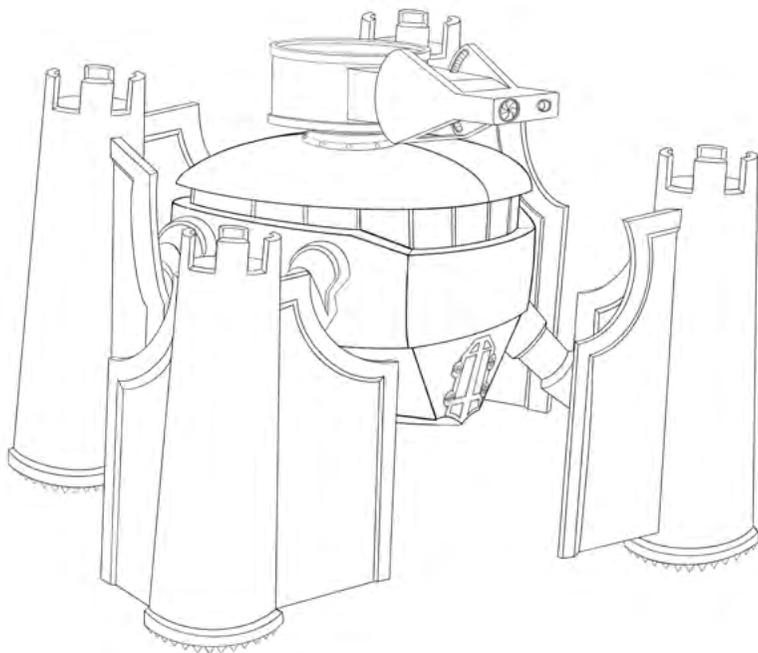
The Tech Level

Viskara's traits as a bulky, stockpiled resource has led to three major groups that technology sorts into.

External Power: Compact and affordable. Within most cities, devices can draw their energy from the city's power grid which removes the need for any built-in viskara power supply. These devices are also typically mass produced and treated as normal parts of everyday life.

Internal Power: Bulky and expensive. Long-distance vehicles and devices that can't rely on a power grid have to come with built-in viskara power, greatly increasing their size and cost. These devices are typically owned by governments, such as with public transportation connecting cities. Some devices are publicly available but viewed as luxury items, such as portable refrigerators and personal vehicles. Extremely wealthy individuals tend to purchase a kinetic battery alongside adapters that allow the battery to provide power for externally-powered devices, gaining the advantages of compact size while keeping the access to electricity.

Unpowered and medieval: For situations where viskara-powered devices are too expensive, take up too much space, or otherwise aren't an option, technology is limited to the most basic concepts that existed before the world harnessed electricity; horses are used for travel, knights and archers perform the majority of combat, and messages are letters written and delivered by hand.

The World
The Wilderness and Cities

The wilderness is full of dangerous creatures; the only civilizations that thrive are ones that establish defenses, typically in the form of massive walls surrounding the territory. Most people stay safe by spending their entire lives within the **supercities** - the five cities each with a population above 10 million - only leaving one supercity to travel to another. While city walls are functionally indestructible due to their viskara reinforcement, creatures have been known to attempt breaching train gates or flying over the walls into the city. Farms are often placed outside of the walls to give them the space they need, but this also makes them the most endangered aspect of a city and leads to heavy reliance on guards stationed beyond the border; losing one farm to an attack is a blow to food production and losing several can cause severe food shortages.

The greatest risk of attack is outside of city walls, especially in the true wilderness but even trains and zeppelins may find themselves under siege from local wildlife that happened to be near the tracks.

Vanguards

To mitigate the danger present in the world, cities maintain a requirement that transports connecting cities and anybody leaving a city by any means must be guarded by a minimum number of competent fighters to defend against creatures; typically 1 fighter per 200 travelers, with a minimum of 1 even for solo travelers.

Vanguard certification is the proof of fighting ability, and it can be earned by completing a series of tests within an exam prepared once per year by supercity Ych. The certification has a long waitlist and a high entry fee, but successfully completing the exam unlocks many aspects of the world:

- Free lodging and free basic meals in any city
- Free transit within cities and between cities
- Permission to enter the wilderness without a guard, and to be hired as a guard by any government

- Access to the library and classes at the Academy for Shadow Research in supercity Veyren
- Permission to enter larger combat tournaments in supercity Antaon, and to join the Antaon vanguard's guild; an organization that maintains a ranking system for vanguards and posts well-paying tasks for vanguards at higher ranks

These benefits come with an implied expectation that holders of the certification will use their talents to make the world a better place, particularly when it comes to defending others. While many do aim to live up to those expectations, some seek only the benefits.

Certification also comes with benefits that won't be explicitly stated on the paperwork; many people with important tasks, legal or otherwise, will seek to hire vanguards. **Vanguard companies** are private military companies that employ vanguards and negotiate for contracts on behalf of those vanguards in exchange for a cut of the profits, the top vanguard companies in the world have exclusive access to lucrative government contracts, and particularly wealthy individuals would pay extra to hire vanguards through a company with a good track record. Most companies operate within a single city, such as the Veyren-based Event Horizon, but larger companies like Rintezka can expand to cover multiple cities.

Group vanguard certification is a common occurrence, where a small team of aspiring vanguards works together to complete the exam. While teams are allowed within the exam, their certification will come with a condition that the certification is only valid during activities that the entire team is participating in together. A common strategy is for a team to get group certification and work together as they grow stronger, until they can complete the exam independently in the future.

The Ych vanguard exams can be an easy starting point for a campaign; it encourages characters to form a team, (if a team signs up for the exam then their certification will specify that the team as a whole is only certified while together, but the perks of having to stick together can often be a more attractive option than undergoing the extreme level of training required to complete the exam with no teammates), and the exam itself is always changing to keep entrants on their toes which can lead to unique situations and new directions that the story can take upon gaining certification.

LOCATION INFORMATION GUIDE

The following guide explains the information that will be given for each location.

LAYOUT	Population A description of the surroundings Local architecture Layout
DEMOGRAPHICS	Prominent groups
REPUTATION	Stereotypes about the location and about its residents
PERSONALITY	Goals, means, and lessons that tend to guide the decisions of the location as a whole
RELATIONSHIPS	Political relations between the location and others
TOURISM	Common reasons for people to visit the location
PLOT SPOTS	Locations where plot developments can often take place
MISSIONS	Jobs that characters can pick up in the location

The World: Aidalon

Layout

Population: 175 million

Aidalon is about 4,300 kilometers in radius and mostly covered by water.
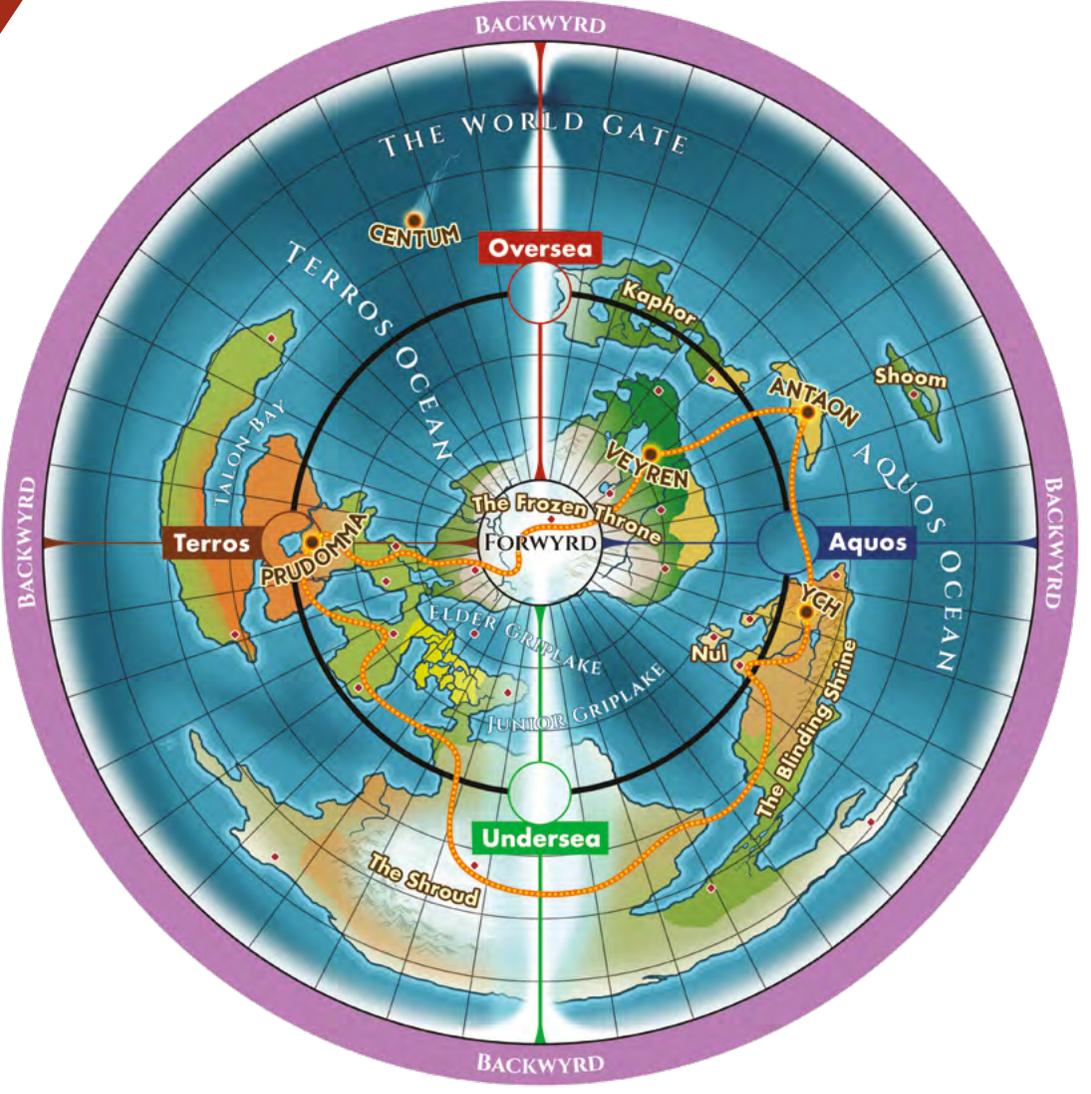
The planet is tidally locked to a massive black hole called the Forwyr, and it orbits within a ring of light called the Lumensea, resulting in a total of 6 major regions on the planet:

- Facing toward the Forwyr (**Forwyrd**): Permanent darkness as the forwyr fills the sky. At high altitudes, some light can be seen coming from the lumensea at two opposite points on the horizon.

- Facing away from the Forwyr (**Backwyrd**): Constant dim light; the lumensea's line of light runs straight overhead through the sky. The line fades as it gets further from the horizon, disappearing completely at the backwyrd-most point.

- 2 opposite regions facing into the lumensea (**Terros** is the pole surrounded by land, **Aquos** is the pole surrounded by water): Constant scorching light from directly overhead, despite the forwyrd half of the sky being filled by the forwyr. The lumensea's light is brightest and hottest where it's closest to the forwyr, dimming and losing heat the further backwyrd it reaches.

- Facing up or down out of the lumensea (**Oversea** and **Undersea**): Constant medium light; the lumensea illuminates the backwyrd half of the horizon, with most of the light coming from the lumensea's brightest points at the Aquos and Terros Poles.

At some point in the past, all of the planet's molten layers condensed and pulled away from the crust into a much smaller core; leaving a cavernous gap beneath the planet's surface. Samples of the core have been impossible to obtain, as its gravity will overpower any aircraft's lift and drag them into a fatal plunge if they even get half way toward it. The planet's lack of a molten core isn't a concern when it comes to heating; the planet is heated by a permanent lightning storm inside the cavern, as a result of electrical buildup in the crust from the world's viskara. Scientists are uncertain of how the core is able to absorb so much energy, and of what will happen if it reaches a limit.

The dangers of the wilderness force people to stay within cities for protection, resulting in vast expanses of unclaimed land dotted with dense and highly defended population centers.

Demographics

95 million people reside in a supercity (54% of the world population)

78 million people reside among the 15 next-largest cities (45% of the world population)

Assumed to be about 2 million people living outside of the 20 largest cities (1% of the world population)

1 in 5,000 people are shadow-users (0.02%)

A quarter of shadow-users and 1 in 25,000 non-shadow-users (for a total of 1 in 10,000 people overall) attempt the vanguard exam at some point in their lives; due to the high cost and potential danger, most entrants are highly prepared and about 2/3rds of entrants manage to succeed. As a result, an estimated 10,000 vanguard licenses are active at any given time.

Reputation

Aidalon is often treated as an unchanging stage for the events of the world to take place; while storms can appear without warning, reliable climates and a lack of tectonic activity mean natural disasters are nearly unheard of.

The people of Aidalon consider themselves to be forces of change in such a stable world; the lights in the sky will never move, so those who want a new view must move themselves.

Personality

Goals: Improve the world for yourself and those you care about.

Means: Find your personal style and use it to the fullest.

Lessons: Cooperation can overcome anything.

Relationships

> The people of Aidalon are not in contact with any extra-terrestrial life. Instead, this section describes general relationships on the planet.

Most people are on respectful or friendly terms with one another; the distance between cities and the dangers across those distances make it easy to feel a sense of camaraderie with the shared trait of people doing their best. However, strong individuality can often lead to conflict when people have clashing goals.

Tourism

> Aidalon does not receive extra-terrestrial tourism. Instead, this section describes notable non-city locations on the planet.

The Icegrip is a ring of ice circling the planet, forming a border between the aquos and terros hemispheres. Travel across the icegrip is dangerously cold without riding on a large train or zeppelin, although some smaller cities have still managed to settle along it and enjoy the safety from creatures that can't survive the temperatures.

The Frozen Throne is the name for the twin mountain ranges on either side of the forwyrd pole. The mountains themselves are extremely deadly due to their cold and permanent darkness, and there have only been rumors of anybody managing to reach either peak.

The Blinding Shrine is the mountain range near Ych, and home to a temple of forwyr worship. A common religious ritual is to climb the blinding shrine on foot, pushing through the extreme heat and light to reach the pinnacle. Vanguards are often hired to ward off creatures that might interfere with the ritual.

The Shroud is a flat region permanently covered in thick fog, which provides moisture to the plant life growing there but reduces visibility to nearly zero. The area is subject to many urban legends and famous mysteries; chatter among train passengers always seems to get quieter when passing through the shroud.

The World Gate is a gap in the Icegrip. As the only way for a boat to travel between the aquos and terros hemispheres, the passage is extremely important for enabling global trade. However, the world's largest sea life hunts at the World Gate and as a result even the largest ships

are unable to pass through without taking potentially catastrophic damage. Aquatic supercity Centum, an entire civilization living on a massive ship, is the only ship that can pass through the World Gate unscathed.

Network Ground Stations are sites located directly underneath each of the floating network stations that enable global radio communication. The ground stations harbor zeppelins for sending up crew and supplies, as well as bringing down any crew that have finished their stay on the station; shifts tend to last for about a month at a time. The station itself will descend for regular maintenance once per year, and visitors will flock to see a building land and/or take off. The maintenance lasts for about a week on average, during which time radio communication within the area is severely limited; the stations make sure to never overlap their maintenance schedules so as to avoid a global communications outage.

Plot Spots

Many cities have made attempts to use the planet's hollow interior for additional land, with small buildings that hang from the underside of the crust and connect to each other via walkways and small trams that hang from rails. Access below the crust is heavily restricted, typically reserved for when an important person has to hide or travel in secrecy. While the entrances to major bases are located within cities, other subsurface buildings often connect to hidden surface-level bunkers in the wilderness. Heavy soundproofing is used for subsurface structures, as the constant echoing thunder inside the planet can cause hearing loss.

Ghost towns - small, empty or nearly empty cities that often have buildings still standing - can be found throughout the world. The ghost towns became abandoned as residents sought the improved safety of the newly-built walled cities that would become supercities. Criminals that escape from a city might hide out in a ghost town, and nomads and vanguards will also occasionally seek shelter there during their travels.

The Wonder Rail is a loop of train tracks that connects the four non-mobile supercities, covering for the extreme majority of all civilian travel. To reach from Ych to Antaon without blocking mobile aquatic supercity Centum from passing between the two areas, the construction features an elevator that lifts the train to a raised track with viskara-reinforced construction with supports spaced widely enough for the supercity to pass underneath. In addition to vanguards on the train, the entire wonder rail is constantly protected by vanguards stationed at scout towers along with their own rail-mounted cars to provide support when needed.

Missions

Protect

One of the most common jobs for vanguards is serving as a guard for a farm, or for a transport vehicle. Aspiring vanguards can often find room to join as well, either as a tag-along to gain supervised experience or as a true contributor when there aren't enough vanguards to meet the employer's headcount request.

Deliver mail

Physical mail is an extremely popular method of communication, especially for pen-pals in different cities. Postal offices are often in short supply of couriers willing to brave the dangerous areas of the world to reach smaller cities that don't have a direct rail line.

Chase lightning

Viskara is always in high demand, and skilled fighters are vital to warding off the creatures and opposing lightning chasers that would take it for themselves. Governments, businesses, and some individuals place a high value on a reliable lightning chaser.

Terros Supercity Prudomma

Layout

Population: 29.3 million

Prudomma rests directly beside the Lake of Providence, an oasis in the desert underneath the harsh light of the Terros Pole. The Lake of Providence features the highest rate of lightning strikes on the planet, which Prudomma takes advantage of to consistently harvest viskara.

The vast majority of Prudomma's buildings are skyscrapers with large overhangs, creating shade for the residents. The ground levels are in near-complete darkness, while the highest levels are barely protected from the light. To make travel more efficient, a dense web of bridges connects each building to its neighbors at several different altitudes. The towers themselves are largely made of clay and covered by hanging plants to absorb heat. The bridges are decorated with elaborate viskara railings and walkways with built-in lighting, guiding pedestrians while providing a small amount of visibility to those at the lowest levels.

The supercity is built in a grid pattern to simplify the road planning, bridge construction, and navigation. When new towers are built, they tend to be taller than previous towers; this results in the supercity skyline growing taller the further it gets from the oldest district next to the Lake of Providence. By relying so heavily on towers, Prudomma occupies very little land area despite having the largest population.

Prudomma boasts a unique form of public transport in bridgewalkers, a fleet of passenger vehicles that use long hooked arms to leisurely but efficiently crawl from one bridge to another regardless of whether it's above, below, or to the side. While notoriously frightening to tourists who don't trust their construction, both the bridges and bridgewalkers are constructed with viskara frames that can support any amount of weight on even the thinnest sections.

Demographics

The wealthy residents of Prudomma tend to live in the middle floors of the towers; low enough that the shade keeps the temperature comfortable, without being at the lower floors where light is hard to find. The poorer residents can only choose between the harsh light of the upper floors and the eerie darkness of the lower floors.

For unknown reasons, Prudomma has the highest number of native-born residents that can use shadows; slightly more than twice the world's average. A special division of the Prudomma military, the Ryko Knights, consists entirely of shadow-users and operates from within their namesake Ryko Tower.

Reputation

City: Prudomma is known as an "economic tyrant". By having the world's highest viskara production and therefore some of the most advanced and energy-intensive technologies, as well as one of the strongest militaries, it often offers large discounts on viskara and military aid to cities that allow Prudomma's Governor to have influence over that city's political decisions. There are rumors that Prudomma is using more than just trade to sway cities; a small city near the Elder Griplake was recently destroyed and reports claim the cause was creature attacks, but skeptics say Prudomma was using a show of force to threaten other cities into joining their empire.

Residents: Considered intelligent but elitist, viewing their super-city as having earned the title of "best" in nearly all regards and viewing themselves as model citizens whose line of work improves the world. The poorer residents of Prudomma are instead stereotyped as opportunist thieves, trying to find any way to work their way toward the "golden floors" in the comfortable middle levels of the supercity.

Personality

Goals: Become the best location in the world, in the eyes of people worldwide.

Means: Leverage the supercity's advantages in engineering and military power; make others rely on Prudomma.

Lessons: Progress requires proactivity.

Relationships

All cities that are further terros than the Griplakes have agreed to join Prudomma's empire in exchange for cheap viskara and military aid on retainer, and are on good terms with Prudomma. Veyren has the most trade with Prudomma due to the direct rail connection between them, however the supercity is too far and independently powerful for Prudomma to attempt influencing it.

Many other cities are either neutral toward Prudomma or hesitant to interact with it. Smaller cities near the griplakes are concerned about Prudomma, as there are rumors that a smaller city destroyed by a creature attack was actually attacked by Prudomma for refusing to join the empire.

Antaon idolizes Prudomma's strategy of advancing technology and leveraging it to gain influence, but is too far away for the two supercities to meaningfully interact.

Tourism

Lake Providence Resort is a side-by-side arrangement of Prudomma's three oldest towers, all directly beside the lake and maintaining a private lakeside area for guests to relax by the warm water. The lake is itself a unique part of the supercity; colder and wetter air from the Terros Ocean constantly rushes in as the extreme heat forces local air to rise, which then cools at high altitudes to form a permanent central storm refilling the basin without causing any unpleasant weather at the shores.

Ryko Tower serves as the world's tallest building at 124 floors, made even more iconic for its construction in the center of the Lake of Providence with its 20 lowest floors submerged. The frequent lightning from the permanent storm is channeled through an insulated column within the tower, striking the ground in the basement where the resulting viskara can be retrieved. A magnet train connects the tower to the Prudomma mainland, transporting viskara to storage and allowing members of the Ryko Knights to travel quickly to and from the tower. The interior of the tower is heavily soundproofed to shut out the noise from the storm.
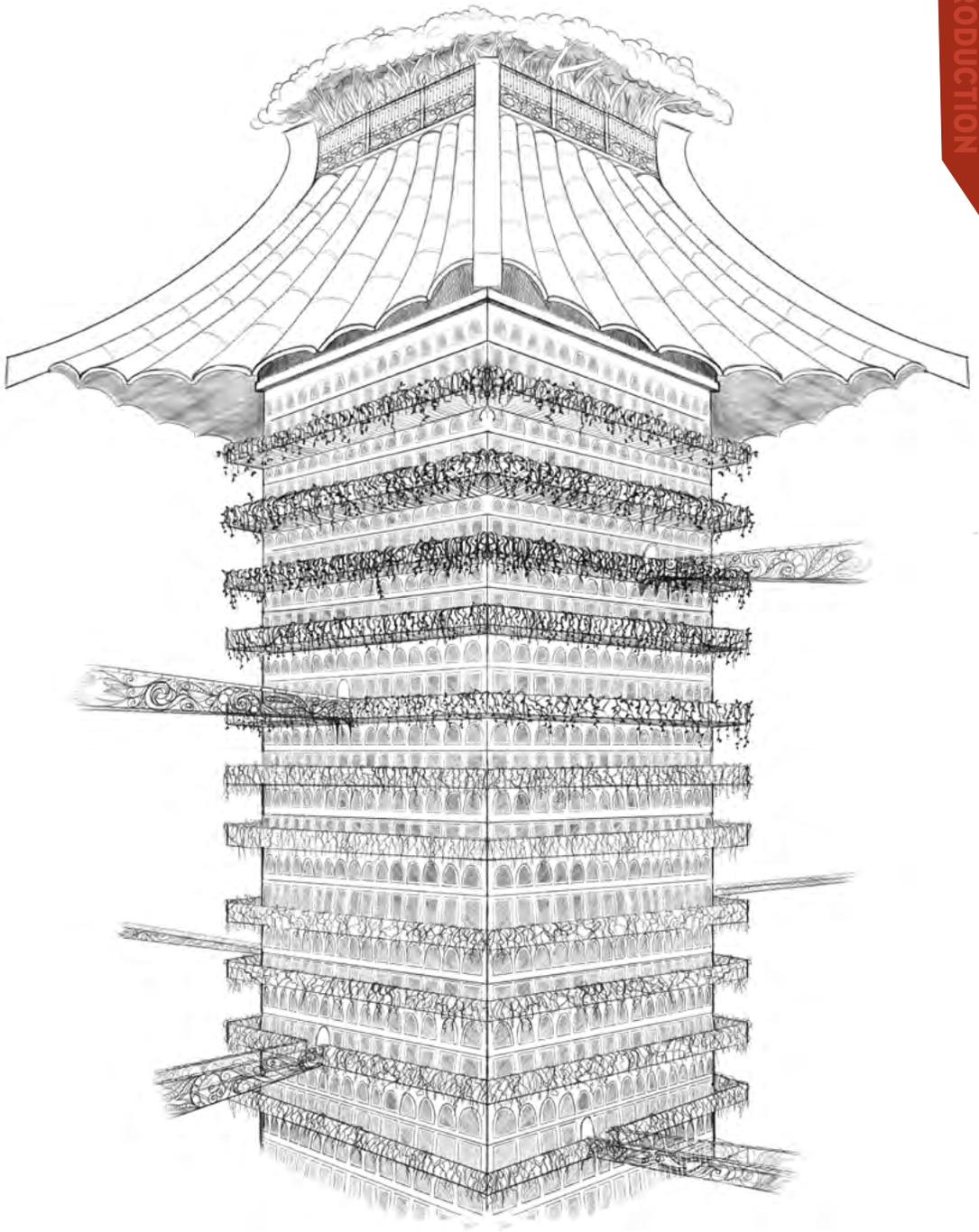
The **Prudomma Exposition** is a theme park showcasing advanced technology, and is home to attractions not available anywhere else in the world. Most famous are the laser tag arena, the roller coaster, and the go-karts.

Plot Spots

Prudomma Academy of Engineering and its surrounding neighborhood is the best place to find talented viskara engineers; especially ones that are either a bit too excited, or a bit too full of themselves, to keep quiet about otherwise secret developments in technology.

Hector's is a pricey restaurant often used as a safe meeting place for vanguards and potential employers. The restaurant management themselves often hire vanguards to fetch exotic ingredients from other cities or from particular creatures, both to use for creating unique dishes and to sell in their secondary business as a specialty grocer. The restaurant features several fully-enclosed and soundproof rooms to ensure privacy when eating and when discussing terms and details, which means that less-than-legal deals can also be discussed safely.

The Extremity Districts are the top and bottom floors of the supercity where the levels of light and heat are most extreme, individually referred to as the Hot district and Cold district respectively. The severe conditions of the districts deter most residents and visitors from entering them; as a result, the districts are well suited for people and businesses to keep out of the public eye.

Missions

Escort Viskara

While typically covered by the Ryko Knights, some viskara shipments within the empire might be to lower-priority cities and therefore below the pay grade of such elite protection. Private buyers and sellers of viskara also hire security for their viskara shipments, both for transfer between cities and transport within a city.

Sabotage

Companies in Prudomma exist in a cutthroat environment, with competitors and unhappy employees alike looking to hire a covert agent for various tasks. Common forms of sabotage include destruction, theft, or insertion, and can typically target an object, person, or information held by the target.

Anti-Sabotage

Protection against sabotage can be just as valuable as being the one performing it. Companies that suspect imminent foul play can hire security to defend them during vital stages of business, and they'll often increase the rewards for those that can find the identity of the saboteur.

FOREST SUPERCITY VEYREN

Layout

Population: 21.7 million

The supercity is surrounded by vast, dense forest, and built on a gentle slope slightly downhill from Seifo Lake. Cold air descends upon the supercity from the Frozen Throne, keeping a chill that makes the air feel fresher and carries the smell of the trees.

The buildings of Veyren are constructed of wood and reinforced by steel and viskara, and they rarely exceed five floors. The architecture focuses on strong, simple shapes, particularly circles and straight lines, with a goal of creating structures that can best fulfill their purpose; minimal consideration is given to decorative aspects. Many describe the aesthetic as "brutally simple" in its extreme contrast to the more elaborate architecture of most other cities and especially Prudomma. Veyren's wall is unique for being constructed in detachable segments and sitting on rolling treads, which allows the supercity to easily grow by spreading portions of the wall outward and building additional segments to fill the newly-created gaps.

The streets are famous for their two-lane design, with a channel running through the middle of each street that allows the lake's water to reach throughout the supercity. The channels are widest near the lake where the most water passes through, requiring pedestrian bridges to cross between lanes. The channels shrink as they branch outward, with the furthest channels thin enough to easily step across. As Veyren expands its territory, the channels are dug deeper to allow more water to pass through and reach the furthest edges.

Rather than the typical city structure of a circle or set of circles with central viskara storage, Veyren expands in curved branch-like offshoots to optimize its usage and maintenance of the water channels. Veyren's

short and sprawling layout means public transit is often relied on for travel within the supercity, but also that crowding is rare and there's room for plenty of trams.

Demographics

Veyren prides itself on having a large population of experts in multiple specialized academic fields. Umbris Academy, the world's leader in shadow research and training, holds many researchers, professors, archivists, and scholarly vanguards while the government itself employs expert city planners and foresters to oversee the supercity's specialized growth pattern.

Alongside the academic population of the supercity, an equally large number of wilderness workers perform jobs that include clearing the local area of creatures, collecting and performing field research on specimens of various plants and creatures, and felling trees to make room for construction.

Reputation

City: Considered to be powerful but kind allies to most; while their military contains some of the world's most powerful vanguards, they maintain a grounded worldview and a humble pursuit of knowledge. Most visitors to Veyren are themselves either seeking the resources of the academy or the serene environment, giving Veyren an air of relaxation mixed with determination.

Residents: Considered to be adventurous, studious, and easygoing, but often reckless and competitive when they feel their pride is on the line. A well-known joke about Veyrenites involves a scientist that keeps an acid-proof notebook in case they have to document what it's like to be eaten.

Personality

Goals: Knowledge, arts, and quality of life for all.

Means: Diligent study, testing, and taking inspiration from natural occurrences.

Lessons: A strategy being common does not mean it's the best for everyone to use.

Relationships

Veyren typically gets along with other cities, but its friendliest ally is Centum; the two supercities frequently exchange research information, particularly regarding experimental horticulture and optimized construction techniques.

Veyren's location, connection to nature, and political safety cement it as a welcoming and stable supercity both politically and socially.

Tourism

Veyren's **Walking Forest** serves as a symbol of the supercity's devotion to the preservation and study of nature. The forest is formed from a species of tree that can detect nearby viskara, and that grows new roots in the direction of that viskara while letting its older roots die. The shifting root system allows the tree to move toward, and even pick up, viskara, storing it to supplement its photosynthesis as an energy source. Over many years, hundreds of these trees have formed a cluster that houses other plant life and even animals to become an entire ecosystem. Veyren leverages its viskara-hunting nature by maintaining a circular track, with a tram constantly driving in circles with a stockpile of viskara; as the tram constantly moves, the forest itself walks in its own circle. Until recently, the viskara had been manually transferred between holding stations instead of being held on an automatic tram; a miscommunication led to the transfer being delayed and the forest colliding with one of the holding stations, stealing the viskara and prompting an update to the methods. Tourists can go for a "walk walk", strolling through paths within the forest while the forest itself travels at the speed of a slow walk.

Bravura Spectacle is a festival that occurs every two years, inviting up-and-coming artists and performers from around the world to compete. Participating cities hold their own qualifier tournament to determine which of their residents should be entered into the festival, then the global competition takes place in Veyren. After months of preparation by the performers and the crew, massive audiences gather for a single day of extravagant stages customized for each competitor as they showcase a performance that represents their city.

The **Museum of World History** documents major events and eras of the world's past. Popular wings of the museum include the Early Civilization wing, detailing life and artifacts from before vanguards were defending the people and before viskara's uses were discovered, and the Creature Collection wing, featuring the skeletons and preserved bodies of a variety of creatures alongside information about the habits and environments of each. Entry to the museum is free, and the museum also hosts the offices of many scholars.

Plot Spots

Umbris Academy is a renowned shadow research facility and library, aiming to learn and document as much as possible about Shadows. It features a combat arena and maintains an academy-wide combat ranking system, encouraging students to discover and apply knowledge about their own shadows.

The Deathwood is a forest near Veyren that contains a particular fungus unique to that location. The fungus has "roots" that cover the ground and can detect when a creature touches them; when it detects a touch, the fungus creates a bioluminescent line from that point to any other nearby points that have also detected touch recently. The fungus contributes to an extremely hostile environment where inhabitants are able to easily track each other, and the increased bloodshed within the forest is the source of the "deathwood" title. However, the fungus can still attract even prey animals into the heart of the woods; its expansive roots feed on remains and use the nutrients to grow the healthiest fruit on the planet, called a mournfruit. The benefits of eating mournfruit are so powerful and long-lasting that prey animals will risk the increased danger to eat a single one.

Border Expansion Settlements surround Veyren, functioning as bases for military and Veyren-employed vanguards as they work to facilitate the supercity's growth. Most commonly, each border expansion settlement will split into three squads each day; two forward squads work to clear out creatures, while a rear squad guards against any creatures that might have evaded the forward squads. The squads defend foresters and excavation crews that clear the land for Veyren's wall segments to roll into the territory, and then they defend the laborers that construct new wall segments to close the openings between the relocated segments.

Missions

Walking Forest pest control

Veyren's walking forest is kept safe by vanguards that search out any dangerous creatures each morning before the forest is opened to the public.

Harvesting mournfruit from the deathwood

This mission is extremely dangerous, but also extremely valuable. It can also be a sign of extreme capability, for potential employers that would like to confirm the talent of anyone that they might hire.

Border Expansion assistance

The Border Expansion Settlements are always looking for assistance in fighting creatures near construction sites. Veyren has an agreement with Ych that border expansion assistance counts as completing one stage of the vanguard licensing exam.

Canyon Supercity Ych

Layout

Population: 16.3 million

The supercity is located within a deep canyon, with a small collection of government buildings and defense structures at the top.

The vast majority of Ych's buildings are carved into the walls of the canyon, extending 50 levels deep in most areas. Attached parallel to the cliff faces are massive rotating wheels, extending just as deep as the buildings do. These wheels, known as lift wheels, have platforms attached that allow for pedestrians to reach any level; a pedestrian can step on a platform as it passes their current level, and the wheel's rotation carries their platform to their destination's level. Trams function purely as horizontal people-movers, sliding along rails mounted at each level. A small number of large bridges connect opposite cliff faces, allowing for direct travel across the open space, and along those bridges are man-made parks to reduce the claustrophobia that can come from living within the canyons.

Ych's architecture is defined by its use of ceiling supports; its infra-structure needs to account for the canyon's brittle stone, and the culture has evolved to use the supports as a medium for expression. Most buildings and tunnel-streets use arches to support their ceilings, with variation in the shape (such as round, square, or triangular) and the decoration (such as painting the arches, engraving designs into them, or hanging objects from them). Other open spaces might be notable for using pillars instead of arches, with variation between pillar designs just as there is with arches. The term for the Ych design aesthetic is jokingly referred to as "arch-itecture".

Similar to Prudomma, the vertical construction keeps the supercity tall and thin rather than short and wide. However, Ych is much more difficult for visitors to navigate due to the lack of traditional streets and the natural separation of districts among cliff faces.

Demographics

The Church of Forsael originated in ancient Ych and has since spread to become the world's predominant religion. The church believes the Forwyr to be the eye of a massive astral god named Forsael, keeping watch over the planet with a freezing gaze. Despite vanguards being a relatively new concept in the world, the church championed their introduction to society under the claim that shadows are Forsael's gift to those who can aid humanity in living without the need for walled cities. The title of Lenzer is reserved for the leader of the church while the title of Mirrer is granted to a collection of high-ranking assistants who carry the Lenzer's messages worldwide. The Church of Forsael promotes acting justly under the watchful eye and the upholding of law in the backwyrd regions that Forsael can't see.

Retired vanguards tend to settle down in Ych, often to become teachers or to live near the existing community of retired vanguards. Those who prefer more isolated lifestyles often find housing near the outskirts of the supercity or near the axle of a lift wheel where the constant noise of the wheel's motor deters businesses and tourists.

Reputation

City: Ych has largely avoided any major reputation, developing itself peacefully with little global influence beyond operating as the base for the vanguard licensing exam. While that lack

of reputation causes most people to assume that the supercity is politically insignificant and depends on the allyship of other cities, others suspect that the supercity is secretly prepared to become self-sustaining and isolate itself from the rest of the world if its sovereignty is threatened.

Residents: The residents of Ych are subject to various jokes about being "hard-headed" due to their choice to live within stone canyons, as well as in relation to their philosophy of pushing through hardship and refusing to admit defeat. The jokes tend to have some amount of respect behind them, as it was that persevering spirit that allowed the founders of Ych to carve their own supercity out of the walls.

Personality

Goals: Encourage all citizens to become their best selves and achieve their dreams.

Means: Make lives easier and reward development of talents.

Lessons: Be wary of those who would exploit kindness.

Relationships

Ych has relatively little trade with other cities, typically trading its mining products as the majority of its exports. It maintains its economic wellbeing through tourism, wealthy ex-vanguards moving to Ych to retire, and entry fees for the vanguard exam.

Politically, Ych attends all international political events but aims to keep neutral and rarely does anything that draws attention to itself except when pushing for peace and fairness.

Tourism

Enelle Beach is the aquos-most piece of land and the hottest beach on the planet, which makes it a popular tourist spot. A constant wind flows from the land out to the ocean and makes optimal kite-flying conditions while also shaping tall waves for surfing. Fishers operate off the coast in the smoother waters, bringing in a supply of the world's most flavorful seafood; the fishing union has an agreement with Centum to keep the waters clear while the supercity passes by, in exchange for discounts on fishing supplies. Enelle Pier stretches from the coast out into the water, hosting the popular restaurant The Line and serving as a spot for diving into the warm waters of the ocean.

The Big Time is a clock tower on the supercity's largest bridge, featuring a wide variety of bells and a mechanism for pre-arranging melodies. Message boards throughout the supercity inform the public of what the upcoming melodies will represent, both for events with specific times such as meetings and for events with uncertain times such as creature attack drills. Residents and visitors can pay for an application to have their own melody prepared and an informative poster added to the message boards, with a cost based on the length of the melody as well as how often it plays and for how long that event-melody combination will be on the list. Officials in charge of The Big Time reserve the right to deny applications for any reason.

Peak Flavor is an annual cooking competition; it takes place in a special stadium overlooking the Mayes Canyons, and features the best chefs from around the world. The competition is split into three rounds: the Theme Round has each chef create a dish that follows certain instructions such as requiring the use of a particular ingredient or creating a specific flavor profile; the Style Round has each chef create the dish that they're most proud of; and the Service Round has each chef create a dish that's both high quality and able to be recreated by kitchen staff to serve to each member of the audience. The Theme and Style Rounds' results are determined by a small panel of judges, while the Service Round is scored by an audience poll, and the winner is the contestant with the highest average score across all three rounds.

Plot Spots

The **Vanguard Licensing Office** is the starting point of many adventures; teams and individuals complete a difficult multi-stage "exam" that requires all entrants to prove their wit and combat prowess, in exchange for the extremely valuable vanguard licenses. The entry fee for the exam is intentionally high in an attempt to be sure that entrants are determined to succeed, although it's common to see wealthy entrants participating without true motivation or with less-than-altruistic motives.

The **Vanguard Sponsorship Office** is a common second step for new vanguards; vanguard sponsors each represent a larger vanguard company, and put in the work of advertising their sponsored vanguards so as to more reliably find jobs for those vanguards (and to get a cut of the pay for themselves). As a result, working for a vanguard sponsor comes with a reduction in pay for doing each job in exchange for more consistent job offers. Some vanguards

manage to become celebrities and can be offered public-facing jobs like acting and advertising products rather than combat, which is a dream for some and a nightmare for others.

The **Mayes Canyons** are near the undersea-most edge of the supercity, and are often used to house specialty locations. Mayes Stadium hosts events such as Peak Flavor and various vanguard exam challenges, and a small unmanned post office on the surface allows for reclusive vanguards to send and receive messages.

Missions

Earn a sponsor

Many vanguards visit Ych specifically to find a sponsor, but it can be difficult to find a good one. The better a sponsor's connections are, the more likely that sponsor is to be selective about who they represent and the harder a vanguard will have to try to earn that sponsor's attention.

Deliver to the Mayes Canyons

While the Mayes post office does receive parcels by train, it has low demand and therefore only operates twice a month. For urgent deliveries, vanguards are hired to make the 2-hour trek on foot from the nearest public transit to the office. Upon delivery, the vanguards trigger delivery bells that alert the recipients to the priority mail

Ingredient/creature capture

Chefs participating in Peak Flavor will want the freshest components for their dishes, but many would be unable to get rare or dangerous ingredients by themselves. The most common items that can't be purchased normally include the mournfruit from Veyren, viskara hermit legs, and the explosive slime of a bellowbreath which can be processed into a spicy sauce. Vanguard exam organizers also tend to hire assistants for running the exam, such as by capturing live creatures to use for combat tests or by directly serving as opposition to the entrants.

Aquatic Supercity Centum

Layout

Population: 11 million

Centum is a supercity-sized ship that travels the globe with frequent stops for trade and tourism with other cities. Many cities near the coasts maintain docks for Centum to stop at, as both Centum and the land-based cities benefit from having easy access to trade with each other.

The supercity is built to resemble a typical land-based city, with individual freestanding buildings and streets in between with trams to move pedestrians around. The construction of Centum establishes districts each with a unique core function, with each district arranged to optimize its function. The greenhouse district uses advanced hydroponics and plant cross-breeding to grow the most nutritious produce in the world; the fishing district houses a vast array of tools for catching and processing any sea life; the market district allows anyone to easily browse all the food and products that are made from the sea (using materials such as shells, bones, coral, and algae); the adventure district contains its own harbor of boats for vanguards to leave the supercity and scout ahead or perform other special tasks beyond the walls; and the central residential districts feature large tower blocks alongside highly-efficient transit to minimize travel and wait times. The upper decks receive the majority of Centum's infrastructure funding to maintain appearances and functions that can draw in tourism; while the supercity doesn't appear as lavish as Prudomma, it does typically feel more comfortable and welcoming.

The entire upper deck of the supercity rests on a massive contraption of pistons and accelerometers, which constantly adjust the supercity's tilt to compensate for any motion caused by waves. Even the largest swells can be reduced to a barely-noticeable rumbling for the citizens above.

The lower deck houses the machinery needed to keep the supercity running as well as the majority of workers who maintain it. The piston balancing system, hundreds of building-sized propellers, and the viskara motors that operate them, are all undergoing constant safety checks and improvements to ensure the supercity is operating in peak condition. The lower decks receive less infrastructure funding, due to the

reduced need for appearances or efficiency in handling crowds. The heavy utility focus means walkways are often narrow and dimly lit, and large open spaces are rare outside of foundries and construction bays.

Centum's growth is the slowest among the supercities, as the massive difficulty and cost in growing the ship outward restricts it only to growing vertically and becoming more dense. The architecture is designed in simple cube shapes with attachment points for future development to expand on existing work; many buildings have expanded to become wider at their higher floors, and some have become wide enough to merge with buildings across the street. As a result of the supercity's preference for vertical growth, crowds often form at busy times. Braver citizens might navigate through the below-deck engineering deck to avoid those crowds, but most others will warn of the dangers: both the non-compensated sway of the ship underneath the balancing pistons, and the tendency for criminals to hide below-decks waiting for an easy target to rob.

Demographics

The residents of the upper decks often fall into one of two categories; the owners and employees of tourism-related businesses are outgoing and friendly especially to the visitors that those businesses cater to, while those less connected to the supercity's tourism industry tend to have much less patience for outsiders.

The residents of the lower decks are typically jaded by their environment's utility-focused, cramped designs, and many criminals make their homes downtown to take advantage of the mazelike streets that law enforcement prefers not to navigate. The majority of the lower-deck residents are honest and hardworking however, knowing that their diligence keeps the supercity going.

Centum has the largest tourist population of any city, and many live on the ship for one "revolution"; boarding when Centum arrives at their home city, and staying on board until it has visited each other city before returning to where they started. Most of these tourists choose to live either near the walls for a view of the ocean, or near the center of the supercity for proximity to the various districts. For those that can afford living at the top floors of Centum's housing towers, the view and the proximity can be achieved at the same time.

Reputation

City: Centum is greatly respected; it supplies coastal cities with large amounts of tourism and goods while paying generous rates for goods that it purchases from others, and it comforts many smaller cities with its ongoing stance that it is always prepared to intervene against any governments that seek to attack another. As a supercity that promotes the holiday-like limited-time nature of its visits while still maintaining strong political views, Centum has a reputation for being fun but strongly disciplined.

Residents: The district arrangement of Centum creates several subcultures within the supercity that each have their own stereotypes, such as the botanists of the greenhouse district that are known for their perfectionism and the merchants of the market district are known for their outgoing (if a bit strong) attitude. Most of the stereotypes are generally positive, however the mechanics of the engineering district are often assumed to be criminals due to the tendency for actual criminals to hide in that district.

Personality

Goals: Economic success and a peaceful world

Means: Hard work and ingenious designs to solve the most vital problems

Lessons: You can never be too prepared

Relationships

Coastal cities have a particularly positive relationship with Centum, as they can easily exchange plenty of tourism and trade in addition to the peace of mind from the supercity's anti-war stance.

Centum and Prudomma have a strained relationship, as Prudomma has made repeated attempts to recruit Centum into the empire to no avail. While Centum maintains that their status is pure neutrality, publications from within Prudomma have occasionally painted Centum as a looming threat that's scheming against the empire.

Tourism

The **Greenhouse District** on Centum is known for its wonderful sights and smells. The district is kept entirely within glass designed to maximize the heat and light inside, and the majority of the supercity's farming is done within the district. The greenhouse, combined with the hydroponic systems used for growing plants and Centum's travel path that maximizes light from the forwyr whenever possible, allows for the widest variety of fruits and vegetables to be grown compared to any other city. A walk through the greenhouse district is a common first date, as the array of unique plants and their flowers creates a calming atmosphere and a wealth of light conversation topics.

The Centum **Market District** is the busiest area in the supercity, filled with specialty shops selling goods that can't be found anywhere else: jewelry and tools from rare and powerful ocean creatures, fruits and vegetables from the greenhouse district, and candies made from the ocean's salt and plant life. Fishermen display their day's catches at their own shops in the market district, and many tourists often come just to view them.

The Nest is the tallest point in Centum and is located near the middle of the supercity, allowing visitors great views of the surrounding area. It reaches peak popularity when Centum is arriving at a city and when it passes through the World Gate, although it always serves as a popular location for dinner.

Plot Spots

The **Centum-Global Consulate** in the middle of the supercity is a key building, serving as a neutral meeting place that representatives of all cities can attend. The CGC boasts some of the tightest security in the world, and as a result it hosts the majority of negotiations between cities; especially cities that don't trust each other.

Within the lower decks, an unassuming warehouse serves as a form of consulate among the various criminal organizations that operate below Centum. This "underworld consulate" will occasionally change location, but only rarely, thanks to vows of secrecy and a shared respect for the benefits of a neutral territory among criminals.

Wocoe'z is a pharmacy between the market district and the greenhouse district. The shopkeeper is new in the field of creating medicines but has a prodigious talent; as a result, the variety of items for sale can vary wildly from day to day and niche or difficulty requests are often fulfilled quickly. Rumors say that it's possible to get extremely powerful medicines, and even poisons, if you can prove yourself to be trustworthy.

Missions

Shipment escorting

Due to Centum's massive trade industry, transport of goods to and from inland cities comes with plenty of escort jobs. Delivery jobs typically include transporting fish and produce while fending off hungry creatures, and retrieval jobs (which typically follow the delivery job, as a return trip) commonly involve transporting building materials such as wood and metal as well as mountain-wheat and sugar-based sweets.

High-profile security

Vanguards are often in high demand for the most popular market stands that fear theft or violence, but especially for the Centum-Global Consulate and for the underworld consulate.

Vigilante justice

Residents, tourists, and even the local guard, have been known to hire assistance in finding criminals within the lower decks and bringing them in to face punishment for their crimes. The task can often involve detective work, and almost always involves combat.

Volcanic Supercity Antaon

Layout

Population: 10.1 million

The supercity is built inside a hollow volcano, with a set of five residential and agricultural rings that encircle the mountain's exterior.

Transport tunnels connect the residential rings to the supercity core, a single massive tower that fills the majority of the volcano's empty interior and hosts the commercial and institutional buildings. The streets are designed for one-way travel to minimize congestion; clockwise and counter-clockwise paths are placed at alternating levels to allow some ability to backtrack. Many structures complement the curved streets by incorporating tall pointed arches for entryways, ceilings, and windows. The core receives relatively little natural light, so many windows are constructed from stained glass that add variety to the artificial lighting found throughout.

The value of property within the supercity is largely influenced by altitude, with the higher residential rings and higher core-based spaces owned by and catering to the wealthier members of society. The core's services trend toward entertainment at the top, with banks and government services in the middle and production facilities at the bottom. Some services can be found throughout the core, such as food sellers, but the products themselves will still cater to a wealthier audience at higher levels.

The highest levels of the core extend beyond the summit of the volcano and the very highest level has a pyramid-shaped glass ceiling, which causes the supercity to appear from a distance as a silver-tipped mountain.

Demographics

The combat tournaments of Antaon attract many battle-focused residents and visitors, resulting in the world's highest concentration of shadow-users and vanguards; especially in the vicinity of the combat grounds, and throughout the supercity during the annual Grand Tournament.

Some of the wealthiest people in the world own vacation homes in the upper rings, visiting during the Grand Tournament and at times that coincide with Centum's arrival. A common occurrence is for the wealthy visitors to enter bidding wars offering lucrative private security jobs to promising combatants from the Grand Tournament.

Antaon has a large population of laborers that supply the worldwide mining and manufacturing industries. In addition, mechanical engineers oversee the designs of new aircraft at the aquos edge of the center ring, and a thriving entertainment industry is supported by performers of all kinds.

Reputation

City: Antaon has developed a slight reputation for being an impersonation of Prudomma; the emphasis on showcasing combat and on developing technology, as well as the focus on high-class tourist entertainment and its maintenance of a shadow-user battalion, reminds many of the culture in Prudomma.

The government of Antaon and the officials within it are often subject to rumors about shady or unethical dealings, but none of them have led to any arrests.

Residents: The stereotypes about Antaonians are different based on the region of the supercity they live in; while they're considered polite and friendly near the rings and entertainment areas, residents encountered within the lower interior of the supercity core are typically assumed to be gruff and short-tempered. However, the locals in general also have a reputation for being honorable and quick to spot a lie.

Personality

Goals: Become the entertainment capital of the world

Means: Extravagant displays of peak human performance, both in combat and engineering

Lessons: There's no accomplishment without showmanship

Relationships

Antaon has a friendly relationship with Prudomma, and hosts the vacation homes of several Prudomman elites. However, the massive distance between the two supercities and the lack of any rail lines connecting them limits their political interactions to little more than friendly visits and exchanges of information.

Antaon Maximum Security Penitentiary is a flying prison that holds the world's most dangerous criminals and serves as an unofficial symbol for the supercity's complicated reputation; while it is considered barbaric and shady, many will still participate and lend their support out of acknowledgement for the system's easy solutions.

Tourism

Antaon is almost exclusively entered by aircraft via the **Antaon Airfield**, the world's largest airport, located on the south side of the middle ring. A wide variety of aircraft designs can be seen coming and going, as flashy travelers display their wealth with custom-designed aircraft.

The Grand Tournament is an annual combat tournament, which anybody over 18 years old can enter regardless of whether they have shadows or a vanguard license. The Grand Tournament features both an individual 1-on-1 bracket and a team-on-team bracket. Each match is non-lethal, going only until one side surrenders or falls unconscious. The Grand Tournament can easily last for a month or even more depending on the number of competitors, and the final matches for each category are massive events; especially when finalists have won previous Tournaments or have had an advertising campaign to build excitement.

Ezwel Arena is the world's most advanced combat stage, with complex machinery underneath facilitating extreme levels of customization to completely change the arena layout on the fly. Ezwel Arena is most well known for hosting the Grand Tournament, but it also hosts smaller tournaments to organizers that can afford to rent it.

Plot Spots

The glass tip of Antaon's core contains the **Victor's Lounge**, a highly exclusive bar reserved for winners of the Grand Tournament and for particularly important guests of the Antaon government.

Flying above the Victor's Lounge is the **Skybank**, the world's first flying building. Kept afloat by an array of propellers, the skybank serves as the most secure location for storage of valuables. Access can only be gained via a small helicopter operated by skybank employees, and several security checks are performed both before takeoff and after arrival in each direction.

A few floors below Ezwel Arena, the **Vanguard Guild** allows for licensed vanguards to participate in a ranking system. Entrants begin at Rank 1 and are granted access to the Rank 1 Mission Board which contains various tasks that can be completed by even the most inexperienced vanguard; completing missions raises a vanguard's rank and unlocks additional mission boards, which become more difficult but come with increasingly grand rewards. High-rank mission boards can go empty for long periods, as there's never a guarantee that tasks of appropriate difficulty would be requested, but vanguards with high rank are able to reach a celebrity status on par with a winner of the Grand Tournament; many vanguards that win the Grand Tournament ARE high-ranking vanguards.

Antaon Maximum Security is a vault-like prison suspended underneath the bottom of the supercity's interior, housing criminals whose capabilities pose a great threat; regardless of whether those capabilities are physical, mental, or shadow. Its layout is an array of cell-cubes that can be rearranged by cranes installed at various locations, intended to create a shifting maze that would-be escapees can't navigate. A surprising amount of Antaon's income is provided by its prison; it charges a monthly fee to "rent" space for the criminals of other cities and will release any non-Antaonite criminals who haven't been paid for since the previous month.
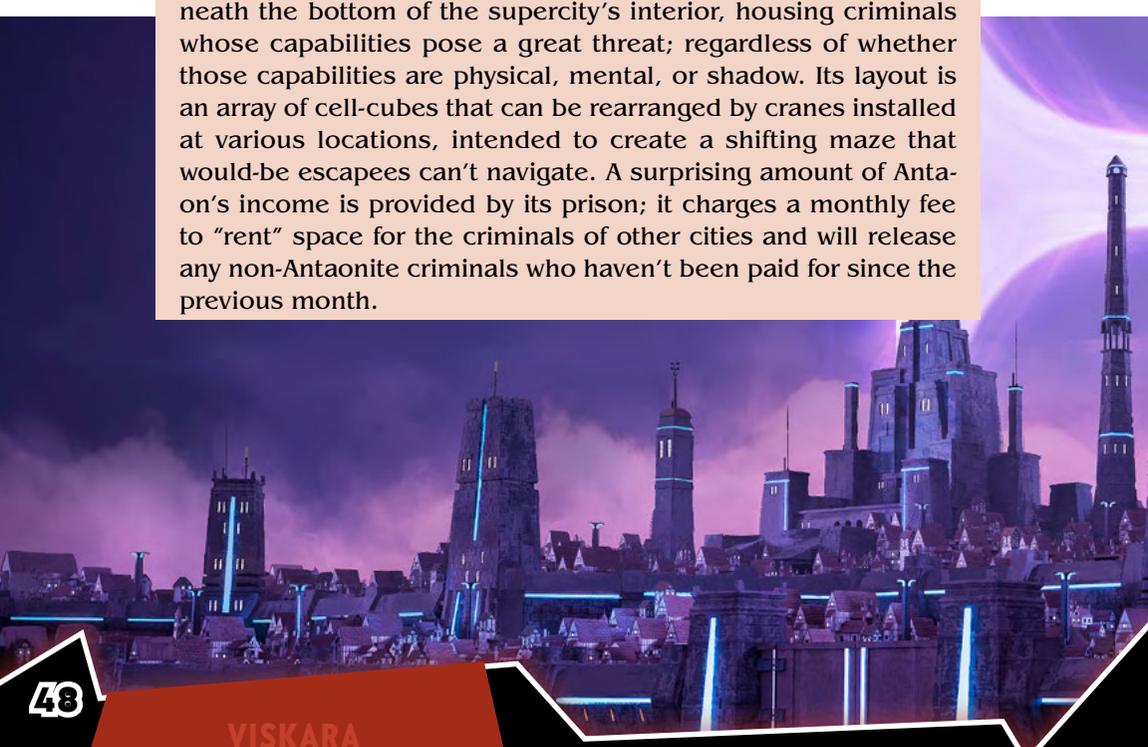
Missions

Compete in a tournament

Many tournament sponsors and organizers are on the lookout for particularly entertaining competitors, and some employers may want to hire combatants that have experience with human opponents. Access to the Victor's Lounge may be the goal, to interact with the people that can be found there; whether it be inhabitants in general or a specific target.

Investigate a mystery

There seems to always be a rumor about some sort of conspiracy going on, and once in a while the rumors turn out to be true. Many of these rumors tend to circulate around the Victor's Lounge, about mysterious disappearances, or even about victors themselves going missing.

Perimeter Defense

Antaon's walls are much shorter than the walls of other cities, largely due to how little of the supercity is actually exposed to potential creature attacks. An array of watchtowers placed further from the supercity allows a small team of guards to call on vanguards before any danger reaches the civilians.
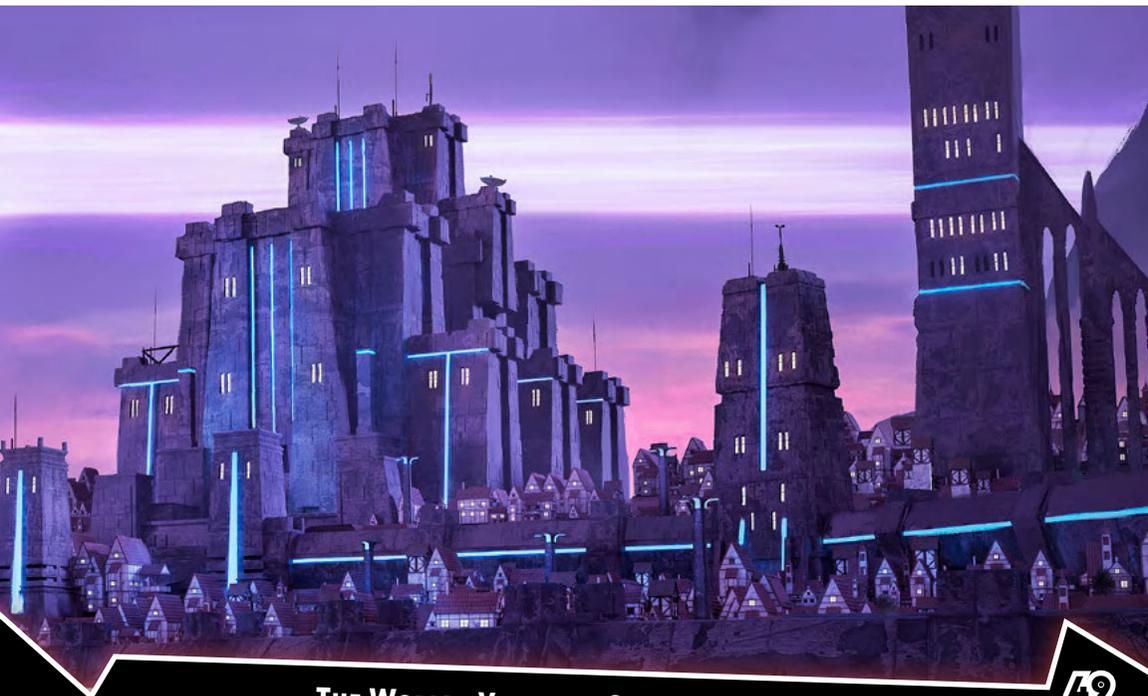
Travel Times Between Supercities

By rail (average train speed is 200 km/h):

Veyren <-> Prudomma: 4,350 km; 21h 45m

Veyren <-> Antaon: 625 km; 3h 10m

Antaon <-> Ych: 2,400 km; 12h

Prudomma <-> Ych, Oversea route: 7,375 km; 37h

Prudomma <-> Ych, Undersea route: 5,780 km; 29h

By zeppelin :

Distance / Time	Prudomma	Veyren	Antaon	Ych
Prudomma		3,700 km 30h 50m	3,100 km 25h 50m	5,200 km 43h 20m
Veyren	3,700 km 30h 50m		600 km 5h	2,900 km 24h 10m
Antaon	3,100 km 25h 50m	600 km 5h		2,300 km 19h 10m
Ych	5,200 km 43h 20m	2,900 km 24h 10m	2,300 km 19h 10m	

(A plane can travel the same distance in about 1/5th of the time).

CONCEPTS
2

This chapter aims to explain the most common ideas of Viskara. When learning the game for the first time, don't feel pressured to learn everything all at once. The Simple Battles chapter doesn't use every concept, so you can play an introductory version of the game and learn more as you get comfortable. The Simple Battles chapter also simplifies some concepts, such as what happens to a character when they lose all of their health; while learning the game you can follow the Simple Battles rules, and when using the expanded rules you can follow the full explanations.

If a concept has additional rules that aren't used in Simple Battles, it will be split into a Simple section and a Full section; you can ignore the Full section until you're comfortable learning more about the game. This book's glossary is also intended to give quick reminders for specific concepts, as well as listings for where to learn more about each one.

THE GAME

One person is the Game Master, while the rest are players.

The players:

- Create and play as their own characters: the protagonists of the story.
- Make decisions and interact with the world as their own characters
- Work with the other players' characters to achieve goals and overcome obstacles.

The Game Master:

- Plays as the world that the story takes place within: every location, event, and non-player character is controlled by the Game Master for the goal of creating a fun and exciting story and game.
- Creates the major story elements that the players can engage with, and updates the story based on decisions that the players make, to keep the story dynamic but consistent.
- Enforces the game's rules, including making decisions regarding situations that aren't handled by the rules, to be sure the game runs smoothly and fairly.

More detailed information about being a Game Master can be found in the Game Masters chapter.

Example:
The players have created their characters, and the Game Master is running the session:

Game Master: You all step off the train, and into Prudōmma Station. You're surrounded by the tallest towers you've ever seen, which is even more impressive since the station is suspended half way up. A web of bridges connect each of the towers to each other at various altitudes. Glancing down, you can barely see the ground that the towers sit on; the sunlight can't penetrate the arrangement of towers and bridges, so dim street lights serve as the only illumination for citizens at the bottom. According to your map, you can board a nearby bridgewalker that will take you to Hector's; however, you are a few hours early.

Annie (playing as her character, Lily): I'd like to see the sights! Can we check out the rooftops?

Zack (playing as his character, Blair): I'm worried that we might be followed. I think going to the rooftops can help us watch for anything suspicious, especially if we take a winding route.

Annie: Is there a bridgewalker we can take to the rooftops? Preferably a route with transfers; especially in the scenic areas.

Game Master: Both of you, give me a show of logic to try and find a good route using your map. Your outputs will be how hard the route is for someone else to follow, and your finale will be how good the vantage point will be at the end.

Annie performs a show of logic, and gets 1 red card with a finale of 7.

Zack performs a show of logic, and gets 3 red cards with a finale of 4.

Annie: Oof, low output. My route would be pretty easy to follow; it would get us to a good spot though.

Zack: I got high output, so I think my route is best. Maybe when we get to the roof and we're sure we aren't followed, we can take a direct path to a tower with a better view.

Annie: Works for me; lead the way.

Game Master: Okay; you take a winding path throughout the city, with plenty of transfers and backtracking. On the bridgewalker heading toward your final stop, you notice another passenger breathing heavily as if they've just been running; you remember that they were on the train with you.

Decks

Each player uses a modified deck of 44 playing cards:

- All 26 Clubs+Spades
- Hearts+Diamonds 1-9 (remove red face cards and red 10s)

It is recommended that each player and the Game Master use separate decks if possible.

The value of each card is:

- Queen/King/Jack = 0
- Ace = 1
- 2-10 = The number shown on the card

Decks are kept face-down. Cards that you reveal from the deck for shows (described later) or for other effects that tell you to reveal cards are kept separate from the deck in a discard pile until the rules tell you to shuffle, at which point you shuffle all of the cards from the discard pile back into the deck. You shuffle your cards into your deck when:

- Your turn or another character's turn ends in battle, and you have cards in your discard pile.
- You finish a show outside of battle.
- You finish a show that ends with the deck having no cards in it.

Play Area and Distances

The game is designed to be played on a square grid; each player character and most game master characters are the size of one square, and distances are measured in squares.

Distances in battle are measured by "chessboard distance"; the distance from one character to another is the number of 1-square movements, with diagonal movements allowed, required for that character to reach the other one.

Resources and Shows

Effort

The main resources of the game are effort (used for most maneuvers) and flair (used to empower maneuvers or perform special ones).

Simple

Effort is used for actions.

At the start of a battle (before placing characters), your effort becomes 1.

At the start of each of your turns, your effort becomes 3.

Your effort can never be increased above 3, and you can't spend more effort than you have.

You can't spend more effort or flair than you have.

Full

If you're exhausted, your effort only becomes 1 each turn even if you had more than that.

Flair

Simple

Flair is not used in Simple Battles.

Full

Flair is used to empower maneuvers or perform special ones.

At the start of a battle (before placing characters), your flair becomes 1.

At the start of each of your turns, your flair increases by 3.

Your flair can never be increased above 30, and you can't spend more flair than you have.

If you're shaken, your flair only increases by 1 each turn.

Tip: Tracking Tools

Simple

It's suggested that each character tracks the following information for themselves, and that the Game Master tracks the information for each character they're controlling in battle:

> Health (a number that typically ranges from one to two digits; in a full battle, it can become negative)

> Effort (a number that is always between 0 and 3)

Using a pencil and notepad can serve as an easy way to track all information, or various tokens such as glass beads. Two ten-sided dice can be combined to track a number from 0-100.

Full

Additional values to be tracked are:

> Flair (a number that is most often one digit, but can reach two digits; it will not become negative)

> Morale (a number that typically ranges from one to three digits; it can become negative)

Morale is tracked with one value per side instead of per character, so only one player needs to track the player-side morale while the game master can track the morale of other sides.

Shows

Simple

For any action with an uncertain outcome that depends on your talents, you perform a show: revealing cards and judging the action's outcome based on those cards.

Performing a Show

How to perform a show:

1. Reveal the top 5 cards from your deck, one at a time

2. When the show is done, it will have two results: **output** and **finale**.

   ✎ Your **output** is determined by comparing the number of red cards in your show to the output tiers associated with your action; output tiers are written in the format of Low/Medium/High (for example "1/2/4"). Revealing 1/2/3+ red cards means your output will be equal to the low/medium/high value, respectively, and 0 red cards means your output is 0.

   ✎ Your **finale** is the value of the last card.

   ✎ Most commonly, output is the most important result of a show (such as for how much damage an attack deals) and finale can be used to determine which side effects occur; positive side effects tend to occur when your finale is 4 or greater.

3. Once the output and finale have been used to determine the outcome, and all effects using those outcomes have been finished (such as damage being dealt, and finale-based "flourish effects" have been performed), put the cards from the show into your discard pile.

Full

Whenever an effect has output tiers without requiring its own show, you use the show for whichever maneuver triggered the effect. For example, if a tactic effect says "when you flourish with an attack or defy using this tactic, you can move your target 0/2/4 squares", the number of squares you can move the target is based on the number of red cards in your attack or defy show.

Alternate Output Tiers: Some effects also include an alternate output at 0 red cards, written in brackets before the main three tiers. For example, a Pike Beetle's poison requires you to perform a show then lose (8) 6/4/3 health, which means your 0-red-card output is 6 instead of 0 and you lose 6 health.

Bonus Red Cards: Some effects also have an opportunity to add bonus red cards in the show. The effects will mention the show and list scenarios in square brackets; for each scenario that's correct for the character performing the show, they get 1 additional red card in the show. For example, the Pike Beetle's poison lists "(body 2+)" for the show; a character whose body is 2 or higher automatically gets 1 additional red card in the show on top of any red cards they reveal for that show.

Increasing/Decreasing Red Cards: Effects that increase or decrease the number of red cards in the show only mean you treat your results as if you had revealed one more red card, you don't physically add or remove red cards. The number of red cards can be increased to any amount, but can only be decreased to a minimum of 0.

Original Results

Some effects refer to the **original output** or **original finale**. The "original" results are the values as they're defined in the above Show Results section, before other effects change them.

Simultaneous Shows

In some situations, characters might be performing shows to directly clash with each other; such as when an attacker is defied, or when one character is trying to intimidate another and they both perform shows to hold their ground. These situations are referred to as simultaneous shows.

Simultaneous shows are all performed at the same time (players don't take turns revealing cards).

A character cannot perform a show simultaneously with another of their own shows; they perform only one show (they can choose which one) and the others automatically have a result of 1 red card revealed. If the show was to attack or defy, it has an original output of 0 and an original finale of 0.

Note: A defy that targets multiple attack lines is still only one reaction, with its show applying to all targets.

CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES

Each character has a collection of attributes that help make them unique. More information about the attributes can be found in the Character Creation chapter.

HEALTH

Simple

Your health is a number that represents your ability to operate at your full potential in battle. In a Simple Battle, if your health reaches 0 or less, you are removed from the battle.

Full

While your health is 0 or less, you are exhausted; an exhausted character's effort only becomes 1 each turn instead of 3, and that character can't dash, but the character can sidestep up to (their speed) once on each of their turns.

When all characters on the same side in a battle have 0 or less health, they lose that battle.

Your health can be increased beyond your maximum health (listed on your character sheet), but any amount health you gain is reduced by the amount of excess health you currently have.

Example: If you have 40 health out of 50 maximum health and you gain 15, your health becomes 55. If you then gain another 25, that 25 is reduced by your excess of 5; you only gain 20 health and reach 75.

At the end of battle, your health becomes equal to your maximum health.

Certain events outside of battle can bypass health to maim or kill a character; for example, a character with 100 health can still be assassinated. The game master has discretion regarding which events can bypass health.

MORALE

Simple

Morale is not used in Simple Battles.

Full

Morale is shared by all characters on your side, and represents the fighting spirit of your group in battle. While your side's morale is 0 or less, you and your allies are shaken; a shaken character only gains 1 flair each turn instead of 3, and characters have no maximum damage against shaken characters.

All damage that a character deals outside of their own turn is dealt to morale instead of health.

Any time you would gain health, you can have your side's morale increase by that much instead. Morale has no limit.

Morale is not tracked outside of battle, but the game master can modify the amount of morale that a side starts battle with if they decide the situation calls for it.

SPEED CLASS

When you choose your character's speed class during character creation, the details of the speed classes will be explained.

Simple

Speed class is not used in Simple Battles.

Full

Your speed class determines how far you can move with the Move action and with most effects that allow you to move. It also affects the cost of dashing, and the cost of using the Anchor action.

Stats

When you choose your character's stats during character creation, the details of the stats will be explained.

Simple

Only one stat is used in Simple Battles; your agility determines how long you can wait before choosing where your character is standing when the first turn of battle begins.

Full

Your stats are a collection of 6 values (body, agility, strength, presence, logic, and creativity) that your battle tactics can draw on to increase their power; the higher a stat is, the stronger the flourish effect will be on a tactic that uses that stat.

For player characters, you can also select 2 of the stats to be specializations that improve your capabilities in various ways. explained in the Character Creation chapter.

Style

When you choose your character's style during character creation, the details of the styles will be explained.

Simple

Style is not used in Simple Battles.

Full

Your style empowers your tactics with bonus effects as long as you meet the requirement listed by the style.

TACTICS

When you create your character's tactics during character creation, the details of tactics will be explained.

Simple

Your tactics are the ways your character knows how to perform various offensive and defensive maneuvers; for example a character might have a tactic for using martial arts, and another tactic for shooting an arrow from their bow. When a character performs an attack or defies one, they can use any of their tactics to determine the details of that maneuver.

Tactics have two details:

Range: Determines how close to a character you need to be in order to attack them or defend them.

Outputs: Values listed in a group of three (such as "1/3/6") that determine how powerful your tactic will be based on the number of red cards you reveal in each show to use it.

Full

Tactics have additional details:

Type: Affects the costs of various upgrades you can apply to the tactic during character creation and while improving characters throughout the story. Also affects the tactic's range, and the likelihood of its move trigger occurring when you flourish.

Stat: Determines what bonus effect applies to this tactic while your style is active.

Power: How strong the stat effect is.

Break Point: Determines how much damage this tactic can deal with an attack before it overflows into damaging enemy morale.

Shadows

When you create your character's tactics during character creation, the details of shadows will be explained.

Simple

Shadows are not used in Simple Battles.

Full

You have access to shadows, which are supernatural powers typically only available to characters that "the universe" chooses. There are three types of shadow that you can gain and improve throughout the game:

Aura: The ability to accumulate power throughout a fight, unleashing it at key moments.

Shadow Arts: Empowered tactics with a greatly increased variety of upgrades you can gain for them.

Signature Move: A customized sequence of maneuvers you perform for a big impact.

Personality

While not strictly covered by any rules, many players enjoy taking on a personality they've created for their character while playing the game and engaging with the story as that character. Advice on creating a character's personality and applying it to the story can be found in the Character Creation chapter.

Simple Battles

These are quick rules for understanding the general flow of battle; they skip more intricate details, choices, and actions available in the actual game. The simple battle rules are suggested for the first time trying the game, before learning the regular rules and before making your own character.

Battle Structure

Battles are turn-based combat; each character takes one turn at a time until all characters have taken a turn, and then a new round begins for each character to take a turn.

Battle Setup (before the first turn starts):

1. **Starting resources** - Each character starts with 1 effort and their maximum health.

2. **Us against them** - The game master sorts the characters into two sides that will battle against each other.

3. **The characters leap to their ready positions** - Each character is placed on the board one at a time, in order of lowest agility stat to highest agility stat. Players choose where their own characters are placed, and the game master chooses where all other characters are placed.

   ✎ Characters on the same side with the same agility are placed at the same time as each other.

   ✎ For characters on different sides with the same agility, the game master chooses the order that the sides are placed in.

4. **Smaller group first** - The side with the fewest characters gives the first turn to any character on that side.

   ✎ If sides are tied for fewest characters, the game master picks one of those sides to make the choice.

Start of Your Turn:

- ✎ Set your effort to 3 (no matter how much effort you already have).

Things you can do on your turn

On your turn you can move and/or attack. Moving and attacking are both optional, but you must wait until you finish one before you can start another. You can move more than once and/or attack more than once, as long as you pay for each action each time you perform it.

> **Tip:** Your effort is also how you defend yourself and others, so when deciding how much to do on your turn you should also be aware of how dangerous your position is and how much you trust your allies to cover for you.

Move

You can move by spending 1 effort.

Choose one of the following options:

Sidestep: Move 1 square at a time, up to 3 total squares.

Dash: Choose a square that's up to 3 squares away from another character (enemy or ally); move in a straight line to that square.

Attack

You can attack by spending 1 effort.

1. Choose one of your tactics to attack with, and choose a character whose distance from you (in squares) is less than or equal to that tactic's range. That character is your target.

2. Your target, or any of that target's allies, can choose to Defy the attack, which can protect the target from damage (following the rules for the "Defy" reaction explained later).

3. Reveal 5 cards from the top of your deck.
   - ✎ If anybody chose to defy the attack, they reveal 5 cards from the top of their own deck.

4. Your attack's damage to your target is based on the number of red cards you revealed. 1, 2, or 3+ red cards means you deal damage equal to your tactic's first, second, or third number in its Outputs section; 0 red cards means you deal 0 damage.
   - ✎ If anybody chose to defy the attack, your damage is reduced by their own show result.

5. If the value of the last card you revealed is 4 or greater, you perform any "flourish" effects your tactic has (effects worded like "when you flourish, (effect)").

Ending your turn

When you don't want to do anything else on your turn or when you can't do anything else, pass the turn to the nearest ally that hasn't had a turn this round. If all allies have had a turn this round, pass to the nearest enemy instead.

If there's a tie for nearest, you can pick which one to pass to.

When it isn't your turn:

Defy

You can defy by spending 1 effort when a character attacks you or one of your allies. You can only defy once per attack.

1. Choose one of your tactics to defy with. If you're defying for an ally, you must choose a tactic with a range that meets or exceeds that ally's distance from you (in squares).

2. Reveal 5 cards from the top of your deck at the same time that the attacker reveals theirs.

3. The amount you reduce the attack's damage by is based on the number of red cards you revealed. 1, 2, or 3+ red cards means you prevent damage equal to your tactic's first, second, or third number in its Outputs section; 0 red cards means you prevent 0 damage.

4. If the value of the last card you revealed is 4 or greater, you perform any "flourish" effects your tactic has (effects worded like "when you flourish, (effect)").

Ending Battle

When your health reaches 0, you're removed from the battle.

Once only one side has characters still in the battle, that side wins the battle.

Sample Characters

Name: Ando

Maximum Health: 20

Agility: 1

Tactic Name: Insult to Injury

Range: 4

Outputs: 2/4/8

Flourish Effect:

> When you flourish on an attack with this tactic, you can deal 1 damage to your target.

Tactic Name: Flow Like Water

Range: 1

Outputs: 3/4/9

Flourish Effect:

> When you flourish with this tactic, you can move up to 3 squares.

Name: Den

Maximum Health: 20

Agility: 0

Tactic Name: Guardian Angel

Range: 1

Outputs: 3/4/9

Flourish Effect:

> When you flourish with this tactic, if you were defying for an ally, that ally gains 2 health.

Tactic Name: Lasso Trick

Range: 3

Outputs: 3/5/9

Flourish Effect:

> When you flourish with this tactic, you can move your target up to 2 squares (if you're defying, you move the attacker).

Name: Meric

Maximum Health: 20

Agility: 2

Tactic Name: To the Point

Range: 1

Outputs: 4/6/7

Flourish Effect:

> None

Tactic Name: Venom Spike

Range: 1

Outputs: 1/3/10

Flourish Effect:

> When you flourish on an attack with this tactic, you can deal 3 damage to your target.

Name: J.J.

Maximum Health: 20

Agility: 0

Tactic Name: Hustle Shot

Range: 4

Outputs: 2/4/8

Flourish Effect:

> When you flourish with this tactic, you can move up to 3 squares.

Tactic Name: Bolt from the Blue

Range: 4

Outputs: 2/3/4

Flourish Effect:

> When you flourish on an attack with this tactic, if your target is exactly 4 squares away, you can deal 5 damage to your target.

Name: Aerven

Maximum Health: 20

Agility: 1

Tactic Name: Advance!

Range: 4

Outputs: 2/4/8

Flourish Effect:

> When you flourish with this tactic, each ally (including yourself) can sidestep up to 1 square.

Tactic Name: Decisive Strike

Range: 1

Outputs: 4/6/7

Flourish Effect:

> None

This enemy's attributes can be modified to match the number of player characters it will battle against; for each number with an X beside it, make X be the number of player characters and multiply the attribute by that amount to have the enemy be strong enough to battle those characters.

You can use multiple enemies in a battle; for multiple enemies, you can give each one a different X amount as long as the total X amount still matches the number of player characters.

Name: Pike Beetle

Maximum Health: 20 X

Agility: 0

Tactic Name: Venom Jab

Range: 2

Outputs: 2/3/4 X

Flourish Effect:

> When you flourish on an attack with this tactic, your target only gets 2 effort on their next turn instead of 3

Tactic Name: Flutterspear

Range: 3

Outputs: 2/3/7 X

Flourish Effect:

> When you flourish on an attack with this tactic, deal 1 X damage to your target.

🖊 Special Rule: If X is 2 or more, Pike Beetle can't attack more than twice on each of its turns.

🖊 Special Rule 2: Whenever a player character would lose more than 10 health from one of the Pike Beetle's attacks, that player character only loses 10 health; the Pike Beetle gains health equal to the leftover damage.

Before you play the game as a character, you must invent that character using the steps below.

Part 1: Shadow Ranks

Shadows are supernatural powers only available to a rare few that have gone through exceptional circumstances. There are 3 types of shadow that a character can use in combat.

Shadow Arts

Shadow arts are a manifestation of its owner's confidence, granting new options for offense and defense that you incorporate into each of your tactics. Shadow arts can take the form of real or imaginary weapons such as an extremely personalized bow or a rocket-powered hammer, but it can also take more abstract forms such as the ability to cast spells or as a pet that you command.

Having a shadow arts rank of 1 or higher unlocks access to a wider variety of options to improve your tactics with, and your maximum capability with each tactic increases with your shadow arts rank.

Signature Move

A signature move is a manifestation of its owner's ambition, in the form of a powerful technique or choreographed sequence that's unique to them. Signature moves can be powers that allow for actions that are typically impossible such as teleportation, or displays of pure talent that a normal human could never perform such as unleashing a flurry of attacks with incredible speed.

Having a signature move rank of 1 or higher allows you to create a signature move, and your ability to further customize and empower the signature move increases with your signature move rank.

Aura

An aura is a manifestation of its owner's determination, and can serve to empower or defend its wielder. Many auras take the form of a decorative uniform or a suit of armor, but they can also take more ethereal forms such as a dark wind that surrounds the wielder and guides their movements, or even music that motivates and empowers them.

Having an aura rank of 1 or higher unlocks a base functionality to gather and release energy, and increasing your aura rank improves your capacity to give the aura additional abilities.

Assigning Shadow Ranks

You start with a shadow rank of 0 for each of the shadows. You can increase individual ranks by 1 at a time until the combined ranks reach a total of 4.

You can also choose for all of your shadow ranks to be 0: this will prevent you from using any shadows, but in exchange you gain the benefits of a third stat perk (explained in Part 3: Stats). Any time you gain a level while you don't have any shadow ranks, you can forfeit your third stat perk to gain 4 shadow ranks as per the process listed above.

You will be able to gain shadow levels later in character creation and throughout the story the character participates in; the combination of shadow level and shadow rank determines how many upgrades can be applied to each of your shadows.

Part 2: Speed Class

Your speed class affects the following aspects of your character:

⤴ How far you can sidestep with the move action, and how far from a character you can dash to. This number is used by effects that refer to (your speed)

⤴ How much range your tactics have, based on their type

⤴ How much extra flair it costs to dash, in addition to any other costs

⤴ How much extra flair it costs to anchor

Speed Class	Speed	Ranges	Dash Cost Increase	Anchor Cost
Low	2	Direct: 1 Exposure: 2 Projectile: 4	+2 flair	None
Medium	3	Direct: 2 Exposure: 4 Projectile: 6	+1 flair	1 flair
High	5	Direct: 3 Exposure: 6 Projectile: 9	None	2 flair

You choose a speed class for your character.

PART 3: STATS AND STYLE

Stats are a character's main attributes; they grant unique perks to customize your character's fighting style, as well as stat effects that can grant additional bonuses to your tactics based on the stat they use.

Each of your stats starts at 0, and you can increase individual stats each time you gain levels.

STAT	PERK	STAT EFFECT
Body	Maximum Health (+5)	Heal yourself or a nearby ally if your original show has an even number of red cards
Agility	Increased output after you use the Move action (+1) *Additional Perk: Increased agility when determining start-of-battle character placements (+0.5)*	Sidestep, then deal damage to your target if you reach a particular distance from them
Strength	Increased maximum tactic points (+10)	Deal damage
Presence	Increased power and maximum power after spending flair (+1)	Deal morale damage and increase your side's morale
Logic	Gain health when you end your turn with leftover effort or in a stance (+1)	Your next stat effect has increased power and can move the target
Creativity	Increased output on 2nd+ unique action (+1)	Perform any other stat's effect, with half power

STAT SPECIALIZATIONS AND STAT PERKS

Choose two stats to be your specializations: you get the perks of those stats.

If you have no shadow ranks, you can also choose a non-specialization stat and get its perk as well.

Stat Perks:

Body

Your maximum health is increased by 5 times your body.

Agility

The first time you use the Move action on your turn, increase your next attack's output by your agility.

When checking character agility to determine placement order at the start of battle, you can treat your agility as being increased by half.

Strength

Your maximum upgrade points on each of your tactics are increased by 10 times your strength.

Presence

When you attack or defy, if you've spent 3 or more flair this turn, increase your maneuver's power and maximum power by your presence. This increase doesn't get doubled when you flourish. If your maneuver's original finale is greater than the amount of flair you spent beyond 3, this perk doesn't apply to any other maneuvers you perform this turn. If the maneuver's original finale is equal to or less than that amount, record that amount and this perk continues to apply to your attacks and defies for as long as your original finales with those maneuvers are less than or equal to that recorded amount; including attacks and defies you perform after the turn ends.

Note: If you reach 3 or more flair spent by paying for an attack or defy, this perk applies to that maneuver. If this perk is already applying and you would trigger it again on another turn, instead of applying it an additional time you increase the recorded amount by the amount of flair you spend beyond 3 this turn (example: If you spent 4 flair on a turn to apply this perk, it lasts as long as your attack/defy original finales are 0 or 1. If you spent 5 flair on a future turn while this perk is still active, you increase the excess from 1 to 3 and now this perk lasts as long as your attack/defy original finales are 3 or less.)

Logic

When you end your turn, if you performed the Stance action this turn or have at least 1 effort, you gain health equal to your logic.

Creativity

When you attack on your turn, if you've spent 2 or more effort this turn (including from paying for this maneuver) and are using a tactic that you haven't already attacked with this turn, increase your output by your creativity.

If you have any stats that you aren't getting perks from, those stats add half of their combined total to each of your specialization stats when determining how strong the perks are.

Example: If your specializations are strength and logic, but you also have 3 creativity without getting the creativity perk, you increase your strength and logic by 2 each for the perks; giving you an additional 20 maximum tactic points and an additional 2 health each time the logic perk gives you health.

If you have no shadow ranks, the additional stat you chose to get the perk from doesn't receive this increase nor does it contribute to it.

STAT EFFECTS

Every tactic used by your character has a stat effect, which occurs when you finish an attack or defy while your character's style applies. Your tactic's **stat** determines what the stat effect does, while your tactic's **power** determines how powerful the stat effect is. Tactics have a **maximum power** equal to the value of the stat the tactic uses; the tactic's power can never be increased beyond the maximum power. However, if you flourish with an attack or defy, you double your power *and* your maximum power for that maneuver.

Tactics can each use the same or different stats. The stat effects occur once per target when you're attacking, or once per attack line you're defying, and you perform stat effects at the same time that you perform flourish effects.

Body: You can have yourself or another character within the tactic's range gain up to (Power) health if your original show has an even number of red cards (0 is even).

Agility: You can sidestep up to (half your speed) squares. If your distance from your target matches your original finale, you can deal (Power) morale damage to that target. Otherwise, you can deal half (Power) morale damage to that target.

Strength: You can deal (Power) health damage to your target.

Presence: You can deal (Power) morale damage to your target, and you gain half that much morale. If your target has 0 or less morale, this stat effect does nothing.

Logic: The next tactic you flourish with before your next turn has its power increased by (Power). If its power reaches your maximum power, you can move that tactic's target up to (its speed) squares.

Creativity: You can perform the stat effect of any other stat. You use half (Power) for the effect instead of your full power.

STYLE

Choose one from the following options to be your character's style. When you finish an attack or defy in a situation where your style applies, you gain the stat effect of whichever stat your maneuver uses.

Aggressive
Your style applies to your attacks.

Dauntless
Your style applies while your health is less than half your maximum health.

Dreadnought
Your style applies against characters with less than half of their maximum morale.

Fast
Your style applies if you've used the Move action since your last turn.

Rhythm
Your style applies while you have 2 or 0 effort (after you pay for the maneuver).

Territorial
When you use the Anchor action, your style applies until your next turn.

Universal
When you pay for the maneuver, you can pay an additional 1 flair. If you do, your style applies for that maneuver.

CHARACTER LEVEL

When you first create a character, the game master will decide what level you start at. A common starting level is 3.

Your level affects the following values:

Maximum Health = Level x10

You start each battle with your health equal to your maximum health.

Your health can be increased past your maximum health, but any health you gain is reduced by the amount of excess health you already have (to a minimum of 0 health gained).

This doesn't apply to health gain that you use to increase your morale.

Example: You have 45 health out of 50 maximum health. If you gain 15 health, you reach 60. If you then gain another 20 health, since you have 10 health above your maximum, you only heal for 20-10 = 10 to reach 70 health.

Starting Morale = Level x5

Your side starts each battle with morale equal to the combined starting morale of all characters on your side.

Any effects that refer to a character's morale refers to the morale that their side has; damaging a character's morale means reducing the morale of that side.

Your side's morale can be increased past the total starting amount, with no limit.

Maximum Stat = Level

You can't increase any of your stats above your maximum stat.

Shadow Level

Your shadow level starts at 0, and can increase each time you gain a character level. Your shadow level determines how many points of upgrades you can apply to each of your shadows, and how many "keystone" upgrades you can apply to them.

Your aura, your signature move, and each tactic you create can only have 1 keystone upgrade applied to each of them; keystone upgrades are shadow upgrades that have no arrows leading to them. Many signature move upgrades are exempt from the keystone classification; signature move keystones are placed separately from the non-keystone upgrades.

When you reach shadow level 5, the limit increases to 2 keystone upgrades.

When you reach shadow level 15, the limit increases to 3 keystone upgrades.

Gaining Levels

Your game master will allow you to gain levels throughout the story. Each time you gain a level, you gain the following benefits:

+1 to any stat, twice

Choose one:

+1 shadow level

+1 to any stat, twice

When you create a character, you gain these benefits once per level you're starting at; a level 5 character starts with +1 to any stat 10 times, and with 5 separate choices of +1 shadow level or +1 to any stat twice. You can make different choices for each stat increase, and for each decision between gaining a shadow level or increasing a stat.

PART 4: TACTICS

Tactics are your character's main actions; their methods for attacking and for defying attacks. Tactics can represent separate weapons that your character uses, various techniques that they can perform with a single weapon, or any other way that a character can perform maneuvers matching each tactic's traits.

TACTIC TYPES

Every tactic has a type, which influences its range and how often you can gain free movement when you flourish with it.

Direct tactics have short range (1 for low speed, 2 for medium, and 3 for high).

> Move trigger: When you flourish with a direct tactic and your original show has at least 1 red card, you can perform the Move action.

Exposure tactics have medium range (2 for low speed, 4 for medium, and 6 for high).

> Move trigger: When you flourish with an exposure tactic and your original show has at least 2 red cards, you can perform the Move action.

Projectile tactics have long range (4 for low speed, 6 for medium, and 9 for high).

> Move trigger: When you flourish with a projectile tactic and your original show has at least 3 red cards, you can perform the Move action.

OUTPUTS

Every tactic has three output tiers, written in the format of low/medium/high. The number of red cards in your show determines which output tier you use for that show's result. For attacks, the output you use determines how much damage your attack can deal; for defies, it determines how much of an attack's damage you can prevent.

0 Red Cards: The result is 0

1 Red Card: The result is your tactic's Low Output

2 Red Cards: The result is your tactic's Medium Output

3+ Red Cards: The result is your tactic's High Output

CREATING TACTICS

Create 3 tactics for your character.

Each tactic has these starting traits:

Type: Choose Direct, Projectile, or Exposure

Range: Determined by speed class and tactic type

↗ **Direct:** 1/2/3 for low/medium/high speed

↗ **Exposure:** 2/4/6 for low/medium/high speed

↗ **Projectile:** 4/6/9 for low/medium/high speed

Stat: Choose any stat

Power: 0

↗ **Maximum Power:** The value of the tactic's stat

Outputs: 0/1/2

Break Point: Determined by tactic type

↗ **Direct:** Twice your level

↗ **Exposure:** 1.5 times your level

↗ **Projectile:** Your level

When you perform an attack and your output is higher than the tactic's break point, the excess output will be dealt as damage to your target's morale instead of to that target's health.

The total output is determined after any increases and decreases from effects are applied, except for the effects of any defies.

> **Maximum Upgrade Points:** (Stat) x10 + (Shadow Level) x(Shadow Arts Rank) x10. +15 if you give the tactic a name.

You can apply upgrades to each of your tactics, as long as the total points from upgrades applied to a single tactic don't exceed that tactic's maximum upgrade points.

Example: If your maximum tactic points for a tactic is 100, that tactic is allowed up to 100 total points of upgrades.

It's a good idea to keep track of each tactic's total points so that future upgrades can be applied without recalculating the total.

Basic Tactic Upgrades

These upgrades can each be applied any number of times, and don't count as keystone upgrades.

Upgrade	Points
Low Output +1	5
Medium Output +1	10
High Output +1	10
Power +1	30

Your tactic's written outputs must each be different numbers, with low output being the lowest and the high output being the highest.

If your shadow arts rank is 1 or higher, you can also apply upgrades listed in the Shadow Arts Upgrades chapter. These upgrades can be applied to any tactic type, but upgrades from a differently-typed section (such as applying an upgrade from the Projectile section to a Direct or Exposure tactic) have their point values doubled. Keystones from a differently-typed section count as 2 keystones.

Example Tactics

Rylie is a level 3 character with a medium speed class, and has chosen to focus on their stats; for each level, they chose +2 stats over +1 shadow level. Their stats are a total of 12:

Body: 4   **Presence:** 2

Agility: 1   **Logic:** 0

Strength: 0   **Creativity:** 5

The tactics they make are:

Name: Dagger Swipe
Type: Direct (Range 2)
Stat: Creativity
Max Power: 5
Power: 0
Outputs: 1/3/6
Break Point: 6
Max Points: 65
Total Points: 65 (+1/2/4 outputs)

Name: Greatsword Air Thrust
Type: Projectile (Range 6)
Stat: Body
Max Power: 4
Power: 1
Outputs: 1/2/3
Break Point: 3
Max Points: 55
Total Points: 55 (+1 power, +1/1/1 outputs)

Name: Greatsword Air Slash
Type: Exposure (Range 4)
Stat: Presence
Max Power: 2
Power: 0
Outputs: 1/2/4
Break Point: 5
Max Points: 35
Total Points: 35 (+1/1/2 outputs)

PART 5: SHADOW UPGRADES

Each shadow rank contributes to the number of points that can go into improving that shadow with upgrades. The exact number of points, and the available upgrades, are listed in each shadow's upgrade section within this chapter.

Some upgrades may be linked by arrows. When you apply an upgrade that has arrows leading out from it, you unlock the ability to also apply the upgrades those arrows lead to (for tactics, this only happens for the tactic that you applied that upgrade to). If an upgrade has an arrow leading to it, you can't apply that upgrade until you have applied the upgrade that leads to it. Many linked upgrades improve the upgrade that points to them, rather than providing new abilities (for example one upgrade might grant the ability to teleport, and it can link to another upgrade that improves the teleport distance).

Keystone upgrades are upgrades that have no arrows leading to them (for signature move upgrades, this doesn't apply to upgrades in the Non-Keystone section). Each of your shadows are restricted in how many keystone upgrades can be applied to them; a maximum of 1 each, increased to 2 each at shadow level 5, and increased again to 3 each at shadow level 15. Each tactic using shadow arts can have its own keystone upgrades, and you don't combine the tactics when counting the total number of keystones.

Tempest

Points: 0

On your turn while no ot[...]
return a red card with a[...]
you target a square with[...]
Tempest on that square.[...]
greater, you can target a sq[...]
Tempest doesn't obstruct t[...]

...

> The Tempest upgrade unlocks the Moveable, Larger Tempest, and Damage Up upgrades that each improve Tempest; Larger Tempest unlocks the Largest Tempest upgrade, which improves Larger Tempest.

▶ **Movable**

Points: 0

Once on each of your turns while Tempest is activated, you can move it up to 3 squares. Tempest's movement doesn't cause it to damage characters.

Increase the point value of Damage Up from 25 to 40, and increase the point value of Eye of the Storm from 10 to 15.

▶ **Larger Tempest**

Points: 0

Increase the range of Tempest from 3 to 5.

To maintain Tempest, the card you return must have a value of 1 or greater.

➡ **Largest Tempest**

Points: 0

Increase the range of Tempest from 5 to 7.

To place Tempest, the card you return must have a value of 3 or greater.

▶ **Damage Up** ∞

Points: 25

Increase the damage of Tempest by 1 (*+1).

Each upgrade can be applied only once unless it has an ∞ symbol beside it.

Upgrades with an ∞ symbol: These upgrades can be applied any number of times, and have a number with an asterisk in their rules text and another number in brackets such as "1 (*+1)". Each time you apply the upgrade after the first time, increase the asterisked number by the value within the asterisks instead of gaining the full text of the upgrade again.

AURA

An aura allows you to store cards that you revealed during shows, then spend them later to empower future shows or gain other bonuses. Having an aura rank of 1 or higher grants you two inherent abilities: **Gather Potential** and **Release Potential**.

Gather Potential: When you finish an attack or defy, after all flourish effects are finished, you can choose any number of cards you revealed for the show and spend flair equal to the combined value of those cards. If you do, store those cards by putting them in a separate "set aside" area until the battle ends or until you use them for any of your aura's abilities. When any aura abilities tell you to "return" cards, you move those cards from the stored area back into the discard pile.

↗ Restriction: You can't store more than 5 cards with your aura; any time you would store a card while you already have the maximum stored, you must either skip storing that card or return another card to make room.

Release Potential: As you finish an attack or defy show, before you use Gather Potential, you can return one card:

↗ If you return a black card: Increase the show's finale by the value of the card you returned.

↗ If you return a red card: Increase the number of red cards in your show by 1 (You don't physically reveal a new red card, you just increase the count by 1).

You can apply upgrades to your aura. The limit to how many total points of upgrades you can apply is equal to (Shadow Level) x(Aura Rank) x10.

Example Aura

Umbris has an aura rank of 2 and a shadow level of 5.

5x2x10 = 100 maximum points

The Aura	Description	Point Tracking / Notes

[Inherent] Gather Potential
[Inherent] Release Potential
Maximize Output x2
 	
When you use Release Potential to reveal a red card for an attack or defy, you can increase your output by 2.
 	
Personality Capacitor
 	
When you end your turn, you can return a card to gain flair equal to that card's value or you can return 3 0s to gain 1 flair.
 	
Fountain of Youth
 	
When you use **Personality Capacitor** to return three 0s, you can have each character within (your direct range) gain 2 health.
 	
If you have a card with a value of 5 or greater stored, you can increase the range to (your exposure range). If you have a card with a value of 8 or greater stored, you can increase the range to (your projectile range)
	A mech suit with glowing energy lines wrapping around the joints; the lines grow brighter as more cards are stored.
	
	Occasionally, the suit releases a healing mist as it purges stored energy.
		Upgrade Point Total: 100
		Keystones: 2
		Maximize Output
		Personality Capacitor
		(2x10=20) **Maximize Output x2**
		
		   (0) **Personality Capacitor**
		   (2x40=80) **Fountain of Youth**

Aura Upgrades

Dread

Points: 10

When a character within (your direct range) of you finishes a show, you can return a card: if you return a black card, reduce their finale by the value of the card you returned; if you return a red card, reduce the number of red cards in their show by 1 to a minimum of 0.

If the character performing the show has fewer characters on their side than you have on your side, this effect costs additional flair equal to the difference.

The range of Dread increases to (your exposure range) while you have a card with a value of 5 or greater stored, and increases to (your projectile range) while you have a card with a value of 8 or greater stored; this includes if you return that card for Dread.

▶ **Output Reduction** ∞

Points: 40

When you return a 0 with Dread, you can reduce the show's output by 1 (*+1) to a minimum of 0.

▶ **Bane** ∞

Points: 15

When you use Dread and return a card that's greater than the show's original finale, you can deal 1 (*+1) damage to the character that performed the show and move them up to (their speed) squares.

Aura Tactic

Points: 15

When you apply this upgrade, create a tactic for it following the rules for creating a tactic (including the maximum number of upgrade points).

You can apply tactic upgrades, including shadow arts upgrades, to Aura Tactic even if your shadow arts rank is 0.

The total point value of upgrades applied to Aura Tactic count toward your maximum aura points, but they are also reduced by Aura Tactic's own maximum upgrade points, to a minimum of 0. This tactic's break point and maximum power are both increased by half.

When you would attack or defy, you can return one or more black cards and one or more red cards to use this tactic for that maneuver.

Efficient Fashion

Points: 0

When you use Release Potential to return a card, you can choose a card in the show with lesser value and a different color: that card only costs half as much flair to store with Gather Potential.

▶ God Eye ∞

Points: 15

If the card you returned has a greater value than your finale, you can deal 1 (*+1) morale damage to the furthest enemy or you can deal half that much health damage to them.

▶ Efficient Blaze ∞

Points: 25

If your finale is greater than the card you returned, you can deal 1 (*+1) morale damage to the nearest enemy or you can deal half that much health damage to them.

Personality Capacitor

Points: 0

When you end your turn, you can return a card to gain flair equal to that card's value or you can return three 0s to gain 1 flair.

▶ Flare ∞

Points: 20

When you use Personality Capacitor to return a card with value greater than 0, you can deal 1 (*+1) morale damage to each character within (your direct range).

If you returned a card with a value of 5 or greater, you can increase this range to (your exposure range). If you returned a card with a value of 8 or greater, you can increase the range to (your projectile range).

▶ Fountain of Youth ∞

Points: 40

When you use Personality Capacitor to return three 0s, you can have each character within (your direct range) gain 1 (*+1) health.

If you have a card with a value of 5 or greater stored, you can increase the range to (your exposure range). If you have a card with a value of 8 or greater stored, you can increase the range to (your projectile range).

Expanded Influence

Points: 0

On your turn while no maneuvers are being performed, you can spend 1 flair to expand your aura until your next turn; while it's expanded, its range is (your direct range). Its range increases to (your exposure range) while you have a card with a value of 5 or greater stored, and increases to (your projectile range) while you have a card with a value of 8 or greater stored. Your aura stops being expanded whenever you start your turn, unless you spend 1 flair to keep it expanded.

While your aura is expanded, you can have your aura's upgrades and Release Potential, other than Expanded Influence itself, also apply to willing characters within your aura's range, however those characters can't store cards if they don't have an aura (if they would store a card without an aura, they put it in their discard pile instead). You must return any cards for effects, and any effects that measure some trait of stored cards uses your own stored cards, but the effects otherwise treat the willing characters as the ones performing the maneuver. For example, you can use Release Potential to empower an ally's show using your own cards, use Speed of Light to teleport them on their turn, or use Rattlesnake to damage a character that attacked your ally.

The upgrades count separately for each character; if you can pay a cost to gain an effect that would normally affect you, you choose which character within range of Expanded Influence gains that effect.

You can only apply up to 2 non-infinite linked upgrades to Expanded Influence.

▶ Relocate

Points: 0

On your turn while no other maneuvers are being performed, you can spend 1 effort and choose two willing characters within range of Expanded Influence: you teleport one of those characters to a square within (that character's speed) of the other character. You can choose yourself as either of the two characters.

▶ Commander

Points: 0

When you would gain sidestep or teleport movement on your turn, you can give it to a character within range of Expanded Influence. Movement you give to characters with a lower speed than you is halved. That character can immediately spend the movement given to them.

When you dash, you can use Commander as if you had gained sidestep movement equal to (your speed).

▶ Moral Support

Points: 0

Whenever an ally other than yourself within range of Expanded Influence is targeted by an attack, you can transfer 1 flair from yourself to that character.

Expanded Influence (Cont.)

▶ Puppeteer

Points: 0

> You can attack and defy using the location of any willing characters within range of Expanded Influence instead of your own location as the starting point. Performing a maneuver this way costs an additional 1 flair, and the character whose location you chose is treated as the one performing the maneuver instead of you (the maneuver is performed with your tactic, but any effects that would apply to the character performing the maneuver apply to that character instead of to you). You can't choose the location of a character that would be performing another maneuver at the same time as yours.

▶ Shared Pain

Points: 0

> Whenever an ally (including yourself) within range of Expanded Influence would take damage, any other non-exhausted ally within its range can spend 1 flair to redirect that damage to themselves instead. If the damage was from an attack, any flourish effects that would apply to the target will instead apply to the character that took the damage.
>
> If an attack is targeting multiple characters, those targeted characters can't redirect the attack's damage from other characters to themselves.

▶ Revitalizing ∞

Points: 10

> Non-shaken allies within range of Expanded Influence and have 15 (*+5) HP or less gain an additional 1 flair on each of their turns.

▶ Ribbon of Fate ∞

Points: 20

> Your attacks have their range increased to match the range of Expanded Influence, and instead of their normal targeting you can target connected squares that form a straight line from you to another character within range as long as none of the squares are obstructed by non-character objects. You don't target your own square, and you can choose whether to target the square that the character is on.
>
> If the attack targets multiple characters, its output against each target is halved but its output against the furthest target is increased by 1 *(+1) after being halved.

Expanded Influence (Cont.)

▶ **Swap**

Points: 0

On your turn while no other maneuvers are being performed, you can spend 2 flair and choose two willing characters within range of Expanded Influence: those characters swap locations. You can choose yourself as either of the two characters.

↪ **Reaction**

Points: 0

Swap can be used as a reaction to anything, and can also be used immediately before you or either of the two characters performs a maneuver.

If you use Swap while either character is being targeted by targeting lines, the characters also swap which targeting lines are targeting them (for example if one character is targeted by an attack line and a swap happens, the character that takes their place becomes targeted by that attack line).

Imposing

Points: 0

When you flourish with an attack, you can make squares within 2 range of you become obstructions for enemy attacks and dashes until your next turn.

Enemies can ignore theses obstructions with attacks that include you as a target, and with dashes that are based on your location.

Enemies can also ignore these obstructions with attacks that can't target you, and with dashes that can't be based on your location (typically due to you being behind a normal obstruction or an ally's Imposing).

▶ **Gone but not Forgotten** ∞

Points: 50

When an attack would deal damage to an ally, if the attack ignored Imposing because it couldn't target you, you can reduce that damage by 1 (*+1).

▶ **Hazard Field** ∞

Points: 15

Instead of obstructing characters, Imposing deals 1 (*+1) morale damage to them when time they finish an attack or dash that would have been obstructed by Imposing.

After this effect deals damage once, you can return a card with a value of 2 or greater or you can return three 0s: if you don't, this effect can't deal damage again until your next turn ends.

Juggernaut

Points: 0

On your turn while no maneuvers are being performed, you can return up to two cards to gain the following effects until your next turn:

- If you returned a black card for Juggernaut, you take half damage from attacks with a finale less than the greatest value among black cards you have stored.

- If you returned a red card for Juggernaut, when you perform an attack show and your original show has fewer red cards than you have stored, increase the number of red cards in your show by 1.

▶ Impenetrable ∞

Points: 25

When Juggernaut reduces the damage that an attack deals, you can return a black card to reduce the damage by an additional 1 (*+1) times the value of the card you returned, to a minimum of 0.

▶ Onslaught ∞

Points: 10

When Juggernaut increases the number of red cards in a show and the output increase is 1 (*+1) or less, you can return a red card to gain 1 effort. If you returned a card with a value of 5 or greater, increase the output of your next attack this turn by 1 (*+1).

Turbo

Points: 0

You can use Release Potential up to two times per show, returning the same color of card or different colors.

▶ Double Down: Power ∞

Points: 20

When you return two black cards with Turbo for a show to use a tactic, you can increase the tactic's power for this maneuver by 1 (*+1).

▶ Double Down: Damage ∞

Points: 10

When you return two red cards with Turbo for a single show to use a tactic, you can deal 1 (*+1) morale damage to a maximum of your tactic's written high output to your target. If you're targeting multiple characters or lines, deal half that much morale damage to each of them instead.

Targeted Enhancement

Points: 0

Immediately before you use another upgrade of your aura for a maneuver, you can return a card you've stored with a value of 1 or greater or you can return three 0s to increase any of the following numbers for that maneuver:

- an output tier; you can't increase a medium tier above the high tier, or a low tier above the medium tier
- power
- distance
- range (including dash ending range)
- damage dealt
- health gained

If the card you returned had a value of 4 or greater, you can increase the number by an additional 1.

If the number you're increasing is part of a maneuver with a lasting effect, set the cards aside instead of returning them. At the start of each of your turns, return the card(s) and remove the increase from the effect; you can spend flair equal to half the value of the card (if there's one card) or you can spend 1 flair (if there's three 0s) to keep the card(s) set aside and maintain the increase.

▶ Repeated Enhancement

Points: 0

You can use Targeted Enhancement any number of times per maneuver.

Each time you use Targeted Enhancement, you lose 1 flair to a minimum of 0.

▶ Universal Enhancement

Points: 0

You can use Targeted Enhancement on any maneuver you perform, regardless of whether your aura is involved.

You can't return 0s for Targeted Enhancement.

▶ Empowered Enhancement ∞

Points: 15

When you use Targeted Enhancement to increase an output tier or power, you can increase it by an additional 1 (*+1). If the card you returned had a value of 4 or greater, double this increase.

When you use Targeted Enhancement to increase a different number, you can increase it by an additional 0.5 (*+0.5) rounded up. If the card you returned had a value of 4 or greater, double this increase. You can choose to increase all three output tiers of a tactic by this amount instead of increasing a single output tier by the larger value listed above.

Targeted Enhancement (Cont.)

▶ Sabotage ∞

Points: 10

> When you flourish with an attack or defy, you can mark one of your targets with Sabotage until the end of your next turn. While that character is marked, whenever they start a maneuver, you can remove the mark: you use Targeted Enhancement on their maneuver, but you reduce a number instead of increasing it. You can't reduce a medium output tier below the low tier, or the high tier below the medium tier.
>
> When you reduce an output tier or power this way, you can reduce it by an additional 1 (*+1). If the card you returned had a value of 4 or greater, double this increase.
>
> When you reduce a different number this way, you can reduce it by an additional 0.5 (*+0.5) rounded up. If the card you returned had a value of 4 or greater, double this increase. You can choose to reduce all three output tiers of a tactic by this amount instead of reducing a single output tier by the larger value listed above.
>
> The minimum amount you can reduce a number to with Sabotage is 1.

Double Up

Points: 0

> When you use Release Potential to return a black card with a value of 2 or greater, you can increase your tactic's power for this maneuver by its written power instead of increasing your finale. If you returned a card with a value of 5 or greater, also increase your tactic's maximum power for this maneuver by your tactic's written power.

▶ Play Both Sides ∞

Points: 15

> When you use Release Potential to return a black card and you increase your finale by 1 or more, you can increase your tactic's power for this maneuver by 1 (*+1). This upgrade can't increase the power by more than the tactic's written power.
>
> If the card you returned has a value of 5 or greater, also increase your maximum power for this maneuver by 1 (*+1).

▶ Flurry ∞

Points: 15

> When you use Double Up to increase your tactic's power, you can deal 1 (*+1) morale damage to your target per card you have stored with a greater value than your original finale. If you're targeting multiple characters or lines, deal half that much morale damage to each of them instead.

Gravity Well

Points:0

On your turn while no other maneuvers are being performed, you can return a black card with a value of 2 or greater to activate Gravity Well: you target a square within (your exposure range) and place Gravity Well on that square. If you returned a card with a value of 3 or greater, you can target a square within (your projectile range) instead. Gravity Well doesn't obstruct the square it's placed on.

While it's activated, any character (including yourself) within 3 range of it has their speed halved and they can't dash unless they spend an additional 2 flair.

At the start of each of your turns, Gravity Well deactivates unless you return a card.

You can't have more than one Gravity Well placed at a time.

Increase the required card value to active Gravity Well and the required card value to use your projectile range by 1 per non-infinite linked upgrade applied to it.

▶ Pull

Points: 0

While Gravity Well is activated, as an action, you can spend 1 flair to move each character within Gravity Well's range 1 square closer to it.

▶ Moveable

Points: 0

While Gravity Well is activated, as an action, you can spend 1 flair to move Gravity Well up to 3 squares.

▶ Zone of Decay ∞

Points: 40

Your attack outputs are increased by 1 (*+1) against characters inside Gravity Well.

If you end your turn without attacking any characters inside Gravity Well that turn, you can choose an ally that hasn't had a turn yet and allow them to receive this upgrade until the end of their turn.

➥ Siphon ∞

Points: 55

Each time Zone of Decay increases an attack's output and that attack deals damage to a character, you can gain 1 (*+1) health.

Gravity Well (Cont.)

▶ Exception

Points: 0

At any time, you can spend 1 flair or return a card to make a character immune to Gravity Well's speed reduction and dash cost increase until the end of the turn. You can choose yourself. If you use Pull while a character within Gravity Well is immune, that character can decide whether or not it moves them.

▶ Black Hole Collapse ∞

Points: 15

On your turn, as an action if you didn't activate Gravity Well this turn, you can spend 1 effort to detonate Gravity Well: you target all squares within its range with an exposure attack that has outputs of 1/2/4 (*+1/2/4). If you flourish with this attack, instead of gaining a move trigger, your targets can't move or be moved during their next turn.

After the attack finishes, Gravity Well deactivates and can't be reactivated this turn.

You can apply tactic upgrades and shadow arts upgrades to Black Hole Collapse, even if your shadow arts rank is 0. The total point value of upgrades applied to it count toward your maximum aura points, but they are also reduced by the maximum upgrade points of your tactic with the highest maximum upgrade points, to a minimum of 0.

Accumulate Potential

Points: 0

On your turn while no maneuvers are being performed, you can spend 1 effort to shuffle your deck and reveal the top 2 cards: store the card with the lower value among the two, and put the other back on top of the deck (if they have the same value, you can pick which one to store).

▶ Gamble Your Future ∞

Points: 10

Immediately before you use Accumulate Potential, you can spend an additional effort to attack: if you do, you use Accumulate Potential after characters have decided their reactions to the attack but before you perform your attack show; then you can choose whether to store that card as normal, or to return it. Perform the attack show after you choose.

If you return the card and its value is greater than or equal to your attack's original finale, you can increase the attack's output by 2 (*+2).

If you store the card and its value is less than your attack's original finale, you can increase the attack's output by 1 *(+1).

Tempest

Points: 0

On your turn while no other maneuvers are being performed, you can return a red card with a value of 2 or greater to activate Tempest: you target a square within (your exposure range) of you and place Tempest on that square. If you returned a card with a value of 3 or greater, you can target a square within (your projectile range) instead. Tempest doesn't obstruct the square it's placed on.

While it's activated, whenever any character starts their turn within 3 range of it or enters a square within that range of it, Tempest deals 1 damage to them unless they're standing on its square. Tempest can't damage the same character more than once per turn.

At the start of each of your turns, Tempest deactivates unless you return a card.

You can't have more than one Tempest placed at a time.

▶ Movable

Points: 0

Once on each of your turns while Tempest is activated, you can move it up to 3 squares. Tempest's movement doesn't cause it to damage characters.

Increase the point value of Damage Up from 25 to 40, and increase the point value of Eye of the Storm from 10 to 15.

▶ Larger Tempest

Points: 0

Increase the range of Tempest from 3 to 5.

To maintain Tempest, the card you return must have a value of 1 or greater.

➥ Largest Tempest

Points: 0

Increase the range of Tempest from 5 to 7.

To place Tempest, the card you return must have a value of 3 or greater.

▶ Damage Up ∞

Points: 25

Increase the damage of Tempest by 1 (*+1).

▶ Ally Protection ∞

Points: 5

Any time Tempest would deal damage to a character, you can reduce that damage by 1 (*+1).

Double this reduction if you have Larger Tempest, and triple this reduction instead if you have Largest Tempest.

Tempest (Cont.)

▶ Eye of the Storm ∞

Points: 30

While you're standing on same square as Tempest, you can increase the power of your tactics by 1 (*+1).

Maximize Output ∞

Points: 10

When you use Release Potential to reveal a red card for an attack or defy, you can increase the show's output by 1 (*+1).

Spring-Loaded

Points: 0

When you would gain movement that includes a measurement of distance (including using your speed as a range for where your dash can end), you can return a card with a value of 2 or greater to increase that distance by (your speed) or you can return three 0s to increase that distance by (half your speed).

▶ Course Correct

Points: 0

Whenever an effect finishes moving you, you can return a card with a value of 2 or greater to sidestep up to (your speed) or you can return three 0s to sidestep up to (half your speed).

You can't use Course Correct or Spring-Loaded while you have 0 effort.

Speed of Light

Points: 0

On your turn while no other maneuvers are being performed, you can return a card with a value of 3 or greater to teleport up to (your speed) squares or you can return three 0s to teleport up to (half your speed) squares. If you returned a card with a value of 5 or greater, you can teleport up to (twice your speed) squares instead.

▶ Reaction

Points: 0

You must return an additional card to use Speed of Light, but you can use it as a reaction to anything or immediately before any maneuver you or an ally performs.

Rattlesnake ∞

Points: 15

Immediately after you're damaged by an attack, you can return a card with a greater value than the attack's finale: if you do, you deal 1 (*+1) morale damage to the attacker.

▶ Force Convert

Points: 0

Rattlesnake doesn't deal damage. Instead, you can move the attacker up to (their speed) if the damage of Rattlesnake would have been more than half the damage you took from the attack (health and morale combined). If the damage of Rattlesnake would have been greater than the damage you took from the attack, you can move the attacker up to (twice their speed) instead.

A Step Ahead

Points: 0

Immediately before you perform an attack or defy, you can spend up to 6 flair: if you do, you can look at that many cards from the top of your deck. Put any number of those cards on the bottom of the deck in any order, and the rest on top in any order.

Recovery

Points: 25

Once on each of your turns, you can return a card to gain health equal to 1 (*+1) times that card's value or you can return three 0s to gain 1 (*+1) health.

SIGNATURE MOVE

A signature move is a list of maneuvers (or a single maneuver) that you can customize with upgrades. Having a signature move rank of 1 or higher allows you to create a signature move.

CREATING A SIGNATURE MOVE

Cost: Your signature move costs 3 flair by default. You can increase its flair cost by up to 12 (to a maximum of 15 flair) to increase the upgrade point limit both on maneuvers you can add and on upgrades you can apply. It has no effort cost unless you apply an upgrade that comes with an effort cost.

Maneuvers: You add maneuvers to your signature move, in the order that you would like to perform them when you use the signature move. The limit on how many total points of maneuvers you can add is 30. For every +1 you add to the flair cost, increase the limit by 10 points (to a maximum of 150 points at 15 flair). You can add the same maneuver to your signature move more than once.

Upgrades: You can apply upgrades to maneuvers in your signature move. The limit on how many total points of upgrades you can apply across all of the maneuvers equals (Shadow Level) x(Signature Move Rank) x20. For every +1 you apply to the flair cost, increase the maximum upgrade points by an additional (Shadow Level) x(Signature Move Rank) x5 (to a maximum of (Shadow Level) x(Signature Move Rank) x80 at 15 flair).

Each maneuver uses its own individual upgrades. Some maneuver upgrades have requirements; you can only apply those upgrades to maneuvers that meet the requirements.

Performing Your Signature Move

You can pay for your signature move at any time that you could perform any of the maneuvers within it. Unless otherwise stated, **maneuvers within your signature move can only be performed as an action**.

When you perform the signature move, you perform each of its maneuvers in the listed order. You can skip maneuvers as you reach them; for example, if your signature move has a dash followed by an attack you can skip the dash and go right to the attack. You must skip any maneuvers you can't perform at the time you reach them.

Whenever a maneuver in your signature move causes side effects (such as an attack causing flourish effects), you perform all of those side effects before continuing to the next maneuver in your signature move.

Example Signature Move

Izzy has a signature move rank of 1 and a shadow level of 5.

Maximum maneuver points: 30

⚡ Raising the flair cost increases maximum maneuver points by 10

5x1x20=100 maximum signature move upgrade points

⚡ Raising the flair cost increases maximum signature move points by 5x1x5=25

Signature move cost: 4 flair

30+10 = 40 maximum maneuver points

100+25 = 125 maximum upgrade points

The Move	Description	Point Tracking / Notes
Attack (Cost: 1 effort) • Type: Projectile • Range: 4 • Stat: Creativity (2) • Power: 2 • Output: 0/1/2 • Break Point: 5 **Move Character:** Within (your speed) (1) range, move a character up to (their speed) Alternate Start Point: Measure the range starting from a character you affected with this move so far (move the character that you hit) **Attack (Cost: 1 effort)** • Type: Direct • Range: 1 • Stat: Strength (4) • Power: 4 • Output: 1/2/4 • Break Point: 10	**Name: Slam Dunk** **Attack**: The ground cracks open, and splinters of stone erupt from the newly-formed chasm underneath the target. **Move Character:** The splinters float in the air around the target, then shove them in a direction (typically toward Izzy). **Attack:** The splinters form a ball and fly to Izzy, who jumps into the air and slams the ball downward for another attack.	**Upgrade Point Total: 25** **Keystones: 1** Alternate Start Point (on Move Character) **[0] Attack** • Maximum upgrade points: 35 (2x10 + 15) • (60) +2 Power • 60 points in upgrades, -35 maximum tactic points = +25 signature move upgrade points (15+20 maneuver points) **Move Character** • (+20) Alternate Start Point **[0] Attack** • Maximum upgrade points: 55 (4x10 + 15) • (35) +1/1/2 outputs • (120) +4 Power • 155 points in upgrades, -55 maximum tactic points = 100 signature move upgrade points

Signature Move Maneuvers

Sidestep

Points: 20

Sidestep up to (your speed).

▶ Teleport

Points: 10

You can teleport that distance instead of sidestepping.

They Can't Hide

Points: 20

You can ignore obstructions when choosing targets for this maneuver.

This upgrade can't be applied to Attack or to Defy/Stance.

The point value of this upgrade counts toward your maximum maneuver points instead of your maximum upgrade points.

Move Character

Points: 15

Target a character that's within (your direct range) of you: move them up to (their speed).

▶ Teleport

Points: 10

You can teleport the character that distance instead of moving them normally.

Defy/Stance

Points: 0

When you add this maneuver, create a tactic for it following the rules for creating a tactic (including the maximum number of upgrade points).

You can apply tactic upgrades, including shadow arts upgrades, to this maneuver even if your shadow arts rank is 0. The total point value of tactic upgrades applied to this maneuver count toward your maximum signature move upgrade points, but are reduced by its maximum number of tactic upgrade points, to a minimum of 0. In addition, this tactic's maximum upgrade points are increased by 15 if the signature move has a name, instead of if this tactic has a name. This tactic's break point and maximum power are both increased by half.

When you reach this maneuver in your signature move, you can spend 1 effort to defy or stance with the tactic you created.

You can perform this maneuver whenever you could defy, but only if you choose to defy with this maneuver.

Swap Location

Points: 20

You and any character within (your direct range) of you swap locations. If you or that character is the target of an attack and the other isn't, the attack's target is changed to the other character.

If this maneuver has multiple targets, you can choose which character ends up in each location.

Attack

Points: 0

When you add this maneuver, create a tactic for it following the rules for creating a tactic (including the maximum number of upgrade points).

You can apply tactic upgrades, including shadow arts upgrades, to this maneuver even if your shadow arts rank is 0. The total point value of tactic upgrades applied to this maneuver count toward your maximum signature move upgrade points, but are reduced by its maximum number of tactic upgrade points, to a minimum of 0. In addition, this tactic's maximum upgrade points are increased by 15 if the signature move has a name, instead of if this tactic has a name. This tactic's break point and maximum power are both increased by half.

When you reach this maneuver in your signature move, you can spend 1 effort to attack with this tactic.

▶ Extra Hits (Additional Purchases increase * numbers)

Points: 25

This attack deals an additional 3(*+3) morale damage.

Reduce this additional damage to 2(*+2) if a single character defied the attack, and reduce it to 1(*+1) if multiple characters defied it.

Target Character

Points: 5

You target a character within (your direct range): for any signature move upgrades that apply to characters that have been affected by the signature move, this counts as affecting that character.

(This maneuver does nothing by itself; it is a blank maneuver to add upgrades to).

This maneuver has no restrictions on when it can be performed.

Create Obstruction

Points: 10

Choose a square within (your direct range) that doesn't have a character or obstruction in it; you create an obstruction in that square. At the start of each of your turns, the obstruction disappears unless you spend 1 flair or you spend health equal to half your level. Characters can target these obstructions with attacks as if the obstructions were characters; if damage would be dealt to one of these obstructions, it disappears unless you pay to maintain it again; if the damage is from an attack, it instead disappears unless you pay once per red card in the attack show. If an effect would deal health damage and morale damage to an obstruction at the same time, it still only requires a single payment to maintain the obstruction.

If you have multiple obstructions created with Create Obstruction, due to upgrades or using it multiple times, you only need to pay once each turn to maintain all of them and you only need to pay once per damaging maneuver to maintain all of them (even if a maneuver deals damage to multiple obstructions at once). However, if you don't pay, all of them disappear.

▶ Obstructions Up (Additional purchases increase the * numbers)

Points: 10

You can create 1(*+1) additional obstruction.

This upgrade counts toward your maximum maneuver points, not toward your maximum upgrade points.

▶ Wall (Additional purchases increase the * numbers)

Points: 5

You can create 1(*+1) additional obstruction, as long as the first obstruction you create and all obstructions created with this upgrade are connected.

This upgrade counts toward your maximum maneuver points, not toward your maximum upgrade points.

▶ Resistant (Additional purchases increase the * numbers)

Points: 10

If an attack would deal 1(*+1) or less damage to your obstruction, you can maintain your obstructions by paying only once instead of once per red card in the attack show. If an attack would deal different amounts of damage to your obstructions, count only the highest-damage attack line instead of combining the damage.

Dash

Points: 20

Dash to a square that's within (your speed) of another character.

Other Thing With a Cost

Points: 5

When you add this maneuver, you can choose any keystone aura upgrade or keystone shadow arts upgrade you have that allows you to pay a cost to get an effect. When you reach this point in the signature move, you can pay the cost to get the effect. If the upgrade allows you to use the maneuver with a timing other than "as an action", this maneuver uses that same timing.

If the upgrade is a flourish effect, this maneuver must either be directly after the attack or defy that you would flourish during, or it must be directly after another flourish effect maneuver. To perform any flourish effect maneuvers you must have flourished with the attack or defy, and the flourish effect maneuvers must be performed (or skipped) in their listed order, but you can perform any of your other non-signature move flourish effects before and/or after your signature move flourish effects (you can do some before and some after, but you can't do any in the middle of your signature move flourish effects).

If the upgrade you chose links to other upgrades, you can apply those upgrades to this maneuver. The point values of those upgrades count toward your maximum signature move upgrade points.

Delay

Points: 15

When you reach this point in your signature move, you can pause it (you don't perform the next maneuver until you resume the signature move): you can resume your signature move at any time, but you must still skip any maneuvers you can't perform at the time that you resume. The signature move ends automatically if you don't resume it before the end of your turn.

If this maneuver is a reaction to a situation, you can perform an additional reaction to that situation; for example, if the delay is a reaction to an attack, you can still defy that attack.

When you add this maneuver to your signature move, apply the Attack Reaction upgrade to this maneuver; that upgrade doesn't increase the total point value of this signature move.

▶ Dramatic Tension

Points: 5

Whenever your delayed signature move would end at the end of your turn, you can spend 1 flair to continue the delay until the end of your next turn.

Dealer's Choice

Points: 10*

When you add this maneuver, attach at least two other signature move maneuvers to this one. This maneuver is worth 10 maneuver points per attached maneuver, plus the maneuver points of only the maneuver worth the most points (the other attached maneuvers don't count toward your maximum maneuver points).

When you reach this maneuver in your signature move, you choose one of its attached maneuvers and you perform that one.

This maneuver has no restrictions on when it can be performed, but you can only choose an attached maneuver that you are able to perform.

When determining how many signature move upgrade points are applied to this maneuver, you count only the total signature move upgrade points of whichever maneuver applied to this one has the highest number of signature move upgrade points. None of the other attached maneuvers count their upgrade points toward your maximum.

Signature Move Maneuver Upgrades: Keystone

Alternate Starting Point

Points: 20

The maneuver can measure distances starting from the location of a character you have affected in the signature move, instead of starting from your location. This upgrade can't affect measurement for sidestep movement.

An attack only counts as affecting a character if it dealt damage to them or flourished against them. Defying always counts as affecting the attacker.

The point value of this upgrade counts toward your maximum maneuver points instead of your maximum upgrade points. Increase the point value of this upgrade by 10 if you have low speed, and decrease it by 10 if you have high speed.

Halt

Points: 10

As you finish this maneuver, choose any number of characters that have been affected by this maneuver and that have started a movement maneuver but not finished it: each of those characters lose their available movement.

The point value of this upgrade counts toward your maximum maneuver points instead of your maximum upgrade points.

Attack Reaction

Points: 10

You can perform this maneuver as a reaction to an enemy starting an attack, or as a reaction to yourself finishing a maneuver (you still can't perform this maneuver until the previous maneuver in your signature move is completely finished).

The point value of this upgrade counts toward your maximum maneuver points instead of your maximum upgrade points.

▶ Movement Reaction

Points: 10

You can use this maneuver as a reaction to any of the following:

- A character starting a maneuver to move, after they chose targets but before they have moved
- A character starting a maneuver to move another character, after they chose targets but before the target has moved
- A character being moved (after at least 1 square of movement has happened)

The point value of this upgrade counts toward your maximum maneuver points instead of your maximum upgrade points.

➥ Maneuver Reaction

Points: 10

You can use this maneuver as a reaction to any character finishing any maneuver.

The point value of this upgrade counts toward your maximum maneuver points instead of your maximum upgrade points.

Pre-Tactic

Points: 10

You can perform this maneuver immediately before you start an attack or defy.

The point value of this upgrade counts toward your maximum maneuver points instead of your maximum upgrade points.

▶ Pre-Anything

Points: 10

You can perform this maneuver immediately before any other maneuver.

The point value of this upgrade counts toward your maximum maneuver points instead of your maximum upgrade points.

Signature Move Maneuver Upgrades: Non–Keystone

Distance Up: Direct to Exposure

Points: 0

If a range or distance in this maneuver uses (your direct range), increase it to (your exposure range).

This maneuver costs an additional 1 flair to perform.

Distance Up: Exposure to Projectile

Points: 0

If a range or distance in this maneuver uses (your exposure range), increase it to (your projectile range).

This maneuver costs an additional 1 flair to perform.

Targets Up ∞

Points: 0

This maneuver can have 1 (*+1) additional target.

This maneuver costs an additional 1 flair to perform, even if you don't choose additional targets. This can only increase the flair cost by up to 2.

Transposed

Points: 10

Instead of measuring this maneuver's range starting from your location, you can target a square within (your direct range) and use that square as the starting point for this maneuver. This upgrade can't affect measurement for sidestep movement.

▶ Transposed: Exposure

Points: 0

Increase the range of Transposed to (your exposure range).

Increase the point values of the upgraded maneuver and its upgrades by half of their written value.

➡ Transposed: Projectile

Points: 0

Increase the range of Transposed to (your projectile range).

Increase the additional points of Transposed: Exposure from half to the full written values.

Granted

Points: 0

You can spend 1 flair to target a willing character and have them perform this maneuver instead of you.

Bide ∞

Points: 10

Requirement: This maneuver can deal damage.

> This maneuver deals additional morale damage equal to the total health damage you've taken since the signature move started, to a maximum of 1 (*+1) additional damage. This upgrade includes damage taken in between starting this maneuver and dealing damage with it, but not damage taken at the same time as your damage being dealt.
>
> If this maneuver deals damage to multiple characters at the same time, you can have the additional damage be dealt to one of them or you can have half of it be dealt to each of those characters.
>
> If this maneuver is an attack, Bide increases your output instead of dealing additional damage.

Inspiring ∞

Points: 20

> As you finish this maneuver, you can target a character other than yourself: the first time they perform an attack show or a defy show before the end of their next turn, that show's output is increased by 1/2/4 (*+1/2/4).

▶ Independent

Points: 10

> You can choose yourself for Inspiring.

Expansive: Target

Points: 0

Requirement: This maneuver affects a character.

> This maneuver also affects any number of characters within (your direct range) of a character or square that this maneuver affects or targets, or within that range of a character or square that an earlier maneuver in the signature move affects or targets (if this maneuver requires the characters to perform a show, each of those characters performs their own show; if it allows the characters to pay a cost to get an effect, each character chooses individually and the effect happens for the characters that did pay.
>
> Increase the point values of this maneuver's upgrades by half of their written value.

▶ Expansive: Target Exposure

Points: 0

> Increase the range of Expansive: Target to (your exposure range).
>
> Increase the additional points of Expansive: Target from half to the full written values.

Expansive: Target / Target Exposure (Cont.)

➡ Expansive: Target: Projectile

Points: 0

Increase the range of Expansive: Target to (your projectile range).

Increase the additional points of Expansive: Target by an additional half.

Expansive: Self

Points: 0

Requirement: This maneuver affects a character.

This maneuver also affects any number of characters within (your direct range) of you (if this maneuver requires the characters to perform a show, each of those characters performs their own show; if it allows the characters to pay a cost to get an effect, each character chooses individually and the effect happens for the characters that did pay).

Increase the point values of this maneuver's upgrades by half of their written value.

▶ Expansive: Self: Exposure

Points: 0

Increase the range of Expansive: Self to (your exposure range).

Increase the additional points of Expansive: Self from half to the full written values.

➡ Expansive: Self: Projectile

Points: 0

Increase the range of Expansive: Self to (your projectile range).

Increase the additional points of Expansive: Self by an additional half.

Riposte ∞

Points: 10

Requirement: This maneuver can deal damage.

This maneuver deals additional morale damage equal to the total damage you've prevented since the signature move started, to a maximum of 1 (*+1) additional damage. The amount of damage prevented by a defy is treated as that defy's output, regardless of any details about the attack.

If this maneuver deals damage to multiple characters at the same time, you can have the additional damage be dealt to one of them or you can have half of it be dealt to each of those characters.

If this maneuver is an attack, Riposte increases your output instead of dealing additional damage.

Shadow Arts

Having a shadow arts rank of 1 or higher allows you to spend tactic upgrade points on shadow arts upgrades. Each of your tactics have their maximum upgrade points increased by (Shadow Level) x(Shadow Arts Rank) x10 maximum upgrade points. Upgrades from a differently-typed section (such as applying an upgrade from the Projectile section to a Direct or Exposure tactic) have their point values doubled. Keystones from a differently-typed section count as 2 keystones.

Your keystone limit is tracked separately for each tactic; if you have shadow level 5, you can have two keystone upgrades per tactic.

Example Shadow Arts

Faligor is a level 5 character with a high speed class, with a shadow arts rank of 2 and a shadow level of 5.

Additional tactic maximum upgrade points from shadow arts = 5x2x10=100

Their stats are a total of 10: Body 4, Agility 0, Strength 0, Presence 0, Logic 3, Creativity 3

The Tactics	Description	Point Tracking / Notes
Name: Demon Hook • Type: Projectile (Range 9) • Stat: Creativity • Max Power: 3 • Power: 3 • Outputs: 1/3/5 • Break Point: 5 **Swing** (Move dash can be 9 range instead of 5; after dashing, you can spend 1 flair to dash to another square within range of a character/obstruction that is also within range. Followup dash can be a curved line) **Called Shot** (Optional +1 effort to attack; +1 red card and +3 finale. If reaching 4+ red cards, increase output by written power (3))	Faligor conjures a demonic claw and launches it at a target; with extra aim, it strikes more accurately. Faligor can launch the claw, attached to him by a chain, at an object or character to grapple it and swing to a new location.	**Upgrade Point Total: 145** **Keystones: 1** Swing Called Shot Maximum Points = 100+3x10+15 = 145 **[0] Swing** **[0] Called Shot** **[3x30 = 90] +3 Power** **[3x10 = 30] +3 High Output** **[2x10 = 20] +2 Medium Output** **[5] +1 Low Output**

Name: Demon Pact
- Type: Exposure (Range 6)
- Stat: Logic
- Max Power: 3
- Power: 0
- Outputs: 1/2/15
- Break Point: 8

Soul Wave

(Can spend 2 flair on attack to target all squares within range except your own. Otherwise, the attack has half output and half damage/healing/move-ment from flourish effects)

Faligor chants an unknown language, and a dark force saps the life from all who stand near. Most often the damage is minimal, but on occasion the demons unleash their full force on the surroundings.

The curse of the demon pact grants Faligor's next attack additional power against a target.

Upgrade Point Total: 145

Keystones: 1

Soul Wave

Maximum Points = 100+3x10+15 = 145

[0] Soul Wave

[13x10 = 130] +13 High Output

[10] +1 Medium Output

[5] +1 Low Output

Name: Pact Athame
- Type: Direct (Range 3)
- Stat: Body
- Max Power: 4
- Power: 4
- Outputs: 0/1/2
- Break Point: 10

Risky Strike x7

When you reveal exactly 2 cards, get +14 output.

When you reveal no red cards, lose 42 health.

Stab with a blade that channels the power of the demon pact; often granting supernatural healing to Faligor or an ally, and occasionally drawing on the power of the pact for incred-ible damage, but always with a small chance for the demons to turn and siphon life as a punishment for Faligor's hubris.

Upgrade Point Total: 120

Keystones: 3

Debilitate

Risky Strike

Maximum Points = 100+4x10+15 = 155

[0] Debilitate

[7x5=35] Risky Strike

[4x30 = 120] Power +4

Shadow Arts Upgrades: Any

Combining

Points: 0

Immediately before you start a maneuver using a tactic other than this one, you can spend 3 flair to have that tactic gain all upgrades from this tactic (ignoring the limit of 3 keystone upgrades) for the maneuver.

The tactic can have the same upgrade more than once, and any linked upgrades stay linked to the specific instance of the upgrade they were applied to (for example if a tactic has Explosive with Range Up: 3, and it's combined with a tactic that has Explosive with Range Up: 5, then the resulting tactic has Explosive twice; one with slightly more range than the other. When you flourish with the tactic, both trigger and you can use both, neither, or only one).

Tip: It can be helpful to write down what each potential combination's total outputs and upgrades would look like, for easy reference in battle.

You can only apply this upgrade to any of your three written tactics, and not any other tactics you might create.

▶ Double Style ∞

Points: 10

When you use Combining to empower a tactic that uses a different stat, you can have that tactic gain the stat effect of this tactic for the maneuver in addition to its own stat effect. The power of this gained style bonus is 1 (*+1), and it isn't affected by other changes to tactic power aside from being doubled when you flourish.

▶ Clutch ∞

Points: 10

While you have 15 (*+5) health or less, Combining costs 2 flair instead of 3.

While you have 6 (*+2) health or less, Combining costs 1 flair instead of 2.

Risky Strike ∞

Points: 5

When you reveal exactly 2 red cards during a show to use this tactic, you can increase your output by 2 (*+2).

When you reveal no red cards during a show to use this tactic, you lose 6 (*+6) health.

Swing

Points: 0

When you perform the dash option of the Move action, you can use this tactic's range for the dash range instead of your speed.

Immediately after you finish a dash using Swing, you can spend 1 flair and choose a character or obstruction within this tactic's range; if you do, you can dash to any other square within this tactic's range of that character or obstruction. This dash can have any path through connected squares instead of being a straight line, but it can only pass through squares that are all within this tactic's range of that obstruction or character.

You can only apply this upgrade to any of your three written tactics, and not any other tactics you might create.

▶ Trip ∞

Points: 10

When you use Swing to dash to another square within this tactic's range of a character and the path you take includes entering every square within 1 range of that character, the next attack targeting that character has its output increased by 1 (*+1). This effect only lasts until that character's turn.

You can only apply Trip to one character per dash, and you can't use Trip on a character that already has Trip applied and hasn't been attacked yet.

▶ Blaze a Trail ∞

Points: 25

Immediately before you use Swing to dash based on this tactic's range, you can also spend 1 effort. If you do, once you finish dashing (including any dashes that you continue performing with Swing immediately after the first dash), you use this tactic to attack any number of characters that you could have targeted with this tactic at any points throughout the dashes. This attack ignores obstructions and your maximum range to target those characters. This attack's damage against each target is halved; the same applies to any measurement of health and movement distance in any of your flourish effects that trigger from the attack. This attack costs an additional 1 flair per target beyond the second.

When you flourish with this attack, you can deal 1 (*+1) damage to your target; this damage does not get halved by Blaze a Trail.

Companion

Points: 0

When you apply this upgrade, you gain a companion with the following traits:

This companion starts combat on your square and moves with you while it's on your square.

Immediately before you perform a maneuver other than moving this companion, you can spend 1 flair to move this companion up to 2 squares; it follows movement rules as if it were a character, but it otherwise doesn't count as a character or as an obstruction. You can teleport it to your square as an action.

When you use this tactic, it uses this companion's location instead of your own.

You can only apply this upgrade to any of your three written tactics, and not any other tactics you might create.

▶ Frontline

Points: 0

While this companion isn't on your square, it counts as an obstruction for enemies. Characters that it's obstructing can attack the companion as though it were a character, and attack lines targeting it can be defied as normal. If the companion would take damage from an attack, you can maintain it by paying 1 flair per red card in the attacker's show; if you don't, the companion teleports to you and can't leave your square nor can you use any of its tactics until after your next turn ends (the damage doesn't do anything other than trigger this effect).

Moving this companion costs an additional 1 flair.

➡ Big Companion

Points: 0

As an action, you can expand this companion to occupy 2x2 squares instead of a single square. One of those squares must be the square that the companion was on immediately before you expanded it, and it can't expand unless each square it will occupy is unobstructed.

While the companion is expanded, it doesn't move with you even if it's on your square. If it has Riding, that upgrade applies to all characters that are on a square this companion is on.

You can reduce the companion back to being 1x1 size as an action. You can't expand and reduce the companion on the same turn.

The cost to maintain this companion's location with Frontline is increased by 1 flair (regardless of the number of red cards).

Companion / Frontline / Big Companion (Cont.)

► Massive Companion

Points: 0

When you expand the companion, you can expand it to 3x3 instead of 2x2.

When you reduce it, you can reduce it to 2x2 instead of 1x1.

Moving this companion costs an additional 1 flair.

► Amorphous

Points: 0

Obstructed squares don't prevent the companion from expanding. Instead, when the companion would be expanded, it expands only into the squares it could occupy (for example, a companion in a 1x2 room could still be expanded to fill that 1x2 room). Whenever a square that it would have occupied stops being obstructed, this companion expands into that square.

This companion can't be moved while its shape is modified by Amorphous, and it can't expand on the same turn it was moved.

► Polite

Points: 10

While the companion occupies more than one square, you and allies can finish movement on squares that the companion occupies. If a character does finish movement on a square the companion occupies, the companion stops occupying that square until the character leaves that square

Moving this companion costs an additional 1 flair.

➡ Riding

Points: 0

While this companion is on your square, you move with the companion whenever it is moved.

When you use this tactic to attack or defy, you can't use it again until your next turn or until you move this companion (you can move the companion immediately before an attack or defy to be able to use it for that maneuver).

Companion (Cont.)

▶ Best Friends

Points: 0

You can treat this companion as a character when determining squares you can dash to.

As an action, you can spend 1 flair to dash to a square that's within 1 range of this companion.

Dashing without using Best Friends costs an additional 1 flair.

➥ No Matter What

Points: 0

You can teleport instead of dash when you use Best Friends.

You can't dash without using Best Friends.

Explosive

Points: 0

When you flourish with this tactic, you can spend 3 flair to create a blast: it's an attack that targets each square within 1 range of your target (including the square that your target is on), using the same original show as your maneuver with output tiers equal to half this tactic's written outputs. The blast doesn't trigger any of your flourish effects.

This attack still counts toward exertion (if you perform two attacks in a turn, all subsequent attacks on the same turn deal half damage and have their finale reduced by 2).

You can apply tactic upgrades and shadow arts upgrades to Explosive as if it were an exposure tactic, even if your shadow arts rank is 0. The total point value of upgrades applied to it count toward this tactic's maximum points.

▶ Range Up: 3

Points: 0

Increase the range of Explosive to 3 squares.

Increase the flair cost of Explosive by 1.

➥ Range Up: 5

Points: 0

Increase the range of Explosive to 5 squares.

Increase the flair cost of Explosive by 1.

Explosive (Cont.)

▶ Synergy

Points: 0

When you pay for Explosive, you can spend an additional 2 flair: if you do, the attack can trigger the same flourish effects that the original attack triggered except for Explosive.

When you perform a show to use this tactic, reduce its finale by 2.

Charge

Points: 50

Immediately before you use this tactic, it gains 2 charges; if it already has 2 or more charges, it only gains half as many charges. It loses all charges when the battle ends or a new one starts.

When you flourish with this tactic, you can spend all of this tactic's charges to deal that much morale damage to the character.

▶ Charges Up ∞

Points: 30

Increase the number of charges it gains by 1 (*+1).

▶ Limit Up ∞

Points: 5

Increase the limit on full charge gain by 1 (*+1).

▶ Force Focus

Points: 0

When you would use this tactic for an attack or defy, you can pay any number of charges it has (including the charges it gains immediately before using it) to increase its power for that maneuver by twice the number of charges spent.

Any other increases to this tactic's power are halved, including from Power +1.

▶ Integrated

Points: 0

Charges that this tactic would gain are charges you gain instead (this tactic's limit still applies to whether you gain the full amount or half the amount; if you have multiple tactics with Integrated, all of the charges they give are added to the same total but each tactic only gives half charges while your total is at or above that tactic's limit).

You can spend your charges for any of your tactics that have Charge, as if they were that tactic's charges.

Whenever you pay to attack or defy with this tactic, if you have fewer charges than this tactic's written medium output (before you gain the charges), you lose health equal to the difference.

Lunge

Points: 0

Immediately before you perform an attack with this tactic on your turn, if you haven't moved this turn, you can sidestep up to (your speed). If you do, you can't move for the rest of the turn (you can still be moved by others).

Immediately before you attack or defy with this tactic on another character's turn, you can spend 3 flair to sidestep up to (your speed).

▶ Teleportation

Points: 0

You can teleport that distance instead of sidestepping.

When you use this tactic, you can't use it again until your next turn.

Shadow Arts Upgrades: Exposure

Wide Area

Points: 0

When you choose one or more characters as targets for an attack with this tactic, you can have the attack also target each square within (your direct range) of those characters. If any of those characters move before the attack finishes, you target the new squares within that range of them instead of the previous squares.

When you choose one or more squares as targets for an attack with this tactic except for with Wide Area, you can have the attack also target each square within (your direct range) of those squares.

▶ Scorched Earth ∞

Points: 40

As you finish a Wide Area attack, each square you targeted that doesn't have characters on it becomes scorched until your next turn starts: whenever a character enters a square you've scorched, that square deals 1 (*+1) damage to them.

If a character is dashing, they only take damage from the first scorched square they enter during that movement.

If a square is scorched, you can't apply scorch to it until it stops being scorched.

▶ Smokescreen ∞

Points: 25

As you finish a Wide Area attack, each square you targeted that doesn't have characters on it becomes obscured until your next turn starts: obscured squares count as obstructions for all targeting lines except for movement targeting lines. Attack and defy targeting lines can pass through obscured squares only if their written low output is 2 (*+1) or greater.

Soul Wave

Points: 0

When you choose targets for an attack with this tactic, you can spend 2 flair to target each square within range, other than your own square, instead of targeting characters. If you don't, the attack has half output; the same applies to any measurement of damage, health, or movement distance in any of your flourish effects that trigger from your maneuver.

▶ Beam

Points: 0

When you use Soul Wave, you target connected squares in a straight line instead of targeting each square in range. The first square you target this way must be adjacent to the attack's starting point, and it must target a number of connected squares equal to the tactic's range.

➥ Arc

Points: 0

When you use Beam, the connected squares don't have to be in a straight line.

When you attack with this tactic without using Beam, you lose 1 flair to a minimum of 0.

➥ Remote

Points: 0

When you use Beam, the first square you target does not have to be adjacent to the attack's starting point.

This tactic's range is halved for attacks that aren't using Beam.

▶ Soul Detonate ∞

Points: 15

When you choose to use Soul Wave, you can also spend 1 (*+1) health: if you do, increase your attack's output by 2 (*+2).

▶ Scatter ∞

Points: 10

When you flourish with an attack using Soul Wave, if your target has 15 (*+5) health or less, you can move them up to (their speed) squares away from the attack line's starting point.

Omnipresence

Points: 0

You can ignore obstructions with maneuvers using this tactic. If a targeting line passes through an obstruction, reduce the line's output to half; the same applies to any measurement of damage, health, or movement distance in any of your flourish effects triggered by that line.

▶ **Refract** ∞

Points: 30

When you finish a maneuver using this tactic, you can deal 1 (*+1) damage to each character within (your direct range) of obstructed squares that your targeting lines passed through.

▶ **Echoes of the Future** ∞

Points: 10

When you flourish with this tactic and one or more of your targeting lines passes through an obstruction, you can teleport to any unobstructed square the line passes through that's closer to you than the obstruction is. If you have 15 (*+5) or less health, you can teleport to any unobstructed square the line passes through.

Reverberation

Points: 0

When you pay to attack with this tactic, if you're targeting a character that's within (your direct range) of you or another character, you can spend 2 flair to increase your finale by 2.

▶ **Destabilize** ∞

Points: 15

When you flourish with an attack and the finale was increased by Reverberation, you can move each non-targeted character within (your direct range) of the target up to (half that character's speed) squares away from that target.

If you move a character that has 15 (*+5) or less health, you can move them up to their full speed instead of half.

This effect can move you if you're within (your direct range) of the character and you didn't target yourself.

▶ **Subterfuge** ∞

Points: 50

When you flourish with an attack and the finale was increased by Reverberation, you can can choose a non-targeted character within (your direct range) of your target: the next attack line targeting that character has its output increased by 1 (*+1).

If that character has 15 (*+5) or less health, that attack's finale is increased by 4.

This effect lasts until your next turn.

Fortress

Points: 0

When you pay to defy with this tactic, if you're defying for another character, you can spend 2 flair to increase your finale by 2.

▶ **Defend the Front Line** ∞

Points: 20

When you use Fortress, if you're further from the attacker than each of the attack's targets are, you can increase your output by 1 (*+1).

▶ **Defend the Back Line** ∞

Points: 20

When you use Fortress, if you're closer to the attacker than each of the attack's targets are, you can increase your output by 1 (*+1).

Fortress

Points: 0

When you pay to defy with this tactic, if you're defying for another character, you can spend 2 flair to increase your finale by 2.

Safe Squares

Points: 0

When you choose targets for an attack with this tactic, you can pay any amount of flair to protect that many targeted squares: characters on protected squares aren't targeted by the attack.

Field of Protection

Points: 0

When you choose targets for a defy with this tactic, you can spend 2 flair for the defy to have any number of targets.

Absolute Territory ∞

Points: 20

When you flourish with this tactic, if you're missing 15 (*+5) or less health, you can move your target in a straight line away from you, 1 square at a time, until their location is outside of this tactic's range.

Conduits ∞

Points: 40

As you finish a show to attack with this tactic, you can increase your output by 1 (*+1) for each non-targeted enemy that's within this tactic's range, to a maximum of 3 (*+3).

Psychic Curse ∞

Points: 20

When you flourish with an attack or defy using a tactic that doesn't have Psychic Curse, you can place a curse on your target until the end of your next turn. If you've already placed a curse on them, any existing curses you've placed on them are extended to remain on your target until the end of your next turn. This effect can only trigger once per attack or defy, even if you have multple tactics with Psychic Curse.

When you finish a show to attack or defy using a tactic that doesn't have Psychic Curse, reduce your finale by the total number of curses on your targets that you've placed. If you haven't dealt damage with Psychic Curse this turn, you can pay 2 flair to ignore this effect (you choose whether or not to pay as you finish the show).

Whenever you flourish with an attack or defy using this tactic, if you haven't placed a curse on your target since your last turn, you can deal 1 (*+1) morale damage to that target per curse on them that you've placed. If you do, remove one of your curses from that target.

Shadow Arts Upgrades: Direct

Debilitate

Points: 0

When you flourish with this tactic, you can spend 1 effort to reduce your target's effort by 1 to a minimum of 0.

If your target has more health than you do, Debilitate costs an additional 3 flair to use.

▶ **Essence Drain** ∞

Points: 30

When you flourish with this tactic and your target had effort when you chose them as a target, you can deal 2 (*+2) morale damage to that target and gain 1 (*+1) health.

▶ **Dominance Over the Weak** ∞

Points: 30

If you have no effort when you flourish and your target has 15 (*+5) or less health, you can use Debilitate on that target without spending effort.

Drag Down

Points: 0

When you flourish with this tactic, you can spend flair equal to the number of characters on your side. If you do, reduce the target's flair by the number of characters on your target's side, to a minimum of 0.

▶ Beat Them With Experience ∞

Points: 20

When you use reduce a character's flair with Drag Down, you can deal 1 (*+1) damage to that character. If you reduced their flair to 0, you can deal 2 (*+2) damage instead.

▶ Gang Up ∞

Points: 20

When you flourish with this tactic but you don't use Drag Down on your target, you can deal 1 (*+1) damage to them if at least one ally other than yourself is within (that ally's direct range) of that target.

Expert Strike

Points: 0

When you attack with this tactic and a non-targeted character defies it, you can spend 2 flair to increase your finale by 2 (you pay before the show).

▶ Enforced Duel ∞

Points: 15

When you flourish with an attack using this tactic, your flourish effects also trigger against each non-targeted character that defied the attack and that has 15 (*+5) health or less. The effects trigger as if you had hit them with the attack line that they defied.

▶ Expert Gambit ∞

Points: 20

As you choose targets for an attack with this tactic, you can choose a non-targeted character that's allied with any of your targets and is able to defy your attack: if that character doesn't defy the attack, increase your output by 1 (*+1).

Underdog ∞

Points: 35

> When you perform a show to attack or defy with this tactic, you can increase your output by 1/2/3 (*+1/2/3) against targets with more morale than you.

Overbearing Defense

Points: 0

> When you pay to defy with this tactic, if the attacker is within this tactic's range, you can spend 2 flair to increase your finale by 2.

▶ Unending Offense ∞

Points: 30

> When you flourish with a defy using this tactic and your health is 15 (*+5) or less, you can deal morale damage equal to your output to any number of characters within this tactic's range.

▶ Dogged ∞

Points: 5

> When you flourish with a defy using this tactic and your target is outside of this tactic's range, you can sidestep up to (your speed) toward that target if the total damage you took from the attack (health and morale combined) was 3 (*+1) or less.

Aggressive Defense

Points: 0

> When you flourish on a defy with this tactic, if your output is greater than the attack line's output, you can deal damage to your target equal to the difference.

▶ Spacemaker ∞

Points: 25

> When you deal 3 (*+1) or more damage with Aggressive Defense, you can also move your target up to (their speed) in a straight line away from you.

▶ Glass Thorns ∞

Points: 10

> When you defy with this tactic, increase your output by your original output. If your original finale is 3 or less, you lose health equal to your original output minus 1 (*+1).

Cleave

Points: 0

When you choose targets for an attack or defy using this tactic, you can target connected squares instead of characters or attack lines. The total number of squares you can target is 3 plus half this tactic's range.

Attacks with this tactic have half output; the same applies to any measurement of damage, health, or movement distance in any of your flourish effects that trigger from your maneuver. Attacks with this tactic also cost an additional 1 flair per character targeted beyond the second (if you're targeting squares, count the number of characters that become targeted from being on targeted squares).

Burst ∞

Points: 90

Immediately after you finish a dash, you can spend 1 effort to attack with this tactic: this attack can target any number of characters within its range, but only characters that you moved toward (you don't need an effect that lets you dash toward a character; if you dashed and ended up closer to a character, you can target them). Increase this tactic's output by 1/2/3 (*+1/2/3); if the distance you dashed is greater than (your speed), double this increase.

Immediately after you teleport, you can spend 1 effort to attack with this tactic: this attack can target any number of characters within its range. Increase this tactic's output by 2/4/6 (*+2/4/6); if the distance you teleported is greater than (your speed), double this increase.

▶ Sonic Boom

Points: 0

Once per dash, you can use Burst at any point during the dash instead of immediately after.

When you use Burst immediately after a teleport, you can draw a line from your previous square to your current square: your starting point for the attack can be any square that the line touches.

Burst no longer doubles the output from dashing or teleporting longer distances.

▶ Velocity ∞

Points: 15

When you use Burst, you can increase this tactic's power for the attack by 1 (*+1); if you double the bonus output, double this power increase as well. This power increase doesn't get doubled when you flourish.

Challenger

Points: 0

When you flourish with an attack using this tactic, if your target could have defied but chose not to, you can spend 3 flair. If you do, your target can't defy the next attack that an ally other than yourself performs this round.

Rising Action ∞

Points: 20

When you finish a show for an attack using this tactic, you can set aside the last card (it still gets used for the show results). On your next attack show this turn, if your original finale is greater than the highest card you've set aside with this upgrade, increase your output by 2 (*+2) per card you have set aside with this upgrade.

When you shuffle your deck at the end of your turn, you also shuffle in the cards you've set aside with this ability.

Strong Start

Points: 0

When you perform a show to attack with this tactic, if this is the first attack of your turn, you can spend 2 flair to increase your output by the value of this tactic's written low output.

SHADOW ARTS UPGRADES: PROJECTILE

Tyrant of the Hill ∞

Points: 35

At the end of your turn, choose any square that's more than (your speed) range from yourself and from any enemies: that square becomes your objective square until you choose a new one at the end of your next turn.

When you finish a show to attack with this tactic while you're within (half your speed) range of your objective square, you can increase the output of the attack by 1/2/3 (*+1/2/3).

Spray

Points: 0

When you choose targets for an attack using this tactic, you can target any number of additional characters. The first additional character can be targeted for no additional cost; other additional characters cost 1 flair each to be chosen as a target.

When you finish a show to attack with this tactic and your original finale is less than 8, reduce your show's number of red cards by 1 and your finale by 3.

Ultimate Teamwork Attack

Points: 0

When you pay for this attack, an ally that you could target can pay 1 effort: If they do, they choose one of their tactics and apply its upgrades to your tactic (ignoring the limit of 3 keystone upgrades) for the attack. Your starting point for the attack is that character's location instead of your own.

You can use Ultimate Teamwork Attack any number of times per attack, but each use is performed one a time; you pass your attack to an ally and then from that ally to another, and so on until you send the attack from the final ally to the attack targets (using the starting point of the last ally). The same character can apply their upgrades to the attack more than once (and can choose a different tactic each time they do), but they can't pass the attack to themselves.

Companions (granted by the Companion upgrade) can be targeted to empower your attack as if they were characters. The owner of the companion pays to empower the attack.

▶ Participation Trophy ∞

Points: 20

Each character that contributes to your Ultimate Teamwork Attack gains 1 (*+1) health.

▶ Ultimate Flair ∞

Points: 20

Once per battle, you can spend an additional 2 effort to use Ultimate Teamwork Attack: if you do, the first two uses of Ultimate Teamwork Attack don't require the ally to pay any effort. Increase this attack's output by 2 (*+2); increase it by 4 (*+4) instead if every ally other than yourself empowers it.

Barrage ∞

Points: 30

When you pay to use this tactic for an attack or defy, you can also spend 1 flair: if you do, your original output is 2 (*+1) per red card you revealed, instead of any of its written output tiers.

Railroading

Points: 35

When you finish an attack or defy with this tactic and any of your targeting lines pass through the location of an ally, you can allow that ally to teleport to any other square that the line passes through. This effect triggers once per character it can apply to.

Artillery

Points: 0

When you pay to attack with this tactic, if you're targeting a character whose distance from you matches this tactic's range, you can spend 2 flair to increase your finale by 2.

Companions (granted by the Companion upgrade) can be targeted to empower your attack as if they were characters. The owner of the companion pays to empower the attack.

▶ **Tracer** ∞

Points: 30

When you flourish with an attack using this tactic and your original output is 3 (*+1) or less, your next direct or exposure attack this turn can use this tactic's range instead of its own range. That attack's output is limited to a maximum of 6 (*+2), before applying reductions.

▶ **Pierce Through** ∞

Points: 20

When you flourish with this tactic and Artillery isn't increasing your finale, you can extend the targeting line through your target until it reaches a non-character obstruction or it reaches your maximum range. You deal 1 (*+1) morale damage to each character along the line (including your target).

Emphasis

Points: 0

Immediately after an ally (including yourself) finishes an attack, you can spend 1 effort and 1 flair to attack with this tactic. This attack must target at least one character that was targeted by the previous attack.

▶ **Combo** ∞

Points: 25

When you use Emphasis after your own attack, if this tactic is different from the one you had just used to attack, you can increase your output by 1/2/3 (*+1/2/3).

▶ **Shotcaller**

Points: 0

When you flourish on an Emphasis attack that's immediately after another character's attack, you can allow an ally other than yourself within your tactic's range to sidestep up (their speed).

Using this tactic for an attack or defy on your turn costs an additional 1 flair.

Emphasis (Cont.)

▶ Slap on the Wrist

Points: 0

> You can use Emphasis immediately after an ally (including yourself) finishes a defy. The attack must target the character that was defied against.
>
> When you choose targets for an attack with this tactic, if you target any characters that have 0 effort (including if you target their square), the attack costs an additional 1 flair.

Called Shot

Points: 0

> When you pay to attack with this tactic, you can spend an additional effort. If you do, you can add an additional red card to the attack show and increase that show's finale by 3. If the number of red cards is 4 or more, you can increase the attack's output by its written power.

▶ AttRoWtHWB ∞

Points: 10

> When you use Called Shot and this tactic's stat effect applies to the attack, you can increase the attack's output by 1 (*+1).

▶ Fake Out ∞

Points: 10

> When you choose targets for a Called Shot attack, take the bottom 2 cards from your deck; reveal one and discard it, but keep the other one secret until after all characters decide whether to defy the attack. Once the defies are decided, reveal the other card and perform the matching effect:
>
> Black - Commit. Increase your output by half of your original output, plus an additional 2 (*+2), against each character that could have defied but chose not to. Increase the outputs of each defy by half of their original output.
>
> Red - Fake Out. Reduce the outputs of each defy by half of their original output, and you gain 1 (*+1) health; if multiple characters are defying, you gain an additional 1 (*+1) health. Reduce your output by half of your original output against each characters that could have defied but chose not to, and you can't flourish against those characters.
>
> *Quick summary: Characters would want to defy if they think the card is black, or do nothing if they think the card is red.*

Denial Shot

Points: 0

When you pay to defy with this tactic and your stat effect would apply, you can choose to use Denial Shot: When you perform the show for the defy, reduce the finale of each attack line you're targeting by your own finale, to a minimum of 0, and then reduce your own finale to 0.

▶ Overdrain ∞

Points: 5

When you use Denial Shot and any of your defy lines reduce an attack line's finale to 0, you can increase your power for those defy lines by 1 (*+1).

▶ Theft ∞

Points: 10

When you use Denial Shot and any of your defy lines reduce an attack line's finale by 4 or more, you can have those defy lines each use the stat effect of the attack lines they're targeting (in addition to your own stat effect). The power for the effect is 1 (*+1), to a maximum of your power limit.

Overseer

Points: 0

When you pay to defy with this tactic, you can spend 2 flair to increase your finale by the number of other characters within this tactic's range of you, to a maximum increase of 2 (including enemies, but not including yourself).

▶ Point Defense ∞

Points: 40

When Overseer increases your finale, you can increase your output by 1 (*+1) against each attack line that has a starting point that's within the exposure range of an ally other than yourself.

Increase the output by 2 (*+2) instead against each attack line that has a starting point that's within the direct range of an ally other than yourself.

▶ Army of One ∞

Points: 10

While you have 5 (*+5) health or less, you can include yourself for Overseer and you can remove the "other than yourself" restrictions from Point Defense.

Part 6: Personality
Goals

Each character should have accomplishments that they want to work toward throughout the story. A character will typically make decisions that can make progress in achieving their goals, and would avoid actions that hinder that progress.

Characters will typically have multiple goals, with varying timeframes; at least one each of short term, medium term, and long term goals. Goals can also update throughout the story, especially when they're achieved or when they're discovered to be not worth trying to achieve.

Characters can have their own perspectives of how long a goal might take to achieve, or what each duration means, but common definitions are:

Short term: Immediate concerns and things the character is most actively working toward

Medium term: Can be completed within a few years; a major accomplishment the character is planning toward

Long term: A character's life goal

Example Goals:

Uncover the past of a mysterious item (short term)

Gain the top rank at the Vanguard Guild leaderboards (medium term)

Make 100 friends (long term)

It can be a good idea for the game master to also give player characters a medium term goal that the game master knows will motivate them to follow the story's initial plot hook. This makes it easier to ensure that the characters have reason to participate in the story, while still leaving room for each character's unique traits to shine.

MOTIVATIONS

While a character's choices tend to reflect their goals, not every situation can be cleanly examined for a single choice that's best for achieving a character's goals. In cases where the decision can't be made purely by considering goals, a character's motivations serve as an additional guide that highlight the more intricate aspects of their personality.

Example Motivations:

Do whatever makes you look cooler

Protect the weak

Empower the lower class

LESSONS

Throughout the character's life, they have likely experienced events that influence specific additional quirks around their decision-making or their behaviour in general. These quirks tend to be less influential than their goals or motivations, but provide an additional dimension to the character's personality through actions that hint at those events from their past.

Example Lessons:

Don't start a fight with someone that's bigger than you

Never accept the first offer

Write everything down

OPTIONAL: HISTORY

While the focus of the story will typically be on events that are currently happening and on upcoming events, having a backstory for your character can provide even further depth and ways to relate your character to the world and story around them. In particular, a character's history can give context to how their goals, motivations, and lessons were formed.

CHECKLIST

Character level

Shadow Ranks

4 among Aura/Signature Move/Shadow Arts, or 0 to gain a 3rd stat perk

Speed Class

Low: 2 speed, 1/2/4 range, +2 dash flair cost, no anchor flair cost

Medium: 3 speed, 2/4/6 range, +1 dash flair cost, +1 anchor flair cost

High: 5 speed, 3/6/9 range, no dash flair cost, +2 anchor flair cost

Stats

2 per level

- ✗ +2 per level that you don't increase your shadow level
- ✗ Stat limit = level

2 stat specializations

- ✗ + 3rd perk if you have 0 shadow ranks
- ✗ Non-perk stats add half value to specialization perks

Style

3 Tactics

Shadow Upgrades

Personality

RULES

4

These rules are intended to cover the majority of gameplay situations. They replace the basic rules. For any contradictions between the simple rules and these full rules, use the full rules.

Additional concepts may be found in the Specific Rules chapter, covering ideas that tend to be more niche.

Battle Structure

Battles are turn-based combat; one character at a time takes a turn, until all of the characters have taken a turn and a new round of turns begins.

Note:
If any rules or effects refer to "allies" or "enemies", they refer to the sides; an ally is any character on your side, and an enemy is any character not on your side. You are your own ally (many effects will still include "you" separately from "allies" for clarity of the individual effects).

Battle Setup

Before any character is given the first turn, perform the following steps:

1. All combatants have their effort and flair each set to 1.

2. Sort all combatants into sides, so that all characters on a given side aren't trying to defeat any characters on their own side. The most common side arrangement is "the player characters and their allies" on one side and "the enemies opposing the player characters" on the other side. Each side's morale becomes equal to the combined morale of the characters on that side.

    - For each character in the battle, that character remains in the battle until they're removed from the battle. They're removed from battle when either of the following occurs:
        - The character does not intend to defeat any other characters in the battle, and no other characters in the battle intend on defeating the character.
        - The character is killed.

3. In order from lowest agility to highest agility, each character is placed on the board by the player they belong to. Characters that have the same agility and are on the same side are placed at the same time; if characters have the same agility but are on different sides, the characters on the player character side are placed first and other characters are placed next.

4. The first turn is given to any character on the side that has the fewest characters. If there's a tie between sides, the player characters get the first turn.

Start of Your Turn

- Your effort becomes 3.
- Your flair increases by 3, to a maximum of 30.

Any "start of turn" effects happen after you've gained your effort and flair for the turn.

Actions

The maneuvers listed can be done on your turn while no maneuvers are being performed.

Move

Cost: 1 effort
Choose to sidestep or dash:

Sidestep: Move 1 square at a time, up to (your speed) total squares.

Dash: Target a square within (your speed) range of another character. You dash to that square.

If you can't perform either of the above, you can't perform this action.

Attack

Cost: 1 effort
Perform the following steps:

1. Choose one of your tactics to attack with.

2. Choose your targets for the attack.
   - By default, attacks can target 1 character that isn't on your side. If an effect allows you to have more than 1 target, you can choose any number of targets between 1 and the allowed number.

3. Characters can choose to react to your attack.

4. Perform your attack show using the tactic, simultaneous with any characters performing shows to react to your attack.

5. Your attack's health damage is its output, to a maximum of your tactic's break point. Any excess output becomes your attack's morale damage. Apply any reductions from defies.
   - *Example: If your output is 7 and your break point is 4, your damage numbers are 4 health, 3 morale.*

6. Your attack deals its damage to each of its targets.

7. Any effects that modify damage apply during this step.

8. Any effects that occur when an attack "hits" will trigger at this point, before you perform the next step.

9. If the value of the last card you revealed is 4 or greater, you perform any "flourish" effects you have (effects worded like "when you flourish, (effect)").

Exertion: If you attack twice on a turn, any additional attacks you perform on the same turn (after the second) deal half damage and have their finale reduced by 2.

All Out Attack

Any time you would attack, you can improve it to become an all out attack.

Cost: 3 flair (in addition to any costs you paid for the attack)

Perform an attack, except your show is performed *after* any otherwise-simultaneous shows and follows different rules:

- ✎ Instead of revealing 5 cards all at once, you reveal 2 cards at a time
- ✎ After each 2 cards, you can choose to reveal another 2 cards or end the show. If you have 4 or more red cards, you must end the show
- ✎ When you end the show, your result is still based on the number of red cards you revealed and the value of the final card. However, if you revealed exactly 3 red cards then you automatically flourish regardless of your finale. If you revealed 4 or more red cards then your original number of red cards and your original finale are both 0 regardless of any other rules, and they can't be increased.

Anchor

Cost: None

You can only anchor if you haven't moved this turn.

Until your next turn, increase the output of each attack and defy you perform by half the value of the tactic's stat.

Until your next turn, you can't move except from your move triggers and you can't be moved by characters on your side.

Stance

Cost: 1 effort and 1 flair. If there are more characters on another side than on your side, reduce the cost by 1 flair.

Perform the following steps:

1. Choose one of your tactics.

2. Choose targets as if you were attacking with that tactic, except you can choose zero targets.

3. Perform your stance show using the tactic.

4. Multiply your output by the number of characters you're targeting. If you're not targeting any characters, reduce your output to half of its current value.

5. You gain health equal to your output.

6. If the value of the last card you revealed is 4 or greater, you perform any "flourish" effects you have as if you had defied attacks from the characters you're targeting (effects worded like "when you flourish, (effect)"). Any flourish effects that require information about attacks or attack lines don't apply.

Immediately after this action, your turn ends (you can still perform effects that happen at the end of your turn).

Stance counts as a defy for any effects that interact with defies, such as anchor's output increase.

REACTIONS

The maneuvers listed below can only be performed as a reaction to their associated situations. You can only perform one reaction at a time.

DEFY

Reaction to: A character on another side starting an attack (it doesn't have to target you).

Cost: 1 effort.

Perform the following steps:

1. Choose one of your tactics to defy with.

2. Choose your targets for the defy.
   - By default, defies target one attack line belonging to a character that isn't on your side. You can choose to have fewer targets, to a minimum of one.

3. Perform your defy show using the tactic, simultaneous with the attacker. If you manage to defy multiple attacks at once, your show is simultaneous with each attacker.

4. Before the attack lines deal their damage, choose to reduce either their damage against health or against morale; if your output is greater than the attack's total damage (the damage against health plus the damage against morale), you can choose both. This decision applies to all of the attack lines you're defying; you can't make multiple decisions for a single defy.
   - If you choose to reduce damage against health, reduce each attack line's damage against their target's health by your output to a minimum of 0.
   - If you choose to reduce damage against morale, reduce each attack line's damage to morale to 0 (regardless of your output).

5. If your show has more red cards than any attack lines do, those attack lines can't apply any stat effects or trigger any of the attacker's flourish effects; in addition, the attacker can't perform their tactic's free Move even if other attack lines didn't have their flourish effects prevented.

6. If the value of the last card you revealed is 4 or greater, you perform any "flourish" effects you have (effects worded like "when you flourish, (effect)").

Challenge Fate

Reaction to: Anything, before you pay for a maneuver.

Cost: No cost.

Restriction: You can't challenge fate while exhausted.

Before the maneuver: You gain 1 effort.

During the maneuver: If the maneuver includes a show, increase your output by your level. If your original finale is 4 or higher, you gain health equal to your output before reductions are applied.

After the maneuver: On your next turn, you gain 2 less effort. You can't challenge fate for the rest of this battle, or during your next battle.

After the battle: At the end of the battle, your health becomes equal to half of your maximum health instead of your full maximum health.

> **Only player characters and important game master characters can challenge fate.**

Ending Your Turn

On your turn while no maneuvers are being performed, you can end your turn.

When you end your turn, follow these steps to choose which character takes the next turn; as soon as a character is eligible to take the next turn, that character takes the next turn and you stop following these steps:

- The nearest non-exhausted ally that hasn't taken a turn this round.
- The nearest exhausted ally that hasn't taken a turn this round.
- The nearest non-exhausted enemy that hasn't taken a turn this round.
- The nearest exhausted enemy that hasn't taken a turn this round.

If all characters have taken a turn this round, a new round begins and the character that takes the next turn is the nearest enemy that isn't exhausted.

If multiple characters are tied for nearest and are at the highest step for taking a turn, you can choose which one takes the turn.

"Nearest" refers to a character being the shortest range away from you, ignoring obstructions. For an explanation of how range is measured, see the Targeting section in the Battles: Detailed Rules chapter.

SHAKEN

While your side's morale is 0 or less, you and your allies are shaken. While shaken:

- You only gain 1 flair per turn, instead of 3.
- Any time damage would be dealt to your morale, it's dealt to your health instead.

   - *This means effects that normally damage a character's morale will damage that character's health instead; it will not cause morale-damaging effects to damage all characters.*

This effect doesn't apply to the maneuver or effect that would bring your morale to 0 or less; if you have 5 morale and take 100 damage to your morale, you will have -95 morale. However if you have 5 morale and each character on your side takes 10 damage to their morale, your morale will drop to -5 from the first maneuver or effect and each subsequent source of damage will affect the health of those characters.

> Reminder: An attack dealing its damage to all targets is a single maneuver and will apply its damage all at once. Flourish effects dealing damage to each target are all separate maneuvers, and the attacker performs them one at a time as separate maneuvers.

EXHAUSTED

While your health is 0 or less, you are exhausted. While exhausted:

- ✗ Your effort per turn becomes 1, instead of 3
- ✗ You can't dash or stance, but once on each of your turns you can sidestep up to (your speed) as an action.
- ✗ You don't count as an obstruction and can't be targeted (even if you're on a targeted square), but characters still can't end their movement on your square.
- ✗ Characters can't pass the turn to you until all non-exhausted allies have taken their turn.

When every character on a side is exhausted, that side (and each character on it) loses the battle and is removed from it.

If every player character is exhausted when the battle ends, the game master records that the party has gained a Threat. At the start of any future battle, the game master can spend that Threat to declare that no character is safe; any time a character would become exhausted during the battle, they die instead.

End of Battle

The battle ends once all combatants are removed from battle (typically when only one side remains, and has no more opponents, or if the battling sides make an agreement to call a truce). After the battle ends, characters have their health, effort, and flair updated by the following rules.

Injuries on defeated characters: After the battle ends, characters that were exhausted on a side that was removed from battle have their maximum health reduced to half. This effect can accumulate, such as having a character's maximum health drop from 30 to 15 and again to 8 after losing two battles. While a character's maximum health is reduced by this effect, they can't willingly initiate a battle for at least 12 hours in the story.

Recovering from injuries: Each time a character spends 1 day resting in the story (not contributing to any battles or performing tasks that the game master decides are strenuous), they can remove one level of maximum health reduction (such as from 8 back to 15 on the first day, and 15 back to 30 on the next day) and then have their health become equal to their current maximum health.

After any injuries are applied, all living characters that were in the battle have their health become equal to their current maximum health and their effort and flair each become 1.

Chain battles: If the player character side wasn't removed from battle but the game master decides that the battle was part of a chain, the player characters do not restore health. Instead, their maximum health will become lower as the strain of battle begins to take hold. The game master will determine how much maximum health each character loses, and then each character whose health is above their new maximum loses health to reach that maximum.

The morale of the player character side will persist across chain battles, instead of resetting to the combined value at the start of each battle.

Specific Rules

These rules cover concepts such as how to choose targets and how to resolve effects, and are intended to also be used for reference when the full rules don't cover a situation. They build on the regular rules; instead of writing the full regular rules in an expanded form, it only lists the rules that have more detail.

Damage

All damage is either **health damage** or **morale damage**. Dealing health damage to a character reduces their health, and dealing morale damage to a character reduces their morale. All damage a character deals outside of their turn is dealt as morale damage.

Maneuvers

A **maneuver** is anything that involves paying a cost to get an effect, choosing a target, or applying an effect to a target that has been chosen. Examples of maneuvers include:

- Each movement within a series of sidesteps, or each movement when moving another character (you target each square you/ they will enter, one at a time)
- Dashing (you target the square you'll dash to; the entire dash is a single maneuver)
- Attacking (you target the characters/squares to attack, and deal damage to those targets)
- Defying (you target the attack lines to defy)
- Many flourish effects (the ones that have an effect on "your target")

Typically the term Maneuver is only written to mean "something being done", and effects don't require you to exactly classify what is or isn't a maneuver. For example this rulebook refers to "the Move maneuver", when each step within it is also a maneuver; the term has no meaning other than to make it clear that the text is referring to the thing you can do on your turn that is called Move, and not referring to the general concept of movement.

ACTIONS

If a maneuver is performed **as an action**, that means it can be performed only on your turn while no other maneuvers are being performed.

If an effect allows you to perform an action, such as a move trigger which allows you to perform the Move action, you can perform it whenever the effect occurs even if you wouldn't be able to perform an action at the time.

REACTIONS

A **reaction** is a type of maneuver that you can perform in certain situations. For example, the Defy maneuver can be performed "as a reaction to" a character attacking, which means any time a character attacks, you have the option to defy that attack (assuming you also meet the requirements, with a tactic that can reach the attack line). Reactions can only be performed once per situation, and each character can only perform one reaction to a single situation.

Whenever an event happens that a character can react to, all reactions to that event must be declared at the same time then performed simultaneously. For example, if a character starts an attack and multiple characters want to defy it, they cannot "wait and see" whether one defy was enough; they must each decide whether or not to defy, all at the same time.

If a maneuver is performed **as a reaction** to a situation, it means you can perform that maneuver as soon as that situation happens and before anything else happens. Any maneuvers currently being performed are paused until the reaction finishes.

If your reaction includes a show and is reacting to the start of a maneuver that also includes a show (most commonly when defying an attack), you perform your show **simultaneously** with that maneuver instead of performing your maneuver first.

Immediately Before / Immediately After

If a maneuver is performed **immediately before** another maneuver, or **immediately after**, it means that those maneuvers are "connected" to be performed as a sequence with less room for anything to happen in between:

If a character is performing connected maneuvers, any effects that allow for non-reaction maneuvers are delayed to happen after the connected maneuvers are finished. This applies to effects from any character, not just the effects of the character performing the connected maneuvers.

> Example: If an effect allows you to dash "immediately before you attack", and you have an effect that says "when you finish a dash, you can sidestep 1 square", the order would be:
>
> ✦ Dash (immediately before attack)
>
> ✦ Attack (connected to dash)
>
> ✦ Sidestep 1 square (a maneuver that isn't connected, so it happens after the connected maneuvers)
>
> However if you also have an effect that says "when you finish a dash, your next attack has its output increased by 1", that effect still applies to the attack because that effect isn't a maneuver.

If a character has multiple "immediately before" maneuvers, that character can perform them in any order (the order doesn't have to be decided all at once; the character can perform one, then choose the next maneuver, and so on). The same applies to "immediately after" maneuvers, as long as all "immediately before" maneuvers are before the main maneuver and all "immediately after" maneuvers are after the main maneuver.

You pay for the main maneuver before you perform any "immediately before"–type maneuvers. As a result, the order for performing connected maneuvers is:

1. Pay for the main maneuver
2. Pay for and perform "immediately before"-type maneuvers
3. Perform the main maneuver
4. Pay for and perform "immediately after"-type maneuvers
5. Perform effects that were delayed until the connected maneuvers are finished

Paying for the main maneuver is mandatory, and that cost is not refunded even if you become unable to perform it or choose not to perform it.

This rule might seem a bit confusing without an explanation for why it exists: this rule prevents situations such as using a Lunge tactic to back up before an attack, ending the movement outside of attack range and having moved for free. To get the bonus effects that come with a maneuver, that maneuver has to be paid for.

"Immediately before"-type maneuvers allow you to "look ahead" when choosing a main maneuver to perform. For example, if you aren't in range to attack any characters but you have an effect that allows you to sidestep immediately before an attack, and you would be able to use that sidestep to be in position to attack a character, you can pay for the attack and perform the sidestep so that you can perform that attack. However if you wouldn't be able to attack even if you did sidestep, you can't pay for the attack or perform the sidestep.

If you have effects that would connect to each other like this:

- "You can teleport immediately before you attack."
- "You can attack immediately before you teleport."

You can choose either one to be your main maneuver and you perform the other one immediately before the main maneuver. You CAN'T make an infinite chain of "immediately before" or "immediately after" maneuvers, because they must all be attached to a single main maneuver.

Targeting

Many maneuvers, such as moving and attacking, require a target. Choosing a target uses the rules written in this section, with different details based on the type of target you're choosing.

All targeting is done by drawing a straight line from a **starting point** to a **target**. For example with an attack, you draw a line from yourself to a character in range to target them; and defies are done by drawing a line from the defying characters to anywhere along your attack line. You can't draw the line through an obstruction (explained in the Obstructions section).

> **Starting Point:** You draw targeting lines starting from the center of the square that the maneuver is coming from, which is your location by default (some effects may change where the maneuver comes from). If the maneuver could come from multiple squares (typically due to a large character performing the maneuver), you choose one of those squares to be where the maneuver comes from.

Targets

The maneuver you're performing will specify what you're targeting; the most common things to target are characters, squares, and other targeting lines. You can only choose the same target once per maneuver; if an attack allows you to target two characters, you can't target the same character twice.

Character

To target a character, you draw the targeting line from your starting point to any edge of any square that the character is on.

Once the character becomes targeted, they stay targeted regardless of where they move (even if they move beyond that maneuver's range, or behind an obstruction).

Square

To target a square, you draw the targeting line from your starting point to any edge of that square.

A character that's on a targeted square is considered a target for as long as they're on a targeted square; if the character moves to a square that isn't targeted, they stop being targeted. If a non-stance defy is tar-

geting a square, attack lines passing through the square are targeted instead of characters on the square.

- ✗ If a character or line occupies multiple targeted squares, it only counts as being targeted once.

Some effects allow targeting a number of **connected squares**: connected squares are an unbroken chain of squares. Once you target your first square, each subsequent square is targeted by using the center of the *most recently-targeted square* as your starting point and drawing the targeting line to a square within 1 range of that new starting point. You continue targeting squares in this chain until you've targeted the maximum number of connected squares you're allowed to target, or until you can't/don't want to target any more squares.

- ✗ When targeting connected squares after the first one, you don't treat **any** characters as obstructions and you can target squares that you couldn't have drawn a line to from the initial starting point. For example, you can have the connected squares wrap around a corner. The first square you target still follows normal rules for targeting a square.
- ✗ All of the squares you target must be within range of the original starting point.

Lines that target a square don't get flourish effects unless they're targeting a character or other line within that square.
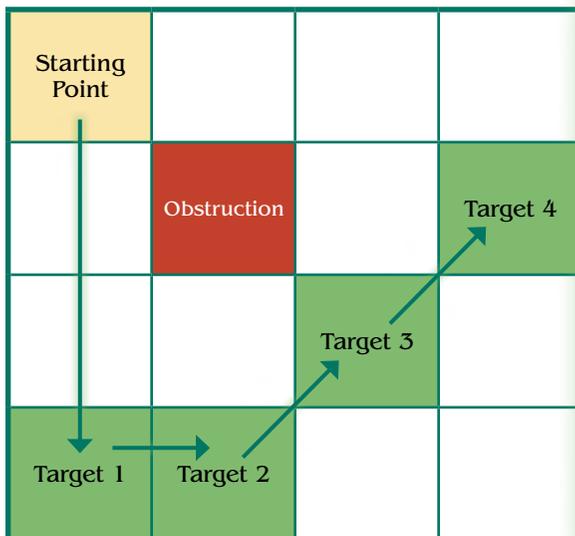
Example: With a range of 3 and targeting up to 4 connected squares, an effect could target squares like this: The first square is targeted as normal, and the obstruction doesn't interfere with the remaining targets.

Targeting line (typically just for defying)

- ✎ To target a targeting line, you draw your own targeting line from the starting point to anywhere along that line.

  - ✎ If the line only touches the edge of a square, you can still target it at the point where it touches that edge.

If an effect targets "each" character/square/line that matches some criteria (such as an explosion targeting each square within 3 range), you must follow the targeting rules for every target you're able to choose.

Obstructions: You can't draw a targeting line that touches an obstruction. Obstructions are any objects that would prevent the maneuver from reaching its target, such as walls and enemies. Allies are not obstructions (they'll lean out of the way and it'll look really cool).

A targeting line is allowed to pass through the edge of an obstructed square, as long as it isn't passing in between obstructions that are adjacent to each other. The game master can decide that certain targeting lines are able to pass between certain obstructions, such as to allow projectile attacks that pass between two pillars.

Obstructions can have unique properties to prevent certain maneuvers from passing through while allowing others, such as a fence that prevents direct tactics and character movement from passing through but doesn't prevent other tactic types from passing through the gaps.
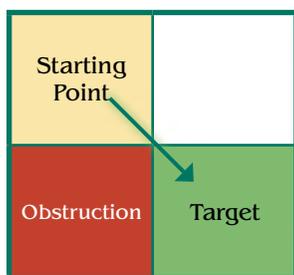
This targeting is allowed; there is only one obstruction at the corner

Starting
Point

Obstruction

Obstruction
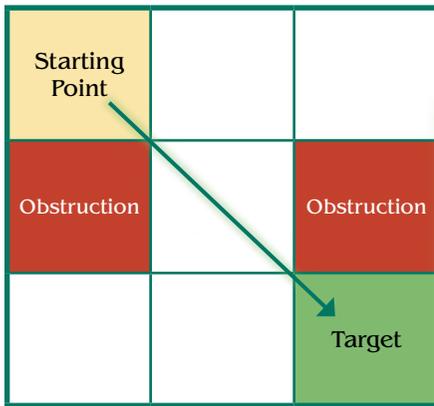
Target

This targeting is also allowed; the obstructions are not adjacent

Starting
Point

Obstruction

Obstruction
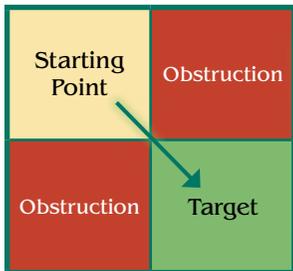
Target

This targeting is not allowed unless the game master states the obstructions have a large enough gap between them.

In cases where it isn't obvious whether a line would pass through an obstruction and somebody wants to try actually drawing one, the GM can decide whether the obstructions block the line.

Note: Targeting lines are named after the maneuver they're part of; an attack's targeting lines are called attack lines, and a defy's targeting lines are called defy lines.

Range: Targeting typically has a range number (such as a tactic with a range of 4, which means attacks and defies using the tactic have a range of 4). You can only choose targets that are up to that many squares away from the starting point.

Start (0)	1	2	3	4
1	1	2	3	4
2	2	2	3	4
3	3	3	3	4

MOVEMENT

Different types of movement have their own rules, but some rules apply to all forms of movement.

You are allowed to enter an ally's square while moving, but you can't move in a way that would cause you to finish your movement in another character's square unless you immediately perform more movement. For example, you can end your movement on an ally's square and then pay 1 effort to Move before you do anything else, or you could pay for a signature move as long as the first maneuver in it you perform is movement.

Note: When sidestepping, "finishing" your movement refers to performing the very last movement of that sidestep; you can sidestep into an ally's square as long as you also step out of it before you use up your last square of movement.

If an effect causes your movement to end while you're sharing a square with another character, you immediately sidestep the shortest distance that allows you to enter a square that has no characters on it; effects can't prevent this sidestep or end it early.

You can't target your starting point with a movement line, except for teleporting.

> **Reminder: When sidestepping, your starting point for each individual movement is only your current location at the time of each movement. You can enter a square then move back to your previous square within a single 2+-square sidestep.**

Sidestep/Move another character

The effect you're using will inform you of how far you can sidestep or move the other character.

- *The most common sidestep effect is the Move maneuver, which allows you to sidestep a number of squares up to (your speed).*

Target a square adjacent to you; you enter that square. Repeat this process until you've entered the number of squares that the effect said you can sidestep (for example if an effect allows you to sidestep up to 3 squares, you can enter up to 3 consecutive adjacent squares).

- Most sidestep effects let you sidestep "up to" a distance. These sidesteps can be ended at any point before you've reached the maximum distance, as long as you've moved at least 1 square.

For moving another character, you instead target squares adjacent to that character and they enter each square you target.

- Character obstruction is based on the character forcing the movement and not the character being moved; if you move an enemy, that enemy can be moved through the locations of your allies but not through the locations of other enemies.

Dash

The effect you're using to dash will inform you of what sort of location you can choose.

✐ *The most common dash effect is the Move maneuver, which allows you to dash to any square within (your speed) of another character.*

Target a square that matches the described location.

✐ If you occupy multiple squares, you must use each square as a separate starting point for drawing a targeting line and each of those lines must be drawn to a different one of the squares that you'll dash to; you must also keep the lines parallel to each other. If the dash lines can't all be drawn, you can't dash along that path.

You move 1 square at a time, only entering squares that the targeting line touches and always moving toward your target. You cannot willingly end this movement until you reach your dash target or you can't continue moving along the line.

If you are moved by a character while dashing, your dash ends but after that movement finishes you can start a new dash targeting a square that meets the same description as the previous effect you had used to dash (you can target the same square you had originally targeted, if you're still able to target it). For example if you use the Dash option of the Move maneuver, and you're interrupted while dashing to a square within (your speed) range of another character, your dash ends but you can start a new dash and choose any square within (your speed) range of another character; it doesn't have to be within range of the same character.

✐ If your dash target is based on another character's location (such as if you're dashing to a square within (your speed) of another character) and that character enters a new square before the dash finishes, or if an obstruction is put in the way of your dash target, your dash ends but you can start a new dash targeting a square that meets the same description as your initial dash and is based on the new location of that same character.

✐ For example if you're dashing to a square within 2 range of a character, and that character moves, you can choose a new square that's within 2 range of their new location.

Teleport

The effect you're using to teleport will inform you of how far you can teleport.

↗ *Characters can only gain the ability to teleport from upgrades; there is no universally-available maneuver for teleporting.*

Target a square within range; you can ignore obstructions when choosing a teleport target. You enter that square (you don't enter any other squares in between your starting point and your teleport target).

Swap location

The effect you're using will inform you of what you can swap.

↗ *Characters can only gain the ability to swap locations from upgrades; there is no universally-available maneuver for swapping locations.*

Target a character; you can ignore obstructions when choosing a swap target. If the effect is for you to swap locations with your target then you and your target simultaneously teleport to each other's location; if the effect is for you to swap the locations of two targets, you choose an additional target and those two targets teleport to each other's location.

Moving Toward / Away From Something

When movement is toward or away from something, before the movement starts, measure the distance between you and the thing you're moving toward/away from. Then follow the matching direction:

↗ **Toward:** Each of your movement targets must reduce the number of squares on the shortest path between you and the thing you're moving toward.

↗ **Away:** Each of your movement targets must increase the number of squares on the shortest path between you and the thing you're moving toward.

> Example: If an effect allows you to move a character 5 squares toward you and they're 3 squares away, you can move them 5 squares in a straight line so that they're 2 away on the other side because each square the character enters is less than the starting 3 squares away.

Some effects might involve moving "directly" toward or away from something. In these cases, you draw a line from the thing being moved to the thing it's moving toward/away from and follow the matching direction:

Toward: All movement directly toward the thing must be performed only by entering squares that the line touches.

Away: Extend the line beyond the thing being moved; all movement directly away from the thing *must* be performed only by entering squares that the extended line touches.

If movement along the line becomes impossible at any point, the movement ends even if not all squares of movement were spent.

Tactic Types

A tactic's type will influence its range and the reliability of gaining free movement from using it.

Speed / Type	Direct	Exposure	Projectile
Low	1	2	4
Medium	2	4	6
High	3	6	9

Type	Move Trigger
Direct	Flourish, with 1+ red cards
Exposure	Flourish, with 2+ red cards
Projectile	Flourish, with 3+ red cards

Note that you can only gain the move trigger once per attack or defy, and you only gain it if all of your maneuver lines meet the condition; if any lines have their finale or red cards reduced below the amount required to trigger, or any lines are prevented from flourishing, you don't gain the move trigger.

Flourish

If multiple characters would flourish at the same time, the attacker chooses the order that the characters flourish in. If a character has multiple flourish effects, that character gets to choose which order their own effects happen in at the time that they flourish (but they don't get to change where they are in the character order).

Flourish effects often refer to "your target", (for example "When you flourish, deal 3 damage to your target"); when attacking this means you affect each character your attack was targeting at the time that it finished, and when defying it means you affect the attacker you defied against but it will affect that attacker once per attack line you defied.

Flourish effects are separate from the maneuver they're attached to; effects that modify an attack's damage don't apply to damage from flourish effects (but effects that modify damage in general will apply to it).

Placements

The game master can change the placement rules (such as choosing how player characters are placed, or giving the first turn to any character or side regardless of how many characters are on each side) if it fits the story. For example, an ambush battle would mean the ambushing side goes first while a coordinated battle with pre-planned starting positions would mean character placements are strict formations unrelated to agility.

Extra Detail: Attack

If an effect changes your show against particular targets or changes the show of particular attack lines, it only affects the show in relation to those targets or lines; it doesn't change the attack's show against other targets or with other lines.

> Example: You perform a 2–target attack and your show's output is 3. If the output of one attack line is reduced by 2, it means the output of that line is 1 but the output of the other line is still 3. However, if an effect says "increase your output by 1", you increase the output of each line by 1.

Determining an attack's split between damage to health and to morale is done after all increases and decreases to output, except for defies.

Extra Detail: Defy

Attackers do obstruct their own squares, so defy lines cannot enter the attacker's square.

If an effect changes your show against particular targets or changes the show of particular defy lines, it only affects the show in relation to those targets or lines; it doesn't change the attack's show against other targets.

> Example: You perform a 2–target defy and your show's output is 3. If the output of one attack line is reduced by 2, it means the output of that line is 1 but the output of the other line is still 3. However, if an effect says "increase your output by 1", you increase the output of each line by 1.

Miscellaneous Rules

- When multiple effects would be performed at the same time, the character taking the current turn chooses characters one at a time to perform their effects. If a character has multiple effects, that character gets to choose when those effects happen relative to each other but only once the character has been chosen to perform their effects.

- Round decimal numbers up unless otherwise specified.

- Costs for things are specified when they exist; for example if an effect says you can perform the Move action but doesn't list a cost, that action doesn't cost any effort.

- Things that refer to "each other character" means each character other than you, not every second character.

This section is dedicated to advice on various topics that are used to play the game, but the focus is more on the storytelling and running of the game than it is on the mechanics. The goal of this section is to help inexperienced players and game masters become more comfortable with the environment of a tabletop role-playing game, so their sessions might flow smoother and be more fun; experienced game masters can choose to use their own preferences over any of the suggestions given in this chapter.

What Does a Game Master Do?

The game master is the person that "runs" the game; they manage the setting that the player characters inhabit, they control all non-player forces such as non-player characters and the weather, and they use a combination of their reasoning and randomness via cards to determine the outcomes to character actions.

Managing the Setting

The game master is expected to be the one that provides the exact setting of the campaign, though it doesn't have to be an original one. This book describes the setting that was made for the game, and gives advice on creating content that fits neatly into the setting, as a way to help game masters adapt the setting in a way that best fits the story they want to tell.

Example: The game master and players all agree to do a grand adventure story. Riley's character wants to perform heroic feats to be the pride of their home city, Avery's character wants to be rich, and Sam's character wants revenge against a sinister cult. The game master can consider that within this setting an organization grants a special "Vanguard License" to anyone that can complete a list of extremely difficult tasks; vanguards are given unlimited free food, travel, accommodations, and access to a cache of information kept updated by other vanguards. By using that premise as a major component of the story, each player has their own reason to work toward becoming a vanguard and the game master can use it to place them together right from the beginning.

Narrating and Roleplaying

The game master is the chief storyteller and informs the players of the things their characters experience; providing the voice of every non-player character the players meet, describing the locations they visit, conveying the ways the environment changes as the characters interact with it, and providing the players with any knowledge that their characters have or gain.

Example 1: When the party goes to a city, the game master describes the standout features of the city and any important facts the player characters have of it. When they enter a building in that city, the game master describes the standout features of the building. When they talk to someone in that building, the game master describes what that person says and does.

Example 2: If a character sees an object that the average character in the setting would recognize but the player themselves doesn't know, the game master can say "You remember..." and tell them what the object is or what it represents.

Determining Outcomes

The game master is the final authority on what actually happens in the game. Whenever a decision or sequence of events has a range of potential outcomes, the game master will find a way to determine which outcome actually happens; most commonly by performing a show, or by requiring a character to perform a show, and using the results of that show as the guide toward which potential outcome becomes the real outcome. The rules for battle are designed to cover the majority of situations that can happen during combat, so the game master's ability to invoke shows will most commonly appear outside of battle.

Example: Player A says "I want to use my full body weight to bust the door open". The game master might consider that the door has been barricaded but that Player A's character has very high strength: the game master might then allow those two factors to cancel out and tell Player A to perform a show, making a mental note that a medium or high output will allow the character to break through but any lower output means the character is unsuccessful.

Advantages and Responsibilities

Many people enjoy game mastering, but the role also comes with expectations.

Advantages of being the game master

Planning/Storytelling: The game master is in charge of the locations, non-player characters, battles, and every factor of the setting and story aside from the player characters and their decisions. The game master can use the setting provided by this book, settings provided by other books, or the game master's own personal creations to determine the content of the world, and can create any kind of story within that setting. Game masters can find enjoyment in creating an immersive world for their players, and in seeing how the player characters interact with that world.

Improvising: Many player choices will take the characters down a path that the game master didn't plan for. When this happens, the game master has to adapt to the new information and find ways to continue the story along the new path. Game masters can enjoy the challenge of constantly updating their plans as the players make new choices, especially if they can improvise well enough that the players don't even know it was improvisation.

Being authoritative: The game master is the expert on providing outcomes to character decisions and on resolving any unclear rules scenarios. A game master that enjoys making swift decisions and has knowledge of the game's rules will be rewarded with sessions that run much more smoothly.

Roleplaying/Wearing many hats: The game master plays every non-player character, from the eccentric train conductor to the egotistical main antagonist. A game master that likes to roleplay a variety of characters would feel at home bringing to life the plethora of unique characters that the players interact with.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GAME MASTER:

Planning: Planning out the content for a campaign takes time and effort that happens outside of the time spent playing with others.

Knowing the rules: Having trouble remembering the game's rules can slow the game down and interfere with its pacing.

Playing the losing side: The player characters are the protagonists of the story, and most stories involve the main characters overcoming great challenges to achieve their goals. For the game master it means they should expect to let their favorite antagonists eventually lose, and to let their non-player characters stay out of the story when they're no longer relevant.

SESSION ZERO

In general, it's a good idea to establish expectations and the goals of everybody at the table before actually playing the game. The time spent having this discussion is often called "session zero" because it comes before the first session of the game, but is just as important as a regular session. The most common things to establish during a session zero are:

WHAT EVERYBODY WANTS

If anyone has preferences for aspects of the game's story, those preferences should be discussed to determine the best style of campaign that everyone would enjoy. Aspects of the game's story can be things like:

The Mood: How does everyone want the players to feel while playing the game? A campaign can have any mood, and can transition between multiple different moods.

The Genre: What does everyone want the campaign's style to be like? Examples include an expansive journey across strange lands like in an action-adventure story, or a political thriller story where the heroes find themselves in the middle of a power struggle between cities, or a school story where everyone's biggest fear is the upcoming exam at the combat academy.

BOUNDARIES

Ideally, everybody knows which topics to avoid so that others at the table are comfortable. Everybody should be clear about where the limits are for:

Morality: People might have moral limits such as those relating to violence, discrimination, torture, blackmail.

Strong/offensive language: Words or phrases that people don't want to say or hear.

Level of detail on particular topics: Some topics may be fine to mention, but not to describe in high detail. Common topics that fit in this category include violence and sexual content.

Other topics: Anyone can have their own topics they want to avoid, and all opinions are valid.

Sometimes, there can be disagreements about boundaries. Some people might want to avoid a topic while others want the topic to be a core aspect of the story, such as allowing for characters to die. If there's no way to compromise on how topics can be handled in the story, it might be for the best that the group doesn't play the game together.

TABLE ETIQUETTE

The game can run more smoothly if certain topics are discussed beforehand. Common table etiquette "rules" include:

- What happens if the game master doesn't know a rule? Does everyone look for that rule, or does the game master make a decision about what they think the rule *should* be and use that rule until they have some spare time to look it up later?

- What happens if a player disagrees with the game master's ruling? The game master typically gets the final say on rules (they're the one running the game, after all), but can a player dispute an initial ruling? If a player can dispute a rule, do they have to find the actual rule within a certain amount of time?

- ✗ Should the group try to enforce a limit on out-of-character talking or on discussion of things that are outside the game? Are players allowed to do things unrelated to the game such as use their phone? If the group has trouble staying on track, creating rules to minimize distractions can help keep the game feeling involved.

- ✗ How will it be handled if two player characters want to have a private conversation? Do they pass notes, or go to another room, or can everyone at the table hear it but roleplay as if their characters didn't hear it? If there is a way for them to talk privately, is the game master able to know about the discussion (reading each note as it's passed, joining the players in the other room, etc) so that they can be sure to keep the private topics in mind when planning the story?

DIFFICULTY

An agreement should be made on how dangerous battles tend to be; some groups looking for a power fantasy story would prefer easier battles so the characters can show off, while groups looking to have their characters be underdogs would like for every battle to feel deadly. The game master should then account for the agreement when deciding how difficult battles should tend to be.

MAKING CHARACTERS/CONCEPTS

For the best chance at having each player character be unique from each other, and as a way to help new players get their questions answered quickly, the group can discuss the types of characters they want to make during session zero.

The discussion can cover topics such as what combat style or shadows each player wants their character to use, or making sure that each player character has motivations that make it easy to justify forming a group with the other player characters. Characters don't have to be started and finished entirely within session zero; players can come in with ideas they already have, and session zero can be ended with each player having a plan for their character which they'll finalize before the first campaign session.

Planning the Story

One of the main tasks a game master performs outside of gameplay sessions is crafting the story that the players will experience.

Story Structure

Each story takes place within a campaign, which itself is made up of smaller components, and those smaller parts can be broken down further until a story that takes years for the players to experience can be viewed as individual moments within sessions.

Game masters should keep in mind that they don't need every detail of the story figured out in advance; the decisions of player characters are often vastly different from expectations, so story elements that are smaller or less immediately relevant can afford to be less detailed.

The Campaign

A campaign can be considered as the entire lifetime of the player characters in the game: the first session is the beginning of the campaign, and the last session that the characters are played is the end of the campaign. The roster of player characters can change over time, such as when one leaves the group or when a new player character joins, but the campaign will continue as long as the group remains.

Concepts to Keep in Mind

When crafting a campaign, these traits are important to consider.

The Mood and Genre: Most story events within the campaign should fit the mood and genre of that story. Rapid shifts in tone can undermine the immersion of the players.

The Setting/World: For the campaign to happen, there needs to be at least one place where it happens. The game master can use, adapt, or create any setting that enables the campaign.

The Selling Point: Many campaigns have a big concept that they're "about"; typically a concept that can be explained in one or two sentences, and that is often relevant to the player characters in some way.

Example: A campaign's selling point can be concepts such as:

Multiple supercities are preparing for war; the player characters have to stop it.

The player characters have entered into the Vanguard Exam to earn their license.

The player characters are low-level criminals, just trying to survive.

The Player Characters: The campaign must be created around the personality traits of the player characters. The selling point of the campaign should contain elements that would make the player characters want to engage with it instead of staying home.

Tip: To help with starting a campaign smoothly, the game master can give the player characters a goal during session zero. For example, the game master can inform the players that their characters must have a goal of "earning a vanguard license" so that it's easy to be sure the characters have a reason to work together. Players can still give their characters additional depth by choosing their character's motivation behind wanting the license.

Elements of a Campaign

These more technical details influence how the campaign feels as the player characters experience it.

Plot points: The campaign is a collection of plot points: planned moments of interesting events that drive change. Plot points also tend to give the characters a direction (or choice of direction) to head in, continuing the story until they reach another plot point. However, the entire campaign shouldn't be a strict list of plot points with no room for change; player characters can make decisions that shift the trajectory of the campaign away from the planned points and require new plot points to be developed. Game masters should revise upcoming plot points as the story develops, and should especially prepare the most imminent plot points by considering how they might change based on player character decisions that occur during the next session.

Example: Plot Point A is that the protagonists are hired to escort a character to a nearby city. This leads to Plot Point B, where the escorted character assassinates the mayor of that city. If the protagonists had decided not to escort that character, or somehow manage to stop the assassination, the game master must be prepared with an alternative Plot Point B where the assassination doesn't happen or is performed by a different character.

Speed: Too many plot points happening in short succession can be overwhelming, but very few plot points over a long period can be boring. No single story speed is necessarily the "best" speed, but it's important for the game master to keep in mind how fast they want things to be moving. The campaign can also speed up and slow down by having varying distances between plot points.

Tip: The mood of a story can often help to guide the speed; the more upbeat the mood is, the faster the story can usually go, while more lower-energy stories will tend to linger on the results and side effects of events.

Tip 2: Changes in speed from one plot point to the next should typically be gradual. An exception would be for major plot points, where the shock of particularly sudden events heightens the impact of the events themselves or where a tragic moment leaves the player characters with more time to grapple with consequences.

Tension: If the player characters feel stressed about upcoming events and the stakes at play, the players themselves are more likely to be invested in the preparation and the outcomes. However, the game master should be careful about keeping tension too high; players can get bored of constant high-stakes situations.

Arc

An arc is a smaller story within a campaign. Many arcs focus on a particular character or concept, and help the campaign feel fresh by introducing their own selling points. A campaign can contain many arcs, and each arc can contain many plot points. Arcs can be the following types:

Plot Arc: A series of plot points that focuses on making progress within the larger story, such as the player characters working toward a major goal or coming into conflict with a new antagonist that holds answers to important questions. Most arcs are plot arcs, but they can also contain additional arc types at the same time. For example, a plot arc can also be a character arc if the story focuses on a character coming into conflict with an antagonist that's personal to them.

Character Arc: A focus on a goal or unresolved conflict that a character (or group) has, which is only partially related to the story or entirely unrelated. Character arcs seek to highlight traits that the larger campaign might not bring out, and often involve a story where those traits become challenged to result in gaining a new perspective on some aspect of their life (such as new goals or lessons) going forward in the story. Character arcs commonly focus on the challenge and growth of an individual, but they can also focus on the dynamics within a relationship or group to highlight and challenge their traits.

Genre Arc: A moment of the story that changes the theme of the campaign for that arc only. An action story might shift to a mystery story to add intrigue for a number of sessions, or to a "slice of life" story where the plot points focus on grounded drama like the struggles to coordinate a good party. Genre arcs are typically shorter than other types of arc since they engage with a genre that the players didn't necessarily sign up for, but they can be a fun source of variety and can even highlight key features of the campaign story by momentarily using a genre without those features.

Example: A campaign featuring a grand world–spanning adventure might slow down to have one arc be an investigation taking place entirely within a single house; drawing attention to the vastness of the world by forcing the player characters to realize how much detail can be in a small area.

Setup Arc: An introduction of new characters or concepts, arranged in a way that makes it easy to quickly understand them. A common example of a setup arc is to have a tournament, where the competitors include several new characters; by having the tournament structured as individual matches, the player characters can watch and/or participate in matches and be introduced to a small number of new characters at a time. Setup arcs often happen at the start of major shifts in the campaign, such as the very beginning of the story or shortly before a massive event that involves the player characters and the newly-expanded cast of non-player characters.

Arcs can often begin with travel to a new location, unlocking a wealth of new activities and ways for the plot to progress. Potential ways to give players reasons to travel to these new locations can be found in the Tourism, Plot Spots, and Missions entries for supercities in the Settings chapter.

Mission

A mission happens within an arc, with its story usually containing three major plot points: the point where the characters learn the mission, the climax of the mission, and the results of the mission's outcome. A mission usually takes fewer than five sessions; a longer mission or a mission made up of multiple smaller missions would likely be a plot arc. A mission usually has one or multiple tasks to be performed, with common task types listed below:

About a Location, Object, Character, or Creature

- ✎ **Go To/Find:** In almost all cases, the mission includes going somewhere or finding something; typically as the first step of the mission, but it can occasionally be the only task or the final task with obstacles in the way.
- ✎ **Collect Information:** Specific knowledge has to be obtained.
- ✎ **Destroy/Clear/Conquer/Subdue:** Something is causing problems, and the task is to stop that thing.
- ✎ **Protect Yourselves/Protect Others:** A threat can't be directly stopped, so the task is to minimize the problems.
- ✎ **Avoid/Distract:** A threat hasn't been triggered, and it's important to prevent that threat from becoming triggered.

About an Object, Character, or Creature

- ✎ **Fetch/Drop Off:** Something or someone has to be retrieved and moved to somewhere else.
- ✎ **Swap:** Something or someone has to be replaced with another something or someone.

About a Character

- ✎ **Communicate:** Information has to be given to one or more characters.

When designing a mission, it's also important to be sure that the player characters understand why they should accept it; often by explaining the reward, such as achieving a goal they'd like to reach or preventing an antagonist from achieving their own goals. If the player characters aren't interested in a mission, the story will stall until they find a mission they are interested in.

Scene

Scenes are the individual situations that occur throughout the story. Every scene leads into another new scene, forming the path that the story follows from beginning to end. A common rule of thumb is that a scene will meet both of the following requirements:

- The situation takes place in a single location or on the way from one location to another
- The situation will progress the story in some way such as through a conversation, battle, decision, or discovery of information

Events that take place in multiple locations are likely too big to be a single scene and should be broken down into individual scenes per location, and situations that don't progress the story can typically be only briefly narrated before continuing to the next scene rather than pausing to let the characters try and find something to do.

Scene Structure

Transition In: The game master describes what changes move the characters from the previous scene to the new one; most commonly it can be that the characters enter a new location, or that something about the environment changes such as new characters entering. Transitions are typically short, as they only need to focus on explaining the events that signify a new scene.

Introduction: The game master describes the initial state of the scene. The focus should be on describing the factors of the scene that the game master intends for the player characters to know they can interact with, such as the characters and important objects that are present. In battle, the introduction usually also includes setting up the battle mat to keep track of exact positions for each combatant. The introduction should end with a decision for the player characters to make or a task for them to perform, to signify that the gameplay of the scene has begun.

Normal Gameplay: The player characters are given the opportunity to respond to the new scene's transition and introduction, and gameplay continues: the game master describes the outcomes of those responses, then the player characters respond to the outcomes, and so on.

Conclusion: Eventually, due to actions taken during the scene or due to other factors the game master has created, something will happen that signals the end of the scene. In most cases, the scene concludes once it achieves its purpose (progressing the story) and an event or decision leads to the next scene. The game master describes how the player characters leave the scene, to prepare for the transition into the new scene. Conclusions are often skipped when a player character initiates a battle, or when external factors cause the new scene to begin such as the entrance of new characters.

An example of three scenes, each one leading into the next:

Transition In: Following the events of the previous session, the player characters find themselves in a chamber.

Introduction: Within the chamber is a sheet of paper that seems to have an encoded message on it. Along the walls, various symbols have been carved and some resemble symbols that are on the paper.

Gameplay: The player characters work to decode the message.

Conclusion: The player characters learn the decoded message. The game master describes the message, then moves to the next scene.

Transition In: A hooded figure and two guards enter the room.

Introduction: The hooded figure demands that the player characters hand over the decoded message.

Gameplay: The players use any methods they can think of to ensure they can keep the message to themselves.

Conclusion: The player characters challenge the figure to a fight for ownership of the message. The figure agrees, and the game master moves to the next scene.

Transition In: The game master describes the enemies preparing for battle.

Introduction: Characters are placed on the battle mat, and the game master describes the enemies in terms of combat-relevant appearances.

Gameplay: The player characters engage in battle with the figure and guards.

Conclusion: If the player characters win the battle, they keep the message and can decide how to proceed. If the player characters lose the battle, the figure takes the message and the player characters must either find a way to ensure it doesn't get delivered or prevent the figure's employer from taking advantage of the information.

Challenges

In any scene where the player characters are tested by some form of test or obstacle, that scene is a challenge. Challenges can include nearly any form of test or obstruction, including:

- Battle against enemies or monsters
- A puzzle with an unknown reward
- A sudden landslide that threatens to injure the player characters or undo their progress in climbing a mountain
- Obtaining information from an important character

It can often be good practice for the game master to design challenges the same way they would design a puzzle, even if the challenge doesn't contain a literal puzzle. The puzzle-oriented mindset can help ensure that challenges feel fair and satisfying to engage with and complete. Aspects of designing a challenge are:

Types of Challenge

Challenges can typically be sorted into categories that share particular traits.

Battle

Battles are the major focus of the game's rules; character creation is heavily focused around combat capabilities. In a battle challenge, the player characters find themselves opposing one or more other characters in combat.

Goals: Most often, the goal is to defeat all characters on the opposing side(s). Alternative goals or additional sub-goals can include surviving a number of rounds, reaching a destination, or protecting an important character from reaching 0 health.

Factors: Enemies to battle against, or some other form of immediate threat, are nearly mandatory. Obstructions and environmental effects added to the battle (such as a raging sandstorm that passively damages all characters at the end of their turn) can also serve as non-enemy factors. Enemies can have unique traits such as "this enemy doesn't lose health unless it has the highest health among characters on its side".

Solutions: Good combat strategy that accounts for the unique factors should generally be a path to achieving the goal. Interesting combat challenges often include factors that make certain combat strategies stronger or weaker, especially if enemies have their own strategies affected by their allies and by the non-character factors.

Non-challenge Battles: It can be valuable to give the player characters battles that showcase their growth as a form of downtime reward. Battles against weak enemies, especially if the enemies used to be difficult for the player characters to defeat when they were at lower levels, highlight the progress those player characters have made when they can defeat the enemies with minimal need for strategy.

Mental

Mental challenges are tests focusing on the problem solving skills of the player characters, typically through some form of puzzle. They typically contain very few of this game's rules, instead focusing on the unique factors of the challenge itself. However, mental challenges can still include other challenge types such as with a maze that contains battle challenges the player characters must complete as they progress.

Goals: Most often, the goal is to solve a puzzle or other problem presented by the challenge. The goal can be obvious, such as a locked door having an obvious goal of "unlock the door" if players want to get through it, but it can also be an unclear goal of "solve the puzzle" where factors are clear but the result of interacting with them is not.

Factors: The rules of the mental challenge are its core feature, but it can still include hidden rules that require the player characters to figure them out through experimentation. Most commonly there will be factors that the players can directly interact with, such as physical objects that can be moved, and the hidden factors will be the rules governing the outcome of each interaction.

Solutions: The solution is typically a process of experimenting to learn about any hidden factors, considering the factors as a whole, and then finding a sequence of actions that results in achieving the goal.

Tip: When designing factors for a mental challenge, it can often be a good strategy to determine the solution first and then create factors that lead to that solution.

Planning/Prep

Planning/Prep challenges are designed to come before another challenge: the player characters are given information about that other challenge, and then are given time to plan their approach / prepare any factors they'll use.

Goals: The goal is typically to find a solution to the upcoming challenge, or to create a strategy that will increase the odds of succeeding at that challenge. The player characters should be left feeling more confident in knowing how the upcoming challenge could play out — but not necessarily certain that it will play out that way, or confident that the challenge will be easy.

Factors: The factors are the information known about the upcoming challenge as well as any factors that the player characters can add to that upcoming challenge during the preparation. Additional factors can be restrictions on the amount of time that can be spent planning or on what factors can be prepared.

Solutions: While the goal is to find a solution to another challenge, the planning/prep challenge itself will have its own solutions. The solution is typically to examine the information and consider any helpful factors that can be added to the upcoming challenge, then create a plan that the player characters feel is either good enough to use or at least the best they could come up with.

Recon

Recon challenges are similar to mental challenges, except the process typically involves observation instead of direct interaction and the purpose is to gain information instead of causing an immediate change.

Planning/prep challenges can often begin with a recon challenge; instead of the player characters being given the information they can use to plan, they have to gather it themselves.

Goals: The goal is always to gain information that can be delivered or used, either by the player characters themselves or by another character or group. There can be requirements for the amount or type of information, or additional requirements such as the player characters not getting caught.

Factors: The pieces of information that can be gained are the main factors, alongside any difficulty in gaining that information and restrictions on how much information can be gained.

Solutions: There can be optimal ways to collect information, either in regards to the amount of information or in its total value. The solutions should typically involve thoughtful decisions over reckless action, rewarding the player characters for taking a measured approach.

Social

Social challenges involve communication between player characters and non-player characters. These challenges are therefore typically the most roleplay-oriented of the challenges, due to their reliance on the players to convey their respective characters' personalities.

Goals: The goal of a social challenge is to cause other characters to either act in a way that the player characters want or avoid acting in a way that the player characters don't want.

Factors: The major factors are the characters involved in the challenge, which each include their own factors for how they engage with others. Mental stats and each character's personality and current circumstances can greatly affect that character's reactions to various approaches.

Solutions: Leveraging situational factors and player character talents can maximize the odds of persuading the non-player characters. Players should often be rewarded for trying strategies that involve authentically portraying their character and engaging with the story.

Non-challenge Social Scenes: It should be common for player characters to interact with other characters in a non-challenge situation. Any social encounter that doesn't fit the description of a social challenge can be played out entirely through roleplay, and spontaneous-but-minor social challenges like asking for a favor can be resolved with a single show or purely by the game master deciding whether the favor is reasonable for the character to give. Social scenes without a challenge can be a fun way for the players to relax while still in character, engaging with the world by their own whims without needing to remember any rules or factors.

Designing a Challenge

Knowing the Player Characters

It's important to know what things the group of player characters can do as a whole, and what they can't do. If the group is good at dealing lots of damage in a single round, then the challenge designs will have to remember that less defensive enemies can potentially get eliminated as soon as their defenses drop. Meanwhile if no character in the party has a tactic range greater than 4, then the challenge designs will have to remember that far-away enemies (such as on the other side of a chasm) might be impossible to defeat in battle.

Knowing Each Player Character

Just as the challenge's design should account for what the group as a whole can and can't do, it's also important to know what each individual in the group can and can't do. A challenge should typically be designed in a way where all characters can contribute; an especially good design can account for strengths and weaknesses to let each character contribute in their own unique ways.

The Goal

The players should typically have a clear idea of what they're expected to be doing; a locked door with a series of levers around it informs the players that the goal is most likely "unlock the door", while a battle typically informs the players that the goal is "defeat the opposing characters".

A challenge can have secondary goals, which can allow the player characters to willingly make an easy challenge into a more difficult one. For example if a challenge's goal is for the player characters to sneak into a party, and they also know that a rival wants to attend that same party, the player characters can discuss the risks and potential benefits of trying to achieve both goals at once.

A challenge can also have multiple goals where not all of them can be achieved, requiring the player characters to make a choice about which goal they'd like to achieve. For example, a challenge can have two goals with "Rescue an ally held captive at a warehouse" and "Catch the criminal trying to escape through the train station" where pursuing one goal requires abandoning the other.

The intrigue of a challenge is largely attached to its factors: the details of the test or obstacle. Factors can be any aspect of the challenge that the game master decided to include. For example, a battle scene can contain a variety of factors:

- Enemy combatants
- Allies on the side of the player characters
- Obstructions on the battlefield
- Requirements for achieving the goal; it can often be as simple as "defeat all enemies", but there can be different requirements such as "survive until reinforcements arrive" or "reach the other end of the battle map"

The most important factors should be known to the participants, and should be either simple enough to remember or written down for easy reference. Some factors can be kept secret to add mystery and surprise elements to the challenge, but if a factor is secret then it should be reasonably possible for player characters to figure out what that factor is or it should be reasonably possible to achieve the goal without knowing the factor. If a factor is hidden, hard to figure out, and also important, the challenge will most likely be unfair and frustrating.

Challenges can often have factors in the form of requiring other, smaller challenges to be completed for the goal to be achieved. A mission could be to unlock a secure door, which turns out to include the factor of "the door needs 3 keys to be unlocked; each key is held by a different security guard, requiring a separate battle challenge for each key". Each small challenge contributes to the completion of a larger challenge, which can in turn contribute to the completion of the even larger challenge that requires the door to be unlocked. A campaign is often one massive challenge, with its arcs including the completion of smaller challenge factors along the way and missions within those arcs being even smaller challenge factors all building up over time to make slow but steady progress toward the campaign challenge's goal.

Not all challenges have to be within the factors of a larger challenge; "side quests" can give rewards that are nice to have but not mandatory for any larger challenge.

Example Campaign–Arc–Mission Challenge Ladder

Campaign Challenge: Prevent a brewing war between Prudomma and Centum

Arc 1 Challenge: Discover the motivation for the war

Arc 1 Mission 1 Challenge: Plan a way to enter the Prudomma military records office

Arc 1 Mission 2 Challenge: Search the office for records that give information about Prudomma's motivation

Arc 2 Challenge: Gain the respect of Centum's military leader. Setup arc focusing on a combat tournament, where the winner is given a trophy by the leader.

Arc 2 Mission 1 Challenge: Defeat the combat examiner to gain entry into the tournament

Arc 2 Side Quest Challenge: Go fishing to catch an exotic meal

Arc 2 Mission 2 Challenge: Defeat an opposing team for round 1 of the tournament, to proceed to round 2

The Solution(s)

Challenges need a way to be completed so that the goal can be accomplished. There can be one clear way to complete a challenge, or a variety of equally-achievable ways, or there can be some ways that are harder than others. It can be good practice to have multiple potential solutions to a challenge or to allow clever player ideas to become solutions, so that players feel rewarded for their efforts.

Having less strictly-defined solutions is especially helpful for allowing the story's details to shift without ruining the game master's plans. Larger challenges such as a campaign-long challenge or an arc-long challenge can stay relevant and achievable as long as the player characters take actions that could reasonably reach the same goal, and the players will feel as if their choices matter when they have the ability to find their own solutions.

Example: A door's guard could be listed with only a solution of "convince them to move or force them to move" and the game master can narrate the doorman moving at any time that they feel the player characters have chosen an approach that's worth rewarding.

GM

The Twist

A challenge can be designed to seem simple at first, until circumstances shift to add new difficulty. The twist is when some aspects of the challenge, typically goals and/or factors, are changed in a way that makes the players reconsider their strategy. The twist can also be viewed as an additional challenge within the current challenge, which isn't discovered until after the player characters have started trying their solution.

Example twist: The player characters are searching for secret loading docks; but now there's police blocking the way, and the player characters have to reach their destination without being spotted.

The twist can be that the reward for completing the challenge is different than the player characters expected. The reward can be bigger, smaller, equal but different, or occasionally even negative.

Differently-sized Reward Example: The player characters defeat a building's guard so they can enter; as he falls, he drops the master key that unlocks all doors in the building.

Alternate Reward Example: A puzzle to unlock a door actually unlocks a different door in the room.

Negative Reward Example: The player characters fight past guards only to learn that the antagonist had set her scheme in motion thirty-five minutes ago.

Twists should be included with care to consider how the players might feel about them; having twists too frequently, and having twists that make previous player effort worthless, can make players hesitant to care about the initial factors of a challenge.

The Reward

For most challenges, the main reward is to have achieved the goal; the reward for finding a secret entrance is "knowing where the secret entrance is". Challenges can also have additional rewards such as:

Character Levels

Becoming more powerful is one of the most iconic and satisfying rewards in combat games. As the player characters overcome challenges and experience the story, the game master can have them gain a level.

Levels should typically be granted to a character one at a time especially when characters don't already have many levels, but particularly large rewards can include multiple levels per character.

The benefits of gaining a level are:

- ✗ +4 Maximum Health (before applying any effects that change Maximum Health)
- ✗ +1 Stat Rank
- ✗ +1 to any priority rank (the player can choose Stat Rank)
- ✗ Increased limits, as listed in the character creation chapter.

Story Rewards

Since the story is a series of challenges, story rewards would often be that existing or future challenges become easier to complete.

New locations or story paths can also be given as a reward, giving the player characters more freedom in where they go and how they can continue working to achieve their goals.

Example Story Paths: A new location that can be explored, new people that can be worked with, or a new event that the player characters can participate in. Each of these rewards can be optional to engage with, but allow the player characters to decide whether they stick with their existing strategy or to engage with their new option.

Downtime

While not necessarily a complete reward by itself, downtime can be very valuable after the conclusion of a long or stressful challenge. Downtime allows player characters to relax and engage with the world at their own pace and in their own unique ways, appreciating life away from high-stakes peril. Additional rewards should usually be awarded alongside downtime since it contains no sense of progress by itself, however it can be a reasonable standalone reward if the player characters know how to continue the story when they're ready or if the downtime will be interrupted by story events to signify that the downtime is over.

It's typically a good idea to have **battle** challenges give **story-based** rewards, and to have **non-battle** challenges give **character levels**; this encourages deeper engagement with the story and makes it easier to transition back and forth between battle and non-battle scenes.

The value of the rewards should typically match the difficulty and length of the challenge; the toughest battles and the longest quests should come with the greatest rewards, unless the twist is for the reward to be different.

While challenges should typically feel like they can be solved, a challenge can be *clearly* too difficult for the player characters to solve with their current capabilities. These challenges should make it clear that it's perfectly acceptable to back away from them, and if the challenge can be attempted in the future then that can also be made clear. Challenges that are too difficult can be used to set up future story events if the player characters can come back to them, and they can be used to remind the player characters that some forces in the story are still more powerful.

FAILING A CHALLENGE

It should be expected that the player characters won't succeed on every challenge they face; if they did, the story would lose its stakes and choices would feel meaningless. However, failing a challenge also shouldn't mean that everything is lost and the story is over. Failing a challenge should mean that while the goal wasn't achieved, the player characters only need to find a new solution for the larger goal they're working toward.

A common way to prevent players from feeling hopeless after failing a challenge is to still have their attempt unlock some sort of advantage that will help with reaching an alternative solution. While their reward should be less valuable than the reward for succeeding at the challenge, the player characters can still be given a way to progress the story.

Not Everything Needs to be a Challenge

While challenges help make goals feel more rewarding to achieve, it's also important to practice restraint and sometimes let goals be achievable without a challenge. For example, while battle is technically always a challenge, player characters can feel powerful by mowing down a group of weak enemies on their way to their goal; similarly, sometimes getting information from a barkeep is as simple as asking for it.

Having too many challenges can cause fatigue where players feel that progress is locked behind arbitrary obstructions, so it's important to have smaller goals be easily achievable and preserve the feeling that challenges are worth completing.

Session

A session is the amount of time spent playing the game in a single sitting. Unlike other story components that define themselves based on their plot points, a session's length is determined by real-world time; it lasts for as long as people want to play.

Because sessions are reliant on real-world time instead of story events, the game master doesn't have to specifically plan the contents of a session. Instead, each session tends to be a continuation of the previous session as the player characters progress through their current mission or arc. At the same time, various concepts regarding sessions can still be optimized for the enjoyment of everybody.

The Mindspace

When the game master and the players are all fully attentive to the game and immersed in the world that they've participated in so far, they've all entered the mindspace of the game. The mindspace is an abstract concept, and it doesn't directly impact the game, but it's useful to keep in mind when designing experiences for the players. The goal of the game master should be to keep players in the mindspace during most of each session, where events feel like they matter.

Session Structure

As mentioned, sessions are less connected to a story's plot points. Instead, sessions have a structure to handle both in- and out-of-game tasks. The tasks listed below don't have to be performed in the order they're written, but the written order is designed to optimize the use of the mindspace.

The Bookkeeping: Approaching the Mindspace

Starting with concepts that are related to the game can be a good way to help players prepare to enter the mindspace. Bookkeeping can include:

Planning the next session: If the next session's details can be figured out ahead of time and while everyone is together, it can help maximize the odds of that next session happening.

Clarifying rules: If a player has a question about how a rule works, or there was confusion about a rule during a previous session, those rules can be researched and clarified before the story resumes.

Leveling up: It might be most convenient for players to apply any gained levels immediately before the session rather than outside of it, so that they can communicate with other players before and after leveling up.

Trivial tasks: If one or more players want their characters to perform some tasks that don't need narration, roleplay, or gameplay, such as buying basic supplies from a store, those tasks can be completed prior to the session properly starting.

The Recap: Opening the Mindspace

Not everyone is going to remember the minor plot details of last session, or important foreshadowing from several sessions prior. Giving the recap lets the game master establish the mood the session is starting at, easing the players into the mindspace. Typically the game master gives the recap, because they know what information is most important to the upcoming session. However, the game master can delegate the recaps to their players; in those cases, the game master should pay attention to what details are recapped as it will give insight into what plot details the players care most about. A recap can contain whatever the recapper would like, which can include some or all of:

Foreshadowing: If the game master is doing the recap, they can remind the players of events from past sessions that might have been forgotten but will become relevant during this session. Players might pick up on the specific callback and understand it means a related event will happen during this session, but an obvious reminder can still improve the experience more than if the foreshadowing stays forgotten.

Known information about upcoming challenges: Similar to foreshadowing, any information the player characters have been given that might be relevant to this session can be re-stated to be sure it's remembered when needed.

Decision-less activities since last session ended: If the previous session ended with the decision to perform a task that doesn't require any further choices, such as taking the train from one city to another, that task can be detailed during the recap. This inclusion is so that players can more quickly enter the mindspace by making story-relevant decisions as soon as the recap ends.

The immediate setting: Where are the characters?

The goal and why it matters: What are the characters doing, and why are they doing it?

The Transition: Arriving Inside the Mindspace

After the recap, players should be nearly within the mindspace as they recall their mental state at the end of the previous session. To finally put each player inside, the game master should follow the Transition In step of a scene's structure to solidify the beginning of the gameplay with that first scene. If possible, the first scene should also begin with a decision for the player characters to make; the decision pushes players into examining their circumstances through the eyes and personality of their character, which is vital for being within the mindspace.

Playing the Game

Starting from the first decision, everybody should be inside the mindspace and the majority of the session's running time should be within it. For the game master this means narrating the outcomes to the player character decisions and continuing the story of the campaign, and for the players this means continuing to make decisions through their respective characters.

Ending the Session: Leaving the Mindspace

While the end of a session is usually a real-world time, the game master can speed up or slow down certain moments within the session to have that time arrive immediately after the player characters reach a plot point. The game master can explain the events of the plot point, pause for the players to understand that plot point's implications, and then declare that the next session will start from that point. While entering the mindspace is a relatively slow process, ending the session suddenly ensures that players are excited to come back for the next session and enter the mindspace eagerly so that they can engage with the story.

There are exceptions to the rule of ending quickly on a plot point; the next-most common ending is after a conclusion to a larger story moment such as an arc. The characters can celebrate their victories and mourn their losses after the major moment of the story, giving appropriate time to wind down and leading into the next session's starting point where the characters decide what to do next.

Keeping the Mindspace Closed

After the session has ended, the game master should allow the players time to talk amongst themselves. The game master can still answer questions that the players might have, but letting the players lead discussion of the story helps them re-live moments of the session and preserve those moments in their memory, which can further help with re-entering the mindspace in the future.

The game master should also be careful not to introduce any new information or decisions after the session has ended. The mindspace is closed, and it takes special care to open it again, so anything that puts players back into the mindsets of their characters would also undermine the significance of the mindspace.

TASKS

When a character would like to do something, the game master decides whether the character needs to perform a show to do that thing. The main reason to require a show is when the task has **multiple potential outcomes** that would be **meaningful to the scene**. An outcome can be considered meaningful if it affects the way that the scene might progress, or if it makes any future events in the scene or story no longer reasonably possible.

The game master should typically exclude "nothing happens" possibilities from a show's potential outcomes; they should instead assume that a character performs the task until *something* happens, unless the character is specifically limiting the amount of time or effort they put into the task.

The game master can also choose to involve a show any time they think it would make the task more interesting.

Example: A player character wants to inspect a desk. There is a hidden button that opens the door that the player characters need to pass through, but there's also a hidden tripwire which would alert guards in a nearby room. The game master would use a show to determine whether the tripwire is triggered while the character searches for the button.

Note that this example treats finding the button as a guarantee; this book's advice is to not lock scene progression behind requiring successful shows. However, using a show to determine whether progressing the scene comes with complications can be useful.

This task has two potential outcomes that would be meaningful: one outcome is that the button is found and the tripwire is activated, which would cause the new event of guards being alerted. The other outcome is that the button is found without activating the tripwire, which would functionally prevent the player characters from triggering that tripwire in the future due to having no need to inspect the desk any more.

Remembering Information: If a player asks whether their character knows something and their character could reasonably know that information, a show should not be required. Shows regarding information should typically be reserved for attempts to gain new information or to recall niche information.

> Example: If a character is in their home city and needs to get to a train station, it's reasonable to assume that the character would just know where a station is and doesn't need to perform a show to remember.

> Example: If a character wants to examine the story of a witness to spot potential clues about a murder, the game master can allow that character to perform a show and where a successful show alerts the character to a lie that the witness is telling.

Subconscious Tasks: A game master can also involve shows for tasks that the players themselves don't know about yet.

> Example: The game master has all players perform a presence show; the game master doesn't tell the players what the show is for, but it's to see if any player characters notice that they're being followed. Any character with an output higher than the spy's agility show output will notice the spy.

> Example: A player character is having a chat with a stranger. The game master asks the player to perform a flat show with a bonus if their logic is 3 or higher; the player doesn't know what the show is for, but the game master knows that a medium output or higher means that the player character will remember the character's voice and realize it's the city's mayor in disguise.

Opposing Tasks: If characters are directly opposing each other, the game master can have each of those characters perform a simultaneous show. Typically, the character that succeeds at the task will be the one with the highest output.

> Example: A player character tries to smooth-talk a military officer into giving hints about a secret plan. The game master can have the player character perform a presence show to convince the officer to trust them, while the game master themselves performs a logic show on behalf of the officer for them to remember the importance of secrecy. If the player character's output is higher than the officer's, the player character is successful and the officer accidentally reveals some information; the higher the difference in outputs, the more information the player character gets.

Task Shows

If the task requires a show, the game master follows these steps. If it doesn't, the game master can skip ahead to the Outcomes section.

A task show determines the success of the uncertain task that a character is attempting.

The components of a task show are:

Stat: The game master chooses which stat is most relevant to the task.

> Example: If a player character wants to tell a convincing lie, the game master might require a stat show using creativity. The task show using creativity is called a creativity show for short.

Bonuses: The game master can give the character additional red cards for their show as a reward for having a high stat that relates to the task, or for any other beneficial circumstance.

> Example: A character is performing a presence show to intimidate a non-player character, and the game master gives them an additional red card as a reward for having high strength that aids in looking intimidating.

↗ Rarely, particularly difficult tasks or adverse circumstances can mean that the game master removes red cards from the show.

Outputs: Task shows have a number output, equal to half/1/2 times the stat used.

> **Tip: Task show outputs can be measured in any units the game master chooses.**
>
> For a character with 4 strength to throw an object, the game master can choose units of 5 meters: converting the 2/4/8 output to an outcome of 10/20/40 meters that the character throws the object.
>
> In situations with competition, the game master can also use relative measurements; a character with an outcome of 4 runs faster than a character with an outcome of 3, but slower than a character with an outcome of 6.

Finale: The finale determines side effects of the task. A finale **between 0 and 3** means the task has a negative side effect, while a finale of **4 or higher** is a positive side effect. The game master can decide that a task show has no side effects.

Task shows are often compared to a **minimum output** to determine success or failure, compared to an opposing task show's output to determine which character succeeds against the other, or used as a measurement for how much the character is able to do with the task.

Below are examples of different ways task shows can be used, and how they can be written or said aloud:

A task show with a minimum output, to climb a tree:

Written: "The character performs a strength show (Agility 3+)."

Said aloud: "Do a strength show, bonus at 3 agility."

> **Tip:** Situations that give additional red cards are written in square brackets. These situations give 1 red card each. Verbally, the default can be to say the minimum amount required for the bonus.

> **Tip:** Minimum outputs can be kept secret, since they don't affect the show itself. However, the game master can still announce minimum outputs if they think it would make the task more interesting.

A task show comparing character outputs, as they compete in a debate:

Written: "Each character performs a logic show (Presence 3+, Creativity 3+, the character wrote cue cards). The character with the highest output wins the debate."

Said aloud: "Do a logic show, bonus at 3 presence and at 3 creativity."

> **Tip:** Bonuses and penalties can be for situational advantages rather than always for having high stats. The game master can often decide situational bonuses and penalties based on the circumstances at the time the task is performed, so that player choices can impact the difficulty of shows.

A task show measuring how much a character can do, as they try to distract a security guard:

Written: "The character can perform a creativity show (Presence 3+; Penalty Presence 1). They distract the guard for that many minutes."

Said aloud: "Do a creativity show, bonus at 3 presence and penalty at 1 presence."

Flat Shows

The game master can require a flat show instead of a task show; a flat show doesn't use a stat, and its outcome will depend entirely on its output tier.

Flat shows are most commonly used when the potential outcomes aren't strongly affected by character stats, including when character stats aren't related at all to the task.

Example: Pike beetle venom is difficult for a body to resist completely. Characters affected by the venom perform a flat show and lose (8) 6/4/2 health.

The game master can also perform their own flat shows to determine events outside of player character influence.

Example: The player characters intend to hunt a creature that can only be found at a particular mountaintop on cloudless days in a typically rainy region; each day, the game master performs a flat show to determine the weather. The weather is (downpour) rainy/cloudy/cloudless for that day.

GM

Decoy Shows

The game master can occasionally perform a show, or ask players to perform a task show, and then do nothing with the results. This is a trick that makes it harder for players to guess whether a show is relevant to a scene.

> Example: If a game master doesn't use decoy shows, and requests the players to each perform a presence show as their characters enter a room, even if the players all fail the show they can be confident that the room has some hidden detail they missed. If the game master uses occasional decoy shows, the players can't be sure whether they missed a detail or the shows were decoys.

Quick Minimum Output

To quickly determine a task show's minimum output, the game master can pick a number between 1 and twice the level of the character performing that task; the more difficult the task, the higher the number should be.

The number chosen is the task show's minimum output. When the character performs their task show, if their output meets or exceeds that number, they succeed at the task.

> Example: A character is level 6 and wants to leap from one rooftop to another. The game master chooses the required output:
>
> The character's potential is 6x2 = 12.
>
> At this moment in the story, the task should feel like a risk; the game master chooses the number 5 to represent the odds being only slightly in the character's favor.
>
> Therefore, the character's show to make the leap needs a minimum output of 5.

Tip: To help players feel as if their choices affect outcomes in the story, it is suggested that the game master apply situational factors as bonuses and penalties to the show instead of modifying the minimum output directly. For example if the character performing the leap has a high agility, the game master can keep the minimum output at 5 but tell the player they get a bonus for that high agility.

Tip: The suggested numbers to reach a particular difficulty level are:

Difficulty	Suggested Number (% of Character Level x2)
Easy	1-20%
Medium	20-40%
Hard	40-60%
Very Hard	60-80%
Nearly Impossible	80-100%

For example if a character is level 10, the numbers would be:

Difficulty	Suggested Number
Easy	1-4
Medium	4-8
Hard	8-12
Very Hard	12-16
Nearly Impossible	16-20

Result Odds

To help the game master with planning show requirements, the tables below give information about the chances of each kind of result.

Output Tier	Odds	Output Tier or Better	Odds
0 Red Cards	6%		
Low	25%	Low	94%
Medium	37%	Medium	69%
High	32%	High	32%

Side Effect	Odds
Positive Side Effect (Finale 4+)	60%
Negative Side Effect (Finale 0-3)	40%

> **Tip: The odds for side effects lean toward positive because effort should be rewarded; while the ideal outcome is far from reliable, players should feel that it's generally worthwhile to push toward a goal and interact with the world that the game master is creating.**

To simulate additional percentages, a game master can take advantage of the following options:

Activity	Odds
Reveal a card. Check the value of that card.	50%: Value 0-4 50%: Value 5-10
Reveal cards until you reveal a non-10 card. Check the value of that card.	33%: Value 0-2 66%: Value 3-9
Reveal cards until you reveal a non-1 card. Check the value of that card.	5%: Value 10 10%: Value 9 15%: Value 9-10 25%: Value 8-10 35%: Value 7-10 45%: Value 6-10 55%: Value 5-10 65%: Value 4-10 75%: Value 3-10 85%: Value 2-10 90%: Value not 9 95%: Value 0-9

Outcomes

For tasks that don't require a show, the game master only has to consider the reasonable outcome of the task. They might have to account for information that the player character doesn't know about, but otherwise the outcome should be something that feels like a fair result.

Example of a fair outcome: A character would like to climb a rickety ladder to reach the top of a bookshelf. The game master's personal notes include that the ladder will collapse once a person finishes climbing it; the game master informs the player that they reach the top of the bookshelf, just as the rickety ladder collapses.

Example of an unfair outcome: A character would like to enter a regular-looking room. The game master's personal notes include that the room is an unlabeled testing chamber for an Instant Death Field; the game master informs the player that their character enters the room and immediately dies.

Tip: The difference between a fair outcome and an unfair outcome is typically the presence of appropriate warning, especially for tasks with a negative outcome. While it's possible for the outcome of a task to still feel uncertain, negative outcomes should avoid making players feel blindsided by massive consequences.

The game master can also reward creativity and engagement with the story by allowing an outcome to have a beneficial side effect, even if the task itself doesn't succeed.

For tasks that require a show, the game master considers the show's output. If the task show had been prepared in advance, the game master can use whichever outcome was listed for the given output. If the task show hadn't been prepared in advance, the game master considers which potential outcome is the best match for the output of the task show. The game master should give a better outcome for higher outputs, however if the outcome wasn't high enough to succeed then the outcome should still be a failure; a high output that's below the minimum is just a good attempt.

A finale of 4 or higher can cause a positive side effect while a finale of 3 or lower can cause a negative side effect. The game master can choose whether a given task has any side effects, but it can be good practice for them to at least let positive side effects apply for important task shows that the character doesn't succeed at.

As with tasks that don't require a show, the game master should still make sure that outcomes feel fair.

Example of a fair outcome: A character would like to intimidate a henchman to find out what their boss plans next. The game master decides that the show's outputs will relate to how much information the henchman gives; results of (0) low/medium/high will correspond to (no information) only a time/a place and time/a place, time, and what the boss will be doing there.

Example of
an unfair outcome: A character would like to see how fast they can run down a hill. The game master decides that any result below high output means that the character slips, falls, and loses (30) 20/10/0 health.

Narrating

The art of narration is in conveying all of the information the players need for understanding the scene without giving irrelevant information or presenting it in a way that's difficult to understand. A player's short term memory is a limited resource, and they have to devote some of their mental ability on channeling their character's personality, so it's important for the game master to be thoughtful about their narration.

Keys to Narration

When narrating, it's important for the game master to know which information is most valuable to be conveying. Narrative information can largely be sorted into the following categories:

Factors are the factors of the scene. When narrating a new location it's important to make sure the players know what factors are in the location including any immediate context, and when narrating an event it's important to describe any changes to the scene's factors.

Senses are the details of the scene that the player characters can see, hear, feel, smell, and taste. Narrating senses makes it easy for the players to put themselves in the shoes of their characters, setting a mood beyond the depiction of the factors.

Embellishments are further details about the senses themselves. Information such as context or historical background for the sources of the senses connects the scene to the world as a whole and can provide players with a way to learn more about the setting through small pieces at a time.

All narration should include factors so that players are aware of the options their characters have in the scene and how those options might change through events. Locations can typically be given more narration as they set the scene as a whole, so senses are easy to include and embellishments can be perfectly reasonable in many cases. Events tend to have shorter narration so embellishments can often be reduced or skipped for fast-paced changes and even senses can be lost when describing events that require urgent reactions.

The amount of information given for a single location or event should typically match the tone of the story at that point, with a more thoughtful tone leading to longer narration with more senses and embellishments while a more action-oriented tone leads to faster narration that has less room for information beyond the factors. The game master should also be willing to adapt their style to match with the preferences of the players, as different players might be more or less receptive to certain types of narration.

Example: The game master is narrating the arrival of the player characters in the Deathwood, a dangerous forest known for a fungus that uses bioluminescence to guide creatures into fighting each other. The fungus siphons nutrients from the bodies left behind, and condenses them into a single hyper-nutritious fruit at the heart of the forest; the mournfruit. The player characters have been hired to find it and bring it to their client.

Factors Only: "As you take your first steps forward, the fungus begins indicating a path veering sharply to your left; it would be the path you could follow to find a creature, but it's also the path that a creature can follow to find you."

Adding Senses: "As you take your first steps forward, your feet sink slightly into the ground below. A smell of death hangs in the air, and something feels strange; or rather, something feels missing: the sound of birds is entirely absent. A faint glow shines from the ground at your feet, as the fungus pervading the forest begins to create a trail of light drawn from your group to the nearest other creatures; and you know that means the other creatures are being alerted to that same line."

Adding Embellishments: "As you take your first steps forward, your feet press through a thin layer of mud before settling on the ground underneath. A smell of death hangs in the air, and something feels strange; or rather, something feels missing: the sound of birds is entirely absent. A faint glow shines from the ground at your feet as your weight triggers the bioluminescent reaction of the fungus pervading the forest. The light begins to creep outward, forming a trail; the macabre system through which the fungus soaks these woods in blood, guiding some unknown foes to your location."

Narrating Events

Whenever something changes within a scene and whenever a character attempts a task, the game master should describe the events that take place to inform the players of the changes and the task outcomes. This means the focus of the narration is on describing the factors in the scene that get added, changed, and removed, as well as the direct consequences of tasks. However, while the narration should indicate to players that changes have occurred, the details of the changes can be subtle hints. Major details can even be entirely hidden as long as the players aren't left unsure of how they might be able to move forward in the scene.

Example of hint events: In a metalworking facility that produces railway tracks, a character flips a switch labeled "Foundry Lockout". The game master narrates the switch clicking into its new position, and a grinding noise that can be heard from deeper inside the facility. While the players weren't given all the information about what changed, they still know that their actions had an impact elsewhere and that they can investigate it if they feel it might help them continue their mission.

Example of hidden implications: A character flips a hidden switch inside a warehouse security office. The game master narrates the switch clicking into its new position, but also describes that the player characters don't notice any change. While the players were given only the information that the switch is in a new position, they can be reasonably confident that the way forward is to explore the warehouse and look for any factors that might have changed.

Information can also be a type of factor that's changed by an event, such as if a character climbs to a higher vantage point to see their surroundings or if characters walking down a hall hear noises from the other side of a door.

The game master should make sure to give player characters time to react to any events they could reasonably detect, to avoid forcing those characters through a sequence that makes the players feel robbed of the ability to make decisions.

Narrating Locations

When the player characters enter a new location, or a location that has changed since the characters had last seen it, the game master should describe that location.

Locations are typically tied closely with scenes, so narrating locations tends to overlap with explaining a scene; particularly the factors the player characters can detect, such as other characters present and any objects that the players should be aware of. It's important that the game master includes details that help the players understand actions available to them, to keep the story moving and help the players feel in control of their own decisions.

Locations can also be given factors that aren't immediately relevant but can guide future decisions, such as posters that advertise upcoming events or warn of anti-military riots in another city.

Example: As the player characters enter the local bar, the game master makes sure to mention features that the characters can interact with; the barkeep cleaning dishes while making conversation with the patrons, a job board with active requests, and a poster advertising the upcoming Antaon Grand Tournament.

Tip: If players value the freedom to choose between multiple paths at any given time, having easily-accessible announcement boards in each town can be a good way to let players assess their options; the boards can hold posters for ongoing and upcoming happenings, as well as available jobs.

GM

PLAYING CHARACTERS

The main purpose of non-player characters is to serve as the helps, hindrances, and/or background to the player characters throughout the story.

The game master has plenty of freedom with how they play characters, but some good practices can include:

- ✗ Use neutral and helpful non-player characters, not just enemies. A common mistake is for game masters to create all of their major characters with the purpose of being antagonists and obstacles, resulting in a story where the player characters distrust everybody they come across. Non-antagonist non-player characters can let player characters interact with the living parts of the world in a positive, or at least transactional, way.

- ✗ Remember the purpose of each non-player character. The characters can have unique personalities and motives, but they should be roleplayed to achieve their purpose in the scene and the overall story. The game master should be willing to let non-player characters be left behind in the scene and in the story once they have no more purpose to serve.

- ✗ Have ways for even background characters to help the player characters move forward. If the player characters are feeling unsure of how to progress the story, it can be useful to be prepared with small connections to connect player characters to the story through any character they interact with.

> Example: The player characters are wandering around a city, hoping to find evidence about an official's corruption but unsure of where to look. The game master can have them bump into a stranger on the street, who happens to have heard a rumor that the official was seen entering an empty courthouse only a few days ago. The player characters can go to the courthouse and begin an investigation.

- ✗ Be aware of what each non-player character would and wouldn't know. The story's world will feel more alive and believable if each character only knows what they could have learned, rather than knowing everything that has happened in the story so far.

An important aspect to the setting is that it feels like a world the player characters inhabit, and not just a collection of objects waiting for the player characters to interact with them. Common ways to make the world feel immersive involve adding events and characters that revolve around something other than the player characters. Examples include:

- The player characters receiving occasional updates about events happening in other areas. The situations evolve over time regardless of player character involvement, and their consequences can influence the story that the player characters experience. Often, the events can also be too large for the player characters to meaningfully impact in any time shorter than an arc or even multiple arcs.

- Having characters with goals, social circles, and professional circles that don't revolve around the player characters. While non-player characters are designed for their purpose within the story, their relationship with the player characters can be more nuanced than the purpose itself.

> Example: The player characters operate as vanguards and are signed up to a vanguard company. Their company sponsor provides them with missions they can complete for payment, but the player characters are only one of many groups that the sponsor handles and several of those groups are stronger and more famous. As a result, the player characters are typically only given missions that the stronger groups didn't feel like accepting.

> Example:
> An antagonist is a scheming politician with several operations happening simultaneously. In the beginning of the story, the antagonist has never even heard of the player characters nor can those characters meaningfully impact his influence. As the story continues and the player characters grow stronger, they can begin interfering with his schemes and he will eventually come to know their names.

GM

THE PLAYERS

While the game master gets a lot of focus due to the amount of effort required to run a game, the players also have an important job in crafting and playing the characters the story will revolve around. Several pieces of advice can help players improve the experience for themselves, for the other players at the table, and for the game master. However, as with the game master advice, this is only a list of suggestions. Players have the freedom to act in any way that improves the experience of playing the game for themselves and for others at the table.

During Character Creation:

- Be willing to create a flawed character, especially in terms of personality. Many interesting characters are defined not by their strengths, but how they overcome their weaknesses.

- Keep in mind that the character will be played alongside the characters of other real people. A selfish character that steals from others might sound reasonable in a single-player game, but in a collaborative game it's important for players to be aware of how their decisions can affect others. Players should make characters whose goals, means, and lessons will lead to a more enjoyable time for themselves and for everybody else at the table.

- Make the effort to gain a basic understanding of the game's rules and the character being played. Since the game master has to devote their own effort to preparing each gameplay session, the players should do their part and be ready to play.

During the Game:

- Remember the game is a cooperative story, with all players being equally important. Players should aim to share the spotlight, and even help each other get their turn in the spotlight for a challenge/mission/arc.

- Be ready to accept failure. Randomness is part of the game, and the experience will be more enjoyable if the focus is on adapting to the events rather than dwelling on the result itself.

- Try to keep the character's personality and knowledge in mind while roleplaying and making decisions. Maintaining the character's personality helps keep the experience consistent, and can also make it easier to spot opportunities that push the story in interesting directions. Acting only on knowledge that the character themselves would have can help keep the story immersive by keeping player knowledge separate from the game.

- Trust the game master. While the game master plays as all sorts of forces that oppose the player characters, that opposition is in the service of a good story and helping everybody have fun. Being honest about a player character's plans and intentions gives the game master more information they can use for creating satisfying outcomes, and reminds everybody at the table that the game master is a narrator and not an enemy.

- Exercise restraint when disagreeing with game master decisions. Typically, the game master is the one that has all of the story information and is most qualified to be the one that determines which outcomes best suit that story. In the case of a rules dispute, correcting a rule can be fair but having a conversation about which rules are correct should be held in between sessions. An exception to this advice is if the disagreement about a decision arises from a player being made uncomfortable; ideally there are no situations that make a player uncomfortable at all, but if any arise then the best course of action is to quickly fix the issue so everybody can go back to enjoying themselves.

- Respect everybody else's time and effort. Treating the player characters as being real within the story, paying attention to things that happen and to things that other characters do or say, and overall becoming invested in the story as a whole will greatly help everybody feel that playing the game together is fun and worth doing.

BESTIARY

6

In this section is a collection of creatures that a game master can use, as well as advice on creating balanced battles and creating basic enemies.

Balancing Battles

The following sections give advice on how to create balanced battles and balanced sequences of battles. A game master might find that their player characters find battles to be too easy or too hard compared to what this advice recommends. Adjusting the suggested battle balance to adapt to the capabilities of the players is highly recommended.

Individual Battles

An individual battle is a typical battle, where the characters are restored to full health at the end. To create a battle of a desired difficulty, consider the combined levels of the player character side then refer to the table below; when the combined enemy side's levels are a particular percentage of the player character side, the expected difficulty of the battle will match that row on the table. The suggested significance of each difficulty is also listed, to help with making sure battles feel as difficult as they should at their place in the story.

Enemy Level Total (Compared to Player Side)	Difficulty for Players	Suggested Significance
50%	Impossible to lose	Establishing how much stronger the player characters are
60%	Very Easy	Cannon fodder
70%	Easy	Small obstacle
80%	Medium	Worthy foe
100%	Even	Dangerous battle; anybody could take the upper hand
125%	Unfavorable	Uphill battle
150%	Hard	Powerful antagonist
175%	Very Hard	Desperate last stand
200%	Impossible to win	Establishing how powerful an enemy side is

Battles with more than 2 sides are more difficult to balance, as each individual side is smaller than normal and temporary alliances could cause an individual side to become severely outmatched. Typically, the most reliable way to make many-sided battles is to make sure each side is roughly equal in level and isn't motivated to make temporary alliances with each other to defeat the player characters first.

Chain Battles

In various situations, the player characters can find themselves suggested to a sequence of battles without time to rest; these are called chain battles. Chain battles have alternate rules for recovering health, to represent the accumulating physical stress of repeated combat.

Healing after a Chain Battle: For the characters experiencing the chain, reduce their maximum health by the Chain Difficulty (explained below); any health that characters have above their maximum is lost. Characters do not gain health after a chain battle ends, as their injuries remain.

Morale Across Chain Battles: The player characters keep the same morale across battles; they don't lose morale even if their maximum health is lowered, but they also don't contribute their full morale amount at the start of each battle. If a character joins the player character side mid-chain, that character's morale can be added to the side's morale at the time of joining. However, if any characters leave the side mid-chain then that side should also lose morale equal to that character's morale.

Chain battles are intended to be the most common type of battle, where the player characters can feel powerful fighting against easier enemies but in a way that they still need to exercise caution to avoid taking damage that stays with them for future battles.

Chain Difficulty: Each battle in a chain has its own Chain Difficulty. Compare the enemy level total to the player level total in the same way as with the difficulty table above, and use the listed chain difficulty for whichever comparison is closest. The chain difficulty applies to each character based on their own level, and not the total level; a group of level 5 characters facing a chain difficulty of Player Level would lose 5 maximum health each. Chain battles should typically not have enemy sides that are a higher level than the players, but the difficulties are listed for completeness.

Enemy Level Total (Compared to Player Side)	Chain Difficulty
50%	Player Level /2
60%	Player Level
70%	Player Level x2
80%	Player Level x3
100%	Player Level x5
125%	Player Level x6
150%	Player Level x7
175%	Player Level x8
200%	Player Level x9

After each battle you create for the chain, record the chain difficulty it applies. For each character that will be affected by the chain difficulty, also record their current level minus 1/10th of the chain difficulty; you can round the resulting number to any amount you find convenient. For each subsequent battle in the chain, when determining the battle difficulty and the chain difficulty, use this newly-reduced level for the affected characters instead of their real levels; this reflects the impact of their reduced maximum health so that battles can continue to be properly balanced. These level reductions do stack with each battle in a chain; if a character loses 0.3 levels from the first battle and 0.7 from the next, the third battle should treat them as being 1 level lower.

Example: A group of 4 player characters are each level 5; their combined level is 20. Their first battle in a chain has a combined level of 12 (60%), which means a chain difficulty of Player Level (5). Each player loses 5 health, and their balancing levels become 4.5 for a total level of 18.

When creating the next battle, the game master can use enemies with a total level of 14 (about 80% of 18) which means a chain difficulty of Player Level x3; each player loses 4.5 x3 = 14 health, and 1.4 levels to become level 3.1 with a total level of 12.4.

When creating a third battle, a single level 12 enemy is now a reasonable threat. If the game master decides there will be a fourth battle in the chain, this enemy's chain difficulty of Player Level x5 means each player loses 3.1 x5 = 15 or 16 (however the game master chooses to round it) health and also loses 1.5 or 1.6 levels to settle at 1.5 or 1.6 each with a total level of 6 or 6.4.

In relation to the total level of 6 or 6.4, the fourth battle can be made very dangerous with an enemy side that reaches a total level of 7; even though an individual battle against a level 7 side would be impossible to lose for the level 20 group. However, the chain battles will have worn down the group's health (from 50 to 15 or 16, although characters with the Body specialization can have more) and turned this battle from a waste of time to a major threat.

Basic Enemies

There may be situations where you need to create enemies with short notice; the simplest method is to use enemies with no abilities, using the values from the following table. You can use this method for creating a single enemy, or multiple enemies, using the typical battle balancing based on the side's total level.

Attribute	Value
Level	Choose any level
Health	Level x10
Morale	Level x5
Speed Class	Choose low, medium, or high
Stats	Choose one stat; that stat's value is equal to Level. The others are 0.
Style	None
Tactic Types	One each of direct, exposure, and projectile. You can choose a different arrangement.
Tactic Outputs	Level x1/3/4 for low/medium/high
Tactic Break Points	Level x1/1.5/2 for direct/exposure/projectile
Tactic Stats	The non-0 stat you chose for the character
Tactic Powers	0

Entry Format

The layout of a creature's bestiary entry is:

Name		Level
Description: In-world information about the creature's appearance, behaviours, and other notable traits.		
Maximum Health	**Speed Class**	
Starting Morale	**Dash Cost Increase**	
Size	**Anchor Cost**	
Stats		
Body:	**Agility:**	**Strength:**
Presence:	**Logic:**	**Creativity:**
Abilities (if any)		
Ability	**Ability Description**	
Tactics		
Tactic Traits	**Tactic effects (if any)**	

The entry details unique to creatures are:

Description: An in-world summary of the creature's appearance, behaviours, and other traits that may be important when describing it in a story.

Size: The number of squares that the creature occupies in battle. Many creatures are 1 square, just like a player character. If a creature is larger, their size will be the total number of squares they occupy in each dimension. For example, a size of "2x2" means the creature occupies a larger square that is made up of 2 regular squares in length and 2 regular squares in width; a 3x3 creature would occupy an even larger square comprised of 3 squares in length and in width (or alternatively described as a central square, plus each square surrounding it).

Abilities: Any effects that apply to the creature or to others in battle.

Creature tactics may also have a type of "Special": Special tactics are unique actions the creature can perform as an action, by paying the tactic's cost to perform its effect. They otherwise don't count as tactics (they can't be used to attack or defy).

IMPORTANT KEYWORDS

Attack Only: A tactic with attack only cannot be used for anything except attacks.

Defy Only: A tactic with defy only cannot be used for anything except defies.

Mandatory: A mandatory tactic must be performed by the character whenever possible; typically this occurs with tactics that cost flair for extra impact, where the character will use the tactic as soon as it has enough flair (and at the appropriate time, if you can choose enough targets; you can still only use a mandatory tactic whenever you could use the tactic at all).

Mandatory Attack: The same as mandatory, but only restricted to attacks. The tactic does not have to be used to defy.

Mandatory Defy: The same as mandatory, but only restricted to defies. The tactic does not have to be used to attack.

Medic Spider — Level 2

A symbiotic creature that can consume the flesh and blood of prey, then use that material to heal wounds on itself and any creatures it's friendly to regardless of blood type or even skin composition; medic spider salves form a hard shell that protects the wound and provides important nutrients for faster recovery. Modern medicine research focuses heavily on trying to emulate the medic spider's ability to create its healing formula.

Maximum Health: 21	Speed Class: Medium (3)
Starting Morale: 11	Dash Cost Increase: 1 flair
Size: 1 square	Anchor Cost: 1 flair

STATS

Body: 0	Agility: 1	Strength: 0
Presence: 0	Logic: 2	Creativity: 1

ABILITIES

Medic	When you end your turn within 1 range of an ally, you can spend any amount of health to have that ally gain that much health.

TACTICS

Blood Bank

Cost: 1 effort	
Type: Direct	
Range: 3	
Stat: Strength (0)	When you flourish with this tactic, you gain 3/5/10 health.
Power: 0	
Outputs: 3/5/8	
Break Point: 5	

Hemoverload

Cost: 1 effort & 5 flair	
Type: Projectile	When you pay to attack or defy with this tactic, if your health is greater than your maximum health, you can spend all of your excess health to increase your output and break point for this maneuver each by the amount of health you spent.
Range: 9	
Stat: Body (0)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 10/15/25	
Break Point: 4	

BEASTIARY

Heckler

A small, lanky primate known for its tendency to throw objects from a safe distance as its primary means of combat. While the creature is considered relatively non-threatening, there are occasionally stories about particularly harrowing encounters with a heckler that landed some lucky hits. Hecklers are most commonly found in forested areas where they can hide behind trees.

Maximum Health: 30	Speed Class: High (5)
Starting Morale: 15	Dash Cost Increase: 0 flair
Size: 1 square	Anchor Cost: 2 flair

STATS

Body: 0	Agility: 2	Strength: 0
Presence: 0	Logic: 0	Creativity: 0
Style: Universal		

TACTICS

Jumpy Claw	Throw a Bug?!
Cost: 1 effort	Cost: 1 effort
Type: Direct	Type: Projectile
Range: 3	Range: 9
Stat: Agility (2)	Stat: Agility (2)
Power: 0	Power: 0
Outputs: 10/11/12	Outputs: 1/2/26
Break Point: 6	Break Point: 3

Handful of Dirt	
Cost: 1 effort	
Type: Exposure	
Range: 6	
Stat: Agility (2)	
Power: 6	
Outputs: 2/3/5	
Break Point: 5	

Pike Beetle   Level 3

Pike beetles are named for their unique use of tools; every pike beetle carries a long stick, chewed at the end to form a point, which they use to attack. They often spit their venom onto the end of their spear, allowing for application at a further distance. Pike beetles can be found adapted to nearly any biome on the planet, making them among the most common creatures to encounter.

Maximum Health: 30	Speed Class: Medium (3)
Starting Morale: 15	Dash Cost Increase: 1 flair
Size: 1 square	Anchor Cost: 2 flair

Stats

Body: 0	Agility: 2	Strength: 0
Presence: 2	Logic: 2	Creativity: 0

Tactics

Quick Jab

Cost: 1 effort	
Type: Direct	When you flourish with this tactic, you can choose another ally: that ally can sidestep up to 1 square.
Range: 2	
Stat: Agility (2)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 6/8/10	
Break Point: 7	

Fresh Venom

Cost: 1 effort & 3 flair	
Type: Direct	When you flourish with this tactic, your target performs a show (Body 2+): then they lose (8) 6/4/3 health, using the number of red cards from that show.
Range: 2	
Stat: Agility (2)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 11/15/20	
Break Point: 10	

Quartztooth Rabbit   Level 3

A species of rabbit that grows extraordinarily sharp crystalline teeth. A quartztooth rabbit produces such high levels of adrenaline production that it seems nearly incapable of sitting still, and their pelts have tough but extremely soft fur. These traits make quartztooth rabbits extremely valuable, as their products can be sold to multiple industries, but the difficulty in catching even one rabbit is beyond most hunters.

Maximum Health: 30	Speed Class: High (5)
Starting Morale: 15	Dash Cost Increase: 0 flair
Size: 1 square	Anchor Cost: 0 flair

Stats

Body: 0	Agility: 1	Strength: 0
Presence: 3	Logic: 0	Creativity: 0
Style: Universal		

Tactics

Crystal Incisors

Cost: 1 effort	**Attack Only**
Type: Direct	Immediately before you use this tactic, you must dash to a square that's within (half your speed) range of another character and at least (half your speed) squares away from your current location. If you dash toward your attack target this way, increase this tactic's break point by half (from 6 to 9).
Range: 3	
Stat: Strength (3)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 10/11/14	
Break Point: 6	

Hasty Retreat

Cost: 1 effort	**Defy Only**
Type: Direct	Immediately before you use this tactic, you must sidestep (half your speed) squares away from the attacker.
Range: 3	If your distance from the attacker is greater than the attack line's range, reduce the attack line's number of red cards by 1.
Stat: Agility (3)	
Power: 3	
Outputs: 7/8/9	
Break Point: 6	

An extremely aggressive species of bird, physically incapable of retreating from a fight and spurred on toward the smell of blood. Packhunt puffin hunting strategy is to injure as many prey as possible, seeking to maximize their bounty from each hunt; their high speed and persistence allows them to succeed at this uncommon approach.

Maximum Health: 48	Speed Class: High (5)
Starting Morale: 24	Dash Cost Increase: 0 flair
Size: 1 square	Anchor Cost: 2 flair

Stats

Body: 0	Agility: 4	Strength: 4
Presence: 0	Logic: 0	Creativity: 0

Abilities

Bloodthirst	Your move triggers don't trigger.
	You can't move away from enemies within (your direct range) of you.
	When you choose targets for an attack, you must target the highest-health enemy you're able to target.
	Whenever another ally's attack deals damage to an enemy, you can sidestep up to (half your speed) squares toward that enemy.
Stubby Bill	Your direct range when defying is 1 instead of 3.
	Immediately before you attack an enemy that's more than 1 range away from you, you must sidestep up to 2 squares toward that enemy and end your movement within 1 range of them. If you don't end your movement within 1 range of them, you can't perform the attack unless you can target another enemy within 1 range of where you end your movement.

Tactics

Draw Blood

Cost: 1 effort	
Type: Direct	This attack's health damage can't be reduced below 1.
Range: 3	
Stat: Agility (4)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 1/6/20	
Break Point: 9	

Shatter Bone

Cost: 2 effort	
Type: Direct	When you flourish with this attack, deal its damage to your target a second time (you repeat both the health damage and the morale damage that was dealt to your target).
Range: 3	
Stat: Strength (4)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 15/18/24	
Break Point: 19	

Viskara Hermit   Level 4

A species of crab that can create limited amounts of liquid refined sugar through its claws, which they use to hollow out viskara and create their own indestructible home. Biological capacitors allow them to store electricity, either for self defense or for hunting. One of the highest-demand seafood items in the world, due to the danger in hunting them but also due to how difficult it is to defeat one; viskara hermits raised in captivity never develop their unique texture or taste, as the viskara shell alters their physiology over a lifetime of exposure.

Maximum Health: 80	Speed Class: Low (2)
Starting Morale: 34	Dash Cost Increase: 2 flair
Size: 1 square	Anchor Cost: 0 flair

Stats

Body: 4	Agility: 1	Strength: 0
Presence: 1	Logic: 2	Creativity: 0

Abilities

The Unfaltering Crab	You can't dash. At the start of your turn, you can sidestep up to (your speed).

Tactics

The Tenacious Crab

Cost: 1 effort	When you flourish with this tactic against a target that's within this tactic's range of you, neither you nor your target can move or be moved until your next turn or until you use The Resilient Crab or The Charged Crab. You can end this effect at any time.
Type: Direct	
Range: 1	
Stat: Body (4)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 1/2/3	
Break Point: 9	

Tactics Continue ▶

TACTICS

The Resilient Crab

Cost: 1 effort	This tactic can't be used to defy for others.
Type: Direct	
Range: 1	When you defy with this tactic, prevent all damage you would take from the attack and its effects. When you prevent damage this way, you become moved (your speed) squares directly away from the attack's starting point; this movement isn't prevented by effects that prevent you from moving, but it only moves you once per time you defy with this tactic.
Stat: Body (4)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 0/1/2	
Break Point: 9	

The Charged Crab

Cost: 1 effort & 6 flair	**Mandatory Attack**
Type: Exposure	Immediately before you use this tactic for an attack, you can target an enemy within any range and dash to the nearest square within 1 range of them. This dash ignores The Unfaltering Crab. If you dash this way, the attack targets the enemy you dashed to. If you don't dash this way, the attack targets all squares except your own.
Range: 2	
Stat: Strength (0)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 4/6/8	
	Lightning Launch - If you dashed to an enemy:
	This tactic can't be defied, and when you finish the show for this tactic, double its output. When this tactic finishes, move your target (their speed) squares directly away from you.
Break Point: 13	*Electric Current* - If this tactic targeted multiple squares:
	When this tactic finishes, deal 3 morale damage to each target.

Smidgeon

A unique breed of small bird that has somehow gained access to shadows, but exclusively in regards to performing signature moves. Smidgeons are thankfully rare, as their potential for destruction rivals only their lack of self-awareness and they have been known to release devastating attacks upon individual insects while hunting. A small branch of researchers in Veyren are devoted to researching smidgeons with the hope of finding a stronger connection between a shadow's manifestation and its implications for the shadow user themselves.

Maximum Health: 60	Speed Class: High (5)
Starting Morale: 30	Dash Cost Increase: 0 flair
Size: 1 square	Anchor Cost: 2 flair

STATS

Body: 0	Agility: 4	Strength: 0
Presence: 5	Logic: 2	Creativity: 1

ABILITIES

Signature Move	When you add a smidgeon to a battle, create a signature move for it following the rules of character creation. A smidgeon is treated as having a rank 4 signature move, with a shadow level of 5. You can choose any flair cost for the signature move, between 3 and 15, as normal.
	(The smidgeon's signature move by default has a limit of 30 points for maneuvers, and 400 points for upgrades. Each +1 to the flair cost adds 10 points for maneuvers and 100 points for upgrades)

TACTICS

Go For the Eyes	Surprisingly Tough Feathers
Cost: 1 effort	Cost: 1 effort
Type: Direct	Type: Direct
Range: 3	Range: 3
Stat: Strength (0)	Stat: Strength (0)
Power: 0	Power: 0
Outputs: 3/4/12	Outputs: 5/7/8
Break Point: 10	Break Point: 10

Pike beetle kings have swelled venom sacs, which contributes to their size and reduced speed. They seem to be psychologically empowered from having allies nearby, fighting for longer and more aggressively if they feel they have to protect their "subjects". Their bulkier shape makes it impossible to apply venom to their spear; instead, they launch it directly from their mouth with great force (and great volume).

Maximum Health: 60	Speed Class: Low (2)
Starting Morale: 30	Dash Cost Increase: 2 flair
Size: 2x2	Anchor Cost: 1 flair

Stats

Body: 3	Agility: 0	Strength: 3
Presence: 4	Logic: 2	Creativity: 0

Abilities

Fealty — Your maximum health and starting health are each increased by 10 per other ally. Your starting morale is increased by 5 per other ally.

At the start of your turn, you gain 5 health per non-exhausted other ally.

Your attack outputs and break points are each increased by 5 per exhausted other ally.

While you're the only non-exhausted ally, the first dash you perform on each of your turns has no cost (including from having low speed) but your dashes must take the shortest possible path to be within 1 square of an enemy.

GM Note: When adding this creature to a battle, its level is increased by 1 per other ally.

Tactics

Venom Vomit	Noble Spear
Cost: 1 effort & 5 flair	Cost: 1 effort
Type: Projectile	Type: Direct
Range: 4	Range: 1
Stat: Presence (4)	Stat: Body (3)
Power: 0	Power: 0
Outputs: 21/28/31	Outputs: 18/21/28
Break Point: 11	Break Point: 12

Mandatory

You can anchor before you use this tactic.

Attacks and defies using this tactic can have any number of targets. At the start of your turn, if you have 5 or more flair but you can't target any enemies this tactic, you lose 5 flair and begin spewing venom until your next turn: while spewing venom, any character that enters or starts their turn on a square within 9 range of you that you could target loses any movement they're currently performing and becomes drenched by venom. A character drenched by venom has their speed reduced to half and has 1 less red card on each show they perform; they can spend an effort as an action to stop being drenched by venom. Each character can only be drenched by venom once per time you use this tactic.

Bellowbreath   Level 7

A bloated, blubbery creature that maintains a constant supply of high-pressure and highly reactive liquid underneath its skin in hundreds of "packets" throughout its entire body. While it attacks by forcing packets to send their liquid to the mouth and out through a small opening to become a burning spray, the coverage of its body with the packets also deters predators by violently releasing the liquid at any point where a bellowbreath's skin becomes ruptured.

As a defense against creatures that attempt to drain a bellowbreath's fluids from a distance, they have developed a habit of catching projectiles in their mouths and spitting them back at their assailant.

Maximum Health: 70	Speed Class: Low (2)
Starting Morale: 35	Dash Cost Increase: 2 flair
Size: 1 square	Anchor Cost: 0 flair

Stats

Body: 4	Agility: 2	Strength: 0
Presence: 3	Logic: 3	Creativity: 2

Abilities

Furnace Rupture	Whenever you take damage from a direct or exposure attack, after flourish effects, you lose 1 flair. If you do, you deal 10 morale damage to each enemy within 3 range.

Tactics

Chew Up	
Cost: 1 effort	
Type: Direct	When you flourish on a defy with this tactic against a projectile attack, you can deal 10 morale damage to the attacker.
Range: 2	
Stat: Strength (0)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 14/20/28	
Break Point: 15	

Steamburst	
Cost: 1 effort & 1 flair	
Type: Exposure	Attacks and defies using this tactic can have any number of targets.
Range: 4	
Stat: Body (4)	When you flourish with this tactic, your target can't move until your next turn.
Power: 0	
Outputs: 5/11/16	
Break Point: 13	

Wolf Hawk   Level 7

A small but cunning bird that often hunts in a pack, although not necessarily a pack of other wolf hawks; the bird is often opportunistic and will follow other hunting animals, forming a symbiotic relationship with each member providing its own senses to maximize the odds of finding and defeating prey. Wolf hawks are prized for their distinctive colors, often sporting bright purple and orange colors that create a disorienting effect when moving quickly.

Maximum Health: 75	Speed Class: High (5)
Starting Morale: 38	Dash Cost Increase: 0 flair
Size: 1 square	Anchor Cost: 2 flair

Stats

Body: 0	Agility: 0	Strength: 7
Presence: 0	Logic: 0	Creativity: 7

Abilities

Pack Hunter	Whenever another ally deals damage to an enemy, if they don't have a hunting mark on them, put a hunting mark on that enemy.
	When you deal damage to an enemy, if they have a hunting mark on them, remove that hunting mark and deal that much damage again (if you dealt health damage and morale damage at the same time, it deals both again).

Tactics

Measured Swipe	All or Nothing
Cost: 1 effort	Cost: 1 effort
Type: Direct	Type: Direct
Range: 3	Range: 3
Stat: Creativity (7)	Stat: Strength (7)
Power: 2	Power: 7
Outputs: 10/14/18	Outputs: 0/1/19
Break Point: 14	Break Point: 14

Airblast Crocodile   Level 8

An airblast crocodile has an extra set of lungs which are placed just behind its eyes. These extra lungs don't add oxygen into its bloodstream, but instead only hold air which it can release at any time in a forceful ejection that slams its mouth shut, launching the air out of its mouth at high speed for a powerful bite that can also be used as a ranged attack. Airblast crocodiles are commonly nicknamed "sneezers".

Maximum Health: 110	Speed Class: Low (2)
Starting Morale: 55	Dash Cost Increase: 2 flair
Size: 2x2	Anchor Cost: 0 flair

STATS

Body: 0	Agility: 0	Strength: 3
Presence: 0	Logic: 0	Creativity: 0

Style: Territorial		

TACTICS

Air Blast

Cost: 1 effort	
Type: Projectile	
Range: 4	Attacks and defies with this tactic can target up to 2 connected squares.
Stat: Strength (3)	
Power: 3	
Outputs: 8/13/18	
Break Point: 8	

Roll

Cost: 1 effort	
Type: Direct	When you flourish with this tactic, you must move 1 square that isn't toward your target or away from them. If the maneuver was an attack, you also move your target 1 square in the same direction that you move.
Range: 1	
Stat: Strength (3)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 16/18/21	
Break Point: 16	

Pneumatic Jaws

Cost: 1 effort & 3 flair	
Type: Direct	
Range: 1	
Stat: Strength (3)	
Power: 3	
Outputs: 20/29/34	
Break Point: 24	

Viskaramander   Level 8

A species of salamander with extreme regenerative capability, fueled by ingested viskara that its body passively feeds on as a source of energy for its cells. A viskaramander attacks prey by suddenly sucking in air to pull the prey in, then either swallowing it whole or crushing it with its jaws. Viskaramander research is highly funded by several cities, as their cells are theorized to be the key to immortality.

Maximum Health: 80	Speed Class: Medium (3)
Starting Morale: 40	Dash Cost Increase: 1 flair
Size: 1 square	Anchor Cost: 1 flair

Stats

Body: 4	Agility: 3	Strength: 1
Presence: 0	Logic: 0	Creativity: 0

Abilities

Viskara-fueled Regeneration	At the end of your turn, you lose all of your flair: you gain 11 health per flair lost this way.

Tactics

Toothless Bite

Cost: 1 effort	
Type: Direct	
Range: 2	
Stat: Body (4)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 15/18/21	
Break Point: 16	

Vacuum Force

Cost: 1 effort & 1 flair	Attacks with this tactic can target up to 2 enemies, as long as your targets are closer to each other than they are to you.
Type: Exposure	
Range: 4	When you flourish with this tactic, you can move your target up to (their speed) toward you. If you move that target to within 1 range of you without spending all of the available movement, deal 5 morale damage to that target per excess square of movement.
Stat: Body (4)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 10/15/20	
Break Point: 14	

Temperslug Level 9

A temperslug simultaneously produces a pheromone that heightens aggression in itself and allies, as well as an acid that creates fumes; the fumes of the acid combines with the pheromones to deepen the aggression to a berserk rage. A third chemical the temperslug produces is a highly slick liquid for it to travel on, allowing it a surprising speed in combat. Dissectors of temperslugs tend to note how little room the animal has for any organs except for the production and storage of so many chemicals.

Maximum Health: 90	Speed Class: Medium (3)
Starting Morale: 45	Dash Cost Increase: 1 flair
Size: 1 square	Anchor Cost: 1 flair

STATS

Body: 0	Agility: 5	Strength: 0
Presence: 8	Logic: 4	Creativity: 0
Style: Aggressive		

ABILITIES

Rage Pheromones	Allies within (your flair) range of you (including yourself) take half morale damage.

TACTICS

Acid Spray

Cost: 1 effort	When you flourish with this tactic, put a rage mark on your target. Whenever an ally (including yourself) performs a show to attack an enemy with a rage mark on it, remove all rage marks and increase that show's output by 10 per rage mark removed.

Attacks with this tactic don't remove rage marks. |
Type: Projectile	
Range: 6	
Stat: Presence (8)	
Power: 8	
Outputs: 5/11/15	
Break Point: 9	

Tactics Continue ▶

TACTICS	
Enhanced Acid	
Cost: 1 effort	Attacks and defies using this attack can have any number of targets.
Type: Exposure	When you hit with an attack using this tactic, and when you flourish with this tactic, put a rage mark on your target. Whenever an ally (including yourself) performs a show to attack an enemy with a rage mark on it, remove all rage marks and increase that show's output by 10 per rage mark removed.
Range: 4	
Stat: Body (0)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 5/7/8	
Break Point: 14	*(This effect applies 2 rage marks to a target if you hit them and flourish against them.)* Attacks with this tactic don't remove rage marks.
Vicious Fangs	
Cost: 1 effort	
Type: Direct	
Range: 2	
Stat: Presence (8)	
Power: 8	
Outputs: 14/18/21	
Break Point: 18	

Blast Eagle

A large, slow-flying bird with extremely powerful wings. It can create sudden gusts of air powerful enough to stun its prey, typically followed by a barrage of specialized feathers that it can launch to fatally wound the stunned target. The gusts are typically even louder than a gunshot, and in the drier regions that blast eagles tend to live, cities have "eagle chasers" that keep the birds away from cities in order to prevent eagle blasts from shattering windows.

Maximum Health: 125	Speed Class: Low (2)
Starting Morale: 63	Dash Cost Increase: 2 flair
Size: 2x2	Anchor Cost: 0 flair

Stats

Body: 0	Agility: 3	Strength: 7
Presence: 2	Logic: 5	Creativity: 3
Style: Aggressive		

Tactics

Stunning Gust

Cost: 1 effort	
Type: Exposure	
Range: 4	When you flourish with this tactic, your target can't spend effort until their next turn.
Stat: Strength (7)	
Power: 7	
Outputs: 8/10/15	
Break Point: 15	

Steelshield Talons

Cost: 1 effort	
Type: Direct	
Range: 2	
Stat: Body (0)	Defy Only
Power: 0	
Outputs: 25/30/35	
Break Point: 20	

Piercing Feathers

Cost: 1 effort	
Type: Projectile	
Range: 6	
Stat: Agility (3)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 5/20/50	
Break Point: 10	

Sledge Walrus — Level 10

A sledge walrus fights using ground-shattering slams, damaging opponents and creating spikes of debris that erupt from the ground to make counterattacks difficult. Its body is covered in a layer of dense muscle that it can reposition to shift its weight, which it uses to facilitate its movements and maintain its balance while warding off close-range attacks.

Maximum Health: 210	Speed Class: Low (2)
Starting Morale: 84	Dash Cost Increase: 2 flair
Size: 2x2	Anchor Cost: 0 flair

Stats

Body: 10	Agility: 2	Strength: 0
Presence: 5	Logic: 3	Creativity: 0

Abilities

Lumbering
You take half damage from direct attacks with fewer than 3 red cards, from exposure attacks with fewer than 2 red cards, and from projectile attacks with fewer than 1 red cards.

You can't dash unless you've already sidestepped toward the dash target since your last turn.

Erupting Shards
When you finish an attack or defy, you can put an obstruction on any number of squares you targeted. If any characters are on one of those squares, move each of those characters 1 square at a time, entering only unobstructed squares or squares that became obstructed from this maneuver, until they reach an unobstructed square. Each square's obstruction can be attacked as if it were a character; the obstruction, and any other Erupting Shards obstructions connected to it, are removed when it's hit by an attack with at least: 1 red card for a direct attack, 2 red cards for an exposure attack, or 3 red cards for a projectile attack.

Tactics

Quaking Slam

Cost: 1 effort	
Type: Direct	Attacks and defies using this tactic target up to 3 connected squares. At least one of the squares must be within 1 range of the maneuver's starting point.
Range: 2	
Stat: Strength (0)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 12/14/16	
Break Point: 20	

Fissure

Cost: 1 effort & 2 flair	
Type: Projectile	Attacks and defies using this tactic target up to 6 connected squares. At least one of the squares must be within 1 range of the maneuver's starting point.
Range: 6	
Stat: Strength (0)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 14/20/22	
Break Point: 10	

Aspidromos Level 14

A stocky, four-legged creature with a powerful build, and a set of thick bony plates covering the entire forward-facing portion of its body; the plates are all angled to minimize wind resistance when it charges forward, and to deflect blows away from it at the same time. Hunting strategies tend to involve surrounding an aspidromos and wearing it down with repeated attacks to its weaker hind spots; rookie vanguards are often informed that they should never try to corner an aspidromos unless they're prepared for their group to be run over.

Maximum Health: 180	Speed Class: Low (2)
Starting Morale: 90	Dash Cost Increase: 2 flair
Size: 2x2	Anchor Cost: 0 flair

Stats

Body: 14	Agility: 0	Strength: 10
Presence: 4	Logic: 0	Creativity: 0
Style: Dauntless		

Abilities

Headstrong	When you choose your location at the start of the battle and whenever an effect allows you to change your facing direction, choose 3 connected squares within 1 range: those squares are your facing direction. Whenever you move or are moved, your facing direction moves with you.
	Attack lines that pass through your facing direction deal half health damage to you, and can't deal morale damage to you.

Tactics

Charge

Cost: 1 effort	**Attack only**
Type: Direct	Immediately before you use this tactic for an attack, you must dash to a square that's at least (twice your speed) squares away and your dash line must pass through your facing direction. Enemies aren't obstructions for this dash. As you enter an enemy's square during the dash, move them 1 square to a square that you aren't currently on; you can choose to move them further along your dash line to move them again when you enter their new location.
Range: Special	
Stat: Strength (10)	
Power: 10	
Outputs: 4/5/6	
Break Point: 28	
	This attack targets each enemy that you dashed through.

Tactics Continue ▶

Tactics	
Thrash	
Cost: 1 effort	When you hit with an attack using this tactic, if your target isn't in your facing direction, move them (their speed) squares directly away from you.
Type: Direct	
Range: 1	
Stat: Strength (10)	
Power: 10	
Outputs: 10/20/25	
Break Point: 28	
Rotate	
Cost: 2 flair	Change your facing direction
Type: Special	

Burrowing Worm   Level 15

The largest land-based creature on the planet, with armor plating designed for it to slam full-force into the ground without slowing down. However, its travel-optimized biology leaves it with several weaknesses in actual combat and it relies heavily on its underground movements to avoid damage as it approaches its prey.

Maximum Health: 220	Speed Class: High (5)
Starting Morale: 110	Dash Cost Increase: 0 flair
Size: 3x3	Anchor Cost: 2 flair

STATS

Body: 5	Agility: 10	Strength: 15
Presence: 0	Logic: 0	Creativity: 0
Style: Rhythm		

ABILITIES

Ground-swimmer	You start the battle aboveground. You can only be either aboveground or underground; whenever you become one, you stop being the other.
	While you're underground, you can't be targeted; including by effects that target any squares you're on.
	If you start your turn underground, **Breach** is mandatory and you can't use **Burrow** on the same turn.
	You can't anchor.

TACTICS

Burrow

Cost: 1 effort	**Attack Only.** You can only use this tactic if you're aboveground.
Type: Direct	Attacks with this tactic target a square, and each square within 1 range of that square, as long as none of those 9 squares have obstructions on them (except for enemies).
Range: 3	
Stat: Strength (15)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 8/20/25	
Break Point: 30	When you finish an attack using this tactic, move each targeted character to an unobstructed square nearest to that character. Then your location becomes the squares you targeted, and you become underground.

Tactics Continue ▶

TACTICS	
Breach	
Cost: 1 effort & 3 flair	**Attack Only.** You can only use this tactic if you're underground.
Type: Direct	
Range: 3	Attacks with this tactic target a square, and each square within 1 range of that square, as long as none of those 9 squares have obstructions on them (except for enemies). When you choose targets with this tactic, you can ignore obstructions in between your starting point and the targeted squares.
Stat: Strength (15)	
Power: 15	
Outputs: 45/60/80	
Break Point: 45	When you finish an attack using this tactic, move each targeted character to an unobstructed square nearest to that character. Then your location becomes the squares you targeted, and you become aboveground.
Bite	
Cost: 1 effort	
Type: Direct	
Range: 3	You can only use this tactic if you're aboveground.
Stat: Strength (15)	
Power: 10	
Outputs: 15/21/30	
Break Point: 30	

Engineered Viskara Hermit — Level 16

An experiment from Veyrenian scientists, engineered viskara hermits have been selectively bred for size and enlarged capacitors that can harness the treated viskara shells they carry. These crabs have managed to reach the wild, however they are still much rarer than their natural cousins. Rumors are that engineered viskara hermits were an attempt to create a basis for organic engines of war, as an alternative to purely mechanical devices, but nobody knows how they might have been controlled.

Maximum Health: 288	**Speed Class: Medium (3)**
Starting Morale: 108	**Dash Cost Increase: 1 flair**
Size: 2x2	**Anchor Cost: 1 flair**

Stats

Body: 16	**Agility: 4**	**Strength: 0**
Presence: 6	**Logic: 3**	**Creativity: 3**

Abilities

The Magnetically Levitating Crab	At the start of your turn, you can sidestep up to (twice your speed).
	Each time you enter a square adjacent to one or more enemies, deal 4 morale damage to each of those enemies.

Tactics

The Unerring Crab

Cost: 1 effort	When you hit with an attack using this tactic against a target that's within this tactic's range of you, neither you nor your target can move or be moved until your next turn or until you use **The Immortal Crab** or **The Kingslayer Crab**. You can end this effect at any time.
Type: Direct	
Range: 2	
Stat: Strength (0)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 11/12/16	
Break Point: 32	

Tactics Continue ▶

TACTICS	

The Immortal Crab

Cost: 1 effort	This tactic can't be used to defy for others.
Type: Direct	
Range: 2	When you defy with this tactic, prevent all damage you would take from the attack and its effects. When you prevent damage this way, you become moved (your speed) squares directly away from the attack's starting point; this movement isn't prevented by effects that prevent you from moving, but it only moves you once per time you defy with this tactic.
Stat: Body (16)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 0/1/2	
Break Point: 32	

The Kingslayer Crab

Cost: 1 effort & 5 flair	**Mandatory Attack**
Type: Exposure	Immediately before you use this tactic for an attack, you can target an enemy within any range and dash to the nearest square within 1 range of them. If you dash this way, your attack targets the enemy you dashed to. If you don't dash this way, the attack targets all squares except your own.
Range: 4	
Stat: Strength (0)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 20/25/30	
Break Point: 44	*Lightning Launch* - If you dashed to an enemy:
	This tactic can't be defied, and when you finish the show for this tactic, double its output. When this tactic finishes, move your target (their speed) squares directly away from you.
	Electric Current - If this tactic targeted multiple squares:
	When this tactic finishes, deal 10 morale damage to each target.

A stout tortoise that reinforces its shell with any detritus it can scavenge, and binds it together with a strange glue-like substance it excretes from the shell itself. A mireshell has no ability to detect smells, which serves to protect itself from the extreme odor of decay that its shell tends to hold, but predators will often be deterred by the smell before they even begin to contend with the shell to cause any damage.

Maximum Health: 380	Speed Class: Low (2)
Starting Morale: 160	Dash Cost Increase: 2 flair
Size: 2x2	Anchor Cost: 0 flair

STATS

Body: 15	Agility: 2	Strength: 0
Presence: 18	Logic: 1	Creativity: 0
Style: Dauntless		

ABILITIES

Rotting Stench	Enemies within (your flair) range of you have the number of red cards in their shows reduced by 1, and their finales reduced by 2.

TACTICS

Lethargic Bite	Snapping Jaw
Cost: 1 effort	Cost: 1 effort & 2 flair
Type: Direct	Type: Direct
Range: 1	Range: 1
Stat: Body (15)	Stat: Body (15)
Power: 0	Power: 5
Outputs: 0/1/2	Outputs: 6/7/9
Break Point: 36	Break Point: 48

Rot Blast	
Cost: 1 effort & 1 flair	
Type: Exposure	When you flourish with this tactic, you can spend up to (your flair) health: if you do, deal that much morale damage to your target.
Range: 2	
Stat: Strength (0)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 0/22/42	
Break Point: 32	

Snowblanket Landmanta — Level 20

A species of manta ray that has somehow adapted to land, using its ripple movements to glide silently across snow. Native to the icegrip, and especially common in the Shroud, it relies on ambush tactics even mid-battle, creating snow and dust clouds that let it find new hiding spots. While hiding, a snowblanket landmanta can swallow a small amount of ice or stone and reshape it into a small bullet that it can fire without giving away its position.

Maximum Health: 225	Speed Class: Medium (3)
Starting Morale: 113	Dash Cost Increase: 1 flair
Size: 2x2	Anchor Cost: 1 flair

Stats

Body: 0	Agility: 20	Strength: 15
Presence: 0	Logic: 0	Creativity: 19
Style: Fast		

Abilities

Natural Camouflage

At the start of battle, you have a stealth mark. At the end of your turn, if you don't have a stealth mark and you haven't moved this turn, you gain a stealth mark.

Whenever you move, you lose your stealth mark.

As long as you have a stealth mark, exposure and projectile attacks targeting you have the number of red cards in their shows reduced by 1, and their finales reduced by 2.

Tactics

Pounce	
Cost: 1 effort	Immediately before you attack with this tactic, you can perform the Move action. If you do and you lose your stealth mark this way, increase the attack's output by 10/16/24 (to 52/66/84) and its break point by 16 (to 56).
Type: Direct	
Range: 2	
Stat: Strength (15)	
Power: 15	
Outputs: 42/50/60	
Break Point: 40	

Snipe	Stir Up Debris
Cost: 1 effort	Cost: 2 flair
Type: Projectile	Type: Special
Range: 6	You sidestep up to (your speed) squares, then gain a stealth mark. Your turn ends once this maneuver and any connected maneuvers are finished.
Stat: Creativity (19)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 10/25/100	
Break Point: 20	

A bird that has grown so massive its legs are often mistaken for trees; it hunts by standing in wooded areas and waiting for prey to pass below. Surprisingly little of the bird can be harvested for useful products, as its bones and flesh are all made of such lightweight material that it becomes brittle and collapses to dust without living cells to constantly repair damage and provide flexibility.

Maximum Health: 250	**Speed Class: High (5)**
Starting Morale: 125	**Dash Cost Increase: 0 flair**
Size: 2 1-square feet (see Towering Above)	**Anchor Cost: 2 flair**

STATS

Body: 0	**Agility: 20**	**Strength: 0**
Presence: 0	**Logic: 10**	**Creativity: 20**
Style: Universal		

ABILITIES

Towering Above	**You have no location; instead, you have two 1-square feet in separate locations. Whenever you gain movement, you choose one foot to move (you can't split movement among the two feet). You can ignore obstructions during movement, but you can't end your movement in an obstructed square and your feet must never be more than 5 squares apart from each other.**
	Characters can target either of your feet to target you.

TACTICS

Impale from Overhead

Cost: 1 effort	
Type: Direct	When you choose targets with this tactic, choose any square within range of either of your feet: this tactic's starting point is that square, and it targets that square.
Range: Special	
Stat: Logic (10)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 26/40/75	
Break Point: 50	

Tactics Continue ▶

Tactics		
Galeforce Wings		
Cost: 1 effort & 3 flair		This tactic targets each square within range of *each* of your feet, except your feet.
Type: Exposure		
Range: 6		
Stat: Creativity (20)		
Power: 0		
Outputs: 75/90/125		
Break Point: 50		
Stomping Strut		
Cost: 1 effort		Immediately before you use this tactic, move one of your feet to any square within (your speed) range of your other foot.
Type: Direct		
Range: 3		
Stat: Logic (10)		This tactic targets each square within range of the foot you moved, except your feet.
Power: 5		
Outputs: 21/27/45		
Break Point: 50		

Pandoramun   Level 30

A pandoramun is a flying creature that looks like a mass of thorned tentacles surrounding a math, with wings covered in rows of calcite plating; it carves intricate designs into the plating and fills them with viskara, in a process similar to viskara hermits reshaping their homes, to reinforce the plates while also harvesting the energy. A pandoramun flies by surrounding itself with its wings like an umbrella, and using organs within its wings that convert viskara electricity to heat, and riding the hot air to float in whatever direction it chooses. The tips of its wings have pointed spikes, and it when it finds prey, it quickly angles itself to point the spikes downward before snapping its wings shut to launch itself faster than the speed of sound and aiming to impale the prey. When grounded, a pandoramun often keeps its wings shut to fend off attacks, but it goes on the offensive by opening its wings and flailing with its tentacles in an attempt to surprise and overwhelm other creatures.

Maximum Health: 300	Speed Class: Medium (3)
Starting Morale: 150	Dash Cost Increase: 1 flair
Size: 3x3	Anchor Cost: 1 flair

Stats

Body: 0	Agility: 30	Strength: 30
Presence: 0	Logic: 0	Creativity: 0
Style: Rhythm		

Abilities

Tyrant of the Skies	You start the battle airborne. You can only be either airborne or landed; whenever you become one, you stop being the other.
	While you're airborne, you have no location and can't be targeted by any maneuvers, but you gain 1 less flair per turn and your maximum flair is 6. While you have 6 flair and are airborne, **Supersonic Skydive** is mandatory.
	While you're landed, you can't move and your speed is 1 for effects that move you.

Tactics

Storm of Tendrils

Cost: 1 effort & 2 flair	You can only use this tactic if you're landed.
Type: Projectile	Attacks and defies using this tactic can have any number of targets.
Range: 6	
Stat: Strength (30)	*Sudden Emergence* - If this tactic is being used to attack and the attack caused you to stop being protected, this attack can't be reacted to.
Power: 30	
Outputs: 20/27/40	
Break Point: 40	

TACTICS

Take Off

Cost: 1 effort	You can only use this tactic if you're landed and not anchored.
Type: Exposure	
Range: 4	Attacks and defies with this tactic target all squares except your own.
Stat: Body (0)	
Power: 0	When you finish an attack or defy using this tactic, you become airborne. You can't use **Supersonic Skydive** until your next turn.
Outputs: 45/55/65	
Break Point: 45	

Supersonic Skydive

Cost: 2 effort	**Attack Only.** You can only use this tactic if you're airborne.
Type: Direct	
Range: Special	When you choose targets with this tactic, choose any square: this tactic's starting point is that square, and it targets each square within 1 range.
Stat: Strength (30)	
Power: 30	
Outputs: 0/185/330	
Break Point: 135	

When you perform a show to attack with this tactic, increase your number of red cards by 2, then reduce your number of red cards by your target's number of red cards if they're defying the attack.

When you finish an attack using this tactic, move each targeted character to an unobstructed square nearest to that character. Then your location becomes the squares you targeted, you become landed, and until you attack or defy, you become protected: while protected, attack lines targeting you have their number of red cards reduced by 2 and can't flourish. You can't attack or defy until your next turn.

While a doubt is definitely related to frogs, nobody knows how this species grows so large or how its hands have become so mutated that they've each split into a three-fingered talon and a two-fingered talon with extremely sharp claws on each finger. The doubt received its name from how strongly the reports of its existence and appearance were disbelieved, especially given how long it took for even one to be defeated and brought in for proof of its existence. A doubt is typically a solitary ambush hunter; it approaches in dead silence, then leaps forward in a storm of blades that very few can survive. In modern times, the name of "doubt" has gained additional meaning; the creature is the manifestation of self-doubt, ending the lives of vanguards that falter.

Maximum Health: 350	Speed Class: High (5)
Starting Morale: 175	Dash Cost Increase: 0 flair
Size: 2x2	Anchor Cost: 2 flair

STATS		
Body: 0	Agility: 35	Strength: 30
Presence: 25	Logic: 20	Creativity: 25
Style: Dreadnought		

ABILITIES	
Leaping Menace	At the start of your turn, target a square to dash to that's at least (your speed) squares away; each non-exhausted enemy within 3 range of your dash targets can spend 1 effort to sidestep, and after each character has performed their sidesteps (if any), you dash to the square you targeted. Perform the first valid effect below (for example if you can perform the *Bravery* triggered effect, you skip the *Doubt* and *Terror* effects even if either of them could also be triggered).
	Bravery - If any enemies moved to stand in the path of your dash: Your attacks against those characters deal half damage, and you can't flourish on attacks, until your next turn.
	Doubt - If any enemies didn't move: Each of your attacks must target at least one of those characters, if you are able to target them, until your next turn. Your attacks deal half damage to those characters.
	Terror - If every enemy moved: If the first attack you perform this turn uses **No Escape**, increase your finale for that attack by **3**.

Tactics		
Apex Hunter		
Cost: 1 effort		
Type: Direct		
Range: 3		
Stat: Agility (35)		
Power: 30		
Outputs: 70/100/130		
Break Point: 70		
No Escape		
Cost: 1 effort		When you flourish with this tactic, you can move your target up to (their speed) squares toward you.
Type: Projectile		
Range: 9		
Stat: Strength (30)		
Power: 30		
Outputs: 50/55/65		
Break Point: 35		
Herdslayer		
Cost: 1 effort & 3 flair		Attacks and defies using this tactic target all squares except your own.
Type: Direct		
Range: 3		
Stat: Strength (30)		
Power: 0		
Outputs: 105/115/135		
Break Point: 105		
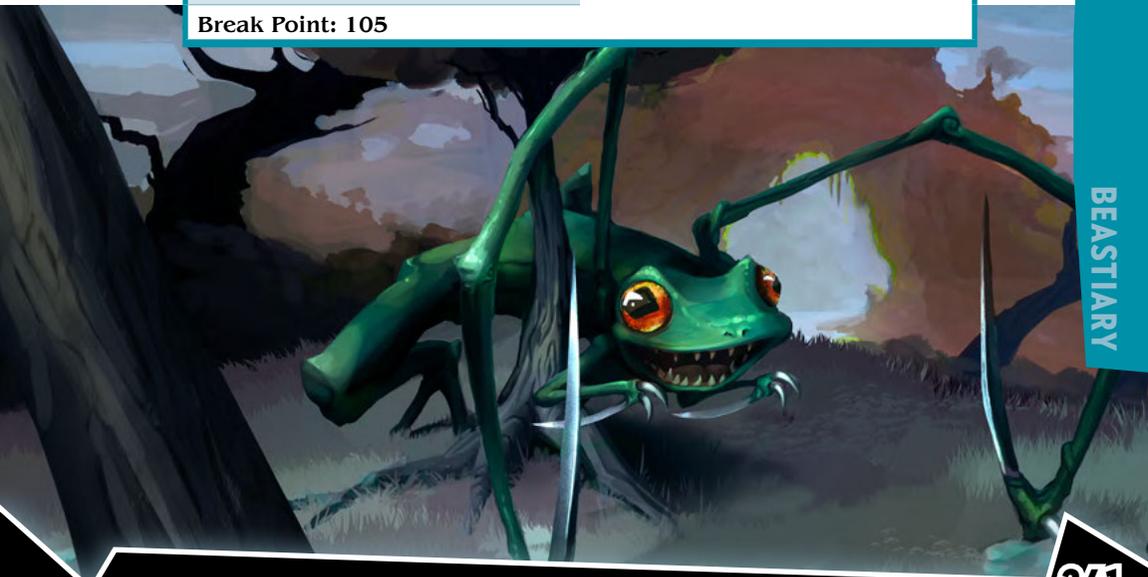
Prudomman Mech   Level 40

One of the greatest feats Prudomma has been able to produce. A Prudomman mech is capable of defeating a small army, and its built-in viskara engine with a massive kinetic battery allows it to recharge mid-battle behind the safety of its castle-wall style leg armor. Its lightning cannon is among the most devastating attacks in the world, and Prudomma is fielding proposals for a mass-production mech factory.

Maximum Health: 600	Speed Class: Medium (3)
Starting Morale: 300	Dash Cost Increase: 1 flair
Size: 4x4	Anchor Cost: 1 flair

STATS

Body: 0	Agility: 0	Strength: 0
Presence: 0	Logic: 0	Creativity: 0

ABILITIES

Machine	You don't take morale damage. When you're shaken, morale damage against you doesn't become health damage.
	You can't perform all out attacks, or spend flair on anything other than paying the costs of your tactics.
	Your move triggers don't trigger.
Weak Point	Attack lines that target you and have 4 or more red cards have no break point.

TACTICS

Remove Infantry

Cost: 1 effort	**Attack Only**
Type: Direct	Attacks using this tactic target each square except your own.
Range: 2	
Stat: Strength (0)	When you flourish with this tactic, move your target (their speed) squares directly away from you.
Power: 0	
Outputs: 30/35/40	
Break Point: 80	

Tactics Continue ▶

TACTICS	
Fortress Configuration	
Cost: 1 effort	**Stance Only**
Type: Direct	Instead of gaining health when you stance with this tactic, record your output. Until you perform another action, reduce all incoming damage by half that output amount (reduce health damage and morale damage separately). This doesn't reduce damage from attacks that have 4 or more red cards.
Range: 2	
Stat: Body (0)	
Power: 0	
Outputs: 70/84/90	
Break Point: 80	*(If you perform no actions on your next turn, this effect still continues. It has no end except for when you perform another action.)*
Lightning Cannon	
Cost: 1 effort	
Type: Projectile	
Range: 6	
Stat: Agility (0)	**Attack Only**
Power: 0	
Outputs: 100/150/200	
Break Point: 80	

Teyos   Level 50

A species of human-sized dragonfly with high intelligence and universal access to shadows. The exoskeleton of a teyos are proportionally much thicker than a normal dragonfly's would be, and appears to be some sort of hardened mycelial network that covers most of the body, however no humans have ever been allowed to study a teyos nor will any teyos answer questions about it. The city of Gage, located on the oversea island of Kaphor, has seen prodigious growth and is on track to become the next supercity.

Maximum Health: 611	Speed Class: High (5)
Starting Morale: 306	Dash Cost Increase: 0 flair
Size: 1 square	Anchor Cost: 2 flair

Stats

Body: 0	Agility: 0	Strength: 0
Presence: 50	Logic: 50	Creativity: 50

Superior Shadows

When you add a teyos to a battle, create shadows and tactics for it following the rules of character creation. The teyos can have any arrangement of shadow ranks that adds up to a total of 4. A teyos is treated as having shadows with the respective ranks you chose, with a shadow level of 100.

You can choose for each of the teyos' tactics to have any name, be any type, and use any stat from among presence, logic, and creativity, but its stats don't contribute to the maximum tactic upgrade points.

Abilities

Spirit Breaker	Against enemies that aren't shaken, all damage you deal is morale damage.
	Your style applies against characters with morale.

Somac Parasite   Level X (See **Parasite**)

An organism resembling a small octopus with unnaturally long and thin tentacles, a somac parasite will attach to a creature's neck and physically insert its tentacles through the skin int`o the brain. Upon making the connection, it grants shadows to its host through some unknown process while also making slight behavioural adjustments such as prioritizing the safety of the parasite and using combat patterns that take advantage of the shadows

Maximum Health: 10 X	Speed Class: None
Starting Morale: 5 X	Dash Cost Increase: Not usable
Size: None; attached to host	Anchor Cost: Not usable

STATS		
Body: 0	Agility: 0	Strength: 0
Presence: 0	Logic: 0	Creativity: 0

PARASITE

You can attach a somac parasite to any creature in the bestiary, or to any human. When you attach it, choose any level for it to be and create shadows for it following the rules of character creation. The somac parasite can have any arrangement of shadow ranks that adds up to a total of 4. A somac parasite is treated as having shadows with the respective ranks you chose, with a shadow level equal to the level you chose for the somac parasite plus the level of the character it's attached to. Any shadow arts upgrades apply to the non-special tactics of the character that the somac parasite is attached to, instead of applying to any other tactics, and the maximum number of tactic upgrade points is equal to the somac parasite's level times its shadow arts rank times 10: if the tactic costs additional effort, increase that 10 by 6 per additional effort, and if it costs additional flair, then increase that 10 by 2 per flair; if it costs no effort, reduce that 10 to 5.

A somac parasite's maximum health is equal to 10 times its level, and its starting morale is equal to 5 times its level.

Add the somac parasite's level, maximum health, and starting morale to the level, maximum health, and starting morale, respectively, to the character it's attached to, and add the somac parasite's level to the maximum power of each tactic that belongs to the character it's attached to.

A somac parasite doesn't count as being in battle. Instead, the character it's attached to has the shadows and tactics of the somac parasite as if they were the creature's own shadows and tactics (in addition to any that the creature already has).

Nobody knows what this creature is, or where it comes from. The only descriptions come from the field reports of lightning chasers scouting out a viskara location, and none of those chasers have survived the battle. The creature has four spider-like legs with an upright torso, a pair of arms and a pair of scythe-like appendages that curve around the shoulders. The creature has no facial features beyond a mouth and a collection of protrusions from its helmet-like head. Its behaviours are unknown; reports have only described it as slowly walking around in the area of the viskara, with no clear goal.

Maximum Health: 1250	Speed Class: Medium (3)
Starting Morale: 625	Dash Cost Increase: 1 flair
Size: 3x3	Anchor Cost: 1 flair

STATS

Body: 0	Agility: 0	Strength: 0
Presence: 0	Logic: 0	Creativity: 100

Style: Universal

Whenever you would perform a show, you can instead choose your original number of red cards (0 to 5) and original finale (0 to 10); you must either choose both numbers or choose neither. If you choose your results, your flair is affected by your choices:
- 0 red cards: Gain 2 flair.
- 1 red card: Gain 1 flair.
- 2 red cards: No change.
- 3 red cards: Spend 1 flair.
- 4 or 5 red cards: Spend 2 flair.
- Original finale between 0 and 3: Gain 1 flair.
- Original finale between 4 and 10: Spend 1 flair.

Options that require spending flair cannot be chosen if you aren't able to spend that flair. You make this choice before any simultaneous shows are performed.

TACTICS

Strange Beam	Teleport
Cost: 1 effort	Cost: 4 flair
Type: Projectile	Type: Special
Range: 6	
Stat: Creativity (100)	Choose any square. You teleport to that square.
Power: 100	
Outputs: 30/60/130	
Break Point: 100	

Flurry of Strikes	
Cost: 1 effort	
Type: Direct	
Range: 2	
Stat: Strength (50)	Attacks and defies using this tactic can have any number of targets.
Power: 0	
Outputs: 50/75/160	
Break Point: 200	

GLOSSARY

Action (P. 136): A maneuver that can be performed on your turn, while no other maneuvers are being performed. If a maneuver is performed "as an action" it follows normal action rules; if an effect allows you to perform an action, you can perform it at whatever time the effect happens.

All Out Attack (P. 137): An improved attack that changes your show to reveal 2 cards at a time instead of 5 at once. Revealing exactly 3 red cards lets you flourish regardless of your finale, but 4 or more red cards reduces your original output and original finale to 0.

Ally (P. 134): A character on your side in battle. Allies don't count as obstructions. You are your own ally.

Anchor (P. 137): Improve your tactic outputs, but limit your movement only to flourish effects, until your next turn. Cost is increased for higher-speed characters.

Attack (P. 136): Use a tactic to damage enemies. Deals damage equal to your output to each target, and you can flourish if your finale is 4 or higher.

Attack Line (P. 151): The targeting line drawn for an attack. Usually drawn from the attacker to a character, but it can be drawn to a square in some cases.

Aura (P. 71): One of the shadows. An aura allows a character to spend flair to store cards and use them later for bonuses.

Break Point (P. 80): A number on a tactic that determines how much of its attack output can be applied as damage to health; any excess applies as damage to morale. A tactic's break point is typically 1/1.5/2 times your level for a projectile/exposure/direct tactic.

Challenge Fate (P. 140): A reaction you can use before any maneuver. Gain 1 effort, add your level to the output of up to one show, and gain health equal to your output if you flourish. Next turn you gain 2 less effort, and you can't challenge fate until after your next battle. Your health only becomes half your maximum at the end of the battle.

Connected Squares (p. 149): Squares that are targeted with special targeting rules, where they become targeted one at a time instead of all at once. The first square is targeted as normal, but each additional square is targeted by drawing a 1-range line from the most recently targeted square to a new square. Connected squares ignore enemies as obstructions and don't need to be targetable from the original starting point, but they do all need to be within range of the original starting point.

Dash (p. 154): A type of movement where you target a square and move in a straight line until you reach that square. The Move action allows you to dash to any square within (your speed) of any other character.

Defy (p. 139): Use a tactic to reduce the output of an attack line. Used as a reaction to an enemy attacking. You can reduce damage to health based on your output, or prevent all damage to morale regardless of output.

Defy Line (p. 151): The targeting line drawn for a defy. Usually drawn from the defier to the attack line being defied, but it can be drawn to a square in some cases.

Effort (p. 55): The main resource each character uses to perform most maneuvers. You start combat with 1 effort and your effort is set to 3 at the start of each of your turns. You can't have more than 3 effort.

Enemy (p. 134): A character that's not on your side in battle. Enemies are obstructions for targeting lines you would draw through them.

Exhausted (p. 142): The state of a character having 0 or less health. While exhausted you only get 1 effort each turn, you can't dash, and you don't obstruct any targeting but you can't be targeted by attacks (you still prevent characters from ending movement on your square) and you can sidestep up to (your speed) once on each of your turns as an action. If all characters on a side in a battle are exhausted, that side loses the battle.

Finale (p. 57): The value of the last card revealed for a show.

Flair (P. 55): A resource that characters can spend for various effects, such as performing all out shows and paying for shadow abilities. You start combat with 1 flair and you gain 3 flair each turn, to a maximum of 30.

Flourish (P. 65): Finishing an attack or defy show with a finale of 4 or higher.

Health (P. 59): A measure of a character's ability to continue fighting; while a character has 0 or less health, they're exhausted. While you have more than your maximum health, any health you gain on top is reduced by your current excess health.

Immediately Before/After (P. 146): A term that connects a maneuver to happen before or after another maneuver as a single event; non-connected maneuvers that require targets happen after all of the connected maneuvers. You pay for the main maneuver before performing any "immediately before"-type effects.

Maneuver (P. 144): Any individual thing that a character can do that involves paying a cost, choosing a target, or or influencing a character with an effect. Most game rules only use the term Maneuver to refer to "something being done".

Morale (P. 60): A measure of a side's mental state in battle; while a side has 0 morale, every character on that side is shaken. Effects that change your morale apply to your side's morale. Any time you would gain health, you can increase your morale by that much instead.

Move (P. 152): Travel from one square to another square. The Move action allows you to choose either to dash to a square within (your speed) range from another character, or to sidestep up to (your speed) squares.

Move Trigger (P. 79): A special flourish effect that happens when you also have at least 1/2/3 red cards in the original show for a direct/exposure/projectile tactic. When the move trigger happens, you can perform the Move action.

Obstruction (P. 150): An object or character that prevents targeting lines and/or characters from passing through it. Enemies are obstructions, and objects that the attack/moving character/etc can't pass through are also obstructions.

Original Show/Finale/Output (p. 58): The details of the show before any other increases or decreases are applied.

Output (p. 79): The main result of a show, based on how many red cards were revealed. Results will be 0/low/medium/high at 0/1/2/3+ red cards. Tactics have their own low/medium/high number values to determine the effectiveness of an attack or defy.

Power (p. 75): A tactic's measure for how strong its stat effect is. Your power is doubled when you flourish.

Range (p. 152): The maximum distance that a tactic or other effect can influence; for example an effect that deals damage to "all characters within 5 range" will deal that damage to every character it can target that's up to 5 squares of the effect's starting point.

Reaction (p. 139): A maneuver that can be performed as soon as an event happens, such as a defy which can be performed as a reaction to a character starting an attack. Performing a maneuver "as a reaction to" an event means you can perform that maneuver when the event happens.

Round (p. 134): A portion of a battle where each character gets to take one turn.

Shadow (p. 70): Supernatural powers available to human characters within the game, as well as very rare animals. Aura, shadow arts, and signature move are the three shadow types, which each influence a character's fighting style in different ways and each take on a form that represents the personality of their user.

Shadow Arts (p. 110): One of the three shadows. Shadow arts empower your tactics, making them more powerful and unlocking additional options for the effects they can have.

Shaken (p. 141): The state of a character being on a side with 0 morale. While shaken you only gain 1 flair per turn, and any damage that would be dealt to your morale is dealt to your health instead.

Show (P. 57): The process of revealing 5 cards, with results that can be used to determine the outcome of a maneuver you're performing.

Side (P. 134): A collection of characters in a battle that are allied with each other, with the goal of defeating their mutual opposition.

Sidestep (P. 153): A type of movement where the character moves one square at a time until they travel the maximum distance the effect allows or until they choose to stop. The Move action allows you to sidestep a number of squares up to (your speed).

Signature Move (P. 98): One of the three shadows. A signature move is a sequence of maneuvers you can perform, and each maneuver within it can be empowered with various effects.

Speed (P. 72): A character attribute that determines how far they can move or be moved through effects.

Speed Class (P. 72): A character attribute that determines the character's speed, the range that each tactic type provides to their tactics, any cost increase to dashing, and any cost increase to anchoring.

Stance (P. 138): A type of defy you perform to gain health instead of reducing damage. You use a tactic as if attacking, but you can choose zero targets; instead of dealing damage, you gain health equal to your output times. With zero targets you only gain half health, with multiple targets you gain health per target. Costs an additional 1 flair if you aren't outnumbered. Your turn ends after you stance.

Stat (P. 73): A type of attribute that determines various other attributes on a character, as well as the starting power for any of the character's tactics that use that stat.

Stat Effect (P. 75): A maneuver you can perform when you finish an attack or defy while your style is active. The details of the stat effect are based on the stat the tactic uses, and the tactic's power.

Stat Perk (P. 74): An additional bonus that characters can gain from specializing in a stat. The bonus depends on the stat chosen, and gets stronger depending on how high the stat is as well as how high other stats are that aren't providing their own bonuses.

Style (P. 76): An aspect of your character that determines which situations allow you to gain the stat effect of attacks and defies using your tactics.

Targeting Line (P. 148): The line drawn for a maneuver that requires a target, such as an attack or movement. Targeting lines are drawn from the center of the square the maneuver is coming from, to any edge of the target's square, without passing through obstructions.

Teleport (P. 155): A type of movement where you disappear from your current location and appear in another; regardless of obstructions.

Threat (P. 143): The penalty for when the player characters lose a fight; it enables the Game Master to make a future fight deadly.

Turn (P. 135): A portion of a battle where a single character gains effort and flair, has the opportunity to perform maneuvers, then chooses the next character to take a turn (the turn will pass to the nearest character that hasn't taken a turn yet this round; prioritizing allies over enemies, and non-exhausted characters over exhausted ones. If all characters have taken a turn this round, then a new round begins and then the turn is passed to the nearest enemy. The character passing the turn can break ties if multiple characters are both the closest).

Value (P. 54): The number associated with a concept; the value of a card refers to the number printed on the card, while the value of a stat refers to the number of times that stat has been increased.