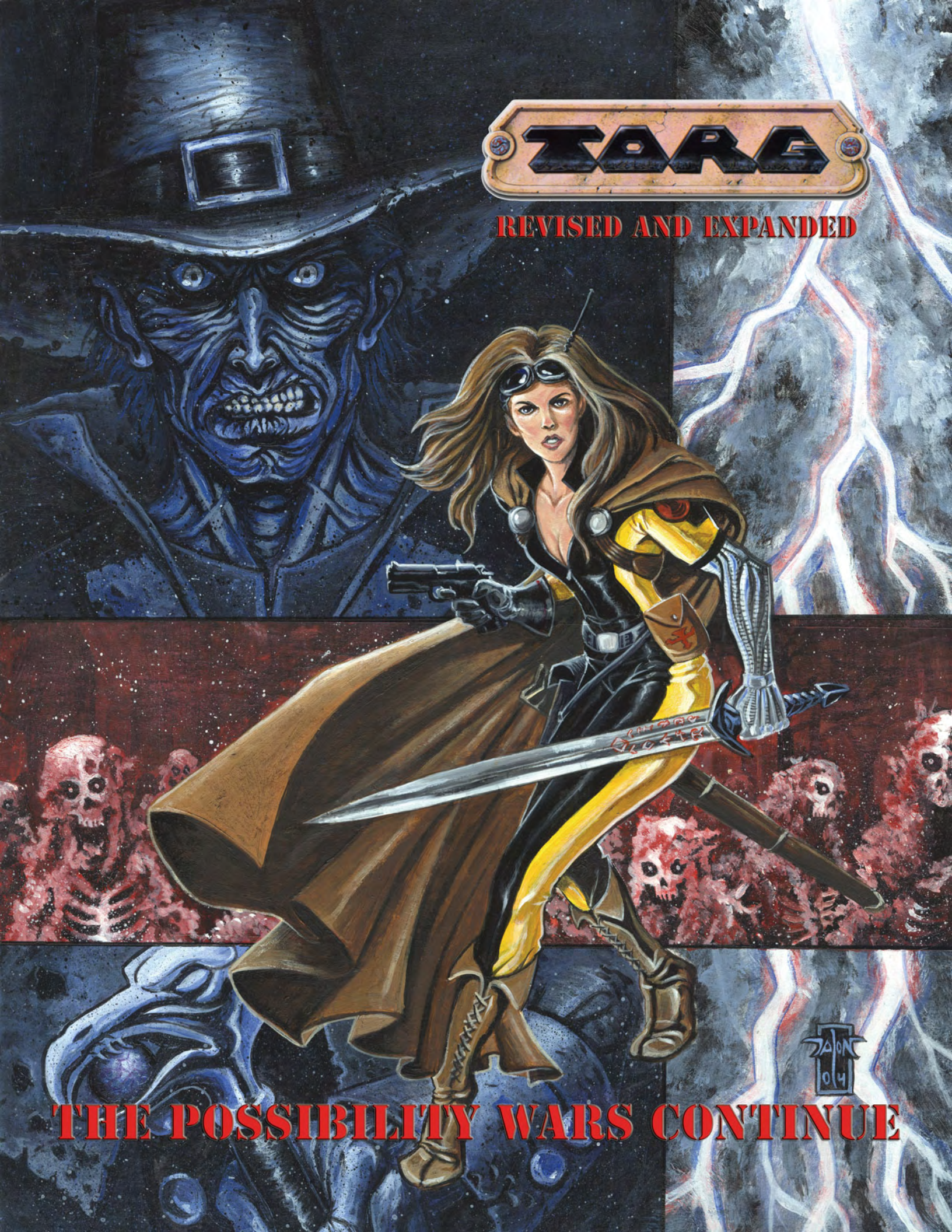

TORG
REVISED AND EXPANDED
THE POSSIBILITY WARS CONTINUE

The Near Now …

Later today, early tomorrow, sometime next week, the world began to end.

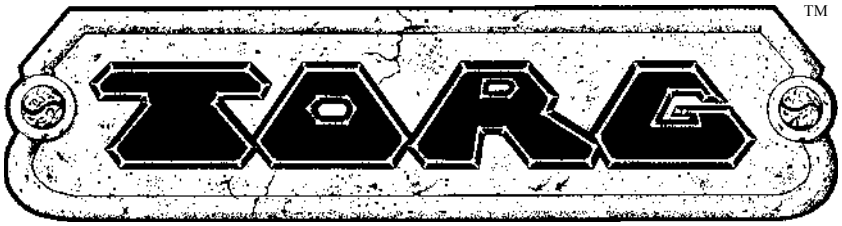
“We were receiving the strangest reports from all over the world ... we never put it all together—and now it’s too late.”

“There are always possibilities, my sergeant told me. But he never had his possibilities torn away like wings from a fly.”

“ ... repeat. Is anyone receiving this message? We need help. The invaders are everywhere ... reality itself has gone crazy. My God, can anyone hear me? Can anyone help us...?”

“There isn’t always a silver lining behind a dark cloud. Sometimes what’s back there is much, much worse.”

“The storm has a name.”



Roleplaying the Possibility Wars
Revised and Expanded

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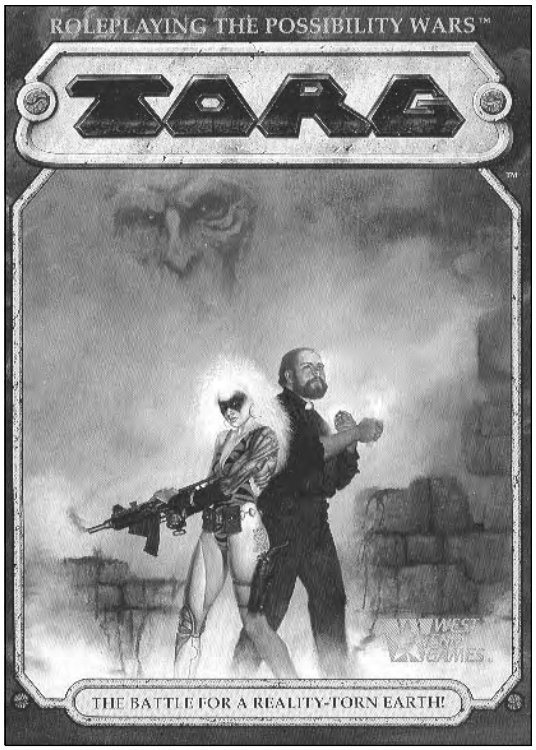

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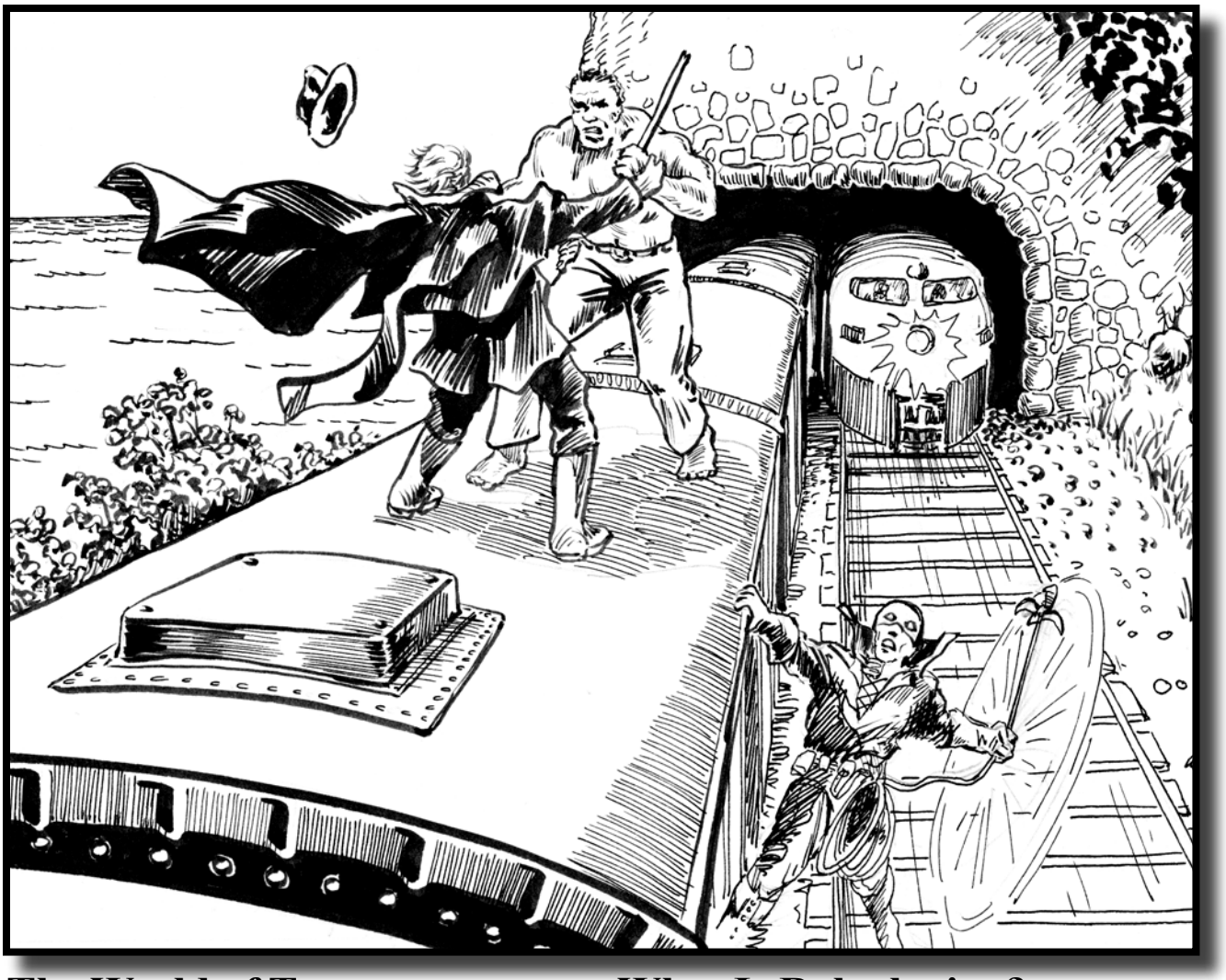


The World of Torg

They came from other cosms - other realities - raiders joined together to steal the Earth's living energy ... to consume its possibilities. These Possibility Raiders brought with them their own realities, turning portions of our planet into *someplace else*.

Led by the Gaunt Man - self-proclaimed Torg of the cosmverse—the High Lords each claimed a piece of the Earth for themselves, setting the conquest in motion. But the invasion did not go as planned. The Gaunt Man's millennia of preparation did not take into account the Storm Knights—men and women who weathered the raging reality storms that transformed the planet, retaining their own realities when everything around them changed. Conventional resistance proves useless against the High Lords, but the Storm Knights possess the power to oppose the High Lords, and they are the Earth's only hope for survival.

This is the setting of *Torg*, a world torn apart by the Possibility Raiders. The High Lords seek to enlarge their territories, to acquire more power, all in search of the ultimate power that will make them into gods, into Torg. The Storm Knights are the only thing that stands between the High Lords and their goals. Only by stopping the High Lords and driving their realms off of the Earth can the world be saved.

What Is Roleplaying?

Everyone loves a good story. It could be a movie, a novel, a television show, myths and legends from the distant past, there's something about the setting, the conflict or the characters that appeals to people and engages their imaginations. They become involved in the stories, imagining new adventures, putting the heroes into situations of their own design or putting new heroes into a favorite setting.

Roleplaying is like an interactive form of this, a way of becoming involved in a story. You and a group of friends take on alter egos and enter an exciting world of adventure, one created by your imaginations or one based on favorite settings.

The "game" aspect of roleplaying games is in the use of rules for determining what characters can and cannot do in a story, which provides a sense of consistency and realism. It also provides a method of arbitrating disputes, avoiding an "I did too," "you did not" kind of situation familiar to anyone who played "cowboys and indians" or "cops and robbers" as a child.

Each player takes the role of a *character*, a participant in a story setting refereed by one player called the *gamemaster*, who is like a narrator for the story. The actions of the player characters will directly affect that story, determining how it progresses and what happens. The gamemaster describes the setting, sets up the action and plays the parts of other people the player characters encounter during their adventures.

This back-and-forth interaction with the other players, the improvisational challenge of playing new and unfamiliar roles in new and unfamiliar locations, and the openended format of the storytelling are what make roleplaying games so challenging and exciting. All you need is some paper, pencils, dice, some friends and your imagination.

Torg: Roleplaying the Possibility Wars

Torg is a "concurrent multi-genre" roleplaying game with an exciting and heroic storyline that not only allows for characters to cross over from one type of story setting to another but practically demands it! Heroic fantasy characters join forces with grim cyberpunks, primitive lizardmen, high-tech ninjas, daring pulp adventurers, brave monster hunters and many other types of heroes in a common cause: to defeat the High Lords and save the Earth from destruction.

There are a lot of roleplaying games on the market, and most use similar mechanics to achieve an atmosphere of interactive storytelling. *Torg* has one different type of game mechanic that separates it from most other games, the *Drama Deck*. The cards of the Drama Deck are not character cards or equipment cards like what can be found in some other games. The Drama Deck actually helps the gamemaster and players enhance and alter the flow of the action and create more dramatic storytelling opportunities by giving the players more influence over the story and the environment around their characters.

While *Torg* can be played without the drama deck it lessens the overall roleplaying experience. The drama deck does not come with this rulebook; it can be purchased separately from West End Game

The Basics

There are a lot of pages in this book but players don't need to read all of them to play the game. The basic mechanics of the *Torg* game are not difficult and can be learn fairly quickly. This section briefly explains the essential concepts and mechanics of *Torg*; reading it first will make learning the material in the rest of this book much easier.

The Main Idea

Whenever a player wants his character to attempt something that doesn't have an automatic chance of success, the player rolls a twenty-sided die and looks up the roll on the *bonus chart*. He takes the *bonus number* from the chart and adds it to an appropriate *Attribute* or *Skill*. This value is compared to a *difficulty number* determined by the gamemaster and if the character's total is equal to or higher than the difficulty number, the character succeeds.

Attributes and Skills

All characters have the same attributes, though not in the same quantities. All characters have skills, but types and level of skills vary from character to character. Skills are rated by *adds*, which is the number added to the character's base attribute to get the value for that skill. A character with a *Dexterity* attribute of 10 and three adds in the *running* skill would have a *running* skill value of 13.

The Die Roll

Torg uses a twenty-sided die. The player rolls the die each time the character tries to use a skill value or attribute value to accomplish a task. Whenever a player rolls a 10 or a 20 on the die she might get to roll the die again, adding the next roll to the first 10 or 20. The player may keep rolling and adding until a number that isn't a 10 or 20 appears. She adds in this final number to obtain the *final die roll*. The open-ended nature of the die roll allows characters in *Torg* to perform amazing feats.

Generating a Total

Compare the final die roll to the *bonus chart*, which can be found on the character sheet provided in the back of this rulebook and also elsewhere in this book. Beneath each range of final die rolls is a corresponding bonus number. The sum of the skill value and the bonus number is called the *action total*.

Some tasks require two totals, the first to determine if a character succeeds at the action, the second to determine just how successful. The second total is determined by adding the **same bonus** (the die is **not** rolled again) to a different value if the action succeeds. This second total is called the *effect total*.

Beating a Difficulty Number

Some actions are harder than others. Whenever the gamemaster calls for an action total, he also sets a difficulty number for the task. The character succeeds **if the action total is equal to or greater than the difficulty number**. If the total is lower, the character fails.

Combat

A combat round represents 10 seconds of "game time." In each round, one side gets to perform all its actions and then the other side performs its actions. Initiative is determined by flipping the top card of the drama deck. The side that has the initiative goes first.

Damage

When a character successfully hits in combat the *effect total* determines damage. The attacker's damage value is her *Strength*, possibly modified by a melee or missile weapon, or the damage value of the weapon used (for firearms and other weapons that provide their own energy). The difficulty is the target's *Toughness* (or armor value). The more the effect total exceeds the difficulty number, the more damage is done to the target.

Values and Measures

Torg uses a unique system of "values" and "measures" to translate back and forth between the game and the real world. A *value* is a quantity measured in a way that can be used in the game, such as comparing a character's Strength value to an object's *weight value* to see if he can lift it. A *measure* is a measurement from the real world such as "60 kilograms." *Measures* can be translated into values and vice versa to enable players and gamemasters to express real world measurements in game terms and the other way around.

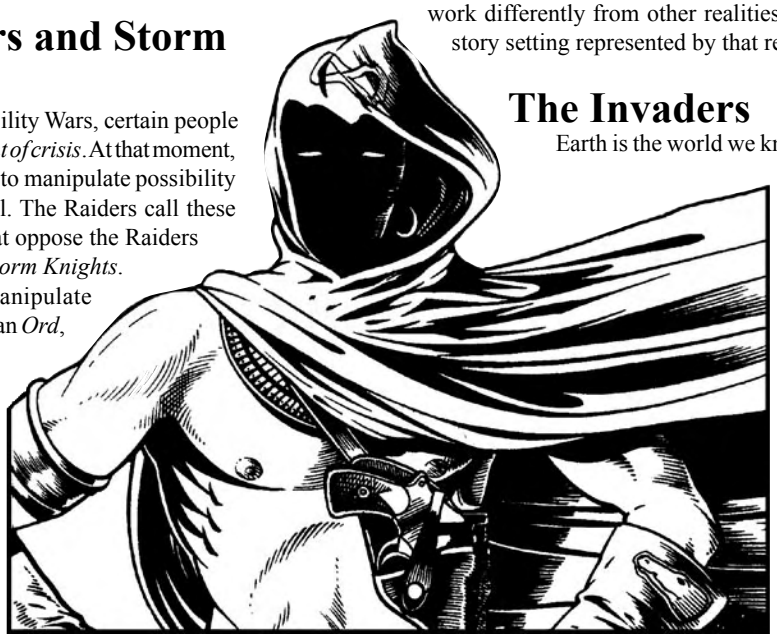
Possibility Energy

Storm Knights (player character heroes) can store possibility energy, which can temporarily alter the world around them in a variety of ways to allow characters to perform amazing feats. Some non-player characters can also use possibility energy. The High Lords crave possibility energy because it is what gives them their power.

Ords, Stormers and Storm Knights

As a result of the Possibility Wars, certain people reach what is called a *moment of crisis*. At that moment, the person gains the ability to manipulate possibility energy, for good or for evil. The Raiders call these beings *Stormers*. Those that oppose the Raiders prefer to call themselves *Storm Knights*. Someone who cannot manipulate possibility energy is called an *Ord*, short for "ordinary."

Your character is a Storm Knight, opposed to the High Lords of the invading realms. Your goal is to free the Earth from the invading realities and stop the Raiders before they consume the living possibilities of the Earth. If they succeed, the Earth dies.



Using This Book with Previous Torg Products

This new edition of the *Torg* rulebook is fully compatible with previous *Torg* products. While there have been a few changes made to some of the game mechanics, none of them should interfere with your ability to use older *Torg* products. Most of the work done for this book was clarifying the existing rules, compiling rules from a number of different sources, working in some additional material from supplements, and adding new material to fill in any gaps in the original rulebook.

The Axioms

Every cosm, or universe, has its own reality and each of the invading realms brings its reality with it. The key to what can and cannot exist, what does and does not work, are the *axioms*. The axioms describe the levels of four basic traits of a world: magical, social, spiritual, and technological. The scale for axioms ranges from zero, at which point the trait doesn't even exist in that world, to 33, where anything is possible with that particular trait.

If an axiom is not high enough to support an activity, performing that activity creates a *contradiction* in that realm. The possibility energy of the realm is organized so as to enforce the axiom levels, eliminating contradictions. The immediate effect of the axiom laws is that equipment, spells and even some creatures foreign to a reality will not work as well in that reality as they do in their own reality.

World Laws

Every reality is also described by its *world laws*, which unlike the axioms are unique in each reality. While the axioms are the limits for a reality, the world laws modify how things work within those limits. A reality's world laws define its *genre*, how things work differently from other realities, they describe the kind of story setting represented by that reality.

The Invaders

Earth is the world we know. *Torg* is set in the "Near Now", a short time in the future from today, so we all know what Earth is like in *Torg*. But what about the invaders, they've changed parts of the Earth into areas of their world, areas of *their version of reality*. Where are they located and what are their worlds like?

Complete information about the invaders and their territories can be found in the appropriate sourcebook for each

reality. The Worldbook, which is contained in the *Torg* accessory pack, provides more detailed descriptions than what's included here

Living Land

The primitive tribes of the Living Land have invaded the west coast of the United States and much of the north-central portion of the country. Their leader, the High Lord known as Baruk Kaah, has brought in a world of great spiritual power where the technology of the United States is powerless. The government has been forced to abandon Washington, DC and relocated to Houston, Texas.

The Living Land is inhabited by a race of lizard-men known as *edeinos*, who wield great spiritual powers and shamanistic miracles. The abandoned and overgrown cities are now filled with all manners of dinosaurs and other strange, prehistoric creatures. Many people trapped in the Living Land by the invasion have changed into primitive savages, though there are still areas where people try to maintain some semblance of the life they had before everything changed.

Aysle

Encompassing what was once Scandinavia and Great Britain, the realm of Aysle is a land of confusion for much of the Possibility Wars, split between dueling forces of Honor and Corruption, Light and Darkness. Early in the course of the war, Aysle's High Lord, Utherion, was dethroned, setting the stage for a civil war in the realm.

Aysle is a realm of magic and wonder, a fantasy world of humans, elves, giants, dwarves and many creatures out of myth and legend. It is a land at once familiar but also unknown. Magic is commonplace, used by many in place of technology, which has regressed to medieval levels. Beleaguered refugees flood into cities like London where modern technology still works.

Cyberpapacy

Initially occupying France and then expanding into other parts of the world, the Cyberpapacy is a bizarre hybrid of the Inquisition of the Dark Ages and a futuristic cyberpunk world. The High Lord, Pope Jean Malraux I of the corrupt Avignon Papacy, claims to be on Earth to save it from the agents of the Antichrist, bringing with him advanced cybertechnology and the wonder of the GodNet.

The Cyberpapacy is a land of suspicion and dark powers. Cyberpriests and Inquisitors wield miraculous powers in addition to the abilities granted to them by their cybernetic implants. Magic is also present, though it is seen as an evil power, a tool of the Devil. The GodNet is a massive virtual reality environment that the CyberChurch claims provides the one true path to God.

Resistance to the Cyberpope is based out of Paris, which is immune to the influence of the Cyberpapacy. Earth's defenders are aided by the fact that the Cyberpapacy seems unfamiliar with much of its own technology, giving GodNet "raiders" the opportunity to hack into the Church's systems and resistance fighters to wage an underground battle against the Church's enforcers.

Nile Empire

Occupying much of northeastern Africa, The New Empire of the Nile combines the myths and stories of ancient Egypt with the two-fisted "pulp" adventures of the 1930s. The realm is overseen by its High Lord, the Pharaoh Mobius, who portrays his realm as a "return to glory" for the ancient traditions.

Mobius is opposed in his realm by the Mystery Men, a group of masked avengers, adventurers and brave heroes who have followed Mobius to Earth from his original world of Terra. But getting to Mobius means dealing with his many villainous henchmen, such as the insidious Wu Han and the seductive Natatiri.

Mobius' empire has resurrected mysterious and arcane forms of magic and spiritual powers based on astrology. It has also brought with it fantastic technological devices created by "weird science." Pulp heroes and villains wear rocket packs, shoot electro-ray guns and use all manner of bizarre devices to fight their never-ending battles.

Nippon Tech

Hidden in plain sight, Nippon Tech is a realm of intrigue, deception, corporate power and high technology that most people don't even know exists. Nippon Tech's invasion of Japan was carried out in such a way that the changes it brought about went mostly unnoticed. The hidden High Lord of Nippon Tech, known publicly as Ryuchi Kanawa, invades and conquers through stealth and economic might, not by brute force like most of the other High Lords.

His Kanawa Corporation does not so much control Nippon Tech as control those who run things - the bankers, the politicians, the underworld crime lords of the Yakuza. Fighting against Nippon Tech is first a matter of determining that it even exists, and then finding out whom you can trust and who works for the enemy. Even those who suspect that Japan was invaded do not necessarily know who is behind it, and whom he controls.

Orrorsh

Orrorsh is the home of the Gaunt Man, the High Lord who has organized the invasion of Earth. His realm is a dark world of spiritual corruption and horror, a land where monsters might lurk in each shadow or lie hidden behind the face of a friend. Orrorsh covers much of Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia and Malaysia.

The horrors of Orrorsh have not visibly conquered the territory. Dupes of the Gaunt Man, people who believe that they have come to Earth to save us from the horrors, have accomplished that for him. Instead, they are the ones who brought the horrors here.

These people, from a world very similar to Victorian England of Earth's nineteenth century, have imposed their control over the territory claimed by the Gaunt Man, arousing memories and hatred of the colonial rule that governed much of the territory not so long ago. Just as the Gaunt Man knew it would.

Orrorsh feeds off of the darkness in people; their fear, their hatred, their deep desires. Those who give in to their dark urges join the ranks of the Gaunt Man's servants, giving the realm strength. It makes Orrorsh the most difficult enemy of the Possibility Wars, for it has the power to turn even Storm Knights into willing minions of the Gaunt Man.

Tharkold

Tharkold is a post-apocalyptic world of savage violence and advanced technology ruled by a demonic race called the Tharkoldu. Its initial attempt to invade Earth in central Asia was actually repulsed, the only invasion that Earth's defenders were able to prevent from happening. But Tharkold was only stopped temporarily, launching another invasion attempt a few years later. This time it was successful, occupying Los Angeles. The "City of Angels" is now a city of demons.

The High Lord of Tharkold when it invades Los Angeles is Jezrael, a human who once served the demonic High Lord Kranod. Its Darkness Device deposed Kranod after the first invasion was repulsed. The other Tharkoldu detest being ruled by a human, and keeping her own forces under her control gives the resistance in Los Angeles the opportunities it needs to wage war against the cybernetically enhanced "techno-demons" of Tharkold.

Other Realms

Besides Earth and the realms of the Possibility Raiders, two other realities become directly involved in events over the course of the Possibility Wars.

Land Below and Land Above

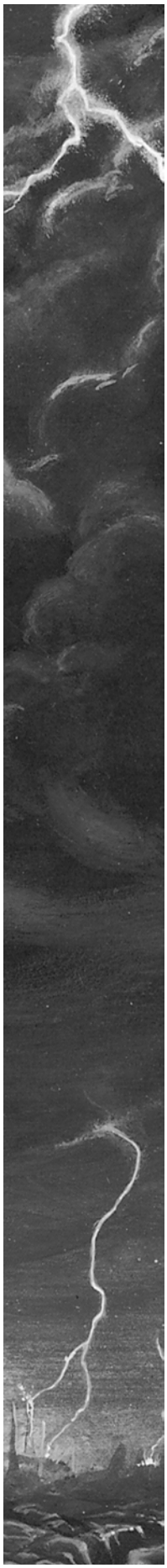
Beneath the surface of the Earth, portals to another reality appear underneath the invading realities and in other places around the world. These caves and tunnels lead to a massive world that becomes known as the Land Below. A primitive world of high adventure, it combines aspects of the Living Land with the Nile Empire.

Partway through the Possibility Wars, the Land Below suddenly becomes the Land Above, erupting out onto the surface of the Earth and displacing part of the Living Land.

Space Gods

Arriving in response to a signal sent during the early days of the Possibility Wars, the Space Gods are a benevolent race of aliens that were the basis of the "ancient astronaut" myths out of Earth's past. They bring with them fantastically advanced technology and powerful psionic abilities to use against the High Lords.

But their arrival brings with it a great danger, one that might undermine all of their efforts and prove to be as much of a threat to Earth as the High Lords themselves!



Chapter 1: Creating A Character

"There may be some people who are born heroes ... but the rest are just folks in a desperate situation who do what most folks wouldn't—they win."

—Colonel Robert Blanchard, Philadelphia Defense Force

Torg: Roleplaying the Possibility Wars is a game that tells of the great struggles between the Possibility Raiders and the heroes of Earth. To take part in these stories you'll need a *character*. A character is a representation, in game terms, of a hero in the world of *Torg*. There are two ways in which you can create your character: use a character template or design a character from scratch. The latter is best left to experienced *Torg* players and is covered in Chapter Two

Before We Begin

Before choosing a template, it would be helpful if you knew something about attributes, skills and action values so that you can better gauge what each type of character is capable of doing.

Attributes and Skills

All characters have *attributes*. An attribute is defined as an ability that all living creatures have. One creature may have more of an attribute, such as strength, than another may, but all characters have a *Strength* attribute.

There are seven attributes in the game — *Dexterity, Strength, Toughness, Perception, Mind, Charisma* and *Spirit*. These are sometimes abbreviated as DEX, STR, TOU, PER, MIN, CHA, and SPI. The first three are broad measures of physical ability, the next two gauge your character's mental sharpness and intelligence, while the last two measure personality and presence. The number listed next to each on the templates is the *attribute value*. An attribute of six is poor, eight is average for normal humans, an attribute of 10 is quite good, and 13 is the normal maximum for Core Earth humans. Characters from other realities may have different attribute maximums (they can be found in Chapter Two.)

COMPARATIVE ATTRIBUTE VALUES

Value	Relative Human Ability
13+	Superhuman
13	Exceptional—best a human can be; gold medal Olympic athlete; a natural genius; indomitable personality
11–12	Outstanding—very adept or extremely bright; in top physical shape; Nobel Prize winning scientist; very popular
9–10	High average—in good shape; athletic; smart; amiable
7–8	Low average—normal; moderate physical conditioning; not overly intelligent; personable but unmemorable
6	Below average—poor physical shape; clumsy; unintelligent; dull or abrasive personality
5–	Well below average—no physical ability; uncoordinated; extremely stupid; weak-minded; lacking in personality

Skills are abilities that can vary from one creature to another and represent knowledge, learning, practice or a natural ability (such as an animal might have.) Some skills are limited to particular realities and are only available to characters from that reality while others have special restrictions limiting who may possess them. The *martial arts* skill, for example, may only be learned by *possibility-rated* characters.

The character templates list the possible skills initially available to a character. One of the skills on every template already has a number (3) filled in on the template. This is that character's primary skill, known as his *tag skill*. All characters based on the same template—the Soldier of Fortune, for instance—have the same attribute values and tag skills. But you will choose the rest.

Attributes and skills are described in more detail in Chapter Three.

A Brief Look at Action Values

In the stories you play in *Torg*, your character will be confronted with obstacles of all kinds, from primitive tribesmen with shamanistic powers to rickety rope-bridges suspended over dizzying chasms, to pulp gangsters armed with submachine guns. The outcome of the story often hinges on how, or whether or not, your character overcomes such obstacles.

Whenever your character confronts an obstacle, her *action value* will help determine success or failure. *Action value* is the collective term for both skill value (when you use a skill) and attribute value (when you use no skill, just your raw attribute). However, as we know, life is very variable, and what you can do easily one time may be much more difficult the next time you try. If this weren't true, for example, bowlers would always bowl perfect games!

So, in *Torg*, when your character faces an obstacle, you roll the 20-sided die and consult the *bonus chart* on your character sheet, adding the bonus number there to your character's skill or attribute value to get an *action total*. Obviously, the higher your character's values are, the better he is at performing certain tasks, and the better his chance for success. The bonus chart goes higher than 20

because players are often allowed to roll the die again and add it to the previous roll.

The complete rules concerning action values can be found at the beginning of Chapter Three.

Using a Template

Character templates can be found in many of the supplements and sourcebooks written for Torg. The templates describe the types of heroes found in the stories of the Possibility Wars. Some are from Core Earth, the portion of Earth not yet conquered by the Possibility Raiders. Others are from the realms of the raiders and have chosen to fight against the High Lords. Each template has basic game information for the character as well as general background material about the character's motives and personality.

Templates are recommended for players who are new to Torg and may not yet fully understand all of the game mechanics and the setting. Experienced players may also find templates useful when they want to quickly generate a new character.

Choose a template that appeals to you. Remember that a character template is only an outline, a character sketch; you provide the imagination and details that bring the character to life. Not all Soldiers of Fortune, Contract Ninjas, or Doubting Clerics are alike.

Something to consider when choosing a template is that a Storm Knight group should be balanced. Each character has different abilities—some can fly aircraft, others are good at medicine, some may possess specialized knowledge that others do not. Some come from the invading realms and have skills not available to characters from other realities. But this works both ways, a Curious Mage from Aysle may be really hot with magic but driving an automobile is completely foreign to her. Try to get together with the other players and your gamemaster and choose your characters with balance in mind.

Building a character using a template is a simple process. Once you have chosen the template you want to use, there are only a few steps in the process:

Step 1:	Choose Skills
Step 2:	Determine Special Abilities (if template has any)
Step 3:	Copy Down Some Final Information
Step 4:	Determine Character Connections

You may want to make a photocopy of the template and work with that or use a copy of the blank character sheet found in the back of this book and copy the information off of your template. Don't worry about copying everything off of a template; you can always refer back to the original if you need to refresh your memory.

Much of the information on a character sheet can change over time so you should use a pencil instead of permanent ink to record your character information.

Optional Templates

While there are templates in some of the game material for the nonhuman techno-demons from Tharkold and ravagons from Tz'Ravok, these are two extremely powerful races and a player character from either race can seriously unbalance a group. These templates are entirely optional and gamemasters should consider before play whether or not to allow them in their games.

Step One: Choose Skills

You get to choose which of the skills listed on the template you are using your character actually has, and how good he is at each skill. You get 16 points to distribute among the skills listed on your template except for your tag skill, which has already had points allocated to it. The points are called *adds* (short for 'additions'), and you write down the number of adds allocated to each skill in the "Adds" column. Follow these rules when distributing adds:

- You must distribute all 16 adds (and no more than 16).
- You may not allocate more than two adds to any one skill. The tag skill is allowed to have three adds because it represents the character's primary field of expertise. The three adds in the tag skill do not count against the character's 16 points.
- All characters must allocate at least one add to the reality skill (but no more than two.) If a character's tag skill is reality then no points need to be allocated to it.
- You do not have to allocate adds to every skill on your template. If you do not allocate at least one add to a skill your character does not have that skill. But that's okay! Characters may still attempt tasks covered by skills that they do not have, but it is usually more difficult than it would be if they had the skill. Skills printed in boldface on templates either cannot be used at all or are extremely difficult to use if you don't allocate at least one add. You may want to check the skill descriptions in Chapter Three for more information about using a particular skill when you have no adds in the skill.
- Some skills are more expensive to acquire than other skills and their first add will cost more than one point. This will be noted in the skill's description and will also be mentioned on the template. These extra points do not count against the two add limit on non-tag skills, a first add which costs three points counts as one add, not three.
- Adds may be spent to gain psionic powers if the character has at least one add in the psionic manipulation skill (see "Psionics" under "Determine Special Abilities".)

Figuring Skill Values

Next to each skill on your template is a column labeled "attribute." In this column is an abbreviation for the attribute on which the skill is based.

THE BONUS CHART

Bonus Chart

Die Roll	1	2	3 4	5 6	7 8	9 10	11 12	13 14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21 25	26 30	31 35	36 40	41 45	46 50	+5
Bonus #	-12	-10	-8	-5	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	+1

Example: The Soldier of Fortune template lists the *dodge* and *fire combat* skills, both of which have DEX listed in the attribute column next to them. Both skills are based on *Dexterity*. The template also lists *first aid* with PER listed in the next column. *Perception* is the base attribute for *first aid*.

The rightmost column is labeled "Value." Here is where you record your character's *skill value*. A skill value is equal to your character's **skill adds plus the base attribute value**. If your character has not taken an add in a particular skill, do not record a value for that skill.

Example: Paul's character has +2 adds in *dodge* and a *Dexterity* value of 11, which gives his character a *dodge* skill value of 13. The character has no *running* skill so Paul records no skill value for *running*.

Important Note on Skill Points

In the first edition of *Torg*, templates received 13 points instead of 16 points for skills. The number of points given out during character creation for skill adds has been increased slightly to account for some changes in the way certain skills are now handled.

Some templates, such as the Contract Ninja in the Worldbook, may specify that the character receive fewer than 13 points for skill adds because some have been already spent for the player. If you come across one of these templates just add three to the number it gives you.

Step Two: Determine Special Abilities

Many of the templates come with special skills or abilities that will require some additional work to flesh out the rest of the character. The information provided here is just the tip of the iceberg to help you get your character created. Additional information concerning these special abilities can be found in other chapters of this book and in other *Torg* products.

If your template does not list any special abilities, you can skip ahead to the next step.

Spells

Characters who have at least **one point each in any two of the four magic skills** *(apportation magic, alteration magic, conjuration magic, divination magic)* **or have one of the four skills as their tag skill** are given an extra 12 points to spend on *arcane knowledges* and spells. *Arcane knowledges* are attributeless skills that are combined with a character's magic skills to determine what spells the character is capable of learning.

Information on how the arcane knowledges are used to determine which spells your character can learn can be found in Chapter Ten along with a selection of spells that you can choose from for your character. The available arcane knowledges are also listed in Chapter Ten.

Each add of an arcane knowledge or a spell costs one of these 12 points. Arcane knowledges cannot be bought any higher than two adds during character creation, the same as any other skill.

These additional 12 points may not be used to purchase normal skill adds, they only apply to arcane knowledges and spells. If the player uses all 12 points and wishes to buy more spells or additional adds in arcane knowledges, the character's starting Possibility Points may be spent on a one-for-one basis.

Example: Alan is designing a character using the Curious Mage template in the Worldbook. Two of the character's 12 points for magic are already spent in the template on the arcane knowledge of *fire* so he has 10 points left to spend. He decides to get +1 add in each of the *folk, light, magic, metal* and *water* arcane knowledges, leaving him with five points. Checking the requirements in each spell write-up first, he uses the last five points to acquire the spells *Altered Fireball, Disguise Self, Away Sight, Detect Magic* and *Bullet*. Alan decides that he wants one more spell for his character and adds *Fog*. Since he has already used all of his 12 points, one of the character's starting Possibility Points must be spent to acquire that spell, leaving him with nine possibilities.

Besides the spells provided in this book, many of the sourcebooks and supplements for *Torg* provide additional spells that characters may learn. *Pixaud's Practical Grimoire* is a supplement for the magic system containing a large number of available spells.

Miracles

Characters that have at least one point in both the *focus* and *faith* skills have the ability to perform spiritual *miracles*. The maximum number of miracles a character may possess when she starts play is equal to the total number of adds the character has in her *faith* and *focus* skills.

Characters from cosms with low Spirit axioms may not get to start with their maximum number of miracles for free, they may have to spend starting Possibilities, but they will have at least one. To determine how many free miracles a character starts with, compare the Spirit axiom on the template with the following chart:

NUMBER OF FREE STARTING MIRACLES

Spirit Axiom	Miracles
9 and less	1
10–14	2
15–18	3
19–22	4
23 and greater	5

If the character's maximum number of starting miracles is higher than the number of free starting miracles listed on the chart, the player may purchase additional miracles for the character by spending one of the character's starting Possibility Points per additional miracle.

Example: Tina is creating a character using the Doubting Cleric template from the Worldbook. Her character has +2 adds in *faith* and +1 adds in *focus* meaning that her character can start with a maximum of three miracles. Becky, the gamemaster, informs Tina that her character only gets one free starting miracle because his Spirit axiom is 9. Tina chooses *Bless* as her one free miracle and then decides to spend one of her characters starting possibilities to get *Calm*, leaving her with nine Possibility Points. She could spend another possibility and pick a third miracle but decides that two are enough for now.

A sampling of miracles available to characters with the *faith* and *focus* skills can be found in Chapter Eleven along with more detailed information about religions in *Torg* and how characters use their miracles. Additional miracles may also be found in the appropriate sourcebook for the character's *home cosm* as well as the *Clerics' Sourcebook*.

Psionics

Characters with at least one point in the *psionic manipulation* skill possess unusual powers of the mind. While the *psionic resistance* skill is helpful when using psionic powers, it is not a required skill to possess psionics. Players may purchase *power groups* for their character during character creation with their skill points or with their starting Possibility Points. Each power group costs one skill point or Possibility Point. Buying a power group gives the character one of the powers in that group for free. Additional powers in a known group may be purchased for one skill point or a starting Possibility Point.

Chapter Twelve contains more information about psionics in *Torg* but the complete system as well as the descriptions of the various power groups and powers can only be found in the *Space Gods Sourcebook.*

Example: Juan is creating a character using the New-Ager template in the *Space Gods sourcebook.* While allocating his points for skills he saves four points to use later for purchasing psionic power groups and powers, spending only 12 of his 16 points on skills. When it comes time to pick his character's psionic abilities, Juan takes two power groups, *Psychic Senses* and *Telepathy*, which costs two of his four remaining points. He uses the remaining two points to get one additional power in each group, giving him a total of two powers in each group. He decides on *Awareness* and *Life Detection* from the *Psychic Senses* group and picks *Empathy* and *Thought Scan* from the *Telepathy* group. He could buy additional powers or power groups for his character by spending some of the character's starting possibilities but decides the four powers he already has are enough.

Customizing a Template

While there are a large number of templates spread throughout the published game material for *Torg*, sometimes players can't find exactly what they want; maybe the template's attributes aren't distributed exactly the way they want, or it doesn't have a particular skill or piece of equipment the player wants.

That's okay. As long as they can find a template that's close to what they're looking for, it can quickly be modified using material in Chapter Two to be more like what they want. Most of the work the player would normally do using the rules in Chapter Two will already be taken care of by the template so the player only has to concentrate on making the changes necessary to fit their concept.

Martial Arts

Players who put points into the *martial arts* skill must choose the *style* of martial arts that their character knows. Some styles have requirements that a character must meet before they can know that particular style. Once the style has been chosen the character gets six attempts to gain some of the *disciplines* that make up that style.

Gaining a discipline involves generating action values, usually with the *martial arts* skill but sometimes with other skills, against difficulty numbers determined by the gamemaster for each discipline. The rules for this process are briefly described in Chapter Twelve along with additional information on styles and disciplines. Similar information can also be found in the Worldbook. The complete system for *martial arts* though can only be found in the *Nippon Tech Sourcebook.*

Example: Barbara is building a character using the Contract Ninja template in the Worldbook. The template specifies that the character's martial arts style is Ninjitsu, which is described in the Worldbook, so Barbara does not have to choose a style for her character. Ninjitsu requires the character to possess certain skills in addition to *martial arts* so Barbara will have to make sure her character possesses all of the required skills. She gets together with her gamemaster Becky to determine which disciplines her character has learned.

Using the material in the Worldbook, Becky determines the difficulty numbers for the tests Barbara's character must pass to learn each separate discipline. Barbara's character gets six attempts to learn the disciplines but bad luck strikes and she is only successful twice, so her character only learns the first two disciplines. Barbara notes the two disciplines and what they do on her character sheet

Weird Science and Pulp Powers

Some templates from the Nile Empire and Terra let characters start with *weird science gizmos*, devices with unusual and fantastic abilities that defy normal scientific conventions such as rocket packs, invisibility belts and x-ray glasses. Other templates from the Nile Empire, Terra and the Land Below let characters begin play with amazing *pulp powers.*

Instructions regarding the gizmos or pulp powers can be found on the templates that allow characters to have these abilities. Other templates may not start play with gizmos or pulp powers.

Chapter Twelve provides some additional material concerning the use of gizmos and pulp powers. Partial rules and descriptions for gizmos and pulp powers can be found in the Worldbook. Complete rules are found in the *Nile Empire* and *Terra Sourcebooks*. The *Land Below Sourcebook* contains rules for the pulp powers that apply to that reality.

Orrorshan Horror Characters

The Werewolf template in the Worldbook and the Reluctant Vampyre template in *Infiniverse Update Volume II* require the use of rules found in the *Orrorsh Sourcebook*. While it is possible to run a Werewolf with the material found in the Worldbook, it is not recommended; the Worldbook does not contain all of the rules involved in running a Horror character.

Step Three: Copy Down Some Final Information

There are a few empty areas left on your character sheet that need to be filled in. If you haven't written in a name for your character yet, this would be the time to do it!

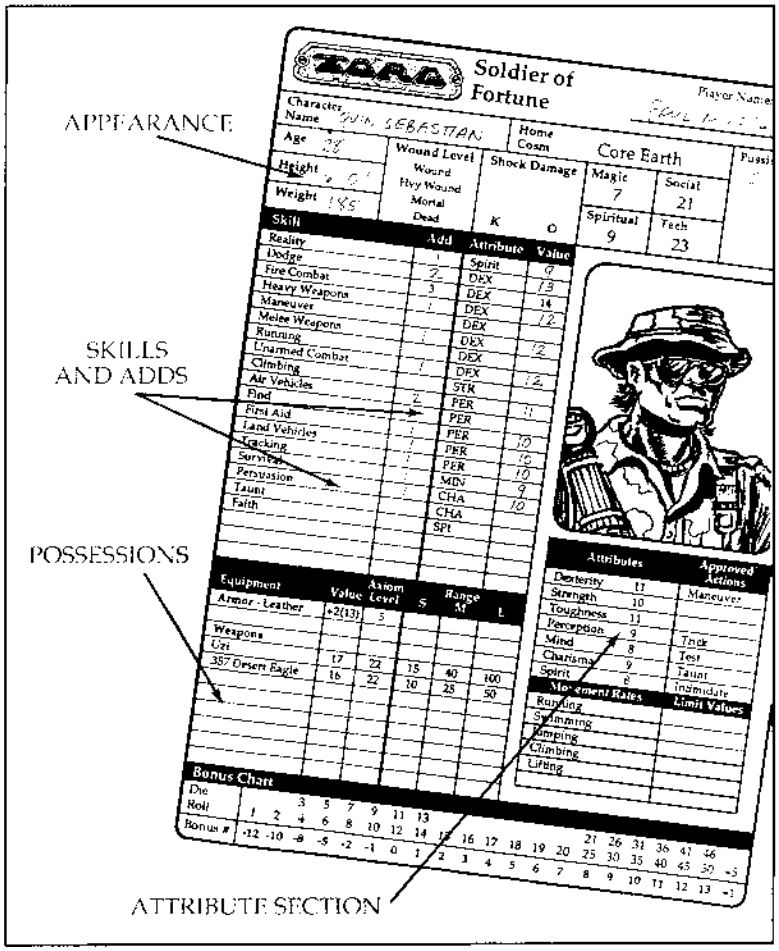
Home Cosm

A *cosm* is a reality, a universe that is physically separate from other realities. Each character has a *home cosm*, which describes the reality he lives under. Core Earth is the cosm of Earth, the remaining parts of the Earth that are not under the influence of another reality. Each of the Possibility Raiders has overlain parts of the Earth with their *realms*, areas in which their realities exist instead of Core Earth's reality.

There are three types of template characters not from Core Earth. There are renegades who have some reason to be opposed to the High Lord of their cosm (being a possibility-rated character is often reason enough to be at odds with the High Lords and their minions.) Some are former Core Earthers who have been *transformed* to another reality, and then there are characters from the Star Sphere, allies who have come to Earth to help fight the Possibility Raiders. (Star Sphere characters are found in the *Space Gods* sourcebook.)

Enter a Soldier

Suppose you choose to be a Soldier of Fortune. This is what the character template looks like:



At the top of the template enter your name, your character's name, "10" in the "Possibilities" box, an age, a height, a weight, and a sex. Decide how you want your character to look, and write a brief description in the "Appearance" section. Other details, such as clothing, posture, and mannerisms, are yours to make up. The more detail you put into a character, the more interesting he will be to play.

In this example Paul Murphy has decided to play a Soldier of Fortune, a template in the Worldbook; he names the character Quin Sebastian. The numbers in the attribute boxes are Quin's attribute values, while the skill adds are written next to the skill names. The +3 next to fire combat was already printed on the template: *fire combat* is Quin's tag skill. Paul has so far allocated 13 of Quin's 16 points as shown and only needs to allocate the final three points to be finished.

The Four Axioms

The four *axioms* are determined by a character's home cosm and represent the limits of what is possible in that reality in four basic areas: magic, social, spiritual and technological. The axioms are used quite often during play so it is important for the player to be aware of his character's axioms. Axioms range from zero to 33; the higher the axiom, the more a character can do within that axiom.

World Laws

World Laws are a set of modifiers and effects that define the nature of a reality within the boundaries of the axioms. The templates do not list world laws for characters. Your gamemaster can provide you with the world laws for your character's home cosm. They are briefly described in Chapter Seven and each of the sourcebooks for the realities involved in the Possibility Wars describe their world laws in detail. The Worldbook provides brief descriptions for the world laws of some of the realities.

Possibilities

All characters begin with 10 *Possibility Points* unless a template notes otherwise. Enter "10" in the Possibilities box. If you spent any starting possibilities during character creation, such as for additional spells, miracles or psionic powers, be sure to put the correct number in the Possibilities box. Possibilities are used during game play to help your character succeed against terrible odds, just like a hero of fiction, so it's generally a good idea to not spend very many of them during character creation.

Equipment

Your template lists your character's starting equipment. All characters begin with some tools of their trade, including weapons. Many begin with money, although the currency is not always what Core Earth locals would consider cold hard cash. Your character is considered to have had time to equip from his home realm as well as from Core Earth.

If you want to purchase equipment for your character, additional equipment can be found in Chapter Thirteen. The sourcebook for the character's home cosm will also have an equipment section that you may use to purchase equipment.

Limit Values

Limit values represent the largest attribute values that can be directly translated into game values, and represent the normal physical limits of human (elf, edeinos, giant, etc.) ability. For example, the Running limit value represents the maximum speed that a person can normally attain without strenuous effort, even if they are a highly skilled runner.

If a character's attribute is less than the limit value then the attribute is translated straight into the game value. If the character's attribute is higher than the limit value, the limit value is used for the game value.

Example: Roger has built a character using the Vampyre Hunter template in the Worldbook. His character has a *Dexterity* of 8. This is less than the human Running limit value of 9 so Roger's character runs instead at a speed value of 8, equal to the character's *Dexterity*. Tina's Doubting Cleric has a *Dexterity* of 9, the same as the limit value, and so her character runs at a speed value of 9.

But Paul's Soldier of Fortune has a *Dexterity* of 11, which is above the Running limit value for humans. His character does not run at a speed value of 11, he is limited to a speed equal to the limit value of 9, so his character has the same base speed value as Tina's character despite having a higher attribute.

The limit values do not represent the absolute maximum of a character's performance, just the point at which they have to make an effort to do better. For example, an Olympic sprinter has the same Running limit value as everyone else but can run faster than other people when they *push* themselves. When a character wants to perform better than their limit value, they perform what is called a *push*. Depending on the action total they generate for a push, they can exceed their limit values and run faster, jump farther or lift more than usual.

The rules concerning pushes can be found in Chapter Four.

Limit Values for Character Races

On the following page, you'll note the limit values for the most common races involved in the Possibility Wars. Rules for determining the limit values of other races can be found in Chapter Four.

Edeinos and stalengers are from the Living Land. Dwarves, elves and giants are from Aysle. Gudaskos, Larendi, Lorbatts and Draygaaks are from the Star Sphere of the Space Gods. Techno-demons are from Tharkold and the ravagons are from Tz'Ravok.

Step Four: Determine Character Connections

How your character fits in with the rest of his group is important. Who your character knows and how he knows them helps you decide how he should act in a given situation. In heroic fiction, characters that are friends will move mountains to help each other or to defeat a common enemy. Character *connections* are possible ways that your character may know the other characters in the group, a way of starting the heroic bond important to adventure fiction.

LIMIT VALUES

Activity	All Humans	Edeinos	Stalenger	Dwarf	Elf	Giant	Gudasko	Larendi	Lorbaat	Draygaak	Technodemon	Ravagon
Running	9	11	9	8	10	10	10	9	10	9	9	9
Swimming	6	8	7	6	7	6	7	7	7	6	5	5
Long Jumping	3	5	3	2	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3
Climbing	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	5	5	6	6
Lifting	9	10	9	10	9	12	10	9	11	11	11	11
Hold Breath	10	12	11	11	10	12	11	10	11	10	12	11
Flying	—	—	11	—	—	—	—	13	—	—	10	13

Try to come up with a reason your character would be friends or at least an associate of at least one other member of your group. Your character doesn't have to be directly connected to every other character in the group; it's perfectly fine if your character knows one character who knows another character who knows two others and so on, just as long as most of the characters end up being connected to some degree.

Talk it over with the other players and your gamemaster to come up with connections that make sense. Not all characters need to be best friends, and you may even want some dramatic tension to exist between characters. But there has to be enough chemistry to bond the group together through all of the travails and troubles ahead—after all, adventuring isn't as much fun (and a lot more difficult) if you have to do it alone.

Here are some ideas of how characters might know each other:

Escaped Together

The characters may be from the same cosm or realm, in which case they may have joined forces while fleeing a High Lord's minions. Or they might have met somewhere outside of a realm while taking refuge from the invaders.

Called

If characters are from different cosms, perhaps one was called to seek the other(s). A character who is called (by a deity, a message from another cosm, or simply by "destiny") has a good reason to seek out people he might otherwise never meet.

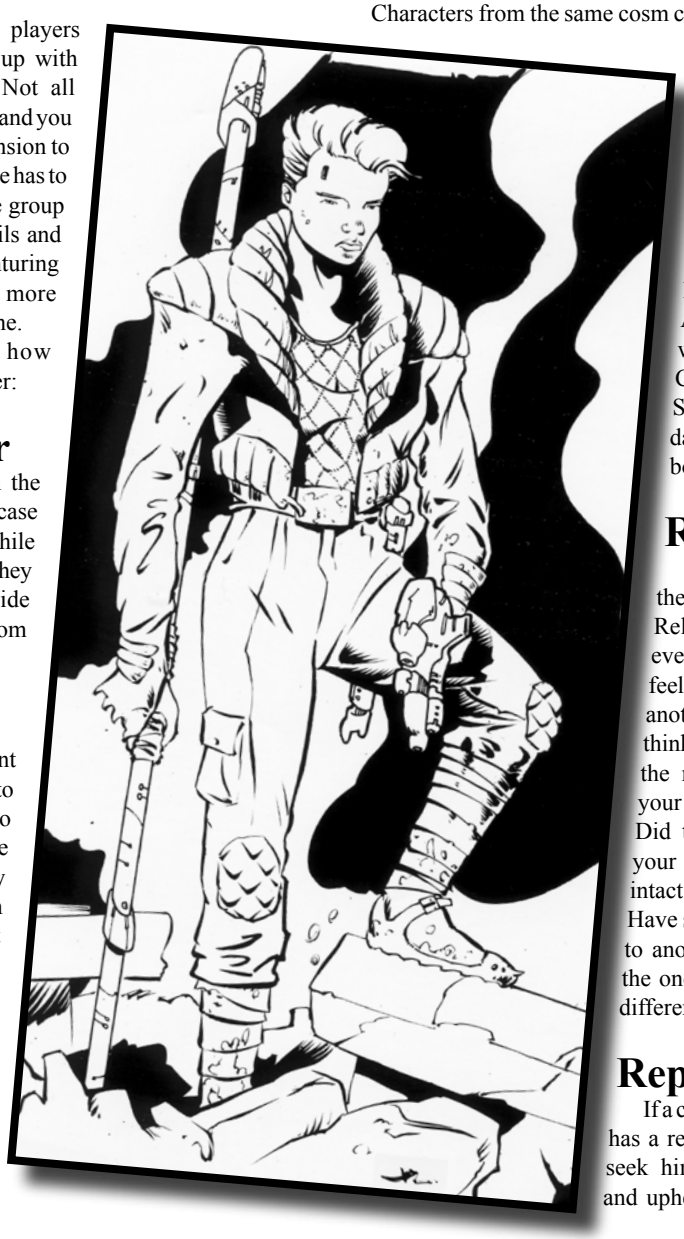
Same Hometown

The characters may be from the same hometown or region. The attachment to their home area gives the characters an element upon which to share a sense of loyalty.

Previous Missions

The characters may have worked together before. The players should agree on the extent and nature of their previous experience.

Characters from the same cosm could have more of a shared past than characters from different cosms, more opportunities to have worked together in the past before the Possibility Wars began.



Employee

One of the characters might have employed the other. A character with status or wealth, such as the Disgruntled Corporate, may have hired the Soldier of Fortune to perform a dangerous mission, or to act as a bodyguard.

Relatives

Any characters originally from the same cosm can be relatives. Relatives often like each other, but even when they don't they usually feel an obligation to each other. If another character is your relative, think about their relationship with the rest of the family as well as your own relationship with them. Did the Possibility Raiders ravage your family? If your family is still intact, do you know where they are? Have some of them been transformed to another reality? Perhaps you are the one who's been transformed to a different reality!

Reputation

If a character is famous, or otherwise has a reputation, other characters may seek him out. In the disorganization and upheaval following the Possibility

Raiders' invasion of Earth, charismatic figures could attract other characters, giving the group a focus. Perhaps a National Hero fought in a highly publicized battle, or a Doubting Cleric's parish church became a rallying point for opposition to the invasion.

Previous Institution

Characters may have spent time at the same school or university. They may have worked for the same company, or held government posts in the same agency. Maybe they served in the military together.

Current Institution

The characters may be attending or working for the same institution. This list is like that above: government agencies, the military, private corporations or foundations. Perhaps they work for the Red Cross in disaster relief; there is certainly plenty of disaster to go around.

Example: Roger, Barbara, Alan, Paul, Tina and Juan get together with their gamemaster Becky to figure out how their characters are connected to each other. Paul's Soldier of Fortune, Tina's Doubting Cleric and Juan's New-Ager are all from Core Earth so the three of them begin talking to see if their characters might know each other.

Juan and Tina decide that their characters are from the same hometown and that the two know each other but aren't exactly friends. Tina's priest frowns on the new-age beliefs of Juan's character, who has similar feelings towards the Cleric's more traditional religious beliefs. Because Becky has told everyone that the first adventure will be set in Philadelphia they decide that is where their characters are from.

Roger meanwhile has been talking to Barbara and the two of them have worked out a connection between Roger's Vampyre Hunter and Barbara's Contract Ninja. Their paths crossed when Barbara's ninja was sent to eliminate a business opponent of her employer's and it turned out that the target was secretly a vampyre from Orrorsh that Roger's character was also after. They teamed up to get rid of the vampyre and in the true fashion of heroic fiction, grudgingly became friends during the process.

Alan comes up with the idea that Paul's Soldier of Fortune might have helped his Curious Mage escape from the evil minions of Aysle's High Lord. But Paul insists that his character doesn't do "charity work" and suggests instead that Alan's character hired Paul's character to get the magician out of Aysle. Alan doesn't have a problem with the idea and agrees to that version of the connection.

Becky suggests that Paul and Alan's characters have traveled to Philadelphia to help with the relief efforts going on there. Paul again insists that his character doesn't do anything for free so someone must have hired him to help out. Since Tina's priest would probably also be involved in the relief efforts she could have met Paul and Alan's characters that way. Juan adds that his character would be interested in the magic that Alan's character does and sought him out after hearing about him in the relief camps.

Roger and Barbara ask Becky if it's absolutely necessary for their two characters to know any of the others. They haven't been able to come up with any ideas due to the fact that their characters are from the opposite side of the world from everyone else. Becky suggests that the two of them traveled to America while hunting down their common enemy and are currently in Philadelphia. Roger's Vampire Hunter may have met Tina's priest because he needed to refill his supplies of holy water or something like that.

Final Touches

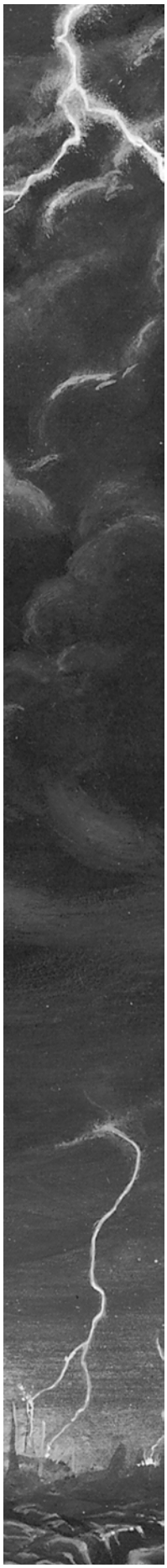
The background and personality information on the templates is meant to provide an example of what your character is like but you don't have to use it is you don't want to use it. Pick the parts you like and ignore the rest.

If you have your own ideas for your character's background and personality, you can use the guidelines given in Chapter Two to help you flesh out the details.

Dramatis Personae

Throughout the rest of this book, we'll be using the same players and the characters they created in this chapter to provide examples of how *Torg's* game mechanics work. To help you keep track of who's playing what, here's our players and their characters:

- **Becky**—the gamemaster
- **Paul**—Quin Sebastian, Soldier of Fortune template in the Worldbook
- **Tina**—Father Wagner, Doubting Cleric template in the Worldbook
- **Juan**—Marco, New-Ager template in the **Space Gods Sourcebook**
- **Barbara**—Yukitaka, Corporate Ninja template in the Worldbook
- **Roger**—Roger is used in Chapter Two to demonstrate custom character creation; instead of the Vampyre Hunter character he built in this chapter he will be using Magoth, a giant magician from Aysle, in the rest of the book.



Chapter 2: Custom Character Creation

"They call us stormers. When I finally meet these High Lords, I will introduce myself as a Storm Knight. Then I will sheathe my blade in each of them in turn."

—Towlyn of House Tancred

While the character templates offer a large variety of character choices, the Possibility Wars offer so many options that creative players will often come up with ideas aren't described any of the available templates. In situations like this it is often easier to design the character from the ground up than to overhaul a template to fit the concept.

There are eight elements to the character design process. Most of the steps can be done in whatever order you desire; sometimes the background will come first and dictate the other elements of the character, other times the game stats may be all that you have figured out beforehand and the background elements are developed out of that. The first and last steps are really the only ones that have to occur in that order—everything in between is flexible.

Step 1:	Discuss the character concept with the gamemaster
Step 2:	Determine the character's home cosm
Step 3:	Assign attribute points and skill adds
Step 4:	Assign any special abilities
Step 5:	Equip the character
Step 6:	Describe the character
Step 7:	Develop character's background and history
Step 8:	Submit write-up to gamemaster for final approval

Step One: Discuss the Character Concept with the Gamemaster

Before getting too involved in the process of building your character you need to run the concept by your gamemaster first and make sure that your idea will work in the campaign. There may be character types that she doesn't want people playing in her game or there may be certain aspects of the campaign you're not aware of that would make some characters less interesting to play. There may even be other player characters already in the game that have the same type of character and having another one would unbalance the group.

It's not all negative though! Your gamemaster can help you figure out the game mechanics for any special abilities you want, provide information about the campaign setting that would affect the character's background, give you advice on how to represent something in game terms and generally provide assistance that will make sure your character fits into the group and the campaign world.

The kind of information you should provide to your gamemaster in this step should include the character's home cosm, a basic idea of how the character's attributes will be arranged, the character's tag skill, any special or unusual skills, any special abilities, the type of equipment you want and at least a general idea of the character's background and personality.

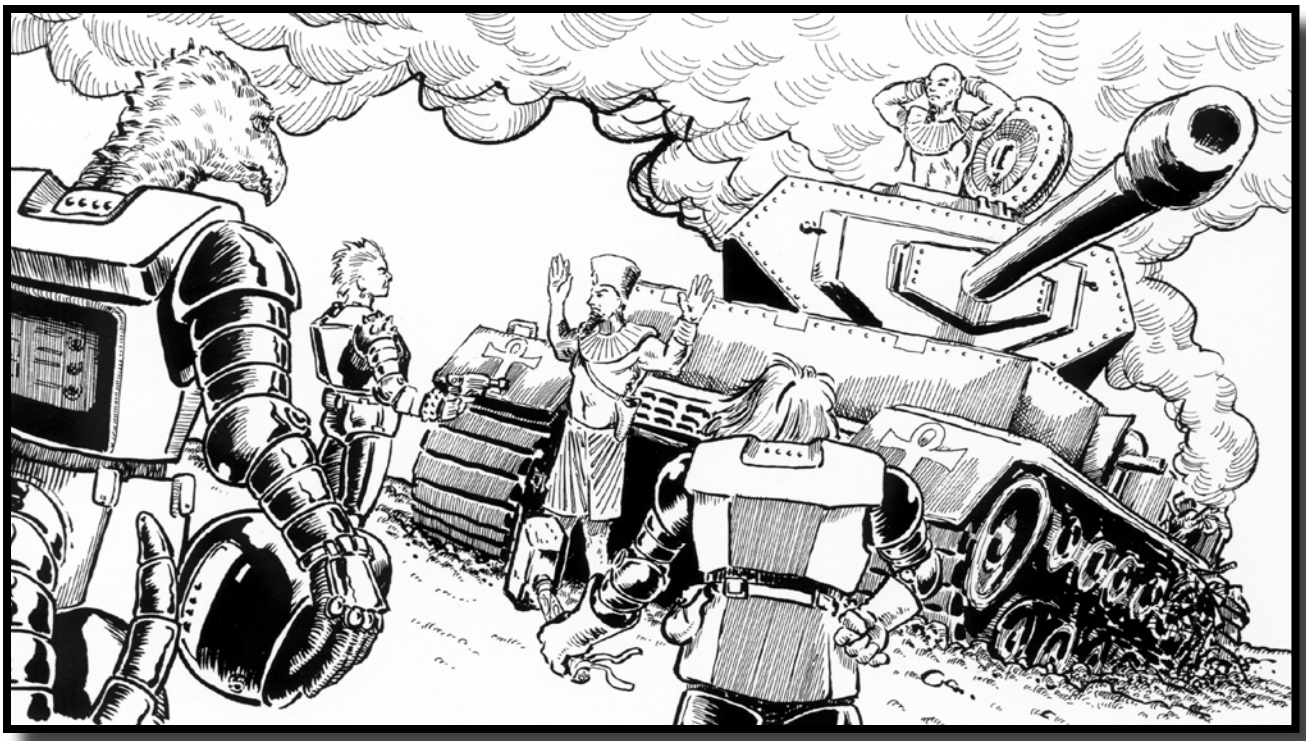
It is especially important to get your gamemaster's prior approval on anything you want the character to have that is *contradictory* to his home cosm, something that exceeds his axioms or otherwise isn't allowed. This is especially true for *transformed characters,* characters that are originally from one cosm but have the reality of another.

Example: After playing a few adventures in Becky's campaign, Roger's vampyre hunter dies so he needs to make a new character. Not finding any templates to his liking, Roger decides to design the character himself. His character concept is an Ayslish giant that's a magician. He won't be as big and tough as most giants but he'll be smarter. His tag skill will be *divination magic* and he won't use any combat magic because even as a small giant he's strong enough to be very dangerous in hand-to-hand and melee combat.

Most of his equipment will be spell components and the like, though for combat he'll carry a giant-sized sword. Roger doesn't have much in mind for the giant's personality or background yet, though he does know that the giant learned magic at Aysle's mage academies and is somewhat well known in magician's circles because there are so few giant mages.

Becky reminds Roger that giants receive enhancement packages on their *Strength* and *Toughness* attributes and that as a native Ayslish character he'll receive some free magical abilities. Since Roger's making *divination magic* the characters tag skill he will also get 12 additional points for spells and arcane knowledges. Becky cautions Roger that he should not duplicate the capabilities of Alan's mage character.

Roger does not want anything contradictory for his giant and Becky has no more questions or suggestions so he's ready to begin!



Step Two: Determine the Home Cosm

"Home cosm" can be a somewhat deceptive term. As described in the template rules, the home cosm is the reality that the character lives under; it represents the axioms and world laws that govern the character's existence. But it may not necessarily be the cosm that the character physically originated from, something that could also be called "home".

One of the many consequences of the Possibility Wars is that each of the invading realms changes people. When an invading realm imposes its reality onto a population, large numbers of people have their personal reality *transformed* to the reality of the invading realm; the realm has become their new "home".

Transformed characters are sometimes called *realm characters* for this reason. Similarly, characters that have not been transformed to a different reality are sometimes called *cosm characters*. So what this step represents is deciding not just the reality of your character, his home cosm, but also if he is a realm character or a cosm character.

Often your character's background will determine if he is a realm or cosm character, or if you haven't gotten that far along yet this decision can help determine some of the character's background. If he's a realm character, where was he from originally? What did he do in his previous life? How and when was he transformed? If he's a cosm character, how did he reach Earth, did he come here as one of the invaders and switch sides later or was he part of a resistance movement back in the cosm and made it to Earth some other way?

The choice can also affect other areas of character design. Cosm characters may receive some benefits that realm characters do not, such as Ayslish cosm natives getting free "birth magics" that realm characters do not receive when they transform.

On the other hand, realm characters often retain some of the knowledge and skills they possessed in their previous life, skills that cosm characters cannot usually start with because they are contradictory. An Ayslish realm character that used to be an airplane pilot before his transformation could retain his *air vehicles* skill even though aircraft are now contradictory to him.

Example: Roger already knows that his giant is from Aysle and since he is not a Core Earther transformed into a giant that makes it a cosm character. As Becky pointed out earlier, this means the giant will benefit from Aysle's "birth magics" rule.

Roger figures that his giant came to Earth as part of the initial invasion force from Aysle, probably as part of a large force of giants. When hostilities ceased, he made his way to the mage academy that was established in Cambridge to further his magical knowledge.

Step Three: Assign Attribute Points and Skill Adds

Attributes

All *Torg* player characters get 66 points to distribute across the seven attributes. The highest value an attribute can have is determined by the character's home cosm. There is no lower limit on attributes but in general an attribute of six or less is a serious weakness and there should be something in the character's background that explains how or why the character has this debilitating condition. If it's part of the character concept a low attribute is not a bad thing, but making one attribute very low just so you can make another attribute very high can easily backfire on you later.

Example: Knowing that his character will receive additional points in *Strength* and *Toughness* from enhancement packages, Roger decides to set those two attributes at 10. Roger knows that a giant can lose his enhancement packages in areas with low Magic axioms and if he has a *Strength* less than 10 he'll have difficulty moving, so that is as low he wants to go with that attribute.

Since *divination magic* is a *Perception* skill Roger wants this attribute to be high so he makes it an 11. *Mind* is also important for

magicians so he makes it a 10. This brings his point total up to 41, leaving him with 25 of the 66 points. Roger gives his giant a *Dexterity* of 9 and splits the remaining points evenly, making *Charisma* and *Spirit* both 8. So right now the giant's attributes are:

Dexterity	9
Strength	10
Toughness	10
Perception	11
Mind	10
Charisma	8
Spirit	8

Attribute Upper Limits by Cosm

Characters with very high attributes run the risk of causing contradictions in realities where the attribute limits are less than their attributes. If the character becomes *disconnected* his attributes will be reduced to the levels supported by the local reality.

The following cosms have an upper limit of 13 for every attribute: Core Earth, Cyberpapacy, Nippon Tech, Orrorsh and the Space Gods. The Nile Empire, Terra and the Land Below allow a character to have any one attribute at 14 but the other six attributes are limited to 13. Limits for the other primary cosms in the Possibility Wars can be found in the table below.

Attribute	Aysle	Living Land	Tharkhold *	Tz'Ravok
Dexterity	14	13	13(17)	14
Strength	15	14	13(19)	17
Toughness	15	14	13(24)	16
Perception	14	13	13(24)	13
Mind	14	13	13(25)	13
Charisma	13	12	13(17)	13
Spirit	13	14	13(24)	13

* Humans from Tharkold have an upper limit of 13 in every attribute; the values in parentheses are for the techno-demons.

Example: Let's say that Roger had made his giant's unenhanced *Strength* 14 instead of 10. This is allowed by Aysle's attribute limits but it is not allowed in most other cosms where the limit on *Strength* is 13. The giant's *Strength* would then be a contradiction in these realities. If Roger's character disconnects in one of these realities his unenhanced *Strength* would drop from 14 to 13.

For characters that receive *enhancement packages*, such as Aysle's elves and giants, these limits apply to their **unenhanced** attributes only. Enhancement packages may take attributes over the cosm limits. If an enhanced attribute is over a cosm limit but the unenhanced attribute is below the limit, the attribute is only a contradiction when the enhancement package itself is a contradiction. Attributes that have been enhanced but are below a cosm's limits are still contradictory if the enhancement is contradictory.

Example: Let's say that Roger adds four points from enhancement packages to his giant's *Strength* of 10, giving him a 14. In the Cyberpapacy, the attribute limit on *Strength* is 13. But the giant's unenhanced *Strength* of 10 is less than the Cyberpapacy's attribute limit and the Cyberpapacy's Magic axiom supports his enhancement packages so his *Strength* of 14 is not a contradiction. But while the Living Land's attribute limits allow *Strengths* of 14, the Living Land's Magic axiom does not support the giant's enhancement packages so his enhanced *Strength* is a contradiction there.

Skills

Once the attributes have been determined the player can select skills for the character and assign skill adds. This is similar to the work done with a template character in Chapter One except that instead of choosing from a pre-determined list of skills the player makes her choices from the Master Skill List in Chapter Three. The player must pick a tag skill for her character and she must take the *reality* skill. As with the templates, the tag skill automatically receives three adds and the player has 16 points to allocate among her other skills. The same rules for allocating points to skills that are used with the templates apply here as well.

Cosm characters must pick skills that are only available in their home cosm. For most skills this is governed by the axioms and the skill descriptions in Chapter Three will list any axiom requirements. Some skills are only available in particular realities, in which case instead of an axiom level the skill description will indicate which realities allow the skill.

Example: Roger's already decided on the tag skill so he gives *divination magic* three adds. Since he has to take *reality* he gives it one add for now, leaving him with 15 points for other skills.

Before going any further, he asks Becky to determine his character's birth magic so he will know which magic skill receives a free add. The result is *divination magic* and the arcane knowledge of *air*. Roger applies the free add to his tag skill and now has four adds in it and one add in the *air* arcane knowledge.

Roger quickly selects the other skills for his giant and assigns adds to each one, including an extra add in *reality*. Roger considers getting an add in either *Ayslish honor* or *Ayslish corruption* but decides his giant prefers the middle ground and has neither skill. He then calculates the value of each skill by combining the adds with the appropriate attribute and ends up with the following:

Melee Weapons	10 (DEX 9 and +1 add)
Unarmed Combat	11 (DEX 9 and +2 adds)
Lifting	11 (STR 10 and +1 add)
Divination Magic	15 (PER 11, tag skill +3 adds and +1 add birth magic)
Scholar (Aysle realm lore)	12 (PER 11 and +1 add)
trick	13 (PER 11 and +2 adds)
apportation magic	11 (MIND 10 and +1 add)
test of will	11 (MIND 10 and +1 add)
willpower	12 (MIND 10 and +2 adds)
persuasion	9 (CHA 8 and +1 add)
faith	10 (SPI 8 and +2 adds)
reality	10 (SPI 8 and +2 adds)
air arcane knowledge	+1 (adds only, no skill value)

Realm characters are allowed to choose a few skills that were allowed in their original home cosm but are not allowed in their current home cosm. This is not required though; it's perfectly acceptable for

a realm character to have only skills that are allowed in his current home cosm. The character cannot have any skills that are not allowed by either his previous home cosm or his current home cosm.

Example: Roger's giant cannot have the *cyberdeck operations* skill because its Tech axiom requirement is too high. If Roger were playing an Ayslish realm character that originally came from the Cyberpapacy he could give the character *cyberdeck operations* even though it's now a contradictory skill for that character.

In neither case could Roger's character have the *occultech* skill because it is only available to Tharkold characters.

A general recommendation is that no more than half of the realm character's starting skills may be contradictory skills from his previous reality. The character's tag skill may be a contradictory skill if the concept calls for it and the gamemaster approves.

Step Four: Assign Special Abilities

There are a large number of effects that fall into this category. Several were detailed previously in the template rules in Chapter One; magic, miracles, psionics, martial arts, pulp powers and weird science gizmos. The rules given there apply here as well.

Example: Roger goes back to the rules in the previous chapter to determine his character's magical skills and spells. With his 12 points for spells and arcane knowledges Roger takes the *earthly, folk, earth* and *inanimate forces* arcane knowledges with +3 adds in *folk* and +1 add in the rest. He chooses the spells *Communicate With Animals, Detect Truth, Gain Language, Pathfinder, Find Things* and *Telekinesis*. Roger did not see any *air* spells he wanted for his character so that arcane knowledge will go unused for now.

There are a few other special abilities that were predetermined for the player with the templates. Some are natural abilities due to the character's race, such as edeinos having sharp claws and teeth that they can use as weapons. Others are unnatural abilities due to the character's race, such as the *enhancement packages* that many races like Aysle's elves and giants receive which increase their attributes. And finally there are unnatural abilities that the player decides to give his character, such as cybernetic or biotech enhancements and implants.

Many unnatural special abilities will be contradictions outside of the character's home reality, and disconnection can prevent a character from using her special abilities. The rules pertaining to contradictions and disconnection are in Chapter Four.

Natural Tools

These are pretty simple, either you have them or you don't. Transformed characters will retain their natural tools unless their bodies were radically altered in the transformation process, which can happen but is rare. Most transformations do not change the character's physical body, just their reality.

For races not included here, such as Ayslish half-folk, natural tools can be determined from the write-ups for each race in the appropriate sourcebook.

Edeinos	claws, STR+3 damage; teeth, STR+2 damage; tail, STR damage
Stalenger	tentacles, STR+4 damage; flying pump, flight speed 11
Lorbaat	mandibles, STR+4 damage; claws, STR+3 damage; shell, TOU+3 armor; baatase glue; trioacid
Gudasko	teeth, STR+2 damage; claws, STR+4 damage
Larendi	claws, STR+4 damage; wings, flight speed 13
Draygaak	teeth, STR+4 damage; claws, STR+2 damage; scales, TOU+3 armor
Techno-Demon	teeth, STR+2 damage; talons, STR+3 damage; wings, flight speed 10; wing strike attack, STR+7 damage
Ravagons	talons, STR+2 damage; armored skin, TOU+3 armor; wings, flight speed 13

Enhancement Packages

Many of the nonhuman races in *Torg* possess attribute levels beyond what is humanly possible, such as the superhuman *Strength* of a giant. To achieve these superior abilities these races are given extra attribute points, which come in groups of three or four points called *enhancement packages*. Enhancement packages may take a character's attributes over the normal limits of his cosm.

Example: Aysle's attribute limits on *Strength* and *Toughness* is 15. Roger's giant has an unenhanced *Toughness* of 10. Roger could put two enhancement packages into his giant's *Toughness* and increase it to 16 because the attribute limits do not limit enhanced values.

These extra attribute points are not free; each comes with a price of some kind. The most common way of paying for an enhancement package is the *adventure cost*. At the end of every adventure the character must pay one Possibility Point per enhancement package. Note: Ords cannot use this option since they do not have Possibility

Points. This only applies to nonplayer characters since player characters are not ords.

If the adventure cost is not paid, the character loses his extra attribute points until he pays the cumulative adventure cost. For example, if he does not pay the adventure cost at the end of one adventure, he will go through the next adventure without his packages. At the end of that second adventure he would have to pay two Possibilities per package to regain them, otherwise they will still be gone in the next adventure.

An alternative to the adventure cost is to place a limit value on a different attribute. The player picks an attribute that does not have an enhancement package and it is limited to a maximum value of seven. The limited attribute may never be improved over seven (though temporary enhancements such as from a spell or miracle are allowed.) Note: Techno-demon and ravagon characters cannot use this option; they must pay for their enhancement packages with an adventure cost.

If the player decides to split things between an adventure cost and limited attributes he must specify which points are being covered by the limited attribute and which are covered by the adventure cost. This is in case he fails to pay the adventure cost, — then the points he paid for with the limited attribute will remain while the ones covered by the adventure cost will go away.

Example: Roger decides to get three enhancement packages for his giant, for a total of nine extra attribute points. He puts four points into *Strength* and five into *Toughness*, increasing those attributes to *Strength* 14 and *Toughness* 15. The character has one *Strength*-based skill, *lifting*, which will have to have its value recalculated since the attribute has increased. The character has +1 add in the skill so with his new *Strength* value the skill value is now 15.

Roger now has to choose how his giant will pay for his packages. The easiest way is to take an adventure cost of three possibilities, or Roger could choose to limit one or more of his giant's other attributes and pay a smaller adventure cost. After considering the possible combinations, Roger decides to pay for one package by limiting one of the giant's attributes and have an adventure cost of two possibilities.

He settles on limiting *Charisma*, which he now has to drop from 8 to 7, and adjusts all of the giant's *Charisma*-based skills down one point as well. Roger now has to put that extra attribute point somewhere else so he puts it in *Spirit*, raising it from 8 to 9 and raising the giant's *Spirit*-based skills as well.

Roger chooses to have the limited attribute pay for three of the points enhancing *Toughness* and notes this on the character sheet. In the event that Roger doesn't pay his characters adventure cost the giant won't lose those three points in *Toughness* but he will lose his other six enhancement points.

Most enhancement packages also come with axiom requirements. These represent the source of the character's enhancement. Giants and elves for example are magical creatures so their packages have a Magic axiom requirement. This means that a character's packages can be a contradiction in other realities. Any action a character takes that is affected by his enhancement packages will then be a contradiction even if the action itself is normally not a contradiction. A giant in Core Earth for example would find that since the packages on his *Strength* are contradictory his *lifting* and *climbing* skills are now contradictory too.

The actual value of the enhanced attribute does not have to be above a cosm's limit values to be contradictory; it is the enhancement package that causes the problem, not the value of the attribute. An elf with a package that raises his *Dexterity* to 13 will still cause contradictions in Core Earth because the package is not supported by Core Earth's Magic axiom.

When an enhanced character disconnects in a reality that doesn't support the packages, they go away and the attributes are reduced to their normal values. This reduction will also affect the value of any skill the character has based on the affected attributes.

Example: Roger's giant disconnects while in Core Earth. His packages no longer affect him so his *Strength* 14 and *Toughness* 15 are reduced to their unenhanced values of 10. His *lifting* skill drops back down to its unenhanced value of 11.

An additional complication is that characters with enhancement packages cannot *reconnect* as easily as unenhanced characters. Instead of only needing to make one *reality* skill check the enhanced character will have to make additional *reality* skill checks for each of his packages. When the character does finally reconnect, the packages will come back. Reconnecting is explained fully in Chapter Seven, for now just remember that packages mean you have to reconnect more than once.

Characters who have lost their enhancement packages, whether it is because they did not pay their adventure cost or because they are disconnected, may suffer a debilitating illness brought on by being in a reality which does not support creatures of their type. Magical creatures for example depend on a certain level of magical energies in their environment to sustain their life. When they disconnect in realities that do not have a high enough Magic axiom to provide these energies they sicken and will eventually die if they remain there for too long.

Aysle Characters

Elves and giants are the main races in Aysle that receive enhancement packages. If half-folk and lesser folk characters are being created the gamemaster may allow them to also receive packages. Humans and dwarves cannot have enhancement packages. Ayslish enhancement packages are worth three attribute points.

Ayslish enhancement packages require a Magic axiom of 9. Enhanced characters that are without their packages for a day will begin to suffer from the dreaded *wasting disease.* The character immediately takes one shock point of damage, which cannot be healed or negated in any way. The character will take an additional untreatable shock point of damage every week he remains without his packages. The character will become comatose when the shock damage equals his *Toughness* and will die if the shock damage increases to twice his *Toughness*.

Orrorshan Horror Characters

Players are generally limited to only two types of Horrors, werecreatures and living vampyres. Most characters of these types can be built by modifying the Werewolf and Reluctant Vampyre templates. The complete rules for designing a werecreature character can be found in the description of the *shapeshifting* skill in the *Orrorsh sourcebook.* The living vampyre rules can be found in *Infiniverse Update Volume II* under the description of the *Infection II* power.

Regaining the enhancement packages will prevent any further damage from occurring. The shock damage will heal at the rate of one per day or can be completely removed at once with a *Healing* miracle.

Elves: Must have one package, may have a maximum of two packages. Packages can be applied to any attribute except *Toughness*.

Giants: Must have one package, may have a maximum of three packages. Packages can be applied only to *Strength* and *Toughness*. If packages are paid for with limited attributes the first limited attribute is seven, but the second and third have limits of six.

Half-Folk: Do not have to have a package, may have a maximum of one package. Gamemasters may wish to limit which attributes the packages can be applied to based on the specific race chosen.

Space Gods Characters

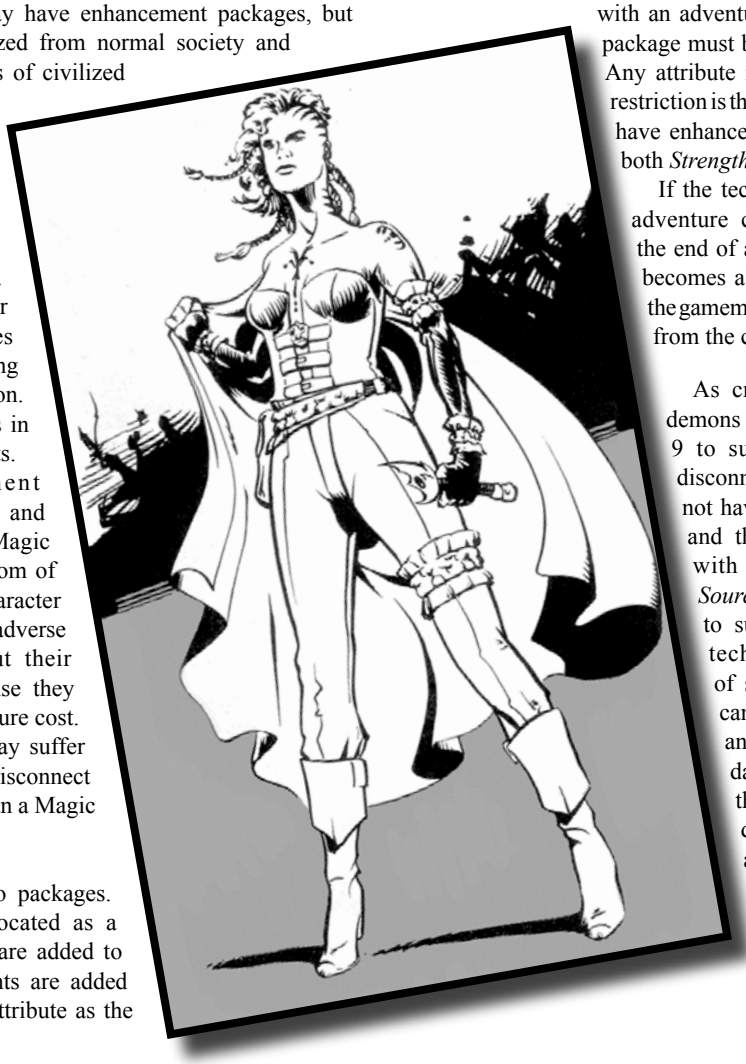
Any of the non-human races of the Star Sphere may have one enhancement package, though no character is required to have a package. The Akashans cannot have enhancement packages. A Space Gods enhancement package is worth four attribute points.

A Space Gods enhancement package requires a Tech axiom of 30. There are no detrimental effects caused by the loss of a package other than the normal drop in the attribute value.

Tharkold Characters

Humans of Tharkold may have enhancement packages, but these "mutants" are ostracized from normal society and forced to live on the fringes of civilized territory. Techno-demon player characters receive enhancement packages but non-player character techno-demons do not. Tharkold enhancement packages are worth three attribute points. Techno-demons must pay for their enhancement packages with an adventure cost; limiting other attributes is not an option. Mutants may limit attributes in place of using adventure costs.

Tharkold enhancement packages for both mutants and techno-demons require a Magic axiom of 12 and a Tech axiom of 26. Mutants and player character techno-demons do not suffer adverse effects from being without their packages unless it is because they have failed to pay the adventure cost. However, techno-demons may suffer from adverse effects if they disconnect in environments with less than a Magic axiom of 9.



Mutants: Must take two packages. Each package must be allocated as a single unit, so three points are added to one attribute and three points are added to another (or to the same attribute as the first package.) Any attribute may be enhanced but the attribute(s) enhanced determines the adventure cost.

Attribute	Cost
DEX, STR, SPI	1
PER, MIN	2
CHA, TOU	3

In place of paying an adventure cost, the mutant may limit other unenhanced attributes. One limited attribute takes the place of one point of adventure cost. So if a player wanted to pay for an enhancement package on *Toughness* entirely with limited attributes, three of the character's unenhanced attributes would have to be limited. Or the player could choose to limit two other attributes and pay an adventure cost of 1 for that package, or limit one other attribute and pay 2 for that package.

If a mutant fails to pay his adventure cost he begins to suffer from a condition called *atma stech*. The gamemaster chooses one of the character's attributes at random. It is permanently reduced by one point. At the end of every subsequent adventure it is permanently reduced one more point until eventually it either reaches zero or the character pays off the accumulated adventure cost, stopping the atma stech. If the attribute reaches zero the character dies. Lost attribute points are not regained when the character stops the atma stech.

Player character techno-demons: Must take six packages with an adventure cost of six points. Each package must be allocated as a single unit. Any attribute may be enhanced; the only restriction is that the finished character must have enhanced values of 13 or higher in both *Strength* and *Toughness*.

If the techno-demon fails to pay the adventure cost of six Possibilities at the end of an adventure it immediately becomes a non-player character under the gamemaster's control and is removed from the campaign.

As creatures of magic, techno-demons require a Magic axiom of 9 to survive. If a techno-demon disconnects in a reality that does not have a sufficient Magic axiom and the demon is not equipped with LifeCyber (see *Tharkold Sourcebook*, p109) it will begin to suffer from *lightblight*. The techno-demon takes a point of shock damage per day that cannot be healed or negated in any way, and when the shock damage equals its *Toughness* the demon dies. If the techno-demon reconnects or reaches an environment with a Magic axiom of 9 or better it will stop taking damage and will heal the shock damage at the rate of one point a day.

Ravagon Characters

Ravagons have a different type of enhancement package. Instead of receiving extra points for attributes they receive extra skill adds. All ravagons must take the package and it can only be paid for with an adventure cost.

The package provides a ravagon with +6 adds in the *flight* skill. Additionally, instead of receiving 16 points for skill adds (plus the tag skill of course) during character creation, a ravagon gets 22 points to allocate. They must still follow the normal rules for allocating skill adds though and no more points may be placed into the *flight* skill during character creation. A ravagon character begins play with only five Possibility Points instead of the normal 10.

The adventure cost of the ravagon enhancement package is six possibilities. If a ravagon fails to pay the adventure cost then none of its skill adds may be used until the adventure cost is paid off, at which point all of its skill adds return and are usable again. During any period that it cannot use its skill adds the ravagon is still considered to have the skills, just with no adds in them.

If the ravagon should become disconnected then it loses the enhancement package, with the same effect as if it had not paid the adventure cost. Reconnection will restore the package and all of the ravagon's skill adds to full. The enhancement package requires Tz'Ravok reality; it is not supported by any other reality.

Cyberware

Cybernetic implants require a Tech axiom of 26 and are available to characters from the Cyberpapacy and Tharkold. While the reality of the Space Gods supports cybernetics, the people of the Star Sphere do not use the technology.

Cyberware can differ in terms of price, capabilities and *cyber rating* depending on whether it is from the Cyberpapacy or from Tharkold, so make sure to use the correct sourcebook for your character when picking cyberware. The two realms also use slightly different *cyberpsychosis* tables so your gamemaster will need to keep the tables that are appropriate to your character on hand.

Every piece of cyberware has a *cyber value,* which represents the effects on the living mind of having body parts replaced by cold metal and circuitry. Too much cyberware can cause psychological problems for characters, known as *cyberpsychosis*, making them feel isolated and cut off from the rest of their kind by the artificial nature of their bodies. The sum total of all a character's cyber values is compared to the character's *Spirit* attribute during stressful situations to determine if short-term and possibly long-term cyberpsychosis problems develop. See Chapter Twelve for a more detailed description of the rules pertaining to cyber values and cyberpsychosis.

There are three general categories that describe most types of cybered characters during character creation; lightly cybered, moderately cybered and heavily cybered. During Step One you should discuss with your gamemaster what category you see for your character.

There are two additional categories for two special types of cybered characters from Tharkold, Techno-demons and cyborgs.

Lightly cybered: These are characters with cyber values that are low relative to their *Spirit* attribute. Most people in both the Cyberpapacy and Tharkold fall into this category, generally only possessing some type of computer interface port and possibly one or two other minor pieces of cyberware. Characters in this category typically have a cyber value no more than four or more points below their *Spirit*.

Moderately cybered: These are characters with cyber values approximately the same as their *Spirit*. Characters with cyberlimbs, several sensory enhancements or other types of noticeable body modification will often fall into this category. Typically the character's cyber value will be within a range of four points above or below their *Spirit*.

Heavily cybered: These are characters walking the thin line of cyberpsychosis. Much of the body has been altered or replaced, leaving the mind fragile and vulnerable. Most characters in this category have been modified for combat purposes and may have extremely powerful cyberlimbs or a large number of specialized enhancements. These characters will have a cyber value noticeably higher than their *Spirit*, at least five points higher up to a maximum starting cyber value of 18.

Techno-demons: All Techno-demons have some amount of cybernetic implants and modifications. During character creation the only restriction is that the Techno-demon ends up with a cyber value between 7 and 16. Most Techno-demons should have a cyber value of at least 10.

Cyborgs: The Tharkold cyborg is a character that is more machine than man. They are often the result of Techno-demon experiments on humans rather than a voluntary replacement of body parts with cyberware. They have been exposed to extensive mental reprogramming and reconditioning to think of themselves not as a living being but as a machine, which helps them resist the effects of cyberpsychosis with the *cyberpsyche* skill. Cyborgs have a **minimum** starting cyber value of 16 and a starting maximum of 23.

Biotech Implants

The biotech implants used by the Space Gods are symbiotic organisms that can provide a number of benefits to the host. Biotech implants require a Tech axiom of 30, though the implants themselves do not cause contradictions since they are simply living creatures. But if an Akashan disconnects in a reality without the required Tech axiom her biotech implants will cease functioning and will in fact die in two rounds if she does not reconnect first.

Only Akashans may have biotech implants. The nonhuman races of the Star Sphere do not have the technology to develop biotech for themselves and the Akashans do not give any of their biotechnology to the other races of their cosm.

Optional Rule: Purchasing Equipment

One way to limit the amount and scope of a character's starting equipment is for the gamemaster to give the player a set amount of money that they can spend to equip their character instead of using the normal rules provided. The player can either be given one amount of money to use on all of the character's equipment or given one amount to use on combat items and another amount for useful items. If the latter method is used the character should receive a larger amount for the type of equipment that goes with his profession. Miscellaneous equipment is considered free.

A character's starting money would be considered separate from the funds provided here for equipment and will be determined with the rules given elsewhere. Any funds not spent on equipment are not carried over to the character's starting money.

The only limitation on the use of biotech implants is that a character can never have more than three implants at any one time. More than three implants creates a biochemical imbalance in the host's body and the character will take one point of shock damage a round until the number of implants is reduced to three or less. If the character takes an amount of shock damage equal to her *Toughness* from this chemical imbalance she will lapse into a coma and remain unconscious until the number of implants has been reduced to safe levels.

Step Five: Equip the Character

A character's starting equipment should be based more on how it helps define and expand the character concept than on how useful, powerful or helpful it will be when the character is adventuring. An assault rifle may make combat go a lot faster but should your character have one? Is he just being expedient or is there some reason that requires him to have such a weapon instead of a smaller firearm; is there something in his profession, background or personality that calls for him to carry heavy firepower?

Similar thought should go into all of your character's equipment, not just the weapons. A good place to start is with the character's tag skill. What kind of equipment does she use with her tag skill? A character with *computer programming* as a tag skill might have a laptop computer or cyberdeck, while a character with *medicine* might have a doctor's bag full of items like a stethoscope, thermometer, bandages, ointments and other small pieces of medical equipment.

If the character's tag skill does not use tools, such as *persuasion*, then think about the character's profession. What did he do with his tag skill? A reporter who used *persuasion* to interview people might have a small tape recorder or a notepad and pens while a corporate salesman who convinced people to buy her company's product might have a cell phone that she used to keep in touch with the main office.

If the character's tag skill is one of the vehicle operation skills (*air vehicles, land vehicles, space vehicles, water vehicles*) that doesn't mean that the character will own a vehicle that goes with their tag skill. Many professional pilots, drivers and sailors operate vehicles owned by their employers rather than vehicles they own themselves, and owning a spaceship is probably right out of the question for most characters!

If you want your character to have a vehicle, you need to provide an explanation for why the character has it. It doesn't need to be a lengthy, complicated explanation, just something that fits into the character's background. A pilot who ran a small shipping company that was put out of business by the Possibility Wars could still have his airplane but a former Air Force pilot isn't likely to have an F-15 fighter jet that he took with him when he quit.

How Much Equipment?

Storm Knights are almost always on the move so being able to travel lightly is important. A good rule of thumb when selecting equipment is that a character should be able to carry all of his equipment at the same time without being encumbered by it, though characters that have a vehicle aren't expected to be able to carry it! At the same time though, the amount of equipment a vehicle could carry should not be considered when selecting equipment, only what the character can personally carry.

The amount of equipment a character can carry is not so much a matter of their strength as a matter of convenience. A suit of armor is heavy but a character can wear it and it won't get in the way. On the other hand, a large suitcase full of clothing may be lighter than the armor but a character won't be able to get around as easily while carrying it, and runs the risk of losing it if he leaves it behind somewhere while off adventuring. Try to envision how each piece of equipment is going to be carried by your character, and if it gets in the way or can't easily be carried then they are probably better off without it.

Most equipment can be divided into three general categories; *combat items, useful items* and *miscellaneous items*. Combat items are things like weapons and armor. Useful items are things like

spell components, toolkits, cyberdecks, first aid kits, generally anything that would be used in conjunction with a skill. Miscellaneous items are just that, random odds and ends that don't fit into the other two categories such as a pack of chewing gum or a jar of armor polish.

A character's profession provides a general indication of how many items she should have from the first two groups. Characters who are combat-oriented should have three or four items from the combat group and two to three items from the useful items group. Characters who are not combat-oriented should have the reverse, two or three combat items and three or four useful items. These numbers include any equipment chosen in association with the character's tag skill.

A character's miscellaneous equipment is more for "atmosphere" than usefulness, minor items that help define the character's personality or background. A favorite book, a framed picture of someone important to the character, a lucky rabbit's foot, a bag of jelly beans, a cool-looking pair of sunglasses, just about any item that isn't normally going to be useful to a character in his adventures will qualify as a miscellaneous piece of equipment. Typically characters can have three or four miscellaneous items but if you want more and the extra items can reasonably be carried then it shouldn't be a problem.

A fourth category of equipment are the "freebies", things that every character is assumed to have but doesn't need to be specified on the character sheet or counted against their number of combat, useful or miscellaneous items. Characters are assumed to have a set of clothing appropriate to their home cosm and small personal items such as wristwatches, wallets, minor pieces of jewelry, a toothbrush and so on.

Characters are also assumed to have minor accessories that normally go with other pieces of equipment they have. A character with a pistol for example is assumed to have a normal holster, some ammunition and even a cleaning kit for the weapon. This does not include all possible accessories; something unusual like a laser sight, a concealed holster or armor-piercing ammunition would have to be accounted for in the character's equipment list.

Example: Roger's giant is not a combat-oriented character so he gets 2 - 4 combat items, 3 - 4 useful items and 3 - 4 or however many miscellaneous items as seems reasonable. Roger already knows that he wants his character to have a giant-sized sword as a weapon so that's one combat item, and he'll need spell components for his magic so that counts as one useful item. Roger can't find a giant sword on any equipment list so he settles on a two-handed sword, figuring that for a giant it's probably a one-handed sword.

Since his giant also fights unarmed, Roger decides to get the character a set of giant-sized brass knuckles too. He can't find a write-up for this item either so he writes down the information for human-sized brass knuckles and figures he can ask Becky later and see if the giant-sized variety would have different numbers. While he could get up to two more combat items, Roger figures those are the only weapons his character needs and he doesn't think the character would wear armor, so he's finished selecting combat items.

Looking at the giant's other skills, Roger doesn't see many that require tools so he's not sure what other useful items to get for his giant besides the spell components. He decides that the character has a book of Ayslish history and folklore he uses with his *scholar (Aysle realm lore)* skill and would probably have a holy symbol of some kind because of his *faith* skill.

For his character's miscellaneous items, Roger figures that the giant carries around a diploma of some kind from the mage academy so he can prove to people that he's a real mage. He also carries around a pair of giant-sized eyeglasses, not because he needs them but because someone once told him that they make people look smarter, and he wants people to know that he's not a dumb giant. Finally, he carries around a small bag of animal food, so that when he talks to animals using his magic he can offer them something to eat.

Axiom Levels for Equipment

Characters cannot start with any equipment that is a contradiction in their home cosm unless the gamemaster approves an explanation in the character's background for how they acquired the contradictory piece of equipment. For example, a Core Earth character can have a short sword without any problem but a magical short sword would require some kind of explanation since that kind of magic is a contradiction in Core Earth.

Sometimes a lower axiom limit may also be in effect to reflect the difficulty in finding what would be considered an antique in the character's home cosm. To a character from Aysle, a wheellock pistol is cutting-edge technology but to a Core Earther it's ancient history, something found in a museum. A Core Earth character could have a wheellock pistol but since it's so far below her Tech axiom there should be an explanation in her background for where and how she got it and why she's carrying it around with her now.

For technology, generally anything with an axiom level more than four points below a character's Tech axiom will require an explanation of some kind. There are some notable exceptions; most melee weapons like knives, swords and clubs have low axiom levels but are still available in cosms with much higher Tech axioms, such as Core Earth.

For magical items or spiritually blessed items it works a little bit differently. An explanation in the character's background is required for any of these items but the more a character's axiom exceeds the axiom of the tool, less of an explanation is required. This is because for these two axioms, items become more common as the axiom increases without becoming "antiques". If the cosm's axiom is more than four points higher than the tool's axiom a fairly simple explanation is all that's required for an average version of the enchanted or blessed item.

For example, a sword with a non-permanent sharpness enchantment is Magic 10. In a reality like the Nile Empire, which has a Magic axiom of 12, magically sharpened swords are possible but still quite unusual so you will need to provide a good background explanation for your character to have one. By contrast, Aysle has a Magic axiom of 18 so magically sharpened swords are fairly common and the explanation can be kept simple.

Starting Money

The amount of money a character starts with is determined somewhat arbitrarily by their home cosm and the perceived wealth level of the character. The values given are a suggested maximum value rather than the amount that every character in that category receives; the actual amount chosen should be tailored to fit the character's personality and background.

SUGGESTED STARTING MONEY

Home Cosm	Currency	Poor	Low	Middle	High	Wealthy
Aysle	Trade	50	150	300	1000	3000
Cyberpapacy	Franc	500	1200	2500	5000	15K
Core Earth	US Dollar	100	500	1000	2000	5000
Nile Empire	Royal	2	10	40	100	300
Nippon Tech	Yen	4000	30K	500K	1M	1B
Orrorsh	Sterling	5	30	100	300	700
Space Gods	Ciara	5	10	30	50	200

Characters from the Living Land, and Land Below do not start with any money because those realms have no form of currency. Characters from the Tharkold cosm similarly do not start with any money because they have no standardized form of exchange. Tharkold characters from the realm have their starting money determined as if they were from Core Earth.

Conversion rates between currencies can be found in Chapter Thirteen.

Example: Roger figures that as a magician and a giant his character can probably demand fair wages for his services and should be better off than lower class, but probably isn't very high into the middle class because he's a giant. Roger decides on 200 trades for starting money.

Step Six: Describe the Character

A description of the character's physical appearance and personality serves as a guideline for how the character interacts with other characters and vice versa. While a character's physical appearance is usually easy to determine and unlikely to change much over the course of time, defining a character's personality is a bit trickier and more subject to change over time.

Appearance

A character's general appearance can usually be defined quite quickly with some basic information - height, weight, skin color, eye color, hair color, hair style, facial hair and so on. The character's race or culture may predetermine some of these features; Ayslish elves for example have dark bluish skin and dwarvish men are well known for having beards.

A character's clothing and equipment are also part of their appearance; an expensive business suit creates a different impression than that caused by a suit of plate mail armor or the traditional Nile Empire garb of a linen kilt and sandals. Obvious cybernetic implants can have a great impact on a character's appearance, especially to people from realities that don't have cybernetics.

Example: Since his character is supposed to be small for a giant, Roger checks the *Aysle sourcebook* for what's considered an average giant height and settles on his character's height as only 2.3 meters (about seven and a half feet). The sourcebook doesn't say anything about an average weight for giants so Roger guesses at 160 kilograms (about 360 pounds) for his short giant.

Roger decides his character has a light complexion, dark colored eyes and dark hair. After considering the matter of hair for a while, Roger decides that the character has shaved his head and is likewise clean-shaven, done as a sign of his magical profession. Roger adds a shaving kit to his character's equipment list, listing it as a miscellaneous item.

Roger figures that because the giant has money, he can afford to wear some nice clothing that is tailored to his size. He envisions the character wearing a stylish black leather jerkin over a loose-fitting long-sleeved white shirt, black pants and a low pair of boots. A rather dashing figure for a giant!

Finally, you should give your character some kind of distinguishing characteristic that helps identify them and make them stand out a bit from the crowd. It doesn't have to be anything terribly unusual, it could be something as mundane as wearing glasses. It could even be something mentioned above, like being noticeably taller than most people or wearing an unusual outfit.

It doesn't necessarily have to be something immediately visible. Maybe your character walks with a limp, or sweats profusely when nervous. The character's voice could be distinctive, something about the tone and quality or perhaps an accent of some kind. The character might have a scar or a birthmark somewhere, maybe normally covered by clothing, maybe not. Perhaps the character has a favorite cologne or perfume that they always use.

Distinguishing characteristics are not necessary and it's okay if you don't want to give any to your character. While they can add to the definition of a character and sometimes provide roleplaying opportunities or generate background ideas, they may not be to everyone's liking. Some characters may even be based on the idea that they don't stand out in a crowd, which in its own way can be a distinguishing characteristic!

Example: Roger feels that the character's baldness is already pretty distinctive, especially when combined with being a giant who wears good clothing. He shouldn't have any difficulty standing out in a crowd.

Personality

While a character's appearance can often be described briefly, accurately detailing the numerous aspects of a character's personality

could fill pages of material and still not be complete. Plus it's unlikely that you will be able to predict every possible aspect of the character's personality that will come up in play, and your character may develop and evolve in ways that you cannot anticipate beforehand.

So when describing a character's personality, it's best to generalize and only cover the highlights rather than trying to provide in-depth information. Two ways to do this are with personality traits and behavior tags.

Traits

Try to pick a few traits that can be used to quickly describe your character, such as "brave", "sneaky", "charming" or "arrogant". Don't worry about being more detailed than that, the specifics can be explored and developed during play. Right now all that's necessary are a few basics to get an idea of how the character will be roleplayed.

Most characters should have a mix of positive and negative traits, and there's plenty of room for variations within each trait. A character could be brave in battle but not in social situations or a rude character may be a model of civility around his family.

No trait has to be absolute; an honest character can lie if he feels it is necessary, a grim character can crack a joke every now and then. Think of the traits as tendencies, not ironclad restrictions on your character's behavior.

Example: Roger has a pretty good idea of how to play the giant; he's proud of his intelligence and of being a mage, sometimes to the point of being egotistical about it. Unlike most giants, he's even-tempered and can usually control his emotions so by comparison he's a much more friendly and approachable giant than most.

But he's got that low *Charisma*, and because it's limited it will never get any higher. While he can make up for that somewhat with skills, he's still going to seem a bit rude and occasionally vulgar.

Sample Personality Traits

Aggressive	Egotistic
Illogical	Pious
Altruistic	Extroverted
Immoral	Punctual
Amoral	Follower
Introverted	Respectful
Brash	Friendly
Kind	Rude
Cheerful	Generous
Leader	Selfish
Courageous	Greedy
Logical	Silent
Cowardly	Grim
Moral	Sincere
Crude	Helpful
Morose	Trusting
Dependent	Honest
Peaceful	Virtuous
Dishonest	Humorous
Pessimistic	Violent

Behavior Tags

While the traits are meant to describe general qualities of the character's personality, behavior tags are more narrowly defined and specific. They are unusual actions or behaviors that help identify a character. Two well-known examples are the way James Bond always introduces himself ("Bond...James Bond") and Zorro always leaving his mark behind with three slashes of his blade.

Below is a list of some possible behavior tags. Many can actually be done at the gaming table as part of your roleplaying the character, though anything that might annoy the other players is probably best left as something you describes your character doing rather than doing it yourself!

Sample Behavior Tags:

- eats sunflower seeds all the time
- whistles when bored
- always chewing on a toothpick
- cracks knuckles before every fight
- collects a small souvenir from every adventure
- has a catch phrase or saying used whenever appropriate
- drinks only certain beverages
- neatness freak
- drums fingers on table when thinking
- performs a certain gesture of action when appropriate
- fiddles with an ever-present possession when nervous
- must always have the last word in a conversation

Example: Since the giant wants everyone to know that he's a magician, Roger decides that his character's behavior tag is that the character always tries to work the fact that he's a magician or that he attended the mage academy into a conversation. If someone asks him a question, he says he learned the answer "back at the mage academy" or he will explain how he used one of his "many divination spells" to learn the answer.

Step Seven: Develop Character's Background and History

A character's background is, simply enough, a brief description of the character's life before becoming a Storm Knight. Describing your character's entire life history is not necessary and in fact could be counter-productive in the long run. Leaving loose ends and gaps in a character's background will allow for more character development and roleplaying opportunities as the game progresses.

As was suggested with describing a character's personality, only the highlights of a character's background need to be defined during character creation. These will be the important events in your character's life that shaped his personality and made him into the person he is at the start of the game. If a character's personality describes *how* he acts, then the background should describe *why* he acts the way he does.

Try to think of interesting and unusual events for your character's background. The events could be dramatic, adventurous, tragic, inspiring or even bizarre. They could even be interesting only in retrospect, at the time the event occurred maybe no one would have viewed it as important.

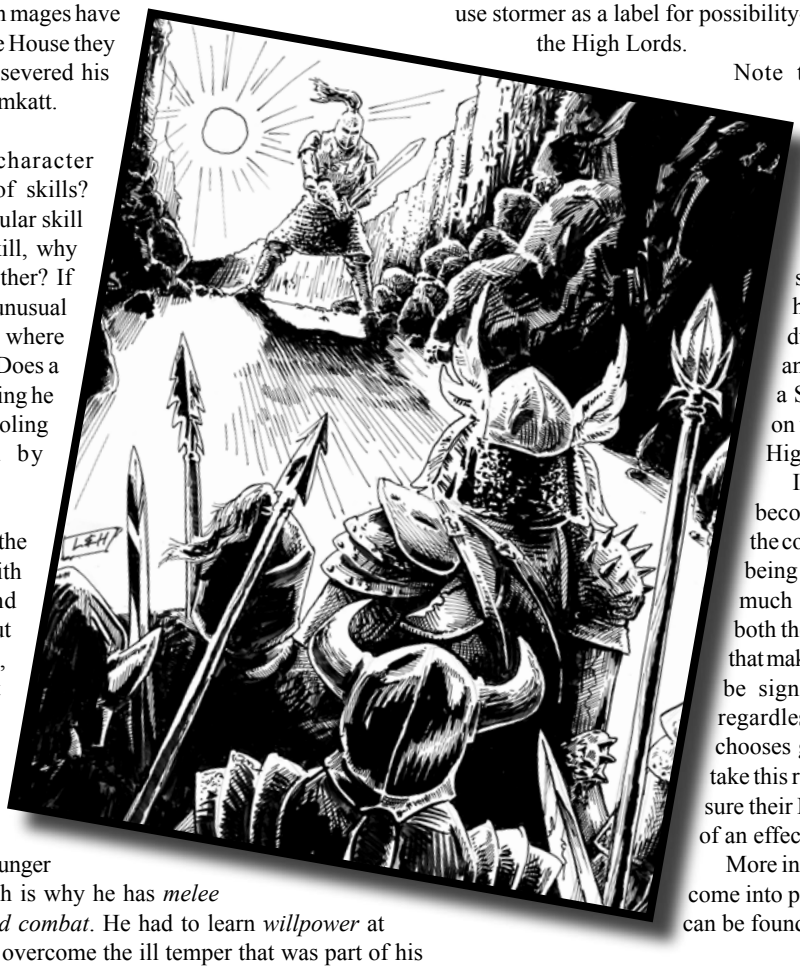
The easiest way to start developing a character's background is ask questions about your character and then come up with the answers. Some of these might be easily enough answered, others may require more effort. Even questions about minor character details may generate some interesting material for the character's background.

One way to start asking questions is to go back over the previous steps of character creation and look at what you determined in those steps. Some steps already call for certain events in the character's background to be detailed, such as how the character came to possess an unusual piece of equipment or how a special ability was gained.

Here are some general questions that you can use to get started:

Where is the character from? While the character's home cosm describes her reality, it doesn't say anything about where exactly she lived before becoming a Storm Knight. How have the Possibility Wars affected where the character lived? Does she still have family there? Does she have family elsewhere?

Example: Roger knows that giants come from Lower Aysle so he looks at the map in the *Aysle Sourcebook* and decides that his character was originally from a tribe of giants in Chamkatt. At a young age he left his tribe and managed to make his way to Upper Aysle so he could learn magic at the mage academy. He has no interest in establishing ties with his old tribe, just as human mages have to sever their ties to the House they were born in, he has severed his ties to his past in Chamkatt.



Why does the character have this selection of skills? Why is this one particular skill the character's tag skill, why that skill and not another? If the character has an unusual skill, such as magic, where did he learn the skill? Does a skill represent something he learned through schooling or was it learned by experience?

Example: Since the character was born with *divination magic* and was smart enough to put the skill to good use, unlike most giants, it makes sense for it to be his tag skill. He had to learn to defend himself from other giants, who picked on him when he was younger for being small, which is why he has *melee weapons* and *unarmed combat*. He had to learn *willpower* at the mage academy to overcome the ill temper that was part of his giant heritage. Because he turned his back on Lower Aysle he tried to learn as much as he could about Upper Aysle which is reflected by the knowledge covered with his *scholar (Aysle realm lore)* skill. He has *trick* because he likes to outsmart his opponents, and it was a useful strategy to use against the larger giants who bullied him when he was younger.

What was the character's *Moment of Crisis?* Every possibility-rated character faces a *Moment of Crisis,* a point in time where they are faced with a conflict and must make a strong moral choice, for good **or** evil. For purposes of the Moment of Crisis, "good" is considered to be a choice that places the safety or interests of others ahead of the character's own safety or interests while "evil" is the reverse.

Most people when faced with a Moment of Crisis fail to make a moral choice of any kind, either because they are paralyzed with fear or are unable to make a quick decision in the face of danger. Those who do make the choice though become possibility-rated.

The vast majority of possibility-rated characters are created when the conflict they face involves another reality, especially in the presence of reality storms. When two realities collide, powerful forces are unleashed and a strong moral stand can influence these forces and infuse the character with possibility energy, making him possibility-rated.

The High Lords and their minions call these people *stormers*, because most are created in the reality storms that accompany an invasion. While the invaders use stormer as a label for all of their possibility-rated opponents and victims, most of those who oppose the High Lords refer to themselves as Storm Knights and use stormer as a label for possibility-rated people who do not fight the High Lords.

Note that whether the character chose good or evil does not determine if the character is considered a Storm Knight or a stormer, a character does not need to be a saint to be a hero. A character who chose to save herself instead of risking her life to save someone else during a Moment of Crisis made an "evil" choice but can still be a Storm Knight if she later goes on to oppose and fight against the High Lords.

It is possible for characters to become possibility-rated without the conflict in their Moment of Crisis being from another reality, but it is much less common. In these cases both the conflict and the moral choice that make up the Moment of Crisis must be significant, life-changing events regardless of whether the character chooses good or evil. If you choose to take this route with your character, make sure their Moment of Crisis has that kind of an effect on the character's life.

More information about the forces that come into play during a Moment of Crisis can be found in Chapter Seven.

Example: During the invasion, Roger's character was ordered to use his magic to locate a group of Core Earthers who had managed

to escape from a recent attack. Accompanied by a bloodthirsty group of giant warriors, he set out to track them down. His spells quickly located the missing humans, but also revealed that they were a group of helpless and unarmed children and elderly people. It would be a slaughter if he led his comrades to these humans.

As they neared the cave the humans were hiding in, his conflict over what to do reached a critical point - doom the Core Earthers by leading his group to the cave or save the humans by leading his group off in the wrong direction? As the cave came into sight, he decided. Pointing at an angle away from the cave, he told his comrades that the humans were still some distance away and led them in the wrong direction.

What motivates the character to be a Storm Knight? Is there some event in the character's life that has driven him to oppose the High Lords? A character's motivation may simply be that the High Lords must be stopped in order to save the world, or that the character's personality causes him to fight against villainy, but creating a more personal reason for the character will give you more storytelling and roleplaying opportunities in the game.

For many characters their Moment of Crisis is what leads them to fight against the High Lords, that strong moral choice being the impetus that drives them to become a Storm Knight. But it doesn't have to be the Moment of Crisis; there may be other events in a character's life that lead them to actively opposing the High Lords.

These events can be tied to other areas already determined for the character. Perhaps the invaders overran and destroyed her hometown or killed her family. Someone who taught the character or inspired his career choice may also motivate him to take action against the High Lords.

If it's some aspect of your character's personality that has led them to become a Storm Knight, perhaps there is an event in their past that resulted in them developing that personality trait. Someone who is protective may have been unable to protect someone from danger in the past, and that failure is what motivates her to help others today.

Example: Roger decides that the giant's Moment of Crisis is what motivated him to switch sides and fight against the invasion instead of for it. Until the invasion is stopped, the senseless killings will just continue and that's something he doesn't want on his conscience, that he didn't do what was necessary to try and stop it.

Background Subplots

An **optional** element for a character's background is a *subplot*, a continuing story involving the character that takes place in the context of the larger stories that make up the campaign. Subplots give you the chance to introduce plot twists and story elements into an adventure and provide you with more roleplaying opportunities for your character.

Subplots normally come into play through the use of *subplot cards* from the *Drama Deck*, which is covered in Chapter Five. Normally when you decide to activate a subplot, the story element is based on something from the current adventure, such as having a romance blossom with a nonplayer character that's part of the adventure, or people suddenly begin mistaking the player character for someone else. Besides the opportunity for some expanded roleplaying, playing a subplot also awards your character extra possibilities.

With a background subplot, you are setting up in advance the basic details that will come into play whenever you decide to activate that particular subplot for your character. The subplot can be big or small, humorous or tragic, something the character anticipates or dreads happening.

For example, a player could define a *Mistaken Identity* subplot as his character bearing a remarkable resemblance to a well-known and popular celebrity. Then every time in the game the player gets a *Mistaken Identity* subplot card and chooses to activate it, that resemblance to someone else becomes an active part of the adventure. It can also be activated if the gamemaster feels that it is an appropriate story element to bring it into the current adventure, even if the subplot card hasn't been played for it.

The exact nature of the subplot when activated is something for the gamemaster to determine rather than the player. The character may get some perks from being mistaken as the celebrity but the problems it can create are usually more interesting to roleplay! Screaming fans may mob the character wanting autographs, making it more difficult for him to chase a villain. The press might start following him around, interfering in everything he does (and getting in the way of the rest of the party too.) An obsessed fan might turn violent when the character denies being the celebrity.

The subplot cards found in the Drama Deck are: *Mistaken Identity, Nemesis, Personal Stake, Romance, Suspicion, True Identity* and *Martyr*. Definitions are in Chapter Five but the names are fairly self-explanatory. *Martyr* is an unusual subplot and has some special rules that apply to it and it cannot be used as a background subplot.

Example: Roger decides to give his giant a *True Identity* subplot. Unknown to the character, in the years since he left Lower Aysle his former tribe has taken over Chamkatt and his father now leads the tribe, making him a very powerful individual in Lower Aysle. As the eldest son, Roger's character also holds a lot of power over the Chamkatt giants, only he doesn't know it.

The first time Roger plays the *True Identity* subplot card, Becky will work this story idea into the current adventure. Perhaps some giants from another tribe recognize Roger's character and try to capture him to use as a hostage against his father, or perhaps some Chamkatt giants may recognize him and offer to serve him as bodyguards.

Character Connections

Just as with characters made from templates, how the character knows and fits in with the other characters in the playing group needs to be determined. Go back to the end of Chapter One if you need to review the possible ways to establish connections with the other characters in your group.

Example: Roger figures that his character probably knows Alan's Curious Mage; they could have gone to the mage academy at the same time or may have worked together during the invasion after the giant defected to the other side. Roger checks with Alan and they decide that they know each other from the mage academy.

Step Eight: Submit Write-up for Final Gamemaster Approval

The last step is to go over your character's write-up with your gamemaster and make sure there isn't anything wrong with the character, in either the game mechanics or in the presentation of the character's personality and background. Assuming that there were no significant changes from the discussion you had with your gamemaster back in Step One, this step is primarily for proofreading and familiarizing your gamemaster with the details of your character's write-up.

The game mechanics of the character (attributes, skills and special abilities) should be double-checked to make sure there aren't any mistakes or miscalculations. Any special rules that apply to the character, such as the restrictions on an enhancement package, should be gone over to make sure both you and the gamemaster are familiar with how they work.

Going over your character's personality and background with the gamemaster will allow the two of you to smooth out any rough spots and integrate your character smoothly into the game world and into the group of player characters. Your gamemaster may be able to provide some additional ideas or details for such elements as your character's Moment of Crisis and Background Subplots.

Covering the character's personality will give your gamemaster an idea of how your character should be played, which will help him determine the adventure award for your character at the end of every adventure. He can also use the information to better gauge how non-player characters may react towards your character.

Your character's background, especially any Background Subplots, can provide your gamemaster with ideas for how to make your character more involved in some adventures. People from your character's past may show up as nonplayer characters or adventures may occur in places your character has visited before.

Example: Roger summarizes all of the information he's determined about his giant and writes up a final version of the character sheet then takes it to Becky. He goes over the attributes and skills with her, explaining how he handled the enhancement packages. Becky notices that Roger forgot to change the values on his *Charisma* and *Spirit* skills after he limited *Charisma* and moved a point into *Spirit* and has him correct the numbers. Becky also points out that he hasn't specified a religion for the character's *faith* skill. She suggests Ugorl, an Ayslish goddess worshipped by most giants who make their home in Upper Aysle, like Roger's character.

Roger asks her about a giant-sized sword and brass knuckles, explaining that he found only human-sized versions in the sourcebooks. Becky says that since the character is short for a giant he probably isn't tall enough to use a two-handed sword with one hand so can use the normal human swords. Likewise, the game numbers for human-sized brass knuckles probably apply to ones that would fit his character.

They go over the character's appearance, personality and background. The only problem Becky has is with the Moment of Crisis; it's not very exciting. The moral decision is a good one but the conflict is weak, there should be more to it than marching a group of giants over a hill.

Roger suggests that when his character pointed away from the cave some of the other giants doubted him, so he had to quickly convince the giants that he was right and force them to follow him over the hill and away from the cave. If he had failed to convince them then they would have probably killed him as well as the humans. Becky says that fixes the problem and gives the character her final approval.

Expanded Rules

A slightly different version of this system with more detail, information and suggestions can be found in *The Storm Knights' Guide to the Possibility Wars* supplement.

Chapter 3: Attributes and Skills

"I design and build microchips. I have doctorates in physics and microengineering. I'm sixteen years old. It's a long story."

—Dr. Hachi Mara-Two

In Chapters One and Two, you were briefly introduced to attributes and skills. This chapter contains a detailed description of each individual attribute and skill, including notes that allow you and your gamemaster to resolve the use of a specific ability during play.

Attributes are abilities or characteristics common to every living thing in the Infiniverse. Thus, a martial artist and a grizzly bear both have a *Strength* and a *Dexterity*, though the bear's *Strength* is probably higher than that of the martial artist and the martial artist probably has a better *Dexterity* than the bear. The seven attributes are *Dexterity, Strength, Toughness, Perception, Mind, Charisma,* and *Spirit*.

Skills, on the other hand, are characteristics that creatures and characters may or may not possess. A doctor from Nippon Tech and a US Army medic from Core Earth would both possess the *medicine* skill, while an edeinos warrior from the primitive Living Land and a horse from the Nile Empire certainly wouldn't possess this skill. The edeinos and the horse, however, might each have the *running* skill, while the doctor and the medic might not. Most characters in *Torg* possess several skills.

Attributes and skills are related. Each and every skill in *Torg* is based on a specific attribute, which serves as an indicator of the character's natural aptitude with abilities associated with that attribute. Skills represent additional knowledge and training that improves upon that base. A character that wants to avoid being hit by a crossbow bolt would depend on his *Dexterity*, but if he has the *dodge* skill that represents an additional capability to avoid the attack.

A skilled character's base attribute value is added to his skill adds to yield the *skill value* for that particular skill. Skill values are the numbers that are most frequently used during play.

Example: Paul's character Quin has one add in the *survival* skill and a *Mind* value of 8. Since *survival* is based on the *Mind* attribute, Quin's *Mind* value is added to his skill add to yield a *survival* skill value of 9.

Skill Adds Versus Skill Values

Sometimes people with similar amounts of training and experience nonetheless have noticeable differences in what they're actually capable of doing. Similarly, there are cases where the new rookie proves to be just as good if not better than the old pros.

Situations like this are handled in *Torg* by using skill values rather than skill adds to indicate a character's overall ability in a particular field. The number of adds in a skill can be used to gauge a character's level of education and experience in a field but his overall capabilities are measured by his skill value. Characters who are more naturally talented in a particular area, represented by a higher attribute value, can have skill values as good as or better than characters with more skill adds but a lower attribute.

Example: Both Magoth and Terrill have a *divination magic* skill value of 15, so they have similar capabilities in the field. Magoth has *Perception* 11 and four adds in the skill while Terrill has *Perception* 13 and two adds in the skill. Terrill has not put as much effort into learning *divination magic* or has less experience with it than Magoth but his natural aptitude as represented by his higher *Perception* attribute makes up the difference.

Making a Skill Check

Whenever your character needs to perform a task covered by one of his skills, you generate a number by rolling a 20-sided die and consulting the bonus chart. The number from the chart is added to the character's attribute or skill value to arrive at the *action total,* sometimes also called the *skill total*. Your gamemaster then compares your number to the difficulty number of the task to see if your character succeeds or fails.

You'll note that the bonus chart goes higher than 20. How can you roll more than a 20 on one die? *Torg* allows characters to sometimes reroll the die and add the second roll to the first. High die totals over 20 become possible, giving characters large bonus numbers and allowing them to perform the same kind of amazing and death-defying feats as the heroes in adventure fiction.

Whenever a possibility-rated character rolls a 10 or a 20 on the die when using a skill that they have, they get to reroll. If the second roll is also a 10 or 20, the player may keep rolling and adding if she wishes, or she may stop if she's satisfied with the total. The final total of all the rolls is then used on the bonus chart.

Ords are not so lucky; they only get to reroll when the player (usually the gamemaster) rolls a 10. A large total is still possible, but less likely than it is for a possibility-rated character.

Example: Barbara is making a *stealth* skill check for her ninja character. She rolls a 10, gets lucky and rolls a 20 on the reroll so she gets to roll again, getting an 8 on her next reroll. The final die total is 38. Barbara checks the bonus chart and sees that this produces a bonus of +11. She adds this to her character's skill value of 15 for an action total of 26. The difficulty was only 15 so Becky tells Barbara that her character was very successful.

If Barbara had been rolling a skill check for an ord character, she would have rerolled after the 10 but would not have rerolled after the 20. Her final die roll total would have been 30 instead of 38 and the bonus number would have been +9 instead of +11.

Possibility-rated characters may also use possibilities to gain rerolls when generating action totals and the *Hero* and *Drama* cards in the Drama Deck can also be used for this purpose. The rules for this can be found in Chapters Four and Five.

What if Your Character Doesn't Have a Skill?

Just because a character does not have a particular skill does not mean that he cannot perform tasks associated with that skill. When a character wishes to use a skill he does not possess, his base attribute is used for the skill value.

There are drawbacks for attempting a task without having the appropriate skill; some abilities are more difficult when used unskilled and some cannot be used at all unskilled. Additionally, when rolling the die a character's chance of getting rerolls is reduced. Possibility-rated characters do not roll again on a 20, only on a 10. Unskilled ords never roll again.

Example: Tina's priest, Father Wagner, wants to sneak up on a camp of Edeinos warriors but he doesn't have the *stealth* skill. In this case, Tina uses his *Dexterity* attribute value. If she rolls a 20, she does not get another roll because Father Wagner doesn't have the skill.

Skills that are more difficult when used unskilled are indicated in **boldface** in the Master Skill List. Skills that cannot be used at all unskilled are indicated in boldface italics in the Master Skill List. The individual skill descriptions will also specify if a skill is more difficult when used unskilled or if it cannot be used at all unskilled.

Some skills may penalize or not permit unskilled use of only a particular ability that falls under that skill. *Acrobatics* for example has two specific functions listed, Vaulting/Springing and Falling. Vaulting/Springing can be done unskilled at a penalty but Falling cannot be done at all unskilled. Skills that have partial or separate restrictions like this are marked with a cross (+) in the Master Skill List and the skill description will explain what part of the skill is restricted.

Unskilled Use Penalties

When a character attempts an unskilled use of a skill, the gamemaster will assign a modifier to the difficulty number of the attempt using the Difficulty Number Scale found in Chapter Four. Depending on the skill being used and the exact circumstances of the situation, the modifier should range somewhere from *Complicated* (+2) to *Extremely Hard* (+10).

As a rule of thumb, a complicated skill is one where it helps if you know what you're doing but it isn't essential. For example, firing a heavy machine gun is mostly a matter of pointing it in the right direction and pulling the trigger. If attempted unskilled, that would only be a Complicated unskilled use of the *heavy weapons* skill.

At the other end of the spectrum, an Extremely Hard skill is one where it's almost, but not quite, impossible for an untrained person to figure out how to do something. Correctly aiming and firing a howitzer, for example, requires training and familiarity with the weapon and how it operates. Attempting it unskilled would probably be an Extremely Hard unskilled use of the *heavy weapons* skill.

Result Points and Success Levels

Most of the time, a character succeeds at a task when their action total equals or exceeds the difficulty number set by the gamemaster. But occasionally success isn't such a cut-and-dried matter; it may be a matter of barely squeaking by or succeeding with flying colors.

In these cases, the amount by which the action total exceeds the difficulty number is called the *result points* of the action. For example, if the difficulty number is 8 and the player generates an action total of 12, she got four result points. Result points are often used to determine the *success level* of an action with the General Results Table in Chapter Four.

Active and Passive Skill Use

Whenever a player generates an action total for their character, that constitutes an *active use* of the skill. Skill and attribute values are also used in some instances without requiring the generation of an action total. This is called a *passive use* of the skill.

Passive skill use most often occurs during *opposed actions,* when one character is trying to affect another character. For example, the difficulty number for hitting someone with the *unarmed combat* skill is the other person's *unarmed combat* skill value. The defending character passively uses his *unarmed combat* skill to avoid being

BONUS CHART

Bonus Chart

Die Roll	1	2	3 4	5 6	7 8	9 10	11 12	13 14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21 25	26 30	31 35	36 40	41 45	46 50	+5 +1
Bonus #	-12	-10	-8	-5	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	+1

hit by the other character. Because passive use of skills occurs most often during opposed actions, it is also known as *passive defense.*

Round Skills and Macro Skills

Skills use can occur on two different time frames. *Round skills* are those that are used from round to round, generating action totals each time the action is performed. Most skills are round skills. A round in *Torg* is ten seconds.

Macro skills are skills or uses of skills that require only one roll to determine the outcome over a long period of time instead of requiring a skill check every ten seconds. Examples include *climbing* when used to climb in non-combat situations and *survival*. Macro skills are noted in their individual descriptions.

Normal Skills and Limited Skills

Skills falls into one of two categories depending on how many activities it encompasses. *Normal skills* encompass a broad range of abilities; a character with a normal skill is able to attempt to perform any task that falls under that skill. A character with *air vehicles* for example can pilot any type of aircraft. Most skills are normal skills.

Limited skills require a player to limit their character's skill to a specific type of ability or area of knowledge covered by the limited skill. A chemist, for example, would have the *science* skill but it would be limited to chemistry, she could not use her *science* skill to solve a physics problem.

Limited skills are written with the specific field following in parentheses, such as *science(chemistry)* or *faith(Cyberpapacy)*. Characters may have multiple versions of limited skills, such as having both *science(chemistry)* and *science(physics)*, indicating that the character is knowledgeable in several different fields.

Limited skills are marked in this chapter with an asterisk (*) and examples of possible fields are provided in the individual skill descriptions.

Skill Specializations

Characters from fiction sometimes have a type of weapon with which they are particularly familiar, or of which they are quite fond, such as James Bond and Walther PPKs or Green Arrow and bows. Sometimes characters have a singular item, such as the Lone Ranger and his trusty horse Silver, with which they are particularly familiar. These are *specializations* of more general skills.

Skill specializations are optional; characters do not have to be specialized if the player does not want it. But they can help define a character's personality and behavior. Using the custom character creation rules in Chapter Two a specialization could even count as a distinguishing characteristic or a behavior tag.

There are two types of specializations, *type specialization* and *trademark specialization*. James Bond and Walther PPKs is an example of a type specialization with the *fire combat* skill. The Lone Ranger's horse Silver is an example of a trademark specialization with *beast riding*.

Type Specialization

A character may choose one *type* of equipment (or animal or whatever), and specializes in that equipment. Think of type as "make" or "brand" or "species." The player spends one Possibility Point to specialize in a type. That character's skill value is one higher when

Master Skill List

Dexterity
Acrobatics+
Beast Riding
Biotech Weapons
Dance
Dodge
Energy Weapons
Escape Artist
Fire Combat
Flight
Heavy Weapons*
Lock Picking+
Long Jumping
Maneuver
Martial Arts*
Melee Weapons+
Missile Weapons
Prestidigitation
Running
Stealth
Swimming+
Unarmed Combat+

Strength
Climbing
Lifting

Toughness
Resist Pain

Perception
Air Vehicles
Alteration Magic
Camouflage
Computer Operations
Craftsman*
Cyberdeck Operations+
Direction Sense
Disguise
Divination Magic
Egyptian Religion
Evidence Analysis
Find
First Aid
Forgery
Gambling
Hieroglyphics*
Land Vehicles
Language*
Master Criminal
Nile Mathematics
Psionic Manipulation
Research
Scholar*
Security
Space Vehicles
Tracking
Trick
Water Vehicles

Mind
Apportation Magic
Artist*
Biotech
Business
Computer Science
Conjuration Magic
Cybertech
Demolitions
Hypnotism
Linguistics
Medicine
Meditation
Mindsense
Nile Engineering
Occult
Psionic Resistance
Psychology
Science*
Streetwise
Survival
Test Of Wills
Willpower
Weird Science

Charisma
Charm
Performance Art*
Persuasion
Taunt
Training

Spirit
Ayslish Corruption
Ayslish Honor
Cyberpsyche
Faith*
Focus
Frenzy
Intimidation
Occultech
Pain Weapon
Possibility Rip
Possibility Sense
Reality*
Shapeshifting
Spirit Medium
Swami
True Sight

No Attribute
Arcane Knowledges
Orrorshan Corruption
Pulp Power Skill*
UltraCAD Operation

Skills listed in **boldface** are more difficult when used unskilled. Skills listed in boldface italics cannot be used unskilled. A cross (+) indicates a partial restriction on unskilled use. An asterisk (*) indicates a limited skill.

using that type of equipment, though the skill add is not increased for purposes of buying future adds. A skill can only have one type specialization associated with it.

Example: Paul wants his Soldier of Fortune, Quin, to have a type specialization with *air vehicles.* Quin specializes in helicopters, so Paul spends one of Quin's possibilities and Quin's *air vehicles* skill, normally 11, is considered a 12 when Quin is flying a helicopter. When Paul raises Quin's air vehicles skill to 12, it will be considered a 13 with helicopters.

Examples of possible type specializations can be found in the skill descriptions in this chapter but are by no means a complete list of the possible specializations with a skill.

Trademark Specialization

A character may choose one *trademark* item, or animal, in which to specialize by spending *two* possibilities. The skill value for that single item is increased by an additional two, though adds are not increased for purposes of buying future adds.

The item cannot be replaced. If it is permanently lost or destroyed, the specialization is lost, and must be bought again for another such item. Only one "trademark" item may be specialized per skill, and if the character has a type specialization as well, the trademark must be of that type.

It is not necessary though to have a type specialization before getting a trademark specialization. If a character does get both they are cumulative, the trademark specialization will be two points higher than the type specialization, which is one point higher than the base skill. If the character only has the trademark specialization, it is two points higher than the base skill.

Example: Paul also wants Quin to have a trademark air vehicle. Since he has a type specialization in helicopters, he must choose a helicopter as his trademark specialization. Paul discusses this with the gamemaster, and *The Blue Meanie*, Quin's chopper, is born. Quin now has an *air vehicles* skill of 11 for non-helicopters, a skill value of 12 with helicopters and a skill value of 14 with *The Blue Meanie.*

Quin could also have a trademark pistol, his "pet" .357 Desert Eagle semi auto pistol. Type specialization is not required for trademark specialization so Quin can specialize with his favorite gun without having to first specialize in pistols.

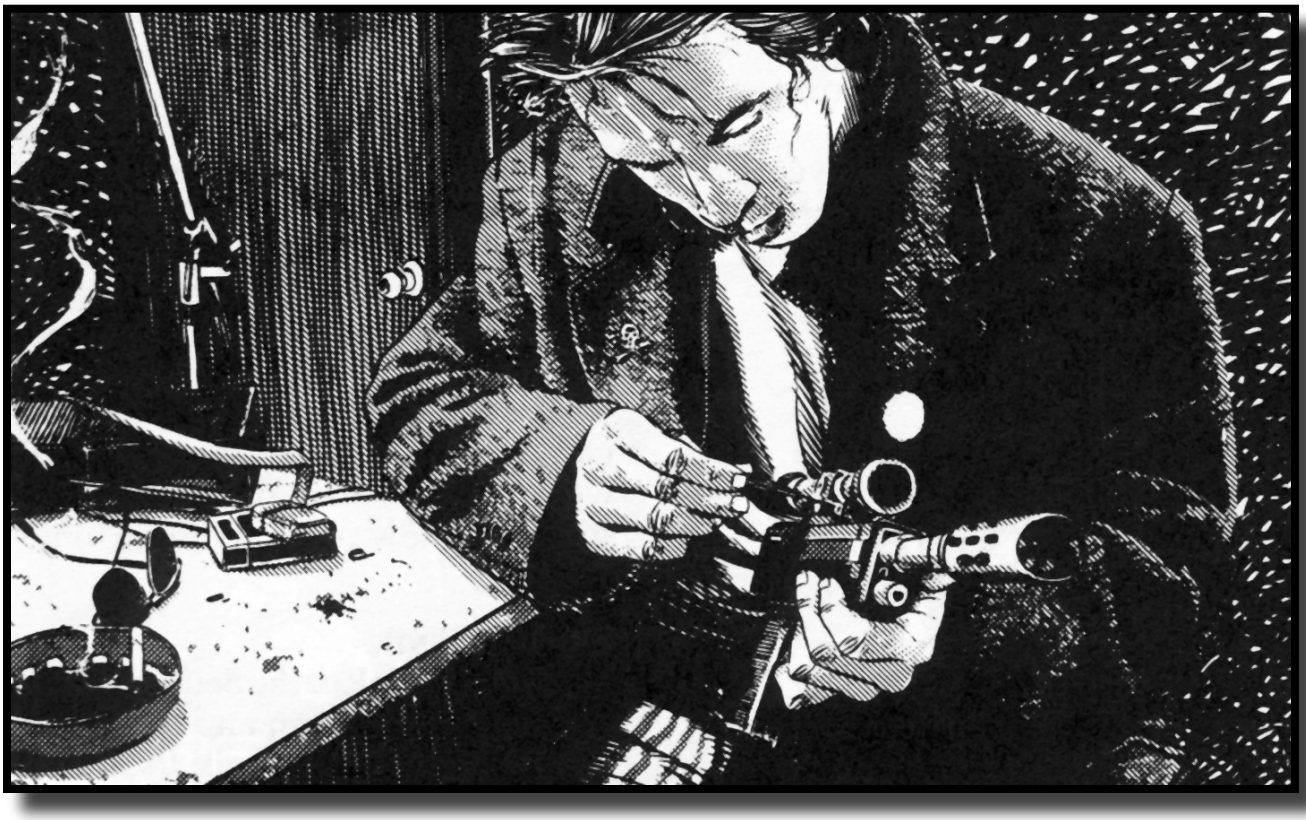
Improving Skills and Attributes

Improving a skill costs a variable number of possibilities or takes a variable amount of time depending on the character's current number of skill adds or her attribute value. The better the character is already, the more difficult it is to improve. You improve a character's skill one add at a time, i.e. if you want to improve a skill from four to seven you would have to buy skill five, then six, and finally seven. You may not skip steps, although you may improve more than one level at a time if you have enough time or possibilities.

Improving and Learning Skills with Possibilities

To increase a skill with possibilities costs a number of possibilities equal to the skill add being purchased. Increasing a skill add from three to four would cost four Possibilities. This increase is considered to happen immediately.

The cost of gaining the first add of a new skill depends on the type of skill and whether the character has someone to teach him or her the skill. For skills that can be used unskilled, it costs two Possibility Points if your character has a teacher, five Possibility Points if self-taught.



Gaining the first add of a skill that is harder to use unskilled or cannot be used unskilled, a **boldface** or boldface italics skill on the Master Skill Chart, costs five Possibility Points with a teacher and ten Possibility Points if self-taught.

Any skill that requires knowledge not native to your character's cosm costs **double** the normal cost.

Example: Juan wants his character, Marco, to pick up *test of will*. He cannot find a character that will teach it to Marco so the first add costs five possibilities for being self-taught. Juan is also interested in having his character learn *divination magic,* which Alan's character can teach him. It cannot be used unskilled, so the first add will also cost five possibilities even though he has a teacher. If Juan had wanted Marco to learn *conjuration magic* from Alan's character, the cost would be doubled to ten possibilities because *conjuration magic* is not available in Core Earth.

Improving and Learning Skills Over Time

While spending possibilities is the normal method by which players will increase the skills of their characters, skills may also be improved or gained by the method most people are familiar with, spending a lot of time studying, practicing and learning. In fact this is the only way ords can improve their skills since they don't get possibilities, so this information is being provided even though player characters will rarely make use of it.

To calculate how much time must be spent to improve a skill or to learn the first add of a new skill, a rough estimate can be made with the following chart. Look up the possibility cost for the desired add in the first column. The corresponding number in the second column is the number of months that must be spent training to gain the skill add.

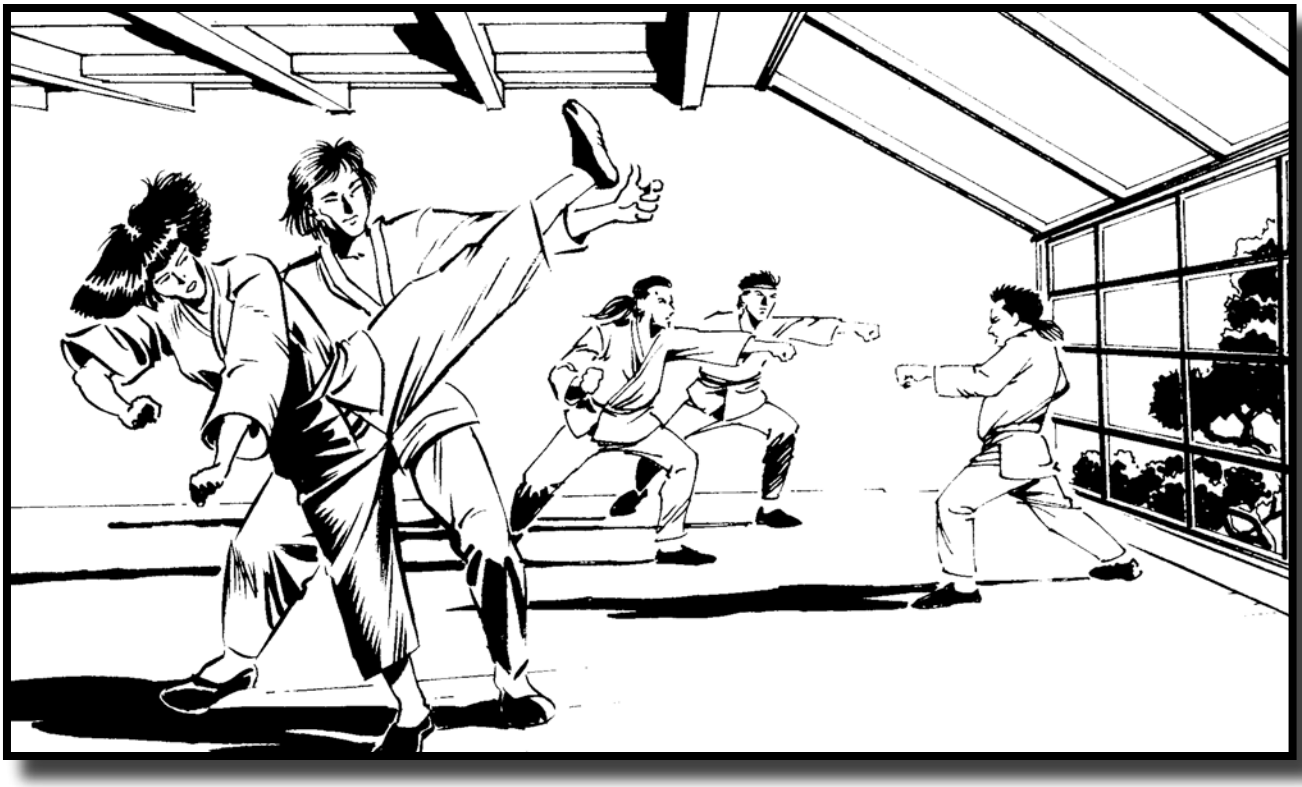
Cost	Time
2	2.5
3	4
4	6
5	10
6	15
7	25
8	40
9	60
10	100

If times for higher costs are needed, the gamemaster can determine the time by finding the *measure* of the cost on the *Value Chart* in Chapter Four.

Example: The first add of a skill like *land vehicles* has a Possibility Point cost of two with a teacher or five without a teacher. Learning this add instead of buying it with possibilities would take 2.5 months with a teacher or ten months without a teacher.

For the purposes of training for a skill add, a month is defined as 25 days of effort devoted to the skill, eight hours a day. If characters are able to devote more or less time than this towards their training, decrease or increase the amount of time necessary as appropriate.

Training can be loosely defined to include practical use of the skill. A paramedic for example would use her *first aid* skill during the normal course of her job, so her time at work could go towards the amount of time required to train up a skill.



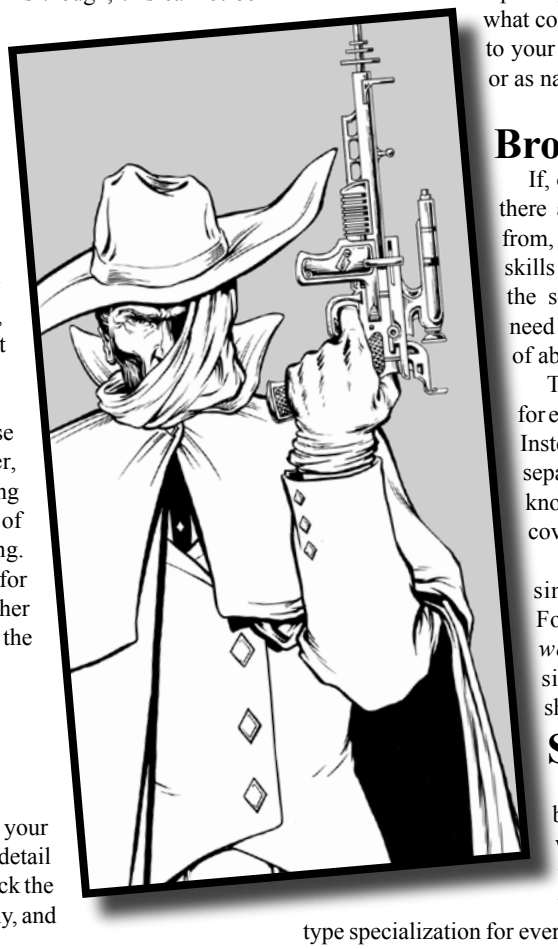
Improving Attributes

Attributes may also be improved, but at a far greater cost. An attribute may never be improved beyond the attribute limits of the character's home cosm as given in Chapter Two.

Improving an attribute with possibilities has its cost figured in the same manner as improving a skill, but the cost is *tripled*. Increasing an attribute from 10 to 11 would cost (11 x 3) 33 possibilities. As with skills, the increase is considered to happen immediately.

Improving an attribute by training over time can be done but the method for calculating the required amount of time is different than it is for skills. The value the attribute is being increased to is the number of months that the character has to train. So increasing an attribute from 10 to 11 requires 11 months of training.

The definition of a month is the same as for skills, eight hours of effort a day for 25 days. Unlike skills though, this cannot be stretched out over a greater amount of time, the 25 days of training must all occur within the span of one calendar month. Increasing an attribute over time requires intense effort and dedication, often at the cost of having time for doing anything else. Olympic weightlifters and professional bodybuilders are examples of the types of people who have this time— they do nothing but train. Most people, especially player characters, will not have this much free time.



Example: Barbara wants to increase the *Strength* of her ninja character, Yukitada. Her *Strength* is 8 so increasing it to 9 would require nine months of intensive, dedicated physical training. Yukitada would not have the time for adventuring while she was training up her *Strength* so Barbara decides to save up the possibilities for it instead.

Optional Skill Rules

These optional rules will allow your gaming group to fine-tune the level of detail and realism in the *Torg* skill system. Pick the rules that your group wants to use, if any, and ignore the ones you don't want.

If a rule is being used, it has to apply to every character in the game; individual players cannot choose to apply one rule to their own character if no one else wants to use that rule.

Simplified Unskilled Use

Keeping track of which skills can be used unskilled, which skills can be used unskilled at a penalty and which skills cannot be used at all unskilled can get rather complicated. Characters are allowed to attempt some unskilled uses at a penalty because in adventure fiction passengers are always landing planes after the pilot dies, people with no medical training are delivering babies while trapped in an elevator and non-combatants are able to load and fire big, heavy weaponry after watching it being used once. It's not easy, but they somehow manage to do it anyway.

If your group is having trouble remembering what their characters can and cannot attempt unskilled, consider all non-*Dexterity* **boldface** skills to be unusable unskilled, as if they were boldface italics skills. Under *Dexterity*, the only skill that could not be used unskilled would be *martial arts*.

Narrower Skills

Most of the skills are intended to be very broad, to cut down on the number of skills a character needs. For additional detail, the skills can be more narrowly defined. Characters will need to have more skills to cover the same amount of abilities.

Every skill in essence becomes a limited skill. For example, instead of being able to shoot every possible type of firearm with the one *fire combat* skill; each distinct type of firearm requires its own separate *fire combat* skill. The exact definition of what constitutes a separate type of firearm is up to your group; the distinctions can be as broad or as narrow as desired.

Broader Skills

If, on the other hand, your group feels that there are already too many skills to choose from, you can reduce the number of available skills by simplifying definitions and widening the scope of many skills. Characters then need fewer skills to cover the same amount of abilities.

Turning limited skills into normal skills for example would be one possible approach. Instead of requiring characters to take a separate *science* skill for every field they know they only need one *science* skill to cover every possible field of science.

You could go even further and combine similar skills into one broader skill. For example, *fire combat* and *energy weapons* could be combined into a single skill, grouping all "point and shoot" handguns under the same ability.

Specialized Skills

The rules for skill specialization can be changed so that instead of being better with a particular subcategory of abilities that fall under a skill, the character is worse at all other aspects of the skill. A type specialization for every skill must be chosen as outlined in the regular rules but no skill bonus is assigned and it does not cost the character any possibilities.

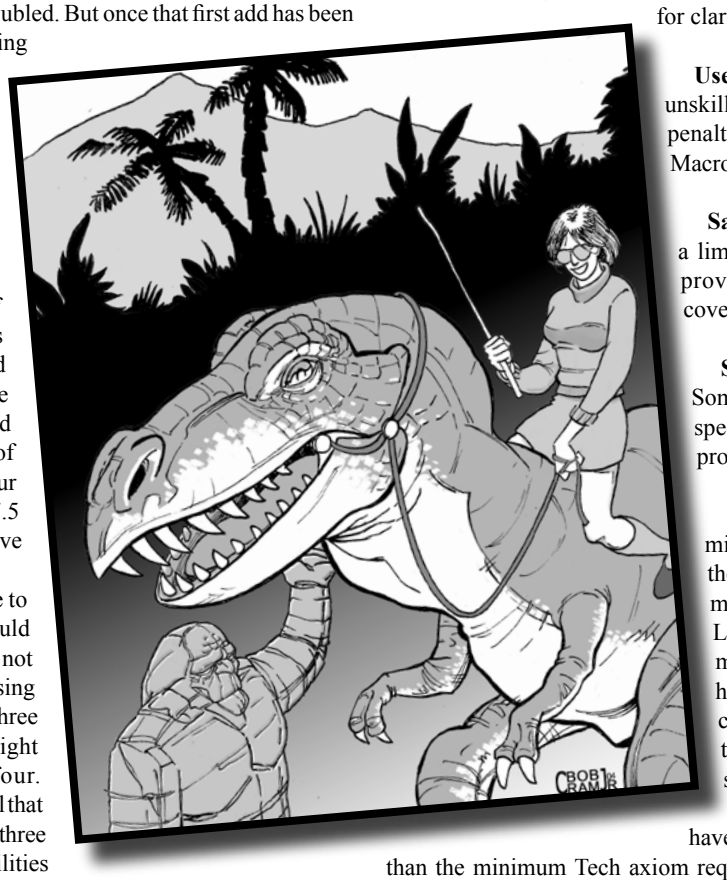
Instead, the skill value is used for the specialization and all other uses of the skill are treated as if the character has zero adds in the skill. The base attribute for the skill becomes the skill value for anything not covered by the specialization but the character is not considered unskilled so no unskilled use penalties are applied.

When this rule is used players may purchase a skill more than once to cover different abilities of the skill. For example, a player might buy *fire combat* twice for her character, once for pistols and once for rifles.

Trademark specializations are still allowed and will add to the skill value normally. The cost though is reduced to one possibility.

Harder to Improve Skills

Normally, the only difference in the amount of time or possibilities involved in increasing a skill is in learning the first add. Skills that are harder unskilled or cannot be used unskilled cost more to learn than normal skills, and skills not native to the character's home cosm have their initial cost doubled. But once that first add has been purchased, the cost of increasing a skill is the same regardless of the type of skill.



To reflect the difficulty and complexity of skills that cannot be used unskilled, it can cost more to raise them than normal skills. The possibility cost is equal to the add being purchased plus half again that number, or 1.5 times the add being purchased (round down.) So increasing a skill like *focus* from three to four would cost six possibilities instead of four and increasing it from four to five would cost seven (7.5 rounded down) instead of five possibilities.

Any skill that is not native to the character's home cosm could have **all** of its costs doubled, not just the first add. So increasing a contradictory skill from three to four adds would cost eight possibilities instead of four. Increasing a contradictory skill that cannot be used unskilled from three to four would cost 12 possibilities if both these rules are used.

Self-Instruction is Difficult

Once a character has learned the first add of a skill the presence of a teacher is no longer required, the skill can be increased without any further assistance. This rule makes it harder to improve a skill through self-instruction; the same way that the first add is more expensive without a teacher.

The normal rule for determining the cost of improving a skill is used only if a teacher is involved. If the character is raising the skill on her own the cost is half again as much, or 1.5 times the add being purchased (round down). If used in combination with the above rule making certain skills harder to improve, the cost becomes three times as much for improving the skill without a teacher!

Training Is Not Automatic

Under this rule, simply finding someone who has a skill is not sufficient to be able to learn that skill from him or her, or have them help you improve a skill. The other character must actually be able to teach the skill before the student is able to acquire it at the lower cost. This involves using an optional *Charisma* skill: *training*. The description of *training* and how it is used in play can be found under *Charisma*-Related Skills.

Skill Description Format

Each skill is described in the following format. Not every skill will have all of the fields indicated below:

Skill name (Limited skills are indicated with an asterisk (*) for clarity.)

Use: If a skill cannot be used unskilled, or unskilled use is at a penalty, it will be indicated here. Macro skills are also indicated here.

Sample limitations: If this is a limited skill, some examples are provided of the possible fields covered by the skill.

Sample specializations: Some examples of possible type specializations for the skill are provided.

Axiom/Reality: This is the minimum axiom requirement for the skill and indicates if a skill might be available in a cosm. Limitations and specializations may have axiom requirements higher than this if they cover a concept or tool more advanced than the minimal level of the skill.

For example, jet airplanes have a higher Tech axiom level than the minimum Tech axiom requirement of *air vehicles*, so a specialization in jet airplanes requires a Tech axiom higher than the minimum axiom given in the *air vehicles* skill description.

Some skills are only found in a particular reality; if that is the case then this line will say Reality and the cosm(s) the skill is available in will be listed instead of an axiom.

Description: The function of the skill and any special rules concerning its use are detailed.

Attribute and Skill Descriptions

Dexterity

Dexterity is a measure of a character's speed, agility, coordination and reflexes. Almost all of the physical skills are based on *Dexterity*. Characters with a high *Dexterity* can walk tightropes, do flips and somersaults easily and are good in combat. Characters with a low *Dexterity* tend to be clumsy, don't move very fast and have a hard time in combat.

Dexterity-Related Skills

Acrobatics+

Use: Unskilled use of Vaulting/Springing penalized; Falling cannot be used unskilled.

Sample specializations: Tightrope walking, swinging on ropes, gymnastics, Vaulting/Springing, Falling

This is the skill used by gymnasts and circus acrobats to perform their flips, rolls, and falls. It can also be used for more practical purposes such as leaping over obstacles, through narrow openings and knowing how to land from a fall to reduce injury. Many martial artists, cat burglars and swashbuckling fighters have use for *acrobatics*.

In game play, *acrobatics* has two specific functions, Vaulting/Springing and Falling. Most applications of the skill fall into the Vaulting/Springing category.

Vaulting/springing: a character skilled in *acrobatics* has the ability to use the natural scenery to vault and spring over physical obstacles. The difficulty number of such an action depends upon the obstacle.

VAULTING/SPRINGING CHART

Obstacle	Difficulty #
Hopping a fence	3
Swinging on a rope	5
Grabbing an overhang and swinging over a pit	8
Vaulting or swinging over a tricky obstacle	10
Performing a backflip	12
Bouncing off an awning during a free fall to reach a specific destination	15

Falling: a character skilled in *acrobatics* can reduce the damage that he sustains in a fall. The difficulty number depends on the distance fallen. Successful use of the skill indicates that any *wound damage* sustained in the fall is reduced by one level (*heavy wound* becomes a *wound; mortal wound* becomes a *heavy wound,* etc.). This part of the skill cannot be attempted unskilled. Rules concerning falling damage are in Chapter Four.

FALLING CHART

Distance fallen	Difficulty #
1 Story (15 feet)	3
2 Stories (16-30 feet)	8
5 Stories (31-100 feet)	12
Over 5 stories	15

Beast Riding

Use: Unskilled use penalized. Macro skill use for long-distance travel.

Sample specializations: Horse, camel, unicorn, elephant, dolphin, lakten (a creature of the Living Land) or whatever other "beasts" may be used as mounts in a cosm.

Axiom: Tech 3

This skill is used to ride horses, camels, and other mounts. When a rider first climbs aboard an animal, he generates a *beast riding* total using the mount's *Mind* value as the difficulty number. If this check succeeds, the rider gains control of the mount and may proceed. If the check fails, the beast runs away, bucks, or throws the rider off (at the gamemaster's discretion).

The rider must make a similar roll whenever gunfire, bomb blasts, etc. spook the mount. The difficulty of getting the mount to perform a specific task, such as jumping over a fence, is determined by the gamemaster using the Difficulty Number Scale and should be based on the animal and the task itself. Getting a horse to jump a fence might be an Average task but getting a camel to perform the same maneuver might be a Very Hard task, and it would be better to just let an elephant go through the fence (elephants can't jump.)

Besides controlling the mount, *beast riding* can be used to increase the animal's speed with a *speed push* (see Chapter Four) in place of the animal's own *running* skill. The macro version of this ability, the forced march, will increase the animal's movement value by one with a successful skill check against the mount's *Mind*. The forced march will last for a maximum of three hours and can only be used once a day.

A character's *beast riding* skill can be substituted for a character's *dodge* and *maneuver* skills while the character is mounted in combat. If engaged in close-range combat while mounted, the character's *beast riding* skill may be substituted for the character's normal defensive skill value.

The difficulty of all *beast riding* checks is increased by 8 on an untrained/undomesticated animal.

Biotech Weapons

Sample specializations: Biotech melee weapons, biotech missile weapons, biotech firearms

Axiom: Tech 30

This skill covers the use of the organically-based weaponry of all types used by the Space Gods. While *biotech weapons* can be used unskilled, the biotech weaponry cannot be used with other combat skills; characters cannot use *fire combat* or *energy weapons* to fire a biotech firearm or use *melee weapons* with a biotech melee weapon.

The skill can also be used to perform minor "first aid" on biotech weapons as well as perform routine maintenance tasks to keep a biotech weapon in good working condition, such as knowing how and what to feed it and how often.

Dance

Use: Unskilled use penalized. Macro skill.

Sample specializations: Ballet, ballroom dancing, square dancing, tap dancing, choreographed dances

Axiom: Social 3

The *dance* skill covers a character's ability to move rhythmically to music or song, in either a free-form or choreographed manner. Dancing can be an important part of the rituals practiced by many cultures as well as something done for enjoyment or to entertain others.

Performing a carefully choreographed dance routine, such as a dance used as part of an important religious ritual, requires making a *dance* skill check against a difficulty number determined by the gamemaster using the Difficulty Number Scale.

When used to entertain or otherwise evoke a reaction in an audience, even if that audience is just your dance partner, *dance* uses the rules given in the *performance arts* skill to determine the quality of the performance and reaction of the audience. *Dance* only covers a character's ability to perform a dance, not design

one; choreographing a new dance routine is covered by the *artist* skill instead of *dance*.

Dancing simply for personal enjoyment does not usually require a skill check.

Dodge

Sample specializations: By type of ranged attack (*fire combat, missile weapons, energy weapons,* etc.)

Axiom: None for the base skill, specializations have axiom requirements equal to that of the appropriate skill.

This skill gives its user the ability to avoid gunshots, laser bolts, and other ranged attacks. *Dodge* skill can be used in one of two ways. Only one of the options may be selected by a dodging character each round.

Passive dodge: during each round of combat, a skilled character may use his *dodge* value for the difficulty number of all shots aimed at him.

Active dodge: instead of selecting a passive dodge, a character may actively try to avoid being shot. Characters who choose this option generate an action value with their *dodge* skill. When rolling for the total, any bonus number generated which is less than +1 is treated as a +1. The action total becomes the difficulty number for all shots taken at the defending character.

Example: A squad of Church Police attacks Alan's character, Terrill the magician. Terrill has a *dodge* value of 11. During each combat round he can either passively dodge, in which case the difficulty number for all the laser blasts the Church Police aim at him is equal to Terrill's *dodge* skill of 11 or he can actively dodge, in which case Alan generates a *dodge* total, with bonuses less than +1 being treated as +1.

Alan decides that Terrill will actively dodge and rolls a 7, which on the bonus chart is a result of -2. Since this is less than +1 it is ignored and Alan instead adds one to Terrill's *dodge* value, to arrive at an action total of 12. Terrill's active dodge will always be at least 12 and could be considerably higher if Alan rolls well.

Energy Weapons

Sample specializations: Laser weapons, plasma weapons, blaster weapons

Axiom: Tech 25

This skill measures a character's ability to use all types of hand-held energy weapons: lasers, blasters, plasma guns, etc. A character generates an *energy weapons* action total to hit when attacking with an energy weapon. *Dodge* is the defensive skill used against *energy weapons*.

The skill can also be used to make minor repairs to energy weapons as well as perform routine maintenance tasks to keep a weapon in good working condition.

Escape Artist

Use: Unskilled use penalized. Macro skill.

Sample specializations: Types of restraints (such as ropes, chains, handcuffs, straitjacket)

This skill gives the character the ability to manipulate her body so as to be able to slip free from otherwise secure bonds by twisting, contorting, and writhing her body into a variety of "impossible positions". A character with this skill may attempt to escape from almost any sort of confinement that physically restrains the body, so long as the character is not completely immobilized. The skill also allows a character to fit into and through spaces that would normally be too small or confined for a character.

The gamemaster should adjust the difficulty of any escape attempt if it is occurring under any unusual conditions, such as if the character is underwater, locked inside a steamer trunk, has a bundle of TNT strapped to her body or is in any other way not operating under optimal conditions.

ESCAPE ARTIST CHART

Restraint	Difficulty number
Ropes	10
Chains	12
Handcuffs	13
Straitjacket	15
Multiple bindings	+2 To highest dn
Size of space compared to character	
Three-quarters	13
One-half	18
One-quarter	25

Example: Barbara's character, Yukitada, has been captured by the insidious Wu-Han of the Nile Empire and is hanging by her feet above a large vat of acid. She has been bound in a straitjacket and then was also wrapped in chains on top of that. The difficulty of the straitjacket is 15, increased by +2 because of the chains.

Becky, the gamemaster, further increases the difficulty by an additional +4 because Yukitada is hanging upside down and swinging freely over the vat of acid. That brings the final difficulty number up to 21. Yukitada has an *escape artist* skill of 15. Barbara rolls a 10 and rerolls a 12 for a final die total of 22. On the bonus chart that is a +8 bonus, giving Yukitada an action total of 23. Success!

Later, after getting away from the acid vat, Yukitada's only exit from Wu-Han's torture chamber is through a small window 30 centimeters square (about one foot square). Becky figures this is an opening about half the size of what a normal character could fit through so the difficulty is 18. Becky rolls a 16 for a bonus of +3, getting an action total of 18. Yukitada just barely fits through the window and escapes.

Fire Combat

Sample specializations: Pistol, rifle, shotgun, submachine gun

Axiom: Tech 15

This skill measures a character's ability to shoot guns and slug-throwers of all types, including black powder pistols, muskets, single-shot revolvers, semi-automatics and handheld automatic weapons. A character generates a *fire combat* total to hit when attacking with a firearm. *Dodge* is the defensive skill used against *fire combat*.

The skill can also be used to make minor repairs to firearms as well as perform routine maintenance tasks to keep a weapon in good working condition.

Flight

Use: May be used unskilled, but only by characters capable of self-powered flight. Macro skill use for long-distance travel.

Sample specializations: Types of maneuvers (speed push, dive-bombing, gliding, etc.)

This skill is a measure of a character's ability to move through the air under her own power. Of the major races involved in the Possibility Wars, the only races that possess natural powers of flight are stalengers, larendi, techno-demons and ravagons. Nile pulp heroes with the *Flight* pulp power can also use this skill.

Characters who possess a non-innate ability to move through the air, such as those who use a magical flight spell or possess a *weird science* gizmo with the *Flight* pulp power, may at the gamemaster's discretion also use this skill if there is no other skill more suitable to the control and operation of their particular mode of flight.

Flying characters can use the skill to increase their movement value with a speed push (see Chapter Four) and it can be substituted for the character's *dodge* and *maneuver* skills while the character is in flight.

Heavy Weapons*

Use: Unskilled use penalized.

Sample limitations: Catapults, ballistae, cannons, machine guns, mortars, bazookas, howitzers, rockets, missiles, laser cannons, field blasters, fixed-mount vehicle weapons

Axiom: Tech 11

Heavy weapons is a broad skill category covering the characters ability to set up, fire and maintain a ranged weapon of the specified limitation. *Heavy weapons* includes any ranged weapon that is too large to be considered hand-held or operated by one person.

"Fixed-mount vehicle weapons" is a special limitation. It allows a character to operate all of the heavy weapons on a particular type of vehicle rather than just one type of heavy weapon. For example, a character with *heavy weapons(F-15 Eagle)* would be able to fire both the 20mm autocannon and the air-to-air missiles of an F-15 Eagle fighter jet with the one skill instead of having to buy separate *heavy weapons* skills for each type of heavy weapon.

A character generates a *heavy weapons* total to hit when attacking with a heavy weapon in combat. *Dodge* is the defensive skill used against *heavy weapons.*

The skill can also be used to make minor repairs to heavy weapons as well as perform routine maintenance tasks to keep a weapon in good working condition.

Lock Picking+

Use: Cannot be used unskilled without the appropriate tools. Unskilled use with tools penalized. Macro skill.

Sample specializations: Door locks, padlocks, safes, bank vaults, combination locks

Axiom: Tech 10

This skill gives its user the ability to surreptitiously open locks and safes with physical tumblers and mechanisms. The use of the *lock picking* skill requires a set of picks or tools, though a skilled character can improvise tools out of hairpins, paper clips, a screwdriver, etc. Unskilled characters cannot improvise and so are unable to use *lock picking* if they do not have a proper set of tools.

Some types of locks, such as combination locks, can be picked without any tools. Locks that do not have physical mechanisms for the character to manipulate, such as an electronic lock or a magical ward, cannot be defeated with this skill. Electronic locks require the *security* skill and magical wards fall under the *divination magic* skill.

Lock picking cannot be used to disarm traps and alarms that may be around or attached to locks, but a character can detect the presence of an alarm or trap on a lock by making a successful skill check against the difficulty of the lock itself. Disarming the trap or alarm will require the use of another skill, such as *security*.

LOCK PICKING CHART

Sample locks	Difficulty
Typical interior residential door	5
Typical interior office door	8
Padlock, exterior door	10
Wall safe/deadbolt	13
Bank vault	18
Modifiers	
Poorly constructed lock	-3
Well constructed lock	+2
High-security lock	+4
No short time limit	-3
Blueprints and diagrams	-3
Specialized tools	-1 To -5

Example: Barbara's ninja Yukitada is trying to break out of an Ayslish dungeon. The guards took all of her equipment but she is

able to improvise a lock pick from a piece of wire hidden in one of her shoes. The lock on the door is a padlock for a base difficulty of 10. It is well constructed which increases the difficulty by +2. Yukitada knows that the guards won't return until morning though so there is no real time limit, which decreases the difficulty by -3. The final difficulty is 9. Yukitada's *lock picking* skill is 14. Barbara rolls a 9, which is a bonus of -1, for an action total of 13. Yukitada plays with the lock for a little while and easily opens it.

Long Jumping

Sample specializations: Standing broad jump, running long jump

This is the ability to leap and jump over pits, chasms, and other obstacles. Every character has a jumping limit value (see Chapter One) which represents how far they can jump without much effort. The *long jumping* skill helps characters jump farther than their limit value and to make jumps in less than optimal conditions. Increasing the distance the character jumps is treated as a speed push (see Chapter Four) while making difficult jumps that are within the character's jumping limit value is done against a difficulty number determined by the gamemaster based on the circumstances.

The following modifiers are used when a character has to make a push roll with *long jumping*. The gamemaster can also take them into account when determining the difficulty number for non-push jumps.

LONG JUMPING MODIFIERS

Condition	Modifier
Flat surface to flat surface	+0
Unlimited landing area	-2
Limited landing area	+2
Very small landing area	+4
Rough/unsteady terrain	+2 Or more
Downhill landing site	-2
Uphill landing site	+4
Carrying a heavy load	+2 Or more

The jumping limit values in Chapter One assume that the jumper had the time and space to take a running start. Standing jumps subtract two from the distance value jumped. Being able to take off at less than full speed reduces the distance value by one.

Example: Paul's character Quin is trying to escape from a pack of edeinos warriors and has his back up against a deep chasm. The chasm is six meters across but Quin's jumping limit value is 3, which translates to only four meters. He will have to try and push his jumping enough to make it across.

Quin does not have the *long jumping* skill so he uses his *Dexterity*. Fortunately for Quin there is no unskilled use penalty. Paul rolls and tells Becky his action total. She calculates the result of his speed push and tells him that he got a +1 result, which will increase his jumping limit value from 3 to 4.

However, the edeinos are close enough to Quin that he didn't have enough space to run up to full speed so his jumping distance value is reduced by one point, back down to 3. Quin sails through the air but only travels four meters, well short of the other side of the chasm so he falls! A convenient ledge saves his life, knocking the breath from him (Becky will apply some falling damage to Quin using the rules in Chapter Four) as the edeinos cluster at the top of the chasm.

Maneuver

Sample specializations: Unarmed, armed, balance

This skill represents a character's mobility in combat. While its specific use is to tire out opponents, it can also be used to put opponents off balance by "faking them out" and provide the character with a tactical advantage. *Maneuver* is defended against by the *maneuver* skill.

Timed Movement

You can find out the time value for how long it takes a character to move a particular distance by subtracting the appropriate movement limit value (or speed value if the character is moving at less than his limit value) from the distance value, then adding five. That value, when converted through the Value Chart in Chapter Four, is about how long it takes the character to cover that distance. Characters can increase their speed above their limit value with a macro use speed push, reducing the amount of time required, but they will suffer the detrimental effects of the speed push at the end of their movement (see Chapter Four for the details.)

Example: Paul's character Quin is trying to run a kilometer as fast as he can. His running limit value is 9, reduced by two because of the distance involved, to a 7. Quin does not have the *running* skill so his *Dexterity* is used to generate the action total for the speed push.

Paul rolls fairly well and Becky tells him the result of his speed push is a +2 bonus to his speed value. This brings his speed value back up to 9. A kilometer has a distance value of 15, so subtracting nine from that and then adding five produces a time value of 11. A time value of 11 is 150 seconds, so the run takes Quin about two and a half minutes.

If Quin was not trying to run as fast as possible and just ran at his running limit value, his time value would have instead been 13 which converts to about six minutes. It takes longer, but Quin doesn't suffer the side effects from making a speed push.

To calculate how far a character can travel in a specific amount of time, the formula is only slightly different. The time value is added to the character's limit (or speed) value and five is subtracted from that number. That value, when converted through the Value Chart, will be the distance covered in that amount of time. For example, a character with a speed value of 8 who runs for one minute (a time value of 9) will cover a distance value of (8 + 9 - 5) 12, which is 250 meters.

These formulas work with all of the macro use movement skills; *beast riding, climbing, flight, running* and *swimming*. They can also be used with vehicles and the vehicle skills, *air vehicles, land vehicles, space vehicles* and *water vehicles*.

Maneuver may also be used in some circumstances like the *acrobatics* skill for activities that involve balance, such as remaining standing on a rolling ship's deck during a bad storm or not slipping and falling while moving over treacherous terrain.

Martial Arts*

Use: Cannot be used unskilled; must be possibility-rated to possess skill.

Sample limitations: Ninjitsu, Ancient Shao-Lin Style, T'ai Chi Chuan, Aikijutsu, Red Lotus Style, Jujutsu, Atemi-Waza, Seda Chen

Sample specializations: Individual disciplines within the style (Crushing Block, Drop Kick, Heart Punch, etc.)

Axiom: Social 21 and Spirit 7

The *martial arts* skill represents a collection of fighting styles that draw upon a character's spiritual strength and possibility energy to perform amazing feats of physical skill and ability. The concept of "ki", or "chi", energy which powers the abilities of a martial artist is possibility energy, and only possibility-rated characters have enough of this energy to use the abilities of the *martial arts* skill.

What most people consider to be "martial arts" are not covered by this skill; Karate, Tae Kwon Do, Judo, Kung Fu and other Oriental fighting styles are covered by either *melee weapons* or *unarmed combat* depending on whether the style uses weapons or is bare-handed. These styles focus on only the physical aspects, striking decisively and using your opponent's strengths and weaknesses against him. Real *martial arts* focus on tapping a character's internal strength and redirecting it into the material world.

Martial arts is discussed further in Chapter Twelve and the full rules for the skill and its many abilities are found in the *Nippon Tech sourcebook.*

Melee Weapons+

Use: Active defense cannot be attempted unskilled, passive defense and attacks can be done unskilled.

Sample specializations: Knife, sword, club, axe, florentine fighting, shield defense, improvised weapons

Axiom: Tech 1

This skill measures a character's ability to use all sorts of melee weapons, pretty much anything that can be picked up and swung or jabbed at someone. A character generates a *melee weapons* total to hit with a melee weapon in combat.

Melee weapons also serves as the defensive skill against unarmed and melee attacks, as long the defender is wielding a melee weapon. If the defender is not wielding a melee weapon, then the *unarmed combat* skill is used to defend against *melee weapons* attacks.

The skill can also be used to make minor repairs to melee weapons as well as perform routine maintenance tasks to keep a weapon in good working condition.

Unskilled characters armed with a melee weapon may attack and passively defend with their *Dexterity* but cannot make an active defense.

Missile Weapons

Sample specializations: Bows, slings, crossbows, shurikens, throwing knives, rocks, grenades

Axiom: Tech 1

This skill measures a character's ability to use all types of thrown weapons and simple mechanical and strength-powered projectile weapons. A character generates a *missile weapons* total to hit when attacking with a missile weapon. *Dodge* is the defensive skill used against *missile weapons.*

The skill can also be used to make minor repairs to missile weapons as well as perform routine maintenance tasks to keep a weapon in good working condition.

Prestidigitation

Use: Unskilled use penalized.

Sample specializations: Stage magic, card tricks, pick pocketing, concealing items

This is the ability to manipulate small items with slight-of-hand without attracting any attention, frequently through the use of misdirection to distract the target. Pickpockets and stage magicians commonly have high skill values in *prestidigitation*.

Prestidigitation uses the target's *Perception* for the difficulty number, or the target's *find* skill if she is on the alert. Situational modifiers should be applied by the gamemaster as appropriate, some examples are provided in the following chart:

PRESTIDIGITATION CHART

Situation	Modifier
Watchful target ready to catch the prestidigitator	+4
Suspicious target	+2
Confused or distracted target	-3
Oblivious target (such as someone who's asleep)	-5
Difficult act (picking a zipped pocket, concealing a large or bulky object)	+1 To +5
Easy act (palming a small object, sliding a hand into one's own pocket unnoticed)	-1 To -5

The success level of the *prestidigitation* total determines how well the character did. If the prestidigitator earns a *minimal* or *average* success, she successfully conceals or gains hold of the item, but is noticed by the target. If she has a *good* success, the item has been successfully concealed or taken without immediately alerting the target. With a *superior* or *spectacular* success, the target will remain unaware for some time about what has happened. All failed prestidigitation attempts automatically alert the target without acquiring the item.

Prestidigitation may also be used in place of the *trick* skill in situations where the trick involves slight-of-hand. For example, a character that is cheating at cards could roll on his *prestidigitation* skill instead of *trick*.

Running

Use: Macro skill use for long-distance travel.
Sample specializations: Sprinting, long distances

Running is primarily used for speed pushes (see Chapter Four) when a character wants to move faster than her running limit value as given in Chapter One. It can also be used as a macro skill to determine how long it takes a character to run a certain distance or how far she can get in a certain amount of time. It may also be used to determine if a character can successfully run over difficult terrain.

The following modifiers are used when a character makes a speed push roll with *running*. The gamemaster can also take them into account when determining the difficulty number for non-push runs.

RUNNING MODIFIERS

Condition	Modifier
Smooth track	-2
Rough/uneven terrain	+2 Or more
Yielding obstructions (tall grass, brush)	+2
Unyielding obstructions (boulders, trees)	+4
Uphill, gentle grade	+3
Uphill, steep grade	+5
Downhill, steep grade	+2

In non-combat situations, characters can move at their full running speed for only a short amount of time. For macro uses of the skill, reduce the character's running limit value by two for distances over 400 meters and reduce it by three for distances over 5000 meters (about three miles).

Stealth

Use: Macro skill. May sometimes be used as a round skill.
Sample specializations: Concealment, trailing, ambush

Characters with *stealth* can sneak about or hide without attracting attention. Characters who use *stealth* are not necessarily being quiet or invisible; the goal is to be **unnoticed**. A character can *stealth* through a large crowd of people and be in plain sight the whole time, but by "blending in" she is able to pass through the crowd without anyone really noticing her doing so.

To use *stealth*, the player generates an action total against a difficulty number equal to the *Perception* of the character whose attention is being avoided. An alert target, such as an on-duty security guard, is usually harder to avoid and the difficulty number is instead equal to the target's *find* skill value. Automatic surveillance equipment will usually be listed with a *find* value or have a difficulty number for avoiding detection by the equipment.

Success means the character remains undetected, failure means she is automatically detected. If there is more than one target involved, such as trying to sneak past a patrol of two security guards, the *stealth* attempt is handled with the *multi-action* rules in Chapter Four.

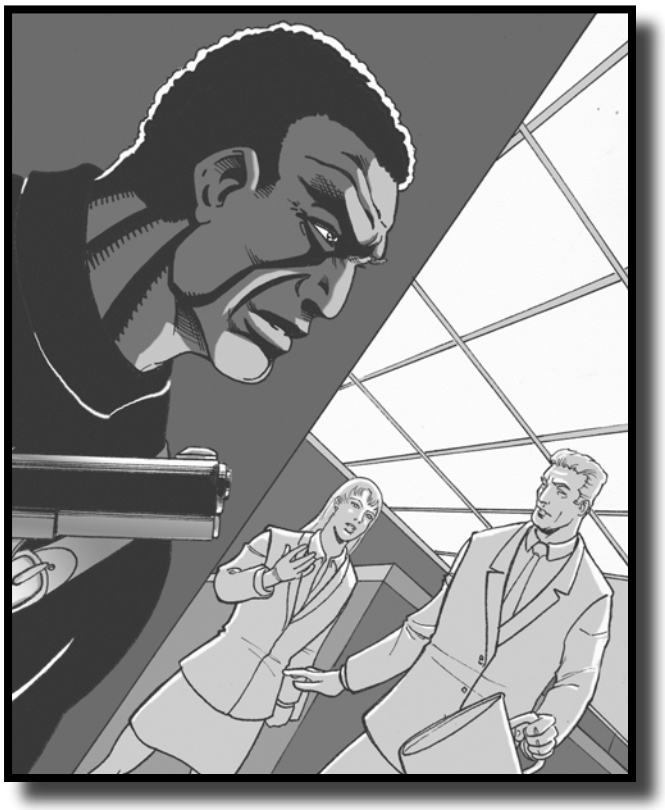
If the character is being actively searched for, *stealth* becomes a round use skill instead of a macro skill and the character will have to make several *stealth* checks to avoid detection.

The conditions around the character can affect the difficulty of attempts to use *stealth*. The chart below lists some common modifiers. Keep in mind that some modifiers can be negated by certain circumstances. For example, if a sentry is equipped with night-vision goggles the modifiers for darkness should not be applied.

STEALTH CHART

Condition	Modifier
Rain, sleet, snow	-1
Dawn or dusk, fog, trees, crowd, etc.	-2
Night	-3
Inattentive guards	-3
Dense concealment (jungle, large crowd)	-5
Attentive guards	+3
Open terrain	+3
Broad daylight, brightly lit area	+4
*This includes guards who are actively searching for the character.	

Example: Yukitada is chased into a room by a group of Nile Empire shocktroopers. She arrives slightly before the shocktroopers and ducks behind a tapestry, hoping to lose them. Barbara must generate a *stealth* total for Yukitada against a difficulty number



equal to the guards' *find* skill value (rather than their *Perception* because they are actively looking for her), taking into account the multi-action penalties for four targets and the additional +2 penalty because the guards are looking for her. If the skill check is successful, the shocktroopers don't notice her. If it fails, they notice her standing behind the tapestry.

Later in the adventure, Yukitada is escaping from a prison cell and is trying to sneak down the corridor and past the guard watching the hallway. Becky decides that it will take Yukitada three rounds to stealthily move all the way down the hall, so Barbara must make three *stealth* checks, one for each round of movement within the line of sight of the guard. If any of these checks fail, the guard will notice her in that round.

Swimming+

Use: Speed pushes may not be attempted unskilled. Macro use for long-distance travel.

Sample specializations: Sprint, long distance

This skill is a measure of a character's ability to stay afloat and move in the water. It is also used for speed pushes (see Chapter Four) when a character wants to move faster than their swimming limit value as given in Chapter One. As a macro skill it can also be used to determine how long it takes a character to swim a certain distance or how far they can swim in a certain amount of time.

The following modifiers are used when a character makes a speed push roll with *swimming*. The gamemaster can also take them into account when determining the difficulty number for moving in the water without pushing.

SWIMMING MODIFIERS

Condition	Modifier
Calm water	-2
Rough water	+2
Strong undercurrent	+2
Dangerous undercurrent	+4
Inappropriately dressed	+2
Carrying a heavy load	+2 Or more
Swimming equipment (fins, water wings, etc.)	-1 To -5*
Character can breathe water	-5

In non-combat situations, characters can move at their full swimming speed for only a short amount of time. For macro uses of the skill, reduce the character's swimming limit value by two for distances over 200 meters and reduce it by three for distances over 3000 meters (about two miles).

Unarmed Combat+

Use: Active defense cannot be attempted unskilled, passive defense and attacks can be done unskilled.

Sample specializations: Punching, kicking, grappling

This skill represents proficiency in normal types of hand-to-hand fighting: boxing, barroom brawling, wrestling, popular forms of martial arts like Judo and Karate, etc. A character's *unarmed combat* total is used to see if he hits whenever the character is fighting without a weapon; his *Strength* serves as his base damage value. *Unarmed combat* also serves as a defensive skill against unarmed attacks as well as armed attacks made with the *melee weapons* skill.

Unskilled characters may make *unarmed combat* attacks and passively defend with their *Dexterity* but they cannot make an active defense.

Strength

Strength is a measure of physical strength and power, though *Strength* does not include the ability to take and absorb damage (that ability is covered by *Toughness*). Weight lifters, wrestlers, and barbarians are examples of characters with high *Strength* values. *Strength* is used to determine the damage value for attacks made with the *melee weapons* and *unarmed combat* skills.

Strength-Related Skills

Climbing

Use: Macro use for long-distance climbing.

Sample specializations: Rope, wall, mountain, cave

This skill is used when a character wishes to climb or scale vertical or near-vertical obstacles, be it a rope, ladder, wall or mountain. A successful skill check indicates that the character climbs a distance equal to their climbing limit value. Failure indicates that the character falls at the start of that round of climbing.

The base difficulty number for a climb is 8, which is modified by the conditions of the climb. A character may choose to "be careful" and climb at a speed less than their climbing limit value (given in Chapter One), which will reduce the difficulty of the climb.

Characters who miss a *climbing* check can catch themselves and avoid the fall with a successful *Strength* check of difficulty 12. Characters who fail to catch themselves will fall and may take damage when they land. The rules for determining falling damage are in Chapter Four.

Characters may attempt to climb at a faster rate than their *climbing* limit value by making a speed push (see Chapter Four) as part of their climbing skill check.

CLIMBING CHART

Condition	Modifier
Ladder	-5
Tree, rough surface with plenty of handholds	-3
Cracked wall, lots of handholds	+0
Wall with handholds, natural rock	+2
Flat but not smooth surface	+4
Smooth stone, metal surface	+7
Less than 90-degree angle	-2
Less than 60-degree angle	-4
Less than 45-degree angle	-6
Darkness	+2
Slick surface	+2
Rain	+4
Ice-covered	+5
Character is pushing speed	+2
Character is being careful	-2 Per -1 speed value
Climbing equipment (ropes, pitons, etc.)	-1 To -5

Example: Marco needs to climb over a tall stone wall to break into a secret installation in the Nile Empire. The base difficulty

of the climb is 8. The stone wall is flat but not polished smooth which increases the difficulty to (8 + 4) 12. It's night, which further increases the difficulty to (12 + 2) 14.

Marco elects to take his time and be careful. He will climb the wall at a speed value of 1 instead of using his full climbing limit value of 3. By reducing his speed value two points, he lowers the difficulty by four points down to (14 - 4) 10.

In non-combat situations, characters can climb at their limit value for only a short period of time. For macro uses of the skill, reduce the limit value by one if they are climbing more than 50 meters and by two if they are climbing more than 200 meters.

If a character "fails" a macro climb, she falls from a point with a height value two less than the top, which is about midway in the climb. If the character catches herself, she is assumed to limp to the top from there. Climbs in which there is a failure (but in which the character catches himself) add one to the calculated time value of the climb.

Example: Magoth and Father Wagner are both trying to scale a mountain peak in the Living Land. Father Wagner's climbing limit value is 3 while Magoth's is 6 thanks to giants being bigger and stronger than normal humans are. The top of the peak is 1500 meters high, a height value of 16. Because of the height of the climb, both characters have their limit values reduced by two.

Magoth successfully makes his *climbing* skill check. He did not push his climbing speed so his limit value remains at 4 and is subtracted from the height value of 16. Five is then added, resulting in a time value of 17, which is only forty minutes. He zips right up to the top!

Father Wagner however fails his *climbing* skill check but does manage to catch himself. The fall occurred at a height value of (16 - 2) 14, about 600 meters up. His modified limit value of 1 is subtracted from 16, five is added and then another one is added because of the fall for a final time value of 21, about four hours. Magoth has plenty of time to enjoy the view from the top before Wagner arrives.

Lifting

Use: Can be used as a macro skill for carrying heavy loads over a long period of time.

Sample specializations: Weight lifting, load bearing

The *lifting* skill is used to increase the amount of weight a character can lift beyond their lifting limit value. This is accomplished with a *power push* as described in Chapter Four. A character who wants to hold up or carry a load greater than their lifting limit value has to make a power push every round. Characters do not have to make *lifting* skill checks to lift an amount equal to or less than their lifting limit value as given in Chapter One.

For macro uses of the skill, characters cannot carry an amount greater than their *lifting* limit value. Lesser amounts can be carried but the heavier the load, the more strain it can have on the character. The difficulty for macro uses of lifting is the weight value of the load plus three. If the skill check fails, the character carries the load to his destination but collapses from exhaustion upon arrival. If the skill check succeeds, the result is treated as a power push to determine any detrimental effects on the character.

Example: Terrill and Marco are carrying badly needed medical supplies to a group of resistance fighters in the Cyberpapacy. Terrill's lifting limit value is 7 and Marco's is 8, equal to their *Strengths*. Neither has the *lifting* skill. Both are carrying 12 kilograms packs, which is a weight value of 6. The difficulty of their check is (6 + 3) 9.

Juan, Marco's player, rolls poorly and fails the *lifting* check. When the two arrive at the resistance camp Marco drops his pack and collapses, exhausted and worn out. It will be a while before he can do anything.

Terrill passes the *lifting* check, but just barely. Treating the result like a power push, Becky tells Terrill's player Alan that his character has taken a certain amount of fatigue damage that will take a while to heal. But he's in better shape than Marco is, he can still move around and do things.

Toughness

Toughness is a measure of a character's endurance, stamina and physical fortitude. It is most often used to determine the effects of damage upon a character; whether she is even affected by it and if so, how much of an effect it has on her. This function of *Toughness* is **always passive**; characters cannot actively resist taking damage by generating an action total with their *Toughness*.

The only way to increase a character's resistance to taking damage, beyond increasing their *Toughness* attribute, is to have some sort of protective armor. This is covered in Chapter Four and a variety of armor types can be found in Chapter Thirteen. Some creatures, such as ravagons, may possess natural armor that makes them more resistant to taking damage.

A high *Toughness* indicates someone with lots of energy, a healthy physique and the ability to shrug off minor injuries. A low *Toughness* character probably gets winded climbing a flight of stairs, catches colds all the time and injures easily.

Toughness-Related Skills

Resist Pain

Sample specializations: none

This skill allows a character to temporarily ignore the detrimental effects of physical damage. The character is not getting rid of the damage; its effects just don't bother him for a little while. The more severe the injuries, the harder it will be for a character to ignore the effects. The skill can only be used to ignore the penalties caused by wound damage; it cannot be used against shock damage or knockout conditions. Because the skill represents a physical increase in the body's capacity to handle pain, it can only be used against physical wound damage, it will have no effect on any penalties caused by mental or spiritual wounds.

The character generates a *resist pain* skill total against a difficulty equal to his *Toughness* attribute and the results are read through the power push table in Chapter Four. This result indicates how much of a wound penalty the character can temporarily ignore. For example, if a character is suffering from a -3 wound penalty and generates a result of +1 on a *resist pain* check, his wound penalty is temporarily reduced to -2.

This skill **cannot** be used as a macro skill as the pain can only be ignored for a maximum of ten combat rounds, or until the character takes any more physical damage. Once the effects of *resist pain* have ended, the character cannot attempt to use the skill again until after he has rested and healed some of his damage.

At gamemaster's discretion, the *willpower* skill can be used in the same manner as *resist pain*.

Perception

Perception measures several abilities; how quick a character is mentally, how observant she is, and how effectively she can use learned knowledge. Characters with a high *Perception* have excellent memories and notice minor details others miss. Characters with a low *Perception* tend to forget things and often overlook important information without realizing it.

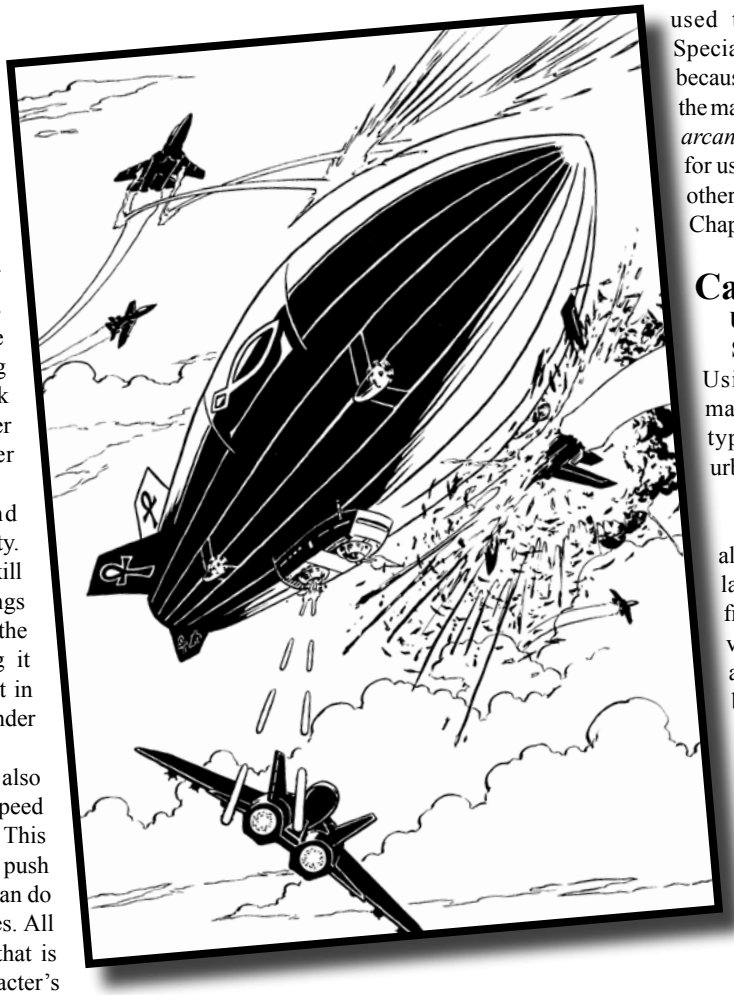
Perception-Related Skills

Air Vehicles

Use: Unskilled use penalized. May be used as a macro skill.

Sample specializations: Gliders, airplanes, helicopters, VTOL craft, jumbo jets, hot-air balloons, zeppelins

Axiom: Tech 16; a magically-operated air vehicle requires Magic 10



This skill reflects a character's ability to operate, pilot and make minor repairs to aircraft of all types. The pilot must make an *air vehicles* skill check whenever taking off and landing as well as when attempting any type of unusual maneuver, such as flying through storm turbulence and maneuvers made during combat. The difficulty of a task is determined by the gamemaster using the Difficulty Number Scale.

Routine take-offs and landings have an Easy difficulty. The consequences of failing a skill check on take-offs or landings should depend on how much the character missed by; missing it by one point should not result in a catastrophic crash except under extreme conditions.

The *air vehicles* skill is also used to increase a vehicle's speed beyond its normal capabilities. This is accomplished with a speed push similar to the type characters can do with their own movement rates. All vehicles have a *speed value* that is essentially the same as a character's limit value. It is not the maximum possible speed of the vehicle, just the maximum speed possible without putting stress on the vehicle's engine and/or structure.

The rules for speed pushes can be found in Chapter Four. The macro use of this skill is handled with the same rules that apply to the macro movements of characters in the "Timed Movement" sidebar.

In aerial combat, a pilot's *air vehicles* skill is used in place of combat skills such as *dodge* and *maneuver*. In the unlikely (but not impossible) case of a vehicle being attacked in flight by someone using *melee weapons* or *unarmed combat* the pilot's *air vehicles* skill substitutes for the normal defensive skill values.

Alteration Magic

Use: Cannot be used unskilled.

Sample specializations: None

Axiom: Magic 7

Alteration magic is magic that uses existing matter and energy and changes it into a form or condition more desirable to the caster. A spell that changes a character's *Strength* attribute is an example of alteration magic, it "alters" the pre-existing *Strength* of the spell's recipient. A spell that changes a character into stone is another example of *alteration magic*; the matter that makes up the character's body is altered into a different substance. Teleportation spells are another type of alteration magic, which work by altering the target's physical location rather than altering an attribute or quality possessed by the target.

The *alteration magic* skill is used to cast alteration spells. Specializations are not allowed because this is already covered by the magic system through the use of *arcane knowledges*. Detailed rules for using *alteration magic* and the other magic skills can be found in Chapter Ten.

Camouflage

Use: Macro skill

Sample specializations: Using natural cover, using man-made tools, by terrain type (arctic, desert, jungle, urban, etc.)

The *camouflage* skill allows characters to conceal large structures and objects from distant observers. Land vehicles, grounded air vehicles and even small buildings can be concealed using this skill. This skill does not apply to a character's ability to conceal her, which is covered by the *stealth* skill. Think of *camouflage* as *stealth* or possibly *disguise* for anything other than the character. *Camouflage* can be used to conceal other characters from observation.

When attempting to *camouflage* an object, the character generates a skill total. This value becomes the difficulty number for anyone trying to locate the concealed object with a *Perception* or *find* skill check. The gamemaster can apply modifiers to this difficulty number based on the surrounding terrain, the size of the object and the type and availability of materials used to conceal the object. Some of the modifiers listed under the *stealth* skill may also be appropriate. If the *find* total exceeds the *camouflage* total used to hide the object, the observer sees the object.

Example: Our group of Storm Knights is in pursuit of Ramses, an evil officer in the military of the Nile Empire. Ramses takes to the jungle; first attempting to conceal his jeep with leaves and branches. Becky, the gamemaster, generates a *camouflage* total of 14 for Ramses, and then applies a +3 bonus to account for the partial cover provided by the jungle and the ready supply of large leaves and branches to cover the vehicle. This increases the *camouflage* total to 17.

The Storm Knights follow Ramses into the jungle but lose the trail of his jeep's tire tracks. Suspecting that Ramses abandoned his jeep, the party searches for it. Everyone in the group generates a *find* skill total. Terrill gets a *find* total of 18 and spots the jeep through Ramses' cover.

Computer Operations

Use: Macro skill.

Sample specializations: Type of operating system (Windows, Macintosh, Unix, GodNet, Grid, etc.), type of operation (accounting programs, computer games, surfing the web, etc.)

Axiom: Tech 22

Computer operations is the ability to operate a computer and use programs. Most of the time characters will use the skill to access information stored in a computer. This skill does not allow characters to write programs or "hack" systems, — that requires the *computer science* skill.

Since computers and their programs can be very diverse in functions and ease of operation, gamemasters should determine the difficulty of tasks using the Difficulty Number Scale. Possible factors to consider are the sophistication of the system, the quality of the software and any security that might be in place (copy protection, passwords, usage monitoring, etc.) In general, the higher the Tech axiom of the computer, the easier it should be to operate, even for characters with a lower Tech axiom. Some specialized functions may be more difficult to characters with a lower Tech axiom though.

Computer operations may be used in place of the *cyberdeck operations* skill to operate a cyberdeck and access the GodNet in the Cyberpapacy or the Grid in Tharkold but the character is considered unskilled for purposes of rerolls. *Computer operations* does **not** substitute for *cyberdeck operations* in determining a character's *net skills* in the GodNet or the Grid. See the *GodNet* supplement, the *Cyberpapacy sourcebook* or the *Tharkold sourcebook* for more information. (This skill is listed as *scholar(computer science)* in those books.)

Craftmanship*

Use: Unskilled use penalized. Macro skill.

Sample limitations: Swordsmith, armorsmith, weaver, potter, tailor, cook

Axiom: Social 7; Tech axiom requirement based on the type of limitation chosen.

The *craftsman* skill is used to manufacture items of the appropriate limitation by hand. It is more common in settings without assembly lines and machined production technology (around Tech 16) though it can still be found in many settings with higher Tech axioms.

A *craftsman* can build or produce any item within her limitation as well as repair the same items if applicable. The amount of time involved will vary depending on the specific limitation, the item being built or repaired and the materials available to the character. Forging a sword for example may take a couple of days while cooking a small meal may only take an hour or less. A seven-course banquet though may require as much time and effort as the sword!

In most situations, the gamemaster should call for only one *craftsman* check when repairing an item. When building a new item, the general rule is to require one skill check per day of work. For items such as weapons and armor, the item's modifier can serve as an indicator of how many days it takes to manufacture by hand. A short sword with a damage value of STR+3 would then take about three days to create and require three *craftsman* skill checks.

Failing a check adds a day to the process. Failing two checks in a row ruins the item and the craftsman has to start over. A *Spectacular* success will shorten the process by one day. The base difficulty for *craftsman* is 12. Items with modifiers add their modifier to the difficulty. For items without modifiers, gamemasters should use the Difficulty Number Scale to determine appropriate modifiers based on the complexity of the item being produced or repaired.

Cyberdeck Operations+

Use: Cyberdecks may not be used unskilled but characters can substitute *computer operations* or *computer science* for *cyberdeck operations* in some instances.

Sample specializations: *Net attack, net defense, net find, net manipulation, net stealth, net tracking*

Axiom: Tech 26

This skill is used for operating cyberdecks, specialized computers that allow characters to access the "virtual experience" (VX) computer networks known as the GodNet in the Cyberpapacy and the Grid in Tharkold. *Cyberdeck operations* allows a character to travel through the VX network, manipulate systems and engage in VX combat with other cyberdeckers and hostile programs. Highly skilled cyberdeckers can even "run" a VX network without the resources provided by a cyberdeck but this can be exceptionally dangerous.

Characters may enter a VX network unskilled, but they cannot operate a cyberdeck unskilled. Most people in the Cyberpapacy in fact access the GodNet without a cyberdeck, but they are limited in what they can do while they are there. Characters with either the *computer operations* or *computer science* skill can operate a cyberdeck with those skills, but they are treated as unskilled for purposes of rerolls.

The sample specializations given above are skills that cyberdeckers use when they are within a VX network. These skills are based on a character's *cyberdeck operations* skill and are modified by the properties of the character's cyberdeck and any cyberdeck programs in use.

Full details on using cyberdecks and interacting with VX networks can be found in the *GodNet* supplement, the *Cyberpapacy sourcebook* and the *Tharkold sourcebook*. A condensed version of the Cyberpapacy rules can be found in the Worldbook.

Direction Sense

Use: Unskilled use penalized. Macro skill.

Sample specializations: Orienteering, map reading, landmark recognition, sea navigation, specific locales (New York City, central France, Amazon river, Land Below tunnels underneath Aysle, etc.)

Direction sense is the ability to determine relative positions between a character's current location, where she has traveled from, and where she is going. It is most often used in wildernesses, at sea and in strange environments. The skill covers use of maps, determining routes, finding the points of the compass (i.e., which way is north), recognizing landmarks and estimating distances. In the Possibility Wars, *direction sense* is an essential skill in the Living Land because of the obscuring Deep Mist that always covers the landscape.

Instead of forcing gamemasters to keep detailed maps of all the areas characters might travel though, the rules for navigating a trip and not becoming lost are kept abstract. Time is determined for the completion of a trip from one point to another without getting lost rather than keeping track of how far a character travels and in what direction. Should a character become lost en route, the exact time and location it occurs during the trip can be determined by the gamemaster as best benefits the flow of the story rather than stranding the character somewhere boring.

Whenever a character is in a situation where they could become lost, the gamemaster should call for a *direction sense* skill check. The base difficulty is 6 but any number of possible conditions can modify this:

DIRECTION SENSE MODIFIERS

Condition	Modifier
Clear day	+0
Darkness (night)	+2
Overcast skies	+3
Surroundings obscure the view (forest, jungle, etc.)	+3
In the living land	+3
Traveling by vehicle	+2
Traveling on foot or mount	+0
Character familiar with area	-3
On minor roadway (back roads, rural areas, etc.)	-3
On major roadway (freeway, interstate, main city streets, etc.)	-5
No distinctive landmarks (open fields, large bodies of water, etc.)	+5
Detailed map of the area/route	-5
Crude map of the area/route	-3

If the skill check is successful, the character continues on her voyage. The gamemaster should make additional *direction sense* skill checks as seems appropriate over the duration of the trip. To keep a trip from being just a boring series of skill checks, the gamemaster should prepare a few minor, nonessential story ideas that they can use along the route to liven up the experience.

If the skill check fails, the character may not initially realize that she is lost. If it failed by more than three points, the gamemaster should assume that the character travels a significant way off-course before realizing her mistake. She will have to successfully determine her current location compared to where she is supposed to be before she can try to back on course.

This requires two successful *direction sense* skill checks; the first to determine her current location and the second to travel in the right direction to get back on course towards her destination. If the skill check failed by only one or two points, the character realizes that she has become lost soon enough that she only has to make one successful skill check to get back on course.

Several *direction sense* failures in a row can get a character completely lost; the gamemaster should assume that after three or four successive failures the character needs to make a fresh start in order to get anywhere. The character either needs some outside assistance (asking for directions, road signs, acquires a map, etc.) or will have to stop traveling for a while and try again after resting for a while, at least several hours.

(A slightly different version of this skill designed specifically for use in the Living Land can be found in the *Living Land sourcebook*.)

Disguise

Use: Unskilled use penalized. Macro skill.

Sample specializations: Costumes, makeup, impersonations

The *disguise* skill gives a character the ability to use makeup, wigs and costumes to appear as another person, or as a specific person. It does not include the ability to speak or act like a specific person, only their appearance. Imitating a person's voice or mannerisms falls under the *performance arts* skill.

To create a disguise, the character must have access to appropriate equipment. Depending on the desired disguise, this could be as minor as a wig or a set of appropriate clothing, or it may require the use of special makeup and elaborate costumes to create a very different appearance, such as appearing taller or shorter.

When creating a disguise, the character generates a *disguise* skill total. This total is then modified based on the circumstances of the disguise:

DISGUISE MODIFIERS

Circumstance	Modifier
A specific person	-5
Opposite sex	-3
Different race/skin color	-3

Different species, close resemblance (human as elf, etc.)	-4
Different species, some resemblance	-6
Different species, little resemblance (human as edeinos, etc.)	-10 Or more
Great age difference (+/- 30 years)	-3
Much larger build	-3
Much smaller build	-5
Character already bears a resemblance	+3
Good disguise kit	+5
No disguise kit	-5
Using *disguise* on another character	-2

This final skill total becomes the difficulty number for anyone seeing through the disguise with their *Perception* or *find* skill. A *Perception* check is automatically granted the first time that an individual meets the disguised character. If that check fails, the observer is fooled and will only get to make another *Perception* check if the character says or does something that does not match his disguise. If the check is successful, the observer realizes that the character is wearing a disguise.

Divination Magic

Use: Cannot be used unskilled.
Sample specializations: None
Axiom: Magic 2

Divination magic is magic involving information gathering. A spell that lets a character observe distant locations close-up is a type of divination spell. Communication spells are another type of divination magic. Spells that block the obtaining of information are also divinatory in nature.

The *divination magic* skill is used to cast divination spells. Specializations are not allowed because this is already covered by the magic system through the use of *arcane knowledges*. Detailed rules for using *divination magic* and the other magic skills can be found in Chapter Ten.

Egyptian Religion

Use: Cannot be used unskilled. Macro skill.
Sample specializations: None
Reality: Nile Empire

The *Egyptian religion* skill indicates a character's knowledge of the Nile Empire's version of the Egyptian gods and the legends that surround them, as well as the powers that they grant their followers. In play, the skill has two primary functions.

The first is that it functions like the *scholar* skill, representing how much the character knows about the Nile Empire's gods and their religion. This does **not** indicate belief in the religion, just an understanding of its principles and mythology. Belief in the religion is represented by the *faith* skill.

The second function is what makes this skill unique to the Nile Empire; it is used to perform *religious astronomy*, an important part of the ceremonies and rituals involved in the Nile's religion. Nile Empire miracles cannot be performed without the *Egyptian religion* skill. The rules regarding this use of the skill can be found in the *Nile Empire sourcebook*.

Characters who want the first function of this skill but not the second should take *scholar(Egyptian religion)* instead of this skill.

Evidence Analysis

Use: Macro skill.
Sample specializations: Clue analysis, physical evidence, forensic evidence, researched evidence, deductive reasoning, puzzle solving, forgeries

The *evidence analysis* skill measures a character's ability to analyze physical evidence and deduce information about events that occurred in the past. A detective might be able to look at a room and guess how many people have been in it recently, for example, or she might be able to look at an object and determine something about where it was made. The skill may also be used to solve puzzles of both the physical and mental kind.

The evidence must first be detected, either through the *find* skill, player characters roleplaying a search or by being rather obvious, such as a corpse in the middle of a room. Evidence may also be gathered by research (another use of the *find* skill), questioning witnesses or from analyzing the efforts of other investigators, such as going over police reports about a crime scene or examining the medical records of an autopsy.

The difficulty of an *evidence analysis* skill check is usually determined by the gamemaster using the Difficulty Number Scale, taking into consideration the nature of the question(s) being asked and the actual course of events that the character is attempting to deduce.

In some cases, an attribute or skill of another character may determine the difficulty. For example, figuring out a riddle left at a crime scene might have a difficulty equal to the *Perception* attribute, or a skill such as *scholar(riddles)*, of the person who left the riddle behind.

Some example difficulty numbers are provided in the following chart:

EVIDENCE ANALYSIS CHART

Physical evidence	Difficulty
Object is familiar or evidence is fairly clear (a knife at a murder scene, lock picks near an open door)	8
Object is somewhat familiar or evidence is only partly clear (a bloodstain near a closet where a body is hidden)	10
Evidence is reasonably obscure (water stains on a carpet forming a faint trail from the door to the window)	12
Evidence is unusual or not obviously related (humming refrigerator indicating that someone opened it recently)	15

The success level of the *evidence analysis* check should be used to gauge how much useful information the character receives from analyzing the evidence.

If the detective receives *minimal* or *average* success, she can identify all of the objects or physical evidence by generic type: automatic pistols, nylon rope, a poison, blood. If she gets a *good* success, she knows precise information on the origin of the object, substance, or evidence, and specific information on its type: a Colt .45 automatic of rare manufacture; the rope has evidence of microstranding common to Nippon Tech materials; the poison is a hemotoxin derived from venomous reptiles found in the Living Land.

If she gets a *superior* success, she knows to what use all of the objects in the room were put. With a *spectacular* success she can accurately reconstruct events from the evidence, fitting in all the evidence to the explanation.

Good players may be able to discover this information on their own through roleplaying and solid induction. The gamemaster

Find versus *Stealth*

The *stealth* skill says that the difficulty of sneaking past a character is that characters *find* skill value. The *find* skill says that the difficulty of detecting a stealthing character is that character's *stealth* skill. Which character makes the skill check, the one trying to be sneaky or the one trying to be observant?

In situations where the skills are being used as macro skills, it's easiest to let the player character be the one who makes the skill check with a difficulty number equal to the opposing skill value of the non-player character. So if a player character is trying to sneak by a guard, she makes a *stealth* skill check against the guard's *Perception* or *find* value. If a non-player character is trying to sneak past a player character, the player character makes a *Perception* or *find* skill check against the non-player character's *stealth* skill.

When events are in round play, such as when a character tries to hide from someone actively searching for him, it should be treated in the same manner as a combat situation. A character can choose to actively or passively "defend" with their appropriate skill against the "attack" being made by the other character.

Example: Yukitada is being pursued through a research facility in the Cyberpapacy by one of the Cyberpope's Inquisitors. Becky informs Barbara that Yukitada has the initiative. Barbara declares that Yukitada is going to find a place to hide and hope that the Inquisitor will pass by without seeing her, so she generates a *stealth* total for Yukitada. Becky, without telling Barbara, knows that the Inquisitor is more interested in shooting at Yukitada than searching for her this round so the Inquisitor will passively "defend" against Yukitada's *stealth* skill. The skill total Barbara generates is compared to the Inquisitor's *find* skill to see if Yukitada is successful. She is, so the Inquisitor passes right by Yukitada without seeing her.

In the next round, Barbara announces that the Inquisitor has the initiative. Because he has lost sight of Yukitada, the Inquisitor will actively search for her with his *find* skill. Barbara says that Yukitada will actively "defend" and try to remain out of sight. Becky generates an "attack" total with the Inquisitor's *find* skill and Barbara generates an active "defense" total for Yukitada. The Inquisitor's total is higher and he spots Yukitada hiding in the shadows.

can encourage such behavior by feeding them a quality level of information at a time when they are on the right track.

Find

Use: Macro skill. May sometimes be used as a round skill.

Sample specializations: Gather evidence, spot ambush, search, reconnoiter

This is the ability to find hidden or concealed objects or persons. It is also used to recognize something as unusual if it is in plain sight, such as a footprint at a crime scene or the fact that someone is wearing a disguise.

Many times the difficulty of a *find* skill check will be based on an attribute or skill used by another character, such as *stealth, camouflage* and *disguise*. For objects that have not been deliberately concealed, the gamemaster should use the Difficulty Number Scale to determine an appropriate difficulty for locating the item. If the character successfully beats the difficulty with their *find* skill, they spot the object.

First Aid

Use: Macro skill. May be used in round play to prevent death from injuries.

Sample specializations: Fatigue, unconsciousness, wounds

This skill measures a character's ability to quickly diagnose and treat traumatic wounds, keeping characters alive and functioning until they can heal. It is normally a macro use skill but it can be used in round play under certain conditions.

The difficulty of a *first aid* skill check depends on the severity of the wounded character's injuries. Gamemasters should also consider applying situational modifiers based on the Difficulty Number Scale when treatment is attempted in adverse conditions, such as on a battlefield or without anything resembling a first aid kit. Wound levels are explained in Chapter Four.

FIRST AID CHART

Wound level	Difficulty
Shock damage only	8
K, o, ko condition	10
Wound	12
Heavy wound	13
Mortal wound	15*
Dead (four wounds)	18*
Dead (five or more wounds)	*First aid* not possible

*These two conditions can be treated in round play.

Successful use of *first aid* during round play will stop the bleeding caused by a *mortal wound* and prevent the wounded character from dying, but will not help the wounded character in any other way. A character at four wounds can sometimes be saved by immediate emergency treatment (such as CPR and similarly drastic methods). Successful *first aid* treatment within one round of the character's "death" will improve her condition to *mortal wound*. The injured character will still be bleeding so *first aid* will need to be applied a second time to treat that problem.

When used as a macro skill, *first aid* will remove all *shock* and *KO conditions* and reduces any action penalties caused by wound damage by one level (characters with a *mortal wound* only suffer *heavy wound* penalties, characters with a *heavy wound* only suffer *wound* penalties.) It does not reduce the wound level, only the penalty. The penalty reduction is temporary and will go away the next time the character that takes any damage.

Each character attempting *first aid* on wounded characters is only allowed one attempt per victim per day. If this attempt fails, he must wait until the next day (though someone else could try to aid the victim today). Characters who have only taken *shock* and *KO conditions* can be treated as often as necessary.

Forgery

Use: Unskilled use penalized. Macro skill.

Sample specializations: Banknotes, signatures, passports, licenses, paintings

Axiom: Social 5; Tech axiom requirements for specializations.

The *forgery* skill allows a character to produce copies or fake versions of documents such as money and identity papers. The skill can be used to duplicate existing works of art such as paintings but cannot be used to produce fake pieces of art, such as a "lost" Rembrandt painting. That requires the artist skill.

The forger generates a *forgery* skill total that then becomes the difficulty number for anyone trying to spot the forgery for what it is. Attempts to see through a forgery are made with the *Perception* attribute or with *evidence analysis* if the character is actively trying to detect a forgery. The *forgery* skill total can be modified by several factors:

FORGERY CHART

Condition	Modifier
Forger is very familiar with item or has a sample to work from	+5
Forger is somewhat familiar with item	+3
Forger has seen item often +0	+0
Item has only been described	-2
Forger is blindly guessing	-7
Forger has all the necessary tools and materials	+1 To +5
Forger is missing tools or supplies	-1 To -5
Primitive document	+3
High-tech document	-3
* Relative to the tech axiom of the forger.	

Example: Quin contacts an old friend for a favor; he needs some fake identity papers to get into a Victorian government office building in Orrorsh. Quin can describe the papers to his friend but does not have an example to show him. The paper and ink used are commonplace though and won't be hard to acquire and Quin's friend is from Core Earth so the documents are pretty simplistic compared to the work he normally does.

Quin's friend generates a *forgery* total of 15. There's a -7 modifier for only having a description to work from, a +3 modifier for a Core Earther forging relatively primitive documents and Becky assigns a +5 modifier for the forger having all the right tools and materials. The modifiers total up to +1 for a final *forgery* total of 16.

Gambling

Use: Unskilled use penalized. Macro skill. May be used in round play to simulate highly competitive gambling.

Sample specializations: Specific games of skill (poker, blackjack, craps), specific games of chance (roulette, horse racing, boxing)

Axiom: Social 7

Gambling is the ability to successfully play the odds in games of skill and chance against other people. The two types of games are handled in separate ways since one is based on the character's active participation in events while the other involves wagering on random chance or on the abilities of someone other than the gambler.

In games of skill, such as most card games, each participant in the game makes a *gambling* skill check and the character with the highest total wins. For a more dramatic, back-and-forth game of *gambling*, the skill can be used in round play and combined with the use of other skills such as *trick, test of will* and *prestidigitation* where the gamblers attempt to influence the odds more in their own favor.

In games of chance, the gambler tries to predict the outcome of an event that she is not directly involved in, such as picking who will win a boxing match or the determination of random numbers in games like roulette. In these games, the gambler makes a *gambling* skill check against a difficulty determined by the gamemaster based on the odds of winning using the Difficulty Number Scale.

Cheating: The *gambling* skill can be used to detect cheating in both games of skill and games of chance. It does not allow a character to cheat though, which has to be done with other skills. *Prestidigitation*, for example, can be used to roll loaded dice or "stack the deck" in a card game without anyone noticing. The *trick* skill could also be used for the same effects. In games of skill, the difficulty to detect cheating is the skill value generated by the cheater. In games of chance, the gamemaster should set the difficulty using the Difficulty Number Scale based on the difference between the normal odds and the illegitimate odds.

Example: Marco is in Atlantic City hoping to win enough money for himself and his friends to afford repairs on Quin's helicopter. Marco sits down at a roulette table and starts betting. After losing several games in a row, even after making some good *gambling* skill totals, Juan tells Becky that Marco suspects the game is rigged.

The table is in fact rigged; Becky decided that the normal odds of winning at roulette are Difficult but the house has rigged the table so that it's actually Very Hard. Becky figures that noticing the winning odds at this table are different is a Difficult task for someone with *gambling*. If Marco can beat the number for a Difficult task with his *gambling*, he'll know that the game is fixed.

Moving to a blackjack table, Marco decides to watch the dealer before playing to see if this game is also rigged. The dealer is in fact using her *prestidigitation* skill to cheat the players. Her *prestidigitation* skill value is the difficulty for Marco's *gambling* skill check.

Hieroglyphics*

Use: May not be used unskilled but the *linguistics* skill may be used at a penalty. Macro skill.

Sample limitations: Egyptian, Aztec, Sumerian

Axiom: Social 5

Hieroglyphics is a form of the *language* skill used to read and write pictographic forms of writing, such as the Egyptian hieroglyphics used in the Nile Empire. In the setting of the Possibility Wars the Egyptian limitation will be the most common since it is still in use by the forces of Pharaoh Mobius. Archeologists and historians are the only characters likely to have a limitation in a different pictographic language.

Egyptian hieroglyphics went though several incarnations in ancient Egypt and some are harder to read than others. Reading the modern script used in the Nile Empire is an Easy task but ancient variations of the language can range all the way up to Extremely Hard. Generally the older the version, the more difficult it is to read.

A character with *linguistics* may attempt to read hieroglyphics without this skill but the idiosyncratic nature of the language applies at least a Hard penalty to the task.

Land Vehicles

Use: May be used as a macro skill.

Sample specializations: Automobile, pickup truck, tractor, tank, motorcycle, bicycle, wagon, carriage, train, hovercraft

Axiom: Tech 5; a magically-operated land vehicle requires Magic 10

This skill reflects a character's ability to operate, pilot and make minor repairs to all types of wheeled, tracked, hover-effect and any other kind of land-based vehicle. The difficulty of any particular driving task is determined by the gamemaster using the Difficulty Number Scale.

The *land vehicles* skill is also used to increase a vehicle's speed beyond its normal capabilities. This is accomplished with a speed push similar to the type characters can do with their own movement rates. All vehicles have a *speed value* that is essentially the same as a character's limit value. It is not the maximum possible speed of the vehicle, just the maximum speed possible without putting stress on the vehicle's engine and/or structure.

The rules for speed pushes can be found in Chapter Four. The macro use of this skill is handled with the same rules that apply to the macro movements of characters in the "Timed Movement" sidebar.

Language Types

The number of different languages in *Torg* that are available under the *language* skill is being left for each gaming group to decide on their own. Most of the invading realms either speak some form of an Earthly language or possess the ability to immediately give knowledge of a new language to its inhabitants so communications in the game can easily be reduced to just a handful of Earthly languages.

On the other hand, some groups may prefer the increased realism of having to deal with the large number of different languages that exist just in Core Earth, not to mention the additional languages spoken in the invading realms. Having to work through a communications barrier can provide some interesting roleplaying challenges. But it can also slow down play and hinder the flow of the action. How both sides of the equation get balanced will depend on how each group wants to play it.

In vehicle combat, a driver's *land vehicles* skill is used in place of combat skills such as *dodge* and *maneuver*. In the case of a vehicle being attacked by someone using *melee weapons* or *unarmed combat* while the vehicle is in motion, the pilot's *land vehicles* skill substitutes for the normal defensive skill values.

Animal-drawn land vehicles are normally controlled with this skill instead of *beast riding* since being attached to the vehicle restricts the animal's free movement. Under appropriate circumstances, gamemasters may allow characters to use *beast riding* in place of *land vehicles*.

Language*

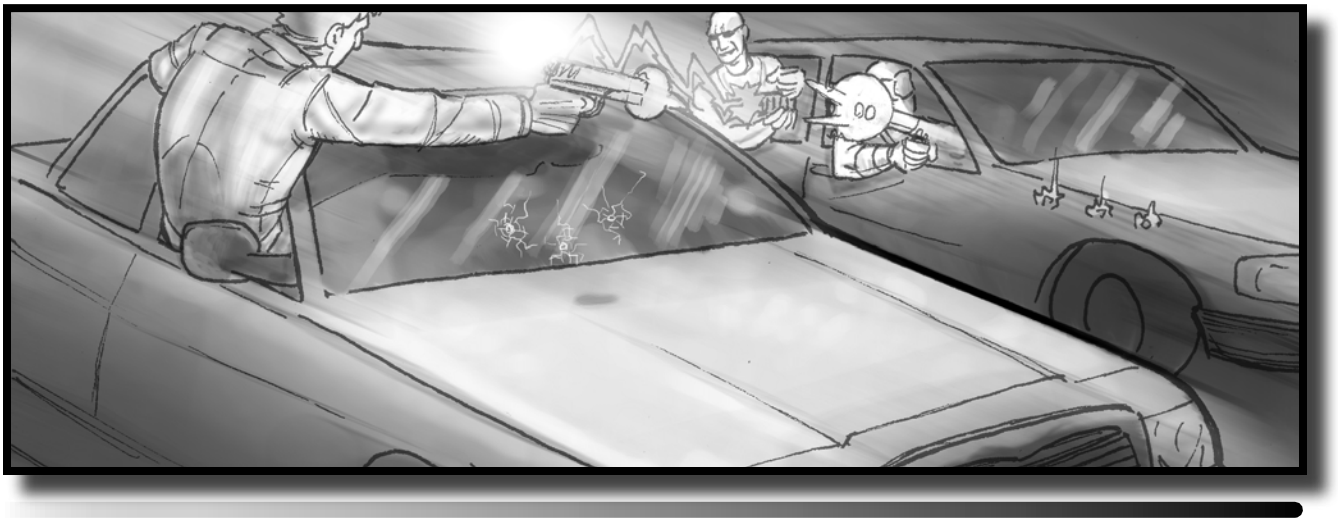
Use: Cannot be used unskilled though linguistics can be used in its place. Macro skill.

Sample limitations: English, French, Japanese, Edeinos, Stalenger Tap-Sign, High Ayslish, Akashan

Sample specializations: reading, writing, archaic, formal

Axiom: Social 3

Language gives the character the ability to speak another language (characters do not need the skill for their native language.) It can be taken multiple times to represent the ability to speak several additional languages. As a macro skill, *language* skill checks usually only have to be made once per conversation, players do



not have to roll every time their character says or hears something in a foreign language.

To speed play even further, gamemasters may wish to assume that a character's base *language* skill value represents the character's normal level of fluency in the language and skill checks are only required when the character needs to communicate "above her level". The following charts can be used to gauge a character's fluency and the difficulty numbers for communicating at a certain level of fluency:

LANGUAGE CHART

Fluency	Skill value/difficulty
Minimal	8
Average	10
Good	12
Superior	15
Spectacular	22

Minimal fluency—Basic phrases and important words, the type of things found in phrasebooks ("Please help me, I'm lost." "Don't shoot!")

Average fluency—Remedial ability, knows basic grammar has a fair vocabulary of words and phrases ("Can you recommend a restaurant?" "I need to find the nearest bank." "Don't shoot, I'm not dangerous.")

Good fluency—Can carry on a normal conversation with a little difficulty, still stumbles over the occasional word or concept. Knows enough to get through normal, everyday situations. Speaks with a noticeable accent.

Superior fluency—Knows the language as well as the average native speaker. May still have trouble with archaic or specialized words and ideas such as slang, technical terminology or an offshoot dialect. Has a neutral accent.

Spectacular fluency—Has mastered the language, is indistinguishable from a well-educated native speaker. Speaks with a native accent.

Master Criminal

Use: Cannot be used unskilled. Special macro use skill.
Sample specializations: None
Reality: Nile Empire, Terra

The *master criminal* skill allows a criminal to anticipate all possible contingencies and outcomes of a possible course of events and develop effective plans or counter-measures to either avoid problems or at least have an "escape hatch" for when things go wrong. The skill represents an effect of the *world laws* in the Nile Empire and is only available to characters in that reality. It is also primarily a skill for non-player characters.

The skill has two functions. The first is that it can be used to plan crimes that are more difficult to solve with the *evidence analysis* skill. When a criminal mastermind plots or executes a crime, he generates a *master crime* skill total. This becomes the difficulty for any use of *evidence analysis* made in connection to the crime.

Example: Milton Avery, a crime lord in the Nile Empire, has devised a crafty scheme to steal a priceless jeweled artifact from the home of a rich art collector in Thebes. He generates a *master criminal* skill total of 22. Anyone attempting to try and solve the mystery of the theft of the jeweled artifact will have a difficulty of 22 for their *evidence analysis* skill checks.

The second function of the skill is to give the criminal mastermind the ability to anticipate and plan for problems that may occur in his plan. Before executing the plan, the character generates a *master criminal* skill total. If player characters during the execution of the crime confront the villain, he may substitute the previously generated *master crime* skill total for **one** non-physical skill total during the encounter. This represents the criminal's clever planning coming into fruition at a critical moment.

Example: During another robbery, Milton Avery is confronted by a group of Storm Knights out to apprehend him. Just when the player characters believe they have Avery cornered, he plays his trump card. Before the encounter, the gamemaster generated a *master criminal* total of 26 for Avery.

Facing down the Storm Knights, Avery attempts to *intimidate* the characters into letting him go, using the previously generated *master criminal* skill total. He shows the Storm Knights several items they recognize as belonging to their family members and he tells them that his henchmen will kill their families if Avery doesn't signal them that the heist went as planned. The powerful skill total is strong enough to make Avery's *intimidation* very successful and he is able to escape from the Storm Knights.

Nile Mathematics

Use: Cannot be used unskilled. Macro skill.
Sample specializations: None
Reality: Nile Empire

The *Nile mathematics* skill is not really about mathematics - adding, subtracting, multiplication and so on, though it can be used for that purpose. It instead represents knowledge about a form of magic based on mathematics and astrology. The mathematicians of the Nile Empire use the skill in combination with an appropriate magic skill (*alteration magic, apportation magic, conjuration magic* or *divination magic*) to compute mystical sums and quotients related to the astrological motion of planets in the Nile Empire's home cosm of Terra.

This *mathematical astronomy* allows the mathematicians to cast unique magic spells. The rules regarding the use of this skill can be found in the *Nile Empire sourcebook* (where it is called *mathematics*.)

Psionic Manipulation

Use: Cannot be used unskilled.
Sample specializations: The general power groups (Kinesis, Psionic Defense, Psychic Senses, Telepathy)
Axiom: Social 21, Spirit 9 and Tech 15

This skill represents a character's ability to focus the power of her mind and use any *psionic powers* she possesses. Psionics are only available in Core Earth and the Star Sphere, the only cosms involved in the Possibility Wars that meet its strict axiom requirements. Characters from other realities can learn psionics if they are in Core Earth or the Star Sphere but the powers are more difficult to use when a character's axioms are insufficient, as well as being contradictory (see Chapter Seven.)

Specializations are not allowed in the Aligned power groups (Aka, Coar, Zinatt) since those groups already constitute a type of specialization. Psionics is discussed further in Chapter Twelve and the full system for psionics is in the *Space Gods sourcebook*.

Research

Use: Cannot be used unskilled.
Sample specializations: None
Reality: Orrorsh (but see below)

Research is a magical form of *evidence analysis* found in the realm of Orrorsh. The Victorians of Orrorsh would stoutly deny that though, claiming that it simply the application of logic and deductive reasoning, a specialization of *evidence analysis* and nothing more. It would not be the first thing about their world that they misunderstand. *Research* is in fact closer to *divination magic* than *evidence analysis*.

A character using *research* is able to produce the same kind of results as *evidence analysis* but from entirely secondary sources; public reports, newspaper archives, medical reports and so on. The character is able to string together apparently unrelated pieces of information and by "reading between the lines" is able to produce insights and conclusions seemingly out of thin air. In truth, the character has magically divined the information.

Research is primarily used to gather information useful for hunting down and eliminating the evil creatures that serve the Gaunt Man in Orrorsh and as such has several rules that apply to that purpose. The full rules for using *research* can be found in the *Orrorsh sourcebook.*

Other cosms can have their own versions of the *research* skill if they have the right axioms. These alternate versions of the *research* skill, minus the special rules that apply to hunting monsters in Orrorsh, requires a Magic axiom of 10 and a Social axiom of 10.

Scholar*

Use: Macro skill.
Sample limitations: Archeology, chemistry, electronics, mechanical engineering, history, literature, art, religion, arcane lore, comic books, celebrities, *Star Trek*, any specialized field of knowledge.
Sample specializations: A more specific area of knowledge within a limitation, such as radios for electronics.
Axiom: Social 10

The *scholar* skill represents a character's knowledge in a specific field of study. In many cases it represents "book learning", academic facts and figures that the character has memorized. Scholars are adept at using research libraries and remembering or locating obscure facts. But it can also represent knowledge that the character has picked up through experience and being knowledgeable in areas that other people might deem "trivial". Players may purchase the *scholar* skill multiple times to represent additional areas of expertise for their character.

Limitations can be about as broad as the subjects in which universities typically offer undergraduate degrees. A narrower focus within a field would normally involve a specialization but isn't required. If the player wishes to limit his character's knowledge to just a narrowly defined field she does not have to take a broad limitation and then apply a specialization.

Example: Becky is writing up a non-player character who knows a lot about French medieval history but not much about any other period of history, French or otherwise. Instead of using *scholar(history)* with a specialization of "French medieval history", she gives the character *scholar(French medieval history)*.

The difficulty of any skill checks involving *scholar* are determined by the gamemaster using the Difficulty Number Scale based on how obscure the desired information might be within the particular *scholar* limitation. Very common information within a field, the kind of thing anyone with any interest in the field would know, does not require a skill check.

For unskilled use of the *scholar* skill, the difficulty is determined by the gamemaster based on the field of knowledge and how much exposure the character may have had to it. For example, a Core Earth character from the United States would have a lower difficulty number than a character from Orrorsh for an unskilled *scholar(history)* check if the question is about American history while the reverse would be true if the question is about an event in Gaean history.

In some cases it may be important to know how much information a character knows about a particular topic rather than just whether or not the character knows a specific fact. Very general, broad-based questions like "what does my character know about elven monks?" instead of something specific like "what Ayslish god do the elven monks worship?" usually fall into this category.

In situations like this, the gamemaster should use the success level of the skill check to determine how much information the character either knows or is able to look up. The difficulty of the skill check should be determined normally using the Difficulty Number Scale.

SCHOLAR CHART

Success level	Information level
Minimal	General information known to most scholars (elven monks belong to a small sect of elmiir worshippers.)
Average	More specific information but nothing obscure (some of the restrictions the elven monks must follow.)
Good	A decent amount of obscure information (the tenets of the path of true knowledge that the monks follow.)
Superior	Detailed information known only to experts in the field (the special abilities elven monks gain from their *faith*.)
Spectacular	Highly specific information known only by a few (the secret location of the temple of true knowledge.)

Realm lore: A common specialization of *scholar* found in the Possibility Wars is *realm lore*. This represents a study of a particular cosm or realm, usually the character's own but not always. Information about how things work in other realities can prove very useful to a Storm Knight. Characters cannot start play with *realm lore* for a reality other than their own but can later gain other *realm lores* during play.

Realm lore can be used to answer questions about history, geography and customs in a cosm like the more general *scholar* fields but is most useful when it involves information unique to that particular cosm, including such areas as the cosm's axioms and world laws and matters that directly or indirectly relate to that.

Example: Magoth has *scholar(Ayslish realm lore)*. If another Storm Knight were to ask Magoth if a particular piece of technology would work in Aysle, he could answer that with a successful skill check. Roger, Magoth's player, can of course just compare the Tech axiom of the item to Aysle's Tech axiom to see if it would work there but these axiom numbers aren't known by the characters so they don't have that option.

Security

Use: Cannot be used unskilled without the appropriate tools. Unskilled use with tools penalized. Macro skill..

Sample specializations: Detecting alarms/traps, disarming alarms/traps, counter-security, electronic locks, electronic systems

Axiom: Tech 8 for mechanical systems, Tech 20 for electronic systems

The *security* skill lets a character work with mechanical and electronic security systems. Depending on the Tech axiom this can range from motion detectors and computerized surveillance systems down to pressure plates and booby traps. A character with this skill knows both how to set up security systems and how to defeat them. Specialized tools are often needed to disable electronic systems but may not be necessary to disable mechanical systems. Detecting security systems usually does not require specialized equipment.

This skill does not cover things like safecracking or opening locks that involve physical tumblers and mechanisms, those are covered by the *lock picking* skill. *Security* can get the character open access to the lock, but not any farther. Electronic locks can be "picked" with the *security* skill.

Difficulty numbers for electronic locks can be based off of the chart given in the description of *lock picking*. Difficulty numbers for detecting alarms and traps can be based off of the Difficulty Number Scale or based on the *security* skill of the person who designed the system. Difficulty numbers for deactivating or bypassing alarms and traps should be based on the Difficulty Number Scale.

Example: Yukitada is trying to gain entrance to a Nippon Tech megacorp tower in downtown Tokyo. She first makes a visual inspection of the building to determine its exterior security measures. Barbara makes a *security* skill check for Yukitada against a difficulty that Becky has based on the *security* skill value of the megacorp's chief of security. Getting a high skill total, Yukitada easily spots all of the building's external sensors and alarms.

Exploiting a gap in the building's security net, Yukitada approaches a side door equipped with an electronic lock. Pulling out a high-tech "lockpick" device, Yukitada tries to break the security on the door. Here the type of lock, not the security skill of the person who designed the system, determines the difficulty number. Using the chart under the *lock picking* skill, Becky rates it as an exterior door (10) with a high-security lock (+4), a final difficulty of 14.

Space Vehicles

Use: Unskilled use penalized. May be used as a macro skill.

Sample specializations: Space shuttle, sub-orbital transport, MMU, Akashan lightship, geomantic shuttle

Axiom: Tech 21

This skill reflects a character's ability to operate, pilot and make minor repairs to spacecraft of all types, including Manned Maneuvering Units on spacesuits and even space stations. Depending on the type of craft the astronaut may need to make *space vehicles* skill checks to take off and land the craft, though with many primitive spacecraft the astronaut is more of a passenger instead of a pilot. The astronaut must also make a *space vehicles* skill check whenever attempting any type of unusual maneuver, such as docking with another ship or space station and maneuvers made during combat. The difficulty of a task is determined by the gamemaster using the Difficulty Number Scale.

The *space vehicles* skill is also used to increase a ship's speed beyond its normal capabilities, assuming that the craft have a controllable throttle. That may not be the case with more primitive spacecraft. This is accomplished with a speed push similar to the type characters can do with their own movement rates. All vehicles have a *speed value* that is essentially the same as a character's limit value. It is not the maximum possible speed of the vehicle, just the maximum speed possible without putting stress on the vehicle's engine and/or structure.

The rules for speed pushes can be found in Chapter Four. The macro use of this skill is handled with the same rules that apply to the macro movements of characters in the "Timed Movement" sidebar.

In space combat, a pilot's *space vehicles* skill is used in place of combat skills such as *dodge* and *maneuver*. In the very unlikely (but not impossible) case of a spacecraft being attacked in flight by someone using *melee weapons* or *unarmed combat* the pilot's *space vehicles* skill substitutes for the normal defensive skill values.

Tracking

Use: Macro skill.

Sample specializations: By terrain type (mountain, desert, forest, jungle, urban)

This skill gives its user the ability to follow a trail left by another creature or vehicle. It combines the ability to notice details of the environment with the processing of that information to recognize signs of recent or not so recent passage A character using just *Perception* or *find* might see all the clues, but not put the information together correctly.

To use the skill, the tracker generates a total against a difficulty number of 8. If the target tries to conceal her trail, she generates a *tracking* skill total of her own and this becomes the difficulty of following her trail. The difficulty number of a *tracking* attempt is modified by the following factors:

TRACKING CHART

Situation	Modifier
Trail is a day old	+2
Trail is a few days old	+5
Trail is a week old	+8
Trail passes through a trafficked area	+2 To +10
Tracking during inclement weather	+5
Tracking over a hard surface (cement, rock)	+10
Per person being tracked	-1
Tracking through mud or snow	-5
Tracking a vehicle	-5
Per vehicle	-2

A tracker is required to make a new *tracking* skill check every time conditions of the trail change, such as the trail crossing from one type of surface to another or a change in the weather. Gamemasters should consider requiring a couple of skill checks be made for following any trail regardless of length and even if none of the conditions change along the trail. As a minimum, following a trail should involve three skill checks; one to find the trail and get started, one along the trail, and one close to the end so that there's a risk of losing the trail.

Trick

Sample specializations: Misdirection, distraction, non-verbal, feint, fast-talk

The *trick* skill is used to unbalance or fool a target for a brief period of time. *Trick* is most commonly used in round play to put opponents off guard rather than as a macro skill due to the short duration of its effects, but it can be used in macro situations to cover a quick lie or deception.

Trick is also the defensive skill used against *trick*, though the *willpower* skill could be used instead during macro uses of *trick*. If the target does not have *trick* then *Perception* is used instead. The results of a *trick* attempt are determined by using the *Interaction Results Table* found in Chapter Four. When a character attempts to trick someone, the player should specify to the gamemaster the effect he wants it to have on his character's opponent before rolling the die. This is known as the *player's call* and lets the gamemaster better judge the results of the *trick*.

The gamemaster, in relation to circumstance and believability as well as the player's roleplaying ability, should modify *trick* skill totals. If the character uses a simple but believable *trick* he should get a bonus to his skill total. If it's something unbelievable or inappropriate to the situation then a small penalty should be applied.

Example: Magoth needs to get past a sentry standing guard outside a gate that leads into a fortified Cyberpapacy cathedral. Magoth's player, Roger, decides he will try and bluff his way in, hoping to at least get up to the gate without the guard raising an alarm. The player's call is being able to convince the guard that he has every right to enter the cathedral grounds and that the guard should open the gate for him. Instead of just describing the action, Roger elects to roleplay out what Magoth says to the guard.

"I'm going to walk straight towards the gate, looking unconcerned, and call out the guard. 'You there! Open the gate! They're expecting me inside and I'm running late!" Roger rolls well and generates a *trick* skill total of 20.

Becky decides to give Roger a +2 bonus for roleplaying the attempt but also applies a -2 penalty for the unlikely nature of the *trick*; Magoth does not look like someone who works for the Cyberpapacy. The modifiers cancel out so Magoth's skill total remains at 20. The guard does not have *trick* so Becky compares Magoth's total to the guard's *Perception*.

Becky consults the Interaction Results Table to see how well Magoth's *trick* works. It works quite well, but not well enough for a player's call. Becky tells Roger that Magoth is able to reach the gate without the guard raising the alarm. The guard started to turn to open the gate but then turned back to look at Magoth again, slowly realizing that something's not quite right.

Water Vehicles

Use: May be used as a macro skill.

Sample specializations: Raft, sailboat, motorboat, submarine, hydrofoil

Axiom: Tech 3; a magically-operated water vehicle requires Magic 10

This skill reflects a character's ability to operate, pilot and make minor repairs to all types of waterborne craft, including submersibles. The difficulty of any particular piloting task is determined by the gamemaster using the Difficulty Number Scale.

The *water vehicles* skill is also used to increase a vehicle's speed beyond its normal capabilities. This is accomplished with a speed push similar to the type characters can do with their own movement rates. All vehicles have a *speed value* that is essentially the same as a character's limit value. It is not the maximum possible speed of the vehicle, just the maximum speed possible without putting stress on the vehicle's engine and/or structure.

The rules for speed pushes can be found in Chapter Four. The macro use of this skill is handled with the same rules that apply to the macro movements of characters in the "Timed Movement" sidebar.

In vehicle combat, a pilot's *water vehicles* skill is used in place of combat skills such as *dodge* and *maneuver*. In the case of a vehicle being attacked by someone using *melee weapons* or *unarmed combat* while the vehicle is in motion, the pilot's *water vehicles* skill substitutes for the normal defensive skill values.

Mind

Mind represents the character's problem-solving capabilities, force of will and ability to concentrate. A character's "IQ" would be based primarily on her *Mind*, though *Perception* would also contribute to it. Characters with high *Mind* values can be found in professions that require the application of knowledge and experience to analyze and figure out new approaches to old problems or to solve new ones.

Mind-Related Skills

Apportation Magic

Use: Cannot be used unskilled.

Sample specializations: None

Axiom: Magic 5

Apportation magic is the magic of motion, the magic that moves an object or a quality from one place to another. A flying carpet uses *apportation magic* to move through the air. A spell that gathers the ambient light of an area and concentrates it all in one place is an

example of apporting a non-physical object, the light itself is being moved by the spell.

A "haste" spell which allows a person to move faster is **not** an *apportation magic* spell because the spell is not conferring motion to the person; the ability to move faster is a change to the character's natural movement rate and so would be an *alteration magic* spell instead. A spell which transferred a movement rate from one character to another, slowing one character down to speed the other up, would be an *apportation magic* spell because it is moving a quality from one location to another.

The *apportation magic* skill is used to cast apportation spells. Specializations are not allowed because this is already covered by the magic system through the use of *arcane knowledges*. Detailed rules for using *apportation magic* and the other magic skills can be found in Chapter Ten.

Artist*

Use: Unskilled use penalized. Macro skill.

Sample limitations: Painting, sculpting, fashion, music, writing, dance choreography, flower arrangement

Sample specializations: Specific field within a limitation (writing poetry, composing music, watercolor painting, etc.), forgery

Axiom: Social 3

This skill gives its user the ability to create a work of art. "Art" is a broadly defined category but for this skill generally refers to designing, arranging or creating something which provokes a response from observers. Tastes vary and not all artists will produce works for the same reason; some may want to entertain and please, others shock, still others may try to communicate a message with their work.

Some categories that fit this definition of art do not fall under the *artist* skill. While dance choreography falls under this skill, the actual application of the artist's work is done instead with the *dance* skill. Similarly, forms of art which involve speaking, singing and anything else which involves performing for an audience are covered by the *performance art* skill.

Creating a work of art generally does not involve making an *artist* skill check against a difficulty number. Because perception of art can be very subjective, when a character creates a work the player generates an *artist* skill total and that value is then used to gauge the effectiveness of the work however seems most appropriate.

A painting intended to invoke feelings of anger in the observer could use the *artist* skill value like the *taunt* skill, while a song meant to convey a message and convince people of something could use the *artist* skill value like the *persuasion* skill. As a general guideline, "good" or at least "effective" artwork should have a skill total of at least 15. The amount of time involved in creating a work can vary, anywhere from a few days to years.

The *artist* skill can also be used to judge other works of art, perhaps to determine a monetary value, to detect a forgery or to gain a better appreciation of the artist's talent (or lack thereof.) The difficulty of judging another piece of art is usually equal to the *artist* skill value of the piece though gamemasters may adjust the difficulty of the task depending on circumstances using the Difficulty Number Scale.

Producing a forgery of a piece of art will use either the *artist* skill or the *forgery* skill depending on the nature of the forgery. An attempt to duplicate an existing piece of art will use the *forgery* skill. Creating a new piece of art that appears to be the work of another artist, such as a "newly discovered" Rembrandt painting, would use *artist*.

Biotech

Use: Unskilled use penalized. Macro skill.

Sample specializations: Weapons, vehicles, genetic manipulation, symbiotes

Axiom: Tech 28

Biotech is a specialized variant of the *science* skill devoted to the organic-based technology of the Space Gods. It measures a character's ability to design, create and maintain biotech constructs. Proper use of *biotech* often requires an extensive amount of specialized Tech 30 equipment, except for the maintenance of biotech equipment that often only requires the equivalent of a first aid kit and a supply of nutrient packs.

The rules for using the *biotech* skill can be found in the *Space Gods Sourcebook*.

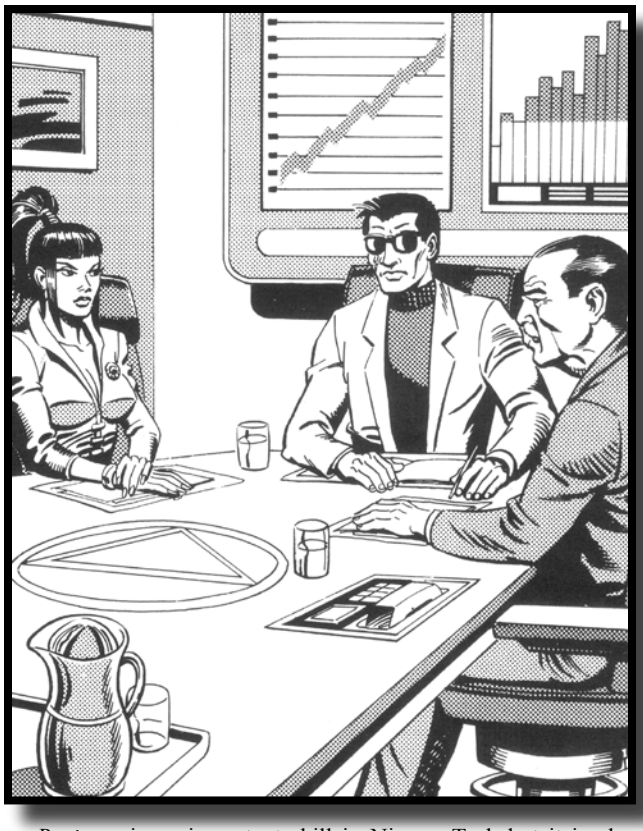
Business

Use: Unskilled use penalized. Macro skill.

Sample specializations: Stock market, trend prediction, production, management, company analysis

Axiom: Social 13

The *business* skill allows a character to understand and operate within a financial and business environment. Businessmen can use the skill to predict future market tends, manipulate the prices of supplies and merchandise, invest in stocks and bonds, judge another company's strengths and weaknesses and follow their business dealings as well. What it usually boils down to using *business* to make money, as much as possible.



Business is an important skill in Nippon Tech but it is also found in Core Earth. While it can be found in several other realities involved in the Possibility Wars, it is not as important a skill in those cosms because the economic structures there are not as advanced as they are in Nippon Tech and Core Earth. Even in the Space Gods realm, with its very high Social axiom, the skill is not as important as it is in Nippon Tech or Core Earth because their culture and economy evolved along different lines and does not emphasize the acquisition of wealth.

The rules and guidelines for using the *business* skill can be found in the *Nippon Tech sourcebook*. When using those rules, businessmen with realities other than Core Earth or Marketplace/ Nippon Tech should be penalized on their skill checks because of their less-developed knowledge of economic systems.

Computer Science

Use: Unskilled use penalized. Macro skill.

Sample specializations: Specific programming languages, specific type of programs, specific operating systems, computer security, networking, VX environments

Axiom: Tech 21

Computer science represents knowledge of computer architecture and program design. In play its primary uses are writing programs and "hacking" computer security. It can also be used to design or modify computer hardware, including cyberdecks (though building a cyberdeck uses *cybertech*, not *computer science*.) The skill can also be used instead of the *computer operations* skill to operate computers and use programs.

Since computers, programs and operating systems can be very diverse in functions and ease of operation, gamemasters should determine the difficulty of tasks using the Difficulty Number Scale. Possible factors to consider are the sophistication of the system and the quality of the programs involved. In many cases the *computer science* skill value of the person who wrote the program or designed the security can be used as the difficulty number for attempts to modify programs or crack security protocols on a computer. The reverse is also true, when characters write their own programs the *computer science* skill value they generate becomes the difficulty for anyone else to modify their programs or circumvent their security measures.

Rules for writing cyberdeck programs can be found in the *GodNet* supplement and *Tharkold Sourcebook*. Additionally, due to the nature of the "Virtual Experience" (VX) computer systems that cyberdecks use, most of the tasks that are handled by *computer science* in non-VX systems will be covered instead by *cyberdeck operations* in a VX environment.

Computer science may be used in place of the *cyberdeck operations* skill to operate a cyberdeck and access the GodNet in the Cyberpapacy or the Grid in Tharkold but the character is considered unskilled for purposes of rerolls. *Computer science* does **not** substitute for *cyberdeck operations* in determining a character's *net skills* in the GodNet or the Grid. See the *GodNet* supplement, the *Cyberpapacy Sourcebook* or the *Tharkold Sourcebook* for more information. (The skill is listed as *science(computers)* in those books.)

Conjuration Magic

Use: Cannot be used unskilled.

Sample specializations: None

Axiom: Magic 10

Conjuration magic involves the production or creation of something that did not previously exist. A spell that allows a magician to produce and throw a fireball at an opponent without a nearby source of flame is *conjuration magic* because it is creating the fireball from "nothing". Similarly, a spell that animates a normally inanimate object is creating life or at least a semblance of life where it did not exist before and is therefore *conjuration magic*.

The effects produced by *conjuration magic* do not have to be physical. A spell that creates fear in a target when previously there was no fear is a conjuration spell. A common use of *conjuration magic* that produces a non-physical effect is the creation of a pathway to another dimension; spells that summon creatures from other dimensions are conjuration spells. These summoning spells are not creating a creature from "nothing", they are creating a bridge across the gap between dimensions, allowing access to the desired creature.

Conjuration magic can also be used for the reverse effect, destruction instead of creation. Instead of creating something from "nothing", "nothing" is created from something. A disintegration spell that completely eliminates a target from existence is *conjuration magic*. Spells that banish summoned creatures back to their home dimension work by destroying the bridge that allows the creature to cross over in the first place. Without that bridge, the creature reverts back to its own dimension.

The *conjuration magic* skill is used to cast conjuration spells. Specializations are not allowed because this is already covered by the magic system through the use of *arcane knowledges*. Detailed rules for using *conjuration magic* and the other magic skills can be found in Chapter Ten.

Cybertech

Use: Unskilled use penalized. Macro skill.
Sample specializations: Cyberware, cyberdecks
Axiom: Tech 26

Cybertech is used to build, improve and repair cyberdecks and cyberware. It also provides knowledge of the engineering involved in the manufacture of the component parts and the principles governing their operation.

Rules covering the use of *cybertech* can be found in both the *Cyberpapacy sourcebook* and the *Tharkold Sourcebook*.

Demolitions

Use: Unskilled use penalized. Macro skill.
Sample specializations: Buildings, bridges, walls, vehicles, armor
Axiom: Tech 13

Demolitions allows a character to do two things; to determine how much explosives are necessary to blow something up and to increase the damage done by an amount of explosives. *Demolitions* is **not** needed to simply set off explosives, it just makes their use more effective.

The first use of the skill involves the player stating what object her character wants to blow up and what, if any, other effects the character wants the explosion to have. For example, a character may want to topple a tree so that it falls across a road and blocks traffic rather than it falling in a random direction.

The player generates a *demolitions* skill check against a difficulty determined by the gamemaster. If the skill check is successful, the character knows how much explosives he needs to use and where to place them for the desired effect. Some sample difficulty numbers are given in the chart below:

DEMOLITIONS CHART

Target	Difficulty
Familiar object (tree, wall, rock)	8
Moderately familiar object (tank, bridge support, armored bulkhead)	10
Unfamiliar object (building of unknown but familiar construction, a familiar object of unknown construction)	12
Completely unknown object (doesn't know what it is or what it's made of)	15
Object has a mostly inconsistent structure (made out of two dissimilar aterials like wood and stone)	+2 To +5

If the character succeeded at the skill check he knows the *damage value* necessary to inflict the desired amount of destruction on the target (generally, a *wound* will break an object and *dead* will completely destroy the object.) If he has the right amount of explosives to produce the desired damage value, he can place and detonate the explosives without having to make another *demolitions* skill check.

If the character does not have enough explosives to produce the desired damage value, the second use of the skill comes into play. By making a second *demolitions* skill check against the same difficulty number, the character can determine where to place the explosives he does have available in an attempt to produce the desired effect. This second skill check is treated as a power push (see Chapter Four), with the results of the push being added to the damage value of the character's explosives. If the damage value is increased enough to equal or exceed the damage value determined with the first skill check, the character can produce the desired effect with the amount of explosives on hand.

Example: A demolitionist in the Victorian army in Orrorsh needs to bring a bridge down. He made his first *demolitions* skill check and learns that he needs a damage value of 25 to blow the bridge. Unfortunately he only has enough TNT to produce a damage value of 22.

He makes a second *demolitions* skill check against the same difficulty number. The gamemaster calculates the results of the power push and determines that the character gets a +4 bonus to the damage value of his explosives. This raises his damage value to 26, enough to blow the bridge exactly the way the characters wants to do it.

If the character fails the first *demolitions* skill check, he has no idea how much explosives are necessary for the desired effect and will have to guess how much to use and where to place the explosives. The gamemaster will have to judge the likely outcome by comparing the amount of explosives used compared to the amount needed and how simple or complicated of an outcome the player wants.

Example: Quin wishes to cause a rockslide on a narrow mountain road and block it off so that no one can pass. Since rock is considered a familiar object, the base difficulty is 8. Quin does not have *demolitions* though so Becky assigns a Very Hard modifier, increasing the difficulty to 18. Paul does not roll very well; Quin only generates a skill total of 12 and fails.

Quin has enough plastique on hand to produce a damage value of 29. Figuring too much is better than too little, he plants all of it along the rocky slope he wants to have slide down onto the road. If Quin had made his skill check, Becky would have told Roger that a damage value of 17 was all that he needed. Since Quin is after a fairly simple result, Becky figures that he will get his desired rockslide. But because he's using much more explosives than necessary, the shockwaves will trigger a second rockslide that threatens Quin and he'll have to move quickly to get away from it!

Hypnotism

Use: Cannot be used unskilled. Macro skill.
Sample specializations: None
Axiom: Social 17

Hypnotism is used to place a target into a trance-like state under which her subconscious mind can be probed. It is an effective interrogation technique, assuming the character can be placed into a trance. The hypnotist can also plant post-hypnotic suggestions that will affect the target's behavior at some point in the future.

Subjects in trances are not aware of their surroundings for the duration of the trance. Trances never last more than 30 minutes and the instant anyone tries to harm a subject who is in a trace, the subject will immediately come back to her senses.

To place a target into a trance, the hypnotist must focus all of the target's attention on one point (usually an eye-catching simple object, like a shiny, swinging watch) and then must try to relax the target until she "falls asleep". The base difficulty of the *hypnosis* check is the target's *willpower* skill or *Mind* attribute. If the target is tense or excited there is a +5 penalty added to the difficulty. If the target is unwilling to be hypnotized, the penalty is +8. Unwilling targets can sometimes have their resistance beaten down, the character becomes too tired or gives up on trying to resist.

When the target is in a trance, the hypnotist may attempt to interrogate the target or plant suggestions. Interrogations are handled with the normal rules found under the *intimidation* skill. Because the target is in a receptive state from the hypnotic trance, the interrogator gets a +5 bonus to his skill totals and the target cannot actively defend against the interrogation.

Planting a post-hypnotic suggestion is a bit more difficult. The suggestions are future actions or tasks the hypnotist wishes the target to perform. The subject does not need to be in a trance to perform the suggestion, only to receive them from the hypnotist.

A hypnotist can implant a number of suggestions equal to the success levels of the initial hypnosis skill check (*Minimal* is one suggestion, *Average* is two, etc.) Each time the hypnotist implants a new suggestion, he generates a new *hypnosis* skill total. This total is recorded for each suggestion.

Later, when it is time for the target to act upon a suggestion, she generates a *willpower* or *Mind* total against a difficulty equal to the hypnotist's skill total for that suggestion. If the action check is successful, she comes to his senses and avoids acting upon the suggestion. The subject receives a +3 bonus to her total if the suggestion would cause the character to do something to which she is strongly opposed, such as harming herself or a close friend. While carrying out a suggestion, hypnotized characters are unaware of their actions.

Example: Brother Sin, a villain from the Nile Empire, has captured Quin and plans on using *hypnosis* to make Quin assassinate a Core Earth military general. Quin is unwilling to be hypnotized and does not have the *willpower* skill so his *Mind* attribute of 8 is increased to a difficulty number of 16. But Becky generates a *hypnosis* skill total of 20 for Sin so he successfully hypnotizes Quin.

Since Sin wishes to plant post-hypnotic suggestions in Quin's subconscious, the success level of his first *hypnosis* check is used to see how many suggestions he can make. Checking the General Results Table, Becky sees that he got a *Good* result, which will allow him to plant three suggestions.

The first suggestion is that when he awakens, Quin will drive to the general's nearby headquarters. Quin is known there so the guards will let him in. The second suggestion is that when Quin hears the word "peregrine" he will go to the general's office. The third suggestion is that when Quin sees the general, he will pull his gun and shoot the general. Becky generates *hypnosis* totals for each of Sin's suggestions; 13, 9 and 14.

When Quin awakens, his player Paul generates a *Mind* total against the first suggestion. He fails, so Quin drives to the general's headquarters. Later, Sin calls Quin at the base and says the word "peregrine", triggering the second suggestion. Paul fails again and Quin carries out the second suggestion. Quin enters the general's office and as soon as he sees the general rolls against the third suggestion.

Because Quin would be strongly opposed to shooting the general, he gets the +3 bonus to his *Mind* total. This time Quin beats the *hypnosis* total and is able to stop himself before he pulls his gun on the general.

Linguistics

Use: Unskilled use penalized. Macro skill.
Sample specializations: Different language groups.
Axiom: Social 3

Linguistics allows a character to figure out foreign languages and codes of communication. It does not provide a level of communication similar to that of the *language* skill, nor does it represent fluency or an ability to speak the unknown language. Rather, it is the ability to draw connections from possibly related language types and also intuits meaning and intent from body language and inflection.

The difficulty of a *linguistics* check is based mostly on the relationship of the unknown language to any *languages* the linguist knows. The following chart provides some guidelines:

LINGUISTICS CHART

Relationship	Difficulty
Different dialect of known languag	3
Language is derived a common source (e.G., Understanding spanish if you understand french)	10
Completely foreign language (e.G., Chinese to english)	13
Alien language (e.G., Language from another cosm)	22*
*Note that many of the cosms in the possibility wars have languages similar to languages in core earth, in which case one of the other relationships should be used instead of this one.	

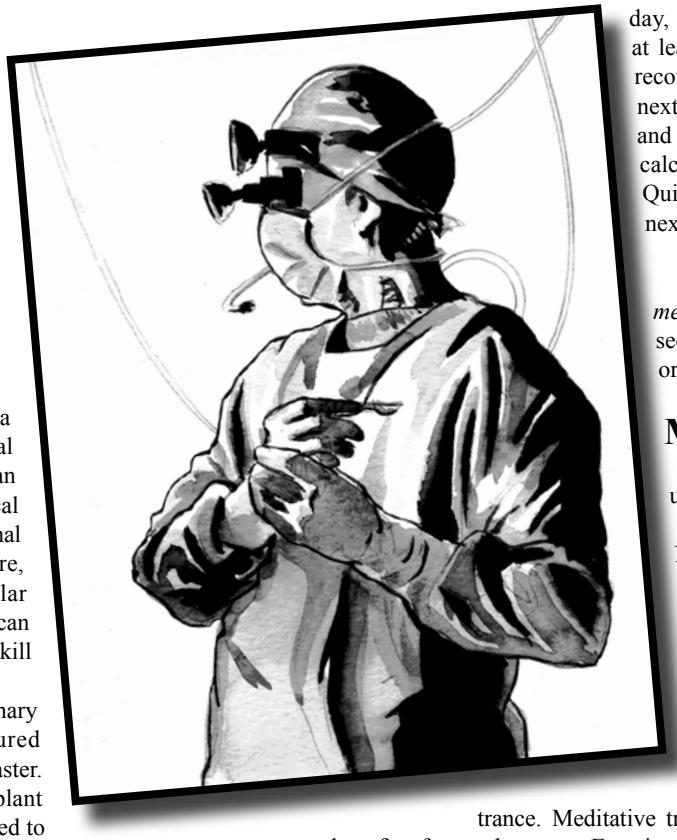
The success level of the *linguistics* skill check will tell how much is understood. *Minimal* success means that only basic concepts are communicated. A *superior* or better success allows the linguist to completely understand what is being said. Communicating back to the other person will depend on their *linguistics* skill though!

Medicine

Use: Unskilled use penalized. Macro skill. May be used in round play as per *first aid*.

Sample specializations: Family medicine, trauma, surgery, specific field of medical study (diseases, drugs, heart, lungs, etc.), alternative styles of medicine (acupuncture, herbal medicine, etc.).

Axiom: Social 10 and Tech 8



Medicine is used to help a damaged character recover and heal from her physical injuries. Its can represent a wide range of medical treatments, ranging from traditional "western" treatments, acupuncture, herbal medicine, or other similar treatments for the sick or injured. It can also be used in place of the *first aid* skill for quick treatment of injuries.

In play *medicine* has two primary uses. The first is to help injured characters heal physical damage faster. The second is to surgically implant cyberware. *Medicine* cannot be used to aid in the recovery of mental or spiritual damage.

When a player is allowed to make a *recovery check* (see Chapter Four) to see if her character heals wound damage, if the character has been under medical care a *medicine* roll is first made by the character with the *medicine* skill. The difficulty of this check depends on the injuries of the recovering character:

MEDICINE CHART

Wound level	Difficulty #
Wound	10
Heavy wound	12
Mortal	15

The Tech axiom of the medical equipment available to the healer may aid in the injured character's recovery, though depending on the type of injury and the type of treatment being administered, such as with most alternative forms of medicine, the Tech axiom may not have that much of a bearing.

For Tech axioms less than 19, the difficulty of the *medicine* skill check is increased by +5. At Tech axioms 19 and 20 the difficulty is increased by +2. For Tech axioms between 24 and 26 the difficulty is reduced by -2 and for Tech axioms above 26 the difficulty is lowered by -5.

If the *medicine* skill check is successful, it is treated like a power push (see Chapter Four again) and the power push result is added as a bonus to the injured character's recovery check. If the check is not successful, the injured character makes a normal recovery check - there is no penalty for a failed *medicine* check. Only one *medicine* check may be made per day on a character

Example: Quin took a *wound* in a confrontation with a mummy in the Nile Empire. He visits Dr. Throckton's clinic in Cairo. Throckton rolls poorly on the first day, giving Quin no benefit but at least no penalty. Quin fails his recovery check for that day. The next day Dr. Throckton rolls well and succeeds. The power push is calculated off of his result and Quin receives a +3 bonus to his next recovery check.

For rules concerning the use of *medicine* to implant cyberware, see the *Cyberpapacy Sourcebook* or the *Tharkold Sourcebook*.

Meditation

Use: May not be used unskilled. Macro skill.

Sample specializations: None.

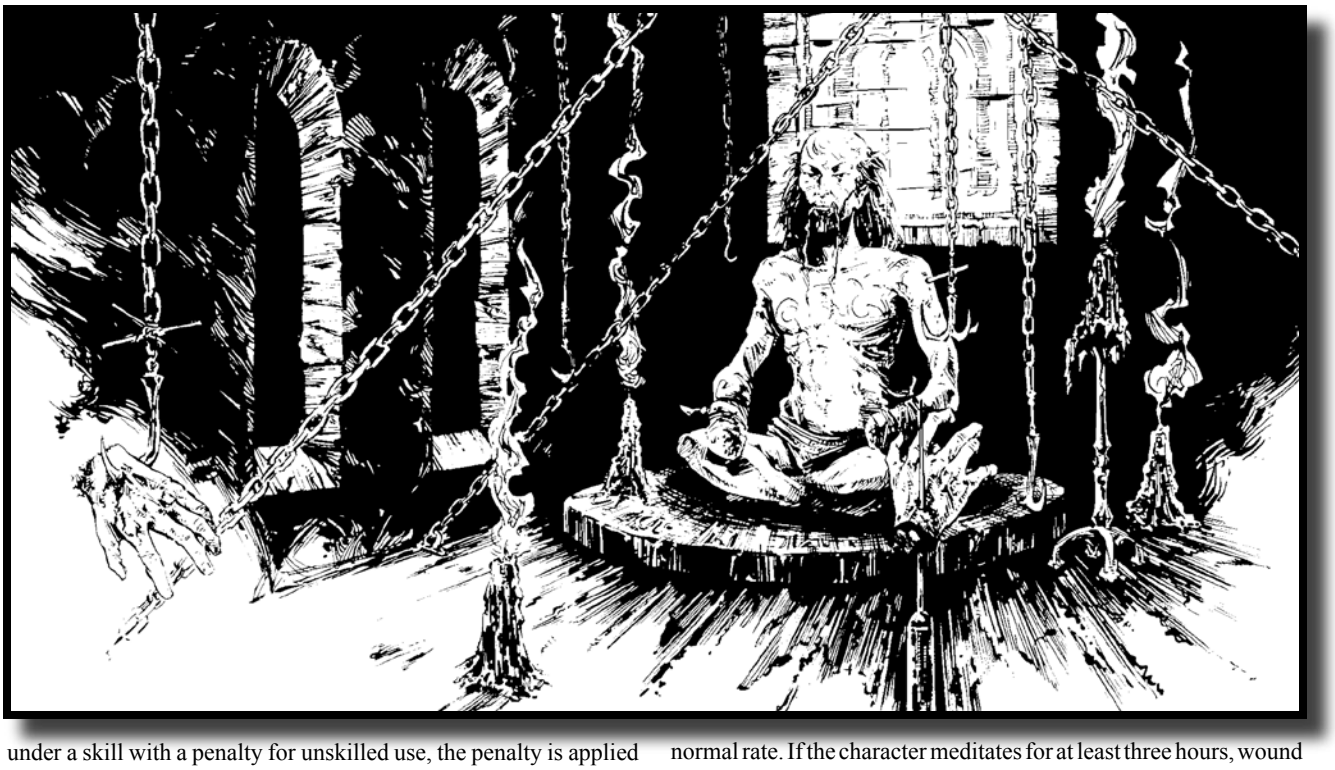
Axiom: Social 12 and Spirit 7

A character with the *meditation* skill has gained complete control over her mind and body, and has the ability to enter a meditative trance. Meditative trances provide several useful benefits for a character. Entering a trance requires complete concentration by the character and takes approximately fifteen minutes.

Under normal conditions a skill check is not required to enter a trance. If the character is in a stressful situation or nervous, entering a trance requires a *meditation* skill check against a difficulty of 8. If the character is in a violent situation where he might be in danger, the difficulty is increased to 13.

Once in a trance, there are three possible effects that the character can use. Each effect has to be used individually, if the character wishes to use more than one of the effects she will have to come out the trance after using the first effect and then go into a second trance to use the second effect.

The first possible effect is to allow the character to use her *meditation* skill in place of her *Perception* or *Mind* attribute to solve a puzzle or problem. If the problem is something that would fall



under a skill with a penalty for unskilled use, the penalty is applied to the difficulty number when the character uses her *meditation* skill to try and solve it. If it falls under a skill that cannot be used unskilled, *meditation* cannot be used to try and solve it.

Example: Yukitada has become lost in the Living Land. Normally in this situation the *direction sense* skill is used. Yukitada does not have *direction sense* though and would use her *Perception* of 9. But Yukitada's *meditation* skill value is 11. By entering a trance and contemplating her situation, she gets to use the skill value of 11 instead of the attribute of 9 and has a slightly better chance of success.

The second possible effect is to slow the character's metabolic rate, reducing the need to eat, drink and breathe. A character can enter a trance and remain in the trance for a number of days equal to her base *meditation* skill value. She does not need food or water while in the trance, though she will be hungry and thirsty when she comes out of the trance, and still needs to breathe. The character must eat and drink after coming out of the trance before she can use *meditation* again.

A meditating character can also reduce her body's need for oxygen, but not to the same extent. By entering a trance, the character is able to add her skill **adds** of *meditation* to the time value of the available air supply to determine how long the air will last for the character.

Example: Yukitada has been locked in an airtight cell that has only fifteen minutes of breathable air in it. Fifteen minutes is a time value of 15. Yukitada has +1 adds in *meditation* which means if she enters a trance the air will last for a time value of (15 + 1) 16, which is 25 minutes. Not much more time, but hopefully enough for Yukitada's friends to find her.

The third possible effect is to speed up the character's metabolism to facilitate faster healing. While in the meditative trance the character will heal shock damage and KO conditions at twice the normal rate. If the character meditates for at least three hours, wound damage heals twice as fast as well. After coming out of the trance the character will be hungry and thirsty and will need to eat and drink before being able to use *meditation* again. See Chapter Four for the normal rules concerning healing rates.

Mindsense

Use: Cannot be used unskilled. Macro skill.
Sample specializations: none
Axiom: Social 17 and Spirit 9.

Mindsense is an advanced and specialized form of *meditation* used to overcome the inner pain caused by mental damage. In this regard it is similar to the *resist pain* skill, though it works a bit differently.

A character that has suffered mental damage must enter a meditative trance, as outlined in the *meditation* skill, and remain in the trance for at least ten minutes per mental wound received. At the end of the trance, the character generates a *mindsense* skill total and compares it to his *Mind* attribute. The result points are read as a power push (see Chapter Four) with that result indicating the number of mental wounds whose effects the character can temporarily ignore. The damage is not removed; the character just doesn't feel the effects of it.

The character may ignore the effects of this amount of damage for a number of hours equal to the number of **adds** the character has in *mindsense*. If the character takes any additional mental damage during that period, the effects of *mindsense* end immediately.

Nile Engineering

Use: Cannot be used unskilled. Macro skill.
Specializations: Pyramids, tombs, temples, trap detection
Reality: Nile Empire

Characters with this skill are experts in the magical engineering techniques of the Nile Empire. In combination with an appropriate magic skill (*alteration magic, apportation magic, conjuration*

magic and *divination magic*), the Nile engineer is capable of constructing fantastic structures and monuments well beyond the normal capabilities of the Tech axiom.

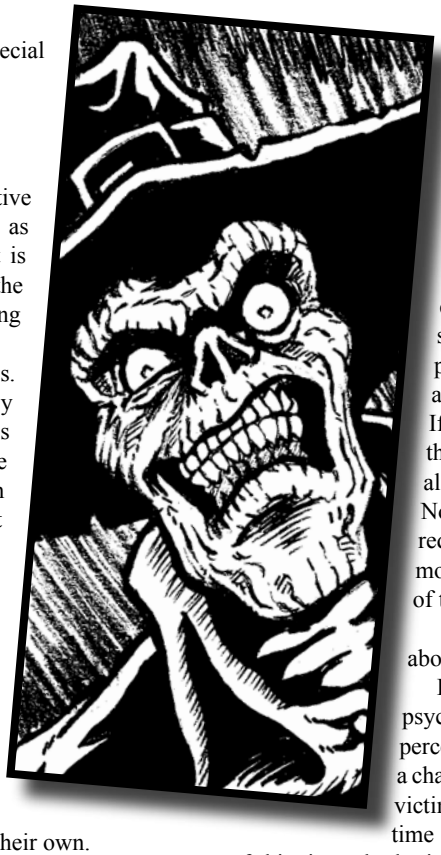
Complete rules regarding the use of this skill can be found in the *Nile Empire Sourcebook*.

Occult

Use: Cannot be used unskilled except in special circumstances. Macro skill.

Specializations: none

Reality: Orrorsh



Occult is the study of the mystical forces native to Orrorsh. It is not the same kind of magic as practiced in other realities such as Aysle; it is a dangerous body of knowledge created by the Gaunt Man to seduce people into committing evil.

Using *occult* is a lengthy and difficult process. Most practitioners are lured into its use by coming across an *occult* ritual that promises to solve some problem they're having or give them something that they desire, but often at a horrible price. In most cases this is not accidental, the ritual was prepared and placed where the character would discover it by one of the Gaunt Man's minions.

This is the only instance in which *occult* can be used unskilled, when someone (or some*thing*) prepares a ritual for a character, tempting them to use it. Characters who become corrupted (see *Orrorshan corruption*) by this unskilled use of *occult* will often be able to seek out someone who can teach them the actual skill, or will attempt to learn it on their own.

The full rules for using *Occult* can be found in the *Orrorsh Sourcebook*.

Psionic Resistance

Use: Active defense cannot be attempted unskilled, passive defense can be done unskilled.

Sample specializations: None

Axiom: Social 21, Spirit 9 and Tech 15

This skill represents a character's ability to withstand the strain of psionic power use. It is also used to protect the character from certain forms of psionic attack. Only skilled characters may actively defend with *psionic resistance* against strain and attacks.

Psionics is discussed further in Chapter Twelve and the full system for psionics is in the *Space Gods Sourcebook*.

Psychology

Use: Unskilled use penalized. Macro skill.

Sample specializations: Treating cyberpsychosis, treating mental damage, brainwashing, environmental psychology

Axiom: Social 17

Psychology is used to treat or condition a person's mind and emotions. It's primary uses in game play are to help characters accept cyberware, to help a character heal mental damage, extract information or alter a character's attitudes through brainwashing and to create a desired emotional state in a character through environmental cues and stimuli.

Healing mental damage: This is handled with the same rules given under the *medicine* skill except that there are no Tech axiom modifiers and *psychology* cannot be used to treat physical or spiritual damage.

Overcoming cyberpsychosis: Characters with cyberware can undergo therapy designed to reconnect them to their alienated sense of humanity and become less susceptible to cyberpsychosis by reducing the character's cyber value. These therapy sessions require a week of peace and rest so characters cannot engage in any stressful or dangerous activity while receiving therapy.

At the start of therapy, the character chooses one piece of cyberware for which she wants help. At the end of the week, the psychologist makes a *psychology* skill check against the target character's total cyber value. If the check is successful, the cyber value of that piece of cyberware is reduced by one point, also reducing the total cyber value by one point. No piece of cyberware can have its cyber value reduced to zero. If the *psychology* check fails by more than five points, increase the cyber value of that piece of cyberware by two points.

See Chapter Twelve for more information about cyber values and cyberpsychosis.

Brainwashing: Brainwashing uses psychological pressure to change a character's perceptions and attitudes. An attempt to brainwash a character requires a number of days equal to the victim's Spirit attribute. It can be attempted in less time but that increases the difficulty. At the end of this time, the brainwasher generates a psychology skill check against the victim's Spirit attribute. If the process was rushed, the difficulty is increased by +2 for every day less spent on the attempt. The success level of the skill check determines the outcome.

- *Minimal* or *Average* success**:** The brainwashing was not successful but the victim's resolve has weakened. The difficulty of further brainwashing attempts is reduced by the result points of this attempt.
- *Good* or *Superior* success: The brainwasher may reduce the difficulty and repeat the process in order to get a better result or may select one of the following results:

  the victim will answer any questions to the best of his ability. He will betray any secret, giving the brainwasher any information she asks for.

  the victim will assume a base attitude of *friendly* or *hostile* to any individual or organization the brainwasher specifies, regardless of the character's previous attitude towards them

  the victim will carry out any commands that do not directly harm himself or his friends. This is handled using the rules given for planting post-hypnotic suggestions under the *hypnosis* skill except the brainwashed victim is a willing participant and remains aware of his actions. Also, instead of using *Mind* to see if the character "snaps out of it" when performing the commands, the character uses his *Spirit* attribute instead.

- *Spectacular* **success:** The victim forgets about being brainwashed and is fully cooperative with the brainwasher. In addition to the preceding effects, the brainwasher may choose one of the following results:

  the victim will assume a base attitude of *loyal* or *enemy* to any individual or organization the brainwasher specifies, regardless of the character's previous attitude towards them.

  the victim will carry out any orders given to him, even if they will be harmful to himself or to his friends.

Environmental psychology: The psychologist can create designs, color schemes and placement of objects to arouse a specific emotional response in anyone exposed to the designed environment. The difficulty is determined by the gamemaster using the Difficulty Number Scale and treated as a power push (see Chapter Four.) The result of the power push becomes a modifier on actions taken within the designed environment, according to the desired emotional context.

The gamemaster determines how the modifier is applied and to what kind of actions based on the emotions the environment is meant to invoke in characters. For example, a room designed to relax people might enhance *charm* and *persuasion* attempts but reduces *intimidation* and *taunt* attempts. An environment that arouses anger might increase attack totals but reduce defensive values

The psychologist herself is immune to the effects of her own creation, and can condition others to resist the effect. No skill check is required to condition other people.

Science*

Use: Unskilled use penalized. Macro skill.

Sample limitations: Biology, chemistry, physics, electronics, materials, any applied field of knowledge.

Sample specializations: A more specific area of knowledge within a limitation.

Axiom: Social 10

This skill represents an understanding of scientific facts and principles, and the ability to apply that knowledge in order to learn new facts and principles, adapt to unusual applications of the knowledge and to develop or understand new technologies. It is this ability to apply what is already known to understand something that is unknown that differentiates *science* from *scholar*. *Scholar* is more rote learning and memorization of facts, if a question or problem involves something not already contained in a body of knowledge, *scholar* is of no help in figuring it out.

For example, a Core Earther with *scholar(physics)* might understand the basic principles behind lasers and would recognize a Tech 26 energy weapon as firing some kind of laser beam. But to understand how the weapon actually creates its laser beam, say for purposes of repairing the weapon or to design and build a similar device, is beyond the scope of the *scholar* skill. That requires *science.*

Players may purchase the *science* skill multiple times to represent additional areas of expertise for their character. Limitations can be about as broad as the subjects in which universities typically offer undergraduate degrees. A narrower focus within a field would normally involve a specialization but isn't required. If the player wishes to limit his character's knowledge to just a narrowly defined field she does not have to take a broad limitation and then apply a specialization.

The difficulty numbers for using *science* to figure out a new concept or piece of technology are based on the overall complexity of the problem, modified by its Tech axiom relative to the scientist's Tech axiom. The Difficulty Number Scale is used to determine the difficulty based on these sample definitions and modifiers:

SCIENCE CHART

Difficulty	Examples
Easy	Basic principles (gravity), very simple mechanisms with few or no moving parts
Average	Basic principles in detail (newton's laws of gravity), simple mechanisms
Complicated	Advanced principles (einstein's theories of relativity), complex mechanisms, simple electronic devices
Difficult	Advanced principles in detail (curvature of space-time), mechanisms with many integrated systems, complex electronics
Hard	Highly specialized principles (gravity waves), complex electronics with many integrated systems
Very hard	Mechanisms with hundreds of integrated systems, simple devices utilizing advanced principles
Extremely hard	Electronics with hundreds of integrated systems, simple devices utilizing highly specialized principles
Incredible	Complex devices utilizing advanced principles
Nearly impossible	Complex devices utilizing highly specialized principles

Situation	Modifier
Prototype device, theoretical model	+3
Production model, tested theory	+0
Lower tech axiom than scientist's	-5
Tech axiom greater than scientist's by no more than three points	+5
Tech axiom greater than scientist's by more than three points	+10
Related information resources available	-1 To -5
Consultation with other scientists	Use many on one rules

The success level of the *scientist* skill check determines how much knowledge the character gains about the device or scientific principle he's trying to understand.

- *Minimal* **success:** The scientist knows what the device is supposed to do and any game values it may possess (such as a weapon's damage value.) Device can be operated if the scientist has the appropriate skill. Theories and principles understood in general layman's terms.
- *Average* success: The scientist can operate devices with the normal unskilled use penalty if he does not have the appropriate skill. Theories and principles understood in more detail.
- *Good* success: The scientist can operate devices without unskilled use penalties, or operate devices that cannot be used unskilled with a Very Hard penalty.
- *Superior* success: The scientist understands the device well enough to repair it, if proper tools and materials of the appropriate Tech axiom are available. Devices that cannot be used unskilled may be operated with a Hard penalty.

- *Spectacular* success: Gives the scientist the knowledge necessary to design a similar device if the proper resources are available. Theories and principles also understood well enough to design devices that utilize said concepts. Devices that cannot be used unskilled may be operated with a Complicated penalty.

Example: Father Wagner pays a visit to a physicist he knows, hoping she can shed some light on a strange television-sized device the Storm Knights discovered during an adventure in Los Angeles. The mechanism, a Tharkold synthecycler, is extremely complex and is made up of numerous systems so Becky rates its difficulty at Very Hard (15). Additionally, the item's Tech axiom is 26 and the physicist's is only 23 so there is a +5 penalty, increasing the difficulty to 20. The physicist has *science(physics)* 14. Generating a skill total of 20, she gets a *Minimal* success.

She is able to tell Wagner that the device appears to be a small automated factory of some kind; raw materials are inserted at one end and are converted into a finished product somehow that comes out the other end. Control of the machine appears to involve a cybernetic link of some kind.

Because the physicist does not have the appropriate skill (*UltraCAD operations*), or a neural interface for that matter, she does not know how to operate the device.

Streetwise

Use: Unskilled use penalized. Normally used as a macro skill.

Sample specializations: Specific urban location, street gangs, criminal organizations, survival, black markets

Axiom: Social 8

Streetwise is used to get information, goods and/or make contacts in urban areas large enough to support a "shadowy" side of life. It can also be used like the *survival* skill for finding food, water and shelter in urban areas.

When attempting to gain information with the *streetwise* skill, the difficulty is based on the size of the city the character is in and modified by the legality of the information being sought:

STREETWISE CHART

Condition	Difficulty/modifier
Large city	8
Small city	10
Town	12
Small town	13
Very small town	15
Legal information (directions to nearest soup kitchen)	-5
Semi-legal (asking how strictly local laws are enforced)	-2
Illegal, but generally inoffensive (asking how big of a bribe is appropriate for local law enforcement)	+0
Illegal (seeking out a pickpocket)	+2
Very illegal (seeking out a safecracker)	+4
Highly illegal (seeking an arms smuggler)	+7
Strict law enforcement	+5
Moderate law enforcement	+4
Light law enforcement	+2
Little enforcement of the law	+0
Corrupt law enforcement	-2 To -5

Example: Marco is in Lyon, France trying to locate a black market seller of Cyberpapal laser weapons. Lyon is a large city so the base difficulty is 8. The weapons Marco wants are highly illegal so there is a +7 penalty applied. Additionally, the Church Police keep a close eye on things so there's another +4 penalty on top of that, bringing the difficulty to a total of 19.

Streetwise can also be used to avoid trouble with street gangs, criminal organizations and local law enforcement by providing the character with information on how to behave, common signals to give, things to avoid doing in certain areas and so on. The difficulty for this task is based on the size of the city and can be modified by the gamemaster with the Difficulty Number Scale.

If the character instead wishes to deliberately cause trouble with a gang or organization, the *streetwise* skill can be used in place of the *taunt* skill when dealing with such groups.

Example: Marco, being chased by a squad of Church Police who caught him trying to buy black market merchandise, races around a corner and sees a bunch of tough-looking punks down the street. With the Church Police on his tail, the last thing Marco needs is trouble from them too. If he can beat a difficulty of 8 with his *streetwise* skill he won't attract any serious attention from the punks.

Halfway down the block though, Marco gets the idea of having the punks distract the Church Police so that he can get away easier. Using *streetwise* like the *taunt* skill, Marco is able to yell something to the punks about how a rival gang of this group is coming down the street looking to cause trouble. Marco's taunt works and as the punks prepare to ambush the "rival gang", Marco makes his escape.

Survival

Use: Unskilled use penalized. Macro skill.

Sample specializations: Specific type of terrain or climate (desert, forest, arctic, mountains, urban, etc.)

Survival is the ability to find shelter, procure food, water and other supplies, and avoid natural dangers such as disease, sunstroke, quicksand or other environmental hazards exclusive of creature encounters.

Each general type of wilderness environment has a difficulty number listed on the chart below. The first day a character spends in the hostile environment, she makes a *survival* skill check. If she succeeds, the result points earned indicate the number of days she can remain in the environment before making another such check. Characters who fail a *survival* check must make another *survival* check the day after their failure.

Failing a *survival* skill check means the character does not find adequate shelter, food or stumbles into some kind of dangerous situation. This can either be roleplayed, such as finding a way to escape from a patch of quicksand, or the gamemaster can assess an appropriate amount of damage to the character that cannot be healed until a successful *survival* check is made or the character returns to "civilization".

SURVIVAL CHART

Wilderness type	Difficulty
Easy environment (woods, grasslands)	3
Moderate environment (aquatic, swamps)	5
Moderately difficult (mountains, ghost town)	8
Difficult environment (high mountains)	10
Barren environment (desert)	12
Inhospitable environment (tundra)	13
Hostile environment (arctic)	15

Example: Quin is in a remote area of the Andes, about a week's hike from the nearest village or town. The first day, he makes a *survival* skill check against a difficulty number of 10. He gets three result points, so he does not need to make a *survival* check for three more days. Three days later, Quin fails this second roll. Becky decides that Quin is suffering from exposure to the cold and the thin air and imposes one wound of damage. The next day Quin must make another skill check. He gets another three result points for another three days. This brings his total up to seven days (first three days, one day for the failure, then another three) so he finally reaches a village and no longer needs to use the skill to survive.

Test of Wills

Sample specializations: None

Test of wills, often shortened to just *test,* is used to unbalance an opponent by pitting their confidence against the tester's confidence and resolve. A successful *test* causes the opponent to doubt that his own determination or that his control of a situation is equal to that of the testing character.

Two drivers playing a game of "chicken", for example, are engaged in a *test,* to see who has less confidence in his driving skills and swerves away from the collision first. In westerns, a gunfight always begins with the two gunslingers staring each other down, trying to take each other's measure. This is an example of *test* being used in a combat situation, each gunslinger showing his resolve to see things through and confidence in his own ability to draw and shoot first.

Test is not the same as *intimidation* though sometimes the line between the two is blurry. *Intimidation* is more often based on an overt physical threat, such as pointing a weapon at someone, or a display of violent emotion. *Test* is subtler, the character implying or creating an impression of being the one who is calling the shots.

Test is the defensive skill used against *test,* though in some situations the *willpower* may be used to defend against *test. Willpower* cannot be used to perform a *test* though, characters without the *test* skill must use their *Mind* attribute. The exact results of a *test* attempt are determined by using the Interaction Results Table found in Chapter Four. When a character attempts to *test* someone, the player should specify to the gamemaster the effect she wants it to have on her character's opponent before rolling the die. This is known as the *player's call* and lets the gamemaster better judge the results of the trick.

The gamemaster, in relation to circumstance and believability as well as the player's roleplaying ability, should modify *test* skill totals. If the character appears calm, cool and unruffled before and during the *test* attempt, she should get a bonus to her skill total. If the character is nervous, panicky and obviously not in control of a situation then a penalty should be applied.

Example: Terrill is having a beer in an Ayslish tavern when an unruly minotaur comes up to his table, looking to cause trouble. Alan tells Becky that Terrill will *test* the minotaur, with a *player's call* of the minotaur backing down, apologizing for disturbing Terrill and then leaving the tavern. He describes Terrill as pausing after taking a drink of his beer, looking up at the minotaur and casually saying "you really don't want to get on my bad side", and then making some kind of magical incantation or gesture so the minotaur knows he's facing a trained magician.

Becky decides that since almost everyone in Aysle knows a little magic the minotaur won't be too impressed by an incantation but the overall description of Terrill's attempt is worth a +2 bonus. Alan doesn't roll well enough to get the *player's call* so Terrill doesn't get rid of the minotaur, but he's been thrown off-balance by Terrill's behavior and isn't quite sure what to do next.

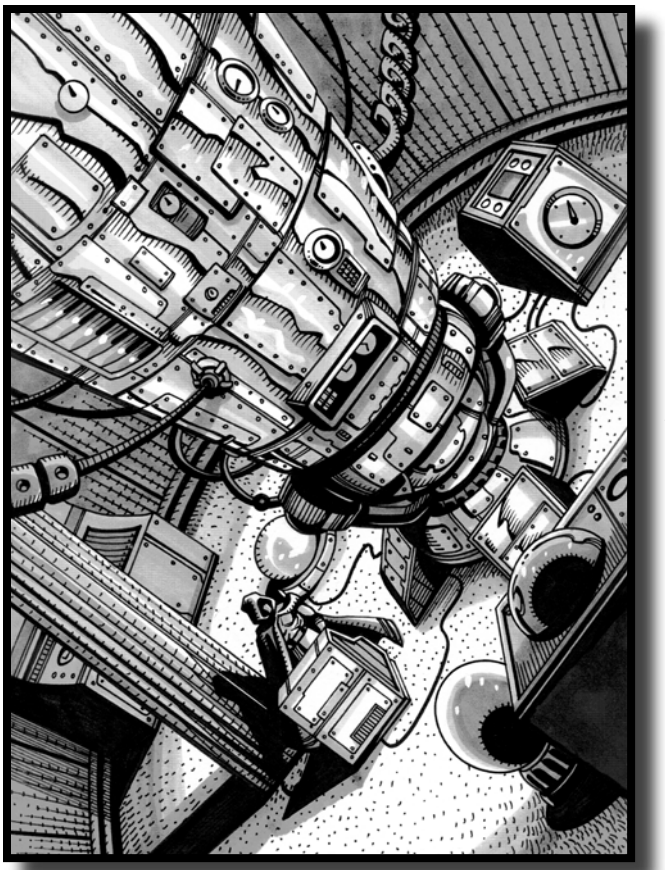
Weird Science

Use: Cannot be used unskilled. Macro skill.
Sample specializations: None
Reality: Nile Empire, Terra

The *weird science* skill allows characters to design, build and analyze fantastic devices, commonly called "gizmos", which far exceed the Nile Empire's Tech axiom. *Weird science* represents knowledge of an entirely separate set of scientific laws and principles that allow for the construction of devices in the Nile Empire's Tech 21 environment whose effects can rate as high as Tech 32!

Weird science is not as reliable or repeatable a process as normal science and it is not possible to mass-produce gizmos, each one must be individually handcrafted by a weird scientist. Gizmos are assigned a Tech Rating that is used outside the Nile Empire like a Tech axiom rating to determine if the device creates a contradiction.

Weird science is discussed further in Chapter Twelve and the full rules for using the skill can be found in the *Nile Empire* and *Terra* sourcebooks.



Willpower

Use: Normally a macro skill.

Sample specializations: Specific defense (against *charm,* against *persuasion,* against *hypnosis, etc.*), ignoring pain, self-control, disbelieving illusions

Willpower represents a character's strength of mind and ability to remain true to a decision or course of action. It is most often used as defense against character interaction skills such as *charm* and *persuasion* and in some cases other interaction skills like *trick, test, taunt* and *intimidation*.

For the latter skills, *willpower* can only be used as a defense against macro uses of those types of interactions, during round play the normal defenses must be used. This is because during round play characters must react based on their instincts and do not have time to apply their *willpower* to the situation.

Similarly, *willpower* may be used to disbelieve the existence of illusionary magic, but only outside of round play. During round play disbelieving illusionary magic defaults to the character's base *Mind* attribute. See Chapter Ten for more information on disbelieving illusionary magic.

Willpower may be used as an active skill in situations where the character faces a difficult temptation, needs to control an impulse or has to overcome a natural reaction or instinct.

Example: Father Wagner, lost in the Sahara desert after being separated from his friends by a sandstorm, staggers into an oasis, dying of thirst (probably because he failed some *survival* skill checks.) He crawls to the edge of the water and is about to start drinking when Becky tells Tina that Wagner notices a strange spell coming from the water and calls for a *willpower* check to see if he is able to stop himself from drinking the possibly tainted water. Tina rolls poorly and Wagner fails the skill check, so he greedily drinks from the pool. Only after it's too late is he able to consider the possibility that the water is poisoned or otherwise unfit to drink.

At the gamemaster's discretion, *willpower* may be used in the same manner as the *Toughness* based *resist pain* skill. If allowed, *willpower* can be used to resist the pain from mental and spiritual wounds as well as physical wounds. Since *resist pain* is normally only used in round play, using *willpower* in this fashion is an allowable exception to it being a macro skill.

Charisma

Charisma measures the strength of a character's personality: not just how likable she is but also how effectively she can communicate and her ability to form a bond or connection with someone. *Charisma* can be used to gauge a character's attractiveness but is not necessarily an indicator of physical beauty, rather the combination of personality and appearance.

Characters whose professions involve communication, swaying opinions or convincing people about something would want a high *Charisma.* Successful salesmen, politicians, actors and teachers are examples of characters with good *Charisma* values.

A low *Charisma* indicates someone who appears unlikable, untrustworthy and probably unpleasant to be around. They're always saying the wrong thing at the wrong time, have little empathy for other people's feelings and opinions and have difficulty expressing themselves in ways other people can easily understand

Charisma-Related Skills

Charm

Use: Macro skill.

Sample specializations: Seduction, "making friends", establishing trust, gaining respect

Charm represents the ability to change the attitudes of acquaintances and onlookers. Characters with a high charm value can turn enemies into friends and friends into devoted followers. Characters generate a *charm* total against the *willpower* or *Mind* value of the target character. Successful use of *charm* improves the *attitude* of the target character toward the charming character. Failures with *charm* though can make things worse!

Charm can require a significant amount of time; at least five minutes spent communicating with the target if not longer. The more time spent on a *charm,* the more effective it might be and the longer the effects may last. The complete rules for the use of *charm* can be found in Chapter Four.

Performance Art*

Use: Unskilled use penalized. Macro skill.

Sample limitations: Acting, singing, storytelling, public speaking, stand-up comedy, improvisational theater, live-action roleplaying

Sample specializations: Specific field within a limitation (singing opera, interpretive reading, dramatic acting, comedic acting, etc.)

Axiom: Social 3

This skill gives its user the ability to perform a work of "art", which is broadly defined as anything spoken, sung or otherwise communicated that is designed to invoke some kind of response in the audience. For example, a public speaker may want to convince

people to support a certain political or moral position, a comedian wants her audience to laugh or a singer may want to lift people's spirits with an upbeat song. See the *artist* skill for guidelines on how to determine the effects of a character's performance.

In some situations a performer will be interpreting someone else's work of "art", such as an actor performing from a script written by someone else. In cases like this, two skill values are generated. The first skill value is for the piece of art being performed; the second is for the performance itself.

The skill check for the piece of art will be an *artist* skill check based on the skill value of whoever created the artwork. The second skill check will be the *performance art* skill check of the performer. The lower of the two values is then used to gauge any reactions or effects of the overall performance. The individual totals can also be used to determine any reactions to the individual components of the performance.

Example: Chuck Harris is the star of the schlock TV show *Rex Able, Freelance Fighter.* Chuck is a pretty good actor and has *performance art(acting)* 14. However, the scriptwriters for the show are a bunch of hacks who have *artist(scriptwriting)* 10. For the latest episode, Chuck generated a skill value of 15 while the scripters turned in a stinker with a skill value of 8.

To determine how well the episode is perceived overall, the gamemaster decides to treat it as a *charm* attempt. Since the scripters have the lower skill value, that value is used for the episode. Comparing the action value of 8 to the average viewer's *Mind* attribute of 8, only the loyal followers of the show are going to like the episode because the script is so bad. On the other hand, Chuck's performance is good enough that when treated as a *charm* attempt even people who don't like the show have to admit that he did a good job.

Performance art, especially storytelling, plays an important role in Core Earth's chances of defeating the High Lords and winning the Possibility Wars. Details can be found in Chapter Eight.

Persuasion

Use: Macro skill.

Sample specializations: Con, bargain, diplomacy, negotiation, interviewing, salesmanship

Persuasion is the ability to convince or sway an acquaintance or onlooker. The exact nature of what it is the character wants the target to do can be almost anything; buy a product from the character, answer a question, do the character a favor, loan the character something, change their opinion about something to match the character's view, and so on.

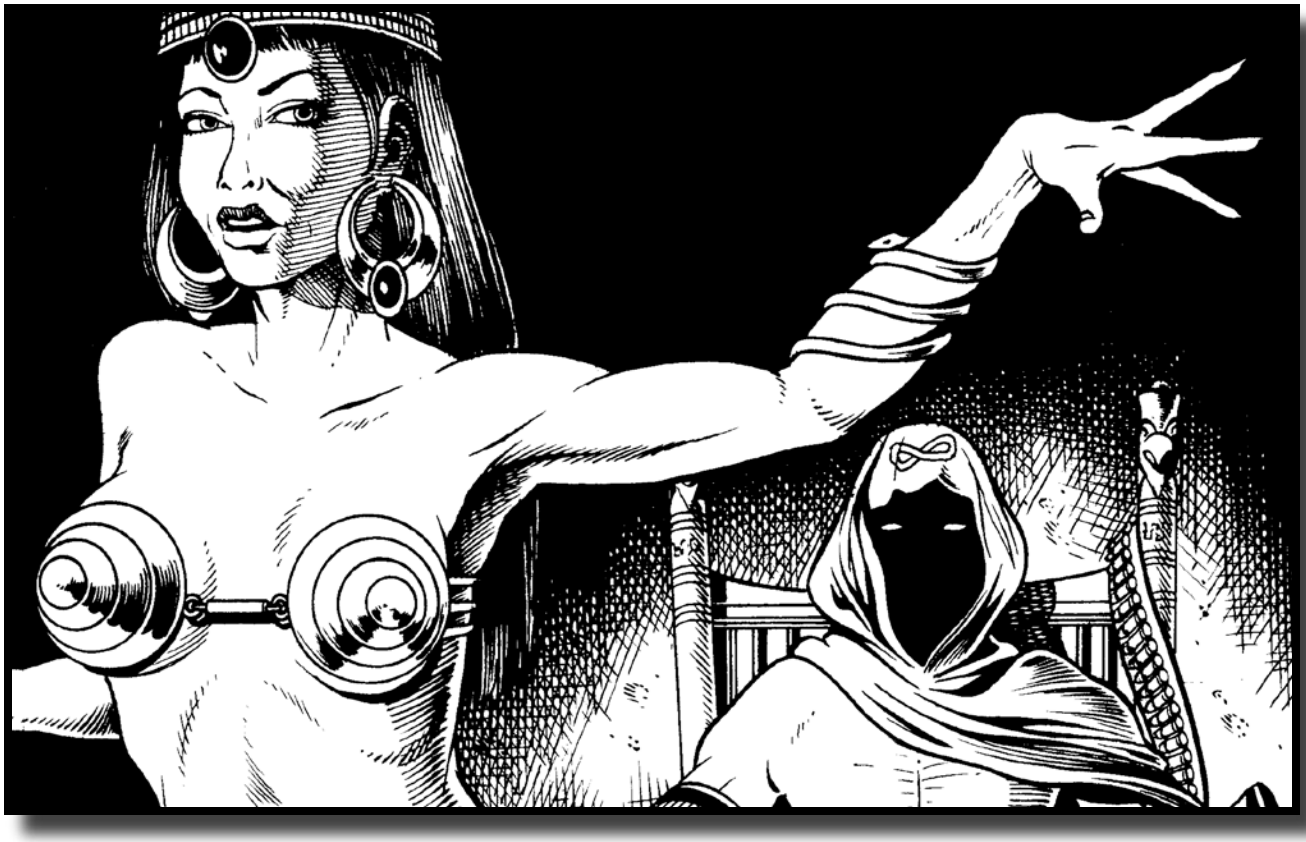
A character generates a *persuasion* total against the *willpower* or *Mind* of the target character. The difficulty may be modified by the gamemaster using the Difficulty Number Scale based on the nature of what the character wants the target to do. Generally the more that a target has to do, especially if it might be dangerous, the harder it will be to persuade them.

The *attitude* of the target affects how successful a *persuasion* attempt will be. If the character has the time, it is usually a good idea to first *charm* a target and improve their attitude towards the character, thereby increasing the chance of a successful *persuasion*. The complete rules for using *persuasion* can be found in Chapter Four.

Taunt

Sample specializations: Non-verbal, insults, sarcasm

Taunt is used to make opponents upset and thus unable to think or act as clearly as they normally would. *Taunt* is normally used in round play to unsettle opponents, annoying or angering them to the point that they act without thinking.



Taunt is also the defensive skill used against *taunt,* though in some situations the *willpower* skill could be used instead. If the target does not have *taunt* then *Charisma* is used instead. The results of a *taunt* are determined by using the Interaction Results Table found in Chapter Four. When a character attempts to *taunt* someone, the player should specify to the gamemaster the effect she wants it to have on her character's opponent before rolling the die. This is known as the *player's call* and lets the gamemaster better judge the results of the *taunt*.

Taunt skill totals should be modified by the gamemaster in relation to circumstance and appropriate nature of the *taunt,* as well as the player's roleplaying ability. *Taunts* should be kept simple in most cases so that that the meaning will be clear to the target. If the target doesn't understand the *taunt,* they may not even realize they've been insulted.

Example: An edeinos warrior has chased Quin to the edge of a chasm, one that Quin knows he can't jump across. Worse yet, he's out of ammunition and one look at the size of the edeinos tells Quin that hand-to-hand combat with the lizard would be very dangerous.

Glancing over his shoulder at the chasm right behind him, Quin gets an idea. If he can get the edeinos mad enough to charge at him, he can jump aside at the last second and the edeinos will go over the edge and fall into the chasm. Paul tells Becky that is Quin's *player's call,* to have the edeinos fall into the chasm.

Optional *Charisma*-Related Skill

Training

Use: Macro skill.

Sample specializations: Skills of a particular attribute (*Dexterity, Perception, etc.*), a particular set of skills (combat skills, knowledge skills, etc.), a single skill.

Axiom: Social 3

One of the major factors in determining the cost for the first add of a new skill is whether the person acquiring the skill is being taught the skill or learns it on their own. *Training* is used by a character to instruct another character so that they can acquire that first skill add at the lower cost. One *training* skill check is used to cover an entire training session.

When a training session begins, several decisions must be made. First, if the skill is being acquired by spending possibilities the amount of time spent on training must be decided. If the skill is being learned over time, then the duration of the training session is equal to the amount of time determined using the normal rules earlier in this chapter.

One week is the minimum amount of time required when spending possibilities, but spending more time will decrease the difficulty of the *training* skill check. The modifier is found by subtracting the time value spent on training from 29, the time value for a week, creating a negative modifier to the difficulty number.

Second, the teacher and the student must decide if they are training to the exclusion of all other activities. If not, they are considered *distracted* which increases the difficulty. If the skill is being learned over time, the *distracted* penalty applies if the training does not occupy at least eight hours a day and 25 days out of a month's time.

Third, if the skill is being acquired using possibilities the student must decide if she is *committed* to learning the skill. Being *committed* means that at the end of the training session the character can and will purchase the first add of the skill even if the teacher fails his *training* skill check. In other words, the character has enough possibilities to pay the self-taught cost for the first skill add and will pay that cost if the teacher fails. A character who is not *committed* can choose whether or not to buy the first add of the skill at the self-taught cost if the teacher fails his skill check.

If the skill is being learned over time, the student is automatically considered to be *committed* but the only effect this has is to reduce the difficulty number. If the *training* skill check fails, the student does not learn the skill.

At the end of the training session, the teacher makes a *training* skill check against a difficulty of 8, modified by the following conditions:

TRAINING CHART

Condition	Modifier
Teacher has skill at only one add	+2
Teacher or student is distracted	+4
Teacher and student are distracted	+5
Student is committed	-3
Skill can be used unskilled at a penalty	+2
Skill cannot be used unskilled	+4
Skill is not native to teacher's or student's reality	+5
Skill is not native to teacher's and student's reality	+7
Training session longer than one week (only when spending possibilities to learn skill)	29 - Time value

Example: Terrill is going to teach Marco *divination magic.* They decide to spend two weeks on it rather than the minimum of one week. Marco is going to devote all of his time to learning the skill but Terrill has other things he needs to do so the teacher is considered *distracted.* Marco really wants to learn the skill so he is *committed* to learning it.

Terrill only has one add in *divination magic* and the skill cannot be used unskilled. But it is native to both Aysle and Core Earth so that won't be a problem. The base difficulty for Terrill's *training* skill check is 8. It is modified by +2 for Terrill only having one add, +4 for Terrill being *distracted,* -3 for Marco being *committed,* +4 for being unusable unskilled and two weeks is a time value of 31 so (29 - 31) a -2 modifier for that. The final difficulty is 13.

Unfortunately, Terrill only generates a skill total of 12 and fails. Because Marco was *committed,* he has to buy the skill add at the self-taught cost, which is 10 possibilities instead of the five he would have paid if Terrill had succeeded.

Paul roleplays out Quin's *taunt* by describing Quin assuming a fighting stance and gesturing condescendingly at the edeinos in a "come up here and fight me" kind of way. Becky, who was prepared to penalize Quin's *taunt* because the edeinos doesn't speak English and wouldn't understand anything Quin said, instead applies a bonus for Paul's description of the nonverbal *taunt.*

Paul gets lucky and rolls two 20's and an 8, for a total of 48, which is a bonus number of +13! Combined with the bonus Becky gave him for the attempt, Paul gets the *player's call.* So annoyed is the edeinos by Quin's attitude and sheer gall in thinking to challenge him in unarmed combat, it charges at full speed towards Quin, who dives to one side at the last second and the edeinos races right off the edge and into the chasm.

Spirit

Spirit represents the force of a character's personality. Unlike *Charisma, Spirit* does not relate to how well a character communicates with others but how well they communicate **at** others. *Spirit* represents the "backbone" of a character's personality, the power of their beliefs and convictions, their ability to impose their thoughts and opinions onto other people and even onto the world around them sometimes.

Spirit-related Skills

Ayslish Corruption

Use: Special.
Sample specializations: None
Reality: Aysle

Ayslish corruption and the related *Ayslish honor* are not actually skills. Instead, they are used to measure the effects of two of Aysle's world laws, the *Law of Corruption* and the *Law of Honor,* upon a character. Ayslish characters may be given adds in *Ayslish corruption* or *Ayslish honor* during character creation but adds **cannot** be bought during gameplay or learned over time.

Rules for using *Ayslish corruption* and *Ayslish honor* can be found in the *Aysle sourcebook.*

Ayslish Honor

Use: Special.
Sample specializations: None
Reality: Aysle

Ayslish honor and the related *Ayslish corruption* are not actually skills. Instead, they are used to measure the effects of two of Aysle's world laws, the *Law of Honor* and the *Law of Corruption,* upon a character. Ayslish characters may be given adds in *Ayslish honor* or *Ayslish corruption* during character creation but adds **cannot** be bought during gameplay or learned over time.

Rules for using *Ayslish honor* and *Ayslish corruption* can be found in the *Aysle Sourcebook.*

Cyberpsyche

Use: Special.
Sample limitations: none
Reality: Tharkold

Cyberpsyche is a skill that can only be possessed by cyborgs created in Tharkold. Though a lengthy and rigorous process of brainwashing and mental reprogramming the cyborg is conditioned to accept that it is a machine and not a living being. The *cyberpsyche* skill increases a cyborg's resistance to *cyberpsychosis* (see Chapter Twelve.)

Faith*

Use: Cannot be used unskilled.
Sample limitations: Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Christian, Keta Kalles, Honor, Balance, Corruption, CyberChurch, Ancient Egyptian, Sacellum, Palanism, Cult of the Dominant, Way of the Race, Aka, Zinatt, Coar, Atheism
Sample specializations: None.
Axiom: Spirit 1

Faith measures the strength of the character's religious beliefs and convictions. In game play, *faith* is most often used as part of the miracles system, which is described in Chapter Eleven. *Faith* does not give a character the ability to reliably perform miracles, which requires the *focus* skill. What *faith* does is it allows the character to participate in a miracle, usually as the recipient of the miracle.

It is important not to mistake *faith* for knowledge about a religion. It is possible to know a religion's beliefs, history and rituals without accepting its principles or acknowledging its validity. Knowledge about a religion is covered with the *scholar* skill; *faith* only deals with belief.

Atheism is considered a possible version of the *faith* skill because it is also a belief system involving spiritual powers. True, the belief is that spiritual powers do not exist, but in *Torg* spiritual powers **do** exist, as represented by the *Spirit* axiom, so atheism is

Different *Faiths*

What separates one *faith* skill from another is left up to each gaming group to decide for itself. The sample limitations provided in the *faith* skill description represent broad, general categories of religious beliefs and group many similar belief systems together. The first five given in the skill entry cover most Core Earth religions and the rest represent religious systems found in the other realities involved in the Possibility Wars. Atheism is available as a belief system in all of the realities involved in the Possibility Wars with the exception of the Living Land.

If more diversity is desired, these groups (except for Atheism, which is all-inclusive) may be broken up into smaller groups. How many groups depend on how specific you want to make each *faith* skill. For example, Honor could be broken up into a separate *faith* for each of the six gods in Aysle's pantheon of honorable gods, or it could be divided into three *faiths* - the honor gods of the humans, the honor gods of the elves and the honor god of the half-folk.

The rules involving *faith* are intended to describe religions as they exist in the fictional game setting of *Torg*. They should not be interpreted as statements about the state or nature of religions in the real world. When dealing with real world religions in the game, players should use the amount of generalization or specification that makes them feel most comfortable.

treated as a sort of negative belief system. Rules for how to handle *faith(Atheism)* can be found in Chapter Eleven.

Focus

Use: Cannot be used unskilled.
Sample specializations: None.
Axiom: Spirit 2

The *focus* skill represents a character's ability to tap into the spiritual energies of a religious belief system and somewhat reliably create "miracles" with that energy. It is not used alone however, miracles are not possible without the *faith* skill also being involved (though in some cases miracles can occur without needing the *focus* skill.) The complete rules for performing miracles can be found in Chapter Eleven.

Focus is an unusual skill in that it cannot normally be taught to another character. In most belief systems, the ability to perform miracles is seen as a gift or a blessing, not something that can simply be learned like any other ability. Players who wish to have their characters acquire the *focus* skill during gameplay will need to discuss the matter with their gamemaster and determine how, and if, the character can get the skill.

Frenzy

Use: Cannot be used unskilled.
Sample specializations: None
Reality: Aysle and Star Sphere, certain character types only.

Frenzy is a special ability that allows a character to work himself up into a deadly, berserk rage. It is a skill only available to two specific types of characters in the Possibility Wars, Ayslish vikings and the Draygaak race of the Star Sphere.

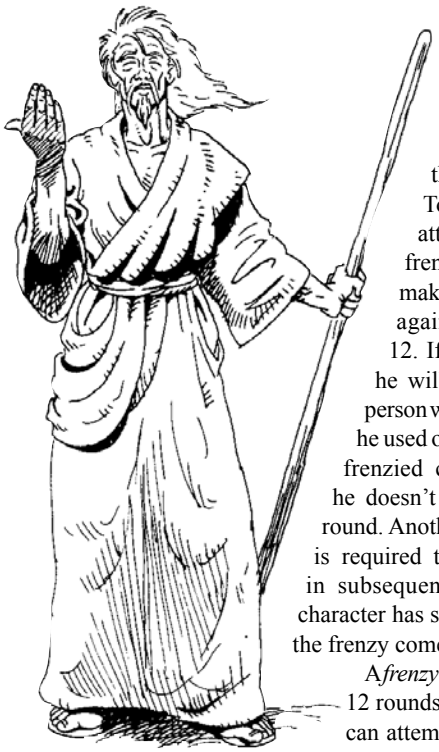
When frenzied, the character becomes little more than a killing machine. They will attack all enemy characters or creatures without hesitation and if there are no enemies nearby, they may attack anyone close by, even their own comrades and allies.

Frenzied characters may not make ranged attacks, all combat must be conducted with either melee weapons or barehanded. Frenzied characters may not use interaction skills such as *maneuver, trick, test* or *taunt* though *intimidation* is allowed. Frenzied characters cannot perform an active defense against any kind of attack, they may only passively defend. Shields however may be used during combat.

The difficulty of entering frenzy is based on the character's wound level. The more injured a character is, the easier it is for him to *frenzy*. A character already involved in a combat situation receives a +5 bonus to his skill total.

A frenzied character has his *Dexterity, Strength* and *Toughness* temporarily increased while frenzied. The amount of the increase is based on the success level of the skill check. On a *Minimal* or *Average* success, the increase is +1; *Good* success +2; *Superior* success +3; *Spectacular* success +4.

This is not a bonus, it is an actual increase in the attribute and will affect any game values based off of an attribute (such as the base damage value of melee weapons and the amount of shock damage a character can take before being knocked unconscious.) While frenzied, characters are immune to *fatigue* results and ignore any action penalties from wound damage (see Chapter Four for details on *fatigue* and damage penalties.)



A frenzied character that has no enemies to attack may lash out at anyone who is nearby, even if they are on his side. To keep himself from attacking an ally, the frenzied character must make a *willpower* check against a difficulty of 12. If the character fails, he will attack the nearest person with the same ferocity he used on his enemies. If the frenzied character succeeds, he doesn't attack anyone that round. Another *willpower* check is required the next round and in subsequent rounds until the character has someone to attack or the frenzy comes to an end.

A *frenzy* lasts for no more than 12 rounds, though a character can attempt to come out of it sooner. The difficulty for ending frenzy is based on the character's wound level, though in this case the more injured the character is the harder it is to come out of it.

FRENZY CHART

Wound level	Entering difficulty	Ending difficulty
None	22	13
Shock and/or ko conditions only	18	15
Wound	15	18
Heavy wound	13	22
Mortal wound	12	25

If the character is attempting to end a frenzy while there are no enemies around, he does not have to make a *willpower* check in that round to avoid attacking the nearest target.

If a character attempts to end *frenzy* and fails by ten or more points, he can no longer attempt to end the *frenzy* and it must run its full course. Allies of the frenzied character can attempt to bring him out of his rage by making *persuasion* attempts against the same difficulty number for the character bringing himself out of the *frenzy.* These must be people the character knows and trusts, not just people who were fighting on the same side with him. If there are no enemies present, the frenzied character may attack the people trying to bring him out of it!

After a character comes out of frenzy, he immediately suffers a *fatigue* result that lasts for thirty minutes, though this shock damage may be healed normally with the *first aid* skill.

Note that the Ayslish vikings also have a religious miracle, *warrior madness,* which produces many of the same effects as *frenzy*. A viking with *frenzy* who has the miracle used on him may use the *faith* total of the miracle in place of his *frenzy* skill value if it is higher.

Intimidation

Use: Interrogation may only be performed as a macro skill.

Sample specializations: Interrogation, threats, non-verbal, bullying, against a specific type of target (men, women, students, military recruits, etc.)

Intimidation is used to threaten another character and unbalance them by making them feel in danger from or inferior to the intimidator. In combat it can cause an opponent to hesitate or back down. Out of combat, it can be used to force someone into doing something the intimidator wants them to do such as follow his orders, answer questions or hand over something to the intimidator, such as money.

Intimidation is also the defensive skill used against *intimidation,* though in some situations the *willpower* skill could be used instead. If the target does not have *intimidation* then *Spirit* is used instead. The results of an *intimidation* are determined by using the Interaction Results Table found in Chapter Four. When a character attempts to *intimidate* someone, the player should specify to the gamemaster the effect she wants it to have on her character's opponent before rolling the die. This is known as the *player's call* and lets the gamemaster better judge the results of the *intimidation*.

Intimidation skill totals should be modified by the gamemaster in relation to circumstance and appropriate nature of the action, as well as the player's roleplaying ability. Intimidation can be as simple as looking dangerous, or involve use of a position of authority, such as the shouting and abuse a drill sergeant heaps upon recruits during military basic training, or the threat of jail time a policeman might use to scare someone into cooperating.

Interrogation attempts are handled a bit differently from most other uses of *intimidation*. For an interrogation to work, the target must believe himself to be at a significant disadvantage, such as being captured or arrested, or at the mercy of the interrogator. Some characters are arrogant or self-assured enough to prevent most forms of interrogation from succeeding; player characters and most major villains fall into this category.

Interrogation does not involve the use of *player's call* and uses a different column on the Interaction Results Table than other uses of *intimidation*. Interrogation is only necessary to gain information that the target is not willing to freely divulge, if they are willing to answer questions then the *persuasion* skill is used instead.

More information on interrogations can be found in Chapter Four.

Occultech

Use: Cannot be used unskilled. Macro skill.
Sample specializations: None
Reality: Tharkold

Occultech is a Tharkold skill that blends technology with magic to create the unique technomagical cybernetics used by the techno-demons. The skill is also involved in the creation of pain weapons and "vril" batteries, which are power cells made from the life energies of possibility rated characters. Rules for using *occultech* are located in the *Tharkold sourcebook.*

Pain Weapon

Use: Cannot be used unskilled.
Sample specializations: None
Reality: Tharkold

Pain weapons are a vicious techno-demon invention, weapons that do spiritual damage. The *pain weapon* skill is used as the base damage value for a pain weapon attack, modified by any adds the weapon might provide. The skill is also used in place of *Spirit* to resist the damage caused by a pain weapon. It does not protect the character from all types of spiritual damage, just from pain weapons.

Information on pain weapons and the skill can be found in the *Tharkold sourcebook*.

Possibility Rip

Use: Cannot be used unskilled.
Sample specializations: None.
Reality: Tz'Ravok

One of the more fearsome abilities of the Ravagon race is this skill, the ability to steal possibility energy from other beings. When an opponent spends a Possibility Point, a ravagon with this skill can spend one of its own and attune itself to the opponent's possibility energy. During its next action, the ravagon can use *possibility rip* against her opponent. A skill total is generated against the opponent's *reality* skill value. The ravagon may not use a Possibility Point on this skill check or cards from the Drama Deck.

If the *possibility rip* check is successful, the ravagon gains two Possibility Points - one ripped from the opponent and the one that the ravagon used to attune itself to the opponent. The opponent must subtract one Possibility Point from his total. If the opponent has no possibilities when the *rip* is attempted, the ravagon only recovers the one spent on attunement. If the skill check fails, the possibility spent on attunement is lost and nothing else happens.

Example: While passing through the reality storms surrounding Aysle, Magoth is ambushed by a ravagon. During the battle, Roger declares that Magoth is spending a Possibility Point to improve an attack on the ravagon. Becky secretly deducts one Possibility Point from the ravagon's total as it attunes itself to Magoth's possibility energy. Magoth's attack is conducted normally, attunement does not interfere with his use of the possibility.

When the ravagon next gets to perform an action, it uses *possibility rip*. Magoth's *reality* skill of 10 is the difficulty of the skill check. The ravagon generates a skill total of 15 and succeeds. Becky increases the ravagon's total of possibilities by two and tells Roger that he has to subtract one Possibility Point from Magoth's total.

Possibility rip must always be within three adds of the ravagon's *reality* skill value. *Possibility rip* is a unique ability granted to ravagons by the World Laws of their cosm; only characters with Tz'Ravok reality may learn the skill. Ravagons who are transformed to another reality may retain the skill as a contradiction.

Possibility Sense

Use: Cannot be used unskilled.
Sample specializations: None.
Reality: Tz'Ravok

Another unique ability of the Ravagon race is the ability to sense possibility-rated characters. This ability is why they are highly prized as assistants by the High Lords. The range at which a ravagon can sense possibility-rated characters is a distance value equal to the skill value (see "Values and Measures" in Chapter Four.) A ravagon's range is even greater for sensing characters undergoing their Moment of Crisis and becoming possibility-rated, add seven to the skill value before converting to a distance value.

Example: A ravagon with *possibility sense* 15 can detect possibility-rated characters at a distance value of 15, one kilometer. The same ravagon can detect a character becoming possibility-rated at a distance value of (15 + 7) 22, which is 25 kilometers.

To determine if a ravagon can detect a possibility-rated person, a *possibility sense* skill check is made against the target character's *reality* skill. The ravagon receives a bonus to the attempt based on the target's total number of Possibility Points; the more possibility energy the target has, the easier he is to detect.

Take the target's number of possibilities and read them as result points for a power push (see Chapter Four again.) The push result is the bonus the ravagon gets on the skill check. For ords becoming possibility-rated, the ravagon receives a flat +7 bonus modifier and the difficulty is the target's *Spirit* attribute.

Example: A stormer within our ravagon's range has 12 Possibility Points. Read as a power push, those 12 possibilities are a +5 result so the ravagon receives a +5 bonus on its *possibility sense* skill check to detect the stormer.

The success level of the *possibility sense* skill check provides the ravagon with information about her target:

POSSIBILITY SENSE CHART

Success level	Result
Minimal	Detects target; +1 bonus to *tracking* skill checks
Average	+2 Bonus to *tracking* skill checks
Good	Determines exact location of target at that moment; +3 bonus to *tracking*
Superior	Determines location and number of possibilities target has; +4 bonus to *tracking*
Spectacular	Establishes a possibility print on the target; +5 bonus to *tracking*

Once a target has been detected, the ravagon must hunt down the target with the *tracking* skill. With a *Good* or better success the ravagon can immediately proceed to the location of the target at the time of the detection and begin tracking there. With a *Minimal* or *Average* success the ravagon must start tracking the target from the ravagon's current location.

The only modifiers listed under the *tracking* skill that are applied are the ones for the age of the trail. A possibility energy trail fades after one week and cannot be followed after that point (though the ravagon could still try to follow a normal trail left by the target character) unless the ravagon established a *possibility print* on the target. Possibility prints never fade, allowing the ravagon to always have a chance of following a character.

Possibility sense must always be within three adds of the ravagon's *reality* skill value. *Possibility sense* is a unique ability granted to ravagons by the World Laws of their cosm; only characters with Tz'Ravok reality may learn the skill. Ravagons who are transformed to another reality may retain the skill as a contradiction.

Reality*

Use: Possessed only by possibility-rated characters.
Sample limitation: Limitation must be the character's home cosm (Core Earth, Living Land, Aysle, etc.).

The *reality* skill is what separates possibility-rated characters from ords. All possibility-rated characters must have the *reality* skill.

Unlike other limited skills, characters may not buy additional *reality* skills with different limitations; they can only have one *reality* skill and it must be limited to their home cosm.

Its primary use in game play is to represent the strength of a character's connection to his home reality and his ability to force reality into accepting (or at least ignoring) contradictions the character causes. When a character is *disconnected* because of a contradiction, the *reality* skill is used to *reconnect* the character to his home reality.

It is also used to protect a character from the transformative powers of a reality storm. In some cases characters can use their *reality* skill to actually create reality storms in an attempt to force their own reality upon someone or something of another reality. These invoked reality storms can be exceedingly dangerous and destructive, not just to the character but to anyone around her as well.

The complete rules and descriptions for all uses of the *reality* skill can be found in Chapters Seven and Eight.

Shapeshifting

Use: Cannot be used unskilled.
Sample specializations: None.
Reality: Orrorsh

Shapeshifting is the ability (or curse) of changing form between human and animal. Most transformations are involuntary and the skill is used primarily to not change rather than to deliberately change. During character creation, any character with *shapeshifting* must take it as her tag skill.

The rules for designing the animal form of the shapeshifter, the special abilities the shapeshifter has while in animal form and the rules for using *shapeshifting* can be found in the Worldbook and in the *Orrorsh sourcebook*.

Spirit Medium

Use: Cannot be used unskilled. Macro skill.
Sample specializations: None.
Reality: Orrorsh, Gypsies only.

Spirit medium allows a character to contact the capricious spirits of Orrorsh and ask them for information. The spirits can answer any question put to them, but there's no guarantee that their answers will be correct. The skill is not magical in nature, though the gypsy performing the séance may make it appear that way with props and appropriate-sounding gestures and incantations.

The rules for use of *spirit medium* can be found in the *Orrorsh sourcebook*.

Swami

Use: Cannot be used unskilled.
Sample specializations: None.
Reality: Core Earth, Orrorsh

Swamis are Hindu religious teachers from either Core Earth or Orrorsh's home cosm of Gaea. To be a swami, a character must have *faith(Findaru)* and this skill. The *swami* skill covers a number of special abilities that derive from the swami's *faith* but are not miraculous in nature.

The rules for use of *swami* can be found in the *Orrorsh sourcebook.* While the skill is only available in Core Earth and Orrorsh, it can be used without contradiction in any reality with a Spirit axiom of at least 8.

True Sight

Use: Cannot be used unskilled.
Sample specializations: None.
Reality: Orrorsh

True sight is a quasi-mystical skill used in Orrorsh by monster hunters, swamis and Victorian occultists to detect *Orrorshan corruption* in another individual. Successful use of *true sight* reveals the actual appearance of a corrupted soul rather than the normal facade everyone else perceives. Depending on the success level of the skill check, it may also reveal useful information about the corrupted individual's powers and weaknesses, if any.

The rules for using *true sight* can be found in the *Orrorsh sourcebook*.

Attributeless Skills

Arcane Knowledges

Use: Must be combined with a magic skill (*alteration magic, apportation magic, divination magic, conjuration magic*.) Cannot be used unskilled.
Sample specializations: None.
Axiom: Magic 1

The arcane knowledges are a type of subskill used in conjunction with the four magic skills to determine the types of spells a character can learn and cast with her magic skills. They are also used in the creation of new spells designed by player characters.

The various types of arcane knowledges and how they are used are described in Chapter Ten. The full rules for spell creation can be found in the *Aysle sourcebook*. An abbreviated set of the spell design rules can also be found in the *Pixaud's Practical Grimoire* supplement.

Orrorshan Corruption

Use: Special.
Sample specializations: None.
Reality: Orrorsh

Orrorshan corruption is not really a skill, though it is treated like one. It represents the amount by which the character's soul has been tainted by one of Orrorsh's world laws, the *Power of Corruption*. A character that gains too much corruption will "fall to the dark side" and becomes a follower of the Gaunt Man. If this happens to a player character, he becomes a non-player character under the gamemaster's control.

Characters acquire points of *Orrorshan corruption* by performing unnecessary acts of evil while in Orrorsh (necessary evils, such as killing a villain in order to save innocents, is okay.) Possibilities may not be spent to gain further points in *Orrorshan corruption* nor may it be increased over time with training, should any character be crazy enough to want a higher value in the first place!

The complete rules concerning *Orrorshan corruption* can be found in the *Orrorsh Sourcebook*.

Pulp Power Skill*

Use: Can only be used by characters that possess a pulp power.

Sample limitations: A specific pulp power.
Reality: Nile Empire, Terra, Land Below

Pulp power skill is not actually an attributeless skill; it just falls under whichever attribute is most appropriate for the use of a particular pulp power. The skill simply represents a character's ability to use a pulp power whose use is not already covered by another skill or that does not require a skill roll to use. A character with a pulp power does not need the *pulp power skill* to use his pulp power, it just indicates that she's skilled at using her power.

Most *pulp power skills* will be based off of *Dexterity,* though there are several sensory and mental powers that would fall under *Perception* or *Mind. Pulp power skill* cannot be taught so any character that wishes to acquire the skill during play will have to pay the self-taught cost.

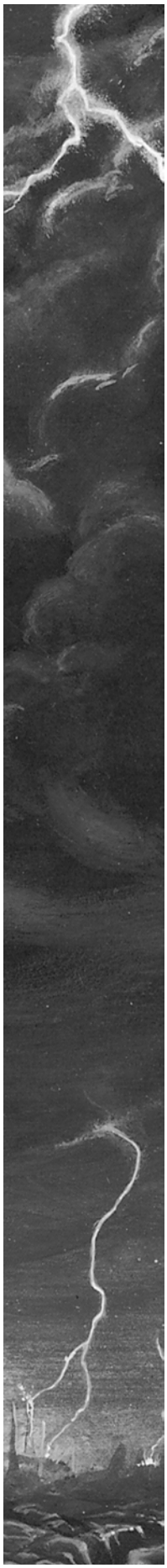
Pulp powers are briefly described in Chapter Twelve of this book and also in the Worldbook. Most of the rules and descriptions of pulp powers are located in the *Nile Empire sourcebook* and the *Terra sourcebook*. Pulp powers unique to the Land Below are described in the *Land Below supplement*.

UltraCAD Operation

Use: Cannot be used unskilled. Macro skill.
Sample specializations: None.
Axiom: Tech 26

UltraCAD operation represents the ability to design or manufacture devices with the ultraCAD technology utilized in Tharkold. While ultraCAD and *ultraCAD operations* only requires Tech 26, the technology is only found at the present time in Tharkold. It is possible that the Cyberpapacy could develop ultraCAD technology at some point in the future.

Rules for the use of *ultraCAD operation* can be found in the *Tharkold Sourcebook.*



Chapter 4: The Rules

"Knowledge of the basics may not always save your life, but it certainly enhances your probabilities."

—Dr. Hachi Mara-Two

This chapter covers the basic mechanics that make up the *Torg* roleplaying system. The rules for using the *Drama Deck* are found in Chapter Five and the special rules for magic, miracles and other "special effects" abilities begin in Chapter Ten. Gamemasters will also need to know the rules in Chapters Seven and Eight but players are better off learning those aspects of the system through gameplay.

Some sections of the rules have already been covered or briefly addressed in previous chapters. That material will be expanded upon first and then the new material will be covered.

Action and Effect Totals

As described in Chapters One and Three, success of an action is determined by comparing an *action total* the character generates against a difficulty number. If the action total equals or exceeds the difficulty then the action is successful.

Sometimes the amount by which the character succeeds is important. When this is the case, the difficulty is subtracted from the action total. The difference is known as the *result points* of the action and can be used in a variety of ways depending on the type of action. (Negative result points obviously indicate a failure since the action total would be less than the difficulty number.)

Example: Magoth is using *intimidation* on a Nile shocktrooper to try and get some information out of him. The shocktrooper has an *intimidation* skill of 9. Magoth generates an action total of 15. He has (15 - 9) six result points on the attempt.

Some actions will require two totals, the action total to see if the character succeeds and then a second is used to determine exactly how well the character did. This second total is found by adding the **same bonus** (the die is **not** rolled again) to a different value. The second total is called an *effect total*. Effect totals are usually compared to a different difficulty number than the action total. Result points are determined the same way for effect totals as for action totals and are used quite often.

Effect totals are sometimes referred to by their specific function; an effect total used to determine damage is a "damage total", an effect total used for movement during a chase is a "speed total", and so on.

Determining Difficulty Numbers

There are two basic types of difficulty numbers and both are used quite often in *Torg*. The simplest difficulty numbers are *opposed actions*. With many skills and types of actions, the difficulty is determined by some value of the object or person being affected. For example, the *fire combat* skill is opposed by the *dodge* skill. The difficulty of trying to shoot someone with a pistol is equal to his or her *dodge* skill.

Determining damage in combat is also an opposed action. The damage value of an attack is opposed by the *Toughness* or armor value of the target. If the damage value does not equal or exceed the target's opposing value, no damage is inflicted even if the attack successfully hit.

The second type of difficulty number is used when there isn't a measurable value opposing the character's actions. For example, the difficulty of treating an injured character with the *first aid* skill is based on the extent of their injuries but damage in *Torg* isn't expressed in game terms by values.

In these situations, the difficulty number is based on how hard the action should be for an average person to successfully perform the task. For the purposes of determining these various difficulty levels, "average" means an ord with no skill adds (unskilled use modifiers are not considered since they vary so much depending on what kind of task is being performed.) Since ords have an average attribute value of 8, an "average" difficulty level is considered to be a difficulty of 8.

On the Difficulty Number Scale, the *description* is a qualitative term for the difficulty level. The *difficulty* is the action total necessary for the average person to successfully perform a task of that difficulty level. *Odds* indicates the percentage chance of the average person being able to successfully perform the task and is based on what kind of a die roll is necessary to generate the bonus number needed for the average person to match or exceed the difficulty number. A "-" means that the average ord cannot succeed at that difficulty level unskilled (because ords do not get any rerolls when unskilled +7 is the highest bonus number they can achieve.)

The *modifier* is used by gamemasters when they have a difficulty number already determined by another means but the circumstances are unusual. For example, shooting a target in combat normally uses the target's *dodge* skill as the difficulty number. But what if the fight is taking place on the deck of a ship being tossed about by the waves of a fierce storm? Hitting a target under those circumstances should be more difficult than normal. The gamemaster can decide

DIFFICULTY NUMBER SCALE

Description	Difficulty Odds	Modifier	
Very Easy	3	80%	-5
Easy	5	75%	-3
Average	8	50%	0
Complicated	10	30%	+2
Difficult	12	20%	+4
Hard	13	15%	+5
Very Hard	15	5%	+7
Extremely Hard	18	—	+10
Incredible	22	—	+14
Nearly Impossible	25	—	+17

how much more difficult it is based on the circumstances and then apply an appropriate modifier.

Many of the skills listed in Chapter Three have sample difficulty numbers and modifiers provided in their descriptions. Those numbers are all based off of the Difficulty Number Scale.

Values and Measures

At the heart of the *Torg* system is the concept of *values* and *measures*. A *value* refers to a quantity measured in a way which can be used in the game, such as a weight value of 11, a time value of 9, a distance value of 4 and so on. A *measure* is a measurement from the real world, such as 150 kilograms, one minute, six meters and so on. Values and measures can be converted back and forth so that real world values can be expressed in game terms and so that players will know what a particular value in the game means in terms they can easily understand.

Alternate Scale Descriptions

In the first edition of the *Torg* rulebook, the Difficulty Number Scale used some different labels to describe the various difficulty levels. Since some products published for *Torg* use those labels, their equivalents in this rulebook are provided here:

First Edition	This Book
2:1 Against	Complicated
10:1	Hard
Heroic	Very Hard
100:1	Extremely Hard
1000:1	Incredible
Never Tell Me the Odds	Nearly Impossible

Most game systems use either a consistent scale for their attributes—each point of an attribute represents a specific amount of real-world measure—or they have no scale at all. The problem with such systems is that while they work fine in a limited setting (fantasy, horror, etc.) they either fall apart when bigger things (like technological weapons) are introduced, or they require huge numbers to represent the top end of the scale. For example, if a dagger does "one die of damage," how many dice do you roll for the main cannon of the Death Star?

Torg solves this problem by the use of a **logarithmic scale.** A logarithmic scale is one like the Richter scale, or the Decibel scale, where each point represents a greater proportional amount than the point before. For example, a level four earthquake is far more than twice as powerful than a level two earthquake, because each point on the Richter scale is 10 times as large as the point before.

TORG VALUE CHART

Value	Measure	Value	Measure	Value	Measure	Value	Measure
0	1	26	150,000	52	25 billion	78	4 quadrillion
1	1.5	27	250,000	53	40 billion	79	6 quadrillion
2	2.5	28	400,000	54	60 billion	80	10 quadrillion
3	4	29	600,000	55	100 billion	81	15 quadrillion
4	6	30	1 million	56	150 billion	82	25 quadrillion
5	10	31	1.5 million	57	250 billion	83	40 quadrillion
6	15	32	2.5 million	58	400 billion	84	60 quadrillion
7	25	33	4 million	59	600 billion	85	100 quadrillion
8	40	34	6 million	60	1 trillion	86	150 quadrillion
9	60	35	10 million	61	1.5 trillion	87	250 quadrillion
10	100	36	15 million	62	2.5 trillion	88	400 quadrillion
11	150	37	25 million	63	4 trillion	89	600 quadrillion
12	250	38	40 million	64	6 trillion	90	1 quintillion
13	400	39	60 million	65	10 trillion	90	1.5 quintillion
14	600	40	100 million	66	15 trillion	92	2.5 quintillion
15	1,000	41	150 million	67	25 trillion	93	4 quintillion
16	1,500	42	250 million	68	40 trillion	94	6 quintillion
17	2,500	43	400 million	69	60 trillion	95	10 quintillion
18	4,000	44	44 600 million	70	100 trillion	96	15 quintillion
19	6,000	45	1 billion	71	150 trillion	97	25 quintillion
20	10,000	46	1.5 billion	72	250 trillion	98	40 quintillion
21	15,000	47	2.5 billion	73	400 trillion	99	60 quintillion
22	25,000	48	4 billion	74	600 trillion	100	100 quintillion
23	40,000	49	6 billion	75	1 quadrillion		
24	60,000	50	10 billion	76	1.5 quadrillion		
25	100,000	51	15 billion	77	2.5 quadrillion		

When trying to find the value of measures that fall in between the cracks on the Value Chart, the listed measure is the upper bound for that value. For instance, a value of 10 has a measure of 100, while a value of 11 has a measure of 150. All measures greater than 100 and less than or equal to 150 have a value of 11.

The Richter scale works that way because earthquakes can range so greatly in size.

Torg's scale is not "each point is a factor of 10" like the Richter scale; instead, every **five** points is a factor of 10. This allows finer resolution at the low end (so all humans don't look exactly alike) but still keeps the top end from being impossible to handle (so an aircraft carrier has a weight value of "only" 41).

The *Torg* scale is consistent from one type of measurement to another, so that a given value always has the same real-world measure, whether it's expressed as time (in seconds), distance (in meters per round), or weight (in kilograms). The *Torg Value Chart* shows how values and measures are related. A value of 10 for example is always a measure of 100, regardless of whether we're measuring seconds, meters, kilograms or any other type of measurement.

The accompanying *Benchmark Chart* provides a number of examples for the value of several different real world objects and measurements. These can be used to make a quick estimate for the game value of something when an exact measure isn't known but its relationship to something on the Benchmark Chart is known or can be guessed.

For example, the Benchmark Chart says that a brown bear has a weight value of 12. The weight value of an animal described as being twice as large as a brown bear could then be estimated without ever having to know how many kilograms a brown bear or the larger animal actually weighs.

Converting Measures

The *Torg* Value Chart uses seconds, kilograms and meters as its default units. But what if you need to find the value of something in a different set of units, such as minutes, pounds or miles? Fortunately you don't have to do a lot of math to convert those measures. That work has already been done for you with the *Measure Conversion Chart*.

To use the Measure Conversion Chart, simply find the value of the measure you have, regardless of what units it's in. Then, add the listed modifier to convert it to the appropriate game value (which automatically converts the measure into seconds, meters,

TORG BENCHMARK CHART

Value	Time	Weight	Distance
0	Second	1 Kilogram	1 Metet
2			Tallest Human
3		Human Baby	Tallest Giant
5	*Torg* Round		
9	Minute	Human Female	
10		Human Male	Football Field
11		Lion	City Block
12		Brown Bear	
15		Small Car	Kilometer
16		Large Car	Mile
17		Elephant	
18	Hour		
20		Empty Truck	
22		APC	
23			Marathon Race
24	Day	Blue Whale	
27		Boeing 747	
28		C5A Galaxy	
29	Week	Tramp Freighter	
30		Destroyer	Leght of Great Britain
32	Month	Six-flat Building	Paris to Moscow
33		Fully Loaded Train	New York to LA
34			New York to London
35			London to Tokyo
38	Year		Circumference of Earth
39		Battleship	
41		Aircraft Carrier	
45		Loaded Oil Tanker	

or kilograms.) Remember, adding a negative number is like subtracting.

Example: A gamemaster is writing up a magic spell. He wants the spell to have duration of 25 minutes. What is the value of 25 minutes?

On the Value Chart, a measure of 25 has a value of 7, and the "minutes" modifier on the Conversion Chart is +9; 7 plus 9 gives us a value of 16. So the duration value of the spell is 16.

Example: A character is trying to lift a couch, which the gamemaster says weights about 160 pounds. On the Value Chart, a measure of 160 equals a value of 12. "Pounds" have a -2 modifier, so the game value of the couch is (12 - 2) 10. If the character can lift a weight value of 10, she can lift the couch.

Example: A radio transmitter being used by a character has a range of six miles. Can he communicate with another character that is at a distance value of 13?

On the Value Chart, a measure of 6 is a value of 4. The modifier for "miles" is +16 so the range of the radio transmitter is a distance value of (4 + 16) 20. The character at a distance value of 13 is within range.

If instead you want to convert a game value into one of these other units, the modifier on the Measure Conversion Chart is subtracted from the game value. Remember, subtracting a negative number is like adding. If the result is a negative number, it means that the value is less than one of whatever unit you're converting to.

Example: Instead of converting the range of the radio transmitter into a game value to see if the other character is within its range, we can convert the other character's distance value into miles to see if he's within the transmitter's six mile range.

The modifier for "miles" is +16 so we subtract that from the distance value of 13. Since the result is negative (13 - 16 = -3), this tells us that the character is less than one mile away, so he's definitely within range.

If we want to know exactly how far away the other character is, we would have to convert his distance value into a unit smaller than miles, such as feet. The modifier for "feet" is -3. We subtract that from the distance value of 13 and get (13 - (-3) = 13 + 3) 16, which is a measure of 1500. The two characters are about 1500 feet apart.

The Value and Conversion charts can also be used as a sort of mini-calculator to transfer between measures, say to find out approximately how many seconds there are in six days or how many pounds there are in 500 kilograms.

Example: How many seconds in six days? 6 has a value of 4 and "days" is a +25 modifier, which is a value of 29. The measure of 29 is 600,000 so there are approximately 600,000 seconds in six days. (The actual number of seconds in six days is 518.400, which is pretty close to the result of using the Value Chart.)

Converting from kilograms to pounds is just as easy since like seconds, kilogram is a basic unit of the Value Chart. 500 kilograms is a value of 14. The modifier for "pounds" is -2 which when we subtract gives us (14 - (-2) = 14 + 2) 16,which is a measure of 1500. (The actual conversion is 1102 pounds.)

Example: A car is traveling at 55 mph, and you need to know how many meters the car will travel in one round of combat (10 seconds). Normally you would have to convert mph to kph, then divide by 60 to get kilometers per minute then divide again by six to get kilometers per round. A lot of work! Using the Value Chart though, it just takes a little bit of addition. The measure 55 has a value of 9. This is adjusted by +3 (for miles per hour) for a game value of 12. Meters per round has a conversion of 0, so the value of 12 yields a measure of 250 meters; the car moves 250 meters in one round of combat. (Doing it the long way, you'd get a result of 244 meters in ten seconds.)

If you need to know the *Toughness* of an object, a good starting point is its weight. Find the game value of the weight, modifying downward if the object is delicate, upward if it is armored or particularly tough to damage. Humans, for example, are quite

MEASURE CONVERSION CHART

Measure is in units of	Value Modifier
Seconds	0
Minutes	+9
Hours	+18
Days	+25
Weeks	+29
Months	+32
Years	+38
Meters per round	0
MPH	+3
KMH	+2
Kilograms	0
Pounds	-2
Tons	+15
Meters	0
Feet	-3
Kilometers	+15
Miles	+16

variable, so their average *Toughness* could be anywhere between +3 to -3 of their weight value.

Measuring Success

For many actions, as long as the action total equals or exceeds the difficulty number the action is successful. But there are times where the *result points* of the action are important in gauging success. Combat and character interactions (*charm, persuasion, trick, etc.*) in particular regularly involve the use of result points.

For all tasks involving the use of result points, there are three tables provided which explain the outcome of successful actions. The *Interaction Results Table* covers the use of *charm, persuasion, test, trick, taunt, intimidation* and the *maneuver* skills. The *Combat Results Table* is used to determine the amount of damage inflicted in combat. And the third table, the *General and Push Results Table*, covers everything else that might make use of result points.

In each of the three tables, the S in the Result Points columns means "same", as in the action or effect total was the **same** as the difficulty number. Another way to think of it is that it means the same thing as zero result points.

General Results Table

The General Results Table is used by a large number of skills. The *quality* of a success, also known as a *success level,* is noted by a descriptive word: *Minimal, Average, Good, Superior* or *Spectacular.*

Minimal implies that the character just barely succeeded, avoiding failure by the skin of his teeth. *Average* is, well, average; no extra description is warranted. *Good* success sometimes merits a more detailed description, particularly if the character faced difficult odds. A *Superior* success deserves special emphasis; the task was performed faster, better or with more precision than expected. For a *Spectacular* success, things go so fabulously well that the gamemaster should give the character some kind of fringe benefits for his amazing performance.

The Speed and Power columns of the table are used whenever a character attempts to exceed one of their *limit values*, as listed in Chapter One, with a *push*. Some other game mechanics, such as spell design, also make use of the columns but they are primarily used for pushes.

The Storm column is used to determine the results of *reality storms*. Its use is explained in Chapter Seven.

Pushing the Limits

The reason for having limit values is that real human beings are only capable of so much. Of course so are heroes, trolls, cyberpriests and pulp villains. The problem comes with heroes who are human or close to human. We want the characters to be heroic, but at the same time we want the world to make sense, to seem real.

This is a tall order, and it requires a little bit of complication. If an attribute value is translated directly into a measure of time, distance or weight, we quickly run into problems with characters that can perform ridiculously powerful feats. For example, if a *Strength* attribute of 13 was directly translated into the weight value that character could lift, he would be lifting 400 kilograms without even breaking a sweat!

So the limit values represent the most that can be done by a character **without significant effort**. Instead of being able to lift 400 kilograms, our *Strength* 13 character can only lift up to his limit value without strain. For a human, the lifting limit is 9, which is 60 kilograms. If our strongman wants to try and lift more than 60 kilograms, he's got to put a little effort into it.

To exceed a limit value is an action, called a *push*, with a base difficulty number of 8. When rolling for a push, any bonus number generated that is less than +1 is treated as +1. The acting value depends on the limit being pushed. The limit values and the associated attribute or skill used as the acting value are as follows:

Limit Values for Other Creatures

The table provided in Chapter One lists the limit values for the major races involved in the Possibility Wars. Limit values can be determined for other races and creatures if they are not already provided in the creature's description. In the table below, "Avg." means the known average attribute for the creature in question; if this is not known, use human numbers or your best guess. In obvious problem circumstances (a sparrow's *running* ability, for example), use your judgment.

Limited Activity	Limit Value
Running	Avg. Dexterity
Flying	Avg. Dexterity
Swimming	Avg. Dexterity -2
Long Jumping	Avg. Dexterity -5
Climbing	Avg. Strength -5
Lifting	Avg. Strength +1
Hold Breath	Avg. Toughness +2

Add +1 to the limit value of the creature's *primary mode of movement* (the ways it travels most often).

Example: The gamemaster assumes that a dolphin's average *Dexterity* is 10; it therefore has a swimming limit value of 9 (*Dexterity* 10, -2 for swimming, +1 for primary mode.)

Running:	*Dexterity* or *running* skill
Swimming:	*Dexterity* or *swimming* skill
Long Jumping:	*Dexterity* or *long jumping* skill
Climbing:	*Strength* or *climbing* skill
Lifting:	*Strength* or *lifting* skill
Hold Breath:	Toughness
Flying:	*Dexterity* or *flight* skill

Lifting pushes use the Power Push column of the General Results Table. All other limit pushes use the Speed Push column. When a character attempts a push, the result points are read on the appropriate column to get a modifier that is added to the appropriate value.

There will also be a number in parentheses. This is the amount of *shock damage* the character takes from overexerting herself. The damage is assessed at the end of the round, so a character can accomplish a superhuman feat, and then collapse. This type of damage, known as *fatigue*, is cumulative with shock damage taken in combat. Shock damage is covered later in this chapter under "Damage".

Example: Terrill is running for his life from a horde of angry, heavily armed gangsters. Alan declares that Terrill is *pushing* his running speed this round. Terrill does not have the *running* skill so he uses his *Dexterity* of 9 and generates an action value of 12. The difficulty was 8, which means he has four result points. On the Speed column of the General Results Table this is a +1(3) result.

The +1 is added to Terrill's running speed value, which is 9, increasing it to a value of 10. Instead of covering 60 meters (value 9) that round, Terrill puts on a burst of speed and covers 100 meters (value 10) that round.

However, the table indicates that Terrill takes three points of shock damage from the push, he's tiring himself out by running at this speed. Nothing serious yet but he'll need a little while to recover and catch his breath once he gets away from the gangsters. If he keeps pushing himself though he might exhaust himself and eventually collapse.

If the character's attribute or skill value exceeds the limit value, the full value is used to generate result points but the modifier is added to the limit value instead. In other words, attributes in excess of the limit value are still useful, but cannot allow a character to perform godlike feats.

Example: Quin, running right behind Terrill, has a *Dexterity* of 11. Paul rolls a 3, normally a -8 bonus but since this is a push the minimum bonus is +1, giving Quin an action total of 12. He gets the same +1(3) result as Terrill. However, the modifier is **not** added to Quin's *Dexterity* value of 11, but to the limit value, which is 9, raising it to 10. Even though Quin has a higher *Dexterity* than Terrill, they both end up running at a speed value of 10 this round.

A player may always elect to use a lesser number of result points on a push to take a lower result in order to avoid fatigue.

Example: Terrill is still running from those gangsters in the next round and Alan says that Terrill will push his running again. Alan rolls very well and generates a *Dexterity* total of 15, which gives Terrill seven result points. This is a +2(10) result on the Speed column.

Ten shock points would be more than enough damage to knock Terrill unconscious, which would be a very bad thing with the

GENERAL AND PUSH RESULTS TABLE

	Success	Speed	Power	Storm
S	Minimal	0	+1(3)	-1
1	Average	+1(6)	+1(2)	-1
2	Average	+1(5)	+1(1)	-2
3	Good	+1(4)	+2(4)	-2
4	Good	+1(3)	+2(3)	-2 Storm x2
5	Good	+1(2)	+2(2)	-3 Storm x2
6	Good	+1(1)	+3(5)	-3 Storm x5
7	Superior	+2(10)	+3(4)	-4 Storm x2
8	Superior	+2(9)	+3(3)	-4 Storm x5
9	Superior	+2(8)	+4(6)	-5 Maelstrom
10	Superior	+2(7)	+4(5)	-6 Maelstrom
11	Superior	+2(6)	+4(4)	-7 Maelstrom
12	Spectacular	+2(5)	+5(7)	-8 Maelstrom
13	Spectacular	+2(4)	+5(6)	Transform (5)
14	Spectacular	+2(3)	+5(5)	Transform (5)
15	Spectacular	+2(2)	+6(8)	Transform (5)
+2		+0(-1)	+0(-1)	

Near-Miss

Near-miss is an optional rule. With a near-miss, there is a chance that a failed action could still succeed, even though things are still bad, or maybe even getting worse. A near-miss can occur when a character misses an important difficulty number by one or two points.

If the situation is a completely clear cut yes or no, if there's no way the action could continue, then a near-miss is a normal failure. But a near-miss can be a great dramatic tool in the right situations; Indiana Jones in the opening of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* had a near-miss result when he leaped over the pit in the South American temple, and then had to haul himself up the seemingly endless vine.

If that had been treated as a normal failure, he wouldn't have been able to grab the vine and ultimately pull himself out, he would instead have fallen into the pit and probably died. Not exactly the best way to start a story!

Near-misses can be great fun if they're played right, certainly more fun than the alternative sometimes. While the gamemaster should not go out of her way to turn every action failed by one or two points into a near-miss, it should at least be considered for most life-and-death situations when one die roll decides everything.

gangsters still on his tail. Alan decides to reduce the number of result points used on the push. He drops to six result points, which is a +1(1) result on the Speed column. It's not as fast as if he had the +2 bonus, but at least he'll remain conscious!

Character Interactions

Character interaction is very important in *Torg* - probably more important than in most other roleplaying games. There are specific ways each type of interaction can affect people, some of them quite powerful. Except for *charm* and *persuasion*, character interactions can be used during combat to give a character an advantage over an opponent.

In adventure fiction, combat is never just two characters exchanging blows with each other. Insults are thrown to anger an opponent, quick moves are made to confuse them and smart fighters outwit their slower opponents. These are the kinds of things covered by the interaction skills that can be used in round play; *maneuver, trick, test, taunt* and *intimidation*. With the exception of *maneuver*, these skills can also be used out of combat, along with *charm* and *persuasion*, to influence the behavior of other characters.

Use of the interaction skills is covered in their descriptions in Chapter Three. The results of their use are determined by reading the result points of the action on the *Interaction Results Table*.

Intimidate, Test, Taunt, Trick and Maneuver Results

The effects of *stymied, unskilled, break,* and *up* only last for one round. They are not cumulative, a character affected by two *stymied* results in the same round is still only *stymied* for one round, not two, and only loses her first reroll, not her first two rerolls.

The *duration* of a setback or *player's call* will depend on the exact effect used. Simple effects should only last for a round, but more complex effects may last longer. For example, if the *player's call* on an *intimidation* was to cause the opponent to surrender, he will surrender; he won't stop fighting for one round and then start fighting again the next round.

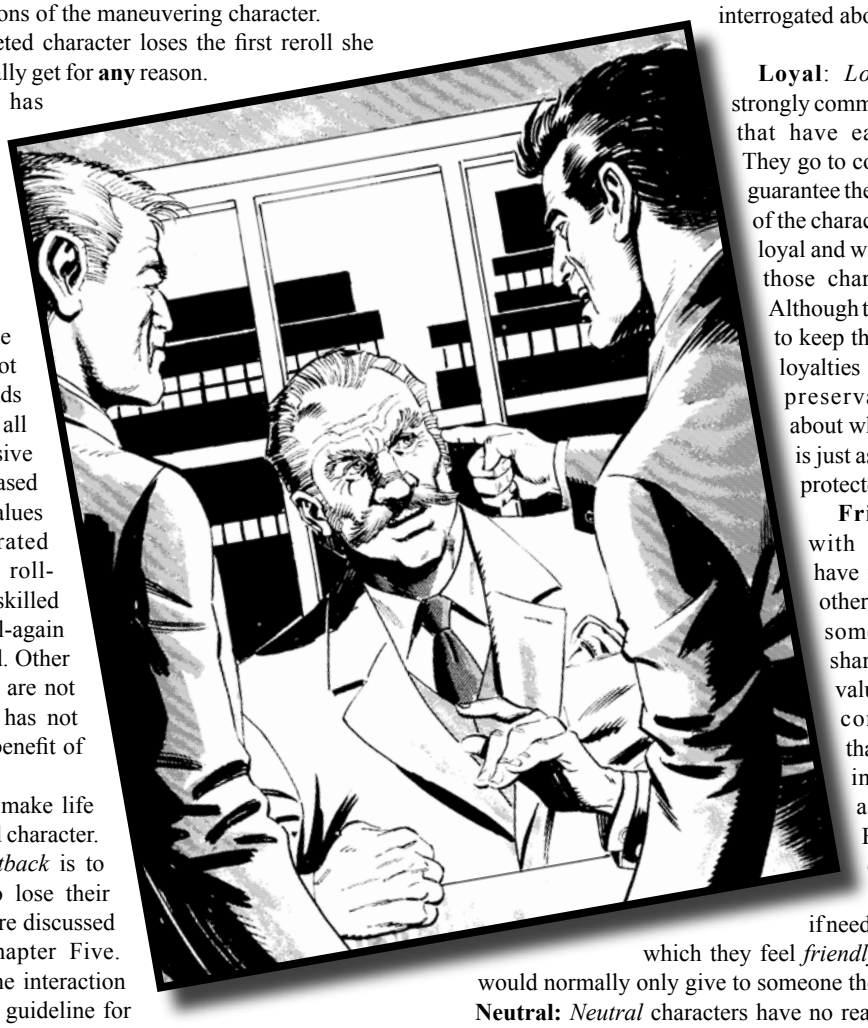
INTERACTION RESULTS TABLE

Result Points	Intimidate/ Test	Taunt/ Trick	Interrogate	Charm/ Persuade	Maneuver
S	Stymied	Stymied	Enemy	Loyal	Fatigued
1	Stymied	Stymied	Enemy	Friendly	Fatigued
2	Stymied	Stymied	Enemy	Friendly	Fatigued
3	Stymied	Stymied	Hostile	Neutral	Fatigued
4	Stymied	Stymied	Hostile	Neutral	Fatigued
5	Unskilled	Unskilled	Hostile	Neutral	Stymied
6	Unskilled	Unskilled	Hostile	Neutral	Stymied
7	Unskilled	Unskilled	Neutral	Hostile	Stymied
8	Unskilled	Unskilled	Neutral	Hostile	Stymied
9	Unskilled	Unskilled	Neutral	Hostile	Stymied
10	Setback	Setback	Neutral	Hostile	Unskilled
11	Setback	Setback	Neutral	Hostile	Unskilled
12	Setback	Setback	Friendly	Enemy	Unskilled
13	Setback	Setback	Friendly	Enemy	Unskilled
14	Setback	Setback	Friendly	Enemy +1	Unskilled
15	Break	Up/ Setback	Loyal	Enemy +1	Setback/ Fatigued
+2	Player's Call	Player's Call	Loyal	Enemy +1	Player's Call

The damage from a *fatigue* result is normal damage and requires the normal amount of time to heal. See "Types of Damage" and "Healing" later in this chapter for more information about shock point damage.

Fatigued: A *fatigue* result inflicts two shock points of damage on the targeted character. (Note that some types of armor and equipment in Chapter Thirteen might increase the amount of shock damage caused by a *fatigue* result.) The damage from a *fatigue* represents the effects caused by the character wasting his energy responding to the motions and actions of the maneuvering character.

Stymied: The targeted character loses the first reroll she would otherwise normally get for **any** reason. If a character never has an opportunity for a reroll during her next action, *stymied* has no other effect. A *stymied* result will cancel out the benefits of an up result, and vice versa.



Unskilled: The targeted character cannot use any of his skill adds during his next action, all action totals and passive defense values will be based off of raw attribute values instead. Possibility-rated characters lose their roll-again on 20's while unskilled and ords lose their roll-again on 10's while unskilled. Other unskilled use penalties are not applied; the character has not lost the skill, just the benefit of his adds.

Setback: *Setbacks* make life rougher for the targeted character. The most common *setback* is to cause the character to lose their next action. *Setbacks* are discussed in more detail in Chapter Five. The *player's call* on the interaction can often be used as a guideline for determining a *setback* result.

Break: During a *break*, the targeted character will flee the battle or concede the conflict if she is unable to harm her opponent or in some other way improve her situation during her next action. Characters who *break* will flee or concede after failing to improve their position.

Up: The character who performed the interaction receives a free additional roll to add to their normal roll on their next action against the targeted character, like getting to reroll the die on any result instead of just on 10's and 20's. This reroll from an *up* condition cannot be counted with a possibility, though it can be canceled by a *stymied* result, and vice versa. A possibility may be spent normally to gain another roll on top of this reroll.

Player's Call: As outlined in the skill descriptions, the player must state before rolling the die the exact effect he wants the interaction to have on the targeted character. With a *player's call* result they get the effect they wanted.

Charm, Interrogate and Persuade Results

Charm is used to improve the target character's *attitude* towards the interacting character, *persuasion* is used to convince the target character to do something for the interacting character and interrogation is a use of the *intimidation* skill to get information out of the target character. The results listed in these two columns deal with the *attitude* of the target character, either towards the interacting character or towards the information he's being interrogated about.

Loyal: *Loyal* characters are strongly committed to the characters that have earned their loyalty. They go to considerable lengths to guarantee the safety and well being of the characters to which they are loyal and will do almost anything those characters ask of them. Although they are still motivated to keep themselves alive, some loyalties transcend even self-preservation. Information about which they feel loyal to is just as fiercely guarded and protected.

Friendly: Characters with a friendly attitude have reason to believe the other to be worthwhile in some sense—they may share common goals or values, enjoy each other's company, or believe that there is something intrinsically valuable about each other. Friends support each other in small ways—sometimes large ways if needed. Information about which they feel *friendly* is information they would normally only give to someone they like or trust.

Neutral: *Neutral* characters have no reason to like or dislike another. People who are *neutral* may seem friendly or standoffish but they have no actual emotional investment in the character toward which they are *neutral*. The flip side is that such characters aren't out to exploit those toward whom they are *neutral*. "Live and let live" is a good motto for the *neutral* attitude. *Neutral* information is something they don't have any particular reason to withhold from anyone.

Hostile: Characters with a *hostile* attitude toward someone have contempt for or feel threatened by that character. The character may be intensely jealous, or the two characters may belong to rival factions. The hostility may stem from long-held prejudice or recent events. *Hostile* information is something of little enough value that there's no danger in it being known by someone the character does not like.

Enemy: An *enemy* is a character who seeks to destroy the other character. The destruction need not be physical and immediate, but each misery and defeat an enemy can inflict on his opponent fulfills

a personal goal. The difference between *hostile* and *enemy* is that a *hostile* character will usually avoid the undesirable character while an *enemy* will go out of her way to antagonize the person she hates. *Enemy* information is something so inconsequential or obvious that there's no reason not to tell it to anyone.

Enemy+1: This result is not an actual attitude. Some uses of *charm* and *persuasion* require getting a result higher than the target character's attitude so this result provides a level above *enemy*

Using *Charm*

The difficulty number for a *charm* attempt is the *willpower* value of the target. If the target does not have *willpower*, use the target's *Mind* instead. The other factors involved are the target's attitude toward the charmer, and the charmer's attitude toward the target (which are not necessarily the same).

Players may choose the attitude they want their character to adopt toward the target, announcing their choice to the gamemaster. Once they choose an attitude, they need to roleplay it appropriately. For instance, if the player declares that her character is *friendly*, but acts in a truly selfish or manipulative manner, the gamemaster should point out that this is *hostile* behavior. If the player amends her action, there is no penalty. If she does not, the gamemaster should ignore the player's stated attitude and treat her as *hostile* towards the other character. The base attitude of nonplayer characters is determined by the gamemaster according to the character and situation.

A successful *charm* **temporarily** increases a character's attitude by one level, although his *base attitude* (the original attitude of the character) remains the same. Any subsequent *charm* attempts still use the **base attitude** to determine the level of success needed.

To continue charming a character in a single scene (another *charm* attempt may always be made in a future scene), the charmer must receive a result which is at least one level **higher** than the base attitude of the target. This is a *continuing success*.

Example: Magoth is trying to create a good impression and put a nervous bartender in a Nile gin joint at ease (they don't get many giants in there!) Magoth doesn't have *charm* so he's using his *Charisma* of 7. The bartender has a *willpower* skill value of 10 and is *hostile* because he's afraid of Magoth. Roger gets lucky on the die roll and generates an action total of 17 for Magoth. Seven result points (17 - target's willpower of 10) are just enough to get a *hostile* result on the *Charm* column.

Magoth temporarily increases the bartender's attitude by one level to *neutral,* though the bartender's base attitude remains *hostile*. Because Magoth did not get an *enemy* result (one level higher than *hostile*) he cannot try to *charm* the bartender again during the same scene.

A charmed character's base attitude toward the character that charmed him is **improved** at the end of an adventure if the following two conditions are met:

- The character's temporary attitude towards the character is *friendly* or *loyal* at the end of the adventure
- The base attitude of the character **doing** the charming is equal to or better than the base attitude of the one **being** charmed

Example: During the rest of the adventure, Magoth returns to the same bar and keeps trying to make a good impression with the bartender. Magoth manages to successfully get another *hostile* result, which improves the bartender's temporary attitude from *neutral* to *friendly*. This satisfies the first condition.

Pressing the Issue

When a character fails a *charm*, or only gets the minimal level of success necessary, no further *charm* attempts may normally be made in that scene without *pressing the issue*. This means trying to *charm* one more time in the face of a potentially negative reaction from the target character.

If this extra *charm* roll is successful (at any level) the target's temporary attitude improves by one more step, and no further *charm* attempts may be made in that scene, nor may the issue be pressed any further.

The danger is in failure. If a character fails while pressing the issue, the target's base attitude **worsens** by one step **and** the temporary attitude changes to the new base attitude.

Example: Magoth's first *charm* attempt on the bartender got a result equal to the bartender's base attitude, so normally he could not use *charm* again on the bartender that scene. But let's say Magoth decided to press the issue. Roger generates another action value, but this time it's only a 12. That does not get a *hostile* result, the bartender's base attitude, so Magoth has pressed too hard and now things actually become worse. The bartender's base and temporary attitude worsen to *enemy*!

Magoth's attitude towards the bartender has been *neutral*; he's being friendly to the guy but not because he wants to be friends, just to be polite and seem non-threatening. Since Magoth's *neutral* attitude is better than the bartender's base attitude of *hostile*, the second condition is satisfied. At the end of the adventure the bartender's base attitude towards Magoth is improved one step to *neutral*. He's no longer afraid of Magoth, he sees him as just another normal kind of guy.

The second condition exists because people, or other social beings, may put up a good front, but true intentions have a way of leaking through and being perceived. This may not have any effect in the short run - the smooth, evil mastermind may be able to temporarily *charm* or *persuade* our hero, but getting him to change his feelings permanently is difficult indeed. Once free from the smooth-tongued charmer, the hero is most likely going to shake his head and try to figure out why the heck he ever trusted such slime in the first place.

At the beginning of a new adventure, temporary attitudes are reset to the base attitudes. So if Magoth goes back to the same Cairo bar during the next adventure, the bartender's attitude towards him will not be *friendly* like it was at the end of the previous adventure. It will be *neutral*, his base attitude towards Magoth after the previous adventure.

Using *Persuasion*

Persuasion is used to get another character or creature to agree to do a certain thing or accept a certain course of action. The difficulty number for persuading someone is their *willpower* or *Mind* value. Only one *persuasion* attempt may be made on a character about any one issue or suggestion, unless the gamemaster decides there is a good story-related reason to allow another attempt.

Example: At a small refugee camp in Aysle, a viking takes offense at an imagined insult and decides to mop the floor with

Quin. Quin doesn't really want to fight the guy, nor does he want to get smashed by him. Becky describes the viking smashing things, throwing insults at Quin and waving his spear around, with Quin dodging in and out amid the tents while trying to *persuade* the tribesman not to skin him alive. She gives Quin three chances at *persuasion*, with a round or two between each attempt, in order to make the scene interesting.

Persuasion takes into account the target's attitude, much as *charm* does. As with *charm,* the persuading character needs to get a result equal to or greater than the target character's attitude to be successful. The difference is that *persuasion* goes against the target character's **temporary** attitude rather than their base attitude, so using *charm* before *persuasion* can makes it easier to persuade someone to do something.

If the persuader gets a success level **equal** to the target's temporary attitude, the target agrees to the persuader's request in exchange for something of roughly equal value. The payoff must be immediate unless the reward is great and the target has genuine reason to believe he will receive the reward.

If the persuader gets a success level **one step higher** than the target's temporary attitude, the target character agrees to the proposition as stated by the persuader, with no strings attached. This result is only possible if the outcome of the proposition has some value to the target; that is, the target must believe there is some self-interest to be served by going along with the persuader's suggestion - if not right now, then soon. The self-interest can be anything from direct monetary reward, to recognition, to knowledge that he is doing the right thing (as he sees it.) If this is not possible, the result is treated as described above for getting a result equal to the target's attitude.

If the persuader gets a success level **two steps higher** than the target's temporary attitude, the persuaded character will follow through on the suggestion with all possible effort and speed if the target character agrees with the fundamental aim of the course of action suggested by the persuader. Target characters with an attitude of *hostile* are usually unlikely to agree with the persuader, in which case the result should be treated as a result one level above the target's attitude. Note that it is not possible to get two steps higher than *enemy* on the Interaction Results Table.

Example: Quin is trying to convince the viking to stop threatening him. The viking's base and temporary attitude towards Quin are both *hostile* since Quin doesn't have time to try and *charm* the viking before attempting to persuade him.

If Quin gets a result of *enemy+1* on the Persuade Column, two steps higher, the viking will immediately stop attacking Quin if there's any reason he might agree to stop. Perhaps he is only attacking because honor demands it for an insult, but he doesn't really believe that Quin meant to insult him. On the other hand, if he has no real reason to stop attacking Quin, it should be treated as described next.

If Quin gets a result of *enemy* on the Persuade Column, one step higher, the viking might stop attacking if he feels that he's getting something in exchange for stopping. If Quin's *persuasion* attempt included an apology for causing offense, that might be sufficient to satisfy the viking's need for compensation. Or maybe Quin offers to buy the viking a drink or has something else that he offers in exchange for the viking halting his attack. If the viking doesn't see anything of value though, it should be treated as described next.

If Quin gets a *hostile* result on the Persuade column, the same level as the viking's attitude, the viking will stop attacking Quin if he offers up something valuable in exchange, something the viking feels is a suitable payment for the insult he thinks Quin paid him. Maybe Quin has to offer up something expensive, like a new battle-axe to replace the viking's old axe. Or perhaps he has to let the viking humiliate him publicly the same way the viking thinks Quin insulted him.

If Quin doesn't offer up something suitable in exchange, or didn't even get a *hostile* result on his *persuasion* attempt, the viking refuses to stop attacking him.

It is not possible to *persuade* a character to do something that is completely against her nature or ethical principles. One of the prime tricks of evil characters is to misrepresent a situation and the choices so that *persuasion* is possible, i. e. producing false evidence against a hero as part of a *persuasion* attempt to make a target take harmful action against the hero.

Even in situations where *persuasion* is possible, the gamemaster may wish to apply modifiers to the difficulty based on what is being asked of the target character. Moderate risk, such as the chance of losing considerable money or prestige or there being a real chance of physical danger, should be worth at least a +3 modifier. If the situation involves high risk, such as a guaranteed chance of physical harm to oneself or loved ones, the difficulty should be increased by at least +5.

First Edition Terms

In some first edition *Torg* material, the terms *negotiated agreement, yes result* and *vow result* are used in relation to *persuasion* attempts. A *negotiated agreement* is getting a result equal to the target's attitude, a *yes* is getting a result one step above the target's attitude and a *vow* is getting a result two steps higher than the target's attitude.

Haggling

Haggling is a special back-and-forth use of *persuasion* where each person participating in the interaction is trying to convince the other of something. It is most often used when a character wishes to sell or purchase something and the price needs to be negotiated rather than being a predetermined amount.

Not every purchase that can be haggled has to use these rules; haggling can often be done purely by roleplaying out the exchange between the characters. But in cases where a character may be better (or worse) than the player when it comes to swinging a deal these

rules can be used to cover the situation. Even when using these rules, the exchange should still be roleplayed out by the involved players.

The attitude of the characters involved in haggling is not determined by how they feel about each other but by how close each person's initial offering price is to the actual cost or value of the item or service being sold. Using the Value Chart, the amount by which the offer and the price is separated from the actual cost determines each side's attitude:

BASE PRICE/ATTITUDE CHART

Offer	Attitude
Bargain	Friendly
+/-1	Neutral
+/-2	Hostile
+/-3	Enemy

A "bargain" is a price that is much less than the item's actual worth or an offer that is much more than the item's worth. "+/- 1" is a price or offer within one point on the Value Chart, "+/- 2" is within two points and "+/- 3" is within three points.

Example: Terrill is in a Cairo bazaar when an Arabian dagger in a nearby stall catches his eye. The normal price of a dagger (as given in Chapter Thirteen) is $50, which is a value of 9. The merchant, noticing Terrill's interest, tells him that the dagger is "only " $200. Two hundred is a value of 12, three above the dagger's normal cost value, which means Terrill's attitude is *enemy* towards this offer. Terrill counters with an offer of $40, which is a value of 8. This is one below the dagger's normal cost so the merchant is *neutral* to Terrill's offer.

Haggling is conducted in round play. Each character attempts to persuade the other into accepting their offer or price on whatever is being sold. This requires getting a success level **one step higher** than the target character's attitude.

If during a round neither character succeeds in persuading the other, both must adjust their offers to be one point closer on the Value Chart to the other person's offer. In most cases this will improve each character's attitude by one step, increasing the likelihood of someone being successfully persuaded in the next round.

If during a round one character successfully persuades the other, the other character will accept the character's offer or price. If **both** characters successfully persuade each other, they agree to split the difference.

Either character may choose at any time to stop haggling and either meet the other person's offer or call off the deal and stop negotiating.

Example: Terrill tries to persuade the merchant to take his offer of $40 for the dagger while the merchant wants Terrill to pay $200 for it. Terrill has a *willpower* skill of 12 and a *persuasion* skill of 10 and is *enemy* towards the merchant's offer. The merchant has a *willpower* skill of 11 and a *persuasion* skill of 14 and is *neutral* to Terrill's offer. Becky announces that Terrill has the initiative in the first round and gets to go first.

Alan rolls on Terrill's *persuasion* skill and generates a 14. That is only three result points, which is a *neutral* result on the Persuade Column. He needed to get better than the merchant's attitude so he is not successful this round. Becky then rolls for the merchant and gets a *persuasion* total of 16. This is four result points, also a *neutral* result. This is below Terrill's attitude so the merchant also fails this round.

Since both failed, Terrill must raise his offer and the merchant must lower his offer. Terrill raises his offer to $60 and the merchant drops his price to $150. Terrill's new offer is a value of 9, still within one point of the item's actual cost so the merchant remains *neutral*. The merchant's new price is a value of 11, two value points higher than the cost, which lowers Terrill's attitude to *hostile*.

In the second round, Becky says that the merchant has the initiative and gets to go first. She generates a *persuasion* total of 18, another *neutral* result, and again fails to persuade Terrill. Alan generates a total of 17 for Terrill, also another *neutral* result and another failure. Both sides must improve their offers again.

Terrill goes up to $70, a value of 10. This is high enough for the merchant to see it as a "bargain" so his attitude becomes *friendly*. The merchant drops his price to $100, also a value of 10, which improves Terrill's attitude to *neutral*. Becky announces that Terrill has the initiative.

Alan generates a *persuasion* total of 14 for Terrill, a *neutral* result. Since the merchant is now *friendly* this is a success! But the merchant still gets to make his *persuasion* attempt. Becky generates an action value of 15 for a *neutral* result, which is not successful since it's not higher than Terrill's attitude. The merchant accepts Terrill's offer of $70.

If Becky had generated an action value of 19 or higher the merchant would have a *hostile* result on the Persuade Column and also been successful in that round. If that had happened, Terrill and the merchant would have split the difference between the two offers and Terrill would have paid $85 for the dagger.

Clearing the Mind

Player characters and other possibility-rated characters are generally tougher to dazzle and confuse than ords because of their superior attributes and skills, but they are not immune to the effects of charm and persuasion. Fortunately, there is a way for characters to shake off the effects of *charm* and *persuasion*, a chance to *clear their minds*.

To do this, the player (or gamemaster for nonplayer characters) makes a *Perception* check for the character; the difficulty number is the character's own *Mind*. If the result points are equal to or greater than the **result points** of the latest *charm* or *persuasion* attempt against him, the *charm* or *persuasion* is negated. If an *enemy* character made the suggestion, add +3 to the bonus number for clearing the mind.

If a character clears his mind, he is safe from the effects of *charm* and *persuasion* by that opponent for the rest of that act.

Example: After several successful *charms* on her part, Marco finds himself smitten (*friendly*) with Sofia Delour, a nightclub singer in Cairo with connections to the evil Wu Han. She suggests that "my penthouse suite has the best view in Cairo - especially at sunrise." Becky rolls on Sofia's persuasion against Marco's *willpower*, getting 9 result points and a *hostile* result on the Persuade column, two steps higher than Marco's attitude - more than enough to get him to go with her back to her suite.

Juan is afraid this might be a trap, and announces that Marco will try to clear his mind. Marco's *Perception* is 9 and his *Mind* is 10. If Juan can generate a *Perception* total of 19 or better (Marco's *Mind* plus the 9 result points Sofia got on her *persuasion* check) he can keep Marco from going to Sofia's penthouse suite. If not, Marco is putty in Sofia's hands and will willingly follow her there.

Interrogation

Interrogation is handled much like a *persuasion* attempt except that the character uses her *intimidation* skill and the attitude levels apply to how the target feels about the information the interrogator wants, not how the target feels about the interrogator. The better the target's attitude towards the information, the harder it is to get them to reveal it.

Personal information and closely guarded secrets might be something the target feels *loyal* or *friendly* about, while information about a casual acquaintance or an event that didn't involve the character personally might be something they would tell to most people (*neutral*) or even to people they don't necessarily like (*hostile* or *enemy*). The goal of the interrogator is the break the target's resistance and force him into revealing information he wouldn't normally give the interrogating character.

Combat

"The object of life is the death of your enemies."

—Kurst of Orrorsh

Combat in *Torg* is the combat of adventure fiction. Bullets and arrows fly, providing danger - but far less frequently do they provide death, at least for the heroes. The chance of death, however, is always present in combat, and probably more frequently than in fiction, where the author has complete control the outcome of events.

Combat occurs in round play with each round representing 10 seconds of "game time." Resolving everything that happens in a combat round takes longer than 10 seconds of real time do, but for the characters only 10 seconds pass. During combat there are nine general types of actions that characters can perform, which are described in the following section.

Action Descriptions

An *attack* is taken in order to damage a target. An attack action always requires generating an action total.

A *defense* action is the use of a defensive skill such as *dodge* or *melee weapons*. Most defensive actions are passive and do not require generating an action total. Characters can elect to perform an *active defense* though, in which case an action total is generated. On an active defense, if the bonus number is less than +1 it is considered to be a +1 bonus.

A *simple action* is an easy task that usually doesn't require any kind of skill check to perform. Shouting a command, flipping a switch, reloading a clip-fed weapon and moving a short distance are examples of simple actions.

A *movement* action involves any movement that covers more than a short distance or requires the use of a skill, such as climbing, jumping and running. All speed push attempts are movement actions.

Maneuver is an aggressive movement designed to tire an opponent or throw her off balance and is covered by use of the *maneuver* skill and the Interaction Results Table.

Trick, Test, Taunt, and *Intimidation* are uses of the skills with the same names designed to unsettle and throw off an opponent, giving the character a tactical advantage.

In general, a character may only roll the die for one type of action in a round. Passive defense and simple actions do not require die rolls so they may be performed in conjunction with an action that does involve a die roll.

Generally there is no limit on the number of passive defense actions a character can perform, they can always passively defend against every attack directed at them in a round. The number of simple actions a character can perform in one round is generally limited to what makes sense within the ten-second period of time represented by a round.

Characters can attempt to perform more than one action that requires a die roll in a round by performing a multi-action. The rules for *multi-actions* are described later in this chapter.

Initiative

Initiative, which side gets to go first during the round, is determined by the *Drama Deck* and is explained in Chapter Five. Everyone involved in a combat is divided into two factions, the Heroes and Villains. One side will get to go first in a round and when everyone on that side has finished taking their actions the other side gets to take their actions. Once both sides have finished taking their actions, the round is over and initiative is determined again for the next round.

The order in which everyone on a side takes their actions is usually determined by the *Dexterity* attributes of everyone on that side. Characters act in order from highest to lowest *Dexterity*. Gamemasters may also simply progress from one side of the table to the other instead of having characters go in order of *Dexterity* if this seems easier than keeping track of when each character would go in order of *Dexterity*.

Attack Skills

Attack skills include *biotech weapons, energy weapons, fire combat, heavy energy weapons, heavy weapons, unarmed combat, melee weapons, missile weapons* and *martial arts*. Attacks made with magic spells, miracles, psionic powers or some other kind of special ability would use the associated skill as an attack skill. When using an attack skill, if the action total is equal to or higher

than the difficulty number of the attack, the attack hits the target. The difficulty number is the opponent's appropriate defensive skill, which may be passive or an active defense.

Example: Magoth is fighting an edeinos and tries to punch him. The attack is made with Magoth's *unarmed combat* skill, which has a base value of 11. Roger rolls a 13, which is a +1 on the bonus chart. His action total is thus 12. The difficulty number is the edeinos' *unarmed combat* skill. The edeinos passively defends so his base skill value of 10 is used. Magoth's action total is higher than the difficulty number so Magoth successfully hits the edeinos.

Defensive Skills

Most of the attack skills also serve as their own defensive skill. The main exception is ranged combat where the *dodge* skill is used for defense instead of the skill used to make the ranged attack. Most defenses will be passive, using the base value of the skill, but characters can elect to make an *active defense* and increase the difficulty number for their opponent.

When rolling a bonus for an active defense, treat all bonus numbers of less than +1 as +1. An active defense can never make a character easier to hit, only harder.

Example: A group of Nile gangsters whip out their pistols and start shooting at Quin. Paul declares that Quin is going to actively defend with his *dodge* skill, which has a base value of 13. Paul rolls a 7, which is a -2 on the bonus chart. Since this is less than +1 it is treated as a +1, raising Quin's *dodge* value to 14.

A character does not need to have the initiative to perform an active defense, it can be taken during the opponents initiative. An active defense does have to be declared before the attacker rolls the die. Because an active defense requires a die roll, characters can only perform an active defense if they have not already taken a dice action that round.

Determining Damage

"Hitting an adversary is necessary but not sufficient."
—Dr. Hachi Mara-Two

Once a character is hit, the effect total (usually called the damage total) determines damage. The attacker's damage value is his *Strength*, possibly modified by a melee or missile weapon, or the damage value of the weapon itself (for firearms and other weapons that provide their own energy). The difficulty is the target's *Toughness* (which might be modified by armor). The more the difficulty number is exceeded, the more the target is damaged. Remember that to get an effect total, you use the **same** bonus number that generated the action total.

Example: Quin's Uzi has a damage value of 17. His die roll on an attack is a 15 for a bonus of +2; this gives him a damage total of 19 (17+2). His opponent has a *Toughness* of 10 and is wearing armor that gives him a +5, raising his value to 15. Quin does (19-15) 4 result points of damage.

The result points determined by applying the damage total against the opponent's *Toughness* or armor value are read on the *Combat Results Table* to determine the amount and type of damage done by the attack. There are two columns on the chart, one for ords and one for possibility-rated characters. By their nature, possibility-rated characters (whether they are player characters or nonplayer characters) are better able to endure damage than ords.

COMBAT RESULTS TABLE

	Ords	Possibility-rated
s	1	1
1	O 1	1
2	K 1	O 1
3	O 2	K 1
4	K 2	2
5	Knockdown O 3	O 2
6	Knockdown K 3	Knockdown K 2
7	Knockdown K/O 4	Knockdown O 3
8	Wnd KO 4	Knockdown K 3
9	Wnd K/O 5	Knockdown K/O 3
10	Wnd KO 5	Wnd K/O 4
11	2Wnd K/O 6	Wnd K/O 4
12	2Wnd KO 6	Wnd KO 4
13	3Wnd K/O 7	2Wnd K/O 5
14	3Wnd KO 7	2Wnd KO 5
15	4Wnd KO 8	3Wnd KO 5
+2	+1Wnd +1 shock	+1Wnd +1 shock

Types of Damage

A character can suffer up to four types of damage when an attack successfully causes injury: *shock, knockout condition* and *wounds* are the three main kinds of damage. The fourth type, *knockdown,* is very temporary and is more of a condition than actual damage.

Shock Damage

Shock damage is expressed as a number. When the total number of shock points taken equals or exceeds a character's *Toughness*, he falls unconscious. Unconscious or resting characters recover shock damage at the rate of one point a minute if the character does not also have a KO condition. An unconscious character will wake up when his shock damage is reduced to an amount less than his *Toughness*.

Example: Quin's *Toughness* is 11. If he takes 11 or more points of shock damage in a fight he passes out. He will remain unconscious until enough shock damage has been healed or removed to bring him to 10 or fewer points of shock damage. If Quin also has a KO condition he won't heal any shock damage until the KO is gone.

Knockout Conditions

Knockout conditions represent blows to vulnerable areas. The letters "K" and "O" mark knockout conditions. When a character takes a K, the player should record that on the character sheet. If a character with a K later takes an O, that's a KO, which knocks the character unconscious.

A K condition lasts for half an hour, representing a serious jolt to the nervous system. If a character already has a K result and takes another K, the shock damage for that blow only is increased by three.

Any Os taken before a K result last for only a round and then fade. If a character already has an O result and takes a K, that's also a KO result and he is knocked unconscious.

A *K/O* result means that if the character has no knockout condition already, he takes a K. If he already has a K, he takes an O instead.

After five minutes, the O of a KO condition will fade, leaving the character with just a K result. The character will regain consciousness at this point (unless he's also unconscious from shock damage, which won't heal while a character has a KO result.)

Example: In the first round of a fight, Quin takes a K result in damage. In the next round, he takes another K and three points of shock damage. Since he already has a K result, the second K becomes three additional points of shock damage and he takes six points of shock that round. In the third round, he takes a K/O result. Since he already has a K, he takes an O, which gives him a KO, and he's knocked unconscious. After five minutes he will wake up with just a K condition.

Pain

While *Torg*'s damage system covers a wide variety of injuries, it doesn't really deal with the pain caused by injuries. There is a penalty on actions taken while wounded, and unconsciousness from shock or KO conditions could be interpreted as being due to pain, but that's about it.

One possible (**and entirely optional**) way to represent the effects of pain in game terms is to use the Character Interaction rules and have effects like *stymied, unskilled* and *setback* represent the temporary reaction a character has when hit with a new injury. Any time a character takes a K or a wound result in combat, the gamemaster generates a bonus number, rolling again on 10's and 20's, and adds it to the damage result points then consults the *intimidation* column of the Interaction Results Table.

Example: An Orrorshan werewolf has just clawed Terrill during a battle. The attack only does three result points of damage, a K 1 result. Becky decides that the K might be painful and checks for any extra effects from it. She rolls an 18, a bonus number of +5. Adding this to the three result points of damage, she looks up 8 result points as an *intimidation*. It's an *unskilled* result. The claw marks are only scratches but they hurt a lot, and the pain temporarily makes it difficult for Terrill to think and react as fast as normal, but only for a moment (one round).

If the bonus number reduces the total to less than zero, the character doesn't feel any pain from the injury. Using a bonus number allows for small injuries to sometimes hurt a lot and serious injuries to sometimes have no effect. This additional effect should only last for one round, though gamemasters may in some situations want to have the effect linger as long as the damage is unhealed.

Characters who have the *resist pain* skill would be able to use the skill to ignore these effects in the same way they can ignore the action penalties for being wounded.

Knockdown

Knockdown causes a character to spend his next action getting up, although he is not completely helpless - he may take an active defense action while getting back up. Alternately, the character can remain on the ground and take an action from that position but at a penalty. The penalty will depend on the action the character attempts and the circumstances, but should be at least a +2 to the difficulty.

Example: Quin suffers a Knockdown during a fight. Instead of getting back up he decides to shoot at his opponent from the ground. Becky assigns a +2 penalty to the attempt. In the next round, instead of getting up Quin decides to *intimidate* his opponent. Becky decides that being laid out of the ground is not the best position for intimidating a standing opponent and assigns a +5 penalty this time.

If a character suffers a Knockdown result while already under the effects of a Knockdown, or takes multiple Knockdown results at the same time, the extra Knockdowns further limit what the character can do while she is knocked down. A second Knockdown limits the character to only being able to perform simple actions during their next action (they can get back up, but they can't actively defend while doing so since that is not a simple action.) Any further Knockdowns extend the number of rounds that the character can only perform simple actions.

Example: While he's still on the ground from a previous Knockdown result, two of Quin's opponents run up and start kicking him. Each one manages to hit and each gets a Knockdown result as part of their damage on Quin. Because he's already under the effects of one Knockdown, these two additional Knockdowns mean that Quin can only perform simple actions for the next two rounds. Even if Quin stands up during the next round, he will still be too dazed to do anything but simple actions in the next round as well.

Wounds

Wound damage is serious injuries that linger and hinder a character's ability to act. There are four levels of wounds: *wounded, heavily wounded, mortally wounded*, and *dead* (more than four wounds also counts as *dead*.) The number of wound levels taken from an attack precedes the abbreviation "Wnd" on the Combat Results Table.

Wounds are cumulative: a *heavily wounded* character that takes another *wound* is now *mortally wounded*, and so forth. When a character reaches the *mortally wounded* level, he will soon die unless he receives medical attention. Whenever a character takes any level of wound damage in combat he also suffers an automatic Knockdown result (see above).

While wounded, a character suffers a penalty on any action she attempts because of the pain caused by the injury. The *resist pain* and *willpower* skill can be used to temporarily ignore these penalties. Certain painkilling drugs, magic spells and other effects may also allow a character to ignore the penalties caused by injuries.

The penalty is equal to the character's wound level: *wounded* characters have a +1 penalty, *heavily wounded* characters have a +2 penalty and *mortally wounded* characters have a +3 penalty. *Dead* characters of course can't do anything (the ultimate penalty).

Additionally, when a character is at *mortally wounded*, he takes one shock point of damage a round until one of two things occurs:

The "Glass-Jawed Ninja" Problem

Characters with high defensive skill values, such as most ninja, are naturally enough difficult for characters with low attack skill values to hit. But when an attacker with a low skill value lucks out and generates a bonus number large enough to hit the character with a high defense value, he ends up doing serious amounts of damage to the character. Why? The same large bonus number gets applied to his damage value.

Example: Yukitada has a *dodge* skill of 15. A Nile Empire shocktrooper with a *fire combat* skill of 10 is trying to shoot her. In order to hit, the shocktrooper has to generate a bonus of at least +5. This means that should he ever succeed in hitting Yukitada, he'll have at least a +5 bonus to his damage since he can't hit with any smaller bonus number.

This often has the effect of causing the characters with high defenses to go untouched for much of a fight but then being taken out of action by one lucky shot. While this "glass jaw syndrome" is not unusual in adventure fiction, it can cause problems when the bonus number needed to hit is exceptionally large and the attacker manages to generate it.

Example: Yukitada is actively defending against the shocktrooper's attack and increases her *dodge* value to 20. Amazingly, the shocktrooper rolls three 10's in row and then a 3 for a total of 33, a +10 bonus that raises his *fire combat* to 20. He successfully hits!

Unfortunately for Yukitada, the damage value of his pistol, a 15, is increased by the same +10. The damage total is 25 and Yukitada's *Toughness* is 10. The 15 result points on the Combat Results Table indicates that Yukitada is *mortally wounded* and knocked unconscious (KO condition), not good!

While most players will probably accept the risk of one lucky blow taking them out in exchange for not taking **any** damage most of the time, if it becomes a serious problem there is an alternative. Instead of using the same bonus number to determine the action and effect totals, the rolled bonus number is only applied to the action total. The **result points** of the attack are then used as the bonus to the effect total. This way attacks that barely manage to hit only do small amounts of damage and an attack has to be very successful before it will do a lot of damage.

Example: In the previous example, the shocktrooper generated a +10 bonus that raised his *fire combat* skill to 20, the same as Yukitada's *dodge* value. There are zero result points (20 - 20) on the attack. Instead of having a +10 bonus to his pistol's damage value of 15 the shocktrooper only has a +0 bonus. This means the weapon only gets five result points against Yukitada's *Toughness* instead of 15 result points, doing considerably less damage.

The flip side to this approach is that it makes characters with high attack skill values exceptionally deadly in combat.

Even if they roll poorly and generate a small bonus number they may still have enough result points to inflict large amounts of damage.

Example: Terrill is being attacked by a ninja with a *martial arts* skill value of 19 using a sword, with a damage value of 13. Terrill's *unarmed combat* skill value is only 9 and his *Toughness* is 7. Becky rolls a 7 for the ninja's attack, a -2 bonus. The ninja still hits with an action total of 17, giving him eight result points on the attack. The ninja's damage bonus is thus +8, not -2, raising his damage value to 21. The ninja gets 14 result points of damage, *heavily wounding* Terrill and knocking him unconscious (KO condition). Under the normal *Torg* rules, the ninja's damage value would have been only 11 (-2 damage bonus) and Terrill would have taken much less damage.

If the gaming group elects to use this method of determining damage bonuses, the gamemaster will have to modify all of the *combat option modifiers* found in this chapter to account for the different method. Because a modifier to the action value will increase or decrease the number of result points of an attack, **an equal and opposite modifier** has to be applied to the damage modifier to negate the change in the result points.

Example: The *Full-Auto* combat option is normally a +3 bonus to the action value and a +3 bonus to the damage value. When using the result-point method of determining damage bonuses, the +3 bonus to the action value has to be subtracted from the +3 damage bonus. So when using the result-point system, full-auto has a +3 bonus to the action value and a +0 bonus to the damage value.

It's possible to combine the two methods and solve both problems but this complicates gameplay and can slow things down quite a bit. After making a successful attack, the damage bonus would be the **lower** of the result points or the rolled bonus number. Also, any damage value modifiers from combat options will be based on which method is used, requiring the players and gamemasters to keep track of both sets of numbers.

Example: In the above example involving Terrill and the ninja, the ninja generated a -2 bonus number and had eight result points on the attack. Because the bonus number is less than the result points, the ninja's damage bonus is -2 instead of +8.

In the earlier example involving the shocktrooper shooting at Yukitada, the shocktrooper generated a +10 bonus and zero result points on the attack. Since the result points are less, his damage bonus is +0 instead of +10.

An attack done with a weapon on full-auto will have either a +3 damage bonus or a +0 damage bonus depending on whether the normal *Torg* damage bonus is used or if the result-point bonus is used.

- he receives medical attention (*first aid* or *medicine* skill) to stop the accumulation of shock damage, or
- the shock damage equals his *Toughness*, at which point his wound level increases to *dead* and he dies.

When a character dies at four wounds, immediate emergency medical attention (*first aid* or *medicine* skills) can be used to improve her condition to *mortally wounded* **if** applied within one round of the character taking the fourth wound. Characters who have taken five or more wounds cannot be saved.

Characters who go from *mortally wounded* to *dead* due to accumulated shock damage **can** have their condition reversed back to *mortally wounded* with successful medical treatment. A second medical treatment must be made immediately in the next round to stabilize the character or their condition will worsen to *dead* again and this time it cannot be reversed.

Healing

Each type of damage (except Knockdowns) takes a different amount of time from which to recover. Knockdowns are recovered simply by standing up.

Shock damage is removed at a rate of one point per minute. An O by itself is removed after one round. A K requires a half an hour to go away. The O portion of a KO is removed in five minutes. A character will not recover any shock damage while suffering from a KO result. Once the KO has faded to a K result then the character will start recovering shock points.

Wound damage takes much longer to heal and isn't automatic. In order to heal a wound, the character makes a *healing check*. The player generates a *Toughness* total for her character against a difficulty number based on the character's total wound level. Another character can use the *medicine* skill to try and help out the recovering character. The amount of time a character has to wait before making the first healing check depends on his total wound level. Once that first healing check has been made, if any further checks are needed they can be made on a daily basis until the character has fully recovered.

A successful healing check will improve a character's wound condition by one level. A failed check does not make the character's condition any worse.

Slower Healing

In adventure fiction the heroes are never out of action for very long, even after being at death's door. The amounts of time stated before the first healing check can occur are meant to reflect this but may seem inappropriately short if a player or gamemaster wishes to describe their damage in more realistic terms. A *wound*, for example, might be a minor concussion in which case one day isn't too unreasonable. But if it's interpreted as a fractured bone, only needing one day to fully heal is nothing short of miraculous!

In situations like this, it is up to the player and gamemaster to work together to determine the exact nature of the injury and how much time seems reasonable before a healing check may be made.

HEALING CHART

Wound Level	Difficulty	Time
Wounded	8	one day
Heavily Wounded	12	three days
Mortally Wounded	15	seven days

Example: Father Wagner was *mortally wounded* in a battle against the Church Police of the Cyberpapacy but fortunately one of his friends was able to stabilize him with *first aid* so that he didn't bleed to death from shock damage. His friends get him to a safe place where he can try to recover.

After a week of rest, Tina can make the first healing check for Wagner. His *Toughness* is 8 but a doctor has been treating him during the week and with her *medicine* skill provides Wagner with a +3 bonus to his healing check. Tina rolls an 18, a +5 bonus. Adding in the modifier from the doctor gives Wagner a *Toughness* total of 16, a success! Wagner's condition improves to *heavily wounded*.

After another day of rest, Tina can make a second healing check for Wagner. This time the doctor only provides a +1 bonus and Tina rolls poorly, an 8. Wagner's *Toughness* total is only 7 so the check fails. He remains at *heavily wounded* and another day has to pass before Tina can try again.

The third time around, the healing check is successful and Wagner's condition improves to *wounded*. After one more day of rest Tina gets to make yet another healing check. This one is also successful and Wagner is fully healed after a grand total of (7 + 1 + 1 + 1) 10 days.

Movement in Combat

In combat, characters may move short distances as a simple action, but what constitutes a short distance? For most characters this will involve walking or running since other types of movement

like jumping, swimming and climbing require the character to make a skill check, so they cannot be a simple action.

Walking distance, though it can also be applied to the distance that a vehicle or mount can be driven or piloted without problem, is determined by subtracting four from a character's running limit value. The measure of this value indicates the distance the character can move as a simple action without it interfering with any dice actions she takes that round.

Example: A character with a running limit value of 8 has a walking value of 4, which is six meters. During a round the character can move up to six meters and it won't interfere with anything else she does that round.

For a vehicle or a mount, subtract four from either the vehicle's speed value or the skill value of the driver, whichever is less, to determine how far the vehicle can be driven in a round without difficulty.

Example: Quin has a *land vehicles* skill of 10 and is driving a car with a speed value of 14. Since Quin's skill value is less, four is subtracted from it to find out how far Quin can drive the car without problems. This is a value of (10 - 4) 6, only 15 meters. Quin is not a good enough driver to cover much distance without it distracting him from anything else he wants to do that round.

Covering more than the walking distance but less than the limit value in a round is still a simple action but it requires enough attention from the character that it imposes a +2 difficulty modifier to any dice action the character takes that round.

For a vehicle, covering more than the "walking" distance but less than the speed value or driver's skill value (whichever is less) is still a simple action but imposes the same +2 penalty on any dice actions the character takes that round.

Example: The character with a running limit value of 8 can move up to six meters without it causing any problems. Moving a distance greater than six meters but less than 40 meters (the measure of her limit value) is still a simple action but makes anything else she does that round more difficult.

If Quin drives the car more than 15 meters but less than 100 meters (the measure of his skill value) in a round it is still a simple action but it distracts him enough that anything else he does is penalized.

Moving more than a character's limit value requires a speed push and is always a dice action. Driving a vehicle faster than its speed value is also a speed push. If the driver's skill value is less than the speed value of the vehicle, driving at a speed value faster than his skill value is not a speed push but it is a dice action. The base difficulty of this is Easy (5) but may be modified by the gamemaster based on circumstances.

Example: If Quin wants to drive the car a distance between 100 and 600 meters (the measure of the car's speed value of 14) he has to make a *land vehicles* skill check against a difficulty of 5 to avoid losing control of the car. If he wants to cover more than 600 meters in that round he will have to attempt a speed push.

Combat Options and Modifiers

Combat is rarely as simple as just making attack totals and applying damage. There are different types of attacks, different types of weapons used, all kinds of situational modifiers that might come into play and even dangers poised by the surroundings themselves.

Melee Weapon Damage

When a character attacks another character unarmed, the damage value is the attacker's *Strength* value. When the attacker uses a melee or strength-powered missile weapon, the weapon's adds are added to the character's *Strength* to determine the base damage value. For example, a character with *Strength* 8 using a STR+6 sword has a base damage value of 14.

The *maximum damage value* listed for a weapon (as listed in Chapter Thirteen and in equipment lists in other *Torg* products) is the maximum **base** damage value possible for the weapon. It is **not** a limit on the damage total that can be caused with the weapon.

Example: Grod, an Ayslish ogre with a *Strength* of 17, picks up a normal human broadsword. The broadsword does STR+6 damage and it's maximum damage value is 20. Grod's base damage value with the broadsword is thus 20, not (17 + 6) 23. In combat, his bonus numbers are added to the base damage value of 20 normally, the limit does not apply to his damage total with the weapon.

Using Two Weapons

Whether it's a sword fighter with a long blade in one hand and a short blade in the other, or a gunman blasting away with a pistol in

First Edition *Torg* Terminology

Non-lethal damage was called "stun damage" in the original *Torg* rulebook and supplements. Instead of the first wound being converted into an extra K result of damage it became a Knockdown result.

each hand, adventure fiction is full of characters that fight with two weapons at the same time. Characters in *Torg* are no exception.

When a character fights with two melee weapons, he has the option of using one for defense against other melee weapons or hand-to-hand attacks. Usually the smaller of the two weapons is used for this purpose. A character fighting this way receives the same benefits as if he were using a buckler shield (see Chapter Thirteen.) Attacks made with the other weapon are conducted normally with no modifiers. Normally characters using two ranged weapons will not want to use them to parry or block melee or hand-to-hand attacks. But if they do try it, the gamemaster will need to determine if the weapon is large enough to be of any use and also determine what might happen to the weapon if an attack hits it.

If the character chooses to attack with both of his weapons he may choose to attack a single opponent with both weapons or split his attacks on two or more opponents. If he attacks a single opponent with both weapons, the attack is conducted normally. Damage is determined by using the weapon with the highest base damage value and receives a +2 bonus. This applies to both melee and ranged weapon use.

If the character chooses to attack more than one opponent with his two weapons, this is considered a multi-action and uses the "Quick Multi-Attacks" rules found later in this chapter. His damage total will again be based on the weapon with the highest base damage value and receives a +2 bonus. The same damage total is applied against all of the opponents successfully hit. This also applies to both melee and ranged weapons use.

Characters using two semiautomatic or automatic firearms at the same time will often combine this option with the "Single, Burst and Automatic Fire" option found later in this section.

Non-Lethal Damage

Non-lethal damage is caused by attacks intended or designed to injure and incapacitate rather than kill. Attacks made with *unarmed combat* are almost always non-lethal damage. Some weapons may also cause non-lethal damage, such as clubs or "beanbag" rounds fired from a shotgun.

Some weapons may also be used in non-conventional ways to do non-lethal damage, such as striking with the flat of a blade instead of the sharp edge or slamming the hilt of the weapon into the target.

Non-lethal attacks do shock, Knockdown and KO damage like regular attacks; however, they do not wound as frequently or severely. They can still wound and kill though. When determining damage from a non-lethal attack, if no wound damage is caused then the damage is applied normally. If wound damage does occur, the wound level is reduced by one step and the character suffers an extra K result.

Example: Magoth punches an edeinos warrior and his damage result is Wnd K/O 5. Because *unarmed combat* is treated as non-lethal damage, one wound level is reduced (down to no wounds) and the "missing" wound becomes a K result. A K plus a K/O is a KO so the damage the edeinos takes from the punch is a KO and five shock points.

In the next round, Magoth punches another edeinos and this time gets a damage result of 2Wnd KO 6. The wound level is reduced by one and an extra K is applied. Because there's already a K result (in the KO) the extra K becomes three more points of shock damage. The edeinos takes a Wnd KO 9 result from the punch.

Knockout Attacks

Closely related to non-lethal attacks are *knockout attacks*, attacks intended to incapacitate or cause unconsciousness without causing serious injury. Almost all knockout attacks are done with weapons designed for that purpose, such as stun grenades, tasers and high-tech energy weapons ("set phasers on stun.")

For weapons designed specifically to do knockout damage, the attack is resolved normally. Before damage is applied to the character it is modified according to these rules:

- the wound level, if any, is reduced one step and an extra K result is applied (as with non-lethal damage)
- any remaining wound levels are translated into an equal number of Knockdown results if the attack is meant to incapacitate, **or**
- any remaining wound levels are translated into three points of shock damage each if the attack is meant to render the target unconscious

Example: A Nippon Tech security guard shoots Quin with a taser and generates a damage total of 27. Quin's *Toughness* is 11 so Becky looks up 16 result points on the Combat Results Table. The unmodified damage is 3Wnd KO 5. Because a taser is a knockout weapon meant to incapacitate, she modifies the damage as follows:

- the wound level is reduced one step, making the damage 2Wnd KO 5
- an extra K result is applied; since there is already a K present in the KO this becomes three points of shock, making the damage 2Wnd KO 8
- remaining two wound levels are translated into Knockdowns, making the final damage 2 Knockdowns KO 8

Example: Yukitada tosses a stun gas grenade at the feet of a Cyberpapal inquisitor and generates a damage total of 27. The inquisitor has a *Toughness* of 11 so Becky looks up 16 result points on the Combat Results Table. The unmodified damage is 3Wnd KO

5. Because the stun grenade is a knockout weapon designed to render the target unconscious, she modifies the damage as follows:

- the wound level is reduced one step, making the damage 2Wnd KO 5
- an extra K result is applied; since there is already a K present in the KO this becomes three points of shock, making the damage 2Wnd KO 8
- remaining two wound levels are translated into a total of six points of shock damage, making the final damage KO 14

If the knockout attack causes the target to go unconscious, any Knockdown results go into effect **when the character regains consciousness**. This represents the character being "groggy" and still dazed from the attack.

Example: Quin was hit by a taser that did 2 Knockdowns KO 8 and knocked unconscious by the KO. When he wakes up five minutes later, the two Knockdowns are still in effect so he is automatically considered knocked down and can only perform a simple action that round.

Knockdown Attack

A *knockdown attack* is an attempt to knock an opponent off its feet, forcing to waste its next action standing back up. Knockdown attacks can be done with almost any kind of normal attack. Often the only thing that has to be done is to direct the attack at the target's legs and knock them out from underneath it.

A knockdown attack applies a -2 penalty to the **bonus number** of the attack. If the action value achieves a *Good* success level or better, the attack causes an automatic Knockdown result in addition to any normal damage from the attack. If the action value only achieves a *Minimal* or *Average* success, only normal damage is applied.

Example: Magoth is fighting another giant and needs a moment to get some distance between him and his opponent so that he can start using his magic. Roger declares that Magoth is going to try a knockdown attack, he's going to swing his sword at his opponent's legs and hope it'll make him fall. Then while the other giant is spending the next round getting up Magoth will have time to move away and start casting a spell.

Roger rolls a 10 and then a 5. A die total of 15 is a +3 bonus. Because he's doing a knockdown attack this is modified by -2 for a final bonus of +1. This gives Magoth an action total of 11 with his *melee weapons* skill. His opponent's *melee weapons* skill is 10 so he only has one result point, only an *Average* success, and does not get the automatic Knockdown result. His damage from the attack is figured normally using his modified bonus of +1.

Roger tries again in the next round. This time he rolls a 19, a +6 bonus, which gives him an action total of 14 after applying the modifier for a knockdown attack. Four result points is a *Good* success so he automatically scores a Knockdown result on his opponent in addition to the regular damage from his attack.

Ranged Weapon Modifiers

Hitting a target at a distance becomes more difficult the farther away the target is from the attacker. Most ranged weapons also experience a drop in damage the farther they have to travel before hitting a target. Projectile weapons, for example, slow down as they travel and energy beams may dissipate or diffuse the farther they go. Write-ups for ranged weapons, such as the ones in Chapter Thirteen, will provide the range values for the weapons.

Ammunition

Keeping exact track of every bullet, arrow and laser beam fired in combat is a bookkeeping chore we do not recommend, which is why ammunition is listed here as a combat **options** instead of being a normal rule. It may be accurate, but we don't think it's that much fun. But the decision on whether to count ammunition or not is left up to each gaming group, some may like doing it while others may not.

If your gaming group is willing to play fast and loose with ammunition rules, let ammunition be a rare problem. Characters can happily blast away without a care until it's dramatically appropriate for them to be low on ammunition. If a *setback* occurs, for example, it may indicate that the character loses some of the arrows from his quiver or she discovers that she only has a few clips of ammunition left for her pistol.

Trigger-happy characters might have from 5 to 10 *combat rounds* worth of ammunition left, those who have been conserving ammo might have up to 15 to 25 *combat rounds* of ammunition left, and they have to start keeping track of their ammo usage from that point. Running short on ammunition should work as a dramatic element of the story, not as an exercise in bookkeeping..

If your group wants to keep track of ammunition, the weapon writeups in Chapter Thirteen and in other *Torg* products list the number of *combat rounds* of ammunition a weapon has when fully loaded. This is **not** necessarily the same thing as the number of bullets a gun might hold in a clip or the number of crossbow bolts the character has in their quiver. Instead it indicates the number of times the weapon may be fired **at its normal rate of fire** before it has to be reloaded.

A crossbow for example has an ammo rating of 1; it has to be reloaded every time it's fired. A submachine gun with an ammo rating of 10 can fire ten *bursts*, not ten bullets, before it has to be reloaded. If a weapon can only fire at full auto, its ammo rating is the number of times it can be fired at full auto before it needs reloading.

How much *total* ammunition the character is actually carrying (and how much they are capable of carrying) is up to the player and gamemaster to decide. Reloading most weapons counts as a simple action, though complicated and/or very large weapons may take several rounds to reload and may require a skill check as well.

Each round that a character fires a weapon uses up one combat round's worth of ammunition. If the character is firing at more than one target, he uses up a number of combat rounds equal to the number of shots taken; if the character uses the Single Fire as Multi combat option, that counts as three combat rounds worth of ammo. If firing a burst-fire weapon at full automatic, chalk off **seven** rounds worth of ammo. If the Burst Fire as Single-Shot combat option is used, mark off one combat round of ammo for every three shots taken.

- *Point-blank* range is any distance less than the given *short* range of a weapon. For most ranged weapons in *Torg* point-blank range is zero to three meters. The minimum bonus number for a point-blank attack is +1, same as the rule for active defenses.
- *Short* range has no modifiers.
- *Medium* range is a -3 modifier to the **bonus number**.
- *Long* range is a -5 modifier to the **bonus number.**

Example: Quin is firing his .357 Desert Eagle pistol at a gospog that is 30 meters away. For the Desert Eagle this is long range. Paul rolls a 20 and then a 2 for a 22, a +8 bonus number. But because the attack is being made at long range, this is modified by -5 and Paul only adds a +3 bonus to Quin's *fire combat* skill and to the pistol's damage value.

Single, Burst and Automatic Fire

Weapons capable of automatic and burst fire are assumed to be firing in bursts. If such a weapon is fired single-shot ("Burst Fire as Single-Shot") its **damage value** is reduced by 3. If the weapon is being fired at full automatic ("Full Auto"), the character receives a +3 bonus to his **bonus number**. Some automatic weapons only fire at full auto. For these weapons the +3 bonus is already calculated into their damage value so the bonus is **only** applied to the action value.

Example: Quin's Uzi is capable of firing a burst and at full auto so it's damage value of 17 is based on burst fire. If Quin switches the weapon to single fire mode the damage value drops to 14.

Quin fires the Uzi on full auto and Paul rolls a 7, a bonus number of -2. Because Quin is firing on full auto this is increased by +3 so Paul adds a +1 bonus to Quin's *fire combat* skill and the Uzi's damage value.

If Quin were to fire a 7.62mm minigun, which can only fire at full auto, he would get a +3 bonus to his action total but not to the damage total because it is already calculated into the minigun's damage value.

Some single-shot weapons may be fired multiple times in one round ("Single Fire as Multi"); this increases the **damage value** by +3. At the gamemaster's discretion, the "Single Fire as Multi" modifier may be also be applied to some small thrown weapons like shurikens to represent the character flinging several of them at the same time.

Example: Quin pulls the trigger as fast as he can on his Desert Eagle pistol, trying to take down another gospog that has suddenly appeared right in front of him. The pistol's damage value is normally 16, by repeatedly firing it Quin raises it to 19.

Aiming

A character may spend one round *aiming*. In the next round, the aiming character gets a +3 bonus to his action value. Aiming does not increase the damage value.

Aiming may only be done with firearms and missile weapons, and requires the attacker to remain motionless and be undisturbed for that round while he tracks his target. The character can perform simple actions while aiming at the gamemaster's discretion. Speaking briefly to another character might not interrupt his concentration, but walking through a doorway might.

Because the character is remaining motionless and concentrating on his target, any attack made against an aiming character has the **bonus number** increased by +3, but he gets to use his normal passive defense. If the character is successfully damaged by an attack while aiming, his aim is ruined and he will not get the aiming bonus on his next action.

Vital Blow

A *vital blow* is an attack aimed at a specific spot with the intent of causing extra damage, such as punching someone in the kidneys, shooting them in the head or sliding a blade between their ribs and into their heart or a lung. The modifiers for a vital blow depend on how much more difficult of an attack the character wishes to perform and/or how much more damage he wants to cause.

The lowest level of a vital blow applies a -2 penalty to the action value of an attack while increasing the damage value by +1. Players can choose increasingly difficult or damaging vital blows by applying the -2/+1 modifier multiple times, up to a maximum of -8/+4.

Example: Yukitada needs to eliminate a Yakuza bodyguard fast so that he doesn't have time to make any noise. Barbara declares that Yukitada will attempt a vital blow with a -6 to the action value and a +3 to the damage value. She describes the attack as a sharp blow to the front of the bodyguard's neck.

If the player provides a clear description of what their character is hoping to do with a vital blow , the gamemaster should reward a successful attack by taking into consideration what the player wanted and, if necessary, create additional benefits and results if the vital blow is successful.

Example: Yukitada's vital blow was successful, but just barely. The bodyguard was not knocked out or killed by the attack. However, since Barbara had described the attack and what Yukitada was hoping to do with it, Becky declares that the blow to the bodyguard's neck

has smashed his larynx, rendering him incapable of shouting out an alarm.

If a character is facing an unknown creature, she cannot take a vital blow if she does not know what parts are vital. While some vital parts are fairly obvious (such as the head), for some creatures they may not be vital, the brain may be in their torso instead of in their head or the creature may not even have a brain. In cases like these, characters may make a vital blow attack but the gamemaster does not apply the damage modifier, since the attack is not really hitting anything vital.

Example: Quin is attacked by a gospog, an undead creature created by the High Lords. The gospog is more plant than animal so even though it is humanoid in shape, it doesn't really have any vital organs or body parts. Quin doesn't know this though. Paul declares that Quin will try to blow the gospog's head off with a shot to its head, a -8 on the acting value and a +4 damage value.

Becky allows Paul to take the vital blow, even though she knows it isn't going to do any extra damage because the head isn't a vital part for the gospog. Quin hits and Paul gives Becky the modified damage value, which she adjusts by taking out the vital blow modifier before applying it to the gospog. She tells Paul that Quin blows away half of the gospog's head but that doesn't seem to slow it down any.

Vital Block

The *vital block* is the opposite of a vital blow. Instead of an attacker attempting a more difficult shot in hopes of causing more damage, a vital block is when a defender sacrifices some of his defensive value in exchange for reducing the likelihood of an attack doing serious damage. In essence the character is focusing his attention on protecting only part of his body from attack, saving him from serious injury but not from minor attacks that might hit non-vital areas.

For example, a boxer who curls his arms up in front of his face and chest is protecting his head and body from his opponent's punches by taking them instead on his gloves and forearms. While his opponent may hit him more often this way, the blows will not be landing on anything vital so the defending character won't take as much damage as he might have otherwise.

The modifiers for the vital block depend on how much of his non-vital defense the character is willing to sacrifice for additional protection to vital areas. The lowest level of a vital block applies a -2 penalty to the character's defense value while increasing the character's armor value by +1. Characters can choose the amount by which they protect themselves by applying the -2/+1 modifier multiple times, up to a maximum of -8/+4.

Vital block may be combined with an active defense; the player declares how much of a vital block the character will perform before rolling the die to generate the active defense value.

Example: Magoth is in a sword fight with a powerful evil knight from Aysle, who's been repeatedly hitting Magoth hard enough to cause wound damage. Magoth realizes that he needs to keep the knight from causing any more wounds so he's going to concentrate on protecting his vital areas. In the next round Roger declares that Magoth is going to actively defend with his *melee weapons* skill and he's going to vital block on top of that, with a -4/+2 modifier.

Roger rolls the die and generates a +4 bonus number. Magoth's defense value remains unchanged (the +4 bonus number and -4 vital block modifier cancel out) but he receives a +2 bonus to his *Toughness* (i.e., a +2 armor value) when resisting any damage the evil knight causes that round.

All-Out Attack

All-out attack, sometimes called a sacrifice attack, is a furious, berserk attack that sacrifices defense to increase the chance of hitting and causing damage. An all-out attack may only be done in hand-to-hand combat, it cannot be done with ranged attacks. An all-out attack can be combined with other attack options, such as a knockdown attack or a vital blow, but it cannot be combined with any defensive actions such as an active defense or a vital block.

An all-out attack gives the attacker a +3 bonus to his action value and a +1 bonus to his damage value. But by going all-out, the character leaves himself vulnerable to counterattacks; all blows aimed at the character doing the all-out attack receive a +3 bonus to the **bonus number** of the attack until the character 's next action in the next round.

Example: Marco and Quin are involved in a bar fight somewhere in Cairo. Marco has managed to stay on the sidelines and is watching Quin's back while he mops the floor with some Nile goons. Suddenly, he notices a goon with a knife coming up behind Quin, who doesn't see him.

Juan declares that Marco is going to perform an all-out attack combined with a knockdown attack. He describes Marco climbing up onto the bar and leaping off, trying to land on the goon with the knife. Hopefully he'll knock the guy to the floor and give Quin time to notice him.

The all-out gives Juan a +3 action bonus and a +1 damage bonus while the knockdown is a -2 to both. The final modifiers are +1 on the action value and -1 on the damage value. Juan rolls and Marco succeeds, flying through the air and slamming into the goon.

However, because of the all-out attack, Marco is off-balance and unable to defend himself very well after landing on the goon. While he's picking himself back up another goon comes over and throws a punch at him, getting a +3 bonus to his acting and damage values.

Sweep Attack

A *sweep attack* is an attempt to hit a target without any real concern for how much damage is done. Sweep attacks can be made in most hand-to-hand situations, such as throwing a roundhouse punch or swinging a sword in a huge arc in front of the character.

Sweep attacks can also be made with ranged weapons capable of burst or full auto fire. The attacker sprays out his shots over a wide area instead of trying to group them together, hoping to catch the target with the spray.

A sweep attack gives the character a +5 bonus to his action value but penalizes damage with a -5 modifier. The character is sacrificing accuracy (more damage) for effect (hitting the target).

Example: Quin is fighting a ninja employed by the Kanawa Corporation. The ninja has a very high *dodge* skill and Quin has not been able to successfully shoot him yet. Deciding that trying to finesse a shot isn't working, Quin clicks his Uzi onto full auto and "sprays and prays".

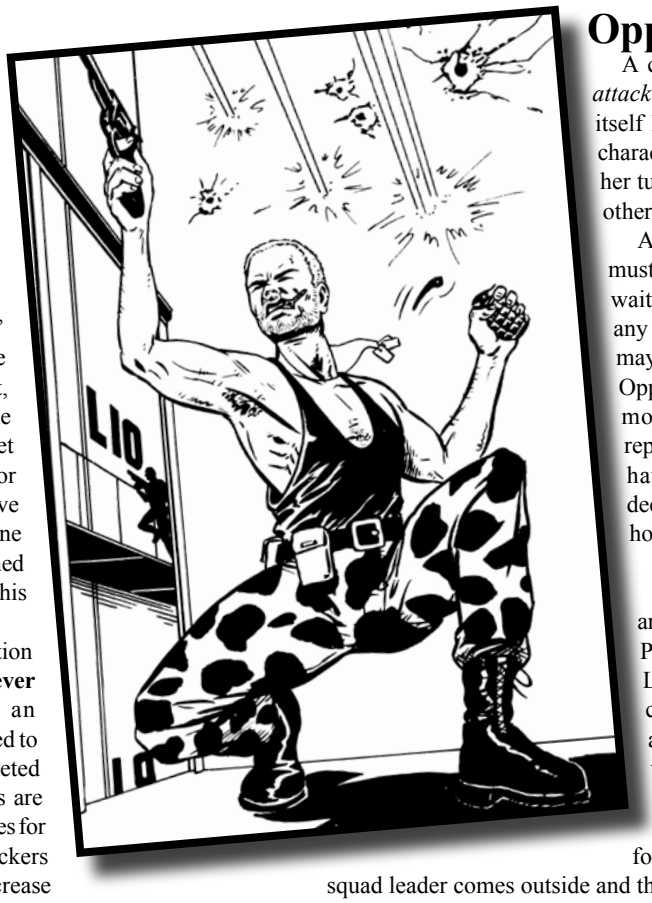
Firing on full auto gives Quin a +3 bonus to both his action and damage totals, which when combined with the sweep attack modifiers gives him a +8 modifier to his action total and a -2 modifier to his damage total. He's not going to do as much damage as he normally

would with the Uzi on full auto but with that bonus to his action total he should at least hit the ninja finally!

Suppressive Fire

Suppressive fire is a variant of the sweep attack used with ranged weapons, usually only those capable of burst and full auto fire but it can be done somewhat less effectively with single-shot weapons too. Unlike a sweep attack, the goal of suppressive fire is not to improve the chances of hitting a target by throwing a lot of lead (or laser beams or whatever) in the air.

Instead, the "field of fire" established by the suppressive fire is meant to *intimidate* the target, to scare him into thinking that if he tries anything he's going to be met by a hailstorm of lead (or lasers or whatever.) The goal of suppressive fire might be to convince someone to surrender or to keep him "pinned down" and unable to move from his current location.



The attacker generates her action and damage totals normally. **Whichever value is higher** is treated as an *intimidation* skill value that is applied to anyone within the area being blanketed by the suppressive fire. The effects are determined according to the usual rules for character interactions. Multiple attackers may combine their fields of fire to increase the effect of their suppressive fire using the rules for combining actions as described later in this chapter.

Example: Quin is trying to sneak into a Nile weird science research outpost when a guard in a tower spots him. Quin dives for cover as the guard opens up on him with a heavy machine gun. Bullets pound into the boulder Quin hides behind and into the ground around it; if Quin sticks his head out to shoot back he might get hit before he can get off a shot, and running for it would be just as bad!

The guard in the tower is using suppressive fire to keep Quin pinned down behind the boulder; he doesn't want Quin to escape so he's going to try and keep Quin from moving until a shocktrooper patrol can be sent out to come at Quin from another direction. The guard's *heavy weapons* skill is 11 and his machine gun has a damage value of 25. Quin is at short range for the machine gun.

Becky rolls poorly and gets a bonus number of -5. The guard gets a +3 action modifier for firing on full auto so the action total is a 9. The weapon's damage value already accounts for firing at full auto so the damage value is 20. The damage value is higher so this becomes the guard's *intimidation* total against Quin.

Quin has a *Spirit* of 8 so the *intimidation* gets 12 result points, a *setback* result. Becky tells Paul that Quin's setback is that he cannot take any actions that would involve exposing himself to the machine gun fire, like running away or trying to shoot back. But he's not completely paralyzed with fear so he's not incapable of doing anything (the *player's call* of the guard) and he isn't so scared that he will surrender (a *break* result.) Quin pulls a walkie-talkie out of his backpack and calls for some help while trying to figure out how he's going to deal with the shocktroopers they're sure to send out after him.

Opportunity Attack

A character taking an *opportunity attack* is waiting for a target to present itself later in the round. In effect, the character holds her action when it is her turn and waits to take it when the other side takes their actions.

As each target presents itself, she must either decide to attack then or wait for another target. If she waits, any target characters "passed over" may act as they normally would. Opportunity attacks have a -3 bonus modifier for action and effect, representing the delay caused by having to make a split-second decision to attack or to continue holding her action.

Example: The Storm Knights are in a battle with a group of Church Police outside a cybercathedral in Lyon, France. Reinforcements are coming out of the cybercathedral and Yukitada decides to ambush the squad leader if he steps outside. Barbara will hold her action with an opportunity attack for this round, waiting until the squad leader comes outside and then launching Yukitada's attack.

As each Church Policeman steps through the doorway of the cybercathedral, Yukitada tenses, waiting for the right one to come through. When he finally does step through, it takes Yukitada a second to recognize him and spring into action, enough to throw her off just a little bit.

Location Attack

A *location attack* is like an opportunity attack in which a character holds his action until a target presents itself. The difference is that character doesn't make a choice about whether to attack or continue waiting, the first target that presents itself at a location is the one that gets attacked. The character must specify a single location, such as a doorway, for a location attack. The location attack occurs as soon as any target presents itself. There is no penalty for a location attack.

Example: The Storm Knights finish off the group of Church Police that they were fighting but know that even more reinforcements are probably on their way out of the cybercathedral. Magoth is elected to guard the door while the rest of the party gets ready for more action.

Roger declares that Magoth will do a location attack on the front door of the cybercathedral. The first thing that comes through that doorway is getting a sword stuck in it.

When a target does present itself in the doorway, Becky doesn't have to determine initiative to see if Magoth gets to go before the

target does, because Magoth has been holding his action with the location attack.

But Magoth has no choice about whether or not to attack the first target through the door, so if it happens to be someone other than a villain, like an innocent hostage, things could get rather grim rather quickly.

Grappling Attack

A *grappling attack* is used to physically grasp a target. It can be used to take possession of an item someone else is holding, such as grabbing a gun out of someone else's hand, or it can be used to restrict the target's ability to move, such as wrestling someone to the ground and pinning them so that they can't escape.

Grappling can be combined with a number of other combat options, such as with a vital blow (choking someone) or even with a sweep attack (a big "bearhug".) While most grappling attacks will be forms of *unarmed combat* some weapons may be used for grappling attacks. A bullwhip for example can be used to wrap around a target and a net can be thrown on someone to bring them down.

Grappling attacks impose a -4 modifier to the action total and a -2 modifier to the damage total. The result points of the action total are read on the General Success Table to determine if the character simply hits the target or successfully grapples with it. If the attacker gets at least a *Good* success level he has successfully grasped his target.

If he only got a *Minimal* or *Average* success then he struck his target and will do damage, but fails to hold onto the target. If he was attempting to take an item away from another character, no damage will be done but gamemasters may want to consider if the attack instead *disarms* the opponent (see "Disarm".)

Example: A Nile Empire shocktrooper is pointing a gun at Quin, who is unarmed. Paul declares that Quin is going to try and grab the shocktrooper's arm, twisting it so that the shocktrooper can no longer point the gun in Quin's direction. Paul rolls, applies the action value modifier for the grappling attack and ends up with two result points on the attack, only an *Average* success. Quin hits the shocktrooper's arm but does not manage to grab it, doing damage instead.

If the grapple was successful and the attacker was trying to take something away from another character, the damage total is compared to the target's *Strength* attribute rather than *Toughness* and read on the General Success Table. On a *Good* result or better the attacker takes possession of the object. On a *Minimal* or *Average* result the attacker successfully grabs the object but did not wrest it away from the other character.

Example: After failing to grab the shocktrooper's arm, Paul decides that Quin will try to take the gun away in the next round. Thanks to a good die roll, Quin gets enough result points on the attack to successfully grapple this time, so he manages to grab the shocktrooper's gun. But can he take it away from the shocktrooper? His damage total ends up being 13 and the shocktrooper has a *Strength* of 9. Four result points is a *Good* success so Quin succeeds in yanking the pistol out of the shocktrooper's hand.

If the attacker is grappling with another character and the attack achieves a *Good* success or better, damage is determined normally and the attacker has a successful hold on his opponent. The opponent is unable to move away from the attacking character until he breaks free or the other character releases him.

A grappled character can usually only do one of two things: they can try to break the grapple and get away from the character that attacked them or they can make their own grappling attack against the character that is grappling with them.

Breaking a grapple involves making a normal *unarmed combat* attack on the other character. The damage value is compared to the other character's *Strength* instead of *Toughness*. Result points are read on the General Success Table for both the action and damage value. The grapple is broken if **either the action total or the damage total** produces a *Good* or *Superior* success level. If the character gets a *Spectacular* success level, he can choose to *reverse* the hold, not only breaking free but putting the other character into a grappling hold of his own! No damage is done by an escape. If the character chooses to apply a reverse, the result points of the damage total are read on the Combat Results Table.

Example: Magoth is engaged in a wresting match with a minotaur and currently has a grappling hold on the minotaur. The minotaur attempts to break the grapple using its *unarmed combat* skill of 16 and *Strength* of 11. Becky rolls a 10 followed by a 13 for a 23, a +8 bonus. This gives the minotaur an *unarmed combat* action value of 24 and a damage value of 19.

Magoth has an *unarmed combat* of 11 and a *Strength* of 14. The minotaur has 13 result points with his action value and 5 result points with his damage value. He achieves a *Spectacular* success with his action value so not only does he break free of Magoth's hold, he turns the tables on Magoth and puts him in a hold. The 5 result points of his damage value are read on the Combat Results Table so Magoth takes a damage result of O 2.

If a grappled character decides to forego escaping the hold in favor of also grappling with his attacker, this grappling attack is resolved normally. If successfully grappled, the two characters have hold of each other and cannot separate until both holds are broken or released.

Once a character has established a successful grappling hold on another character, he may continue to make grappling attacks on that character without having to apply the -4 action value modifier or the -2 damage value modifier. These attacks are treated as normal *unarmed combat* attacks with one restriction. If the attack should fail to hit, the character loses his hold on his opponent.

Holding an Action

Players will occasionally want their characters to take their actions after another character's action. For example, one player character may be waiting for another player character to move out of the way so he has a clear shot at a bad guy. Or perhaps a player character is waiting to see what a nonplayer character decides to do and then will react to that.

When it's a case of waiting for a character on the same initiative side to take an action, it simply means that the first player lets the other player go before him. There are no penalties for waiting to act after someone on your side.

Waiting to take an action during the other side's initiative though is always considered either a location attack or an opportunity attack depending on the nature of what the character is waiting for before acting. Most of the time it will probably be considered an opportunity attack.

Example: The minotaur still has Magoth in a hold. He makes a normal *unarmed combat* attack and generates an action value of 18 and successfully hits, maintaining the hold. His damage total is only 13 and Magoth's *Toughness* is 15 so the hold inflicts no damage. But since the minotaur maintained the hold, Magoth's only options this round are to try and escape or to make a grappling attack of his own. He tries to escape, but fails.

In the next round, the minotaur again makes an *unarmed combat* attack on Magoth but this time his action total is only a 10, less than Magoth's *unarmed combat* skill value. The minotaur loses his hold and Magoth slips free.

Depending on the type of grappling hold the attacker performs, damage values may be compared directly to the target's *Toughness* rather than against any armor value it may have. While a suit of plate mail might offer some resistance to a squeeze or a crushing "bearhug", it's not going to help much if the attacker has grabbed an arm and is trying to twist it out of the socket!

A grappled character may be able to perform actions other than the two specified earlier in certain situations. For example, a character who's been grabbed in a choke hold still has both of his own hands free and could draw a weapon such as a dagger and attack the other character with it.

Disarm

A *disarm* is similar to using a grappling attack to take something out of another character's hands except that the attacker isn't trying to take possession of the item, she just wants to make the other person drop it. Unlike a grappling attack, a disarm can be attempted with almost any kind of attack or weapon since the goal is simply to strike the item itself or the target's hand in such a way as to cause the target to lose his grip and drop the item.

A disarm attack is made with a -2 modifier to the action total. If the attack is successful, the damage total is compared to the target's *Strength* attribute to see if the disarm is successful. The result points are read on the General Success Table and on a *Good* or better success the target is disarmed. With a *Minimal* or *Average* result, the result points are instead read on the Combat Results Table and the damage is applied to the target.

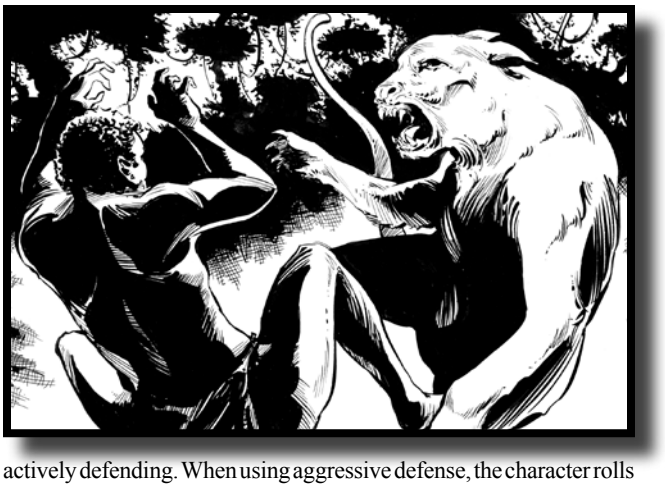
Example: Quin is in a Cairo marketplace when suddenly a sword-wielding cultist charges in, headed straight for Quin! Thinking quickly, Quin grabs a coconut from a nearby produce stall and throws it at the cultist, aiming for his sword hand. Quin's sure that he can beat this guy up as long as he's unarmed.

Paul declares that Quin is going to try and disarm the cultist with a *missile weapons* attack, the thrown coconut. Quin would normally just shoot the guy but a recent *setback* result means he's low on ammo so he wants to conserve his bullets. Becky tells Paul that the coconut will do STR+2 damage (it's a heavy coconut.)

Quin doesn't have *missile weapons* so he'll use his *Dexterity* of 11. The cultist has a *dodge* of 10. Paul rolls and gets a +3 bonus number, giving him a final action total of 12 - he hits! Quin's *Strength* is 10 so his damage total is 15. The cultist also has a *Strength* of 10 so Quin has five result points, a *Good* success. The coconut knocks the sword out of the cultist's hand.

Aggressive Defense

A character attacking with either *unarmed combat* or *melee weapons* skill may use an *aggressive defense*. This is a particular type of multi-action where the character is making an attack while also



actively defending. When using aggressive defense, the character rolls for an active defense, but she has a -2 modifier to her defense value. The minimum bonus on the active defense is still +1 though.

The **same** roll is also used to generate an action and damage total for the attack, but has a -4 modifier to both. The attack does **not** get a minimum bonus number of +1 like the active defense.

Example: Yukitada is in a sword fight with a ronin (a samurai mercenary) who is working for the Kanawa Corporation. Yukitada decides to use an aggressive defense in hopes of improving her defensive value while continuing to press the attack. Yukitada can use her *martial arts* skill to fight with a sword so her base skill value is 16.

Barbara rolls an 8, a bonus number of -2. For Yukitada's active defense, a bonus number less than +1 is treated as +1 so her defense total goes up to 17. But then the -2 modifier for the aggressive defense is applied and she actually ends up with a 15.

For Yukitada's attack, she has to use the -2 bonus, the minimum +1 bonus only applies to the active defense. Combined with the -4 penalty for the aggressive defense, Yukitada ends up with only a 10 for her action total.

An aggressive defense is a kind of last-ditch desperation maneuver since it only pays off if the player can generate a large bonus number. Many times the character will end up doing worse than if they had just attacked or just actively defended instead of trying to do both at the same time.

Blindside

A blindside attack comes from a direction which is unexpected or which the defender cannot protect well. Hitting a character from behind is a blindside attack. The target does not have to be unaware of the attack, he may know it's coming but isn't able to see it coming so he cannot react to it as well.

A blindside attack normally requires surprise or that the target is unable to turn and face the attacker for some reason. When two characters are facing each other in combat, a character can get behind his opponent and launch a blindside attack in the **next** round if he gets a *setback* result on a *maneuver* skill check. Attacks made on fleeing opponents (with their backs to the attackers) are also blindside attacks.

Blindside attacks give the attacker a +3 to his **bonus number**. The modifiers for a blindside are cumulative with any other modifiers, including any gained from surprising a target (see below.)

Surprise

There are two types of surprise: "complete" and "partial." *Complete* surprise is only possible when the target is unaware of the attacker's presence and is not expecting any attack at all. Characters who routinely operate in dangerous environments where conflict is expected, such as soldiers on combat duty or a policeman patrolling a rough neighborhood, cannot be caught completely by surprise.

Partial surprise occurs when the defenders may be expecting something to happen, but do not know when, where or what is going to happen. A security guard patrolling a perimeter for example is ready for action but doesn't know when, or if, he might be faced with a dangerous situation.

Surprised characters, whether partially or completely surprised, are not able to react as quickly or as intelligently as usual. Partially surprised characters are still able to react fairly quickly, they're startled but not caught flat-footed. Completely surprised characters though are caught totally unprepared and off-guard.

Partially surprised characters may perform an active defense or a simple action but cannot attack or take a movement action in the round that they are surprised. Player characters who are partially surprised may not play any cards (see Chapter Five) in the round that they are surprised though they may still use Possibility Points (see below). Attacks made on a partially surprised character, including any character interaction skills like *trick* or *intimidation*, receive a +2 bonus to both the action and effect totals.

Completely surprised characters may take no actions in the round that they are surprised, not even an active defense. Player characters that are completely surprised may not play any cards in the round that they are surprised. Attacks made on a completely surprised character, including character interactions, receive a +4 bonus to both the action and effect totals. Possibility-rated characters may still use a personal Possibility Point to negate damage while completely surprised.

In the next round after being surprised, partially surprised characters are able to act normally without any restrictions. Completely surprised characters though suffer the effects of being partially surprised in that second round and are not able to act normally until the round after that, two rounds after they were completely surprised.

Concealment and Cover

When a character hides behind an object, he becomes harder to hit and may receive some additional protection from damage. *Concealment* refers to how much of the character's body is concealed from the attacker by whatever the character is hiding behind. "Complete plus" means that not only is the character completely hidden from view but there's a lot of extra area, so the attacker can't be sure exactly where the character is behind the object.

Cover is the amount of protection the object provides against attacks directed at the character and is based on the composition and thickness of the object. Whenever an attacker manages to hit a character despite the concealment the object provides, the armor value of the cover is added to the character's *Toughness* (or armor value if the character is wearing armor) to see how much damage the object "soaks" before the attack reaches the character.

CONCEALMENT AND COVER CHART

Concealment is:	Defense Modifier:
One-Quarter Hidden	+2
One-Half Hidden	+4
Three-Quarters Hidden	+5
Completely Hidden	+7
Complete Plus	+10
Type of Cover	Armor
Soft	+3
Medium	+5
Hard	+8
Very Hard	+10
"Impenetrable"	+15

COVER EXAMPLES

Soft:	Something most attacks would go through with limited resistance: a thick bush, picket fence or glass window.
Medium:	Fairly tough material but still penetrable, perhaps a strong material but only a thin layer: a human body, car door, wood planks
Hard:	A tough material, thicker or more resistant to damage: heavy wooden door, shatterproof glass, a tree trunk
Very Hard:	An improvement over the above; a heavy steel door, thick tree trunk, brick wall, sandbags.
"Impenetrable"	Something you'd usually try to blow up instead of trying to shoot through it: reinforced concrete wall, an engine block, several inches of armor-plating steel.

Explosives

Explosive attacks always hit targets within the blast range. Explosive attacks have three blast ranges, *short, medium* and *long*. Targets within short range take the full damage value of the explosion. For targets at medium range the damage value is reduced by 3. For attacks at long range the damage value is reduced by 5.

While all targets within the blast range of an explosion are automatically hit, targets may be able to reduce the damage they take by hiding behind cover. Depending on the situation, characters may also be able to reduce the damage they take by moving away from "ground zero" of the explosion and either leaving the blast range or at least moving into a farther out range category.

Explosives that are thrown or fired at targets, such as grenades or artillery shells, may "scatter" and land somewhere other than where the attacker intended if the attack total was not successful. Because of the blast range though this may not be a problem, the desired target may still be caught in the explosion, so accuracy is not always necessary when using explosives. However, there's always the danger that the attacker will find himself within the blast range if the scatter is bad enough!

If the action total is not successful, the gamemaster needs to determine the direction and distance by which the explosive missed the desired target. Direction is determined randomly by a rolling a die and consulting this table:

SCATTER DIRECTION

Roll	Direction
1–4	directly behind target
5–7	behind and to the right of target
8–9	to the right of target
10–11	to the right and in front of the target
12–13	directly in front of the target
14–15	to the left and in front of the target
16–17	to the left of the target
18–20	behind and to the left of the target

The distance of the scatter is based on how far the attacker had to throw or fire the explosive to reach the target. If he was attacking at *short* range, the scatter distance is a number of meters equal to how much he missed the difficulty number. If he was attacking at *medium* range, the scatter distance is a number of meters equal to twice how much he missed by. If he was attacking at *long* range, the scatter distance is the **measure** of how much he missed by. (If he was attacking at point blank range with explosives, he deserves to have it land at his own feet!)

Example: Quin is ambushing a patrol of Nile Empire shocktroopers by throwing grenades into their midst. The grenades he's using have throwing ranges of 3-6/ 15/ 40 and a blast range of 0-3/ 8/ 15. Quin throws his first grenade when the shocktroopers are 30 meters away, at *long* range for the throw. The difficulty is the *dodge* skill of the shocktrooper Quin tries to hit with the grenade. He misses though so Becky has to determine the scatter.

She rolls to determine the direction of the scatter and gets "directly behind target". Quin missed at long range so the amount he missed by is read on the Value Chart to determine the distance. He missed by five, which has a measure of 10, so the grenade goes off 10 meters behind the shocktroopers. This is within the long blast range of the grenade so the shocktroopers still take some damage from the grenade, but not as much as if it had gone off closer.

The shocktroopers begin moving forward, closing the distance between them and Quin. They're at 15 meters, medium range, when Quin throws another grenade at them. He misses by three so it scatters again. Becky determines the direction as "to the right of the target". Since it is at *medium* range, it scatters by twice the amount Quin missed by, so six meters. The shocktroopers are within the medium blast range of the grenade so they still take some damage from it. Quin is now within the long blast range himself since it went off 15 meters away so he takes some damage too!

In the next round, the shocktroopers are almost on top of Quin before he can throw his third and last grenade, they're only five meters away. Paul declares that Quin is going to throw the grenade and then run away so that he's not in the blast radius when it goes off. Quin misses by two (probably because of the +2 penalty for running) so it scatters yet again.

COMBAT OPTION CHART

Option	Action Modifier	Damage Modifier	Other Effects
Non-Lethal Attack	—	—	wound levels reduced
Knockout Attack	—	—	extra non-wound damage done
Knockdown Attack	-2	-2	automatic Knockdown result
Point-Blank Range	—	—	minimum +1 bonus number
Short Range	—	—	—
Medium Range	-3	-3	—
Long Range	-5	-5	—
Single Fire as Multi	—	+3	—
Bust Fire as Single Shot	—	-3	—
Full Auto	+3	+3	weapons that only fire at full auto get +3/+0
Aiming	+3	—	attack made on the aiming character are +3/+3
Vital Blow	-2	+1	may be applied multiple times to a maximum of -8/+4
Vital Block	—	—	reduces defense value but raises armor value
All-Out Attack	+3	+1	attacks made on this character are +3/+3
Sweep Attack	+5	-5	—
Suppressive Fire	—	—	acts as an *intimidation*
Opportunity Attack	-3	-3	—
Location Attack	—	—	must attack first target that presents itself at location
Grappling Attack	-4	-2	target may be restrained
Disarm	-2	—	target may lose grip on item
Aggressive Defense	-4	-4	-2 to active defence total
Blindside Attack	+3	+3	—
Partial Suprise	+2	+2	surprized target limited in possible actions
Complete suprise	+4	+4	suprised target cannot take any actions

Becky doesn't bother determining the scatter direction because it will only scatter by two meters, the amount Quin missed by, so the shocktroopers will still be within the grenade's short blast range. Quin is a good 60 meters away when the grenade goes off so he doesn't take any damage this time.

Environment

"At times Mother Nature is the most dangerous, and unstoppable, opponent of them all."

—Andrew Jackson "Ace" Decker, US congressman

Besides all the dangers that characters face in combat, there's all kinds of natural hazards that characters may face during their adventures. Rules for dealing with some of the more commonly encountered ones are included here.

Falling Damage

Whether it's from a failed *climbing* skill check, being pushed out of an airplane or fighting at the edge of a deep chasm, falling from a height and hitting the ground is a very common danger characters face. The amount of damage inflicted by a fall depends on the weight of the character and on the distance fallen, up to a point.

The base damage value for a fall is equal to the character's weight value plus the distance value of the fall. If the distance value is greater than 14, use 14 instead of the actual distance value. This is because 14 is the speed value of terminal velocity, and it's actually the character's velocity that determines the damage, not the distance they fall. With *Torg's* value system, falling distance and velocity work out to have the same value up to terminal velocity, so we don't have to calculate how fast a character is falling, we only need to know how far he falls.

The gamemaster generates a bonus number and adds it to the base damage value. The bonus has a minimum of +1. If a character is wearing armor it will only provide a maximum protection of +2 against falling damage regardless of its actual armor value. (There is one exception: "kinetic armor" will provide its full armor value. See Chapter Thirteen for more information.)

Characters with the *acrobatics* skill may attempt to reduce the amount of damage they take from a fall. See the skill description in Chapter Three for the details.

Example: Marco is climbing a cliff in the Living Land and fails his *climbing* skill check, falling from a height of 200 meters (a distance value of 12.) Marco weighs about 85 kilograms, a weight value of 10. The base damage value is thus (12 + 10) 22. Becky rolls a 2, a -10 bonus number, so the minimum bonus of +1 is used, for a final damage total of 23. Marco has a *Toughness* of 9 and was wearing some padded clothing, which Becky allows to act as TOU+1 armor, giving Marco an armor value of 10. The fall gets 13 result points of damage and inflicts 2Wnd K/O 5 on Marco, ouch!

Fire

Fire is a natural consequence of many of the things characters might do during an adventure - explosions can set things ablaze, spilled gasoline get ignited by sparks, mages throwing fireball spells, rescuing people from burning buildings, and so on.

Damage values for fire-based attacks, such as fireball spells or flamethrowers, are the damage value of the attack itself. Damage from fire is treated like any other attack, the only thing special about it is that it can set things ablaze and continue to do damage even after the attack is completed.

Determining whether or not something catches fire is usually a judgment call by the gamemaster. A good rule of thumb is to only worry about it when the object is something that should almost

certainly ignite (paper, gasoline, etc.) or when a fire would add to the dramatic tension of the scene.

Damage values for natural, normal fires are based mostly on the size of the conflagration, the bigger the fire the more damage it can do because it can affect more of a character at once. If a character is unable to move away from a source of flame, such as being tied to a stake in the middle of a bonfire, the damage value should be bumped up somewhat to account for the unavoidable and prolonged exposure to the fire.

Conversely, the damage value could be bumped down if the intensity of a large fire varies from one location to another. For example, in a burning building there might be areas close to but free from flames that characters can duck into and run between, avoiding the worst of the fire.

For a small fire, something about the size of a campfire, the damage value would be about 10. A large bonfire might have a damage value around 14. A large, out of control fire like a burning building or a blazing gasoline slick might have a damage value around 17. A huge, blazing inferno like a forest fire might inflict a damage value of 22 on anything unfortunate enough to be caught in it.

If the character itself catches fire (or its clothes catch fire), start with a damage value around 12 and adjust up or down depending on how much of the character is covered in flames, and for how long.

Smoke inhalation is another danger of fires, though usually only large ones. In most cases the damage from breathing smoke and toxic fumes can be assumed to be part of the damage values given above. But in cases where a character might be protected from heat, such as with a fire protection spell, but not from the smoke, the gamemaster may wish to determine a separate damage value for smoke inhalation.

Drowning

When a character fails a *swimming* skill check or has otherwise been placed in a situation where they're cut off from breathable air (such as being tied to an anchor and thrown overboard by a villain), there's the danger of drowning. If the character is taken by surprise and doesn't have an opportunity to take a deep breath, the drowning rules take effect immediately or within a few rounds if the character has the opportunity to hold whatever breath he has before going under. Characters who have the opportunity to take a deep breath are able to hold it for a time value determined by making a speed push on their Hold Breath value. Shock damage from this push is ignored.

Characters with the *meditation* skill who are able to enter a meditative trance may add their skill adds in *meditation* to the time value determined by the push, extending the amount of time their air supply will last for them.

Example: Quin and Father Wagner have been tied to a ship's anchor and dropped overboard by a sadistic Victorian naval officer working for the Gaunt Man. Both were able to take a deep breath before hitting the water. Quin's *Toughness* is 11 and Wagner has an 8. The Hold Breath limit value for humans is 10. Quin's value is thus 10, since the limit value is lower, while Wagner's is 8 since his *Toughness* is less than the limit value.

The players for both characters generate *Toughness* totals for the push. Paul gets a total of 14 for Quin while Tina gets a total of 11 for Wagner. The difficulty of the push is 8 so Quin has six result points and Wagner has three. On the speed push column both of these results are a +1 bonus. Each adds this to their characters' limit values and the new value is translated into an amount of time. Quin's limit of 10 is increased to 11, a time value of about two and a half minutes. Wagner's limit of 8 is increased to 9, a time value of about one minute.

If a character can reach breathable air before their time limit expires, they never actually drown and don't take any damage. Gamemasters may wish to modify the amount of time a character can hold their breath based on the amount of physical exertion the character makes (using up his oxygen supply faster) or because of unusual circumstances (such as being punched in the gut by an enemy so that the character accidentally lets some of his air out.)

When a character reaches the end of her time limit, she can't hold it any longer and involuntarily tries to take a breath, inhaling water instead. She begins to drown.

Example: After one minute of being underwater, Father Wagner is at the end of his time limit (Quin still has over a minute left, a benefit of being in good physical condition.) Wagner begins to drown!

Every round that a character is drowning, he takes two points of shock damage, similar to a *fatigue* result. He continues taking shock damage until he either goes unconscious or finds breathable air. Once the character passes out, he begins to die.

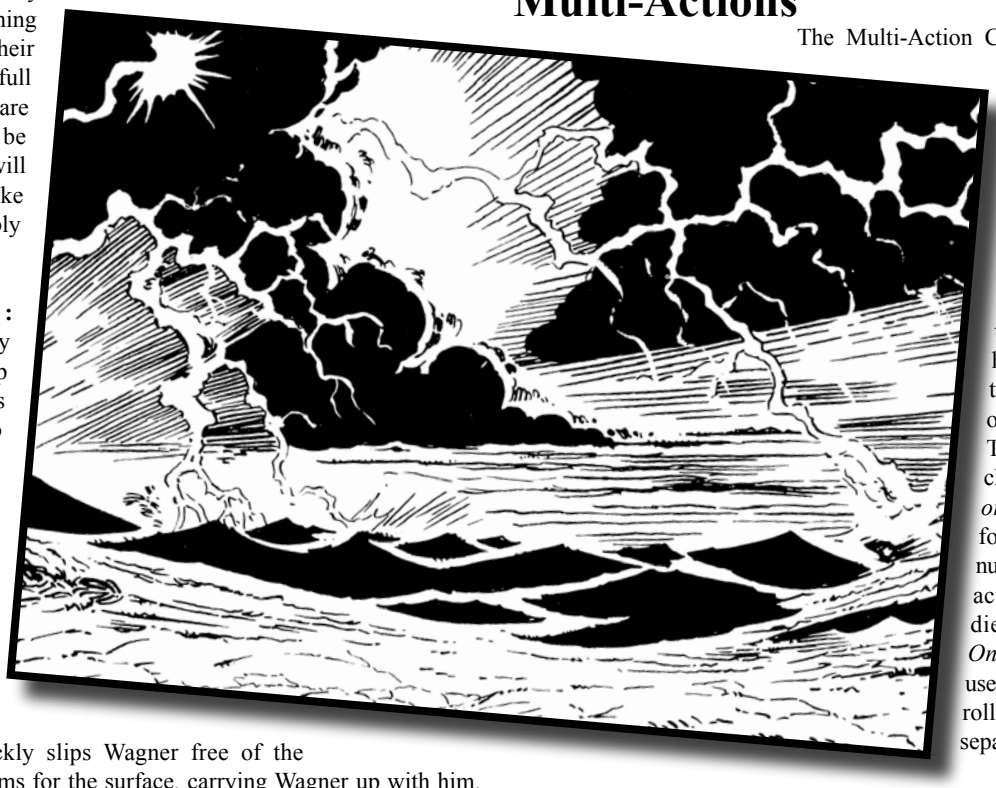
Example: Father Wagner's *Toughness* is 8; after four rounds of drowning damage he will become unconscious and start dying.

The amount of time it takes a drowning character to die is generally six minutes, though the gamemaster may want to allow it to take longer depending on the situation. There are cases of people being successfully revived after 45 minutes of submersion in icy-cold

waters! In general though, the drowning character will take one wound level of damage every one and a half minutes after passing out, reaching four wounds and death after six minutes.

While underwater and holding their breath, any other actions a character takes are made at a +2 penalty to the difficulty number. Characters who begin to drown usually panic, making it very difficult for them to do anything to save themselves. Gamemasters may wish to allow drowning characters to make a *willpower* check to control their fear but the difficulty should be very high, a Very Hard task at least.

Characters who have taken damage from drowning that are rescued before death occurs can be treated with the *first aid* skill. The difficulty is determined normally by the amount of wound damage, increased by +2 for unconscious victims since their lungs need to be cleared of water before they can start breathing again. While their lungs are still full of water they are considered to be drowning and will continue to take damage, possibly even dying.



Example: Quin finally manages to slip free of the chains holding him to the anchor and still has a few rounds of air left, so he's not in trouble yet. Wagner though has passed out and may not have much time left. Quin quickly slips Wagner free of the anchor and swims for the surface, carrying Wagner up with him. After catching his breath at the surface, Quin heads for shore. By the time he gets there, Wagner has been unconscious for about two minutes and has taken one wound.

Because Wagner is unconscious, the difficulty for Quin's *first aid* check is 14 instead of the normal 12 for being *wounded*. Quin only gets one shot at saving Wagner's life (a character may only use *first aid* once a day on wounded characters) so he'd better make it count or Wagner will die from drowning, even though he's no longer in the water.

Weather

The weather can cause all kinds of problems for characters. Some types may inflict damage, such as a blast of lightning or a pounding of hailstones, while other conditions like fog or snow may just make life more difficult. Storm Knights will encounter their fair share of bad along the borders of the invading realms where *reality storms* often occur. While these storms often produce bizarre and unpredictable effects (see Chapter Seven) they also have the same effects as the more mundane kinds of storms.

For weather effects that don't cause damage, gamemasters can use the Difficulty Number Scale to determine appropriate penalties for any actions characters might take that would be affected by the weather. Rain, fog and snow can all affect how far a character can see, strong winds can make ranged weapons difficult to use and increase or decrease movement rates, slick surfaces might make travel treacherous and so on.

Bad weather can cause damage in a number of different ways; hail, lightning, blowing sand, tornadoes and so on. Lightning can have damage values ranging from 16 to 25 while the various types of wind-based damage values can range from a mild sandstorm at 13 to tornado or hurricane force winds that hit with damage values as high as 22.

Multi-Actions

The Multi-Action Charts are used to sum the action of many identical (or nearly identical) characters into a single die roll, or when a character is trying to have his roll apply to more than one action. There are two charts; the *Many on One* is used for combining a number of separate actions into one die roll and the *One on Many* is used to have one die roll apply to several separate actions.

Many on One

To resolve many characters' actions with one roll, the characters must all have a skill or attribute value within one point of each other. If the values are too different, they must be rolled separately, though it could be broken down into smaller groups with similar values.

For each group of similar characters, find the number of characters acting on the Many on One Chart under "Characters". The corresponding modifier from the next column is added to the bonus number of the group's attempt. The result points are then used with the third column, "Successes", to determine how many of the involved characters are successful. If the result points fall between a value given on the chart, always round down. The maximum number of characters who can succeed is the number of characters involved, you can't have more characters succeed than there are characters.

In a situation requiring an effect total, use the modifier of the **number of characters who actually succeeded** as an effect modifier, not the modifier for the total number of characters involved. The final effect total represents a combined effect total for the efforts

of all the successful characters, it is **not** applied separately for each successful character.

MANY ON ONE CHART

Characters	Modifier	Successes
1	—	DN
2	+2	DN+2
3–4	+3	DN+4
5–6	+4	DN+6
7–10	+5	DN+8
11–15	+6	DN+10

Example: A patrol of six Nile Empire shocktroopers opens fire on a fleeing Yukitada. Instead of rolling a separate *fire combat* skill check for each of the six shocktroopers, Becky will use the Many on One table and only roll once. Consulting the chart, she sees that six characters have a +4 modifier. The shocktroopers all have *fire combat* at 10 and Yukitada's *dodge* is 17 (from an active defense).

Becky rolls a 19, a +6 bonus. Adding in the Many on One modifier, the group of shocktroopers has an action total of (10 + 4 + 6) 20. They get 3 result points on their attack. Checking the third column of the chart, the group's action falls between "DN+2" and "DN+4" so Becky uses the lower "DN+2" result. Reading across to the left side of the chart, two of the six shocktroopers successfully hit Yukitada with their shots.

To determine the damage total from the group attack, Becky uses the modifier for two characters since that's how many succeeded. Two characters get a +2 modifier. The guns the shocktroopers are using have a damage value of 17 so the final damage total is (17 + 2 + 6) 25. Becky applies this once against Yukitada's *Toughness*, not twice, because it represents the combined damage from the two successful attacks.

One on Many

If a single character is trying several actions with different skill values and/or different difficulties, the player rolls the die once to get a bonus number, and adds that bonus number to each skill separately. Each total is then compared to the "modified difficulty" of that action. He may check in any order he wishes if the actions are taken simultaneously. If an action depends on another action being performed first, the second action must follow the first but it doesn't have to follow immediately.

The difficulties are modified according to the "Modified Difficulty" column of the One on Many chart. The first action checked is at DN+2, the second at DN+4, the third and fourth are at DN+6, and so on.

Example: Quin needs to swing across a ravine on a rope but there are two shocktroopers waiting on the other side. Quin doesn't have time to shoot first and swing across next round so he'll have to shoot while swinging across the ravine.

Becky tells Paul to use Quin's *Dexterity* of 11 for the swing and of course his *fire combat* of 14 for the shooting. Swinging across the ravine has a normal difficulty of 8. The shocktroopers have a *dodge* skill of 9.

Paul rolls a bonus of +0; since he's doing all three actions simultaneously he can decide which one to check first. Paul decides to check the swing first, as he'd prefer not to leave Quin hanging over the chasm (or falling in). The modified difficulty of the swing is DN+2, or 10; his *Dexterity* total of 11 is enough to cross the ravine.

The second action, shooting the first shocktrooper, is DN+4, or 13. Quin's *fire combat* total is 14 so he hits the first shocktrooper. The third action, shooting the second shocktrooper, is DN+6 or 15. Quin misses the third shot.

Quin makes it across the ravine, hitting one of the shocktroopers but missing the other. He lands on the other side of the ravine and he is done for this round.

ONE ON MANY CHART

Actions	Modified Difficulty	Toughness Increase
1	DN+2	-
2	DN+4	+2
3-4	DN+6	+3
5-6	DN+8	+4
7-10	DN+10	+5
11-15	DN+12	+6

If a character is attacking more than one opponent, each opponent's *Toughness* is automatically increased by the amount listed under "*Toughness* Increase" for the **total** number of actions taken, even if the character hits fewer opponents than he attacked. Diverting his attention among multiple targets and spreading his attack lowers the damage of any successful attack.

Example: In the above example, the first shocktrooper's *Toughness* is increased by +3 to resist Quin's attack since Quin was attempting three actions.

Quick Multi-Attacks

If a character uses the same skill to attempt several actions, each of which has a difficulty number within one of all others, you can use a shorthand method to determine number of successes. This is most often used when attacking multiple opponents, each of whom has the same defensive skill. **This method may not be used to attack the same opponent multiple times.**

Find the amount by which the skill total exceeded the difficulty of a **single** action on the "Modified Difficulty" column of the One on Many Chart, then look under the "Actions" column to find how many of the attacks successfully hit.

Example: Having finally finished off the two shocktroopers at the ravine, Quin runs across two more who have come to investigate all the shooting. Quin decides he had better drop both at once so they cannot raise an alarm. If Quin beats the difficulty number by two he has hit one shocktrooper, if he beats the difficulty number by four he hits both shocktroopers at once. In either case, both of them receive a +2 bonus to their *Toughness* against Quin's attack because he's performing a multi-action against two targets.

Unless dramatic circumstances dictate otherwise, player characters should always get the top end of the spread when determining number of successes; they're heroes, they deserve a break every once in a while! Of course they can never get more successes than there are available opponents.

Example: Quin is shooting at six shocktroopers and beats the difficulty number by six. On the chart that's a range of 3-4. Since he's a player character, Quin hits four of his targets instead of just three.

Summing Efforts for a Single Action

When multiple characters are combining their efforts to accomplish a single task, and when they must either succeed as a group or fail as a group, use the following procedure instead of the Many on One rules:

- A *lead character* is chosen; this is the character whose skill or attribute value is best suited (i.e., highest) for the task.
- All other characters whose appropriate skill or attribute is **within five points** of the lead character's skill may add to the. Each aiding character makes a *Perception* check against the *coordination difficulty* of the task.
- The **value** of the number of characters who successfully add their effort, counting the lead character, becomes a bonus modifier for the lead character's action total.

Extending the Charts

If situations arise where modifiers for a number of actions or groups larger than 15 are needed, the Value Chart can be used. Find the value of the number in question. That value becomes the "Modifier" of a Many on One or the "*Toughness* Increase" of a One on Many.

Example: One hundred characters performing a Many on One would have a modifier of +10 (the value of 100). If a single character attacked 100 characters with a One on Many, their *Toughness* increase would be +10.

Figuring the "Successes" or "Modified Difficulty" also uses the value of the number in question. For the "Successes" on the Many on One chart, subtract one and then double. For the "Modified Difficulty" on the One on Many chart, just double the value.

Example: For 100 combined actions on the Many on One chart, all will succeed with DN+18 (10 - 1 = 9, 9 x 2 = 18). For 100 actions taken on the One on Many chart, all will succeed with DN+20 (10 x 2 = 20).

Example: Seven characters are trying to lift a huge boulder. One of the characters is appointed the lead character, the other six will be assisting her. Five of the six make their coordination checks; a measure of 6 (the leader plus the five who successfully coordinate) is a value of 4, so the lead character gets a +4 bonus to his action total.

Coordination Difficulties

The *coordination difficulty* for working together on a group effort depends on the complexity of the task and the amount of interaction required between everyone participating. The gamemaster should use the Difficulty Number Scale to set the coordination difficulty. Here are some examples:

- Task can be broken up into parts that can be worked on independently, such as digging a ditch, with minimal interaction between characters: Very Easy.
- Task requires basic coordination of activity, such as lifting a rock: Easy.
- Task requires coordination and adjustment based on feedback, such as paddling a canoe in a flat lake or repairing a large vehicle: Average.
- Task requires constant adjustment in a non-stable environment, such as repairing a vehicle during combat, paddling a canoe in rapids, or modifying different parts of a computer program simultaneously: Difficult.

Summing *a Lot* of Efforts for a Single Action

What if 200 nonplayer characters are coordinating their efforts in a powerful mystic ritual? Instead of rolling 200 separate *Perception* checks, the following approximation can be used. It assumes that each participating character has a skill or attribute value within five of the lead character's value.

- Start with the value of the number of participants, including the lead character
- Add their average *Perception* attribute value
- Subtract the coordination difficulty
- Subtract two
- The result is the bonus modifier for the lead character.

Example: Two hundred edeinos worshippers of their goddess Lanala have gathered to take part in a great religious ritual. The average *Perception* attribute of the followers is 9. The coordination difficulty of the ritual is 9.

The value of 200 participants (the lead character being one of them) is 12. We add +9 for the average Perception, subtract 9 for the coordination difficulty and then subtract two. The result is 10, so the lead character receives a +10 bonus modifier.

The final modifier may never be greater than the value for the number of characters. If an approximation is too large, reduce it to the value of the number of characters.

Possibility Energy

Now that you know the rules, here's how player characters and some nonplayer characters can bend them! Possibility-rated characters are able to store and manipulate *possibility energy*, the very essence of reality itself. With possibility energy characters can temporarily alter the world around them, change the outcome of some events and modify the results of others. Possibility energy is what the High Lords seek and is what brought them to Core Earth. It is also the heroes' most powerful tool for defeating the evil schemes of the High Lords.

Possibilities and the Die Roll

When attempting an action, a player of a possibility-rated character can spend one of her character's *Possibility Points* and roll the die again, adding the number rolled to the final die roll. No more than one personal possibility may be spent on any one action, though possibilities from outside sources (such as cards from the Drama Deck, see Chapter Five) may be used in addition to the one personal possibility.

The player may spend a possibility **after** seeing the first roll, it does not have to be declared before the player rolls the first time. Possibility energy is very potent; if the extra roll is less than 10 it counts as a 10 (but it does not grant another reroll like actually rolling a 10 would.) Additional rerolls for 10s and 20s are allowed like normal.

Example: Terrill has been *mortally wounded* in a fight and Father Wagner only has one chance with his *first aid* skill to keep Terrill from dying. The difficulty of treating a *mortally wounded* character is 15, Wagner's *first aid* skill is 10. Tina rolls the die and gets a 12, a +0 bonus.

That won't be enough to save Terrill so Tina declares that Wagner is spending a possibility, and she rolls again. This roll is a 4. Because the extra roll is due to a possibility, this is treated as a 10. Adding this to her first roll, Tina's final die total is 22. That's a +8 bonus

number, giving Wagner a *first aid* total of 18; Terrill is successfully stabilized and will live.

Countering Possibilities

Whenever a character spends a possibility to alter a die roll, another possibility-rated character may cancel that extra die roll by spending a possibility himself. The possibility must be countered at the moment the other character spends it, **before** the die is rolled. Both points are spent and there is no extra roll.

Notice that this means the gamemaster must announce when a nonplayer character spends a possibility on a die roll in order to allow the players the chance to counter it. Possibility-rated characters can sense when another character spends a possibility point if they are aware of the action that the character is modifying with the possibility. Any character can counter another character's possibility, they don't have to be involved in the action, just aware of it.

Example: Quin, Magoth and Marco are fighting the Red Hand and some of his goons. The Red Hand attempts to shoot Quin with his electro-ray gun. Becky rolls a 6 and declares that the Red Hand will spend a possibility on the action.

Quin knows that the Red Hand is trying to shoot him and Marco can see the attack, but Magoth is facing away from the Red Hand and doesn't know what he's doing. Either Quin or Marco could spend a possibility to counter the Red Hand's possibility, even though the Red Hand is not attacking Marco. Because Magoth is not aware of the Red Hand's action, he cannot counter it.

Paul declares that Quin will counter the Red Hand's possibility. Both Quin and the Red Hand spend one of their points and the Red Hand's original roll of 6 stands.

If no player characters are aware of an action taken by a nonplayer character, the gamemaster does not need to announce the use of a possibility and thus it cannot be countered by one of the players. But this works the other way too - if no nonplayer character is aware of the action taken by a player character then they cannot negate any possibilities spent by the player.

Example: Quin is on a rooftop in Thebes with a sniper rifle, hoping to get a shot at Pharaoh Mobius himself. Finally, Quin spots Mobius on a nearby balcony. He aims and fires. Paul rolls an 11 and declares that Quin is spending a possibility, hoping to get a much better bonus number. Because neither Mobius nor any of his possibility-rated bodyguards are aware of Quin's attack, they cannot counter Quin's possibility.

Damage to Equipment

Normally characters are only able to use possibilities to negate damage that they take; any equipment they are carrying or operating takes damage normally. There is one exception to this rule - heroes who are associated with a particular piece of equipment, especially a vehicle like Han Solo and the Millennium Falcon, often seem to be able to keep the vehicle operating sometimes through force of will alone.

In game terms, a character that has a *trademark specialization* with a particular tool or piece of equipment can use possibilities to negate damage inflicted on that item. They can't do it for similar items, only for their one trademarked item.

Example: Quin has a trademark specialization with the "Blue Meanie", a helicopter he acquired during an early adventure. When Quin is flying a normal helicopter he cannot use possibilities to negate damage the helicopter takes in combat. When Quin is flying the Blue Meanie though, he can negate damage that the Meanie takes in combat the same way he can negate damage that he takes himself.

Negating Damage

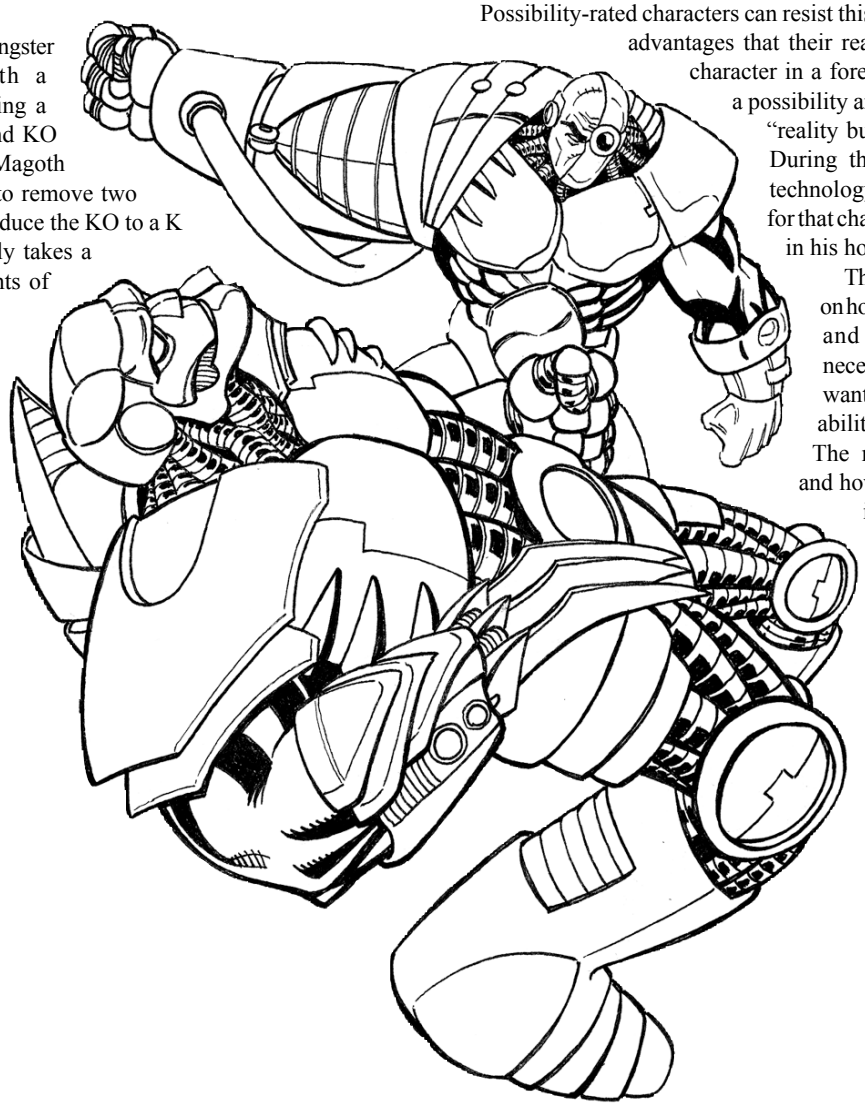
Characters may spend possibilities to reduce the amount of damage they take from an attack. The attack itself is not negated, the blow still strikes the character. It just doesn't do as much damage as it might have done otherwise. No more than one personal possibility may be spent to negate damage but additional possibilities from outside sources may be used to further reduce the damage total. Possibilities spent to reduce damage **cannot** be countered.

Each possibility used to negate damage may do **three** of the following, and each type may be done more than once:

1. Remove three points of shock damage.
2. Remove a K or O condition or reduce a KO to a K condition.
3. Remove a Knockdown result.
4. Remove one wound level.

Example: A Nile gangster shoots Magoth with a submachine gun, getting a damage result of 2Wnd KO 5. Roger declares that Magoth will use a possibility to remove two wound levels and to reduce the KO to a K condition. Magoth only takes a K and five shock points of damage.

Damage results that are modified by special attack forms, such as a Knockout Attack, have their modifications performed before the character gets to negate any damage.



Example: Quin has been shot with a taser. The unmodified damage of the attack is 3Wnd KO 5 but this has to be modified before a possibility can be used to reduce it. After modification the damage is 2 Knockdowns KO 8. Paul declares that Quin will spend a possibility to negate some of the damage. He decides to reduce the KO to a K, removes one Knockdown and three shock. So Quin actually takes a Knockdown, a K result and five shock from the attack.

Reality Bubbles

Reality works differently between one cosm and another, and each cosm uses its possibility energy to maintain its reality - meaning that equipment, magic, and even skills from one cosm might not work so well in another cosm. The High Lords use this to their advantage because they are able to bring their realities with them, and can deny their normal opponents any contradictory advantages their realities might normally give them.

Possibility-rated characters can resist this though, retaining any advantages that their reality might provide. A character in a foreign reality may spend a possibility and cocoon himself in a "reality bubble" for 15 minutes. During that time, everything - technology, magic, etc. - works for that character as it would work in his home cosm.

There are some restrictions on how reality bubbles work, and they're not always necessary when characters want to use contradictory abilities in a foreign reality. The rules covering reality and how it affects characters, including the use of reality bubbles, are in Chapter Seven.

Chapter 5: The Drama Deck

"The drama of life! If only we could do without it!"

—Father Christopher Bryce
Catholic Priest

Torg uses the cards of the *Drama Deck* to mimic the ebb and flow of action in an adventure story by introducing dramatic surprise and storytelling elements into the adventure. While *Torg* can be played without the Drama Deck, it is less involving and exciting when the cards are not used. Rules for handling certain situations when playing without the Drama Deck are included at the end of this chapter.

What's on the Cards

The face of every card in the Drama Deck is divided into two areas. At either end of the card is a colored bar, either gray or orange. Gray bars indicate player information while orange bars indicate gamemaster information. Some special cards have orange bars at both ends, indicating that the information in the player area of the card is also used by the gamemaster.

Each card also has a number next to the colored bars. This number is used to identify each card and can be used to keep track of which cards a player has at the end of a game session. That way at the beginning of the next game session the player can get back the same cards.

Gamemaster Information

Underneath the colored bar on the gamemaster's side of each card are five elements. During round play these elements are used by the gamemaster to determine the general course of the action during that round. Starting under the colored bar, these elements are as follows:

"Flavor" text: The text has no effect on play, it's purely there to provide atmosphere. It can be used to give the gamemaster an idea of how to describe the action in that round.

Standard encounter line: During *standard* scenes this line is used to determine which side in a conflict has the initiative and any special modifiers in effect during the round.

Dramatic encounter line: During *dramatic* scenes this line is used to determine who has initiative and any special modifiers in effect during the round.

Approved actions: This line indicates which actions will provide player characters with additional cards from the Drama Deck if they successfully perform that action during this round.

Dramatic skill resolution box: The text in this box is used with the *dramatic skill resolution* rules.

Information on using each of these elements in play (except for the "Flavor" text) is covered below under "Gamemastering With the Cards".

Player Information

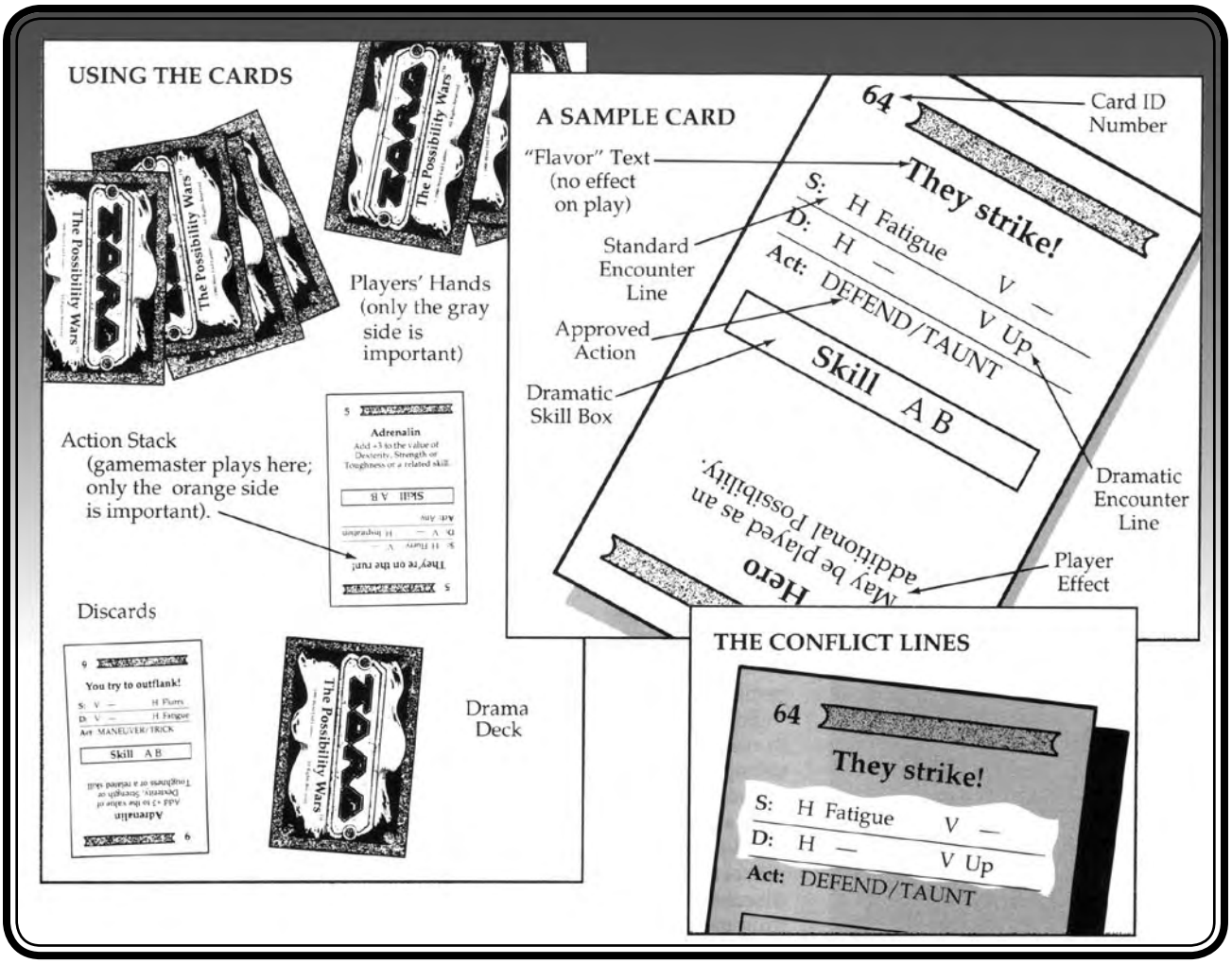
Underneath the colored bar on the player's side of each card is a special game effect that players can use to modify their characters actions and the game story. There are two types of effects on the player side of the cards, *enhancements* and *specials*.

Enhancements are indicated by a gray bar at the top of the player's side of the card. Enhancements typically add a bonus to an attribute or to a bonus number. For example, a *Willpower* card gives the player a +3 bonus to his *Perception* or *Mind* attribute for the round. When an enhancement card is played, it takes effect immediately. Some enhancements are discarded immediately after being used while some last for the remainder of the round.

An orange bar on the player's side of the card indicates *specials*. Unlike enhancements, specials do not have to take effect immediately when played. A special card takes effect when the gamemaster decides that it takes effect. The involvement of the gamemaster in its activation is why specials have the same colored bar as the gamemaster side of the card, it lets them know that they need to work the card into play. Whenever a player puts a special card into play he needs to notify the gamemaster. Some specials

Getting the Cards

The Drama Deck is not sold with this rulebook. It can be found in the original *Torg* boxed set or purchased directly from West End Games. Slightly different Drama Decks were also used in a couple other West End Games products: *Shatterzone* and the *Masterbook* series of role-playing games (*Bloodshadows, Necroscope, Species, Indiana Jones,* etc.) The cards from these games can be used with *Torg* though the rules, definitions and effects given in this chapter should be used in place of the ones given in those other games.



are discarded after being activated, others may remain in play and continue to have their effect on the character or the story until the end of the adventure.

The effects for both enhancements and specials are described below under "Card Descriptions".

Playing With the Cards

At the beginning of every new adventure, the gamemaster deals a hand of cards to each player character. (If a player is running multiple characters, each character receives a separate hand of cards.) The number of cards each character receives depends on how many player characters are involved in the adventure:

CARD PLAY AND GROUP SIZE

Number of PCs	Number of cards
1	6
2	5
3–6	4
7	3

The gamemaster does not deal herself a hand, and nonplayer characters do not receive cards. After dealing out the cards, the remaining cards are kept in a stack for use by the gamemaster. When players discard cards, they are placed face up in a *discard pile* to the side of the Drama Deck. When cards are flipped by the gamemaster they are placed in front of the deck in the *action stack*. If all of the remaining cards are used up during play, the discard pile is shuffled and turned face down, becoming the new stack of cards.

During normal scenes, when the player characters are searching a room, using a macro skill, discussing among themselves or anything of that nature, time passes at about the same rate in the game as it does during real life. At these times, players may use cards from their hands at any time.

When the action involves a chase, combat, or some other kind of conflict the action is divided into *rounds* and card play becomes restricted. Instead of being able to freely play cards out of their

Keeping the Hands Secret

Each player should keep his hand a secret from the gamemaster and the other players - just as in any card game. This way he has the chance to surprise the group with what he plays; it also means that each player is in full control of his own cards. If a player doesn't want to use a particular card, he doesn't have to. If he wants to save cards to use later, they're his to save. Players may reveal their cards whenever they want to - but to speed up game play, it should usually only happen when they play cards into their pools.

hand, players must first build up a *card pool* before they can put the cards into effect.

Card Pools

When a scene is progressing by rounds, players build a *card pool* by setting cards face up in front of them, aside from their hand. In a round, one card may be played from the hand into the pool after the character takes an action that would help move the scene along (whether he succeeds or not). If a character takes an action that does not directly contribute to the events in the scene, the gamemaster may choose to not let a card be played into the pool that round.

During the first round of action, normally no one will have any cards in their pools because no one has had the opportunity to act yet. However, if there are only one or two player characters involved in the action they are allowed to start with a few cards in their pools. This is to give such a small group of characters enough of an edge that they can make it through the first few rounds. If there's one character, he can start round play with three cards in his pool. If there are two characters, they can start round play with two cards in their pool.

During round play, **cards in the hand cannot be played for their advantages**, only cards in the pool may be used. At any time during a round, players may spend the cards in their pool in any combination they wish, from one card out of the pool to using all the cards in the pool. The only restriction is that the player must decide on all of the cards he wishes to use before telling the gamemaster his final result and learning the outcome. He can't play a card, ask the gamemaster if he's successful, then play another card after that.

Example: Quin is fighting against a techno-demon from Tharkold. During the first three rounds of combat, Quin attacked with his Uzi in each round but had little effect because the techno-demon is really tough. After each attack, Paul was able to play one card from his hand into his pool, so at the start of the fourth round of combat he has three cards in his pool.

In the fourth round, Quin shoots at the demon again but after seeing his die roll Paul knows that his result is once again not going to have much of an effect. So he announces that he's using two of the cards in his pool on the attack. After applying their effects he tells Becky what Quin's modified skill total and damage value are this time.

Becky tells Paul the result of this attack and while it's good, Paul wants it to be better. He says that he'll play his third card as well but Becky reminds him that it's too late for that because she's already told him the outcome of Quin's action that round.

Why the Card Pools?

Wouldn't it be easier to just let the players use cards directly from their hands during round play and skip the whole idea of a card pool? Yes, it would be easier. But it would make things too easy.

The card pools help build a natural flow of action for an encounter. The player characters should be at something of a disadvantage at the beginning of most encounters, just battling to survive. But as the encounter wears on, more and better options open up to the characters, until they can finally come out on top.

The use of card pools simulates this by slowing down the rate at which players can use their cards, trading time for success. As the card pools grows in size, the characters have a wider selection of options available to them, they have more choices about what to do and how to do it. If players could use any number of cards they wanted straight out of their hand in the first round of an encounter, most encounters wouldn't last past that first round. It would certainly be easier and more efficient, but a lot less exciting and not as much fun to play.

Playing for the Critical Moment

There is one exception to the restriction about only being able to use cards from a pool during round play. Once per act during round play a player may declare a *critical moment* and choose to play as many cards from her hand as she wishes directly onto an action. Cards from the pool may also be used during the critical moment. A player must declare a critical moment **before** they roll the die.

Example: Marco and Quin are being badly beaten by a Nile mummy they accidentally awakened. Quin has just been knocked unconscious and if Marco doesn't do something quick, the mummy will kill both of them.

Marco has not been doing much during the fight up till now so Juan only has one card in his pool. He has three good cards in his hand but they're not doing him any good there. Juan declares that this is Marco's critical moment for this act and puts the three cards from his hand down on the table.

Marco scoops up Quin's Uzi and faces the mummy. Aiming for the creature's head, Marco tells it "hasta la vista, baby" and pulls the trigger. Music swells dramatically in the background (at least it would if this were a movie.)

Juan plays two of the cards on the action total for a +6 bonus. The third card will be used for a +3 bonus to the effect total. Juan rolls a 14, which is good, but not good enough. Using the *Second Chance* card in his pool, Juan rolls again. This time he rolls a 10 followed by a 17, for a 27. That's a +9 bonus, which the cards increase to a +15 action total bonus and a +12 effect total bonus!

The mummy pitches over backward, screaming in rage and agony. Marco pulls Quin to his feet and starts dragging him away from the mummy. "I don't think it's in any condition to follow us, let's get out of here!"

Trading Cards

Players may trade cards with each other, representing teamwork and cooperation between the characters. During round play, only cards in pools may be traded. Outside of round play, cards are traded between hands. Both players must agree to the trade and an equal number of cards have to be exchanged.

Trading can take place at any time but needs to be more than just giving and receiving cards. The players involved in the trade must explain the trade in terms of how their characters are helping each other or working together.

Example: Quin and Marco have escaped from the mummy's tomb and must now find their way out of the desert. Quin is badly hurt and can't do much on his own so it's up to Marco to find them some shelter and a source of water.

Juan makes a *survival* skill check for Marco and rolls a 1, generating a really bad skill total of -2! Juan doesn't have any cards that could help.

Paul however has a *Second Chance* card, but must think up something for Quin to do or say that would let him trade the card to Juan. Quin has *survival* so Paul asks Becky if Quin would be able to give Marco some advice on how to locate water in the

desert. Becky says that he can so Quin tells Marco what he should be looking for and Paul gives Juan the *Second Chance* card. Juan has to trade one of his cards back to Paul in exchange so he gives Paul a *Haste* card.

Juan uses the *Second Chance* card to generate another *survival* skill total and this time rolls well and succeeds, spotting an oasis just over the next sand dune.

Refilling the Hand

At the end of each scene, players pick up the cards from their pools (except for some of the special cards as described later in this chapter) and put them back in their hands. If they have more cards in their hand than they were dealt at the beginning of the adventure they need to discard down to that number of cards. After that, or if they are already at that level or less, they may discard one card they no longer want in their hand. Once all the discarding is done, hands are refilled with cards from the deck up to the specific number of cards.

Example: It's the end of a scene so each of the players picks up the cards from their pools and adds them back into their hands. Roger currently has three cards in his hand, Barbara has eight cards and Alan has four. Since there are three player characters, the number of cards each one should have is four. Barbara will need to pick four of her cards and discard them. Neither Roger nor Alan needs to discard any cards.

Once Barbara has discarded down to four, each player may choose to discard one of the cards in their hand. Barbara is happy with her four cards and chooses not to discard another one. Both Roger and Alan decide to discard one card they don't think their characters will need in the next scene.

Barbara has four cards so she does not get to refill her hand. Roger is down to two cards after discarding and Alan has three. Becky deals Roger two cards from the deck and one card to Alan.

Players may **not** trade cards with each other before discarding at the end of a scene since they aren't likely to be doing anything, so there's nothing for them to be cooperating on. If the players can come up with a reasonable explanation though, gamemasters may allow some card trading to occur before cards are discarded and hands are refilled.

When the final encounter of the adventure is over, **hands are not refilled**. Cards are not saved from one adventure to the next, though they are saved from act to act (players should write their card types or ID numbers on their character sheets so that they get the same cards back at the start of the next gaming session).

Gamemastering with the Cards

The gamemaster side of the cards affects the flow of the action by giving the initiative to one side or another, and by introducing additional dramatic elements. Each round, the gamemaster flips a card from the drama deck and places it on the action stack. Even if the action is not a combat and is not proceeding in 10-second increments, such as a character using *charm* on someone, the gamemaster might still flip cards to mark the beats and to regulate the flow of the action that each character performs in the conflict.

Standard and Dramatic Scenes

The gamemaster sets the tone of a scene depending upon how important the scene is to the story. Ordinary scenes are called *standard* scenes. In a standard scene, the player characters have the edge; the pace is quick and the action fast. In a *dramatic* scene, the player characters are faced with a tough situation, or a conflict central to the story. The cards are stacked against them, literally - only clever play, good cards, and a little luck will save the day. The pace is slower and more intense, as there is more at stake and the odds are greater.

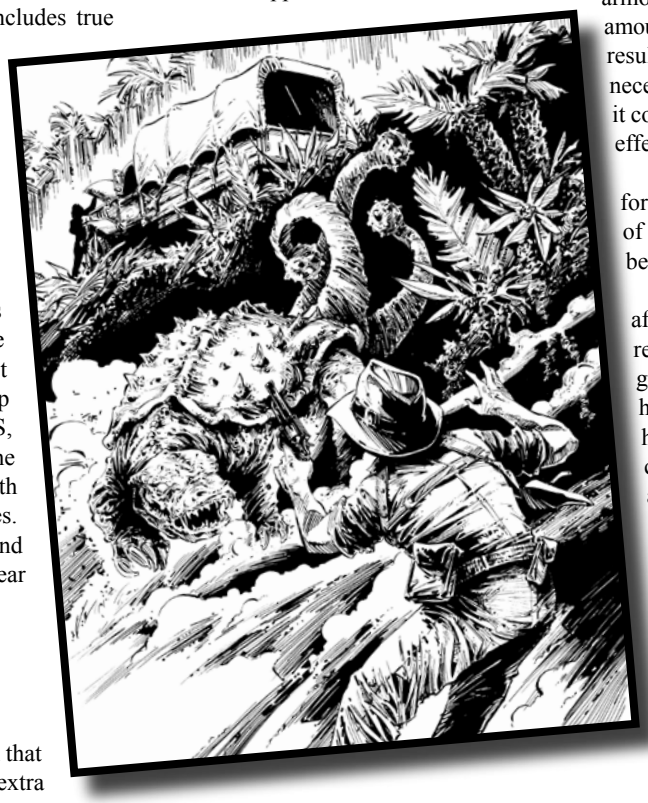
Guidelines for working with standard and dramatic scenes can be found in Chapter Nine.

Combat Between Two Player Characters

Although it's hard to fathom - there's more than enough to do in *Torg* with the Earth being invaded - every once in a while some heroes will see fit to fight each other. Since both sides are heroes, the conflict line advantage or penalty applies to both of them. The characters involved generate action totals with their *Dexterity* to determine initiative, highest total getting to act first. They play cards into their pools and use them as they ordinarily would.

Initiative and Advantage

The card on top of the action stack determines which side of a conflict has initiative and what advantages or disadvantages, if any, the sides have. The deck assumes there are two sides to any conflict: the hero side, consisting of player characters and their allies, and the villain side, which is composed of all of the characters opposed to the heroes. If the action includes true neutrals, those that are simply caught in the way, they are lumped with the heroes for card purposes.



The faction listed on the left half of the encounter line has the initiative. An "H" stands for hero and "V" stands for villain. Any other advantages, disadvantages, or instructions are listed next to the appropriate faction. There are two conflict lines on each card. The top conflict line, marked with an S, is used in standard scenes. The second conflict line, marked with a D, is used for dramatic scenes.

There are three advantages and five disadvantages that can appear on the conflict lines:

Conflict Line Advantages

Flurry: Every character on that side of the conflict gets an extra action that round. All characters on the one side take their normal actions and then everyone gets to act again. Characters can receive cards for performing *approved actions* during either or both of their actions but are still limited to only playing one card from their hands into their pools.

Inspiration: Characters who are inspired **immediately** remove all shock damage, KO conditions and knockdown results. Unconscious characters wake up fully recovered but suffer a knockdown result that round. Player characters that are inspired also receive a card from the Drama Deck for their card hands.

Up: Every character on the affected side receives a free additional roll to add to their normal rolls this round, like getting to reroll the die on any result instead of just on 10's and 20's. This reroll from an *up* condition cannot be countered with a possibility, though it can be canceled by a *stymied* result, and vice versa. A possibility may be spent normally to gain another roll on top of this reroll. Any character with multiple actions, such as someone playing a *Haste* card, gets the free additional roll for all of their rolls in this round.

Conflict Line Disadvantages

Break: *Breaks* will only occur on the Villain portion of a conflict line. During a *break*, any injured characters on that side of the action will flee the battle or concede the conflict if they are unable to harm someone on the other side, significantly improve their position or otherwise improve the situation in their favor somehow. Villains who *break* will flee or concede at the end of the round the *break* occurs.

Confused: *Confused* will only occur on the Hero portion of a conflict line. When *confused*, no player may use cards from her pool, although they may still gain cards from *approved actions* and can still play a card from their hand into their pool.

Fatigued: A *fatigue* result inflicts two shock points of damage on every character of the afflicted side. (Note that some types of armor and equipment might increase the amount of shock damage caused by a *fatigue* result.) The damage from a *fatigue* does not necessarily have to represent exhaustion, it could be due to fear, stress or a delayed effect of injuries.

Setback: *Setbacks* make life rougher for the afflicted side. There is any number of ways to represent a *setback* so it will be covered in detail later.

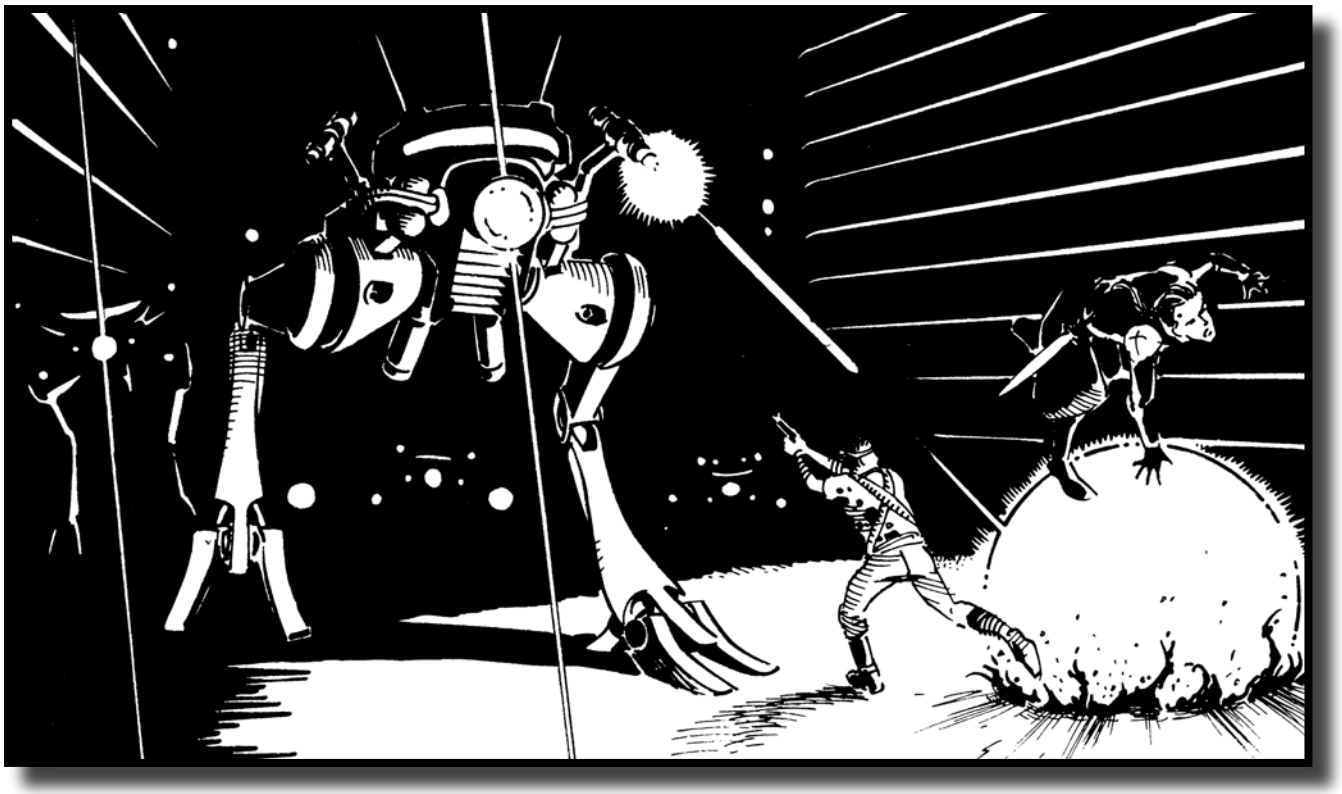
Stymied: Every character on the affected side of the action loses the first reroll they would otherwise normally get for **any** reason. If a character never has an opportunity for a reroll, *stymied* has no other effect. A *stymied* result can be canceled out by an *up* result, and vice versa.

Special Villain Actions: When any of the interaction skills (*trick, test, taunt* and *intimidate*) are listed on the villain side of the dramatic conflict line, a villain who successfully uses the listed skill against a player character gets to remove cards from the player's pool. This is described in further detail below.

A "—" on the conflict line means no advantages or disadvantages are in effect for that side during the round.

Setbacks

A *setback* on the conflict line is a good tool for the prepared gamemaster, a chance to make the lives of the player characters even more difficult in a tense situation (or to help them out if the *setback* affects the villain side.) Gamemasters should plan in advance possible setbacks for encounters when designing an adventure, but if you feel comfortable with winging it, go ahead. Setbacks include sudden and unexpected turns of events, disastrous coincidences, and failures of people or items outside the characters' control.



Example: Becky sets up an encounter along a narrow path leading up the side of a mountain. The heroes will be following Dr. Mobius' trail into an ambush set by a group of the High Lord's henchmen. She decides that if a *setback* should come up on the conflict line, a character from the side receiving the penalty loses his footing and slips off the trail. While the character can grab onto a scrub bush growing out of the side of the mountain, he will hang nearly helpless, thousands of feet above certain doom, out of combat and in desperate need of aid.

The number of possible setbacks is only limited by the gamemaster's imagination. Here are a few general suggestions for possible setbacks to use:

- Nonplayer characters on the heroes' side lose their nerve and flee the scene (like a *break* result).
- The other side receives reinforcements.
- Equipment fails to work properly that round, especially contradictory equipment.
- The nonplayer characters come up with a new fact or astounding-but-believable-lie to confound the players, causing them to lose their actions this round.
- The environment causes problems - a rope begins to fray, steam pipes burst, a smashed lantern starts a fire, a bystander wanders into the middle of the fight, even something as big as an earthquake if it fits the situation and makes things tough for the afflicted side.
- Characters with projectile weapons have only a few rounds of ammunition left.
- Melee weapons are accidentally dropped out of reach.
- Characters slip on something and suffer a *knockdown* result.
- Characters with cyberware have to make a *cyberpsychosis* check (see Chapter Twelve.)

If nothing appropriate can be thought up for a situation, a generic approach to a setback is to apply a +5 penalty to the actions of every character on the afflicted side.

With a little experience, gamemasters should be able to find dozens of plot complications that can be introduced through a setback result. An effective technique is to set up a setback that could happen in any of several encounters, and give hints to the players that this might happen. If the villains' underground complex is near a fault line, have tremors ripple through the tunnels now and again - then let the quake rip after a setback is flipped onto the action stack.

Using Conflict Lines in the Story

The penalties and bonuses that appear for the villains and heroes each round can be used to inspire more varied descriptions of the conflict's resolution. For example, although the card says "V Flurry," the gamemaster could describe a specific way the villain is letting loose rather than just saying that she gets two actions. Does she suddenly go mad from watching the heroes destroy her meticulously built machine, and launch herself into combat without any regard for her own life? Does she suddenly put on a dazzling display of swordsmanship?

Remember though, no one has to add color like this if they don't want to. The game mechanic advantage of the villain *flurry* (two actions for the villain that round) makes what is happening clear enough.

Special Villain Actions

Taunt, test, trick and *intimidate* are possible villain instructions on the dramatic conflict line only. They have an additional effect when they appear on the conflict line: if the villains successfully use the appropriate skill when that option appears on the conflict line, the gamemaster removes one card of her choice from the card pool of the affected character and discards it. If the villain gets a superior success, two cards are taken from the pool; on a *spectacular* success three cards are taken.

At the gamemaster's discretion, the villain does not have to use the listed skill when the opportunity presents itself; she may attack or perform whatever action the gamemaster believes makes the most sense for that villain at that time. Keep in mind that, for instance, a mummy would be unlikely to use *taunt*, gospogs rarely *trick*, unintelligent creatures can't really *test*, and so on.

Approved Actions

On the top card of the action stack is a line labeled "Act:" which stands for *approved actions*. The line lists two actions, or "any" which means **any** of the following seven actions are approved: *Attack, Defend, Trick, Test, Taunt, Intimidate*, or *Maneuver*. **If a player character succeeds** at an approved action, he draws a card from the Drama Deck and adds it to his card hand. An attack is considered successful if it hits, even if it does not cause any damage. A defense is successful as long as the character is attacked and not hit. The gamemaster may disallow certain actions in certain cases.

Taking approved actions is the only way players can build up the really large card pools that are necessary to affect impressive opponents. Otherwise they would quickly run out of cards after just a few rounds.

The approved action line is meant to encourage players to use tactics other than hacking away at their opponents (though at the same time, *attack* is in the list of approved actions because sometimes there's no other choice but to fight.) The approved actions are not meant to be taken as actions that the players must perform in that round, there's no way a card can predict what would be most effective for the characters to be doing that round. Sometimes the approved actions just aren't appropriate to what's going on so there's no good reason to do them.

Dramatic Skill Resolution

In most situations, a skill use is resolved in a single roll; most of the skills are set up with that assumption. But there are times when it is desirable for the sake of drama to stretch out the skill resolution, to introduce tension that is not possible when something is accomplished with a single roll in a single round of action.

For example, disarming a bomb falls under the province of the *demolitions* skill, and could be done in a single roll. But this isn't very exciting, it misses the point of having to disarm a bomb in a story; if that bomb were an important element in a movie for example, a considerable amount of screen time would be devoted to defusing it before it goes off. Situations like this call for *dramatic skill resolution.*

A dramatic skill resolution breaks down the use of a single skill into up to four steps, labeled A through D. The gamemaster determines, preferably in advance, what each step represents when performing the task. The same task can be assigned to more than one letter if necessary in order to stretch things out. Each different step will also have its own difficulty.

Example: When defusing a bomb, step A is disconnecting any motion sensors that would set the bomb off prematurely, B is locating the timing device in the maze of wires, C is locating the explosive primers, and D is cutting the wires between the timer and the primers. This is a dramatic skill check of *demolitions*. The gamemaster sets the difficulty of step A at 13, Step B at 10, Step C at 12 and step D at 10.

Example: Father Wagner has been shoved out the door of a Nile cargo plane flying at 7,000 feet, and must climb back inside. Becky declares that steps A and B both involve climbing back onto the wing while avoiding the propeller, step C is traversing the length of the wing to the door, and D is getting back in the plane. This will be a dramatic skill resolution of *acrobatics*. Becky sets the difficulty of each action at 10, increased to 12 because Father Wagner does not have the *acrobatics* skill and must use it unskilled.

In a round, a character may only attempt the steps that are listed on the top card of the action stack. To successfully complete a dramatic skill resolution, a character must succeed at steps A,B, C and D in that order (or complete however many steps are involved if not all four steps are being used.) Succeeding at each step requires a separate skill check.

If the card shows more than one step for which the character is eligible, he may try to do more than one step in that round by taking a multi-action using the One on Many Chart.

Example: Father Wagner has succeeded in crawling partway onto the wing in the face of howling winds (step A). Becky flips a card with "BC" in the skill box. Tina announces that Wagner will attempt to perform both steps B and C with one roll. He cannot attempt D because it is not listed on the card.

The One on Many chart shows that the difficulty increase is +2 on the first action and +4 for the second action. If Father Wagner can generate an *acrobatics* skill total of 16 or better he will successfully perform both steps. If he generates a total of 14 or 15 he will succeed at the first action (step B) but not the second (step C). If his total is less than 14, he fails at both.

Bad Things Can Happen

Not only can a dramatic action take time, but also things can happen to make the task more difficult along the way. These problems include *possible setback, complication,* and *critical problem*. Each of these effects occurs when listed **if the character fails her skill roll for that round**. If she succeeds, she does not gain a step, but there is no penalty. The difficulty number is the same as whatever step the character would perform next.

Possible Setback

Failing when a *possible setback* appears causes the character to lose a step. If he had been on step C, something causes the character to slip back to step B; step C will have to be repeated.

Complication

A *complication* makes the task more difficult. Failing the skill check during a *complication* round adds +1 to the difficulty of all further skill checks for the dramatic skill resolution.

Critical Problem

Failing the skill check during a *critical problem* round is real trouble; now the character must use another skill to accomplish the

task, or attack the problem from a new angle (which would mean starting over from step A). The player is responsible for figuring out the new skill or course of action; if it does not sound convincing, she must try a different tack next round.

Example: Father Wagner has completed steps A and B and has crawled up onto the wing of the plane. Now he needs to make his way across the wing (C) and into the airplane (D). Becky flips the next card and a *possible setback* comes up. The pilot of the Nile plane is tipping the airplane, trying to make Wagner slide off the wing! Tina makes an *acrobatics* skill check for Wagner but fails. Losing his grip, Wagner slides partway off the wing and will have to climb back up. He's back at step A and must do B over again.

A few rounds later, after having successfully completed B again, a *complication* comes up. The plane flies into a cloudbank and the moisture from the cloud makes the wing slick. Tina makes an *acrobatics* skill check for Wagner and fails again. The difficulty is increased from 12 to 13 for the remainder of the skill resolution.

After a few more rounds, Wagner has completed step C and just has to make it through the hatch to get back inside the plane. But then a *critical problem* appears - the door has been shut! If Wagner can make a successful *acrobatics* skill check this round then the door being shut isn't a real problem, he can try to open the door and enter the plane when step D next comes up. But if he fails the skill check during the *critical problem,* it's not that simple anymore. He will either need to use a different skill when step D comes up or he will have to find another way of getting back into the plane and be back at step A again.

Tina's luck continues to be poor and Wagner fails the *acrobatics* skill check. What to do now? Tina asks if there is a porthole in the door of the plane. Becky says that there is a small window in the door. When step D comes up a few rounds later Tina asks if she could use *unarmed combat* to smash the window and then reach through and unlatch the door. Becky says the window is large enough to do that and allows it. The difficulty of step D is the same (including the previous modifier from the complication) even though Wagner is no longer using *acrobatics*. Because there is no unskilled use penalty on *unarmed combat*, Wagner's difficulty is only 11 instead of 13 this time. Tina rolls well and Wagner succeeds! Breaking the window with an elbow blow, he reaches through and unlatches the door, then opens it and falls inside, safe at last.

Skill Use as an Approved Action

During a dramatic skill resolution, whenever the character does not have the opportunity to gain a skill step he still gets to make a skill check against the current difficulty number. If he succeeds, it counts as an approved action and he gets a card for his hand. He may also play a card from his hand into his pool that round. This represents the fact that even when temporarily stymied, the heroes of fiction are usually still working toward the final goal.

When a character succeeds on a step of the dramatic skill resolution, he may of course play a card into his pool, but it is not

counted as an approved action. This may seem perverse, but the intent is to keep the tension high - success is its own reward, and failure leads to eventual success in a dramatic skill resolution.

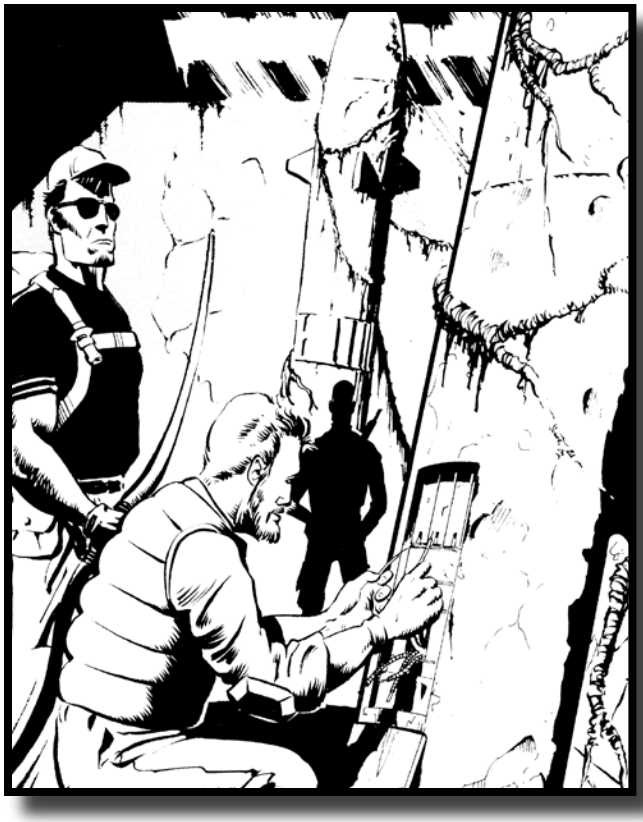
Last Ditch Effort

It is always possible during a dramatic skill resolution that time will run out before the last step can be completed. If a character is on step C of defusing a bomb when the timer reaches 0, for instance, he needs a way to take a final, rushed attempt at the problem.

During any round of a dramatic skill resolution, the player may declare a *last ditch effort* to resolve the skill use; any unfinished steps are resolved all at once with the usual multi-action penalty. The difficulty number is additionally increased by +4 beyond the normal multi-action penalty to account for the desperate circumstances of the last ditch effort. If the last ditch effort fails, and there is still time remaining, treat it as a failure during a *critical problem.*

Example: Yukitada is trapped in a chamber with a bomb she must defuse. Yukitada does not have *demolitions* and the unskilled use penalty has kept her from completing more than steps A and B by the time there's only one round left before the bomb goes off. The card flip for the last round reveals an AB, neither of which she needs. Time for a last ditch effort.

The difficulty of C is 12 and the difficulty of D is 10. The multi-action penalty on two actions is +2 for the first and +4 for the second, increasing both to 14. Additionally, there's an extra +4 penalty for it being a last ditch effort, raising it to 18. Then on top of that is the unskilled use penalty of +5 Becky has assigned, bringing it up to a final difficulty of 23! It's going to be a tough one; luckily Barbara has been putting cards in her pool all along for just this kind of situation, and hopefully it will be enough.



Other Characters

When appropriate, other characters may aid the lead character during a dramatic skill resolution. To do this, use the coordination rules in Chapter Four to determine any bonuses their aid contributes. They may also help out by trading cards or playing *Supporter* cards from their pools.

Working the Timing Out

Timing dramatic skill resolution can be tricky. If disaster is looming on the horizon (as it almost always is), how much time should the player get to complete the skill resolution? Use the following as a guideline.

To have the sequence A, B, C, and D appear in order requires about 14 cards to be flipped if the character is going through the steps one at a time, or about 10 cards if the character is skilled enough to attempt two when the opportunity presents itself. For characters with high skill values (larger than the difficulty number), good cards, and no other pressing business, five flips is fine. As an average, we recommend giving them seven to 10 flips before disaster strikes.

The player should be given an indication of how much time their character gets so that they know if they are expected to attempt multiple steps at a time or if they're expected to go one step at a time. While it may not seem fair to penalize skilled characters by giving them less time, it may be the only way to create any tension for that character with the dramatic skill resolution. If they have too much time available, then all they're really doing is just making a couple of skill checks instead of one skill check.

Example: When Father Wagner gets thrown out of the Nile airplane and has to crawl his way back in, he doesn't have the necessary skill and Tina doesn't have very many cards in her pool. Becky decides to give Father Wagner a good 14 rounds to complete the skill resolution since he's not really prepared for this kind of action. If he doesn't complete it in that amount of time, he can no longer keep a grip on the airplane's surface and will be blown off, most likely falling to his death.

If however it had been Yukitada who had been thrown out of the plane, Becky would have given her less time then she gave Father Wagner. Yukitada has a very high *acrobatics* skill and Barbara already had a couple of good cards in her pool. Since the skill resolution would not be as difficult for Yukitada as it was for Wagner, Becky would tell Barbara that Yukitada only has five rounds before her strength gives out and she loses his grip.

Other Uses for Dramatic Skill Resolution

Gamemasters may find other ways to use the dramatic skill resolution system during play. Generally anything that requires multiple steps or has to be done multiple times could use what's in the dramatic skill box on the card the gamemaster flips onto the action stack. For example, it can be used as a randomizer; if the gamemaster needs to make a random decision about something the players are doing he can assign a letter or letter combination to each possible choice and then flip a card to see what comes up.

Example: Magoth has charged into a burning building to try and rescue some people who are trapped inside. Becky has three nonplayer characters inside the burning building that need rescuing. She assigns each one a letter (A, B or C) and flips over a card to see which character Magoth encounters first. If D comes up, Magoth

doesn't find anyone right away. If a combination of letters comes up, Magoth encounters those characters at the same time. Becky flips additional cards as necessary until Magoth either rescues all three or until the time limit expires, at which point the building collapses on anyone left inside.

Another possible use is to place a time limit on something that doesn't have to be completed in any particular order, or just a time limit on how long it takes for something to happen. For example, as a fight breaks out between the heroes and villains, a heavy steel door begins sliding down over the only exit of the room where the fight is occurring. Instead of saying that the door seals off the room in a flat number of rounds, trapping everyone inside, the room isn't sealed off until after the gamemaster has flipped over enough cards that the sequence A-B-C-D has come up. If a card comes up with multiple steps, only the first letter is considered. This way no one can predict exactly how long it will take for the door to seal the room off. It might only take four rounds, it might take a lot longer.

Some of the sourcebooks and supplements for *Torg* contain some possible other uses of the dramatic skill resolution system. The *Tharkold sourcebook* for example has extensive rules for using the dramatic skill resolution system to handle gridrunning (hacking the Grid or GodNet) sessions. The *Ravagons* supplement suggests using dramatic skill resolution to determine the effects of the damaging storms that ravage that world's surface.

Card Descriptions

The two basic kinds of effects on the player side of the cards are *enhancements* and *specials*.

Enhancement Cards

Many of the cards in the deck are *enhancements*. Some of these cards increase a character's skill or action values while others allow characters to do something unusual. An enhancement card, once used, is discarded.

Action

The *Action* card increases the bonus number for all actions a character takes that round (including *flurry* results and *Haste* cards) by +3. It cannot be used passively since it increases the bonus and not the underlying value.

Adrenalin, Willpower, and Presence

There are three types of attribute value cards, each of which increases any one of the appropriate attribute values by +3. *Adrenalin* increases the physical attributes *Dexterity, Strength* or *Toughness*, *Willpower* increases the attributes *Perception* or *Mind,* and *Presence* increases *Charisma* or *Spirit*. The player chooses which value to increase with each card. One card may not affect more than one attribute.

The effect of attribute cards lasts an entire round - if the character uses a *Haste* or has a *flurry*, the benefit lasts for all actions taken that round. If Adrenalin was played on *Toughness* to increase the character's resistance to damage, it will last for the rest of the round against any damage the character takes.

The benefit does not extend to values that are not generated by the character's attribute. For instance, an *Adrenalin* card could not increase the damage value of a gun but the damage value of a bow could be increased.

Coup de Grace

The *Coup de grace* card increases only the **effect value** of an action; if the action total fails, the *Coup de Grace* is no help. If the action the character performs does not have a separate effect value, only then can the *Coup de Grace* be added to the action total.

Drama

The *Drama* card may be spent as a possibility. This possibility may be spent in addition to possibilities a character may normally spend, including other *Drama* or *Hero* cards. Villains may negate a *Drama* card used for an extra roll just as they can a regular possibility.

If the adventure is completed and a player still holds a *Drama* card, that player receives three extra possibilities for his character. This is a reward for surviving the adventure while taking the more difficult path of not using the *Drama* card during play.

Escape

Escape allows the entire party of player characters to escape an encounter. There is only one *Escape* card in the deck. In order to use the *Escape* card, it **must** be the first card played into a character's card pool when round play begins. This is so the gamemaster will have time to arrange the necessary circumstances. Once in a card pool, the card can be played at any time.

Example: Marco is in a car chase, being pursued by a bunch of Yakuza thugs through the streets of Tokyo. Becky flips over a card and a *setback* comes up for the heroes! Suddenly, there's a horrible grinding noise from the engine of Marco's car and it conks out!

Juan had played the *Escape* card as the first card into his pool. He uses it now rather than trying to restart the car or face the Yakuza in a fight. Becky has had time to figure out an appropriate escape for Marco and describes how he jumps out of the car and leaps into the back of a truck going in the opposite direction. The Yakuza are unable to turn their car around in the heavy traffic and can only watch as the truck carries Marco away from them.

The restriction on having to play the *Escape* card first is to give the gamemaster time to figure out how the players can get away if necessary. The escape does not have to be easy, or even immediate. The players may get off easily, or they may barely get away - they might even get captured for awhile! But, before anything bad can happen, they will manage to escape.

Glory

Glory cards can only be played in rare circumstances. If a player rolls a 60 or more on an action that has a major impact during a dramatic scene, he may play this card. The award given out at the end of the adventure for **all player characters** involved in the adventure is increased by three possibilities. Playing a *Glory* card also helps the Storm Knights fight the High Lords by making it easier to reclaim conquered territory. The rules for this are in Chapter Eight.

Haste

The *Haste* card grants the character an additional action. The action is taken immediately after the card is played. A player may play a *Haste* card out of turn, during another player's turn, or during the villain's turn, as well as during her turn in a round.

Hero

The *Hero* card can be played to gain an extra possibility for any action. The possibility from the card can be used in addition to

possibilities that a character can normally spend, including other *Hero* or *Drama* cards. Villains may negate a *Hero* card used for an additional roll, just as they can a regular possibility.

Unlike the *Drama* cards, an unused *Hero* at the end of an adventure is not worth any extra possibilities.

Idea

The *Idea* card simulates those brainstorms fictional characters always have at the right moment. Whenever a character (or the player) is stumped as to what should be done next, the *Idea* card can be used to get a hint from the gamemaster.

When the card is played the player poses a specific problem dealing with the adventure to the gamemaster, who provides an answer. This reflects the fact that the character has deeper knowledge of the world's workings than the player has, and simulates fictional characters who "get the right idea" at the right time.

The gamemaster might simply give the answer to the problem, or might offer a list of solutions that the characters have to pursue.

Example: Father Wagner is at the scene of a murder. On the table before him is the murder weapon, an ancient dagger identified as Sumerian in origin. Earlier in the game, at a formal ball, Wagner met Mr. Hadish No'dab, a nonplayer character that explained that he collects ancient Sumerian art. Tina however has forgotten all about Mr. No'dab and is completely stuck as to which direction to go with this clue. In desperation she plays an *Idea* card.

Becky reminds Tina about Wagner meeting the art dealer and his interest in Sumerian art. She also suggests that the Cairo Museum of Art (which Tina doesn't know about but Wagner might have heard about) could be another possible lead.

Leadership

A *Leadership* card allows the player to give up to two of her cards to another player, and then she can immediately discard any cards she wishes from her hand and refill her hand to however many cards she was dealt at the beginning of the adventure. Cards in her pool, if any, are not counted for this purpose. The player should explain what her character is doing that provides leadership for the other character.

The player using the *Leadership* card can take the two cards from either her hand or pool if she has one. If used during round play, the *Leadership* card must be played from her pool like any other card. The cards given to the other player will go into his pool if done during round play, otherwise they go into the player's hand.

Master Plan

This card lets a player take the top card off of the discard pile in exchange for the *Master Plan* card, which is placed on the discard pile. The exchanged card must be from the top of the discard pile, not the top card of the action stack. If the *Master Plan* is used during round play the exchanged card goes into the player's pool, not the hand.

Monologue

This card allows a character to stop all hostile action on both sides of a conflict while she makes a dramatic speech (this counts as her action for the round). If the conflict in question is openly violent, the odds of anyone listening to reason are small, but the card will still have the effect of canceling all other actions for the round. The effect of the card lasts a round, possibly more depending on what the character actually says. The gamemaster may want to have players actually perform the monologue themselves in order for this card to work. There is only one *Monologue* card in the deck

Opponent Fails

This card negates any one successful action taken upon the player's character. If a villain shoots at this character and hits, the player can use the card and the attack fails; it may just miss, or be stopped by hitting something in his pocket, or be deflected by some other stroke of luck. The card "rewrites the script" so that the opponent's action fails. This is the ultimate defensive card.

It is important to note that the card in no way safeguards a character from his failures; that's what the other cards are there for. An *Opponent Fails* card may be played after any successful action taken against a character, but must be played before the next roll of the game is made by anyone. It cannot be used to negate actions of other characters that are not directed at the player character.

Second Chance

This lets a character immediately retry an action after he has failed the first time; all consequences of the first die roll are ignored, but any cards or possibilities used do not carry over to the second roll. The gamemaster must enforce the "immediately" - the *Second Chance* must be taken before another player rolls or any other cards are played.

Seize Initiative

This card allows the players to either keep the card currently on the action stack for one more round (if it is beneficial to them), or flip another card up for this round (if the one just flipped is bad for them). Once the gamemaster flips the next card over, *Seize Initiative* may only be used to flip again, not to go back to the previous card.

If the gamemaster flips over a card with a *confused* result on it, the *Seize Initiative* may **not** be played to flip another card; the *confused* result takes precedence and prevents the players from using any of their cards, including *Seize Initiative*.

Supporter

This card lets a player add +3 to another character's bonus number. This card may be played after the other player rolls the die but **before** the gamemaster announce the final result. The supporting character's player should explain how her support benefits the acting character.

Rally

The *Rally* card lets **all** players discard as many cards as they wish from their hands and immediately draw to refill their hands to however many they were dealt at the beginning of the adventure. Cards in their pools are not counted for this purpose. There is only one *Rally* card.

Special Cards

There are three types of cards that have an orange bar on the player's side. When these cards are played into a pool they remain there until used or until the end of the adventure. Players do not pick them up and put them back into their hands at the end of a scene and they do not count as being in the player's hand when it comes time to refill the hand.

These three types of cards are *Alertness* cards, *Connection* cards and *subplot* cards. Additionally, there are several different types of *subplot* cards.

Alertness

Alertness lets a character notice an item or clue she otherwise would have missed. The card assures that a hero searching or examining an area will find or notice something (information, an item, an ambush) as long as it is there to be found, whether he makes his *find* roll or not.

It is placed into the card pool normally, but once there, the gamemaster keeps track of it; when there is a clue to be found, and all characters have missed their chance to notice it, the gamemaster activates the *Alertness* card and tells the player what they missed. When the *Alertness* card is activated by the gamemaster, it is discarded.

Example: Father Wagner, when he arrived at the scene of a murder, failed his *find* skill check and did not discover the murder weapon, an ancient Sumerian dagger, buried at the bottom of the garbage can in a corner of the room. However, Tina had earlier played an Alertness card into her pool.

Because there is something to find in the room and Wagner missed it, Becky takes the *Alertness* card, puts it in the discard pile and mentions that Wagner spots a glint of gold in the garbage can - a rather peculiar sight.

If there had been nothing to find in the room, the card would have remained in Tina's pool. It would not be used until Wagner was in a situation where there was something to *find* and he failed to find it on his own.

Connection

Connection lets a player character know someone in the area that might be able to offer her some help. This reflects the fact that characters have a "past" that reaches back beyond the point where the player began playing the character. It does not mean that the character automatically finds the person, just that there is someone available.

A *Connection* is played into the card pool normally, but once there the gamemaster keeps track of it until he activates it (which may not be exactly when the player expects it to be activated.) Once activated, it is discarded.

It is up to the gamemaster to decide exactly who and what the contact is, and how helpful she will actually be to the player character. The players are free, and encouraged, to provide suggestions, but the gamemaster has final say.

A *Connection* should show up as soon as it makes sense for the story. If the heroes are trapped in a tomb and someone plays a *Connection* card, there isn't really much of an opportunity to introduce a friendly nonplayer character at that time, but it should show up somewhat soon.

Example: The Storm Knights are wandering lost in the Living Land. They're trying to reach a resistance community but got off the trail. Paul plays a *Connection* card from his hand and looks imploringly at Becky, who just nods. Nothing happens at the moment, but Paul knows that sooner or later they'll run into someone who can help them.

After wandering around for a while longer, and having a battle with a hungry dinosaur, Becky has a nonplayer character come across the lost player characters. She explains to the players that the character is an old friend of Quin's, an Indian named Crowfire, who is now living at the resistance community their characters were trying to reach. Crowfire will be able to lead them there.

Subplots

A *subplot* is a story within a story. In *Torg*, a subplot card adds an additional wrinkle to the story as told by the players and the gamemaster. A subplot card assigns a character a role to play or a motivation that helps the player guide her character's actions. When a subplot card is played into a card pool, the player can suggest to the gamemaster how this subplot applies to his character, but this is not necessary, sometimes the player may not have an idea for how the subplot might work.

The subplot cards give players a chance to introduce elements that will broaden the role of their characters in the story. By making the subplots into cards that each player has the option to play or not, no player is forced to participate in a subplot that he does not want. The player decides for himself what entanglements he wishes to take for his character.

If a player would rather not play a subplot, she may discard it instead of putting it into her pool. When a subplot is discarded, the player receives a "compensation" of one possibility for her character and a replacement card from the Drama Deck.

The gamemaster can disallow any subplot card that he feels does not fit in the story. If the gamemaster disallows a subplot, it is discarded and the compensation is given to the player. Once a subplot has been accepted though, it cannot be discard later for compensation.

Players may only have one active subplot per adventure. Subplot cards that have been placed into a pool may not be traded, though unactivated subplots in a player's card hand may be traded like normal cards.

Once in play, a character who has a subplot in his pool gains an additional possibility at the end of each act in which the subplot is active, as a reward for taking on the exciting, but sometimes detrimental, effects of the subplot. If a player takes on a subplot and then consistently ignores the story elements of that subplot, they do

Circumstances of Subplots

Depending on circumstances, several of the subplots could be quite similar. If a villain kidnaps the true love of a character, it might be a *Romance* with a twist, or a *Personal Stake*, or the *Nemesis* pulling another stunt. If a hero is thought to have stolen the Queen's jewels, is it *Suspicion* or *Mistaken Identity*?

There are two reasons for leaving a degree of overlap between the subplots. The first is that the subplots are more flexible this way. If there is a theft involved in the adventure and the gamemaster wants one of the characters to be suspected of the crime, there are two subplots by which this suspicion may be introduced (*Suspicion* or *Mistaken Identity*). However, the **circumstances** may vary between the two subplots. Is the hero mistaken for Milton Avery, a renowned jewel thief from the Nile Empire, the man whom the police suspect stole the jewels? Or does the detective investigating the case suspect the hero on a hunch? In one case there is an actual, well-known individual who is involved in the subplot, and in the other the hero has to clear his name.

In other words, it makes a great deal of difference if the villain who kidnaps a woman is a *nemesis* or if the woman kidnapped is the hero's *romance*. Not only would an encounter between the hero and the villain be played very differently, but also the motivation for the two subplots would differ greatly as well. In one case the hero would want to prevent the fiend from ever performing evil actions again, and in the other he would want to rescue his true love at all costs.

not get the extra possibility at the end of the act. Gamemasters may also wish to reduce a player's final adventure award if the player consistently ignores the subplot throughout the entire adventure.

Before an adventure begins, the gamemaster should outline which of the subplots are easily incorporated into the adventure and which ones won't work. (Published adventures for *Torg* will have done this for the gamemaster). That way when a player puts a subplot into her pool, the gamemaster already knows whether or not to disallow the subplot.

Subplots do not have to start as soon as the gamemaster approves it. It's possible that a player will put a subplot card into his pool long before the planned circumstances will occur. For example, a gamemaster may have planned on introducing a nonplayer character in the middle of the adventure that would be suitable for a *Romance* subplot. At the very beginning of the adventure though, one of the players puts a *Romance* card down on the table. Even though the *Romance* can't start until the nonplayer character shows up, the gamemaster can go ahead and approve it at that time. The subplot just won't be considered active until it can begin.

The player must keep in mind that he does not necessarily know how the subplot will affect his character or whom it will involve. For example, when Paul plays a *Romance* card after Quin meets a jungle princess of the Nile Empire, it does not mean that Quin will become involved romantically with the princess - Becky might have a romance prepared with one of the princess's slaves instead.

Types of Subplots

Mistaken Identity

With this subplot the character is thought to be someone else by one or more gamemaster characters, or else believes another character to be someone she isn't. The former is usually more fun to play. The mistake may be because of physical similarity or misinformation ("It will be the first man who walks through the door and says "good-morning! Fine day, eh?"") The subplot may be comic

(a primitive tribe in the Nile Empire thinking the player character is a god returned from heaven) or dangerous (an assassin cult is after the character because they believe he killed their leader).

Nemesis

There is, somewhere in the adventure, someone against whom the character has a grudge, or who has a grudge against the character. The conflict may stretch back to their childhood, or may start when the player character bests the nonplayer character during their first encounter this adventure.

The gamemaster should make sure that the nemesis and the player character have a few scenes alone together, including (and most importantly) a final showdown. The showdown does not have to culminate in a huge, knockdown battle to the death, but there should be a satisfying resolution. The nemesis might not settle for less than the hero's death, though the player character might want to merely imprison the villain. If a *Nemesis* is campaigned, the villain might seem to be killed (falling out of a zeppelin or into a snake pit) only to reappear later, but he should be out of the hero's hair for at least a couple of adventures.

Personal Stake

When the *Personal Stake* subplot is played, the character becomes emotionally tied to the major plot at hand. The woman his group has been hired to rescue may turn out to be someone he loves, or a long-lost relative. The villain may turn out to be the man who killed the character's family or scarred him for life. The city the Disintegrator Cannon is aimed at might be the character's hometown. Whatever it is, it gives the character a stronger reason to triumph when facing challenges encountered during the adventure.

Romance

The player character becomes romantically involved with a nonplayer character. The romance may be one sided, with the nonplayer character in love with the player character or a love-struck player character scorned by a nonplayer character. They may be in love with each other, but separated by social standing or jealous spouses. They may start out hating each other but eventually become attracted to each other. Remember that a complicated romance is more interesting than a romance with no problems, because a perfect romance isn't very dramatic to anyone but the two people involved.

There are **two** *Romance* cards in the deck. If both are in play it might mean that both player characters are involved with the same nonplayer character (causing some tension), or that there are two separate romantic interests available. The former is usually a lot more interesting to play.

Suspicion

This subplot casts a pall of guilt over a character. The character might be suspected of a murder in the past, a recent theft, or simply be regarded as somebody worth watching with a careful eye. The suspicion may be well founded or it might only be the result of rumor. The people who suspect the character might even be other player characters.

True Identity

This subplot is the opposite of *Mistaken Identity*. The character actually is somebody who matters to one or more nonplayer characters, but nobody knows it. Alternately, the player character knows the true identity of someone else. The character with the *True Identity* may be completely unaware of her true identity, or may be deliberately hiding behind a false identity.

Examples of true identities are the heir to the throne who was spirited away at birth, the son (or daughter) of the villain the heroes are pursuing, the man who was prophesied generations ago to kill the beast in the mountains, and the master villain masquerading with a double identity.

Martyr

The *Martyr* card hangs a peculiar shadow over the character whose player took the subplot, for everyone knows that the character is so noble in intent that his own life is less important than the defeat of evil. Or perhaps the character feels so certain that he's going to die on this adventure it casts a gloomy pall over everything he does that adventure. It could even be a death wish; the character **wants** to go out in a blaze of glory. However it's interpreted, the character should be played as if his life is on the edge, because it just might be that way.

The Campaign Card

In most cases a subplot lasts from when it is played to the end of that adventure. For example, a *Nemesis* is established for a player character at some point in the story, and by the story's end the nemesis is defeated by that character.

The player of a character with a subplot may want to retain the subplot for his character, in effect create a new background subplot (see Chapter Two) for the character. To do this he, or another player, plays the *Campaign* card while the subplot card is active. A player must agree to have his subplot "campaigned", even if another player lays down the *Campaign* card. The gamemaster must also approve the campaigning of a subplot.

For example, if Alan plays the *Campaign* card on Quin's *Romance* subplot, and both Paul and Becky agree, Quin's affair with the jungle princess's servant continues through adventures to come. She may not be involved in all adventures (he's a busy fellow, trotting all over the globe and such), but when she is involved in an adventure, Quin automatically has a *romance* subplot activated in that adventure, just like a background subplot. She may be in trouble, somebody else may be courting her, but the gamemaster will have her there, waiting with a subplot. This, of course, gives Quin extra possibilities at the end of each act the subplot is active. Additionally, if Paul gets the *romance* subplot card again during a game and activates it, Becky already has some idea of who and what it should entail.

A *Campaign* card is used only in campaign games, which are a string of related adventures using the same heroes. Campaign games are played on a regular basis; if you are not running a campaign, then the *Campaign* card has no effect. The *Campaign* card, if discarded or disapproved, is worth one possibility and a replacement card, as any other subplot.

The *Martyr* subplot card, because of the special game mechanics associated with it, cannot be campaigned.

The *Martyr* card is the only subplot card with an additional rules mechanic. A character whose player has this card out may, at any time, sacrifice his life and **automatically produce a victorious condition in the face of disaster**. Suppose that Quin and Roger's vampyre hunter arrived just a moment too late to prevent the evil Professor Samson from firing his Disintegration Cannon at New Delhi. Roger has the *Martyr* card in his pool. He declares that his character races for the cannon's power system and flings himself into it just as the cannon charges up its deadly ray. In a storm of sparks the machinery is destroyed but at the cost of the character's life. The city of New Delhi, however, is saved without a single roll having to be made.

It is important though to remember that a character with the *Martyr* card does **not** have to sacrifice herself during the adventure. It is simply an option when all else fails. If the character makes it to the end of the adventure without using the card's special game mechanic, the gloomy shadow hanging over the character is lifted. However, if the *Martyr* card was treated more as an "automatic victory" card rather than roleplayed as a subplot, the gamemaster has the option of reducing the character's final adventure award by the same number of possibilities gained from the subplot during play (i.e., one Possibility Point per act the *Martyr* card was active.) But if the subplot was roleplayed, the character gets to keep the possibilities.

The *Martyr* subplot cannot be campaigned.

Blank Cards

Each drama deck comes with a number of blank cards. These may be used to replace other cards that get lost or gamemasters may come up with new cards and new effects that they wish to add to the drama deck. Several new card ideas were published in the *Infiniverse* newsletter during the first edition of *Torg*. Back issues of *Infiniverse* may be purchased from West End Games or downloaded for free from the website. The new cards were included in issues #11, #13, #15, #17 and #24.

Playing *Torg* Without the Drama Deck

Torg can be played without the cards. We strongly recommend you use them, because we feel they add important elements to the game and the story. If you are a traditional roleplaying gamemaster, you may feel uncomfortable with the cards. If you don't use them, *Torg* plays much like any other roleplaying game. You should be aware though that without the cards the player characters will be doing far less spectacular deeds than is normally expected in *Torg*, and the enhanced teamwork possible with card play is lost.

It is possible to play using only portions of the cards. You may wish to use conflict lines, at first, only to determine initiative. Later, you can add in the positive and negative results. You may decide not to use player cards until your players become more familiar with the system. You may decide not to use dramatic skill resolution at all. The choice is yours. We do urge you to at least try using the cards for a couple of adventures before deciding to play without them.

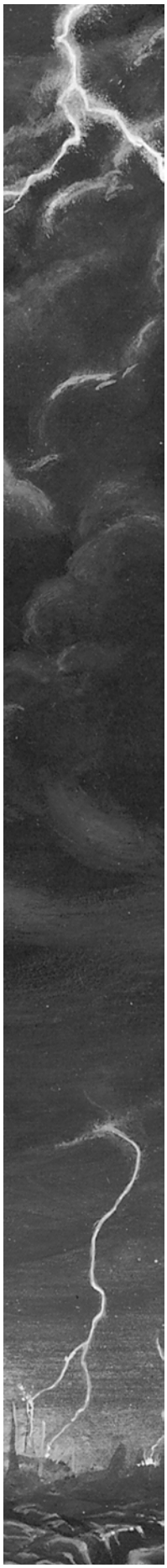
When the cards are not used, there are two areas of game play that need to be addressed. Initiative in combat must be determined another way and the loss of the *Glory* cards needs to be addressed in relation to that card's important usage in Chapter Eight.

Initiative is determined by the roll of dice rather than by the conflict lines. There are a number of possible approaches; here are a few suggestions:

- One character from each side of a conflict rolls one die. During standard scenes, the player adds five to his die **roll** (the straight die roll is being used, a bonus number is **not** being generated.) During dramatic scenes, the gamemaster adds five to her roll. The side with the higher die roll gets the initiative.
- The character on each side with the highest *Dexterity* attribute generates a *Dexterity* value. During standard scenes the player get a +3 bonus to his totals. During dramatic scenes, the villain gets a +3 bonus to her totals. The side with the highest *Dexterity* value has the initiative.
- Each character in a conflict has a separate initiative. Each character generates a *Dexterity* value. During standard scenes players get a +3 bonus to their totals. During dramatic scenes, the villains get a +3 bonus to their totals. Initiative proceeds in order from highest total to lowest total.

A lack of *Glory* cards is addressed in Chapter Eight.

EC 5



Chapter 6: Putting It All Together

"We've entered the darkness of our own accord. Are we very brave, or just very stupid? Whichever, God help us reach the light."

—Father Christopher Bryce
Catholic Priest

This chapter provides a detailed example of gameplay in *Torg*, covering much of the material from the previous chapters as well as a few things from later chapters. Its purpose is to give you a better idea of how some of *Torg*'s more unusual mechanics, such as the Drama Deck, function in the game.

The Players

The players and their characters used as examples in the previous chapters will also be used here to further demonstrate the game. To refresh your memory, they are:

Paul, playing Core Earther Quin Sebastian, built from the Soldier of Fortune template in the Worldbook.

Roger, playing Magoth, a giant magician from Aysle, built using the rules in Chapter Two.

Barbara, playing Yukitada from Nippon Tech, built from the Corporate Ninja template in the Worldbook.

Alan, playing Terrill, a magician from Aysle built on the Curious Mage template in the Worldbook.

Tina, playing Father Wagner, a Catholic priest from Core Earth built from the Doubting Cleric template in the Worldbook.

Juan, playing Marco, a Core Earth psychic built from the New-Ager template in the *Space Gods sourcebook.*

Becky, the gamemaster.

Setting the Scene

Once everyone has their character sheet and is ready to begin, Becky recaps where the player characters are after their last adventure. While she is doing this, she is dealing out cards from the Drama Deck to all of the players. Since there are six player characters, each one gets four cards.

Becky: "When we last left our heroes, they were on a small island in the Philippines and had just foiled the efforts of a vampyre from Orrorsh and its followers, who were trying to expand the realm northward towards Manila. While the evil scheme was defeated, the vampyre escaped, swearing vengeance on the group for interfering with his plans."

Paul: "Too bad Roger's vampyre hunter still wasn't with us, he would have been a lot of help."

Roger: "Yeah, well, them's the breaks. When you gotta martyr yourself, you gotta martyr yourself."

Becky has finished dealing the cards to each of the players. Each player examines their cards but doesn't show them to anyone else yet. Paul has an a*drenalin*, *haste*, *second chance* and a *drama*

card. Roger has an *alertness*, *haste*, *action* and the *monologue* card. Barbara has a *willpower*, *alertness*, *coup de grace* and a *leadership* card. Alan has an *adrenalin*, *master plan*, *connection* and a *drama* card. Tina has a *willpower*, *seize initiative*, *hero* and the *suspicion* subplot card. Finally, Juan has a *seize initiative*, a *hero* and two subplot cards, the *martyr* and the *nemesis* card.

Roger, Barbara, Tina, Alan and Juan all have special cards that they could go ahead and play into their pools right now if they wished, where those cards would remain until they were used. Roger and Barbara both decide to hold onto their *alertness* cards for now and will wait until it looks like they might be useful. Tina goes ahead and puts her *suspicion* subplot on the table, announcing that she's activating it if Becky approves.

Becky has planned ahead and knows how a *suspicion* subplot might work in the adventure she's prepared so she approves it. Juan, who has two subplots in his hand, knows that he can only have one active subplot at a time so he will have to discard at least one of the subplots sooner or later. He decides to discard the *martyr* now but keeps the *nemesis* card in his hand for now, he'll decide about activating it later.

Because Juan is discarding a subplot, Marco receives a possibility point as "compensation" and Becky deals Juan another card from the deck to replace the discarded subplot. The new card is a *presence* card.

Juan: "Anyone with a *master plan* who wants this *martyr* card can feel free to take it from the discard pile, I sure don't want it!"

Roger: "Chicken!"

After the cards have been dealt with, the game gets underway.

Act One, Scene One

Tina: "Hey, how are we going to get off this island? As I recall, those cultists sank our boat after we landed."

Becky: "That's right, they did."

The players think for a moment and then Paul remembers that they saw a helicopter land on the island during the last adventure, presumably bringing in some of the vampyre's Core Earth cultists. But they never saw the helicopter leave so it must still be on the island.

Alan: "How big is this island? It might take us a long time to search it."

Roger: "Magoth says, 'You forget my friend, back at the mage academy finding things was a field I specialized in! It should only take me a few minutes to bring us to the flying machine.' Magoth will cast his Pathfinder spell and have it lead us to the helicopter."

Becky quickly checks the spell description and sees that the magician must be able to picture the object he wants to find.

Becky: "Did Magoth actually see the helicopter last adventure?"

Roger: "Not up close, we all saw it from a distance. But Magoth has seen Quin's helicopter many times, it can't be too different, right?"

Becky: "If you visualize Quin's helicopter the spell will lead you Quin's helicopter, not the nearest helicopter."

Paul: "And the Blue Meanie is back in the United States anyway."

Roger: "Well, I can't use the Find Things spell, it won't work on objects bigger than Magoth."

Barbara: "Hey Becky, could Yukitada use an *alertness* card to remember what the helicopter looked like and describe it to Magoth well enough that he could cast his spell?"

Becky stops to consider Barbara's question. Normally the *alertness* is used to notice or find something the character has just missed, not something that she failed to notice in the past. Having the character remember something is usually covered with the idea card.

Becky: "No, you'd need an *idea* card for that. Good try though."

Barbara: "So does anyone have an *idea* card?"

No one does, so the players go back to figuring out how they might locate the helicopter. After discussing some possibilities, they decide they'll just have to do it the hard way and search for it.

Barbara: "We might be able to see the helicopter or where it landed from up on one of the mountain peaks in the middle of the island. Anyone else want to join me in a climb?"

Barbara plays her *alertness* card from her hand onto the table, knowing that if she should fail a find skill check up on top of the mountain she'll still see something important thanks to the card.

Juan: "Well, if you're going to play that card, why don't we all just wait down here for Yuki to come back and tell us where it is?"

Paul: "I think we should all go, better chance that way of someone seeing something and then Barb doesn't have to use the *alertness* card."

Juan: "But Marco hates climbing! He had a bad experience in the Living Land once."

Becky: "This won't be anything like that, the slope is pretty gradual and you can practically walk to the top."

In fact Becky has already determined that the difficulty for *climbing* skill checks is only 2, so it's unlikely that anyone is going to have a problem. But there's always a chance, so anyone who does go up will still have to make a skill check. Eventually, the group decides that Quin, Yukitada and Father Wagner will go climbing while the other three wait down below.

Becky has the three players generate *climbing* skill totals; Quin has *climbing* at 11 while Yukitada and Wagner both have to use their *Strength* attributes of 8. Paul rolls a 12, a +0 bonus, for a skill total of 11. Tina rolls a 15 for Wagner, a +2 bonus, giving him a skill total of 10. Barbara rolls a 3, a -8 bonus, which would give Yukitada a skill total of 0.

Barbara figures the climb has to be more difficult than a 0 so she spends a possibility and rolls again. The second roll is a 9. Since it's less than 10 it's treated as a 10. Added to the first roll, Barbara now has a 13, a +1 bonus, and Yukitada's skill total is 9. Barbara tells all three players that their characters succeeded and made it to the top.

Becky uses the Difficulty Number Scale to pick a difficulty for spotting the helicopter from the mountain peak, deciding that it's a Difficult task (12). Furthermore, she decides that the success level of the check will determine if a character actually spots the helicopter or if they just spot a clearing where a helicopter might be able to land. She figures a Good success level or better is required to actually see the helicopter.

Becky: "It won't be easy spotting the helicopter from up here, but you might at least be able to spot some likely places where it could have landed. Generate find totals for your characters and tell me what you get."

Quin and Yukitada don't have find so they will use their *Perception* attributes of 9. Wagner has find at 11. Paul rolls a 13, giving Quin a total of 10. Barbara rolls an 8, giving Yukitada a total of 7. Since she has the **alertness** card out, Barbara isn't really worried about failing the skill check.

Tina rolls a 10 and then a 7 for a final roll of 17, a +4 bonus that gives Wagner a *find* total of 15. Becky checks the General Results Table and sees that Wagner has a Good success level.

Becky: "Okay, Quin and Yukitada don't see anything, just a lot of trees. Wagner though catches a glint of sunlight reflecting off of something, like glass or metal, and after a few moments sees that it's coming from a large object in a clearing on the far side of the island."

Tina: "I think I've found the helicopter. Let's go back down and get the rest of the group."

Paul: "Quin wants Wagner to point out the helicopter's location to him, the more of us who know where it is the quicker we should be able to find it on the ground."

Tina: "Can I do that?"

Becky: "Sure, not a problem. You can show Yuki too if you want. Then I'll need *climbing* totals again for everyone on the way down."

The difficulty for climbing back down is the same as it was climbing up and everyone makes the skill check, getting back down safely.

Becky: "You rejoin the rest of the party and tell them what you found. I'll need *direction sense* skill checks from the three of you who know where the helicopter is to see if you can lead everyone there or not."

Paul: "See, I told you it would help if we all knew where it was! How about if we combine our efforts and work together on it?"

Becky: "Okay, we can do it that way."

None of the characters have *direction sense* so they will use their *Perception* attributes, all of which are 9. The three players decide that Quin will be the lead character so Paul will make the actual *direction sense* skill check. Yukitada and Wagner will instead make coordination checks to see if they provide Quin with a bonus or not.

Becky checks the description of *direction sense* in Chapter Three and determines the difficulty number will be 9, with a +2 penalty added in because the characters are using the skill unskilled, for a final difficulty of 11. The coordination difficulty for Yukitada and Wagner will be a *Perception* total of 8, an Average difficulty.

Barbara gets a Perception total of 7. She decides not to bother using any cards or a possibility to make the coordination check since she figures that if Quin fails, her alertness card will still let the group find the helicopter. Tina rolls a 14, getting a total of 10 so she coordinates with Quin.

Becky looks up a measure of two (Quin and Wagner) on the Value Chart and gets a value of 2 so Quin has a +2 bonus to his direction sense check. Roger rolls a 4 though, giving Quin a final total of only 3. Paul is about to spend a possibility when he remembers Barbara's *alertness* card and decides to let the roll stand. Becky does activate the *alertness* card, picking it up from in front of Barbara and putting it on the discard pile.

Becky: "The group heads off through the jungle, and after a while the three in the lead begin to wonder if they're still going the right direction. Fortunately, Yuki spots a landmark she remembers seeing while up on the mountain peak and is able to get her bearings again. After a little while longer, the group enters a clearing and sure enough, there's a helicopter in it. You all also see a small shed on one side of the clearing."

Roger: "I'm going to go check out the shed. I suggest that Quin check out the helicopter since he's the only one who can fly it. We may not have taken care of all the cultists last adventure so everyone else might want to keep an eye out for trouble."

Becky: "Inside the shed you only find a wooden table and a stool, plus a box of what look like road flares. Paul, give me an *air vehicles* total for Quin."

Roger: "Should I make a *find* total to see if I find anything else in the shed?"

Becky: "If Magoth wants to search the shed, go ahead."

Becky knows that there's nothing else in the shed but figures there's no reason to tell Roger that and lets Magoth waste some time searching the shed. Roger generates a *find* total of 13 and to play it safe also plays an *action* card out of his hand bringing it up to a 16.

Becky: "Nope, you don't find anything else in the shed. Paul?"

Paul: "I got a 14 on Quin's *air vehicles*, including his type specialization for helicopters."

Becky: "The helicopter is in fine shape and should have enough fuel to get you back to Manila. It will be a tight fit getting everyone inside, Magoth as usual will have to sit sideways in the back with his legs hanging out through the open door."

Roger: "One of these days we'll find a helicopter large enough so a giant can sit normally in the back!"

Becky: "Roger, is Magoth going to do anything with the box of flares?"

Roger: "He probably doesn't know what they are, aren't they above his Tech axiom? He'll bring them to someone's attention since he doesn't know what they are."

Tina: "Wagner can probably figure them out with his evidence analysis skill."

Becky: "Go ahead and roll then."

Becky was hoping someone would get curious about the flares and the apparent fact that helicopters land in this clearing often enough that someone would go to the trouble of building a shed on a supposedly deserted island. It's a clue that starts off the main plotline of the current adventure.

Tina: "I rolled a 1! Argh! Anyone got a second chance card they'd be willing to trade me?"

Paul: "I have one, but I don't want to trade it."

Tina: "Why not?"

Paul points as the *suspicion* subplot card that Tina has on the table in front of her.

Paul: "For some reason, Quin thinks that Wagner is holding back on something important, so he's not inclined to be helpful."

While this is not the suspicion subplot that Becky has planned for the adventure, there's nothing wrong with Paul getting Quin slightly involved in Wagner's subplot this way.

Tina: "Well, does anyone else have a *second chance* card?"

No one else does, and Tina doesn't think it's worth spending a possibility on the roll so Wagner's skill total of -1 stands.

Becky: "Wagner did so bad he's not sure what they are. Anyone else want to try?"

Barbara: "Sure, if he's just scratching his head looking stumped I'll look in the box too."

Barbara rolls a 20 but Yukitada doesn't have the *evidence analysis* skill so she does not get to roll again. Still, the +7 bonus gives her an action total of 16. Becky had decided earlier that identifying the flares for what they are is only a difficulty of 8, but if the character gets a Superior success level on the check they'll also piece together that the flares and the shed indicate that this clearing must be used an awful lot for helicopter landings. Yukitada's eight result points on the check are a Superior success so she will get the extra information.

Becky: "Yukitada quickly determines that they are indeed just regular flares. The presence of the flares and the shed here in the clearing leads Yuki to deduce that this clearing must be used fairly often for helicopter landings, possibly even in the dark since they could use the flares to mark off the landing zone for an incoming copter."

Alan: "I was wondering about that myself, but since Terrill doesn't know anything about helicopters he couldn't say it."

Juan: "Maybe the cultists were coming and going often enough that they needed a regular landing pad?"

Paul: "Well, they're not going anywhere anymore, we took care of that last time. I say we blow this joint and get back to Manila."

No one disagrees with Paul's suggestion and everyone says that their characters get into the helicopter. Paul rolls the die to generate an *air vehicles* total for Quin's takeoff. From past experiences, Paul knows that a takeoff is normally a difficulty of 5 but that Becky raises the difficulty to 8 whenever Magoth has to ride with his legs sticking out the door.

Paul: "I got a total of 12, that should get us on our way."

Becky: "Sure does. Now that you're on you way that's the end of the first scene. If you want to discard a card from your hands you can do that now and then when everyone's done let me know how many cards you need to get your hands back up to four. Tina, remember that your *suspicion* card doesn't count since it's in your pool."

Juan decides to discard the *presence* card and Tina decides to discard the *willpower* card in her hand while the rest of the players decide not to discard anything. Alan and Paul have four cards so they don't need to refill their hands. Tina needs two while Juan, Barbara and Roger need one each. Becky deals out the cards; Roger gets a *presence*, Barbara gets a *seize initiative*, Juan gets a *haste* and Tina gets an *adrenalin* and an *opponent fails* card.

Act One, Scene Two

Alan: "You know, that went way too quietly. I have a bad feeling about this next scene."

Becky: "Well, you guys aren't out of the woods just yet. I'll need a *direction sense* check from Quin or whoever's navigating to see if you can find your way back to Manila."

Paul: "I'd rather have someone else do it, flying and navigating at the same time will probably have a multi-action penalty on it."

Tina: "Are there any maps in the helicopter?"

Becky: "Yes, there are some maps in the glove compartment. The one on top even has a route marked on it in red, the line runs from Manila down over a couple of other small islands and then ends presumably on the island you just left."

Tina: "Wagner will navigate for Quin from the copilot's seat. Shouldn't be that difficult since we've got maps."

Using the guidelines in the *direction sense* skill write-up, Becky has determined that to be true. With maps it's only a difficulty of 8, increased to 10 because Wagner doesn't have the skill. Tina rolls a 15, generating an action total of 11 with Wagner's *Perception* of 9.

Becky: "You fly along for about ten minutes and approach the first little island the red line crosses on its way to Manila."

Paul: "I'll stick to the coastline and fly around the island rather than over it."

Becky: "Okay."

At this point Becky secretly generates *Perception* totals for all of the characters to see if any of them notice a helicopter rising up out of the jungle on this island. She sets the difficulty at Average (8) for the four characters riding in the back and at Complicated (10) for Quin and Wagner since they're preoccupied with flying and navigating.

She rolls a die for each character; Magoth's action total is 17, Yukitada's is 9, Marco's is 13, Terrill is oblivious with a 5, Quin gets a 15 and Wagner is completely clueless with a -3!

Juan: "I hate it when she starts rolling dice like that."

Becky: "As you're about halfway around this island, everyone but Terrill and Wagner notice something. You four see another helicopter, a different type from the one you're in, rising up above the jungle trees a couple hundred meters in off the beach. It rotates so that it's facing in your direction but doesn't start moving towards you - yet."

Becky flips over the top card of the Drama Deck, forming the action stack, starting round play. This will be a standard scene so she reads initiative off of the top conflict line, which reads "**S**: V - H -". She will also read off the approved actions listed on the card.

Becky: "The other side has initiative. *Defend* and *taunt* are the approved actions."

Paul: "Are they doing anything I might want to defend against?"

Becky: "As a matter of fact, yes! You see a puff of smoke appear on both sides of the other copter and the blur of rapidly approaching rockets."

Paul: "Rockets! I'm going to actively defend, hang on everybody!"

Even though it is the villains' initiative, Paul can elect to perform an active defense since he has not used his action for this round. Since round play has just begun Paul does not have any cards in his pool yet so he won't be able to use any cards on his action. Paul rolls a 17, giving him an **air vehicles** total of 16 counting his type specialization in helicopters. Having taken his action, Paul can now play a card from his hand into his pool, so he puts the *second chance* card face up on the table.

Paul: "I got a 16 on my defense. Do I get a card for the approved action?"

Becky: "Let me see if the rockets hit you or not; if they miss you get a card."

The gunner in the enemy helicopter has a heavy weapons skill of 11. Becky rolls for his attack and gets a 9; his action total of 10 is less than Quin's defense so he misses. She announces this and deals a card from the deck to Paul, who puts it in his hand. It is an action card.

Becky: "The rockets shriek by you, finally running out of steam and diving into the water where they make a really big explosion. Once they see that their rocket attack missed, the other helicopter starts moving towards you."

Juan: "Is it our initiative now?"

Becky: "Yes."

Juan: "Do we have anything we can shoot back with? Terrill, a magic spell maybe?"

Alan: "About all I've got is Bullet, we'd be better off trying to shoot it with Quin's Uzi."

Barbara: "Is there any way we could taunt them at this distance? Over the radio maybe?"

Becky: "You'd have to know what frequency their radio was on, and they're too far away to see any visual kind of taunt."

Barbara: "Rats."

Tina: "I have something I can do! Quin has the same *faith* skill as Wagner so I can perform a Bless miracle on him that will increase his ability to fly our helicopter. Okay, here goes Wagner's prayer: "Heavenly father, see fit to bless this child of yours so that he may keep us safe from harm, amen."

Becky considers the situation and looks at some of the modifiers for miracle use given in Chapter Eleven. She figures this qualifies as a "life-threatening" situation so the difficulty of the miracle will be reduced by 3. The normal difficulty of Bless is 10 so it will be a 7.

Tina generates a *focus* total for Wagner and rolls an 18, a +5 bonus, giving Wagner an action total of 19, easily succeeding. The same bonus number is added to Quin's *faith* skill of 9, giving the miracle an effect total of 14. Against the difficulty of 7, Quin's effect total produces 7 result points, a Superior success. The miracle infuses Quin with spiritual energies, giving him a +4 bonus to his Perception and all of his Perception-based skills for the next hour.

Since she performed an action this round, Tina is allowed to play a card into her pool. She chooses to play the opponent fails card.

Paul: "Good card, good card! I hope we won't need it though."

Becky: "That ends the first round. In the second round ... "

Becky flips over the top card of the deck onto the action stack to determine the initiative for the next round. The standard conflict line reads "**S**: H Fatigue V -".

Becky: " ... heroes have the initiative but are *fatigued*. Approved actions are again *defend* and *taunt*. The fatigue result I'll only apply to the helicopter since you guys haven't actually had much to do yet."

Paul: "What's the helicopter's *Toughness* so I know how much shock damage it can take?"

Becky: "Oh, right! Forgot about that. It's *Toughness* is 14 and its speed value is 13."

Paul writes the information down on his character sheet and notes that the helicopter has taken two points of shock damage.

Paul: "I'm going to defend again this round, and I'll fly over the island just in case we need to ditch, then we won't have to swim to shore. I rolled a 12, the +0 becomes a +1 because I'm actively defending, another +4 from the Bless miracle, that gives me an *air vehicles* total of 17."

Paul plays an *action* card into his pool and waits to see if he'll get a card for the approved action this round. None of the other players can think of anything to do this round so the initiative switches to the villains.

The gunner on the enemy helicopter shoots some more rockets at the heroes but only generates a *heavy weapons* total of 11 and misses once again. The pilot of the enemy helicopter accelerates and gets closer to Quin's wildly weaving helicopter. Becky makes an *air vehicles* roll for the pilot, which he easily makes since he's not flying at full speed yet and he's not trying to match Quin's fancy flying.

Becky: "Another cluster of rockets goes streaking past, blowing up in the heavy jungle growth and spraying palm leaves everywhere. The enemy helicopter speeds up and gets closer."

Alan: "Hey, do the rockets start any trees on fire down there? Could we get close enough for me to use those fires to cast my Altered Fireball spell?"

Becky: "Sorry, unless Quin's flying real slow ... "

Paul: "No chance of that!"

Becky: " ... the fires are a long way behind both helicopters before you could do anything. Paul, here's your card for successfully defending."

Becky deals the next card off the deck to Paul, a *willpower* card. She then flips the next card over onto the action stack for the next round of combat.

Becky: "Villains have initiative, *intimidation* and *trick* are the approved actions. Quin, going to actively defend again?"

Paul: "Yeah, but I'm also going to do a speed push, maybe I can get some distance between us and then I can try to lose them. This island has mountain peaks like the last one?"

Becky: "Yes."

Paul: "Good, give me some terrain to try and hide in. I'll do that next round."

Becky: "Okay, let's go ahead and get your speed push out of the way now since you're also going to actively defend. As you know, performing two actions increases the difficulty of one by +2 and the other by +4, do you want the +2 on the dodge or the speed push?"

Paul: "I'll put the +4 on the *dodge*, with God as my co-pilot I don't think I have to worry about them hitting us."

Paul rolls a 15, a +2 bonus, and with the Bless he has an *air vehicles* total of 18. The speed push is normally a difficulty of 8 but it's now a 10 because of the multi-action penalty. On the Speed column of the General Results Table, Quin's eight result points are a +2(9) result. Quin's active defense total is reduced by four because of the multi-action penalty so the enemy gunner only needs a 14 to hit. Paul plays the willpower card into his pool.

Paul: "I'll take the +2 speed push, that'll take our speed value up to 15. I don't like the nine shock points, if this was the Blue Meanie I could negate that with a possibility, but I guess I'll have to live with it."

Becky notes that the enemy helicopter has a base speed value of 15, so the enemy pilot doesn't even have to make a speed push to accelerate and keep up with Quin. The enemy gunner, having run out of rockets, switches over to the minigun mounted in the helicopter's nose. Since it fires at full auto, he gets a +3 bonus on his action total. Becky rolls a 12, a +0 bonus, so the gunner's action total is a 14. He hits!

Becky: "The enemy helicopter manages to keep pace with yours even though you're redlining the engine. You see a bright flash from the nose of their helicopter and then hear the unmistakable sound of bullets ripping into the body of the helicopter!"

The minigun has a damage value of 27, which already accounts for full auto fire. The gunner's bonus number was +0 so the damage total isn't increased any. Quin's helicopter has a *Toughness* of 14. Becky looks up 13 result points on the Combat Results Table, using the Ord column for the helicopter. She's about to announce the damage value as being three wounds, a KO and seven shock when Tina speaks up.

Tina: "Can I play the *opponent fails* card in my pool and make them miss us or do I have to trade it to Paul first since he's piloting the copter?"

Becky: "Since you're in the helicopter I'll let you play it, you don't need to trade it to Paul."

Tina: "Okay, I'll play it so that they don't hit us. When I see the flash on the other helicopter I shout a warning to Quin and he's able to jink us out of the way just in time."

Paul: "I guess God really is my co-pilot, huh?"

Tina's opponent fails card goes onto the discard pile. Becky flips the top card of the deck over onto the action stack.

Becky: "Heroes have initiative, villains are *fatigued*. Like I did with you guys that'll apply to their helicopter instead of the people inside it. Approved actions are *intimidation* and *trick*."

Barbara: "Quin, I have an idea. Instead of running away from these guys, turn us around and fly right back at them. If you pass close enough we might be able to throw some attacks at them when we go by."

Paul: "It's worth a shot. Someone can use my Uzi if they want."

Becky: "Only two of the people in the back will be able to launch an attack when you go by, which two will depend on which side you pass them on."

Barbara: "Yukitada has an idea so I'd like it to be the side I'm on."

Alan: "I'm sitting on that side with Yuki. I'll use my Bullet spell when we go by, maybe I'll get lucky and hit something vital."

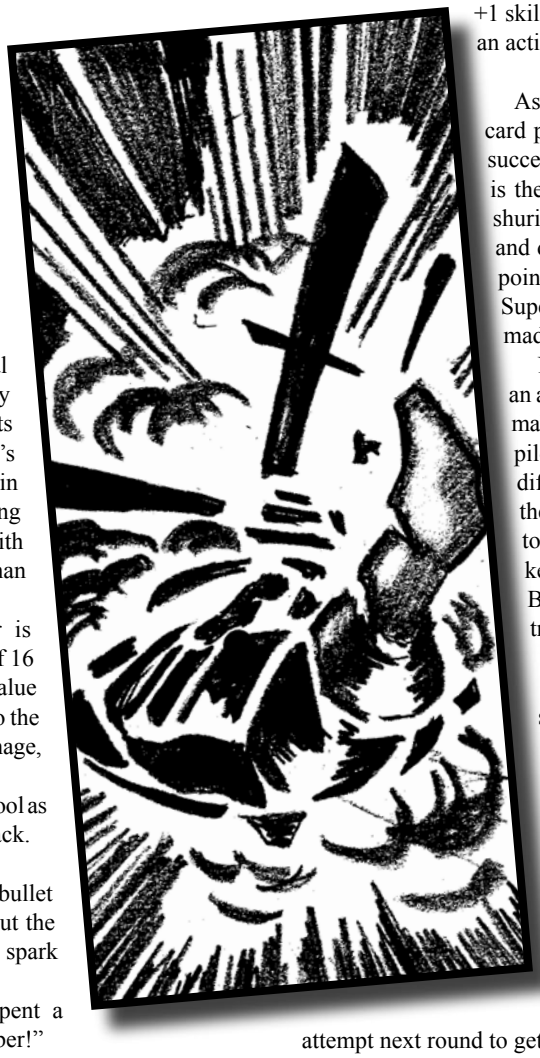
Becky: "Is Quin just going to turn around and fly past them or will he actively defend as well in case they are able to turn around and get into attack position again?"

Paul: "It shouldn't be that difficult to just turn around ... I'll go ahead and multi-action again. This time I'll put the +2 on the *dodge*, last time was too close for comfort!"

Paul rolls another 15 so once again he has an *air vehicles* total of 18. This time the active defense has a value of 16 since it gets the +2 penalty. The difficulty for turning the helicopter around is only Average (8) so even with the +4 penalty Quin makes it without any problem. Paul plays the *haste* card into his pool.

Becky: "Quin pivots the helicopter around and zooms back past the enemy helicopter. You get a quick glimpse of the surprised faces of the pilot and his gunner as you pass by them. Alan, your attack?"

Alan: "Right, the difficulty of the spell is 11 and the backlash is 15 ... an eighteen, good roll! That gives me an *apportation magic* skill total of 18, which beats the difficulty just fine and it also beats the backlash, so I don't take any damage from casting the spell. The bonus number goes to the effect value of 15 so the damage total is 20!"



Becky compares Terrill's skill total to the *air vehicles* skill of the enemy pilot to see if Terrill's spell actually hits the enemy copter. The enemy pilot's skill value is only 11 but Becky adds in a +4 penalty for trying to hit a moving target from a moving vehicle. Even with that though, Terrill's 20 is more than enough.

However, the enemy helicopter is heavily armored; it has a *Toughness* of 16 and +4 adds of armor for an armor value of 20. Terrill's effect value is also 20 so the attack only does one result points of damage, which is only one shock point.

Terrill plays a *master plan* into his pool as Becky announces the result of his attack.

Becky: "Your magically-driven bullet flies out and hits the enemy copter, but the only noticeable effect you see if a spark when it hits."

Alan: "I knew I should have spent a possibility to get a bigger bonus number!"

Becky: "Barbara?"

Barbara: "I want to try something tricky. As we flash past, I want to throw a shuriken into the spinning barrel mechanism of the minigun. Hopefully the shuriken will get wedged in there and the next time he fires it'll jam and destroy the weapon, or at least make it unusable."

Becky: "Wow! Okay, that'll be difficult, kind of like a disarm attempt only the minigun doesn't have a *Strength* value ... here's how I'll handle it, there will be al -4 action penalty and if you can get a Superior success on the attack I'll say that it wedges in tight enough to wreck the gun."

Barbara: "Sounds fair. I wish I had some cards I could use, oh well."

Barbara rolls a 13 and immediately says that she's spending a possibility. Neither of the enemies is possibility-rated so they can't counter it. Barbara's second roll is a 17 so her final die roll is 30. That's a +9 bonus, then the -4 penalty Becky assigned for the trick shot is added in to get a final bonus number of +5.

Barbara: "Does Yukitada get her +1 skill bonus on *martial arts* because she's attacking someone who doesn't have *martial arts*?"

Becky: "Um, sure, why not."

Barbara: "Then with my skill of 16, then the +1 skill bonus, then my +5 bonus number, that's an action total of 22."

As Barbara plays a *seize initiative* into her card pool, Becky figures out if her attack was successful or not. The difficulty for Yukitada is the same as it was for Terrill, a 15, so the shuriken does hit, but does it hit the minigun and does it stick in? Barbara has seven result points, which is exactly what she needed for a Superior success. The *martial arts* skill bonus made all the difference!

Now that everyone who was going to take an action on the heroes' side has gone, Becky makes an *air vehicles* skill check for the enemy pilot to see if he gets turned around. The difficulty is the same as it was for Quin but the enemy pilot rolls a 2, generating a skill total of 1! That's not even good enough to keep the copter moving in a straight line so Becky decides that he must have clipped a tree or something and loses control.

Becky: "Apparently very distracted and surprised by Quin's charge back at him, the enemy pilot doesn't pay enough attention to what he's doing and the rotor blade of the copter clips a palm tree sticking out from the side of a mountain peak and the enemy copter begins to spin out of control!"

Barbara: "No, they can't crash yet! I want to see the minigun blow up when they try to fire it!"

Paul: "Do they crash?"

Becky: "Not this round, he'll get one attempt next round to get control back, but if he fails, they crash."

Since the gunner on the enemy copter can't get a shot at the heroes while is copter is spinning out of control, that's all for the villain's initiative so Becky flips the next card onto the action stack.

Becky: "Oh sure, now this comes up for you guys, right when you don't need it! Heroes have the initiative and a *flurry* plus *attack* and *taunt* are approved actions."

Roger: "Can we wait and see if the other pilot manages to pull out of his crash and then take our actions if we have to?"

Becky: "Sure, it'll be kind of like a location attack, you're all be waiting for the target to present itself. If the pilot fails, then there probably won't be a target anymore."

Becky decides that pulling a spinning copter out of a crash, especially when flying around mountain peaks, is an Extremely Hard task, difficulty 18. The enemy pilot might be able to do it, but only if he gets a really lucky die roll. Becky rolls and gets a 1! The enemy pilot's skill total is -1, complete and utter failure. She doesn't even bother figuring up a damage value for the crash, that bad of a roll deserves a spectacular finish.

Becky: "It looks like he deliberately makes the helicopter start spinning even faster and more out of control, before slamming it into the side of a mountain peak and exploding into a huge fireball!"

Paul: "Well, that's one way to outfly them I guess, wait for them to screw up and kill themselves."

Tina: "Father Wagner says to Quin, 'it's because we have God on our sides, right Quin? And speaking of which, when was the last time you took confession? As your spiritual advisor it pains me to see you neglecting your faith like that."

Juan: "Don't listen to him Quin, come over to the dark side and join me! We can chant mantras and meditate on crystals together...."

Becky lets the group roleplay out this little joking conversation for a while then asks the party what they want to do next.

Alan: "Head straight to Manila, full speed!"

Roger: "Hold on, I want to know what a heavily armed attack helicopter of unknown design is doing lurking around on this island. Isn't the route on that map right over this island, and it continues on to the island where we fought the cultists? It can't be a coincidence."

Juan: "You think there might be more cultists on this island? Do you think the vampyre might have come to this island after we drove him off the last one?"

Barbara: "It's a possibility. We know there was a lot of air traffic to the island we left, there was that shed and the flares. If they flew over this island a lot they might have set something up here too"."

Paul: "I think we should land and check this island out. There's definitely something funny going on here."

Alan: "I really think we should keep going to Manila."

Paul: "Becky, Quin will start looking for an inconspicuous place to land. I don't want it to be too close to where we first ran into the other helicopter, too much chance of someone noticing us, if there's anyone down there to notice us."

Becky: "That's not a problem. And as the helicopter lands, we come to the end of scene two! Discard any cards if you have to or want to and then let me know how many you need to refill your hands."

Roger: "Can I play an alertness into my pool right before the scene ends?"

Becky: "Sorry Roger, you'll have to wait for the start of the next scene to do that."

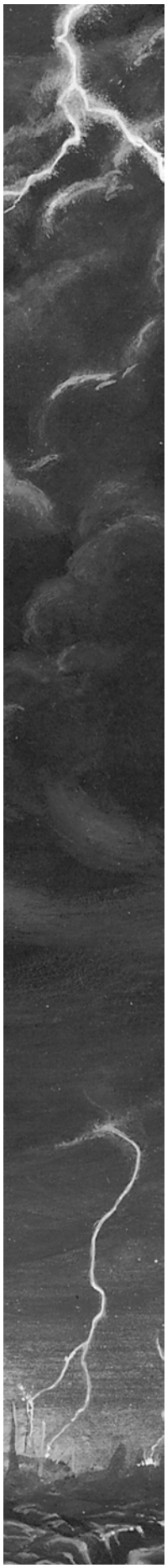
Roger: "Just checking. I don't need any cards then, I'm fine."

Barbara also has four cards already and doesn't want to discard any so she's fine too. Quin needs to get rid of two cards so Paul discards the *willpower* and *adrenalin* cards. Alan chooses to discard the *connection*, figuring that there's not likely to be too many people for him to know on this tropical island. Alan and Tina are the only ones who don't have four cards in their hands so Becky deals each of them a card. Alan gets another *adrenalin* card and Tina gets a *willpower*.

Becky: "Okay, on to scene three!"

Note!

If you are a player, you should skip the next couple of chapters as the material covered in them is primarily for gamemasters; much of it is stuff that players and their characters should learn through experience. You can jump ahead to Chapters Ten through Thirteen though, there's nothing in them that needs to be kept a surprise.



Chapter 7: Reality

"Damn all stormers to the depths of darkness anyway! And especially damn the fact that they exist in droves on the very worlds best for plundering!"

-- the Gaunt Man, High Lord of Orrorsh

The interactions that can occur between different realities are central to *Torg*'s overall story line. Some of these concepts such as *cosms, axioms, world laws, reality storms, contradictions* and *disconnection* have been mentioned in earlier chapters but not explained in much detail.

This chapter details the fundamental workings of reality: the different types of realities that can exist, how realities are defined, how characters from one reality interact with another and vice versa, the possible consequences of these interactions and the ways that possibility energy can be used by characters to interact with reality itself.

Additional material concerning possibility energy and manipulating reality is in Chapter Eight, which covers information pertinent to the Possibility Wars; the ways High Lords operate, the tools at their disposal and what Storm Knights must do in order to defeat the Possibility Raiders.

The Big Picture

Because *Torg* deals with concepts involving multiple realities and different universes, it's important to know how existence is structured and how its various components relate to each other. Not all realities are created equal and some realities can naturally interact with others while some cannot.

At the top of the *Torg* cosmology is the *cosmverse*. The cosmverse contains the sum total of all realities that exist, save one. Outside of the cosmverse is an unimaginable and unreachable reality known only as "The Place". This place outside of normal reality is the source of the *darkness devices*, the unimaginably powerful objects that give the High Lords much of their reality-warping abilities. More about The Place and darkness devices can be found in the next chapter.

The cosmverse contains an unknown number of *cosms*. Some believe that the cosmverse contains an infinite number of cosms, others believe that while the number of cosms is uncountable, it is still a finite number and one that gets smaller every time a High Lord invades and destroys a cosm.

A *cosm* is defined as an entire universe that was, at the time of its creation, completely separated from every other cosm, meaning that there is no normal way to travel from one cosm to another. Most cosms have realities that are at least a little different from one another; some are drastically different. Travel between cosms is possible but involves direct manipulation of reality and possibility energy rather than lesser manipulations such as using magic, miracles, technology or psionics.

Most cosms only contain one reality but some possess multiple realities. These additional realities are usually physically separate from each other but travel between them is still possible through magical, spiritual, technological or psionic means. It is this ability to travel "normally" between the realities that distinguishes them from cosms.

Cosms that contain more than one reality have a *core reality* that is considered the "center" of the cosm; the other realities, known as *fringe realities*, lie outside the physical boundaries of the core reality. Most of the time when someone refers to a cosm, such as "the Core Earth cosm", they are referring to the core reality of the cosm and not the cosm as a whole.

Fringe realities can be "close" to the core reality, which means that it's generally easy to travel between the fringe reality and the core reality. Or they can be "far" from the core reality, indicating that it may be difficult or even impossible to travel between it and the core reality (though it's possible that it could still be reached from another fringe reality.) Some scholars imagine that the fringe realities are like satellites of the core reality, moving in orbits that might take them nearer or farther away from the core reality over time, but the exact mechanics of these orbits are often impossible to determine and may not even be stable over time.

How Big is a Cosm?

A common question about Core Earth reality is how far does the reality extend beyond the planet Earth, essentially what is the physical size of the Core Earth cosm. Is the Moon part of the Core Earth cosm, does the cosm include the solar system, what about the Milky Way galaxy and the rest of the universe? Does other life in the universe operate under the Core Earth axioms and world laws?

The answer is that the Core Earth cosm does indeed include the entire known universe. A space traveler visiting the Andromeda Galaxy would find that the reality there is the same as it is on the planet Earth. As for other life in the universe, there isn't any. If the High Lords succeed in destroying the Earth, the Core Earth cosm, the entire universe, will be devoid of life.

While this complete absence of life on other planets may strike some people as highly improbable, it's not impossible. Until just a few decades ago, the conventional scientific wisdom was that the probabilities favored there being no other life in the universe except on Earth. While opinion has been changing in recent times, until life is proven to exist elsewhere the possibility that there isn't life anywhere else cannot be ruled out. For the fictional setting we have created for *Torg*, that is how we have defined the Core Earth cosm, there is no life except on Earth.

That doesn't mean that all universes will only have one inhabited planet, it just means that the Core Earth universe only has one inhabited planet. The Star Sphere of the Space Gods, for example, is a galaxy with hundreds of inhabited worlds and the solar system of the Terra cosm has at least two inhabited planets, Terra and Mars.Little is known about the physical size of most of the cosms involved in the Possibility Wars. Aysle is known to be of a finite size and it is suspected that Magna Verita (the home cosm of the Cyberpapacy) is also a closed space, though the exact dimensions are not known. Both cosms only have one world in them.

The Star Sphere is given a specific size but whether this refers to the entire cosm or just the portion explored and settled by the Akashans is unclear. Most of the other cosms are described as having a planet orbiting a sun but beyond that there's no data. These cosms could consist only of the one planet and its sun or like Core Earth there may be a huge volume of space beyond the planet's orbit.

Some fringe realities are believed to have originated as a part of the core reality that, over time, grew to be physically separate from the core reality and splintered off as a fringe reality. Legends in a core reality may prove to be half-remembered stories about a part of the reality that somehow separated into a fringe reality, existing on its own terms independent of events in the core reality. Core Earth has a number of such fringe realities: stories about King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table live on as the truth in the fringe reality of Avalon and the ancient civilization of Atlantis continues to thrive in the fringe reality of the same name.

These fringe realities are sometimes known as *pocket dimensions*. While the term is often used interchangeably with fringe reality, "pocket dimension" technically only applies to fringe realities that were once part of the core reality instead of being created independent of the core reality. It is often difficult to judge the origin of a fringe reality though; stories and legends in the core reality may have originated from exposure to the fringe reality rather than indicating that the fringe reality began as part of the core reality.

For example, did the King Arthur of myth and legend really exist in Core Earth's historical past, ultimately leading to the creation of the Avalon pocket dimension, or were those stories brought to Core Earth by people from or who had visited the already existing fringe reality of Avalon? It is because of uncertainties like this that "pocket dimension" and "fringe reality" are often used to mean the same thing.

Fringe realities may possess axioms and world laws similar or even identical to those in the core reality. Such fringe realities often reside very "close" to the core reality and can be assessed with a minimum of effort. The GodNet of the Cyberpapacy is an example of such a fringe reality, it can be accessed in a non-physical manner simply by "jacking in" with a cyberdeck.

One other term used in association with different realities is *realm*. A realm is a foreign intrusion of one reality into the physical space of another reality. The areas of the Earth that have been transformed by the Possibility Raiders are realms, areas where the reality of the invading cosm has replaced the natural Core Earth reality. During the third year of the Possibility Wars, a naturally occurring realm came into existence when part of the Land Below, a fringe reality of Core Earth, burst through the dimensional barriers and established it's reality over a sizable portion of North America.

Possibility Energy

Every reality is imbued with a form of energy that allows the limits of that reality to be expanded, or that allows events to be changed in exceptional ways. This energy is called *possibility energy*. Possibility energy is a unique force that can only be tapped through the interaction of living beings and unliving objects according to an arcane set of laws known as the *Everlaws*.

Possibility energy may be harnessed directly though the will of a being who possesses the energy, as well as through other strange, more mechanical means. A character that can tap and store possibility energy is called *possibility-rated* and can perform feats and survive dangers far beyond what is possible for normal beings. With knowledge and skill, possibility energy can even be used to alter reality itself.

Only a small number of beings per cosm are blessed with the ability to store significant amounts of possibility energy and tap what they have stored; far fewer are those who have mastered its secrets.

Some of the ways that possibility-rated beings can use their possibility energy have already been covered in previous chapters; buying skills, modifying die rolls, changing the outcome of events, and so on. Within the game environment, even the cards of the Drama Deck that players use to modify their character's actions can be viewed as a use of possibility energy by the characters to manipulate their environment. This particular use of possibility energy is something that the High Lords and their minions are not capable of doing themselves, which gives the Storm Knights who oppose them a much needed advantage.

Most uses of possibility energy are unconscious in nature; while the player is fully aware of the fact that a Possibility Point has been spent or that a card has been played most characters never consciously understand that they're using possibility energy to alter reality around them. They may believe that they're just lucky, attribute it to coincidence, the influence of the gods, or rationalize their good fortune in any number of other ways without realizing the truth.

The Infiniverse

The cosmverse is actually not the top unit of the *Torg* cosmology; each separate gaming group that plays *Torg* is in fact playing in their own separate cosmverse. The collection of these separate cosmverses is known as the *infiniverse*.

The infiniverse was a central feature of West End Games' original plan for the *Torg* campaign setting. Through the Infiniverse newsletter, gaming groups around the world were able to take part in the decision-making process that guided the overall development of the campaign material published by West End Games.

In the game setting, the infiniverse was created during the early days of the Possibility Wars; prior to that point in time there was only one cosmverse, only the official campaign setting existed. The creation of the infiniverse within the setting was in response to a danger that threatened to destroy the entire cosmverse; the entity known as The Nameless One had gained entrance to the cosmverse and its very presence was causing the destruction of untold numbers of realities.

Another entity called Apeiros, who embodies creation in opposition to The Nameless One's destruction, replicated the cosmverse an infinite number of times, spreading The Nameless One's essence out across an infinite number of planes of existence. Thus weakened, The Nameless One was forced to withdraw from the newly created infiniverse, returning to its home outside of the new infiniverse, The Place. All existence itself was saved from The Nameless One, at least for the moment.

These new cosmverses became new campaign settings, all starting from the same point in the overall campaign storyline but diverging in any number of ways from that point on. Every gaming group that started a new *Torg* campaign was determining the outcome of the Possibility Wars within their own cosmverse.

The idea was that even if the High Lords proved victorious on one Earth, there was still the chance that they would be defeated on another. Each gaming group determined its own fate, it wasn't shackled to the outcome of events that occurred in someone else's setting, even the official campaign material published by West End Games.

Central to the infiniverse concept was the Infiniverse newsletter. This monthly (then later bi-monthly) newsletter contained a number of story ideas that described events occurring in the official campaign, but left the outcomes undetermined. Subscribers to the newsletter were able to send in response forms which described how some of these events were playing out in their own campaigns; what evil plans were being foiled by Storm Knights and which ones weren't. West End then used those response forms to decide how those events would play out in the official campaign.

The Everlaws

The *Everlaws* are cosmversal truths that hold in every reality; no matter how different a reality may be from every other reality in the cosmverse, the Everlaws still apply there. The first two Everlaws are the most important and inclusive, affecting nearly every aspect of life in all cosms. The last two are less powerful and they affect reality less often than the first two. In fact their very existence is generally unknown even to scholars who have deduced or learned of the existence of the first two Everlaws.

The High Lords and their Darkness Devices have developed a technique that takes advantage of the first two Everlaws to drain worlds of their possibility energy. While some of the High Lords may be aware of the other two Everlaws, they generally do not know enough to take advantage of them except in the most general ways.

The Everlaw of One

There are thousands upon millions of possible futures for every world that exists, and each passing second opens up new possible futures. Some of these possible futures differ from one another only in minutiae, others may have fundamental differences. But only one of those possible futures can become reality due to the Everlaw of One. The Everlaw of One states that **only one possibility from a set of two or more contradictory possibilities can become a reality at one time**. If a person gets shot, they're either dead or they're alive, they can't be both. This may seem fairly obvious but it has a number of metaphysical implications on reality.

The first implication is that the Everlaw of One acts to eliminate contradictions, it keeps events occurring "on the straight and narrow." Something which cannot normally happen is not allowed to happen; the Everlaw of One uses possibility energy from the cosm to "put things right" by changing those contradictory elements so that they are no longer contradictory. This is most often seen in the enforcement of the axioms and world laws of a reality, the Everlaw of One is preventing something that should not be happening from happening.

The second implication is less noticeable, but in its own way has a far greater effect. When two possible futures begin to coexist, such as someone being shot and finding himself simultaneously dead and alive (somewhat difficult to imagine), the Everlaw of One would change the conditions so that the character is either dead or alive. While he might have a definite preference, the Everlaw chooses the outcome that requires the least amount of change, and the least expenditure of possibility energy.

This elimination of possible futures has the effect of preventing the creation of alternate timelines, a common theme in most fiction involving multiple universes. There can only be one Core Earth in the cosmverse; new, divergent versions of Core Earth caused by the creation of alternate timelines cannot happen because the Everlaw of One prevents the creation of alternate timelines.

There are parallel worlds though. Terra (Nile Empire), Tharkold, Gaea (Orrorsh) and Magna Verita (Cyberpapacy) all have some similarities to Core Earth history and geography. But they aren't "spin-offs" of Core Earth or of any other Earth-like cosms; their realities are different and as outlined in the definition of a cosm, were completely independent and separate from other cosms at the time of their creation.

The Everlaw of One's elimination of alternate timelines has additional implications that would place limits on time travel. Trying to alter the course of events in the past will be a contradiction because the Everlaw of One has, from the viewpoint of the future, already

eliminated every other possible outcome; events can only proceed as they originally happened.

Events that happen in a character's future would remain undetermined until they happen though, so viewing the future wouldn't guarantee that what's seen is actually how things will happen, only how things might happen. A character that traveled into the future would find that the Everlaw of One does not restrict the flow of events the way it would if she traveled into the past. However, returning to her original time may be impossible because changing what is now the past for her has become a contradiction.

The Everlaw of Two

Every reality spawns an amazing variety of animals, living beings, landforms, plants, minerals, elements and even incorporeal entities such as spirits. But a fundamental relationship exists between the *living* of a reality and the *unliving* elements that constitute the rest of that reality. The Everlaw of Two states that the **living and the unliving are linked by the rules of their reality**, and this link causes possibility energy to flow between the living and the unliving. **The living may use this possibility energy to create and change their world**. Possibility energy is only generated when the living and unliving interact and the axioms and world laws of their reality govern these interactions.

The Everlaw of Two is weaker than the Everlaw of One, and the High Lords are able to interrupt its operation thanks to the power of their Darkness Devices. To do this, the invader overlays a new set of rules, their version of reality, on top of the natural unliving portion of the reality, so that the invading reality take precedence.

The living beings in this realm are still connected to the unliving portion of their reality and send it possibility energy like always. But when the unliving seeks to return that energy, the flow is interrupted and the energy stolen by the Darkness Device. If this process continues for a long enough period of time, the living being is eventually drained of all of its possibility energy because it's not receiving any back to replace what it uses up.

More information on this process used by the High Lords can be found in Chapter Eight.

The Everlaw of Three

The legends speak of Apeiros, a being of immense and unknowable power, creator of the cosmverse, who exists both within and without each and every reality of the cosmverse. Scholars in some cosms believe Apeiros to be the source of all Possibilities, while others believe Apeiros to merely be the source of the first Possibilities.

In either case, the Everlaw of Three states that in addition to the living and unliving parts of reality there is a third part: a part created directly by or from Apeiros. This part is rich with possibility energy, and works to protect and empower the living and unliving in that reality. These manifestations of Apeiros, some of which are physical and durable, are symbols of great power and hope: Excalibur, the Holy Grail, the Heart of Coyote.

These "incarnations of possibility" are supposed to exist forever, surviving for all time. For this reason they are sometimes known as *eternity shards*. If they can find one, Storm Knights can tap into the possibility energy and special powers of an eternity shard; High Lords seek to acquire them in order to drain them of their possibilities.

Eternity shards are discussed in detail later in this chapter.

The Everlaw of Four

The existence of the Everlaw of Four is a matter of some dispute; some see its effects as being a part of the Everlaw of Two while others consider it a companion to the Everlaw of Three. In effect the Everlaw of Four does fit somewhere between the second and third Everlaws. It's placed fourth as a matter of convenience; the Everlaw of One stipulates that there is **one** outcome for every event, the Everlaw of Two states there are **two** sides of reality (living and unliving) and the Everlaw of Three adds a **third** part to reality, eternity shards.

The Everlaw of Four states that there is a second effect of the Everlaw of Two, and two twice is **four**. Also, its effect is seen as being complimentary but weaker than the Everlaw of Three so it has to come after it in the numbering scheme, which it couldn't do if its effects are part of the Everlaw of Two.

Where the Everlaw of Three creates objects imbued with possibility energy that can be used to inspire and empower a reality, the Everlaw of Four creates living beings imbued with possibility energy that serve this same purpose. It does this by strengthening the connection that the living being has to the Everlaw of Two, which allows the being to amass and store larger amounts of possibility energy than normal. With this excess of possibility energy the being can change and affect the world much more dramatically than a normal living being. The Everlaw of Four is what's responsible for the existence of possibility-rated beings.

Axioms and World Laws

Every reality works by its own set of rules. But there is an underlying structure in all realities: each is built on *axioms*, natural laws that define the limits of a reality and the way things work within those limits. Realities that have different axioms, even if the difference is as small as one point in a single axiom, have difficulties coexisting. The "rules" are just different enough between them for the Everlaw of One to treat things as manifestations of a **single** reality, and it tries to resolve and remove the differences. This explains why devices from one reality do not always work properly in another, it's

the Everlaw of One acting to keep things operating within the rules of whichever reality it has determined is the "correct" one.

While the axioms are the limits for a reality, the *world laws* modify how reality works within those limits. A reality's world laws describe how it is different from other realities, even ones with the same axioms; the function and the flavor of a reality, its genre, is bound up in its world laws. World laws can to a limited extent even allow the reality to operate in violation of the limits imposed by the axioms. In Orrorsh for example, its world laws allow magic performed using the occult skill to create effects far in excess of what the reality's Magic axiom normally allows.

The Axioms

Axioms define the limits of what is possible within a reality. There are four areas governed by axioms: *Magic, Social, Spirit,* and *Technological* (Tech for short.) Each axiom limits the interaction **between the living and the unliving parts of a reality**, in effect providing a measure of the extent to which the living can manipulate the unliving in each of the four areas. Tractors are an example of using technology to change a world. The concept of economics is a social tool. The potency of magic spells and spiritual miracles are similarly defined and limited by their axioms. Any tools created by the living will have an axiom requirement affecting its operation.

A low axiom level often represents a weak link between the living and unliving in that particular aspect of the world. However weak the link though, **the unliving world can always affect the living**. Axioms do not limit how the unliving interact with the living, axioms only apply to the living and to the tools they create.

Actual Axioms versus Effective Axioms

In many of the realities involved in the Possibility Wars, the axioms given represent the **maximum** level of what's allowed in that cosm. This is not necessarily the same thing as the level at which most of the population operates at. For example, Core Earth has a Social axiom of 21 but in many parts of the world governments and economies are not as advanced or developed as they are in countries like the United States. These areas still have a Social axiom of 21, they just don't use it; they have an *effective axiom* level that is lower.

Some of the invading realities also behave this way. The actual axiom may only represent a few select areas or concepts where the reality operates at that potential, while everything else occurs at a lower level. The Cyberpapacy, for example, has an actual Social axiom of 18 but outside of the organization and operations of the CyberChurch their world is essentially trapped in the social conventions of the middle ages, it's effective Social axiom is only 13.

Effective axiom levels for some of the realities involved in the Possibility Wars are included in the following axiom lists. These are provided to help indicate the typical mindset and perceptions of the people of that reality. In no way should an effective axiom level be taken to indicate the actual axiom level for that reality. A Cyberpapal character may be used to thinking only at a level of Social 13 but his reality will allow him to learn about and use concepts all the way up to Social 18 before it becomes a contradiction.

For instance, a being from the Living Land has a Tech axiom of 7 and is limited by that axiom. He couldn't, for example, shoot a firearm in his home cosm without creating a contradiction. But it is **not** a contradiction for the bullet fired from that gun to injure someone in the Living Land. The contradiction is in the operation of the tool (firing the gun), not in the interaction between the unliving (the bullet) and the living (the target).

It is important to remember that the independent operation of a tool is not the same thing as an interaction between the unliving and the living. Tools have axiom requirements, which puts their operation in the realm of the living interacting with the unliving. A clock from Core Earth left in the Living Land will not continue to operate on its own, it is a tool and requires the living to create the contradiction necessary for it to operate there. See "When Realities Collide" later in this chapter for more information on this subject.

Each of the axioms is ranked on a numeric scale from 0-33. This scaling does **not** use the **Torg** Value Chart, a five point axiom difference does not mean that what's possible is magnified by a factor of ten.

THE AXIOMS OF THE COSMS

	Magic	Social	Spirit	Tech
Aysle	18	18	16	15
Core Earth	7	21	9	23
Cyberpapacy	10	18	14	26
Land Below	12	8	17	10
Living Land	0	7	24	7
Nile Empire	12	20	17	21
Nippon Tech	2	22	8	24
Orrorsh	15	20	17	19
Space Gods	7	27	13	30
Tharkold	12	20	17	26
Tz'Ravok	7	18	17	12

Magic

The *Magic* axiom limits the extent to which the living beings of a reality may use and affect the "supernatural" element of their world. It determines the types of magic that are available and the types of spell effects that are possible. Magic is covered in more detail in Chapter Ten.

0—No magic is possible in this world.

Living Land

2—Magic is extremely difficult and of limited usefulness. Effects are available only through complex and lengthy rituals, the creation of which requires decades of effort. Divination magic is the only type available and the effects are unpredictable and unreliable, as well as limited in scope. Divinatory magic may only perceive the present, it cannot see into the past or the future.

Nippon Tech

3—Years of effort are required to create divinatory spells, but magic may now perceive the past and the future as well as the present. It is still highly unreliable though.

5—Apportation magic becomes possible, though even minor effects require complicated and lengthy spell rituals. The "wild" nature of magic is generally limited to type, divination magic will always product a divination result, it won't create an apportation result by accident.

7—Alteration magic is available as complicated and lengthy spells with highly erratic effects, divination and apportation are slightly more reliable. Spell creation becomes easier, generally only requiring a year or two instead of several years.

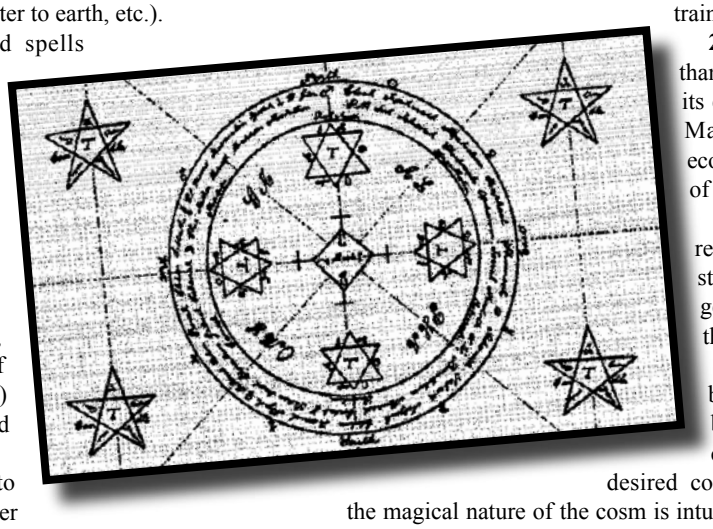
Core Earth, Space Gods, Tz'Ravok

8—Magical laws are stable enough to produce predictable effects, "wild" magic is no longer a problem. The stability also allows magicians to formalize their spell patterns into shapes understandable by other magicians. These spells may be taught from one magician to another, although personal interpretation of the spell is still important.

9—Enough magical energy is available to sustain the existence of creatures whose essences requires a small amount of magical energy to live such as fairies, elves, giants, and creatures which are impossible physical amalgams of otherwise possible living beings, such as centaurs and harpies.

Alteration magic may be used to transmute elements from one form to another (lead to gold, water to earth, etc.).

10—Magical processes and spells may be "focused" into objects, creating enchanted items with a limited duration. Such devices include lucky charms, magically sharpened weapons, and protective talismans.



Sufficient magical energy now exists to sustain highly magical creatures; non-corporeal creatures (spirits, ghosts), elementals, demons and embodiments of moral virtues (including "gods") may **physically** exist in a world as entities.

Alteration magic may be used to transform living beings into another type of living entity. Transforming the being back into its original form may entail some risk though.

Conjuration magic becomes possible, though it may only create ephemeral effects such as insubstantial ("fully illusionary") objects or emotions within a living being.

Cyberpapacy

12—Conjuration magic may produce effects from "nothing". Real, solid objects may be conjured but are more difficult than creating partially real ("illusionary") effects.

Alteration of living being into inanimate matter is now possible. The reverse is dangerous and often fails.

Land Below, Nile Empire, Tharkold

13—Items can be enchanted to hold "charges" of spells instead of a single limited-duration focused effect. Magicians can master an on/off process that lets them activate an item's charges one at a time.

Conjuration of permanent substance or object is now possible. Communication with other dimensions (fringe realities) becomes possible.

15—Magic can be used to create connections between dimensions, allowing for travel or the summoning of objects or creatures from one dimension to the other.

Magicians may now create ward spells that do not release their effects until triggered by a condition they have been programmed to detect.

Orrorsh (when using normal magic)

17—Spells may be "pre-cast" - impressed into the magician's mind for later use. Such spells are transient; a magician can erase a spell and replace it with another rather than permanently burn it into her mind. Spells may be impressed into objects or other people but must be specifically designed for the purpose.

18—Magic is common enough that most beings in the cosm use some magic to at least a limited degree, although training confers huge advantages.

Aysle

20—"Wish spells" (spells of a generic nature that interpret the desires of the caster) are possible but highly unreliable. Wish magic is not one of the four basic kinds of magic; its use requires a separate, fifth magic skill.

Orrorsh (when using the occult *skill)*

22—Magical energies are plentiful enough in the cosm that the four basic kinds of magic become easier, more effect for less effort. Beings in the cosm may cast spells with only a minimal amount of training.

24—Using magic is easier than operating technology and its effects are greatly superior. Magic is the basis of the economy and the prime source of labor.

28—"Wish spells" become reliable, though casters must still have a specific rather than general intent in mind when they perform the spell.

33—Magical energy can be tapped by all thinking beings, or any creature capable of formulating a desired condition. Understanding of the magical nature of the cosm is intuitive in all people. Minimal training can produce spectacular effects.

Social

The *Social* axioms govern what sort of interactions are possible between beings; the complexity of their social organizations and what ideas they may put into practice. It determines the ease with which information may be collected and disseminated and the equality and efficiency of social structures.

0—No social interaction between beings is possible; beings that reproduce by fission or similar methods live lives of complete solitude in the presence of all other beings.

2—The only social unit is the nuclear family (parents and offspring only); rudimentary rituals for death of a family member develop. Language is possible, but not permanent records.

3—The extended family is possible. Verbal traditions are strong, ritual knowledge is passed down from generation to generation. Rites for all important stages of life are developed.

The concept of personal property is possible. Painting and other forms of ornamentation and decoration are developed.

5—The tribe (multi-family groups) is possible, resources can be shared. Political organization is possible, but of very limited scope.

Pictographic writing such as hieroglyphics can be developed. Dramatic theater is possible, distinct from religious rituals and stories. Poetry is developed.

7—Villages and cooperative agricultural efforts are possible. Rulership by a "king" is possible but the range of his authority is limited. Social organization developed sufficiently to allow the existence of professional tradesmen. Semi-professional military and militia formed for common defense can exist.

The concept of land ownership is possible. Unfortunately, so is the concept of owning other intelligent beings. A combination sound/pictographic alphabet may be developed. Epic poetry and sporting events are possible.

Living Land

8—The city-state, a network of villages and smaller cities ruled from one central city, usually with a monarch of some kind, can exist. Feudalism is possible. Standing armies for conquest as well as defense may be raised.

Taxes are invented, as are arithmetic counting and administrative procedures for collecting taxes.

Land Below

10—Collection of information is sufficiently centralized for the beginning of scholarship and science; libraries and institutions of learning may appear. Abstract or phonetic alphabets are possible.

Money is invented. Laws are codified. Early forms of democracy are possible but voting privileges are usually limited to the upper class.

12—Social organization sufficiently robust as to assimilate conquered cultures rather than simply rule them. Societies may trade "cultural ideas" as well as hard goods. Credit and money lending established. Property is rented. Postal and news services are possible.

Governments and religions may institute large bureaucracies, allowing them to influence far greater numbers of people over a larger amount of territory than before.

Tharkold (effective axiom level for non-military matters due to the Law of Ferocity *world law)*

13—Financial concepts develop rapidly. The idea of a company or royal monopoly, a non-family owned venture sponsored by several partners, is possible. Stock, commodities and financial exchanges possible. The concept of collateral is invented. Insurance policies are possible.

Cyberpapacy (effective axiom level for most matters)

15—The nation-state is possible; while a city or province may rule a nation, the nation as a whole has some say and representation in forming policy. A federal system of government is possible.

17—Knowledge about how others think and behave is sufficient to allow for diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders; hypnotism and psychology skills possible.

18—Social structure developed enough to allow implementation of economic principles based on the concept of man as an "economic being." Capitalism, socialism and communism are possible.

Aysle, Cyberpapacy, Tz'Ravok

20—Pluralism, the balancing of many factions within a government and society, is possible. More inhabitants of a nation are enfranchised. Vast bureaucracies may be spawned to handle the increased social complexity.

Orrorsh, Nile Empire, Tharkold (axiom only usable for military matters due to the Law of Ferocity *world law)*

21—Pluralism on a transnational scale is possible, balancing the needs and wants of nations against each other. The beginnings of a "global society" may take shape.

Martial arts, psionic manipulation, and psionic resistance skills possible if other axiom requirements are met.

Core Earth

22—Supranational organizations with authority over nations are possible, a "federal government" for nations. Economic systems can encompass and predict global levels of production, distribution and sales.

Nippon Tech

23—Standard rights of all individuals and rights of the group may be accepted. A high degree of individual responsibility and the responsibility of the group is fostered. Methods for conflict resolution are established which are efficient and non-destructive.

26—A "government for all" which tolerates and enhances a wide range of cultures is possible. The limitations of Arrow's Theorem of a Social Welfare Function may be exceeded, allowing a high degree of equality and social justice. Decision making processes are able to reach solutions that please everyone.

27—Social structures are advanced enough to incorporate factions and societies of a completely alien nature.

Space Gods

29—Anti-social behavior ("evil") is identified and contained. Social memes develop which are highly resistant to evil, allowing society members moral freedom not possible when evil is a philosophy given equal, or superior, value to "good". Evil actions are contradictory.

33—A more perfect society than humanity can currently envision.

Spirit

The *Spirit* axiom defines the level of spiritual energies available for those powers commonly thought of as belonging to "the gods", such as miracles. This spiritual energy exists even if the axiom level is very low; the axiom merely indicates how easily the beings of the reality can call upon their "gods" for miraculous effects and the type of effects that are possible. Miracles and other aspects of the Spirit axiom are covered in more detail in Chapter Eleven.

0—The world is devoid spiritually and faith is not rewarded. There are no concepts of higher beings or afterlife.

2—Miracles work only for the truly faithful, who must **all** have the *focus* and *faith* skills. Even then it takes a lifetime of study and prayer to cause even the most minor of miracles; such miracles are only possible in the presence of the **entire** community of the faithful.

3—Spiritual energy is so low that rituals take years in order to get even the slightest effect. These miracles may be invoked without requiring the presence of the entire community. All involved must still have both the *focus* and *faith* skills though.

5—An "extended" community is possible in which characters with *faith* but not *focus* may participate in miracles performed by a character with the focus skill. Rituals are still extremely difficult and lengthy.

Direct invocation of divine power becomes possible, but is extremely unlikely. Even if successful, the effect will never be a visible and direct confirmation of divine agency.

7—Quick prayers for miracles become available but usually require years of study or training to utilize properly. Powerful effects still require the use of lengthy rituals.

Religious symbols can be imbued with spiritual power as a result of divine agency but not through the will of the community; this power most often manifests itself by making the use of spiritual power easier for the faithful.

Spiritual energy may be used to manipulate internal possibility energy with *martial arts* skill if Social axiom is sufficient. *Meditation* skill is also possible.

8—Miracles which enhance the abilities of believers become possible, but are limited in only being able to affect beings who provide both the *focus* and *faith* values for the miracle.

Nippon Tech

9—Independent action taken by spiritual agencies can occur but happen at the whim of the divine will, never in response to the request of the faithful. These interventions are clear signs of divine power.

Miracles that enhance the abilities of believers may now affect any of the faithful.

Core Earth

11—The community of faithful may imbue an item or place with spiritual power. Items (swords, talismans) may be imbued with spiritual energy that can aid in the performance of miracles or that allow an individual to perform a specific miracle. These items will only work for someone with the same *faith* skill as those who empowered the object.

13—Direct invocation of divine power that provides irrefutable evidence is possible but still extremely difficult.

Space Gods

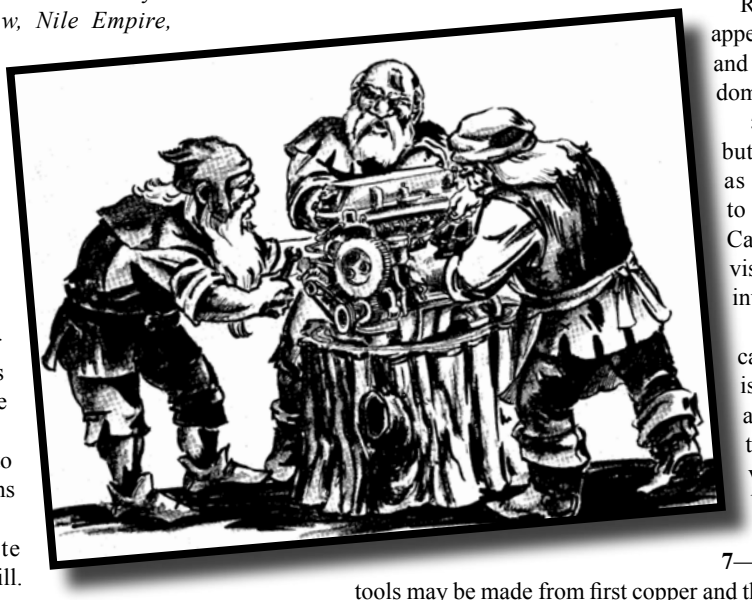
16—Evidence of divine power readily available to the faithful and a routine part of their lives.

Aysle

17—Independent action taken by spiritual agencies occurs on a regular basis, including the existence of locations or items that are capable of performing perpetual miracles. These perpetual miracles provide their own *focus* and *faith* totals, meaning that their effects will work on anyone, not just on the community of believers.

Orrorsh, Land Below, Nile Empire, Tharkold, Tz'Ravok

19—Religious power courses through the cosm with such regularity that specific training is not needed to create miracles, though those trained in the rituals of the religion can draw on the power of their faith with more reliability. Characters with the focus skill may attempt **any** miracle allowed by their mythos, though any miraculous effects they haven't learned are more difficult.



"Paradise" is now accessible to mortals. Travel to mythic regions (fringe realities) is possible.

20—The laity may create miracles without the *focus* skill. The power of the community is so strong that a gathering **automatically** provides a minimal *focus* for the miracle. The laity must still receive training in all the proper procedures in order to invoke the miracle.

21—Miracles are plentiful, and the spiritual power is enough to lower the difficulty of all focus processes for the faithful. Miracles with reduced difficulty values have their axiom requirements increased by the effect.

23—One mythos becomes dominant. Miracles and invocations performed by beings that follow any other mythos are contradictions. This includes an atheist's ability to negate miracles. Independent action by the entities of any non-dominant mythos cease to occur.

24—The spiritual power in the cosm is plentiful enough to reduce some lengthy and complex rituals down to prayers.

Living Land

27—All **enemies** of the dominant mythos have **no** spiritual power. Miracles may not be performed at all by followers of an enemy mythos. Atheists are unable to negate miracles.

33—A pure cosm, a cosm in which all aspects of the dominant mythos are literally true. No other mythos has access to spiritual powers, miracles may not be performed at all by followers of other mythos.

Technological

The *Tech* axiom affects the interactions between living beings and the natural world around them. It defines the ways in which the living can manipulate and affect the unliving portion of their reality. It does **not** say anything about what "natural laws" operate in a cosm, such as gravity or radiation, only how much (if any) advantage living beings can take advantage of those natural laws.

0—No technology is possible.

1—Natural objects such as rocks and sticks may be used as very simple tools. Fire can be domesticated but not created.

2—Fire making is invented. Small primitive tools made from stone, wood or bone are possible.

3—Advanced stone tool making possible. Spears with stone points and axes (more like clubs with a rock affixed to the end) are state-of-the-art weapons. Armor made from animal products possible.

Rafts and small river craft appear. Animals such as dogs and goats may be bred and domesticated.

5—Agriculture invented, but still practiced largely as a dietary supplement to hunting and gathering. Calendars based on easily visible phenomena may be invented.

Simple fired clay pottery can be created. Arithmetic is possible. The wheel or axled rollers first used for transportation. Fishing vessels (four or more beings, muscle powered) appear.

7—Metal is first smelted, tools may be made from first copper and then later from alloys like bronze. Metal hand axes and daggers are state of the art weapons. Bows are possible, but only with enough punch for small game.

Potter's wheel appears, plow speeds agriculture. Glass, cloth, wine, beer invented. Seaworthy ships are possible but still muscle-powered. Oil lamps invented. Kiln-fired bricks used in buildings.

Living Land

8—Medicine and astronomy as organized sciences are possible (given a sufficient Social axiom for sciences.) Civil engineering possible; pulleys, block and tackle are available machines. Avian, reptilian and other "difficult" lifeforms may be domesticated.

Hard metals such as iron are smelted. Bows are powerful enough for use as combat weapons. Metal armor appears. Maps may be created. Simple wind-powered vessels appear.

9—Timekeeping devices such as sundials and water clocks appear. Place-based numbering systems (such as the decimal system) may be invented. Astronomy fully developed. Silk may be harvested for fabrics.

Large buildings appear for first time, may have simple plumbing to provide water and transport waste. Wide-scale irrigation systems are possible.

Use of hard metals is common for professional tools, metal currency may become common (given a sufficient Social axiom for currency.) Sea vessels powered by more than one sail possible; first true trans-oceanic vessels possible.

10—Pharmacy and surgery organized sciences; healing herbs and simple drugs may be cataloged and produced. Lathes, paper, candles may be invented. Dying of fabric is possible.

Concrete possible. Bridges, dams, aqueducts, tunnels, extensive road systems can be built. Hard metal tools commonplace, quality of metals improve significantly. Locks and keys become practical.

Land Below

11—Specialized surgery, such as cataract surgery, possible. Basic anatomy of living beings, with all vital subsystems, understood enough to diagnose and treat many ailments.

Gears and screws possible, allowing exploitation of water power. Sugar can be refined, milling expands greatly. Magnetic compasses are possible but crude.

12—Hard metal alloys such as steel become possible. Wind power exploitable with windmills. Rudders make boats more maneuverable. Clay and ceramic techniques refined to the point that porcelain is possible.

Tz'Ravok

13—Inks are refined, making book printing (block printing) possible. Acids can be produced, mechanical clocks possible. Accurate magnetic compasses can be made. Gunpowder may be invented; cannon are possible. Small hot-air balloons may fly.

Alcohol denatured for use as a disinfectant. Primitive analgesics may be refined from plants. Biology develops categorization of animals by function rather than appearance. Glass mirrors are invented. Corrective spectacles possible, but not terribly effective.

15—Cut-glass process invented. Telescope, microscope may be invented. Steam power possible but very crude and inefficient. Metal plates used for printing; printing press possible. Barometers invented; crude weather prediction begins.

Crude firearms (matchlocks and wheellocks) possible; principles of ballistics understood and exploitable. Basic mechanics of physics understood. Probability theory and calculus invented. Magnetism and electricity connected. Psionics possible if other axiom requirements are met.

Aysle, Magna Verita (effective level in the Cyberpapacy's home cosm outside of the CyberChurch)

16—Metallurgical advances allow precision-machined parts; Industrial revolution may begin. Efficient steam engines possible if energy source better than wood available. Pocket watches, bifocals possible. Muskets invented. Primitive rifling possible. Large hot-air balloons can be built.

Velocity of light recognized as finite. Gravitation and tides understood. Plant extracts and essences possible; inoculation invented. Anesthesia introduced into surgery.

17—First electric batteries possible. Steamboats, telegraph, crude calculating machines, somewhat portable electric generators appear. Railroads are possible. Easy to ignite matches, sewing machines, reaping machines, vulcanized rubber invented. Photography on metal plates is possible.

Thermodynamic laws established. Bacteria recognized as transmitters of disease. Cell structure explained. Evolutionary theories first developed.

Flintlock firearms possible, rifling improved greatly. Artillery pieces now very reliable; as explosive shells are refined, they replace rifles as prime killer on the battlefield.

19—Single-action revolvers, repeating rifles, hand-cranked machine guns, recoil-operated machine guns are possible. Tungsten steel invented. Internal combustion engines possible.

A Core Earth Timeline

To provide a clearer picture of the relative conditions found at different Social and Tech axiom levels, the following charts can be used to compare axiom levels to periods in Earth's history. The dates and periods given are approximate, they **are not** meant to indicate the point in time that the axiom changed to the specified value, only that the given axiom value was in effect at that time.

Only Social and Tech are provided because there are no reliable histories on which to base timelines for the Magic and Spirit axioms. However, it is known that both axioms were higher in Core Earth's past than they are currently. How much higher and the rate at which they have declined though is unknown.

Abbreviations used in the chart are MYA for "million years ago" and TYA for "thousand years ago" as well as the more familiar BC and AD conventions used with modern dating systems.

Social Axiom

	100MYA	15MYA	500TYA	250TYA	6000BC	3000BC	1500BC	200BC	1200AD	1600AD	1850AD	1930AD	1980AD
Social:	1	2	3	5	7	8	10	12	13	15	18	20	21

Tech Axiom

	3MYA	500TYA	20TYA	6000BC	1600BC	600BC	400AD	1000AD	1300AD	1500AD	1850AD	1930AD	1930AD	1990AD
Tech:	1	3	5	7	9	10	11	12	13	15	17	19	21	23

Bicycles, telephones, hydrogen airships, gliders and submarines become practical. Syringes first used for injections. Antiseptic surgery developed. Photosynthesis understood.

Orrorsh

20—Radio voice transmission possible. Crude, flimsy airplanes can fly. Automobiles are reliable enough to replace animal-drawn transport. Sonar invented. Brain surgery successful. Automatic pistols and submachine guns possible. Movies, including "talking pictures." Radioactivity understood. Discovery of relativity is possible.

21—Tanks become an effective tool of war, metal-skinned aircraft with jet propulsion, radar possible. Electron microscope, vaccinations against viral diseases, antibiotics, television, polymers and artificial fabrics, large mainframe computers, helicopters, ballpoint pens appear. Nuclear power and bombs possible. Antimatter discovered.

Nile Empire

22—Orbital spacecraft, lightweight automatic weapons, wire-guided munitions, integrated circuits, transistor radios, organ transplants, crude artificial hearts and other organs, gene synthesis, "test-tube" babies, 400,000 ton oil tanker, primitive space stations, first home computers, space shuttle, neutron bomb, robot probes to other planets.

23—Doppler radar, genetic engineering, cloning proven possible, international computer networks, solar power, compact disks, computer-controlled aircraft, fire-control helmets, laser-guided munitions, large skirted hovercraft vehicles, permanent space station, hyperplanes capable of Mach 20, limited fusion power.

Core Earth

24—Small skirted hovercraft practical, clone-organ replacement, "intelligent" self-maintaining houses, holographic television, high-energy laser weapons, fusion commercially attractive, superconducting technology common, supercomputers achieve limited awareness, efficient solar cells, retina scanners, "bionic" prosthetics that function almost as well as natural limbs, practical virtual reality (VR) technology, energized melee weapons.

Nippon Tech

26—Personal energy weapons common, portable fusion generators possible. "Memory" metals and plastics available. Sublight interstellar travel is feasible. Nanotechnology practical for microscopic-scale uses, psionic-based technology may be created if Social and Spirit axiom allow for psionics. Basic principles of reality and possibility energy may be deduced.

Artificial intelligence in computers, cybernetic prosthetics as good as or better than the natural components, advanced gene therapy, extensive genetic engineering of physical traits possible.

Cyberpapacy, Tharkold

28—Artificial gravity can be generated, nanotechnology practical for macro-scale uses, "living" plastics possible, genetic engineering of non-physical traits possible, regeneration of lost body parts possible, primitive biotechnology possible, sublight interstellar travel practical though relativistic effects must still be dealt with.

29—Technology may be used to manipulate magical energies. Artificial intelligences can become self-aware and pass as living minds but lack true sentience. Biotech spaceships are possible. Genetic manipulation can create unnatural modifications in lifeforms.

30—Faster-than-light space travel possible, nanotech can be formed into "living" materials that reshape themselves as needed, anti-gravity technology available, computers may become fully sentient and even possibility-rated. Force fields, biotech weaponry, teleportation, dimension travel (fringe realities) are possible. Genetic manipulation in conjunction with medical technology can create virtual immortality. Possibility energy may be manipulated with technology.

Space Gods

31—Atomic forces can be controlled to allow for dispersal and "phasing" of materials through other materials; mass and volume of objects can be similarly adjusted. Energy sources can similarly be controlled and manipulated at the atomic level.

32—Matter and energy can be manipulated and shaped almost at will.

33—Control over reality itself; space and time can be manipulated. Time travel is finally possible.

World Laws of the Cosms

Laws	Summary	Description
Aysle		
Law of Observation	Anything that can be perceived is real (P)	Aysle, p48-49
Law of Magic	Ayslish characters born with one magic skill and one arcane knowledge, magic can be perceived (P)	Aysle, p49
Law of Honor	Good and honor reflected in the appearance; allows honor skill (A)	Aysle, p49-50
Law of Corruption	Evil and corruption reflected in the appearance; allows corruption skill (A)	Aysle, p50
Core Earth		
Law of Prodigy	Starting characters can buy prodigy package (start with +6 in tag skill) for three possibilities (P)	Delphi Council Worldbook, p9
Law of Hope	Characters not from Core Earth decrease difficulty numbers on the "Transformation Table" by one step (A)	Delphi Council Worldbook, p9-10
Law of Glory	+2 bonus to Core Earth character for persuasion during planting of story seed (A)	Delphi Council Worldbook, p10
Cyberpapacy		
Law of the One True God	Increases difficulty number of miracles for members of other religions (A)	Cyberpapacy, p67
Law of Heretical Magic	+3 to spell difficulty and backlash; if backlash other than shock points, demon attempts possession; +5 to effect value of successful spells (A)	Cyberpapacy, p68
Law of Ordeal	Must prove innocence through a trial by ordeal if accused by priest (P)	Cyberpapacy, p68-69
Law of Suspicion	+3 to willpower or Mind when resisting charm or persuasion (only +1 if character attempting has proof of identity); -3 resistance to taunt or intimidation (A)	Cyberpapacy, p69
Land Below		
Law of Savagery	May only use Hero/Drama cards during combat for physical attacks or to reduce damage; if Attack is approved action, only get card for performing an All-Out Attack; one extra possibility at end of each Act if romance subplot played; +3 to all Charisma skills when it involves the opposite sex (A)	Land Below, p66-67
Law of Action	Can spend two possibilities on actions and choose which die roll to use (A)	Land Below, p67
Law of Wonders	Can construct buildings that exceed the Land Below's Tech axiom (P)	Land Below, p67
Living Land		
The Deep Mist	Visibility is reduced; easy to become lost (P)	Living Land, p65-66
Lanala's Love of Life	Dead things decay rapidly (P)	Living Land, p67
Law of Lost Valuables	Living beings become separated from their non-living objects (P)	Living Land, p70
Nile Empire		
Law of Morality	Good or Evil only; neutral morality is a one-case contradiction; lose one possibility if act against Inclination; Detect Inclination; Inclination Seduction; the price of Evil (A/P)	Nile Empire, p60-62
Law of Drama	Adventures move at dramatic, breakneck pace; obstacle piling (P)	Nile Empire, p62-63
Law of Action	Can spend two possibilities on actions and choose which die roll to use (A)	Nile Empire, p63

(A) indicates an active world law.
(P) indicates a passive world law.
(A/P) indicates a world law with both passive and active effects.

World Laws of the Cosms (Continued)

Nippon Tech		
Law of Intrigue	+3 to stealth or -3 to Perception against stealthing characters; +3 to charm and persuasion based on lies/deception; +3 to persuasion for bribes; +3 bonus to trick; reduce Perception success level by one against disguise; traitors in large groups (A)	Nippon Tech, p69-70
Law of Profit	Goods and services cost less when purchased by the wealthy (P)	Nippon Tech, p70-71
Law of Vengeance	Receive six possibilities at end of act in which vengeance is exacted (A)	Nippon Tech, p71
Orrorsh		
Power of Fear	Until Power of Fear is overcome, may not invoke reality storms or play for the critical moment; Perseverance, Fear Points (A/P)	Orrorsh, p60-66
Power of Corruption	Wicked acts lead to corruption (A)	Orrorsh, p57-59
Law of Eternal Corruption	Horrors are reincarnated if not killed by True Death, Corrupt who die can become Horrors (A)	Orrorsh, p35-37
Space Gods		
Law of Religious Compatibility	Different religions may work together on miracles; no spiritual struggle (P)	Space Gods, p50
Law of Acceptance	Characters may use their own world laws in Akasha without contradiction (P)	Space Gods, p50-51
Way of Zinatt	Alignments, gain bonuses and penalties on certain types of actions (A)	Space Gods, p51-52
Tharkold		
Law of Ferocity	All-Out Attacks ignore K, O and K/O results; +3 to intimidation and taunt, +3 to willpower or Mind against charm and persuasion; surprise results reduced on step (A)	Tharkold, p38
Law of Pain	Gain a roll again if inflict or receive a K or wound result in combat (A)	Tharkold, p38-39
Law of Domination	Submissives suffer -3 penalty on any action against dominant; submissives gain +1 bonus on all actions that aid dominant; dominants receive a +3 bonus on persuasion, charm, intimidation and taunt when used on a submissive (A/P)	Tharkold, p39-40
Tz'Ravok		
Law of the Most Real	Cannot disconnect if obeying Tz'Ravok axioms (A)	Ravagons, p40
Law of Survival of the Fittest	Everyone uses "Possibility-Rated" column of Combat Results Table (P)	Ravagons, p41
Law of Transcendence	Allows possibility sense and possibility rip skills (A)	Ravagons, p41-42

Bending the Axioms

The axioms impose boundaries on what is possible within a reality, but those boundaries are not absolute, they are flexible. The limits can be pushed outward in isolated cases for short periods of time in small areas. These localized axiom shifts most often occur in places where the inhabitants all have a special affinity for one of the axioms. Unconscious use of the possibility energy within them causes a temporary increase in the axiom level.

Example: A large group of Core Earth scientists work in a laboratory setting, all of them firmly committed to the development of new technology. Their current project is organ cloning, just over the axiom boundary in Tech 24; their firm belief and commitment to the project creates a localized axiom shift in their laboratory and the otherwise contradictory technology is developed and works fine. But only in the laboratory, if taken outside of the localized axiom shift, such as to another research lab, the technology is once again contradictory and doesn't function as well as it did in the original lab.

The Tech and Social axioms can be temporarily shifted up as much as two points, although one-point increases are far more common. These increases last only briefly, often just long enough to develop the critical components on one prototype or the breakthrough concept on one theory. The prototype is often impossible to duplicate, or the theory rejected for years. But the breakthrough occurred.

The Spirit and Magic axioms are somewhat more flexible and can change by up to four points in extreme cases. They have also been known to temporarily decrease as well as increase due to "pressure" from the beliefs of people in the area. External factors also seem to be able to create localized axiom shifts in the Spirit and Magic axioms but not the Tech or Social axioms, possibly due to localized belief that those external factors have that specified effect. The arrangement of celestial bodies, the timing of religious festivals, traditional sites

of power or natural wonders - all can produce temporary shifts in the Magic and Spirit axioms in specific locations.

Example: In the Cyberpapacy, localized shifts in the Spirit axiom are possible on holy days such as Easter, All Saints Day and Christmas, though usually only on holy ground. Similarly, belief in the evil powers of witchcraft and Satan can create localized axiom shifts in the Magic axiom on days such as All Hallows Eve (Halloween) in places associated with the "dark powers", such as graveyards and other sites where evil witches and demonic powers conduct their rituals.

Permanently Altering the Axiom Levels

Localized axiom shifts can be made permanent, but it takes a lot of time and a huge amount of possibility energy; it requires large numbers of people, all with similar attitudes, living in an area for an extended period of time. A permanent increase of one point over a 10-year period would be phenomenal; it taking several decades is more likely. Due to their flexibility, permanent shifts in Magic and Spirit are more likely than shifts in Tech and Social.

Example: On the island of Haiti in Core Earth, belief in and practice of voodoo has over the centuries given the island a permanent localized axiom shift in both Magic and Spirit. Haiti's Magic axiom is 9 (a two point increase) and the Spirit axiom is 10 (a one point increase).

A permanent localized downward shift also requires a lot of time but does not require huge amounts of possibility energy, in fact a downward shift usually represents a **lack** of sufficient possibility energy to support the axiom at its current level. It's like taking the air out of a balloon, there's less internal pressure on the boundary (the skin of the balloon) so it shrinks. As with temporary axiom shifts, the Magic and Spirit axioms are more vulnerable to being shifted downward than the Tech and Social axioms.

Example: Within the Helfei human territories of Tharkold, an almost phobic fear of magic (a primary tool of the techno-demons) among the population has over the centuries caused a localized shift downward in the Magic axiom in several of the major communities. Combined with some external influences in the region, the Magic axiom in some of these communities is as much as seven points below the cosm's normal Magic axiom.

Characters who live most of their lives in these permanent localized axiom shift areas will have personal axioms equal to the localized axiom set, not the reality's normal axioms. For example, a character from Core Earth Haiti would have Magic 9, Social 21, Spirit 10, Tech 23 on her character sheet instead of Core Earth's normal axioms of Magic 7, Social 21, Spirit 9 and Tech 23.

The character's reality is still considered to be that of the base reality, the localized axiom shift does not cause them to be treated as if they are from a different reality. They will face different problems with contradictions in the shifted axioms but that's about it. How localized axiom shifts affect a character will be covered in the following sections of this chapter.

Permanently Altering the Axioms for an Entire Reality

If the number of people with similar attitudes is large enough and their beliefs exist for a long enough period of time, the axioms for the entire reality can be permanently shifted up or down. These changes are never by more than one point at a time and usually take centuries to occur. Reality-wide axiom shifts do not require the support and belief of the entire population of the reality, though the greater the number involved the faster it can occur.

Unlike localized axiom shifts, it appears to be easier to create reality-wide axiom shifts in the Tech and Social axioms than in the Magic and Spirit axioms. In some cosms the Tech and Social axioms have changed on the order of decades instead of centuries.

World Laws

In addition to the four axioms, *world laws* are used to further describe realities. These are additional rules or modifiers that describe how a reality differs from other realities, even ones with similar or the same axioms. The world laws help define the genre of each reality and emphasize the type of roleplaying and the type of adventures to be found in that particular setting.

Some world laws affect the environment of the reality while others affect characters in a reality. The Nile Empire's Law of Drama, for example, affects the way adventures are run in the Nile Empire but has no direct effect on characters. On the other hand, the Law of Morality and the Law of Action include effects that can be used by characters or that have an effect on a character's actions.

World laws that affect the environment only are called passive world laws while the ones that affect characters are called active world laws. Characters carry the active world laws of their home cosm with them when they visit other realities. For example, a character from the Cyberpapacy still applies the modifiers listed under the Law of Suspicion even if she is in Aysle, Core Earth or anywhere else.

Passive world laws have no effect outside of their native reality. For example, a mist cloud does not surround Living Land characters that leave the realm, they cannot make dead things decay rapidly and their presence doesn't cause non-living objects to disappear.

The world laws of other realities affect characters that travel to them. Anyone who enters the Nile Empire, for example, is forced by the Law of Morality to be Good or Evil. Similarly, anyone in the Nile Empire can make use of the Law of Action.

When characters travel to other realities they may face problems with contradictions as a result of being affected by active world laws, both their own and those of the reality they're visiting. Passive world laws cannot cause contradictions since they do not affect characters directly. Contradictions caused by world laws are covered later in this chapter under "Creating a Contradiction".

A few world laws allow for the existence of special skills and skill-like abilities, such as Ayslish honor and Ayslish corruption in Aysle or Orrorshan corruption in Orrorsh. Characters may only use or be affected by these effects while they are under the influence of the associated world law.

For example, a Core Earth character who gains an add of Ayslish honor can only use that add while she is under the influence of Ayslish reality, because honor requires the Law of Honor. When she leaves Aysle she will keep that add of Ayslish honor, but she cannot use it outside of Aysle because the Law of Honor is no longer affecting her. When she returns to Aysle, she will once again be able to use that add of honor.

Characters native to these realities carry their active world laws with them when they visit foreign realities so they are able to use these special skills or abilities. An Ayslish character with an add of Ayslish honor is able to use it when he's in Core Earth or anywhere else as long as he hasn't been disconnected. But if he does become disconnected while outside of Aysle, he no longer has access to his Ayslish world laws and thus loses the ability to use his honor skill. When he reconnects or returns to Aysle and once again is affected by the Law of Honor, he is able to use the skill again.

Varying Strengths of Reality

The effectiveness of the Everlaw of One at enforcing the axioms and world laws of a reality can vary depending on the concentration of possibility energy within the reality. Areas with high levels of possibility energy are more "flexible" and can tolerate contradictions better than areas with low levels of possibility energy. Areas of inflexible reality are called *pure zones* while the flexible areas are called *dominant zones*. A third type of area, *mixed zones*, is also possible but does not exist naturally, it has to be created artificially.

Most realities contain a mixture of pure and dominant areas, generally an even mixture leaning towards more pure than dominant. As concentrations of possibility energy change over time, the location and distribution of pure and dominant areas will also change. Realities under the control of a High Lord have their pure and dominant zones determined by the High Lord.

Core Earth is an unusual cosm in that its reality is almost entirely dominant, due to the great amounts of possibility energy contained in the cosm. As the Possibility Raiders drain off Core Earth's possibility energy though, pure zones will begin to form and expand in areas with lower concentrations of possibility energy.

Pure Zones

A *pure* reality is one in which only one reality is allowed, the Everlaw of One enforces the local axioms and world laws to such an extent that **no contradictions are possible**. Possibility-rated characters can temporarily avoid this restriction by creating a reality bubble, as described in Chapter Four and also later in this chapter.

In a pure zone, only one reality may exist. Any attempt at creating a contradictory reality is immediately suppressed by the Everlaw of One. This means anything that might exceed the pure zone's axioms or involves a foreign world law results in the automatic disconnection of the character. This can be particularly harsh on characters from other realities that heavily depend on a tool or effect that contradicts the local reality.

Example: A character from Tharkold with two cyberlegs enters a pure zone of Nippon Tech reality. Because her Tech 26 cyberlegs are contradictory to Nippon Tech reality (Tech 24), her cyberlegs stop working and she is now unable to walk.

Example: A Horror from Orrorsh depends on the Power of Corruption world law to conceal its true monstrous appearance from normal sight. If it enters a pure zone of another reality, the Orrorshan world law is immediately suppressed and the Horror's true appearance is no longer concealed from view.

Characters from other realities in a pure zone may contradict their own reality so long as the action does not contradict the reality of the pure zone. The Everlaw of One is vigilantly enforcing only the local reality and so it is inclined to "overlook" contradictions that are supported by the local reality.

These personal contradictions do still run a risk of causing disconnection though, as described later in this chapter. But they don't cause an automatic disconnection in a pure zone as long as the local reality supports the action.

Space Gods Mixed Zones

The Space Gods have the unique ability to create **stable** mixed zones. This is not something they have achieved technologically, it is instead a side effect of one of their World Laws, the Law of Acceptance. No matter what means they use to project their reality into another reality, it will always create stable mixed zones, never pure or dominant zones.

These mixed zones, created by a biotech device called a *reality tree*, will never flip and there is never any danger from reality storms sweeping across the zone. Reality trees are long-lived biotech devices, a tree can project its mixed zone for centuries with little to no maintenance required.

Reality trees only project a single reality, overlaying this reality onto another reality is what creates the mixed zone. A tree can be attuned to project a zone of any reality, not just that of the Space Gods. A tree that has been attuned to the Living Land, for example, if planted in Core Earth would create a stable Living Land/Core Earth mixed zone. If the same tree were instead planted in the Nile Empire it would create a Living Land/Nile Empire mixed zone. Once a reality tree has been attuned to project a particular reality it cannot be later changed to project another reality.

Reality trees that project a reality other than that of the Space Gods still create stable mixed zones. While the zone may not have the Law of Acceptance in it without the Space Gods reality, the tree's personal reality remains that of the Space Gods; the Law of Acceptance affects the tree, not the reality being projected.

More details on reality trees can be found in the *Space Gods sourcebook.*

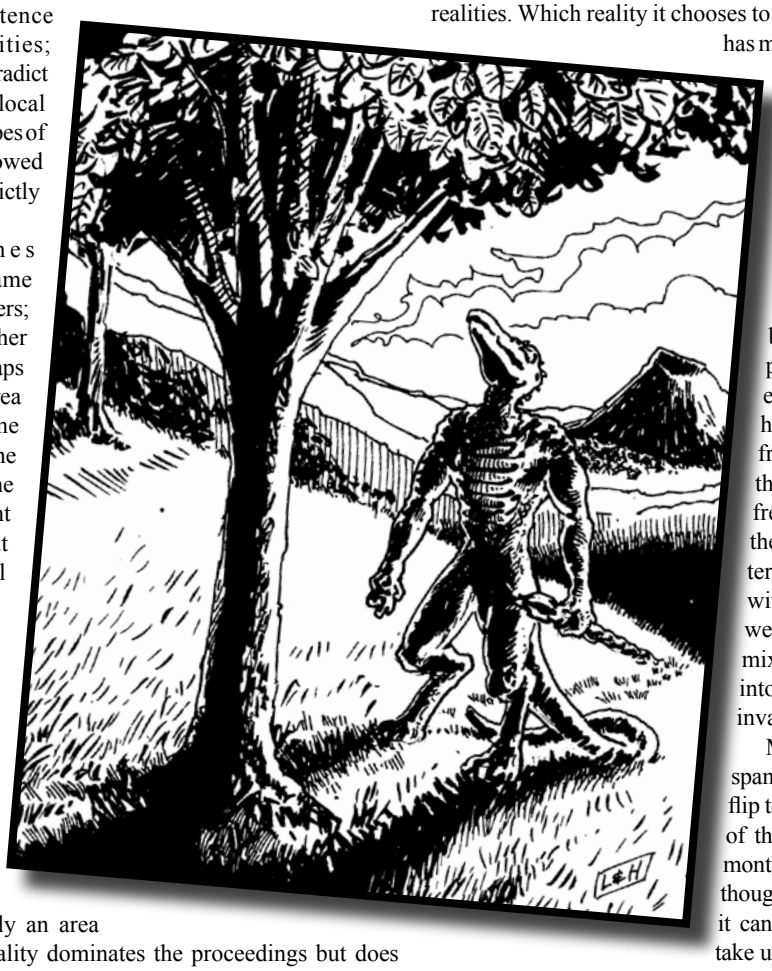
Example: An edeinos from the Living Land is in a Nippon Tech pure zone and fires a pistol. While the Tech 22 pistol contradicts the edeinos' personal reality (Tech 7), the pistol is not a contradiction to Nippon Tech reality so the Everlaw of One does not automatically disconnect him for causing a contradiction.

Pure areas expend a great deal of the available possibility energy enforcing the local reality. Pure areas therefore fiercely resist attempts at change, including incursions from other realities such as an invasion by a High Lord. However, a strong enough influx of possibility energy can cause a pure zone to become dominant, making it that much easier to introduce changes.

If that surge of possibility energy comes from the *axiom wash* of an invading reality, the pure zone can be "flipped" so that it becomes a dominant or pure zone of the invading reality! While pure zones are initially tough to crack, they disintegrate completely when broken. Axiom washes are discussed in Chapter Eight.

Dominant Zones

In a *dominant zone*, there is enough excess possibility energy to allow for the existence of contradictory realities; characters are able to contradict the local reality. The local reality still dictates the types of interactions that are allowed but it is not enforced as strictly as it is in pure zones.



Dominant zones originally got their name from the Possibility Raiders; when they invade another reality, their reality overlaps the natural reality of the area they have invaded. One reality is stronger than the other and *dominates* the other reality; the dominant reality is the one that the Everlaw of One will enforce in that area.

This origin for the term can lead to some confusion, creating the mistaken impression that a natural dominant zone must therefore be suppressing a second underlying reality of some kind. That is not the case. A natural dominant zone is merely an area where one particular reality dominates the proceedings but does not outright prevent other realities from operating in the way a pure zone does.

Dominant zones, because they are more flexible and open to the influx of contradictions than pure zones, do not resist attempts at change as well as pure zones but at the same time have a greater capacity to bend and absorb those changes. While an invading reality may find a dominant zone easier to enter than a pure zone, it won't flip as easily as a pure zone. Mixed zones are often the result of an invading reality entering a natural dominant zone.

Mixed Zones

A *mixed reality* contains two - and no more than two - realities that are in equal balance. Mixed zones do not exist in nature, they can only be created by the artificial introduction of one reality into another reality.

The Everlaw of One enforces both realities in a mixed zone. With axioms this means that the highest axiom level of each pair is what the Everlaw of One enforces in the mixed zone. The world laws from both realities are also in effect. For purposes of contradictions, consider a mixed zone to be like a dominant zone with the determined axioms and world laws.

Example: A Nippon Tech/Living Land mixed zone would have axioms equal to the highest value from the two realities: Magic 2 (Nippon Tech), Social 22 (Nippon Tech), Spirit 24 (Living Land) and Tech 24 (Nippon Tech). All six world laws (each reality has three) will be in effect at the same time.

Mixed zones are normally unstable; over time the Everlaw of One sorts things out and begins enforcing only one of the two realities. Which reality it chooses to enforce depends on which one has more possibility energy invested in the mixed zone. A mixed zone can be "pushed" in the direction of one of the two realities by adding possibility energy from one reality to the zone or reducing the amount of possibility energy the other reality has in the zone.

This is usually accomplished by having large numbers of people from the desired reality enter the mixed zone or by having large numbers of people from the undesired reality leave the mixed zone. The High Lords frequently use this tactic when they expand their realms into new territory, by flooding the new area with people from their reality they weigh things in their favor and the mixed zone typically settles down into being a dominant zone of the invading reality.

Most mixed zones have short life spans. Generally a mixed zone will flip to being a dominant zone of one of the involved realities within six months of the creation of the zone, though depending on circumstances it can occur within a few weeks or take up to a year.

A mixed zone can be maintained indefinitely by constantly shifting the balance of the possibility energy that each reality has invested in the mixed zone, a difficult task that requires access to huge amounts of possibility energy and the means to measure the balance within the mixed zone.

Darkness Devices are capable of performing this task and have the requisite amounts of possibility energy to achieve the delicate balancing act. During the course of the Possibility Wars campaign, several mixed zones were created and maintained in this fashion.

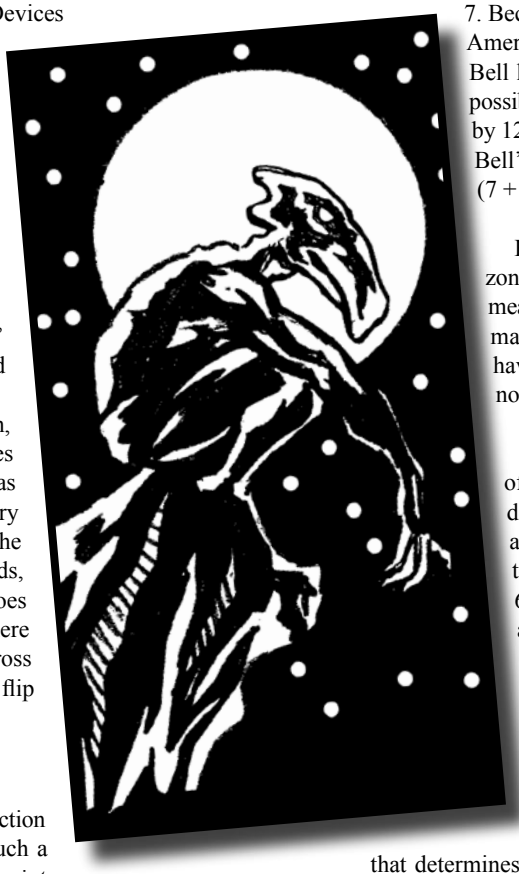
If additional realities intrude into a mixed zone, all but two of the realities are immediately suppressed; which realities are initially suppressed appears to be entirely a matter of chance. Over time though, the two realities which have the most possibility energy invested in the mixed zone will come out on top, suppressing any other realities involved in the area.

Example: During the first year of the Possibility Wars, Nippon Tech and the Living Land cooperated to create a mixed zone in Core Earth. When the zone was initially created though, it was not a Nippon Tech/Living Land mixed zone but a Nippon Tech/Core Earth mixed zone - by chance the Living Land reality had been suppressed instead of Core Earth.

Within a short period of time though, the Darkness Devices of the two invading realities were able to manipulate the possibility energies in the mixed zone and bring the Living Land up to the top. Core Earth reality was suppressed and it became a Nippon Tech/Living Land mixed zone as the Darkness Devices had originally intended.

Most mixed zones are prone to violent outbreaks of *reality storms* that sweep across the entire zone. These storms are a manifestation of the Everlaw of One trying to sort out which single reality to enforce in the zone. These storms can temporarily change the reality in small areas of the mixed zone to a dominant region of one of the realities involved, in essence the storm "sweeps away" the other realities and leaves just one behind in its path.

These effects are usually short-lived though, on the order of a few hours, as the other realities slowly push their way back into these areas once the storms have passed. The temporary dominant zones do not necessarily reflect the reality that the mixed zone is moving towards, it is a random effect. When a mixed zone does flip and finally becomes a dominant zone, there is often one final burst of reality storms across the zone, though occasionally a zone will flip without any visible manifestations.



Hardpoints

An unliving object can have a strong connection with the reality in which it was created; such a connection can cause it to become a *hardpoint*. The object continues to serve as a source for the unliving rules of a reality, even when totally surrounded by a foreign reality.

Example: In Philadelphia, a strong connection exists between various artifacts and the events that took place in the city. The Liberty Bell, among other artifacts, has become a hardpoint of Core Earth reality. Even though Philadelphia is within the Living Land, most of the city operates under Core Earth reality thanks to its hardpoints.

The connection is flexible and tough, but it is immobile. If a hardpoint is moved, which is called *uprooting the hardpoint*, it loses its properties in a matter of hours, becoming useless within a day, sometimes in as little as thirty minutes. Hardpoints are immobile because the connection is not just with the object but with the place it is associated with. Physically destroying a hardpoint has the same effect as moving it.

Most hardpoints project an area of their reality out to a certain distance, though some only maintain the reality within the object itself. For most hardpoints, the radius of effect depends on the object's mass and how much possibility energy, if any, it has absorbed over time from the inhabitants of the reality.

The maximum radius value is determined by dividing the hardpoints weight value by two (rounding down) and then adding a value that represents the additional possibility energy the object has absorbed. Determining the value for the possibility energy is a somewhat arbitrary process; things to consider are the length of time the object has been viewed as important or meaningful to people and the number of people that view the object as important.

Example: The Liberty Bell weighs approximately 944 kilograms, a weight value of 15. Half of that is 7.5, rounded down is 7. Because it has served as a symbol of the American Revolution for a long time, the Bell has absorbed a significant amount of possibility energy, increasing its radius value by 12. The maximum radius of the Liberty Bell's hardpoint zone is a distance value of (7 + 12) 19, a measure of six kilometers.

Hardpoints normally create pure zones out to half the radius **value** (not measure) and dominant zones out to the maximum radius value. Some hardpoints have smaller than normal pure zones or none at all.

Example: Halving the radius value of the Liberty Bell is (19 / 2) 9.5, round down to 9. The Liberty Bell projects a pure zone of Core Earth reality out to a radius value of 9, a measure of 60 meters. It's dominant zone starts at 60 meters and extends out to six kilometers.

Not all significant artifacts are necessarily hardpoints, no matter how important they may be to a large number of people. Since it is the location as well as the object that determines a hardpoint, objects that are moved around or are on display somewhere other than where they earned their significance will probably not be hardpoints, or fairly weak ones if they have become hardpoints.

Nor do hardpoints have to be items that are significant to a large number of people; some hardpoints are small, minor objects only important to a few people such as a family heirloom or even something as normal as a personal computer that someone uses all the time. These hardpoints will rarely have absorbed any extra possibility energy and their radius values will be based purely off of their mass, if they even project a reality zone.

Hardpoints can be artificially created through the manipulation of possibility energy but they only function for a short period of time. Storm Knights are able to create hardpoints with the appropriate *group power* (described later in this chapter) and the High Lords can create them with their Darkness Devices.

Besides physically moving or destroying the hardpoint, a hardpoint can also be uprooted by attacking it with the *reality* skill. Possibility-rated characters can use an *invoked reality storm* against a hardpoint but run the risk of injuring themselves if they fail. This is covered later in this chapter under "Invoking Reality Storms Against Hardpoints."

Talismans

A *talisman* is like a mobile hardpoint, it's an object that has a strong connection to the reality in which it was created and projects a small zone of that reality. A talisman decays over time like an uprooted hardpoint but at a much slower rate. Talismans can also be recharged, extending their duration indefinitely.

Almost all talismans are artificially created. Unlike hardpoints, the link a talisman has to its reality rarely develops without conscious effort on someone's part. The High Lords are able to generate talismans with their Darkness Devices and Storm Knights can create them with the appropriate *group power*.

Occasionally a talisman can be generated subconsciously by characters with strong beliefs and an affinity for their home reality. Usually these characters aren't even aware of what they've done, only that they seem unaffected by foreign realities. In actuality it's because some item they're carrying has become a talisman and is projecting a field of their home reality around them.

The maximum radius of a talisman's area of effect is determined in a similar manner to that of a hardpoint, dividing the mass value of the object by two. Talismans do not get any extra range from excess possibility energy though. Because characters normally carry talismans, they tend to be small, lightweight objects and as a result often have very small radius values.

Example: A group of Storm Knights from Nippon Tech use the create talisman group power to energize the katana of their lead character as a talisman. The katana weighs about 1.5 kilograms, a weight value of 1. Half of that is one-half, round down to a value of zero. The measure of zero is one, so the katana will project an area of Nippon Tech reality in a radius of one meter.

Talismans made from objects that weigh less than one kilogram (in other words, objects with a weight value of zero) do not project a zone of reality around them. Their effect is limited to the person holding the object; she will be under the influences of the talisman's home reality but the effect does not extend any further her body. In a way these small talismans are like semi-permanent reality bubbles.

A talisman's duration is determined when it is created. Talismans can be recharged back up to their full duration by exposure to their home reality and an infusion of possibility energy.

The recharge time is equal to half the talisman's duration. If the recharge process begins before the talisman's duration expires, it only requires half as many Possibility Points as were used to create the talisman. If the talisman is recharged after its duration has expired, it requires as many Possibility Points as were originally used to create it.

Example: The Storm Knights from Nippon Tech were able to energize their leader's katana with a duration of one month. Using the *create talisman* group power cost four Possibility Points. Spending two weeks in Nippon Tech and two Possibility Points before it expires can recharge the talisman, four Possibility Points after it expires.

Using Passive Contradiction Checks

Active contradiction checks are simple to use during play; if the player rolls poorly while his character is using a contradictory tool or ability (or he's in a pure zone and tries to contradict the local reality) they become disconnected. Passive contradictions can be a bit trickier to adjudicate though.

For example, if a character enters a pure zone wearing a contradictory item, such as a wristwatch in the Living Land, are they immediately disconnected because the watch is a contradiction or does disconnection only occur when they use the tool, looking at the watch to check the time? The same basic question can be applied to making passive contradiction checks at the beginning of a scene; is the watch an immediate contradiction or does it only become a contradiction when she tries to use the item?

A good way to judge the timing for passive contradiction checks is to consider the function of the item. Is its function something that the character expects to continually operate, like a watch keeping time, or is it something that only operates when the character wants it to operate, like using a portable CD player to play some music?

If it's the former, then a passive contradiction check must be made during the scene since the character expects the item to be continually functioning (a watch isn't much good if it only runs when you're looking at it!) Even if the character never consciously uses the item, the expectation that it will keep running causes the contradiction to occur. For convenience sake, these passive contradictions can be checked for at the beginning of a scene.

If it's the latter, the item only needs to operate when the character wants it to operate, then the contradiction check should only be made if and when the character tries to use the item during that scene. If they never use the item, it never requires a contradiction check.

Items whose physical existence is the extent of their function, such as clothing and most forms of armor, can be checked whenever seems the most appropriate, either at the beginning of the scene or whenever the character first uses or puts on the item. Obviously if the character begins a scene wearing contradictory armor the two times coincide!

Contradiction checks don't have to be made for every single passive contradiction a character has; all of a character's clothing, for example, should be checked as a single item rather than rolling for each individual piece. A world law like the Nile Empire's Law of Morality is always a single contradiction check regardless of how many passive contradictory effects it may have on a character.

Contradiction checks made at the beginning of a scene don't always have to result in immediate disconnection. Having the disconnection occur at some random point during the scene instead of occurring immediately can liven things up and provide additional challenges for the character. He may not even immediately realize that he's been disconnected until he tries to perform a contradictory task and finds that he can't.

When Realities Collide

When a High Lord launches an invasion, the axioms from his cosm pour over the *maelstrom bridge* used to connect the two realities. The invading reality overpowers the native reality, disrupting the link between the living and unliving of the invaded world. The natural order breaks down as new rules take its place. This conflict of realities is the heart of the Possibility Wars.

Living Under Another Reality

A character that is living under his native reality is living in a world that acts in expected ways. A Core Earth character knows that if he flips the light switch on the wall an electric light will come on, the morning newspaper will tell him about events occurring around the world, if he has a headache he takes an aspirin for it, and so on. A character from Aysle on the other hand knows that the best artificial light comes from enchanted lanterns, news comes from the town and the best way to deal with pain is to pay a visit to the temple of Shali and petition the goddess for relief.

When a character lives in a cosm or realm where the reality is different, the world becomes strange to him. Familiar objects may refuse to work properly and simple tasks can become confusing to the point of impossibility. The character still has **his** living reality within him, but the **local** unliving reality is different. For a while the character is able to make reality work the way he expects it to, but at the same time it also works in ways he doesn't expect.

The Everlaw of One is working to confound him by enforcing the local version of reality while the Everlaw of Two tries to keep him in touch with his home reality. Eventually the Everlaw of One is triumphant. The character is *disconnected* from the Everlaw of Two and the reality of his home cosm. The flow of possibility energy is disrupted; a disconnected character cannot use his reality anymore to make the world work as he expects it to work, he must now live according to the reality of the land in which he lives.

For example, a Core Earth character who is disconnected by living in Aysle cannot use his toasters, cars, computers, refrigerators - none of it would work, and eventually he will forget how they were *supposed* to work. Contradictory memories become vague and distant, almost dream-like. Even when the character does remember how something works, he's unable to get it to function correctly.

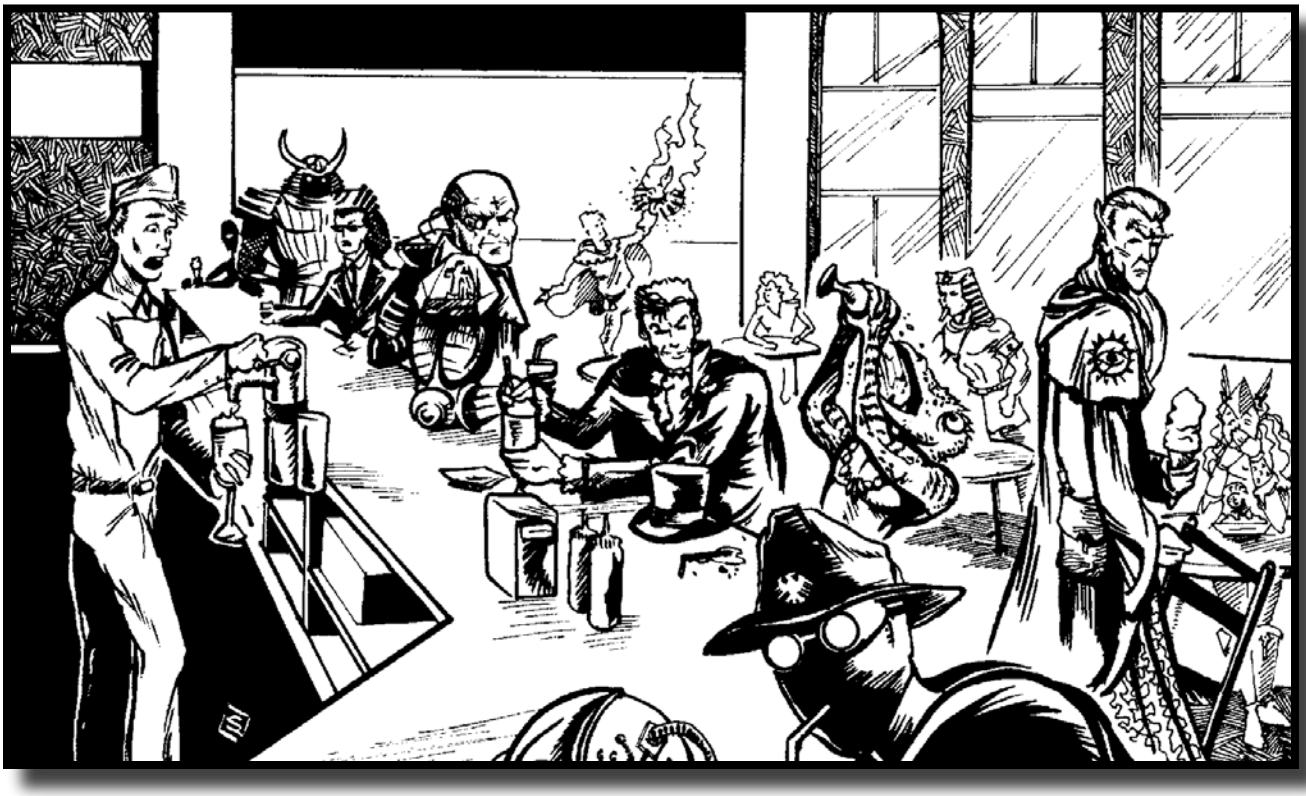
But at the same time he gains an intuitive sense of magic and an increased feeling for the spiritual power in the world. Many disconnected people are relieved to find that reality, even if different, has at least settled down and only follows one set of rules now. Others are extremely agitated that reality has changed for them, and try to find ways to grasp what the now unfamiliar objects mean. A few adapt to the new reality with glee, preferring it to what had been their lot before.

Contradictions

When the living from one reality are exposed to the unliving rules of another reality, *contradictions* result. A Core Earth character expects her watch to work. The Tech axiom of the Living Land says it cannot; furthermore, even the subdivisions of time a watch represents make no sense to natives of the Living Land because the Social axiom there doesn't support that concept.

To maintain her world, her reality, is to live a contradiction. In order to create or sustain a contradiction, the character uses possibility energy and the Everlaw of Two to bend the fabric of reality, causing it to conform to her personal reality instead of the local reality. A minute amount of possibility energy is used to divert the Everlaw of Two into connecting the character's living reality with the unliving of the local reality rather than with her home reality. This temporary connection allows the contradiction to exist.

Tools do not possess a personal reality, only an axiom requirement, which means that if they are a contradiction they cannot bend reality to function on their own. Without the Core Earth character's expectation that her watch will work, the watch would be unable to function in the Living Land.



The Everlaw of One does not like contradictions and works to prevent their occurrence. It accomplishes this in two ways. The first is to sever a character's connection to the Everlaw of Two. A disconnected character cannot create or sustain contradictions without the Everlaw of Two. The second, more permanent, method is to *transform* the character's living reality to match the local unliving reality. A transformed character becomes a native of the local reality.

Contradiction Checks

Whenever a character uses tools or abilities that exceed either their own living reality or the local unliving reality, they are creating a contradiction. Using or being affected by their own world laws while in a foreign reality or by the world laws of the foreign reality is also contradictory.

In pure zones, attempts to contradict the local reality are automatically suppressed by the Everlaw of One; as soon as a character attempts the contradictory action, they are disconnected and their ability to create contradictions is thus removed. Actions that contradict the character's living reality but not the local unliving reality are allowed, though they may still result in disconnection.

In dominant and mixed zones, as well as pure zones when the contradiction is to the character's reality but not the local reality, as soon as a character uses a tool or ability that would create a contradiction, her player must make a *contradiction check*. If using the ability or tool requires a die roll to generate a bonus number, such as shooting a gun, that die roll is used for the contradiction check. This is called an *active contradiction check*.

World laws that affect a character's skills or abilities, such as providing a bonus to certain types of actions, are considered active contradictions when the character uses the affected ability. Any world law effect that a character can consciously choose to use is also considered an active contradiction when the character elects to use it.

If the tool or ability does not require a roll to use, such as armor, the player makes a *passive contradiction check* by rolling the die. No bonus number is generated, the die roll is all that's necessary. Any world law effect that is not an active contradiction is treated as a passive contradiction (not to be confused with a passive world law.)

Active contradiction checks are made **every** time the tool or ability is used, each use requires a separate contradiction check. Passive checks are generally only made once a scene per item or ability for sake of convenience. Passive checks can be made at the beginning of a scene if the contradiction is something the player or gamemaster knows will be used, such as some world law effects. Alternately, they can be made the first time the contradictory tool or ability is used, such as when a character first puts on a suit of contradictory armor.

Types of Contradiction Checks

There are three types of contradiction checks, based on the severity of the contradiction. The worse the contradiction, the greater the chance that the Everlaw of One deals with it. To determine the degree of contradiction, consider the axioms of three things: the character, the local reality and the axiom requirement of the tool or ability being used.

Reconnection Difficulty Chart

Character is in:

Character is from:	Aysle	Core Earth	Cyberpapacy	Land Below	Living Land	Nile Empire	Nippon Tech	Orrorsh	Space Gods	Tharkold	Tz'Ravok
Aysle	0	14	7	13	20	8	17	6	13	8	14
Core Earth	11	0	6	15	18	6	8	8	3	4	14
Cyberpapacy	12	9	0	17	21	8	12	9	17	3	8
Land Below	4	11	7	0	15	3	12	3	17	3	8
Living Land	10	16	12	9	0	9	16	9	12	9	10
Nile Empire	10	11	8	14	16	0	12	5	8	3	13
Nippon Tech	11	5	7	16	19	7	0	8	3	5	15
Orrorsh	8	11	8	15	17	6	15	0	11	6	12
Space Gods	16	12	12	22	25	12	10	13	0	10	20
Tharkold	14	12	6	17	21	8	14	9	8	0	17
Tz'Ravok	6	10	7	12	15	3	12	3	8	3	0

Zero Case

If the axiom level of the tool is equal to or less than the axiom level of the character **and** the local reality, then any possible contradiction is so minor that it escapes the Everlaw of One. There is no chance of disconnection.

Example: Quin shoots his Uzi at a villain while in the Cyberpapacy. The Tech axiom of the Uzi is 22, which is less than both Quin's Core Earth Tech axiom of 23 and the Cyberpapacy's Tech axiom of 26. Even though both Quin and the Uzi are from "someplace else" compared to the Cyberpapacy reality, this is not enough of a contradiction to cause disconnection since neither Quin's nor the Cyberpapacy's Tech axiom is being violated.

World laws can very rarely be zero-case contradictions. This can only happen if a character is in a foreign reality that has a world law **exactly** like one of his own. In the Possibility Wars there is only one case of this; the realm of the Nile Empire, the cosm of Terra and the Land Below fringe reality all have a Law of Action which works the same in each reality. A Nile Empire character can thus use the Law of Action in the Land Below or Terra without risk of disconnection and vice versa.

One-Case

A *one-case contradiction* is created when the axiom of the tool **is greater** than either the character or the local reality, **but not both**. If the player rolls a 1 while using the tool, or when otherwise making a contradiction check, the Everlaw of One eliminates the contradiction and disconnects the character.

Calculating Reconnection Numbers

To determine reconnection numbers not provided in this book or in any other Torg book, use the following formula:

- For a character from reality A in reality B, start with the largest axiom difference where A is greater than B.
- Subtract B's axiom from A's axiom.
- Add +1 for every other axiom A has that is higher than B.
- Add in a "fudge factor" based on the current value: if it's 0-5, add +3; if it's 6-10, add +2; if it's 11-15, add +1; if the current value is over 15, don't add anything.
- The value may be fudged a few more points to reflect intangibles not reflected by the axioms, such as world law conflicts between the two realities.
- The difficulty of reconnecting in a character's home reality is always zero.

Example: Let's calculate one of the difficulty numbers provided in the chart, a Nile Empire character in Aysle. The largest difference between their axioms is in Tech; the Nile has a 21 and Aysle has a 15. Our beginning value is (21 - 15) 6. The Nile's Spirit and Social axioms are also higher than Aysle's axioms so we add +2, bringing the total up to 8. The fudge factor is an additional +2, bringing the total up to 10, which is the value on the chart.

Example: Magoth tries to use a telephone while in Core Earth America. The telephone works fine under Core Earth's axioms but it exceeds Magoth's Tech axiom of 15, making it a one-case contradiction. Becky has Roger make a passive contradiction check; if he rolls a 1 Magoth disconnects using the telephone.

Contradictions involving world laws are almost always one-case contradictions (the only exception being the few zero-cases.) This is because a character's living reality will always support his own world laws so they are only a contradiction to the local unliving reality. Similarly, the local reality will always support its own world laws so they are only a contradiction to the character's personal reality.

The contradiction check is independent of the final die total. Even if there are additional rolls, such as from an *Up* condition or from spending a Possibility Point, if the first die roll is a 1, the character disconnects.

A *Second Chance* card from the Drama Deck can be used to avoid disconnecting on a die roll. All consequences of the first die roll are ignored when a Second Chance is played, including disconnection.

The Bonus Chart on the character sheet provided in this rulebook and on the templates in some Torg books have the "1" column marked in black to help remind people of one-case contradictions.

Four-Case

A f*our-case contradiction* is created when the axiom of the tool exceeds **both** the axiom level of the local reality and the character using the tool. If the player rolls a 1 through 4 on the die while using the tool, or when otherwise making a contradiction check, the Everlaw of One eliminates the contradiction and disconnects the character.

Example: Yukitada fires a Tech 26 laser pistol while in the Living Land. The laser pistol's Tech axiom exceeds the Tech axiom of both Yukitada (Tech 24) and the Living Land (Tech 7). If Barbara rolls a 1, 2, 3 or 4 it causes Yukitada to disconnect and the contradiction is prevented from happening, the laser doesn't fire.

Contradictions involving world laws can **never** be a four-case contradiction. Characters cannot have access to a world law that is foreign to both herself and to the local reality.

As with one-case contradictions, the contradiction check is independent of the final die total. A *Second Chance* card can likewise be used to avoid disconnecting on the die roll.

The Bonus Chart on the character sheet in this rulebook and on the templates in some *Torg* books have marked the "2" and "3-4" columns in gray to help people remember four-case contradictions.

Long Range Contradictions

Even an ord can tap his minute reserves of possibility energy in order to create a contradiction. Though the Everlaw of Two is very weak in the ord, as long as the tool is touching him the character may create contradictions until he fails a contradiction check.

But if an ord throws a grenade, or leaves a warding spell, or fires an explosive missile - anything that requires the tool itself to perform an operation after it leaves the ords hand - then the item will not work. The grenade or missile will not explode; the spell will never be triggered. Ords cannot extend a contradiction past the confines of their own bodies.

Possibility-rated characters, on the other hand, can do so, but only if they can deflect the Everlaw of One's efforts to suppress the

tool's contradiction. When a possibility-rated character attempts to create a contradiction at range, he must generate a *reality* skill total in addition to any skill total he makes in operating the tool (possibly requiring a multi-action.)

The *reality* skill total is compared to a difficulty number equal to the effect value of the tool. If the *reality* total exceeds the difficulty, the contradiction occurs without any problems. If the *reality* total is less, the difference is read as non-lethal damage on the Combat Results Table. Failing this check does **not** mean the character is disconnected, unless he rolls a 1 (or 1-4 as the case may be) while making the roll.

Example: Quin throws a grenade, damage value 14, in the Living Land. Once the grenade leaves his hand, he is attempting to cause a long-range contradiction (to get the fuse to work). He performs a multi-action, generating a *missile weapons* total for the throw and a *reality* total for the long-range contradiction. Paul applies the first +2 multi-action penalty to the *reality* total, increasing the difficulty to the damage value of the grenade plus two, 16 (the difficulty of his missile weapons check is increased by +4 because of the multi-action.) Quin's *reality* skill total is only a 12 so (16 - 12) four result points are read on the Combat Results Table; Quin takes two points of shock damage causing the contradiction at range.

The character must remain conscious after any damage is applied in order for the contradiction to occur. If the character is killed or knocked out by the damage, the tool does not create a contradiction.

If the tool does not have a specified effect value, the difficulty is **not** zero. Long-range contradictions for items that do not have an effect value are a Very Easy (3) task that the gamemaster may modify based on circumstances.

Long-range contradictions that involve macro skill use, such as starting a timer on a charge of explosives and then maintaining the timer's contradiction while running for cover, generally only require one *reality* skill check. The character does not have to make a check every round until the timer goes off.

Magic spells that are cast directly by a character are **not** long-range contradictions; even though the spell effect may occur at a distance, the spell pattern remains connected to the mage. Magic spells focused or impressed into other objects or people (see Chapter Ten) are also not long-range contradictions for the magician since they become the concern of the person who has the item or the spell.

Miracles only have to worry about long-range contradictions when the *focus* provider for the miracle cannot touch the *faith* provider (see Chapter Eleven.). If the *focus* character provides the *faith* for a miracle, the miracle is not a long-range contradiction regardless of where the effect occurs. Direct invocations are never long-range contradictions.

Items that maintain some kind of direct physical connection to the character while operating never have to worry about long-range contradictions. For example, while a "fire and forget" missile does require a long-range contradiction, a wire-guided missile does not because the character remains physically connected to the missile through the control mechanism and the wires that connect it to the missile.

Disconnection

When a 1 or 1–4 is rolled, or whenever a character contradicts the local reality in a pure zone, the Everlaw of One eliminates the contradiction by breaking the link between a character and the Everlaw of Two. Without this link, a character cannot create a contradiction because the Everlaw is necessary to link the realities together.

The link to the Everlaw of Two is also how a character receives possibility energy from his home reality. Until the link is repaired, the character does not collect any Possibility Points due him at the end of an act or an adventure. He may still spend those that he has, and play Hero and Drama cards as possibilities, but without the link his personal supply of possibility energy cannot be replenished.

While disconnected, the character may not use any tool (item or ability) whose axiom level exceeds the axioms of his current location. If he moves to a different location that has a different reality, the axioms of that area now apply. A disconnected character is "adrift" and must conform to whatever passes for reality wherever he goes.

While disconnected, characters can exceed their own axioms without problem if the local axioms are higher. This is because while disconnected the character's personal reality has no means of expressing itself, so it cannot affect the character's actions in any way.

Example: Terrill is in the Living Land and shoots an M-16 at an attacking edeinos. Alan rolls a 3 and since the M-16 is a four-case contradiction, Terrill is disconnected. He may not use the M-16, nor may he use magic or any other tool that exceeds the axiom levels of the Living Land. If he had access to a Living Land miracle, he could use that without creating a contradiction since his Ayslish reality has no way of affecting his actions.

Possibility-rated characters can use their *reality* skill to *reconnect* with the Everlaw of Two. Ords however have no conscious ability to reconnect and must wait, possibly a very long time, for the connection to be restored by the Everlaw of Two. Ords can only reconnect over time like this when they are in their home reality, if they are in a foreign reality the only way they can be reconnected is through *sparking* (see Chapter Eight) or by being transformed into a native of the local reality.

Reconnection

Possibility-rated characters can use their *reality* skill to repair their link to the Everlaw of Two. This counts as an action so if they are in round play performing any other action will incur multi-action penalties.

Repairing the link while in a foreign reality requires the tool that was being used when the link was broken, it contains fragments of the character's connection to the Everlaw of Two. **If the character does not have the tool, reconnection is not possible**. A character in her home reality may repair the link without the tool that was being used when the link was destroyed. If the character loses the tool while in a foreign reality, going home is the **only** way she can attempt to reconnect.

The link may be broken in one reality and repaired in another; often the link is easier to repair in a reality different from the one in which the character was disconnected. The character must still have the tool though in order to repair it in any foreign reality.

The difficulty of a reconnection attempt is based on how different the local reality is from the character's own reality. Difficulties for the main realities involved in the Possibility Wars are provided in the chart below. If difficulty numbers for other realities are needed, the formula used to compute the difficulty numbers is provided in the sidebar.

Example: Magoth is trying to repair the link that was broken while he was experimenting with the telephone in Core Earth. The difficulty number is 14. If he generates a *reality* total of 14 or more, then he regains his ability to create contradictions. If it is less, he remains disconnected and limited by the axioms of Core Earth. While he can use the telephone without problem, he no longer has access to many of his spells and, more importantly, to his magical enhancement packages.

Reconnection Bonus Modifiers

A character attempting to reconnect may receive a bonus modifier if the tool she was using had a **lower** axiom level than her own axiom level. The bonus modifier is the character's axiom level minus the tool's axiom level.

Example: Quin disconnects in Aysle using a Kentucky rifle, which has a tech axiom of 17. Quin's tech axiom is 23 so he gets a (23 - 17) +6 bonus on his reconnection attempt.

If the tool has an axiom level **greater** than the character's axiom, a **negative** modifier is applied if the tool's axiom also exceeds the local axiom level (a four-case contradiction.) If the local reality supports the tool though, no modifier is applied. The modifier is determined the same as above, the character's axiom level minus the tool's axiom level (since the tool's axiom is higher the result will be a negative number.)

Example: Terrill disconnected with an M-16 while in the Living Land. The M-16 has a Tech axiom of 22 and Terrill's Tech axiom is 15. Terrill therefore has a (15 - 22) -7 modifier to his reconnection attempt.

If Terrill leaves the Living Land and enters Core Earth reality, the M-16 no longer exceeds the local (Core Earth) axiom so there is no penalty to Terrill's reconnection attempt.

Limiting Reconnection Attempts

If a player character can attempt to reconnect every ten seconds (every round), all they would need is a little "down time" and eventually they'll roll well enough to reconnect regardless of how high the difficulty might be. An hour contains 360 rounds, which would be 360 opportunities to reconnect!

To prevent this kind of situation, the frequency with which characters can attempt to reconnect is limited. Characters can attempt to reconnect every round **only when they disconnect during round play** and only for the duration of that current period of round play. If they have not reconnected by the end of that period of round play, they only get **one more attempt** in that scene to reconnect. If the scene ends immediately following round play, they still get the one chance to reconnect before the scene actually ends.

If a character disconnects outside of round play, such as at the beginning of a scene due to a passive contradiction check, they get **one** attempt to reconnect during that scene. If a scene lasts for longer than one day, they get a chance to try again each new day. If there's a lengthy period of time between scenes, acts or adventures (if the character is that unlucky) then the character gets one attempt to reconnect per day of that time period.

A character that begins round play disconnected is allowed one attempt to reconnect during that period of round play. Players

Important!

The *transformation table* was designed with Core Earth ords in mind since they are the ones most at risk in the Possibility Wars. One of Core Earth's world laws, the *Law of Hope*, affects the odds of Core Earthers transforming and this effect is reflected in the numbers given in the table. For ord characters from other realities, use the transform numbers and roll numbers **one row lower** on the chart than indicated.

For example, after one week in a foreign pure zone five out of every one hundred Core Earthers will have transformed and the roll for an individual Core Earther in that situation is a 26 or greater. If instead we were looking at ords from the Cyberpapacy, after one week in a foreign pure zone twenty out of every hundred will have transformed and the roll for an individual Cyberpapist is an 18 or greater.

cannot have their characters initiate round play, such as by starting a fight, simply to gain an extra attempt at reconnection! If in the gamemaster's judgment a player does initiate round play for this purpose, she is within her rights to not give the character the opportunity to reconnect.

Transformation

The Everlaw of One tries to reconcile the Raiders' invading reality with the living natives and objects in the invaded areas; these invaded areas are cut off from the rest of their cosm by the *stelae* placed by the High Lords' agents before the invasion begins. Since the living entities and native objects in the small invaded area require less possibility energy to change than the invading axioms (connected to their entire cosm by the *maelstrom bridge*), the Everlaw of One chooses to enforce the invading reality and attempts to eliminate the contradictions of the natives rather than the invading reality.

Transformation is the process the Everlaw of One uses to convert a target into an object or being which does not create a contradiction with the attacker's reality. Even disconnected characters can be viewed as a contradiction since their living reality, even if they cannot access it, is different from the unliving reality of the invaded area.

The transformation process tries to use as much of the target's nature as possible, attempting to conserve things such as mass, attributes and skills (though any contradictory abilities may be permanently lost.) Ords can be transformed spontaneously simply by being in a foreign reality or by being caught in a reality storm. Possibility-rated individuals can only be transformed by reality storms, their *reality* skill protects them from transformations caused by exposure to foreign realities.

The table below gives the number of people (ords) who will spontaneously transform in a given area after a set period of time. For random determination of an individual ord's chance to spontaneously transform, use the roll numbers given on the table below. If the roll is equal to or greater than the roll number, the character transforms. When rolling, roll again on 10s and 20s.

For story purposes, we recommend that gamemasters decide if and when important non-player characters transform based on its impact on the story line rather than as a simple matter of percentages. Rolls should be saved for determining the fate of relatively minor characters or for when a transformation would not have any real impact on the story.

Values are not provided for mixed zones because the unstable nature of mixed zones precludes the possibility of spontaneous transformation. Instead, most people transformed in mixed zones will be transformed by the reality storms that occasionally sweep across the zones.

A character that is transformed loses all of his possibility energy because the Everlaw of One uses that energy to drive the transformation. Once transformed, the character's living reality (axioms and world laws) matches that of the local reality, he is now a native of that reality. He may even be physically altered to more closely match the natural inhabitants of the reality, though this is a relatively rare occurrence. When a character transforms, a roll of 1 on the twenty-sided die indicates that he has been physically altered by the transformation.

A physical transformation will also affect a character's mind as well as their body. Contradictory skills are eliminated by a physical transformation, usually replaced with new skills more appropriate to the character's new reality. For example, a Cyberpapal character who is physically transformed to Core Earth reality would lose his

TRANSFORMATION TABLE

Time	Pure Area Transform	Roll #	Dominant Area Transform	Roll #
1 second	1 / 10M	105	2/ 100M	130
1 minute	5 / 1M	90	9/ 10M	100
1 hour	3 / 10T	60	5/ 100T	77
1 day	7/1,000	40	1/ 10T	72
1 week	5/100	26	9/1,000	38
1 month	20/100	18	4/100	28
3 months	50/100	12	11/100	19
6 months	75/100	6	25/100	17
1 year	93/100	3	37/100	14
18 months	98/100	2	50/100	12
2 years	100/100	-	60/100	9
3 years	100/100	-	75/100	6
4 years	100/100	-	84/100	4
5 years	100/100	-	90/100	3

A notation of "M" means *million*; 10M thus means ten million. A notation of "T" means *thousand*; 10T thus means ten thousand.

Disconnection Table

In a pinch, the transformation table can be used to determine the chances of ords in a foreign reality being disconnected. For example, if a group of National Guardsmen enter the Living Land to deliver supplies to a resistance community, how many of them will disconnect in the day it takes them to reach the community?

Shift down two rows from the amount of time the ords are at risk of disconnecting and use the Pure columns to find the percentage and roll number. For example, after one day in a pure zone twenty percent (20/100) of the National Guardsmen will have disconnected and the roll for an individual Guardsman is an 18 or greater.

energy weapons skill but it might be replaced with the *fire combat* skill.

Over time the physically transformed character's memories of his original reality will fade and be replaced with surrogate memories that are more appropriate to his new reality. What remains of his original memories will seem like a long-ago dream, something that could never have happened in his "real" life.

Ords who do not undergo a complete physical transformation will retain their original skills and abilities. Their memories will not fade as quickly as the physically transformed but they will become less and less "real" to the character as more time passes.

Transformed ords, whether physically transformed or not, are unable to create contradictions. Because possibility energy is required to create contradictions and transformed characters have had their possibility energy consumed by the process, it is impossible for them to create any kind of a contradiction.

Example: Eric Wold, an ord Core Earth Englishman, wakes up one morning to discover that he's been transformed to Ayslish reality. He remembers almost everything about his previous life; he remembers concepts like "television" and "automobile," and can even correctly identify them. But he no longer has any idea how they operate and is no longer capable of making them work because he can no longer create contradictions.

Possibility-rated characters that are transformed by reality storms are not faced with this problem; by their very nature they quickly absorb enough possibility energy from their new reality to once again be capable of creating contradictions. (Note that this amount of possibility energy is considerably less than one Possibility Point; a newly transformed possibility-rated character will have zero Possibility Points until she receives an award at the end of an act or the end of an adventure.)

Transformed ords face another problem with contradictions. Since they are incapable of creating any kind of contradiction, should they travel to a different reality they must **simultaneously** obey the axiom limits of both their own reality and the reality they've entered. The only way this is possible is to operate at the lower axiom value for each pair.

Example: Eric Wold, now an Ayslish native, travels to London, a Core Earth hardpoint. Because he cannot create any contradictions he is constrained to act at the combined lower axiom values of Core Earth and Aysle. This means he must operate at the levels of Magic 7 (Core Earth), Social 18 (Aysle), Spirit 9 (Core Earth) and Tech 15 (Aysle).

Additionally, by being unable to create contradictions it becomes impossible for transformed Ords to use or be affected by world laws while in a foreign reality. Not only are the foreign reality's world laws a contradiction to the character's reality, his own world laws are a contradiction to the foreign reality.

For world laws that must be consciously utilized by a character, this simply means that the character is incapable of calling upon the effects of those world laws. World laws that affect characters on their own accord are a different matter. These world laws try to exert their effect on the character but because the character cannot support contradictions, they cannot have an effect on him. The Everlaw of One will resolve this situation by disconnecting the character when the world law tries to affect the character.

Example: While in London, Eric performs a heroic deed. One of Aysle's world laws, the *Law of Honor,* attempts to give Eric an add in the *honor* skill in recognition of his behavior. This world law

Transformation of Objects

The Everlaw of One also transforms contradictory objects , but not all transformations have the same result; military tanks have transformed into both small stone fortifications as well as armored horse-drawn carriages (without the horses) in Aysle. The one constant seems to be that living things transform to living things, or things with living components, while the unliving remains unliving. When objects transform, form is apparently less important than function, resulting in transformations like a tank into a small stone fort rather than an armored vehicle.

Objects do not carry a reality around within them like living creatures do, they simply possess axiom requirements. When an object transforms it must then become something with an axiom requirement appropriate to the local unliving reality. Therefore, when an object transforms it is almost always a physical transformation, the object is recreated as something native to the local reality.

A Tech 23 semiautomatic pistol, for example, cannot transform into a Tech 15 semiautomatic pistol in Aysle because there is no such thing. It would instead have to become a Tech 15 pistol, a single-shot matchlock or flintlock of some kind. That's assuming that it even remained a pistol, depending on how broadly its function is interpreted by the Everlaw of One the pistol might become a crossbow instead of a firearm. Or it might become a magical weapon, an enchanted "semiautomatic" crossbow perhaps!

The transformation table provided for characters can be used to provide the chances of a contradictory object being transformed into a non-contradictory object. Shift down two rows from the amount of time the object has been exposed to the reality to determine the roll necessary to indicate a transformation. For example, after one week in a pure zone the roll number will be 12 or higher.

Objects in the possession of a character capable of supporting contradictions will **never** spontaneously transform. Transformation of contradictory objects is only possible when the object is not being supported as a contradiction.

effect is contradictory to the Core Earth reality of London though so the Everlaw of One immediately disconnects Eric.

When a transformed ord is disconnected, it works the same as any other disconnection; the character now operates completely under the rules of the local reality. The ord may mistakenly believe that he has been transformed again since reality is now working differently for him yet again, but that is not really the case.

Which is good for the ord, because there is a serious risk they face. If the Everlaw of One should transform them again, they no longer have any possibility energy of their own available to power the transformation. The Everlaw of One will instead use their very life force to drive the transformation process, a fatal (and often fiery) outcome for the character.

Transformed ords must then be refilled with possibility energy if they are to survive a second transformation; a fact that Storm Knights bent on liberating areas from the invaders must factor into their strategy and tactics. This process, called *sparking,* is detailed in Chapter Eight.

Transcendence

"In a moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing to do. The worst thing you can do is nothing."

—Theodore Roosevelt

When faced with making a strong moral choice between "good" and "evil", especially when coupled with a threat from another reality, some characters experience a *Moment of Crisis* as described in Chapter Two. The Everlaw of Four strengthens and reinforces the link between the character and his own reality via the Everlaw of Two. This sends a surge of possibility energy into the character, making him possibility-rated and giving him the *reality* skill.

When a different reality is involved in the conflict, the Everlaw of Two supersedes the Everlaw of Four (resulting in the argument over whether the Everlaw of Four actually exists or if it's simply part of the Everlaw of Two.) When two realities meet, such as in a reality storm, the Everlaws are struggling over the character; the Everlaw of One wishes to resolve contradictions by changing the character (either through disconnection or transformation) while the Everlaw of Two wishes to preserve the character's connection to his own reality.

Usually the Everlaw of One wins, but when coupled with a strong moral choice the Everlaw of Two is sometimes able to send a surge of possibility energy into the character and make him possibility-rated. Some of this energy is consumed by the Everlaw of One, which acts to stop its effort to transform the character. The character retains the rest of the energy from the Everlaw of Two and now possesses Possibility Points. In these cases the character is said to have *transcended* the transformation.

Characters who hesitate or otherwise fail to make a definitive choice during their Moment of Crisis do not transcend and remain ords. If this occurs during a conflict with another reality they may also be transformed, particularly in reality storms. Failing to make a choice during a Moment of Crisis when the character is in a foreign reality can also trigger spontaneous transformations (roll for the character using the Transformation Table).

Transcendence occurs regardless of whether the moral choice was for good or evil. In normal situations, the number of people who transcend are roughly split 50-50 between those who chose good and those who chose evil. For purposes of the Moment of Crisis, "good" is considered to be a choice that places the safety or interests of others ahead of the character's own interests while "evil" is the opposite.

The High Lords have over the centuries learned how to manipulate events during reality conflicts so that "evil" choices are much more likely to provoke transcendence than "good" choices. This is an important way for the High Lords to gain possibility-rated converts to their cause. Within the realms established by the Possibility Raiders, the ratio of transcendence can be as disproportionate as 90-10 in favor of those who made evil choices.

That doesn't necessarily mean that there are nine possibility-rated villains for every Storm Knight within a realm. Making an evil choice during a Moment of Crisis does not turn that person into a villain, it just means they made a selfish or self-centered choice. Some of these people may go on to become Storm Knights, others may decide not to get involved in either side of the Possibility Wars.

Reality Storms

The boundaries between conflicting realities can unleash fearsome displays of possibility energy in the form of *reality storms*. These storms occur because the Everlaw of One is working very hard to eliminate contradictions. A reality storm can appear in an instant and last for hours or only for seconds. They might travel dozens of miles before dissipating or remain stationary the entire time it is active.

All reality storms have violent physical manifestations; roiling, ethereal cloud cover, winds ranging in velocity from forty to hundreds of kilometers an hour are possible, fierce lightning storms capable of shearing the tops off of mountains or leveling entire cities.

But the storm effects are often peculiarly selective in their targets. Lightning storms in Indiana during the initial invasion by the Living Land were seen to only strike objects which contained aluminum, and the winds caused no damage to trees and other plants, only to man-made structures and objects. In the Ruhr valley of France, only churches were damaged by the storms.

More dangerous than the physical effects are the reality-warping effects that sometimes accompany reality storms; gravity can become variable, languages of a region can be changed, vehicles can move about on their own, objects change size and shape, axioms can fluctuate wildly, common substances such as rain water can become deadly, and so on. Reality storms may also cause transformations to occur in both people and objects.

Most of the reality-warping effects of a storm fade within two to 24 hours of the storm's passage though in a few rare instances the effects can last much longer. Some effects, such as transformations and damage caused by the storm's physical effects, are not temporary.

Storm Strengths

Reality storms are rated with a *strength value,* which is used to determine the effect it might have on anything that gets caught in its path. Invoked reality storms have a strength based on the reality skills of the two characters involved in the storm (see "Invoked Reality Storms" later in this chapter.) Natural reality storms will vary in strength, seemingly at random, so there's no way for characters to predict or determine how strong a storm is until they're in it.

Along the borders where two realities meet, an average reality storm will have a strength value around 15, varying by a few points in either direction. In most cases this will be used as a physical damage value, representing the effects of the strong winds, lightning, hail or any other weather-related phenomena that may occur. Reality storms may sometimes cause mental or spiritual damage instead of physical; a cold wind that chills the soul, lightning that fries the mind but not the body, and so on.

In areas of severely contested reality, such as in mixed zones or along newly established borders between realities, the reality storms will be stronger. The average strength value is around 18 and can range as high as the mid-20s. These storms are also more likely to attack a character's reality, attempting to drain off possibility energy and even causing transformations.

When a storm attacks a character's reality, the character has to make a *reality* skill check against the storm's strength value. If the skill value is higher, the character comes through the storm intact. If it is equal to or less than the storm's strength value, the character becomes trapped in the storm and must make further *reality* skill checks against the storm's strength value to escape.

Every time the character fails a *reality* skill check against the strength value of the storm, the difference is read on the Storm Results Table and the result is applied to the character, ignoring *maelstrom* results. Each failure will cost the character Possibility Points and may result in a transformation to one of the two realities involved in the storm. The only way out of the storm is to either defeat it or to be transformed.

Example: Marco is crossing the storm front along the border between Core Earth and the Nile Empire when a reality storm springs up and attacks his reality. Marco's *reality* skill is 12, the storm's strength value is 14. Juan rolls poorly and generates a *reality* skill total of only 6. Becky tells him that Marco is trapped in the storm and loses four Possibility Points.

In the next round, Juan generates a skill total of 14. Almost, but not quite good enough. Becky tells Juan that Marco loses one possibility point. In the third round, Juan rolls and then spends a possibility for a roll again, generating a skill total of 20 this time. Becky tells Juan that Marco manages to overcome the storm's effects and is free.

Ords, because they do not possess the *reality* skill, are unable to fight the transformative effects of a reality storm and will be immediately transformed to one of the two realities involved in the storm. Usually the transformation will be to the reality the character was trying to enter, but not always. If the character belongs to one of the two realities involved in the storm, they will always be transformed to the other reality.

Some of the High Lords have adjusted the relative strengths of their realms in order to increase or decrease the average strength of the reality storms that surround their realms. The reality storms surrounding the Cyberpapacy are exceptionally fierce, with an average strength value of 22 and are almost constantly raging. By contrast, the storms around Nippon Tech have been "turned down" to minimize the chances of people realizing that the realm is there. Their storms have an average strength value around 12 and are infrequently seen compared to the other realms.

Unusual Reality Storm Effects

Reality storms will occasionally produce effects that don't cause any damage. These kinds of effects are quite rare and should only be used for dramatically appropriate storm encounters rather than every time characters encounter a reality storm. Some possible effects are:

- Spatial distortion: characters suffer a penalty on all *Dexterity* and *Perception* based actions
- Spatial curvature: characters become stuck in a closed loop of space and will wander aimlessly over the same terrain over and over again until they successfully generate a *reality* skill total against the storm's strength value
- Panic attacks: characters are paralyzed with fear unless they generate a successful *Spirit* check against the storm's strength value
- Vivid illusions/hallucinations: characters cannot trust one or more of their senses
- Temporary reality comes into existence: axioms and possibly even world laws suddenly become something completely different from either reality involved in the storm
- Temporal anomaly: time flows slower or faster within the storm.

Small reality storms do occasionally appear on the borders of the Space Gods' reality tree zones. These storms have an average strength value of only 8 and will very rarely attack a character's reality.

Home Field Advantage

A character that is in her home reality receives a +3 bonus modifier to resist the effects of a reality storm. This is because the Everlaw of One sees a greater incongruity in characters that are not native to the location of the reality storm.. If a character is not from the reality where the storm occurs, there is no modifier. Reality storms along the boundary between two realities are considered to be in both realities for purposes of determining the home field advantage.

Example: Marco, Yukitada and Terrill are crossing the storm front between Core Earth Ireland and the Aysle realm when a reality storm hits, lashing at them with lightning and fierce winds. Since Marco is from Core Earth and Terrill is from Aysle, they both receive a +3 bonus to their *Toughness* to resist the physical damage the storm causes. Yukitada, being from Nippon Tech, receives no bonus.

A reality bubble does not count as being within a character's home reality, nor do the zones created by talismans. Zones projected by hardpoints do count though.

Invoked Reality Storms

A possibility-rated being can invoke the Everlaw of One whenever he is confronted with a possibility-rated being from another cosm. The two, being strong representations of their realities, are prime contradictions targeted for removal by the Everlaw of One. An invoked storm represents the ultimate personification of the premise that only one possibility from a set of two or more conflicting possibilities can exist. Reality storms may not be invoked against ords or against beings from the same reality.

No more than one opponent may be targeted when invoking the Everlaw. The two characters become pitted against each other in a reality storm. The reality storm continues until one of the characters is transformed to the other's reality. Characters in their own reality do gain the home field advantage in an invoked storm.

The reality storm seals off the combatants from all other beings, objects, or energy; the Everlaw of One does this to minimize the number of variables that can affect the contest. Nothing affects the contestants other than themselves and their own resolve and belief in the superiority of their own reality, until the storm is over. For game purposes, characters in a reality storm may not receive any kind of assistance from other characters, such as receiving or trading cards or being affected by such things as a *Supporter* card or the *Shift Possibility* group power. Characters in a reality storm may spend their possibilities and use their own cards normally.

To invoke a reality storm, a character must first be able to recognize the target as being from another reality. Generally this requires witnessing the target perform an action or utilize an ability that is contradictory to the character's own reality. In some cases the target's mere existence may be sufficient. A Core Earth character, for example, could immediately recognize a techno-demon from Tharkold as something that isn't "normal", something that cannot exist in the "real world" (as he understands the world anyway.)

Second, the character must call upon the Everlaw of One. In essence, the character needs to direct the Everlaw's attention at the target and "push" it into recognizing the target as a contradiction that needs to be eliminated. This involves generating a *reality* skill total against a difficulty number that is equal to the target's *reality* skill value. If the check is successful, a reality storm is invoked.

If the check fails, nothing happens and the character may not make a second attempt. However, the target may choose to invoke a reality storm of her own if she wishes to retaliate in that manner.

The conflict occurs in round play and follows the normal rules for initiative and the effects on the Conflict Lines. There are no approved actions though; characters in a reality storm can only perform two types of actions - a *reality* skill attack against their opponent or an active defense using their own *reality* skill. Characters may use the Aggressive Defense combat option if they wish to attack and actively defend in the same round.

When a character attacks, he generates a *reality* skill total against a difficulty equal to his opponent's *reality* skill value. Any result points from the attack are read on the Storm Results Table. The storm rages back-and-forth between the two characters in this fashion until one proves victorious.

When the defeated character is transformed, the gamemaster should roll to determine if the character is physically transformed. As outlined earlier under "Transformation", a roll of 1 on the twenty-sided die indicates that the character has been physically altered by the transformation.

THE STORM RESULTS TABLE

	Result
S	-1
1	-1
2	-2
3	-2
4	-2 Storm x2
5	-3 Storm x2
6	-3 Storm x5
7	-4 Storm x2
8	-4 Storm x5
9	-5 Maelstrom
10	-6 Maelstrom
11	-7 Maelstrom
12	-8 Maelstrom
13	Transform (5)
14	Transform (5)
15	Transform (5)

The results on the Storm Results Table are expressed as a number followed by a notation. The numbers are the Possibility Points lost by an opponent as a result of that round of the storm.

Example: A Lorbaat warrior from the Space Gods realm has successfully invoked a reality storm against Quin. The Lorbaat has a *reality* skill of 10, Quin's *reality* skill is 9. In the first round of the conflict, the Lorbaat generates a skill total of 12, getting three result points. The Storm Results Table indicates that Quin loses two Possibility Points.

Then Quin gets to go. Paul rolls well and generates a skill total of 17, getting seven result points against the Lorbaat's *reality* skill. The table indicates that the Lorbaat loses four Possibility Points. There is also a notation indicating that the reality storm gets stronger (see below.)

When a character has been drained of all her Possibility Points, further point losses are taken directly from her *reality* skill **adds**. Once her adds have been reduced to zero, the character loses the fight and is transformed to the other character's reality; the storm ends. The character does not lose the *reality* skill, only the adds.

Example: Quin has reduced the Lorbaat warrior down to one remaining Possibility Point. In his next attack, Quin's attack drains two Possibility Points from the Lorbaat. The Lorbaat first loses his last Possibility Point and then loses one add from his *reality* skill. Since the Lorbaat only had one add in *reality,* he is reduced to zero adds and the storm transforms him to Core Earth reality.

Characters who lose adds in *reality* may build it back up by accumulating Possibility Points in the normal way and buying the skill adds as normal. If the character was reduced to zero adds, buying the first add only costs one Possibility Point because they did not entirely lose the skill, just the adds.

There are three types of notation on the Storm Results Table: *storm multiplier, maelstrom* and *transform.*

Storm Multiplier

A *storm multiplier* increases the size and intensity of the storm. When invoked, a reality storm has a beginning radius of five meters and the storm appears midway between the two opponents, with wisps of energized mists reaching out to enshroud the contestants. (If the opponents are closer than five meters, the storm engulfs them.) The multiplier increases the radius of the storm; a *x2* result doubles the radius; a *x5* result multiplies the radius by five.

The storm begins with a strength value equal to the greater of the two characters' *reality* skill values. The two opponents do not feel the storm's effects, it only affects non-combatants within the storm's radius. Each *storm multiplier* result not only enlarges the radius of the storm, it also increases the storm's ferocity, increasing the storm's strength value by +1.

Example: The reality storm between Quin and the Lorbaat began with a strength value of 10, the higher of their two *reality* skill values, and a radius of five meters. Quin's first attack included a storm multiplier notation of "storm x2". The storm's radius doubled to ten meters and its strength value increased by one to 11.

A few rounds later, an attack by the Lorbaat included a "storm x5" notation. The storm's radius jumped from ten meters to fifty meters and its strength increased to 12.

High Lords and Reality Storms

In the event that a High Lord becomes involved in a reality storm, he may draw upon the Possibility Points possessed by his Darkness Device to satisfy any losses incurred in the storm. However, should a maelstrom result occur, the intense forces within the storm block the link between the High Lord and his Darkness Device, cutting him off from it's supply of Possibility Points.

If the High Lord should happen to be transformed because of the storm, his link to the Darkness Device is severed and the Darkness Device would have to re-attune itself to him. There is no guarantee though that the Device will do this; it may instead prefer to choose a new High Lord, someone who still belongs to the reality that it is familiar with.

Maelstrom

A *Maelstrom* result stops the growth of the reality storm. The listed number of Possibility Points are lost by the opponent and then the maelstrom result takes effect From that point on, the storm maintains its current size and intensity; *storm multiplier* and *transform* effects are **ignored**. Only the number of Possibility Points lost in the storm are important.

During a maelstrom, crackling possibility energy surrounds the contestants, each character's reality being broken down and then rebuilt from the energies of the storm. Each character's sense of identity and sense of what is "real" is under assault, being torn apart by the storm and then reassembled by the characters' own resolve and power. All order is gone from the battle and a direct transformation is no longer possible. Only by draining an opponent of all her possibilities can the storm be ended, for that is the only way to prevent them from continuing to rebuild themselves and their reality.

Once locked in a maelstrom, a successful attack can either inflict the listed damage on the opponent's store of Possibility Points or the attacker can choose to revitalize himself by taking that number of Possibility Points from the reality storm and adding them to his own store. On a *transform* result, the attacking character does both; he drains his opponent of five Possibilities **and** increases his own total by five.

Example: Quin's reality storm with the Lorbaat became a maelstrom after a few rounds of the conflict. During one attack, the Lorbaat got a result of "-1" on the Storm Result Table. Instead of causing Quin to lose one Possibility Point, the Lorbaat chose to increase his own total by one point.

Quin's next attack on the Lorbaat achieved a *transform* result. Because the storm was a maelstrom, it didn't transform the Lorbaat. Instead, the Lorbaat lost five Possibility Points and Quin gained five Possibility Points.

Transform

Transform does exactly that: transforms the target character, instantly stripping him of **all** his remaining possibility energy (but

it leaves his *reality* skill adds intact). When a character scores a *transform* result, he takes five Possibilities from his opponent and adds them to his own store. If the target character has fewer than five to lose, his opponent takes all that remain.

Invoking Reality Storms Against Hardpoints

A risky method of uprooting a hardpoint is to invoke a reality storm against it. The principle is essentially the same as invoking a reality storm against another being, it is an attempt to provoke the Everlaw of One into eliminating a strong representation of another reality.

Because hardpoints do not have a *reality* skill, the procedure is somewhat different. The difficulty of invoking a reality storm against a hardpoint is equal to the radius value of its projected zone of reality.

Example: The Liberty Bell has a radius value of 19 for its zone of Core Earth reality, so the difficulty of invoking against it is 19.

Once invoked, the attacker gets **one** attempt to uproot the hardpoint. If the attack succeeds, the hardpoint is uprooted and its projected zone of reality will quickly begin to decay. If the attack fails, there is a backlash of possibility energy from the hardpoint that may injure or even kill the attacker.

The difficulty of uprooting most hardpoints is a base difficulty of 8 plus the radius value of the hardpoint. Core Earth hardpoints are more difficult to uproot because of the cosm's tremendous reserves of possibility energy. Core Earth hardpoints have a base difficulty of 15 plus the radius value of the hardpoint.

If the attacker can generate a *reality* total equal to or higher than the difficulty, the hardpoint is uprooted. If the total is less, the attack fails and the character may not attempt to uproot the hardpoint again.

When an attack against a hardpoint fails, there is a powerful backlash from the hardpoint. This is not a *reality*-based attack since the hardpoint does not have a *reality* skill. Usually the attack causes physical damage though some have been known to inflict mental or spiritual damage instead. The difficulty of uprooting the hardpoint is used as a base damage value. The gamemaster generates a bonus number for the attack with a minimum bonus of +1. The damage total is then applied to the character that attacked the hardpoint; no action total is necessary, the backlash automatically hits.

Example: Baruk Kaah, High Lord of the Living Land, attempted to uproot a significant Core Earth hardpoint during the first months of the Possibility Wars. The hardpoint, Silicon Valley in California, was actually composed of several smaller hardpoints but in his arrogance Kaah assumed that he could uproot all of them simultaneously by invoking a reality storm on the entire region! (Of course with a *reality* skill of 35 he has good reason to be arrogant.)

The storm was successfully invoked but Kaah was unprepared for the strength of Core Earth's reality; the difficulty of uprooting the twenty kilometer radius area he targeted proved to be (15 + the radius value of twenty kilometers, 22) 37 instead of the (8 + 22) 30 he was expecting. The attack failed, and he was hit with a backlash damage value of 37 plus a minimum +1 bonus number! Kaah was able to negate some of the damage by spending a Possibility Point but it still came very close to killing him.

Reality Bubbles and Large Objects

The situation: two Core Earth characters are in a car in Aysle. The driver has put up a reality bubble so that he is able to operate the car without contradiction. The passenger has disconnected and is unable to create contradictions.

The question: if the passenger tries to turn on the radio, does the driver's reality bubble extend to every function of the car, meaning that the radio will work when it's turned on? Or will it stay off because the disconnected passenger cannot create the necessary contradiction?

The answer: the radio will not work. While the driver's reality bubble allows **him** to operate the car without contradiction, it has no effect on anyone else. If the driver turned the radio on, it would work. However, the moment he takes his hand off the radio he is no longer operating it, so the reality bubble would no longer affect the radio. The driver will either have to keep his hand on the radio or support a long-range contradiction if he wants to keep it working.

Reality Bubbles

Characters who have the *reality* skill are better connected to their realities and can tap its possibility energy indirectly. Possibility-rated characters can guarantee that their reality, the axioms and world laws, will work for them without contradiction in an alien reality by putting up a *reality bubble*.

A reality bubble is a thin, skintight field that mimics the unliving portion of her home reality, drawn from the possibility energy of the character's home reality. Within this field the living/unliving link expressed by the Everlaw of Two is artificially maintained and the character is able to act as if she were in a dominant zone of her home reality, without the risk of contradicting the reality of where she actually is at the time.

The field sustains only its creator and her actions, it cannot be extended beyond the character herself. The reality bubble will affect unliving objects that are being held or operated by the character; they will function according to the owner's reality rather than the local reality. **The bubble has no effect on any other character, regardless of reality, or on objects the character is not holding or operating.** A reality bubble does not support long-range contradictions.

Example: Quin puts up a reality bubble while in the Living Land. He is able to fly his helicopter, the Blue Meanie, without contradiction for the duration of the reality bubble. If he should stop operating the controls of the helicopter though, the Blue Meanie goes back to being under Living Land reality and will immediately stop working. While the bubble is up, Quin can fire his Uzi without

contradiction but if he throws a grenade he must still generate a long-range contradiction to make it work in the Living Land.

A character has the option to create a reality bubble as long as he is linked to the Everlaw of Two (in other words, is not disconnected.) Creating a reality bubble costs one Possibility Point and lasts for fifteen minutes. A reality bubble can be created anywhere, in any type of zone, whether pure, dominant or mixed. Characters may even put up reality bubbles when in pure zones of their own reality if they have a need to create a contradiction (since in the bubble they are treated as being in a dominant zone.)

Eternity Shards

The Everlaw of Three states that in addition to the living and unliving parts of reality, there is a third part, objects rich in possibility energy. These objects are supposedly eternal in nature, created by Apeiros to always inspire and protect the living and unliving of all realities. It is also said that Apeiros crafted these objects from pieces of Eternity, a primordial entity even more vast and unknowable than Apeiros, a progenitor of both Apeiros and the Nameless One. In any case, these objects have come to be known as *eternity shards*.

Eternity shards may appear to be made out of ordinary materials such as stone or metal but in truth they are pure possibility energy given form and are indestructible, they cannot be damaged by any means except reality-based effects. Many shards are related to the myths and stories of a reality's history and culture. Some Core Earth examples include Excalibur, the Holy Grail, the Ankh of Ozymandias and the quill pen used to sign the Declaration of Independence. Whether these eternity shards are in fact the actual objects from the stories or are representations of them created by Apeiros is unclear.

A shard's possibility energy can be "tapped" by possibility-rated beings and used like regular Possibility Points. Additionally, many shards possess special abilities and powers that are used in support of the shard's purpose for existing. There are often limitations on how these powers and abilities can be used. The High Lords, whose goals in life run counter to the entire purpose of eternity shards, are often unable to take advantage of any special powers a shard may possess. As such, they only have one reason for seeking out and acquiring eternity shards - so that they can completely drain them of their possibility energy and feed that energy to their Darkness Devices.

Some shards have shown an ability to communicate with possibility-rated beings, though it is fairly limited in nature. These eternity shards appear to possess emotions but not intelligence, and some people are able to sense these feelings even at great distances. When the Heart of Coyote cried out in pain and fear during the first weeks of the Possibility Wars, its song reached Storm Knights several thousands of miles away and led them towards the shard's location. The shard's pain and fear are a reflection of the damage being done to Core Earth's reality by the Possibility Raiders. Eternity shards, as the "third part" of a reality's existence, are apparently attuned to the overall health and condition of a reality and those that can communicate are afraid of what the High Lords are doing to Core Earth.

Many eternity shards carry a *group power*. Group powers do not actually reside within an eternity shard. Instead, they are more like a knowledge that the shard can impart to possibility-rated beings, who can then in turn pass it along to others. Group powers are a way of using possibility energy to achieve reality-based effects without having to rely on any axiom-based tools. For example, the *Gate* power is like teleportation but doesn't operate on magical, miraculous, psionic or technological means. It is entirely reality-based in nature and as such exists **outside** of the axioms. This means that group powers are never contradictory regardless of where they are being used or who is using them.

They are called *group* powers for a specific reason; a single individual cannot use them. Group powers come from the synergy of possibility-rated beings cooperating together. The High Lords and their minions are incapable of creating this kind of gestalt, by their very natures they are incapable of truly trusting one another enough to create the same level of interconnectedness and cooperation that Storm Knights can achieve with each other. As such, the High Lords and their minions are incapable of using group powers, though the Darkness Devices are capable of producing effects similar to some of the group powers.

Eternity Shard Descriptions

An eternity shard is rated for how many Possibility Points it contains, what the purpose of the shard is (if any), the powers and abilities it has, and what restrictions are placed upon them. Eternity shard write-ups can be found in many *Torg* books and supplements. Each write-up contains information similar to what's given the following.

The Heart of Coyote

Cosm: Core Earth
Possibilities: Many hundreds
Tapping Difficulty: 16

Tapping Rules

A character that wishes to tap a shard generates a *reality* skill total against the tapping difficulty. The success level of the attempt indicates the number of Possibility Points that are liberated from the shard. A *minimal* result frees one Possibility Point, *average* frees two, *good* releases three, and so on.

These possibilities may be used for any actions that are not prohibited by the shard's purpose and restrictions. These possibilities cannot be saved for later use, they must be used immediately upon being freed from the shard on the character's next die roll. In round play this means they must be used within one round or they dissipate. Outside of round play, the possibilities must be used on the character's very next action or they will be lost.

These possibilities are not considered to be personal possibilities of the character and so the limitation of only being able to spend one personal Possibility Point on an action does not apply to possibilities from a shard. In this way they are like *Hero* or *Drama* cards from the Drama Deck. Characters can in fact spend one of their own Possibility Points and use *Hero* or *Drama* cards in addition to the points tapped from the shard if desired.

Shards can be tapped for purposes that are contrary to its purpose and restrictions, but it is much more difficult. The tapping difficulty is increased by +20. If characters are in possession of more than one shard, tapping one shard for possibilities to use in tapping another shard is an action that will increase the tapping difficulty for all involved shards by +20.

Purpose: To awaken spiritual power within humankind, to rekindle the divine fires within the heart of humans.

Powers: The Heart of Coyote is an icon of Core Earth reality; creatures in physical contact with the Heart are in a dominant zone of Core Earth reality.

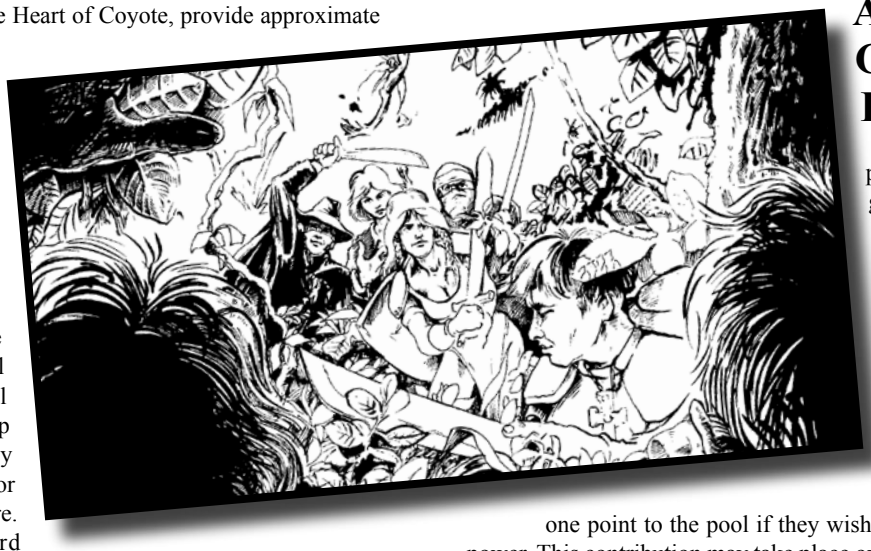
Group Power: *Shift Possibility*

Restrictions: The heart's Possibilities may only be used to augment *Spirit*-based skills, including the performance of miracles.

Description: A turquoise stone with crimson bands swirling through it, shaped like a human heart and about the same size. Coyote was a hero of American Indian legends who helped mankind by bringing (some say stealing) them things from the gods. When Coyote was preparing to leave man on his own, he left a piece of himself behind in case man ever needed his help again.

Cosm is the reality that the shard belongs to. Despite the use of the word "cosm," shards can be associated with fringe realities and even realms.

Possibilities indicate the number of Possibility Points the shard has available for tapping. Some write-ups will specify exact numbers while others, like the Heart of Coyote, provide approximate values.



Not all of a shard's possibility energy is available for tapping, some of the energy must remain behind to give the shard its form. Shards that have been drained of their tappable possibility energy still possess any special powers and group powers, they simply cannot be tapped for possibilities anymore. When a High Lord feeds a shard to a Darkness Device, all of the shard's possibility energy is consumed and the shard ceases to exist.

Tapping difficulty is the difficulty number to tap possibilities from the shard. Tapping difficulties can range from a minimum value of 15 to as high as 40.

Purpose is a brief description of how the shard is meant to inspire, empower or protect the living and unliving of the shard's home reality. Purposes can range from the very basic, such as preserving all life, to the very specific, such as promoting a particular religion or social institution.

Powers indicates any special abilities the shard may possess. Not every shard will have powers.

Group power indicates the knowledge that a shard can impart in the form of a group power. Almost all eternity shards will possess a group power, though there are a few that do not.

Restrictions are usually associated in some way with the purpose of the eternity shard and most often express what kinds of actions the shard's possibilities can be tapped for. Occasionally there will be restrictions on a shard's special powers too.

Description provides a little background on the shard as well as indicating what it looks like. All eternity shards incorporate the colors red and blues in their makeup somehow, for that is how possibility energy appears to normal sight, a swirling matrix of red and blue.

Some shards may appear entirely red and blue, such as the Heart of Coyote, while others may appear to be made out of ordinary materials with only a small amount of red and blue openly visible. A Marketplace eternity shard known as the Tobukai Algorithms, for example, appears as an old, weathered book with a cover of black cloth. Upon closer inspection, fine threads of red and blue can be seen woven in the cloth of the cover and also in the paper of the pages of the book.

Group Powers

A team (at least two) of possibility-rated characters is required to use group powers. A group power is activated by the whole group, and allows that group to perform spectacular feats. When enacting a group power, one character is chosen as the *lead character;* the others are *supporting characters* that strengthen the lead character's chance for success and augment his result. All checks for group powers are made with the *reality* skill.

Acquiring Group Powers

Acquiring a group power is, naturally, a group effort. When an eternity shard with a group power has been found, the group can gain the shard's group power by expending Possibility Points into a "pool." Every possibility-rated character in the group must contribute at least one point to the pool if they wish to be part of the group power. This contribution may take place over the course of several adventures, it doesn't have to be done all at once.

When the pool reaches the *purchase value* of the group power, everyone who contributed to the pool gains the group power. The character (or characters) who contributed the largest amount of possibilities in the pool become the *bearer* (or bearers) of the power. The pool may be "overpaid" in order to have more than one bearer. A group must have at least one bearer to use the group power, and the lead character when a power is used must be a bearer.

Example: Our group of Storm Knights finds a shard with the group power *Stelae Sense*. The purchase cost for the power is 10 Possibility Points. At the end of an adventure, Quin puts three Possibility Points into the pool, Magoth puts in two, and the other four characters each put one point into the pool, bringing the total up to 9. At the end of the next adventure, Marco puts another point into the pool, satisfying the purchase cost of the power. Magoth elects to put one more point into the pool himself, bringing his contribution up to three, so that both he and Quin will be bearers instead of Quin being the only bearer.

Characters whom later join the group can join into the group power by spending at least one Possibility Point. The eternity shard

does not have to be present for this to happen, the new characters can be "sparked" off of the existing members of the group who have the power. Characters who are in the group can also spend additional possibilities to become bearers. Doing so requires the character to bring his overall total of possibilities spent on the power to the same level as the current bearers of the power.

Example: Bob, a new player, joins the game and brings in a new character, a Mathematician from the Nile Empire named Thasiu. By spending one Possibility Point, Thasiu is able to join in on the group power. If he wanted to, he could spend two more to bring his total contribution up to three, which would make him another bearer of the power. But he decides to put that off for now.

Marco, who currently has spent two points on the power, elects to spend one more so that he is now a bearer of the power along with Magoth and Quin.

Using Group Powers

To activate a group power, each member of the group must spend at least one Possibility Point. A group power cannot be used alone; at least two characters must combine in order to use a group power. Each group power has a *use cost*. This is the minimum number of possibilities that must be spent in order to activate a power. If there are fewer characters than the use cost, the characters will be required to spend more than one Possibility Point if they want to use the power.

Example: *Stelae Sense* has a use cost of five Possibility Points. If only Quin, Father Wagner and Thasiu are available when the group wants to use the power, they will only have three of the five points needed if they only spend one each. Father Wagner volunteers to spend an extra two points, bringing the total up to five. The power is now activated.

When using a group power, one of the bearers is chosen to be the lead character with the other characters supporting his efforts. Each supporting character generates a *reality* total against the *coordination difficulty* of the group power. The value of the number of characters who successfully add their efforts (including the lead character) is used as a bonus number modifier for the lead character's skill check.

Example: Three characters (counting the lead character) successfully coordinate on a group power. A measure of 3 has a value of 3. The lead character gets a +3 bonus modifier.

In addition, the synergy involved in using a group power increases the contribution each individual character can make; each success level beyond *minimal* on each character's coordination skill check adds an additional +1 bonus to the lead character's efforts.

Example: Thasiu and Wagner are supporting Quin in the use of *Stelae Sense,* which has a coordination difficulty of 8. Thasiu's *reality* total is an impressive 21, for a *spectacular* result. This is four levels beyond *minimal* so Quin receives an extra +4 bonus from Thasiu. Wagner gets a *good* result on his coordination check, giving Quin another +2 bonus. Including the +3 coordination bonus, Quin has a total bonus of +9 to his use of *Stelae Sense!*

To successfully activate a group power, **at least one supporting character must exceed the coordination difficulty** with his *reality* skill total. If this does not happen, the group power cannot be used because there is only one character (the lead character) involved.

Assuming that at least one supporting character succeeds in coordinating, the lead character then generates a *reality* total, adding in all the appropriate modifiers from her supporters. This is compared to the difficulty number of the power to see if the power is successfully used or not.

The Powers

Below are descriptions of most of the group powers known to exist in the Possibility Wars. Each power description includes the following information:

Purchase is the purchase cost in Possibility Points for the group power.

Use Cost is how many Possibility Points must be spent each time the power is used (minimum of one point per participating member of the group).

Coordination is the coordination difficulty of the power.

Difficulty is the group power's difficulty number.

Range is the group power's range.

Duration is the duration of the group power's effect. A duration of "performance" means the effect lasts as long as the group continues to coordinate their efforts. A duration of "NA" means the effect is permanent.

Effect is a brief summary of the effect of the group powers.

Block

Purchase: 20
Use Cost: 8
Coordination: 12
Difficulty: 12
Range: 4 (6 meters)
Duration: 9 (1 minute)
Effect: wards against the powers of Darkness Devices

This power creates a protective sphere that blocks the abilities of Darkness Devices. When used in the vicinity of stelae, it "deadens" its power and makes it vulnerable to being uprooted. While a stelae is deadened, all it takes to uproot the stelae it to physically destroy it.

The stelae may still defend itself as normal (see Chapter Eight) but the Darkness Device is unable to channel any of its powers or abilities through the stelae while it is deadened.

The limited area of effect and short duration of the *Block* power is further complicated by the fact that the protective sphere is fixed in location, it cannot be moved once created. Minions of the High Lords who are caught within the sphere will be cut off from any aid that the Darkness Device might provide, but the sphere has no physical substance so there is nothing preventing anyone from moving into or out of the sphere's area of effect.

Create Hardpoint

Purchase: 20
Use Cost: 4
Coordination: 8
Difficulty: 8
Range: touch
Duration: variable
Effect: create a hardpoint from an object

This power focuses the possibility energy of the group into an object in order to make that object a hardpoint. The reality of the hardpoint will be that of the lead character.

The lead character's *reality* skill total becomes the maximum weight value that can be converted into a hardpoint. An object must be chosen for conversion into a hardpoint **before** the skill total is generated. If the object proves to have a weight value greater than the lead character's *reality* skill total, the power fails.

The standard duration is one week, a time value of 29. For every point by which the final total exceeds the weight of the object, the time value is increased by one.

Example: A party of Storm Knights wants to create a hardpoint out of an anchored yacht that weighs 90 tons. The value of 90 tons is 25. The lead character's *reality* skill total will have to be at least 25 in order to convert the yacht into a hardpoint.

The Storm Knights succeed with the lead character generating a *reality* total of 27. Since this exceeds the yachts weight value by two, the duration of the hardpoint is increased by two from 29 to 31, which is two and a half weeks.

Create Talisman

Purchase: 20
Use Cost: 4
Coordination: 9
Difficulty: 12
Range: touch

Duration: variable
Effect: create a talisman from an object

This power focuses the possibility energy of the group into an object in order to make that object a talisman. The reality of the talisman will be that of the lead character. Additionally, the object chosen to be the talisman must be from the same reality as the lead character (or at least not be something that is contradictory to the lead character's reality.)

The standard duration is one day, a time value of 25. For every point by which the final total exceeds the weight of the object, the time value is increased by one.

Example: Andre', a Jaz Fighter from the Cyberpapacy, creates a Cyberpapal talisman from a cyberdeck. His *reality* skill total, after figuring in all the bonuses from the rest of his group, is 19. This gives him 7 result points, increasing the duration value from 25 to 32, one month.

Gate

Purchase: 20
Use Cost: 12
Coordination: 10
Difficulty: 15
Range: base reality skill value or special
Duration: performance
Effect: creates a gate for travel between two points

The group uses this power to form a teleportation gate between two points in space. The gate itself is two meters by two meters in area, and appears at a spot two meters or less away from the lead character. The gate is an actual connection between two points in space so characters can see what is on the other side of the gate, and can even interact with people on the other side of the gate as if the intervening space didn't exist.

Each round the gate is open, its point of entrance/exit may be moved up to five meters by the lead character in any direction. Each round in which the gate is open, the lead character must generate another *reality* total against the difficulty number or the gate will collapse.

The **base** *reality* skill value of the lead character, not the *reality* skill total the character generates, becomes the range value for the power. For example, a character with a *reality* skill of 10 will have a range of 100 meters.

The lead character may attempt to extend the range of the gate before it is formed. Every **three** points by which the base difficulty number is increased will increase the range by **two**. In other words, the difficulty may be increased in order to raise the maximum range.

Example: Hachi Mara-Two and her companions are trying to create a gate from Indonesia to California, a considerable trip of some 16,000 kilometers (distance value 37). She has a base *reality* skill of only 13, giving her a base range of only 400 meters.

Mara decides to increase the difficulty by +36, thus increasing the range by +24 (two-thirds of 36.) Now the difficulty is (15+36) 51. She will need to generate a bonus number of (51 - 13) +38 to succeed!

The gate is only accurate to within five meters, but this should be close enough for most transportation. If the *gate* opens in solid ground, the lead character can try to move it five meters in another direction the next round.

There are times, however, when the accuracy of the *gate* must be better than five meters. Every **five** points by which the difficulty is increased will increase the accuracy by a factor of **ten**. In other words, Increasing the difficulty by +5 increases the accuracy to 50 centimeters instead of five meters, increasing the difficulty by +10 increases the accuracy a hundredfold to five centimeters, +15 to the difficulty increases the accuracy a thousandfold to 5 millimeters, and so on.

The *gate* power can be used to travel between realities as well as across physical distances. This is actually somewhat easier than using *gate* to cross large physical distances. Traveling between realities that are physically connected (such as by a maelstrom bridge or a fringe reality with a natural connection to its core reality) increases the difficulty by +10. Realities that are not connected in any way, such as going from one cosm to another, increases the difficulty by +20.

When *gate* is used to travel between realities, the lead character has no control over where the gate will form in the other reality. She may still move the gate in subsequent rounds though.

Herald

Purchase: 20
Use Cost: 2
Coordination: 8
Difficulty: 22
Range: NA
Duration: one round
Effect: allows characters to send messages to another reality

Herald sends an ethereal packet of information from one reality to another. The message is imprinted on some media upon arrival, although the group that sends the message has no control over the media used. The message is attracted to possibility-rated beings and will form itself within 10 kilometers of a possibility-rated character. The herald cannot distinguish between possibility-rated characters who serve a High Lord and those who oppose one.

These "messages in a bottle" are often the only way that possibility-rated characters can contact their counterparts in other cosms. If the cosms are physically connected, such as by a maelstrom bridge, the difficulty is reduced by five.

If the lead character personally knows a character in another reality, she may try to send the message to that specific person, which increases the difficulty by 10. The herald message may contain about as much information as the lead character can speak and/or visualize in about ninety seconds.

Insight

Purchase: 13
Use Cost: 6
Coordination: 12
Difficulty: 12
Range: NA
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Effect: allows the group to share their ideas regarding a situation and gain clues to a solution

This power extends the synergy of the group to allow the thoughts of the involved characters to mingle and join together in an attempt to figure out their current predicament or situation. Utilizing the power requires the participants to spend an hour focusing their thoughts on the problem at hand before activating the power.

If used successfully, each character may ask the gamemaster one unique, specific question relating to the current adventure. It could be the solution to a puzzle, a clue that the group has overlooked, and so on. The gamemaster chooses one of the questions and answers it.

Judgment

Purchase: 15
Use Cost: 8
Coordination: 9
Difficulty: 15
Range: 4 (5 meters)
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Effect: allows lead character to determine the true nature of another

This power allows the lead character to view the" inner being" of another character. This can take the place of an Inclination Check in the Nile Empire, the use of *true sight* in Orrorsh, to sense the level of *Ayslish honor* or *Ayslish corruption* a character has, to see through disguises and illusions or any other similar kind of effect.

Life Thread

Purchase: *15*
Use Cost: 4
Coordination: 12
Difficulty: 8
Range: touch

Duration: one day plus
Effect: keeps a mortally wounded character alive

Life thread sustains mortally wounded characters that cannot be kept alive by any other means. This power may only be used on characters that are mortally wounded, it will have no effect on characters that have a lower wound level nor can it help characters that are dead..

Life thread connects the wounded character to the group by a thin invisible conduit through which possibility energy flows to the wounded character. The energy sustains the character, replacing metabolic energy so that food consumption is greatly reduced (one day of food will last ten days), although liquids still need to be replaced on a normal basis. A character connected by life thread may take no action (except recovery checks) until healed to a wound level less than mortal.

If the wounded character receives further damage while connected to a life thread, any additional wound levels will not kill the character as long as the life thread functions. However, if the characters wound level increases beyond four wounds, the character will immediately die when the life thread expires. Life thread lasts a number of days equal to the result points of the power check.

Mind Expansion

Purchase: 7
Use Cost: 4
Coordination: 5
Difficulty: 8
Range: NA
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Effect: increases one non-physical skill of the lead character

This power grants the lead character a bonus to any one Perception, Mind, Charisma, or Spirit-based skill for the duration of the power. Only one skill may be chosen. If the character does not possess the skill, they are still treated as being unskilled.

The bonus granted by the power is equal to the value of the number of participants who successfully supported the power, not including the lead character.

Send

Purchase: 20
Use Cost: 8
Coordination: 8
Difficulty: 15
Range: 3 (3 meters)
Duration: instantaneous
Effect: sends spirit of dying hero to new reality

Send is a power that the High Lords dread because it prevents them from forever eliminating a dangerous enemy. Just when a High Lord finally has a Storm Knight at the edge of death, a send can fling their soul to another reality, a reality in which a body can be found to house the hero's soul, a reality in which the Storm Knight can once again come to oppose the High Lords.

Send takes only a round to perform, but the soul of the Storm Knight may wander for some time before arriving at her new cosm. Towlyn of House Tancred wandered for 500 years before arriving in the Core Earth cosm to once again face Uthorion, the High Lord of Aysle.

The hero must wait until a suitable host is also dying; when the soul of the host departs, the soul of the Storm Knight may enter. Upon arrival, the hero begins to regain the skills and abilities she formerly possessed. The hero automatically regains the reality skill, and her attributes are those of the old body rather than the body of the host. Each week the hero makes a reality check against a difficulty of 18, with a bonus modifier equal to the value of the number of weeks she has been in the new body; a minimal success regains no skills. An average success regains one skill, a good success regains two skills, superior success regains three skills, and spectacular success regains four skills. All skills return with their full adds.

Example: Towlyn of Tancred was sent from her home cosm of Aysle to Core Earth, where she inhabited the body of Wendy Miller after Wendy died in an accident. Tolwyn's attributes and reality skill are immediately as they were in her original body.

Each week she generates a reality skill total to see if she regains any of her old skills.

At the end of the fifth week she generates a reality skill total against a difficulty of 18, with a +3 bonus number modifier for the number of weeks she has been in her new body. She gets a total of 25, for a superior success; three of her skills return at full adds.

Send can sometimes affect the memories of the hero sent, giving them partial amnesia. Their memories usually return after half of their skills are regained.

Shift Possibility

Purchase: 20
Use Cost: 2
Coordination:10
Difficulty: 15
Range: 50 meters
Duration: one round
Effect: allows group characters to shift possibility energy to another character that is attempting task

This group power allows participants to shift all of their possibility energy to a character in exchange for the energy that character has generated. One of the participants in the power (other than the lead character) may attempt another task while gaining the benefits of this power.

In game terms, this means that all of the power participants (including the character performing the other task) roll a die as though they were attempting the task. The player of the character who is actually attempting the task may choose which of the rolls her character uses to generate her skill total. Every participant gets to reroll on 10's and 20's regardless of the task being performed.

Example: Quin is trying to repair the engine of the Blue Meanie so that he can fly himself, Magoth, Father Wagner and Terrill out of the path of a flow of lava from an erupting volcano. Magoth will be the lead character since Quin needs to be free to make the repair attempt. The other three make their coordination rolls and are all successful. Magoth then rolls against the difficulty of the power and is successful.

Now all four of the characters roll a die for Quin's skill total and Paul gets to choose which roll to use to generate Quin's skill total. Paul rolls a 15, Roger rolls a 4, Alan rolls an 8 and Tina rolls a 20. Rolling again, Tina gets a 13, giving her a final roll of 33. Paul chooses to use Tina's roll, which gives Quin a +10 bonus number for his skill check.

The power may be kept up during additional rounds by spending the use cost again, without having to roll against the power's difficulty each round, as long as the lead character is still able to focus on the power and does not have to take any other action.

Stelae Sense

Purchase:10
Use Cost: 5
Coordination: 8
Difficulty: 20
Range: 20 (10 kilometers)
Duration: instantaneous
Effect: allows characters to narrow down the location of stelae

This power lets characters sense the possibility energy flowing through the stelae that make up the realms of the Possibility Raiders. The accuracy of Stelae Sense depends on the quality of the result. Successful use provides a vision of a location; the stelae will always be within a certain distance of that location.

The lead character will be able to find the location in the vision with a successful tracking or Perception check against a difficulty number of 8. Once the group has reached the location they will know the approximate distance to the stelae but not the direction or even what to look for if the stelae is buried, concealed or disguised as something else.

STELAE DISTANCE CHART

Success	Stelae is within
Minimal	1000 meters
Average	400 meters
Good	60 meters
Superior	6 meters
Spectacular	1 meter

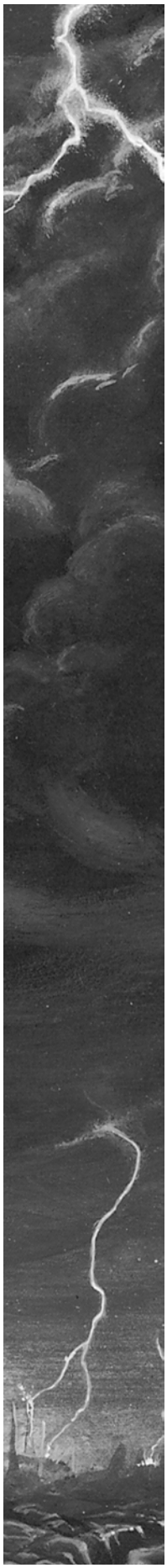
Transcendence

Purchase: 20
Use Cost: 8
Coordination: 10
Difficulty: 22
Range: variable
Duration: permanent
Effect: gives the reality skill to a worthy Ord

This rare power allows possibility-rated characters to create more possibility-rated characters without requiring a Moment of Crisis. The use of the power infuses a worthy ord with the possibility energy required to transcend and become possibility-rated. The power will not work on just any ord, it will only affect those who have some undefinable quality that makes the person "ready" to become possibility-rated. If the power is used on an ord unsuitable for transcendence, it automatically fails but the group participants get back the possibilities they used to pay the use cost.

Successful use of the power gives the newly transcended character the reality skill at one add and a starting number of Possibility Points equal to half the amount of points the group spent to use the power, rounded up (so a minimum of four Possibility Points since it requires eight Possibility Points to use the power.)

If the character's attributes total less than 66 points, the infusion of possibility energy maximizes their potential and the character will gain however many attribute points are necessary to bring the character up to 66 attribute points. These points may be allocated as desired but cosm attribute limits must be respected. See Chapter Two for more information on assigning a character attribute point values.



Chapter 8: The Possibility Wars and the High Lords

"The possibilities of Earth are unlike any riches I have ever known. They shall doubtless be exploited by the Everlaw to rid Earth of our presence with a rapidity of cycle never before seen. The resulting energy shall give us more power faster than any prize we have ever taken."

—a portion of the Gaunt Man's message to the other High Lords.

Cosm Travel

Sooner or later most cosms can develop the knowledge and necessary abilities to discover the existence of other cosms. Depending on the axioms, this discovery may be technological in nature or it may arise from magical, spiritual or even psionic means. Regardless of how it's done, discovery almost always leads to a desire to travel to these other cosms. It may be a desire to explore, to interact with the beings of other realities, or it may be from a desire to conquer.

Travel between cosms is only possible through the manipulation of possibility energy and the fabric of reality itself, which requires one of two things. It requires either a very high (in the upper 20's or higher) axiom level or something which operates outside the normal boundaries of reality, such as an eternity shard (which can bestow the *Gate group power*) or a Darkness Device.

Maelstrom Bridges

Regardless of the method used, bridging the gap between two cosms involves manipulating an extra-cosmal energy force to create what is known as a *maelstrom bridge*. The natural appearance of a maelstrom bridge is a beam of light, though they can be made to take on any appearance. Aysle's bridges appear to be made of stone, the Living Land's appears to be made of plants, Tharkold's bridges are metallic, and the Gaunt Man has his bridges appear to be constructed out of writhing, tortured bodies mortared in blood.

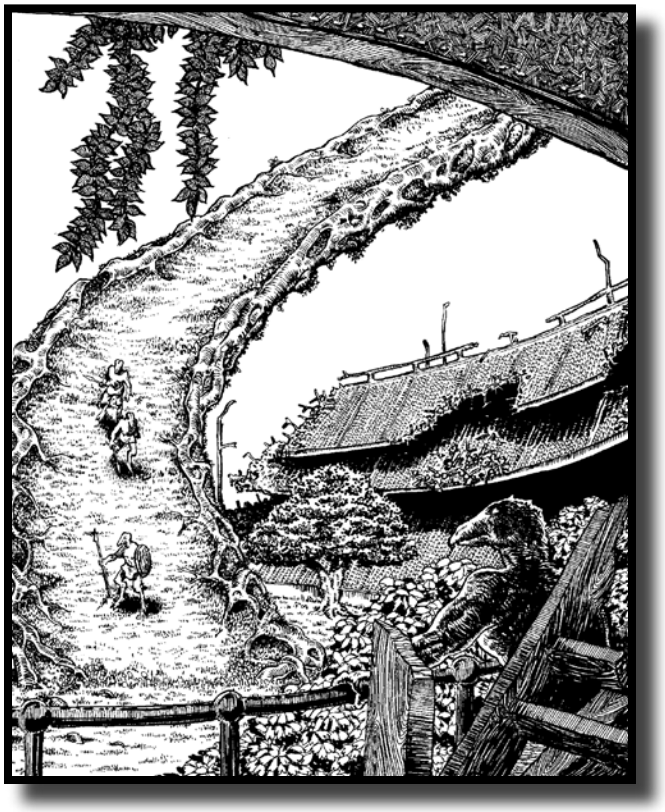
A maelstrom bridge physically links two cosms together, enabling beings from one cosm to simply walk (fly, swim, ride, whatever) from one reality to another. There is a serious problem when this happens though. By connecting two realities together, a maelstrom bridge allows the two realities to come into contact with each other, something the Everlaw of One (see Chapter Seven) doesn't want and it reacts violently to the situation.

The dropping of a maelstrom bridge into a cosm unleashes a violent flux of possibility energy, eventually causing powerful reality storms to spring into existence as the Everlaw of One attempts to reconcile the existence of two separate realities in one place (the point the maelstrom bridge touches down.) The bridge is usually destroyed by these reality storms, along with much of the territory around it.

In most cases when a bridge collapses, a tremendous backlash surge of possibility energy causes violent (but short-lived) reality storms to erupt at the originating point of the bridge, destroying much of the surroundings there as well. When Tharkold's attempt to invade Core Earth was repulsed at the beginning of the Possibility Wars, Core Earth's tremendous amount of possibility energy created a backlash at the bridgehead in the Tharkold cosm powerful enough that its reality storms briefly ravaged their entire planet!

Dimthreads

Two ways were found to avoid this disastrous result of cosm travel. The first was to create very small or very weak maelstrom bridges and to only maintain their existence for a short period of time, usually less than one hour. This creates a small enough incursion into the target cosm that the backlash is minimized and safe travel becomes possible. These mini-bridges are called *dimthreads*. The *Gate* group power is also a form of dimthread, as are the *stargates* used by the Akashans to travel from the Star Sphere to Core Earth.



While maelstrom bridges may be as much as a kilometer wide, dimthreads are usually only wide enough for one or two individuals at a time and have a maximum width of one hundred meters (any larger and it's considered a maelstrom bridge.)

Maelstrom bridges are pure zones of the reality that launched the bridge. Dimthreads may be "powered down" from a pure zone to further reduce the backlash caused at their destination point. Most dimthreads are treated like a dominant zone of the reality that launched it while the weakest type of dimthreads carry no reality of their own, changing to match the local reality of any place it physically passes through.

While dimthreads allow for safe travel between cosms, they are inefficient for regular travel back and forth between the cosms and often have to be kept so small and short-lived that only a few people can pass through at a time. While maelstrom bridges require more possibility energy to initially create, in the long run they require less energy to maintain than would be spent constantly creating new dimthreads.

The second method found to avert the disastrous backlash against maelstrom bridges came from the Darkness Devices: stelae.

Stelae

Stelae are arcane artifacts created by a Darkness Device. The High Lord or the High Lord's minions prepare ritualized objects and then the Darkness Device energizes them. Each Darkness Device

has its own individualized stelae, usually something indicative of the reality. Whatever the physical manifestation, the stelae are used for essentially the same purposes by every High Lord.

Stelae have three primary functions. The first and most significant use is to allow for the creation of realms around a maelstrom bridge. A network of connected stelae create a protective boundary around a maelstrom bridge which prevents the full possibility energy of the invaded cosm from reacting to the invading reality, preserving the bridge and allowing the invading reality to dominate the area within the realm.

The second use of stelae is to tap into and drain possibility energy from the invaded reality and its inhabitants. Some of the energy unleashed by the Everlaw of One in reaction to the presence of the invading reality (the same energy that the stelae prevent from destroying the realm) is absorbed, but most of the energy the High Lords drain from a cosm comes from the inhabitants of the invaded reality who are caught within the invading realm.

The third use of stelae is as a transmission point for some of the powers of a Darkness Device. These powers can be used to aid the Device's High Lord or other beings allied with the High Lord if they are within a certain distance of the stelae.

The maximum range to which stelae can transmit or absorb energy is 500 kilometers (about 300 miles). In order to form a protective network of stelae around a maelstrom bridge, each stelae in the network must be within 500 kilometers of at least two other stelae, forming a triangle (often called a *stelae zone*.) High Lords bent on efficient conquest try to extend their holdings by placing stelae in triangular patterns of the maximum size possible but terrain and strategic considerations usually force them to plant their stelae in less efficient arrangements.

Stargates

Stargates are an unusual type of dimthread found in the Star Sphere, home cosm of the Space Gods. The Akashans do not know if the stargates are natural phenomena in their cosm or if they were artificially constructed eons ago by their progenitors, the Mohani. If they are artificial constructs, they are a form of reality technology far beyond what the Akashans themselves are capable of creating.

Most of the stargates in the Star Sphere connect to points within the Star Sphere, allowing for extremely rapid space travel between distant solar systems. At least one stargate though was found to connect to another cosm, the Core Earth cosm. Its terminus in the Core Earth cosm is on the fringes of Earth's solar system, beyond the orbit of Pluto.

Stargates can only be detected and navigated psionically, which has so far served to conceal the Core Earth stargate's existence from any of the High Lords who have tried to learn how the Akashans reached Core Earth. The Akashans worry though that the reality-bending powers available to the High Lords might allow them to eventually detect the stargate. They have stopped all communication and traffic between their home cosm and Core Earth to minimize the chances of a High Lord learning their secret and being able to follow the stargate back to the Star Sphere.

While the stargate carries the reality of the Star Sphere throughout its length, there is no possibility energy backlash evident at its Core Earth terminus as there normally would be with a maelstrom bridge or a long-duration dimthread. The unique nature of the Space Gods' reality is believed to be responsible; a stable mixed zone of Core Earth/Space Gods reality exists around the terminus, similar to that created by one of their reality trees.

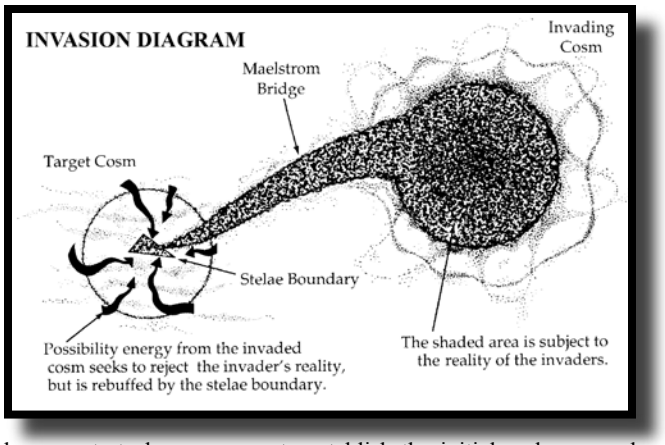
Invading Outer Space

In cosms like Terra or the Star Sphere where more than one inhabited planet exists, it would be impractical for a High Lord to try and extend his realm to another planet across space. Not only are the distances literally astronomical, requiring thousands of stelae just to bridge the distance from a planet to a moon, but there are no living beings to be found in the intervening distances, meaning that there would be very little in the way of possibility energy for the stelae zone to drain.

Instead, the only real way a High Lord could extend his realm from one planet to another would be to drop a new maelstrom bridge onto the second planet and create a second realm there, ignoring the empty physical space in between the two planets. By skipping from one inhabited planet to the next in this fashion, a High Lord could conceivably conquer an entire multi-planet cosm without the necessity of space travel.

Stelae are normally laid out in a two-dimensional grid with the boundary of the realm extending to a depth of 150 meters and an altitude of 15 kilometers. High Lords can extend the depth or height of their realms to a maximum of 250 kilometers, half the maximum range of a stelae's transmission ability. Nippon Tech and the Cyberpapacy have extended the height of their realms to 250 kilometers and Orrorsh has extended the depth of its realm to one kilometer. The other realms have not changed their values.

If for some reason a High Lord wished to extend the height or depth of his realm beyond 250 kilometers, he would have to create a three-dimensional stelae network of tetrahedral stelae regions (a four-sided die is an example of a tetrahedral shape) where each stelae connects to at least three other stelae instead of two.



Producing Stelae

Stelae are usually difficult to produce, and the process varies with each cosm. The procedure typically involves the creation or manufacturing of a specific object, often accompanied by much ritual and ceremony. Once a stelae has been prepared, it may be stored until needed or taken to the Darkness Device to be energized.

Most High Lords are hard-pressed to manufacture eighteen stelae a month, with six being the more usual pace. Prior to an invasion a High Lord will usually ramp up production until he has twice what he expects to be necessary to establish the initial realm around the maelstrom bridge. Only a portion of these stelae are energized though, with the excess being kept in reserve for emergencies and later expansion of the realm.

Energizing stelae is a different matter from producing them. It requires a significant expenditure of possibility energy by the Darkness Device and so the rate at which stelae are energized depends primarily on how rapidly the Darkness Device acquires

Stelae of the Possibility Wars

Each of the invading realms in the Possibility Wars has its own distinctive kind of stelae. In some of the realms, the stelae bear additional powers and abilities beyond those shared by all stelae. Additional information about the stelae of a particular realm can be found the appropriate sourcebook.

Aysle - Ayslish coins blessed by the corrupt god Corba'al are used as stelae. At sunrise and sunset the crossed bones symbol of Corba'al briefly appears on the face of the stelae coins. Ayslish stelae can be energized at twice the normal rate. Ayslish stelae are almost always buried.

Cyberpapacy - Ritually prepared altars are used as stelae. The process of preparing the altars is relatively simple and the Cyberpapacy can produce (but not energize) stelae twice as fast as most other realms. The Cyberpapacy has placed large numbers of prepared but unenergized altars throughout the Cyberpapacy, usually in Cyberpapal installations and churches. The Darkness Device can energize these altars at any time (provided it has the necessary energy) regardless of location, giving the Cyberpapacy stelae network a high degree of redundancy and security.

Living Land - Corpses, usually of sacrificial victims, are ritually prepared , wrapped in leaves and vines and then preserved against the decaying effects of the Living Land miracle with a special miracle, *make stelae*. Living Land stelae are always buried.

Nile Empire - Idols of the ancient Egyptian gods sitting atop stone obelisks are used as stelae. The Nile Empire conceals its stelae by using similar obelisks for all manner of things, ranging from street signs to commemorative statues to highway distance markers.

Nippon Tech - Nippon Tech changes the form of its stelae for each invasion, using something that will appear native and unobtrusive in the reality to be invaded. Specially prepared computer circuit boards are used as stelae in the Core Earth invasion. They are most commonly concealed within ATM machines in urban areas and telephone switchbox relays in rural areas. They are fully functional circuit boards of the same design used in both devices so no one would notice anything out of place if they opened up either type of machine.

Orrorsh - Orrorsh has no standardized stelae object; almost anything can be ritually prepared as stelae. The most common types of object used are small marble statues of the Gaunt Man, a member of the Hellion Court or one of the Nightmares. Some of the more unusual objects used as stelae include a deck of playing cards, a tombstone and the jellified remains of a Victorian soldier! Orrorsh's stelae are furthermore unique in that they become part of the Darkness Device when they are energized. Attacking Orrorshan stelae is almost like attacking the Darkness Device itself. Orrorshan stelae are sometimes buried.

Tharkold - Tharkold has used two types of stelae during the Possibility Wars. Under the High Lord Kranod, Tharkold's stelae were silver metallic cylinders with black circuitry patterns visible just beneath the surface. Under the High Lord Jezrael, Tharkold uses pyramidal objects known as Sierpinski Gaskets, a three-dimensional fractal shape. Also under Jezrael, Tharkold's stelae were designed with a defensive ability to teleport a short distance away should they become threatened and remain connected to the stelae network. However, the occultech device that made this possible, the Apocularum, was destroyed by Storm Knights shortly after Tharkold invaded Los Angeles and the stelae lost their teleportative ability. Kranod's stelae were buried. Jezrael initially did not have her stelae buried, figuring the Apocularum was enough protection.

possibility energy (or how willing it is to deplete its reserves of possibility energy.) Each new stelae zone created by an invading realm gives the Darkness Device enough energy to energize more stelae, allowing expansion of the realm to continue.

No single stelae may connect to more than six other stelae. A stelae placed so that it would try to connect to seven or more others would simply not connect to the seventh stelae. Within that limit, when activated a stelae always attempt to connect to all other stelae within 500 kilometers, as long as that connection would not cross other connections.

Normally a stelae will only link to stelae from its own reality but during the Possibility Wars the High Lords learned that it was possible for two Darkness Devices to cooperate and have the stelae of one Darkness Device link to the stelae of the other Darkness Device. The stelae zone created by this cooperative venture is always a mixed zone. By manipulating the flow of possibility energy into this mixed zone, the Darkness Devices could guarantee that the mixed zone would be made up of their two realities (see Chapter Seven for more information on mixed zones.)

Mixed zones of these type were created three times during the Possibility Wars. Nippon Tech and the Living Land cooperated to create mixed Nippon Tech/Living Land zones in the western United States, Tharkold and Nippon Tech briefly cooperated to create mixed Tharkold/Nippon Tech zones in the southwestern United States and Tharkold and the Nile Empire cooperated to create a single mixed zone around Berlin, Germany.

Planting Stelae

Placing an energized stelae into the stelae network is called "planting" the stelae. Prior to an invasion, a High Lord will use dimthreads to drop minions into the reality to be invaded so that they can plant the stelae that will form the initial boundaries of the realm when the maelstrom bridge drops. Most stelae are buried to avoid detection, though some of the realms conceal their stelae in plain sight by disguising them as something ordinary or by placing them in protected locations.

After invading, the boundaries of the realm are expanded by having minions plant new stelae outside the realm within 500 kilometers of two stelae that make up the realm's boundary. The realm will then immediately expand into the new stelae zone created by the newly planted stelae.

The process of planting a stelae usually involves lengthy rituals and ceremony and can take anywhere between fifteen minutes and two hours to complete. Once the stelae has been planted it immediately links itself to other stelae within range. Prior to being planted an energized stelae is just an ordinary object and can be destroyed by conventional means. Once planted though, the possibility energy flowing through a stelae effectively makes it indestructible as well as immobile. Moving or destroying a planted stelae can only be accomplished if it is first separated or isolated from the stelae network. What Storm Knights must do to *uproot* a planted stelae is described later in this chapter.

Reality Trees

The Space Gods do not use stelae to create their reality on Core Earth, instead they use a Tech 30 biotech device called a reality tree to create a mixed zone of their reality. More information on reality trees can be found in Chapter Seven under "Space Gods Mixed Zones" and in the *Space Gods sourcebook*.

The Mechanics of Invasion

When the Possibility Raiders attack a cosm, their reality floods down the maelstrom bridge into the target cosm, filling the land until it reaches the boundaries defined by the stelae placed prior to the invasion. This flooding of a reality into an area is commonly referred to as an *axiom wash* (though it is the whole reality that fills the area, not just its axioms.) If a stelae zone collapses, there will be an axiom wash of the native reality as it rushes back in to fill the void left by the collapsed area of the realm. Axiom washes can appear as a fast-moving wall of reality storms, sweeping across the territory with blinding speed, or it may not be visible at all.

During an axiom wash, the reality flooding into the area causes a significant amount of transformations to occur, even to objects and people that are not contradictory to the reality of the axiom wash. For example, when the Cyberpapacy realm was created, much of France's Tech 23 telecommunications network was transformed upwards into a Tech 26 telecommunications grid, forming the GodNet.

In general, thirteen percent of unliving objects will undergo an immediate transformation during an axiom wash while five percent of the living creatures caught in the wash will be immediately transformed. Once the wash has passed, the normal percentages and odds of transformation apply (see "Transformation" in Chapter Seven.)

Axiom washes tend to disrupt the existence of hardpoints. Generally, all but the most powerful hardpoints are destroyed by the axiom wash within the stelae zone in which a maelstrom bridge lands. Any that do survive have their power greatly diminished. If the hardpoint has any spiritual value added into its radius value, the spiritual value is eliminated from the radius value by the axiom wash.

The stelae zones immediately bordering the one containing the maelstrom bridge have a smaller chance of eliminating hardpoints and any that survive retain their full potency. By the time the axiom wash gets two stelae zones away from the maelstrom bridge, it has weakened enough that even the smallest hardpoint can withstand the assault unscathed.

After the axiom wash reaches the boundaries of the realm, the invaded reality attempts to repel the invader with its own surge of possibility energy, swinging the pendulum back in the other direction in an attempt to reconnect with its inhabitants. Without the protection offered by the stelae network, this process would continue back and forth, reality storms surging first in one direction and then another, with the invaded reality slowly gaining the upper hand because it can bring more possibility energy to bear on the invading reality (the invading reality being limited by the amount that can be brought down by the maelstrom bridge from the home cosm.)

Eventually the invaded reality would push the invading reality back to the maelstrom bridge. Finally, the surge from the invaded reality would destroy the maelstrom bridge and send a backlash of possibility energy back up the bridge to the invader's home cosm, unleashing brief but destructive reality storms at their end of the bridge.

However, the stelae boundary around a realm prevents this from happening; it acts as an unbreachable barrier that the surges from the invaded reality pound against without success. In response to this situation, the invading reality pours more possibility energy into its attempts to repel the invading reality.

Which is just what the High Lords want to happen. The stelae boundary serves to suspend the pendulum in one direction, with the possibility energy of the invaded reality surging against the boundary of the invading realm. Stelae are able to absorb a portion of this energy and channel it through the network back to the Darkness Device.

As this energy is siphoned off, the invaded reality sends even more energy against the invading realm to replace its losses, speeding up the draining process. Combined with their second method of draining possibility energy, the invaders can drain off most of the reality's possibility energy while only spending a small portion of their own in return.

Conquering Territory

Before a High Lord can capture an area, two conditions must be met. The reality of the High Lord's cosm must be successfully introduced within the stelae boundaries, usually not a problem, and living beings from the High Lord's reality, or living beings who are prepared to accept that reality, must be present. For a stelae area of average size (side lengths between 300 and 500 kilometers), approximately 25,000 beings must be from the invading reality or must be natives ready to accept the new reality. These supporters do not have to constitute a majority of the population within the stelae zone, meaning that even densely populated regions can be conquered by only tens of thousands of believers instead of requiring millions.

High Lords who favor the direct approach will send armies or vast migrations of people from their reality into the bounded area as soon as the stelae are planted, usually sending them in right behind the axiom wash. Other High Lords are more devious, sending agents into the desired territory ahead of time to recruit natives and generate belief and support for the invading reality. When new stelae are activated, the believers already present in the territory provide most of the support for the stelae zone, giving the High Lord the luxury of not having to immediately flood the territory with people from his realm.

If a stelae zone lacks sufficient believers to support the invading reality, it will be weak. Newly created stelae zones will remain mixed zones instead of quickly stabilizing into dominant or pure zones. Already existing stelae zones that lose enough of their supporting population to drop below the critical level will also weaken; pure zones will become dominant zones, dominant zones will become mixed zones and mixed zones will flip to dominant zones of the invaded reality! If this condition lasts for extended periods of time, it is possible for a pure zone of the invader's reality to eventually become a dominant zone of the invaded reality.

Storm Knights can attempt to take advantage of this by trying to sway the population of a stelae zone against the reality of the High Lord. If support can be reduced below the minimum threshold, the stelae zone will weaken and reduce the High Lord's hold on that area. (The trick is that turning people against the High Lord isn't enough, they must reject the reality too.) Of course the High Lords will be attempting the opposite, increasing the number of people in a stelae zone who believe in and support the reality, in order to secure their position.

Draining Possibility Energy

While the High Lords are able to drain some of a reality's possibility energy from the surges against the stelae boundary of their realms, they get most of the energy from a second method. Living beings whose reality differs from the High Lord's reality are the catalysts for this method of draining energy from a reality.

When the living and unliving interact, the Everlaw of Two causes possibility energy to flow between them (see Chapter Seven.) Stelae can interrupt this cycle when a living being from a **different** reality is inside the boundaries of a realm. Energy is able to leave the living being and connect to the unliving reality but the stelae intercept the return flow and the energy is channeled to the Darkness Device.

This happens even when the being is interacting with the unliving reality of the foreign realm; while creating a contradiction does briefly connect the being's living reality to the local unliving reality (see Chapter Seven) , possibility energy only flows in one direction through this temporary link. The Everlaw of Two still draws the return flow from the being's home reality, which is what the stelae intercept.

A pure zone drains possibility energy from beings faster than a dominant zone, producing the most short-term benefit. Dominant areas drain more slowly but sustain the reaction for a longer period of time because they transform beings slower than pure zones. As a rule of thumb, pure areas drain three units of possibility energy for every two units that can be extracted from a dominant area, but a dominant area provides energy five times longer than a pure.

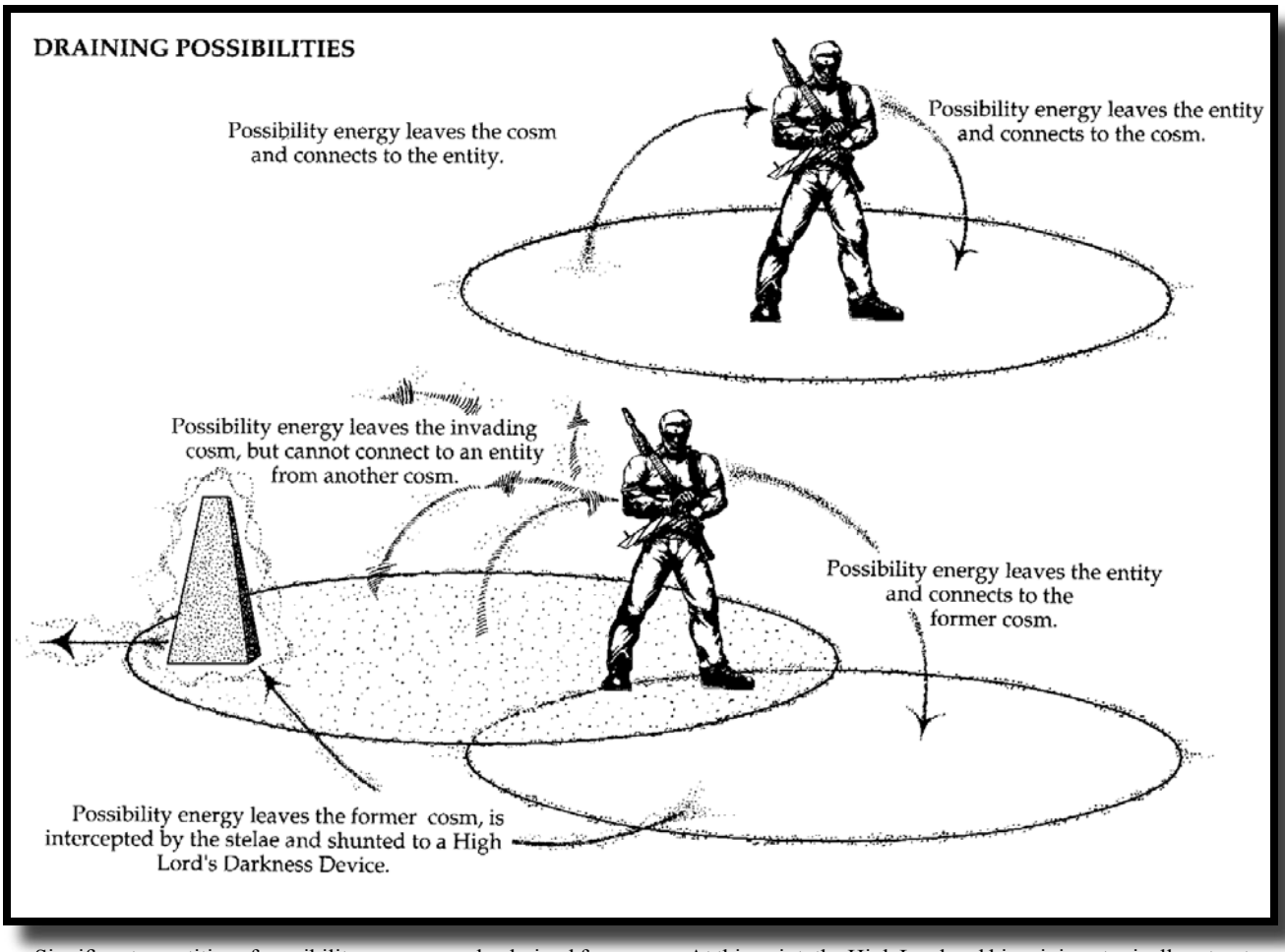
Mixed areas are useless to High Lords in terms of gaining possibility energy, as they are too chaotic for any energy to be drained from them. They can also be dangerous spawning grounds for Storm Knights due to the preponderance of reality storms that often sweep across mixed zones. While the High Lords are usually willing to wait for reality storms to tip the balance of a mixed zone, they occasionally try to hasten the demise of a particularly troublesome mixed area by either dumping possibility energy into the zone or by sending more believers into the area.

The Theorem of Futile Reconnection

Whenever a living being creates contradictions in a foreign reality, he is temporarily reconnected to the unliving portion of his reality when the Everlaw of Two attempts to send possibility energy back to him. The Everlaw of Two also sends a separate surge of possibility energy through him, attempting to reconnect to other beings in danger of transforming.

This energy is canceled by a corresponding surge from the Everlaw of One, which doesn't want those other beings creating further contradictions. As the Everlaw of One cancels out this second surge from the being's native reality, it adds to the possibility energy of the invading cosm, which builds up until it again surges across the realm as in the initial invasion. This time the axiom wash is slightly dissipated and is weaker, but it draws a corresponding counter-surge from the invaded reality, increasing the amount of energy it throws against the stelae boundary of the realm, accelerating its loss of possibility energy.

This makes the presence of Storm Knights (who routinely reconnect to their native reality) actually useful to the invaders, at least in the short run, as every surge against the stelae boundary provides the High Lords with additional energy.



Significant quantities of possibility energy may be drained from a reality this way as long as at least ten percent of the population in a stelae zone remains untransformed. Below that threshold, the cost of maintaining the stelae zone and extracting the possibility energy is greater than the energy obtained. Zones that have fallen below this threshold are sometimes called *exhausted zones* since they no longer provide the High Lord with any possibility energy.

The High Lords must then strike a balance between sufficient numbers of supporters to confirm the invading reality and sufficient numbers of untransformed (and likely unsupportive) beings to provide the energy which is the ultimate goal of the invasion. One possible strategy to use against the High Lords would be to deny them the possibility energy they seek by reducing the number of untransformed beings in their stelae zones.

The United States' Delphi Council took this strategy to drastic extremes during the first two years of their war against the Living Land. When it proved to be too difficult to convince Americans living within the Living Land to leave, the Council dispatched "sweeper crews" into the Living Land with instructions to kill anyone who refused to leave.

Destroying A Reality

When an invasion succeeds in conquering an entire reality, the High Lord can still drain possibility energy from the unliving essence of a reality as long as he has stelae zones in which more than ten percent of the population is untransformed. Once too much of the population drops below this threshold it is no longer cost-effective for the High Lord to remain there since maintaining the stelae network requires more energy than can be drained from the reality.

At this point, the High Lord and his minions typically retreat up the maelstrom bridges to their home reality and then deactivate the bridges. When the bridges are removed, the realm collapses. What is left of the native reality immediately rushes in to fill the void in an axiom wash of tremendous proportions. In most cases, the axiom wash is so violent that it destroys all remaining life in the reality.

Sometimes the reality storms are so powerful that the unliving is also destroyed, reducing the entire reality to a barren, lifeless landscape. Some High Lords have claimed to cause destruction on a large enough scale that planets break apart when they leave a conquered reality, that there isn't even a landscape left behind when they're done. (The Gaunt Man claims in the novel *Interview With Evil* that this was the fate of Kantovia, his first conquest, but later events in the Possibility Wars proved him wrong.)

Darkness Devices

Darkness Devices are instruments of destruction, born of an immensely powerful being known as The Nameless One who exists outside of the cosmverse in a location known only as The Place. Said to be imprisoned or barricaded in The Place by Apeiros, The Nameless One seeks to destroy Apeiros' creation, the cosmverse, but it is unable to leave The Place.

While an entity of pure destruction, its conflicts with Apeiros did teach The Nameless One enough about existence to allow it one act of creation, the Darkness Devices. While The Nameless One could not leave The Place, the Devices could.

Flung blindly into the cosmverse, the Devices attempt to travel to inhabited cosms, to be found and used by ambitious beings. Created from a need to destroy, filled with a hunger for destruction, the

Darkness Devices look for those who can magnify the destruction within them. If the destruction wrought by the Device and its user, its High Lord, is great enough, legends say that The Nameless One will be drawn to the destruction, through the barriers keeping it in The Place, releasing it into the cosmverse.

In fact this has already happened once; early in the Possibility Wars, The Nameless One was successfully brought into the Core Earth reality. However, Apeiros had anticipated this and events were put into motion which lead to the creation of the Infiniverse, an infinite replication of the one previously existing cosmverse (see "The Infiniverse" in Chapter Seven.) Its power diluted by being spread across an infinite number of cosmverses, The Nameless One was forced to retreat back to The Place. While the totality of existence is now safe, individual cosmverses are still threatened with the possibility of The Nameless One being able to once again escape and bring destruction to all realities within that cosmverse.

The primary ability of a Darkness Device is to absorb and store possibility energy stolen from other sources. Once understood, a Darkness Device can confer great power upon the user, who must be possibility-rated. Darkness Devices are able to sense intent or perhaps even read the thoughts of those who would use it.

Those individuals whose destructive urges could prove useful to the Device are often drawn to the Device in some manner. A few Darkness Devices have shown the ability to actively seek out and contact individuals but most are forced to manipulate lesser beings into creating stories and myths about "great devices of evil power," hoping to lure suitable candidates to them. If a Device finds several suitable candidates, it may arrange events to bring the candidates into conflict with each other, with the final victor being the one who gets the prize, the Device itself.

Before a Darkness Device can use most of its special powers, it must be *attuned* to a living being. This being becomes the Device's High Lord and it is through the High Lord that the Device is able to utilize most of its special powers. Only one being may be attuned to a Darkness Device at one time, and attunement is to the physical body of the being, not to its mind.

Once attuned, the Device may use its special powers through the High Lord as well as communicate with him and transfer possibility energy to him across great distances. There is only one way this connection can be interfered with and that is if the High Lord is caught in a reality storm that becomes a maelstrom. The severity of the maelstrom, with its constantly shifting swirls of possibility energy, is sufficient to disrupt the connection. This disruption is only temporary, if the High Lord is not transformed as a result of the maelstrom the connection is reestablished the instant the High Lord emerges from the storm.

Normally, invoking one of its special powers is required to move a Darkness Device, though some Devices are less restricted than others in how they may be moved. Unless under the effect of the power, a Device is immobile; no known force is capable of moving one.

Darkness Devices are also the most indestructible objects ever discovered; no known physical force has ever harmed a Darkness Device enough to affect its operation. A Darkness Device can easily survive a cataclysm that would annihilate a sun! They are also exceptionally difficult to harm with mental or spiritual force, though not to the same levels as against physical forces.

Restrictions on Skill Use

A Darkness Device can only use its skills in self-defense and only against targets within 100 meters of the Device; this is one of the reasons most Darkness Devices can lie hidden and undisturbed for millennia before acquiring a High Lord. Until a living being comes within range, these Devices can do nothing to further their mission except wait.

Uthorion's Story

The first High Lord of Aysle, Uthorion, had a number of problems dealing with the fact that Darkness Devices attune to bodies instead of minds. When he acquired his Darkness Device, Drakacanus, Uthorion was a servant of the Gaunt Man and had Orrorshan reality. The Gaunt Man made it clear to Uthorion that he would not tolerate a second Orrorshan High Lord and Darkness Device. Before he could become a High Lord, Uthorion needed to change his reality.

But transformation has its risks; he could lose skills, memories, even become someone who is no longer suitable High Lord material. Uthorion came up with a plan, a way of skirting the rules and changing his reality without risking his inherent nature. Using powerful magic spells, he could strip a person's spirit from their body and place his own spirit into their now empty form. The body would retain its native reality, effectively making Uthorion a native of that reality without risking a reality storm.

Uthorion carried out his plan in Aysle, sundering the spirit of that cosm's leader, Lady Pella Ardinay, and taking possession of her body. Drakacanus attuned itself to Uthorion/Ardinay and finally had itself a High Lord. On top of that, everyone in Aysle thought Uthorion was still Lady Ardinay and he didn't even have to conquer the cosm to gain control over it.

However, five hundred years later the down side of this arrangement came back to haunt Uthorion. Due to the actions of a Storm Knight, Towlyn of House Tancred, Pella Ardinay's spirit was restored to her body during the early days of the Possibility Wars on Core Earth. Uthorion's spirit was forced out, ultimately taking up residence in another body, an Ayslish viking chieftain named Thorfinn Bjanni.

But Drakacanus remained attuned to Ardinay's body, even though she was unwilling to act as the Device's High Lord. Because Ardinay would not cooperate, Drakacanus was unable to use most of its special abilities and the Ayslish invasion ground to a halt. With the Device physically in Ardinay's possession, Uthorion/Bjanni had to fight his way through Ardinay's forces to reach Drakacanus before it could re-attune itself to Bjanni's body.

Ultimately Drakacanus tired of waiting on Uthorion/Bjanni, who was unable to take it away from Ardinay, and it sought out a replacement High Lord, someone who could prove that they were more suitable than the now disgraced Uthorion. After several months, a mysterious being known only as the Warrior of the Dark succeeded in liberating Drakacanus and became Aysle's new High Lord.

Typical Darkness Device

Dexterity 0
Strength 0
Toughness 200
Perception 20
find 25, trick 21
Mind 40
linguistics 47, test 41, willpower 41
Charisma 25
charm 26, persuasion 30, taunt 26
Spirit 40
faith (The Nameless One) 50, focus 41, intimidation 41, reality 50

Additional Skills: non-physical skills that are appropriate to the reality of its High Lord, often with multiple adds in each.

Possibilities: untold thousands

Natural Tools: special powers that vary based on the reality of its High Lord

Standard Device Powers

The following abilities are common to all Darkness Devices. Most also possess powers in addition to these that are specific to the reality of its High Lord. For example, Ebenuscrux, the Darkness Device of the Cyberpapacy, has the special ability to control portions of the GodNet. Details on the unique powers of each Darkness Device involved in the Possibility Wars can be found in the write-ups for the Devices in the appropriate sourcebooks or supplements.

- Transfer possibility energy to the High Lord, or to another being of the High Lord's choice. The being must voluntarily accept the energy. The rate of transfer varies, usually in the range of two to four Possibility Points an hour. A Darkness Device can transfer possibility energy to anyone within 50 kilometers (30 miles) of itself or ten kilometers (six miles) of any connected stelae.
- Spend an extra Possibility Point on actions for the High Lord. These possibilities are spent in the same way as personal possibilities, meaning the Device is limited to spending only one Possibility Point on an action. These Points are added to any spent by the High Lord himself, in essence allowing the High Lord to spend two Possibility Points on any action, including the negation of damage. The Darkness Device may also spend possibilities to negate possibilities spent by people acting against the High Lord. A Darkness Device can spend possibilities for its High Lord if he is within 50 kilometers (30 miles) of the Device or within ten kilometers of connected stelae.
- A Darkness Device can automatically communicate with its High Lord or any other being to whom it has given possibility energy, as long as the being is within the High Lord's home reality, within the realm or is within 100 kilometers (60 miles) of the realm's boundary.
- A Darkness Device may transfer one of its skills to any character that it can communicate with, but no more than one skill may be "lent out" at one time. The recipient must spend one Possibility Point to receive the skill (if the recipient is the High Lord, the Device may spend the possibility for him.) The transfer is instantaneous and the recipient receives the Device's full skill value, not its skill adds. The only skill that may not be transferred is the Darkness Device's *reality* skill. It is not impossible, but a Darkness Device will not part with the skill because it is powerless without its ability to manipulate possibility energy.
- Create a dimthread.
- Create a hardpoint. This works like the *create hardpoint* group power in Chapter Seven except that the Darkness Device is only able to create hardpoints out of objects with weight values equal to or less than half of its *reality* skill, placing a greater limit on the size of the hardpoint's reality zone.
- For each stelae laid so as to form a new bounded area (an area which the High Lord has not previously bound, not one which he is merely reclaiming) in which all three sides are at least 350 kilometers (220 miles) in length, a Darkness Device can use one of the following abilities. The ability does not have to be used at the time that the new stelae zone is created, effects may be "saved up" for use at a later time.
- Scan the entire realm and temporarily mark every possibility-rated character in the realm with a *soulstain*. The stain fades over time (a cumulative five percent chance of fading per day) but during this period these characters may be tracked by minions of the High Lord, and the locations of all possibility-rated beings are known precisely by the High Lord and the Darkness Device. Ravagons serving the High Lord can be given the equivalent of a possibility print (see *possibility sense* in Chapter Three) on any individual the High Lord directs them to track down for the duration of the soulstain.
- Energize three ritually prepared stelae.
- Create a maelstrom bridge.
- Reverse the aging process of a character of the High Lord's choice (including himself) for a period of approximately three years (meaning that for the next three years the character ages backward, becoming younger instead of older). This ability fluctuates, sometimes granting much more life, sometimes much less, depending on the machinations of the device.
- Move the Darkness Device from any one location to another, including up or down maelstrom bridges. Some Devices possess a special power that allows them to be moved freely over short distances, in which case this power only needs to be invoked when moving the Device from one stelae zone to another or when going up or down a maelstrom bridge or dimthread.

- Bump one axiom level of the High Lord's home reality up or down by one point, or make an alteration to a world law. The change does not take effect immediately; instead, the Darkness Device begins to filter and correct all of the possibility energy it drains in order to produce the desired change by applying this sorted energy to the reality. It can take a few weeks to several months for the change to manifest itself, but compared to the decades it normally takes to change an axiom or world law (see Chapter Seven), it might as well be instantaneous.

  Besides the acquisition of a new stelae area, these powers can also be invoked by sacrificing an existing stelae zone. Stelae can be "burned out" by reversing the flow of possibility energy through them, creating a short-lived influx of possibility energy when the zone collapses and the invaded reality surges up against the newly established boundary of the realm.
- For each new reality invaded and subjugated, the Darkness Device can either increase one attribute of the High Lord's choice by one to seven points or grant the High Lord three to 15 additional skill adds. The amount the High Lord gains will depend on the possibility energy gained from the defeated reality. This is the only method by which a High Lord may increase his skills and attributes while attuned to his Darkness Device.

The Torg

Torg is a title that represents the ultimate goal of most High Lords. To become Torg means to fully merge with a Darkness Device, to gain vast power over possibility energy and reality itself. The Torg would wield truly godlike powers and be an almost unstoppable invader. No High Lord is known to have ever become Torg, though the Gaunt Man claimed the title for himself at the start of the Possibility Wars, indicating his confidence in attaining the position through the conquest of Core Earth.

The Darkness Devices tell their High Lords that becoming Torg frees a being from the entropy of time, granting real immortality; being Torg gives a High Lord a taste of the infinite, and removes some of the restrictions on the use of the Darkness Device's special powers. The merging of a High Lord with a Darkness Device is said to grant the following special abilities and powers:

- The Torg possesses the physical attributes (*Dexterity, Strength* and *Toughness*) of the High Lord and the highest non-physical attributes (*Perception, Mind, Charisma* and *Spirit*) from either the High Lord or the Darkness Device.
- Movement of the Darkness Device is no longer restricted since it is now part of the Torg.
- The Torg possesses all the skills of the High Lord and the Darkness Device, including the Darkness Device's *reality* skill. The Darkness Device's skills are no longer restricted to defensive use only.
- The Torg has all of the Darkness Device's possibility energy.
- Possibility energy drained by stelae flows directly to the Torg. Eternity shards can be drained of their possibility energy by the touch of the Torg.
- The Torg may spend two Possibility Points instead of just one on any action, including negation of damage.
- The Torg may soulstain, energize stelae, create maelstrom bridges, reverse the aging process of others, and bump axiom levels as outlined above without the restriction of placing new stelae zones (possibility energy must still be expended though.)
- The Torg may transfer possibility energy to other beings as outlined above for the Darkness Device but at double the normal rate. Energy may be given to anyone within the Torg's cosm or realm or within 100 kilometers (60 miles) of the realm boundary.
- The Torg may communicate with anyone it has given possibility energy to regardless of where they are, even if they are in another cosm.
- The Torg can create dimthreads at will.
- The Torg's attributes and skills increase with each reality conquered as outlined above.

To become Torg requires tremendous resources and an equal amount of arrogance. To become Torg is a dangerous process, one which might fail as easily as it might succeed. Some suggest that being successful may prove to be even more dangerous, that it is all a big trick on the part of the Darkness Devices, that the actual result of a High Lord becoming Torg is the entrance of The Nameless One into the cosmverse and the destruction of everything.

Whatever the truth, the first requirement of becoming Torg is to accumulate a phenomenal amount of possibility energy. The Core Earth cosm contains the necessary amount of possibility energy, possibly even in excess, being unusually strong in this regard. Unseen, untapped, nearly unreachable, to absorb this energy means tinkering with a Darkness Device, increasing its capacity to hold possibilities, and risking its destruction.

Absorbing this much energy also places strain on the stelae network. With so much energy coursing through the network and the Darkness Device, there is a risk of stelae burning out. This would cause the realm to collapse and allow the native reality to pour in unrestrained across hundreds of kilometers of invaded territory, unleashing an axiom wash that would destroy the realm, the maelstrom bridge, even the High Lord. The feedback may even prove too be much for the overloaded Darkness Device to handle.

Second, this accumulated possibility energy needs to be sorted, a process of selecting and separating desirable conditions from the undesirable. Sorting possibilities is a tricky business, and being possibility-rated is necessary, but not enough. To sort through the

Darkness Devices and High Lords of the Possibility Wars

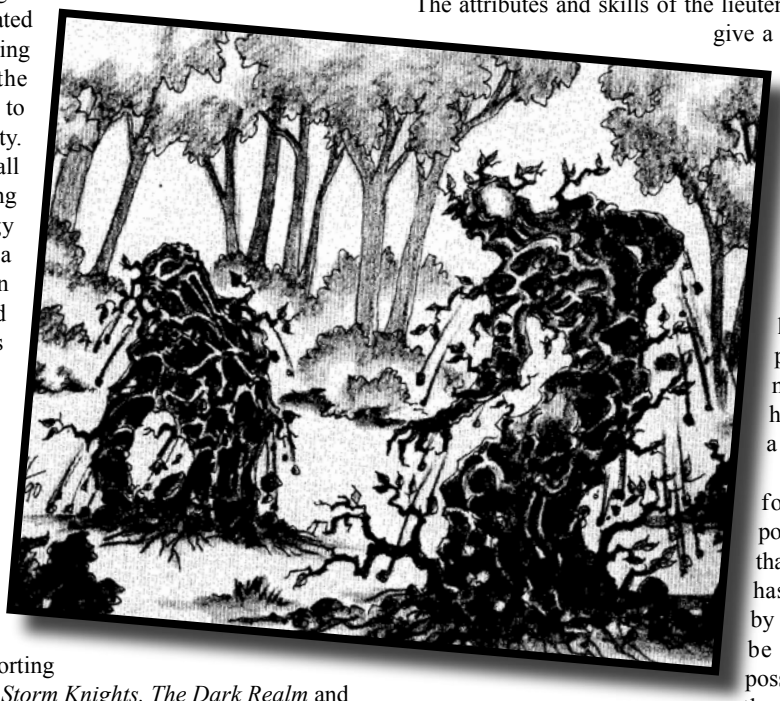
- Aysle: Drakacanus, a large crown of jet-black metal. Uthorion was High Lord at the start of the Possibility Wars, eventually succeeded by the Warrior of the Dark.
- Cyberpapacy: Ebenuscrux, a glowing crucifix made of onyx. High Lord is Pope Jean Malraux I of the Avignon Papacy.
- Living Land: Rec Pakken, an ebon forest of stone trees. High Lord is Baruk Kaah, Saar of Takta Ker.
- Nile Empire: The Kefertiri Idol, a small obsidian idol of the crocodile-headed Egyptian god Sebek. Pharaoh Mobius AKA Doctor Mobius AKA Sutenhotep is the High Lord.
- Nippon Tech: Daikoku, a slim, all-black laptop computer. In Nippon Tech the High Lord is known as Ryuchi Kanawa, in his home cosm of Marketplace he is known as 3327.
- Orrorsh: Heketon, a huge, obsidian, anatomically correct human heart. The Gaunt Man is its High Lord.
- Tharkold: Malgest, an onyx staff covered with intricately carved mystical runes. The techno-demon Kranod was High Lord at the start of the Possibility Wars, succeeded by the human Jezrael when Tharkold's initial invasion of Core Earth failed.

myriad possibilities, to see where each might lead and to choose the correct ones, requires creativity, imagination and insight. These are qualities which are often lacking in High Lords, being contrary to the traits and qualities that in fact make someone suitable High Lord material. The type of people who will willingly serve a High Lord also prove to be lacking the essential qualities necessary for sorting possibilities.

This leaves a High Lord with only one option, using stormers. Storm Knights in particular seem well suited to the task, having both the desired qualities and usually also having a strong *reality* skill. The irony of the situation is not lost on most of the High Lords. Only when all of the possibilities are sorted, ordered and placed in a specified pattern can a High Lord use that possibility energy to construct the reality of a mortal being reborn as the Torg.

The Gaunt Man is the only High Lord known to have constructed a "sorting machine" for the purposes of forcing stormers into sorting possibilities for him. The device creates images in the mind of the victim, forcing him into making an endless series of seemingly unimportant choices, constantly being faced with options and decisions to make. Unfortunately for the victim, the possibility energy flowing through their bodies proves to be more than most can handle, burning out their minds in a short matter of time. The higher a character's *reality* skill, the longer they will last, but it is unlikely that any single individual could survive sorting the entire amount of possibility energy the High Lord needs to become Torg.

Finally, an incredible amount of physical energy is required. This energy is used to energize the pattern of possibilities created by the sorting process, burning along the latticework of the almost-real and perhaps-true to create an actual, eternal reality. Such energy must be released all at once at several points along the latticework. The energy required is enough to destroy a planet, to crack its crust down to its core. Even the combined firepower of all of Core Earth's nuclear arsenal doesn't begin to compare to what's required.



The Gaunt Man came to Earth to become Torg; he had plans for all three steps. All his plans were put into motion, a precise clockwork of destruction and death. A band of Storm Knights managed to foil one part of his plan, eliminating his sorting machine (see the *Torg* novels *Storm Knights, The Dark Realm* and *The Nightmare Dream* for the full story). The adventure contained in the Adventure Book in the accessory pack, "Before the Dawn", gives your Storm Knights the opportunity to foil the third part of his plan, the accumulation of the physical energy necessary to become Torg.

Minions

As powerful as they are, the High Lords are not capable of conquering realities by themselves. They require armies to seize ground and support the reality, agents and creatures that can deal with the Storm Knights who arise to oppose them, and competent subordinates who can keep the reality-crushing process running smoothly.

Each High Lord will have many unique minions drawn from his own reality, but there are some minions common to all High Lords.

Lieutenants

Lieutenants are a High Lord's immediate underlings; their second-in-commands and the ones entrusted with important missions and assignments. The High Lords differ in approach when it comes to selecting lieutenants. Possibility-rated characters are the most effective, but their ambitions can include becoming a High Lord, which might lead them into scheming against the current High Lord.

The Gaunt Man uses the most possibility-rated lieutenants, around a dozen, secure in his own power and position that their ambitions only serve to amuse him. 3327, High Lord of Nippon Tech, uses the fewest possibility-rated lieutenants, only one. The other High Lords average four to eight powerful possibility-rated lieutenants.

All of the High Lords also find it useful to have powerful ords as lieutenants. These are used to conduct important operations within the realm or cosm, where possession of the *reality* skill is not as important. Baruk Kaah possesses the largest number of ord lieutenants, the hundreds of gotaks (priests of the dead) who serve him in the Living Land.

The attributes and skills of the lieutenants vary too widely to give a write-up for an average lieutenant. However, lieutenants are usually the best the High Lord could find for whatever task requires their attention. The High Lords go through considerable trouble to assure the loyalty of their lieutenants, especially the possibility-rated ones, and most of the High Lords hold their lieutenants on a tight leash.

Most of the sourcebooks for *Torg* describe the possibility-rated lieutenants that each of the High Lords has in their service, but by no means should they be considered the only possibility-rated lieutenants they have. Gamemasters should feel free to invent additional lieutenants as they feel necessary, especially in realms like the Living Land and the Cyberpapacy where the sourcebooks do not provide any named lieutenants of the High Lords.

Gospogs

Gospogs are a creation of the Gaunt Man that he gave to the other High Lords involved in the Possibility Wars to secure their participation. A problem all High Lords have faced at one time or another is the need for expendable troops to push forward their

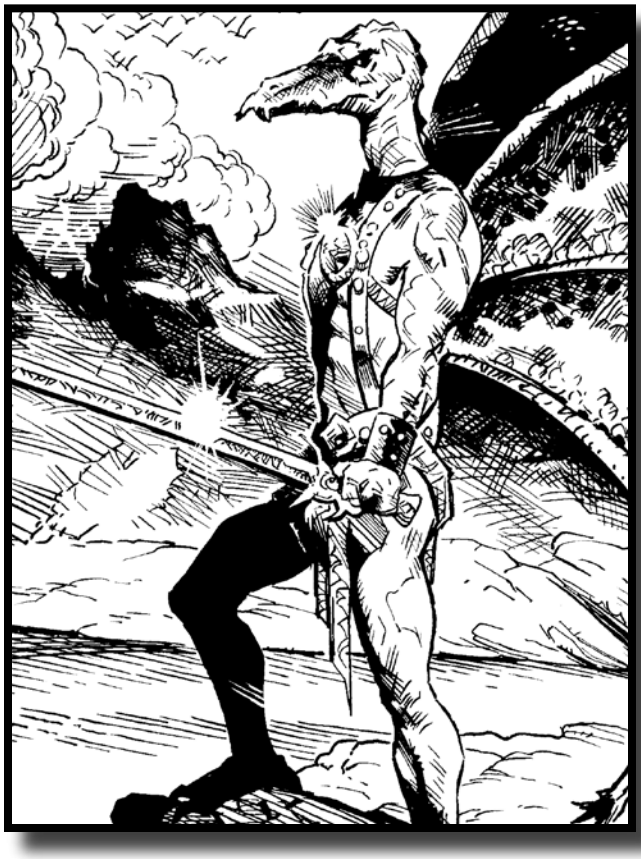
realm boundaries against determined opposition. Living beings are not that expendable because they are usually needed to support the new stelae zones, if too many of them are killed by the defenders of the invaded region then the stelae zone may not be as strong as the High Lord desires.

Enter the gospog, a creature produced by the dark magic and spiritual powers of Orrorsh but possible to duplicate in any reality controlled by a Darkness Device. Gospog are a type of undead creature, grown from seeds planted in prepared fields of corpses taken from the invaded reality. Each field of corpses can be planted and harvested a total of five times from the same corpses, producing thousands of disposable troops for a High Lord.

Besides serving as expendable troops, gospog possess a unique ability that makes them very useful to the High Lords. Because they are a combination of the living of the invaded reality (the corpses) and the unliving of the invading reality (the seeds), gospog possess **both** realities and are able to use tools from either reality without contradiction no matter what the local reality may be like. For example, a Living Land gospog is really a Living Land/Core Earth gospog. It can use Tech 23 firearms or Spirit 24 miracles **anywhere** without causing a contradiction.

The drawback is that gospog are completely unable to use anything that contradicts both realities that it came from, it cannot contradict its own reality. A Living Land gospog, for example, may be able to use a Tech 23 firearm with impunity but it cannot use a Tech 24 firearm anywhere, even in Nippon Tech or any other reality that supported the firearm.

One final advantage a gospog has in combat is that due to its undead nature it is immune to shock damage of any kind and KO results only render it inactive for one round, after which the O result goes away and the gospog becomes conscious again. Additionally, a wounded gospog never suffers an action penalty for being wounded. This applies to **all** five plantings. Storm Knights faced with gospogs can take small consolation in one fact though; gospog are never possibility-rated.



Each successive planting in a field yields fewer gospogs, but each successive planting produces more powerful gospogs than the previous ones. Once a field has been harvested the fifth time, it will no longer produce gospogs unless more corpses are buried in the field.

The table below lists the planting, the number of weeks it takes to grow each planting, when each planting is ready to be harvested and the yield of each planting assuming that the field was prepared with 10,000 corpses, the minimum number necessary to guarantee a fifth-planting being produced.

The yield is limited by the number of corpses which have been prepared and buried in the field; a High Lord can never get more first planting gospogs than the number of bodies which have been prepared. If there are more or less than 10,000 corpses in the field, the yield of the second through fifth plantings will be greater or fewer in number by the same ratio of the number of corpses used compared to 10,000 (round down.)

Example: A gospog field is prepared with only 1,000 corpses instead of 10,000. The yield of gospogs from this field will be one-tenth what is given on the chart; there will only be 100 second plantings, ten third plantings, one fourth planting and no fifth planting.

GOSPOG CHART

Planting	Weeks	Ready by End of Week	Yield
First	1	1	10,000
Second	3	4	1,000
Third	5	9	100
Fourth	7	16	10
Fifth	11	25	1

First planting gospogs vary little from cosm to cosm. They grow to resemble the bodies that line the field, being part flesh but largely plant (particularly in the veins and ligaments), smelling of rotting vegetation and flesh. If the bodies in the field were wearing clothing or jewelry, it is possible that those things may show up integrated into the body of first planting gospogs grown in that field. First planting gospogs all have the same skills; they are a High Lord's generic soldier, useful in many cosms.

Beginning with the second planting, the gospog vary according to the reality of the High Lord. For example, the second plantings in Aysle take on the shape of huge wolves, in the Living Land they appear much like the edeinos except they have four arms, in the Nile Empire they're mummies, and so on. Third plantings usually vary even more than the second plantings.

Beginning with the fourth planting, the gospog may begin to vary in appearance within the same planting, though they tend to keep the same attributes and abilities. Fifth planting gospog are always somewhat unique in appearance, though they still share the same abilities.

Details on the second through fifth plantings of each of the invaders can be found in the appropriate sourcebook. Because first planting gospogs are the same everywhere, their write-up is provided here.

First Planting Gospog

Dexterity 8
unarmed combat 9, any other combat skills appropriate to its two realities also at 9
Strength 8
climbing 9
Toughness 8
Perception 7
find 10, tracking 8
Mind 7
willpower 10
Charisma 7
Spirit 7

Possibility Potential: none, always Ords
Natural Tools: tough hide, counts as armor TOU+2/10; immune to shock damage; KO results only last one round; suffers no action penalties while wounded.
Equipment: varies based on realm but will almost always be equipped with a weapon of some kind
Notes: Besides *unarmed combat,* first planting gospogs will have *energy weapons, fire combat, melee weapons* and the *missile weapons* skill if the skills are available in either of the two realities the gospog comes from. First planting gospogs receive a +2 modifier to their *Strength* when using grappling attacks due to the unusual consistency of their bodies. This advantage does not carry over to later plantings.

Ravagons

Ravagons are an ancient, powerful race of winged hunters controlled by the Gaunt Man. Their unique abilities to detect and to drain possibility energy makes them very useful to the Possibility Raiders, so the Gaunt Man chose to subvert and coax them to his side rather than expend considerable energy to conquer their cosm.

Since that time the ravagons have served the Gaunt Man, and the other High Lords that the Gaunt Man chose to help him invade Earth have all received ravagons from him to provide aid in battle and to hunt down Storm Knights wherever they may appear. While the other High Lords do not trust the ravagons given to them by the Gaunt Man, correctly suspecting that their true loyalties will always be to the Gaunt Man, none dared refuse his offer.

Most of the ravagons involved in the Possibility Wars have a simple assignment - to hunt stormers, especially Storm Knights. These ravagons nominally are under the control of the High Lord in whose realm they operate but for the most part are free to act on their own initiative. They are most frequently found near the reality storms along the boundaries of the realms, for that is where most stormers are created.

Smaller numbers of ravagons, typically a group of three, have been assigned to work directly with the High Lord of each realm. These ravagons act as spies for the Gaunt Man, reporting back to Orrorsh on the activities of the other High Lords. These ravagons have been instructed to obey the High Lord they were assigned to so long as the orders do not undermine the power and authority of Orrorsh and the Gaunt Man. They have also been instructed not to obey any orders that would bring them into conflict with any of the other High Lords. For example, if Pharaoh Mobius ordered his ravagons to attack people who were working for 3327, the ravagons would refuse.

A write-up for an average ravagon is provided here. Most of the ravagons that Storm Knights encounter in the Possibility Wars will be similar to what is presented here. If a group of three or more ravagons is encountered, one will be a veteran with slightly better skills than the rest. The ravagons that directly serve each of the High Lords are even more experienced and more powerful. Further information on ravagons can be found in the *Ravagons* supplement.

Average Ravagon

Dexterity 9
flight 15, maneuver 15, stealth 12, unarmed combat 11
Strength 14
Toughness 10
Perception 10
find 12, tracking 11, trick 12
Mind 8
test 9, willpower 12
Charisma 8
taunt 9
Spirit 8
faith (irishantism) 10, intimidation 11, possibility rip 11, possibility sense 11, reality (Tz'Ravok) 15

Possibility Potential: always, typically 5-10 Possibility Points
Natural Tools: armored skin, TOU+3/13; talons, damage value STR+2/16; wings, speed value 13

Storm Knights

The Possibility Raiders refer to those who transcend a moment of crisis as stormers since most transformations take place during reality storms. Long ago, the Raiders realized that stormers were the greatest threat to their plans for pillaging other realities, because those who made the choice to defend their home reality (ultimately to become known as Storm Knights) had the power to defend themselves and others, and even the power to attack the High Lords. With long experience, the High Lords adopted strategies for quickly

Storm Knight Numbers

Not all stormers go on to become Storm Knights; some ally themselves with the High Lords while most simply sit on the sidelines, neither opposing nor aiding the High Lords. Roughly ten percent of stormers become Storm Knights, effectively giving us a value of one Storm Knight for every million people in the territories invaded by the Possibility Raiders. In areas not invaded by the High Lords, the ratio of stormers to Storm Knights is closer to 50-50, but significantly fewer people become possibility-rated without the presence of reality storms, perhaps only one person in ten million.

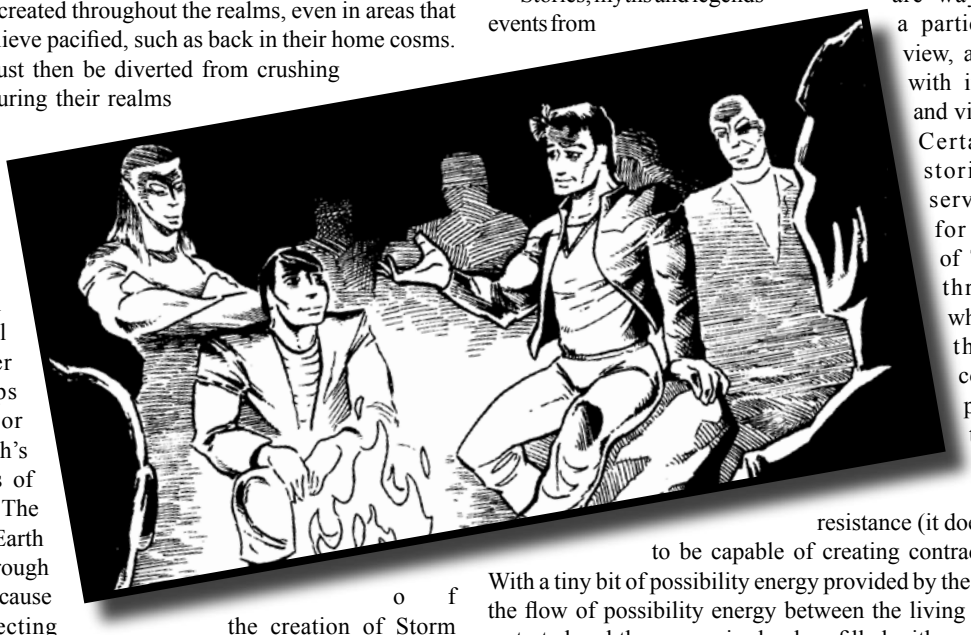
An estimate used during the first year of the original Possibility Wars campaign placed the number of stormers on Core Earth around six thousand people, with six hundred or so being Storm Knights. Events described in the module *The Forever City* can result in the creation of dozens or hundreds of additional Storm Knights and as mentioned in the main text, the number of Storm Knights steadily increases over time. (Since the number of stormers doesn't increase steadily over time, an assumption is that as more time passes, an increasing number of stormers choose to oppose the High Lords instead of remaining on the sidelines.)

destroying the few Storm Knights who appeared in an invaded cosm, thus preventing them from joining forces or organizing others to effective action.

Even before the invasion of Earth, they knew that this cosm would be different. Earth's possibility energy was more plentiful than had ever been experienced by the Raiders; the number of stormers and Storm Knights generated on Earth would be unprecedented. While still very few in number - perhaps one per 100,000 people on Core Earth would become stormers - it was more resistance than the High Lords were used to. The Raiders, trying to anticipate these additional Storm Knights, planned to use their Darkness Devices to monitor the Storm Knights whenever possible and the Gaunt Man made his ravagons available to deal with them.

Once the invasion took place, there were additional complications for the High Lords. They had agreed to work together to plunder Earth's resources, but cooperation is not a strong trait in the High Lords while rivalry, jealousy and fear are. Where coordination lapsed or was intentionally undermined, the people of Core Earth regrouped, patched their wounds, and began to resist with renewed ferocity.

There are two unexpected factors which give the people of Core Earth hope. First is the steady **increase** in the number of Storm Knights. The possibility energy of Earth is so strong that new Storm Knights are being created throughout the realms, even in areas that the High Lords believe pacified, such as back in their home cosms. Their attention must then be diverted from crushing Core Earth to securing their realms and home cosms.



The second unexpected factor is the strength of the *possibility nexi* of Earth. Core Earth has an unusual affinity for other realities, perhaps a reflection of or the cause of Earth's tremendous stores of possibility energy. The invasion of Core Earth has sent ripples through the cosmverse because of this affinity, affecting the creation of Storm Knights in other cosms, even those not connected to the Earth by the invasion.

A few Storm Knights from other cosms are actually finding their way through the cosmverse to Core Earth, even some who have fought the High Lords before such as the Kadandrans who fought against Tharkold shortly before the Earth invasion.. When they find Storm Knights on Core Earth, they can teach them about the High Lords and the invasion, and in turn learn about other cosms. This increase and spread of knowledge has strengthened the resistance. With the addition of this knowledge - as stormers transcend the storm, as Storm Knights transcend stormers - the Storm Knights on Earth have transcended their own individuality to become something even more powerful: a group that not only resists the High Lords, but might actually win.

Giving Possibilities to the People

An area that is bounded by stelae will eventually transform natives of the invaded reality into beings of the invading reality, draining them of all their possibility energy. Once drained and transformed, however, these beings are far from useless to the High Lord; rather, they are hostages against the attacks of the Storm Knights.

When Storm Knights manage to locate a stelae and uproot it, a Core Earth axiom wash pours back in to the formerly bounded area. This energy soon returns the land, and the living, to Core Earth's reality. Unfortunately for the transformed, this means their death - when the Everlaw of One transforms them back to the reality of Core Earth, their lack of possibility energy means that their very life-force is used to fuel the change. If the Storm Knights reclaim the land without first *reclaiming the people,* the land will soon be empty.

Glory

To reclaim the people, Storm Knights need to re-imbue them with a small amount of possibility energy before uprooting any stelae. High Lords, if they choose to, can do this with their Darkness Devices, which the Storm Knights do not have.

But they do have legends.

Stories, myths and legends are ways of framing events from a particular point of view, a point of view with its own beliefs and visions of reality. Certain inspiring stories can even serve as a spark for the Everlaw of Two, a slender thread of hope which strengthens the Everlaw's connection to a person enough to overcome the Everlaw of One's resistance (it doesn't want them to be capable of creating contradictions again.) With a tiny bit of possibility energy provided by the Storm Knights, the flow of possibility energy between the living and unliving is restarted and the person is slowly refilled with possibility energy. The process may take a few days or a few weeks and varies from one being to the next and from one situation to the next.

Once a transformed being has been refilled, she may retell the same story to others, giving them the same spark and eventually they too will refill with possibility energy as well. This process grows and grows as more and more people are sparked by the tale. Eventually, everyone in a stelae zone will be protected from a second transformation. (As a side effect, once refilled these people will also be able to create contradictions again, which may help them remember the lives they led in their former reality.)

What sort of stories contain enough of the mythic and legendary to spark people? Stories of heroes, stories of great deeds, stories of Storm Knights who are resisting the High Lords - the stories of the player characters themselves. The adventures of the player characters can serve to inspire and restore hope to the people who need it most.

To spark people, a story must not only be heroic be about events that affect them personally. While a rousing story about how the

Storm Knights defeated the evil servants of the Living Land might be entertaining to people in the Nile Empire, it's too remote to have an impact on their immediate lives. They won't have an emotional connection to the events in the story because there's not enough resonance with their own situation.

Usually then these stories are only effective in the same areas the events occurred in, though events with wide-ranging repercussions can be relevant to people located far away from where they took place. Since most stories will be used to spark people within stelae zones, a good rule of thumb is that the only stories that will have an impact on people are stories about events that occurred within or very close to that particular stelae zone.

There are a few conditions on the stories that may be used to spark people. Not all heroic deeds are sufficiently inspiring enough to serve this purpose, they have to be of a certain magnitude before the story can ignite that spark. Deeds of this magnitude are known as *Glory deeds* and are signified in play by the use of the *Glory* card.

As described in Chapter Five, a *Glory* card may be played whenever a player rolls a 60 or more when attempting an action during a Dramatic scene. However, the play of a Glory card only counts as a *Glory* deed when it is played on an action that plays a significant part in the successful resolution of the scene or the adventure. *Glory* cards may be played on actions that are not significant to the resolution of the adventure, they just don't count as Glory deeds later on.

Glories without Glory

For groups who have elected to play *Torg* without the Drama Deck, the lack of any *Glory* cards makes achieving Glory deeds a bit problematic. The lack of Hero and Drama cards and the rerolls they represent will also make die rolls of 60 and higher a bit more problematic too.

The first rule modification is to reduce the die roll necessary to qualify as a Glory. Instead of 60, use a die roll of 40 or higher. The restriction that it has to occur in a Dramatic scene still applies. The rules for differentiating between Glory rolls that qualify as Glory deeds and those that don't also remain the same.

When playing with the Drama Deck, a player isn't always going to have a *Glory* card available when he rolls well during a Dramatic scene. For this reason, when playing without the Drama Deck not every roll of 40 or more in a Dramatic scene should automatically be considered a Glory roll. First, the player has to declare that he's made a possible Glory roll. If she rolls above a 40 in a Dramatic scene but forgets to say anything, that's too bad.

Second, the gamemaster should roll a die of his own; this bit of randomness takes the place of the chances of the player having a *Glory* card available if the Drama Deck was being used. If the gamemaster rolls above a 20 (getting to reroll on 10's and 20's), it counts as a Glory roll.

As with the card, the possibility award at the end of the adventure will be increased by three possibilities for each actual Glory roll that occurs. Actions judged to be Glory deeds can be used to plant story seeds using the normal rules since the Drama Deck is not involved in that part of the Glory process.

First Edition Storytellers

In the first edition of the *Torg* rulebook, the storytelling involved in planting a story seed was accomplished with the *persuasion* skill instead of *performance art (storytelling)*. Groups playing with characters from first edition campaigns may choose to continue using *persuasion* instead of having their characters suddenly become worse at planting story seeds because they must now use their straight *Charisma* or be forced to buy adds in a brand-new skill.

Example: Marco has just downloaded some vital information off of a Kanawa Corporation computer and needs to get out of the building with it. Turning, he finds a Kanawa security guard pointing a gun at him, demanding his identification. Juan declares that Marco will use *test of wills* on the guard, contemptuously staring him down with a player's call that the guard backs down and lets Marco leave the building without seeing his identification. Juan rolls a 63 and since it's during a Dramatic scene he plays a *Glory* card on it (needless to say his *test* is wildly successful.) Becky says that because getting the information out of the building is important to the adventure, it counts as a Glory deed.

Later in the same scene, Marco is trying to find Quin in a crowded sushi bar. Generating a *find* total for Marco, Juan rolls a 67 and plays another *Glory* card on that roll. Becky says that seeing where Quin is sitting doesn't have enough of an impact on the adventure to count as a Glory deed.

Playing a *Glory* card marks the magnitude of the deed and fixes it in time and space, serving as a focus through which the Everlaw of Two can act when it is used to spark people. If your group has decided to play without the Drama Deck, see the sidebar for rules on handling Glory deeds without the *Glory* card.

Story Seeds and Secrecy

Some players may be concerned that by relating their heroic exploits to the populace at large, they're going to draw unwanted attention to themselves, especially the attention of the High Lords. Wouldn't it be better to remain anonymous than to have the High Lords know who they are, putting prices on their heads or sending ravagons after them all the time?

It would be safer to remain anonymous, but being a Storm Knight isn't about playing it safe. It's about putting the safety of others ahead of their own safety. If that means attracting the attention of a High Lord, that's one of the risks they have to face. And if they truly want to defeat the High Lords, they've got to uproot stelae. And if they don't want to kill thousands, perhaps millions, of people doing so, they have to tell their stories.

For groups who are concerned about being known by the High Lords, the *Tokyo Citybook* supplement does provide rules for determining the relative renown/fame of Storm Knights operating in Nippon Tech. With a little modification it can be used to gauge how "public" a group has become in other realms as well.

The Story Seed

Just as the High Lords plant stelae, Storm Knights need to "plant" the stories of their Glory deeds before they can hope to uproot stelae without risking the people in the stelae zones. This requires the player characters to relate their stories to other people, simply performing a Glory deed isn't going to do any good if no one ever hears about it.

To plant a story seed, one of the player characters must tell their story. Storytelling usually falls under the *performance art* skill or uses the character's *Charisma* attribute if he does not have the skill. The other player characters may coordinate with the character telling the story using the rules in Chapter Four for summing up the efforts of a single action. Coordinating their storytelling efforts has an Average difficulty.

To plant the story seed, a storyteller must do two things. First, he must spend one Possibility Point. This is the energy that ignites the spark if the seed is successfully planted. The possibility is spent even if the effort fails.

Second, the storyteller must generate a skill total using *performance art (storytelling)* or whatever skill seems most appropriate to the method the Storm Knights are using to tell their story. For example, they might tell the story in the form of a song, in which case *performance art(singing)* would be more appropriate.

The difficulty of the skill check is equal to the highest *Mind* or *willpower* value in the immediate audience - this is **not** a Many on One multi-action, the number of people in the audience does not affect the difficulty. If a Core Earth character is involved in the effort to plant the story seed, either as the storyteller or someone who has successfully coordinated his efforts, there is a +2 bonus to the effort thanks to one of Core Earth's World Laws, the *Law of Glory*. A contradiction check is necessary though if the story is being told outside of Core Earth (which is usually the case.)

If the key individual, the one who determines the difficulty number, can be convinced of the truth and importance of the story, the seed is successfully planted. If this person doubts the veracity of the story, the necessary synergy in the audience fails to form and the story planting fails.

Once all three conditions (*Glory* card, Possibility Point, and a successful storytelling skill check) are met, the story begins its work. A story from a single seed can take awhile to work its way through an area, or it can spread like wildfire. The rate at which a story spreads is random and unpredictable, but for each time a story seed is planted, the greater the chance that it "takes" and sparks the population of the stelae zone. A story seed **can** be planted more than once in an area by telling the story to a different audience and going through the above process again.

If a storytelling check fails, the Storm Knights may no longer use that Glory deed as a story seed, though any previous plantings they made with that seed will remain in effect. They must perform a new Glory deed in the area if they wish to plant any further story seeds. In many cases it is desirable to do so anyway, since multiple different story seeds can greatly increase the overall chance of success.

Does the Story Take?

Storm Knights have no absolute way of measuring the progress of a story seed. Anecdotal evidence can confirm that it's spreading, but the rate at which individuals are refilled with possibility energy is impossible to judge. For that matter, telling the transformed who are at risk apart from the non-transformed who are not at risk is difficult enough in some cases. A person who seems filled with hope and

How Many Will Actually Die?

If a story seed doesn't take in an area, it usually doesn't mean that everyone in the stelae zone will be killed when the stelae is uprooted. Unless one hundred percent of the population in a stelae zone has been transformed, there will be some people who are not at risk from a second transformation because they haven't yet gone through a first transformation.

And while it simplifies matters to treat sparking as an all-or-nothing affair, the truth is that as long as a story seed was successfully planted and some amount of time was allowed to pass, there's bound to be at least a few people who get sparked and refilled. At the very least it would seem that the people directly sparked by the Storm Knights when they planted their seeds might have time to be refilled since they would start gaining possibility energy almost right away.

If partial successes are desired, a gamemaster can determine what fraction of the transformed population in a stelae zone was not sparked and refilled if the Storm Knights don't achieve a complete success. If the Storm Knights fail, their highest roll is found on the dominant area column of the Transformation Table (even if they qualified for the three-time bonus), rounded down. The accompanying percentage given for that value indicates the percentage of transformed people who were not sparked and refilled when the stelae was uprooted.

Example: In the example in the main text, Tina failed to roll well enough to indicate that their story seeds had completely taken in the stelae zone. Her highest roll was an 18. On the Transformation Table, the closest die roll (rounding down) is a 17. Reading across to the percentage, it says "25/100". Twenty-five percent of the transformed population was not refilled with possibility energy at the time the stelae was uprooted.

And even then, many of those people may not be doomed to die. Axiom washes only transform about five percent of the living when they sweep through an area. Anyone who survives the axiom wash is still at risk of being transformed again, but for many it will take a fair amount of time to happen. After the arrival of the Akashans, reality trees could be used to create safe havens for the transformed. If there's no other option, the at-risk could be sent into the realm that they were just liberated from to protect them against a second transformation.

Also, story seeds don't have to be planted only in stelae zones. Planting a story seed in a newly reclaimed area or in nearby refugee camps may provide the at-risk with the spark they need to avoid a fiery fate down the road. Who knows, the story of uprooting the stelae may have included a Glory seed worth telling people about!

optimism by a story may be a transformed person who's been refilled with possibility energy or he could be an untransformed native of the reality who never lost his store of possibility energy.

At any time, of course, the Storm Knights may seek out and attempt to uproot a stelae. But the less time they wait after planting a story seed, the more likely the transformed are to die. Sparking takes time, and acting too quickly may not give the story sufficient time to spread and refill everyone at risk. While it is safest to wait at least a few months before uprooting a stelae, the Storm Knights may not have that luxury.

Storm Knights learn whether or not their story seeds work only at the moment of truth, when they actually begin the process of uprooting the stelae. Through their *reality* skill, the Storm Knights can sense whether or not their stories took and abort the uprooting process before it is too late if they wish to do so.

As the players characters are uprooting a stelae, one player rolls a die once for each story seed the group planted in this area (cards and possibilities may **not** be spent on this roll, but additional rolls **are** taken on 10s and 20s). On the Transformation Table (see Chapter Seven), find the line which is closest to the amount of time since the **first** story seed was planted (rounding to the closest time if an

exact match isn't found and in the Storm Knights' favor if the time is between two values on the chart.) If any of the players' rolls equal or exceed the "transform number" listed under the **dominant area** column, a story seed took with the transformed of this area, refilling the people with possibility energy.

Three-time Bonus

If the characters have planted three **different** story seeds in a stelae zone, they have effectively neutralized each of the three bounding stelae. In this case, the die roll is made under the **pure area** column of the Transformation Table instead of the dominant area.

Example: Quin, Magoth and Father Wagner have uncovered a stelae and begin the process of uprooting it. They have planted one story seed five times in this area, the first being planted two months prior to their uprooting attempt. Two months falls between "one month" and "three months" on the chart so Becky rounds in their favor and the number listed for "three months", 19, is the number they must beat.

Tina volunteers to roll the die. She rolls five times: 2, 9, 1, 18 and 7. No roll of 19 or higher, the story seeds have not had enough time to work. Becky tells them that their characters feel pain radiating from the land around them, that the people are not ready for this yet.

If the party had planted three different stories in the stelae zone though, things would be different. On the pure area column of the Transformation Table, the number listed for "three months" is a 12. Tina's fourth roll would have succeeded.

Uprooting Stelae

Uprooting a stelae is dangerous for reasons besides the risk to the transformed people in the stelae zone. As the stelae is being removed, any boundary of which it is part of begins to weaken. The realities that had been held apart by that boundary can now unleash their full fury against each other, with the stelae as the focus. Horrific reality storms often result.

Such storms have a minimum strength value of 20 when they start, and escalate from there. While the fury of the storm is usually focused upon the stelae being removed, occasionally the stelae is in an area of calm, much like the eye of a hurricane. Storm Knights unfortunate enough not to have a calm area form around the stelae have to complete the uprooting process while also contending with the effects of the reality storm raging around them.

In addition, the Darkness Device of the realm will become aware of what is happening to the stelae if the uprooting process takes too long. It will use its powers to communicate with any beings it can, and urge them to save the stelae. Ravagons are usually the first to respond to such a call from a Darkness Device. Also, attempting to uproot a stelae counts as taking an action against the Darkness Device, enabling it to use its skills defensively against the Storm Knights.

The first step in uprooting a stelae is to locate it. Many of the invaders bury their stelae or otherwise conceal them. A stelae cannot be uprooted until it is *exposed*. Exposing a stelae can be as simple as digging it up or identifying an object as the stelae.

Once exposed, there are two methods that can be used to uproot a stelae. The first method is safer but takes more time. The second method is quicker, but much more difficult and much more dangerous.

First Method

The first method uses the Dramatic Skill Resolution rules (see Chapter Four.) Characters use their *reality* skill to first sever the stelae's connection to the other stelae it is linked to and then to actually uproot it. Because the *reality* skill is involved, only characters from an opposing reality are able to affect a stelae.

The number of steps in the Dramatic Skill Resolution depends on the number of connections that need to be broken. The minimum number of connections a stelae will have is two with a maximum number of six. If the target stelae has two or three connections, uprooting the stelae uses Steps A, B and C. If the target stelae has four, five or six connections steps A, B, C and D are used.

The difficulty of each step is the *reality* skill of the stelae. Stelae have a minimum *reality* skill of 12 and it can be as high as the *reality* skill of the realm's Darkness Device. To determine the stelae's skill value, count the number of stelae between the target stelae and the nearest zone which contains a maelstrom bridge or in which the Darkness Device resides (count the stelae that is part of that zone.) For each stelae, subtract 12 from the Darkness Device's *reality* skill. If the result is greater than 12, that is the stelae's *reality* skill. If the result is less than twelve, its skill is 12.

Example: Storm Knights are attempting to uproot a Nippon Tech stelae on the Japanese island of Hokkaido. The shortest path from the target stelae to the zone containing the maelstrom bridge in Osaka goes through two stelae (counting the one that is part of the zone around Osaka.) Daikoku, Nippon Tech's Darkness Device, has a *reality* skill of 45. The stelae's reality is thus (45 - 12 - 12 =) 21. The target stelae is connected to three other stelae so the uprooting process will use steps A, B and C.

If the Dramatic Skill Resolution involves three steps, the first two are the severing of the stelae's connections while the third step is the actual uprooting of the stelae. If the Dramatic Skill Resolution requires all four steps, the first three represent severing the stelae's connections and the fourth step is the actual uprooting. If a story seed has not taken effect in the stelae zone, the Storm Knights will become aware of the fact after they sever the last connection, after completing the next-to-last step (step B or C.)

Regardless of how many steps are required, the Storm Knights only have ten rounds to complete the process before the Darkness Device detects what they are doing. In the eleventh round, the Darkness Device will first summon any nearby creatures to come save the stelae and then in the twelfth round it invokes a reality storm against one of the Knights attempting to uproot the stelae.

This will, naturally, isolate the stelae and the unfortunate Storm Knight from the rest of the group, preventing them from continuing to uproot the stelae. The *reality* skill of the stelae is used instead of the Darkness Device's *reality* skill for this storm **except in Orrorsh.** In Orrorsh, when Heketon invokes a reality storm through one of its stelae it gets to use its full skill value. Because the storm is with the Darkness Device, it has a virtually unlimited supply of possibilities available.

Should the Storm Knight prevail (unlikely, but possible) and achieve a *transform* result, the stelae is considered uprooted. The Darkness Device is not affected by the *transform* result. In the more likely case of the Darkness Device winning, the character is transformed to the Device's reality and the storm ends. If there are any other Storm Knights still in the area, the Darkness Device may invoke another storm against one of them to prevent the group from attempting to continue the uprooting process.

Second Method

The second, and more dangerous, method of uprooting a stelae, is for a Storm Knight from an opposing reality to invoke a reality storm against the stelae and attempt to transform it in one quick strike. The difficulty number is the *reality* skill of the stelae plus three (home field advantage) plus six (from the One-on-Many table). In essence, the Storm Knight is trying to perform all the steps of the Dramatic Skill Resolution at once. The stelae has a number of Possibility Points equal to its *reality* skill.

Example: If one of the Storm Knights in Hokkaido invokes a reality storm against the stelae, the difficulty of uprooting the stelae is (21 + 3 + 6 =) 30. The stelae has 21 Possibility Points.

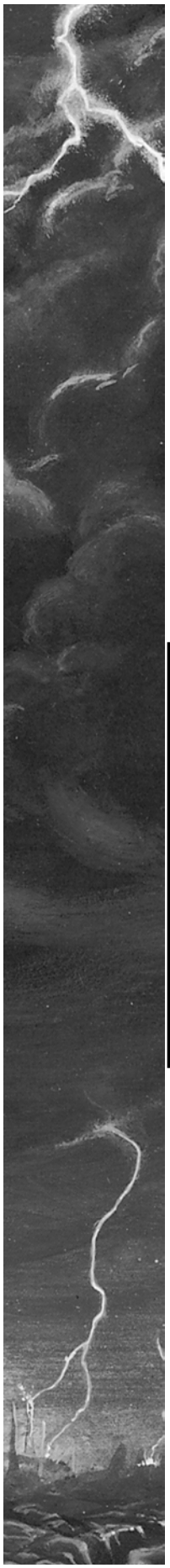
If the Storm Knight achieves a *transform* result against this difficulty number, the stelae is instantly uprooted. If he achieves a *maelstrom* result, he is locked in a reality storm with the stelae and must drain it of all its possibilities to uproot it. If this occurs, the reality storm is run according to the normal rules. The stelae will still get the home field advantage bonus but the One-on-Many bonus is not applied after the initial attempt.

If the Knight did not get a *transform* or *maelstrom* result, he's in trouble. The Darkness Device is instantly aware of what is happening and floods the stelae with possibilities, making it virtually impossible for the Knight to succeed. Even if he should achieve a *maelstrom* result in the next round and cut the stelae off from the Darkness Device, the stelae will have already received hundreds, possibly thousands of possibilities from the Darkness Device. Essentially, if this method if used the Storm Knight only gets one shot at it, if he doesn't score a *transform* or a *maelstrom* result in that first round it becomes next to impossible to uproot the stelae.

If the uprooting process is unsuccessful, either from being abandoned partway through (because a story seed didn't take in the area) or due to interference by the Darkness Device and it servants, it takes the Darkness Device about an hour to rebuild the severed connections between the stelae. During this time any further attempt to restart the uprooting process is immediately detected by the Darkness Device and dealt with accordingly.

The Last Step

Once a stelae has been uprooted, the only thing left to do is to physically destroy it so that it cannot be used again (an uprooted stelae would have to be re-energized again by the Darkness Device but it would save the High Lord from having to construct a replacement.) The difficulty of this depends entirely on the material of the stelae.



Chapter 9: Gamemastering Advice

"These 'heroes' take on impossible challenges and sometimes actually win, just like in those tawdry motion pictures on which your teen-aged ilk wasted so much money."

—Professor Berofski, Heritage of Osiris Research Center

Basic *Torg* Gamemastering Information

This chapter is primarily meant to be an addendum to the gamemastering information contained in the Adventure Book, which can be found in the *Torg* accessory pack. The Adventure Book covers such basics as "what is a gamemaster?", running *Torg* adventures, tips on using the Drama Deck and advice on designing your own adventures for *Torg*.

On Being a *Torg* Gamemaster

The number one rule to remember when gamemastering *Torg*, or any other roleplaying game for that matter, is that you're supposed to have fun too. There's a lot of material available for *Torg* so don't try to memorize every rule and every modifier before playing. Just get an idea of the basics - how to read the result tables, how to handle action within a round. And also get an idea of **where** information is located. Later, if someone wants to invoke a reality storm or build a weird science gizmo, you can quickly find the appropriate book and reread the pertinent material.

Avoiding the Tyranny of the Rules

The rules in this book and the *Torg* supplements are a framework upon which you and your friends build stories set in the world of *Torg*. As with most frameworks, the rules work best when they show the least, and when they can bend under stress. If you need to bend the rules to keep a story flowing with a nice dramatic beat, do so. Keeping to the letter of the rules at the expense of the story is almost always counterproductive.

Story Structure in the Game

The game of *Torg* consists of placing the player characters in stories that you have plotted out in advance. The choices for each character, combined with the rules of the game, determine the outcome of the story. Since *Torg* is structured around storytelling, gameplay is structured to reflect that. The following definitions are used to describe different aspects of the game.

An *adventure* is a complete story. The player characters confront the main problem or conflict in the story, and achieve a final success or failure.

An *act* is a large portion of the story in which the characters solve a problem or obtain a goal necessary to go on to the next step in

Tip Sheet for Gamemasters

1. Learn the game by playing it, rather than by trying to read all the rules, hints and source material at once. Familiarize yourself with the basics, and then give it a try.

2. Talk the rules over with your players so they can get a basic understanding of the game without reading all of the material. Having someone explain the rules to you is often the easiest way to learn the game.

3. Extend the rules when necessary. However detailed, no set of roleplaying rules can cover everything. Use your common sense, make a quick ruling, and get on with the game. Leave yourself room for change on such quick rulings; "Okay, this is how it works tonight. But I may have a different house rule once I've had some time to think about it."

4. Expect to make an occasional mistake. Admit the mistake to the players and correct it. Do an instant replay of the scene if necessary. Then get on with the game.

5. Prepare for the game. At first we recommend you use published adventures such as "Before the Dawn" in the Adventure Book. Use them as models of how to present characters, situations and story to the players.

6. Ham it up. Okay, so maybe you are not the greatest actor/orator in the history of humankind, but don't let it stop you. Every iota of energy, every ounce of melodrama you put into it can make the game more entertaining - for you as well as the players.

7. Take it slow! You aren't going to become an expert gamemaster overnight. While challenging, learning to be a gamemaster can be a great deal of fun if you don't take it too seriously or try to do too much at once. All our rules, comments, and world background have been written to provide you with an entertaining way to create stories with your friends. Use what you like, toss out the rest.

the story. Most *Torg* adventures have from two to five acts, though short adventures may only require one act.

A *scene* is a portion of an act. The action in a scene is continuous. If the story makes a jump in time or place, then the scene has changed. If the characters are still dealing with a character or situation introduced in a scene, then that scene has not yet ended.

As described in Chapter Five, scenes can be either *standard* or *dramatic*. A standard scene is one where the action moves along quickly and the heroes have an edge over the villains. A dramatic scene is one involving a conflict central to the act or the adventure as a whole, and things are a bit tougher for the players.

An *event* is an action or situation confronting the characters in a scene. A scene may have more than one event. Events introduced in a scene are resolved in a scene, but may trigger other events in other scenes.

The Flow of Action

When you are gamemastering an adventure, time is a fairly fluid concept. When the player characters are negotiating with a merchant, the amount of time it takes in the game is fairly close the amount of time that passes in the real world. But when the characters are driving for hours in a car to get to their next destination, you can say, "Okay, you're there," and skip over a large portion of down time. In either of these two cases it's a fairly simple matter to keep track of what everyone's doing, and to control the flow of action.

However, when trouble of any sort occurs, players (and even gamemasters) tend to let their excitement get the better of them and things can get pretty chaotic. When this occurs, round play is used to control the flow of the action and give everyone a chance to get in on the fun. Each round represents 10 seconds of "real" time. During a round, characters can engage in combat or perform other activities, playing round after round until the encounter has been completed. You can decide that rounds represent more than 10 seconds if the encounter warrants larger chunks of time. For example, if the characters are negotiating with a merchant each round may represent a minute of haggling, bargaining and posturing by both sides as they try to get the better end of the deal.

The Flow of Round Play

Round play occurs in this order:

1. Flip over the top card of the Drama Deck to determine initiative and special effects for the round, as defined in Chapter Five.

2. The side with initiative declares their actions and then generates the appropriate action totals. When the players generate their totals, they tell them to you and you then …

3. Announce if the action succeeds or not. If an action needs an effect total, tell the player to determine their second total. When you announce which actions succeed, you can give dramatic descriptions appropriate to the situation.

4. For successful actions, check the appropriate result table when necessary.

Of course, when you are determining the actions and results for nonplayer characters you do not have to announce the intermediate stages, just the final result.

When to Use Round Play (and When Not to)

Because the Drama Deck serves so many functions, it is important to understand when cards come into play and when they don't. Basically, **the cards come into play when you want them to come into play.**

Using conflict lines and dramatic skill resolution is always at your discretion. They are tools to help you establish the flow of the action. In most conflicts (fights, chases, interactions where a hero is trying to get somebody to do something which the subject would rather not do) you will turn over a card onto the action stack. At that point the game switches to round play, the conflict lines set the rhythm, and card pools begin.

But let's say the characters have just met a couple of bad guys in the deserts of the Nile Empire. The players don't know yet that these nonplayer characters are bad guys, they simply want to buy some food and water from them. You don't want to tip the players off that something could go wrong (you've decided that the bad guys had a bad day and just want to be left alone) so you don't flip a card over when the bargaining session begins. Instead you're going to "roleplay it out."

Roleplaying it out means that you and the players simply talk to each other as if you were the characters in the story. You are like actors improvising a script on the spot. Dice do not have to be rolled because if you know what your characters want, you should be able to judge their reactions to the player characters.

If the player characters do something that you think would upset the thugs enough to get them into a fight, flip a card and have the bad guys draw their weapons. Or, if the villains are intrigued by the heroes' offer but want something more substantial, make the action tighter by flipping a card to control the flow and call for a *persuasion* skill check. This might confuse the players (they're just trying to buy some food after all), but would put them on edge, making the bargaining all the more interesting.

Remember, it is up to you to decide when to use the conflict lines. When you do, it means that an open conflict has begun (though not necessarily a violent one).

Gamemaster Fiat

If it makes the story more interesting, it is always a good idea to bend the rules; *gamemaster fiat* is a way of allowing the gamemaster to "cheat" with the Drama Deck in an open and aboveboard fashion. The idea behind gamemaster fiat is to give you greater control over the flow of action. If the players are having too easy of a time during an encounter, you can make it more difficult for them. On the other hand, if they're in deep trouble you can shift things more in their favor.

Gamemaster fiat can be used at the beginning of a round during a **dramatic** scene. Up to three times in a dramatic scene, you may inform the players you are invoking fiat. Immediately take four cards from the top of the Drama Deck and select the one with the conflict line you wish to use, discarding the other three. The chosen card is then used as the flip for that round.

Skill or Attribute Check?

As stated in Chapter Three, the rules require you to pay careful attention during play to untrained use of a skill. If a character wants to swing across a ravine on a rope, that is a use of *acrobatics*. If a character searches a room, that is a use of *find*. A character who does not have the appropriate skill has to use the base attribute for the action total and the player doesn't get to reroll as often as she would if her character had the skill.

Certain actions, however, might be interpreted as non-skill related. In other words, you can rule that the use of an attribute is **not always** rolled unskilled, even if there is a skill that could aid the character in performing a task. For example, swinging across a ravine may be a use of *Dexterity*, but the character may use *acrobatics* instead if he has it. In this case, the attribute check is not made unskilled - there is simply a skill available that would make the action easier.

The circumstances will help you make the decision. When in doubt, call it unskilled if the character does not possess the proper skill. Actions covers by skills which are more difficult when used untrained, the **boldface** skills, should always be considered unskilled use rather than use of the attribute. Skills that cannot be used untrained, the boldface italics skills, can never be an attribute check since they can't be used without the skill.

Parenthetical Skill Values

Some nonplayer characters found in *Torg* products may have interaction skill values given in parentheses. These *parenthetical skill values* are used for **defense only,** and may be used for passive or active defense. If a nonplayer character has a non-parenthetical value as well, then he uses that skill as an attack.

Example: A Divine Mummy from the Nile Empire has the skill *test of wills 12(18)*. If the mummy uses *test* on someone its base action value is 12. If someone attempts to *test* the mummy though, its defensive value is 18.

Player characters may not have parenthetical skill values. If they want to develop a defensive skill value different from their offensive skill value, they should use the skill specialization rules for that.

Interaction Skills

Using interactive skills in combat can be tricky. There will be many times when it just doesn't seem right to you to allow a player to taunt a mindless gospog or intimidate a vampyre. In these situations, use your judgment. If it doesn't feel right, it probably isn't. Have the player think of something else, either use a different skill or take an entirely different action. If they insist, let them do it but assign a penalty to the attempt. Here are some guidelines on handling the interaction skills:

Intimidation requires very little action on the part of the attacker. One can be intimidated by another's mere physical presence. However, to be intimidated implies some degree of intellect on the part of the target - it would be difficult to *intimidate* a giant slug, for instance.

Test of wills should require some active attempt on the attacker's part. *Test* is more nebulous than *intimidate* and so can be used more often, but its use is more restrictive. The attacker must lock eyes with the target, or speak so that he can be understood, etc.

Taunt requires that the target understand the taunt or insult in some way. Even a dog can be *taunted* in the right circumstances, but you cannot insult something that cannot understand you. Also, certain creatures known for icy calm (oracles, zombies and other undead) are probably bad subjects for *taunt* attempts.

Trick is also quite nebulous, but requires activity on the attacker's part. Verbal *tricks* (such as a con) obviously require that the target understand what's being said. Physical *tricks* (based on gestures) can be used in more situations but may require some degree of intellect; pointing over someone's shoulder like there's something behind him might work on a person but would probably be ignored by an animal.

Adventure Awards

"Guys who do a tough job are good; guys who do a tough job and learn something from it are heroes."

—Rick Alder, NYPD

Characters gain possibilities by going through adventures. Possibilities are awarded at the end of each act and at the end of the adventure. The more heroic the characters are, the more great deeds performed and opponents defeated, the greater the number of possibilities awarded. Players may also be rewarded for how well they roleplay their character.

On average, an act award should be from zero to three possibilities, based on how well the characters did and how well the players roleplayed. At the end of a successful adventure, the average award should range between two to three possibilities for each act of the adventure. A four act adventure, for example, might have an adventure award of eight to twelve possibilities. You can increase or decrease

this amount depending on how well or how poorly the characters do and how the players roleplayed their characters.

More detailed guidelines for determining adventure awards can be found in the Adventure Book contained in the accessory pack.

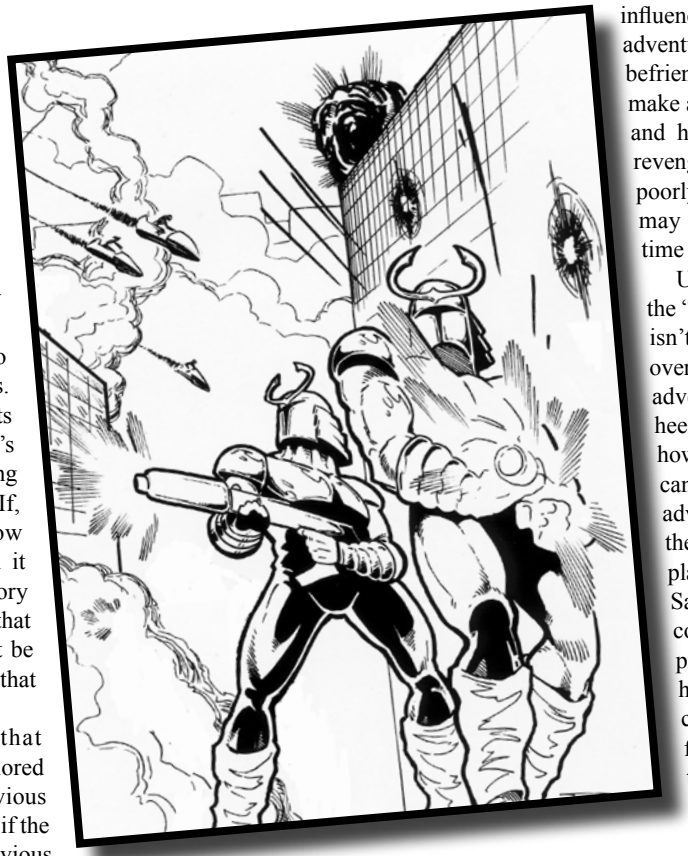
Campaign Styles

While *Torg* (or any other roleplaying game) can be enjoyed as an occasional "one-nighter" adventure with no connection to any other *Torg* adventures you might run, most roleplayers enjoy using the same characters from one adventure to another, developing the character's personality and abilities over the course of many adventures. By linking the adventures together into a common campaign, not only do the characters grow and develop but also the setting itself can be expanded upon and further developed by both the gamemaster and the players.

In general, campaigns follow one of two approaches. *Episodic* campaigns are the easiest type to play while a *serialized* campaign allows for a greater sense of depth and continuity, but can require a bit more effort than an episodic campaign.

Episodic

An episodic campaign is one in which each individual adventure stands on its own as a complete story, with the heroes being the only constant element from one story to the next. The James Bond movies are an example of an episodic campaign, as are many television programs.



Episodic campaigns do have a number of advantages. Because each adventure exists independently of the others, it's much more flexible when dealing with the absence of players. If, for example, Tina can't show up for the next game session it doesn't inconvenience the story to leave Father Wagner out of that adventure because there won't be any continuing story elements that require his presence.

Another advantage is that adventures don't have to be tailored to account for how the previous adventure ended. For example, if the player characters ended the previous adventure injured and without any of their equipment in the middle of the Sahara desert, there's nothing wrong with having them start the next adventure in perfect health with all of their equipment in downtown Tokyo. Getting out of the desert, healing up, resupplying and traveling to Tokyo occurred in the "down time" between the two adventures. The details of what happened during the down time aren't important because it's not part of the adventure, it can be glossed over and forgotten.

One drawback to an episodic campaign is that there are usually very few recurring nonplayer characters, so the gamemaster has to be constantly creating new villains and opponents for the player characters to encounter. In a similar manner, because there are usually no continuing story elements to draw upon it can sometimes be difficult to keep coming up with new adventure ideas. Generally the only story elements that might carry over would be campaigned subplots, but since those are subplots they should not serve as the main focus of an adventure.

Serialized

A serialized campaign is one in which the individual adventures are often part of a larger story arc, where each adventure contributes to an overall story that develops and builds over time. Television shows like *The X-Files* and *Babylon 5* are a serialized story, as are the *Star Wars* movies. The published Possibility Wars setting itself is a very general serialized campaign, starting from the initial invasion scenario and adding on five years of development and change, eventually wrapping things up in the module *War's End.*

Serialized campaigns depend on building a sense of continuity, a coherent history of the events that occur in the individual adventures. If the player characters meet Wu Han in Cairo during one adventure, the next time they have an adventure in Cairo the events of their previous adventure should have an influence on what happens in that next adventure. People they helped out or befriended in the first adventure could make a return appearance and Wu Han and his minions might be eager for revenge (or if the player characters did poorly in the previous adventure, they may underestimate the heroes this time around.)

Unlike the episodic campaign, the "down time" between adventures isn't necessarily something to gloss over and ignore. Many times a new adventure follows directly on the heels of the previous adventure, so how the previous adventure ended can have an impact on how the next adventure begins. For example, if the previous adventure ends with the player characters in the middle of the Sahara desert, the next adventure could begin immediately after the previous adventure and be about how the characters get back to civilization. Or it could be set a few days later, with them out of the desert but still injured and low on supplies and equipment.

The advantages and drawbacks of the serialized campaign are the opposite of the episodic campaign. While the gamemaster can draw upon previous adventures for story inspiration and can have a stable of nonplayer characters that reoccur from one adventure to the next, there is less flexibility in dealing with absent players, especially when a new adventure begins right after the conclusion of a previous one.

The gamemaster also has more background material to keep track of as the campaign develops, since she will have to remember what the player characters have done and how that affects what they can and cannot do in a new adventure. For example, if they killed the Red Hand during their first adventure in the Nile Empire, they shouldn't encounter the Red Hand again without some kind of explanation for how he's returned from the dead.

Campaign Settings

While it might seem that there's really only one campaign setting for *Torg*, the Possibility Wars itself, there are actually a couple of different ways the Possibility Wars can be used by gaming groups. And besides the Possibility Wars, it is possible to use the *Torg* system and its source material to play single-genre campaigns rather than the multi-genre Possibility Wars campaign. For example, the *Terra sourcebook* can be used to play a pulp-hero campaign that has nothing to do with Core Earth or any of the realms involved in the invasion.

But assuming that you want to use the Possibility Wars campaign, here are a few things you might want to consider.

The Classic Campaign

The material originally published for *Torg* is based on the Possibility Wars beginning sometime in the early 1990's, the same period when the game material was published. A "classic" *Torg* campaign is one that takes place in this original time frame.

One possible difficulty players and gamemasters may face in playing a classic campaign is remembering the differences between the Core Earth of the early 1990's and the present day real world. While it doesn't seem like that long ago, the world has changed significantly since the game material was originally published. A short list of changes includes the breakup of the Soviet Union, the unification of Germany, the United States now having the world's strongest economy instead of Japan, the Gulf War changed how we view Iraq and the Middle East, the Dow Jones average wasn't anywhere near the 10,000 mark, the World Wide Web didn't exist yet, computers weren't as ubiquitous as they are now and were much less powerful (see sidebar), and so on.

Generally, this will only be a significant problem for players and gamemasters who want to play with lots of attention to real-world detail in their Core Earth. A lot of the differences between now and then can be overlooked by not attaching a specific year to the start of your Possibility Wars. Instead of starting in 1990, have the war start "sometime in the '90s" and use that vagueness to cover up any lapses that people might make in regard to what things were like in Core Earth. Don't worry too much about getting all the details right; roleplaying is about having fun, not historical accuracy.

Technological Advances

One area in which the published *Torg* material shows its age is in some of the "advanced" Tech 23 and Tech 24 technology presented in the material, especially computers. For example, the computers presented in the *Nippon Tech sourcebook* are supposed to be examples of the Kanawa Corporation's leading-edge technology, but by today's standards even the supposed Tech 24 systems are outdated and primitive.

Whether playing a classic or twenty-first century campaign, the definition of what's available at Tech 23 and Tech 24 and the descriptions of such technology should be updated to better conform to today's standards. The technology possible in Nippon Tech should be as far ahead of what we have today as today's technology is ahead of what was available in the 1970's and 1980's.

Post-*War's End* Campaigns

In 1995, the module *War's End* was published. As the name indicates, it brought the Possibility Wars to an end. You would think that any future releases by West End Games for *Torg* would either have to be "flashbacks" to the period before *War's End* or involve a campaign setting based on the state of the world after the end of the Possibility Wars.

But there is another possibility - to not end the Possibility Wars with *War's End*. Many *Torg* players have expressed an interest in having the war continue instead of playing in a post-war setting. While it's uncertain at this time what path future *Torg* products may take, there's a good chance that they will in some way ignore or alter some of the events that occurred in *War's End* in order to allow the Possibility Wars to continue past the end of its original five-year lifespan.

21st Century Torg

Updating the Possibility Wars to begin in the present day rather than in the 1990's will require some work on the part of the gamemaster. In the long run though it should pay off by making it easier to associate events in Core Earth with real world locations, events and situations. It will especially be easier for players since they can use their real-world knowledge without having to adjust it for what the world was like a decade ago.

While information concerning most of the invading realms won't need to be updated, published information concerning Core Earth might need some adjustment to match changes that have occurred since the material was originally published. The extent to which these changes on the world scene will actually affect the campaign setting is entirely up to you.

You may decide, for example, that the collapse of the Soviet Union only requires mentally substituting the word "Russia" whenever you come across "Soviet Union" in the game material, such as calling the Soviet Psychic template the Russian Psychic template. While this is the easiest approach, it does miss some of the opportunities presented by the ways in which today's world is different.

For example, you might decide that the economic and political situation in Russia was bad enough after the collapse of the Soviet Union that Project: Omen was disbanded sometime in the 1990's and Russia was forced to accept help from Nippon Tech to thwart the initial Tharkold invasion attempt. Instead of being suspicious and untrusting of Nippon Tech as in the published material, Moscow would consider Nippon a valuable ally. This would enable Kanawa to slowly gain influence and power in Russia, possibly leading up to a Nippon Tech invasion of eastern Europe via Russia, something that never happened in the published material.

System Conversions

In case you wish to adapt some material from some of West End Games' other game systems, or wish to play *Torg* using the mechanics of either the *Masterbook* or *D6* systems, here are some recommendations we have for converting between the game systems.

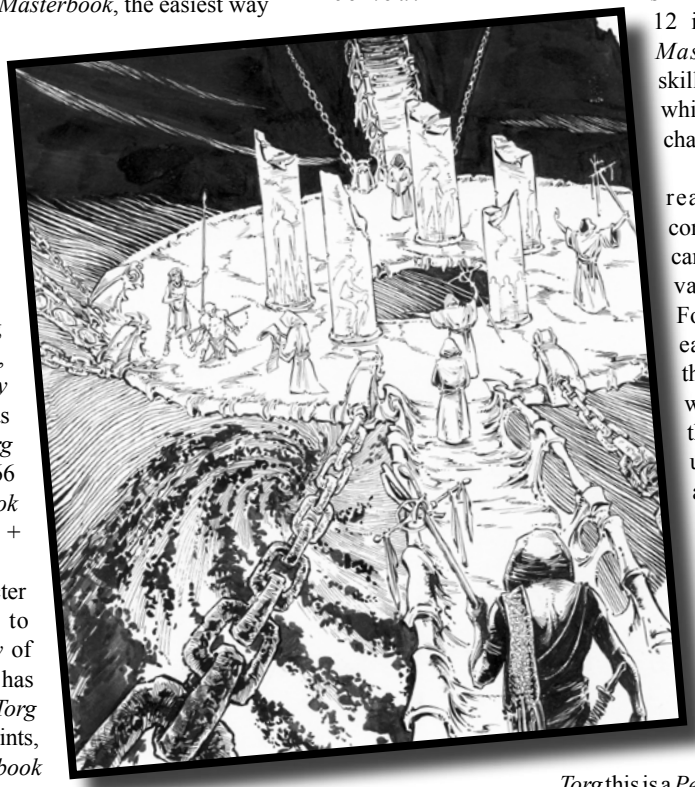
Masterbook

Masterbook is a generic system that was based on the original *Torg* mechanics so converting between the two systems is fairly easy. For the most part, values can be converted directly without modification because both games use the same value system. Special consideration does need to be made in a few cases though.

Attributes

Masterbook uses eight attributes instead of *Torg*'s seven attributes plus has a derived attribute not found in *Torg*. *Strength, Mind* and *Charisma* are essentially the same in both systems and translate directly. In place of *Dexterity, Masterbook* has *Dexterity* and *Agility* attributes. *Torg's Toughness* attribute translates to *Masterbook's Endurance* attribute. *Torg's Perception* attribute becomes *Masterbook's Intellect* attribute and *Spirit* becomes *Confidence*.

When converting from *Torg* to *Masterbook*, the easiest way of translating *Dexterity* is to use it as the value for both *Dexterity* and *Agility*. While this will generally work for nonplayer characters, it can cause player characters to become unbalanced by giving characters with a high *Dexterity* the equivalent of being built on more attribute points than other characters.



Example: Alan is converting Terrill, his Curious Mage character, to *Masterbook*. Terrill has a *Dexterity* of 9 in *Torg* so in *Masterbook* he has *Dexterity* and *Agility* of 9. His *Torg* character was built on a total of 66 attribute points so his *Masterbook* character is built on a total of (66 + 9) 75 attribute points.

Paul is also converting his character Quin, the Soldier of Fortune, to *Masterbook*. Quin has a *Dexterity* of 11 in *Torg* so in *Masterbook* he has *Dexterity* and *Agility* of 11. His *Torg* character was built on 66 attribute points, the same as Terrill, but his *Masterbook* character is built on (66+11) 77 attribute points - Quin has unfairly gained extra attribute points over Terrill without having to compensate for them in any way.

In order to keep characters balanced, we suggest doing the following when converting *Dexterity*. Take the character's *Torg* attribute value, add nine and then divide by two. Use this value for the character's *Dexterity* and *Agility* in *Masterbook*. This way the balance is maintained between characters when they are converted, though some characters may have to deal with a slight drop in their average attribute value.

Example: Using this rule, Terrill still comes out with a 9 in both *Dexterity* and *Agility* (9 + 9 = 18, 18 / 2 = 9) and a total of 75 attribute points. Quin also comes out with a total of 75 attribute points but his *Dexterity* and *Agility* are 10 (11 + 9 = 20,. 20 / 2 = 10) instead of 11.

Players may wish to adjust the final balance of their *Dexterity* and *Agility* by moving one or two points from one attribute to the other if they feel that one attribute or its skills is more important to the character concept.

Masterbook does have a *Toughness* attribute but it is not the same thing as *Torg's* attribute. In *Masterbook, Toughness* is a derived attribute based on the character's *Strength* and *Endurance* attributes. To determine the character's *Toughness* in *Masterbook,* use the rules given in the *Masterbook* rulebook.

If you are converting from *Masterbook* to *Torg,* we suggest making *Dexterity* the average of the character's *Dexterity* and *Agility*. Be sure that you convert *Endurance* to *Toughness* instead of converting *Toughness* to *Toughness.*

Skills

In general, skills translate directly like the attributes, a *fire combat* skill of 12 in Torg is usually a 12 in *Masterbook*. However, *Masterbook* does put some skills under different attributes, which might affect some of the character's skill values.

There are two ways these reassigned skills can be converted. Either the skill adds can be carried over or the skill values can be carried over. For nonplayer characters, the easiest solution is to carry the skill values over and not worry about the adds unless the translated skill value ends up being lower than the new attribute, in which case you should translate the skill adds instead of the skill value.

Example: Becky is translating a nonplayer character to *Masterbook* who in *Torg* has a *Dexterity* of 11 and a *Perception* of 8. The skill being translated is one add in *land vehicle*s. In *Torg* this is a *Perception* skill so the character has *air vehicles* 9. In *Masterbook* though it's a *Dexterity* skill. Since the skill value of 9 is less than the new attribute, the adds are translated instead and the character has a new skill value of 12.

For player characters, it's better to translate the skill adds in order to maintain balance among player characters, otherwise some characters may end up getting "free" skill adds out of the translation.

Example: Magoth has a *Mind* of 10 and a *Spirit* of 8 in *Torg*. The *willpower* skill falls under *Mind* in *Torg* but is under *Confidence (Spirit)* in *Masterbook*. Magoth has +2 adds in *willpower* giving him a skill value of 12 in *Torg*. If the skill value was translated directly to *Masterbook* it would be like giving Magoth two free adds since he would need +4 adds in the skill instead of +2 to have a skill value of 12 with his *Confidence*.

When converting from *Masterbook* to *Torg*, follow the same general guidelines when dealing with rearranged skill locations.

Building Torg Characters with Masterbook Rules

If instead of translating characters you wish to build new Storm Knights with the *Masterbook* character creation rules, you should use 75 attribute points instead of *Masterbook's* normal 68 attribute points. Storm Knights are supposed to be heroic and larger than life characters, and the extra attribute points will help reflect that. Similarly, start Storm Knight characters with ten Life Points instead of the normal five.

Masterbook characters get a number of initial skill points based on their mental attributes rather than everyone getting the same amount of skill adds. If you have converted characters in your game we suggest that any new Storm Knights be built on the same 16 skill points as the original *Torg* characters. If your group will be made up entirely of characters created under the *Masterbook* rules you can use the variable point system if you wish.

If you use *Masterbook's* system of advantages and compensations during character creation, you'll need to keep in mind any possible reality-related restrictions that might apply to any skills or abilities the character possesses. For example, a contradictory skill might require buying the Supranormal Knowledge advantage and also have an Advantage Flaw attached to it since they can lose the ability to use that skill while disconnected.

For advantages that already exist in *Torg*, such as the attribute enhancement packages available to certain races from certain cosms, we suggest using the established *Torg* rules instead of trying to reconstruct them as a group of *Masterbook* advantages and compensations. It can be very difficult getting some of them to balance out correctly under the *Masterbook* rules. Similarly, when translating characters we suggest not trying to model any advantages or drawbacks the character has in *Masterbook* terms, just stick with the existing *Torg* rules.

Dice

Instead of a twenty-sided die, *Masterbook* uses two ten-sided dice which are rolled and then added together, generating a range of numbers from 2-20 (not counting rerolls) with a greater probability of generating some numbers than others. For example, while there is a five-percent chance (1 in 20) of rolling a 20 on *Torg's* die, there's only a one-percent chance of rolling a 20 with *Masterbook's* dice.

We suggest that you use *Torg's* twenty-sided die instead of *Masterbook's* two ten-sided dice because it allows for more "heroic" rolls which is part of the overall tone of *Torg*. If you choose to use *Masterbook's* system, be aware that characters will be less likely to succeed at difficult tasks since they will not be generating high bonus numbers as often as they would using the twenty-sided die. Whichever dice system you decide to use, be sure and use the bonus chart from the same system.

If you choose to use the *Masterbook* dice system, you'll need to use new numbers when checking for disconnection; since you can never generate a total of 1 on two ten-sided dice, characters would never be disconnected by one-case contradictions! Instead, under the *Masterbook* system there are four-case contradictions (which are like *Torg's* one-case contradictions) and seven-case contradictions (which are like Torg's four-case contradictions.)

The four-case contradiction means that if the player generates a roll total (the total of the two ten-sided dice) of 4 or less, the character disconnects if the action involves a tool that violates either the character's reality or the local reality. A Core Earth character using a laser pistol in the Cyberpapacy for example would disconnect if her player rolled a total of 2, 3 or 4.

The seven-case contradiction means that if the character generates a roll total of 7 or less, the character disconnects if the action involves a tool that violates both the character's reality and the local reality. A Core Earth character using a laser pistol in Core Earth for example would disconnect if her player rolled a total of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7.

Possibilities and Life Points/Skill Points

Masterbook's Life Points are essentially the same as *Torg's* Possibility Points except that they're not restricted to a particular type of character (i.e., possibility-rated characters.) Everyone has at least one Life Point, even faceless thugs and henchmen. Additionally, *Masterbook* imposes a maximum of ten Life Points on characters, and adventure awards in *Masterbook* hand out fewer Life Points than *Torg* does with Possibility Points.

One big difference between Possibility Points and Life Points is that Life Points are not used to buy new skill adds. This is done instead with Skill Points, which are awarded separately from Life Points (and should a character gain enough Life Points to take him over the limit of ten Life Points, the excess is converted into Skill Points.)

When converting from *Torg* to *Masterbook,* the easiest approach is to continue using Possibility Points and ignore the rules concerning Life Points and Skill Points. If you choose to do this, any published *Masterbook* characters should have their Life Points converted to Possibility Points and they should probably have their number of points increased since *Masterbook* is more frugal with them than *Torg*.

If you decide to use Life Points and Skill Points, when converting *Torg* characters we suggest converting their Possibility Points straight into Life Points. If they have more than ten Possibility Points, give them ten Life Points and turn each excess Life Point into three Skill Points.

Damage Charts

Masterbook only has one damage chart, there's no distinction made between ords and possibility-rated characters. Additionally, under the *Masterbook* system it takes six wounds to kill someone instead of four, so the damage chart extends up to that amount at 20 result points instead of going up to four wounds at fifteen result points (for ords) like the *Torg* chart.

Masterbook also uses the result point method of determining damage bonuses, which is described in Chapter Four as an optional *Torg* rule in the sidebar "The 'Glass-Jawed Ninja' Problem". If you elect to use the *Masterbook* damage chart we suggest also using *Masterbook's* method of determining damage values since the chart was designed with that method in mind. If you choose to use the *Torg* damage system, we suggest sticking with *Torg's* method of determining damage values.

Cards

The Drama Deck is used in essentially the same way under *Masterbook* as it is in *Torg*. The only real differences are that *Masterbook* has a few cards that *Torg* does not have and that the bonuses given by the *Masterbook* cards are usually smaller, typically only a +1 bonus instead of the +3 found on *Torg's* cards.

To maintain the "heroic" atmosphere of *Torg*, we suggest using *Torg's* Drama Deck instead of *Masterbook's* deck, or at least increasing bonuses given by the *Masterbook* cards from +1 to +3. If you wish to incorporate some of *Masterbook's* unique cards into your *Torg*

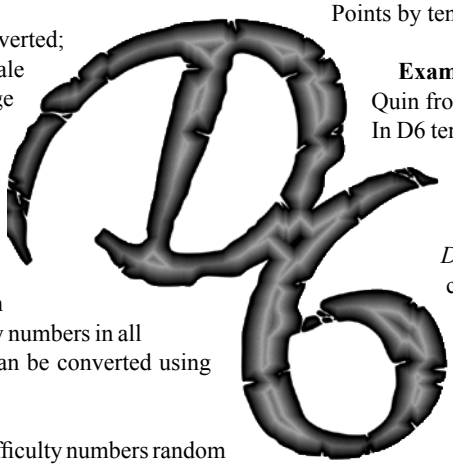
deck, the blank cards that came with your *Torg* deck can be used to represent those *Masterbook* cards in the *Torg* deck.

D6 System

Converting from the *Torg* system to *D6* requires a bit more work than converting to/from *Masterbook* because the systems are based on different game mechanics and concepts. However, the work isn't actually that difficult. For quick conversions, all you really need to do is divide all *Torg* values by three; the result indicates the Die Code under *D6* with any remainder equaling the pips. Since *D6* allows you to use whatever attributes and skills you want, there's no need to convert the *Torg* attributes and skills in any way, just use them as they are without modification.

Example: Terrill has a *Perception* attribute of 13 in *Torg* and an *alteration magic* skill value of 16. In *D6* terms he has a *Perception* attribute of (13 / 3 = 4 remainder 1) 4D+1 and an *alteration magic* skill code of (16 / 3 = 5 remainder 1) 5D+1. Terrill is armed with a dagger that has a damage value of STR+3. In *D6* terms it does (+3 / 3 = 1) STR+1D damage.

Difficulty numbers do not have to be converted; the *D6* difficulty scale parallels the *Torg* scale closely enough that there's no need to change the numbers. Note though that difficulty numbers based on another character's attributes or skills, such as using the *dodge* skill to avoid being shot, are no longer a set number but a Die Code and will have to be rolled every time a difficulty number needs to be determined. If you wish to maintain this random quality to difficulty numbers in all aspects of the game, difficulty numbers can be converted using the method above.



Example: Becky decides to make all difficulty numbers random so all of Terrill's spells need to have their Backlash and Difficulty Values converted. A spell which in *Torg* has a Backlash of 16 and a Difficulty of 10 would have a Backlash of 5D+1 and a Difficulty of 3D+1, which Becky would roll for each time Terrill tried casting that spell.

When converting from *D6* to *Torg,* simply reverse the equation and multiply the Die Code by three then add the pips to arrive at the *Torg* value.

Example: A character who has a Mind attribute of 3D+1 would have a Torg Mind attribute value of (3 x 3 = 9, 9 + 1 = 10) 10.

Disconnection Rules

Because *D6* uses a different dice system, contradiction checks need to be redefined to account for the different dice being used. Instead of *Torg's* one-case and four-case contradictions, *D6* uses one-two-case in place of one-case and one-case contradiction in place of four-case contradictions.

Use the Wild Die to check for contradictions. Whenever a 1 is rolled on the Wild Die, it indicates a possible disconnection. If the character's action violates both his own reality and the local reality, rolling a 1 on the Wild Die indicates the character has disconnected on a one-case contradiction.. A Core Earth character using a laser pistol in Core Earth would thus disconnect if his player rolled a 1 on the Wild Die.

If the character's action violates either his own reality or the local reality, when a 1 is rolled on the Wild Die the die is rolled again to see if the character disconnects. If on this second roll the Wild Die comes up either a 1 or a 2 then the character has disconnected on a one-two-contradiction. A Core Earth character using a laser pistol in the Cyberpapacy would be an example of a one-two-contradiction.

Possibilities and Fate Points/ Character Points

While the Fate Points and Character Points in *D6* may sound much like the Life Points and Character Points in *Masterbook,* their effects are different enough in *D6* that we suggest using the following rules rather than the ones suggested above for converting to *Masterbook*.

When converting from *Torg* to *D6*, give the character a number of Character Points equal to her Possibility Points. To determine the number of Fate Points the character has, divide her Possibility Points by ten and round to the nearest whole number.

Example: At the time Paul converts his character Quin from *Torg* to *D6*, Quin has 17 Possibility Points. In D6 terms, Quin has 17 Character Points and (17 / 10 = 1.7, round to nearest) 2 Fate Points.

Damage

D6 provides two methods for handling damage to characters. The basic method is that characters have a certain number of Body Points and the amount of damage an attack does (if it does any) is subtracted from a character's Body Points until it reaches zero, at which point they either pass out or die.

The second method is similar to *Torg's* system where the difference (result points) between the damage total and the character's *Toughness* roll determines the effects, if any, of the attack. We recommend using *D6's* wound system instead of Body Points because it provides a closer analogy to combat results under the *Torg* system.

Drama Deck

While *D6* does not have a Drama Deck of its own, you can use the *Torg* deck with it. Cards which provide a bonus to an action or an attribute have their bonus converted the same as everything else, by dividing by three to find the Die Code. For example, a *Willpower* card would add (+3 / 3 = 1) +1D to any *Perception* or *Mind* based die roll.

If you wish to use the Drama Deck to determine initiative while playing *D6*, the following conflict lines have their effects translated as follows:

Inspiration: If using Body Points, characters recover 2D worth of Body Points. If using the wound system, character's condition improves by one wound level. Players get one card for their hand like normal.

Up: Players get to roll twice their normal number of dice, just as if they had spent a Fate Point that round.

Fatigued: If using Body Points, characters lose 1D worth of Body Points. If using the wound system, character is considered Stunned for the round.

Stymied: Players lose their first reroll; if they roll a 6 on the Wild Die they do not get to reroll it and add. If they want to use Character Points, the first point they spend is negated by the Stymie; the limit of two Character Points per attempt still applies.

Setback: If the gamemaster cannot come up with a story-based setback result, they can choose to increase all difficulty numbers for the afflicted side by +2D for that round.

Scale

D6 uses a scaling system to represent large differences in mass between objects, such as between people and vehicles or other large structures. This is done to avoid the need for rolling a huge number of dice that would otherwise be needed to represent things like the *Toughness* of a tank or the damage done by a tank's main gun.

An M1 Abrams tank, for example, has a *Torg Toughness* of 22, +11 armor adds and its 105mm gun has a damage value of 29. With a straight conversion to D6 this would become a *Toughness* of 7D+1, 3D+2 armor (for a total of 11D to resist damage) and the gun would have a damage value of 9D+2. Quite a lot of dice to roll every round!

If you don't want to be rolling that many dice, here's a quick method of changing the converted die codes to Scaled die codes. Locate the approximate type or size of the object on the chart below and then subtract that many dice from the converted die codes. For items that have armor, divide the scale modifier and apply half to the object's *Toughness* die code and half to its armor die code.

In some cases, an object may have two scale codes, one for its *Toughness* and one for its weapons. For example, the anti-aircraft missiles on an aircraft carrier would use the scale modifier for a jet fighter instead of the scale modifier for an aircraft carrier since the missiles are intended for jets, not aircraft carriers.

Size	Scale Modifier
Human	none
Car	-2D
Tank	-4D
Jet Fighter	-6D
Aircraft Carrier	-10D

Example: Our M1 Abrams tank has a scale modifier of -4D. First off we apply that straight to the tank's main gun, giving us a damage value of 5D+2. We divide the scale modifier by two and apply half (-2D) to its *Toughness* to get 5D+1 and half to its armor value to get 1D+2.

When converting from *D6* to *Torg,* simply reverse the scale modifier and apply it to the die code before multiplying by three to get the *Torg* value.

Chapter 10: Magic

"I've never heard the word 'abracadabra' before. Is that a word of power in your language?"

—Magister Mathea of the TwoTowers to one of her Core Earth students

Magic is a powerful, varied force. In some cosms, such as Core Earth, the power has waned, but in realms like Aysle magic is strong. While magic is always magic, it may be controlled in a number of different ways and have different effects. Most cosms use the same basic principles but a few have developed unique methods of creating magical effects.

The rules in this chapter are for "normal" magic spells. Alternate forms of magic, such as Orrorsh's *occult*, Tharkold's *occultech* and the Nile Empire's *Nile mathematics* and *Nile engineering*, have unique rules governing how they work. While they may utilize some of the concepts and rules found in this chapter, the complete rules for using these different styles of magic are found in their respective sourcebooks.

The Basic Structure of Magic

Every magic spell is made up of many different elements. The two key elements are the *type* of magic and the *arcane knowledge* involved in the spell.

There are four basic types of magic, each with a separate skill devoted to it: *alteration, apportation, conjuration,* and *divination. Alteration* causes a change in an existing object, entity or condition. *Apportation* deals with movement. *Conjuration* creates an object, entity, or condition. *Divination* perceives and interprets information.

The skills are akin to verbs in sentences. The magic skill used in a spell determines what basic effect the spell will have. To create a spell may require several such "verbs." For example, *conjuration* to create an effect and then *apportation* to move it to its target. However, depending on the cosm most magicians do not create their own spells but instead learn them from a *grimoire* (magical tome of stored spells).

Grimoire Spells

Casting a *grimoire spell* only requires the one magic skill necessary for the **most important component** of the effect.

The Primary Rule of Magic

Magic is not physics, or chemistry, or biology. It is a distinct discipline with its own rules. Magic works by extending the will of the spellcaster, interweaving it with nature and coming up with a result. The primary rule of magic is a spell will have no positive effect without being willed by the caster; negative or non-effects are generally a result of insufficient control and will.

Thus magic and technology are at odds at a fundamental level. Technology works with natural laws, while magic intervenes in those laws. Each has its advantages and drawbacks.

Magic can accomplish spectacular feats beyond the possibility of even sophisticated technology, but is limited by the primary rule of magic. To those raised in a technological society, the very workings of magic make no sense. A magically propelled bullet could be deadly within the range of the spell, but once it reached the end of the range it would fall straight to the ground. Out of the range of the mind that powered it, the bullet has no velocity, no momentum, and no physically measurable force whatsoever. But within the range of the spell, such concepts as friction, angular momentum, and other crucial underpinnings of science have greatly reduced meanings.

In a sense all magic is impossible, in that magical effects can create effects at odds with the local laws of nature. When the magic wears off, physical laws resume and things go back to what's considered normally possible.

However, magic is real in that when magic takes effect, supernatural forces can affect the natural. A rock split by magic will not miraculously reseal itself when the magic wears off. "Nature concedes the destruction of anything, the construction of nothing" is a magician's maxim.

Magic and natural law can work together. For example, magicians quickly made the messy discovery that wounds could be healed easily through use of *alteration magic,* but they would reappear when the spell wore off. When more effort was put into the spell design, a solution was found: instead of just closing the wound, if it is repaired at the same fine level as the natural healing process, then when the spell wears off, the healing will have proceeded in accordance with natural laws.

For further scholarly discussions about the nature of magic, see the *Aysle sourcebook.*

Secondary effects are subsumed into the spell at the time of its design, making them unnecessary for purposes of casting the spell. For example, altering a small ball of pitch into a blazing ball of flame is the most important element of a fireball spell; moving the fireball is secondary. While the magician who designed the spell would have to take into account the problems of moving it (*apportation*) and accuracy (*divination*), once designed and formed into a grimoire spell these effects are "built in"; casting the spell only requires the *alteration magic* skill.

Arcane Knowledges

The *arcane knowledge* used in a spell determines how the spell effect will manifest itself. If spells are sentences, arcane knowledges would be nouns and modifiers. Arcane knowledges are like skills in that characters have adds in the arcane knowledges they know and adds can be purchased in game play like a normal skill. But arcane knowledges do not fall under any attribute and they are rarely used in play like a normal skill.

Arcane knowledge may not be used unskilled, a character may not learn or cast a spell that requires an arcane knowledge that she does not know. Simply possessing an arcane knowledge may not be enough to allow a character to cast a particular spell, some characters may need to purchase multiple adds in a knowledge in order to use and learn the grimoire spells they want. See "Acquiring Spells" later in this chapter for more information.

The cosm of Aysle is probably the most magically advanced of those involved in the Possibility Wars. The mages of Aysle have studied the science of magic for generations, and have compiled a list of arcane knowledges. The list is not long, and it is not known if it is complete. The magically adept techno-demons of Tharkold are thought to have a few arcane knowledges available to them that the Ayslish do not know about, but this may also be a side-effect of their peculiar blending of magic and technology.

Complete or not, a great number of effects may be constructed from these arcane knowledges, which are believed to be universally consistent from cosm to cosm. Even in realities that have developed their own unique forms of magic, such as the Nile Empire, Tharkold and Orrorsh, these knowledges have been shown to exist and function in the same manner in those realities.

Arcane Knowledges

- The Essences
  - Death
  - Life
  - Time
  - True Knowledge
- The Principles
  - Darkness
  - Light
  - Magic
- The Mixed Forces
  - Inanimate Forces
  - Living Forces
- The Elements
  - Air
  - Earth
  - Fire
  - Metal
  - Plant
  - Water
- The Kindred
  - Aquatic
  - Avian
  - Earthly
  - Elemental
  - Enchanted
  - Entity
  - Folk
- Process Theorem Knowledges
  - Cast Time
  - Control
  - Duration
  - Range
  - Speed
  - State

Essences

The *Essences* are believed to be at the pinnacle of the natural order, and are often required to perform the most spectacular effects possible with magic. *Essences* are the most difficult of the knowledges to work with, requiring great skill and patience. The *Essences,* for reasons as yet not understood, cannot be combined with *apportation magic* but work fine with the other three magic skills.

Death: The essence of corruption and non-existence as well as death.

Life: The essence of creation, renewal and purity as well as life.

Time: The essence of change and chaos as well as time. Time and True Knowledge are complimentary forces in the same way Death and Life compliment each other.

True Knowledge: The fundamental aspects of physical properties and "true nature", that which resists change or remains unchanged. It is "order" to Time's "chaos."

Principles

The *Principles* are pure forces of a high order. When used in pure form, they conform well to the will of the magician. Ayslish magical theoreticians believe *darkness, light* and *magic* all to be the result of interplay between the *Essences: Darkness* is the product of *death* and *time, light* is the result of *time* and *true knowledge,* and *magic* is the result of *time* and *life.*

Darkness: Encompasses spiritual as well as physical darkness. Negative emotions and thoughts such as fear and greed or confusion and doubt are part of Darkness. Physical darkness is not merely the absence of light, it is a condition in its own right.

Light: Encompasses spiritual as well as physical light. Positive emotions such as love, loyalty and bravery are part of Light.

Magic: Embodies change in the living and unliving. Magic is one of the most important arcane knowledges used in the design of spells.

Mixed Forces

The *Mixed Forces* represent a bridge between the *Essences* and *Principles* and the knowledges below them, as well as combinations of elemental forces. They are difficult to handle, but they have great applications in the hands of a skilled magician.

Inanimate Forces: Encompasses the forces which affect elements —heat, electricity, magnetism, forces which bind elements together and forces which make them appear as they do.

Living Forces: Encompasses the forces that energize and control the health and vitality of all living creatures.

Elements

The *Elements* are often easy to work with, even for a beginning mage. All the *Elements* are considered to have a small spark of life, but it is life without spirit. The techno-demons of Tharkold are rumored to know of additional *Elements* that involve high-tech materials and concepts unknown to the Ayslish.

Air: Includes all substances that are gasses at room temperature (except water vapor, which is considered to be Water.)

Earth: Includes glass, ceramics and other materials made primarily from earthen components that are not metallic in origin.

Fire: Includes any form of combustion. Nuclear reactions (fusion reactors, atomic bombs, etc.) are not included, those are considered Inanimate Forces.

Metal: Includes all substances found in the earth that, unlike substances under the Earth knowledge, are pliable when heat is applied. Mercury is considered a metal with a "strong proclivity" to Water but some substances considered metals by Core Earth science, such as arsenic, would fall under the Earth knowledge.

Plant: Plants are considered *Elements* because even though alive, they are without mind or spirit. The knowledge includes all that grows on dirt, water and sun alone as well as anything derived from such life. The Ayslish have thus classified petroleum and all petroleum-based materials under the Plant knowledge rather than under Earth.

Water: Includes water and all other liquids, though some liquids are considered a mixture of Water with another *Element* and could be affected by either Water or the appropriate knowledge for the other component.

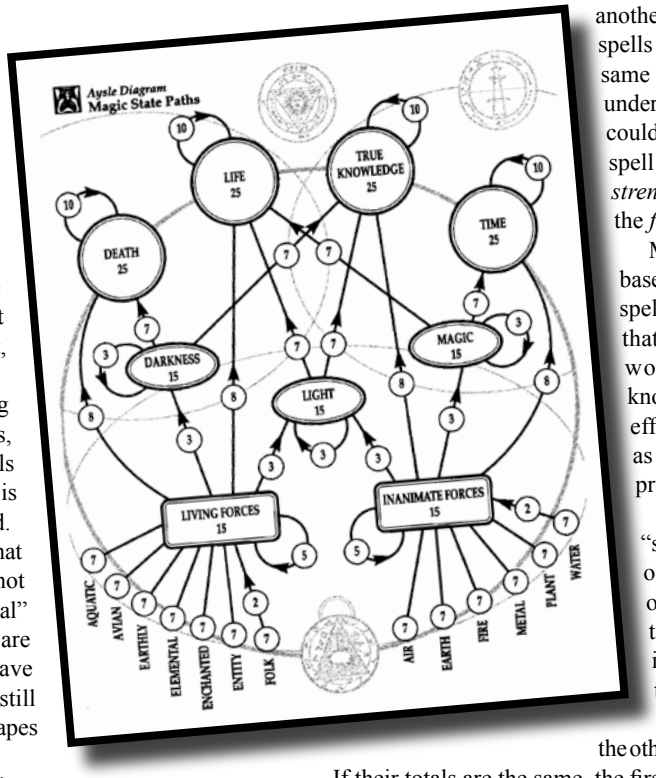
Kindred

The *Kindred* are the living beings and creatures that possess a spiritual life-force separate from the physical body. The *Kindred* are often easy to work with and many minor magicians will be able to use them.

Aquatic: Covers all marine life including amphibians. While the Ayslish have not yet classified it since they haven't discovered it yet, bacteria are considered Aquatic.

Avian: Includes all flying creatures, including insects, birds, flying reptiles and flying mammals such as bats. One notable exception is dragons; they fall under Enchanted.

Earthly: Covers all creatures that live on or in the ground that have not transcended their "primal" or "animal" natures. Creatures such as humans are considered Folk because they have overcome these "primal urges" that still dominate related creatures such as apes and chimpanzees.



Elemental: These are beings composed directly of elements that possess an intelligence and/or spirit that sets them apart from the *Elements*. Each of the *Elements* can have elemental life forms. This knowledge rather than the corresponding Element knowledge affect such life.

Enchanted: Encompasses all creatures that subsist on or weave magic into the core of their being. Dragons, unicorns and faeries are examples of Enchanted creatures. Many of the humanoid races that require magical energies to survive, such as Aysle's elves and giants, do not fall under this knowledge though, they are still considered Folk.

Entity: Creatures that violate the natural order of life, whose existence is at odds with nature, are covered by this knowledge. Ghosts, undead, golems and demons are all considered Entities. This includes the techno-demons of Tharkold.

Folk: Covers intelligent beings whose defining relationship is with others of their kind, rather than with an element or the supernatural. Humans, dwarves, edeinos and even the magically dependent elves and giants are all Folk.

The *process theorem knowledges* are different from the other knowledges in that there are no spells based these theorems. Instead, the theorems are used primarily during the spell design process described in the *Aysle sourcebook.* Magicians also use them to *manipulate* grimoire spells, a process that lets them "fine-tune" the values of a spell when it is cast. Manipulating spells is covered later in this chapter.

The Principle of Definition

An important rule of magic is *the Principle of Definition.* This states that a character or object may not be subjected to two active spells at the same time **if both spells are based on the same arcane knowledge.** An *active spell* is one which still has time left on its duration.

A mage may replace one spell with another, but a target cannot be under two spells using the same knowledge at the same time. For example, a character under the effect of a *strength* spell could not be affected by a *languages* spell without losing the effects of the *strength* spell first, for each spell uses the *folk* knowledge.

Many forms of defensive magic are based on the Principle of Definition. A spell using the Fire arcane knowledge that protects against magical fire would prevent any other Fire knowledge spell from having any effect on the protected character as long as it is weaker than the protection spell.

A spell cast upon a target has a "strength" equal to the effect value of the spell. When another spell of the same type is cast upon the target, the new spell's effect total is compared to the effect value of the previous spell. The spell with the higher total takes effect, and the other spell is immediately dissipated. If their totals are the same, the first spell remains in effect.

Example: The evil magician Salbane has hidden a valuable artifact that Magoth is trying to locate. Salbane has protected the artifact from magical detection by placing an Inanimate Forces spell called *Hide Things* on it with an effect value of 12. Magoth is using an Inanimate Forces spell called *Find Things* to try and locate the artifact. When Magoth casts his spell, its effect value is compared to that of Salbane's protection spell. Because *Find Things* has an effect total of 0, Magoth's spell cannot penetrate Salbane's spell and the artifact remains hidden from detection.

Synonymous Knowledges

The restrictions of the Principle of Definition have frustrated mages from many cosms, and ways around its restrictions have been sought for untold centuries. After extensive research and experimentation, some cosms discover a solution: *synonymous knowledges*.

Synonymous knowledges are arcane knowledges which are nearly identical to the known, existing knowledges, but use slightly different definitions of the same concept. Using these parallel knowledges, a mage can design spells that will get around the Principle of Definition.

For example, a mage who has the Fire knowledge and a synonymous knowledge he calls Combustion can have two flame-based spells active upon himself (or another character or object) at the same time, even though both are essentially using the same knowledge.

A synonymous knowledge would also let the mage completely ignore any defensive spells or magical barriers that operate on the Principle of Definition. Our mage with Combustion could design a version of a fireball spell that would ignore any Fire knowledge defensive spell that relies on the Principle of Definition to prevent another spell from affecting a target.

Synonymous knowledges require a sizable amount of effort and time to research properly, so they are zealously guarded and quite rare. Should a character gain access to knowledge of a synonymous knowledge, he must learn it from scratch; despite being so close to another knowledge, a synonymous knowledge is a distinct knowledge - it just happens to work in the same way as its synonyms.

Also, all-new spells must be designed for use with the new knowledge, a character cannot simply cast a Fire spell with the Combustion knowledge. He will have to design a version of that spell that uses Combustion instead of Fire as its knowledge.

Acquiring Spells

A mage begins the game with 12 additional skill points, usable only for arcane knowledges and spells. Each point not used for arcane knowledge entitles the mage to an additional spell; for example, if a player uses eight of his character's bonus skill points to buy arcane knowledge adds, he may buy four spells. More information on acquiring spells during character creation can be found in Chapter One.

During the course of the game, a mage may learn new spells from a grimoire. To do this, he must have undisturbed access to a grimoire and either spend one possibility or six weeks studying the new spell (studying is the only way ord magicians can learn new spells.) Once a grimoire spell has been learned, the mage does not need to read the grimoire again in order to cast the spell. Spells can also be cast by reading directly from the grimoire without having to learn the spell first, but this is more difficult than casting a learned spell.

Mage player characters are assumed to have access to a grimoire before the game begins, and so may purchase additional spells with possibilities if they wish. Some characters may also have a grimoire of their own, possibly containing additional spells they haven't learned yet. A character with a grimoire of their own can copy spells from other grimoires into their own book without having to learn it first, but each spell requires a week to transcribe.

What Can Be Learned

A character's magic skills and arcane knowledges determine which spells he is capable of learning; many spells require a high degree of skill and cannot be learned by just anyone. Besides having the necessary skill and knowledge, the character must possess a certain level of ability before a spell can be learned.

Each spell write-up has a *skill requirement* that lists the necessary magic skill, arcane knowledge and a number. To determine if a character can learn the spell, his appropriate magic skill plus his adds in the specified arcane knowledge must equal or exceed the number given. If the character's total isn't high enough, he cannot learn the spell. (He can still attempt to cast it directly from the grimoire though.)

Example: Alan wants to know if Terrill can learn the spell Conjured Fireball. In the spell description, the skill requirement is "*conjuration/fire* 20". Terrill has a *conjuration magic* skill value of 13 and he has +2 adds in the Fire arcane knowledge for a total of 15. This is less than the number given in the skill requirement so Terrill cannot learn the spell.

Casting Spells

To cast a spell that the character has learned, she generates a *spell skill total* with the appropriate magic skill and compares this total to the spell difficulty as listed in the spell description. **The arcane knowledge required for the spell is not included in the casting total.**

Example: Terrill wants to cast his Away Sight spell. It is a divination spell and has a difficulty of 11. Terrill's *divination magic* skill is 15. His adds of Light, the arcane knowledge required for the spell, are not figured into his casting total. Alan rolls an 8, which gives Terrill a skill total of 13. The spell is successfully cast.

Principle of Confused Definitions

The Principle of Definition was inconsistently handled in some of the earlier material published for *Torg*. The original rulebook said to compare skill totals of the two mages who cast the spells. Some spells published later said to compare the casting total of the new spell to the first spell's effect value, others said to compare the new spell's effect value to the skill total of the old spell.

Gamemasters may elect to allow the spells to work as written or modify them to use the rule given in this book. The rule was changed to use effect values rather than the magician's skill totals to reduce the amount of information that gamemasters and players must keep track of for spells that have been cast.

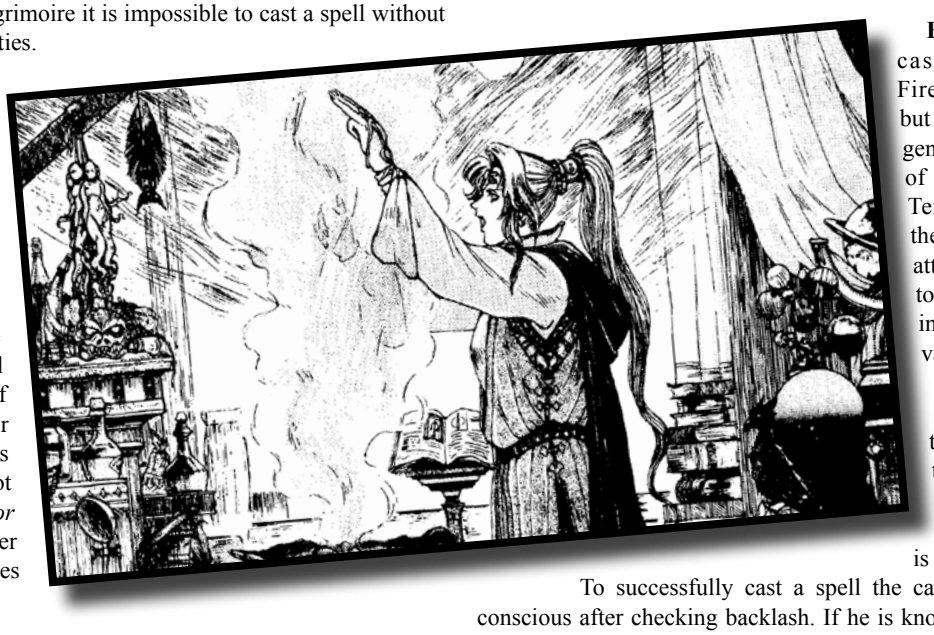
Casting From a Grimoire

Characters can cast spells directly from a grimoire without having to learn the spell first. If they are capable of learning the spell (i.e., they meet the skill requirement of the spell) then they may attempt to cast the spell with a +4 penalty added to both the difficulty and the *backlash*.

Example: Terrill has come across a grimoire that contains the *Haste* spell, a spell he does not know. It has a difficulty of 11 and a backlash of 16. Terrill meets the skill requirement of the spell so if he were to attempt casting it directly from the grimoire it would have a difficulty of 15 and a backlash of 20.

Characters may also attempt to cast spells directly from a grimoire that they cannot learn (i.e., they do not meet the skill requirement of the spell) but it is much more dangerous. The character must still possess the required magic skill and arcane knowledge of the spell; even from a grimoire it is impossible to cast a spell without the right basic abilities.

The difficulty of the spell is **not** increased but the backlash is increased by +8. Additionally, there is a chance that the spell will prove to be too powerful for the mage and she will lose control of its effects. If the character successfully casts the spell but does not get at least a *Superior* success level with her casting total, she loses control of the spell.



Example: The grimoire that Terrill found also has the Conjured Fireball spell in it. Terrill cannot learn the spell yet but he does have both conjuration magic and the Fire knowledge. The spell's normal difficulty is 6 and the normal backlash is 19. If Terrill were to try and cast this spell from the grimoire, the difficulty would remain 6 but the backlash would increase to 27. If Terrill casts the spell but his casting total isn't at least 13 (seven result points is a Superior success), the spell will go off but it will not do what Terrill wants, he will have no control over the effects.

When a spell goes out of control, the exact effects are up to the gamemaster. Essentially anything the character would normally determine for the spell, such as its target, is out of his hands. If the spell normally gives the magician control over aspects like duration, shape of the spell effect, determine targets for an area effect spell, anything that the magician would normally determine should be determined randomly by the gamemaster.

Backlash

When a character attempts to cast a spell, regardless of whether it is successful or not, the next step is to determine the consequences of the spell's *backlash.* Backlash is the natural resistance of the supernatural to being manipulated, a type of feedback unleashed when the caster attempts to work magic. Backlash is a damage value that is compared to the **casting skill total;** the amount by which the backlash number exceeds the casting total is read as result points on the Combat Results Table. Damage taken from spell backlash is normal damage with possible mental consequences (see "Mental Damage Effects".).

Example: Terrill successfully casts his Altered Fireball spell with a casting skill total of 12. The backlash of the spell is 21. Becky looks up 9 result points (21 - 12) of damage on the Combat Results Table and Terrill takes a Knockdown K/O 3 damage result.

If the character is casting a spell that she has learned, she is partially protected against bad casting totals causing large amounts of backlash damage. If the **casting skill total** is less than the caster's *Mind,* their *Mind* value is used instead.

Example: Terrill casts his Altered Fireball spell again but Alan rolls poorly, generating a skill total of only 6. Because Terrill has learned the spell, his *Mind* attribute of 11 is used to resist the backlash instead of his skill value of 6.

A spellcaster takes backlash each time he attempts a spell, regardless of whether or not it is cast successfully.

To successfully cast a spell the caster must still be conscious after checking backlash. If he is knocked unconscious (or killed) by the backlash, the spell effect fizzles out of existence before fully forming.

"Casting On the Fly"

"We lose more wizards to the folly that is casting spells on the fly."

—Kurgar the Melancholy
after losing his fourth apprentice

"Casting on the fly" is used to refer to the dangerous practice of casting spells that have not been formalized into grimoire form. It is essentially on-the-spot spell creation, requiring the magician to use all four magic skills at once to deal with every aspect of the spell instead of only having to worry about the single most important aspect of a spell, as is the case with grimoire spells.

Since casting on the fly involves using the spell design system, the rules for casting on the fly are part of the spell design rules in the *Aysle sourcebook.*

Example: Terrill has a K result of damage from a previous spell that he cast. He casts another spell successfully but the backlash damage is an O 2 result. The K and the O combine into a KO and Terrill is knocked unconscious by the backlash. His spell casting is no longer successful, it immediately fails and the spell effect never even comes into existence.

Mental Damage Effects

When damage is taken from a spell's backlash, it can have mental consequences. Even though this type of damage is treated the same as physical damage, it has additional mental effects and is called *mental damage.*

When a character is KOed by mental damage, the character loses the ability to use the arcane knowledge required for the spell that knocked him out. This does **not** include falling unconscious from accumulated shock, only from KO conditions. The character does not have to take the full KO condition from mental damage, an O from backlash combined with a K from physical damage or vice versa will still cause the character to lose the use of the knowledge.

Even after the KO damage has been healed, the knowledge doesn't immediately return. The character must wait 24 hours or be treated specifically for the loss of mental abilities. The Refresh miracle (see Chapter Twelve) can be used for this purpose, as can the *psychology* skill.

If the character suffers wound damage from backlash **and** his wound level becomes *heavily wounded* or greater, the character loses both the arcane knowledge and the appropriate magic skill used to cast that spell. He will not regain either until 24 hours have passed or he has received treatment as mentioned above. Additionally, his wound status cannot be healed to better than *wounded* until he has restored his skills.

Spell Bonus

If the character is still conscious after backlash from a successful spell, the spell works. Every spell description has a section labeled "Bonus Number to:". The bonus number generated while casting the spell is added to the part of the spell listed in the *Bonus Number to,* increasing the effectiveness of some part of the spell.

Example: Terrill successfully casts Away Sight. His bonus number was +2. The spell description says that the bonus goes to range, so the spell's range value of 13 is increased to 15.

Types of Spells

Most spells are cast directly, meaning that they take effect immediately and the effect is controlled by the spellcaster. Not all spells are like this though. Some spells can be placed into objects or other people, allowing someone other than the mage to control the effect, while others may need to remain functioning even when the magician is not present, such as a warding spell that protects the magician's home while he's away adventuring.

A direct spell remains "connected" to the spellcaster for the purposes of determining contradictions. For example, the target of a *Weakness* spell does not make contradiction checks because the spell is affecting him, the effect originates from the spellcaster so it is the spellcaster who has to make any necessary contradiction checks. This is not necessarily the case with the other types of spells.

There are three other types of spells in addition to those cast directly; *focused, impressed* and *wards.*

Focused Spells

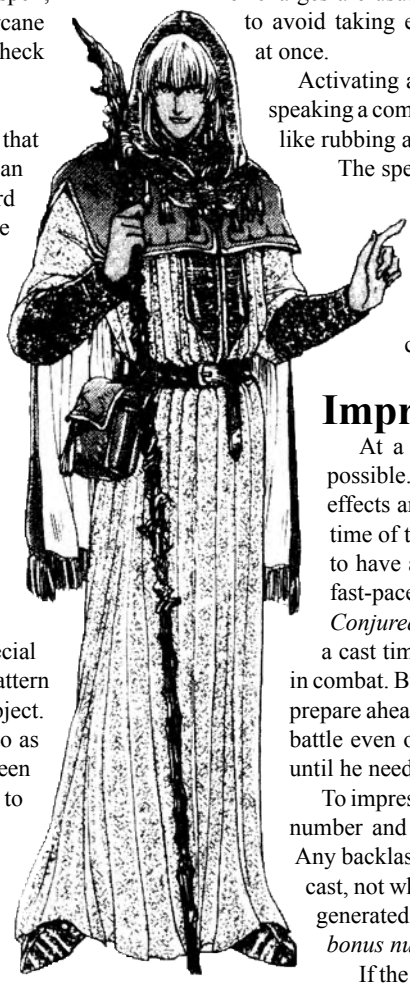
Focused spells are spells that place their effect into an object so that the effect originates from that object rather than from the spellcaster. Focused spells are most commonly used to create magic items such as protective talismans and enchanted weapons. They

are also used to give the recipient of a spell effect control over that effect.

Focused magic requires a Magic axiom of 10 to function and contradictions are the responsibility of the person controlling or operating the spell effect, not the magician who cast the spell. Focused magic does not vanish if the person using it disconnects in a reality that doesn't support it, it is simply inaccessible to the disconnected person. When that person reconnects, if the spell duration has not expired the magic is still there.

Using an item with a focused spell effect requires no special knowledge or abilities. **Control** of a focused spell effect does requires the same magic skill used to cast the spell, though the person does not need to possess the arcane knowledge and they do not have to make a skill check of any kind.

Example: Terrill buys a magic sword in Aysle that has a flaming blade effect focused into it, which can be turned on and off by anyone holding the sword if they have the *alteration magic* skill and know the command word. Even if he tells his fellow Storm Knights the command word none of them could turn the flames on or off because none of them have *alteration magic.* Terrill could activate the sword's flames and then give the sword to one of his friends and the sword would continue to burn for them because using the effect does not require anything special from them to operate.



Spell Charges

At a Magic axiom of 13, it becomes possible to create a special type of focused spell, one that allows a magician to focus *spell patterns* rather than spell effects into an object. Additionally, this special type of spell allows for more than one spell pattern of an arcane knowledge to be focused into an object. These multiple patterns are commonly referred to as "charges". For example, an item that can hold fourteen spell patterns of the Fire arcane knowledge is said to hold fourteen Fire knowledge charges.

A *spell pattern* is in essence the spell itself; it is what brings the magical effect into existence. By placing the pattern into an object, it becomes possible for anyone with the right magic skill to cast the spell, even if they do not possess the arcane knowledge normally required for casting the spell.

Example: Terrill comes into possession of an "air wand", a wand enchanted to hold spells of the Air knowledge. This particular wand contains four charges of the *Floater* spell. Even though Terrill does not the Air knowledge, he does have the *apportation magic* skill so he can use the wand to cast *Floater* up to four times

While it would seem that having multiple spells of the same arcane knowledge in an object violates the Principle of Definition, the Principle only prohibits active spell **effects** of the same knowledge affecting an object simultaneously, not spell patterns. The Principle of Definition would prohibit an object from being able to hold spell patterns of two different knowledges though, because the spells used to enchant the object would be of the same knowledge.

Spell charges cannot be held indefinitely by an object though, the spell used to enchant the object has a duration like any other spell. When that duration expires, any charges still in the object are lost. Permanent magic, as described later in this chapter, can be used to get around this restriction to create magic items that will indefinitely hold their charges (though the charges will still have their normal durations, they won't be permanent.)

To fill the charges of an enchanted item, the magician must cast each spell he wishes to place inside the item. As long as the spell is cast successfully its pattern is placed inside the item. Backlash damage is assessed normally, so items that can hold a large number of charges are usually filled over a spread out period of time to avoid taking excessive amounts of backlash damage all at once.

Activating a charge is usually a simple action, such as speaking a command word or performing a ritualistic action like rubbing a finger over a certain part of the object.

The spell patterns placed into the enchanted object do not have to be focused spells; they can be any type of spell. They can even be impressed spells if such magic is available (see below.) Information about creating spells that enchant objects to hold charges can be found in the *Aysle sourcebook.*

Impressed Spells

At a Magic axiom of 17, *impressed* spells are possible. Impressed spells are cast normally but their effects are held in check and then released at a later time of the magician's choosing. This allows a spell to have a lengthy casting time but still be useful in fast-paced situations such as combat. For example, *Conjured Fireball* is a powerful combat spell but has a cast time of one hour, making it impossible to cast in combat. But because it can be impressed, the mage can prepare ahead of time by casting the spell long before the battle even occurs and then holding the effect in check until he needs it.

To impress a spell, the caster rolls to beat the difficulty number and calculates backlash as for a normal spell. Any backlash damage is taken when the spell is initially cast, not when the effect is released. The bonus number generated when impressing a spell is **not** applied to the *bonus number to* portion of the spell.

If the spell is successfully cast, it is impressed into the magician's mind. The spell may then be released within a combat round (ten seconds) at any future time.

A mage may hold in his mind as many impressed spells as the total of his **adds** in *conjuration magic* and the State arcane knowledge. The two together are a measure of his knowledge of the spell impression process. He may impress several different spells or he may impress the same spell several times, in any combination.

Once impressed, a spell remains impressed until it is released or until the mage chooses to dissipate it in order to make room for a different impressed spell. There is no time limit on how long a spell can remain impressed.

Example: Terrill has +2 adds in his *conjuration magic* skill and no adds in the State arcane knowledge. He can carry two impressed spells in his mind at any one time.

When releasing the impressed spell, the caster must roll again to generate a bonus number, which is then added to the *bonus number to* portion of the spell. Since difficulty and backlash have already been checked, the mage never takes backlash from releasing an impressed spell. If the impressed spell requires using the magician's casting skill total to determine if a target is hit, as is the case with most combat spells, the bonus number from this second roll is used to determine the skill total.

If a magician disconnects in a reality that does not support impressed magic, any impressed spells he has cannot be released. They are still present in his mind; he simply cannot access them. After he reconnects, he will be able to release them normally. While disconnected in a reality that does not support impressed magic the magician also cannot impress any new spells. If he tries, the spell effect will go off normally when the casting process is completed.

It is possible to impress spells into objects or into other people, allowing someone other than the spellcaster to release the spell effect. Impressed spells to be placed in objects or other people need to be designed for that purpose; it cannot be done with a regular impressed spell. When this is done, contradictions become the responsibility of whoever possesses the impressed spell effect, not the spellcaster. Unlike focused spell effects, impressed effects do not require any particular magic skill to control. For the rules on how to impress spells into objects or other people, see the *Aysle sourcebook.*

Example: If Terrill's flaming sword used impressed magic rather than focused magic, then anyone who knew the command word could turn the flames on and off, it would not require the *alteration magic* skill to do so.

Warding Spells

Warding spells are an advanced form of focused magic first available at Magic 15 that foreshadows some elements of impressed magic. A warding spell is cast normally, almost always focused upon an object or location, but the effect of the spell does not go into effect immediately. The spell can be programmed to "trigger" its effect when it detects a certain condition or event. Most wards are used as traps and alarms and the trigger can be defined as the lack of a certain condition or event too. For example, a mage may set an alarm ward on the door to his library that is triggered when a certain word is not spoken before the door is opened. Because wards are most often focused into objects or on a location rather than a living creature, if a ward is placed somewhere that does not have the required Magic axiom, it is immediately dispelled because there is nothing supporting the contradiction.

Like an impressed spell, a ward can hold its effect indefinitely. The duration given in a ward spell description indicates how long the **effect** lasts once it is triggered. Once triggered, a ward spell expires like a normal spell, it does not "reset" and keep functioning (but see "Permanent Magic" later in this chapter for information on ward spells that can reset themselves.)

Warding spells do not automatically detect whatever condition has been programmed as their trigger; a ward has a *detection value* built into it by the magician who created the spell. The detection value of a spell is equal to the *divination magic* skill plus the adds of the knowledge to be detected of the magician who designed the spell.

Example: A magician with *divination magic* 15 and +5 adds in Folk designs a ward that is triggered when it detects dwarves (who are covered by the Folk knowledge.) His ward spell will have a *detection value* of (15 + 5) 20.

When a ward might be triggered by a condition, the gamemaster generates an action total for the ward using its *detection value.* The normal difficulty to detect a condition is 8. Characters who have the *divination magic* skill may attempt to magically circumvent detection by wards if they are aware of the ward and know what arcane knowledge it is set to detect. a character trying to avoid a ward generates an "active defense" total with his *divination magic* skill (minimum bonus number of +1) and that becomes the difficulty for the ward to detect the character.

Example: Magoth knows that the doorway to the evil wizard Salbane's library has a ward that detects if a password is spoken before the door is opened. Magoth generates a *divination magic* skill total that represents his knowledge of how wards work and his ability to skirt the edges of its trigger, hopefully doing well enough to keep the ward from detecting that the door was opened without the password being spoken first.

If the character knows or suspects that a ward is present but does not know what it is set to detect, he may still generate a divination magic total to try and avoid detection but has a -3 penalty on the attempt.

If there are multiple occurrences of the trigger condition, the ward gets the appropriate Many on One modifier for the number of possible trigger conditions.

Example: Salbane has placed a ward in a corridor that detects metal weapons. Magoth is carrying his sword and brass knuckles, two metal weapons, so the ward gets a +2 bonus to its detection total.

Illusionary Magic

When most people think of "illusion spells", they think of something that creates a false perception or a belief in someone who views the illusion - there's a pit in the ground where there really isn't one, a doorway is concealed by the appearance of a blank wall, and so on. While *Torg* does have spells that do things like this, "illusionary magic" is used in *Torg* to refer to something more than that.

Illusions are magical "cheats," they're shortcuts in conjuring magical effects that let the effect be created without expending the magical energy necessary to create the **full** reality of the effect. Illusions can run the gamut from fully illusory (the false perceptions mentioned above) to something that is almost real (a bridge over a chasm that can actually be walked across.)

There are only two types of magic that can be illusionary, conjurations and transformations. Spells that divine, move or modify something within its natural limits are never illusionary. The difference between a transformation and a modification is that a modification can only work with what already exists in the target. You could modify a dwarf so that he appears to be a different dwarf but you couldn't modify him into being a frog, doing that would require transformation magic.

The extent to which a conjuration or transformation is illusionary depends on the type of arcane knowledge involved. Conjurations and transformations that use the *Essences* are always real. The "cheating" comes from using a knowledge below the *Essences*; the spell is easier to cast but this comes at the cost of its effect being "less real" than it would be if an *Essence* was used.

How "real" an illusion is to those who view it can depend on the belief of others who see the illusion. Possibility energy generated by their belief provides the illusion with reality, and as long as

there is belief, the spell effect is for all intents and purposes real. (Characters do not lose any of their own possibility energy to this process, their interaction with the illusion creates new possibility energy. This generation of possibility energy is an aspect of the way the Magic axiom is supported by people's belief in magic, see Chapter Seven for more details.)

This effect is temporary, though - as soon as the belief ceases (either because the believers leave the area or because someone *disbelieves* and becomes convinced that the object is an illusion), the illusion vanishes as well. For this reason a mage could never conjure an illusion where no one else is around, leave, and expect it to still be there when he comes back at a later time. Without observers, illusions cease to exist.

To disbelieve, a character generates a *Mind* or *willpower* total. *Willpower* can only be used outside of round play to disbelieve illusions, during round play characters must rely on their base *Mind.* The difficulty number to disbelieve depends on the type of arcane knowledge used in the spell. The difficulty to disbelieve when a *Principle* is used is 15, with a *Mixed Force* it is 12 and with a *Kindred* or an *Element* the difficulty is 8.

Some spells may further modify the difficulty to disbelieve; this will be indicated in the spell description and either a modifier or a difficulty value will be provided. Additionally, the number of beings who **do** believe the illusion increases the difficulty for anyone else to disbelieve; this is because the possibility energy from their belief makes it "more real". The Modified Difficulty column of the One on Many chart is used to determine the difficulty increase based on the number of believers.

Example: An army of conjured skeletal warriors confronts a party of six Storm Knights. One of the Storm Knights wants to disbelieve but his five companions believe the magic is real. Using the One on Many chart, because his five friends believe the skeletons are real the single disbelieving Storm Knight has the difficulty raised to DN+8. (Note that the number of skeletal warriors present has no effect on the difficulty of disbelieving since it is a single spell effect being disbelieved.)

Illusionary Magic in Aysle

Illusionary magic is especially potent in the cosm and realm of Aysle thanks to one of their world laws, the *Law of Observation.* While the mechanics of disbelief work the same, illusions don't necessarily fade out of existence once there are no more believers around (an illusion that has been disbelieved will disappear normally though.)

Enough belief in an illusion, combined with the *Law of Observation,* can actually transform a partially real effect into a completely real effect. This process requires a large amount of belief, which may come all at once or over a continuous duration as long as believing observers are always present. How much time and belief is necessary for this to happen is left up to gamemaster's discretion. But at the very least, figure that the illusion must have a duration of at least a day and exposure to a large number of believers before there's any chance of it becoming completely real.

Even if an illusionary effect becomes real, it does not become permanent; it will still disappear when the spell duration expires. But if the effect does become real, it cannot be disbelieved.

Illusory spells which affect a mental state, such as a *charm person* spell which succeeds in charming its target, may not be disbelieved by the target character without prodding from a different character. This is because, by definition, the emotions produced by the spell feel real enough to negate any desire to question them, and an objective viewpoint is needed to allow disbelief. Characters are only allowed one chance to disbelieve an illusion. If they fail the check, they have no choice but to believe that the illusion is real.

An illusion's effect value is a measure of how much of the illusion is real. The lower the effect value, the more the spell relies on pure illusion, and the less "reality" it contains. **An illusionary spell with an effect value of zero is completely illusionary** and would be unable to directly effect anything, though it might still be believed to be real until it was interacted with and there was no effect. The *disguise self* spell is an example of a completely illusionary effect, as soon as someone touches the disguised character they will realize that the appearance does not match what they feel and the spell is broken.

Conversely, an illusion with a nonzero effect value is somewhat real and can have a possibly significant effect. For example, an illusionary bridge with an effect value of 15 could hold up to 1,000 kilograms of weight. Its appearance may be of a bridge that can hold more or less than that amount, but that has no actual bearing on the reality of the spell effect.

The gamble for the caster of an illusion is that successful disbelief in an illusionary spell dissolves the spell effect completely - and not just for the disbeliever. Thus, **even the caster of the spell** is required to make a disbelief check if he wants to **use** some portion of the illusion as though it were real. The caster would be safer if many people around him believe in the illusion, as it will now be more difficult for him to disbelieve his own spell.

Example: A mage casts a spell to create an illusionary bridge. His army starts across the bridge, thinking that it is real, and it becomes "more real" as they cross. The mage, knowing that it is an illusion, must roll for disbelief before crossing himself. The fact that 100 men believe in the bridge increases his difficulty to DN+20 so he's probably safe.

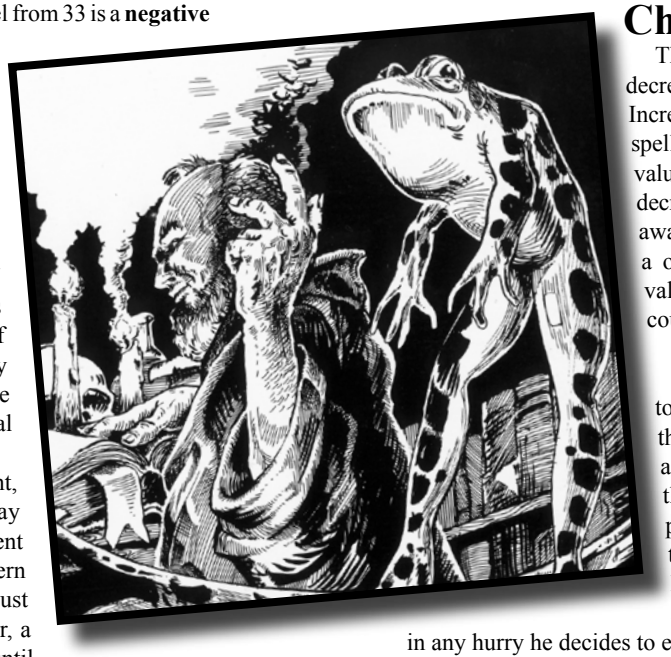
Note that the caster only has to make a disbelief check **if he wants to use the illusion himself;** if the mage in the example stays off the bridge, he never has to make a disbelief check and there's no risk of him undoing his own spell. It's only when he sets foot on the bridge that he would have to make a disbelief check.

Any physical effects from an illusion prior to disbelief are real because the illusion **is** real until that point. A wall torn down by an illusionary dragon will still be torn down if someone disbelieves the dragon afterwards, soldiers who cross a river on an illusionary bridge will still be on the other side, someone squashed by an imaginary boulder is still squashed, and so on.

Permanent Magic

Almost any magic spell can be made permanent by the spellcaster at the time she casts the spell. Making a spell permanent requires that the spellcaster have the *conjuration magic* skill even if the spell being cast is not a conjuration spell. This is because to make a spell permanent a lasting link between the spell pattern and the natural world must be created, and creation requires conjuration.

Permanent magical effects require a minimum Magic axiom of 13. The higher the Magic axiom, the easier it is to make an effect permanent. At Magic 33, all effects are permanent! Below Magic 33, the difference in the axiom level from 33 is a **negative modifier** to any attempts at creating permanent magic. Aysle for example has a Magic axiom of 18 so any attempt to make a spell permanent has a (33 - 18) -15 modifier to the casting total.



Besides the negative modifier, backlash is **always** compared to the casting total, the spellcaster's *Mind* is never used if the casting total is less than her *Mind*. Each creation of a permanent effect is in some way unique, enough so that it cannot be refined and formulated like a normal grimoire spell.

When making a spell permanent, the caster has a choice. He may choose to make the effect permanent or he may make the spell pattern permanent. A permanent effect is just that; a fireball would burn forever, a disguise would last forever or until dispelled, a man transformed into a frog will stay that way, and so on. The casting mage has whatever control over the spell is built into the spell but no more.

A permanent spell pattern means that the potential to cast the spell has been made permanent. It is most often used in the creation of magic items, such as a ring that would allow someone to cast the *Mage Light* spell or an amulet that contains the *Strength* spell. Using the item would require the appropriate magic skill to activate the effect but the arcane knowledge is not required.

Impressed and warding spells can also be made permanent but it requires a bit more effort. Both the effect and the pattern must be made permanent, which means the spell has to be successfully cast twice, both times with the negative modifier. If both castings are successful, the spell will go into effect like normal.

When the impressed spell effect is released or the ward is triggered to release its effect, the spell **recasts itself** using the normal casting time of the spell, and the effect will again sit suspended until released. In this way, wards can be made which "recharge" themselves after being triggered and magic items can be made with impressed spells in them so that the item can be used to cast spells over and over again without requiring the user to have an appropriate magic skill.

Spell Manipulation

A magician who knows all of the *process theorems* listed in a spell description has the ability to *manipulate* the spell and change some of the values of the spell. The effect cannot be changed, a spell that changes a man into a frog cannot be manipulated to turn him into a goat, but the magician can change the values of the spell's backlash, difficulty, effect value, range, duration and cast time. A spell that does not have any *process theorems* listed can be manipulated by any spellcaster.

There are four basic ways that a spell can be manipulated. A spellcaster manipulates a spell prior to casting it, essentially increasing the casting time of the spell. Each type of manipulation requires one round and the player does not roll the die to cast the spell until after all manipulations have been finished.

Change Cast Time

The spellcaster may increase or decrease the cast time of the spell. Increasing the cast time gives the spellcaster points to allocate to effect value, range and/or duration while decreasing it requires taking points away from those three values. It is a one-to-one exchange for effect value and range, duration points count twice as much.

Example: A magician wants to cast *detect magic* to locate the source of an enchantment affecting an area. He suspects that the spell he's looking for is powerful and wants to increase the effect value of his spell so that he can gain more information about the other spell. He's not in any hurry he decides to extend the cast time.

The normal cast time is 7 (25 seconds). He elects to increase this to ten minutes, a value of 14. This increase gives him (14 - 7) 7 points to add to the effect value, raising it from 10 to 17. The manipulation takes one round so the total cast time on the spell actually becomes ten minutes and ten seconds.

Shift Complexity

The spellcaster may reallocate points from difficulty to backlash or vice versa.

Example: A magician wants to cast the *lightning* spell (backlash 19, difficulty 11) but is worried about the damage the backlash might cause so he decides to shift points from backlash into difficulty. He moves six points and in the next round he can cast the spell at backlash 13, difficulty 17.

Shift Spell Values

The spellcaster may reallocate points from the effect value to range and/or duration, range to effect value and/or duration or from duration to range and/or effect value. Effect and duration points are exchanged on a one-to-one basis but range points count twice as much - two points of effect equal one point of range and so on.

Example: Right before casting his *lightning* spell, our magician realizes that his target is slightly out of range. He decides to spend another round manipulating the spell to increase its range. Because range points are worth twice as much, he will need to sacrifice two points from effect value and/or duration to increase the range by one.

He decides to take one point from duration and one point from the effect. The one point increase in range is enough to let him strike his target. He has now spent two rounds manipulating the spell and can cast it in the next round.

Increase Backlash

The spellcaster can increase the backlash of the spell to increase the effect value, range and/or duration of the spell as well as decrease the cast time. The amount the backlash is increased by is read through the Power Push table, the resulting value being the amount that the other values may be changed (the shock damage of the push is ignored.) **This manipulation can only be performed as the spell is being cast,** it does not add a round to the cast time and would have to be performed after any other manipulations.

Example: Our magician who has been manipulating his *lightning* spell decides at the last second that he's more worried about his enemy surviving his attack than what the spell's backlash will do to him (the whole reason he did the first manipulation!)

He can't afford to reduce range and doesn't want to reduce the duration any further. He feels that he has already spent enough time manipulating the spell and can't afford to increase the cast time any further. The only thing left to do is increase the backlash in exchange for increasing the effect value. He begins to cast the spell and performs the manipulation while casting the spell.

His current backlash value on the spell is 13. He increases this by six points, back up to its original backlash value of 19. On the Power Push chart, six result points are a +3 modifier. The effect value, previously manipulated to 19, is now increased to 22. With this manipulation completed, casting total is finally generated.

Problems with Low Magic Axioms

In cosms that have a Magic axiom less than 10, the magic is unstable and less predictable. Even some of the four basic types of magic become unavailable, further complicating the entire matter.

"Wild" Magic

Below a Magic axiom of 8, the connection between the natural world and the supernatural world is weak enough that magic becomes unstable and erratic. Spells designed in this kind of environment rarely work exactly the way spellcaster intends, and each time a spell is cast it may behave erratically in a different way from previous castings.

The exact way in which a spell misbehaves should vary from casting to casting and is left up to the gamemaster's discretion. Some possible effects are: the spell backfires and affects the caster instead of the target, unrelated side effects such as strange odors or color changes may affect the surroundings, a spell value may be randomly increased or decreased, the backlash is treated as a Knockout Attack instead of normal damage, a *strength* spell may increase the target's *Mind* instead of *Strength,* and so on.

A spell will behave erratically whenever the caster does not generate a spell total **exactly** equal to the difficulty number of the spell. If the casting fails, an *erratic failure* occurs and should produce some kind of negative or at least unintended side effect.

The amount the character misses by can be used to gauge the severity of the side effect; using the General Results Chart, a *minimal* or *average* failure could be counted as a *near-miss* (see Chapter Four). A *good* failure might produce an unintended but not detrimental effect while a *superior* or *spectacular* failure should almost always cause something bad to happen.

If the casting succeeds but the mage didn't get exactly the difficulty number, an *erratic success* occurs. As outlined in the "Primary Rule of Magic", a spell will have no positive effect without being willed by the caster. An erratic success will therefore never produce a positive effect different from what the caster intended, it will only produce unintended side effects. A successfully cast *strength* spell will increase the target's *strength* but it might also make all the hair on their body fall off, or their muscles might suddenly increase in size and all of their clothes get torn and ripped like the were the Incredible Hulk.

The success level of the successful casting can be used to gauge the severity of the erratic success. The lower the success level the more erratic the result should be. With a *spectacular* success, the spell works almost exactly as designed, any side effects are minor. With a *superior* success, things are a bit more erratic but still in keeping with the purpose of the spell. A *good* success starts producing side effects unrelated to the purpose of the spell and with an *average* or *minimal* success the desired result of the spell may be somewhat obscured by the side effects.

These "wild" magic rules apply only to spells designed in these cosms and to spellcasters from these cosms. For example, a magician from Aysle who casts a low axiom spell from Aysle such as Away Sight (Magic 7) never has to worry about the spell behaving erratically, even if he casts the spell in a low Magic cosm like Core Earth (Magic axiom 7).

Spellcasters from low Magic cosms who learn low axiom spells from other cosms, such as a Core Earth magician learning Away Sight from an Ayslish grimoire, must still deal with erratic magic even though the spell was designed in a more stable environment. This is because the character herself is the weak link, it's her Magic axiom that causes the spell to behave erratically.

Spell Uniqueness

Another problem faced in cosms with a Magic axiom less than 8 is that the instability of magic makes spells designed in that environment so dependent on the designer's personal view of how magic works that **spells cannot be learned by anyone other than the mage who designs them.** In other words, the patterns that make up a magic spell are so unique that the only person who can learn it (i.e., it can be cast without a grimoire) in these low Magic cosms is the mage who designed it. In these cosms mages cannot learn spells from another magician's grimoire nor can another magician teach them spells.

Spells may still be cast from a grimoire without having learned the spell first, the normal rules for that still apply. And in fact many magicians in low axiom cosms will cast most if not all of their spells this way, since it is much easier and does not require designing every one of his spells himself.

Mages in these cosms will never be far from their grimoires and every magician will have her own grimoire. By contrast, magicians from cosms with high Magic axioms may not even own a personal grimoire since they can learn spells from other people and then never need a grimoire to cast them.

Magicians from these low axiom cosms can learn spells that were designed by other magicians in cosms with a Magic axiom of 8 or greater. A Core Earth magician for example could learn Away Sight from an Ayslish grimoire. He would still have to worry about the spell being erratic and there are additional problems regarding contradictions to worry about too.

Missing Magic Skills

Below a Magic axiom of 10, the four skills that relate to the basic types of magic start to become contradictory and unavailable to natives of those cosms. *Conjuration magic* requires a Magic axiom of 10, *alteration magic* requires Magic 7, *apportation magic* requires Magic 5 and *divination magic* requires Magic 2.

As described under "Basic Structure of Magic", the creation of a spell involves all four of the magic skills because every aspect of the spell must be accounted for in the design. How can spells even be designed in cosms that don't have all four magic skills? And how does this lack of one or more of the magic skills affect spells that were created using all four skills?

Designing Spells in Low Axiom Realities

For magicians in realities that do not support one or more of the magic skills, spells can still be created but it involves using one of two compromises. The first option is to simply form the spell pattern without the unavailable skills. Working around the missing elements greatly complicates things though; the supernatural is much more resistant to being manipulated, increasing the backlash, and casting the spell is more difficult because the spell pattern is incomplete.

When using the spell design rules in the *Aysle sourcebook,* characters from low Magic axiom realities who create spells simply use a value of zero wherever a missing magic skill would be used. For published spells, such as the ones in this book or in supplements like *Pixaud's Practical Grimoire,* a simple way to create versions of those spells from low axiom realities is to add +5 to both the backlash and difficulty of the published spell for each magic skill that is not available in the cosm.

Example: *Detect magic* is a spell in this book with a Magic axiom of 5, backlash of 14 and difficulty of 10. Those numbers could be used for any version of the spell that comes from a cosm with a Magic axiom of 10 or greater where all four skills are available. In a cosm like Core Earth where *conjuration magic* is not available, a version of *detect magic* native to Core Earth would instead have a backlash of 19 and a difficulty of 15. In a cosm with a Magic axiom of 5 or 6, where *alteration magic* is also not available, the backlash would be 24 and the difficulty would be 20.

The second possible compromise is to bind the magic pattern to a particular philosophy, such as a religion, and fill in the gaps of the spell pattern with elements of that philosophy. Voodoo, for example, is a Core Earth school of magic that blends religion with magic. In game terms, the magician *substitutes* a nonmagical skill related to that philosophy for each of the missing magic skills. Core Earth Voodoo practitioners for example substitute *faith(voodoo)* for *conjuration magic* in their spell patterns.

This substitution does not allow the spellcaster to create spells of the missing skill type; voodoo practitioners cannot create *conjuration magic* spells. The substitution only applies to the spell design process. When using the spell design rules in the *Aysle sourcebook,* players creating spells that utilize substitution use the substituted skill value wherever the missing skill value would be used.

The drawback to substitution is that it severely limits the types of magic spells that can be created. The nature of the limitations depends on the philosophy that is used as the substitution. Voodoo for example can only be used to affect people, animals and spirits, it cannot be used to create spells like *away sight, bullet, floater* and so on.

Substitution spells may only be cast by magicians who have the skill used for the substitution. An Ayslish mage for example could not learn any voodoo spells nor cast them unlearned from a voodoo grimoire unless he first gained the *faith(voodoo)* skill.

Practitioners of substitution magic do not face any unusual problems with contradictions unless the skill used for the substitution is contradictory. For example, the spells belonging to a school of magic that used *computer science* as a substitution skill would be contradictory in realities with a Tech axiom below 21 even if the Magic axiom of the spell is supported.

Using Spells Designed in High Axiom Realities

With spells created in cosms that support all four magic skills, such as Aysle, casting those spells in a cosm that lacks one or more of the four magic skills imposes a penalty; **the spell is treated as a contradiction even if the spell's stated axiom level is supported by the cosm.** This is because the spell is composed of forces and patterns that are a contradiction in the low axiom reality. It's the same situation as having a broadsword (Tech 8) made out of tungsten

No-Frills Magic

Strange ritualistic gestures, droning incantations, bizarre material components, lengthy casting times, why do spells require these things, why can't magicians just point a finger and make things happen?

Actually, they can. According to the spell design system in the *Aysle sourcebook,* spells do not actually require any of the trappings usually associated with them. It's entirely possible to design spells with one second casting times that only require the mage to think in order to cast the spell. Pointing isn't even necessary!

So why do magicians put all these things into their spells if they're not necessary? Paradoxically, by increasing the complexity of the spellcasting process, the spell itself becomes easier to cast. All those gestures and magic words and accessories reduce the backlash and difficulty of spells; the more of them built into a spell, the easier it is to cast the spell and resist its backlash. Without them, only highly skilled magicians would have a chance of successfully using magic.

steel (Tech 19), the sword is considered Tech 19 instead of Tech 8 because it is constructed from a material with an axiom higher than that of its function. The same rule applies to magic spells.

Example: Terrill is in Core Earth and casts *away sight.* Even though the spell's axiom level is 7, the same as Core Earth's Magic axiom, casting the spell is a contradiction because Core Earth's reality does not support the *conjuration magic* elements that are a part of the spell's pattern because it was created in Aysle.

In essence, any spell designed in a cosm with a Magic axiom of 10 or greater should be treated as having an axiom level of at least 10 **in realities with a Magic axiom of less than 10.** In the Possibility Wars setting this primarily means that any spell not from Core Earth that is cast in Core is a contradiction even if the spell write-up has an axiom level supported by the reality.

The same rule applies in Nippon Tech, even if a spell has a Magic axiom of 2 it will still be a contradiction if it was created outside of Nippon Tech.

A Sampling of Grimoire Spells

The following spell descriptions are common grimoire spells, found in many cosms (assuming of course the cosm's Magic axiom is high enough.) The standard grimoire spell description looks like this:

Bullet

Axiom Level: 7
Skill: *apportation/metal* 13

Backlash: 15
Difficulty: 11
Effect Value: 15
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 5 (10 meters)
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Cast Time: 3 (four seconds)
Manipulation: control

The *axiom level* is the Magic axiom of the spell, as detailed in Chapter Seven. If the axiom level of the spell is less than or equal to the axiom level of the cosm, it works just fine (in most cases, see "Problems with Low Magic Axioms" for more details.) Otherwise the caster must check for a contradiction when casting the spell as described in that chapter. Focused and impressed spells may also require further contradiction checks as described earlier in this chapter.

A spell that is **impressed** in an area with an axiom level lower than 17 requires a contradiction check; when the impressed effect is released, use the non-parenthetical number as its axiom level. The (17) in the entry is there as a reminder of the impressed axiom level.

Skill lists which of the four magic skills is used for the spell: *alteration, apportation, conjuration* or *divination.* The necessary *arcane knowledge* is also listed. **The sum of the caster's skill value and knowledge adds must equal or exceed the number listed in order to learn the spell.**

Backlash is how powerful a force surges through the magician as he casts his spell. Backlash is a damage value that is compared to the spell total. The magician must survive the backlash (stay conscious) to successfully cast a spell.

Difficulty of the spell is the difficulty number required for a successful cast. "Successful" means the spell's effect value is used, not necessarily that the spell affects its target.

Effect value is the effect value of the spell, if any. Effect values are usually compared to an attribute of the target of the spell to determine its effect. A fireball spell, for example, uses its effect value as a damage value that is compared to the target's *Toughness*. A spell that turned a man into a frog has its effect value compared to the target's highest attribute to see if the spell successfully affects the target or not.

Bonus Number to lists the part of the spell to which any generated bonus number is added. While usually added to the effect value, the bonus number could be added to duration or range, depending on what the designer of the spell wished. Negative bonus numbers are added to the appropriate value.

Range is the greatest distance over which the spell effect may be projected. The range is measured from the caster of the spell unless the spell is focused, in which case it is measured from the focus object. A range of *self* means the spell may only affect the caster. A range of *touch* means the caster must make physical contact with his target for the spell to take effect.

Duration is how long the spell effect lasts.

Cast time is how long it takes the magician to cast the spell. In round play, a spell meant to strike an enemy target (someone on the other initiative side) must have a cast time of 3 (four seconds) or less in order to have a chance to hit their targets in the same round in which they are cast. Spells which have a cast time of 4 (six seconds) may be used on a friendly character (same initiative side) during the same round as the effect takes place. Spells with cast times longer than 4 will not take effect until the next round (or possibly later depending on the cast time.)

Cast times greater than 23 (ten hours) cannot be done in a single stretch. The magician is assumed to be casting six to eight hours a day for an extended period; this is the maximum cast time which can be done repeatedly with little chance of error. A mage may be able to go 24 hours straight for one spell, but has little chance of going 12 hours a day for a month without making a mistake which would ruin the spell (and possibly himself).

Manipulation lists the *process theorems* that are necessary to manipulate the spell. A magician must know **all** of the listed theorems in order to manipulate a spell. Some spells may include other restrictions than the process theorems, usually due to being a non-standard form of magic, such as Tharkold's "technomagic". Spells that say "none" on this line can be manipulated by any spellcaster.

Whenever a spell description says something like "limited to a man-sized or smaller target," that means the spell is limited to a

Designing Your Own Spells

The rules for how a character can go about creating a new spell are given in the *Aysle sourcebook.* Gamemasters do not have to go through the entire process as described in the sourcebook to create new spells for their non-player characters or to create new grimoire spells for the player characters to discover during an adventure, they're free to "wing it" if they wish.

specific mass, 100 kilos, which is the size of a large, but not huge, man. Other restrictions may be inferred from the knowledge that generated the spell. A spell based on *folk* knowledge, for example, could not affect dogs, regardless of their size.

If a spell is described as having a radius, all targets within that radius are affected by the full value of the spell.

Spell Descriptions

Altered Fireball

Axiom Level: 10
Skill: *alteration/fire* 14

Backlash: 18
Difficulty: 10
Effect Value: 14
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 8 (40 meters)
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Cast Time: 3 (four seconds)
Manipulation: apportation, control

Altered fireball requires a large flammable ball as a contagion. Traditionally a ball of pitch, weighing about 150 grams, is used. The magician lights the ball from a source of flame, grabbing a piece before the sphere is completely engulfed. As the spell is cast the rest of the ball leaps toward the target. The magician directs it toward its impact point by mimicking its flight with the piece he retained, slamming the piece into his hand when he wants the ball to expand to its full four-meter radius and do its damage.

Away Sight

Axiom Level: 7
Skill: *divination/light* 15

Backlash: 18
Difficulty: 15
Effect Value: 9
Bonus Number to: range

Range: 13 (400 meters)
Duration: 11 (2.5 minutes)
Cast Time: 15 (15 minutes)
Manipulation: range, speed

Away sight forms a small, slowly revolving series of translucent tubes that catch the reflections of light, and hence the images, of everything in a 10-meter radius. The whirling construct travels at a speed value of 12 (250 meters per round). The images it collects are grainy; a mage viewing distant objects through *away sight* could not tell the detail on a coin, for example, but could certainly tell that the object was a coin. The caster can make *Perception* checks, but is limited to using the spell's effect value if his *Perception* is higher.

Casting the spell requires a glass lens, through which the images are seen for the duration of the spell.

Bullet

Axiom Level: 7
Skill: *apportation/metal* 13

Backlash: 16
Difficulty: 10
Effect Value: 15
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 5 (10 meters)
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Cast Time: 3 (four seconds)
Manipulation: control

The spell can sling a metal mass about the size of a small sling bullet, or a coin the size of a US quarter. The magician pantomimes the whirling of a sling with the hand holding the metal, then releases it aiming at his opponent. The *apportation* total must exceed the *Dexterity* or *dodge* of the target character in order to hit him.

Charm Person

Axiom Level: 11
Skill: *conjuration/living forces* 16

Backlash: 18
Difficulty: 13
Effect Value: 14
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 2 (2.5 meters)
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control, duration, state

Charm person begins with a smile and a gesture resembling a greeting. The effect value of the spell is substituted for the casters *charm* skill. The spell works as the *charm* skill, except that the caster may make a *charm* attempt each round rather than every few minutes. *Charm person* is limited to beings who are man-sized or smaller, and who can understand the caster's language.

Charm person is an illusory spell with a disbelief difficulty of 12. After the duration of the spell expires, the effect wears off rather quickly, and is dispelled within an hour for intelligent beings, perhaps a day for simpler creatures. If the spell is disbelieved, the character is no longer charmed, although memories of the feelings do exist.

Cleanse

Axiom Level: 10 (17)
Skill: *alteration/water* 19

Backlash: 19
Difficulty: 7
Effect Value: 20
Bonus Number to: duration

Range: touch
Duration: 26 (1.5 days)
Cast Time: 29 (1 week)
Manipulation: control

Cleanse is an **impressed** and **focused** spell, with the effect being focused in a liter of specially prepared water when it is released. The water contains a very small amount of herb tea. When a character drinks the water, the water cleanses his body by absorbing any

chemical impurities, such as poison or alcohol. If the spell's effect value is greater than the effect value of the poison, the poison has no effect.

The water does not act quickly, as it must travel through the body's own transport mechanisms. But the effect will remain in the person's body for the duration of the spell and will counteract any new impurities that enter the body.

Communicate With Animals

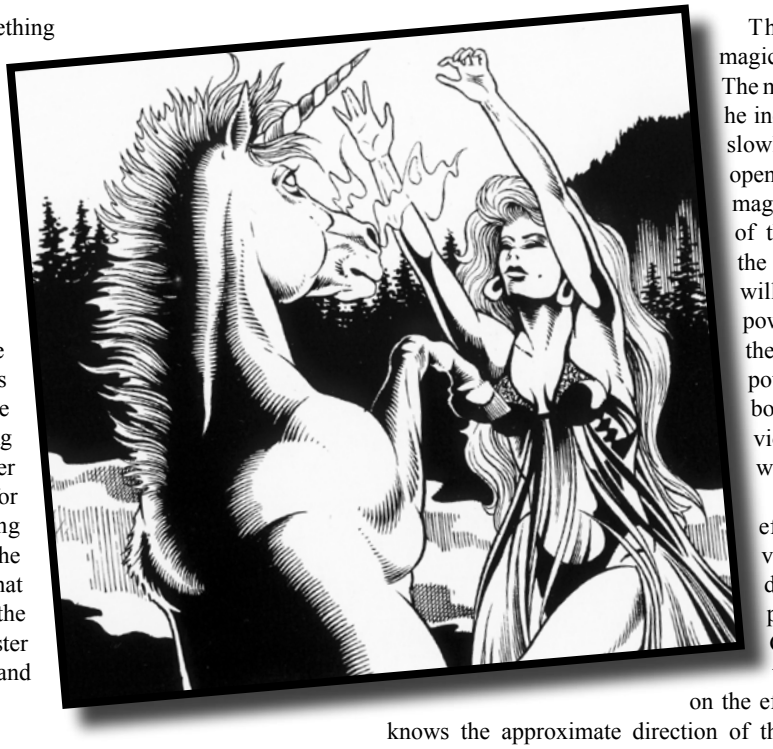
Axiom Level: 7
Skill: *divination/earthly* 16

Backlash: 17
Difficulty: 12
Effect Value: 18
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Cast Time: 6 (15 seconds)
Manipulation: control, duration

The caster must have something from the specific species of animal with which he wants to communicate (a piece of fur, a claw, etc.) He places the contagion on the ground before him and draws a line in the ground leading from the object back to himself. He draws a second line in the opposite direction.

Compare the effect value of the spell to the caster's *Perception* and read on the Power Push table. The resulting value is treated as a number of adds in a *language* skill for purposes of communicating with the desired animal. The spell does not guarantee that the animal will speak with the caster though, only that the caster can speak to it and understand anything it says.



Conjured Fireball

Axiom Level: 13 (17)
Skill: *conjuration/fire* **20**

Backlash: 19
Difficulty: 6
Effect Value: 18
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 5 (10 meters)
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Cast Time: 18 (one hour)
Manipulation: control, speed, state

Conjured fireball is an **impressed** spell and is illusionary in nature. The conjuring must be done near an open flame, although the flame may as small as a pair of candles. Once impressed, the spell effect may be released within a round, the magician uttering a cast word of his choosing and mimicking shaping the ball of flame with hand motions. The ball of fire has a burst radius of 10 meters and anyone not disbelieving (difficulty 18) takes the effect value as damage.

Detect Magic

Axiom Level: 5
Skill: *divination/magic* 11
Backlash: 14
Difficulty: 10
Effect Value: 10
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 7 (25 meters)
Duration: 8 (40 seconds)
Cast Time: 7 (25 seconds)
Manipulation: range, speed

This spell requires the magician to hold a grimoire. The mage opens the grimoire as he incants the spell, then turns slowly in a circle, holding the open grimoire before him. If magic is in effect within range of the spell in the direction the mage is facing, the pages will flutter softly. The more powerful the magic, the more the pages move - extremely potent magic can cause the book to shake and tumble violently as if caught in a whirlwind.

Compare the spell's effect value to the effect value of the spell being detected and read the result points (if any) on the General Success Table. If there are no result points on the effect total, the mage only knows the approximate direction of the detected magic. On a *minimal* or *average* success, the mage knows the approximate distance and direction of the magic. On a *good* success he knows the exact direction but only the approximate distance. On a *superior* success the exact range is also known. With a *spectacular* success, the caster also knows the magic skill and arcane knowledge used in casting the detected magic.

Disguise Self

Axiom Level: 7
Skill: *conjuration/folk* 13

Backlash: 14
Difficulty: 9
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: duration

Range: self
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control, state

Prior to casting the spell, the magician must have a rendition of the kind of person or being he wishes to look like, and must somehow attach the rendering to his person. The mage casts *disguise self* by "sculpting" the image with his hands as he imagines his new look. The spell weaves an illusion of the being.

Disguise self is not precise enough to copy a specific person. Disguising oneself as a different race (such as a human disguising himself as a dwarf) increases the difficulty to 15. The difficulty of disbelieving the illusion is 10. Anyone physically making contact with the caster will automatically disbelieve the illusion and dispel it.

Doelaran's Door of Shooting Fire

Axiom Level: 15
Skill: *conjuration/magic* 22

Backlash: 16
Difficulty: 10
Effect Value: 14
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 3 (four meters)
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Cast Time: 19 (1.5 hours)
Manipulation: range, duration

This **ward** harms those who wish to enter places that the caster would rather not have them go. When casting the spell, the wizard paints dots of red ink in a circular pattern on the door that is to be protected. He burns the pattern into the door by voicing words of arcane power. At the end of the cast time, all markings of the dots disappear from view.

The spell detects all *Kindred* who touch the door with a detection value of 21. Jets of flame gush forth from the dots on the door, hitting the individual standing at the door. Generate an action total using the spell's effect value against the target's *Dexterity* or *dodge* skill to hit. The effect value is also the damage value of the attack.

The flames are illusionary and the difficulty of disbelieving the spell is 15.

Earth Shield

Axiom Level: 8
Skill: *apportation/earth* 12

Backlash: 12
Difficulty: 7
Effect Value: 10
Bonus Number to: duration

Range: touch
Duration: 7 (25 seconds)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control, duration

The mage scoops a small piece of earth from the ground, quickly molds it into a crude image of a shield, and then touches the ground where he had scooped out the dirt. An immobile shield of earth rises from the ground, two meters high, one meter wide and a hand span thick. The shield has an armor add of +10, maximum armor value of 25, and will remain standing until dispelled or until it takes a number of shock points of damage equal to its effect value.

Enchant Air Wand

Axiom Level: 13
Skill: *conjuration/plant* 20

Backlash: 15
Difficulty: 16
Effect Value: 15
Bonus number to: duration
Range: touch
Duration: 29 (one week)
Cast Time: 18 (one hour)
Manipulation: state, control

This spell works only on wands made out of wood. The magician must hold the wand while casting the spell, constantly blowing puffs of air across its surface. The mage concentrates on images of the wand absorbing the air as he breathes across it.

This enchantment allows a number of spell patterns of the Air arcane knowledge to be placed in the wand at one time equal to the Power Push of its effect value.

Find Things

Axiom Level: 7
Skill: *divination/inanimate forces* 13

Backlash: 16
Difficulty: 13
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: range

Range: 7 (25 meters)
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Cast Time: 7 (25 seconds)
Manipulation: duration

To the casual observer, the mage who uses this spell appears to have an uncanny ability for locating lost or hidden objects. Casting the spell merely requires that the mage have an accurate description of the object he is searching for, or he must have seen it once. The object may not be larger than the caster.

Once the spell is cast, the mage will know the location of the object if it is within the range of the spell and it has not been magically hidden. The caster may move while the spell is in effect and he may change targets or even cancel the spell.

Flickering Fire Shield

Axiom Level: 11
Skill: *alteration/fire* 16

Backlash: 15
Difficulty: 18
Effect Value: 20
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch
Duration: 20 (2.5 hours)

Cast Time: 12 (four minutes)
Manipulation: state, control

This is a **focused** spell. The caster passes his hand through a flame while casting the spell, touching the hand of the recipient, and focusing the spell into that character. The back of that hand now has a barely visible flicker of flame in the shape of a shield on it.

The spell resists the effects of all spells that use the Fire knowledge and prevents any with an effect value less than its own from affecting the protected character. The recipient can turn off the spell before it expires if she wishes.

Floater

Axiom Level: 5
Skill: *apportation/air* 17

Backlash: 15
Difficulty: 12
Effect Value: 6
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 7 (25 meters)
Duration: 14 (10 minutes)
Cast Time: 3 (four seconds)
Manipulation: none

The caster begins the spell by puffing air under a lightweight disk (with a surface area no greater than one square meter) that causes it to rise in the air and float there. The floater can support weight equal to its effect value and may move at speeds up to the effect value minus the weight value carried. The caster controls the movement and speed of the disk and may also end the spell before it expires if she wishes. The disk must remain within range of the caster at all times.

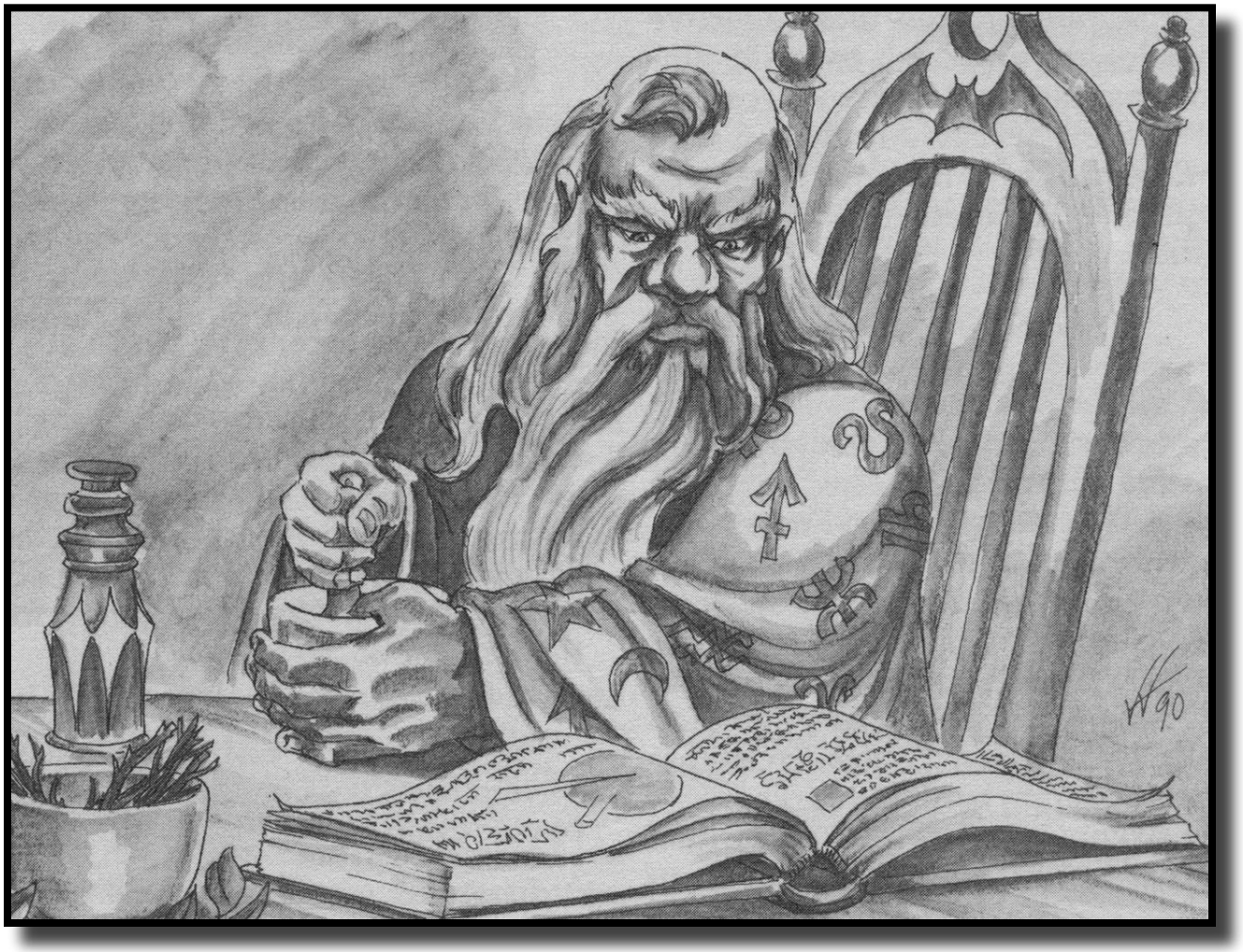
A person riding the floater is buffeted from underneath by the hard, rolling air currents that keep the disk afloat. While not dangerous, they can occasionally blow small, unsecured objects off the disk.

Fly

Axiom Level: 10
Skill: *apportation/avian* 18

Backlash: 15
Difficulty: 12
Effect Value: 8
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch
Duration: 18 (one hour)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control



Fly is a **focused** spell and requires the feathers, skin, or other covering from the skin of a flying creature. The spell works by moving (apporting) the creature's ability to fly into the target character.

The mage flaps the component as if flying, then gives them to the recipient of the spell. As long as that character is holding onto the component, or safely tucks it somewhere next to his skin, he can fly for the duration of the spell. The spell is on the character, not the component, so passing the component to another character does not allow the other to fly. If the flying character loses the component, he immediately loses the ability to fly.

Speed of flight is equal to the effect value.

Fog

Axiom Level: 10
Skill: *alteration/water* 12

Backlash: 15
Difficulty: 8
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: duration

Range: touch
Duration: 11 (2.5 minutes)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control, duration

This **focused** spell requires a liter of water in a vessel with an opening. As the magician casts the spell, he pours the water over one of his hands, splashing the water into the air. The water billows into a dense fog, completely filling a 25-meter radius. The fog stays centered about the vessel, and will last for the duration of the spell. The fog is dense, but evaporates quickly after the duration expires.

Haste

Axiom Level: 10
Skill: *alteration/folk* 14

Backlash: 16
Difficulty: 11
Effect Value: 15
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Cast Time: 4 (six seconds)
Manipulation: control

This **focused** spell increases the speed of the target character. The effect value of the spell is compared to the target's *Dexterity* on the Power Push Table (not the Speed Push). The resulting value modifier is added to the target's *Dexterity* **for the purposes of movement only** for the duration of the spell. The shock damage of the push is ignored.

To cast the spell, the target character and the caster move their hands up and down with increasing frenzy, then the magician touches the character with one of his hands. The recipient of the spell may turn the effect on and off for the duration of the spell.

A character's *Dexterity*-based movement values will be increased to the new *Dexterity* value or to the movement limit value, whichever is less. The character's *Dexterity*-based movement skills are increased by the spell's effect, increasing the character's capability to perform speed pushes.

Example: A human character with a *Dexterity* of 8 and no *running* skill has a running speed of 8. A *Haste* spell is cast on him and it gets a +3 result. For purposes of movement, the character's Dexterity is treated as if it were 11. This will increase his running speed to 9 (the limit value for humans) and he will have an action value of 11 instead of 8 for any *Dexterity*-based speed pushes he attempts for the duration of the spell.

Increase Charisma

Axiom Level: 9
Skill: *alteration/folk* 14

Backlash: 19
Difficulty: 14
Effect Value: 14
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: self
Duration: 13 (6 minutes)
Cast Time: 6 (15 seconds)
Manipulation: control

The caster needs two images, one smiling, and one frowning. They do not have to be images of himself, they can even be crude cartoons of a happy face and a frowning face. He crumples the frowning image, and then places the smiling image against his skin. The effect value of the spell is compared to his *Charisma* on the Power Push table. The resulting value modifier is added to his *Charisma* for the duration of the spell. The shock effects of the push are ignored.

Jump

Axiom Level: 10
Skill: *apportation/folk* 14

Backlash: 11
Difficulty: 9
Effect Value: 12
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 3 (four meters)
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control

This **focused** spell requires the hind legs from an animal known for jumping, such as a cricket or frog. The magician makes the sound of the animal while making hopping motions with the hand holding the legs, then points at the recipient of the spell.

The effect value of the spell is compared to the target's *Dexterity* on the Power Push table. The resulting value modifier is added to the target's *long jumping* skill value for the duration of the spell. The shock effects of the push are ignored.

Keen Blade

Axiom Level: 10
Skill: *alteration/metal* 15
Backlash: 19
Difficulty: 13
Effect Value: 19

Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch
Duration: 17 (40 minutes)
Cast Time: 9 (one minute)
Manipulation: duration, state

The magician must have a bladed weapon that he keeps extremely sharp. He quickly hones the target blade with a whetstone while casting the spell and then touches the ritual blade to the target blade.

The effect value of the spell is compared to the maximum damage value of the target weapon on the Power Push table. The resulting value is added to both the maximum damage value and the damage bonus of the weapon for the duration of the spell.

Note that this spell is **not** focused. The spell effect only works while the caster is holding the target blade. If the enchanted weapon is given or taken away from the mage the spell effect vanishes.

Lightning

Axiom Level: 10
Skill: *alteration/inanimate forces* 19

Backlash: 19
Difficulty: 11
Effect Value: 20
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 8 (40 meters)
Duration: 8 (40 seconds)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control, range, speed

Quick, jagged motions by the caster's arms begin the *lightning* spell. If successfully cast, powerful electricity charges up within the caster, doing no harm save that of raising his hair. He may then cast a lightning bolt for each of the next four rounds, with a damage value equal to the effect value of the original casting. To hit a target he must generate an *alteration* total that equals or exceeds the target's *Dexterity* or *dodge.* This use does not cause any backlash as the spell has already been successfully cast. The damage value is determined by the original casting, the bonus number from these targeting checks is not added to the spell's effect value.

Mage Dark

Axiom Level: 12
Skill: *conjuration/darkness* 15

Backlash: 18
Difficulty: 12
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: duration

Range: 8 (40 meters)
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control

This **focused** spell is cast by blowing a bit of soot or ash into the air and pointing at a target. Everything within 15 meters of the initial target point is enshrouded in a thick, palpable darkness. *Mage dark* is not completely impervious to light, but ordinary light appears as random sparkles, more common near a light source, but insufficient for illumination and sight. *Mage light* combined with *mage dark* fills the overlapping areas with a suffused glow like an illuminated fog, and vision is barely possible (+10 to the difficulty of all visual *Perception* checks). *Sunstore* creates a condition similar to dusk, and *true light* destroys the *mage dark.*

The darkness created by the spell is illusionary, the disbelief difficulty is 15.

Mage Light

Axiom Level: 12
Skill: *alteration/light* 15

Backlash: 16
Difficulty: 11
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: duration

Range: self
Duration: 18 (one hour)
Cast Time: 6 (15 seconds)
Manipulation: control

The mage needs a mirror and at least a faint glimmer of light to cast this **focused** spell, catching the reflection of the light in the mirror. The mirror glows with a gentle brightness until everything within 10 meters is illuminated. *Mage light* has a strange, "thick" quality to it, and objects illuminated appear coarse and grainy, occasionally with a few random gray or black speckles. Colors are muted. The mirror is a necessary component of the spell, but the spell is not focused into the mirror, it is focused into the caster. Should the magician be separated from his mirror, the spell ends.

Open Lock

Axiom Level: 6
Skill: *apportation/metal* 14

Backlash: 16
Difficulty: 11
Effect Value: 13
Bonus Number to: effect
Range: touch
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Cast Time: 6 (15 seconds)
Manipulation: control, duration

Touching the lock he wants to open with one hand, the mage takes a key in the other and mimes the opening of a lock. At the completion of the spell, he takes the key and places it as near the lock mechanism as possible then turns it. The spell's effect value is used as a *lock picking* action value to see if the spell unlocks the lock.

Pathfinder

Axiom Level: 7
Skill: *divination/earth* 14

Backlash: 15
Difficulty: 9
Effect Value: 9
Bonus Number to: range

Range: 13 (400 meters)
Duration: 18 (one hour)
Cast Time: 18 (one hour)
Manipulation: control, duration, speed

The mage draws a simple design into the earth, drawing over the image again and again to score it deeper. At the same time he visualizes the place he seeks.

If the place is directly connected to earth or stone and within range, the spell can find it. When the spell is cast, the design moves through the earth toward the place in the most direct manner possible, at the rate of 10 meters per round - the pace of a moderate walk. If the range of the spell is increased beyond 18 and the target is that far away, then the design's speed is insufficient to reach the target before the spell expires.

Ritual of Mind Preparation

Axiom Level: 9
Skill: *alteration/folk* 15

Backlash: 17
Difficulty: 10
Effect Value: 15
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: self
Duration: 18 (one hour)
Cast Time: 18 (one hour)
Manipulation: control, duration

This spell requires the mage to memorize a poem or geometric proof during the first half of the ritual, and then to silently recite the proof or poem, associating a hand gesture with each part of the work. Once the link between thought and movement is complete, the spell is finished. The effect value of the spell is compared to the target's *Mind* on the Power Push Table. The resulting value modifier is added to the target's *Mind* for the duration of the spell. The shock effects are ignored.

Ritual of Perception Preparation

Axiom Level: 9
Skill: *alteration/folk* 15

Backlash: 17
Difficulty: 10
Effect Value: 15
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: self
Duration: 18 (one hour)
Cast Time: 18 (one hour)
Manipulation: control, duration

The mage must draw three large concentric circles, the smallest large enough for him to sit in, the others about a handspan farther out. He must make the circles as perfect as he can. Then, sitting in the innermost, he examines each of the circles looking for imperfections. He touches each circle at the site where it is furthest from a true circle.

The effect value of the spell is compared to the target's *Perception* on the Power Push table. The resulting value modifier is added to the target's *Perception* for the duration of the spell. The shock effects of the push are ignored.

Slow

Axiom Level: 10
Skill: *alteration/folk* 19

Backlash: 18
Difficulty: 14
Effect Value: 14
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 7 (25 meters)
Duration: 11 (2.5 minutes)
Cast Time: 3 (four seconds)
Manipulation: control, range, speed

The mage points at his target, moving in slow motion, to cast this **focused** spell. If the casting total is greater than the target's *Dexterity* or *dodge,* that target is hit by the spell. The effect value is compared to the target's *Dexterity* on the Power Push table, the shock effects of the push are ignored. The resulting value is **subtracted** from the target's *Dexterity* **for purposes of movement only**. *Slow* is limited to creatures that are man-sized or smaller.

A character's *Dexterity*-based movement values will be reduced to the new *Dexterity* value if it is less than the characters limit values. The character's *Dexterity*-based movement skills are also reduced by the spell's effect, decreasing the character's capability to perform speed pushes.

Example: A human character with a *Dexterity* of 11 and a *running* skill value of 13 has a running speed of 9 (the limit value). A Slow spell is cast on him and gets a +4 result. His effective *Dexterity* for movement purposes is now (11 - 4) 7, which means that his running speed value drops from 9 to 7. Additionally, his *running* skill is treated as being only (13 - 4) 9 for purposes of speed pushes.

Stealth Walk

Axiom Level: 10
Skill: *alteration/folk* 17

Backlash: 16
Difficulty: 14
Effect Value: 14
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch
Duration: 16 (25 minutes)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control, duration

This **focused** spell increases the *stealth* skill value of a character. The effect value of the spell is compared to the target's *Dexterity* on the Power Push Table. The resulting value modifier is added to the target's *stealth* skill (giving him the skill if he does not have it) for the duration of the spell. The shock effects of the push are ignored.

To cast the spell, the mage stands three paces from his target and holds his hand out, palm up. As he chants the spell, the recipient quietly takes three steps forward and lightly places a personal possession in the palm of the mage. *Stealth walk* is limited to beings that are man-sized or smaller.

Stone Tunnel

Axiom Level: 8
Skill: *apportation/earth* 12

Backlash: 16
Difficulty: 9
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch
Duration: 12 (four minutes)
Cast Time: 9 (one minute)
Manipulation: control, duration

The mage begins by taking a chip of the rock he wishes to tunnel through and smashing it to fine pieces. Once he has done that, he may cast the spell by kneading the stone dust into a piece of clay, then smearing the clay onto the wall. The mage pounds his hands on the stone with increasing firmness; at the end of the cast time the stone begins to crack and break in front of him as the spell begins to move the stone out away from where the mage is touching it.

The effect value represents the distance the mage tunnels each round, the tunnel being roughly one meter in diameter. .

Strength

Axiom Level: 10
Skill: *alteration/folk* 15
Backlash: 15
Difficulty: 12
Effect Value: 10
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control

The mage places a heavy object in the hands of the recipient, and helps the character lift the object, applying more force as he finishes casting this **focused** spell. The effect value of the spell is compared to the target's *Strength* on the Power Push Table. The resulting value modifier is added to the target's *Strength* for all purposes for the duration of the spell. The shock effects of the push are ignored.

Sunstore

Axiom Level: 10
Skill: *alteration/light* 20

Backlash: 15
Difficulty: 10
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: duration

Range: 8 (40 meters)
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Cast Time: 3 (four seconds)
Manipulation: control

The mage places a glass sphere in the sunlight so that the sunlight catches on some part of the sphere. The mage quickly utters the spell and the sunlight is trapped in the sphere. The sphere glows brighter and brighter, until at the end of the cast time its glow illuminates a 15-meter radius with natural sunlight (which may be more useful than other forms of light in some situations.) This effect lasts for the duration of the spell.

Sweet Water

Axiom Level: 8
Skill: *alteration/water* 14

Backlash: 17
Difficulty: 11
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: duration

Range: touch
Duration: 8 (40 seconds)
Cast Time: 9 (one minute)
Manipulation: control, duration

Sweet water purifies a liter of water, or a solution that is primarily water, each round of its duration. To cast the spell the magician requires two containers and one must be immaculately clean. The magician pours the liquid into the dirtier vessel, and places the clean vessel an arm's length away. He then scrubs clean one of his hands, placing that hand near the clean vessel. The other hand is placed over the dirty vessel. The fluid moves from the dirty to the clean vessel, passing through the magician's hands. His clean hand sparkles and glows, while his less clean hand collects all the impurities in the water.

Tracker

Axiom Level: 7
Skill: *divination/earth* 14

Backlash: 18
Difficulty: 10
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: range

Range: 13 (400 meters)
Duration: 20 (2.5 hours)
Cast Time: 18 (one hour)
Manipulation: *control, duration, range, speed*

To cast *tracker*, the mage must bury something which belonged to the person being tracked, and sit beside the spot while casting the spell. Digging up and "discovering" the buried item, then placing it on the ground completes the spell. If the person who the object belonged to is in contact with earth or stone and within range, the spell can find her. The item will begin to move along the ground toward the person in the most direct manner possible at the rate of 10 meters per round - the pace of a moderate walk. If the range of the spell is extended beyond 20 and the target is that far away, then the spell duration will expire before the object can reach its destination.

Understand Language

Axiom Level: 7
Skill: *divination/folk* 14

Backlash: 15

Difficulty: 14
Effect Value: 13
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: self
Duration: 11 (2.5 minutes)
Cast Time: 6 (15 seconds)
Manipulation: duration

The mage must touch the lips of the speaker whose language he wishes to understand. At the same time he begins to parrot the speech, to the best of his ability. The effect value of the spell is compared to a difficulty number of 8 on the Power Push table. The resulting value modifier is added to the caster's linguistics skill (giving him the skill if unskilled) for the duration of the spell. The shock effects of the push are ignored. *Understand language* only works for casters who are man-sized or smaller.

True Light

Axiom Level: 17
Skill: *conjuration/true knowledge* 28

Backlash: 16
Difficulty: 10
Effect Value: 5
Bonus Number to: duration

Range: 5 (10 meters)
Duration: 15 (15 minutes)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control, duration, light

True light conjures a glowing, streaming mass of pure Light, one of the three *Principles* of nature. The mage casts the spell by imagining that all he believes to be true is coalescing before him, and shaping these beliefs into the light. The light illuminates anything within 10 meters. *True light* drives away darkness, be it physical, mental or spiritual.

In addition, each round the mage may concentrate upon one being within the radius of the light. The mage generates an action total using the spell's effect value. Lies and evil intentions will appear as shadows about the creature if the total is greater than the *Mind* of the creature (if lying) or the *Spirit* (if harboring evil intentions).

Water Spray

Axiom Level: 8
Skill: *alteration/water* 12
Backlash: 16
Difficulty: 10
Effect Value: 10
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 6 (15 meters)
Duration: 6 (15 seconds)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control

The magician requires a liter of water in a container he can squeeze to produce a spray. As he incants the spell, the mage squirts the spray into his other hand, allowing it to deflect at a shallow angle. When the spell is cast, the volume and power of the spray increases dramatically as it is deflected from the mage's hand. The spray lasts for two rounds of combat. The *alteration* total must exceed the *dodge* or *Dexterity* of the target character in order to hit a target with the spray and it does damage equal to its effect value.

Weakness

Axiom Level: 9
Skill: *alteration/folk* 16

Backlash: 19
Difficulty: 13
Effect Value: 8
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 5 (10 meters)
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Cast Time: 3 (four seconds)
Manipulation: duration

The mage points at the target character and lets his arm fall limp as he finishes the spell. The effect value of the spell is compared to the target's *Strength* on the Power Push Table. The resulting value modifier is subtracted from the target's *Strength* for all purposes for the duration of the spell. The shock effects of the push are ignored.

Chapter 11: Miracles of Faith

"The Day of Judgment is at hand! Does not the Bible say, 'Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it to the earth; and there were peals of thunder, loud noises, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.' Look around you and tell me that this is not happening now!"

—Cyberpapal propagandist quoting Revelations 8:5 to Core Earth students

In every cosm inhabited by sentient beings, there is religion. How much influence and power religion has in a cosm can vary widely, but in every cosm where spirituality exists, there are stories of miracles. Sometimes they are true.

Community and Spirituality

Religion and spirituality differ from magic in a fundamental way: magic bends the forces of the universe according to alternate laws of nature governed by the will of an individual, the magician while religion creates a spiritual *community*, people linked by their beliefs to a divine will that is separate from the individual's will. This divine will can be called a spirit, a god, even the universe itself may be believed to have a will. Whatever it is called, whatever the belief, it is from this divine will that spiritual powers are derived.

Religion in a Game

This chapter describes religions as they exist in the fictional game setting of *Torg*. It should not be interpreted as a statement about the condition or nature of religions in the real world.

Magic is like an alternate form of science or technology, limited only by the practitioner's mentality. A wizard can study in his tower for years, never see a living soul, and be unhindered in his quest for magic. Religion, on the other hand, is not something that can be done entirely alone; it depends on a community of believers to create, empower and sustain the divine will. Without a community, there is no religion.

When people of a belief gather and interact in a service or ritual, their belief reaffirms the divine will. Even hermits begin their lives of faith in a community of belief. When they leave to seek solitude, they are still bound to that community by their faith, linked to the others through the divine principles they share. The hermit may be separate from others, but in a spiritual sense he is not alone as long as the community and the divine will it is linked to exists.

Spiritual Beliefs

A *mythos* encompasses the stories, symbols, practices, beliefs and history that people use to form their spiritual community, to connect themselves to the divine will and the spiritual power of

Community and the Social Axiom

Because the Social axiom governs how living beings can interact with each other, the spiritual community created by the interactions of believers must be governed by the Social axiom. But isn't the Spirit axiom supposed to deal with everything that relates to spirituality?

In fact it doesn't, no more than the Tech axiom relates to how many scientists can work together on a research project. The Spirit axiom, like the Tech axiom for the scientists, does not indicate anything about what the group itself, only what the group can do.

So what influence does the Social axiom have over religions? Like any organization, the Social axiom affects the scale and complexity of the interactions that are possible. A worldwide religion is possible with a low Social axiom but it would be an inefficient organization; there would be no central authority, a very simple hierarchy of priests who tend only to their own small part of the overall community, little coordination and cooperation would exist between groups on the types of rituals to perform, when to perform them, how to perform them, and so on. The Living Land is a perfect example of this kind of situation.

Conversely, a higher Social axiom would allow for a much more efficient and complex secular organization. The Cyberpapacy is an example of this situation; it is another worldwide religion in its home cosm but unlike Keta Kalles in the Living Land, the Avignon Church it is a uniform entity, one with a strong central authority and very rigid adherence to the same rituals and practices throughout the body of the community.

So are there Social axiom requirements involved with religions and miracles? There is one axiom requirement; a community cannot exist below Social 2. Beyond that, the only other restriction imposed by the Social axiom would be the number of believers who can effectively join together to perform a miracle. See "Faith and Believers" for more information.

their universe. A mythos is peoples' interpretation of the way the divine will allows spiritual power to work in their world; their faith in this mythos can act as a conduit for that power.

However, faith can only carry power for purposes that are consistent with the mythos, and the power must manifest itself in ways that are consistent with the beliefs. If , for example, a mythos centers on a loving and caring divinity, its power cannot be used contrary to those principles, such as to harm someone. Similarly, it must be consistent with the mythos; if the same mythos doesn't involve the weather then the divinity's power could not be used to cause a rainstorm even if it's meant to help people.

Religions differ dramatically in their interpretation of nature, of humanity's place in nature, and the ethical structure of the universe. This can have a great impact on how each religion may utilize its spiritual powers. Traditional Western Core Earth religions set man apart from nature, usually one notch above the rest of the world. A character believing himself to be separate from nature may use nature as he sees fit; for example, animals may be killed for any reason which benefits man, as man is a more divine creature than any other and has been given dominance over nature.

Many Eastern and shamanistic Core Earth religions instead assign man a place within nature. In some American Indian mythos for example, prayers must be spoken to get a deer's permission to kill it, or to ask its forgiveness for killing it, because in that mythos the deer is just as significant as the hunter. To put it another way, the hunter's place in the mythos is no more special than that of the deer.

To have faith in a religion and participate in its miracles is to accept **all** of the core beliefs of the religion. If a religion says there is only one true god, a faithful follower of that religion can only participate in miracles as long as he believes there is only one true god. If he doubts the validity of that statement, or any other central tenets of the religion, then he does not have true faith in the religion.

Basic Types of Spiritual Beliefs

When a character takes adds in the *faith* skill, she must declare what specific religion she is faithful to (Judaism, Ayslish Honor, the Cyberpapacy, Taoism, etc.). This can include being "faithful" to atheism. A character **cannot** take adds in different faiths, it is only possible to believe in one mythos at a time. It is possible to change religions, which is discussed later in this chapter.

The general categories provided here, with the exception of atheism, are **not** meant to be taken directly as a *faith* skill; a character would not have *faith(monotheism),* she would have something like *faith(Christianity)*.

Animism

Animism is the belief that all things have a vital life force. Some versions of animism state that all things have a soul or spirit. Animistic mythoi rarely have enemies within their mythos. Many American Indian religions are animist in nature.

Atheism

Atheism is a strong belief in the non-existence of divine beings or spiritual powers that can or should affect the everyday existence of humanity. Since spiritual powers do exist in *Torg*, atheism is considered a spiritual belief, even if it is a negative belief. Atheists are treated as a different faith by all mythos. Some may consider atheists as enemies.

Atheists can be found in any cosm with a Spirit axiom less than 23. In cosms where the existence of spiritual powers in undeniable, atheism may represent a stubborn refusal to accept the evidence or it may represent a belief that even though these divinities exist they have no business interfering with people's lives. At Spirit 23 though, atheism becomes a contradiction and at Spirit 27 it becomes impossible.

Atheism, unlike other faiths, has no miracles. Instead, it has the power of *denial*. If a miracle is performed in the presence of an atheist but he is not the target of the miracle, the atheist **may** generate a *faith* total. If the atheist's total is greater than the *faith* total of the miracle, the miracle fails. Generating the *faith* total counts as an action and may incur multi-action penalties on the character.

An atheist can never provide the *faith* skill for a miracle, even one for his own benefit. Miracles where another character provides the *faith*, such as a miracle used to injure someone else, has its difficulty increased by the **adds** of the atheist's *faith* skill if the miracle is directed at the atheist. The atheist may also choose to deny the miracle by generating a *faith* total of his own.

Monotheism

Monotheism is the belief that there is but one divine will. Traditionally monotheists consider atheists, pantheists, and

How Specific Is Faith*?*

As briefly discussed in Chapter Three, there's a lot of variation possible when it comes to specifying a character's *faith*. Some gaming groups may be comfortable, for example, placing all Core Earth Christian religions into one general "Christianity" group and treating them as being all the same community.

Others may prefer to be a bit more specific within each category and treat different versions of the same general belief as different faiths. Christianity for example could be subdivided into Catholics and Protestants. While both Christian, each one constitutes a separate community with its own distinct version of the mythos. Even further subdivisions within these groups are possible if the gaming group desires that level of separation and detail.

When considering how specific to get with the *faith* skill, it's important to keep in mind how the game rules treat interactions between different faiths. As detailed elsewhere in this chapter, characters with different *faith* skills are limited in how they are able to use their *faith* skills with each other, particularly in the performance of miracles.

With broadly defined faiths, characters from different religious sects could join together without any difficulties. For example, a Roman Catholic priest could perform the *bless* miracle on a Southern Baptist character because despite their philosophical differences they both have *faith(Christian).* On the other hand, if the *faith* skill is defined narrowly, the Roman Catholic may only be able to use *bless* on other Catholics, maybe only on other Roman Catholics.

panentheists as enemies, while considering all other mythos to be of a different faith.

Traditional monotheistic religions include Islam, Christianity and Judaism. Monotheists almost always have an evil enemy within the mythos, possibly in addition to considering some other types of religions as enemies. Monotheistic religions from other cosms include the Avignon Papacy of the Cyberpapacy and the Sacellum in Orrorsh.

Pantheism and Panentheism

Pantheism is the belief that the divine and the world are the same thing; the universe is divine. Panentheism is the belief that all reality is part of the body of a divine being or beings; the universe is a part of the creator. Hinayana Buddhism is an example of a nearly pantheistic religion, as is the Force in *Star Wars*. The Living Land's Keta Kalles is a type of panentheistic religion; everything that is alive is part of Lanala.

Polytheism

The belief that there are many gods and no one god is vastly greater in power than the others. Polytheistic religions often have enemies within the mythos. Examples of polytheistic religions are the ancient Greek and Norse religions as well as the religions of Aysle and the Nile Empire.

Evil Enemies

Some mythos divide the spiritual forces of the world into good and evil, or order and chaos, or some other type of "us versus them" perspective. Believers in the mythos fall on one side and the other side is considered an *enemy* of the faith. Christianity for example has Satan and his demons, Honor is opposed by Corruption in Aysle, and so on. While the enemy may have a place within the mythos of the religion (being the opposite side of the coin as it were), they are not considered to be part of the same community and so they are treated as a separate *faith* in all regards.

When enemies of a mythos meet, the *faith* **adds** (not the *faith* value) of the enemy are added to the difficulty of any miracles a character tries to perform on the enemy, including miracles beneficial to the enemy (the enemy has no choice in this matter). It's like trying to touch the same poles of two magnets together, the closer they're brought together the harder they push to stay apart. *Spiritual struggle* will also ensue if an enemy allows a beneficial miracle to be performed on him (i.e., he contributes his *faith* to the miracle.)

Faith Skill

Faith, unlike most skills, does not measure a character's training, knowledge or experience with a particular field. Instead, *faith* measures the **strength** of a character's belief in a mythos. A character may memorize the teachings of his religion, attends services regularly, and follow the moral code of the mythos but if he does not truly believe, he does not have the *faith* skill.

The more belief a character has in his mythos, the stronger his connection is to the divine will that encompasses those beliefs. It is through this connection that characters are able to participate in miracles, it is their conduit to the power that provides the miracle.

Faith alone does not normally produce miracles though; it provides the power but no control. Most miracles require the participation of a character with the *focus* skill or access to some other kind of agent through which the spiritual power can be controlled, such as a religious artifact.

A character's *faith* value is normally used to determine the effect value of miracles. When a miracle is requested, the **direct beneficiary** of the miracle is usually the one whose *faith* gives the miracle its spiritual power, **not** the one providing the miracle's *focus* (unless it is the *focus* character who benefits from the miracle.)

Example: Father Wagner asks God to *bless* Quin and aid him in gaining control of their out of control helicopter. While Wagner is providing the *focus* for the *bless* miracle, Quin's *faith* skill is the one that's used for the effect value because he's the one who will receive the bonus from the miracle.

Since the beneficiary of a miracle uses her *faith* to power the miracle, **she must volunteer** in order to accept the effects of a miracle. A character cannot be forced to use her *faith* skill against her will. If she does not volunteer, the beneficial miracle has no power. A character that does volunteer does not need the same *faith* as the character providing the *focus.* But if they do have different *faiths*, a negative consequence known as *spiritual struggle* will occur, as described later in this chapter.

A miracle harmful to a character must draw its *faith* from a character other than the target, since most targets won't willingly cooperate and provide their own *faith* skill for that purpose! The *faith* in these cases is normally provided by the *focus* character, assuming that he stands to benefit somehow should harm come to the target. Combat miracles are discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

When beneficial miracles are performed on people who do not have any *faith* skill, their *Spirit* attribute is **not** used to determine the miracle's effect value; the *faith* cannot be used unskilled. Instead, the character providing the *focus* must also provide the *faith* for the miracle. When the target character does not have any *faith* to provide, their cooperation is not necessary for the performance of beneficial miracles, since they cannot contribute towards the miracle in any way.

Focus Skill

The focus skill allows a caster to "focus" the raw spiritual energy which believers are connected to by their faith skills and somewhat reliably produce miraculous effects with that power. The focus skill provides the action total of a miracle while the faith skill of the person participating in the miracle determines the effect total.

Religious symbols and items can sometimes be used to provide focus for a miracle. A few miracles, such as ward enemy, can be performed by anyone with faith if they have a holy symbol of their religion; the holy symbol acts as their focus skill for the miracle, but only for those few miracles.

Most ordinary holy symbols and items don't have enough spiritual power invested in them to perform most miracles though. Usually the item must serve as a center of worship for a community of the faithful over an extended period of time before it even becomes possible. Such symbols have focus skill adds which may be used by anyone of the appropriate faith. Characters who already have focus will have their skill value increased by the adds of the holy item.

In realities with a Spirit axiom of at least 11, it is possible to invest items with spiritual power through ritual and miracles, giving them adds in focus. It is known, for example, that many of the clergy in the Cyberpapacy possess crucifixes which have been invested with at least +1 add in focus, allowing them to perform miracles or increasing their own ability to perform miracles.

These holy items should not be confused with religious artifacts, which often possess abilities far beyond the ability to bestow miracles. More information on artifacts can be found later in this chapter.

Acquiring Miracles

During character creation, characters who have both the focus and faith skills are allowed to pick a maximum number of miracles equal to the combined total of their faith and focus skill adds. These characters automatically get one miracle for free but may have to pay some of their starting Possibility Points to acquire any more than that. In cosms with low Spirit axioms, miracles are rarer and those who can work them generally become known for only a few blessed abilities rather than possessing a wide and varied range of miraculous powers.

The Spirit axiom of the character's home cosm is used to determine how many free miracles they may start with during character creation. If this number is less than the maximum amount they are allowed to start with, they may spend one possibility per miracle up to the maximum amount that they are allowed.

NUMBER OF FREE STARTING MIRACLES

Spirit Axiom	Miracles
9 and less	1
10 - 14	2
15 - 18	3
19 - 22	4
23 and greater	5

Example: When Tina designed Father Wagner during character creation, he had +2 adds in *faith* and +1 adds in *focus* so he could start with a maximum of three miracles. Wagner is from Core Earth, Spirit axiom 9, so he started with just one free miracle. Tina chose *Bless* for the one free miracle and then spent one of Wagner's starting possibilities on a second miracle, *Calm*. While she could have spent another possibility for a third miracle, Tina decided against it.

During play, the total of the character's *faith* and *focus* adds continue to represent the maximum number of miracles that a character may possess. Whenever a player increases his character's *faith* and *focus* skills, the maximum will likewise be increased. Similarly, if a character should somehow lose adds in either skill, the maximum number of miracles they may have will likewise decrease. If this new maximum is less than the number of miracles the character possesses, they do not lose any of their miracles, they simply can't gain any new miracles until they increase the maximum number back above the number of miracles they know.

Characters can acquire new miracles during play in two ways. The first is that whenever the player increases faith or focus he may choose to spend a possibility and the character automatically acquires a new miracle. This may be done for each new add acquired so if, for example, a player bought up both skills by one add each he could spend two more possibilities and acquire two new miracles for his character.

The miracles a character acquires in this manner must have a Spirit axiom requirement equal to or less than the character's Spirit

axiom; it cannot be used to acquire miracles that are contradictory to the character's reality. The miracles must also be appropriate to his religion in order to acquire them in this manner.

The second method is for the character to pray to the divine will of her mythos and ask for a new miracle. This can only be attempted after the character has witnessed the desired miracle being performed by another character or after the *focus* character has used an *invocation* to create the desired miraculous effect. This is the only method by which characters may acquire miracles which contradict the character's reality or that are inappropriate to the character's religion.

Praying for a new miracle is accomplished by spending a Possibility Point and generating a *faith* total. The spent possibility **does not** give the character a reroll; its expenditure is to gain the opportunity to receive a new miracle. The character may spend another possibility to gain a reroll if desired and cards may be used normally, though the player may not trade cards with another player since this is a personal matter between the character and the divine will of her religion

If the desired miracle has an axiom level equal to or lower than the character's Spirit axiom, the difficulty of acquiring the miracle is 20 plus the Spirit axiom of the miracle. If the desired miracle has an axiom level higher than the character's Spirit axiom, the difficulty is 30 plus the Spirit axiom of the miracle. If the miracle is not appropriate to the character's mythos there is a +15 penalty to the difficulty number.

Example: Father Wagner wants to pray for the *Common Ground* miracle, which has an axiom requirement of Spirit 7. Since Wagner's Spirit axiom is 9, the difficulty will be (20 + 7) 27.

If Wagner were to pray for the *Healing* miracle, which is Spirit 10, the difficulty of that would be (30 + 10) 40. If Wagner were to pray for a miracle like *Animate Dead,* which goes against the mythos of his religion, the difficulty of acquiring this Spirit 13 miracle would be (30 + 13 + 15) 58.

If the character's *faith* total is successful, they gain the miracle they prayed for. If the *faith* total fails, the character does not gain the miracle and **cannot ever** ask for that miracle again or acquire it through the purchase of new adds in *faith* or *focus*.

Selecting the Right Miracles

Every mythos teaches the faithful about good and evil, about what behavior is applauded and what is taboo. A miracle that does not conform to the ethical guidelines of a mythos is extremely difficult to acquire and extremely difficult to perform if it is acquired.

During character creation, the player may select only miracles that fit the morality and ethics of the character's religion (as well as the character's Spirit axiom of course.) This may require the player to consult with the gamemaster to determine which miracles are considered appropriate for their character's religion and which ones are not appropriate. The *Clerics' sourcebook* includes lists of suggested miracles for the major religions involved in the Possibility Wars and most of the realm sourcebooks also indicate what miracles are available to characters from the realms.

During play, characters will often be exposed to miracles from other cosms and from other religions. While many miracles are commonly found in most religions, it is likely that the character will be exposed to many miracles that are not directly available to him through his mythos, either because of an axiom level requirement or because the miracle is not appropriate to the mythos.

Characters who witness a miracle not directly available to them can attempt to gain that miracle by praying for it as outlined above.

Ords and Miracles

Ord characters who possess both *faith* and *focus* may also possess miracles, but because they do not have possibilities to spend they should rarely, if ever, have more than the "free" number determined by the Spirit axiom of their home cosm.

Miracles which are within the character's Spirit axiom and deemed appropriate for the character's mythos are the easiest ones to acquire in this manner, though not as easily as gaining them by buying adds in *faith* and *focus*.

Contradictory miracles and effects that are not consistent with the character's mythos may also be acquired, though they are more difficult. Gamemasters may wish to consider forbidding characters from even attempting to acquire miracles that are not appropriate for the character's mythos if they are uncomfortable with the whole idea. Given the way players can increase skill totals by using possibilities and cards from the Drama Deck, even the +15 penalty may not be enough to keep powerful characters from running roughshod over the restrictions of their *faith*.

Performing Miracles

To perform a miracle, the character with the *focus* skill generates an action total using his *focus* skill, including any possible modifiers. If the *focus* is successful, the character providing *faith* for the miracle adds **the same bonus number** to his *faith* value to generate the effect value.

Example: An Ayslish priest is performing a miracle with Terrill. The priest has a *focus* skill of 13 and Terrill's *faith* skill is 11. Becky rolls a 17, a +4 bonus. The priest generates a *focus* total of 17 and succeeds. The same +4 bonus is added to Terrill's *faith* to arrive at a *faith* total of 15 for the miracle.

Only one personal Possibility Point may be spent to enhance the die roll, as usual; however, since there are two participants in the miracle, there are special rules concerning who may spend the possibility. The *focus* character may spend a possibility **if and only if** the *focus* total will not exceed the difficulty of the miracle without the additional roll. If it does exceed the difficulty, then only the *faith* character may spend a possibility.

Possibilities from outside sources are handled the same way. The *focus* character may only use a *Hero* or *Drama* card or possibilities from some other source if the check would normally fail. If the *focus* character spends any possibilities of any kind of the miracle, the *faith* character may not spend any, they can only spend possibilities if the *focus* character cannot.

Example: Father Wagner performs the miracle with Quin and rolls a 2, generating a *focus* total of 3. The difficulty though is 10 so he will obviously fail. Tina declares that Wagner will spend a possibility and she rolls again, getting an 11 and bringing her die roll up to 13. Not satisfied with that, she also uses a Hero card and rolls again. Because Tina has spent possibilities on the miracle, Quin cannot further increase it with his own possibilities.

In a later encounter, Wagner and Quin perform another miracle together and Tina rolls an 11, a +0 bonus. Wagner's *focus* total will be 13 so Wagner will successfully perform the miracle and Tina cannot

Focus Characters and Spirit 19 Realities

In realities with a Spirit axiom of 19 and higher, the spiritual energies that drive miracles are easy enough to control that characters with the *focus* skill can attempt to perform any miracle allowed by their religion and their Spirit axiom, though it is still easier to perform miracles that the character actually possesses.

Performing a miracle that the character does not possess is normally considered a Difficult task. Gamemasters can use the Difficulty Number Scale to impose a different modifier when appropriate. Characters from realities with a lower Spirit axiom may attempt to perform miracles they do not possess when they are in a reality with a Spirit axiom of 19 or higher but the attempt is a contradiction for them even when the desired miracle is not a contradiction.

spend possibilities to increase the total. Paul though would like to have a bigger bonus number for Quin's *faith* total so he declares that Quin will spend a possibility on the miracle. Tina rolls again to determine the final die roll and the final bonus number.

Prayers and Rituals

There are two basic methods by which miracles are invoked: *prayers* and *rituals.* Prayers are quick requests for miracles, often personal and impromptu, while rituals carefully follow sacred rules. A prayer can be done in as little as 10 seconds (one round). A ritual takes at least ten minutes, often longer. Some miracles may only be attempted as a ritual.

Miracles that must be performed as rituals will say in their descriptions how long it takes to perform the ritual. The priest must not be interrupted during the ritual or he will have to start over from the beginning. A priest may attempt to perform a ritual in a disruptive environment, such as while combat rages around him, but this imposes a +5 penalty to the difficulty of the miracle. A priest performing a ritual can be successfully interrupted by being physically attacked in any way or with a successful character interaction (*trick, test, taunt,* etc.)

Rituals that require more than one day to perform do allow some time for the priest to eat and sleep; a day is considered eighteen hours for purposes of performing rituals. The action and effect totals of the ritual are not generated until the completion of the ritual. The person providing the *faith* for the miracle must also be present during the entire period of the ritual, though they can sometimes be disturbed without it disrupting the ritual.

Modifiers

Miracles are spiritual powers used to fulfill a need of the faithful. They are not like spells, dry processes that may be learned and then used whenever desired for any possible reason. The conditions facing the faithful who request the aid greatly affects the outcome of the miracle. The difficulty number of the *focus* check will be increased or decreased by those circumstances.

The divine will of the mythos acts to protect the faithful from its enemies. First, as mentioned earlier, it makes it more difficult for an enemy of the mythos to invoke miracles that directly affect the faithful. Second, miracles that protect the faithful from an enemy of the mythos are easier to invoke than against non-enemies. In any case where the lives of the faithful are threatened, by an enemy of the mythos or not, miracles also become easier.

Miracles are primarily meant to meet an immediate need; a character that is wounded needs healing, a character that is hungry needs food. If a miracle is not needed immediately, it becomes more difficult.

MIRACLE MODIFIER CHART

Conditions	Modifier
Target of miracle not providing the *faith* skill	+3
Target of miracle an enemy of the *focus* character's mythos	+adds of enemy's *faith* skill
Miracle defends faithful against an enemy of the mythos	-3
Need for miracle is urgent or lives of the faithful are threatened	-3
Need for miracle is not immediate	+5
Miracle stretches or violates tenets of either the *faith* or *focus* character's religion	+15
Miracle stretches or violates tenets of both the *faith* and *focus* characters' religions	+17
Ritual performed in a disruptive environment	+5

Example: A priest in the Cyberpapacy is preparing to hunt down a demon that has been terrorizing a small village. As part of his preparations, he performs a *Bless* miracle on himself. He is the target of the miracle and provides the *faith* for it, so no penalty there. While the demon is considered an enemy of his religion, the miracle is not targeted at the demon so that has no effect either. The miracle does serve to protect the faithful from an enemy so the difficulty is modified by -3. The miracle is not immediately needed as the demon is currently hiding and not threatening anyone, so the difficulty is modified by +5. The final modifier to the miracle's difficulty is thus +2.

Example: A viking warrior in Aysle agrees to allow Father Wagner to perform the *Calm* miracle on him so that he doesn't lose control of himself and go into a killing frenzy during the middle of a delicate diplomatic meeting. The viking will use his own *faith* so that's not a problem and enemies of the faiths are not involved in any way. The miracle is needed urgently to keep the viking from losing control so that's a -3 modifier. But the *Calm* miracle goes against the teachings of the viking's religion so there's a +15 penalty to the difficulty, for a final modifier of +12. (Additionally, because Wagner and the viking believe in different mythos there will be a *spiritual struggle* as well.)

Modifiers for Combat Miracles

Several of the religions in *Torg* are violent and warlike in nature and possess powerful miracles designed for use against enemies, which could be of the secular variety as well as the spiritually defined enemies of the mythos. Determining modifiers for some of these miracles can be a bit confusing at times. When does the target of a combat miracle provide the *faith*? Is all combat considered an urgent need for a miracle? Does attacking an enemy count as defending the faithful?

Even with combat miracles, targets cannot be forced to involuntarily use their *faith* skills to power a miracle so in almost every situation the *focus* character will have to provide the *faith*, so the +3 difficulty modifier is used. There can be situations where the target of an adverse miracle believes that he "deserves it"; perhaps he violated some tenet of his faith and sees the attack as a "punishment" or a form of "divine retribution" for his sins.

In cases like this the character could be considered to be volunteering to receive the miracle and thus his *faith* would be used and the difficulty penalty would not be applied. But this should be a very rare situation. Players would have to clearly indicate that their character was welcoming the effects of an adverse miracle before their character's *faith* skill could be used to power it.

In general, combat miracles are not urgently needed unless there is **no other way** to protect the faithful from an immediate threat posed by the target. For example, an unarmed and otherwise unprotected priest who comes across a demon attacking someone would have an urgent need for combat miracles. But if the priest was equipped for combat with weapons and armor then the miracles aren't urgently needed. Similarly, if the priest was armed but had no armor he may not urgently need offensive combat miracles but he might desperately need defensive miracles.

An offensive miracle is always considered "defending the faithful" if it is used against an enemy of the mythos so the -3 modifier is always applied, offsetting the penalty for the character providing the *faith* for the miracle. Offensive miracles used against other opponents may receive the -3 modifier for "lives of the faithful are threatened" if the target of the miracle is perceived as a threat to the faithful, even if that threat is not immediate.

Example: The doctrine of the CyberChurch of the Cyberpapacy is that heresy and heathenism poses a moral threat to the souls of all god-fearing people. Therefore, offensive miracles directed against heretics and heathens gain the -3 difficulty modifier for "lives of the faithful are threatened". Note though that this may be offset by the +5 penalty for not immediately needing a miracle if the heretics/heathens are not posing an immediate threat to the souls of the faithful.

Miracles and Multiple Targets

If more than one character or object is to be affected by a miracle, it's treated as a One on Many (see Chapter Four.) If a miracle is beneficial (as seen by the target characters), the characters are affected in **descending** order of *faith* values, highest value first. If the miracle is harmful, characters are affected in **ascending** *faith* value order, highest value affected last. The One on Many table is **not** applied to the faith total(s) for the miracle, only to the *focus* total to determine how many are affected.

Example: A Sacellum priest is performing a *Blessing Vow* miracle for a group of six worthy Victorian soldiers. Two of the soldiers have a *faith* skill of 11, two have a 12, one has a 13 and one has a 14. The miracle's normal difficulty is 8. The priest generates a *focus* total of 12. Consulting the One on Many chart, DN+4 means that only two of the six soldiers receive the benefits of the miracle. Because it is a beneficial miracle the two highest *faith* skills receive the miracle. The characters with *faith* 14 and 13 are blessed.

Consequences of Failure

If a miracle fails, the *focus* character may not attempt the same miracle for 24 hours or until he undergoes the *ritual of purification*.

Spirit Axiom 20 and Miracles

In cosms with a Spirit axiom of 20 or higher, the *focus* skill is not necessary to perform miracles. The spiritual energies of the cosm are so plentiful that simply by gathering together in worship the religious community generates a *focus* skill equal to the value of the number of worshippers, plus the Spirit axiom minus 20.

Example: Twenty edeinos gather together in the Living Land, which has a Spirit axiom of 24, to pray for a miracle. The value of 20 is 7 and then (24 - 20) 4 is added, giving the assembled group a *focus* skill of 11.

When a group comes together like this and creates their own *focus* skill, the rules given under "The Strength of the Community" need to be modified somewhat. The bonus is determined normally but it is **only** applied to the *faith* total of the miracle, the bonus is **not** added to the *focus* total because the combined efforts of the group have already made a contribution, it created the *focus* value in the first place.

These characters cannot just pray for any miracle, they must be trained in the same rituals and prayers that a character with *focus* would use to perform the same miracle. If they have not been trained in any miracles, the only way they can use the *focus* skill they have generated is to perform an *invocation*.

In addition, the character providing the *faith* must wait 24 hours or be cleansed in a *ritual of hope* before he can use his *faith* in **any** miracle, except for the *ritual of hope*. The character is able to use his *faith* for that miracle during those 24 hours, but no other. If a character is providing both *faith* and *focus,* both restrictions apply.

The Strength of the Community

When a miracle is created among a group of believers, their *faith* intertwines and supports one another; thus, a miracle may be powered by multiple members of a community and can be far greater than the miracle possible when only one person is providing the *faith* skill. The difficulty of participating in the creation of a miracle is called the miracle's *community rating* and can be found in the miracle descriptions at the end of this chapter and in other *Torg* products. Only characters with the same *faith* skill may combine on a miracle.

Each character wishing to aid in the miracle (i.e., is not the *focus* character or the character providing the *faith* for the miracle) generates a *faith* total, and if the total is greater than or equal to the community rating of the miracle, that character contributes. The **value** of the number of people who successfully contribute (including the *focus* character and the provider of the *faith* if it is not the same character) becomes a bonus modifier to the miracle, it is added to both the *focus* and *faith* totals of the miracle.

Example: Seven people have gathered to help a priest perform a miracle on another member of the community. Four people successfully beat the miracle's community rating with their *faith* totals. The bonus modifier will be the value of six people (the four faithful, the *focus* character and the character providing the *faith*

for the miracle). On the Value Chart a measure of 6 has a value of 4 so the bonus is +4. The *focus* character gets a +4 bonus to his *focus* total and the beneficiary of the miracle gets a +4 bonus to her *faith* total.

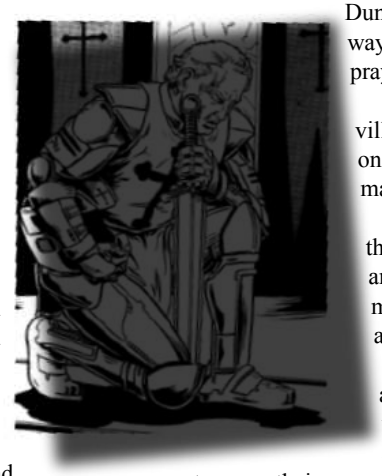
When there are a large number of people coordinating on a miracle, instead of having to generate a *faith* total for each single person, use the following formula:

- Start with the value of the number of participants, including the *focus* and *faith* characters
- Add their average *faith* skill value
- Subtract the community rating of the miracle
- Subtract two
- The result is the bonus modifier.

The final modifier may never be greater than the value for the number of characters. If a modifier is too large, reduce it to the value for the number of characters. A zero or negative modifier is ignored; a miracle can never be less effective because of faithful participants.

Example: 50 faithful characters with an average *faith* value of 10 are trying to help a Ayslish priest heal a *mortally wounded* hero by joining their prayers to hers. The value of 52 characters is 9. The community rating of the *healing* miracle is 11. Character value (9) plus average *faith* (10) minus community rating (11) minus 2 equals a bonus modifier of +6.

To determine the average faith of a community, use the following rule of thumb: a casual believer in a religion has a *faith* add of +1. A confirmed believer, one who lives his life by most of the tenets of the religion, has a *faith* of +2 to +4. Only the fiercely devout have *faith* adds greater than +4. For most races, the average value of the *Spirit* attribute is 8 so average casual believers would have a skill value of 9 while the more confirmed believers would range from 10 to 12.



Invocations

Invocations are a different type of miracle. Instead of being a "gift" or talent that the individual can perform somewhat on demand, an invocation is a direct appeal to the divine will of the religion, asking for direct intervention or action from the spirits, a god or whatever. The base community rating and *focus* difficulty of an invocation is 20 + (33 - **Spirit axiom of the location**).

For example, the community rating and *focus* difficulty number for an invocation attempted in Core Earth is 20 plus (33-9) 24 = 44. In the Living Land it is only 20 plus (33-24) 9 = 29. These difficulties are independent of the personal Spirit axioms of the characters performing the invocation; the Spirit axiom of the location is all that matters because it determines the amount of spiritual energy directly available to the divine will for use in creating the desired effect.

The only difficulty modifier that could be applied to an invocation is if the request is for something that does not conform to the ethical guidelines of the mythos, such as the followers of a violent god of war praying for a peaceful resolution to a problem. When an invocation violates or stretches the tenets of a mythos, the difficulty is increased by +15.

No *faith* total is necessary when performing an invocation, the spiritual energy necessary for the miracle is coming directly from the divine will and does not need to come through any of the characters involved in the invocation. If the invoking character fails to beat the difficulty she may spend a Possibility Point, but if she succeeds she may not. Possibilities from outside sources such as cards are handled as outlined earlier under "Performing Miracles."

If the invoking character gets a *minimal* success, the miracle disturbs the world in the least way possible while still meeting the needs of the invoker. If the invoker gets *average* or *good* success the miracle makes a more direct, noticeable impact to achieve its results. These levels of success can restore internal resources, as well as providing possible solutions to the problem. On a *superior* success, the miracle is achieved in a way that provides new resources that were previously unavailable.

Spectacular successes show the work of a divine hand that is irrefutable to all but the strongest doubter; *spectacular* success may only be achieved in an area with a Spirit axiom of 13 or greater. If the axiom level is lower than 13, *spectacular* successes are treated the same as *superior* successes.

Example: A priestess of Dunad is leading a group of villagers on a desperate journey through a dangerous "dark" region of the Aysle cosm, when they reach the forbidding Trieridge mountains. Low on food and sought by numerous enemy patrols, the faithful desperately need a way over the mountains. The priestess invokes Dunad, asking that she and her people be given a way over the mountain. The villagers gather in ritual prayer in support of the priestess.

If she gets a *minimal* success, a scout for the villagers could find a path less arduous than the ones they already know about; perhaps they could make it if they pressed ahead.

If she gets an *average* or *good* success, the villagers would find themselves refreshed and invigorated by a breeze coming from the mountain. The scouts would then find a better path and the journey could begin at good speed.

On a *superior* success, they gain the benefits above. In addition, as they began their journey, they would find sure-footed pack animals, apparently abandoned, who are tame enough to carry their gear and who instinctively know their way over the mountain. With the animals and the renewed energy, they cross the mountain with unnatural ease.

On a *spectacular* success, the power of Dunad would carve a safe, level passage through the mountain in a storm of unprecedented frenzy. As the villagers passed through, an earthquake would reseal the pass.

Spiritual Struggle

Characters who have faith in different mythoi cannot coordinate on miracles (see "The Strength of the Community" earlier in the chapter). But a character of one faith may perform a miracle on a willing character of a different faith, generating his *focus* total normally. If he succeeds, the target uses his *faith* normally to determine the miracle's effect value.

However, a *spiritual struggle* erupts due to the differences in the two religions involved. Each character is exposed to the power and beliefs of a different mythos and getting the two belief systems to work in harmony to produce the miraculous effect can be a bit of an ordeal.

Immediately after the miracle is performed, even if it is unsuccessful, each character generates an action total with their *faith* (this is separate from the totals generated for the miracle) using the **other character's** faith **skill value** as the difficulty number. Positive result points are read on the Combat Results Table as non-lethal damage (first wound is changed into a K result.) This damage is spiritual in nature and has some additional consequences that are described below.

The characters involved have no choice in the matter and **must** generate a *faith* total against the other character even if they don't want to harm each other. However, they can choose to not take rerolls and of course not use possibilities or cards to increase their totals in order to minimize the final results.

Example: In a pinch, Father Wagner performs a *Bless* miracle on Terrill. Because they have different *faith* skills, a spiritual struggle ensues as soon as the effects of the miracle are determined. Becky has Tina and Alan generate new *faith* totals for their characters.

Terrill's *faith* skill is 11. Alan rolls a 10 but decides against taking the reroll because he wants to minimize any possible damage that Terrill might do to Wagner. The roll is a -1 modifier so Terrill's action total is 10. Compared to Wagner's *faith* skill of 14, there are no result points so Terrill does not inflict any spiritual damage onto Wagner.

Tina generates a *faith* total of 16 for Father Wagner. Compared to Terrill's *faith* of 11, it produces five result points. Becky consults the Combat Results Table and informs Alan that Terrill takes an O 2 damage result from the spiritual struggle.

Conflicting Write-ups

The miracles described in this chapter can also be found in other sourcebooks and supplements produced for *Torg*, such as the various realm sourcebooks and the *Clerics' Sourcebook,* where slightly different values and descriptions may be used. With the exception of the Spiritual Ratings of the miracles, these differences are not significant and you may use whichever version you prefer.

If you find a version of a miracle in another book which has a higher Spiritual Rating than what is given in this book, you can consider that miracle to be an "advanced" or "improved" version of the miracle given here and the write-up can be used without any problems.

However, and this is unfortunately a problem with the *Clerics' Sourcebook,* if you come across a version of a miracle where the Spiritual Rating is lower than the one given in this book, you should ignore the value given in that write-up and use the Spiritual Rating provided here. Some earlier products, such as the *Clerics' Sourcebook,* were inconsistent in how they determined the Spiritual Ratings for their miracles and have lower axioms listed than allowed by the Spirit axiom chart.

For example, *healing* is given a Spiritual Rating of 10 in every *Torg* product it appeared in except for the *Clerics' Sourcebook,* where it was given a much lower Spiritual Rating of 6. The previous axiom value of 10 is much more consistent with the Spirit axiom chart found in Chapter Seven and more sources listed it with that axiom, so the write-up here for *healing* uses 10 instead of the 6 given in the *Clerics' Sourcebook.*

Spiritual Damage Effects

When damage is taken in a spiritual struggle, it has spiritual consequences. Even though this type of damage is treated the same as physical damage, it has additional effects and is called *spiritual damage*.

When a character is KOed by spiritual damage, the character loses the ability to use her *focus* skill. This does **not** include falling unconscious from accumulated shock, only from KO conditions. The character does not have to take the full KO condition from spiritual damage, an O from spiritual damage combined with a K from physical damage or vice versa will still cause the character to lose the use of the skill.

When a character loses their *focus* skill this way, it can only be regained by undergoing a *ritual of purification* miracle (obviously performed by another character with *focus*). In essence, the spiritual struggle has "tainted" their *focus* skill and they will be unable to use it until it has been cleansed of the foreign influences.

If a character suffers one or more wounds of spiritual damage and her cumulative damage total becomes heavily wounded or greater, that character loses both her *faith* and *focus* skills and cannot get them back until she undergoes both a *ritual of purification* and a *ritual of hope.* Additionally, the character's wound status cannot be healed to better than *wounded* until she has restored both of her skills.

Characters who do not have the *focus* skill are not adversely affected by spiritual damage unless they take one or more wounds and their cumulative wound level reaches *heavily wounded* or greater, at which point they lose the ability to use their *faith* skill. They may regain the use of the skill by undergoing a *ritual of hope.*

Characters who have lost *faith* or *focus* to spiritual damage may also regain the use of their skills by *converting* to a different belief system.

Conversion

Conversion is the abandonment of one set of beliefs in favor of another. It is not something that characters should do lightly, and should involve a great deal of soul-searching and inner debate about what might involve a fundamental change in how the character views himself and his world.

Converting from one faith to another can only be done voluntarily, a character cannot be forced into accepting another mythos. Conversion lowers a character's *faith* adds by one, although the add may be bought back at a later time. If a character with just +1 adds in *faith* converts, she is considered to have the *faith* skill at +0 adds. Increasing the skill from +0 to +1 adds costs one possibility or (especially for Ords, who don't have Possibility Points) requires one and a half months of intense devotion to the beliefs of the new mythos.

Conversion also rids the character of the consequences of any spiritual damage the character may have taken - with new belief comes new hope and a fresh connection to the divine will. Characters who lost the use of *faith* or *focus* to spiritual damage immediately regain the use of those skills upon conversion, they do not have to go through the *rituals of purification* or *hope*.

Characters who do not have the *faith* skill cannot voluntarily convert since they have nothing to convert from. A character with no *faith* who decides to accept the beliefs of a particular mythos must acquire the first add of the skill like any other skill as outlined in Chapter Three.

However, characters that do not have the *faith* skill are vulnerable to **involuntary** conversion. If the character is a participant in a miracle that achieves a *spectacular* success, the experience is so overwhelming that the character cannot help but be swept up into the community of the *focus* character and become a believer in that mythos.

Because the process is involuntary, characters do not have to pay the full price to acquire the first add in *faith*. Possibility-rated characters only spend two possibilities to gain the first add, which they must do before or at the end of the adventure that the *spectacular* success occurred in. Ords receive the first add in the skill immediately with the assumption that the experience has changed their lives enough that they will be devoting the next couple of months to learning and living the teachings of their new religion.

Religious Artifacts

Divine power can sometimes realize itself in the form of an *artifact*. These objects differ from the spiritually empowered religious artifacts mentioned under "*Focus* Skill" in that the artifact, as an actual extension of the divine will of the mythos, can act as much more than just a *focus* for miracles. It may be capable of performing miracles on its own volition and it may possess miraculous powers beyond what the mortal faithful could produce themselves.

Example: The Holy Grail is a Core Earth religious artifact, said to be the cup from which Christ drank at the Last Supper. Those who have at least one add in an appropriate Christian *faith* skill and are deemed "worthy" may drink from the cup and automatically receive the benefits of the *Healing* miracle, even though the miracle is not normally possible in Core Earth religions because it's axiom requirement is 10, too high for Core Earth.

Additionally, some artifacts may also be eternity shards (see Chapter Seven) and possess special abilities related to the use of possibility energy as well as spiritual energies. The Holy Grail is one such artifact and is described in more detail in the *Storm Knights' Guide to the Possibility Wars* supplement.

A Selection of Miracles

The following miracles are a representative sampling of the spiritual powers available in the Possibility Wars, divided into prayers and rituals. The standard miracle write-up looks like this:

Bless

Spiritual Rating: 9
Community Rating: 10
Difficulty: 10
Range: touch
Duration: one hour
Effect: adds success levels to all bonuses of one attribute for one character

The *spiritual rating* of the miracle is the minimum Spirit axiom necessary to create the effect as detailed in Chapter Seven. Some especially high axiom miracles, such as some of the ones available in the Living Land, may actually produce low axiom level effects but have a high Spirit axiom requirement because the difficulty of the miracle has been made lower, an effect that begins at a Spirit axiom of 21.

The *community rating* of a miracle is the difficulty for faithful worshippers to contribute to a miracle as discussed earlier in this chapter.

The *difficulty* is the difficulty number for the *focus* check of a miracle. If there is a *faith* check, such as to determine the amount of damage caused by a combat miracle, the difficulty is also the *faith* difficulty. If the difficulty is stated as "*faith* or *Spirit* of target" this means to use the target's *faith* skill as the difficulty or their *Spirit* if they don't have the *faith* skill.

Range is how far the focusing character may be from the target character or object. There are five types of ranges for miracles: *self* means the miracle may only affect the *focus* character; *touch* means the *focus* character must be able to physically lay hands on the target of the miracle; *voice* means the miracle may only affect targets within earshot, which can vary greatly depending on circumstances; a straight value in meters; and *faith total* which means the generated *faith* total of the miracle is read as a value in meters.

Duration is how long the miracle lasts. A duration of "performance" means the miracle lasts as long as the *focus* character actively continues the miracle through prayer, chanting, or ceremony. A miracle might have a time value given, which may be specific ("one hour") or it may be general ("until combat is over".) If the duration is listed as "NA", the effects of the miracle are permanent.

Effect summarizes the effect of the miracle.

Ritual length is also included in write-ups for miracles that require lengthy ceremonies and performances to create. Miracles which do not have a ritual length specified are performed in one combat round (10 seconds).

Prayers

Banish

Spiritual Rating: 11
Community Rating: 9
Difficulty: *faith* or *Spirit* of target
Range: 7 (20 meters)
Duration: 18 (one hour)
Effect: forces a character to flee

This miracle may only be used against opponents of a different religion or opponents who do not have any *faith* skill. The effect value of the miracle is compared to the *faith* or *Spirit* of the target. If the miracle's effect value is greater, the target is compelled to flee from the location of the *focus* character. However, if the target's *faith* or *Spirit* is greater than the effect value, it is the *focus* character that becomes compelled to run away!

The target of the miracle may actively defend if he wishes by generating a *faith* or *Spirit* total, with a minimum +1 bonus. This counts as an action if performed in round play.

Bless

Spiritual Rating: 9
Community Rating: 10
Difficulty: 10
Range: touch
Duration: 18 (one hour)
Effect: adds success levels to all bonuses of one attribute for one character

A *bless* surrounds and infuses the target character with spiritual energy. The *bless* enhances the character, adding to all **bonus numbers** generated while under the *bless* for all actions controlled by any **one** attribute. This is **not** a bonus to the attribute, only bonus numbers, so values derived from the attribute such as movement limit values are not affected by the *bless*.

The blessed character receives a +1 bonus for each success level attained by the *faith* total of the miracle, i.e. a *good* success is worth +3 to the bonus number. The attribute to be affected must be chosen by the recipient, at the time the blessing is performed. Only one *bless* may affect a character at a time.

Call Animals

Spiritual Rating: 8
Community Rating: 8
Difficulty: 11
Range: 14 (600 meters)
Duration: 20 (two hours)
Effect: summons animals within range

This miracle allows the *focus* character to attract animals to his location. If so desired, the character can specify the type of animal he wishes to attract. If the miracle is successful, all animals or all animals of the desired type will make their way towards the character at their normal rate of movement. Intelligent animals may resist the summons if the *faith* total of the miracle does not exceed their *Spirit* attribute.

Control over the summoned animals is not provided by the miracle, nor does it provide any special means of communicating with the animals.

Calm

Spiritual Rating: 7
Community Rating: 10
Difficulty: *willpower* or *Mind* of target
Range: voice
Duration: performance
Effect: rids target of violent emotions

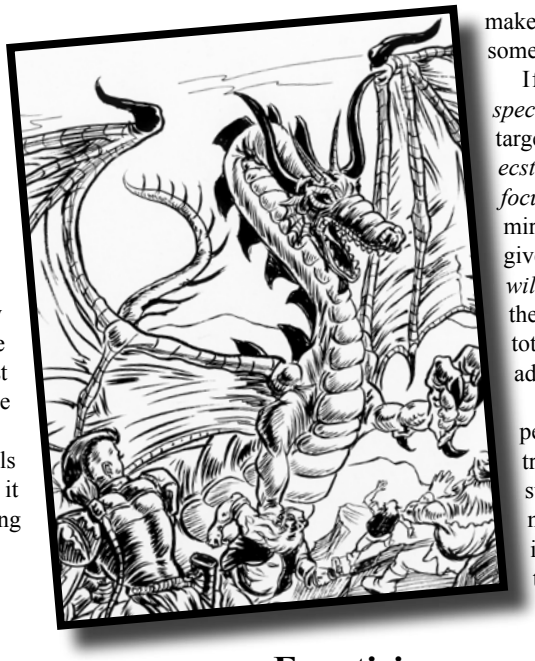
Calm eliminates any violent or extreme emotions of the target, replacing them with a tranquil state. The effect total of the miracle is compared to the target's *Mind* or *willpower* skill. On a *good* or better success level, the target is calm and peaceful and will remain that way for the duration of the miracle. On a *minimal* or *average* success the target is also calmed, but can be easily provoked into extreme emotions again even while the miracle is in effect. If the calmed character is attacked, the miracle immediately stops working regardless of the success level.

During this time the target may be reasoned with, or communicated with by characters other than the characters that performed the miracle (who are busy performing the miracle). The miracle may not be performed on a target that perceives the *focus* character as an immediate threat or danger.

Ecstasy

Spiritual Rating: 23
Community Rating: 7
Difficulty: 20
Range: voice
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Effect: immobilizes a target with overwhelming pleasure

Ecstasy stimulates the target's pleasure centers, overwhelming them with the perception of enjoyable sensations. Targets affected by *ecstasy* cannot perform any actions, not even simple actions, unless they make a *willpower* check against a difficulty equal to the *faith* total of the miracle (this counts as an action so multi-action penalties may apply if the character wishes to perform a dice action.) A successful *willpower* check only lasts for the round that it was made in, the character will have to make another check if he wishes to attempt something in the next round.



If the *focus* character achieves a *spectacular* success with the miracle, the target character becomes addicted to the *ecstasy* and will obey the commands of the *focus* character even when not under the miracle's influence. To disobey an order given by the *focus* character requires a *willpower* check against the *faith* **skill** of the *focus* character, not against the faith total of the original *ecstasy* miracle that addicted the character.

Addiction to the *ecstasy* miracle is permanent. It may be overcome by the traditional means of fighting addictions, such as counseling, or by the *cure disease* miracle. The difficulty for *cure disease* is the *faith* skill of the *focus* character that performed the *ecstasy* miracle that addicted the character.

Fanaticism

Spiritual Rating: 14
Community Rating: 8
Difficulty: 13
Range: voice
Duration: a number of rounds equal to success levels
Effect: gives the character one extra action per round

Fanaticism increases the target's belief in the cause that he is fighting for, spurring him on and giving him extraordinary speed. The effect value is compared to the miracle's difficulty and for a number of rounds equal to the success level of the miracle the character gains a second action as if he were under the effects of a *flurry* on his side of the conflict line. While the miracle is in effect, if an actual *flurry* comes up on the character's side of the conflict line, the duration of the miracle is extended an extra round. The character does **not** get three actions in that round.

At the end of the duration of the miracle, the character takes a number of shock points in damage equal to the number of rounds the miracle was in effect, including any extra rounds gained from *flurry* results on the conflict line.

Heightened Hearing

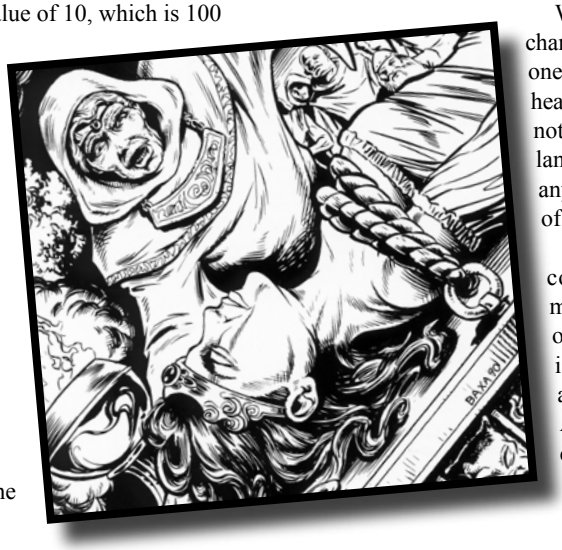
Spiritual Rating: 9
Community Rating: 8
Difficulty: 12
Range: result points +5
Duration: 17 (30 minutes)
Effect: enhances the target's hearing

The target of this miracle can clearly hear all sounds made within the range of the miracle. The range is equal to the result points of the effect value plus five read on the Value Chart as distance. For example, if a *faith* total of 17 is generated, that's five result points. Adding five to that provides a range value of 10, which is 100 meters.

The character does not automatically hear everything that occurs within range; she is able to choose the location, object, person or creature that she wishes to hear. If it is within range, she can hear it as if she were right next to it and whispers are as audible as a shout.

Inferno

Spiritual Rating: 13
Community Rating: 11
Difficulty: 19
Range: 7 (25 meters)
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Effect: causes flames to consume the target



When successfully performed, *inferno* causes elemental flame to erupt from the ground and incinerate an enemy. The miracle may only be performed against one opponent at a time and it inflicts damage equal to the *faith* total of the miracle.

The flames burn for the next minute but do not follow a moving target; the *inferno* remains where it initially burst out of the ground. At the end of the miracle's duration the flames immediately vanish, though anything they set ablaze will continue to burn normally.

The *focus* character may not call up another *inferno* while the first one is still active.

Kill Technology

Spiritual Rating: 22
Community Rating: 7
Difficulty: 14
Range: touch
Duration: 18 (one hour)
Effect: renders technology inactive

This powerful miracle of the Living Land causes any item with a Tech axiom above 7 to simply stop functioning. While the priest must touch the character providing the *faith* for the miracle, the effect extends in a 150-meter radius around the *faith* character for the duration of the miracle. It is an area effect so there are no One on Many penalties or modifiers involved, everything within the radius of effect is affected.

Items affected by the miracle are not damaged in any way; they simply do not work. If removed from the area of effect they will function normally again, which also happens when the duration expires. The effect is purely spiritual in nature and not reality-based so possibility-rated characters cannot avoid the effects of the miracle by putting up a reality bubble.

Language

Spiritual Rating: 10
Community Rating: 8
Difficulty: 10
Range: self
Duration: 18 (one hour)
Effect: lets the character speak a foreign language

While this miracle is in effect, the character can understand and speak any one language she is physically capable of hearing and speaking. The character does not have to know the proper name of the language she wishes to understand or have any prior knowledge or understanding of it.

The *faith* total of the miracle is compared to the difficulty of the miracle. A *minimal* success means only a pidgin version of the language is understood. *Average* success gives a rudimentary grasp of the language. A *good* or *superior* success gives the character complete understanding and a *spectacular* success gives completely fluency in the language.

Rood Awakening

Spiritual Rating: 12
Community Rating: 14
Difficulty: *faith* or *Spirit* of target
Range: touch
Duration: rounds equal to miracle's result points
Effect: causes target to experience the agony of crucifixion

This combat miracle from the Cyberpapacy causes the target's body to become rigid in a cruciform position, suffering great pain and the effects of crucifixion as if they were actually being crucified. The victim suffers a *fatigue* result every round of the miracle's duration and may not attempt any actions except trying to break free of the miracle's effects. Breaking free requires generating a *faith* or *Spirit* total against the *faith* total of the miracle. The *focus* character may also choose to release the victim at any time.

Note that the *focus* character must touch the target of the miracle in order to affect them. During a combat situation this would require performing a multi-action, one action being the performance of the miracle and the second being an *unarmed combat* skill check to touch the target.

Simple Spear

Spiritual Rating: 23
Community Rating: 8
Difficulty: 3
Range: touch
Duration: until replanted
Effect: turns a hrockt plant shoot into a spear

This Living Land miracle allows a character to take a shoot from a hrockt plant and transform it into a living weapon. The shoot lengthens and becomes strong and firm with one end tapering to a sharp point. The damage value of the spear is STR+4/20. When the character is done with the weapon, he replants the hrockt shoot and it returns to its normal condition as a plant.

This is an example of a miracle that has an unusually high Spiritual Rating because its difficulty has been lowered by the cosm's high Spirit axiom. The miracle may also be performed with a Spiritual Rating of 9 and a Difficulty of 10.

Soothe

Spiritual Rating: 7
Community Rating: 8
Difficulty: 12
Range: touch
Duration: NA
Effect: heals minor injuries

Soothe is much like a miraculous version of the *first aid* skill in that it can be used to heal characters of shock damage and KO conditions but not wound damage. Unlike *first aid* though, the miracle's difficulty is not determined by the character's injuries.

The *faith* total of the miracle is compared to its difficulty. On a *minimal* success the miracle will heal five points of shock damage. On an *average* success the miracle will heal all of a character's shock damage and remove a K or O condition. If the character has a KO condition it is reduced to a K. With a *good* or better success level the miracle will heal all of a character's shock damage as well as completely remove any KO conditions.

Soothe will also stop the accumulation of shock damage that a character with a *mortal wound* experiences if the effect total receives an *average* or better success level. A character who is at four wounds (*dead*) that is immediately treated with *soothe* will improve to *mortally wounded* with a *good* success level or better but will still accumulate shock damage from being *mortally wounded*. With a *superior* or better success level the *dead* character is improved to *mortally wounded* and will not accumulate any shock damage. Characters who are *dead* from more than five wounds may not be rescued with the miracle.

Vex

Spiritual Rating: 14
Community Rating: 8
Difficulty: faith or Spirit of target
Range: voice
Duration: number of rounds equal to success level
Effect: target is stymied

A *vexed* target is *stymied* and loses the first roll again he would normally receive during the duration of the miracle. This includes rolls gained from an *up* result on the conflict line, an *up* result from a successful *taunt* or *trick,* rolling a 10 or 20 on the die or spending a Possibility Point. Once the target loses that first roll again in a round though he may get additional rolls like normal. For example, if the player rolls a 20 he loses that roll again but he may now spend a possibility and get to roll again.

Ward Danger

Spiritual Rating: 9
Community Rating: 6
Difficulty: 13
Range: voice
Duration: performance
Effect: increases difficulty of harming the faithful

Ward danger gathers the spiritual energy of the faithful and attempts to decrease the chance of the community coming to harm. The faithful must be praying for protection from one particular source of danger; if the worshippers were praying for protection from a tornado, the ward would have no effect against a terrorist who launched a missile at the church.

The difficulty number to harm characters protected by *ward danger* is increased by +3 for each success level of the miracle. If the source of danger does not have to make an action total, such as a tornado or some other natural disaster, the bonus is applied to the *Toughness* of the faithful to resist the effect total of the danger.

Ward Enemy

Spiritual Rating: 7
Community Rating: 6
Difficulty: 0
Range: self
Duration: performance
Effect: protects against enemies of the faith

Ward enemy is one of the few miracles that does not require the *focus* skill to be performed, any character who possesses a holy symbol or icon of his *faith* may perform the miracle. Characters who have *focus* do not require any symbol or icon but if they do have one, their *faith* total is increased by the **adds** of their *focus* skill.

When this miracle is performed, the character generates a *faith* total. An enemy of the mythos may not attack the warded character by physical, magical or miraculous means as long as the ward is in place. The enemy may however perform character interactions such as *trick, test, taunt* and *intimidate* on the warded character; if the enemy achieves a *player's call* result the warding character stops performing the miracle and the enemy is no longer restrained by it. Lesser effects of the character interaction are applied normally to the warding character.

The enemy may make a special attack against the ward itself in an attempt to overpower it and bring it down. The attacker generates a *faith* total against the *faith* total of the miracle. Note that the attacker **must** use *faith*, if they do not possess the *faith* skill then they cannot attempt to breach the ward! Attempting to defeat the ward counts as an action.

If the enemy's total is higher, he successfully penetrates the ward and it collapses. The result points of the attack are read as spiritual damage on the warding character. The warding character may enact the ward again at his next opportunity if he wishes to be protected again.

If the miracle's total is higher, the ward successfully repulses the attack and the enemy takes spiritual damage equal to the amount that the difficulty exceeded his *faith* total. Even though the attack doesn't penetrate the ward, it does cause it to waiver enough that the warding character must sacrifice his next action to reinforce the ward by generating a new *faith* total for the ward, or else it will collapse at the end of his next action.

Rituals

Bless Weapon

Spiritual Rating: 10
Community Rating: 8
Difficulty: 14
Range: touch
Duration: 25 (one day)
Ritual Length: 18 (one hour)
Effect: increases the damage value of one weapon

This ritual enhances the damage value of any weapon, including ranged weapons such as firearms, unless the character's mythos forbids the use of certain types of weapons in which case the miracle only affects those weapons proscribed by the religion. The *focus* character must lay her hands on the weapon and call upon the power of her mythos to make the weapon as strong as the *faith* character's heart is brave.

The *faith* total of the miracle is compared to the difficulty and each success level results in a +1 increase to the weapon's damage value. For weapons with maximum damage values, such as most melee weapons, the bonus is also added to the weapon's maximum damage value. The blessed weapon may be used by anyone; it does not have to be used by the character that provided the *faith* for the miracle.

Blessing Vow

Spiritual Rating: 9
Community Rating: 6
Difficulty: 15
Range: voice
Duration: until vow is broken
Ritual Length: 18 (one hour)
Effect: adds success levels to one attribute for one character

In this ritual, the blessed agrees to uphold an institution, or virtues important to the mythos, for as long as he shall live. In exchange, the blessed receives an increase in one chosen attribute equal to the number of success levels achieved by the blessing for as long as he maintains the vow. Unlike the *bless* miracle, this is an actual increase in the attribute so all values derived from the attribute are affected by the blessing.

A character may only have one *blessing vow* on him at one time. A *blessing vow* is only given to characters that have proven themselves worthy to spiritual leaders and the community.

Clean Suit

Spiritual Rating: 8
Community Rating: 12
Difficulty: 10
Range: touch
Duration: 25 (one day)
Ritual Length: 14 (10 minutes)
Effect: allows travel through contaminated areas

A *clean suit* allows the recipient of the miracle to traverse areas that have been contaminated by chemical, nuclear or biological wastes and weapons. While protected by the *clean suit*, the character will suffer no ill effects due to the hazardous materials. The miracle will even protect against ingestion of hazardous materials such as from inhaling toxic fumes or drinking fouled water.

Common Ground

Spiritual Rating: 7
Community Rating: 12
Difficulty: 12
Range: faith total
Duration: performance
Ritual Length: 18 (one hour)
Effect: improve relations between targets

Common ground is used to mediate between individuals. In order for the miracle to work, the characters influenced by the miracle must have some common interest. If the characters share no goals or have no desires that are not mutually exclusive, then the miracle automatically fails. Only where mutual gain is possible will the miracle work.

When successful, the miracle provides a temporary boost to relations. The *faith* total is compared to the difficulty of the miracle. Each success level achieved improves the attitudes of **all** involved characters one step each (see Chapter Four) to a maximum of *friendly*. Attitudes are only improved towards the other side of the situation; it will not improve attitudes unrelated to the matter being mediated.

Communication with Spirits

Each of the four miracles below allows spoken communication with any of the appropriate spirit that is in range. If no animal, plant, or elemental is visible or otherwise obviously present, the difficulty is increased by +3.

Minimal success means that only a pidgin version of communication is possible with the spirit, *average* success gives the miracle worker rudimentary understanding the spirit's language, *good* or *superior* results give the skill user complete understanding of the spirit's language, and *spectacular* success allows the user to speak and understand the spirit with no penalties. The character communicates with the spirit as part of the ritual so he may perform it and communicate at the same time without penalty.

Communicate with Animal Spirit

Spiritual Rating: 5
Community Rating: 12
Difficulty: 12
Range: voice
Duration: performance
Ritual Length: 14 (10 minutes)
Effect: speak to the spirits of animals

The spirit of an animal is considered to be more intelligent than the animal that houses it. While seeing things from the perspective of their animal host, the spirits can equal human intelligence.

Communicate with Elemental Spirit

Spiritual Rating: 5
Community Rating: 12
Difficulty: 15
Range: voice
Duration: performance
Ritual Length: 14 (10 minutes)
Effect: speak to elemental spirits

There are five elemental spirits (other than plant elementals, covered below) - earth, air, fire, water and metal. Elementals are temperamental and have an intelligence slightly below that of an

average human, but with a cunning greater than that of ordinary animals. They see things from a very pure standpoint relating to their own element.

Communicate with Plant Spirit

Spiritual Rating: 5
Community Rating: 12
Difficulty: 12
Range: voice
Duration: performance
Ritual Length: 14 (10 minutes)
Effect: speak with the spirits of plants

Plant spirits are slow - not dumb, just slow. They take their time when speaking and have a very different perspective of the passage of time. Even plants who have very short lives are slow communicators. They tend to notice less during the night than during the day.

Communicate with Technology Spirit

Spiritual Rating: 5
Community Rating: 12
Difficulty: 15
Range: voice
Duration: performance
Ritual Length: 14 (10 minutes)
Effect: speak with the spirits of technology

Technology spirits have a perspective distinctly colored by their function and are often friendly with humans who treat them well. Their intelligence can range from slightly above animal level to above human levels, but is often limited in scope based on the tool's function.

Computer Empathy

Spiritual Rating: 13
Community Rating: 12
Difficulty: 12
Range: touch
Duration: 18 (one hour)
Ritual Length: 14 (10 minutes)
Effect: increases a character's ability to use computers, cyberdecks and artificial intelligences

With this miracle in effect, a character can operate and understand the workings of all varieties of computers, including cyberdecks and artificial intelligences, even if the character had no previous knowledge or understanding of the machine.

If the miracle is successfully performed, the *faith* total of the miracle may substitute for any relevant skill that involves the use of computers such as *computer operations, computer science* and *cyberdeck operations*.

Cure Disease

Spiritual Rating: 10
Community Rating: 8
Difficulty: see below
Range: touch
Duration: NA
Ritual Length: 18 (one hour)
Effect: cures a disease

Cure disease destroys an infection or affliction that is ravaging the target character. The target is cured but is not healed of any damage caused by the disease. The character must regain her strength over time or receive additional healing from another medical, magical or miraculous source. The type of disease to be cured determines the difficulty of the miracle, some examples are provided below. The Difficulty Number Scale and the provided difficulty numbers can be used to judge difficulties for other diseases.

Both the *focus* and *faith* total must beat the difficulty for the miracle to be successful.

DISEASE DIFFICULTY CHART

Disease	Difficulty
24-hour cold bug	8
Influenza (flu)	10
Pneumonia	12
Cocaine addiction	15
Cancer	18
HIV/AIDS	22
Alzheimer's	25
Comaghaz, any stage	30

Exorcism

Spiritual Rating: 7
Community Rating: 15
Difficulty: 13
Range: voice
Duration: NA
Ritual Length: 29 (one week)
Effect: drives possessing spirits out of the target's body

An *exorcism* pits the *faith* of the character performing the ritual against the *faith* or *Spirit* attribute of the creature possessing the target's body. Spirits may possess objects as well as people (see *communicate with spirits* miracles above.) The end of the ritual triggers a use of the Dramatic Skill Resolution rules (see Chapter Four.) Most exorcisms require steps A, B and C while particularly powerful entities by also require step D.

Characters who supported the *focus* character in performing the miracle may continue to aid him during the Dramatic Skill Resolution but they must make a new *faith* check against the Community Rating every time the *focus* character attempts one of the steps in the Dramatic Skill Resolution.

Every time the appropriate letters come up, the *focus* character generates a new *faith* total against a difficulty equal to the *faith* or *Spirit* attribute of the possessing entity. When the exorcist completes

Healing Miracles

Faith can have miraculous healing powers, but there is a limit even to faith. A character may always be healed by a miracle at least once per day. However, if the miracle does not fully heal the character, the same miracle may not be repeated on that character unless he is injured again and worsens to *mortally wounded* or until a full 24 hours have passed.

the required steps, the entity is driven out of the target's body and it cannot return.

During **every** round of the Dramatic Skill Resolution the possessing entity may make a spiritual attack on the *focus* character or on anyone supporting the *focus* character. The spirit generates a *faith* or *Spirit* total against the *faith* of the person it is attacking with positive result points being read as spiritual damage. Supporters who are knocked unconscious or who lose their *faith* skill because of spiritual wound damage may no longer aid the *focus* character. If the *focus* character is knocked unconscious by spiritual damage or loses his *faith* skill because of spiritual wound damage, the exorcism is a failure and the possessing spirit remains in the target's body.

Healing

Spiritual Rating: 10
Community Rating: 11
Difficulty: 15
Range: touch
Duration: NA
Ritual Length: 18 (one hour)
Effect: reduces damage and wounds by number of success levels

If the miracle succeeds at all, the target is healed of all KO-conditions and shock. In addition, each success level of the effect value beyond *minimal* reduces the target character's wound level by one. For example, a character with a *heavy wound* who received *average* healing would be healed one level to *wounded*.

Unconscious characters may not provide the *faith* for this miracle, even if they would otherwise be willing to do so.

Refresh

Spiritual Rating: 7
Community Rating: 8
Difficulty: 12
Range: 5 (10 meters)
Duration: NA
Ritual Length: 18 (one hour)
Effect: restores lost mental faculties

A character that is *refreshed* regains the use of mental skills and knowledges (such as arcane knowledges or magic skills) lost due to mental damage. A *minimal* to *good* success restores one such loss, *superior* or better success restores all lost mental abilities.

Ritual of Hope

Spiritual Rating: 5
Community Rating: 5
Difficulty: 12
Range: voice
Duration: NA
Ritual Length: 17 (30 minutes)
Effect: restores lost faith

The *ritual of hope* restores a character's lost *faith* skill, whether it was lost due to a failed miracle or spiritual damage. Once the character has undergone the ritual, he may use his *faith* skill again and may now be fully healed if under that restriction.

Ritual of Purification

Spiritual Rating: 3
Community Rating: 15
Difficulty: 10
Range: voice
Duration: NA
Ritual Length: 17 (30 minutes)
Effect: restores lost focus

The ceremony of *purification* heightens the character's awareness of his religion and removes any impurities from the spirit, whether they are from mundane and material concerns or due to *spiritual struggle*. The target regains the use of his *focus* ability whether lost to spiritual damage or a failed miracle.

Sanctum

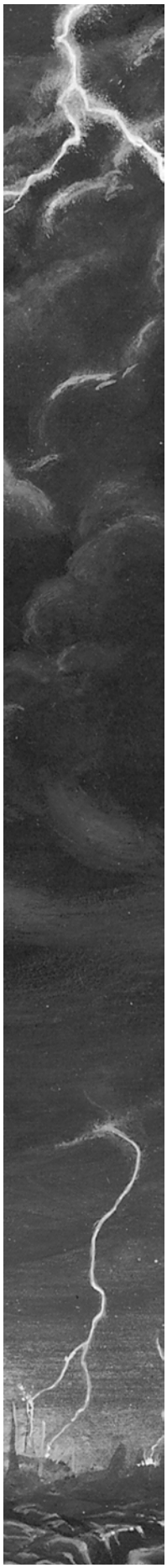
Spiritual Rating: 10
Community Rating: 9
Difficulty: 10
Range: touch
Duration: 25 (one day)
Ritual Length: 21 (four hours)
Effect: sanctifies area around the target

When this miracle is performed, an area with a radius of 20 meters around the target becomes sacred ground to the religion of the *faith* provider of the miracle. The target may be a person or it may be an object, but if it is an object it must be something associated with the mythos of the *faith* character. The area of effect does **not** move with the target, if the target is a person he is only protected by the miracle while he remains within the area of effect.

Anyone of the **same** *faith* that powered the miracle is affected by it when they are within its area of effect. Attacks directed against the target or against others who possess the same *faith* have their difficulty increased by the number of *faith* adds the **attacker** possesses. Attacks launched from outside the area of effect are not affected by the miracle.

Enemies of the *faith* that powered the miracle have the difficulties of **all** their actions increased by the number of success levels the miracle's *faith* total achieved while they are within the area of effect.

Characters who possess a different *faith* skill, no *faith* skill and are not considered enemies of the mythos powering the miracle are not affected by the miracle.



Chapter 12: Other Special Abilities

"It isn't your powers or abilities that make you a hero, it's what you do with them that counts."

—The Guardian, Terran Mystery Man

This chapter briefly describes some of the special powers and abilities besides magic and miracles that can be found in *Torg*. Full descriptions and rules for these abilities are not included here, the appropriate sourcebooks and supplements will need to be consulted to get full usage from these abilities.

Martial Arts

What most people consider to be "martial arts" are not covered by the skill *martial arts*; in *Torg*, fighting styles and techniques such as Karate, Jujitsu and Judo are handled with the *unarmed combat* skill and sometimes with the *melee weapons* skill if the style involves the use of a weapon. The *martial arts* skill is meant to represent the unbelievable abilities of fictional types of martial arts, those which depict the practitioners as possessing unnatural powers of physical prowess such as being able to become invisible, to run on water, to chop through metal with their bare hands or to leap into the air and kick six opponents in the head before even reaching the top of their jump.

The amazing abilities granted by the *martial arts* skill are derived from not just physical training and mastery of combat techniques but from a spiritual philosophy that enables the character to draw upon the energy of his "ki" (also known as "chi"), an inner strength and energy that all people have but few are able to use.

It turns out that ki is in fact possibility energy and the only people with enough resources of ki energy to learn the techniques of the *martial arts* skill are possibility-rated people. Ords simply do not have what it takes to become a "real" martial artist and must settle for watered-down fighting styles (that operate off of the *unarmed combat* and *melee weapons* skills) that focus more on the physical elements and gloss over the deeper spiritual levels.

Martial arts has two axiom requirements, which limits its availability to only a few of the realities involved in the Possibility Wars. It requires a Spirit axiom of 7 and a Social axiom of 21. Three realities support those axioms: Nippon Tech, Core Earth and the Star Sphere of the Space Gods. Of those three, the spiritual philosophies necessary for the development of the *martial arts* skill are only known to exist in Nippon Tech and Core Earth, and in Core Earth they were only developed by cultures in one part of the world, the Orient.

The Worldbook provides a little more information about the *martial arts* skill and also contains the style write-up for Ninjitsu as well as descriptions for all of its disciplines and the associated tests. The complete rules for *martial arts* can be found in the *Nippon Tech sourcebook* and additional styles and disciplines can also be found in the *Tokyo Citybook* supplement. A system for designing new *martial arts* styles was published in *Infiniverse newsletter #33*

Different Axiom Requirements for Martial Arts?

A version of the *martial arts* skill that requires a Social axiom of 20 instead of 21 was introduced in *The High Lords' Guide to the Possibility Wars* supplement as a skill available to Oriental characters from the Nile Empire, such as the henchmen of the evil criminal genius Wu Han. The skill, *Nile martial arts,* is essentially the same as the normal *martial arts* skill except for a few limitations imposed by the World Laws of the Nile Empire reality.

If desired, players and gamemasters may extend the *martial arts* skill to other realities besides Nippon Tech and Core Earth by designing "limited" versions of the skill that have lower Social axiom requirements. For example, the Swamis of Orrorsh might practice a form of *martial arts* that is only a little different from the Core Earth version (Orrorsh's Social axiom is 20). Perhaps the elf monks of Aysle have discovered during their quest for knowledge the secrets of tapping their inner strength and have a very basic form of *martial arts* (Aysle's Social axiom is 16, probably about as low as it should go for any chance of having *martial arts*.)

The main thing to consider when thinking about expanding *martial arts* to another reality is to consider if it's even appropriate for that reality. Does the reality have a culture that could develop the Eastern styles of philosophy and religion necessary for *martial arts*? The Cyberpapacy for example is an unlikely candidate for *martial arts* since the Avignon Church wiped out all competing religions in its cosm centuries ago. Similarly, the contemplative and unassertive nature of the philosophies makes it unlikely that *martial arts* could have developed in the violent and brutal cosm of Tharkold.

Martial arts is an exceptionally difficult skill to learn. Besides the requirement that the character must be possibility-rated to even learn the skill, the first add of the skill is more expensive than normal. During character creation, the first add of *martial arts* costs **three** points instead of one. During play, if a character decides to learn *martial arts* the cost in possibilities of learning the first add is **tripled**. *Martial arts* must be learned from a teacher, it cannot be learned without one. Beyond the first add of the skill, all costs are normal, one point per add during character creation and buying new skill adds during play costs a number of possibilities equal to the skill add being purchased.

Most *martial arts* styles come with a number of restrictions that a character must meet before she can gain the first add of the skill. Usually these are additional skills that a character must possess, such as *meditation* or a particular *faith* skill. Sometimes the character is required to take a vow of some kind too, such as swearing never to reveal the secrets of the style to outsiders or taking a vow of poverty and never owning more than the character can carry at one time.

The *martial arts* skill gives a character a number of special abilities. Some of these abilities are inherent in the skill and are something all martial artists are able to do. Others require special training and are only available to particular styles of *martial arts.*

All martial artists are able to use their *martial arts* skill in the following ways:

- *martial arts* may be substituted for all uses of the *unarmed combat* skill
- *martial arts* may be substituted for all uses of the *melee weapons* skill
- *martial arts* may be substituted for all uses of the *missile weapons* skill
- *martial arts* may be substituted for the *dodge* skill against *missile weapons* attacks
- the base damage value for barehanded attacks made with *martial arts* is STR+2 instead of the straight *Strength* attribute
- when using *martial arts* against an opponent who does not have the skill, the martial artist gets a +1 bonus to any relevant action based on *Dexterity* including the use of *martial arts*

Disciplines

Beyond these abilities, characters may learn a number of *disciplines* associated with their style. Disciplines are the extraordinary abilities of *martial arts* and are divided into three general levels, *minor, major* and *master*.

Minor disciplines primarily serve to increase a character's combat abilities. Several of them are similar to the combat options in Chapter Four but are usually a little more effective, perhaps causing extra damage or reducing the penalties of a particular kind of action. For example, the Kick Disarm discipline allows a martial artist to perform the Disarm combat option but with no penalties on the action and effect totals.

Major disciplines are more powerful and begin entering areas outside the realm of combat, such as the ability to accelerate the healing process and to make other people less aware of one's presence (effective invisibility rather than actual invisibility.)

Master disciplines represent direct application of ki (possibility) energy to produce powerful effects, such as the ability to extend one's lifetime out to centuries or to end another's life by merely touching them. The master disciplines require much more ki energy than the minor and major disciplines when used and require characters to spend Possibility Points to use them.

Every *martial arts* style possesses eight disciplines; five minors, two majors and one master. A character must learn all of the disciplines of a style before he can move on and begin learning a different style. Martial artists do not automatically gain the disciplines of their style, they have to pass *tests* to indicate that they have learned them.

Each discipline in a style has a different test associated with it, and different styles may use different tests for the same discipline. The tests involve generating attribute or skill totals against a given difficulty number. Most of the tests involve using the *martial arts* skill or the *Dexterity* attribute but some require the use of other attributes. For example, one of the minor tests, Count the Grasses, requires the martial artist to generate a *Perception* total, representing his ability to count the blades of grass in a field.

During character creation the character gets six opportunities to learn disciplines, representing at least six years of training under a master of the character's style. Disciplines must be learned in the order they are given in the description of a style, a character cannot skip a failure and try to learn the discipline listed after it, they must keep trying to learn a discipline until they succeed. The player may not spend any of the character's possibilities on the tests taken during character creation (and won't have any cards yet so can't use them either.)

Example: During character creation, Barbara needs to determine how many disciplines Yukitada knows at the beginning of the game. She gets six attempts at passing the tests, so if she's successful each time Yukitada would start with all five minor disciplines and the first major discipline.

The first minor discipline listed for Ninjitsu in the Worldbook is Block/Strike and the test is Board Break. To successfully pass the test requires a *martial arts* skill total of 9. Yukitada as a *martial*

arts skill of 16 so it shouldn't be too difficult but some bad die rolls cause Barbara to fail twice before finally succeeding. Yukitada now knows the Block/Strike discipline but has used up three of her six chances.

The second minor discipline is Lighting Fist and the test is Rabbit Chase. Passing this test requires a *Dexterity* total of 10. Barbara rolls well enough and Yukitada passes the test on the first try. She know also knows Lightning Fist and has two chances left.

The third minor discipline is Stunning Attack and its test is the Bucket Walk. Passing this test requires a *Strength* total of 9. Yukitada's *Strength* is only 8 so Barbara needs to roll at least moderately well to succeed. However, both times she rolls low and Yukitada does not pass the third test. All six chances have been used up so Yukitada will have to make do knowing only the first two disciplines of Ninjitsu.

During game play, a character may take the test required for the next discipline of their style every time he purchases a new add of his *martial arts* skill. Normally this is conducted between adventures since it usually involves the character seeking out a master of his style to administer the test.

For tests taken after character creation, the player may spend a Possibility Point on the test but cards are only allowed if the test is taking place as part of an adventure. If the test is being conducted between adventures, cards cannot be used.

Optional Rule for Tests

If the difficulty numbers provided for the various tests seem low and are making it too easy for characters to acquire their disciplines, add the position of the discipline being tested for to the difficulty number. For example, a test attached to the third discipline of a style would be at DN+3, the first major discipline would be DN+6 and the test for the master discipline would be DN+8.

Only one test can be taken per add of *martial arts* the character purchases during game play. If the character fails the test, they must wait until they again gain another add in *martial arts* to retake the test.

Example: After a couple of adventures, Barbara decides to increase Yukitada's *martial arts* skill from +3 to +4 adds. Becky tells her that in between adventures Yukitada took a quick trip back to Japan to find her old master to administer the Bucket Walk test again for the Stunning Attack discipline. Barbara rolls poorly again but this time is able to spend a possibility on the action check, which she does. Thanks to the reroll, Yukitada easily passes the test this time and finally gains the Stunning Attack discipline.

Psionics

Psionics represent the ability of an individual or a group's mind to control matter, energy and other minds purely by the power of thought alone. While psionics may bear some resemblance to magic in both function and game mechanics, the underlying principles are quite different. Psionics is in fact primarily a tool of the Social axiom while magic of course depends on the Magic axiom.

Psionics do not depend solely on the Social axiom though, there are a number of other conditions that must be met before a reality is capable of supporting psionics. The full axiom requirements for psionics are a Social axiom of 21, a Tech axiom of 15 and a Spirit axiom of 9.

The basis for psionics stems from the possibility energy generated by the interactions between living beings, particularly those interactions involving large-scale cooperative organizations. At Social 21 the conditions reach the necessary level of complexity and depth to allow living beings access to a previously unknown type of social tool, psionics.

This is the level at which large group organizations begin to recognize that they must cooperate for the benefit of not just society as a whole but for the benefit of the individual as well. This new relationship between the individual and the group and vice versa

is the catalyst that brings into existence the connective network of thought and action that allows the existence of psionics.

This new network of social interactions has been given many names; Carl Jung called it the "collective unconsciousness", researchers working for the US government in the 60's and 70's called it "the matrix" (not to be confused with a certain movie) and certain New Age beliefs call it as the "Akashic record" after an ancient Hindu term. (Needless to say, the Akashans are curious about the similarity between this word and the name of their race.)

What all of these terms describe is a tightly woven network of thought, information and energy that connects every physical point in a cosm and the minds of every person within a cosm, and not just at the present moment in time but at all moments in time - past, present and future. All psionic powers stem from accessing this network and manipulating it a variety of ways to gather information or to change information in the network that then becomes reflected as a change in the physical world.

But no matter how high the Social axiom, without access to certain scientific concepts and principles the living minds of a cosm do not have enough of an understanding of the universe to tap into this network. That's where the Tech axiom comes into play.

At Tech 15 the "tools" necessary, the ability to take advantage of certain physical laws and abstract scientific concepts, become available. A psychic doesn't have to be aware of these laws anymore than someone driving a car needs to understand every scientific and engineering principle used in the car, they just need to know how to operate it.

The connection between psionics and the Spirit axiom is a little more tenuous than it is for the other two axioms. Psionics are not spiritual miracles any more than they are magical spells, nor do psionics require belief in a greater spiritual power.

But through the network created by the Social axiom, people become connected to each other on a deeper, more emotional level than the simple intellectual aspects that the conscious mind recognizes. This is actually a spiritual connection, very similar to the notion of community that links the believers of a religion together (see Chapter Eleven.) In essence the Spirit axiom's concept of a connected community is realized for society as a whole. This deep and sometimes intimate connection is realized in a couple of psionic powers that go beyond the conscious mind and work on a more emotional and spiritual level, such as empathy and the ability to merge several individual minds into a single group consciousness.

Using Psionics

Performing psionics requires the *psionic manipulation* skill. The *psionic resistance* skill is useful to have but not essential. Characters who have *psionic manipulation* are able to acquire *power groups*, which represent broad categories of psionic abilities. There are four power groups available in Core Earth and three more are available in the Star Sphere. The four groups available in both realities are *Kinesis, Psionic Defense, Psychic Senses* and *Telepathy*. The three groups unique to the Star Sphere are called *Aka, Coar* and *Zinatt* and correspond to the three alignments of one of the Star Sphere's World Laws, the *Way of Zinatt*.

Characters acquire power groups as if buying a skill add; during character creation each power group costs one skill point and during play a power group costs either five or ten possibilities depending on whether the character has a teacher or not. When a character purchases a power group they automatically gain the ability to use one of the powers contained in that group. Additional powers in a group may be purchased at a cost of one skill point during character creation or one Possibility Point during play. Teachers are not required to learn new powers in a power group the character already knows.

Example: During character creation, Juan spent four skill points on acquiring psionic powers for his character, Marco. Two of the skill points went towards purchasing two power groups, *Psychic Senses* and *Telepathy*. Marco automatically gets the ability to perform one power from each of the purchased groups and Juan chose *awareness* from *Psychic Senses* and *empathy* from the *Telepathy* group.

He then spent two more points to acquire two more powers for Marco, one from each of the power groups. From *Psychic Senses* he selected *life detection* and from *Telepathy* he chose *thought scan.*

After playing a couple of adventures, Juan decides it's time for Marco to pick up some new abilities. He spends one of Marco's possibilities and Marco gains a new power from the *Telepathy* group, *send thoughts.* Marco has made some connections during the game with a group of Russian psychics, including one whom offered to teach Marco the *Psionic Defense* power group.

Marco takes her up on her offer and spends five possibilities to acquire the power group. He automatically gets the ability to perform one of the powers in the newly acquired group and chooses *general resistance (self)*. Juan decides to spend another possibility and also gives Marco a second power from the *Psionic Defense* group, *general resistance (group)*.

To use a psionic power, the character generates a *psionic manipulation* skill total against a difficulty determined by the power being attempted. If the skill check is successful, the power goes into effect. The effects of psionic powers normally only last for one round unless the character elects to *maintain* the power for a longer period of time. Maintaining a power involves making another *psionic manipulation* skill check every additional round that the power is kept active, though the difficulty is not as high as it was

Playing Without the Space Gods' Power Groups

A number of the powers in the *Aka, Coar* and *Zinatt* power groups are fairly traditional psionic abilities that should be available to Core Earth psychics. But because they're linked to an Akashan World Law they are only available to Core Earth psychics as a contradiction, and there's no way for a Core Earth psychic to learn the power until after the Akashans arrive on Earth during the Possibility Wars.

One way of dealing with this is to take the powers contained in these three power groups and reassign them to the other four power groups, making them available to everyone instead of just people from the Star Sphere. To retain the effects of the alignment groupings in the Star Sphere, simply say that characters of a particular alignment are prevented by the Way of Zinatt from learning any powers listed as belonging to the other two alignments.

For example, if the power *project emotion* from the *Coar* power group was reassigned to the *Telepathy* power group, any character from the Star Sphere who purchases the *Telepathy* power group and has an alignment of Aka or Zinatt is able to learn any power from that group except for *project emotion*, because the World Law only allows Coar characters to learn that power.

to activate the power in the first place. The difficulty to maintain a power is the power's DN-5.

Whenever a character attempts to use a psionic power, regardless of whether they successfully activate it or not, they run the risk of taking mental damage from what's known as *psi strain*. Psi strain is similar to the backlash of a magic spell, it represents the inherent resistance of the world to being manipulated and the power required overcoming that resistance can injure the character attempting it.

To determine if a character takes any damage from psi strain, the difficulty of the power is compared to the character's *psionic resistance* skill value, or the character's *Mind* attribute if she doesn't have the skill. Any positive result points are applied as damage to the character. Psi strain must also be checked for whenever a character attempts to maintain a power.

Example: Marco is attempting to use his *life sense* power, which as a base difficulty of 15. Marco's *psionic resistance* skill is 12. Marco will take (15 - 12) 3 result points of mental damage, a K 1 result, from attempting to use the power.

Assuming he was successful, if Marco decided to maintain the power during the next round, the difficulty would be reduced to 10. Because this is less than his *psionic resistance* skill, Marco will not suffer any psi strain from maintaining the power.

Characters with *psionic resistance* may actively defend against psi strain by generating a *psionic resistance* skill total with a minimum +1 bonus number. However, this has to be done at the same time the character makes the *psionic manipulation* skill check to use the power so it involves performing a multi-action. The intention to actively defend must be declared before the player rolls. The difficulty modifiers for the multi-action may be applied however the player wishes.

Optional Modification for Psionic Power Levels

Many of the powers described in the *Space Gods sourcebook* have range values or effect values that are determined by the characters base *psionic manipulation* skill value. For example, a character with a skill value of 10 has a range value of 10 on a power like *awareness*. As with any value, it is read through the Value Chart to determine what it means in real world terms, in this case it means the power has a range of 100 meters.

With some psionic abilities though, basing their range or effect value on the character's base skill value can quickly escalate out of control and the character becomes more like a comic book superhero than a "real" psychic. A character with a skill value of 10 and the *telekinesis* power can lift 100 kilograms into the air at a distance of 100 meters. Even worse, a character with a base skill value of 15, not that difficult for a psychic Storm Knight to attain, could be lifting a **metric ton** into the air from a **kilometer** away!

If this becomes a problem, one way of addressing it is to change the definitions slightly for the troublesome powers. Instead of using the character's skill as a value, use it as the actual measure of the range or effect. For example, a skill value of 10 would no longer means a range of 100 meters, it would mean a range 10 meters. Instead of being able to lift 100 kilograms, it's only 10 kilograms.

Disconnection, Cyberware and Fairness

It may seem unduly harsh and unfair to say that a cybered character can be crippled or even killed when disconnection causes all of her cyberware to stop functioning. In fact, it is harsh and unfair! But the cyberpunk genre that inspired Tharkold and the Cyberpapacy is a genre where life is cheap and the world doesn't care about being fair. The harshness of the situation for cybered characters is just a reflection of the harshness of the setting.

For cases where cyberware failure isn't life threatening, such as being unable to walk because of having two cyberlegs or being blinded when two cybereyes stop working, the character is just going to have to deal with it. They've probably benefited from their cyberware a lot more often than they've been inconvenienced by it so they should see this as just paying the price for the advantages the cyberware gives them.

If the character does have something like a cyberheart or some other type of cyberware where failure could lead to death, it shouldn't happen immediately, the gamemaster should give the character enough time to try and reconnect and get the cyberware working again. One possible method of handling this is to treat it as a Dramatic Skill Resolution. The four steps of the Resolution each represents a wound level the character takes if he doesn't reconnect in that round. If Step D is reached and the character doesn't reconnect in that round, heart (or whatever) failure finally kills them.

Characters who do not have the *psionic resistance* skill cannot actively defend against psi strain.

Example: Marco is going to try using *life sense* again, only this time Juan declares that Marco will actively defend against the psi strain. The penalties for performing two actions at once are DN+2 and DN+4. Juan decides to put the DN+2 modifier on the psi strain and the DN+4 on activating the power. His *psionic resistance* skill total will be compared to a difficulty of (15 + 2) 17 to determine any damage from psi strain.

Juan rolls an 18, a +5 bonus., which isn't enough for him to succeed with his *psionic manipulation* skill against the modified difficulty number. His active defense *psionic resistance* skill total is (12 + 5) 17, the same as the modified difficulty number for psi strain. This time he takes an S (Same) result on the Combat Results Chart, one shock point of damage.

The complete rules for psionics and the write-ups of the power groups and the powers contained in those groups can be found in the *Space Gods sourcebook*.

Cyberware

The advanced technology of the Cyberpapacy and Tharkold allows for the use of cybernetic enhancements and replacement body parts. While the Space Gods have the necessary Tech axiom for cyberware, they prefer a more organic approach and use biotechnology in favor of cybernetics. The majority of cyberware

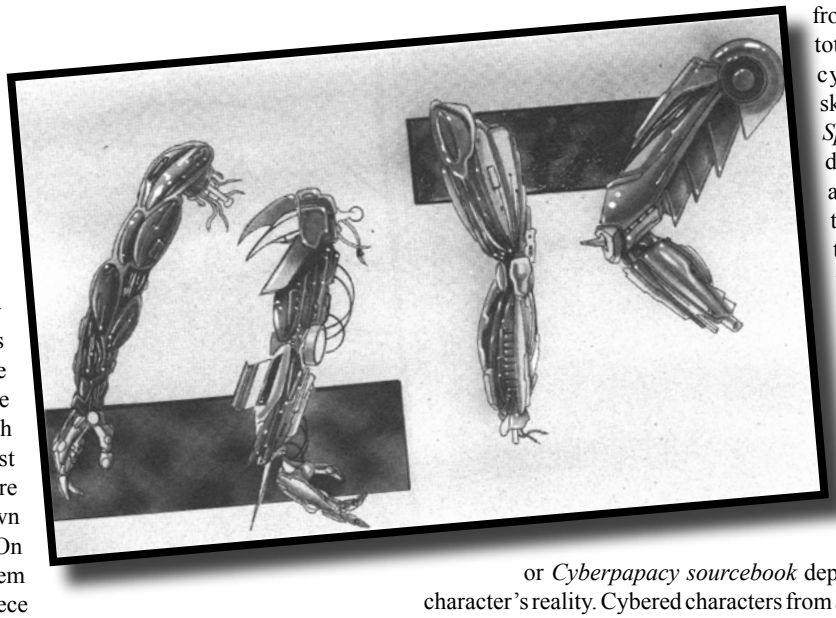
requires a Tech axiom of 26, though there are a few pieces that are Tech 25.

While the two realms have slightly different versions of cybertechnology available to them, both follow the same basic set of rules regarding how cyberware is used in the game. Characters who possess cyberware have three major concerns; disconnection, *system failures* and *cyberpsychosis*.

Cyberware, while it may be implanted into a character's body or used to replace part of a character's body, is still technology and is still considered to be a "tool" that the character uses, and that use is governed by the Tech axiom. If a character disconnects in a reality that does not have a Tech axiom of 26 or higher, **all** of their cyberware immediately stops functioning.

While this may only be inconvenient to someone who has a cybernetic hand, it is a much bigger problem for someone with, for example, two cybernetic eyes and it's a deadly serious problem if the character has something like a cybernetic heart! Cyberware will function normally again when the character reconnects so possibility-rated characters with cyberware can still operate outside of Tharkold or the Cyberpapacy. Ords however, who cannot reconnect, can encounter serious problems if they leave their realm for a reality with a lower Tech axiom.

System Failures



System failures are not quite as serious as the complete shutdown caused by disconnecting in realities with low Tech axioms. For one thing, system failures usually only afflict a few pieces of cyberware at a time rather than every piece simultaneously as with disconnection. And most of the time, a system failure won't completely shut down a piece of cyberware. On the down side, if a system failure does cause a piece of cyberware to stop working, it has to be repaired before it will operate again. That can be tricky if the cyberware is buried deep inside the character's body somewhere!

System failures may occur whenever a player rolls a 1 while generating an action total with a skill or attribute that has been enhanced by cyberware. Note that if the roll causes the character to disconnect, that takes precedence and system failure doesn't occur.

When a system failure might occur, the gamemaster generates a bonus number and consults the appropriate System Failure Table in either the *Cyberpapacy sourcebook* or the *Tharkold sourcebook*. The two tables are different and the gamemaster should use whichever table is appropriate for the character's cyberware. Tharkold cyberware is slightly more advanced than the Cyberpapacy's cyberware and has a lower chance of system failures.

Cyber Value and Cyberpsychosis

System failures may also occur as a result of *cyberpsychosis*, a mental affliction suffered by cybered characters. While cyberware can mimic the appearance and function of living flesh, it has an alienating effect on a person's psyche; the person feels that he's no longer a "complete" human being. Even if the person consciously accepts and even embraces his cyberware as a good thing, the doubts and feelings of isolation can still linger beneath the surface. All pieces of cyberware have a *cyber rating* and the sum of all the cyber ratings of a character's cyberware is the character's *cyber value*.

Example: The average cyberpriest from the Cyberpapacy is loaded down with cyberware and thus has a high cyber value. The cyber ratings for his cyberware are: NeuraCal +5, EpiphaNeur +2, BelleView 20-20 +2, CSI LEDs +1, CyberHam Receiver +2, TSE LeMotion +2, Throat Mike +1, Homer +0, DATAS Boomer +2, MB Charger +2 and ChipHolder +2 for a total cyber value of 21.

Whenever a cybered character experiences a *setback*, such as from being taunted or intimidated or by a *setback* showing up on her side of the conflict line during round play, their cyber value can be used to determine if they experience an episode of cyberpsychosis. The gamemaster generates an action total using the character's cyber value and compares it to the character's *Spirit* attribute.

For cyborg characters from Tharkold, the action total is compared to the cyborg's *cyberpsyche* skill value instead of its *Spirit* attribute. Techno-demons from Tharkold are less susceptible to cyberpsychosis than other races so the action value of their cyberpsychosis checks has a -3 modifier applied to it.

Result points, positive or negative, are read on the Cyberpsychosis Table in either the *Tharkold sourcebook* or *Cyberpapacy sourcebook* depending on the cybered character's reality. Cybered characters from a different realm should use the chart appropriate for where they got their cyberware.

Example: Our cyberpriest from the previous example has a *Spirit* attribute of 12. During an encounter with a group of Storm Knights, one of the Storm Knights *taunts* the cyberpriest and gets a *setback* result. A check is made to see if the cyberpriest has a cyberpsychotic episode. The gamemaster rolls a 9, a -1 bonus, generating an action total of 20 from the cyberpriest's cyber value.

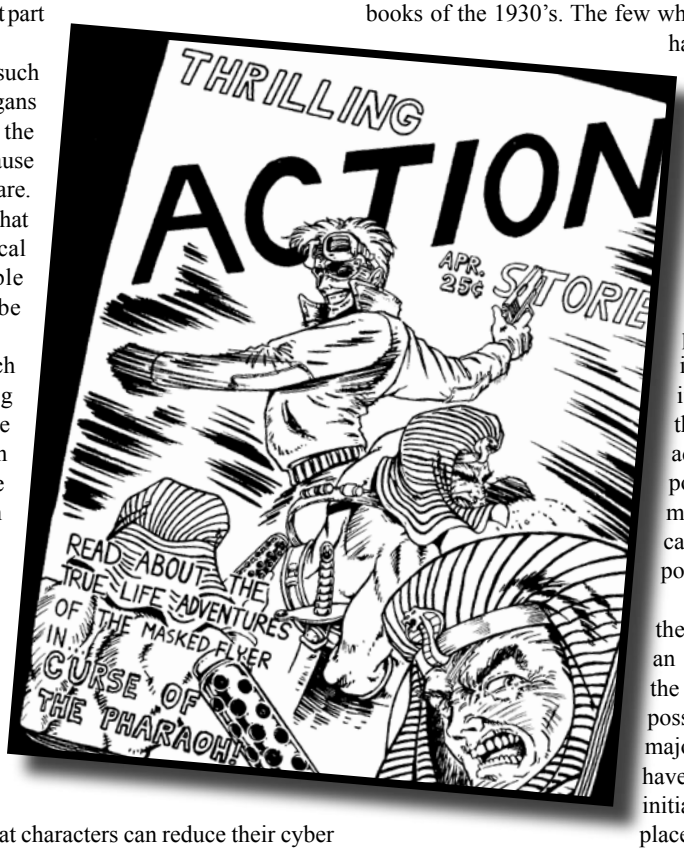
Compared to his *Spirit* attribute that's 8 result points. Consulting the Cyberpsychosis Table in the *Cyberpapacy sourcebook*, 8 result points does trigger an episode; the cyberpriest is afflicted with a case of paralysis for the next three rounds.

Gamemasters should not feel obligated to check for cyberpsychosis every time a cybered character suffers a *setback* result, if something else would be more appropriate for the *setback* then go ahead and use that instead of a cyberpsychosis check. But cyberpsychosis checks are a handy, pre-determined type of *setback* that can be used on cybered characters when nothing more appropriate presents itself.

Characters can choose to actively defend against a cyberpsychosis attack by generating a *Spirit* total. As with a normal active defense, the minimum bonus number is +1 and the defense does count as an action, so the character will have to perform a multi-action if they wish to do anything else during the round they're actively defending.

Characters can take steps to decrease their cyber values and reduce their vulnerability to cyberpsychosis. The most obvious approach is to have some cyberware removed, which will subtract its cyber rating from the cyber value. One drawback to this approach though is that it might leave the character with a reduced capacity to function if the cyberware was a replacement part rather than an enhancement.

Biological replacements for such things as eyes, limbs and organs are generally not available in the Cyberpapacy or Tharkold because of their dependence on cyberware. Limited cloning technology that would provide some biological replacement parts is available in Nippon Tech but could be prohibitively expensive.



The most common approach characters take to reducing their cyber values is to receive treatment for their condition from characters that have the *psychology* skill. As outlined in Chapter Three, a week's worth of therapy, if successful, will reduce the cyber rating of one piece of cyberware by one point. No piece can have its cyber rating reduced below +1 though and if the therapy is unsuccessful there is a chance that the cyber rating is actually increased!

There are two other ways that characters can reduce their cyber values. A very low result on a cyberpsychosis check can actually reduce a character's cyber value, representing a gain in inner strength caused by defeating the cyberpsychosis attack.

The other method is only available to characters with *faith(Cyberpapacy)* and is generally limited to very loyal members of the CyberChurch. By jacking into the GodNet and spending time in the region called Heaven, Cyberpapists can have their cyber values dramatically reduced, up to a maximum of six points per one-week visit. Full details can be found in *The GodNet* supplement.

The full rules for cyberware, including the tables for system failures and cyberpsychosis, can be found in the *Cyberpapacy sourcebook* and the *Tharkold sourcebook.* The Worldbook contains a brief overview of the rules similar to what is in this chapter as well as write-ups and descriptions for some of the more common pieces of cyberware available in the Cyberpapacy. However, it does not have any of the tables.

Pulp Powers

Characters from the Nile Empire, the cosm of Terra and some parts of the Land Below may possess special abilities that separate them from ordinary characters. They might be able to fly, run faster than a cheetah, turn invisible, see through walls, possess superhuman strength, or have some other amazing ability known as a pulp power.

Characters who wish to have a pulp power **must** have an unusual background event that explains the origin of the power. The explanation should be something appropriate to the pulp genre, such as exposure to fumes generated by an unknown chemical compound, being raised in the wild by apes or learning the secret talents of a group of mystics hidden in the high Himalayas.

Keep in mind that these characters are not present-day comic book superheroes but "mystery men" from the pulp magazines and comic books of the 1930's. The few who do possess actual powers may have one or two special abilities but they depend more on their fists and their .45's when it comes to dealing with doers of evil.

Every pulp power has an *adventure cost* and an *action value* that is usually based on one of the character's attributes. The adventure cost is the number of possibilities the character must pay at the end of each adventure in order to keep the power, even if he did not use the power during that adventure. Most powers have adventure costs of two to four possibilities though some of the more unusual and rare powers can have costs as high as twelve possibilities!

If a character does not pay the adventure cost at the end of an adventure, the character loses the power. Regaining the power is possible but will require some kind of major story event; the character may have to recreate the conditions that initially gave him the power in the first place or the character may have to do something dangerous in order to "jump-start" his lost powers.

The action value simply represents the value of the power; how fast a character runs, the damage value of an attack power, and so on. Action values are based on a character's attributes. The *Running* power, for example, has an action value equal to the character's *Dexterity* attribute. During character creation players may increase the action value of a power by taking away points from the character's attributes on a one-to-one basis. For example, if a player takes away one point from *Strength* he can increase the action value of *Running* to DEX+1.

During play, power values can be increased by spending possibilities as if raising an attribute (i.e., three times the value the power is being raised to, going from an action value of 10 to 11 would cost 33 possibilities.) Raising the attribute that was used to determine a power's action value would not increase the power value, once the initial action value has been determined it is independent of the defining attribute.

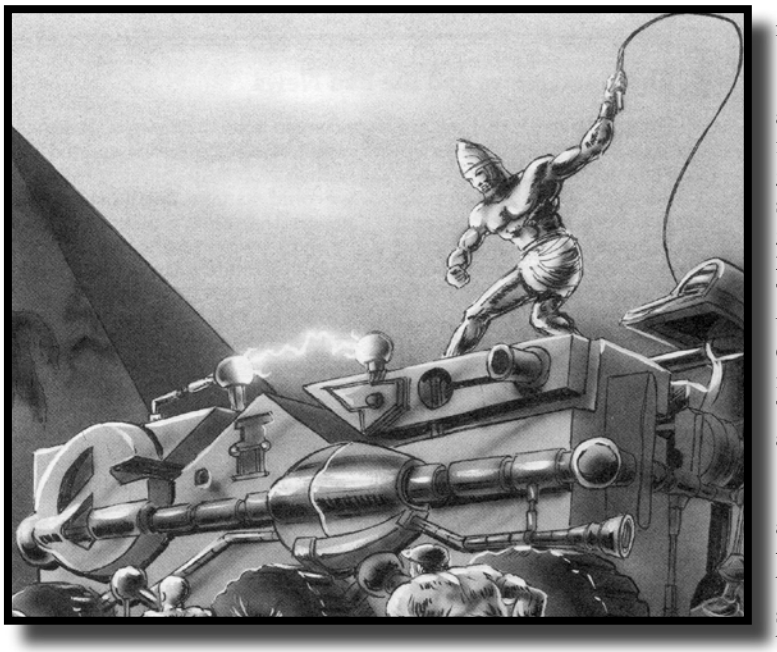
Flaws

Players do have an option that makes it easier for their characters to pay their adventure costs: *power flaws*. There are two types of power flaws. The first type, described in the *Nile Empire sourcebook*,

are drawbacks that the character experiences in relation to the use of his powers. For example, a character might become *stymied* or he might take a point of shock damage whenever he uses his power.

The second type, described in the *Terra sourcebook*, are drawbacks that affect the power or how the character uses the power instead of the character himself. The character may need to perform a certain type of action in order to activate the power, such as recite a cryptic phrase or make an unusual gesture, or the power may not be able to affect certain types of targets, like animals or objects made out of wood.

Pulp powers are a by-product of the World Laws and the axioms of the three realities they are found in and as such are contradictory almost everywhere else. Pulp powers from the Nile Empire will work without contradiction in the cosm of Terra and vice versa, but both are contradictory in the Land Below as well as everywhere else. Pulp powers from the Land Below are contradictory everywhere else.



The rules governing the use of pulp powers can be found in the *Nile Empire sourcebook,* the *Terra sourcebook,* the *Land Below supplement* and in the Worldbook. Power flaws are described in the *Nile Empire* and *Terra sourcebooks* and as noted earlier each book describes a different type of power flaw.

Pulp power write-ups and descriptions can be found in a number of *Torg* products. Besides the three previously listed sources, pulp powers can also be found in *Infiniverse Update Volumes I* and *II*, *The High Lords' Guide to the Possibility Wars* and *The Storm Knights' Guide to the Possibility Wars* supplements.

Weird Science

Closely related to the pulp powers of the Nile Empire and cosm of Terra are the fabulous "gizmos" that can be created with the *weird science* skill. Gizmo-using heroes and villains are in fact more common in both realities than characters who actually possess innate pulp powers, though the production of gizmos is an inexact enough science that it's impossible to mass-produce them. Each gizmo is an individual creation and will thus vary slightly from one sample to the next.

Building gizmos is a complicated process and requires special components and elements that are only manufactured in the Nile Empire or Terra. In fact they cannot be manufactured anywhere else since the *weird science* skill is a contradiction everywhere but Terra and the Nile Empire. Like pulp powers, *weird science* is a by-product of the World Laws and axioms of the two realities.

The rules for designing and building gizmos can be found in the *Nile Empire* and *Terra sourcebooks.* The version of the rules in the *Terra sourcebook* is a "streamlined" version of the rules found in the other book and is a little easier to use in play. The *Terra* book also contains rules for "kitbashing" one-shot gizmos out of common, everyday items instead of using specialized gizmo components.

While the *weird science* skill is a contradiction outside of the Nile Empire and Terra, the gizmos created by *weird science* may not be contradictory. Even though *weird science* represents using an entirely separate set of scientific laws and principles from what's accepted as "normal" science, the Tech axiom does not apply to how a piece of technology works, only in what it does. All gizmos that are built with a pulp power in them will have a *Tech Rating,* which is used just like a Tech axiom requirement on a normal device. Regardless of how weird and impractical the explanation for how a gizmo functions, as long as its Tech Rating doesn't exceed the local Tech axiom the device is not a contradiction.

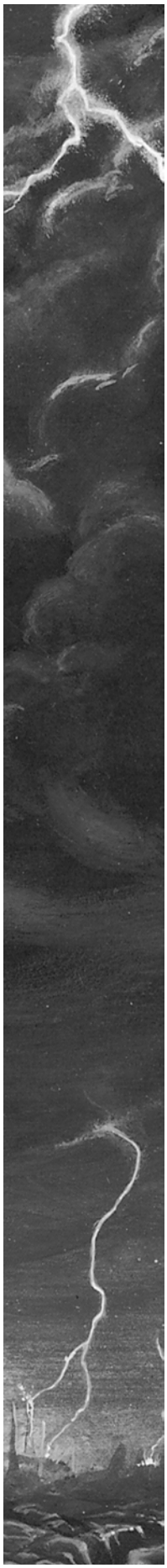
Example: The Owl is a Nile pulp hero known for his amazing "night-goggles" which let him see in the dark. The gizmo's Tech Rating is 25. If the Owl is in Nippon Tech, which is Tech 24, using his gizmo is a contradiction. If the Owl is in Tharkold, which is Tech 26, the gizmo is not a contradiction.

While some gizmos are just normal devices that have been improved beyond the limits of normal science, most gizmos are built around pulp powers, such as a "lightning pistol" that contains the *electro-ray* power or a jetpack with the *flight* power. Gizmos with pulp powers have an adventure cost that the character must pay to use the device, though its handled a bit differently than an innate pulp power.

The adventure cost of a gizmo is paid not at the end of each adventure but the **first time** a character uses the gizmo in an adventure. The character only needs to pay the adventure cost once an adventure, she doesn't have to pay every time she uses the gizmo. If the character doesn't use the gizmo during an adventure, she doesn't have to pay the adventure cost.

With most gizmos, the character actually pays "in advance" and does not have to pay the adventure cost from their personal store of possibilities when they activate the gizmo. Most gizmos contain a component known as a *possibility capacitor,* which can store possibility energy that the gizmo uses to pay the adventure cost. With a properly equipped *weird science* laboratory a character can put up to ten possibilities into a capacitor, essentially paying for several adventure's worth of use from the gizmo ahead of time. Evil characters naturally prefer to take the possibilities from someone other than themselves to charge their capacitors.

One-shot gizmos built with the rules from the *Terra sourcebook* will generally not have possibility capacitors and so the adventure cost for their usage does have to come directly from either the character that built the gizmo or the character who activates it.



Chapter 13: Equipment

"Hachiman wants to help you protect your loved ones from the invaders, and those who fight for them. So come to Hachiman Arms ... before it's too late."

-- Advertising slogan of Hachiman Arms, a subsidiary of the Kanawa Corporation

In this chapter various types of equipment are detailed. Each table includes information about the items; its *Tech* level, its abilities, and price in Core Earth. Note that many of the items are available only (or most commonly) in other cosms; it is assumed that your characters will pick them up in those cosms or somehow the equipment has found their way to wherever your characters are based. The prices given are in US dollars, taking somewhat into account import costs and so on. In the price lists, "K" = thousands, "M" = millions and "B" = billions.

Many of the sourcebooks available for *Torg* contain additional equipment that characters may have. Some of them list prices in terms of that cosm's currency instead of US dollars. Characters may also be carrying currency other than US Dollars. The Value Chart can be used to convert between the currency types of the various realms by applying the following modifiers to the value of a given price:

Example: The price of a GWI Hellfire assault rifle in the *Cyberpapacy* sourcebook is listed as 10,000 francs. On the Value Chart a measure of 10,000 is a value of 20. To convert to US Dollars we apply a -4 modifier, giving us a value of 16. The measure of 16 is 1,500 so the price of the Hellfire converts to $1,500.

The price for a flashlight given in the rulebook is $10. How much does a flashlight cost in Nippon Tech? On the value chart a measure of 10 is a value of 5. To convert to Yen we apply a +11 modifier, giving us a value of 16. The measure of 16 is 1,500 so the price of the flashlight converts to 1,500 Yen.

Converting from one cosm's currency to another is simply a matter of first converting it to US Dollars and then converting that to the new currency. Simply combine the modifiers given in the table to produce a single modifier. For example, to convert Ayslish Trades to Nile Empire Royals, add the -2 modifier for Trades to Dollars to the -5 modifier for Dollars to Royals, producing a -7 modifier.

Another version of this chart, which doesn't include the Space Gods, can be found in the Worldbook.

Equipment Availability

If you're unsure about the availability of an item to a particular character, its cost value in US Dollars can be used as a difficulty number for either *persuasion* or *streetwise* skill checks. Success means that the item can be found and purchased, either legally or on the black market. The success level can be used to adjust the quality or price of an item. A *minimal* success might indicate that a poor-quality piece was found, or that it's more expensive than normal, while a *superior* success might indicate finding a brand-new piece or getting a discount.

The Difficulty Number Scale can be used to modify the possible availability of an item depending on circumstances. For example, in a war zone, weapons for purchase might be Difficult to find because demand exceeds the available supply. A laptop computer on the other hand might be Very Easy to locate in one of Nippon Tech's major cities.

CURRENCY CONVERSIONS

Cosm	Currency	Value in US Dollars	Convert to US Dollars	Convert from US Dollars
Aysle	Trade	$0.50	-2	+2
Cyberpapacy	Franc	$0.15	-4	+4
Nile Empire	Royal	$10.00	+5	-5
Nippon Tech	Yen	$0.007	-11	+11
Orrorsh	Sterling	$5.00	+4	-4
Space Gods	Ciara	$50.00	+9	-9

General Gear

This equipment is a sampling of gear that Storm Knights may encounter or find useful adventuring from cosm to cosm. Descriptions are not provided since the items are fairly basic. For equipment not included in the chart or found in other *Torg* products, or for different Tech axiom versions of this equipment, the gamemaster can extrapolate a Tech axiom from the axiom chart in Chapter Seven and assign a price that seems reasonable.

GENERAL GEAR CHART

Item	Tech Level	Price
Hemp Rope (30 meters)	8	15
Nylon Rope (30 meters)	21	25
Climbing Cable	23	50
Torch	5	5
Oil Lamp	7	25
Candles	10	5
Gas Lantern	19	30
Flashlight	20	10
Sundial	9	5
Mechanical Clock	13	20
Pocket Watch	18	75
Wrist Watch	20	50
Electric Watch	21	10
Digital Watch	22	25
Down Parka	21	150
Thinsulate Parka	22	100
Bronze Mirror	7	25
Glass Mirror	13	10
Animal Hide Canoe	3	600
Inflatable Raft	21	150
Iron Spikes	10	5
Piton	19	25
Knapsack	14	10
Backpack	14	100
Belt Pouch	12	10
Nylon Hip Pack	22	40
Collapsible Tent	20	100
Sleeping Bag	18	100
Sleeping Mat	8	25
Cot	16	10
Portable Gasoline Generator	21	1000
Portable Fusion Generator	26	2500
Semaphore	13	100
Telegraph	18	250
Telephone	19	25
Field Telephone	20	100
Field Radio	21	500
Walkie Talkie	21	50
Car Phone	22	750
Satellite Transmitter	22	5000
Cell Phone	23	400
Global Satellite Phone	24	800
Compass	13	5
GPS Receiver	23	250
Refrigerator	19	800
Wood Stove	17	1100
Gas Stove	19	500
Microwave Oven	22	50
Meat Jerky (1 wk)	10	20
Army C-rations	21	15
Freeze-Dried Food	21	30
Dehydrated Food	21	75
Microwaveable Food	22	60
Self-heating Food Packs	23	50
Flash-bulb Camera	20	200
Movie Camera	21	500
35mm Camera	22	100
Video Camera	22	400
Disposable Camera	23	10
Digital Camera	23	800

Armor

While offensive and defensive technologies have vied for superiority on the battlefield, the defensive superiority is always short lived. An advance in weaponry quickly offsets every new advance in protection. But some protection is usually better than no protection and many characters will want at least a minimal amount of armor.

The armor adds listed below presume that the armor covers the torso (front and back), but not the rest of the character's body. If the arms and legs are also protected, increase the armor add by one; if a helmet of the same or better armor is worn, increase the add by one. A full suit of armor will therefore have two more adds than listed below, unless otherwise noted. The prices given are also only for the torso piece; armor for all four limbs costs about 25 percent of the listed price, helmets are five percent of the listed price. (Using the Value Chart, limb armor prices are found by applying a -3 to the value of the torso piece's price, helmet prices are approximated by applying a -6 to the torso piece's price.)

Example: Quin is considering buying a Kevlar helmet. The price of a Kevlar vest is $250, a value of 12. Applying the -6 modifier produces a value of 6, which translates to a price of $15. (Five percent of $250 is actually $12.50, $15 is close enough to be acceptable.)

If a character purchases only a helmet or limb armor with no torso protection, he is protected at full armor value from blows that strike the protected areas. If torso armor is added, the add is increased as above, and the armor is assumed to be protecting the whole body even if the whole body is not actually covered.

Example: Quin buys the Kevlar helmet. He has five armor adds for his head only. Later, he buys a Kevlar vest to go with the helmet. He now has six armor adds that protect his entire body, even though technically his limbs are still unprotected.

Any armor which says "yes" under "Fatigue?" reduces a character's *dodge* skill value by one for just the basic torso piece; limb armor and a helmet also reduce the character's *dodge* skill value by an additional one point each. These types of torso armor also increase shock damage from a *fatigue* result (see Chapter Four) by an extra point. Limb armor and helmets do not increase *fatigue* damage unless otherwise noted in the description.

ARMOR CHART

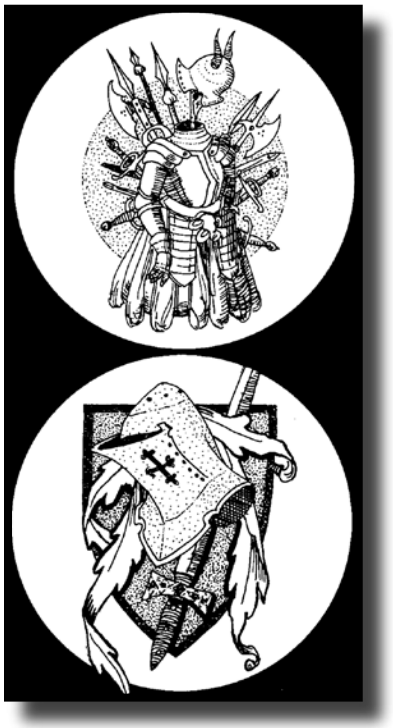
Armor	Tech	Value/Max.	Fatigue?	Price (Value)
Hides and Furs	3	+1 / 20	no	200 (12)
Bone and Hide	3	+3*/ 20	no	3000 (18)
Leather	5	+2 / 20	no	400 (13)
Bronze Plate	8	+4 / 25	yes*	3500 (18)
Cuir Bouilli	8	+3 / 20	no*	450 (14)
Chain Mail	12	+4 / 25	yes	7500 (20)
Ring Mail	12	+3 / 20	no	6000 (19)
Silk Lining	12	+2*/ 20	no	500 (14)
Plate Mail	13	+5 / 25	yes*	8000 (20)
Improved Plate Mail	15	+5 / 25	no*	10K (20)
Elfmail	15*	+6 / 21	no	10K (20)
Bullet Proof Vest	21	+6 / 22	no*	400 (13)
Kevlar Armor	22	+5 / 22	yes	250 (12)
Kevlar/Ceramic	22	+7 / 22	yes	1000 (15)
IriMesh	24	+3 / 20	no	500 (14)
Kyoto Police RKD	24	+7 / 25	no*	100K (25)
Interdermal Plating	25	+6 / 25	no*	50K* (24)
GWI Armor of God	26	+8 / 30	no	150K (26)
Reflec/Diffrax	26	+6*/ 25	no	1000 (15)
Kinetic Armor	30	+10*/ 30	yes	20K (22)

*See special note in text

Armor Descriptions

Hides and Furs: Hides and furs are the oldest forms of armor available. Soft leather and durable fabrics, such as used for clothing and jackets, also fall into this category.

Bone and Hide: Bone and hide armor consists of finely shaped bone pieces carefully sewn into the hide. It is very difficult to make, for if the bone layer does not conform in shape to the user, it breaks easily in combat. If the armor is not specifically made for the character wearing it, it breaks when the character takes a *wound* result or greater, reducing its protection to +1.



Leather: These are like hides, but are tanned to a stiffer, more durable finish.

Bronze Plate: Bronze and other equally soft metal alloys are heavy in comparison to the protection they give. In addition to the normal *dodge* penalties, any character wearing bronze armor on torso and limbs takes an extra two points of shock damage from a *fatigue* result.

Cuir Bouilli: Cuir bouilli is boiled, treated leather, increasing its toughness but reducing its flexibility. Any character wearing cuir bouilli on torso and limbs has her *Dexterity* (and all related skill values) reduced by 1.

Chain Mail: The classic middleweight armor, made of linked chains of worked metal.

Ring Mail: The larger mesh of ring mail makes it slightly lighter than chain mail, but also less effective.

Silk Lining: Silk lining is not normally worn as armor alone but is combined with other types of armor to produce an early example of composite armor - armor made from two distinct substances to gain benefits from both materials. Silk lining increases the effectiveness of some armors by giving, but not tearing, when a weapon penetrates the outer coating. Silk lining is effective against all melee and missile weapons, but it offers no protection against firearms of Tech 19 or better. Silk lining is very expensive at the *Tech* levels where it is effective; the price of silk is often literally its weight in gold.

Plate Mail: Early plate mail is heavy and hot; any character wearing a complete suit of plate mail (torso, head and limbs) takes two extra points of shock damage from a *fatigue* result.

Improved Plate Mail: At Tech 15 armorers are able to overcome many of the weight and heat problems of plate mail, but it's expensive. Only a complete suit (torso, head, and limbs) of improved plate is fatiguing.

Elfmail: A thin yet sturdy variety of plate mail developed by the elves of Aysle. Besides offering the normal protection of armor, it provides an additional +2 armor value against magical attacks. The price given is what elves charge each other for elfmail, it is not for sale to outsiders. Elfmail's ability to provide extra protection against magical attacks requires a Magic axiom of 10.

BulletProof Vest: Bulletproof vests first appeared in the form of flak jackets, and with refinements became available for infantry use. Wearing a full suit of bullet proof vest material is impossible; no more than a helmet and vest may be worn for *Tech* 21 bullet proof armor. They are also quite clumsy; a character wearing a vest has his *Dexterity* attribute (and all related skill values) reduced by 1.

Kevlar Armor: Kevlar is a synthetic material that becomes "bullet proof" when more than a dozen layers are carefully laminated together. Kevlar is light enough to line overcoats or other bulky outerwear but is quite hot.

Kevlar/Ceramic: A composite armor that is quite heavy. Limb protection is not available, the best possible mix is a helmet/torso combination.

IriMesh: IriMesh is the lightweight high-tech armor of choice, weighing only about twice the fabrics used in comparable street clothes. While the heat pores are only moderately successful at removing excess heat, they do negate enough to avoid being fatiguing.

Kyoto Police RKD: A product of the Kanawa Corporation, processed RKD armor became known as Kyoto Police, or simply Kyoto armor, as that's where it had its extremely successful debut. Small biocams were hooked into the armor which augmented the motion of the wearer just enough to overcome the clumsiness of the full suit, while efficient H-cross units disposed of the heat, converting a fraction of it back into useful energy for the biocams.

RKD can cause problems if used while disconnected or otherwise rendered inoperative. It has a normal *fatigue* penalty in this case, and a character wearing the armor has his *Dexterity* attribute (and all related skill values) reduced by 1.

Interdermal Plating: An early form of cybernetic enhancement (see the *Cyberpapacy sourcebook* and the *Tharkold sourcebook*) that forms plates of armor underneath and within the character's skin. The armor is almost a living part of the person, being maintained by nanotech machines that draw the necessary raw materials from the host's bloodstream.

GWI Armor of God: The Cyberpapacy's Church Police wear this armor. It operates on the same principles of the Kyoto RKD but is made from a more advanced material and has more efficient biocams and heat dispersal technology.

Reflec/Diffrax: A reflective polymer coating that provides protection against energy attacks. It is usually applied to other pieces of armor since by itself it offers no protection against physical attacks. It is called Reflec in the Cyberpapacy, Diffrax in Tharkold.

Kinetic Armor: A symbiotic piece of Akashan biotechnology, the creature covers its host's entire body in a thin layer, providing complete protection from physical attack. The symbiote actually feeds on kinetic energy, absorbing the energy of impacts and protecting its host. It offers no protection against energy attacks, gasses or temperature extremes

Shields

Shields come in a variety of sizes and materials. A Plexiglas shield used by present-day riot police is not that different in function from the steel shield used by an Ayslish knight. The amount of protection a shield offers is based more on its size than on its material, though the material does determine how much damage the shield itself can take before being destroyed.

The adds of a shield **do not add to a character's armor value.** They are instead applied to a character's defensive skill value, normally *melee weapons* or *unarmed combat* though *dodge* is also possible.

If an attacker's action total is greater than the defender's skill value but less than the skill value plus the adds of the shield, the attack hits the shield. The damage value of the attack is then applied against the *Toughness* of the shield. A shield is usable until it takes four wounds, at which point it is destroyed.

Example: Terrill is using a small shield to defend himself against a viking. Terrill's *melee weapons* skill is 10. The small shield provides a +4 bonus, raising it to 14. When the viking attacks, if his *melee weapons* total is 9 or less, he does not hit Terrill at all. If his total is 10 through 13, then he hits Terrill's shield and it might take some damage, but Terrill is not affected. If the viking's total is 14 or higher, he gets past the shield and hits Terrill.

Layering Armor

Within reason, some of the armor types listed above can be combined to offer greater protection. For example, leather can be worn over a layer of hides or furs to produce padded leather, and silk lining is designed to be worn in combination with other armors, such as chain mail.

Some combinations may prove to be too bulky and unwieldy, such as trying to wear a Kevlar vest with plate mail, and should not be allowed. Some combinations may also prove to be inefficient and not provide any significant increase in the amount of protection offered. Combined armors must have armor adds within two points of each other to effectively increase protection.

If one type of armor offers less protection than the other but is within two points, the combined armor protection is equal to the higher armor's adds plus one. If the two types of armor offer equal protection, the armor adds are increased by two. This is determined without considering any additional adds provided by limb armor or helmets, those adds are figured in after determining the combined armor value.

Example: Terrill has been wearing a leather breastplate (+2 armor adds) and helmet (additional +1) for a while and wants to increase the protection it offers. He purchases a tunic of ring mail (+3 armor adds) and wears that over the leather. The leather increases the protection value of the ring mail by +1, bringing it up to +4 armor adds. The helmet is then added to this value, for a final total of +5 armor adds.

Combining armor will reduce the character's mobility somewhat and will often make the armor fatiguing or increase the amount of fatigue it causes. If both types of armor are not fatiguing, the combination imposes a -1 penalty to *dodge* but does not increase *fatigue* damage. If one piece is fatiguing, the combination is also fatiguing. If both pieces are fatiguing, the combination causes two extra points of shock damage instead of one point on *fatigue* results.

Example: Neither the leather or ring mail is fatiguing so Terrill's combination of armor imposes a -1 penalty on his *dodge* skill. Additionally, helmets penalize *dodge* by an extra point so Terrill's penalty is actually -2.

Some creatures, such as ravagons, may possess natural armor and then wear additional armor over that. This form of layering uses the same rules for layering different types of worn armor. In cases where a creature with natural armor is wearing multiple layers of armor, figure the combined protection of the worn armor, including limb protection and helmets, and then combine that with the natural armor to arrive at their final armor value. Natural armor is never figured into calculations of fatiguing penalties.

Example: A ravagon is wearing a leather tunic under a ring mail tunic and a helmet, and ravagons have a tough hide that gives them +3 natural armor adds. The leather (+2) and ring mail (+3) combine to +4. The natural armor combines with that number to provide +5 protection. Finally, the helmet adds an additional +1 for a total of +6. The leather and ring, neither fatiguing, combine to impose a -1 penalty on *dodge* and the helmet imposes an additional -1 *dodge* penalty.

Shield Descriptions

Buckler: A small round shield, about the size of a dinner plate, usually worn on the wrist so that the hand remains free. Commonly made of wood or metal.

Small Shield: About a meter in length or diameter, usually held in one hand or strapped onto an arm. It is easier to carry than larger shields and is preferred by those who travel lightly. Commonly made of wood or metal.

Medium Shield: About 1.5 meters in length, this is the type of shield commonly associated with knights in shining armor. Predictably, most Ayslish knights use a medium shield. Usually made of metal, though at higher Tech axioms lighter materials such as Plexiglas may be used.

Large Shield: Sometimes called a tower shield, it is two meters in height and difficult to move around in combat. Warriors may have assigned shield-bearers whose only job is to carry the shield while the warrior fights around the shield. Trying to fight while carrying a large shield is fatiguing.

SHIELD CHART

Shield	Tech	Value / Toughness	Fatigue?	Price (Value)
Buckler, wood	3	+2 / 13	no	200 (12)
Buckler, metal	8	+2 / 16	no	400 (13)
Small shield, wood	5	+4 / 15	no	300 (13)
Small shield, metal	12	+4 / 18	no	500 (14)
Medium shield, metal	12	+5 / 19	no	750 (15)
Medium shield, Plexiglas	22	+5 / 20	no	600 (14)
Large shield, metal	12	+6 / 20	yes*	1000 (15)

Weapons

There are two basic types of weapons in *Torg*; weapons which derive their effects from the user's *Strength*, such as a sword or a longbow, and weapons that define their own effects, such as firearms and explosives. Some representative examples in both categories are described here.

Melee Weapons

With *Strength*-based weapons, the "plus to damage" given in the charts is added to the user's *Strength* to determine the weapon's base damage value. The "maximum value" listed with these weapons refers to the maximum **base** damage value, not to the maximum possible damage the weapon can do in combat.

Melee weapons can be made out of many materials; wood, stone, bronze, iron, steel, advanced composites and so on. The Tech axioms provided in the chart below indicate the minimum axiom level for the weapon, but higher axiom versions made out of more advanced materials are possible. The Mass Impact Club, for example, is a high-tech version of a very low-tech weapon.

In general, weapons made out of stone, wood or bone will be around Tech 3. Bronze and other soft metals are Tech 7. Iron weapons are possible at Tech 8 and early steel is available at Tech 10. Weapons made out of high quality steel generally fall between Tech 12 and Tech 15.

Knife: The simplest bladed weapon, usually less than 15 centimeters in length (about six inches) not counting the hilt.

Dagger: A short-bladed weapon between 15 and 30 centimeters (about six to twelve inches) in length, not counting the hilt. Daggers can be easily concealed and drawn in close quarters.

Spear: A long wooden pole with a metal head on the end, spears can be used as melee or missile weapons. It is not uncommon for a character that uses spears to carry several of them, some for throwing and at least one to keep on hand for melee combat. Spears that use stone or bone heads instead of metal are only Tech 3 but will do the same damage. A spear that is just a pointed stick only does STR+2/16 damage.

Short Sword: Most one-handed wide blade swords fall into this category regardless of whatever proper name is given to the weapon. Short swords may have an edge on one or both sides of the blade for cutting and slashing and the tip can be used for thrusting.

Rapier: A long, thin bladed weapon made famous by such characters as the Three Musketeers and Zorro. The lightweight blade can be used for faster maneuvers than a short sword, and its narrow tip is excellent at penetrating armor when backed up with a strong thrust. The major drawback of the rapier is that it can be broken much easier than a wide bladed sword.

Broadsword: Any wide-bladed weapon around a meter in length, usable with one hand or two if the hilt is large enough. The heavy blade may have an edge on one or both sides and is best suited for cutting instead of slashing or thrusting attacks.

Katana: Essentially a Japanese broadsword made famous by Japan's samurai, superior quality steel and workmanship allows this one-edged blade to be lighter than a regular broadsword but with a stronger and more flexible blade that holds a better edge, allowing it to do more damage.

Two-Handed Sword: Long, heavy bladed weapons designed to be swung two-handed. With their also lengthy hilts some of these weapons can be more than 150 centimeters in length (over five feet)!

Baseball Bat/Club: Essentially just a weighted length of wood that can be swung for substantial impact.

Staff: Thinner than a club, but much longer, a staff can be a very effective weapon in trained hands. Besides striking blows it can also

be used to trip up opponents and in a pinch serve as a vaulting pole (+3 bonus to *long jumping* skill totals.)

Nunchaka: Two short clubs joined by a length of chain, the nunchaka is used by holding one club and whirling the other end at tremendous speed. This allows the user to strike several rapid blows, giving it an effective damage value. Additionally, the speed of the weapon allows characters with *melee weapons* or *martial arts* to attack two adjacent targets with no action penalty, but the plus to damage is reduced to +3 when used this way.

Mace: A metal club usually ranging in length from 30 centimeters to a meter, topped with spikes or sharp ridges. They can be swung one or two-handed.

Morning Star: A variation of the mace, the head of the morning star is connected to the handle by joints or chains which increase the force of the blow. One drawback is that the weapon usually requires more space to be swung than a mace due to the extra length of the chains.

Battle-axe: A sharp, broad metal head attached to a wooden shaft, battle-axes are most commonly used as melee weapons but they can also be thrown, though at a small penalty. Battle-axes can have either single-edged or double-edged blades.

Halberd: A polearm slightly over two meters in length with a large axe-blade mounted at one end with a spike for puncturing armor opposing it. Some also have a long thrusting point on the end of the pole for chopping and thrusting attacks.

Giant War Club: A huge, thick wooden club with iron spikes driven through it and a band of metal wrapped around the head to give it added weight. It requires a minimum *Strength* of 14 to use due to its size and weight.

Power Dagger: Sometimes known as a plasma dagger, pressing a control button on the hilt activates a laser or plasma energy field around the blade, increasing its effectiveness. The weapon can be used as a regular dagger with the power off. Power versions of other melee weapons such as swords and clubs are also available.

Mass Impact Club: Constructed of an advanced polymer, mass impact clubs concentrate the weapon's kinetic energy into the point of contact, causing more damage than a normal club. However, the polymer is actually quite lightweight and if used while disconnected in a reality that does not support the weapon's Tech axiom, the weapon's damage rating drops to one less than the normal version of that weapon (so +2 for a club). Mass impact versions of other impact weapons such as maces and staves are also available.

Volent: A biotech weapon of the Akashans, the volent is a hard-shelled creature about 25 centimeters in length that telescopes to about a meter in length when it is awakened by its wielder. The armor plates at one end also expand, changing that end into a large mace-like head. The volent must be fed every two months.

MELEE WEAPONS CHART

Melee Weapon	Tech	Plus to Maximum	Damage Value	Price (Value)
Knife	3	+1	15	5 (4)
Dagger	7	+3	17	50 (9)
Short Sword	8	+4	18	150 (11)
Rapier	15	+5	19	300 (13)
Broadsword	9	+6	20	400 (13)
Katana	15	+7	21	200 (12)
Two-Handed Sword	10	+7	21	750 (15)
Baseball Bat/Club	6	+3	18	20 (7)
Staff	7	+2	17	25 (7)
Nunchaka	9	+5*	19	200 (12)
Mace	8	+4	19	100 (10)
Morning Star	11	+6	21	200 (12)
Battle-axe	8	+5	20	75 (10)
Halberd	10	+6	20	150 (11)
Giant War Club	8	+4	28	30 (8)
Power Dagger		24	+5	19
Mass Impact Club	25	+4	19	200 (12)
Volent	30	+5	24	3 0 0 0 (18)

Optional Rule

The range values given for the *Strength*-based missile weapons are based upon a *Strength* value of 9. Characters with notably higher *Strength* values are able to extend the Long Range of a weapon beyond that given in the table. First, find the value of the number given for Long Range. Then for every two points of *Strength* above 9, increase that value by one point. Convert the new value back into a measure to determine the character's Long Range with that weapon. Short and Medium Ranges are not changed.

Example: Magoth borrows one of Yukitada's shuriken and gives it a toss. Long Range for a shuriken is 15 meters, which on the Value Chart is a value of 6. Magoth's *Strength* is 14, five points higher than the baseline of 9, so two is added to this value to get 8. Converting back through the Value Chart, a value of 8 is a measure of 40. Magoth is able to throw the shuriken a maximum distance of 40 meters instead of 15 meters. However, Medium Range still ends at 10 meters, Magoth only increases the Long Range of the shuriken.

Missile Weapons

With *Strength*-based weapons, the value given under Damage in the charts is added to the user's *Strength* to determine the weapon's base damage value. The "maximum value" listed with these weapons refers to the maximum **base** damage value, not to the maximum possible damage the weapon can do in combat.

As outlined under Melee Weapons, some of the weapons listed here can be made from a number of different materials such as wood, stone and various grades of metal. The axioms listed are minimum axiom levels for the weapon, higher axiom versions made out of more advanced materials are possible. The shuriken for example is essentially a high Tech version of the throwing dagger, made from a higher grade of steel instead of being a more advanced weapon. See Melee Weapons above for the axiom levels of common materials used in some of these weapons.

Throwing Dagger: A specially balanced blade weighted so that it can be thrown with reliable accuracy at a target (a normal dagger cannot be counted on to hit a target blade-first.)

Battle-axe: See description under Melee Weapons. When used as a missile weapon, battle-axes impose a -1 penalty on the action value because they are often not balanced properly for accurate throwing.

MISSILE WEAPONS CHART

Missile Weapon	Tech	Damage/Max. Value	Range (meters).			Price (Value)
			Short	Med	Long	
Throwing Dagger	7	+3/17	3-5	10	15	100 (10)
Battle-axe	8	+5/20	3-5	10	15	75 (10)
War Boomerang	5	+4/19	3-5	40	100	40 (8)
Shuriken	15	+3/17	3-5	10	15	200 (12)
Spear	7	+4/18	3-5	25	40	25 (7)
Sling	7	+4/19	3-10	40	100	100 (10)
Short Bow	8	+5/19	3-10	40	100	70 (10)
Long Bow	12	+6/20	3-10	100	300	300 (13)
Composite Long Bow	13	+7/22	3-10	60	250	500 (13)
Modern Compound Bow	22	+7/25	3-10	100	250	150 (11)
Light Crossbow	11	15	3-10	100	200	150 (11)
Heavy Crossbow	12	16	3-10	100	250	250 (12)
Frag Grenade	21	19	3-6	15	40	10 (5)
Offensive Grenade	24	22	3-6	15	40	16 (6)

War Boomerang: A heavy throwing stick, this boomerang does **not** come back to its thrower if it doesn't hit anything. While it can be thrown in such a way to follow a curved flight path, the war boomerang is too heavy to make a big enough curve to return to its thrower.

Shuriken: The famous "throwing stars" of the ninja, shuriken are small metal disks with sharp blades emerging from the sides.

Spear: See description under Melee Weapons.

Sling: A piece or rope or similar material with a pouch in the middle. A stone or lead ball is placed in the pouch. Grasping both ends, the wielder of the sling twirls it rapidly and then at the proper moment releases one end of the rope, flinging the stone rapidly towards its target.

Short Bow: A simple wooden bow, less than 1.5 meters in length. It fires wooden shafts usually fitted with metallic heads. The string is drawn back to the breast, and thus does not require as much strength of its descendant, the long bow. Short bows are actually possible as early as Tech 5 but they have less power and thus do less damage and have shorter range that what is listed here.

Long Bow: A wooden bow, greater than 1.5 meters in length, which requires both strength and skill to use effectively. The string is drawn back as far as the ear, and has a greater range and can shoot arrows at a greater velocity than the short bow.

Composite Long Bow: A more powerful version of the long bow, the bow is made up of three different materials, combined so as to enhance the elastic properties of each. While actually closer in size to the short bow, the composite bow can fire arrows at a greater velocity and do more damage than the regular long bow.

Modern Compound Bow: A further extension of the concept of the composite bow, the compound bow uses pulleys and cables instead of elastic materials to reduce the amount of strength required to pull and hold the bow while applying more force to the arrow when it's released.

Light Crossbow: A crossbow consists of a bow attached to a wooden stock, which allows the weapon to be kept cocked without any effort by the firer. Some crossbows require the firer to cock the bow manually while others use mechanical devices to assist in cocking the bow, which allows for much stronger pulls and thus more power than the firer might be able to manage with his bare *Strength*. Cocking a light crossbow is a simple action if the character has something to brace the crossbow against, otherwise it takes one round to cock.

The main advantage of crossbows over regular bows is that they require less training and less strength to use, allowing more people to use them in combat situations.

Heavy Crossbow: A larger version of the light crossbow, almost always equipped with some kind of foot stirrup and a winch or pulley arrangement to facilitate cocking the more powerful pull of the bow. While more powerful with a longer range, the heavy crossbow is hampered by the time it takes to cock the bow. Most characters require two full rounds to cock a heavy crossbow. Characters with *Strength* 11 and higher can cock a heavy crossbow in one round and *Strength* 14 and higher can cock a heavy crossbow as a simple action.

Fragmentation Grenade: The classic "pineapple" grenade seen all the time in the movies. Pulling the pin allows the safety handle to pop free, arming the grenade, unless the handle is manually held in place. The fuse has a normal duration of seven seconds. The pineapple is a defensive grenade, it has a large blast radius that would be a problem for advancing (offensive) infantry. The blast radius values are 0-3/ 8/ 15.

Offensive Grenade: A high-tech grenade from Nippon Tech, it has not seen much export due to problems with long-range contradictions. It is a small cylinder with a timer knob on the top. The timer can be set from one to 60 seconds. Intended for offensive (advancing) use, the blast radius is less than the more familiar fragmentation grenade, only 0-2/ 5/ 10.

Firearms

The weapons listed here only begin to scratch the surface of the many kinds of firearms that have been developed through Core Earth's history and in other cosms. Except for values like ammunition capacity and price, the values given here for a weapon of a particular type or size should work for any other firearm of the same general type or size. For example, the numbers given for the 9mm Baretta can be used for most other 9mm pistols without affecting game play in any significant way.

Pistols

Ayslish Wheellock: An early form of firearm, the wheellock uses a spring mechanism to generate sparks when the trigger is pulled. The sparks ignite the black powder and the weapon is fired, assuming that all the involved components are dry and working properly. See the entry on "black powder" under Firearm Accessories for more information on using this type of weapon. In Aysle, dwarves are generally the only people who use wheellocks.

Flintlock: More reliable and with a spring that doesn't need winding before each shot, the flintlock is a major improvement over the wheellock. However, it still uses black powder and it takes a fair amount of time to reload after each shot.

Pauly 1812: One of the first pistols to use an ammunition cartridge, though still a single shot weapon. But it could be reloaded much faster than a flintlock, and the powder of the era was not quite but almost smokeless.

Colt Peacemaker: This is the classic "six shooter" revolver of westerns and is popular enough to still be manufactured today. The hammer must be manually cocked before every shot but a trained character can use a second hand to "fan" the hammer and allow the character to perform the Single Shot as Multi maneuver.

.38 Revolver: A straightforward six-cylinder revolver known for its reliability and long use by law-enforcement organizations around the world.

.45 Automatic: Actually a semiautomatic pistol, the .45 Auto was the standard US military sidearm for almost seventy years. It's a heavy pistol with a lot of recoil but with excellent stopping power. The weapon is a favorite of the "mystery men" who operate in the Nile Empire.

Baretta 92F: A recoil-operated 9mm semiautomatic that replaced the .45 Auto as the US military's standard sidearm.

.357 Desert Eagle: A semiautomatic pistol chambered for heavy pistol cartridges and usually fitted with a long barrel. It requires large hands to get a good grip and is not very concealable.

.44 Smith & Wesson Magnum: A large revolver chambered for the large .44 Magnum cartridge. A telescopic sight can be mounted on the pistol for hunting purposes.

13mm Chunyokai: One of the most powerful semiautomatic handguns available in the Possibility Wars, the Chunyokai is rarely exported outside of Nippon Tech because of its Tech axiom. A laser sight is built into the weapon.

11/Alph Automatic: An 11mm autoloader capable of firing on Full Auto, this Tharkold weapon uses caseless ammunition and an electronic ignition system, making it the most advanced projectile firearm available. It has an integral laser sight and can use "smart" ammunition.

GWI GodLight Laser: Small enough to be mounted on a person's wrist with an appropriate holder, the GodLight emits a deadly yellow beam of laser light. A laser sight is integral, using a low-power beam from the weapon itself.

Akashan Blaster: A handheld plasma weapon, the blaster shoots concentrated bolts of superheated plasma that cause damage by intense heat and kinetic energy. Unlike most Akashan equipment, the blaster is not biotech in nature.

Rifles and Muskets

Arquebus: A matchlock musket with a barrel length of 1.2 to 1.8 meters. The weapon is so heavy that a wooden rest is required to support the barrel when aiming. A lit match is used to ignite the black powder and fire the weapon. Wet conditions make use of a matchlock virtually impossible. Reloading takes a very long time. See the entry on "black powder" under Firearm Accessories for more information on using this type of weapon.

Kentucky Rifle: A flintlock with a rifled barrel, giving it superior range over its smoothbore cousin, the flintlock musket (see Blunderbuss under Shotguns.) Sometimes called a "long rifle" because of its size. More reliable than a matchlock or wheellock but still suffers from the use of black powder and lengthy reload times.

Winchester 1873: The archetypal level action repeating rifle, nicknamed "the gun that won the West". Cartridges are fed into a magazine in the forestock through a loading gate in the side of the weapon. The lever, part of the trigger guard, ejects the empty cartridge and feeds a fresh round into the breech.

Lee Enfield MK 1: A British bolt-action repeating rifle with a box magazine, the Lee Enfield has proven popular in Orrorsh because of its superiority to the local Victorian rifles. A reliable and accurate rifle, later models of the Lee Enfield are available in Tech 21 and Tech 22 versions but they do not differ significantly from the Tech 20 version.

M1 Garand: A semiautomatic rifle developed by the US for World War II. A smaller carbine version of the M1 was also produced, which while lighter and easier to carry was not as favored as the Garand was because it did less damage (damage value 19 instead of 20).

M-16: The US military's current assault rifle, the M-16 is chambered for a relatively small 5.56mm round. To increase the weapon's stopping power, designers installed a controversial modification that makes the round "tumble" when it leaves the barrel, causing the bullet to transfer more of its kinetic energy to the target, doing more damage. The M-16's normal rate of fire is a three-round burst. It can be set to fire on single shot or at full auto.

AK-47: Also known as the Kalashnikov, this Soviet-era assault rifle is a familiar sight worldwide. It fires 7.56mm ammunition and its normal rate of fire is the three-round burst, though it can be set for single fire or full auto. The AK-47 is a very rugged piece of equipment and can take a lot more abuse than its American counterpart, the M-16.

SC Kyogo T11: A powerful assault rifle from Nippon Tech that rivals the power of the AK-47 while somehow managing to squeeze four times the ammunition capacity into each clip. A modified version of the weapon has been designed for use in automated security systems.

GWI GodBeam Laser: A rifle version of the GodLight laser pistol, the GodBeam has a barrel of one meter and fires a blue beam of laser light. It has an integral laser sight, which produces a blue dot on the target rather than the more normal red.

PISTOLS CHART

Pistol	Tech	Damage Value	Ammo	Range (meters)			Price (Value)
				Short	Med	Long	
Ayslish Wheellock	15	13	1	3-5	10	25	1500 (16)
Flintlock	17	14	1	3-5	15	25	1500 (16)
Pauly 1812	18	15	1	3-5	15	40	400 (13)
Colt Peacemaker	19	15	6	3-5	15	40	500 (14)
.38 Revolver	20	14	6	3-10	25	50	150 (11)
.45 Colt Automatic	20	16	7	3-10	15	40	450 (14)
Beretta 92F	22	15	15	3-10	25	40	550 (14)
.357 Desert Eagle	22	16	6	3-10	25	50	400 (13)
.44 S&W Magnum	22	17	6	3-10	15	40	400 (13)
13mm Chunyokai	24	18	9	3-10	40	50	1000 (15)
11/Alph Automatic	25	16	21	3-10	30	50	5000 (14)
GWI GodLight Laser	26	24	50	3-10	25	40	1800 (17)
Akashan Blaster	27	30	40	3-100	300	500	250K (27)

RIFLES AND MUSKETS CHART

Rifle/Musket	Tech	Damage Value	Ammo	Range (meters)			Price (Value)
				Short	Med.	Long	
Arquebus	15	14	1	3-10	20	40	1200 (16)
Kentucky Rifle	17	16	1	3-40	100	250	1200 (16)
Winchester 1873	19	18	8	3-40	250	600	900 (15)
Lee Enfield MK 1	20	19	10	3-40	600	1.5K	550 (14)
M1 Garand	21	20	8	3-40	400	600	250 (12)
AK-47 (auto)	21	21	10	3-40	150	400	1500 (16)
M-16 (auto)	22	20	10	3-40	250	400	300 (13)
SC Kyogo T11 (auto)	24	21	40	3-40	150	400	2000 (17)
GWI GodBeam Laser	26	26	50	3-150	500	1.5K	3000 (18)
GWI GodsFire Plasma	26	30	25	3-100	300	500	4500 (19)

SHOTGUNS CHART

Shotgun	Tech	Damage Value	Ammo	Range (meters).			Price (Value)
				Short	Med	Long	
Blunderbuss	19	17	1	3-12	20	30	1500 (16)
Double Shotgun	20	17	2	3-15	25	40	100 (10)
Remington 870	22	17	7	3-15	40	60	200 (12)
Atcheson 12 (auto)	24	19	10	3-15	20	30	900 (15)
MAS Storm Gun (auto)	25	22	12	3-16	50	70	900 (15)

GWI GodsFire Plasma: The GodsFire more closely resembles a flamethrower than a rifle, as a hefty power supply worn as a backpack is required to generate the plasma energy, which is fed to the "rifle" through a connecting cable. The superheated plasma appears as a fiery red ball that explodes when it hits, affecting all targets within four meters of the detonation point. A laser sight is built into the weapon.

Shotguns

Blunderbuss: A flintlock musket with a wide brass barrel and flared muzzle, the blunderbuss does not have good range but it scatters shot very effectively in that short range. Because it is a black powder load weapon, it has the additional benefit that just about any metal scrap could be used for shot if lead pellets are not available.

Double Shotgun: The typical hunting shotgun, two barrels either side by side or one on top of the other. Most have one trigger that fires each barrel in turn though some may come with two triggers, which would allow both barrels to be fired at once (treat as the Single Fire as Multi maneuver.)

Remington 870: A popular pump-action shotgun available in a variety of gauges. Numerous add-ons and special shells are available for the police and paramilitary markets.

Atcheson 12: Also known as the Assault 12, the Atcheson is an innovative short-barreled, auto-loading 12-gauge shotgun from Nippon Tech. The weapon is designed for hip firing and uses caseless ammunition. The Atcheson's normal rate of fire is single shot but it is capable of firing at Full Auto (there is no burst mode.)

MAS Storm Gun: A fully automatic shotgun used by the Church Police of the Cyberpapacy, the Storm Gun fires its projectiles at great velocities, giving it superior range capabilities. It's normal mode of fire is on full auto, this is already figured into the weapon's damage value and ammo rating (firer still gets the +3 action bonus for Full Auto.) It can be set to fire at single shot (treat as the Multi Fire as Single maneuver.)

Submachine Guns

All submachine guns are capable of firing at Full Auto. Normal rate of fire is a three-round burst except for the Impala Chaingun which only fires on Full Auto. Single shot settings are available except where noted.

Template Note

The Edeinos Gone Native template in the *Living Land sourcebook* is equipped with a 7.62 minigun, which is a huge machine gun the character literally cannot carry around due to its size and weight. A Tech 23 version of the Impala Chaingun can be substituted in place of the minigun. Its damage value is 21 instead of 23 and its ammo rating is only 4.

Thompson 1298: The "tommy-gun" was made famous during the gangster era of Prohibition in the United States. A heavy weapon, the Thompson fires .45 caliber ammunition and is brutally efficient at close range thanks to its high rate of fire. A 20 round clip was available though more people are familiar with the 50 round drum. Ammo ratings are provided for both the clip and drum. The Thompson cannot be fired on single shot, only burst and Full Auto.

Schmeisser MP40: A German 9mm submachine gun from World War II, it is a cutting edge weapon for Tech 21. The Schmeisser is a popular item on the black market in the Nile Empire, and even some members of the Nile military prefer it over the Nile's own weapons.

MAC 10: Generally considered more of a heavy machine pistol, the Mac-10 is rugged and reliable but not particularly accurate or easy to use.

Uzi: Famous from appearing in numerous movies, the Uzi is recognized and used worldwide. It is extremely durable and designed for extended use.

SC Kyogo 144: A lightweight submachine gun from Nippon Tech, the Kyogo is unusually accurate for a submachine gun and is quite popular due to its exceptional range and damage.

Impala Chaingun: A borderline heavy weapon, chainguns were made popular in movies like *Predator* and *Terminator II*. The weaponsmiths at the Kanawa Corporation have improved on the design. The Impala only fires at Full Auto, which is figured into its damage value and ammo rating. Despite efforts at miniaturization, the Impala is so large and heavy that it must be operated two handed.

Thav-9: A standard submachine gun design used in Tharkold. Sophisticated muzzle breaks design prevents "climbing" problems when fired on Full Auto.

SUBMACHINE GUNS CHART

Submachine Gun	Tech	Damage Value	Ammo	Range (meters)			Price (Value)
				Short	Med.	Long	
Thompson 1928	20	17	7/17	3-15	25	100	900 (15)
Schmeisser MP40	21	17	11	3-15	40	100	400 (13)
MAC 10	22	18	10	3-15	25	50	200 (12)
Uzi	22	17	11	3-15	40	100	400 (13)
SC Kyogo 144	24	18	15	3-15	40	150	500 (14)
Impala Chaingun (auto)	24	23	6	3-40	150	400	7000 (20)
Thav-9	26	19	24	3-15	40	150	800 (15)

MACHINE GUNS CHART

Machine Gun	Tech	Damage Value	Ammo	Range (meters)			Price (Value)
				Short	Med.	Long	
Maxim	19	23	25	3-50	500	1K	2500 (17)
1912 Vickers	20	23	20	3-100	500	1K	3000 (18)
Bwng .50/.303/MG-17	21	25	11	3-250	1K	2K	1500 (16)
Maremont M60	23	23	15	3-100	600	1.5K	3000 (18)
7.62mm Minigun	22	27	10	3-250	1K	2K	75K (25)

HEAVY WEAPONS CHART

Heavy Weapon	Tech	Damage Value	Ammo	Range (meters)			Price (Value)
				Short	Med.	Long	
Ballista	11	18	1	3-150	250	375	25K (22)
Ayslish Cannon	15	22	1	3-100	250	600	10K (20)
12-pounder Field Gun	17	24	1	3-150	600	1.5K	4000 (18)
Armstrong Gun (T)	19	25	1	3-300	1200	3K	8000 (20)
20mm Cannon (auto)	21	27	8	3-400	2.5K	4K	75K (25)
30mm Cannon (auto)	22	30	10	3-400	2.5K	4K	100K (25)
1933 Mortar (T)	20	22	1	100-400	750	1K	8000 (20)
75mm Tank (T)	21	28	1	100-400	600	2.5K	300K (28)
105mm Tank (T)	22	29	1	100-1K	2.5K	4K	500K (29)
125mm Tank (T)	22	29	1	100-1K	3K	5K	550K (29)
Long Tom (A)	21	32	1	—	1K-6K	25K	200K (27)
105mm Howitzer (A)	21	30	1	400-1K	4K	12K	400K (28)
Hellfire Anti-Tank (M)	22	29	1	50-2K	15K	—	100K (25)
TOW Anti-Tank (M)	22	28	1	100-400	1K	4K	36K + 7K (23/20)
LAW Rocket (M)	22	27	1	10-100	250	400	300 (13)
Stinger AA (M)	23	27	1	100-1K	2.5K	4K	50K (24)
2.75 Inch Rockets	21	29	1	100-400	1K	2.5K	200 (12)
MK48 Torpedo	22	37	1	1K-10K	30K	70K	500K (29)

Machine Guns

All machine guns normally fire on Full Auto and have this calculated into their damage values and ammo ratings. Firers still get the +3 action bonus for Full Auto. Shorter burst fire is an option where noted. The single shot option is not available. These weapons are large enough that they either need to be mounted on a tripod or a vehicle to be fired. Some require two people to operate, one to fire and one to control the feed of the ammunition belt.

Maxim: One of the first heavy machine guns, the Maxim is usually water-cooled and belt-fed. Sustained use is only possible with the water-cooling jacket, otherwise the barrel overheats too fast.

1912 Vickers: A belt-fed, air-cooled, tripod or vehicle mounted British machine gun developed during World War I. A more advanced water-cooled tripod version is available at Tech 21 that is highly accurate. Medium Range is extended to 1K and Long Range is extended to an unbelievable 4.5K!

Browning: Available in a number of calibers, the Browning sees most use as an aircraft-mounted machine gun, either in turrets or fixed mounts. When mounted on an airplane it can only be fired on Full Auto. A lighter version of the weapon with a shorter barrel can be used on other vehicles or mounted on a tripod. The lighter version can be set for burst fire instead of Full Auto (treat as the Multi Fire as Single maneuver.)

Maremont M60: A selective-fire light machinegun, the Maremont can be set for burst fire instead of Full Auto (treat as the Multi Fire as Single maneuver.)

7.62mm Minigun: An electrically operated gatling gun, capable of a horrendous rate of fire. It weighs 120 kilograms without ammunition and is most often used in light aircraft or helicopters.

Heavy Weapons

Use of these weapons requires the *heavy weapons* skill. Weapons which are indicated as firing on Full Auto fire only at that rate, which is already figured into their damage values and ammo ratings.

Ballista: The ballista is a large, crossbow-like device used to fire 4.5 kilogram spear-like bolts great distances and with great force. Winding the bowstring back requires six rounds for one person; three rounds if two people work the windlass. The power of the ballista is such that if it is used against a person, the armor adds of any armor they are wearing is reduced by four. Aysle's armies commonly use ballistae to attack enemy fortifications.

Ayslish Cannon: Similar in size to the 12-pound cannons of Core Earth's 15th century, cannons have only recently been used in any great number by the Ayslish. Some cannons are equipped with magical modifications that can serve to increase the range, rate of fire or accuracy of the weapon.

12-pounder Field Gun: One of the last muzzle-loading smoothbore cannons of the 19th century, sometimes known as the Napoleon Field Gun. A wide variety of different rounds are available for the gun, including scattershot and exploding rounds (0-3/ 8/ 15 blast radius.)

Armstrong Gun: A rifled, breech-loader that fires 76.2mm caliber rounds, including scattershot and exploding rounds. The Armstrong is known for its accuracy, which is due to the special lead-coated ammunition designed for it. It can be fired using normal ammunition but is less accurate (-1 action penalty at all range.)

20mm Automatic Cannon: Similar in design to an enlarged machine gun, this belt-fed weapon is most often found mounted on airplanes, though it can be mounted on other vehicles or fortifications. The Tech 21 version only fires standard shells, a Tech 22 version is capable of firing high-explosive incendiary rounds (damage value 28).

30mm Cannon: Another aircraft cannon, the 30mm does not fire as fast as comparable 20mm cannons but its larger shells hit harder and have greater range.

1933 Mortar: The mortar is an indirect-fire weapon familiar from war movies. A fin-stabilized projectile is dropped into the mortar tube and when it strikes the base plate the projectile's propellant charge is ignited, firing the projectile up out of the tube towards its target. Mortars can fire high-explosive or smoke shells.

75mm Tank: Once the cutting edge in Tech 21 tank guns and used in the popular Tiger Tank, nations fighting the Nile Empire have been rushing to add this gun to their arsenal.

105mm Tank: Found on the US Army's M1 Abrams tank, it lacks the punch and range of its Soviet counterpart but the M1 has a larger ammo capacity.

125mm Tank: Found on the former Soviet Union's T-72 tanks, this weapon and that tank can be found in many nations around the world.

Long Tom: A highly praised 155mm artillery piece, the Long Tom can fire a 43-kilogram high-explosive shell some 22 kilometers with impressive accuracy. The Long Tom can also fire armor-piercing and smoke shells.

105mm Howitzer: This breech-loader fires a 15 kilogram shell with a wide range of shell types available; standard high-explosive, armor-piercing, smoke, incendiary and HEAT rounds.

Hellfire Anti-Tank Missile: Designed expressly to be fired from the US Army's Apache helicopter, the Hellfire is a laser-guided missile. When fired, the gunner receives a +8 bonus to his *heavy weapons* skill total if he is able to keep the laser designator "painted" on the target until the missile covers the distance. The Hellfire is considered armor-piercing.

TOW Anti-Tank Missile: Fired from a vehicle mount, such as on a jeep or helicopter, the TOW is a wire-guided missile the firer "flies" into the target. The firer receives a +7 bonus to his *heavy weapons* skill total if he is able to keep the optical sight on the target. The TOW is considered armor-piercing.

LAW Rocket: An extremely portable and disposable anti-tank weapon, the LAW is often confused with the Stinger but it is closer to the old fashioned bazooka than a guided missile. Instructions for its use are inscribed on each LAW canister in cartoon form, enabling the LAW to be fired by just about anybody. Once fired the canister is discarded. The LAW is considered armor-piercing.

Stinger Anti-Aircraft Missile: A self-guided missile designed for use against low-flying aircraft, the Stinger missile itself comes in a disposable tube that is fitted to the reusable launching unit. The firer aims at the target and once the missile signals a lock-on, using a passive infrared or ultraviolet sensor, it can be fired. The firer rolls the die twice. The first is to generate her normal *heavy weapons* skill total. The second is to generate a *heavy weapons* skill total for the missile itself, which has a base skill value of 10. Whichever total is higher is used to determine if the missile hits the target.

2.75 Inch Rockets: Commonly found on combat helicopters, these rockets are usually fired in swarms to simply overwhelm a target. The damage value represents the total damage from a small swarm of rockets rather than the damage from a single rocket.

MK48 Torpedo: Found on US Navy submarines, the MK48 is an initially wire-guided torpedo also capable of passive and active sonar homing. Because of the size of its warhead, there is a danger that it will damage the ship that fired it if the torpedo goes off too close, so the torpedo must run for at least one kilometer before it can be armed. The torpedo's internal guidance system is considered to be a *heavy weapons* skill value of 14. The firer rolls the die twice, once for his own skill total and the second time for the torpedo's guidance system. Whichever total is higher is used to determine if it hits the target.

Explosives

Normally used with the *demolitions* skill, though dynamite sticks can be thrown using the *missile weapons* skill assuming the fuse is lit or the thrower has some other way of setting off the blasting cap.

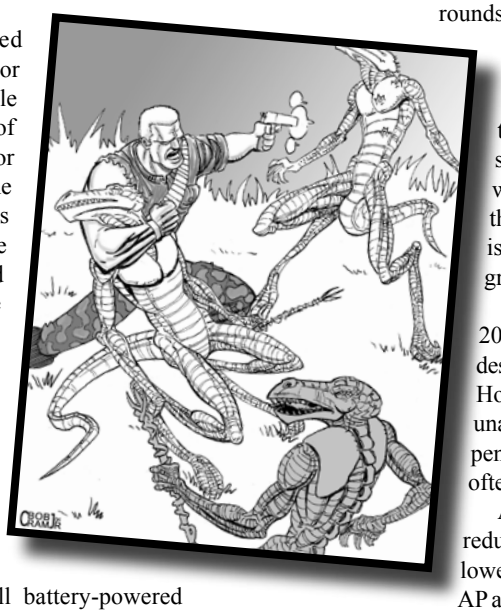
When using more than the base amounts given in the descriptions below, both blast radius and damage values are increased. To determine the increase for both damage and blast radius values, divide the amount used by the base amount and look up that number on the Many on One multi-action chart in Chapter Four. Add the modifier directly to the base damage value. Multiply each range value by this amount to find the new range values.

EXPLOSIVES CHART

Explosive	Tech	Damage Value	Ammo	Throw Range (meters)			Burst Radius (meters)			Price (Value)
				Short	Med.	Long	Short	Med.	Long	
Dynamite (1 stick)	19	13	1	3-5	10	15	0-2	4	6	20 (6)
C-4 (30g)	22	14	1	-	-	-	0-3	6	10	25 (7)
C-6 (30g)	24	18	1	-	-	-	0-5	10	15	40 (8)
C-9 (30g)	25	21	1	-	-	-	0-8	12	18	100 (10)

Example: Marco opens a door inside the headquarters of the evil Wu Han and discovers it's booby-trapped; a bundle of twelve sticks of dynamite is about to go off! Can Marco get far enough away to avoid being blown to pieces?

Becky looks up twelve on the Many on One chart; it's a +6 bonus. This will increase the base damage from 13 to 19. Multiplying each blast radius value by six, the blast radius values for the bundle are 0-12/ 24/ 36.



Dynamite: Nitroglycerine stabilized in a neutralizing material such as clay or sawdust, dynamite is exceptionally stable and normally is only set off by the shock of an explosion, usually from a blasting cap or detonator (dynamite sticks with a fuse have the blasting cap included in the stick.) Old sticks however can be very dangerous because the nitroglycerine "sweats" out of the stick and any sharp shock will set it off. The damage value and blast radius values are for a single stick of dynamite.

Plastique (C-4, C-6, C-9): A chemical explosive with a consistency of putty or modeling clay, plastique can be molded easily and is very stable. It cannot be set off by any amount of impact and only extreme levels of heat (over 500 degrees Celsius) might set it off. Plastique is triggered electrically, usually by a small battery-powered timer/detonator. The damage values and blast radius values are for a 30-gram amount of the explosive.

EXPLOSIVE BURST RADIUS (IN METERS)

	Short	Med.	Long
Artillery Round (HE)	0-5	15	40
Tank Shell (HE)	0-4	10	25
Missile	0-5	15	20

Burst Radius Notation: (A) = Artillery shell; (T) = Tank shell; (M) = Missile

Firearm Accessories

This equipment consists of specialized ammunition used with firearms and weapon add-ons that are used to increase accuracy. The add-ons are sometimes found as standard components of higher-tech weapons, built into the weapon housing itself. Energy weapons may also benefit from some of the add-ons.

Ammunition Types

Black-powder: Early firearms such as the flintlocks, matchlocks and wheellocks don't use "ammunition" in the common sense of the word. They are single-shot weapons that have to be reloaded after every shot, and loading can take several rounds to be done properly.

Powder has to be kept dry or it won't ignite. Additionally, the powder used creates dense clouds of white smoke, not only obscuring the firer's vision but also making it very easy for opponents to locate the firer.

For Tech 15 through Tech 17 firearms, the powder and projectile have to be loaded separately. This takes anywhere from three to six rounds and requires a *fire combat* skill total of 7. If the skill check fails, the weapon must be emptied and loaded again.

At Tech 18, paper cartridges combining the powder and projectile are developed, speeding up the process. Loading the weapon only takes two rounds, though the difficulty of the *fire combat* skill total is still 7. Smoke is still a problem, but greatly reduced.

Armor-piercing: First available at Tech 20, armor-piercing rounds, AP for short, are designed to reduce the effectiveness of armor. However, they are less effective against unarmored targets because their increased penetration ability results in cleaner wounds, often passing straight through the target.

Against armored targets, AP ammunition reduces their armor adds by three points (to no lower than zero.) Against unarmored targets, AP ammunition reduces the firearm's damage value by one point.

Hollow Point: First available at Tech 20, this category includes a variety of ammunition types besides hollow points, such as "dum-dum" rounds. These are types of ammunition designed to either deform on impact ("mushroom") or otherwise expand to create a larger, nastier wound. They are more effective against targets not wearing any armor because impact with the armor causes the projectile to deform before it hits the target's body.

Hollow point ammunition will increase a firearm's damage value by one point when used on unarmored targets. Against armor-wearing targets, the damage value is reduced by one point.

Scattershot: Most commonly associated with shotguns and muskets, scattershot is ammunition packed with "shot" which when fired scatters out in a cone from the end of barrel. Scattershot weapons have a limited range compared to regular projectiles but the scattering effect is useful in hitting multiple targets.

At short range, scattershot ammunition grants the firer a +2 to his *fire combat* action total. At Medium range, the bonus is +4 and at Long range the bonus is +5. Scattershot does not change the damage value.

Explosive: First available at Tech 19, explosive ammunition covers any type of ammunition that is designed to fragment inside of the target to create a larger wound. Most types will contain a

small amount of explosive that upon impact explodes the projectile like a miniature fragmentation grenade. Other types, such as Glaser rounds, load the projectile with pellets which spray out upon impact, almost like a blast from a shotgun shell.

As with hollow point ammunition, explosive ammunition is more effective against unarmored targets since the impact with the armor detonates or scatters the projectile before it hits the target's body. When used against unarmored targets, explosive ammunition increases the firearm's damage value by two points. Against armor-wearing targets, the damage value remains unchanged.

Explosive rounds that actually use an explosive charge may require a long-range contradiction check.

High Explosive Anti Tank (HEAT): Found only in heavy weapons and first available at Tech 21. The HEAT round is an armor-piercing high explosive round designed to detonate after it has penetrated the armor. A vehicle's armor adds are reduced by three and the damage value is increased by two points. The explosion has a blast radius like that of a fragmentation grenade.

Smart: First available at Tech 25, smart ammunition is not really a bullet but a small, self-guiding rocket. The projectile is equipped with a sensor, usually some kind of heat-seeker, and can change its trajectory during flight to track a target. Only small adjustments are possible, it cannot make sharp turns such as going around a corner.

Smart ammunition provides the firer of the weapon with a +2 bonus to her *fire combat* skill total. The firearm's damage value is not changed. Smart ammunition may require a long-range contradiction check.

Flechette: First available at Tech 24. Flechette rounds are designed to defeat standard ballistic armor such as Kevlar and IriMesh. A flechette shell is tightly packed with slivers of metal that will go through soft armor like a needle through cloth. However, they are much less effective against hard armor. Flechette ammunition can only be fired from weapons designed or modified to fire flechette rounds.

Optional AP Rule

To better reflect the penetrating ability of higher Tech axiom firearm rounds, any **normal** ammunition can be considered armor-piercing against certain armors if:

- the firearm's Tech axiom is two or more points higher than the Tech axiom of the target's armor, and
- if the armor's Tech axiom is 19 or less.

If the ammunition is also designed to be armor-piercing, increase the amount by which it reduces the target's armor to five points.

Example: Quin and Terrill are being attacked by an Ayslish knight who is wearing Tech 15 plate mail, which gives him +5 armor adds. Terrill is armed with an Ayslish wheellock pistol, also Tech 15. His shots at the knight are treated normally.

Quin is armed with an Uzi, which is Tech 22. The bullets from his gun are treated as armor-piercing against the knight, reducing the protection of his plate mail to +2 adds. If Quin were to load his Uzi with AP ammunition, they will reduce the knight's protection an additional two points, down to zero!

When used against a target wearing soft armor or hard armor which is not a single, solid piece (such as chain mail) flechette ammunition will reduce the target's armor value by three points (no lower than zero.) Armor which falls into this category includes hides and furs, bone and hide, leather, cuir bouilli, chain mail, ring mail, silk lining, bullet-proof vests, Kevlar armor, IriMesh and interdermal plating.

When used against a target wearing hard armor, the damage value of the flechette firearm is reduced by three points. Armor which falls into this category includes bronze plate, plate mail, Kevlar/ceramic, Kyoto Police RKD, GWI Armor of God and kinetic armor.

When used against a target not wearing any armor, there are no modifiers.

Add-on Descriptions

Targeting Scope: Usually mounted onto a rifle or other kind of firearm meant for use at long ranges, targeting scopes are low-powered telescopes that let the firer see distant targets better. They are first available at Tech 17. When combined with the *Aiming* combat maneuver, a targeting scope reduces the action penalty for range by one step; Long range is treated as Medium range and Medium range is treated as Short range. Short range does **not** improve to Point-blank range. Targeting scopes do not affect the damage modifiers for range.

Laser Sight: First available at Tech 23. A small laser is fitted to the barrel of the firearm and projects a red dot onto targets that indicates to the firer where the weapon is actually aimed. At higher Tech axioms a laser sight is often built into the weapon as a standard feature. Most laser weapons will use the weapon's own beam on a low-power setting rather than have a separate laser sight. Laser sights could be fitted to some other types of ranged weapons, such as crossbows.

A laser sight gives the firer a +1 bonus to his attack total.

Silencer: First available at Tech 21, a silencer is a tube or baffle added to the barrel of a weapon that suppresses the amount of noise it makes when fired. Firearms may also be "silenced" by using ammunition that travels at sub-sonic velocities, eliminating the distinctive "crack" heard when the bullet breaks the sound barrier.

In game play, either method lowers the damage value of the firearm by two points but allows a character to fire the weapon without making much noise. If the two methods are combined, the damage value is reduced by three points and the shot makes hardly any noise.

Silenced weapons can only be fired out to Medium range. If a targeting scope is used with the silenced weapon, it can be fired out to Long range but the scope does not reduce the action penalty for range.

Vehicles

Modes of transportation vary widely from one reality to the next. A trip of 500 kilometers may only take an hour in Core Earth or Nippon Tech thanks to jet aircraft, but might require days in less technically advanced realms like Aysle where a horse-drawn carriage is the best way to travel.

The descriptions provided in this section can be used for craft similar to the specific one listed, most variations between vehicles of a similar type and Tech axiom are small enough that they do not affect the game values of the craft. For example, the game values of the Sopwith Camel can be used for most other types of Tech 20 biplanes.

In the table below speeds are given in kilometers per hour (kmh) and miles per hour (mph) as well as the game speed value. "Pass." is the total number of passengers, including the driver/pilot. "Armor" refers to the amount of protection the vehicle itself has against attacks, not the protection offered to passengers. Passengers in armored vehicles usually cannot be attacked directly without first destroying the vehicle.

Air Vehicles

Tech 16

Hot Air Balloons: Hot air balloons are at the mercy of whatever winds are available to move them, the pilot really only has control over vertical movement. They can carry cargoes of up to 400 kilograms, about half of which is usually ballast. Tech 21 and later balloons can carry substantially more cargo, close to 1,000 kilograms. Hot air balloons have an effective ceiling of 15,000 feet. Hot air balloons vary in *Toughness* from 9 to 15, while the gondolas provide soft cover. (Cost = $15,000, value 21).

Tech 19

Gliders: Crude gliders have a glide-to-descent ratio of about four to one, which means they glide four meters for every one meter drop - less a form of flying than a slow method of falling. At *Tech* 20 the glide ratio improves to around eight to one, and lightweight materials at *Tech* 23 make twenty to one possible. *Tech* 22 materials are light enough to make hang-gliders practical. Gliders provide soft cover (hang-gliders provide no cover) and have *Toughness* from 8 (hang-gliders) to 19 (WWII troop landing gliders). (Cost = $12,000, value 21).

Zeppelins: Shaped aerodynamically, Zeppelins are hydrogen or helium filled balloons over lightweight wood and aluminum frames. The cargo gondola is slung beneath the Zeppelin. *Tech* 19 Zeppelins carry only a small crew, no passengers and a small payload. Zeppelins of *Tech* 20 carry up to 35 passengers and a crew of 12. They can achieve a top speed of 100 kmh (60 mph). Zeppelins have *Toughness* from 10 to 26. The gondolas provide soft cover. (Cost = $800k, value 30).

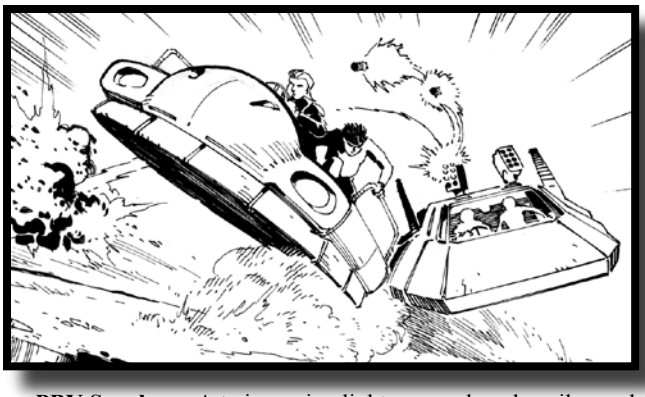
Piston-Powered Airplanes

Early aircraft are slow, and barely able to lift their own weight. These rapidly develop into warplanes, at first capable of inflicting damage only on each other, then becoming lethal ground support elements. Metal skinned aircraft make their appearance at Tech 21. Greatly improved fuel efficiency is possible at Tech 23, increasing speed and range.

Sopwith FI Camel: The Camel is extremely tricky to fly, having a tendency to climb when turning left, and a strong tendency to dive when turning right. These peculiarities could become advantages in the hands of a skilled pilot. The camel has an operational ceiling of 22,000 feet. Standard armament is two Vickers machine guns.

Spitfire VB: The large elliptical wing is a boon for pilots desperate for a tight turn, and the Spitfire has excellent speed. It is difficult to repair, however, and early models' poor carburetor design can cause a loss of power when going into a steep dive. A Spitfire is armed with four .303 inch Brownings and two 20mm cannons.

PM-1 Paket: A single engine monoplane from the Nile Empire, it is the workhorse of the Imperial air fleet. It is used as a support fighter and for reconnaissance. Standard armament is one .303 Browning.



PBY Seaplane: A twin-engine light cargo plane heavily used by the military of the Nile Empire. The cargo area can be converted into passenger space, increasing its capacity to 20. It is armed with three Vickers machine guns, one in a forward roof-mounted cupola and two cupolas, one port and one starboard, amidships.

DC-3/Dakota: The 1,500-mile (2,400-kilometer) range of the DC-3 Dakota is quite impressive for Tech 21. A military transport version has also been developed, the C-47. Both types of aircraft continue to see use in Core Earth.

Rotary Wing

"Rotary wing" covers aircraft that get their lift from a spinning airfoil called a rotor. They include autogyros and helicopters. An autogyro does not power its lift rotor; instead, the forward motion of an autogyro sets the rotor spinning, and the vehicle lifts. In that respect an autogyro is more like a plane than a helicopter, requiring a running start to take off.

Avro C.8L Mk II: The Avro C.8L Mk II autogyro is noted for its extremely short take-off distance, which is reduced to a few meters by gearing the engine to the rotor, and then disengaging once airborne. It can take off and land from the roof of a large building. Almost a helicopter, it lacks only a helicopter's ability to hover.

PA-19: The Pitcairn autogyro is a popular commercial model, made even more popular by its supposed exploits at the hand of G-men and other heroes of the day. With external tanks, its range can exceed 300 miles.

Bell H-13: The well-known "MASH" helicopter, used in the Korean War for medical evac. It carries a crew of two, plus two additional "passengers" who can be strapped into the stretchers on the sides of the craft.

Bell AH-1G: Known as the Huey Cobra, this helicopter is amazingly lethal for Tech 22. Its crew of two controls a turret with two 7.62mm miniguns and twin wing pods that can hold a total of eight rockets.

Aerospatiale Lama: The highest-flying helicopter built; it is used extensively in the India/Indonesia area.

Mi-24 Hind A-10: An experimental model developed from the helicopter gunships that saw extensive use in Afghanistan, the A-10 is Core Earth's fastest helicopter. The Soviets are returning to production of the Mi-24A-10s in response to threats posed by the Possibility Wars, and limited quantities are available for export. The Hind can carry eight troops in addition to a crew of two. It is armed with a four-barrel machine gun, four rocket pods, and four missiles.

Apache AH-64: The Apache gives up speed in order to gain increased maneuverability, superior armor and armaments. The Apache is armed with a M230A1 Chain Gun 30mm cannon with

PISTON-POWERED AIRCRAFT CHART

Aircraft	Tech	Speed kmh/mph/Value	Pass.	Tough	Price(Value)
Sopwith FI Camel	20	200/120/14	1	13	60K (24)
Spitfire VB	21	600/ 380/16	1	17	200K (27)
PM1-Paket	21	600/380/16	1	17	600K (29)
PBY Seaplane	21	200/120/14	6	17	200K (27)
DC-3	21	320/ 200/ 15	36	19	150K (26)

ROTARY WING AIRCRAFT CHART

Aircraft	Tech	Speed kmh/mph/ value	Pass	Tough	Armor	Price (Value)
Avro C.8L Mk II	20	160/100/ 13	1	14	-	300K (28)
PA-19	21	150/ 90/ 13	4	4	14	450K (29)
Bell H-13	21	150/ 90/ 13	2(+2)	14	-	600K (29)
Bell AH-1G	22	350/ 220/ 15	2	15	+2	1.5 M (31)
Aerospatiale Lama	22	150/ 90/ 13	2	15	-	1 M (30)
Mi-24 Hind A-10	22	370/ 230/ 15	10	18	+3	12 M (36)
AH-64 Apache	23	300/ 180/ 15	2	16	+4	8 M (35)
Oda Butterfly	23	150/ 90/ 13	8	17	-	600K (29)
Oda Hornet	24	400/ 250/ 15	8	17	+4	1.5M (31)

JET-POWERED AIR CRAFT CHART

Aircraft	Tech	Speed kmh/mph/ value	Pass.	Tough	Armor	Price (Value)
F-86	21	1,100/ 680/ 18	1	18	+2	150K (26)
Mirage III	22	2,400/ 1,500/ 19	1	19	+2	5 M (34)
Learjet L24	22	780/ 480/ 17	8	20	-	1.5 M (31)
Boeing 727-200	22	900/ 570/ 17	189	23	-	1.5 M (31)
Boeing 747	22	950/ 590/ 17	490	24	-	5 M (34)
F-15	23	2,250/ 1,400/ 19	1	20	+3	17 M (37)
SR-71	23	3,600/ 2,200/ 20	2	22	-	32 M (38)
Oda-17	24	3,750/ 2,345/ 20	2	22	-	24M (37)
Digam-Sim/12	26	4,800/ 3,000/ 21	1	20	+6	100M (40)

1,200 rounds of ammunition, its stub wing armament can be either 16 Hellfire anti-tank rockets, or 76 2.75 inch rockets.

Oda Butterfly: A commercial helicopter from Nippon Tech designed for the business executive on the go. Onboard features include such necessary office features as cellular phones, onboard computer system, entertainment center and a wet bar.

Oda Hornet: Based on the design of the Oda Butterfly but equipped with some different amenities. The Hornet is armed with two Impala mounted chain guns and two rocket launchers that can fire up to 100 2.75-inch rockets. It can also carry the more mundane amenities like on the Butterfly.

Jet-Powered Aircraft

F-86: The F-86 is an aircraft on the cutting edge of Tech 21, a fighter with almost supersonic performance in level flight. It doesn't quite make it, but its maneuverability and stability make it the best dogfighter of its era. The F-86 is armed with six .50 caliber Browning machine guns.

Mirage III: Produced in interceptor, reconnaissance, trainer and ground attack versions, the Mirage III is in service in better than a dozen nations of Core Earth. It has an attack radius of 745 miles (1,200 kilometers). Armament includes two fuselage-mounted 30mm cannon and a mixture of bombs, rockets and guided missiles depending on the mission and configuration of the plane.

Learjet L24: When a plane flies paying customers, it is called an airliner. A privately owned Learjet is given the loftier sounding title of "executive transport." In addition to the passengers, the L24 has room for about 1,000 pounds (450 kilos) of cargo.

Boeing 727: A design that originally competed for a contract as a military transport, the 727 became the most common jetliner in dozens of fleets. The plane has a range of 2,600 miles (4,200 kilometers).

Boeing 747: The Boeing 747 is a marvel of engineering, and continuous adaptations have kept the plane up to date with new developments in avionics. The 747 has a range of 7,000 miles (11,000 kilometers).

F-15: While fast, the F-15 is not built for speed - it is built for acceleration. The F-15 is capable of climbs, dives, and turns that are more than enough to outmaneuver most opponents. Unfortunately, the fighter is capable of maneuvers that can knock a pilot unconscious from the G-force! Knowing how to push the envelope is the key to victory and survival. The F-15 is armed with a 20mm rotary cannon, and eight air-to-air missiles.

SR-71: The SR-71 started development at Tech 22, and its power plant is of that generation. However, its control-surface technology and stealth/ECM gear is strictly state of the art of Tech 23. The SR-71 has a service ceiling in excess of 80,000 feet, and literally flies faster than a speeding bullet. The SR-71 is a reconnaissance aircraft.

Oda-17: Built purely for speed, the Oda-17 is the fastest jet produced in Nippon Tech. It is also equipped with extensive stealth technology, making it extremely suitable for reconnaissance work.

Digam-Sim/12: A small single-seat jet fighter from Tharkold. Armament can be configured as desired by swapping out weapon pods located on the wings and under the fuselage.

Animal-Powered Land Vehicles

The technology of most animal-powered vehicles is fairly basic, its comforts and amenities determine the Tech axiom of a vehicle more than its function. While control of an animal-powered land vehicle is handled with the *land vehicles* skill, occasions may arise where the driver will need to use *beast riding* to control the animals more directly, such as dealing with animals panicked by gunfire.

Passenger Carriage: A simple four-wheel carriage that can carry four passengers in moderate comfort. The driver sits atop the cabin at the front of the carriage. Depending on their size carriages are usually drawn by two or four horses. Carriages do not have any real suspension systems until Tech 18, making for a bumpy ride.

Sulky: A light, one-person carriage built for speed and maneuverability. A canopy usually shelters the single seat. One

horse normally pulls a sulky. Adding a second horse will increase the speed value by one.

Self-Powered Land Vehicles

Internal Combustion

Model T: The Model T comes only in one color, black. It requires hand cranking to start and is not completely sealed against the weather. Durable and relatively inexpensive, it sold more than any other car of its day.

Daimler-Benz: This sedan epitomizes the low, sleek rounded designs of its day. The Daimler-Benz has a suspension system that gives it a coveted ride.

Thunderbird: The Thunderbird encapsulates tastes in the opulent United States of the 1950s: powerful, heavy, and sporting liberal applications of chrome.

Lotus Esprit: The Esprit is responsive - overly responsive in the hands of inexperienced drivers. The mid-body engine is difficult to service, but the design gives the car great maneuverability.

Ford Taurus: The basic design of the Taurus literally spawned a whole fleet of similar cars. Moderately reliable, the primary failing of the Taurus is that it sustains more damage in a collision than similar cars. Most normal Tech 23 automobiles will have the same specifications.

Chevrolet Sportvan: A mid-1990's cargo van with good load capacity and a powerful engine. Bench seating can be placed in the cargo area to increase the passenger capacity to 15.

Honda CBR600F2: A maneuverable, middleweight motorcycle with a powerful engine providing for quick acceleration.

Kenilworth Semi-Truck: While all large trucks are designed to sacrifice acceleration for efficient power, the Kenilworth is slower off the mark than most modern semis. In return it can haul more freight than any other truck - nearly 35 tons.

Electrically-Powered

Peugeot 105 Hover Car: Produced in the Cyberpapacy, this four-seater rides on a hoverskirt that grants clearance over obstacles up to 35cm in height. It is not exceptionally fast or maneuverable though. It is powered by an electric engine with batteries good for about a week before needing recharging.

Xedi-1 Hovercycle: A small scale hovercraft from Tharkold that uses vectored-thrust jets rather than a hoverskirt, enabling it to attain a maximum cruising altitude of five meters. It has a cargo capacity of 100 kilograms in addition to the one pilot. A weapon mount is included on the front of the vehicle. The powercell used in the vehicle is good for up to 60 hours of use.

ANIMAL-POWERED LAND VEHICLES CHART

Craft	Tech	Speed kmh/mph/ value	Pass.	Tough	Price (Value)
Passenger Carriage	9	48/ 30/ 11	5	12	800 (15)
Sulky	10	48/ 30/ 11	1	12	3000 (18)

SELF-POWERED LAND VEHICLES CHART

Vehicle	Tech	Speed kmh/mph/ value	Pass	Tough	Price (Value)
Model-T	20	55/ 35/ 11	2	14	3000 (18)
1933 Daimler-Benz	21	100/ 60/ 12	4	15	8000 (20)
1955 Thunderbird	21	125/ 80/ 13	2	16	8000 (20)
1977 Lotus Esprit	22	210/ 130/ 14	2	15	35K (23)
1990 Taurus	23	160/ 100/ 13	5	14	15K (21)
Chevrolet Sportvan	23	135/85/13	2	16	14K (21)
Honda CBR600F2	23	140/90/13	2	12	7000 (20)
Semi-Truck	22	140/ 90/ 13	2	23	120K (26)
Peugeot 105	24	160/ 100/ 13	4	18	15K (21)
Xedi-1	26	400/ 250/ 15	1	14	25K (22)
Fey Carriage	9*	32/ 20/ 10	8	11	40K (23)
Swifter	30	200/ 120/ 14	4	12	60K (24)

RAILROADS CHART

Railroad Engine	Tech	Speed kmh/mph/value	Pass.	Tough	Price (Value)
1868	18	40/ 25/ 10	80	28	15M (36)
1907	20	70/ 45/ 12	20	32	25M (37)
1950	21	110/ 70/ 13	160	37	50M (39)
Bullet Train	23	300/ 180/ 15	350	33	70M (40)
Laser Train	24	400/ 250/ 15	200	32	150M (41)
Cyber Train	25	320/ 200/ 15	300	44	7.5M (35)

MILITARY VEHICLES CHART

Vehicle	Tech	Speed kmh/mph/ value	Pass.	Tough	Armor	Price (Value)
1938 Halftrack	21	55/ 35/ 11	10	20	+2	100K (25)
Tiger Tank	21	40/ 25/ 10	4	20	+9	200K (27)
Jeep	21	80/ 50/ 12	4	15	-	6K (19)
T-72	22	55/ 35/ 11	3	21	+10	750K (30)
M113A2	22	65/ 42/ 12	13	17	+7	100K (25)
M1 Abrams	23	70/ 45/ 12	4	22	+11	1.4 M (31)
Oda PG-3	24	70/ 44/ 12	6	15	+10	750K (29)
GWI Samson	25	110/ 68/ 13	4	27	+15	2.3M (32)

Magically-Powered

Fey Carriage: This "horseless carriage" looks like an open buckboard wagon, except for the missing horses. A magical engine is used provide motive power to the carriage's rear wheels by a belt drive system. The carriage is steered with a large "rudder" positioned in front of the driver's seat. Opening the magical engine is very dangerous (it will explode with a damage value of 35.) The carriage requires a Magic axiom of 13 to operate.

Futuristic Technology

Swifter: A biotech device that is the primary land vehicle in the Star Sphere. The craft can only attain a maximum altitude of 50 centimeters, the length of the cilian curtain around the fringe of the craft that provides directional control. Swifters do not need to

SPACE VEHICLES CHART

Spacecraft	Tech	Speed kmh/mph/value	Pass.	Tough	Price (Value)
US Space Shuttle	22	28K/ 18K/ 25	6	27	2B (47)
Mitiya Low Orbital	24	28K/ 18K/ 25	20	28	600M (44)
GWI Ezekial Transport	25	35K/ 22K/ 25	4	28	4B (48)
Geomantic Shuttle	30	170K/ 106K/ 29	8	22	10B (50)

SURFACE VESSELS CHART

Watercraft	Tech	Speed kmh/mph/value	Pass.	Tough	Price (Value)
Viking Longship	9	10/ 6/ 7	30	15	20K (22)
Galleon	15	20/ 12/ 9	220	25	15M (36)
Clipper Ship	17	40/ 25/ 10	140	26	20M (37)
Coal Steamer	18	30/ 18/ 10	24	30	20M (37)
Diesel Steamer	21	40/ 25/ 10	24	31	30M (38)
Motorboat	21	100/ 60/ 12	6	15	16K (22)
Luxury Liner	22	25/ 15/ 9	3,200	34	110M (41)
Skimmer	30	125/ 80/ 13	3	14	50K (24)

SUBMARINES CHART

Submarine	Tech	Speed kmh/mph/value	Pass	Tough	Price (Value)
Type 209 class	21	40/ 25/ 10	33	28	30 m (38)
Los Angeles class	22	55/ 35/ 11	140 33	2 b (47)	

be fed like most biotech devices; they are able to draw sustenance from the geomantic energies of a planet.

Railroad

1868: Powered by coal-generated steam, this class of locomotive spread throughout the Americas, as far south as Patagonia and as far north as Alaska. A half dozen or so of these vehicles have been refurbished as a result of the Possibility Wars, as they are more easily "repaired" than more modern vehicles.

1907: Coal and steam are the sources of power for these long trains, many with richly appointed passenger cabins. Lower-class tickets are located in the rear, which occasionally receives the ash from the locomotive. A variation of the 1907 is the most common train in Orrorsh and the Nile Empire.

1950: Diesel engines pull these trains, and passengers have given way to increased freight. Superior brake technology takes credit for much of the increase in speed performance; less technically sophisticated trains may be able to get up to speed, but they cannot stop in a reasonable distance.

Bullet Train: Developed in Japan and France, these trains make use of superior aerodynamic knowledge and materials to allow the train to reach speeds that would derail ordinary trains.

Laser Train: An advance on the technology of the bullet train, combined with special rail tracks the laser train is twenty-five percent faster than the trains it is replacing.

Cyber Train: A huge train that runs on a magnetic rail, the cyber train is not as fast as Nippon Tech's laser train but it's also heavily armored and equipped with numerous plasma cannons and Hellfire missile launchers. The train is not used commercially; it is the property of the Avignon Papacy.

Military Vehicles

1938 Halftrack: Halftracks are lightly armored trucks for troop transport. The rear of the vehicle is tracked for better off-road performance, and they are often armed with a .30 caliber machine gun.

Tiger Tank: The state of the art tank for nearly a dozen years, the Tiger Tank has a 75mm cannon which is advanced for its Tech axiom.

Jeep: This all-purpose utility vehicle is not so much rugged as it is easy to patch back into a semblance of working shape. Repairs have been made literally with safety pins and chewing gum.

T-72: The T-72 is a common tank in dozens of nations who had cordial relations with the Soviet Union. The T-72 sports a 125mm-tank gun.

M113A2: The M113A2 is an armored personnel carrier used extensively by US forces in the Vietnam War. Its experimental aluminum armor is light, but provides inadequate protection against heavy weapons.

M1 Abrams: Currently the most modern tank in US inventories, the Abrams is capable of good highway speed, and carries composite armor. While its 105mm gun is slightly less impressive than the Soviet 125mm, the Abrams can carry over 60 105mm shells, as opposed to 40 120mm shells for the T-72.

Oda PG-3: A skirted hovercraft vehicle designed for patrol and reconnaissance work, the PG-3 is equipped with a variety of advanced data gathering and processing equipment. Its hoverskirt allows it to clear obstacles up to 60 cm in height. A gyro-mounted 30mm autocannon can optionally be installed on the roof and controlled from inside. While equipped with advanced composite armor, the vehicle itself is not very rugged.

GWI Samson: An early attempt by the Cyberpapacy to produce a high-tech battle tank, the Samson is an unusual mix of Tech axioms. The vehicle itself is a Tech 25 hoverskirt vehicle, capable of clearing obstacles a meter tall. It's main gun is a Tech 24 125mm tank gun and it carries four Tech 22 Hellfire missiles in side racks plus a heavy (damage value 35) version of the Tech 26 GWI GodsFire plasma gun is mounted on the turret for the vehicle commander to use.

Space Vehicles

US Space Shuttle: While the avionics and some of the control surfaces of the newer shuttles are Tech 23, most of the fleet is actually Tech 22. The shuttle can place over 60 tons into low Earth orbit.

Mitaya Corporation Low Orbital: The Low Orbital is a hypersonic sub-orbital space place, capable of traveling to anywhere on the face of the Earth in under four hours. It takes off and lands likes a normal jet, though only the largest airports have runways long enough for it.

GWI Ezekial Transport: Developed to support the Cyberpapacy's space station, Firmament, The Ezekials are large, cargo-carrying craft. The transports take-off and land vertically and can maneuver like airplanes in both the atmosphere and space, though they are not agile. The cargo compartments can be converted to passenger space, increasing the transport's capacity to 16.

Geomantic Shuttle: Utilizing gravitic drives, this Akashan shuttle is capable of tremendous speeds but only when within

10,000 kilometers of a planet or other large gravitational body, making it unsuitable for anything beyond mid-level orbits (it can't even reach the Cyberpapacy's Firmament space station in geostationary orbit.)

Water Vehicles

Viking Longship: Single sail craft used by Aysle's vikings, the longship can also be rowed by its crew of 30 when the winds are calm or when they are on the attack. They are often equipped with a ram, which at full speed inflicts a damage value of 24.

Galleon: Galleons are a compromise between a merchant ship and a warship. They are better merchanteers. Galleons are bulky and not too maneuverable, but can haul a good deal of cargo, pack several dozen cannon, and take considerable damage before going under. Many Ayslish traders use galleons.

Clipper Ship: The clipper ships are the ultimate tall ships. Complicated and sophisticated rigging can, in the hands of skilled crews, be used to draw every ounce of power from the winds. Only moderately armed, the ships count on escape rather than confrontation.

Coal Steamer: Early steamers retained their sails, in part to take advantage of the wind, in part due to a distrust of the machinery which moved the vessel. As the efficiency of the engines - and people's acceptance of the technology - grew, the sails were abandoned. Coal steamers can sail throughout the year as dictated by the needs of trade rather than the prevailing wind patterns.

Diesel Steamer: Oil-fired engines also went through a transitional tech period; oil-soaked coal was first used, then pure oil-fired engines replaced the coal burners. Oil brings great gains in efficiency; ships can remain at sea for months, rather than three weeks or so for a coal burner.

Motorboat: A small personal watercraft, usually powered by one or two outboard motors and used for short-distance travel. They are very common along most waterways and coastlines.

Luxury Liner: Diesel engines power these great behemoths, which require more than three times the space of military vessels carrying a similar number of people. They are remarkably seaworthy. Many have been pressed into military service as a result of the Possibility Wars, ferrying troops equal to twice the normal passenger limits, plus hundreds of tons of gear.

Skimmer: A small biotech watercraft, the craft floats by way of a large air bladder on the bottom while propulsion and steering are accomplished with a mass of two-meter long tentacles that hang down into the water. The skimmer does not need to be fed like most biotech, being able to feed itself on the water.

Submarines

Type 209 class: Designed by West Germany, this diesel-powered submarine is in service throughout the world. Their sensors are more modern (Tech 22 or 23) than the rest of the vessel. The 209 is meant for patrols of 50 days or less. The Nile Empire is believed to have purchased some 209s, apparently having no submersibles of their own.

Los Angeles class: The Los Angeles class submarine is a nuclear powered attack submarine, using extremely sophisticated sensing gear (Tech 23) to hunt other submarines as well as surface ships. While equipped with MK48 torpedoes, these submarines also hunt with missiles that hit the water only as they near the target.

TORG™ CHARACTER RECORD SHEET

Player Name:

Character Name	Home Cosm	Possibilities
		10

Age	Wound Level	Shock Damage	Magic	Social
Height	Wound Hvy Wound Mortal Dead		Spiritual	Tech
Weight		K O		

Skill	Add	Attribute	Value

Attributes	Approved Actions
Dexterity	Maneuver
Strength	
Toughness	
Perception	Trick
Mind	Test
Charisma	Taunt
Spirit	Intimidate
	Reality

Weapons & Armor	Value	Axiom Level	Range S	Range M	Range L
Armor					
Weapons					

Equipment	Axiom Level	Notes	Equipment	Axiom Level	Notes

Bonus Chart

Die Roll	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	25	26	30	31	35	36	40	41	45	46	50	+5
Bonus #	-12	-10		-8	-5		-2		-1		0		1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10		11		12		13	+1

Spells				
Name	D	B	E	Ax*

Arcane Knowledges			
Know.	Add	Know.	Add

Miracles				
Name	C	D	E	Ax

Cyberware		
Name	CR	E

Powers & Gizmos			
Name	Cost	E	Ax

Natural Tools	
Tool	E

Martial Arts	
Style:	Style:
Maneuver:	Maneuver:

Psionics			
Name	D	R	E

Other		
Name	E	Ax

*D: Difficulty **B:** Backlash **E:** Effect **Ax:** Axiom Level **C:** Community Rating **CR:** Cyber Rating **R:** Range

CHARACTER RECORD SHEET

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