



FARFLUNG

SCI-FI ROLE-PLAY AFTER DARK

“Imagination will often carry us to worlds that never were. But without it we go nowhere.”

— Carl Sagan, Cosmos

you are welcome here

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Farflung is a role-playing game set in the future that comes after the future, where nothing is new and everything is permitted. Come here to see the future, for there's no time like the present.

To play, you will need two dice (the six-sided kind, and it's best to have two for each player). Everyone will also need their own character sheet, though you can use scrap paper, instead. The best pencils have good erasers.

Since you'll be moving your "points in time" around a lot, you could use some counters, stones, coins, etc.

IF YOU'VE NEVER played a role-playing game before...

Farflung is a game about pretending to be someone else. You could take on the role of a devil-may-care space adventurer, eager to see what wonders the universe has to show. You could be the incarnation of death, destroyer of worlds... but it's not time for the apocalypse, so you are hanging loose. You could be an incomprehensible alien or the most ordinary human in the universe.

One player will be the Master of Ceremonies (MC). They will preside over the action. The rest of you will be Players, which are like actors, who each have their own character.

The MC will describe to you a situation, such as "the berserkers are assaulting with their railguns" or "the mad empress wants you to headline this year's gala" or "we've tracked the signal and it's coming from inside your house." Like an improv actor, you'll describe what your character's response will be. The MC will then tell you what happens next.

You don't always have to wait for the MC to tell you something, either. You can seize the moment and make your own move. Then the MC tells you how the world responds to you.

Some moves will be a gamble. For those, you'll be rolling dice. Rolling a high total will get you what you want and more. Rolling low will get you trouble.

You're the hero of your own story. You'll have time points to call upon special moves to help you out.

Your character may suffer harm, such as physical pain, social anxiety, and mental stress. If your character suffers too much harm, they will be down and out, and you'll have to get some help before you can come back to the story. (Being the future and all, there's not a big risk of death.)

We've written the game of **Farflung** to give you and your fellow players a glimpse of a far-off future at the end of the universe. The only limits are your imagination. The most important rule is, **have fun!**

IF YOU'VE played a COMPUTER role-playing game before...

Farflung is a game about pretending to be someone else. You could take on the role of a devil-may-care space adventurer, eager to see what wonders the universe has to show. You could be the incarnation of death, destroyer of worlds... but it's not time for the apocalypse, so you are hanging loose. You could be an incomprehensible alien or the most ordinary human in the universe.

One player will be the Master of Ceremonies (MC). Like a computer hosting a game, the MC will preside over the action. The rest of you will be Players, who each have their own character - your avatar in this story.

Each character has a unique playbook, your class of character. You start with all your unique moves unlocked. You can also use a list of common moves, that you share with every class.

The MC will describe to you a situation, such as "the berserkers are assaulting with their railguns" or "the mad empress wants you to headline this year's gala" or "we've tracked the signal and it's coming from inside your house." Like an improv actor, you'll describe what your character's response will be. The MC will then tell you what happens next.

You don't always have to wait for the MC to tell you something, either. You can seize the moment and make your own move. Then the MC tells you how the world responds to you.

Some moves will have random results. For those, you'll be rolling dice. Rolling a high total will get you what you want and more. Rolling low will get you trouble, or it may force you to make a difficult choice to get what you want.

Some moves will cost time points. These come in two kinds: Future_x (for science stuff, awesome powers, etc.), and History_x (for passive buffs for your friends). Your points will shuffle from one meter to the next, so you'll have to juggle different moves. Sometimes, your points will move into pools, special meters that trigger other abilities.

You have three kinds of hit points, called health: Doing, Feeling, and Thinking. If any one of those drops to zero, then you're incapacitated. (Being the future and all, there's no permanent death.) You also get a deflect - you can bounce damage from one HP track to other ones.

There's no levelling up in this game. You start at maximum power level. Combat doesn't help you level up - in fact, it can get you into serious trouble. Feel free to look for other solutions.

Instead, you can grow Connections with other characters. Like a guild ranking, Connections can give you increased access to other characters and gear.

IF YOU'VE PLAYED A TABLETOP ROLE-PLAYING GAME BEFORE...

Farflung is a game about the far future at the end of the universe. You could take on the role of a devil-may-care space adventurer, eager to see what wonders the universe has to show. You could be the incarnation of death, destroyer of worlds... but it's not time for the apocalypse, so you are hanging loose. You could be an incomprehensible alien or the most ordinary human in the universe.

Like most tabletop RPGs, our game has a Master of Ceremonies (MC), who is the master of the game. Everyone else is a Player. The MC will preside over the action.

Each character starts with a unique class that gets its own playbook, complete with unique moves that only your class uses. You'll also be able use a list of standard actions, called the common moves.

Like any RPG, you don't have to roll any dice if the situation is casual and you're just doing normal things. For risky things, you'll declare a move, then roll two six-sided dice and add a bonus, like an attribute.

Some moves will have random results. For those, you'll be rolling dice. Rolling a high total will get you what you want and more. Rolling low will get you trouble, or it may force you to make a difficult choice to get what you want.

Some moves will cost time points. These come in two kinds: Future_x (for cool powers, etc.), and History_x (for improving your friend's rolls.). Your points will shuffle around, so you'll have to juggle different moves. Sometimes, your points will move into pools, which have their own special effects.

You have three kinds of hit points, called health: Doing, Feeling, and Thinking. If any one of those drops to zero, then you're incapacitated. (Being the future and all, there's no permanent death.) You also get a deflect - you can bounce damage from one HP track to other ones.

There's no levelling up in this game. You start at maximum power level. Life's too short. Combat doesn't help you level up — in fact, it can get you into serious trouble, so feel free to look for other solutions to problems.

Instead, you can grow Connections with other characters. Like a guild ranking, Connections can give you increased access to other characters and gear.

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dedication

This one's for Richard. Thanks for believing in us.
 We believe in you.

how to do everything

To play **Farflung**, you'll need anywhere from two to six players. One of the players will be the **Master of Ceremonies (MC)**. The MC presides over the story, making sure that each of the Players gets their moves in.

Each Player controls one or more **Characters**, the actors in our passion play. Each Character comes with a **playbook** that explains the special abilities they can use in the game. You will combine these with the general abilities that anyone can use - the **moves** - to get stuff done.

beginning of the game session

Each session starts the same way.

- ❑ Each Player introduces their character by saying their character's name and some of their distinguishing looks.

If anyone wants to make any last-minute changes to their characters, they're allowed to make those changes right now, before the game has started.

- ❑ The MC begins the game, either by picking up where the last game session left off, or by introducing a new situation. "You're trapped on a space station in a decaying orbit." "The Autarch demands a pure-strain human for their consort." "A neutron scaffold is cascading through the galaxy, destroying all life," etc.

playing the game

- ❑ The fiction has one or more **challenges**, the plot points that you need to confront to deal with this situation.
- ❑ One or more Players describe how their Characters will deal with these fronts, usually by using their special moves, and often by rolling dice.
- ❑ The MC describes the outcomes of what the Players' Characters just did, and then describes any new events that happen, and the game continues until there's a good time to stop.

Don't panic! The purpose of a role-playing game is to have fun. It's not about winning battles, it's about exploring new experiences in interactive story-telling. These rules are just the guidelines, to make sure we're all thinking about the same things. Relax. Dream. Share. Enjoy.

A quark is an elementary particle of matter, the only ones which experience all interactions (weak, strong, etc.) There are six flavors of quarks (up, down, strange, charm, top, and bottom). Just as quarks make up all interactions of our matter, so do the attributes make up all interactions in our game.

The word “quark” originates in the novel *Finnegans Wake*, referring to calls to the bar for more drinks.

In the pecking order, are you at the **bottom**, or the **top**?

THE MEASURE OF ALL THINGS: YOUR ATTRIBUTES

Your character will be rated in six different numbers, called **Attributes**.

Attributes range are rated in numbers. For your characters, these numbers will range from -3 (the worst) to +3 (the best), with =0 as the average. Whatever “normal” is, it’s a zero in an attribute.

bottom DON'T make waves



Bottom is cool-headedness, introversion, introspection, and humility. Bottom will add to rolls to be sneaky, to be subtle, to get out of the way, and to keep your head.

Characters with high values in this attribute are often sympathetic, diplomatic, and friendly. Characters with low values will be shy, aloof, stubborn, and unpleasant.

Your +Bottom helps with:

- ☑ Being introverted
- ☑ Blending in with a crowd
- ☑ Restraining your emotions

Bottom (the attribute of deferring to others’ will) is the opposite of **Top** (being bossy).

charm bring joy and harmony



Charm is ego, social interaction, leadership, friendliness, and conversation. Charm will add to rolls to convince others to like you, to do things for you, and to listen to what you have to say.

Characters with high values in this attribute come off as attractive, encouraging, and the life of the party. Characters with low values aren’t nearly as much fun.

Your +Charm helps with:

- ☑ Being likeable and pleasant
- ☑ Getting other people to listen
- ☑ Convincing others to negotiate with you

Charm (the attribute of getting people to like you) is the opposite of **Strange** (getting people to not like you).

down

work with your hands



Down is resourcefulness, cleverness, mechanics, and making do with what you have. Down will add to rolls to repair things, to craft things from raw materials, and to know obscure details about the past.

Characters with high values in this attribute know a lot about history and science, they are good with machines, and they're good about fixing things that are broken. Characters with low values don't know or don't care much about the past, and they won't be very helpful around the house.

Your +Down helps with:

- ☑ Working with machines
- ☑ Applied science
- ☑ Hands-on experience

Down (the attribute of working with what you got) is the opposite of **Up** (cooking up new and weird plans).

strange

bring fear and chaos



Strange is id, social dominance, rage, manic episodes, and passion. Strange will add to rolls related to savagery, brutality, unpredictability, or insanity.

Characters with high values in this attribute are fearless, willful, and stubborn. They can be angry loners or they might even be manic. They're clearly not another face in the crowd. Characters with low values are unremarkable, meek, and forgettable.

Your +Strange helps with:

- ☑ Freaking people out
- ☑ Being violent and dangerous
- ☑ Tapping into your id, your animal nature

Strange (the attribute of being scary, terrifying, and violent) is the opposite of **Charm** (being friendly, comforting, and approachable).

Are you the charmer we've been waiting for, or the stranger we were warned about?

Top make a big splash



Top is hot-headedness, extroversion, planning, and boldness. Top will add to rolls to take charge, to boss other people around, and to follow through with long-term plans.

Characters with high values in this attribute will often be leaders, ready to tell people what to do and how to do it. Characters with low values are more likely to follow than to lead... and when they do try to lead, they'll have a hard time getting people to do what they say.

Your +Top helps with:

- ☑ Being extroverted
- ☑ Standing out in a crowd
- ☑ Displaying your emotions

Top (the attribute of taking charge) is the opposite of **Bottom** (letting other people get their way).

To fix our problem, will you get **down** and get your hands dirty... or will you step back to think **up** a solution?

Up work with your mind



Up is intellect, science, abstraction, and higher functions. Up will add to rolls to work with mathematics, to program computers, to engineer new devices, and to know obscure details about this wondrous future.

Characters with high values in this attribute will be curious, inventive, and forward-thinking. Characters with low values are often set in their ways and will have trouble learning new things or coming up with new ideas.

Your +Up helps with:

- ☑ Observation and deduction
- ☑ Deduction, logic, and math
- ☑ Theoretical science

Up (the attribute of guessing what could happen) is the opposite to **Down** (relying on what you already know that works).

YOUR INDICIA OF HEALTH

Various forces will try to hinder or to destroy your character. They will attempt to injure your body, to tax your mental resources, and to subjugate your will.

Your character has three **health** indicia. They must all be kept above zero for your character to continue to function.

DOING PHYSICAL FITNESS

Your **Doing** index is your physical endurance. While your Doing index is positive, you're able to interact with the physical world.

If your Doing index drops to zero, you will become incapacitated from pain, exhaustion, or other disability.

If your attributes change, your Doing index might change too. It should always be equal to

Bottom+Top+5.

FEELING SELF-ESTEEM

Your **Feeling** index is your capacity for emotions. While your Feeling index is positive, you're able to interact with other personalities.

If your Feeling index drops to zero, you will become incapacitated, as you lose the will to act.

If your attributes change, your Feeling index might change too. It should always be equal to

Charm+Strange+5.

THINKING MENTAL WELL-BEING

Your **Thinking** index is your facility for remembering, reasoning, and rationalizing. While your Thinking index is positive, you'll be aware of what's going on and able to make sense of it. If your Thinking index drops to zero, you will become incapacitated, collapsing into a cataleptic state.

If your attributes change, your Thinking index might change too. It should always be equal to

Down+Up+5.

HARM REDUCES AN INDEX

During the game, bad things will happen to you, or you will push yourself too far. In the rules of this game, your character will suffer **harm**.

Harm reduces one of your character's health. For example, if the MC tells you "Lose 3 Doing", then you must find your Doing index and reduce it by 3 points. (An index can't be reduced below zero. If you run out of points to lose, then stop.)

did your index drop to **zero**? Then you are dropped, too

If any single index drops to zero, your character becomes **incapacitated**. They are no longer participating in the fiction. (In the science fantasy that is **Farflung**, a character is rarely permanently dead. Super-science, time travel, and plot convenience make a permanent demise into a rare thing.)

You and your fellow players should describe how your character has lost the ability to affect the story.

- ✦ If your Doing drops to zero, then your character might be in shock, or passed out, or in too much physical agony to press on.
- ✦ If your Feeling drops to zero, then your character might be having an anxiety assault, or they might lapse into catatonia or into uncontrollable sobbing.
- ✦ If your Thinking drops to zero, then your character might be confused, hallucinating, collapsed in an exhausted heap, or in a fugue state.

Characters who have lost all of their health aren't necessarily unconscious, comatose, or in a fugue state. By the needs of the story, they might still be led around by other characters, or even their followers.

Zero health just means you're no longer making moves that interact with the story. Use your imagination to come up with what your character does at this, their lowest moment. Are you crippled by pain? Lost in your own thoughts? Having a nervous breakdown? Unable to maintain physical form? Babbling incoherently? Lost in memories of the past? Unstuck in time and space?

Teela attempts to restart the computer but fails spectacularly. The MC says that she suffers 3 harm of Thinking stress.

Teela's player deflects the damage to Doing, by describing Teela as getting frustrated, kicking the stupid machine... and stubbing her toe. Ouch!

YOU MAY DEFLECT ONE KIND OF HARM

Some characters are extremely tough. Genetically-engineered, cybernetic life-forms can shrug off physical impacts that would turn normal people into paste. Genius intellects and positronic computers could solve problems that a lesser mind couldn't even begin to consider. Jaded killers and remorseless monsters could witness cosmic horror that would destroy the minds of ordinary people.

Your character can **deflect** one kind of harm, listed on your character sheet. When you suffer harm to the deflecting index, you can choose a different index to suffer that harm, instead.

For example, the MC might tell you that your character suffers “**-4 Feeling**” ... when your Feeling is your deflect. You could choose to lose 4 points from your Doing, or 4 points from your Thinking, instead. You could even ignore the deflect and lose 4 points of Feeling, if you wanted to.

Yes, you can split the points up, too. You could, say, deflect 3 points to your Doing and 1 to your Thinking... or deflect 1 to Doing, 2 to Thinking, and leave 1 in Feeling, etc.

DEFLECTING HARM MEANS PLAYING YOUR ROLE

Describe how your character works through the pain. Each playbook includes a brief description to inspire you. (A Techie might deflect harm from Feeling, muttering something about the how emotions are so hard to understand compared

to physics and plans. A Freebooter could brush off harm to their Doing with a quip such as “I decided to leave before I lost more than just my dignity.” A Displaced character could talk about how nothing makes sense and how they just wanted to go home, while they kick a machine that's not working, etc.)

LOSS & HEALING

If a character becomes **incapacitated**, then you and your friends can try to get them up again. Whenever a character has a chance to rest, they can refill one or more of their indices. Characters with a **connection** to each other recover more when they rest together.

The full rules for resting and helping incapacitated characters are on pages 126 and 127.

YOUR POINTS IN TIME [F_x and H_x]

Your character is very unusual. You may have superior reach in time and space. Or vast material resources to draw upon. Or maybe you're just lucky. In game terms, your character has **time points (x)**.

We call each set of points your **pool**, that you can put up to use special moves. (More on that, below.) We recommend that each player use tokens to keep track of their F_x and H_x points. There's a space on the character sheet where you can set these tokens down, so you can shuffle them at need.

FUTURE [F_x]

The undiscovered country, your **Future time (F_x)** is the unrealized potential of things yet to happen to you.

Moves that require Future points include amazing powers that violate the laws of nature as we know them, extra-sensory perception, and miraculous technology.

HISTORY [H_x]

What you've done, your **History time (H_x)** is your memories, and the connections that you've developed with other people, or the plans you've made for future contingencies.

Moves that require you to bet History points include using your Connections with other characters and resources to get things done.

You may notice that your best moves are slowly pushing all your points into your History pool. Every character has the **inspiration** move (page 30), which will move H_x to your F_x pool.

PUT UP OR SHUT UP: ANTE

Some moves require you to ante up. You have to put a point forward to use them. For example, if a move says "**ante 1 F_x**", then you must take a point from your pool of Future time and put that forward.

If you don't have the point for the ante, then you can't use the move. You can't substitute points, either. If the move needs an ante of 1 F_x, you can't use an H_x instead.

If a move says to ante 1 point, then you just ante 1 point. If a move says you can ante 1 or more, then your only limit is if how many points you have. (If you have only 5 F_x points, you can only ante up to 5, etc.)

Sometimes your ante comes back. If your ante is **returned** to you go, it goes back into the original pool.

Other times, your points are **moved** somewhere else. If the rule says "**Move your ante to H_x**", then you put all those points into your History Time (H_x) pool.

SET ASIDE POINTS OUT OF TIME

You might make a long-term change to the narrative, and your time can get caught up in it. You may have to **set aside** time into a **pool**. If the rule says "**Set aside your ante as inventory**", then you have a new pool of points, and it's now called "inventory". Set-asides may unlock new game effects while they last, or they may be slowly used up, point by point, each time they're triggered.

Sometimes, points might get locked out of play into their own pool. For example, a **scars** pool builds up as a character suffers grievous injury. Some special abilities, like an Immortal's **eternal** or a Lost Toy's **battered**, will also tie up points.

At the end of each session of play, the player will get to re-arrange all their points in time. That time will be when you can empty out these pools and put your points back into circulation. Some characters, like the Hero of the Universe, can give their points to other characters; the end-of-session reset is when everyone gets their points back.

Dvan needs to rustle up some quick cash. Fortunately, he's an immortal, so he goes to check on the many bank accounts he's stashed over the centuries. In game terms, his player uses his **reminiscence** move. Dvan antes up 2 F_x points and rolls two dice plus 2. They score a 9, which works. The 2 points are set-aside as a **reminiscence** pool, "+2 connection with bank account".

YOUR CONNECTIONS

As you play your character in the **Farflung**, your character will have a growing backstory. They will make friends, they will enslave entities, they will have love/hate relationships with pan-dimensional beings, they will encounter new life and new civilizations. And maybe have sex with any or all of them.

Castor has a +3 connection to Pollux. Castor's player can get a +3 bonus on rolls to inspire or to get Pollux to do things. (Sadly, Pollux has only a +1 connection with Castor. It's not an equal relationship.)

Your character will also collect gear such as laser guns, star-ships, bottle cities, Klein bottles, personal computers, jet packs, battle-suits, and alien artifacts. And maybe have sex with one or more of those things, too. No one judges you, here.

On your character sheet, you will list one or more **connections** that your character has. Connections start at 1 and go up from there.

If your Connection drops to zero, then you've lost it. Special gear is no longer available. A follower no longer hangs out with you or does what you say. You can still hang out with another Player-Character if you've lost the Connection, you just no longer share that special bond.

CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER CHARACTERS

Your character may have a special bond with one or more other characters.

During the game, you can ante an Hx point to use moves to help other characters that you have a connection with. See **inspiration**, page 30

CONNECTIONS WITH YOUR FOLLOWERS

No one is an island. You may have a love-interest, a pet, a robot, or a robotic pet cum love-interest that follows your character around.

During the game, you can ante an Fx point to get a follower to do things for you. Check out the **order** move, page 32.

CONNECTIONS WITH KNOWLEDGE

As your character becomes more familiar with the game world, they will improve their ability to work with that knowledge. Your character may earn connections with history, geography, politics and other game world concepts.

During the game, you may be able to use your connections to dig up historical facts about what you're looking for. And you may be able to **reveal** new treasures and weapons. See page 27.

CONNECTIONS WITH ORGANIZATIONS

When you just saved the Extropian Arcology from a fractal implosion, they will be eager to repay the favor.

During the game, you can bet an Hx point to use moves to get an organization to intervene on your behalf or to give you special concessions. Check out the **order** move, page 32.

CONNECTIONS WITH GEAR

One person's trash is another one's treasure. You might be a collector who acquires all kinds of neat stuff. Maybe you tinker in your off time to fix junk or to decrypt alien tools. Or maybe you just understand the art of the deal.

During the game, you can ante an Hx point to use moves that instantly reveal that kind of gear. (See **reveal**, page 27.) Maybe you had it all along, stashed at the bottom of your bag for an emergency just like this. Or maybe you put some pieces together very quickly.

GETTING THINGS DONE: YOUR MOVES

All of the character playbooks list **moves**, the things you can do in the game. When a player declares that their character does something, that's when the character is making a **move**... and that's when the player will roll dice.

TAKE THE SPOTLIGHT

You and your fellow Players will be participating in the game, with your Characters doing their own things in the world's fiction.

As a Player, when you're talking with the Master of Ceremonies, you have the **spotlight**. You tell the MC what you want your Character to do, in the fiction of the universe, and the MC tells you how the fiction responds.

The MC will often pretend to be other Characters in the universe. You and the MC may have long conversations **in character**, where what you say is what your Character is saying. Feel free to immerse yourself in your Character. Say things that they would say. Try new gestures and new expressions.

Just like it's a bad idea for one actor to hog the stage, you shouldn't stay in the spotlight for too long. Give other Players a chance to shine, to have some of the fun that you're having by pretending to be some fantastic Character. In charged situations, if you stay in the spotlight for too long, your character may push themselves too far and get into some serious trouble.

DECLARE IT. THEN DO IT

The basic rule for making a move is that the player says their character will do it, and then the player rolls dice to see how well their character does that move.

The fiction of the world will often respond to your moves. For example, if you declare that you will flip the unlabeled switch on that sparking device, the MC may say that the device promptly explodes. Now that the MC has told you that the device exploded, you can't just say, "Wait, I've changed my mind!" You did something, and it had consequences. You'll have to deal with the broken device... or call upon some reality-altering power to change what just happened.

IS THE CURRENT SITUATION CASUAL OR CHARGED?

Like a novel, movie, or other fictions, the tone of the story in **Farflung** can shift from light-hearted to serious business.

If the situation is **casual**, you and your fellow Players can be cool and composed. Talk about what your characters are doing. Improvise new situations. Make jokes. Banter. Exact positions, places, and timing won't need to be tracked to the finest detail. While everyone should feel free to participate, it won't be

important to make sure everyone's getting a turn, and when.

However, sometimes the situation will get worse. Hostile beings may try to shoot you. A bulkhead's seal could fail, giving you just seconds to get out of the room before it empties of all air or fills up with molten boron. You could be trying to convince an artificial intelligence to recall its death fleet before they destroy the sun.

When the tension is high and the timing is important, the tone of the game becomes **charged**. It's now vitally important that everyone takes a move, and what moves they take and when can have serious consequences.

SOME MOVES ARE SAFE AND DON'T NEED ROLLS

You walk across the room, you pour yourself a cup of coffee, you turn on your personal computer, you talk to your friend, etc. In casual situations, most things will be free and easy.

When you tell the MC that your character will take a safe move, the MC can just tell you what the result is, without any fuss. (Yes, you can walk over there, sip the coffee, reboot the machine, and say a few nice words without rolling everything.)

Typical play:

- The MC tells you what you see.
- You declare a move.
- The MC tells you it's okay and what might happen if you win or lose.
- You roll dice.
7-9 gets weak stuff done.
10-12 gets strong stuff done.
13+ gets grand stuff done.
- The MC responds, with a counter-move or hazard or new situation or something else.
- Another PC makes a move, and the cycle starts again.

Some of your moves may say that nothing happens, but you get a bonus if you try it again as your next move. Whatever you just tried to do is working, but it's going to take some time. Give other players a turn, to make their own moves. (They can stall for time while you finish what you started, or they inspire you to finish faster.) If you move too hard, too fast, the MC may tell the story of how you pushed yourself too hard.

Other moves are uncertain, and make you roll dice

You need to run across an icy floor, you must fix the coffee machine, you must crack the computer's passcode, you've got to figure out what strange language that alien speaks, etc.

A safe move can become uncertain if circumstances make it harder. For example, looking around the room to see what's in it is normally a safe move. Looking around the room for hidden objects, subtle clues, invisible enemies, or entropic residue is uncertain.

A safe move can become uncertain if the situation is charged

For example, if you need to get to the coffee machine before the Gray Goo does, you may have to make a roll to see if you can win this race. When things are uncertain, we roll dice to make things exciting and random.

Unique moves are in your character's personal playbook

In the playbook for your character, you'll see have you one or more **unique** moves. These moves are your alien powers, your superhuman abilities, your alterations of time and space, your capacity to push the story in strange and wonderful directions.

Each special move is different. Refer to your playbook for details.

After making a move, describe what happened

Now's your time to shine. After playing out the die roll and the results, you and the MC should hype up what just happened.

Did your character just do something amazing? Explain in some detail what just occurred. Describe the bloody spatter when a vibro-blade cuts through against a spacesuit. Make up some technobabble on how you reversed the polarity of the deflector dish. Share a line of dialogue or two on how you

convinced the artificial intelligence to aid you in your quest. You have the spotlight, now play up your role!

Did your character just drop the ball? Make a wise-crack or other comment. Express your character's disappointment.

It's a game! Have fun with it. Not every moment has to be a Shakespeare, but you should take a few seconds to let your imagination run wild with the random events in the game. It's all part of the fun!

Ask the MC for the response to your move

After you make a move, the MC will tell you how the characters respond to it. Sometimes the MC will make counter-moves, where the non-player characters force you to make rolls, or do harm to your character, or other things. You move, and the world responds.

After the MC tells how the world responds, you and the other players make your own counter-move. And so it goes.

ROLLING YOUR DICE

When you tell the MC that your character will take an uncertain move, the MC will ask you to make a roll. You'll roll two+ six-sided dice and then add or subtract modifiers. The higher your total is, the better your results will be.

Most moves have a layout like this:

To do a move, roll +mod.

"Roll two six-sided dice and add them together. Then apply your modifier to the total, and that's your result."

Up to 6: No result

"If your result was 6 or less, you got no result."

7-9: Weak Success

"If your result is 7 to 9, you scored a Weak Success."

10-12: Strong Success

"If your result is 10 to 12, you scored a Strong Success."

13+: Grand Success

"If your result is 13 or more, you scored a Grand Success."

If a certain range isn't described, then rolling in that range means nothing interesting happens. For example, if there's no "Up to 6" range, that means rolling 6 or less means nothing happened. (Though the MC may have an interesting response)

adds explained

+Bottom, +Charm, +Down,

+Strange, +Top, +Up

Add the value of your attribute to the roll. For example, if the roll says "roll +Down" and your Down is -2, then you'd roll two dice and subtract 2.

+Connection

Add your Connection with the target. That's your connection with the target, not their connection with you. (These numbers might not be the same.)

+ante

Add whatever amount of points you anted up before rolling. For example, if you put up 3 points, then you will add 3 to the roll.

+(name of pool)

Add the amount of points in the pool. For example, if you have a reflexive pool of 2, then **+reflexive** means "add 2 to the roll."

bonuses and penalties

Sometimes dice have modifiers. A **bonus** adds to your die roll (that is, "take +1 forward" means add one to your die roll) and a **penalty** subtracts from it (that is, "take -2" means subtract 2 from your die roll).

forward modifies the next roll

Sometimes, a bonus carries over to your next roll. If the rules say, "+1 forward", that means your next roll gets a +1 bonus.

If the rules say "if your next move is this, +1 forward", then you only get the +1 if your next move is whatever "this" is.

LAST modifies the previous roll

A last bonus applied after the fact. These bonuses can increase a bad roll into a good roll. If the rule says "+1 to your last roll", take whatever your last total was and add 2 to it. Changing a roll you had just made can retro-actively change a failure into a success.

ROLL TOO LOW? There are ways to fix that!

Any time you roll dice, you're gambling on your success. But even if you don't quite get what you need, there are ways to change a roll after it's made. Some examples:

- ☒ You can be **inspired** by your friends. They can ante their Hx points for a chance to improve your last roll. See page 30.
- ☒ Many characters can **set aside** points into pools that can be used to boost rolls. See the playbooks for details.

It's good etiquette to apply these moves to your roll before you play out the results or make any hard bargains. If you want to boost a bad roll, do it before anything else happens.

We'll only be rolling dice if we're unsure of what will happen. You won't be rolling for casual things where success is a given (such as walking across the room, putting your pants on one leg at a time, etc.) nor will we be rolling for things that are impossible (such as dividing by zero, wearing socks and sandals together, etc.)

For most rolls in the game, you simply need to roll a total of 10 or better to get what you want.

If your dice total is 7, 8, or 9, you might still get score a weak victory... or the MC may tell you that you only get what you want, if you are willing to pay a price. See "Hard Bargain", page 100.

If your dice total 6 or less, then you didn't succeed. You'll have to try again on a later move, and the MC may describe other things that happen to you. It's time to give someone else a try!

An MC's response might be:

- Harm to your character
- A new roll that you must make to avoid some unpleasantness
- A new challenge or situation.
- Or something else that the MC can think of.

See pages 98-127 for more ideas about what challenges can be.

AFTER YOUR MOVE, THE MC RESPONDS

Every action has an equal and opposite reaction, though some reactions are more opposite than others.

After playing out your move, the MC might tell you how your target **responds** to it. Think of the responses as the MC's counter-moves. Just like a player has their character do things, the MC has other characters (or machines, or the environment) respond to those moves.

You might be required to make another roll... or your character may automatically suffer some harm. You may get a response even if you defeated the challenge with an amazing roll.

ALWAYS ASK THE MC WHAT THE RESPONSE IS TO YOUR MOVE

We understand — you're invested in the story, and you want to do whatever it takes to win the day. It's easy to get very excited and to blurt out a bunch of moves, furiously grabbing at dice. Everything you do has a consequence, even if you're rolling well, and the MC controls the story and its pacing. So remember: after you move, ask for the counter-move, then move on.

While there's no hard limit to how many moves you can make in a row, you may find the responses get harder and nastier, until you take a break and give the spotlight to someone else. The other players are your partners in this story, so give them a chance to shine.

HOW DOES THE MC RESPOND TO A MOVE?

- ❖ If you rolled poorly (6 or less), the MC may have your character experience some setback, such as personal harm, the loss of some resources, or another obstacle.
- ❖ If you're dealing with a confrontational threat (cosmic beings, major bosses, planetary armies etc.), the MC may have the threat respond with intimidation, demands, violence, or worse.
- ❖ If you're trying the same move twice, other things could happen in the interval. (Other people could get suspicious, or annoyed, or twitchy. You could exert yourself, suffering harm. Or something else!)

Want to know more about about responses? See page 97.

YOUR CHALLENGES

Your Character will often be called upon to do dangerous and difficult things. In game terms, we call these **challenges**. A challenge is something you have to deal with, to move the story along. Challenges are discussed in greater detail in the MC's section, pages 98-127.

Challenges can open up all kinds of complications:

- ✦ You might declare a **special move**, that you must roll high enough to pass. These special moves deal with the challenge in front of you. (Disarm that bomb! Run across the highway at rush hour! Calculate the jump to hyperspace!)
- ✦ After you perform a move, you might have to deal with a **response**. A response is something the MC says that your character must react to. If you roll badly, your character will suffer.
- ✦ And sometimes, you're in a hurry. A **countdown** is a timer slowly counts down. The pool starts with a number of points in it. After key events, or after a certain **interval** of time, the MC removes a point from the pool. If the countdown pool ever runs out of points, something happens. If you fail to deal with challenges fast enough, you may run out of time.

The MC will be tracking countdowns. They may keep some of them a secret from you, so you don't know what sort of pressure you're under until it's too late. With other countdowns, they may only hint at how far along they are. In the game of **Farflung**, time is often your greatest enemy.

SOME THINGS ARE HARDER THAN OTHERS: TIERS

Just so everyone's on the same page, we can break down the various challenges into **tiers**.

- ✦ **Weak** challenges can be defeated half the time by people who have no special training, simply by chance. Weak enemies are the rank-and-file creeps of the universe, dangerous only in large numbers.
- ✦ **Strong** challenges will require high attributes, special resources, or lucky rolls. Strong enemies are a serious threat to life and limb.

- ✦ **Grand** challenges are the stuff of nightmares. They can only be overcome with the best attributes rolling the highest rolls. To defeat a grand challenge, you may have to pull out all the stops, heaping all kinds of pushes, inspirations, and other bonuses on top of each other.

- ✦ Worse still are the **grander** challenges: the elder gods, the god-emperors, the star-conquerors. These challenges will take two or more grand results before they're complete.

Many moves will list the quality of your success. For example, to defeat a weak challenge, you'll need to score a weak success. Naturally, overwhelming force is better. If you score a grand result, you can defeat strong challenges easily.

HIGH TIER INCLUDES LOWER TIERS

If a rule says it affects a strong thing, it could affect a weak thing, if you want. And yes, if the rules say it affects a grand thing, you can substitute a strong or weak thing.

All matter is governed by fundamental forces. The weak force helps to prevent radioactive decay, while the strong force binds the nucleus of the atoms together.

Some scientists seek a model that combines these two forces into a grand unified theory.

end of your session

A play-session of **Farflung** usually runs about 2, 3, maybe 6 hours of real time. When it's done, there's some things to take care of.

debriefing

The MC asks the players some questions about how the play-session went.

- ❑ Is anyone confused? Did a situation happen in the game that a player feels they didn't understand what happened?

- ❑ Did anyone try to use a move or another rule, and the way the game played out was not what they expected at all?
- ❑ Did anything happen in the game that a Player felt was unfair? Or that made them uncomfortable? Should such things keep happening?

The purpose of a role-playing game is to make an interactive story that is fair, that is consistent, and that is (above all) fun.

changes

Also after the game session, you will be allowed to make some minor changes to your character's Attributes, Health, and Time. See page 128 for more details.

you are ready

That's it. Everything else is just detail. It may sound complex, but think of **Farflung** as your own personal sonnet. Sure, there's some rules you have to follow, but within that framework, you're only limited by your imagination.

YOUR EXAMPLE OF PLAY

The MC asks the players to introduce each other. The premise of the adventure is going to be that Thyrnn is assembling a crew to investigate a hidden treasure trove of pre-Autarchy artifacts on an unseen planet that's hidden near the black hole of Vindematrix system, the so-called "Chastity Belt".

Jennifer describes her character. "Captain Thyrnn is a four-eyed alien merchant with hot pink hair and impeccable taste in clothing. They come from a gender-fluid alien race called the Urgri, who are the best privateers in the galaxy."

Michael describes his character. "Sergeant Shaysen 'Shay' Abramson did several tours in the 3rd Tännhauser brigade before his dropship was split by a relativistic missile. He woke up several million years later in what he thought was a med-bay, but was actually a robot repair shop. Everyone he ever knew has been dead for centuries, so he's fallen back on all he knows: soldiering on."





Chris describes their character. "Professor Apex is a tall, bookish instructor from the Solar Federation State University. She's highly active, she enjoys fashion trends, and she wants to do real research. She has a connection with Shay because she's the one who discovered his derelict ship and freed him from the robot masters."

Tegan says, "My character has no name. He's a two-meter, 100 kilo slab of meat with blue skin and he's always smiling. His back is covered in all these weird needles."

YOUR COMMON MOVES

These are moves that any character can use, regardless of their playbook. Your playbook may have a move that looks better than one than you see here – and that’s great! Use that one, instead, use the best tool for the job at hand.

ASSAULT in a harmful & violent manner



Many characters will assault using weapons. Some weapons have a greater range than other weapons; for example, a pistol can strike targets much further away than a knife can. If you’re not in range, you’ll have to use a move that gets you into range, first. The details of a weapon’s tier, range, ammunition, etc. is up to MC.

In the **Farflung** universe, far too many people will be quick to use violence against things they don’t understand... and your character will be a weird thing that some people don’t understand. Before you start something you might regret, consider if you’d rather use an **avoid** move to step around the problem, or use a **schmooze** move to talk out your problems, first.

Assaulting may expose you to a harmful response.

If your result says that you’re exposed, you’re out in the open and everyone is witnessing your act of violence. Weak or strong enemies will respond to exposed targets first, and you may suffer worse harm than if you hadn’t exposed yourself like this.

To assault an enemy, declare your weapon or method of assault, then roll +Strange. If your weapons are much fancier than your opponent’s armor, you may get +1 or more to this roll. If you are shooting at a target who is way past your weapon’s effective range, the MC may give you a -3 penalty, or they may just say the shot fails.

7-9: Glancing Hit. Choose one:

- ☑ Move into range. If your next move is “assault”, take +3 forward. **You are exposed.**
- ☑ In range, cause a hit that’s one lower tier than your weapon. (That is, a strong weapon makes a weak hit, and a grand weapon makes a strong hit.) **You are exposed.**

10+: Solid Hit. Choose one:

- ☑ Move into range, score a hit that’s lower-tier than your weapon, and then find cover. (That is, you score a weak hit from a strong weapon, or a strong hit from a grand weapon). You are not exposed.
- ☑ Move into range, and score a hit that’s the same tier as your weapon. **You are exposed.**
- ☑ Move up to a higher-tier target. If your next move is to assault that target, take +3 forward. **You are exposed.**

13+: Critical Hit. Choose one:

- ☑ Move into range, score a hit that’s the same tier as your weapon, and then find cover. You are not exposed.
- ☑ In range, score a hit that’s one tier higher than your weapon. (A grand hit from a strong weapon, or a strong hit from a weak weapon.) **You are exposed.**

Jalpa decides the time for conversation has ended. He declares an **assault** on the Ur-Reptoids.

Jalpa rolls a 10. His blaster is a strong weapon, and the targets are in range. The MC rules that a strong hit reduces the Ur-Reptoid count by 1. The MC says that the Ur-Reptoids respond to the surprise attack by falling back.

Not wanting to be left out, his buddy Vulf joins in. Vulf assaults and rolls a 7. Since he’s not even in range, all he does is charge, screaming at the top of his lungs. Vulf is now exposed, but if his next move is assault, he’ll take +3. No longer surprised, the Ur-Reptoids respond, and Vulf has to avoid damage. The battle continues...

avoid the unpleasantness

The Master Brainer shows up with an army of Proud Enforcers here to round up all the deviants. Ghiana says “nope” and is out of here, making a move to avoid any trouble. The player rolls an 8. All the weak-tier Enforcers ignore Ghiana. The strong Master says, “Not so fast”, and responds with a tingle blast. Ghiana would normally suffer 3 harm, but their weak avoidance reduces that to only 2.



Sometimes you want to be somewhere else... and you'd be happier if no one saw you, at all.

If you have to overcome walls, laser fences, sarlacc pits, etc., and not set off any alarms or cause a scene, use this move.

If you just want to be somewhere else on the battlefield, and you don't want to be assaulting while you do it, use this move.

In the **Farflung** universe, far too many people will be quick to use violence against things they don't understand... and your character will be a weird thing that some people don't understand. Rather than escalate the violence, you can try to increase the peace by simply avoiding the things that want to harm you. It can often be easier to just sneak into a place, get the thing you want, and then leave... than it is to just smash up the place. (Oh, and it's a lot nicer, too.)

To escape detection or to blend in with the surroundings, roll +Bottom. The MC may give you +1 or more for busy, shadowy places... or they may penalize you -1 or worse if there's nothing to blend in with (like the yawning vacuum of space).

7-9: Weak Avoidance. Weak enemies will only assault you if there aren't any other targets to assault. Subtract 1 from all harm until your next move.

10-12: Strong Avoidance. Strong enemies will only assault you if there aren't any other targets to assault. Weak enemies can't assault you at all, and weak detectors won't even notice you. Subtract 2 from all harm until your next move.

13+: Grand Avoidance. Grand enemies will only assault you if there aren't any other targets to assault. Strong enemies can't assault you at all, and weak detectors won't even notice you. Subtract 3 from all harm until your next move.

block to protect somebody or something



Sometimes, you just want to hold the line. This move is a catch-all for any move where you plan to take hits or to defend something else. While this move is great for using your variable-sword and hard-light shield to block incoming fire, it might also work if you envelop your friend's psyche in orgone to shield from the mind-parasite and other weirdness.

Some characters will be much better at taking a hit than others. If you're one of those tougher types, consider blocking for a friend who is more fragile than you are.

To defend a person, item, or region, roll +Top. If you have a position that is easily defensible, you may claim +1 or more.

7-9: Weak Block

Weak enemies must target you instead of what you are blocking.

Until your next move, take +1 forward when responding to enemies.

If your next move is a block, take +1 forward. Stand together!

10-12: Strong Block

Strong enemies must target you instead of what you are blocking

Until your next move, take +3 forward when responding to enemies.

If your next move is a block, take +3 forward. Hold that line!

13+: Grand Block

Grand enemies must target you instead of what you are blocking

Until your next move, take +6 forward when responding to enemies.

If your next move is a block, take +6 forward. Never give up!

Thrug cries out in dismay when the Master Brainer and the Proud Enforcers assault Ghiana. Thrug declares they will block for Ghiana.

They only roll an 8. That roll will distract the weak Enforcers, but it's not enough to force a strong foe like the Master to assault him instead of Ghiana.

Thrug must deal with the MC's response before they can try to block, again.. but until then, Thrug has +1 on rolls to respond to the enemies.

If Thrug's next move is block, they will take +1 forward.

Emeritax the Elder finds a strange book. The MC says no roll is required to know what a book is, that it's bound in leather and that the ancient paper is inked in some archaic script. Emeritax wants to know more, so they make a **lore** move. They roll a 9, and the MC tells them it's a book of the lost Charybdese civilization, long since purged in the Yoga Wars. (It's too bad Emeritax didn't roll a 10, or they might've gotten a +1 connection for "Charybdese literature").



There's a lot of things to know, such as: who made these obelisks, what gasses do these aliens breathe, where does this strange radiation come from, when did this civilization die out, and why can't you determine both a particle's location and its velocity?

To know common knowledge, no roll is needed. Your character should know where things are in their own personal space. And if you, the Player, can't always remember some tidbit that your Character certainly knew three weeks ago, it's good etiquette for the MC or for the other Players to remind you. (It's just a game. There's not going to be a test later.) This move is only to know obscure facts and figures in the context of the fiction, things that haven't been revealed in our story before now. It's to know the kinds of things that only some professor, egghead, or history geek has picked up from their education, their reading, and their elementary deductions.

LORE TO KNOW MORE OF THE STORY

To consult your lifetime of accumulated knowledge to help you with something, roll +Down. If you have access to a library or database that is specifically dedicated to your problem, you may be able to claim +1 or more.

7-9: Something Interesting

The MC should tell you some factoid that might prove useful when dealing with this situation. This should be some obscure fact that was impossible to find without some research: names, dates, places, etc.

10+: A Useful Connection

Your detailed knowledge of the past can be applied to this situation. Take +1 forward when acting on this clue.

In addition, the MC may tell you to write down a Connection +1 to something about this situation's lore, such as "Ixian Technology +1" or "Eddorian Law +1". You can't raise a Connection above +1 with this move.

REVEAL JUST WHAT GEAR YOU NEED



It's not in anyone's best interests to list every single piece of equipment that a character has. Your character will constantly be picking up new equipment, and sometimes you'll have to pull something out of your big bag of stuff.

Some characters will be powerful beings beyond material concerns, and won't need to use this move. Others are tinkerers, collectors, and kleptomaniacs, whose pockets are full of amazing junk that can do all kinds of neat future things.

In game terms, we use your "connection with gear" to represent how much buying power your character has, how much stuff they collect, how they can use it, etc.

We call this "revealing" because it's assumed that you've had this thing all along. (You knew you were going to get into trouble today, or you buy a thing you need from a local vendor, or you build something out of the junk you found, etc.) Some players will want to specify that they have specific gear at all times, and that's okay, too. Use the debriefing so you, your MC, and your fellow players can strike the right balance for managing your inventories.

To keep the game simple, we're not listing every single piece of equipment we can think of, just the tiers. (See page 93 for more details on that.) If you want to deal with a strong challenge, you're going to need a strong piece of gear.

To equip a new piece of gear that hasn't shown up in the fiction before, ante 1 Fx and roll +Connection. The gear that you equip must somehow be related to your connection. For example, the peaceful Extropians are more likely to have given you medicine than a weapon. The Entropy Empire? Just the opposite.

Up to 6: Return your ante to Fx. You don't have what you're looking for. Your MC may let you try again if circumstances change. (You move to a new location, you find a new store, you call in some favors, etc.)

7-9: Move the ante to your Hx. You may reveal one piece of weak gear. You could reveal a gas mask, a smart phone, a holdout pistol, a multi-tool, or some other cheap device that's nothing special, but is still the right tool for your next job. The MC may give you +1 forward on appropriate rolls, and the gear is certainly enough to help solve a weak problem.

10-12: Move the ante to your Hx.

Choose one:

- ☑ Reveal one piece of strong gear. (Spacesuit, AI drone, cone rifle, liquid metal, or another fantastic device.)
- ☑ Reveal enough weak gear for you and all your friends.
- ☑ Get a single follower from a large organization to help you for a single errand.

13+: Choose one:

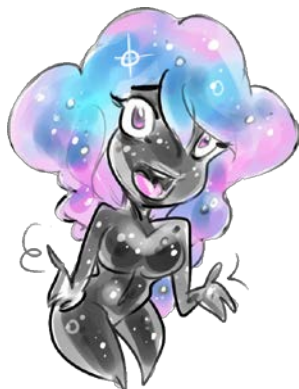
- ☑ Reveal enough strong gear for you and all your friends.
- ☑ Reveal one piece of grand gear. (Big-Booster Suit, Bottle City of Kandor, Smith-Hitachi Godzilla Blaster, Matmos Shoggoth, or other gear with a fancy name.) Set aside your ante as **inventory**. Once the grand gear is out of play, move the inventory to your Hx.
- ☑ Get a group of followers to help you for a single errand.
- ☑ Get one follower to help you for three errands.

Ulwin wakes up from a trans-bacchanal sleep to discover their partner is gone and an assassin has taken their place. "Not again!" cries Ulwin, as they reach under their bed to **reveal** a weapon. Ulwin antes 1 Fx and rolls their +2 connection with "stashed weapons". They score an 8. Whatever this weak weapon is, it will have to do.

Amity 7-4800 doesn't want to see anyone else get hurt. They make a move to **schmooze** the creeps to stop attacking. Amity rolls a 9. Deciding that the creeps can be reasoned with, the MC immediately stops the battle that's going on and invites the players to participate in a "cease hostilities" challenge.

If Amity had rolled a 10, the MC might have just had the creeps make a simple demand for money or favors, and we'd be done.

SCHMOOZE TO GET SOMEONE TO TALK WITH YOU



You can attempt to get people to stop assaulting you and to listen to what you want to say.

In the **Farflung** universe, far too many people will be quick to use violence against things they don't understand... and your character will be a weird thing that some people don't understand. Rather than escalate the violence, you can try to increase the peace by convincing hostile people not to fight with you, by using this move.

To have a conversation in a casual environment with friendly people, no roll is needed. It's only when things are charged (say, in the middle of a heated battle) or when things are risky and uncertain (such as a dicey negotiation) that you'll have to roll to talk. Remember, we only roll dice for things when it's interesting that we don't know exactly what the result of your move will be.

To get your targets to talk with you, in a charged situation, tell the MC what your demands are.

Tell the MC what your demands are. Demands can be simple ("a stop to all this fighting"), to complex ("the surrender of the Eye of Algorac and the Blue Star to us"), to the obscure ("the cupidry of Gandahar/Thamber") and even the abstract ("your obedience"). **Roll +Charm.**

Up to 6: The target is not interested. Ask the MC if there is any response. Your target may either ignore you, or they may say that your demands are unacceptable, or they may even start a fight.

7-9: The target is open to negotiation, which is more complex than just a simple "do what I want" roll. The MC should set up a new challenge for you. Some suggestions:

- ❑ If all you want is to end a fight, that's **cease hostilities** (page 123).
- ❑ If you want to cheat someone, to lie to them, or otherwise play them false, that's **deceit** (page 124).
- ❑ If you want to buy or to sell something, that's **haggling** (page 124).
- ❑ If you want to force a target to give you what you want, because they should be afraid of what happens if they don't give it to you, that's **intimidation** (page 125).
- ❑ If you seek romance, that's **seduction** (page 122).
- ❑ Or you and the MC can make something up.

10+: The target will respond with a counter-offer. If you agree, then we have come to terms. Otherwise, the MC chooses a new challenge, as above.

SCOPE OUT THE SITUATION



Sometimes you want to take a good look at the place before you do something to it. Like all moves that have a roll, you don't have to use this move in casual situations - only charged ones, where time is a factor or your safety is in danger.

To observe the obvious, no roll is needed. Your character can notice obvious things like blaster bolts, rocket launches, blinking lights, emergency exits, piles of festering garbage, opera singers, and the like. You don't have to declare a special move just to ask your MC to tell you what's in plain view.

To closely study a situation or a person, roll +Up.

If you have superior information or scanning equipment, you might claim +1 or more.

7-9: Ask the MC one of these questions:

- ❑ Does this person have something I need?
- ❑ How could I get these people to leave me alone?
- ❑ Who's really in control here?
- ❑ Is this person trying to deceive me?
- ❑ What happened here recently?
- ❑ What here is useful or valuable to me?
- ❑ What is about to happen?
- ❑ Is there anything here that isn't supposed to be here?
- ❑ What should I be on the lookout for?
- ❑ What tier is this challenge?
- ❑ What's the best way to deal with these people?

Take +1 forward when acting on the answer to your question.

10+: Ask the MC three of the above questions, and take +1 forward when dealing with the answers.

"This hallway is empty," thinks Ircelle. "Too empty." They make a move to scope out the situation.

Ircelle rolls a 12 and may ask 3 questions. They ask: "What should I be on the lookout for?"; "What is about to happen?"; and "What tier is this challenge?"

The MC responds that there are sentry turrets hidden in the walls, that they will pop out of the walls if you can't find some way to baffle their infrared sensors, and interacting with them is a strong challenge.

If Ircelle decides to deal with this challenge, they will take +1 forward to their next roll.

YOUR SUPPORT MOVES

These moves work with other people. The inspiration and prepare moves help your fellow players, while the order move lets you boss the non-player-characters around into doing things. Some playbooks have a unique move that works better for you than what you see here... so if you have one like that, use it, instead!

INSPIRATION FROM YOUR FRIENDS' HISTORYx



Kurphyon assaults the Anti-Nemesis and scores an 11. That's good, but the monster is a grand threat and Kurphyon needs a 13.

Azuragul cries out, "Kurphyon! Don't die! You can do this, I believe in you!" Azuragul's player antes 3 Hx. Kurphyon rolls to get inspired. Kurphyon's player rolls two dice and adds +1, their connection with Azuragul.

The roll comes up 8, which is success! Kurphyon's roll is increased to 14, and is now a success! Azuragul moves 3 Hx to Fx.

When things are at their darkest, think back to the inspiration your friends give you. Don't do it for you, do it for them!

To increase a roll you just made, pick another player who has Hx points and that you have a Connection with. You can only be inspired by another player who has at least 1 Hx point to ante up. You can't be inspired by someone you don't have at least +1 connection with.

Describe the inspiration. Talk about a good time you had together. Apologize for something terrible you did, before. If your friend isn't here, flash back to a time when they helped you work through the pain. And can you really give up now, lost like tears in the rain? Moments of inspiration should build on the story, they should remind you that you're not alone in this universe, that you can always depend on your friends to guide you.

Inspiration doesn't put the inspiring character at any risk. The other character doesn't need to be where you are, or even conscious at this time. You can have a flash-back to happier times, or when they said something prophetic and inspiring to you, or maybe just thinking of your history together fills you with determination.

The player who is inspiring you antes 1 or more Hx. You roll +Connection. (So yes, the other player puts up the ante, but you roll your connection with them.)

Up to 6: Return the ante. You and your friend don't have enough history for meaningful inspiration. The ante goes back to their Hx.

7+: Inspiration

Add the other player's ante to your last roll. Then the other player moves their ante to Fx.

You can stack many inspirations, one per player.

As long as you have connections, and your friends have Hx points to ante, you can try each one in turn until you're satisfied that your roll has enough adds, or until you can't score any more inspiration.

Like all moves, **ask your MC if there is a response to your inspiration.** Hesitating like this might expose you to more danger. A grand nemesis will mock you for depending so much on your useless friends.

prepare to help a friend



Is a friend about to make a roll, but you want to help? You can lend some support.

There will be many problems in the game where it makes sense to have the best character working on the problem... but other characters can pitch in to help.

When you prepare to help a friend, you may expose yourself to danger. Usually it's the same danger your friend is in. For example, if you help to disable a device, you could suffer the same electrical shock that your friend suffers for their mistake. If your friend rolls well but you roll poorly, you might suffer something bad while your friend stays safe.

To set up a friend to make a roll, describe how you would help. You could double-check a friend's math, hold a machine steady while they repair it, quickly offer a distraction from a faux pas, etc.

Then make a roll to help. Often, you'll be rolling the same attribute they will be rolling. For example, if they're trying to roll +Up, then you roll +Up.

In some cases, you might be able to use a different attribute on your assist. For example, if you're assisting a friend to avoid a sentry (which is normally a +Bottom roll) ... you might distract the sentry by being romantic (+Charm), or bizarre (+Strange), or bossy (+Top). Be creative!

7+: +1 forward to your friend's roll

Multiple assists don't stack — take the best assist out of all the rolls. The MC may choose to limit the number of Players who can assist on something.

Notice this move is called “prepare”, so it happens before your friend makes their own move. If you want to help someone after the fact, you must use an **inspire** move, instead.

Enon is about to fly the ship through the asteroid field. Yvere is in the co-pilot seat, and prepares to help. They roll a 9, which will give Enon +1 forward on the piloting roll.

Contessa Irlid is about to be assaulted by ruffians. She takes cover behind her factotum, Mister Caret. In game terms, Irlid's player orders the follower to use an "avoid" move.

Irlid is normally terrible at avoidance, since her Bottom is -3. Instead, she moves 1 Fx to Hx and then rolls her connection (+2). She scores an 11, for strong avoidance.

The bad guys shoot, causing 3 harm to Doing. The "avoid" move subtracts 2. Irlid decides to take the 1 point of harm to herself. (Which she deflects to Thinking, as this is all part of the plan.)

USE FUTURE_x TO **order** a FOLLOWER TO DO IT



It's the future, already. What's the point of all this stuff if you can't get someone else to handle your dirty work?

To get a follower to do something for you, declare the move the follower will do, move 1 Fx to Hx, and then roll +connection. As a rule, you can only ask a follower to do common moves for you. The MC is free to not allow you to make your follower do certain moves, especially your special moves or moves against a grand opponent. But there might be special circumstances. Use your best judgement!

The follower does the move for you. Use whatever you rolled as your own roll. The best time to order someone else to do something for you is when your +connection is better than whatever attribute you would have used, instead.

What happens next? **If the response to the move results in something bad** (harm, capture, disease, horror, etc.), **you must make a choice:**

- ☒ Suffer the response yourself.
- ☒ Let the follower suffer the response. The MC may permanently reduce your connection by at least 1 point, possibly more.

YOUR example of play

Chris says, "I want to **scope** this place out, to see if anything here is interesting."

Michael says, "Hold on. Let my character recon the area first, so I can **prepare** you."

The MC says both rolls will be +Up. Michael rolls first, and scores an 8, which gives Chris +1 forward. Chris rolls 11, and may ask three questions. Chris asks "What here is useful to me?", "What should I be on the lookout for?", and "Is there anything here that isn't supposed to be here?"

The MC says, "Under the glass ground, there's the hint of some larger structure, like a giant door, but it's under tons of some fused, crystalline mineral. This place couldn't be more empty of people or hostiles, Shay can be sure of that. What's not supposed to be here is all this glass. Shay can tell you that it's ground fused by atomic bombs, which he used to see in his war days. That's how he assists your roll."



Caused by "bunker busters"—H-Bombs dropped from orbit to punch through the ground and take out underground shelters. Must've been really solid defenses to have resisted them.





Jennifer asks a follow-up question: “So when you say there’s a structure, that means that what we’re looking for is buried under the glass?”

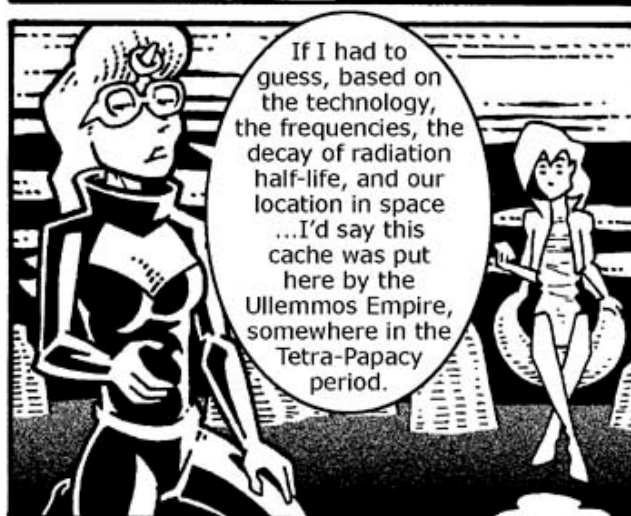
The MC decides that now that the scope has revealed the door, this is a **casual review of the obvious** and doesn’t need a roll. “Yes, it’s a mechanical door, still in great condition. Your scanners tell you that it still has power.” The MC decides that decoding the door’s encryption is a special move that they make up on the spot. “If you could send the right codes to open it using your transmitter, you could try +Up. You can only have one assistant prepare you.”

Jennifer asks if she can assist Chris, since Chris has the best +Up. They roll and score an 11. The MC says, “That’s close enough to know that this lock is a grander challenge. You can keep trying, or you can try to find someone who might know the codes. Do you want to roll again on this, or do you want to take +3 forward to find another solution?”

Jennifer says, "I'm well-connected and I meet lots of people. I'd like to roll to see if I know where these codes come from."

The MC says okay, and they score a 12, thanks to the forward bonus from before. "This caché was built by the Ullemmos Masters, who have since relocated to Vulpeculae space. You could keep brute-forcing this lock — and maybe lose some Thinking points from stress — or go get some help. Or try something I haven't thought of."

Thrynn had dealt with enough academics to know when one was unable to say "can't." Ask them "What do you know?" instead; these academic types loved to hear themselves talk.





The players talk over their options. They decide they could always use brute force later. There's no time pressure, so they head off to the Vulpeculae system in search of Ullemmos lore.

choose your playbook

Each player of the game of **Farflung** has a unique **playbook**. This will be the kind of character you will be playing in the game.

Don't think of a playbook as a box, but as a platform. These are the common types of heroes you see in the fiction. Your Old Soldier could be a sleek, untouchable veteran with too many victories to mention... or they could be a cybernetic wad of meat, barely recognizable from one term too many. Your Futsie could be a hulking, alien monstrosity... or something uncannily human, a spooky little kid who barely talks. We included a picture and some concepts to get you started, but it's just the numbers that matter. How you interpret them is up to you.

Your character needs a **name**. This character will be your avatar, your role in the game. When you're in character, other players will address you by this name. We've given you some sample names to get you started. Don't worry, you can change your name, later.

What's your character's **look**? In the far future, you could be almost anything, but some things are more anything than others. We've listed some ideas to get you started, but you should use your imagination. What's your character's apparent age? Gender? Your color? Do you have hair? How many eyes? How many roentgens do you emit per second? Do things taste salty to you? Be creative! Don't worry, you can change this later.

Now comes the math part. Your character has a set of **attributes**. While you can choose these numbers, some values make more sense than others. Choose one of these four setups, and copy them to your character sheet. You'll also get values for your **health** (Doing, Feeling, and Thinking). These indices can change, if you change your attributes around, later.

There's one kind of harm that your character **deflects** to other indicia. There's a brief description of why, too. Write this down.

Your character also starts with **time**, measured in two kinds of points: Future (**Fx**) and History (**Hx**). You can write these points down, or use counters to track them. Because just like life, your time points will keep changing. Don't worry, you can change these later.

No one is an island. Your character begins the game with **connections** to other characters around the table, and possibly to other people or organizations. Write these on your sheet.

Finally, your character has **unique moves**. While your character can try almost everything, you have a few somethings that aren't just anything. Keep these unique moves handy, but don't forget there's plenty of basic moves and support moves to pick, too.

These playbooks are short and sweet. Even if we could list every single pitfall, misinterpretation, and loophole, the rules would become so big and wordy that no one could understand it all... and the entire point of role-play rules is so we all understand what each of us expects out of the story.

Don't do things you don't want to do. Stay true to the spirit of your character. You and the MC work together to tell a great story about your character... by staying true to what your character is about.

archie

The problem with history is that they used to just keep making more of it. Now, here at the end of time, you can finally get around to cataloging all this stuff.

Archies just love going through old things. They've forgotten more than most people will ever remember. They make for great adventurers because they know a little bit about everything... and what they don't know, they can extrapolate from the thousands of things they do know.

Play an Archie if you want to help your friends with useful facts, figures, and trivia.

SAMPLE NAMES

Amaranth, Attabar, Bill, Cassandra, Codger, Doc, Herodotus, Notion, Mambazol, Matins, Mei Feng, Miss Understanding, Oort, Professor, Reverend, Secretary, Teach, C. S. Tyson, The Watcher

LOOKS

Choose one or more:

Big hat, Books, Canteen, Dirt under fingernails, Dirty clothes, Duster, Gears, Glasses, Goggles, Good luck charm, Magnifying glass, Mismatched clothes, Moleskin journal, More books, Neat and fastidious appearance, Out-of-date clothes, Pocket watch, Pony tail, Short hair, Too many books, Unkempt hair, Towel, Vest, Wrinkles, Wristwatch

ATTRIBUTES & HEALTH

Choose one:

☒ Antiquarian

Bottom -1, Charm -1, Down +3
Top -1, Strange +1, Up +2
Doing 3, Feeling 5, Thinking 10

☒ Quiet Observer

Bottom +2, Charm -1, Down +1
Top -1, Strange -1, Up +3
Doing 6, Feeling 3, Thinking 9

☒ Most Interesting Person

Bottom -1, Charm +2, Down +1
Top -1, Strange -1, Up +3
Doing 3, Feeling 6, Thinking 9

☒ Insufferable Know-it-All

Bottom -1, Charm -2, Down +3
Top +1, Strange =0, Up +2
Doing 5, Feeling 3, Thinking 10

DEFLECT: FEELING

Prime Directive of Non-Interference:

Whenever you would suffer harm to your Feeling, you can deflect the harm to your Doing or Thinking, instead.

TIMES

Future_x 2,

History_x 3

CONNECTIONS

Ask a trivia question. For the first player to answer the question to your satisfaction, you have +1 Connection with their character. There's no time limit. The truth will out.

Also, +2 Connection with (choose one):

- ☒ Coat of Deep Pockets (gear)
- ☒ Carpet Bag of Tribid-8 (gear)
- ☒ The cluttered closet of my research vessel (gear)
- ☒ Gastronompede (alien pet, named Plato, Elon, Wales, Oxnard, Bartleby, Quux, etc.)
- ☒ Floating thought matrix (alien pet, named Bit, Core, Hash, Klak, Computer, Log, etc.)
- ☒ Lab assistant (follower, named Bem, Shev, Qyd'eb, Sedgewick, Tyro, Clone, something you can't remember, etc.)
- ☒ Or make something up!

UNIQUE MOVES

AUTODIDACT

What you're doing right now isn't so hard. You read about it in a book.

Before making a roll, ante 1 Fx, then roll +Up.

Up to 6: -1 forward! Oops, well, at least we learned something. Set aside your ante as **study**.

7+: +1 forward. Set aside your ante as **study**.

ANALYSIS

Those who fail to learn history are doomed to repeat it.

Ante 1 or more Fx, then pick a situation to analyze. Roll +Down.

Up to 6: Return your ante to Fx.

7+: For each point in your ante, ask the MC one question from the list below. Then set aside the entire ante as **study**.

- ❑ What happened here recently?
- ❑ What is about to happen?
- ❑ What should I be on the lookout for?
- ❑ What here is useful or valuable to me?
- ❑ Have there been any strange scientific anomalies here?
- ❑ What is the anthropological history of this place?
- ❑ What are the life sciences here? (Biological readings, life-forms, toxins, signs of activity, etc.)
- ❑ Who's really in control here?
- ❑ What tier are these people?

- ❑ What is here that's not what it appears to be?

Take +1 forward to deal with the answers to these questions.

STUDY

Your study pool builds from your other moves.

When you or another character tries to solve a puzzle, to work with tech, to know something, to involve themselves with something you have a Connection with, or does something else that the MC says would benefit from your field study, **they may move 1 point of study to your Hx. Forward, they will roll three dice and then choose which two to keep.**



celebrity

Welcome to fame and fortune, baby. You might be a darling of the galactic media, a president on the run, or a holographic music idol giving your first transstellar tour. When you talk, people listen—even if you're just running your mouth. No matter how obnoxious you are, the mystique of fame excuses all. The universe is your audience, so give them something to watch.

Play a Celebrity if you want to draw lots of attention to yourself and solve your problems by talking.

sample names

Alazia-5, Biff, Chris, Emplox Alpha, Ereshk1g4l, Hatsune, Lady Stardust, Minmay, Mogolith, Raka Zar, Tsqaliyah, Zaphod

LOOKS

Choose one or more:

Androgynous beauty, Cosmetic body modifications, Expensive taste, Fancy suit, Glowing eyes, Holographic vid-screens, Je ne sais quoi, Musical instrument, Narcissistic, Paranoid, Shifty eyes, Smells like booze, Smokes, Sunglasses

attributes & health

Choose one:

☐ Heartthrob

Bottom +1, Charm +3, Down -1
Top +2, Strange -1, Up -1
Doing 8, Feeling 7, Thinking 3

☐ Living Legend

Bottom -2, Charm +3, Down +1
Top +2, Strange +1, Up -2
Doing 5, Feeling 9, Thinking 4

☐ Politician

Bottom +2, Charm +3, Down -2
Top +2, Strange -1, Up -1
Doing 9, Feeling 7, Thinking 2

☐ Glitterati

Bottom +1, Charm +3, Down -2
Top +2, Strange -1, Up =0
Doing 8, Feeling 7, Thinking 3

DEFLECT: THINKING

Getting By on Looks Alone:

Whenever you would suffer harm to your Thinking, you can deflect that harm to your Doing or Feeling instead.

TIMES

Future_x 4

History_x 1

connections

Ask each other player to name their favorite actor, musician, or other celebrity. After listening to their answers, choose one character to have +2 Connection with.

Also, +2 Connection with (choose one):

- ☐ My influence with friends in high places (gear)
- ☐ My embezzled or otherwise illegal fortune (gear)
- ☐ A cutting edge high-tech gizmo or toy (gear)

☐ My press secretary (follower, named Astra, Factotum, Gofer, Cordelia, or You There)

☐ My bodyguard (follower, named Rax, Spike, Brutus, Ronin, or Devastator)

☐ My pet exotic lifeform (alien pet, named Checkers, Mister Woofykins, Bitey, or Socks)

☐ Or make something up!

unique moves

grandstand

If you have at least one observer, then before performing any common move, you may declare that move to be a grandstand. Ante 1 Fx then roll for the move as normal.

Up to 6: In addition to the move you just made, you also embarrass yourself. Move your ante to Hx and any fame points you might have to Hx.

7+: In addition to the move you just made, move your Fx to **fame**, and play out the move as normal.

SPOTLIGHT

To get the attention of everyone around you, **ante 1 or more Fx**, then **roll +Charm**. There must be people around you to be a star.

Up to 6: Do these people not know who you are? Inconceivable! Move your ante to Hx.

7-9: You draw a crowd of weak targets. Move your ante to **fame**.

10+: You draw a crowd of weak and strong targets. Move your ante to **fame**.

FAME

You gain fame by using your grandstand and spotlight moves.

- ❑ **Add +fame to any rolls* to avoid consequences** such as being caught lying, making a faux pas, or other social mishaps where being famous could help you.
- ❑ **Use +fame as a connection* with any crowd that you gathered with your spotlight move.**
- ❑ **Subtract -fame from any roll to be stealthy, to blend in, or to otherwise not be the center of attention.** The MC may rule that having fame makes some things impossible for you.
- ❑ **Add +fame to a friend's roll*, if being a celebrity would help.** For example, if you're being a distraction while a friend sneaks in somewhere, or if your friend is trying to impress someone else by knowing you, a real celebrity.

*If you add **+fame** to a roll that has **doubles** (any two dice have matching numbers), **move all mass appeal to your Hx**. (Fame is fleeting.)

Ego

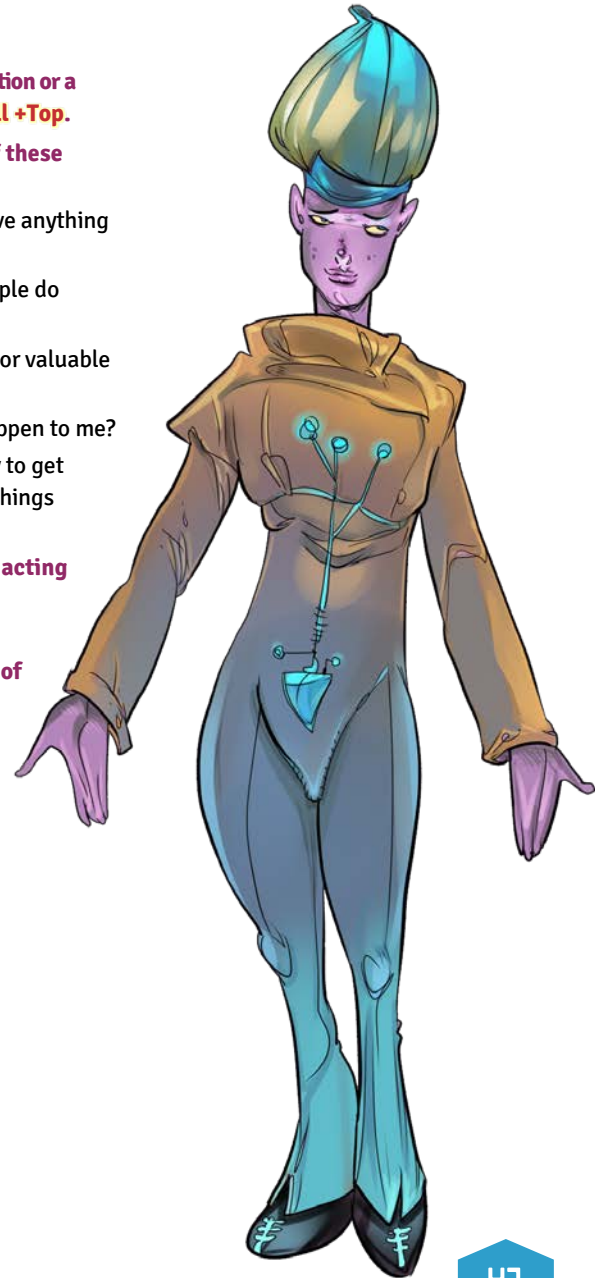
To figure out how a situation or a person relates to you, **roll +Top**.

7-9: Ask the MC one of these questions:

- ❑ Do these people have anything to offer me?
- ❑ What can these people do for me?
- ❑ What here is useful or valuable to me?
- ❑ What is about to happen to me?
- ❑ What's the best way to get these people to do things for me?

Take +1 forward when acting on the answer to your question.

10+: Ask the MC three of the above questions, and take +1 forward when dealing with the answers.



CLOCKWORKER

Other people think that time is a strict linear progression of cause to effect. You know better. You have a personal line into the timestream: psychic powers of precognition, a time machine, four-dimensional technology, or bizarre time-warping powers.

Play a Clockworker if you want to meddle about with time and space.

SAMPLE NAMES

Aradia, Chiana, Dave, Dio,
Introssor, Janus, Kinmune, Marty,
Pelinal, Professor, Tachyon,
Tessera, Trance

LOOKS

Choose one or more:

Anachronistic fashion, Dapper,
High-tech timekeeping device,
Low-tech timekeeping device,
Milky-eyed, Mischievous smile,
Scarf, Soothing voice, Tendency to
talk about things that haven't
happened yet as if they already
have, Tired eyes, Trouble with verb
tenses, Tweedy, Twitchy

ATTRIBUTES & HEALTH

Choose one:

☒ Stranded in Time

Bottom +2, Charm +1, Down +2
Top -2, Strange -2, Up +2
Doing 5, Feeling 4, Thinking 9

☒ Precog

Bottom +2, Charm +1, Down +3
Top -3, Strange -1, Up +1
Doing 4, Feeling 5, Thinking 9

☒ Eternal Wanderer

Bottom +3, Charm =0, Down +2
Top -1, Strange -2, Up +1
Doing 7, Feeling 3, Thinking 8

☒ Anomalistic Entity

Bottom +2, Charm -2, Down +1
Top +1, Strange +1, Up =0
Doing 8, Feeling 4, Thinking 6

DEFLECT: FEELING

In the Long Run: Whenever you
would suffer harm to your Feeling,
you can deflect the harm to your
Doing or Thinking, instead.

TIMES

Future_x 4

History_x 1

CONNECTIONS

**Ask each other player to name a
historical event. After listening to
their answers, choose one charac-
ter to have +2 Connection with.**

**Also, +2 Connection with
(choose one):**

- ☒ Historical artifacts gathered
from across time (gear)
- ☒ Using time travel to get rich
quick (gear)
- ☒ The gratitude of those you've
helped (gear)

- ☒ The contents of my larger-on-
the-inside time machine (gear)
- ☒ My traveling companion
(follower named Ace, Adric, Ian,
Peri, or Susan)
- ☒ Displaced historical figure
(follower named Abe, Joan,
Napoleon, Saladin,
Shakespeare, etc.)
- ☒ Or make something up!

UNIQUE MOVES

CHRONOMETRY

It's easy to do things when you
already saw how they will end up.

**Before making a roll, ante 1 Fx,
then roll +Down.**

Up to 6: -1 forward! You don't
remember it happening this way
at all. Set aside your ante as
paradox.

7+: +1 forward. Set aside your ante
as **paradox.**

observer

Why study history, when you could just watch it first hand?

To consult the past or future to help you with obscure facts, ante 1 Fx and then roll +Bottom.

Up to 6: That's not a time that either your past or future selves have experience with. Move your ante to **paradox**.

7-9: The MC takes on the role of you, from the future, travelling back in time to this spot, to tell you useful that might prove useful when dealing with this situation. This should be some obscure fact that a first-hand observer would know: people who were there, layout of the room, combinations and passwords, etc. Take +1 forward when acting on their/your observations, then move your ante to **paradox**.

10+: It's you who travels back in time to observe some key event or happening to help you. The MC may describe a scene where you're a passive observer, and things that you see. Not only do you get +1 forward when acting on these observations, but the MC may tell you to write down a Connection +1 to something about this situation ... even with something or someone you haven't met yet. Move your ante to **paradox**.

paradox

You gain paradox points by using your chronometry and observer moves.

While you have paradox, you may use these moves:

☒ **Roll +paradox to order a duplicate of yourself to do something*.** The MC takes on the role of a follower — another you from an alternate time-line. This follower appears out of nowhere, does a common move for you (using +paradox instead of the usual attribute), and then disappears. **If something bad happens to them** (such as harm, capture, disease, horror, etc.), **move one point of paradox to Hx.**

☒ **To retcon a response from the MC, roll +paradox*.**

7+, the MC must choose something different. For example, if a friend was about to suffer harm, the MC might retcon that harm from happening ... or they might move the harm to you, instead. You have no control over what the MC chooses instead, even if it's worse. Don't tamper with the time-stream lightly.

☒ **Roll +paradox to alter time in some way*.** We

can't think of all the time-travel possibilities. As a rule, a roll of 7-9 will make a weak alteration, and a roll of 10+ will make a strong alteration.

***If you add +paradox to a roll that has doubles** (any two dice have matching numbers), **move all paradox to your Hx.** (The universe only tolerates so much meddling.)



displaced

Funny thing about time, it just keeps slipping into the future. You're from one of the many previous eras. Perhaps you're from 21st Century Earth, where you were put in cryogenic suspension or what-have-you, only to be revived in this strange future time. Maybe you're from a derelict spaceship, where you were put in suspended animation only to be rescued much, much later than you ever thought possible. Or you might have popped through a wormhole or other cosmic anomaly, and you were lucky enough to survive the time point.

Play a Displaced if you want to come through in a pinch and bring out the best in your friends.

SAMPLE NAMES

Amber, Amelia, Arthur, Brittany, Carter, Cooper, Craig, Jimmy, Justin, Lei Po, Ook, Melissa, Lauren, Leela, Lindsay, Newcastle, Past-Lifer, Philip, Popsicle, Rip, Rose, Roy, Sarah, Shannon, Specimen, Travis, Whitley, Yesterday

LOOKS

Choose one or more:

Ankle monitor, Bathrobe, Cigarettes, Confused expression, Digital watch, Eyes that cannot unsee, Fedora, Flannel, Flint and tinder, Jeans, Lack of background radiation, Legwarmers, Newspaper, Nervous tic, Portable stereo, Party attitude, Poncho, Rosary, Simple smile, Sneakers, Tattoo of lab number, Tracking tag (on ear), T-Shirt, Trilby, Vivisection scars

ATTRIBUTES & HEALTH

Choose one:

Trying to Blend In

Bottom +3, Charm +2, Down +1
Top -1, Strange -3, Up -1
Doing 7, Feeling 4, Thinking 5

Backward Savage

Bottom +2, Charm +1, Down +1
Top -3, Strange +2, Up =0,
Doing 4, Feeling 8, Thinking 6

Perpetually Confused

Bottom +2, Charm +1, Down +1
Top +1, Strange =0, Up -2
Doing 8, Feeling 6, Thinking 4

Xenophile

Bottom +1, Charm +3, Down -1
Top +2, Strange =0, Up -2
Doing 8, Feeling 8, Thinking 2

DEFLECT: THINKING

Ignorance is Bliss: Whenever you would suffer harm to your Thinking, you can deflect the harm to your Doing or Feeling, instead.

TIMES

Future_x 2

History_x 3

CONNECTIONS

Ask each player to name a song. After listening to all their answers, choose one character to have a +2 Connection with. You have latched onto this character as your anchor in this strange new world.

You have +1 Connection with all the other characters.

UNIQUE MOVES

harmless

For some reason, you're never considered a priority.

Ante 1 Fx, then roll +Bottom.

Up to 6: Until your next move, subtract 1 from all harm and weak threats ignore you. Move your ante to Hx.

7+: Until your next move, subtract 3 from all harm and all threats ignore you. Move your ante to fluke.

MOTIVATE

Your boundless enthusiasm can bring out the best in people.

Pick a character or other target, and make a motivational speech to them. Ante 1 or more Fx, then roll +Charm.

Up to 6: Set aside your entire ante to **fluke**. Your target has no idea what you're on about.

7-9: Your target takes +1 forward as you cheer them on. Set aside 1 ante as **fluke**, return the rest to your Fx.

10+: Your target takes your +ante forward, as you cheer them on. After they make the roll with the +ante bonus, move your entire ante to **Hx**.

LUCK

The universe must really like you.

Declare you want to have a really lucky break, ante 1 or more Fx, and roll +ante. You, the MC, and your fellow players should feel free to make suggestions, each one more unlikely and embarrassing than the last.

Up to 6: You suffer humiliation. (You reach into a bin and something stings you; the alien reveals a frightening array of toothy orifices; not only does the door not open, but you trigger the security system, etc.)

Set aside your entire ante as fluke.

7-9: Something strong happens, mostly in your favor. (You find a useful, rare, strong device; the alien has a love for some obscure fact or ancient history you happen to know; you crash the entire security system by typing in the exact random sequence it didn't expect, etc.)

Set aside 1 ante as fluke and move the rest to Hx.

10+: Something grand happens, mostly in your favor. (You find a singular, grand device; you look exactly like the messiah, as inscribed generations ago; you trigger the self-destruct sequence and now everyone must leave, etc.)

Set aside all your ante as fluke.

FLUKE

You set aside fluke points by using your unique moves.

Add +fluke to any rolls to avoid harm.*

Add +fluke to any rolls forward that act on a previous luck result.* Especially the luck results that embarrassed you!

***If you added +fluke to a roll that had doubles** (two dice that have matching numbers), **move all fluke to your Hx.** You still get the +fluke bonus to that last roll, but now it's all gone.

Move 1 fluke to Hx to have you or a nearby friend replace a hazard with embarrassment.

(Enemies spare your life, only to capture you. Your fall is broken by a dumpster of Ultra-Manure. The alien considers your bodily fluids to be a powerful aphrodisiac, etc.)



empath

You understand. You have telepathic powers, whether they're an inborn gift, a natural talent of your species, or the product of technological upgrades and experimentation. You can understand people better than they know themselves, and exert a terrifying degree of control over unwilling minds.

Play an Empath if you want to play a character with mind-reading and other telepathic powers.

SAMPLE NAMES

Antharum, Byron, Charles,
Cognitotron 9000, Esth, Jean,
Locus, Scorpius, Susan, Taruvius,
Troj, Vriska, Zhaan

LOOKS

Choose one or more:

Bald, Brain augmentations, Chatty,
Frequent nosebleeds, Gas mask,
Jaded eyes, Kind eyes, Menacing
eyes, Perfumed, Scared of crowds,
Soft voice, Third eye, Tidily
groomed.

ATTRIBUTES & HEALTH

Choose one:

☒ Xenopsychologist

Bottom +1, Charm +1, Down -1
Top +1, Strange -1, Up +2
Doing 7, Feeling 5, Thinking 6

☒ Interrogator

Bottom -2, Charm +1, Down +1
Top +2, Strange -1, Up +2
Doing 5, Feeling 5, Thinking 8

☒ High Priest

Bottom +2, Charm +2, Down -2
Top +1, Strange -3, Up +3
Doing 8, Feeling 4, Thinking 6

☒ Dominator

Bottom -2, Charm -1, Down +1
Top +3, Strange +1, Up +1
Doing 6, Feeling 5, Thinking 7

DEFLECT: FEELING

Psionic Discipline: Whenever you
would suffer harm to your Doing, you
can deflect that harm to your Feeling
or Thinking instead.

TIMES

Future_x 3

History_x 2

CONNECTIONS

In character, ask each other
character to tell you how they
feel. After listening to their
answers, choose one character to
have +2 Connection with.
You have +1 Connection to all
other characters.

UNIQUE MOVES

TELEPATHY

You can use telepathy to establish a
link to other people's minds

**Ask a willing target if they will
consent to your telepathy.** If they
do, set aside 1 Fx on the target, as
rapport. (No roll is needed.)

Use your psychic powers to reach
across the cosmos. Distance is not
a factor. **Declare a target or group
that you have a Connection with,
ante 1 Fx, and roll +Connection.**
Up to 9: move your Fx to Hx.
10+: set your Fx on the target, as
rapport. If your connection was
with a group instead of a specific
person, you'll get a random person
in that group – the closest, most
receptive mind.

You can also use telepathy without
someone's consent. **Declare an
unaware or unwilling target in
your zone of control, ante 1 Fx,
then roll +Up.**

Up to 6: No Telepathy

Your power fails you; return
your ante to Fx.

A weak target won't notice.

A strong target will become
suspicious of you.

A grand target will know you
just tried using telepathy on them.

7-9: Weak Telepathy

If your target is weak, choose
one: either let the telepathy fail,
or move 1 Fx to **rapport**. Your
target suspects nothing.

If the target is strong, the telepathy fails, return your ante to Fx, and the grand target becomes suspicious of you.

10-12: Strong Telepathy

If your target is weak or strong, choose one: either let the telepathy fail, or move 1 Fx to **rapport**. Your target suspects nothing.

If there's a group of weak characters here, all reasonably similar, the MC may let you move 1 Fx as **rapport** with the whole group.

If the target is grand, the telepathy fails, return your ante to Fx, and the grand target becomes suspicious of you.

13+: Grand Telepathy

Choose one: either let the telepathy fail, or move 1 Fx to **rapport**. Your target suspects nothing.

Rapport

You gain rapport points by using your telepathy move.

You may use the following moves, but only on targets who have your rapport set aside on them:

- ❑ **To read the target's mind, roll +Up.** 7-9, you know the target's deep thoughts, including anything they're hiding from you, who they really serve, and if they are trying to deceive you. 10+, you know the target's subconscious thoughts, such as the target's personal fears,

vulnerabilities, and past history with other telepaths.

- ❑ **To plant a hypnotic suggestion into a remote target's mind, roll +Top.** Up to 6, affect a weak target; 7-9, affect a strong target; 10+, affect a grand target.

Hypnotic suggestions are simple, careless actions that do not cause the target immediate harm. (Forget to lock the door, leave the oven on, drop their wallet, etc.) Be subtle, be creative, and be fun. The suggestion lasts even after the rapport is gone.

- ❑ **To dominate a local target against their will, roll +Top.** 7-9, dominate a weak target. 10+, dominate a strong target. (Grand targets cannot be dominated.) Until your next move, the target does anything you want, including suicide. They will remember being controlled.

- ❑ **To possess a target, roll +Top.** 7-9, possess a weak target. 10+, possess a strong target. (Grand targets cannot be possessed.) Your own body becomes inert, and you are now controlling the target. Any harm suffered by the target transfers to your body. The target won't remember any of this.

- ❑ **To transfer some of your personal energy to another character, no roll is needed.** You may move points from any of your indices to restore the same kind on the target. You may move points from your Fx to the target's Fx.
- ❑ **To erase a target's memories, roll +Top.** 7-9, erase a weak target's memory of what just happened. 10+, erase a strong target's memory.
- ❑ Do something else that involves telepathy, mind-reading, and other powers, making rolls as appropriate. Be creative!



energy being

You are an existence of pure energy, a lifeform that transcends the crude limitations of biology and technology. Whatever you're made of—electricity, light, radiation, cosmic energy—it's tuned you into a perspective on reality that's fundamentally different from the way lesser beings experience it. Your reasons for traveling the universe might seem inexplicable to them, but what are they going to do? Stop you?

Play an Energy Being if you want an alien perspective of the world combined with weird, logic-defying powers.

sample names

Anomaly Zero-X, Chorzoron, Dave the Vortex, Emanation Prime, Galoch, Helios, Nova, Phoenix, Omegnetron, Rakasha, Rebus, Starchild, Syzygy, Tzalikoth

looks

Choose one or more:

Containment suit, Crackling electricity, Disrupts technology, Dots of cosmic energy, Energy tentacles, Higher-dimensional geometry, A metallic tang, Ozone smell, Person-shaped, Radiant, Shadowy, Translucent

attributes & health

Choose one:

☒ Trickster

Bottom +2, Charm +3, Down +1
Top -3, Strange -2, Up +2
Doing 4, Feeling 6, Thinking 8

☒ Transcendental

Bottom +2, Charm +2, Down -1
Top -2, Strange -1, Up +3
Doing 5, Feeling 6, Thinking 7

☒ Scientific Observer

Bottom +3, Charm +2, Down +1
Top -3, Strange -2, Up +2
Doing 5, Feeling 5, Thinking 8

☒ Energy Eater

Bottom +2, Charm -2, Down -1
Top -1, Strange +3, Up +2
Doing 6, Feeling 6, Thinking 6

deflect: doing

Beyond Material Form: Whenever you would suffer harm to your Doing, you can deflect that harm to your Feeling or Thinking instead.

times

Future_x 3

History_x 2

connections

In character, ask each other character how they enjoy the confines of their material bodies. After listening to their answers, choose one character to have +2 Connection with.

unique moves

Transcendence

You don't need to breathe, eat, sleep, or drink. You're beyond such things.

To use your energy, ante 1 Fx, then roll +Bottom.

Up to 6: Either return your ante to Fx and do nothing ... or choose one item from below, and move your ante to Hx (as you drain your personal energy).

- ☒ Phase through a weak barrier.
- ☒ Transmit yourself through electrical wires, over a radio dish, etc.
- ☒ Ignore gravity.
- ☒ Ignore a single incident of weak harm.
- ☒ Drain or disable a weak electronic device, including a weapon held by a weak target.

7+: Choose one:

- ☒ Return your ante to Fx, and choose one option from the list above (and thus avoid draining your personal energy).
- ☒ Move your ante to Hx, and then overcome a strong barrier, harm, or device.

COSMIC SENSES

You have otherworldly senses beyond those of material beings. **To sense energy and cosmic phenomena, ante 1 Fx, then roll +Up.**

Up to 6: Either return your ante to Fx and do nothing ... or choose one item from below, and move your ante to Hx (as you drain your personal energy).

- ❑ What's the largest source of power nearby?
- ❑ Have there been any strange energetic anomalies, cosmic phenomena, or other beings of pure energy around here lately?
- ❑ Is there anything weird or unusual happening around here that could help me?
- ❑ What's the technology level like nearby, and is there infrastructure that's useful to me?
- ❑ What should I pay attention to?
- ❑ What happened here recently?
- ❑ What's about to happen?
- ❑ What tier are these people?

7-9: Choose one: Return your ante to Fx, and ask one question from the list above ... or drain yourself, move your ante to Hx, and then ask three questions from the list.

10+: Return your ante to Fx, and then ask up to three questions from the list above

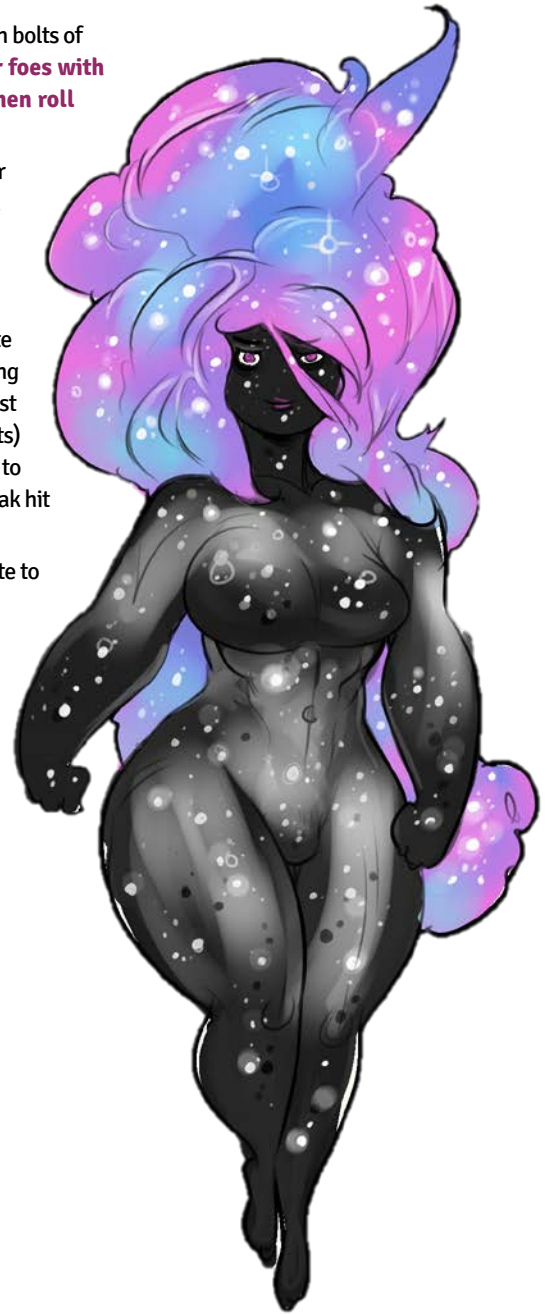
BLAST

You can attack others with bolts of energy. **To blast your foes with energy, ante 1 Fx, then roll +Strange:**

Up to 6: Either move your ante to Hx and score a weak hit... or return your ante to Fx and miss.

7-9: Either move your ante to Hx and score a strong hit (or weak hits against a group of weak targets) ... or return your ante to Fx and just score a weak hit on one target.

10+: Either move your ante to Hx and score a grand hit... or return your ante to Fx and just score a strong hit.



explorer

Every map has edges. You're one of the people that keeps pushing those edges forward. Driven by wanderlust and the thrill of discovery, you live a constant adventure into the unknown. You take joy in finding uncharted planets, discovering new species, making first contact with alien civilizations, and in dreaming of what's still left to be discovered.

Play an Explorer to be a jack of all trades who comes out of danger unscathed.

SAMPLE NAMES

Alexander, Darak, Ell, Farin,
Hunter, Indie, James, Lara,
Mimulex, Ravi, Rey, Roland, Swift

LOOKS

Choose one or more:

Bright eyes, Curious eyes,
Compass, Dusty clothes, Heavily
armed, Hiking gear, Messy, Scruffy,
Tanned, Trusting eyes, Unsus-
pecting, Utility vest

ATTRIBUTES & HEALTH

Choose one:

☒ Thrill Seeker

Bottom -1, Charm +2, Down +2
Top +2, Strange -1, Up -1
Doing 6, Feeling 6, Thinking 6

☒ Scientific Adventurer

Bottom +2, Charm +2, Down +2
Top -2, Strange -3, Up +2
Doing 5, Feeling 4, Thinking 9

☒ Treasure Hunter

Bottom +1, Charm +2, Down +3
Top +1, Strange -1, Up -3
Doing 7, Feeling 6, Thinking 5

☒ Most Interesting Character

Bottom +1, Charm +2, Down +2
Top +2, Strange -2, Up -2
Doing 8, Feeling 5, Thinking 5

DEFLECT: FEELING

Can't Take the Sky from Me:

Whenever you would suffer harm
to your Feeling, you can deflect
the harm to your Doing or
Thinking, instead.

TIMES

Future_x 4

History_x 1

CONNECTIONS

In character, ask each other
character what they want to find.
After listening to their answers,
choose one character to have +2
Connection with.

Also, +2 Connection with
(choose one):

- ☒ Space fleet uniform with
bandolier and communicator
(gear)
- ☒ A talent for improvising repairs
with whatever's at hand (gear)
- ☒ The lost treasure of an ancient
alien civilization (gear)

- ☒ An all-purpose navigational
drone (gear)

- ☒ Caches of weapons everywhere
(gear)

- ☒ A newly discovered life form
(alien pet, named Argo, Jax,
Obi, or Specimen Zero)

- ☒ Or make something up!

UNIQUE MOVES

VERSATILITY

Specialization is for insects.

After rolling 6 or less, but before
playing out any effects, move
1 Fx to Hx. That roll is changed
to 7.

After a nearby friend rolls 6 or
less, but before playing out
any effects, offer your
assistance. Move 1 of your Fx
to your Hx, and your friend's
roll is changed to 7.

CAUTION

You're ready for ambushes, traps, and other surprises.

When suffering some hazard or peril, instead of rolling the usual challenge, roll +Down.

Up to 6: Suffer the hazard, as if you rolled 6 or less.

7-9: Avoid any weak hazard completely, or reduce any harm by 1. (In case it matters, treat the hazard as if you rolled 7.) Until your next move, any friend who responds to the same hazard takes +1 forward.

10+: Avoid any strong hazard completely, or reduce any harm by 2. (In case it matters, treat the hazard as if you rolled 10.) Until your next move, any friend who responds to the same hazard takes +3 forward.

DIPLOMACY

You speak dozens of languages, you've been to hundreds of places. You are most interesting, that way.

When you interact with a strange or alien culture, roll +Charm.

7-9: The MC should tell you basic facts about the civilization you've just met. The MC should tell you who is in control here, what you should be on the lookout for, and what is the best way to deal with these people. If they are currently hostile, you may immediately try to **cease hostilities** (page 123).

10+: As above, plus the MC may tell you to write down a Connection +1 with this civilization. You can now negotiate with them, freely.



EXTINCTIONER

You could be a sentient vapor cloud, or a being of pure energy, or a swarm of nanites. In theory, if you were left unchecked, you could destroy planet after planet... but what's the fun in that? Besides, you'd eventually go head-to-head with some other unstoppable force and it would just get ugly. The genocide of countless innocents hasn't brought you any happiness. If you just take a chance to talk to people, many of them are extremely polite, when they're not sobbing and begging you to spare them from your ineffable power. Maybe here, among these gentle, ephemeral beings, you might come to know the strange and wonderful feeling called "love." Or maybe you'll get jilted, throw a fit, and wipe out a few star systems. Most of us are hoping for the "love" part.

Play an Extinctionner if you want to be a big, dangerous power, even by our standards!

SAMPLE NAMES

The All-Consuming, Aohime, Azathoth, Berserker, Bringer-of-Death, Dioxygene Diflouride, Ender, Gemmajacula, Grey Goo, Gygan, The Instrumentality, Jenora, Kali, Kosmos, Otto, Pyron, Ripper, Shakara, Shen Taier, Shiva, Tarkus, Tiamat

LOOKS

Choose one or more:

Amorphous blob, Crackling plasma, Death cannons, Everybody sees something different, Glow, Humming noise, Ichorous ooze, Nanomachines, Polymorphism, Pulsating flesh, Robotics, Shifting chaos, Small child, Stench of death, The stuff of nightmares, Yawning void of space

Choose your dread power:

- ☒ Zetta-tech cybernetics
- ☒ Self-replicating nano-machines
- ☒ Hard-light force-screens
- ☒ Level 9000 Psycho-Kinesics
- ☒ Unchecked biotic growth
- ☒ Being of pure energy
- ☒ ... or make something up!

When you are powered up, it's quite obvious. Nearby electronics may suddenly turn on or short out. Sentient beings feel the aura of your dread. Your appearance changes to your final form, etc. Be creative!

ATTRIBUTES & HEALTH

Choose one:

- ☒ **Cosmic Horror**
Bottom -1, Charm-1, Down -2
Top +3, Strange +2, Up +2
Doing 7, Feeling 6, Thinking 5
- ☒ **Nice If You Get to Know Them**
Bottom +1, Charm =0, Down -3
Top +3, Strange +2, Up =0
Doing 9, Feeling 7, Thinking 2
- ☒ **Hiding in Plain Sight**
Bottom +1, Charm =0, Down -2
Top +2, Strange +2, Up =0
Doing 8, Feeling 7, Thinking 3
- ☒ **Bad News**
Bottom =0, Charm -1, Down -1
Top +2, Strange +3, Up =0
Doing 7, Feeling 7, Thinking 4

DEFLECT: THINKING

Unthinkable Destruction:

Whenever you would suffer harm to your Thinking, you can deflect the harm to your Doing or Feeling, instead.

TIMES

Future_x 4

History_x 1

CONNECTIONS

In character, ask each player if their character is afraid of yours. After listening to their answers, pick one character to have a +2 Connection with.

UNIQUE MOVES

might

To power up for might, ante 1 or more Fx. Roll +Strange.

Up to 9: Return your ante to Fx.

If "power up for might" is your next move, take +3 forward.

10+: Put all of your ante aside, as might.

While you have might, you may use these moves:

- ☒ **Survive and travel in outer space.** You propel yourself with some sort of locomotion. While you could travel to other stars, you don't move faster than light and it will take centuries to get there.
- ☒ **Ignore weak hazards and attackers.** They either bounce off you or are destroyed.
- ☒ **Before resisting a strong hazard or attack, roll +might.** If you roll 7+, you both ignore and destroy the source.
- ☒ **Before resisting a grand hazard or attack, roll +might.** If you roll 7+, you may move 1 point from might to Hx to ignore this source until your next move, and to inflict grand damage on it. Some grand challenges will be destroyed by this, but grander ones might not.
- ☒ **Move all might to Hx.** You power down.

DESTRUCTION

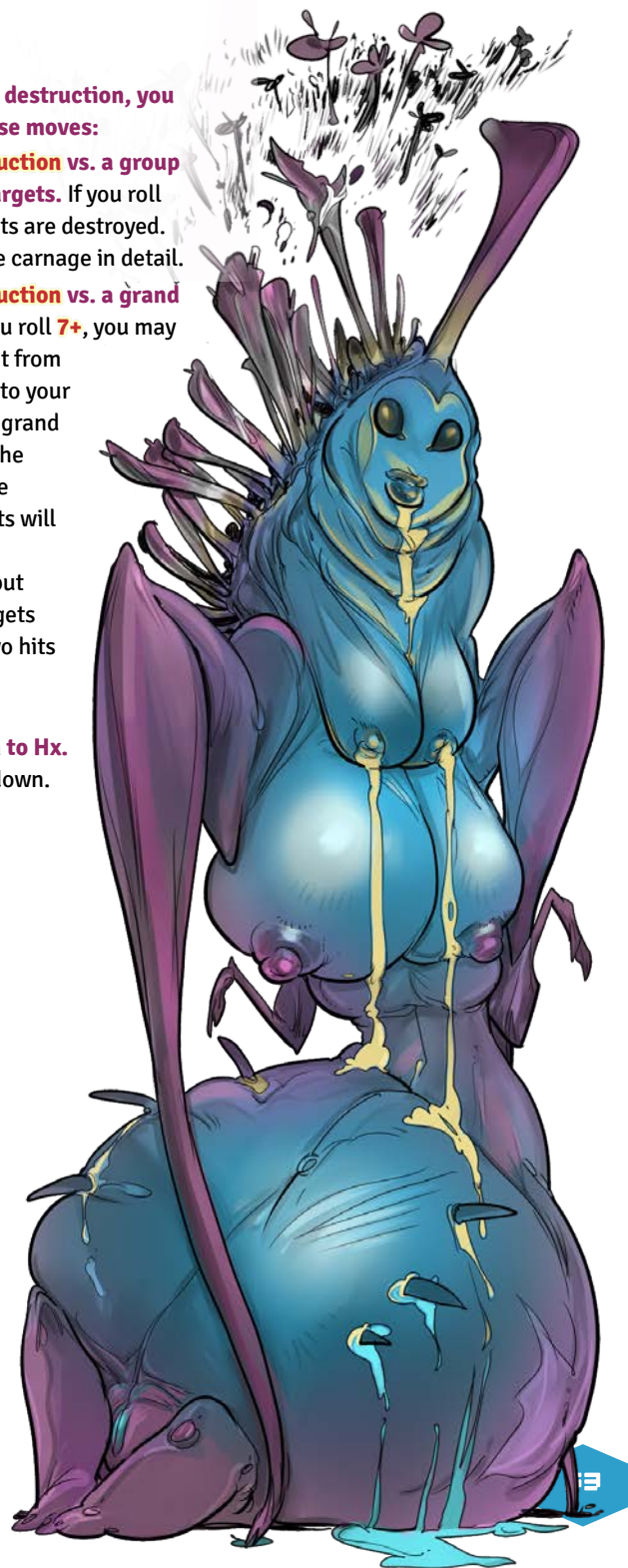
To power up for destruction, ante 1 or more Fx. Roll +Top.

Up to 9: Return your ante to Fx. If "power up for destruction" is your next move, take +3 forward.

10+: Put all your ante aside, as destruction.

While you have destruction, you may use these moves:

- ☒ **Roll +destruction vs. a group of strong targets.** If you roll 7+, all targets are destroyed. Describe the carnage in detail.
- ☒ **Roll +destruction vs. a grand target.** If you roll 7+, you may move 1 point from destruction to your Hx to inflict grand damage to the target. Some grand targets will be instantly destroyed, but grander targets may take two hits or more.
- ☒ **Move all destruction to Hx.** You power down.



FLORA

Galactic sentence is often biased in favor of the mammals, what with their circulatory systems and their high metabolic rate and whatnot. Maybe sometimes you get marsupials or even reptiles, but what about our other kingdoms? When you're a humanoid plant, you don't have a shallow complexity just to show off to the homiotherms. And you smell nice.

Play a Flora if you want to be different, if you want to be pretty, or if you want freaky plant powers.

SAMPLE NAMES

Alec, Audrey, Aweto, Eedyh, Elder, Eukeif, Groot, Hawthorne, Kiara, Kodama, Morphir, Neued, Pamela, Rowan, Sallis, Treven, Triff, Woodrue, Willow, Yew

LOOKS

Choose one or more:

Androgynous, Asexual, Bark skin, Bright colors, Flowers, Fungoid growths, Green hide, Humanoid, Hundreds of symbiotic insects living inside your body cavity, Leaves, Mass of Fibers, Pleasant Odor, Pollen, Reedy voice, Sticky globs, Tendrils

ATTRIBUTES & HEALTH

Choose one:

☒ Plant Thing

Bottom +1, Charm -2, Down -2
Top +3, Strange +2, Up =0
Doing 9, Feeling 5, Thinking 3

☒ Avatar of Nature

Bottom +1, Charm +1, Down -2
Top +1, Strange +2, Up =0
Doing 7, Feeling 8, Thinking 3

☒ Beautiful Arrangement

Bottom =0, Charm +2, Down -2
Top +3, Strange +1, Up -1
Doing 8, Feeling 8, Thinking 2

☒ Eternal Wisdom

Bottom =0, Charm =0, Down =0
Top +1, Strange +1, Up +1
Doing 6, Feeling 6, Thinking 6

DEFLECT: THINKING

Natural Law: Whenever you would suffer harm to your Thinking, you can deflect the harm to your Doing or Feeling, instead.

TIMES

Future_x 2

History_x 3

CONNECTIONS

Ask each player to say their favorite color. After listening to their answers, pick one character to have a +2 Connection with.

UNIQUE MOVES

GROWTH

To rapidly grow into a plant monster, ante 1 or more Fx. Roll +Top.

Up to 9: Others can see your flowers bloom, stalks extend, etc. Choose one: +ante forward to your next growth move... or move your ante back to Fx.

10+: Set your ante aside, as **growth**. The more points in growth, the bigger you are.

While you have growth, you may use the following moves.

☒ When a friend or nearby object suffers harm, roll +growth.

7-9, you take the hit instead;
10+, you take the hit and you subtract 1 from the harm, too.

☒ When you are assaulted directly, roll +growth. 7-9, you ignore and disable a weak attacker; 10+, you ignore and disable a strong attacker or group of weak ones. Choose one: subdue them (with vines, catapults, etc.) or destroy them (with thorns, smashing, smothering, etc.)

- ❑ **Add +growth to any rolls where being huge would help** (holding doors open, getting things off high shelves, catching falling people, etc.)
- ❑ **Subtract -growth from any rolls where being huge would hurt** (convincing people you mean them no harm, sneaking about, fitting into places, pushing buttons, etc.) The MC may rule that some things are impossible for giant plant monsters to do.
- ❑ **Move 1 growth to Hx to reduce incoming harm by 1, or just because you want to.** If all your growth is gone, you shrink back to normal size.

BLOOM

To use your colors, aroma, and other display to your advantage, ante 1 Fx and roll +Top.

7-9: Move your ante to Hx, and choose one from the list below.

10+: Return your ante to Fx, and choose one from the list below.

- ❑ Use bioluminescence to illuminate an area, revealing anything hidden.
- ❑ Dazzle a strong enemy, so that they stop assaulting you, thus giving you an opening for negotiation.
- ❑ Entrance a weak target, with your bright colors, powerful pheromones, and natural promise.
- ❑ Cover a place in fungus, spores and leaves, which instantly enrages all maids, cleaners, and janitorial staff in the area.
- ❑ Attract one or more types of insects. With the right wind on the right planet, you could summon swarms of the things.
- ❑ Repel an animal.
- ❑ Synthesize a variety of poisons, irritants, thorns, and other unpleasant things.
- ❑ Use healing herbs and oils to give you or someone else +3 on their next revive move. (See page 126).
- ❑ Sprout a blossom, which you can then hand off to someone as a token of your regard.
- ❑ Learn the biological history of the plants in this area.
- ❑ Blend in with local plants.
- ❑ Landscaping.
- ❑ Root yourself into good soil and then wait a hundred years.
- ❑ Or something else related to being a sentient plant.



freebooter

You can't take it with you, and with the stars about to go out, why wait? Everything has a price, and your goal is to build up the best inventory that you can. It's not so much that enjoy the money, as the thrill of the acquisition. Your stock and trade is the exotic, the bizarre, and the unique. Without a standard for money, you have to make frequent spot judgements to weigh the value of one thing against another. And to you, everything has a price.

Play a Freebooter if you care about getting the best toys as much as you care about having them.

SAMPLE NAMES

Adam, Captain, Carmen, Croesus, Cyrano, Delos, Fortune, Harry, Lucre, Macklin, Midas, Milton, Noah, Quark, Stan, Tiktik, Tivan, Underwood, Vantabeard, Xuanzang

LOOKS

Choose one or more:

Clashing clothes, Concealed weapon, Deep pockets that jingle, Exotic cologne, Gaudy jewelry, Honest face, Immaculate complexion, Mixed drink, Smile, One or more attendants, Organizer with up-to-date inventory, Polyglot of languages, Pride of their collection, Styled hair

ATTRIBUTES & HEALTH

Choose one:

☒ Merchant Marine

Bottom -3, Charm +2, Down +1
Top +3, Strange +1, Up -1
Doing 5, Feeling 8, Thinking 5

☒ Smooth Talker

Bottom -2, Charm +3, Down +2
Top +1, Strange -2, Up +1
Doing 4, Feeling 6, Thinking 8

☒ Collector

Bottom -3, Charm +3, Down =0
Top +2, Strange -1, Up +2
Doing 4, Feeling 7, Thinking 7

☒ Connoisseur

Bottom -2, Charm +2, Down +1
Top +2, Strange -2, Up +2
Doing 5, Feeling 5, Thinking 8

DEFLECT: DOING

Better Part of Valor: Whenever you would suffer harm to your Doing, you can deflect the harm to your Feeling or Thinking, instead.

TIMES

Future_x 2

History_x 3

CONNECTIONS

Think of a number, then ask all the other players to guess that number. After hearing all their guesses, pick one character to have a +2 Connection with. You can choose who guessed the closest, or who didn't go over, or just anyone. Don't tell anyone what your number was.

Also, +2 Connection with (choose one):

- ☒ Your Designer Bag of Holding with patented Xtra-Dimension™ Pok-8 Space® (gear)
- ☒ Your ship's cargo hold (gear)
- ☒ Your credit at finer stores found across the galaxy (gear)
- ☒ Your supercargo (follower, named Arrow, Blackberry, Cat, Efrete, Newton, 1-Zero-1, Silver, Uteeni, Zoop, etc.)
- ☒ Your rare, exotic, and spoiled pet (named Angel, Buster, Lucario, Nero, Princess, Snookums, Sweet Baby, Zuqueta, etc.)
- ☒ Or make something up!

UNIQUE MOVES

SAVVINESS

Always be closing. **Move 1 Fx to Hx, then roll +Top.**

Up to 6: Ask the MC one question from the list below. **7-9, two questions. 10+, three questions.**

- ☒ What happened here recently?
- ☒ What is about to happen?
- ☒ What's in it for me?
- ☒ What of mine is at risk, here?
- ☒ What things here are the most valuable or profitable?

- ❑ How valuable are these things to other people?
- ❑ What tier are these people?
- ❑ Who's really in control here?
- ❑ What is here that's not what it appears to be?

Take +3 forward when acting on the answers to your questions.

trade

It's time to make a deal. **Declare a target, then ante 1 or more Fx. Roll +Charm.**

Up to 6: Return ante to Fx.

7-9: Set aside 1 point of the ante as **trade**, and return the rest to Fx.

10: Set aside the entire ante as **trade**.

Declare +trade to be a +Connection with the target.

Use this connection to reveal gear, services, or other things. You could have multiple trade pools, set aside for different targets.

To liquidate trade, find another target who wants to do business with your first target and roll +Top.

Up to 6: Move all trade to Hx.

7-12: Set aside 1 trade as **riches**.
If your next move is to liquidate, take +3 forward.

13+: Move all trade to **riches**.

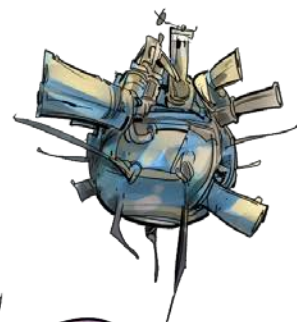
riches

You gain riches by making successful trade deals.

Add +riches to all rolls when you can impress others with how wealthy you are.

Make a business transaction with someone. **Move 1 riches to Hx, and choose one:**

- ❑ Make a strong purchase for you and each one of your friends.
- ❑ Bribe a grand target. (Grander targets may need multiple riches.)
- ❑ Purchase a grand piece of gear. (Grander gear may require multiple riches.)
- ❑ Throw money at a problem, what can be solved with money. In a casual situation, this could just work, but for charged situations, the MC may give you +3 per riches spent.



FUTSIE

Only the insane have strength enough to prosper. Only those who prosper truly judge what is sane. And boy, have you prospered. The pointless entropy of the universe, coupled with the death of everything and everyone you hold dear, may have had an adverse effect upon you. Or maybe you just weren't all there to begin with, and you thrive in the madness that is the end of history. If you're stubborn enough, eventually there won't be anyone around to tell you that you need help ... just you, and the voices in your head.

Play a Futsie if you want to solve problems with brutal violence or addle-headed insights.

SAMPLE NAMES

Albert, Alice, Black, Citizen Snips, Colonel, Crazy, Death-on-Two-Legs, Decker, Jane Doe, The End, Forbus, Frankie, Goldman, Jason, Kilgore, Mister Happy, Johnson, Mawl, Mom, Nutjob, Omega, The Perfect Being, Priscilla, Prophet, Psycho, Reaper, Roberto, Sam, Smiley, Super-Beast, The Unnamable, Wacko

LOOKS

Choose one or more:

Babbling, Bad teeth, constant sparking, Collection of small and shiny objects, Cybernetics, Hand-written manifesto, Invasions of personal space, Look of eagles, Necrosis, Never talks, Odd voice, Rictus, Ritual scarring, Sockets, Smell of blood, Spasms, Talks too much, Tattoos in fractal patterns, Unblinking eyes, Unusual diet

ATTRIBUTES & HEALTH

Choose one:

Walking Horror

Bottom -1, Charm -3, Down +2
Top +2, Strange +3, Up =0
Doing 6, Feeling 5, Thinking 7

Lurker in the Darkness

Bottom +3, Charm -2, Down =0
Top -1, Strange +2, Up +1
Doing 7, Feeling 5, Thinking 6

Compulsive Builder

Bottom +1, Charm -2, Down +2
Top -2, Strange +2, Up +2
Doing 4, Feeling 5, Thinking 9

Seer

Bottom +0, Charm -2, Down -1
Top +2, Strange +2, Up +2
Doing 7, Feeling 5, Thinking 6

DEFLECT: FEELING

Unconstrained by Conventional

Morality: Whenever you would suffer harm to your Feeling, you can deflect the harm to your Doing or Thinking, instead.

TIMES

Future_x 4

History_x 1

CONNECTIONS

Ask all the other players to roll two dice. Look at all their numbers, and then pick one character to have a +2 Connection with. You don't have to tell anyone why you did or didn't pick them.

UNIQUE MOVES

ATROCITY

You are capable of extreme violence.

Ante 1 Fx, then roll +Strange

Up to 9: Weak Atrocity

Move the ante into Hx. Charge any weak opponent and destroy them using only your bare hands. If your next move is an assault or atrocity, take +1 forward.

10-12: Strong Atrocity

Return the ante to Fx. Charge any one strong opponent, or group of weak opponents, and destroy them using only your bare hands. If your next move is an assault or atrocity, take +3 forward.

13+: Grand Atrocity

Move the ante to Fx. Charge a group of strong opponents, and destroy them using only your bare hands. You may charge a grand opponent and inflict grand damage on it, but it may or may not be destroyed.

If your next move is an assault or atrocity, take +6 forward.

prophecy

If only they would listen to you!
It would all make sense, given time.

Declare another character to share your secrets with, and ante 1 or more Fx. Roll +ante.

Up to 6: Insanity

Move 1 point to your Hx, and return the rest to your Fx. What you say makes no sense to anyone and just sounds really creepy.

7+: Prophecy

Set your ante in front of that player, as **prophecy**.

After that player makes a roll, they may ask you if they can move 1 point from the prophecy to your Hx. If you say yes, that player rolls one die and adds that to their last roll. (Oh, that's what you were talking about!)



GESTALT

One is the loneliest number. You've expanded—a single entity distributed equally among multiple bodies. Some gestalts are telepathic in nature, multiple individuals mind-melded into a single amalgamated whole. Technology can also offer multiple mechanical or cybernetic bodies, synchronized to the will of an uploaded brain or A.I. Others arise out of bizarre scientific accidents, quirks of alien evolution, or deep space anomalies.

Play the Gestalt to be defined by your multiple bodies, being in many places at once and occasionally pausing to mourn the loss of an individual body.

SAMPLE NAMES

Alpha Mind, Anaander, The Combine, Enantiomorph, The Harmony Consciousness, L.E.G.I.O.N, the Many-in-One, The Multiple Toms, Nestor, Omnius, Psmith, Uberclique, Unity

LOOKS

Choose one or more:

Coordinated outfits, Cybernetic implants, Disjointed movements, Eerily synchronized voices, Glowing eyes, Happy smiles, Matching accessories, Matching eye colors, Pleasantly harmonic voices, Simple white clothing, Smelling of incense, Smelling of recreational drugs

ATTRIBUTES & HEALTH

Choose one:

☒ Telepathically Linked

Bottom -2, Charm +2, Down +3
Top +1, Strange -2, Up +1
Doing 4, Feeling 5, Thinking 9

☒ Mechanized Drone-Bodies

Bottom -3, Charm -2, Down +2
Top +3, Strange +2, Up +1
Doing 5, Feeling 5, Thinking 8

☒ Pleasure Collective

Bottom -1, Charm +3, Down +2
Top +1, Strange -1, Up -1
Doing 5, Feeling 7, Thinking 6

☒ Too Many Clones!

Bottom -2, Charm +1, Down +2
Top +2, Strange -1, Up +1
Doing 5, Feeling 5, Thinking 8

DEFLECT: DOING

Expendable Bodies: Whenever you would suffer harm to your Doing, you can deflect that harm to your Feeling or Thinking instead.

TIMES

Future_x 4

History_x 1

CONNECTIONS

In character, ask each other character how they cope with only having a single body. After listening to their answers, choose one character to have +2 Connection with. You have +1 Connection with all other characters.

UNIQUE MOVES

COLLECTIVE

Your minds are linked, and you can summon a flash mob at any time.

To summon more bodies, ante 1 or more Fx. Roll +Down.

Up to 6: Return your ante to Fx. Your other bodies have been delayed, for some reason.

7+: Put all your ante aside, as **multiplicity**.

TRANSFERENCE

What is the fatigue of one body, when you have dozens to spare?

Whenever you would set aside a point in your scars pool, roll +Top. Roll once per point.

Up to 6: Set the point aside as **dwindling**, instead.

7+: Set the point aside as **multiplicity**, instead.

dwindling

You gain **dwindling** points by using your transferring to prevent scars. Each time you gain a dwindling point, one or more of your bodies perish, but the gestalt carries on.

Move all scars to dwindling. You don't have a scars pool. If a rule tells you to set a point in scars, set it in dwindling, instead.

If any one of your indicia (Doing, Feeling, or Thinking) drops to zero, ante 1 or more Fx or Hx, then roll +ante. If you have any +dwindling, add that to your roll, too.

Up to 6: Return your ante. You can try again on a later move, but wait for the MC to respond, first.

7-9: New bodies arrive to take up the slack. Restore 1 to each of your Doing, Feeling, and Thinking. Move 1 of your ante to **dwindling**, and the rest to **multiplicity**.

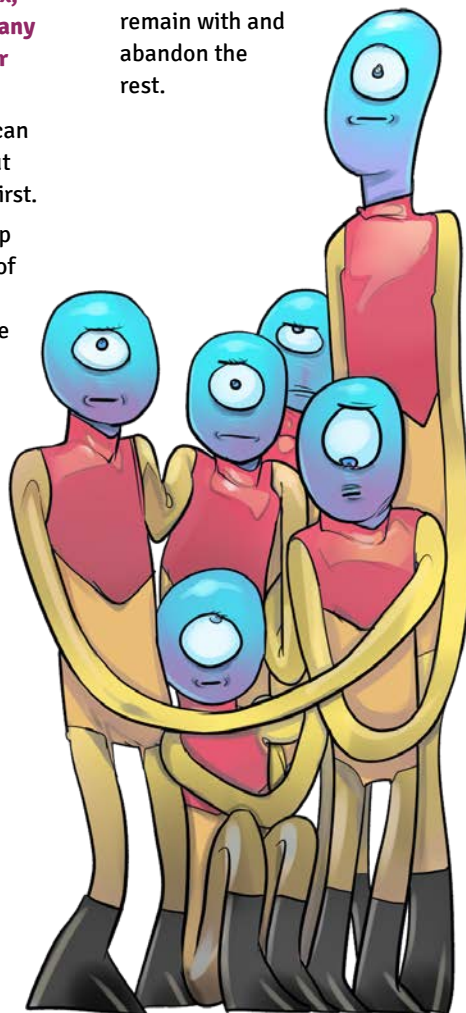
10+: Fresh bodies arrive to take up the slack. Restore 1 to each of your Doing, Feeling, and Thinking. Move your ante to **multiplicity**.

MULTIPLICITY

You gain **multiplicity** points by using your collective, transference, and dwindling moves. The more multiplicity you have, the more of you are around.

Whenever you have multiplicity, you may use these moves:

- ❑ **You may be in multiple places at once.** If your friends split up, you may send one or more bodies with them. If your multiplicity is gone, choose one friend to remain with and abandon the rest.



- ❑ **To control an area, roll +multiplicity.** Until your next move, all weak or strong enemies must target you first.
- ❑ **Before a friend makes a roll, offer to help and roll +multiplicity. 7+,** they may take +1 forward to the roll.
- ❑ **Add +multiplicity to any rolls where having multiple, coordinated bodies would help** (assembly-line, complex repairs, cleaning house, social events, etc.)
- ❑ **Subtract multiplicity from any rolls where having multiple, coordinated bodies would help** (being sneaky, taking cover, avoiding disasters, etc.) The MC may rule that some things are impossible for a large crowd.
- ❑ **At any time, move one or more points from multiplicity to Hx.** You can send your bodies off on their errands.
- ❑ **When you suffer harm, move one point from multiplicity to dwindling to negate the harm.** One of your bodies suffers the harm, instead, and it instantly perishes, from organ failure, heart attack, seizure, etc. (This demise may freak other people out, but you're used to it.)

hazmat

The wars of the future have seen the line between man and machine blur into nothingness on the battlefield. Soldiers cybernetically enhanced with mechanical exoskeletons, armored suits pilot by uploaded mindprints, powered armors that continue functioning long after the brain death of their pilot, and more. Were you ever human to begin with? If you were, it's hard to tell now. Your body is powerful and almost indestructible—but it's also your prison.

Play the Hazmat to protect your allies with strength and technological prowess.

SAMPLE NAMES

A'keni, Alita, Baxu, Evander,
RIM Model-009, Kathra, Liza,
Morrigun, Raltel, Rom,
S.O.L.D.I.E.R., Tony, Uron Null

LOOKS

Choose one or more:

Built-in weaponry, Custom upgrades, Hazmat-sealed, No visible face, Nuclear power core, Motorized hum, Multiple mechanized arms, Polished chrome chassis, PTSD, Static in voice, Tubes, Weathered chassis

ATTRIBUTES & HEALTH

Choose one:

☒ Power Suit Veteran

Bottom -1, Charm -1, Down +2
Top +1, Strange +1, Up +1
Doing 5, Feeling 5, Thinking 5

☒ Sentinel

Bottom -1, Charm -1, Down +3
Top +1, Strange =0, Up +1
Doing 5, Feeling 4, Thinking 5

☒ Self-Upgrade Enthusiast

Bottom -2, Charm -1, Down +2
Top +1, Strange =0, Up +3
Doing 4, Feeling 4, Thinking 10

☒ Forgotten War Machine

Bottom -1, Charm -2, Down +2
Top +2, Strange +3, Up -1
Doing 6, Feeling 6, Thinking 6

DEFLECT: FEELING

More Machine Than Person:

Whenever you would suffer harm to your Feeling, you can deflect the harm to your Doing or Thinking, instead.

TIMES

Future_x 3

History_x 2

CONNECTIONS

Ask each player whether they'd rather take the offensive or stay on the defense in battle. After listening to their answers, choose one character to have +2 Connection with.

Also, +2 Connection with (choose one):

- ☒ Pocket dimension storage capsule (gear)
- ☒ High-tech multimodal weapons array that can configure itself into various forms (gear)

- ☒ Sensory scanners and probes linked in to your armor's H.U.D. (gear)
- ☒ An onboard database of general information, navigation, and sites of strategic interest. (gear)
- ☒ Assorted mechanical components (gear)
- ☒ War plunder (gear)
- ☒ Or make something up!

UNIQUE MOVES

SELF-REPAIR

Your suit has numerous self-repair systems to help you. **To heal yourself, ante 1 Fx and roll +Top.**

Up to 6: Your systems need more time to complete the repairs. Return your ante to Fx. If your next move is self-repair, take +3 forward.

7-9: Restore up to 3 points to your Doing, Feeling, or Thinking (mix and match). Then move your ante to **failsafe**.

10+: Restore up to 6 points to your Doing, Feeling, or Thinking (mix and match). Then move your ante to **failsafe**.

FAILSAFE

You gain failsafe points from using your self-repair. It's not as good as self-repair, but it's better than nothing.

Whenever one or more of your indices is reduced to zero, roll +failsafe.

7-9: Restore 1 point to each of Doing, Feeling, and Thinking. Then move one **failsafe** point to **scars**.

10+: Restore 1 point to each of Doing, Feeling, and Thinking.

CYBERNETICS

Your suit has a variety of systems to help you get stuff done. **To use your suit to your advantage, ante 1 Fx and roll +Down.**

7-9: Move your ante to Hx, and choose one from the list below.

10+: Return your ante to Fx, and choose one from the list below.

- ☒ Scan an area for strange radiations and toxins, giving you and your friends +1 forward to deal with the problem.
- ☒ Use a point-defense system to neutralize a weak target.
- ☒ Until your next move, use your point-defense systems to temporarily reduce all strong targets in your zone of control into weak ones. (Maybe someone else can take them out?)

- ☒ Tank for your friends. Until your next move, any and all friends in your zone of control can deflect 1 point of damage from hazards onto you. You choose which of your indicia (Doing, Feeling, or Thinking) that they are deflecting the damage onto (mix and match).
- ☒ Use your exoskeletal strength to force open a door, to lift something heavy, to leap to a great height, etc.
- ☒ Use rockets or jet boost to rapidly change location.
- ☒ Endure some environmental hazard, subtracting 3 from the damage until your next move.
- ☒ Engage suspended animation, where you fall asleep and reduce your life-signs, to elude detection and to survive until help arrives.
- ☒ Or something else that only someone in a powered-armor suit could do. Be creative!



hero of the universe

The universe is a messy, complicated place where morality goes not just from black to grey to white, but to blue and orange as well. Doing the right thing will get you killed, and if it doesn't, you'll just live to see the unintended consequences of your heroism. You know that. But that's not going to stop you from trying. You are the kind of person who will always do the right thing, who protects the innocent and leads their friends to victory. It's hard world to be that kind of person in, but that makes what you do all the more important.

Play the Hero to inspire other characters with your heroic example. Someone's got to try!

sample names

Adam, Attrid, Cesa, Chandra, Eliza,
The 404 Kid, Ilana, Juda, Kimball,
Lance, the Lone Unit, Luke,
Malcolm, Marco, Marshal, Maya,
Rebec, Shane, Sparks, Vash, Wayne

looks

Choose one or more:

Backwater accent, Badge,
Calmness, Determined eyes,
Duster, Honest face, Inspiring
voice, Lantern jaw, Military
fatigues, Smile, Steady hand, Too
young to shave

attributes & health

Choose one:

☒ Space Ranger

Bottom -2, Charm +2, Down +3
Top +2, Strange =0, Up -2
Doing 5, Feeling 7, Thinking 6

☒ Sheriff

Bottom -1, Charm +2, Down +1
Top +3, Strange =0, Up -2
Doing 7, Feeling 7, Thinking 4

☒ Swashbuckler

Bottom -1, Charm +2, Down +2
Top +2, Strange =0, Up -2
Doing 6, Feeling 7, Thinking 5

☒ Exiled Royalty

Bottom +2, Charm +3, Down +1
Top +1, Strange -2, Up -2
Doing 8, Feeling 6, Thinking 4

deflect: thinking

It's Time for Action: Whenever you would suffer harm to your Thinking, you can deflect the harm to your Doing or Feeling, instead.

times

Future_x 3

History_x 2

connections

In character, ask each other character what they personally believe in. After listening to their answers, choose one character to have +2 Connection with. You have +1 Connection with all other characters.

unique moves

RESCUE

With great power comes great responsibility.

When a friend is assaulted, ante 1 Fx and roll +Down.

Up to 6: You're not fast enough! Return your ante to Fx and try to keep strong as the MC describes what happens.

7-9: Weak Rescue. You subdue a weak attacker, or prevent a weak hazard before any harm. If it's a strong challenge, you'll still succeed, but with complications. (You may suffer harm, you might lose some important item, you gain unwanted attention, or something else that you and the MC think of.) Move your ante to **heroics**.

10+: Strong Rescue. You deal with a strong challenge with no problems, but if it's grand, you suffer complications, as above. Move your ante to **heroics**.

RALLY

Lead by example. Describe some noble calling to inspire your friends, ante 1 Fx and roll +Top.

Up to 6: Return your ante to Fx.

7+: Move your ante to **heroics**.
If your friend's next move is in the spirit of what you just described, you may tell them to **roll three dice and keep the best two**.

HEROICS

Your heroics pool builds up by using your rescue and your rally moves.

When you have points in heroics, you may use these moves:

- ❑ Add +heroics to any rolls to convince others of your good intentions.
- ❑ Add +heroics to any rolls to escape from containment, prison, or any other place that would hold you back.
- ❑ Add +heroics to any roll to pick yourself back up.
(See "revive", page 126.)
- ❑ Subtract heroics from any rolls where being a good guy make things more difficult for you. The MC may rule that things are impossible when you've got heroics.
- ❑ If you are incapacitated, all your friends may add +heroics to their rolls to help you or to fight against what caused your downfall.

- ❑ Urge a friend to do the right thing. If their next move is in the spirit of your urge, move 1 point of your heroics to their Fx pool.



IMMORTAL

By definition, anyone who can't die would still be around by the end of history. Well, here you are. You might be some sort of biological entity that's immune to the ravages of age. Or you could be a mechanical robot who's really durable, easily fixed, or both. You might not even be a linear, causal being as we understand it. What makes you unusual is that you've lived a long, long time, and you've seen a lot. Now it's time to party.

SAMPLE NAMES

Ancient One, Arvin, Ayesha, Cane, Chosen One, Claire, Connor, Dorian, Durham, Elizabeth, The Foretold, Jack, Lazarus, Logan, Magnus, Maitland, Messiah, Methuselah, Milo, Number 17, Orchid, Orlando, Pamela, Pilgrim, Vandal, Walter

LOOKS

Choose one or more:

Anachronistic clothes, Beard, Calmness, Deliberate movements, Eyes that have seen it all, Memento of lost love, Paternal demeanor, Soothing voice, Steady hand, Striking looks, Weathered cane, Youthful complexion

ATTRIBUTES & HEALTH

Choose one:

☒ Sybarite

Bottom +1, Charm +2, Down =0
Top +1, Strange -1, Up =0
Doing 7, Feeling 6, Thinking 5

☒ Eternal Soldier

Bottom +1, Charm +1, Down +2
Top +1, Strange -1, Up 1
Doing 7, Feeling 5, Thinking 6

☒ Adventurer

Bottom +1, Charm +1, Down +1
Top +1, Strange +1, Up -2
Doing 7, Feeling 7, Thinking 4

☒ Nomad Soul

Bottom -1, Charm =0, Down +2
Top +1, Strange +2, Up -1
Doing 5, Feeling 7, Thinking 6

DEFLECT: DOING

Who Wants to Live Forever:

Whenever you would suffer harm to your Doing, you can deflect the harm to your Feeling or Thinking, instead.

TIMES

Future_x 4

History_x 1

CONNECTIONS

In character, ask each other character what their oldest memory is.

After hearing all the answers, choose a +2 connection with one of them.

Also +2 Connection with (choose one):

- ☒ Calvary uniform and weapons (gear)
- ☒ Several secret caches that I stashed over the millennia (gear)
- ☒ The hospitality of my ten thousand children (gear)

☒ Items bought with compound interest from the bank account I started last century (gear)

☒ Robot assistant assembled from a dozen different sources (follower, named Christian, Friday, Jeeves, Lydia, Oliver, Vivian, or Servant)

☒ Indestructible alien (pet, named Auklar, Exu, Marble, Spot, etc.)

☒ Or make something up!

UNIQUE MOVES

REMINISCENCE

You've forgotten more about life than most people will ever see. You can delve into old relationships, recover lost memories, and tap into hidden caches.

Declare a new connection with a person, organization, or gear.

This has to be a new connection, not an existing one. Then ante 1 or more Fx. Roll +ante.

Up to 6: Return your ante to Fx.

7+: Set all of your ante aside as the reminiscence.

Your +reminiscence is a +Connection with the target.

empathy

You've been around. **When a friend you have a connection is about to make a roll, offer to assist. If they accept, roll +Top.**

7+: Your friend takes your +Connection with them, forward.

IMMORTALITY

Your body resists harm that would fell lesser people.

Whenever you suffer harm or any calamity, ante 1 or more Fx, then roll +ante. (And +eternal, if any.)

Up to 6: Return the ante to Fx. Until your next move, reduce any harm by 1. If your next move is immortal, take +1 forward.

7-12: Move 1 point of ante to **eternal**, return the rest to Fx. Until your next move, reduce any harm by 3. If your next move is immortal, take +3 forward.

13+: Move all of your ante to **eternal**. Until your next move, reduce any harm by 6. If your next move is immortal, take +6 forward.

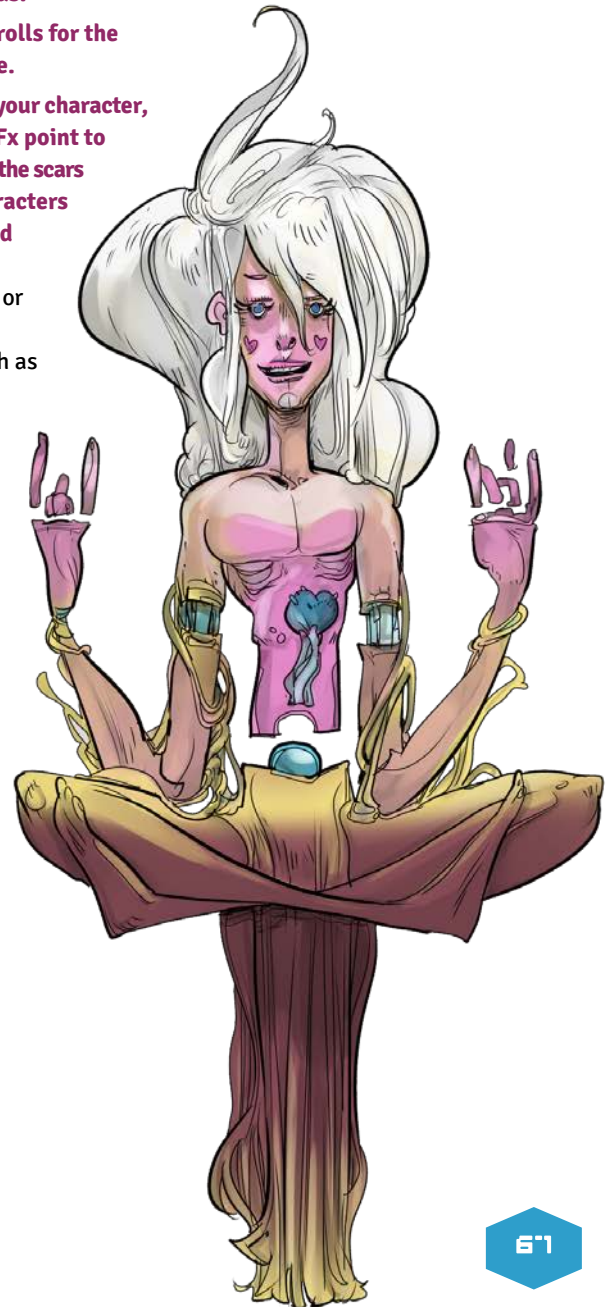
ETERNAL

As you use your immortality to resist damage, your eternal pool builds up.

Add +eternal to any rolls to resist damage or hazards.

Add +eternal to all rolls for the immortality move.

If you have scars on your character, you may move 1 Fx point to eternal. Then give the scars points to any characters you want, mix and match. They put those points in Fx or Hx, mixing and matching as much as they want.



LAST OF THEIR KIND

You are the last of a species or civilization lost to ages in some great cataclysm, war, or apocalypse. As the last, it is up to you to honor the memory of your people and their traditions—but it is also your burden to make amends for the wrongs of your people. On your journeys you seek out planets where your people interfered—conducted weapons experiments, meddled in the evolution of indigenous species, or built the architecture of that planet's society. You're the only one left who can fix that.

Play the Last of Their Kind to carry a timeless sadness and an ancient secret.

SAMPLE NAMES

Adam, Cratius, Guinan, Howard, J'onn, Kamandi, Kirana, Lobel, Nandi, Relict, Seht, Unit: Final, Vestige, The Wanderer

LOOKS

Choose one or more:

Androgynous, Clothing or jewelry decorated with mysterious symbols, Humanoid, Kind eyes, Lengthy journal, Mementos of lost family, Polyglot, Quiet dignity, Sad eyes, Unidentifiable accent, World-weary eyes

ATTRIBUTES & HEALTH

Choose one:

☒ Blending in With Society

Bottom +2, Charm =0, Down +1
Top -3, Strange +1, Up +2
Doing 4, Feeling 6, Thinking 8

☒ Sole Survivor

Bottom +1, Charm +2, Down +2
Top +2, Strange -3, Up -1
Doing 8, Feeling 4, Thinking 6

☒ Still in Mourning

Bottom +1, Charm -2, Down +2
Top -1, Strange +1, Up +2
Doing 5, Feeling 4, Thinking 9

☒ Seeking Vengeance

Bottom +1, Charm -3, Down +2
Top +1, Strange +1, Up +1
Doing 7, Feeling 3, Thinking 8

DEFLECT: FEELING

Everything is Lost: Whenever you would suffer harm to your Feeling, you can deflect the harm to your Doing or Thinking, instead.

TIMES

Future_x 4

History_x 1

CONNECTIONS

In character, ask each other character how they feel about their family or culture. After listening to their answers, choose one character to have +2 Connection with.

UNIQUE MOVES

CARETAKER

You have access to the rare resources of your civilization.

To find something to use for this situation, ante 1 Fx, then roll +Down.

Up to 6: Return your ante to Fx.

7+: Ask your MC one of these questions:

- ☒ What gear would my ancestors have put me here to find?
- ☒ What gear could I use to impress who's in control here?
- ☒ What gear would protect me from a bad thing that's about to happen?
- ☒ Is there anything here that's not supposed to be here?
- ☒ What would be the best gear to deal with these people?

The MC tells you what new piece of strong gear that you reveal, as dictated by your question. Move your Fx to **relics**.

RELICS

You gain relics points by using your caretaker move.

Add +relics to any moves that deal with the question(s) you asked to get the relics points in first place.

At any time, move 1 or more points from relics to Hx. Once all your relics points are gone, so is the gear, lost to the dustbin of history.

COVERT

You are one with the shadows.

Declare an enemy, then roll +Bottom.

Up to 6: You are discovered before you can do anything unpleasant, and the enemy responds in kind. You are exposed.

7-9: Move into range, subdue a weak target, and then move away. No weak enemies see you do this.

10+: Move into range, subdue a strong target, and then move away. No weak or strong enemies see you do this.

COUNSEL

Let others learn from the mistakes of the past. As your time ends, theirs begins.

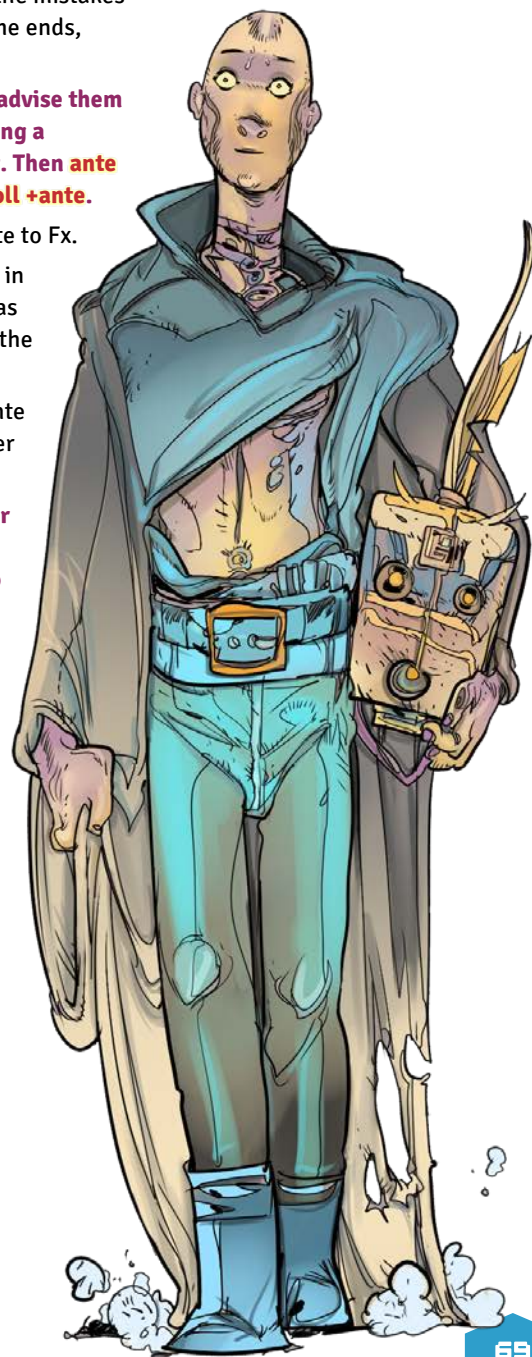
Declare a friend, and advise them on their future, using a parable of the past. Then ante 1 or more Fx and roll +ante.

Up to 6: Move your ante to Fx.

7-9: Set 1 of your ante in front of the player as **counsel**, and move the rest to your Hx.

10+: Set your entire ante in front of the player as **counsel**.

At any time, the player may ask if what they're about to do is in line with their counsel. If you say yes, they may move 1 point of your counsel to your Hx pool to their own Fx pool.



LORD OF ASHES

In your glory days, your rule was unquestioned, and your power was absolute. Entire planets paid tribute to you. You knew your empire would last until the end of time. And here we are. After centuries of operation, your empire is running on fumes. Most of your resources have been used up. The few followers that you have remaining are a pale imitation of what they were, generations ago. You're still lord of all you survey, and you still have vast wealth and resources. But here at the end of history, who doesn't? What's it all worth, when the last star goes out?

Play a Lord of Ashes if you want to help your friends by wallowing in pomp and glory.

SAMPLE NAMES

Am, Autarch, Divine Shadow, Erebus, Forbus, God-Emperor, Gwyn, Highmost, King Nothing, Lum, Maal Dweb, Magus, Namirha, Nashandra, Ozymandias, Pontiff, Prime, Qwib, Thasaidon, Typhon, Vergama

LOOKS

Choose one or more:

Advanced age, Baggy eyes, Booming voice, Ceremonial sword, Crown, Cultured accent, Dueling pistol, Gilded cybernetics, Jewelry, Life support, Purple robes, Quick gestures, Royal scepter, Short temper, Signet ring

ATTRIBUTES & HEALTH

Choose one:

☒ Senescent

Bottom -3, Charm +2, Down =0
Top +2, Strange +1, Up +1
Doing 4, Feeling 8, Thinking 6

☒ Dynastic Clone

Bottom -3, Charm +1, Down +1
Top +3, Strange +1, Up =0
Doing 5, Feeling 7, Thinking 6

☒ Machiavellian

Bottom -1, Charm +1, Down =0
Top +2, Strange =0, Up +1
Doing 6, Feeling 6, Thinking 6

☒ Emeritus

Bottom -1, Charm +1, Down +1
Top +2, Strange -1, Up +1
Doing 6, Feeling 5, Thinking 7

DEFLECT: DOING

Imperial Behavior: Whenever you would suffer harm to your Doing, you can deflect the harm to your Feeling or Thinking, instead.

TIMES

Future_x 3

History_x 2

CONNECTIONS

Ask all the other players to say something nice about your character. After judging their responses, choose one player and gain a +2 Connection with their character.

Also, +2 Connection with (choose one):

- ☒ The star-spanning remnants of my glorious empire (gear)

- ☒ The cargo hold of my personal vessel (gear)

- ☒ Tribute still granted to me by my thousands of supporters (gear)

- ☒ My personal attendant (follower, named Reader-of-the-Rules, Majordomo, Klytus, Zilog, etc.)

- ☒ My bodyblock (follower, named Maximilian, Star, Spirall, X86 Myrmydion, Royal Scion, etc.)

- ☒ My pathetic heir (follower, named Lothric, Sofia, Paul, Anakin, Morgana, Me the 2nd, etc.)

- ☒ Or make something up!

UNIQUE MOVES

VALOR

Shout a mighty and righteous challenge, then roll +Top.

Up to 6: Until your next move, weak enemies must target you first.

7-9: Until your next move, strong enemies must target you first. You may charge into range and destroy a weak target.

10+: Until your next move, all enemies must target you first. You may charge into range and destroy a strong target.

decree

When you talk, people listen.

At any time, ante 1 or more Fx.

Address all your fellow characters in a booming voice and give a rousing speech, worthy of a sovereign such as yourself. Roll +Charm.

Up to 6: Set 1 point aside as the **decree**, and move the rest to your Hx.

7+: Set all your ante aside as the **decree**.

After another player makes a roll, they may ask if they may move one point of decree to your Hx. If you say yes, they roll one die and add it to their last roll.

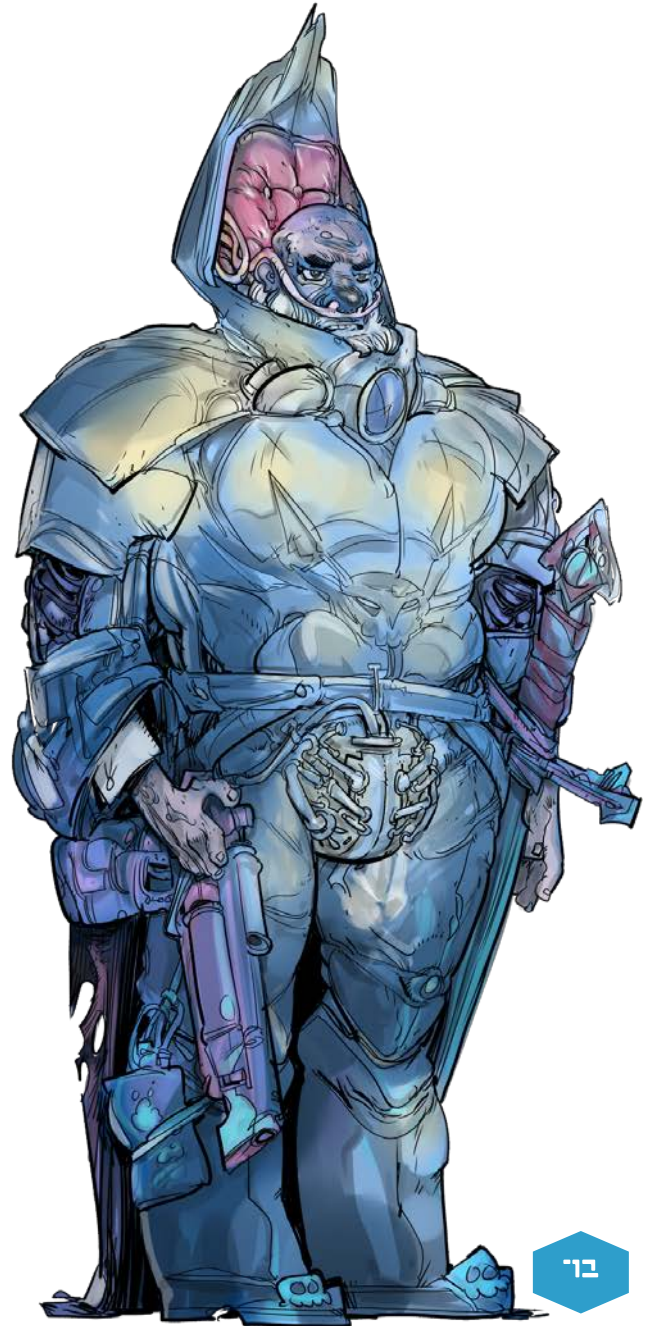
command

You can urge others to greatness.

Order a follower to do something, and ante 1 Fx. Roll +Top.

Up to 6: Return your ante to Fx. If your very next move is “command”, take +3 forward.

7+: Your follower does the task for you. Use your roll as the follower’s roll. When the MC reacts, if you choose to suffer the harm to yourself, subtract your +connection with that follower from any harm.



LOST TOY

What amazing robots, machines, and servants will we see in the future? And what happens when they're discarded. A few centuries without a system update, and a calamity or two have left you with a solid sense of awareness and just a teensy bit of paranoia. You might have spent who knows how long doing the same repetitive tasks over and over again. Or maybe you were left in the dark of the toy box, waiting and waiting for someone to come back and play with you, one more time.

SAMPLE NAMES

Aphrodite-A, Burradoberi, Cheri, David, Galatea, GA07-JL, Joe, Leroy, Maria, Neko, Noa, Pino, Priss, Rex, Roy, Raimu, Rogi, Steely Dan, Zev

LOOKS

Choose one or more:

After-market add-ons, battle carapace, Better than the real thing, Buzzing, Easy to clean, Endowments, Eyelashes, Genderfluid tank, Heat warmers, Jailbroken, Jerky movements, Last year's model, Makeup, Overclocked processor, Perfume, Pretty dress, Plastic smell, Polyvinyl skin, Replaceable facial features, Static in voice, Stitches, Strong grip, Subwoofer, Various attachments

ATTRIBUTES

health

Choose one:

Household

Bottom +2, Charm +2, Down +1
Top -3, Strange -1, Up +2
Doing 4, Feeling 6, Thinking 8

Military

Bottom +1, Charm =0, Down +2
Top -2, Strange +1, Up +1
Doing 4, Feeling 6, Thinking 8

Technical

Bottom +2, Charm =0, Down +2
Top -3, Strange =0, Up +2
Doing 4, Feeling 5, Thinking 9

Recreation

Bottom +2, Charm +2, Down +1
Top -3, Strange =0, Up +1
Doing 4, Feeling 7, Thinking 7

DEFLECT: DOING

Unfeeling Exterior: Whenever you would suffer harm to your Doing, you can deflect the harm to your Feeling or Thinking, instead.

TIMES

Future_x 4

History_x 1

CONNECTIONS

In character, ask each other character if they have ever felt lost or alone. After listening to their answers, choose one character to have a +2 Connection with. You tend to call that character "Master".
Also, +1 Connection with robotic parts (gear). A lifetime of scavenging has you constantly collecting bits and pieces, in case you need to repair yourself.

UNIQUE MOVES

robotics

You are a robot! You do not breathe, drink, eat, or sleep. You may suffer occasional power outages.

To use your robotic nature to advantage, ante 1 Fx and roll +Down.

Up to 6: Return your ante to Fx. If your next move is robotics, you may take +3 forward.

7+: Move your ante to battered, and choose one:

- ❑ Destroy a strong target, with nothing more than your bare hands.
- ❑ Until your next move, weaken a grand target to merely strong. (Maybe someone else can finish it off?)
- ❑ Until your next move, dominate a strong computer or device.
- ❑ Until your next move, prevent a grand hazard from hurting anyone else. (Block the plasma jet with your body, hold the door open so everyone else can get through, stand in the line of fire, etc.)

SELFLESSNESS

Whenever a friend is assaulted and you're close by, **ante 1 Fx** and **roll +Bottom**.

up to 9: You are now the target. Move your ante to **battered**.

10+: You are now the target. Move your ante to **battered** or to Hx (mix and match).

battered

Your battered pool builds up when you suffer damage. Tell other people that you're used to this kind of abuse and that it doesn't bother you anymore.

Your **+battered** may be used as a **Connection with anyone who might be sympathetic to you, even complete strangers**.

Whenever you would suffer harm, **roll +battered**.

7-9: subtract 1 from the harm.

10-12: subtract 2 from the harm.

13+: subtract 3 from the harm.

Another character (and not yourself) can volunteer to fix you.

If you ask someone else to do it, the other character takes -3 forward to fix you. (It's not in your nature to ask for your help.)

The other character **antes 1 Hx and roll +connection with you**.

7-9: the other character moves Hx to Fx. If their next move is "fix you", they take +3 forward.

10+: The other character moves Hx to Fx. Move all your battered points to Fx or Hx (mix and match).



OLD SOLDIER

War never changes. Having survived many tours of duty, you don't even remember what you started fighting for. You may have outlived your old unit, or maybe you were just considered unfit for duty. You now roam the stars, trying to find a purpose. It's not that you particularly enjoy killing... it's that there's nothing you enjoy more.

Play an Old Soldier if you want to be savvy about fighting, and about strategy in general.

SAMPLE NAMES

Athena, Bagman, Brannigan, Burton, Caine, Chief, Davis, Deadlock, Doomguy, ED-210, 4C, Grinner, Gunnar, Hammersmith, Hicks, Jango, Joe, Kilgore, Marshal, Mekum, Panzer, Reese, Rico, Rogue, PVC15, Slade, Todd, Vasquez, Zippo

LOOKS

Choose one or more:

Alcoholic, Bald, Battle armor, Burn scars, Buzzkill, Clipped speech, Cybernetic replacements, Fatigues, Grafted body parts, Gruff voice, Haunted look, Inappropriate laughter, Missing eye, Necklace of ears, No sense of humor, Polycarbon combat knife, PTSD, Religious, Remorseless, Tattered uniform, Tattoos, Unidentifiable accent, Vintage weapons

ATTRIBUTES & HEALTH

Choose one:

☒ Veteran

Bottom +1, Charm -2, Down +2
Top +2, Strange +2, Up -1
Doing 8, Feeling 4, Thinking 6

☒ Shellshocked

Bottom =0, Charm -2, Down +2
Top +1, Strange +2, Up =0
Doing 6, Feeling 5, Thinking 7

☒ Mercenary

Bottom +1, Charm =0, Down +2
Top +2, Strange -1, Up -1
Doing 8, Feeling 4, Thinking 6

☒ Conscript

Bottom +1, Charm -1, Down +2
Top +2, Strange =0, Up -1
Doing 8, Feeling 4, Thinking 6

DEFLECT: FEELING

All the Scars are on the Inside:

Whenever you would suffer harm to your Feeling, you can deflect the harm to your Doing or Thinking, instead.

TIMES

Future_x 3

History_x 2

CONNECTIONS

In character, ask each other character who is the most untouched by the horrors of war. After listening to their answers, pick one character to have a +2 connection with.

+2 Connection with (choose one):

- ☒ Your former unit's tontine (gear from the Resistance, the Brownshirts, the Separatists, the Spinward Marchers, etc.)
- ☒ An uncanny knack for having stashed weapons all over the place (gear)
- ☒ The captain's locker in your military-surplus vessel (gear)
- ☒ A pocket dimension accessed by the psionic actuator inside your spinal column (gear)
- ☒ A modular uniform where bits can be taken off and assembled into a variety of tools, sensors, and weapons (gear)
- ☒ Or make something up!

UNIQUE MOVES

STRATEGY

Any plan can be broken down into simple elements. **Describe an operating plan to the MC, then ante 1 or more Fx. Roll +Top.**

Up to 6: Return your ante to Fx.

7-9: Set aside 1 point of your ante for your strategy. Move the rest to your Fx.

10+: Set aside all points of your ante for your strategy.

Any player(not just you), after making a roll, can ask the MC if what was just rolled was covered by the plan. If the MC says yes, move 1 point from the strategy pool to your Hx, and then **re-roll**. The new roll stands, even if it's worse.

WARFARE

If fighting will result in victory, then you must fight. **Move 1 Fx to Hx, and then roll +Down.**

Up to 6: Choose one

7-9: Choose two

10+: Choose three

- ❑ Until your next move, any assaults made by weak enemies are directed against you, instead of your friends, and you take +1 forward to respond to their assaults.
- ❑ Charge to within range of a weak target and then take it out. You are not exposed.
- ❑ Until your next move, subtract 1 from all harm.
- ❑ Relocate to another position. Weak enemies will not observe your relocation.
- ❑ Until your next turn, whenever a friend assaults a weak target and misses, you may choose to take out the target for them and become **exposed**.
- ❑ Declare a strong target. Until your next move, your superior flanking reduces that target to weak. Maybe one of your friends can take it out?

PROFICIENCY

To attack an enemy, roll **+Down**.

Up to 6: You are exposed.

7-9: Charge into range and take out a target that's a lower tier than your weapon. If your next move is proficiency, take +1 forward. You are not exposed.

10+: Charge into range, and take out a target that's the same tier as your weapon. If your next move is proficiency, take +1 forward. You are not exposed.

13+: Choose one:

- ❑ Charge into range, take out a group of targets at the same tier as your weapon. You are not exposed.
- ❑ Charge into range, and reduce a grand target to strong, until your next move. (Maybe one of your friends can take it out?) If your next move is proficiency, take +1 forward. You are not exposed.



POLYmorph

Who are you, really? Maybe you don't know. You might be an alien from a planet where creatures have evolved to be perfect mimics. Or you could be a creation of science, the perfect spy or consort. In theory, a cluster of nano-machines could form and re-form into any shape needed for the current situation, too. Whoever you are, or were, or will be, you are the ultimate tourist. There's nowhere you can't go, no one you can't be.

Play a Polymorph if you want to be flexible and faceless.

SAMPLE NAMES

Alzabo, Blundht, Carmilla, Doppleganger, Firvulag, Gar, Grunge, Kerrigan, Legion, Leucrocotta, Luna, Morphir, Mystique, Moldvay, Otho, Qualtz, Slimer, Sybil, T-X, Zelig

LOOKS

Choose one or more aspects of your true form:

Ambient energy, Aura of psychic unease, Compound eyes, Dripping and reforming, Fangs, Fleshless, Genderless, Liquid metal, Many fingers, No one knows, Pleasant odor, Tiny cube, Transparent skin

ATTRIBUTES & HEALTH

Choose one:

☒ Succubus

Bottom +2, Charm +2, Down -2
Top +2, Strange +1, Up -2
Doing 9, Feeling 8, Thinking 1

☒ Imposter

Bottom +3, Charm +2, Down -3
Top +1, Strange +1, Up -1
Doing 9, Feeling 8, Thinking 1

☒ Assimilator

Bottom +2, Charm -1, Down =0
Top +1, Strange +3, Up -2
Doing 8, Feeling 7, Thinking 3

☒ Infiltrator

Bottom +3, Charm =0, Down -2
Top =0, Strange +2, Up =0
Doing 8, Feeling 7, Thinking 3

DEFLECT: THINKING

Whatever You Need to Be: Whenever you would suffer harm to your Thinking, you can deflect the harm to your Doing or Feeling, instead.

TIMES

Future_x 4

History_x 1

CONNECTIONS

In character, ask each player what their character thinks your true form looks like. After listening to their answers, pick one character to have a +2 Connection with.

UNIQUE MOVES

MIMICRY

Ante 1 or more Fx, and choose a character to mimic. Roll +Bottom.

Up to 9: Return your ante to Fx.

Your shape distorts, slowly and weirdly; if your next move is mimicry or shapeshift, +3 forward.

10+: Set your ante aside, as **mimic**.

While you have mimic, you may use the following moves.

☒ **Your +mimic counts as a +Connection to other characters who have a connection to your mimicked target.**

☒ **Add +mimic to all rolls to convince other people that you're the mimicked target.**

☒ **When someone assaults you while your mimicked target is here, roll +mimic. On 7+, they assault the mimicked target instead.**

☒ **Move 1 point of mimic to Hx to reduce harm by 1, or just because you want to. If all your mimic is gone, you revert to your bizarre, true form.**

shapeshift

To change into something else,
ante 1 or more Fx. Roll
+Strange.

Up to 9: Return your ante to Fx, as
you turn into something that's
not like anything; if your next
move is mimicry or shapeshift,
+3 forward.

10+: Put all your ante aside, as
shapeshift.

While you have shapeshift, you
may use these moves:

❏ **Roll +shapeshift to relocate.**

On **10+**, you can ooze through
cracks, fly into the air, or other-
wise use your shapeshifting
nature to get somewhere. On
7-9, you flounder and distort
yourself, slowly morphing; if
your next move is mimicry or
shapeshift, +3 forward.

❏ **Roll +shapeshift to charge a
weak group.** On **7+**, you
destroy the entire group, by
using razor-sharp tentacles,
gigantic jaws, acidic goop, etc.

❏ **Roll +shapeshift to assault a
strong target that's close by.**
On **10+**, you engulf the target.
If your next move is to mimic
that target, take +3 forward.

On **7-9**, your next move
against that target takes +1
forward.

❏ **Move 1 point of shapeshift to
Hx to reduce harm by 1, or
just because you want to.** If all
your shapeshift is gone, you
revert to your solid, true form.



The ship

You are a living spacecraft, possessed of consciousness and free will in a body that is a vast interstellar vessel. You might be an artificial intelligence overseeing the systems of a warship, projecting a holographic avatar to interact with your crew. You might be truly biological, able to detach a symbiotically bonded pilot or cute animal mascot for one-on-one conversation. Some ships have a technological or telepathic bond to a single pilot, requiring their neural pattern as their activation key.

Play the Ship to assist your allies from orbit with information, advice, and shows of technological power.

Sample names

Albatross, Argo, Caliburn, Defiant, Father/Mother, Invincible, Lexx, Melfina, Moya, Orac, Queen Zargon's Nervous Energy, Revenge, Sentinel, Sunbird, SwEEtie, Talon, Vera

LOOKS

Choose one or more:

Battered hull, Blaring klaxons, Crystalline machinery, Engine hum, Gas fumes, Holographic displays, Maintenance drones, Painted red, Plant-like design features, Self-regenerating, Shiny chrome hull, Static in voice, Techno-organic machinery

Describe your avatar: Your main body is a spaceship, but you also have a secondary avatar that's useful for interacting with people. You can take moves normally through your avatar, although it doesn't gain the benefits or penalties of any systems you've powered up.

Choose one:

- ☑ A human that's your psychically-bonded pilot
- ☑ A symbiotic alien pilot that can detach from you temporarily

- ☑ A holographic projection of your consciousness
- ☑ A remote-controlled mechanical drone
- ☑ A cute furry animal
- ☑ Or something else!

Attributes & health

Choose one:

- ☑ **Scientific Vessel**
Bottom +2, Charm +1, Down +2
Top -2, Strange -2, Up +2
Doing 5, Feeling 4, Thinking 9
- ☑ **Warship**
Bottom -1, Charm -3, Down +1
Top +2, Strange +1, Up +3
Doing 6, Feeling 3, Thinking 9
- ☑ **Scout**
Bottom +2, Charm +1, Down +3
Top -1, Strange -3, Up +1
Doing 6, Feeling 3, Thinking 9
- ☑ **Merchant Freighter**
Bottom +2, Charm +3, Down +2
Top -2, Strange -3, Up +1
Doing 5, Feeling 5, Thinking 8

deflect: FEELING

High Maintenance: Whenever you would suffer harm to your Feeling, you can deflect that harm to your Doing or Thinking instead.

TIMES

Future_x 3

History_x 2

CONNECTIONS

In character, ask each other character how they feel about being aboard you. After listening to their answers, choose one character to have +2 Connection with. You have +1 Connection with all other characters.

UNIQUE MOVES

conn

You may redirect power to your systems. **Ante 1 or more Fx, then roll +Up.**

Up to 6: You need more time. If your next move is conn, take +3 forward.

7+: Move your ante (mix and match) to any of these five pools: **cargo, speed, firepower, sensors, or shields.**

As a casual move, you may move 1 or more points out of firepower, sensors, shields, or speed to Hx (no roll is needed).

cargo

You set aside cargo points by using your conn move.

While you have cargo, you or any friend can raid your cargo bay to claim your +cargo as a bonus to reveal gear. If they are successful, you may choose to replace their ante of Fx with 1 point of your cargo (transferring your cargo point to the other player's Hx or inventory. See page 27.)

speed

You set aside shields points by using your conn move.

You or your pilots may add +speed to any rolls where piloting fast and precise would help you.

firepower

You gain firepower points by using your conn move.

You and your friends may add +firepower to any rolls to intimidate others or to cease hostilities. The MC may rule that having firepower makes some operations (stealth, diplomacy, etc.) impossible.

To engage in an exchange of weapons, roll +firepower

Up to 6: Ineffective fire! The MC describes the response from any other armed vessels.

7-9: Move 1 firepower to Hx. You unleash a strong barrage against a strategic target (giant ships, buildings, asteroids, etc.) Precision accuracy against tiny, human-sized targets is impossible, so there's no way to guarantee that you'll take out a specific foe.

10+: As above... or you may choose to move 1 firepower to scars and unleash the full strength of your arsenal, to deal grand strategic damage.

sensors

You gain sensors points by using your conn move.

Add +sensors to any rolls that you or your friends make to scan strategic areas for life signs, energy anomalies, and the other kinds of things that ships can find.

After a player makes a roll, you may roll +sensors to assist them.

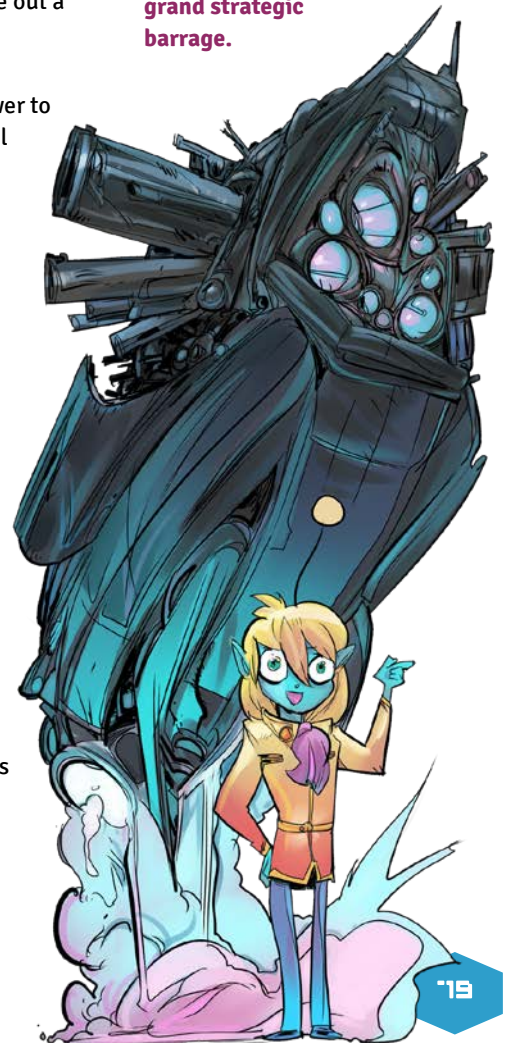
7+, add +1 to your friend's roll, then move one sensors point to Hx.

shields

You gain shields points by using your conn move.

You and your passengers may add +shields to resist harm that comes from outside your ship (turbulence, radiation, psychic waves of despair, etc.)

You may move 1 shields point to Hx to resist a strong strategic barrage. You may move 1 shield point to scars to resist a grand strategic barrage.



SIMULACRUM

Since the dawn of computers, people have been trying to make simulations of how real people behave. Scholars would input the entire repertoire of a famous author or playwright, hoping that some algorithm could generate new works. Motion-capture and 3D-modeling could make likenesses of people from ages long gone. And if the brain is merely neural impulses stored in known chemicals, might it be possible to duplicate someone's very thoughts? By the end of time, more than once, someone has been intelligently designed not to be unique, but to be someone else. You have a constant existential dilemma: are you your own person, or were you just made to be this way?

Play a Simulacrum if you want to be a holographic A.I., full of useful knowledge and computer tricks.

SAMPLE NAMES

Albert, Alice, Arnold, Becky, Bernard, Blue, Bob, Caspar, Claptrap, Cleo, Cortana, Eliza, George, Grace, Hal, Minerva, The Red Queen, Sal, Samuel, Samantha, Sark, Siri, Tourbot, Vannevar, Veronica, Virginia, Wintermute, Wopr, Yori, Ziggy

LOOKS

Choose one or more:

Business dress, Expository dialogue, Flickering appearance, Glasses, Mono-chromatic, Outdated clothes, Pop-up windows floating nearby, Static, Transparency

ATTRIBUTES & HEALTH

Choose one:

☒ Custodian

Bottom +2, Charm +2, Down -1
Top +1, Strange -3, Up +2
Doing 8, Feeling 4, Thinking 6

☒ Remake

Bottom +1, Charm +1, Down -1
Top +2, Strange -2, Up +2
Doing 8, Feeling 4, Thinking 6

☒ Self-Aware Program

Bottom +1, Charm =0, Down =0
Top +1, Strange =0, Up +1
Doing 7, Feeling 5, Thinking 6

☒ Field Guide

Bottom +1, Charm +1, Down +1
Top +1, Strange -2, Up +1
Doing 7, Feeling 4, Thinking 7

DEFLECT: FEELING

User-Friendly: Whenever you would suffer harm to your Feeling, you can deflect the harm to your Doing or Thinking, instead.

TIMES

Future_x 3

History_x 2

CONNECTIONS

Ask each player to say the name of a person from history or fiction. After listening to each of their answers, choose one player and get +2 Connection with their character. You then have +1 Connection with all other characters.

UNIQUE MOVES COMPUTATIONS

You have a tiny drone that projects your holographic simulation of a person. **You can float places, and you don't breathe, eat, drink, or sleep.** You can be affected by things that affect computers.

To perform a holographic drone stunt, ante 1 Fx, and roll +Top

Up to 6: Choose one:

- ☒ You fail to make any progress. Return your ante to Hx. **If your next move is more computations, take +1 forward.**
- ☒ Until your next move, you can dominate a weak computer or device. **Move your ante to Hx.**

7+: Choose one:

- ☒ Until your next move, you can dominate a strong computer or device. **Return your ante to Fx.**
- ☒ You can overcome some grand computer or device, straining your capacity in the process. Your image becomes noticeably dull. **Move your ante to Hx.**

façade

You were designed to blend in with the other appliances, and you are very good at avoiding trouble. **Roll +Bottom.**

7 to 9: Until your next move, weak enemies will ignore you, weak detectors will fail to notice you, and you subtract 1 from all harm.

10+: Until your next move, strong enemies will ignore you, strong detectors will fail to notice you, and you subtract 3 from all harm.

TREATMENT

You have access to vast libraries of medicine. **To give emergency treatment to someone else, ante Fx and Hx (mix and match). Roll +ante.**

Up to 6: Restore up to 6 points of the target's **Doing, Feeling, and Thinking** (mix and match).

Set aside 1 point of your ante on your friend, as **scars**. Move the rest to your Hx.

7 to 9: Restore up to 12 points of the target's **Doing, Feeling, and Thinking** (mix and match).

Set aside 1 point of your ante on your friend, as **scars**. Move the rest to your Hx.

10+: Restore up to 18 points of the target's **Doing, Feeling, and Thinking** (mix and match).

Set aside 1 point of your ante on your friend, as **scars**. Move the rest to your Hx.

atabanks

If a friend asks for advice before doing something, you can access your databases. **Ante 1 Fx, then roll +Up.**

Up to 9: Your friend takes +2 forward. Move your ante to Hx.

10+: Your friend takes +2 forward. Return your ante to Fx.



Techie

One person's trash is another person's treasure. The junkyards, refuse heaps, and dustbins of history are full with wondrous machines that just need a little maintenance to get them working again. The universe is your workshop, and you take great joy in collecting wondrous machines, in restoring things to working order, and in learning from your mistakes. It's very unwise to underestimate what you're capable of making, given even the most basic of tools.

Play a Techie if you want to master all the ancient machines at the end of history.

Sample Names

Al, Ba Hei, Bill, Boffin, Bucky, Clayton, Doc, Emile, Engie, Fingers, Howie, Isaac, Jillian, Kaylee, Madd, Miles, Monk, Pops, Richard, Rusty, Scotty, Screwloose, Sparky, Vitruvius, Wheels, Wrath-of-Goddard

Looks

Choose one or more:

Crew cut, Dirty fingernails, Flux capacitor, Geiger counter, Gloves, Grease stains, Hazmat suit, Jeep cap, Jumpsuit, Operating Manual with notes scribbled in margins, Overalls, Personal digital assistant, Pipe wrench, Pockets, Pony tail, Sonic screwdriver, Universal tool, Voltmeter, Waft of ozone, Work boots

Attributes & Health

Choose one:

Mechanic

Bottom -1, Charm -2, Down +3
Top +2, Strange =0, Up +1
Doing 6, Feeling 3, Thinking 9

Engineer

Bottom =0, Charm -2, Down +3
Top +2, Strange -2, Up +2
Doing 7, Feeling 1, Thinking 10

Junker

Bottom +2, Charm -2, Down +3
Top -1, Strange -1, Up +2
Doing 6, Feeling 2, Thinking 10

Forbidden Technologist

Bottom =0, Charm -3, Down +3
Top -1, Strange +2, Up +2
Doing 4, Feeling 4, Thinking 10

Deflect: Feeling

Never Regret Time Spent in the Lab:

Whenever you would suffer harm to your Feeling, you can deflect the harm to your Doing or Thinking, instead.

Times

Future_x 3

History_x 2

Connections

Write down a math problem, and share it with the other players. After each player tries to solve it, pick one and you have a +2 Connection with their character. Pick anyone, even someone who got the wrong answer. Also, +2 Connection with (choose one):

 Lab uniform with bandolier and satchel (gear)

 Various parts in the boot of your junker vessel (gear)

-  Purchasing power from the residuals of your patents (gear)
-  The uncanny ability to find large, useful piles of junk (gear)
-  Robot assistant assembled from a dozen different sources (pet, named Amiga, Bob, Foster, Gax, K10, Mitsuko, Zed-X, etc.)
-  Humanoid assistant (follower, named Adric, Frank, Nyssa, Pearl, You're not sure but you've been calling them Max this whole time and can't be bothered to learn their real name, etc.)
-  Or make something up!

Unique Moves

Augment

You can reveal some amazing technology from what you carry around.

To improve a piece of gear, ante 1 or more Fx. Then roll +Down.

Up to 6: Lesser Augment

Put 1 point of ante aside, as your augment, and return the rest of your ante to Fx.

7+: Greater Augment

Set all your ante aside, as your augment.

You can hand this gear off to someone else, to a follower, another character, etc.

When this gear would help a move, add +augment to that move.

After someone uses your augmented gear, you may move 1 point from its pool back to your Hx, then roll your +Up. If you roll 10+, they gain +3 to your last move.

You can take apart the augment. No roll is needed, just move all the points to your Hx.

If the gear is destroyed, set aside the augment points as **scraps**. Otherwise, the gear is fine once the augment runs out. You can't augment gear that already has an augment pool on it.

INVENT

You're got a lot of good ideas. And you've got a lot of bad ideas, too.

To make a new device, declare what you'll invent, ante 1 or more Fx and roll +Up.

7-9: Move 1 point to the **invention** pile. Return the rest in your Fx.

10+: Move the whole ante to the **invention** pile.

You can hand this invention off to someone else.

The user of the invention has these new moves:

☒ Use the invention for a strong purpose, rolling +Down. On a 7+, the strong function works. Up to 6, the strong purpose works anyway, but move 1 point from the invention to **scraps**.

☒ Use the invention for a grand purpose, rolling +Down. On 7+, it works. Whether it works or not, move 1 point from the invention to **scraps**.

Yes, you can augment an invention. If the invention loses all its points, the augment is destroyed, too.

OVERLOAD

Those safety specifications are just guidelines, really.

To push a device past all safety limits, ante 1 Fx and roll +Down.

7-9: Move your ante to Hx. You overload a strong device.

10+: Move your ante to Hx. You overload a grand device.

When you successfully overload a device, choose one:

☒ **Make the device unsafe.** All rolls with this device gain +1 ... but if any two dice ever match, the device explodes, harming the user (and possibly others).

☒ **Sabotage the device.** Any use of the device makes it explode.

Yes, you can overload augments and inventions. Just wait until we're out of the blast radius, please.

SCRAPS

Your scraps pool builds up from your other moves.

Add +scraps to all moves to reveal new gear.

Add +scraps to all moves to augment, to invent, and to otherwise tamper with devices.



UPLIFT

What has science done? It's not enough to just upgrade some aging computer to the point where it becomes artificial intelligence. A recombinant nano-virus or a chordate implant can bring sentience to some of the most basic of organisms. You never asked to become self-aware... but really, who does?

Play an Uplift if you want to pair big brains with big brawn.

SAMPLE NAMES

Algernon, Bea, Bubastis, Caesar, Chickenhead, Clara, Croolie, Dog, Experiment #1138, Flask, Gelf, Gene, Gunter, Hammond, Jermaal, Jones, Justin, Licker, Mistake, Pazuzu, Pha, Pretty Boy, Reuben, Redacted, Schrodinger, Zaius

LOOKS

Choose one or more:

Claws, Clicking noises, Cybernetic arms, Doesn't use contractions or personal pronouns, Dyslexia, Fangs, Flippers, Housebroken, Hulking, Musk, Lashes out, Leash, No concept of personal space, Saltwater smell, Skittishness, Snarling, Sniffs everything, Spiked collar, Stuttering speech, Tattered clothes, Tiny, Uses "Me" instead of "I"

ATTRIBUTES & HEALTH

Choose one:

Cybernetic Monster

Bottom +2, Charm -2, Down =0
Top +2, Strange +2, Up -1
Doing 9, Feeling 5, Thinking 4

Pet Project

Bottom +2, Charm +2, Down -1
Top +0, Strange +2, Up -2
Doing 7, Feeling 9, Thinking 2

Brain Enhancements

Bottom +1, Charm =0, Down -1
Top =0, Strange +2, Up +1
Doing 6, Feeling 7, Thinking 5

Genetic Mutation

Bottom +2, Charm -2, Down -1
Top +2, Strange +3, Up -1
Doing 9, Feeling 6, Thinking 3

DEFLECT: THINKING

Feral Instincts: Whenever you would suffer harm to your Thinking, you can deflect the harm to your Doing or Feeling, instead.

TIMES

Future_x 2

History_x 3

CONNECTIONS

Ask each player to say the name of an animal. Then, choose one character to have +2 Connection with. You have latched onto that character with a primal bond.

Then choose to have a +1 Connection with all other characters except one (your choice). That last one? You either don't like them for some reason, or you seek to subordinate them at every opportunity (by eating their shoes, stealing their food, marking their territory, etc.) No one's sure why you do that, not even yourself.

UNIQUE MOVES

ATAVISM

You can enter a fugue state to call forth your animal instincts. **Ante 1 or more Fx, then roll +Strange.**

Up to 6: Return your ante to Fx.

7-9: Put 1 point aside, as **atavism**,

10+: Put all your ante aside, as **atavism**.

To use your animal senses to scope an area, roll +atavism.

7+: Learn what happened here, by tracks, smells, spoors, etc.

Move 1 point of atavism to Hx, and choose one:

- ☒ Charge and destroy a strong target, using teeth, claws, etc.
- ☒ Charge and destroy a group of weak targets, using teeth, claws, etc.
- ☒ Charge and savage a grand target. Until your next move, the grand target is reduced to strong, so maybe your friends can do something.
- ☒ Do something else that a cybernetic, gene-enhanced, animal/machine hybrid could do.

COGNITION

You have strange enhancements to your brain for higher functions.

You can push your neural network far past what it was ever meant to do.

Declare you will use enhanced cognitive functions, then ante 1 or more Fx. Roll +Bottom.

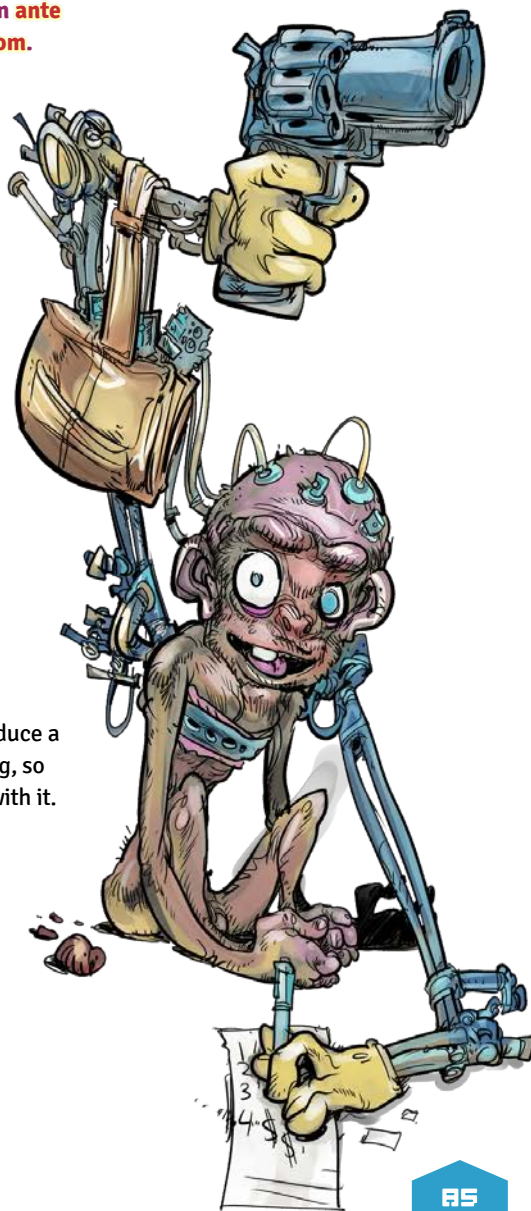
Up to 6: Return your ante to Fx.

7-9: Set 1 point of ante aside, as **cognition**. Move the rest to your Hx.

10+: Set all of your ante aside, as **cognition**.

Move 1 point of cognition to Hx, and choose one:

- ☒ Dominate a strong computer.
- ☒ Solve a strong problem about mathematics or engineering.
- ☒ Advise a friend on some technical issue, giving them +3 forward to an appropriate roll.
- ☒ Until your next move, reduce a grand computer to strong, so someone else can deal with it.



The Duke has lured Thrynn and the Professor away from the party.



YOUR example of play

Jennifer says, "I want to talk the Duke into giving letting me go. I'll offer him money, using my ability to trade." The MC says okay, and Jennifer antes up 1 Fx. Jennifer rolls only a 6., not enough to pass. Jennifer decides she really wants to convince the Duke, so she says that she will push the roll. She rolls an 8, which lets her add 3 to her roll and make it 9. That's enough for 1 point of trade. She now has 1 point of a connection with the target. "I'll try to talk with him, to let me go. We have a connection now!"

The MC says, "you're pushing too hard, I'll let you try the Talk if you suffer -1 Thinking from stress." Jennifer says okay, but only rolls a 5. The MC says, "he doesn't let you go, but now that he has a connection with you, he'll be reluctant to kill you."

Chris says, "I could risk shooting the Duke, but I don't know if my strong gun can take him out. I want to use **analysis** on the Duke."

The MC says to go ahead. Chris antes 1 Fx, and rolls a 7. They move their ante to a study pool, then they ask the MC, "What tier is the Duke?"

The MC replies, "Grand. He's got an active-plastic outfit that resists damage and redundant organs."

Chris frowns, "There's no way I could deal with that."

Michael says, "Don't be so sure. I want to use my **proficiency**."

The MC asks, "How would that work? You're not even there."

Michael offers, "Well, the playbook says I can charge into range. My character is a veteran of many wars, maybe his sixth sense picked up on it."

The MC says, "Well, that's worth a roll, but if you fail, you could suffer harm."

Michael says, "I always support my friends."

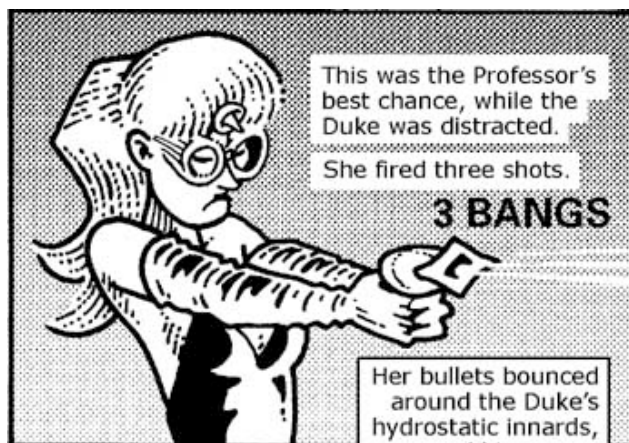
Michael only rolls an 8. "I need a 13 to reduce the target to strong. I want to use that **prophecy** point that Tegan put in front of me earlier. They told me to 'watch out for green things', and I could have seen a weird green coat be put in the cloak room, earlier."

The MC says sure, that works in the fiction. Michael rolls an extra die, but is now only up to 12. Still not enough! "I'm out of Fx points, I can't push the roll."

Jennifer says, "I have a connection with you. You're the only person who can put a cost on things like I can. I want to use my history with you to **inspire** you to protect me." The MC says that's cool, and Jennifer antes 1 Hx. They roll a 9. "I did it! You can add +2 to your last roll, that's our connection."

Michael says, "well, that's 14. I jump out and take a shot at the Duke, but all it does is distract him. He's only a strong enemy right now. It's up to you, Chris."





“Okay,” says Chris, “I’ll take the shot. Before I roll, I’m going to **spend my study point**, to calculate the right angle of the shot.”

Jennifer chimes in, “I want to distract the Duke. I have a connection with him, so I’ll say something to get him off balance, to prepare the shot.” The MC tells Jennifer to roll first. Jennifer gets a 7, which gives Chris a +1. Chris then rolls three dice and takes the best two.

However Chris’ character has a low Strange score, and their roll comes up as a mere 8. “I want to **push** this roll!” shouts Chris, “it’s now or never!” Chris antes 1 Fx, and rolls a 5. That’s enough to add +3, which raises the roll to 11. Chris’ character scores a strong hit and takes the Duke out.

making up new moves

You're sure to think of some more moves that we haven't thought of. When making up your own rules, be fair and be consistent. Here are some guidelines for making up your own.

- ❑ Don't make up a new move that's simply better than one that already exists. Why is it better? Will you remove the old move from play?
- ❑ Use an appropriate Attribute for the roll (And not just the one the player wants to use because it's their highest one.)

- ❑ If it's an ante move, ask if it should be risky (and use +ante) or dependable (and use +attribute).
- ❑ Rolling 7+ should be a weak success, 10+ should be strong, and 13+ should be grand.
- ❑ A weak success could be "this could be strong if you're willing to take a hit, like suffer some harm or screw up a count-down". See **hard bargain**, page 100, for more ideas.
- ❑ A strong result could be "weak, but better". Maybe a weak result applied to a large area? Or a weak result that also lets you charge closer or take control of the situation?
- ❑ A grand result could be "strong, but better." Most grand results should be awesome, but grand threats are often too big to be taken out with a single roll.

What attribute should you use for a move?
Some ideas:

- Angry? Strange
- Bizarre? Strange
- Comforting? Charm
- Crafty? Down
- Extroverted? Top
- Intimidating? Top
- Introverted? Bottom
- Machinery? Down
- Math? Up
- Money? Connection
- Nice? Charm
- Observing? Up
- Programming? Up
- Relations? Connection
- Sneaky? Bottom
- Subtle? Bottom
- Violent? Strange

YOUR GUIDE TO BEING A MASTER OF CEREMONIES

When you're the Master of Ceremonies, you're the director of the action. It's your job to present an interesting situation to the players, let them play out their moves, and then respond accordingly.

YOUR PRINCIPLES

- ❑ **Be fair.** Make things too easy, and the players won't feel challenged. Make things too difficult, and the players will get exhausted. Each group is different, so you'll have to watch for the signs. (That's what the debriefing is for.)
- ❑ **Be consistent.** You're in charge of the universe. If you said the polarity of the deflector dish can't be reversed, then you're not allowed to just change your mind and say that it can without explaining what's different, now.
- ❑ **Have fun.** Don't let these rules get in the way of a good time. These rules are designed to be simple and free. Your job isn't to "get" the players, or catch them making mistakes. Stick to the spirit of the game, not the letter.

YOUR AGENDA

Tell a story full of strange landscapes, wondrous technology, alien vistas, and bizarre juxtapositions. The city expands to the horizon, the arcology domes glittering in the sun that shines down over the dreadful lemon sky. If you focus your eyes, you can see the starscraper buildings slowly sway to the song of shear and torsion, their summits rising to a vanishing point far above your head.

Talking to the players "in character" can help the mood. "Pollux, what are you doing this morning?" It's clear from context that the "you" here refers to Pollux the character. This kind of talk will help keep the players immersed in the game.

Players are working together for a common goal. Encourage the party to work together. Remind the players that the best way to get Hx points back into circulation is by using the **inspire** move (page 30).

While moves are handy, don't feel like you have to use them all the time. When a player wants their character to do something, don't bring the game to a screeching halt as we all read these rules looking for the exact fit. Ask the player to name an attribute, then roll two dice, add, and go. Some rolls will come up 2, 3, 11, or 12 and you won't even have to look anything

up, you can just play out the outcome and go. When in doubt, roll and shout!

YOU ARE THE BOSS: CHANGE THE RULES

We've included a lot of rules in this book, for what we think will be quick and easy reference to inspire your story. But we can't possibly include a rule for everything — then this book wouldn't be quick and easy, it would be a few exabytes of exceptions and formalisms.

A quick and easy read also means quick-and-easy answers ... and what we have in the text may not be right for what you, the MC, want to happen. You can over-ride anything in here! You are the alpha and the omega when it comes to the story.

When changing the rules, remember the three principles:

- ❑ **Be fair.** If you think what the rule-book says would happen is unfair or wrong, change it to a result that's fair, just this once. If you want to make this change permanent, discuss the change with your players during the debriefing.

❏ Be consistent. If you change the rules, make sure your players understand why you're changing it. If you're not consistent, the players won't know what they can or cannot do. They may become paralyzed, unable to make decisions because they don't know how the game works. Some will feel frustrated, because what they thought was true is now false. You should change the rules when the result that you're getting doesn't feel consistent with what you and your players think should be happening in the story.

❏ Have fun. Don't change the rules just to turn your players' successes into failures; no one likes to feel they were winning but are then told the rules changed to make them lose. Work with your players, roll with their punches. Likewise, if a rule gives results that you and your players think is boring or inappropriate, change it. Use the debriefing to discuss what you all enjoy, and find ways to make more fun happen.

SPECIFIC, NOT GENERAL: SHOW, DON'T TELL

It's too easy to keep the game abstract and strange, with generic "bad guys". Put faces to the threats. Remember that the NPCs want things, they have their own interests. All grand characters, and many strong ones, should have names.

Use inventive names like "Exercitum lubal the 3rd", "Liberty 5-3000", and "Magnus Ridolph". Though in a pinch, a nickname like "Big McLargeHuge" can work for a throwaway character. Keep a list of names handy, and cross them off as you use them. Keep the players guessing on who is a major character in the story and who is an incidental, and they'll get far more immersed in your living world.

Do the same thing with the fiction's technology. Don't say "scan", say "Level 1 Diagnostic." It's not a radio, it's a "qubit interociter." Why use a "gun" when you can equip a "phased plasma rifle in the 40-watt range"? Any gear that's not weak should have a strong name to go with it. Make stuff up! Tech the tech!

Have names for places, too: "The Orion Belt", "The Seldon Institute of Natural History", "the third moon of Summa Nulla", "the Gamma-Quadrant side of a stable wormhole", etc. Name things after myth, after people, after scientific principles. Make it fantastic and fun.

THE PLAYERS ARE THE STARS

Be a fan of the player characters! Your goal is to make them feel like they're playing some bizarre space-person from the far future. Give them challenges that are worthy of their greatness.

But don't let them get soft. The moves the players make should have consequences that shake up the known universe. Sometimes

it's good, sometimes it's bad, but it's always interesting.

"Interesting" is not the same thing as "worse". Your job isn't to make the player-characters miserable and pathetic. Don't nerf their powers by making them useless. Don't kill off their followers casually or off-screen. Don't let them roll dice and then declare that their 11s and 12s have no effect on the story.

Give your players the freedom to make their own mistakes. Most characters have more than enough power to knock things seriously out of whack. After any session – *frak*, after any major incident in the game, even – consider the long-term repercussions. How do the non-player characters feel about all of this?

As MC, you're playing to lose. You will see your non-player characters killed, crushed, disintegrated, and removed from matter coherency. (And not always in that order.) That's fine. You have an infinite universe, with infinite possibilities. Next session, let's do something new. Or let's build something from the ruins of the old. Explore. Invent. Construct.

Oh, and remember to be a fan of every player, not just the loud ones. Make sure you take time out to give every player a chance to take a move. (You might go around the table, left to right, making sure everyone gets the spotlight.)

PLANT HOOKS FOR FUTURE STORIES

A **hook** refers to something that will happen later. Someone could get a strange package or alien artifact. You could create a non-player character to join up with our heroes who helps them out with boring stuff... only to have bad people show up and kidnap that NPC six sessions later, now that everyone's invested. Make note of any unsolved mysteries on alien worlds so you can have them come back later.

We're going to let you on a secret. You need to be consistent... but only about things you already told to the players. You can introduce a mystery box into the story, but you don't have to decide what's actually in it until someone opens it.

Oh, and don't get bothered when your players ignore or completely miss out on a hook you set up. Remember, no matter how good you think the hook was, it's the players who are the stars. Take a deep breath, let it go... and make a note so you can use this great idea in a later game.

Part of the fun of the game is keeping the players guessing. Don't let them know what's a hook and what's an actual plot point. Take notes.

EXPRESS YOURSELVES

Don't just rattle off game terms like "he hits you, lose 3 Doing." Be descriptive, like "The centurion squawks with a burst of static. Its needle-gun strikes you in the shoulder. Lose 3 Doing." Don't just say, "you seduce the alien." Really

sell it with, "While a coy smile passes across her lips, the Xyrrillian gently nods at you, and leads you to a private chamber." The game can be more fun when it's over the top.

When players roll really high, even if it doesn't matter, cheer them on. "That guy is now a closed-casket funeral." "You quickly tap a series of buttons in rapid fire, then hit the big red one with a flourish; the alien computer lights up for the first time in five hundred years." "Over-awed by your prowess, the Tralfamadorian prostrates before you, demanding that you kill them right now, as they know they will never time point anything better in the rest of their existence." High rolls of 11 or 12 are pretty rare, so celebrate them with a big to-do.

THERE'S A WHOLE UNIVERSE OUT THERE. OUR HEROES JUST LIVE IN IT

When playing **Farflung**, it's all too easy to fall into the trap that the player-characters are the only "real people" in the fiction. They roll all the dice and declare all the things. While you can treat the rest of the cast of your game as props, like a computer game, you can make the story that much stronger by playing up the other characters.

If you want your story to feel real, then don't have the bad guys just sitting around in rooms, blocking the treasure while waiting for adventurers to storm in and kill them. Have them go home and night and come back in the morning. They

could get sick of waiting and go hunt down the heroes on their own.

Give your supporting cast some personality. The more your characters act like people, the more the players will treat them like people, and the more everyone will get immersed in the story. No one has "PC" written on their forehead, so your non-player characters should treat PCs like they were real people.

If you can, give accents and personality to minor characters. If the players latch on to one of your improvisations, you could develop that improv into a full-fledged character in their own right. Long-running series do that all the time, and so can you.

Make it clear to the players that countdowns are ticking down. Our heroes could over-hear news broadcasts on the radio. One of their followers could remind them that time is running out. Find a way to tell the players about a countdown so that they know it's a countdown, so they'll be spurred into action.

WHAT'S HAPPENING OFF-SCREEN?

While our heroes are doing things, the other characters are doing things too. If our heroes take some down-time to rest, what will the villains be doing? Or the citizens of the doomed planet? Or the robo-factory that they activated so carelessly? And what about that electronic scaffolding that came out of that explosion, what's up with that?

It's difficult to juggle all the balls of the universe in your

head... so just pick one thing or two and follow that. Keep in mind that the players that after they smashed the wasp's nest, those angry wasps are still flying around.

STUFF SHOULD WORK

Farlung is a science-fantasy. It's often about pretending to be a character with more power, more agency, more awesomeness than you have in your daily life.

So to make the game fun, we set up the playbooks so everyone's got great powers to use: over-powered guns, cosmic blasts, beweaponed extremities, orotund runcibles, etc. Players are going to want to use those powers, and it's only fair that you let them.

That said, the game isn't all ice cream and cake, either. Some challenges will make the players think outside the box. Every character has six attributes and the common moves, so remind your players that their characters can do a lot more than just their special powers.

Never let a player roll dice if you're not going to honor the outcome. It's far better to tell a player not to roll and that they just lose ... than to let the player roll, have a 12 come up, and then tell the player that the roll was meaningless. Rolling is only for when nobody – MC or player – knows what the outcome is going to be.

Cheerlead your players. The biggest, grandest challenge are going to require big ideas and high rolls. Remind your players that they have the **inspire** move that can

raise rolls after they've been made, so a low roll isn't a lost cause. Some threats will be impossible unless the characters work together.

FAIR AND CONSISTENT CHALLENGE: TIERS

Not all threats are equal. Don't treat a minor, random creep with the same level of seriousness as a destroyer-of-worlds. Some doors will be flimsy wood, and other doors will be tungsten-carbide steel. Some records are kept on video files with a user-friendly interface, and others are 50,000 words written in Beta-Crypt 3, with the pages sorted out of order, etc.

We've kept the tiers very simple, from the casual (not worth a roll), to weak, strong, grand, and beyond. Many moves let you defeat a low tier with a low roll, and a higher tier with a higher roll.

The stories you create will make more sense when you have the right tier in the right situation. Our heroes will be able to take out a weak challenge without too much trouble... they might have to use up some resources for a strong one... and they'll have to team up and use everything they've got to beat a grand one.

You can lead your players along with escalating challenges. When the puzzles and threats that show up are slowly ramping up, the players will feel like they're making progress, that they're on the right track.

To make the game easier, we've ranked the tiers of challenge for you:

☒ Most of the universe is **casual**. Shopkeepers will sell you things if you give them money. Most people live boring, uneventful lives. Not everyone is armed. Casual threats are the “zero” of the threat scales. No rolls are needed.

It's easy to forget that the casuals are out there, because they are not a challenge. Once in a while, remind your players that there's a few billion normal people out there.

☒ **Weak** threats are the police, the armed blocks, the hostile politicians, the omega clones, the berserk drone. If you don't have the right moves to deal with them, weak threats can be an annoying obstacle. If you do have the right moves, there's still the off chance that you might have to push yourself to deal with them.

If a character gets into trouble— say, by detonating an explosive at the tram station — it's the weak threats that will respond first.

- ❖ **Strong** threats are the serious business. These are the elite soldiers, the heads of state, the security systems, the death-robots. A strong threat is a serious challenge to someone with the right moves. Characters with the wrong moves will have to push themselves really hard ... and even then, they'll only win on a good day.

To keep things simple, you can treat a group of weak threats as one big, strong threat.

- ❖ **Grand** threats are the big story points. These are the cyber-tanks, the global intelligence networks, the galaxy's most wanted.

Players will want to work smarter, not harder with a grand threat- they will need to work together, to play to their strengths, and to exploit any weaknesses that the grand threat has.

Only introduce a grand threat into your game once every few sessions. Always give them a name, and always impress on the players just how serious this business is.

Rather than game out every little thing, you could treat a group of strong threats as one big grand threat.

A grand threat will use up some resources of a player, but they could still get taken out by a single, lucky roll. (More likely, by a roll with lots of players assisting.) If you want a

challenge that you're sure will take two moves or more, then you want a grander challenge or a countdown, below.

- ❖ The most powerful are the **grander** threats. A grander threat is just a grand threat that has to be overcome 2, 3, or more times. (You pick a number.)

A grander threat should be the single-most "big bad", the nemesis that shows up in multiple sessions, to trouble our heroes. Grander threats shouldn't be suicidal - if they are beaten so badly that the next defeat will end them, they should run away. The players will be happy that they won the battle, and they will be eager to win this war.

- ❖ When a challenge has multiple steps, you can use a **countdown**. Sometimes it's counting towards disaster (you have 3 counters until the matrix unravels), and sometimes it's counting towards victory (inflict 3 strong hits on the Bugbladder Beast and it dies). Use a countdown where everyone is expected to participate.

- ❖ A variation on the countdown is the **climb**. This challenge requires a player to roll 13+, but if they roll 10-12, they get +6 forward, and if they roll 7-9, they get +3 forward. Most players will be able to climb to victory in three moves or less. A climb only matters if there's other hazards going on (like a dangerous combat, radiation leak, eager

voyeurs, etc.) or if there's a countdown (and it's a race to see if you climb to success before time runs out.)

Like all rules, if the situation is casual, you and the players can just say it's done; no need to waste everyone's time with die-rolling that's not fun or interesting. Climbs are for building tension, as bad guys respond to our hero, or as other players make their own moves to stall for time. Hurry up before it's too late!

VIOLENCE IS THE FIRST REFUGE OF THE VIOLENT

While **Farlung** will have its share of violent encounters, most entities will have self-preservation on their minds. When Fritz's skull explodes in a localized cold fusion and leaves behind only a cyan afterglow, his friend Max is going to spend a moment rethinking the life choices that led him to be standing next to Fritz... and then he'll start running.

While a few problems in the **Farlung** can be solved by just blowing things up, there will be lots more that can't. Most of the universe is full of casual or weak characters who want to spend as little time dying as possible. (Sure, our players might come back the dead, but Matthews, Thompson and Olson won't. They're so inconsequential, you don't even know who they are.)

Stories are about conflict. Violence just happens to be a simple conflict. (You want to kill them, they don't want to die.) Science-fiction is about the possibilities of imagination. Some examples:

- ❑ Our heroes are sent to retrieve a unique or rare creature, and maybe it has weird powers. Use too much force, and they could kill it.
- ❑ Our players are sent out looking for Erith Nomic, as he has information they need or is the only person who knows the Genesis Formula. They are opposed by Vondos Quarn, a violent man who is eager to assault. Unfortunately, it turns out that Quarn is Nomic, and if the players accidentally kill him, they won't get the information they need.
- ❑ Our heroes are invited as guests to a social function, but there's constant whispers about how uncouth or uncivilized they are. Someone might provoke a player into violence, just to prove it. Others might suggest resolving disputes with other kinds of contest, such as gambling, Tantrism, a race, or a spelling bee.
- ❑ It's time for time travel! Try to avoid killing yourself or your own grandfather. Paradoxes are inconvenient even on the best days.

- ❑ An old friend appears, and they're doing something bad. But why? Are they being blackmailed? Are they deluded? Does that fungus growing out of their spine have anything to do with it?

If you and your players enjoy violent encounters, that's fine. This is a game, and you're all meant to have fun. You can find there will be fun to be had in mixing things up, presenting challenges that can't be solved simply by blowing something up.

people make things happen (and people-like things make things happen, too)

The laws of physics don't lie, cheat, hold grudges, or fall in love. People do those things. And **Farflung** is about people. (And what it means to be a person.)

Get into the heads of the non-player characters, from the casual all the way up to the grandest baddies. What would they do? Just like each player asks what their character would do, you have to ask yourself what your characters would do. If these characters don't care about what our heroes are up to, then they're not part of the story. If they do care enough to get involved, then they are. Keep things personal.

A great way to make adventures is to have a non-player character decide to do something that the players don't want done. For example, Lord Erebus has decided to destroy the star of Beta-Carotene, which will exterminate billions.

Only our heroes can stop him! This struggle can be more interesting than just "stop the sun from exploding", because now there's a face to talk to and a villain to interact with.

KILLING PLAYERS IS NEVER A GOAL

Many MCs mistakenly think their job is to line up a bunch of monsters and then throw them at the player-characters, trying to kill them. That's not going to work.

In **Farflung**, there's no permanent death. It's the future! Clones, time warps, retcons, etc. can bring anyone back from anything. Even if you could destroy a character, that threat is an empty one unless you follow through with it once in a while... and few players want to see their precious persona killed off.

Look at the long-running TV series, comics, and novels. They have recurring cast members. How do the writers keep it all exciting when we know the leads can't die, they're clearly going to be in the next episode? Reach into the author's bag of tricks.

- ❑ **Appeal to the player's sense of heroic achievement.** When the desperate farmers of the Ioun Belt ask our heroes to stop the Giga-Slayer from killing them off, emphasize that only our heroes could stop the monster in time. If our heroes fail, millions die, and the players will have to live with the shame of failure.

❏ **Build up recurring characters, then threaten to kill them.**

Introduce a minor follower that helps the players out with grunt-work. ... Then four sessions later, tragedy! “Falloe is infected! She’s going into shock as the nanites spread through her system. What do you do?” Falloe’s not a player character, so you need to emphasize that she could permanently die.

❏ **Learn about your players’ characters, and put their personal issues at stake.** Your players are a creative group. They will come up with all kinds of imaginative back-stories. And the more sessions you play, the more things they will make up.

Think of a question about a player character that could make for a good story. “Will the Reverend-Engineer step down from leading his cult?” “What will Dba do, when they discover who they use used to be in their past life?” “Will Matins reconcile with her father?” Etc. Keep it short, keep it personal, keep it meaningful.

Break this question down into plot points and into identifiable threats. Why is the cult breaking up? What new revelation of Dba’s past just came up? Who is Matins’ father, exactly?

Whatever the answer to the question is, it should have major impacts for the fiction. (Staying with the cult means taking

responsibility for whatever the cult does; leaving the cult could start a civil war. Dba could discover they have children, or enemies, or a malfunctioning Van-Neuman machine that only they can deal with. What if Matins’ father is a loathsome criminal? Is Matins responsible for stopping him or should she just disown him and move on. Etc.)

Players will enjoy seeing how their own story is being told. You will make the game personal, and you can threaten a player with loss. (Not loss of their character’s life, but a loss that’s still meaningful all the same.) Loss, change, and what comes with that are what compelling stories are all about.

SET THE PACE, AND SET IT FAST

Even in a game like *Farflung*, where space and time are mutable, and life and death are in constant flux... you could still have players who are too afraid to make a decision. Some players hem and haw over every choice, paralyzed with fear that they’ll do something “wrong”.

If the players are taking too long, you can force time to move. Force another challenge onto the players. Take a counter from a countdown. Have a follower or another character express their dismay. Set off alarms or sensors which warn of dangerous energy levels. Have a time traveler from the future appear and scream, “There’s still time!”

You may have to remind your players how you’re their biggest fan. That message sounds better coming from the helpless non-player characters of the world, who thank them for their help and their sacrifice.

It’s also okay to move the story ahead to the next interesting part. Just like a movie or a book might have a time skip, you can just wave your hand and say, “Five hundred years pass while you’re in cold sleep” or “nine months later and the embryo has finished gestation” or “twenty-nine minutes later, your pizza finally arrives.”

Making the game move faster doesn’t mean you can ignore anyone. Some players are shy or easily intimidated, so be sure to ask everyone what they’re up to.

It’s also okay if you need to slow down or take a break. If tempers are high or bladders are full, you can call for a short break. Keep it fun.

...BUT NOT TOO FAST! KEEPING THINGS COOL

In *Farflung*, there’s no specific limit on how many moves a player can take in a row, or how many times they can try something. You may find that some players are very aggressive, shouting moves rapidly and very eager to roll dice. This behavior can be annoying, turning the game into “roll-playing” or lots of shouting, with the calmer, more deliberate players feeling left out. Some advice:

- ❖ Rash behavior should have rash consequences. If a player pushes too moves in a row before another player gets a chance, remember to have enemies respond.
- ❖ Even if they succeed, pushing too much too soon can take a strain on a character. Try telling the player that if they want to keep taking so many moves, they must choose to suffer some harm to their character, such as fatigue (-1 Doing), stress (-1 Feeling), or exhaustion (-1 Thinking). Making it a player's choice will let them keep control, and it will let them understand they're pushing too hard.
- ❖ Watch out for "fail forward" types who will roll dice before even considering their next move. Some players will just "roll-play" their way through everything, since a high roll means they get what they want, right?

Well, there's a gazillion special exceptions to all these moves and situations, and we can't list them all. You may have to make it clear to a player that it's not just their game, it's everyone's game, even the MC's. You may want to insist that players don't roll unless they

ask you, first. When debriefing, ask the players what you can do to encourage them to role-play rather than roll. Should there be more casual time and less charged time? Which situations do your players like to interact with, and which ones do they just want to be over, already?

Note that some moves are meant to be tried repeatedly. Any move that lists "if you try this move again, take +3 forward" means you can try it a second time, with increased odds. These climbing moves let the MC respond before the inevitable success, and they also give the other players a chance to stall for time while their friend finishes up.

IMMATURE MCs STEAL. MATURE MCs IMITATE.

It's okay to use what you already know for inspiration. This is a game that you play in your spare time, not a published, copyrighted work for sale. No one's going to break down your door and tell you that you can't put Princess Cadance, Ianto Jones, or the Giraffe Monster into your game.

But your players, who know you pretty well, are going to see right through if you just drop the character or setting into your

game with no changes. At the very least, change the name to something random or strange, because they're going to figure out who "Baajin Mu" is, in a heartbeat.

Inserting a canon character into your game can make the game easier. When confronted by the players, you can ask yourself, "What would Demogorgon do?" and then react quickly and decisively.

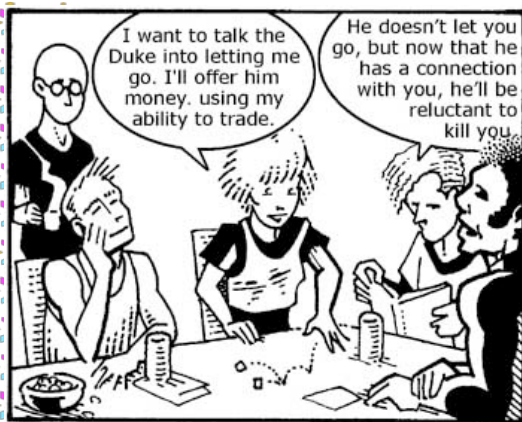
Remember that the players are the stars, and that your insertion isn't the hero and thus may actually lose. Don't worry, this isn't the real Malachite, it's just an imitation, so it's okay if some nasty player-characters kill her off.

Even better than the imitation is the mashup, where you combine two or more characters together. It will be harder for the players to figure out, and you get to have the fun of seeing just what the "DisQord" could do. (But, seriously, use a random name.)

As always, use the debriefing to talk with your players about what worked and what didn't. The sign of a good imitation is when your players don't immediately figure it out. Keep them immersed in the fiction and avoid meta. Make it matter, make it real.

building upon your player's moves

The game will follow a regular rhythm: you present a situation, you ask your players what moves they want to take, and then you respond to those moves. Just like players have their moves, you have your own “counter-moves:” your responses and challenges.



yes. and...? improvising

Role-playing games share a lot with improvisational theater. Your job is to present a situation to the players, listen to their responses, and decide what goes next. (Sure, you might roll some dice to help you decide, but you're still the boss.)

Each event in the game builds on the previous one. If our heroes blow up the power plant, then the lights go out, the force field drops, looters and rioters come out, etc. If our heroes save the power plant, then the lights come back on, the field contains the alien menace, the looters can now take proper selfies without a flash, etc. Things happen in “real time”, there's no retakes, retcons, or do-overs. Learn to build on what's happened before. Escalate.

only roll dice when it's exciting that we **don't** know what happens next

You don't have to roll dice for everything. If you just need the players to get from point Alpha to point Beta, we can just say that happens and get on with it. Your game should only be about playing out the most

interesting parts. You don't have to be boring because some book told you to add and subtract random numbers.

While it's possible to role-play without ever rolling dice even once... without any random events, risky gambles, or unpredictable results, the game can become very boring, very quickly. Everything happens exactly the way you expect it to.

Encourage players to try new things— even things that their character isn't best at. Taking a gamble can be exciting when it works. And when a gamble doesn't work... well, it wouldn't be a risk if it worked every single time!

consider warning them before they roll

You'd think a player would know that, if they throw a firebomb into a library, the books will catch fire... but they don't always know seem to know that that. It's a good idea to ask a player, “Are you sure you want to do that?” before they commit to some drastic act.

A role-playing game is a theater of imagination, and some players don't always think things through. They may be used to video games, where buildings are

indestructible and where non-player-characters never die.

Also, watch out for players who will “roll-play” — players in such a hurry that they’ll throw dice on the table while barely taking any time to say why. Always encourage your players to describe what their characters are doing. Let the fiction inspire players to roll the dice.

Some players will roll dice, get a result they don’t like, and then immediately try to convince you to give them a victory anyway. In **Farflung**, you can boost a roll after you make it with inspiration, with special moves, etc., so a bad roll isn’t the last word. But it’s also bad sportsmanship to complain only when the dice aren’t going your way. You may want to warn a player that if you, the MC, are asking them to roll, that means there’s a chance they could fail!

It’s a good idea, especially with new players, to warn them if they’re about to something terribly out of character. Not all players will agree on what the word “game” means — some will assume it means anything goes in the name of fun... while others may want a more serious fiction with serious consequences. Also, many players’ first experience with role-play comes from video games... which often have save-states, plot-protected characters,

and other ham-handed techniques to keep players in line... techniques that just aren’t seen in tabletop.

every move should reveal something

As with everything, describe the results of a roll. If the player rolled high, describe something amazing, effortless, and cool. If the player rolled low, describe something painful, unlucky, or inept. Die rolls are for emergence, but the players are here for experience. Make it come alive.

Near-miss rolls (like 7 to 9) usually give the player a choice between giving up or getting what they want, at a price. While many of the moves list some ideas, feel free to make up your own results. (“The device sparks with electricity! Either give up or suffer -1 Doing.” “The Gynoplasm raises pseudo-pods in what you think might be a threatening or obscene manner. Either flee or suffer -1 Feeling.” Etc.)

Bad rolls (6 or less) usually don’t give the player anything at all. Some players may become frustrated or discouraged if they’re told they got nothing. Take time to describe failed rolls, to inform the player whether they should keep trying this thing or something else. (“Your shot bounces off the sentry’s protective armor. You’d have to be more accurate if you want to hit a critical spot and take them out.” “The ambassador says no,

thank you, they’re quite flattered by your offer, but since their species dies after mating, they’re not interested in your proposal.” Etc.)

We only ask players to roll dice if there’s some risk of loss involved. If the story requires the players to find Father Antos and get his ring, then either your heroes casually meet him with no rolls involved ... or they roll dice and run the risk of not finding him. Remember, if the players cannot lose, then nothing is at stake. When nothing’s at stake, nothing is interesting.

Also remember that you, the MC, control the pace. Don’t stop the game because the players aren’t reading your mind or rolling high enough. If the players can’t gain ground fast enough, have something happen. The security guard arrests them all! The ambassador grows tired of these delays and leaves for home! The wormhole closes, and its mystery is lost forever, time to move onto the next story, etc. To make sure your players know there’s pressure to get this done, use a countdown. Tell them how many counters are left and that they’d better try something soon.

Your players are creative, smart, and fun — encourage them to work outside their comfort zones and to take risks when the chips are down and time is running out.

All moves in **Farflung** fall into three kinds:

- The **casual**, where success is automatic, no roll needed.
- The **impossible**. You tell the player that their character can't do that; no roll is even allowed.
- The **roll**, where we think you can do it, but we're not sure, so let's chance it!

If you let a player roll, you are telling them there is a chance they could succeed. You can't tell a player who rolled a 10 that they just failed. Be fair.

Likewise, a player who agrees to roll is accepting there's a chance they could roll a 2 and get nothing. Make it clear to your players that rolling can also mean losing.

You could offer a low-rolling player a **hard bargain**: fail, or succeed but at great cost. That gives the player some agency about what happened, and can make them feel better about their bad luck.

SNOWBALLING

After a player makes a move, the MC needs to tell everyone what happens next. As the MC, you should always respond to a player's move, even if just to help them describe how it worked. Sometimes your response can be a "counter-move", the people or the environment responding

Many moves already list something to do to the player if they roll low... but you're the MC. If you can think of something better, then declare that response to happen, instead. You are the boss, just make it fair and make it fun.

Here's some ideas for how to respond to player's moves.

INVITE ANOTHER PLAYER TO TRY

Okay, that last move was yours, now let's hear from someone else at the table.

There's no specific rule against letting a player try two or more moves in a row... but you're the MC, you're in charge, and some players might not take a turn unless they're asked.

OFFER THE PLAYER A HARD BARGAIN

Use this response when a player scores only a 7, 8, or 9 ... when they miss out on that 10 that would make everything so easy. Offer the player a choice: accept the failure... or take the success they need and some setback that comes with it.

❖ Did our hero miss an attack? Ask the player if they want to miss, or if they want to hit and take some damage, too.

❖ A character needs to fix a device? Ask the player if they want to keep working on it, or if they want to just say it's done... with a random chance of breaking down, later.

❖ Trying to convince someone to help you? You could play out that the someone wants a particularly nasty favor in return, and our player must either accept their offer or walk away.

❖ You can use this response to let a player "fail forward" — to move the story along but also making the player pay some price to do it. Progress will have more meaning when our heroes had to give something up to get it.

Inviting the player to make a hard choice about whether they really want this victory or not can make for some of the most memorable moments in your game.

A hard bargain is similar, but not that same, as a climb. With a climb, our player is trying to eventually roll high enough for success, with each failed roll giving the a +forward bonus to the next one... while other moves, countdowns, and enemy activity go on around them. A hard bargain is either "pay a price" or "give up". But you can make a climb more dramatic by including a hard bargain: "let the countdown tick down and take +3 forward... or

end this now and lose something important to you."

GIVE THE CHARACTER SOME PHYSICAL HURT: HARM TO DOING

Falling from a height, incidental fire, and taking too many moves too fast could all inflict harm to a character's Doing.

The harm could be automatic (say, -1 Doing from a weak threat, -3 from a strong one, and -5 from a grand one). Or it could require the player to make a move. (Bottom to dodge it? Strange to respond with a brutal counter-attack? Top to take the hit and not care? Etc.) Rolls of 10+ will probably enough to evade the harm, but 7-9 might force a difficult choice: suffer harm but solve the problem, or be disarmed, or let the console be destroyed instead, or make a loud noise that alert the guards, or something else, etc.

GIVE THE CHARACTER MENTAL STRESS: HARM TO THINKING

Trying to make too many decisions at once, operating too many machines, and just taking too many mental moves too fast could inflict harm to a character's Thinking.

The harm could be automatic (say, -1 Thinking from a weak threat, -3 from a strong one, and -5 from a grand one). Or it could require the player to make a move. (Up to quickly come up with a solution? Down to rewire or retool the mess? Top to just shrug it off and not care?

Etc.) Rolls of 10+ will probably enough to evade the harm, but 7-9 might force a difficult choice: suffer harm but solve the problem, or give up as hopeless, or install a quick fix that could break later, or use up some valuable resource, etc.

GIVE THE CHARACTER SOME SOCIAL ANXIETY: HARM TO FEELING

Being embarrassed or mocked in front of one's peers, dealing with abhorrent monsters from beyond the pale, and just taking too many social moves too quickly could inflict harm to a character's Feeling.

The harm could be automatic (say, -1 Feeling from a weak threat, -3 from a strong one, and -5 from a grand one). Or it could require the player to make a move. (Charm to assuage everyone's feelings? Up to try to reason with them? Top to just shrug it off and not care? Etc.) Rolls of 10+ will probably enough to evade the harm, but 7-9 might force a difficult choice: suffer harm but solve the problem, or give up as hopeless, or make a bargain that's definitely not in your favor, or get talked out of a valuable resource, or make a promise that you can't deliver, or lose your social standing in the community, or have your dark and perverse secret exposed, etc.

ADD A NEW CHALLENGE

The classic response. You can put new enemies on the field, or you can present a chase sequence or puzzle to be solved. See page 98.

SEPARATE THE CHARACTERS

Not everyone will be together all the time. If someone's fixing the ship, other people can scout around or wander off for a tryst.

After players say what they do, tell the players where they are, and if they can see each other. Set up a rendezvous — that is, a place and time where the players plan to get back together, so you don't have to keep; the separated for too long.

It's the future — people have radios, phones, telepathy, etc., so they can call each other for help.

PUT A CHARACTER IN A BAD PLACE

Weapons fire may pin a character in a cave or storage space. Or there could be social pressure, where a character just can't leave a social event or someone's company without risking embarrassment or implication.

PUT A CHARACTER ON THE SPOT

A character could run into an old enemy... or an old friend who wants to talk, at a time when delay isn't an option. Debt collectors, bounty hunters, old flames, imperfect clones, and more can all show up to make life difficult.

TAKE AWAY A CHARACTER'S STUFF

Characters who roll high, but not high enough, could drop things or leave them behind. Our heroes could drop things, or run out of ammunition. And social functions won't let you bring normal weapons past the detectors. Vehicles can be impounded. Accounts can be seized. Easy come, easy go.

INTRODUCE SOME SIDE EFFECTS

Guns used in spaceships could blast holes in walls, exposing everyone to vacuum. Explosives could have friendly fire. Arcane devices could require lots of power and attract attention.

GIVE THEM WAY MORE THAN WHAT THEY ASKED FOR

Any time grand or grander stuff is involved, there should be side effects. Grand weapons could blow holes through several buildings. Grand devices could discharge power or energy fields, or start cascades in motion that transform entire city blocks into something else. A grand enemy could have millions of strong or weak supports who also now hate the player... and a grand friend means lots of publicity, lots of attention from hangers-on, and the attentions of that grand friend's millions of enemies.

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED: RETRIES

In this book, some moves have bonuses to try them again. As the MC, you should have something happen in between the two tries. Is the Extinctionner powering up? People may scream in horror, run for cover, start shooting now to hope they can stop it in time, etc.

A player can never simply retry a roll without asking the MC for a response, first. Sure, you might say that nothing happens... but you might not. The entire purpose of a climb, after all, is to give everyone else (friends, enemies, observers, intervals, countdowns, events, hazards, super-intelligent shades of the color blue, etc.) a chance to respond before you can try again. Keep the pace.

A climb is meant to be re-tried. A rule that says, "If you try this move again, +3 forward", that's a climb. You're almost there, and you will probably get there on your next move... but you have to wait for something else to happen first. Unless something drastic changed between your last move and this one, then the player can try again. (Oh, and if nothing is going on, you can tell the player to stop rolling, if you want, and just give them victory on the climb. Don't make for boring busy work! Only roll dice when random uncertainty makes things more exciting.)

You might tell a player that they can't retry a move unless something changes. You can tell a player that their character can't try to fix the engine, to calculate the hyper-jumps, or to perform the pressed position unless something happens. Maybe they learn something new, or someone helps prepare them, or maybe they push themselves harder (and suffer some harm before rolling)... or maybe they just have to give someone else a chance to try a move. (Maybe they can loosen it up for you.)

What can be retried, and how often, will vary from group to group – and from move to move. Most players won't think twice about retries for pistol shots, athletic moves, or piloting rolls ... but some may not like retries at all on negotiations or other social moves. Use the debriefing sessions at the end of each game to talk to your players about what they like and don't like.

THE CLOCK IS TICKING: INTERVALS

There's no specific time-keeping in **Farflung**... but you still need to keep the pace going forwards. Some challenges will have a time **interval** that is, after a certain amount of time has passed, something's supposed to happen. But when does that time happen?

As a rule, **an interval happens just before a player takes a second move.** That means that everyone should be asked if they want to make one move before the clock moves forward and the interval happens

You're the MC, so you enforce the clock – ask other players if they want to try any moves (even a simple avoid move) before you let someone else go twice in a row, when time is of the essence. Some of your players may not understand when they get a turn unless you specifically ask them to make a move.

Any challenge that has an interval is one where timing is key, so it's up to players to each use their resources wisely. And if that challenge has a countdown, then you really might need a lot of people working together, and quickly, to defeat it before time runs out.

PLOT TWISTS

Do you feel the game deserves to be more interesting? Try one of these plot twists to liven up any story.

Accidental Crime: The players do something they didn't even know was breaking a local law of custom. Speaking out against the choco-gram rationing, sexual relations with a virgin prince, or wearing white after Labor Day could all be punishable by all kinds of local laws. Do our players risk becoming fugitives over a trifle like this? And what is the penalty anyway? A fine? Trial by combat? This twist allows for all kinds of social conflicts, and even for a courtroom scene.

Bizarre Coincidence: Two old enemies (or friends) just happen to run into each other. The day of the Triplanetary Accord Signing is apparently on the one day every 32,000 years when the planet's phase-cicadas all hatch at once. That lump of jethryk rock in the back of the hold turns out to be a piece of a temporal-control device that holds the fate of the universe, etc.

Part of the fun of **Farflung** are these extremes of chance. Use them occasionally, to add humor and excitement.

Body Swap: Ah, the hallowed tradition of science-fiction, where two or more people's minds get put into other people's bodies. See what it's like to take moves out of someone else's playbook! Try to blend in when you lack the psi-control that takes a lifetime to develop! Come to terms with someone else's genitalia! And I worked too hard to get this date with Lady Gallumbits this Friday night, so you will go the opera with her and you will not embarrass me!

This is another twist that can really only be used once. No, it doesn't make a lot of sense, but it's good for a few laughs.

Bundle of Joy: Science-fiction stories are rife with unexpected pregnancies. Weird aliens might rereveal by budding, by laying eggs, or cloning.

This twist is another for the debriefing. Some players enjoy this kind of challenge; others won't care for it all. If the brood ages quickly, it can be fun to see a new pet, follower, or rival emerge.

Catastrophic Mistake: Someone goofed, and it's not for the best. A scientist accidentally invented a linguistic virus that is turning people into non-volitional vectors. A tachyon decelerator has started a temporal cascade, unraveling time and space with increasing frequency. A bug in a piece of software has robots building endless copies of themselves,

devouring the galaxy's resources at an exponential rate. Those people who made the mistake come to our heroes for help.

This twist can be made personal if one of our unique players has the right gifts to solve the problem. Maybe one of heroes is immune to the problem. Or it's their own invention, used improperly, and only its original inventor — our hero — could shut it down before it's too late.

Envy: One of the players has something this NPC wants: the last Christian Dior dress, the Phoenix Force, or the rights of inheritance to the Ordos Throne. The NPC is willing to go to great lengths to get the player to give this up.

This twist benefits from a lighter touch. Consider having this NPC repeatedly show up, willing to bail our heroes out in return for taking things from them.

Face-Heel turn: Someone switches sides to the bad guys. An ally of the players betrays them. This twist is more interesting if the ally is duped or blackmailed, and if they regret the decision later.

Use this very sparingly, as players don't take this very well. They often feel cheated, and they will take out their aggression in the game.

No one knows your players better than you do. What do they like? What do they dislike? Each game session ends with a debriefing, so don't be shy about asking them about what they want!

Each player has a character who has awesome powers. These unique moves are what makes the character special. It's a solid bet that the player wants to find ways to make those powers useful. Find ways to give your players ways to show off, with plot twists that can't be solved by normal means.

Framed! Someone is pretending to be one of heroes, ruining their reputation. This twist often uses some sort of duplicate, getting caught on video doing all sorts of bad things. Is it a disguise? A clone? The other version from a mirror universe?

This twist works best after a few sessions have been played. It's also an excuse for a violent showdown that's evenly matched.

Grim Portents: An encoded signal from deep space... a strange energy field that won't leave... a psychic signal of four drum beats. What could it mean?

You can leave a twist like this as a hook for something later. Don't build it up too much, just leave it out there. And by all means, let a player investigate it. It's not "ruining the surprise" if they figure it out, it's showing genuine interest in the game.

Groundhog Day: Our heroes are stuck in a loop. The same 24 hours keeps repeating itself over and over again. They must find out what's causing this and stop it. Or just enjoy the same things again and again.

This twist can be a good one-shot episode, for its humor value as players do outlandish things because they can expect a rewind with no consequences. There's a reason your favorite sci-fi show had an episode just like this.

Heel-Face Turn: Someone switches sides to the good guys. An enemy of the players betrays their cause and helps out. Maybe the enemy can't stand their employers. Maybe they fell in love with a player-character.

This twist works great if it follows from a player's moves in the game. Show that characters can change the story through more than just domination and violence.

Loot the Burning House: Our players are sent on some great battle or violent conflict with the bad guys... and a third party tries to sneak in and sweep up the debris as their own reward.

Use this twist sparingly. Players hate being played for chumps. But it does make the world feel like it's a real place.

Misguided Love: An NPC falls madly in love with one of our heroes (or a follower) and will not leave them alone. To be interesting, that NPC should be far too grand to be dismissed with a single roll. This story can take a dark turn if the NPC kidnaps someone to lock away in a gilded cage.

Use the debriefings as your guide for this kind of twist. A few players enjoy this sort of gothic bondage... but many more do not like it at all.

Not Funny Ha-Ha, Funny Strange: Things look a little ... off, today. There's an odd smell. Or people are suddenly talking about "the

great overmind" and are glowing orange. Or all records of our existence have been deleted and no one knows who we are. For some reason, only our heroes notice this anomaly.

This twist will involve a lot of "spot the differences". Anything that stayed the same or is greatly different will attract the players' attention. This story can be a great callback to NPCs from before, as the players interview them to see what's different.

Rising Hostility: One non-player character does something that makes another NPC crave revenge. Or two civilizations go to war.

Use this twist when the players have a stake in one of the sides winning. They can't just beat everyone up, they'll have to find a way to work through these problems.

Secrets Revealed! Strike a dramatic chord when someone's true identity becomes known. Disclose the mystery of what really destroyed the lost civilization. Witness the firepower of the fully-armed and operational battle station!

This twist only works if you had a hook earlier that hinted that it would happen. It's not a dramatic reveal unless after it comes out, the players realize they should have known this, earlier.

Sins of our Fathers: Nothing like a few millennia of neglect to leave trouble brewing. An old computer could be switched on and decide it's overdue to activate mutually-assured destruction. Or the ringworld arcology could be wobblingly unstable, its guy-wires in dire need of overhaul. Our players could be called in

Something Missing: There was a hole here, now there's not. A person could disappear. A ship could disappear from the scopes. A whole planet could just disappear. Nothing like a cosmic anomaly that needs to be solved, especially if someone on that missing planet still owes me a beer.

This twist is good for opening an adventure. You can use this as a long term hook, too, when a player discovers that the planet disappeared at the exact same time they pushed that button on the alien device last week.

Strange Behavior: A friend is behaving oddly. Maybe their cybernetic brain is malfunctioning? Or perhaps they're having some sort of mental breakdown.

For added drama, it could be a player-character having problems! Use the debriefing as your guide. Rarely, you can have a player who thinks it would be neat to have their character de-powered, or insane, or unreliable. (Most players don't like it, so don't push this on anyone who doesn't like it.) This can be an excuse to re-invent someone's character into a different version, swapping out a new playbook.

Ulterior Motives: Just because someone has their own agenda doesn't mean they're out to get you. Some things are need to know. The players could be sent on some errand without knowing that they're part of some grander scheme.

Use this twist very sparingly. Many players resent the idea that NPCs are "using them". Be sure to have a debriefing to ask how this story went. We cannot stress enough that the ulterior motive

should not be, "betray the players". Not only is that cliché, but you're just asking for trouble.

Unexpected Arrival: Any situation that's going easy enough can be ruined by the appearance of someone who has no business being there. Don't go for the obvious "villain crashes party" — it's far more interesting when it's an old friend or embarrassing ally.

This twist can turn any story that's going too easy into one that's suddenly dramatic, when the arrival accidentally gets caught or put into danger.

Victims of our own Success: That miner that you rescued from Chiron Beta Prime won't leave you alone. You killed the baddies and saved the entire planet... and now the people want to elect you emperor! The sentient mass from the center of the universe keeps shifting reality in ways that should make you happy, but don't.

Use this twist after players solve a problem a little too well. This hook can shake the players up a bit, because how do you let someone down easily?

SAMPLE CHALLENGES

Use these sample challenges as a guide for making your own. As MC, always listen to your players. They may come up with their own ideas for moves to deal with these situations. We can't possibly list every idea here, nor all the bizarre responses and situations that can come up. If you think of better moves, better responses, or better choices, then use those! Don't let our silly book boss you around. Above all: be fair, be consistent, have fun.

HOSTILITIES

These encounters are of a violent and charged nature with other people and monsters.

creep

ONE WEAK CHARACTER

Hangs around bad neighborhoods, found in sleazy bars, works below deck, or is a hired gon.

Choose a name: Bad Benjamin Barr; Betamax; Bill; Bimmy; Carvey; Cassiday; Crooley; Devlin; Draaga; Dug; 50-Cred; Frang; Hector; Ironbelly; Jock; Kilmour; LummoX; Myrdir; Norris; Osgar; Poundar; Pustule; Rowe; Scully; Shooty; Slick; Tornewan; Two.P; Uller; Wez

PLAYERS' MOVES:

Use the standard moves. Assault? Avoid? Block? Schmooze? Etc. The creep is a **weak** target. If the players can neutralize a weak target, this challenge ends.

SUGGESTED RESPONSES FROM THE MC:

- ❖ **The creep counter-attacks: roll +Bottom.**

Up to 6: -1 Doing, and another -2 Doing if you're exposed.

7-9: Choose one: flee or -1 Doing

- ❖ **The creep yells catcalls, insults, and abuse: roll +Top.**

Up to 6: -1 Feeling and become exposed

7-9: Choose one: Become exposed, flee, or -1 Feeling

- ❖ **The creep attacks:** At the interval, the creep picks a single character to **roll +Strange.**

Up to 6: Choose one: surrender something to the creep (their choice), or -3 Doing.

7-9: Choose one: surrender something to the creep (their choice), or -1 Doing.

- ❖ **If all characters flee, only the ones with the lowest Top traits become part of a chase sequence** (page 118). If even one character remains, the creep will deal with them, first.
- ❖ **If all remaining characters are incapacitated, they are at the mercy of the creep.** (Kidnapping? Robbery? Extortion?)

You can introduce a Creep challenge when a player wanders off into someplace they're not supposed to be. Or you can introduce a Creep if a player does something clumsy, obnoxious, or otherwise fails on a move.

If our players are in a civilized place, you may want to warn your players that asymmetric violence is frowned upon. That is, if you kill someone just because he threatened you, you could get into even more trouble. Encourage your players to try clever moves.

GANG OF CREEPS

MANY WEAK CHARACTERS

A bunch of creeps, in greater numbers and tacky clothes. The cheapest and lowliest of hired goons.

Choose a name: Badwolves; Bagheads; Fire Walkers; First-Shooters; Hell's Sergals; Hemovores; Iota Syndicate; Jailbreakers; Lagrange Rangers; Neonates; Permanent Floating Riot Club; Pure Strain Humans; Red Ribbons; Quasar Irregulars; Unified Field; Ultra-Violent

Countdown = 3 counters

PLAYERS' MOVES:

Use the standard moves. Assault? Avoid? Block? Schmooze? Etc. Neutralizing a **weak** target takes out one creep and -1 countdown. Neutralizing a **strong** target takes out all the creeps and zeros the countdown.

SUGGESTED RESPONSES FROM THE MC:

- ❑ **One of the creeps assaults you: roll +Bottom.**

Up to 6: -1 Doing, and another -2 Doing if you're exposed.

7-9: If you're exposed, -1 Doing. Now, choose one: either flee or -1 Doing

- ❑ **The gang yells catcalls, insults, and abuse: all characters roll +Top.**

Up to 6: -countdown Feeling and become exposed

7-9: Choose one: Become exposed, flee, or -1 Feeling

- ❑ **The creeps advance at the interval: all characters roll +Bottom.**

Up to 6: -countdown Doing, and another -2 Doing if you're exposed.

7-9: If you're exposed, -countdown Doing. Now, choose one: either flee or -1 Doing

- ❑ **Characters who flee become part of a chase sequence** (page 118).

- ❑ **If all characters flee, they all become part of a chase sequence** (page 118). If some characters flee while others stay, the MC must choose: reduce the countdown by 1 and start a chase sequence, or have the creeps stay here.

- ❑ **If all remaining characters are incapacitated, they are at the mercy of the creeps.** (Kidnapping? Robbery? Extortion? Take them back to the boss creep? Etc.)

A single Creep is a minor obstacle to a player-character with positive attributes and common sense. A Gang of Creeps is another story. A strong assault or avoid move could get past them... but a bad roll could spell trouble.

A Gang of Creeps could be small-time hoods, a rabble of hostile people, or out-dated robotic sentries. Use the Gang of Creeps when you want a challenge that's clearly beyond the skill of common people, but is something that our uncommon heroes can deal with.

A Gang of Creeps is a much more serious obstacle when their Boss Creep is around. If your players are smart, they will try to neutralize the Boss, first.

Consider increasing the Boss to grand tier, if you want a recurring villain who isn't to be trifled with.

A Paramilitary is an armed guard, police, security, or clear authority figure. Either our players are violating the local laws, or they are tangling with an evil empire.

If our players are dealing with a nasty, violent person (not well-armed or well-trained), you should use a Creep, instead.

BOSS CREEP

ONE STRONG CHARACTER

Often found with a creep, or a gang of creeps.

Choose a name: Abobo; Anti-Maim; Bleek; Carnifex; The Captain; The 404 Kid; Der Hexenhammer; Doc Rictus; Harry the Unspeakable; Kraab; Lady Maple; Lobo; Lostcore; Lufi; Molly; Mongul; Old Man; Russo; Vetter; Zann the Man

PLAYERS' MOVES:

Use the standard moves. Assault? Avoid? Block? Schmooze? Etc. The boss creep is a **strong** target. The boss creep will ignore results that only affect weak targets, but they can be neutralized by a single, strong result.

SUGGESTED RESPONSES FROM THE MC:

- ❖ **The boss counter-attacks: roll +Strange.**
Up to 9: -3 Doing
10-12: Choose one: flee or -1 Doing

- ❖ **The boss orders their gang to do things.** This can happen at the interval, or if a character does something that really, really offends the boss. Either add a new gang of creeps, or add 1 to the countdown of an existing gang of creeps.
- ❖ When **the boss creep is neutralized**, their underlings may flee, they may keep fighting, they may insist on **ceasing hostilities** (page 123), etc.

PARAMILITARY

ONE STRONG CHARACTER

Could be a lone bounty hunter, or could possibly be part of a larger group. A paramilitary comes dressed for war.

Choose a name: Ares, Boba, Bossk, Calhoun, Curare, Dalton, Duke, Elexis, Esteves, Ezril, Fang, Gantz, Geist, Glossu, Idaho, IG-88, Jeltz, Julie, Kersey, Leonard, The Major, McGinnis, Mikiko, Nack, Rusty, Sever, Shadow

SUGGESTED RESPONSES FROM THE MC:

- ❖ **The paramilitary counter-attacks: roll +Down.**
Up to 9: -3 Doing
10-12: Are you exposed? -3 Doing.
- ❖ **Military action** at the interval.
All characters roll +Bottom.
Up to 6: Call for backup! Replace this challenge with a paramilitary unit
7-9: Suppressive fire! -1 Doing (and another -2 if exposed)
10+: Start **cease hostilities** challenge (page 123) (Yes, if some characters roll low but others roll high, we could have backup arriving while negotiating for a cease-fire.)

- ❖ A single paramilitary **may pursue** characters that flee, or they may call out for patrols to catch them, instead (which can start a **chase**, see page 118).
- ❖ **If the paramilitary captures, incapacitates, or forces one or more characters to surrender**, they will almost always move them to some other location and detain them. (See **containment**, page 114.)

PLAYERS' MOVES:

Use the standard moves. Assault? Avoid? Block? Schmooze? Etc. The paramilitary is a **strong** target. They will ignore results that only affect weak targets, but they can be neutralized by a single, strong result.

PARAMILITARY UNIT

MANY STRONG CHARACTERS

Armed police, hired mercenaries, veteran soldiers, and anyone else who knows how to fight and isn't afraid.

Choose a name: Anarcho-Militia; Anti-Human League; Building Security; Combine Peacekeeper; Grubert Safari Company; Redshirt Brigade; Spartan Phalanx; Special Weapons & Tactics; Vortigaunt Conscripts

COUNTDOWN = 3 COUNTERS (or more)

PLAYERS' MOVES:

Use the standard moves. Assault? Avoid? Block? Schmooze? Etc. The paramilitary unit is a group of **strong** targets. They will ignore results that only affect weak targets. A single strong neutralization only reduces the countdown by 1, but a grand result will affect the entire unit (and maybe zero out the countdown).

SUGGESTED RESPONSES FROM THE MC:

☒ Suppressing fire vs. hostiles.

Automatic -1 Doing, with another -countdown Doing if you are exposed.

☒ Return fire:

Automatic -countdown Doing, with another -2 Doing if you are exposed.

☒ Demand for surrender: roll +Top.

Up to 6: -countdown Feeling
7-9: Either surrender or -1 Feeling

☒ Military action at the interval. All characters roll +Bottom.

Up to 6: Call for backup! Add +1 countdown.

7-9: Suppressive fire! -1 Doing (and another -countdown if exposed)

10+: Start **cease hostilities** challenge (page 123) (Yes, if some characters roll low but others roll high, we could have backup arriving while negotiating for a cease-fire.)

- ☒ **If one or more characters flee, they become part of a chase sequence** (page 118). The paramilitary will prefer to call for other units to pursue the characters, if they can. Otherwise, they must reduce their countdown to send one or more units after our heroes.
- ☒ **If the paramilitary captures, incapacitates, or forces one or more characters to surrender**, they will almost always detain them somewhere until the law or some other authority arrives. (See **containment**, page 114.)

An army is many Paramilitary Units, one after the other. The players might defeat one Paramilitary Unit, but as MC you should tell them if "that was just the first wave, more are on the way."

Some players may have difficulty understanding that they don't have to stay and fight. Remind the players what their goals are, and if that goal doesn't include "fighting the army", then they probably leave before more units arrive.

A single Alien Predator is a nuisance: non-combat characters will have trouble, but tougher types won't break a sweat. For a greater challenge, you could upgrade the creature so only grand effects work on it. Or you could have a hoard of the things, with a countdown of 3, 5, 10, or more. (Strong hits cause -1 countdown and grand hits cause -3.)

For an alternative challenge, our heroes may have to look after one of these things. (Maybe it's a pet, or a zoo animal, or the baby part of an alien's life-cycle.) Try not to let it get loose!

alien predator

ONE STRONG CREATURE

An apex predator from some forgotten world. Has lots of teeth.

Choose a name: Agropelter; Axe Beak; Bitey; Ib; Jibburc; Mega-chicken; Merlock; Mew-Tannt; My Child Still in Its Larval Stage; Only Specimen in the Known Universe; Owlbear; Rare Delicacy; Sacred Beast of Klylo; Scrag; Thyrax; That Thing That Keeps Turning Up and We Don't Know Where They Keep Coming from; Slorrk; Triffid; Umber Hulk; Velociraptor; What Used to be Greg Before He Got That Weird Rash; Vllillo; Vulpeon; Zerg

Introduce the Alien Predator with a sneak attack: the MC asks all players to roll +Up, and then says "Not it!". All players who do not say "Not it!" before rolling are exposed.

Up to 9: -3 Thinking and you are **exposed**, even if you said "Not it".

10+: Nothing. We discourage you from pointing at the other players and laughing at their misfortune.

Round up the exposed characters.

The one who was the last one to say "Not it!" is pounced upon by the predator. The MC is encouraged to resolve any disputes using contests of wits and humiliation.

PLAYERS' MOVES:

Brute-force moves (such as assault, avoid, block, etc.) should work, but the predator won't respond to reason (schmooze, etc.) in the typical manner. The alien predator is a **strong** target, but it is also cowardly. Weak results will make it flee the area; a single strong result will take it out.

There's also a special move for the unfortunate victim:

☒ **Break free of the pounce:** roll +Strange.

Up to 6: You only make it worse! Predator drags you into some terrible place where it has you all to itself.

7-9: Break free, but you must choose: -3 Doing; destroy or lose some valuable item; or something else that you or the MC think is dramatic.

10+: Break free.

SUGGESTED RESPONSES FROM THE MC:

☒ **Counter-Attack:**

-3 Doing vs. the character and -1 Thinking on a pounced target.

☒ **Ravage the pounced target:**

Automatic -1 Doing, -1 Feeling, and -1 Thinking on the pounced target.

☒ **If any target becomes incapacitated, the alien predator will grab that target and run off.** The best

predators have many escape routes, which may require successful scopes to figure out where they went.

Whatever the predator does with its victim is up to the MC. (Line the larder? Lay its eggs in their body cavities? Present it to the nest mates?)

PSI MONSTER

one weird creature

It floats through walls and feeds off mental energy. Immune to conventional weapons and hazards.

Choose a name: Flumph; Intellect Devourer; Mind Parasite; Thought Eater; W'th't V'w'l

Introduce the Psi Monster with a sneak attack: the MC asks all players to roll +Up.

Up to 6: -3 Feeling and you are exposed.

7-9: Choose: flee the area, or -3 Feeling.

10+: Without surprise, the Psi Monster is not nearly as frightening. You may take +1 forward on all moves vs. the Psi Monster in this challenge.

players' moves:

Standard move might work, but with qualifiers. The psi monster is a **strong** target; it will ignore any weak results. In addition, it is immune to assault or containment from any gear that isn't specifically designed to work against psi monsters. (Special-attack moves from personal playbooks will work, however. As always, the MC decides what goes.)

suggested responses from the mc:

❏ Counter-Attack:

-3 Thinking vs. the character and -1 Feeling on all **exposed** characters.

❏ Mind Blast: at the interval, all characters roll +Top.

Up to 9: -1 Thinking, and choose: flee, or another -2 Thinking.

10-12: Choose: Flee or -1 Thinking

❏ Flee by moving through walls.

It's really annoying how they do that.

The Psi Monster here is plain and simple. You could make one that has an advanced personality, with all sorts of wants and desires. It's only dangerous if the players can't reveal or invent the gear to deal with it. You could upgrade it to a higher tier... or have the thing possessing innocent people, which raises ethical questions on how to remove the psi monsters from them.

ALIEN MENACE

one grand creature

Your standard space monster. We're gonna need a bigger ship.

Choose a name: Arachnoid, Bullette; Gargantua; Grell; Protozoid; Slimie; Stroggo; Xenomorph; Your Mom

players' moves:

Standard moves will work normally. The alien menace is a **grand** target; only grand results can affect or neutralize it. In addition, not only does it ignore weak results, but strong results only make it mad. **Any time someone scores a strong result vs. the alien menace, add 1 rage counter.**

suggested responses from the mc:

❏ Counter-Attack: roll +Bottom

Up to 9: -1 Doing and -1 Feeling, and another -2 Doing if you're **exposed**.

10+: Add 1 rage counter.

❏ Berserker rage:

Whenever the rage counter gets to 3, all characters roll +Top.

Up to 9: -3 Feeling, and choose: -3 Doing or flee. Remove 1 rage counter.

10-12: Choose: -3 Feeling or flee. Remove one rage counter.

13+: Choose: -1 Doing or remove one rage counter.

If all targets flee, start a chase sequence (page 118). If even one target stays behind, the alien menace will continue to interact with that character.

If you were looking for the big nasty monster, this is it. Use this kind of creature sparingly: grand threats can use up a lot of resources. And there's no rule that says the Menace can't be a sapient, thinking creature. Jealous, hate, revenge, and other emotions could turn a person into a force of nature.

At some point, you might want the ridiculous mecha-robot or space dragon that throws trains or pushes over buildings. Again, there's no rule against playing the Kaiju as something that can be reasoned with, bargained with, or even propositioned. (Though the details of such a relationship are left as an exercise for the reader.)

GIANT KAIJU

one grander creature

A monster as tall as a skyscraper, this is the kind of problem that is very difficult to cover up.

Choose a name: Arcyos, Cthulhu; Ghidra; Gozer; Kabuto; Mazinger; Neo-Bahumut; Queen-Mother; Ro-Jaws

Countdown = 3 counters (or more)

When a character first gets within range of the kaiju, they must roll +Top.

Up to 9: -countdown Feeling.

If you don't flee right now, another -2 Feeling.

10-12: -1 Feeling, and if you don't flee right now, -countdown Feeling

13+: The bigger they are, the harder they fall. Take +1 forward to your next move.

players' moves:

Standard moves will work normally. The alien menace is a **grander** target; only grand results can affect it, and even then, they only remove 1 counter from the countdown. The creature ignores weak or strong results.

If the kaiju's countdown gets reduced to zero, it will surrender, collapse, turn back into a statue, lose all structural integrity, realize the error of its ways, or something else that makes it stop being such a threat.

suggested responses from the MC:

❏ **Counter-Attack: roll +Bottom**

Up to 9: -5 Doing and -1 Feeling, and another -2 Feeling if you're **exposed**. If you survive, you are pinned under rubble or knocked out of range. You take -3 on your next move against the kaiju.

10-12: -3 Doing, and another -1 Feeling if you're **exposed**.

13+: -1 Doing.

❏ **Every interval, smash more of the city. All characters on the scene roll +Bottom.**

Up to 6: -3 Doing and -3 Feeling. If you're still active after that, then choose: either flee or suffer another -countdown Doing.

7-9: -1 Doing and -1 Feeling, and choose: either flee or suffer another -2 Doing.

space knight

one grander character

A humanoid typhoon, this person has “arch-nemesis” written all over the creepy mask that they wear. The worst knights have an entourage of a gang of creeps or a paramilitary group.

Choose a name: Ardel; Athame; Cutter Jane; Darth; Feyd; Forgrave; Hiryu; Hudzen; Malik; Rom; Terminus; Tetsutengu; Vantabright; Wade

Countdown = 3 counters or more

When the space knight first appears on the scene, all characters must roll +Top.

Up to 6: -2 Feeling, and choose one: flee, surrender, or -countdown Feeling.

7-9: Choose one: surrender, flee, or -1 Feeling

10-12: You can surrender or flee if you want, but you can also hold your own.

13+: Finally, an opponent worthy of your attentions. Take +1 forward to your next move.

PLAYERS' MOVES:

Standard moves will work normally. The space knight is a **grander** target; only grand results can affect them, and even then, they only remove 1 counter from the countdown. The knight ignores weak or strong results.

If the knight's countdown gets reduced to zero, they let out a cry of hate (see below). The very next grand result will be able to neutralize them.

suggested responses from the MC:

☑ **Counter-attack with laser blade: roll +Up.**

Up to 9: -3 Doing. You are disarmed by the laser blade or by a ricocheted attack.

10-12: -1 Doing. Choose one: be disarmed or -1 Feeling.

☑ **At each interval, the knight chooses a target and slashes at them, forcing them to roll +Up.**

Up to 6: -3 Doing, and another -2 Doing if you are **exposed**.

7-9: -1 Doing, and another -2 Doing if you are **exposed**.

10-12: -1 Doing.

☑ **When countdown drops to zero, the space knight lets out a cry of unfathomable hate: all characters roll +Strange.**

Up to 9: -1 Feeling, and -3 forward to next move.

10+: The space knight flees. (Yes, if even one character rolls this high, the knight will flee.)

Use the Space Knight as a template for your recurring villains. If you want the game to feel personal, then you need to put faces on the characters. What's your Space Knight's appearance? Manner? Motivation? Goals? Emotions? Dreams?

As a grander threat, it usually makes more sense for our heroes to run away from the Knight, only confronting them when they must. You can make even the most mundane adventure more interesting by simply having a Knight show up to stop our heroes from whatever it is they want to do.

ENVIRONMENTAL

These are challenges that involve weather, travel, distance, objects and the like.

In stories, heroes get captured all the time. In role-playing games, it can be very difficult to capture a player-character. To some players, getting captured is the same thing as losing, and no one likes to lose.

Farflung is a game of high emotions and quick turn-arounds. Getting captured can get you right into a villain's lair, and you can learn a lot of information that way. Also, no one is truly alone, there's plenty who can come to your rescue. As always, use the debriefings to discuss the story tropes with your fellow players.

STRONG HAZARD

Oh no! Your enemy has trapped you in some kind of futury thing, and they are laughing at you while reminding you that escape is impossible. While you are trapped like this, you can't move against others who aren't in the same containment as you (unless you make a special move, below).

Choose a name: The classic pit; Force field; Frictionless floor; Giant magnet; Glue bomb; Hard-light screen; Honey-pot decoy; Increased gravity; Myob bag; Net; Pocket universe; Prison cell; Psychic projection of your own private hell; Spider web; Spider garden; Stasis globe; Sticky effulgence; Time loop; Zero-point energy

CONTAINMENT

PLAYERS' SPECIAL MOVES:

☒ **Think of something!**

Roll +Down.

Up to 6: It's hard to act under pressure! -3 Thinking.

7-9: Choose one: do nothing... or -3 Thinking and +3 forward on your next move.

10-12: Choose one: sacrifice a piece of strong gear and break free; try to improvise new gear, and roll again with +connection; or -3 Thinking and +3 forward.

13+: You disable the device. You're free! Take +3 forward to help free anyone else still caught.

☒ **Brute force: roll +Strange.**

Up to 6: Flail in agony, curse your captor's name, and -3 Doing.

7-9: Choose one: do nothing... or -3 Doing and +3 forward on your next move, as you push yourself harder than ever before.

10-12: Choose one: work through the pain (-3 Doing) and free yourself, or take +3 on your next move.

13+: You and everyone else are free! Take +1 forward on all moves to get revenge against your captor.

☒ **Affect someone or something outside of the containment: roll +Bottom.**

Up to 6: You strain yourself. Choose one: -3 Doing or -3 Feeling.

7+: Choose one: -1 Doing or -1 Thinking. You may now take a move against something outside of the containment, with +1 forward.

SUGGESTED RESPONSES FROM THE MC:

☒ **Someone comes to your rescue.** They can't bear to see you like this. Maybe you could just give your captors what they want? Or maybe they have to confess their undying love for you. Would you put someone else at risk, just to get yourself out of here?

☒ **The gloating.** You're not sure which is worse: the humiliation of defeat, or having to listen to this blowhard go on and on about their victory. Maybe if you're patient, they'll accidentally reveal a detail of their master plan, and you can use it after you escape.

INFILTRATION

STRONG PUZZLE

Sneak into a high-security area.

Choose a name: Abandoned Soylent Packing Plant; Bani's Fortified Compound; Secret Lab on Cinnra; The Ineluctable Sewers; Northbridge Robo-Factory; Ruins of Ancient Olorin; Shatabisha Zaibatsu; Undisclosed Location; Under-City of Vespae Secunda

Countdown = 3

PLAYERS' SPECIAL MOVES

☒ **Recon: roll +Up.**

Up to 6: Caught by surprise! Choose one: Surrender or -3 Thinking and you must deal with a creep or paramilitary.

7-9: Almost caught! -1 Thinking.

10+: You've cased the place. +1 countdown and +3 forward to all "sneak" moves for you and all your friends.

☒ **Disguise: roll +Charm.**

Up to 6: You're not fooling anyone! Choose one: surrender; or -3 Feeling and you must deal with a creep or paramilitary.

7-9: Almost caught! -1 Feeling. Choose one: leave the area; surrender; or make some people suspicious (-1 countdown).

10+: Good job. You get +1 forward on other infiltration rolls, and you can be casual in places that a non-disguised person could not.

☒ **Sneak around: roll +Bottom.**

Up to 6: Caught off guard! Choose one: surrender; or -3 Thinking and you must deal with a gang of creeps or a paramilitary group.

7-9: -1 Thinking and you're not yet inside. If your next move is "sneak" or "sabotage the security system", +3 forward.

10-12: You're almost inside. If your next move is "sneak" or "sabotage the security system", +3 forward.

13+: You're inside. +1 countdown.

☒ **Sabotage the security system: roll +Down.**

Up to 6: Subtract 3 from the countdown.

7-9: -1 Thinking. If your next move is "sneak" or "sabotage the security system", +3 forward.

10+: +10 countdown. Security system is offline; this move is no longer available.

suggested responses from the mc:

☒ **Each interval: -1 countdown.**

If the countdown reaches zero, then any move that would reduce countdown again sets off every alarm, everywhere. It's probably time to go.

☒ **After a character does some non-infiltration move that could get bad attention: roll +Bottom.**

Up to 6: If you don't immediately go outside, -1 countdown. And if you just did something loud, blatant, or obnoxious, another -1 countdown.

7-9: Either go outside or -1 countdown.

There's a long tradition in genre fiction of sneaking into places you have no business being in. From robot factories to alien spaceships, from dominated hive-minds to the most boring of metropolises.

We can't possibly detail every place you'd break into, or what you'd do while you're in them. Use this challenge as a guide for your own sneaky adventures. Encourage your players to bluff their way past indolent guards, to eavesdrop on others' conversations, and to stumble into private collections of adult novelties. What sort of things do you do, when you think no one is watching?

Use the Hull Breach as a model for other challenges where players must make a hard choice: flee to save themselves, or take a risk to save others?

Whether it's driving the car, riding the tomo, or flying the ship, sometimes our heroes will have a risky "travel montage" to get somewhere.

As with all rules, only use the Long Journey challenge if you think the random results and costs will make the story more fun. If our players just need to get to Tau Ceti before anything interesting happens, then just have them get there, no rolls needed.

HULL BREACH

STRONG HAZARD

In space, no one can hear you curse your poor die rolls.

Choose a name: Airlock Failure in Cargo hold; Integrity Loss on in the Stern; Rupture on Deck 3; Stress Fracture on Spinal Mount

Countdown = 3 counters

PLAYERS' SPECIAL MOVES:

☒ **Evacuate: roll +Bottom.**

7-9: Choose one: -3 Doing and get to safety, or +3 forward.

10+: Get to safety.

☒ **Seal the breach: roll +Down.**

Up to 9: So much stress! -1

Thinking. If your next move is "seal the breach", +3 forward.

10-12: Choose one: +1 countdown or +3 forward.

13+: Sealed! **Remove hazard from play.**

SUGGESTED RESPONSES FROM THE MC:

☒ **Each interval: -1 countdown**

☒ **When countdown runs out, all characters still not in safety roll +Down.**

Up to 6: Sucked into space.

All friends suffer -1 Feeling.

7-9: -5 Doing just before you get to safety.

10-12: -3 Doing just before you get to safety.

LONG JOURNEY

STRONG PUZZLE

"Long" is relative, but you can use this threat as a template for any long journey where resources could be consumed or lost, or where time is important.

Choose a name: From the slipgate to the hyperspace bypass; safari through Iarlayn Jungle; Over Junkyards of Tetanoid Valley; Cross Asphalt Plain on Hol-1; Long walk home after one-night stand

Countdown = 3

PLAYERS' SPECIAL MOVES

☒ **Stay on course: roll +Down.**

If you're in a vehicle, only the pilot rolls. Otherwise, everyone rolls.

Up to 6: Something breaks, you get lost, enemy catches up, etc. **New challenge** and -1 countdown.

7-9: Making good time. If your next move is "stay on course", take +3 forward.

10-12: Making great time. If your next move is "stay on course", take +6 forward.

13+: You've arrived!

☒ **Planning the route: roll +Up.**

Up to 6: Have you even seen a map before? -3 Thinking and -1 countdown.

7-9: Either admit your mistakes and -3 Feeling, or get us lost and -1 countdown.

10 or better: Choose one: better economy (+1 countdown) or better route (pilot takes their +connection with you as a bonus on all "stay the course" rolls)

SUGGESTED RESPONSES FROM THE MC:

☒ **Each interval: -1 countdown.**

If the countdown reaches zero, something bad happens.

Everyone gets lost, the ship runs out of fuel, their enemies catch up with them, etc.

dangerous piloting

STRONG EVENT

For those dangerous piloting event.

Choose a name: Fly through the rings of Asphodel VII; Navigate the blasted remains of the Yao-Chi Station; Pass through the Satai Anomaly; Skim the Event Horizon of the Corvi-Neb Black Hole

Countdown = 3

PLAYER'S SPECIAL MOVES

☒ **Sit in the Pilot's Chair:**
roll +Down.

Up to 6: Bad move! Choose one: nightmare stress (-3 Thinking) or crash course (-1 countdown)

7-9: Do you risk it? Choose one: hard turn (+3 forward, -1 Thinking, **thrown about**) or crash course (-1 countdown)

10-12: Smooth piloting. Choose one: hard turn (+6 forward, **thrown about**) or hotdogging (+1 countdown)

13+: Crisis averted. You're in the clear.

SUGGESTED RESPONSES FROM THE MC:

☒ **Turbulence: All crew and passengers roll +Top.**

Up to 6: Strapped in? -1 Doing. Not strapped in? -1 Doing, and choose: Drop what you're holding or another -2 Doing. Oh, and are you the pilot? -1 countdown

7-9: Not strapped in? -1 Doing.

10+: Take +3 forward against anyone else who didn't succeed on a "thrown about" roll.

☒ If the countdown drops to zero, something bad happens. (The ship is horribly damaged, the bad guys catch up to you, you get sent way off course and run out of fuel, etc.)

Dogfighting and space combat can be interesting to some players... but it can be boring to the players who aren't participating. If you want to have a pitched space battle, feel free to add more custom moves (operating the guns, repairing the engines, etc.) ... and think of ways to involve all the players, not just one or two.

Another staple of the genre is the chase sequence: running away from the baddies. "Running away" is concept some players have a hard time with. Isn't fleeing the scene the same as losing? No one likes to lose.

Some of our challenges specifically have the choice: "flee or take damage", to make it clear to the player that staying means automatic harm, and if you want the harm to stop, you must go.

When playing out a chase, think about the movies or shows that make a chase exciting, and put in the same elements. Near-misses with vehicles! Jumping over rooftops! Running over factory conveyors! Like everything else, look for ways to make this chase to be fun.

chase sequence

STRONG EVENT

For those long-term running scenes, when you're running from strong enemies that you'd rather not murder.

Choose a name: Ditch the Kawashi Murdergangs; Escape from the Breeding Pits of Bara-Dur; Flee from the M'Pyri Slime Colony; Get Out Before the Seals Are Shut for another 30,000 Years; Grab the Poker Pot and Run for It; Jump Through the Portal Before It Closes; Run from the Neo-Seattle Organ-Leggars; Snatch the Winslow and Worry About What to Do With it Later; These Guys Again, We Do Not Have Time for This Now

Countdown = 3

PLAYERS' SPECIAL MOVES

☒ **Escape: roll +Bottom.**

Up to 6: Choose one: surrender (and get caught), slow everyone down (-1 countdown), or get turned around (-3 Thinking)

7-9: Keep running! Choose one: exhaustion (-1 Doing) or stress (-1 Thinking). If your next move is "escape", +3 forward.

10-12: You're losing them! If your next move is "escape", take +6 forward.

13+: Either escape (and leave your friends behind) or add +3 forward to everyone's "escape" move until this hazard ends

☒ **Slow down the pursuit:**

roll +Strange. This move is only available if you're being chased by hostiles that can be slowed down by your weapons.

Up to 6: It's not working!

Choose one: Get caught (and drop out of this event), get hurt (-3 Doing), or slow everyone down (-1 countdown)

7-9: Choose one: a risky shot (-3 Doing and +1 countdown) or duck and cover (-1 Doing)

10-12: You take one or two of them out (+1 countdown). If your next move is "Slow down the pursuit", take +countdown, forward.

13+: Choose one: Take out all your pursuers and suffer -1 Doing for your trouble... or take out most of them and scare the rest of them off. You and your friends get away, and the chase is over.

☒ **Surrender: no roll necessary.**

You're caught (see below), but all your friends take +1 forward to escape, if they keep running.

suggested responses from the MC:

☒ **Each interval: -1 countdown.**

If the countdown runs out, all the chased characters are caught. Your pursuers make a demand that you must meet... or you might held in **containment** (page 114)... or you might get trapped in an unpleasant place, etc.

After losing a chase, you won't be taking any moves until your MC tells you it's time to take moves again.

arcane device

strong puzzle

It's a strange thing and we need to figure it out before we can move on.

Choose a name: Dead-Hand Perimeter Missile Array; D'ni Codex; Firefrost Device; Gräfenburg Topology; Kobayashi Maru; Logopolis Block-Transfer Device; Rama Console; Meganti-kythera Mechanism; Shining Trapezohedron; Szilard-Kahn Defense Solution; Tabernacle Crystal; That Thing with the Blinking Lights; Ultimate Nullifer; Voynich Laserdisc

Countdown = 3

players' special moves

☒ **Make sense of the thing:** roll **+Up**.

Up to 6: It's hard to act under pressure! -3 Thinking and -1 countdown.

7-9: Pressure! Either take -3 Thinking or -1 countdown.

10-12: You think you've seen this design before. Either +1 countdown or make another "make sense of the thing" move with +countdown forward.

13+: You have command of the device.

☒ **Sabotage it:** roll **+Down**.

Up to 6: Whatever you're doing, stop it! -3 Feeling and -1 countdown.

7-9: Either admit your mistakes and -3 Feeling, or waste time and -1 countdown.

10-12: Almost there! Take another "sabotage it" move with +3 forward.

13+: Device disabled.

suggested responses from the mc:

☒ **Each interval: -1 countdown.** If the countdown reaches zero, something bad happens. (Lockdown? Explosion? Alarm? Unleash the hordes? Device runs out of power? Our time is up and we must return the device? Something else?)

Puzzles such as this arcane device can build a sense of mystery and fun into your game. But what happens if none of your players' rolls are lucky enough to defeat this puzzle? If you just give them the win, anyway, then what was the point of rolling?

A good answer is that if none of the players can solve the puzzle of the Device, they must find someone who can. See "Fact-Finding", page 120.

INTERPERSONAL

These are challenges that involve dealing with other people.

FACT-FINDING

Fact-Finding doesn't have to just be "make roll, fact comes out." You can make this challenge interesting and personal by putting on a face.

After passing the roll, the player meets an absent-minded scientist, a crazed recluse, a petty criminal, an ancient computer, or some other non-player character that you use for just this encounter.

Any Fact-Finding challenge can be made more interesting if our players' enemies show up during any part of it. Sure, the players' characters can't die, but the non-player characters can, and any good player will seek to protect their fact-finding allies from harm, first.

LONG-TERM EVENT

We have to go to some social institution or library to find some stuff out before we can advance the story. A simple "lore" check isn't going to tell us.

Choose an obscure fact: Anti-Life Equation; Combination to the Druidian Shield; Cure for the Andromeda Strain; Index to Borges Memorial Library; Location of the Lost World of Thamber; Knowledge of What Lies Beyond the Great Barrier; List of all Cylon Agents; Plans to Starkiller Base; Proof of Fermat's Last Theorem; Recipe for Dark-Matter Fuel; Text of God's Final Message to His Creation

Countdown = 5 for something easy to find, 3 for rare facts, 2 or 1 for something incomprehensible.

PLAYERS' SPECIAL MOVES

☒ **Use your expertise.**

Roll +Connection with this topic.

Up to 6: Argh, the truth is out there, you just know it. Choose one: -3 Thinking from stress or -1 countdown.

7-9: A good lead, or a dead end:

Choose one: -3 Thinking from stress... or -1 countdown and you and everyone else takes +3 forward on these fact-finding moves.

10+: Eureka! You've found the solution. You or someone else on your team may add 1 to their connection with this topic.

☒ **Find someone who can help you, then ask them.**

Roll +Charm.

Up to 6: Everyone is giving you the run-around. Choose one: -3 Feeling from stress or -1 countdown.

7-9: This other person will help you, but with strings attached. Either do what they ask (and the MC invents a brand new challenge) or -1 countdown. If you successfully help them, use the 10-12 result, below.

10-12: The other person educates you on this problem. Everyone improves their connection with this topic by +1, and you may claim +3 forward on your next fact-finding move.

13+: Either you find someone who knows everything, or they tell you the right solution. You find out the fact that you need, and you or someone else on your team may add 1 to their connection with this topic.

SUGGESTED RESPONSES FROM THE MC:

☒ **Mental stress.**

-1 Thinking or more, from all these late nights and hard reading. (Best for bad rolls.)

☒ **Unwanted attention.**

Someone doesn't like you looking these things up. You could run into an unexpected challenge of a gang of creeps, a paramilitary unit, or even a space knight.

☒ **Time is running out.**

-1 countdown at the interval. Either we need this thing fast, or someone else will find out and it will be too late. (Don't choose this response if there's no time pressure.)

☒ **Countdown drops to zero?**

It's hopeless. Something must change in the story (such as a new lead, a prophetic vision, someone's tell-all confession, etc.) before you can take this up again.

SOCIAL GATHERING

STRONG EVENT

Just try not to embarrass us too much.

Choose a name: Annual First-Order Founders' Day Parade; Cloned Debutante's Ball; The Digital Circus; Dinner at Milliways'; Ephrofrek's Coming-Out Party; Fhloston Cruise for Swingers; Fundraiser for Retcon Victims; Mardi Gras but in Space; Rollerball Finals; Sadalachbia Supernova and Fireworks Display; Shufflepuck Café Gender's Night; Thunderdome Invitationals

Countdown = 3

SPECIAL MOVES FOR PLAYERS:

☒ **Life of the party: Roll +Top.**

Up to 6: Embarrass yourself. Choose one: Leave, -3 Feeling, or -1 countdown.

7-9: Ha ha! That's a good one, I'll have to remember that. You take +1 forward on all "mingle" rolls.

10+: Fascinating! Choose one: +3 forward to all your "mingle" rolls, or +1 forward for the rest of this party.

☒ **Sneak weapons into the event, past security: Roll +Down.**

Up to 6: Nice try, chief.

Either excuse yourself from the gathering ... or hand over all your weapons to security and -1 countdown.

7-9: Security frisks you and finds all but one of your weak weapons (your choice).

10+: Choose one: either keep one strong weapon, or a group of weak weapons and armor.

☒ **Mingle: Roll +Charm.**

Up to 6: How could you say that? -3 Feeling and -1 countdown.

7-12: How delightful! You and all your friends take +1 forward to all rolls at this gathering.

13+: +1 countdown, and you and all your friends take +1 forward to all rolls at this gathering.

☒ **Use the party as cover while you do something else** (Choose one: steal the silverware; seduce the help; install surveillance device; find evidence; plant evidence): **Roll +Bottom.**

Up to 6: Almost caught! Choose one: -3 Thinking or -1 countdown.

7-9: Almost caught! Choose one: +1 forward, or -1 countdown and +3 on your next "use the party as cover" move.

10-12: Should your risk it? Choose one: +1 forward on your next move ... or -1 countdown and +6 on your next "use the party as cover" move.

13+: You did it! Either go back to the party, or just leave.

SUGGESTED RESPONSES FROM THE MC:

☒ **One chime closer to midnight:** -1 countdown at the interval. We don't have all night, people.

☒ **Dreadful insult!** Good for bad rolls. Something a player has said has insulted someone. This makes for a charged situation, which may require schmoozing to calm down. (See page 28.)

☒ **Inopportune arrival.** Someone who hates our heroes is also at this party. Better avoid them if you don't want to cause a scene.

☒ **Conspicuousness.** Use when a player is doing things they shouldn't be. They get the attention of someone else. (Security? Rival? Busybody?) They must deal with this new situation before they can go back to the social event.

Farflung is a game about strange new worlds and new civilizations. You can use the Social Gathering challenge as a model for any place where talking, intrigue, seduction, and politics are the mode of the day.

You might be surprised at the number of players who insist that their characters carry weapons at all times, even when attending the ballroom dance hosted by the Federation Prime Minister.

Some players will enjoy the idea of their characters being successful at romance. Other players may not enjoy this type of play as much. Many players would rather “role-play not roll play”; that is, they’d rather describe the romance informally and emotionally, not as a game of luck and of dice.

As always, use the debriefings after each game to ask your players about what worked for them and what didn’t, and how you can make your next game session even better.

SEDUCTION

STRONG EVENT

For when you just want to game out a romantic encounter, no strings attached.

Choose a partner: Ah’len; Professor Algedon; Autarch; Bio; Clorcoxx; Cifal; Butch Deadlift; Dromana; The Eichner Cloud; Harmony; Iprotar; Jommy; Kokopelli; Doctor Malrubius; Melmoth; The Nephilim Ambassador; Nikolai; Onkagg; Reon Lak; Rex; Sānshi Fēn; Slaanesh; Slabb; Tarl; The Thing That Dares Not Call You The Day After; Tirapheg; Tod; Tošho Ashura; Trix-Eznari; Unity; Varnett; Vina; V’siana

PLAYER’S SPECIAL MOVES

☒ **Propose Relations:** roll +Charm.

Up to 6: Embarrass yourself.
-3 Feeling and give up.

7-9: You make a gaffe but you might recover. Choose one: give up, or -3 Feeling and you are **hitting it off** (see below).

10-12: You are **hitting it off**. Ask the MC what attribute your partner is looking for. Dominating? (Top) Submissive? (Bottom) Sophisticated? (Up) Energetic? (Down) Sensual? (Charm) Perverse? (Strange) If you follow the MC’s advice, use that new attribute and take +3 forward.

13+: Ask your partner if they would have relations now, or later. You have come to terms.

☒ **Friends with Benefits:**
roll +connection.

Up to 6: Ugh, what did they ever see in you? -3 Feeling and give up.

7-9: Your old friend has some new interests, and they may propose some sort of bargain or favor out of you. Either concede, or give up. (If you fail to follow through on the favor, this could jeopardize your connection.)

10+: Ask your partner if they would have relations now, or later, just like old times. You have come to terms.

SUGGESTED RESPONSES FROM THE MC:

☒ **Propositioned:** roll +Top.

Up to 6: This has turned ugly. -Submit to the proposal, leave now, or -3 Feeling.

7-9: -1 countdown and choose one: Submit to the proposal, leave now, or -1 Feeling.

10-12: -1 countdown and choose one: Submit to the proposal ... or make a demand of the proposer. If they agree, you must either honor their proposal or live with the disgust (-3 Feeling).

13+: Submit to the proposal... or make a demand of the proposer. If they agree, honor it or don’t. You’re that cold.

CEASE HOSTILITIES

STRONG EVENT

Only the most mindless or remorseless of killers would ignore a plea to end a combat encounter.

PLAYERS' SPECIAL MOVES

- ✦ **Plea to surrender:**
roll +Bottom

Up to 6: Hostilities continue.

The MC may have you suffer injury (harm to Doing), anxiety (harm to Feeling), or something else. The harm should match the tier (weak -1, strong -3, grand -5). If your next move is “surrender”, take +1 forward.

7-9: The enemy demands that you and yours **surrender unconditionally**. The details of your upcoming imprisonment are up to the MC. Either accept or keep fighting.

10+: The enemy demands a **favorable surrender**. You may be able to surrender just some of you while the rest get away, or you might have time to do a custom move first. (Stash a weapon? Discard evidence? Call your lawyer? Tell your significant other to stay alive, no matter what occurs, because you will find them? Etc.)

- ✦ **Assert your social status:**
roll +connection with some person or group that your enemy respects

Up to 6: Hostilities continue.

You don't know these people as well as you thought you did. The MC may have you suffer injury (harm to Doing), anxiety (harm to Feeling), or something else. If you don't surrender right now, the MC may reduce your connection.

7-9: The enemy demands that you and yours **surrender peaceably**. Since you have a connection with them, you can be expected to get favorable treatment. Either accept or keep fighting.

10+: The enemy demands **parley**. They recognize that you have a connection with their people or organization, and they will make reasonable demands. (You must leave? Pay a bribe? Hand over the evidence you have on Freynzam Dec? Etc.) You may accept or make a counter-offer. The MC will decide what happens next.

Some players may have a hard time with the idea of surrender. Isn't surrender the same thing as losing? No one likes to lose.

It's a staple of the high-concept sci-fi genre of our heroes willingly surrendering, even to opponents who you clearly inferior. A surrender can get you taken directly to their base of operations, it lets you gather information and meet the authorities, and (most importantly) it keeps anyone from getting hurt. If you're really as awesome as you think you are, you can always break free or get rescued, later.

As MC, you know everything about your game's fiction, even the secret stuff.... But your NPCs don't. Your players will often be able to deceive weak and strong non-player characters... and if they're rolling well enough, they should. You might know the players are being deceitful, but the weak and strong characters won't. Be fair, be consistent, and have fun.

deceit

STRONG EVENT

Bluffing, lying, cheating at cards, or otherwise playing someone false.

Special move "Deceive":

roll +Charm

Up to 6: Caught red-handed. The MC may have you suffer injury (harm to Doing), anxiety (harm to Feeling), or something else. This may start a combat, a chase sequence, or something worse. Use your imaginations.

7-9: The target suspects you're lying. Either confess (and accept your fate), or make some concession (you pay more, they pay less, you confess some other truth, or the MC could suggest something else even more unpleasant) and still get something.

If you continue to try to deceive these suspicious people, take -3 forward.

10-12: The target falls for it. You convince a strong target to take a deal that's not favorable to them at all. Only the most unreasonable lies or cheats will still fail. If your next move would benefit from this deceit, take +1 forward.

13+: The target really falls for it. You convince a grand target to take a deal that's not favorable to them at all... or you can convince a strong group of the most preposterous of lies. Take +3 forward on future rolls to keep this lie up, but as time goes on, it may get harder and harder.

haggling

STRONG EVENT

From gold to latinum to bitcoins and everything in between, the bizarre values of the future. Can also be used to hammer out deals of contracts.

Special move "Haggling":

roll +Down

Up to 6: Bad deal. The MC may have you take bum goods (defective weapons, knockoff fashions, robot servant that lacks the Three Laws, etc.) and not tell you until later, or the seller might sense your

desperation and have you take a bath, etc. If you really insist that you won't take the deal, you will at least suffer anxiety (harm to Feelings) or stress (Thinking).

7-9: Mixed deal. You trade weak stuff for other weak stuff. For higher-tier deals, you get part of what you want, or you're forced to pay more to get things you don't want as part of the deal, or you must jump through some hoops, or there's a hidden rider in the contract.

10-12: Great deal. You get strong goods for a strong price, and maybe something extra (MC's choice).

13+: Deal of the century! You can hammer out a grand deal for a grand price... or a business deal that's ridiculously in your favor.

INTIMIDATION

STRONG EVENT

Sometimes the best offense is the threat of a strong offense.

PLAYERS' SPECIAL MOVES

- ❖ **Demand that your targets give you what you want: roll +Top**

Up to 6: You might not be as impressive as you think you are. If the non-player-characters were already hostile, you may suffer immediate harm. Otherwise, a charged situation will only get worse, at the discretion of the MC.

7-9: Weak shutdown. A single weak enemy will submit to your demands. Strong targets will want something else in return: either accept their counter-offer or don't.

10-12: Strong shutdown. A group of weak enemies or one strong one will submit to you. Grander enemies may take notice of you to taunt, humiliate, flirt, or otherwise interact.

13+: Best shutdown. Entire groups of strong enemies will pause and take notice. A grand target will take you seriously enough to make a deal.

- ❖ **Scare them: roll +Strange**

Up to 6: You are the laughing-stock of space monsters everywhere. The MC may have your targets attack you, laugh at you, take pictures of you, or anything else that is the opposite of fear.

7-9: Weak fear. A single weak enemy will run away from you. If you're outnumbered or if the target is strong, you'll have to do something to convince them to fear you. Ask the MC how your targets respond. (Harm? Falling back? Containment? Etc.) If you're still active, you get +1 forward to do something scary.

10-12: Strong fear. A group of weak enemies or one strong one will run away from you. Grander enemies will simply notice you.

13+: Best fear. Entire groups of strong enemies will panic. You may cause heart attacks, catatonia, and nightmares in the general populace. A grand target will remember you.

- ❖ **Throw your weight around: roll +connection with the enemy's bosses**

Up to 6: Who are you, again?

The MC may have your targets attack you, laugh at you, take pictures of you, or anything else that is the opposite of fear.

7-9: The enemy recognizes you, and asks that you surrender peaceably, or pay a bribe, or something else that they would only offer to someone who has connections like yours. Either give in to their demands or keep fighting.

10+: The enemy recognizes your authority. They will cease hostilities, but they may have to detain you to keep up appearances, if you caused a lot of property damage, etc.

Put your non-player characters into tiers, so you can tell who is a minor challenge and who is a story point.

Casual encounters are trivial. You dash them off and move on. Players should be able to roll over weak characters easily.

Strong characters will give up with a single good roll... but a marginal roll isn't going to get them to back down.

A grand character never simply gives up because you made one good roll. They are a force to be reckoned with.

If you're looking for the rules on how to get someone back up after they're incapacitated, this is where they are.

The healing rules are covered under "rest", page 127.

Getting taken out can be stressful for a player. They may see the experience as "losing", and no one likes to lose. (Permanent death isn't normally possible in our rules, but emotions can trump reason.) Remember to use the debriefing session to talk about what happened during the game. Remind players that role-playing is about the experience, it's not about winning or losing.

REVIVE

STRONG EVENT

When a character has gone down, you can try to get back into the action.

Choose a method: Chi manipulation; Engram realignment; Final form; Gift of some of my personal power; Healing factor; Medpack; Not your destiny to die today; Our love; Psychic healing; Regeneration; Reserve power; Sensu bean; Stimpack injection; Support from your friends; Wound transfer; You can't die now, you have too much to live for

Countdown = 5, minus the scars pool already on target

PLAYERS' SPECIAL MOVES

- ☒ **Pick yourself back up: Ante 1 or more Fx or Hx. Roll +ante.**

Up to 6: It's no use! -1 countdown, and return your ante.

7-9: Restore all zeroed indicia to 1, then set aside all your ante to **scars**. If your next move is anything but flee from what downed you, -3 forward.

10+: Set aside all your ante to **scars**. If your next move is anything but flee from what downed you, -1 forward.

- ☒ **Use field medicine on a friend who has zero Doing: Ante 1 or more Fx or Hx. Roll +Up.**

Up to 6: Damn these terrible conditions! -1 countdown, return your ante.

7-9: Choose: either -1 countdown or add +ante to target's Doing, then set your ante on the target, as **scars**. If your next move is a revive move, take +3 forward.

10+: Reset the target's Doing full, then set your ante on the target, as **scars**.

- ☒ **Rally a friend who has zero Feeling: Ante 1 or more Fx or Hx. Roll +Charm.**

Up to 6: Try harder! -1 countdown, return your ante.

7-9: Choose: either -1 countdown or add +ante to target's Feeling, then set your ante on the target, as **scars**. If your next move is a revive move, take +3 forward.

10+: Reset the target's Feeling full, then set your ante on the target, as **scars**.

- ☒ **Restore a friend who has zero Thinking: Ante 1 or more Fx or Hx. Roll +Top.**

Up to 6: Concentrate! -1 countdown, return your ante.

7-9: Choose: either -1 countdown or add +ante to target's Thinking, then set your ante on the target, as **scars**. If your next move is a revive move, +3 forward.

10+: Reset the target's Thinking full, then set your ante on the target, as **scars**.

- ☒ **Get a friend back up: Ante 1 or more Fx or Hx. Roll +Connection.**

Up to 9: You can't give up on me now, not when we've already seen so much together! -1 countdown, return your ante. If your next move is a revive move, take +3 forward.

10+: Choose: either -1 countdown or move your ante to the target, as **scars**... for each point you move, add 1 to a target's index of choice (Doing, Feeling, Thinking), mix and match.

- ☒ **Carry a friend out of here: Roll +Bottom.**

7-9: It's time for some hard choices: either ditch your friend, or become **exposed** and let the bad guys take parting shots at you.

10+: Get out of this place. You may wind up in a chase sequence (page 118), forced to make rolls for your friend.

SUGGESTED RESPONSES FROM THE MC:

- ☒ **Each interval: -1 countdown.** If the countdown runs out, reviving no longer works on you.
- ☒ **Threats from bad guys.** An enemy may agree to spare your friend if you give them something. If our heroes concede, then the enemies make off with the goods, and after they're gone, our hero revives; add 1 to each Doing, Feeling, and Thinking (up to max).

REST

STRONG EVENT

Get to somewhere safe. Absolutely no charged events. Several hours will pass in the game fiction as you recuperate.

Choose a method: Alcohol; Bonding with followers or friends; Brooding; Drugs; Estivation; Orgasmotron; Recharge; Peace and quiet; Repairs; Sex; Sleep; Update the log; Video games

PLAYERS' SPECIAL MOVES:

- ☒ **Special move in a restful place:** Ante 1 or more Fx or Hx (mix and match), then roll +ante.

Up to 6: Choose one index to reset to full. Then move ante to **scars**.

7-9: Choose one health index to reset to full. Then choose a friend and add +connection to one of theirs (Doing, Feeling, Thinking, mix and match) Then move ante to your **scars**.

10+: Choose one or two indexes to reset to full. Then choose a friend and add +connection to theirs (Doing, Feeling, Thinking, mix and match) Then move ante to your **scars**.

SUGGESTED RESPONSES FROM THE MC:

- ☒ **Events in motion.** While our heroes are nursing their wounds, the villains are pushing ahead with their nefarious schemes.

☒ **Bonding.** A follower or other non-player character uses this time to reveal a secret, or to confess to our hero that they felt lost and alone in an uncaring universe until they came into their life, or to share a private intimacy.

☒ **Support.** Someone that our heroes helped out earlier pledges to support them in their darkest hour. Our heroes could get special gear, new information, or (in only the most extreme of cases) a resilient boost that moves 1 or more points out of **scars** and back into Fx or Hx.

For harm to mean something, it must have some lasting effect. In game terms, getting people back up means losing your points in time to being set aside as **scars**, resources removed from play.

If you don't like the idea of your players getting weakened like this, you can use the "support" response to put scars points back into circulation. Having a base of operation, with a proper medical facility, can be a good excuse within the story for that.

As always, use the debriefing to discuss what's working and what isn't. Players are often biased to making things too easy for themselves, but you also don't want them to lose hope. Work together to find the right balance between challenge and power.

your debriefing

After each play session, the Master of Ceremonies and the players should take a few minutes to talk about their game went.

how was the game?

Now that the session is over, the MC should ask each player what they thought of the game. Some good questions to ask include:

- ❑ Did something happen in the game and you didn't know why?
- ❑ Did someone use a move or other rule and you want to know how that worked?
- ❑ What do you like about the story? What do you dislike?
- ❑ Do you have any story ideas that you want to try, in the next game session??

Some people might be shy about talking about things that bothered them in front of others. This table is a safe space, the game is for everyone. Be polite, be specific, and be fair.

MAINTENANCE

Whew! After a big session like that, all the time points must now be all over the place!

At the end of each session:

- ❑ Remove all set-aside pools, such as scars, eternal, etc.
- ❑ Each player resets their character's Future and History times to their starting numbers.

MODIFICATIONS

Players may want to alter their characters. We do that during the debriefing. Ask your MC for permission to change something. They will probably let you make the change, but it's good etiquette to ask them, first.

change your connections

If you made a good impression on people, you will gain positive connections with them.

- ❑ If any connections were lost, destroyed, killed, etc. remove them from your sheet.
- ❑ If you gain a new connection, write it down.
- ❑ If you gain +1 to an existing connection, improve it.

A connection won't rise above +3 without a very good reason.

swap your time points

You can move your Future and History starting amounts if you want. You can mix and match, if they total up to 5. You can have 5 Future and no History, if you want.

swap your attributes

You can move your attribute points around. You can subtract one from

Bottom and add one to Top... or subtract one from Charm, Down, and Up to add 3 to Strange. We don't recommend moving more than 1 point per play session, but maybe your character had a serious change of life. Also, you must follow these limits:

- ❑ **You can only have one attribute as high as +3.** All other attributes must be +2 or less.
- ❑ **You can only have one attribute as low as -3.** All other attributes must be -2 or more.

After changing your attributes, your health will change, too. If one of these numbers is zero, change your attributes until it's not.

- ❑ Doing = Bottom+Top+5
- ❑ Feeling = Charm+Strange+5
- ❑ Thinking = Down+Up+5

change your playbook

Maybe your character was killed and brought back as a holographic simulation. Or perhaps you merged with the Emyrean Forge and now you're an unstoppable juggernaut. Or maybe you were de-powered, trapped in a simple human body.

If you change your playbook, then all your unique moves change, too. You gain all the new ones and you lose all the old ones. You should consider making changes to your appearance.

PLANNING YOUR STORIES

When planning your games, timing is key. Take too long to reach the next point of interest in the story, and the players will give up trying to make sense of anything. Rush things too quickly, and the players will feel they've been railroaded, that their decisions don't matter.

The right balance will be different from group to group. But every group plays out game sessions, and each one is only a few hours long. Just like how a TV writer, video-game reveal, or screenwriter plans to fill so much airtime, you can use the same techniques to plan your stories.

Start with an idea of who is involved, what they want, where they are, and how they're going to do it. When they do it, and how fast, is what your plan is for. Sure, you can improvise everything on the fly, but without a plan, your fiction might not be able to keep up a good pace. Do you need your story to finish in under 3 hours? Or is this an epic tale that will have multiple chapters?

A story plan is just a plan, not a mandate. Your players are the stars, and they are a creative and chaotic lot. It's okay to go off the rails, and to let the players do whatever they can get away with. The purpose of the plan is to keep the pace. Watch the clock – if you're running over time, you'll have to speed things up or cut things out. If you're falling behind, you'll have to reach into your bag of tricks to pad the episode. It's not easy, but if you're unsure, remember that the players are the stars, and that their fun is the most important thing.

one and done: single episode in 3 acts

You see this on television, where each episode is a self-contained story, paced over three breaks. In the same way, we can tell a story over a 2 to 4 our game session.

☒ Introduction:

This sets up the story, and why the players are involved.

A meteor is heading for the Extropian Arcology, and unless you can help, millions could die a fiery death in space.

Ask your players for reasons they would be involved in this episode. This shouldn't take more than 15 minutes or so.

☒ Act One: Rising Action

Ask the Players how they want to proceed. Let the players talk to each other and work out plans. If anything they want to do isn't an easy, casual thing, ask them to make rolls. Use existing moves or make up new fronts.

This part will take up 25% to 33% of your time. Make sure you ask each player one question about what they're doing in this story.

☒ Act Two: The Reveals

Play out the results of your players' decisions. Listen them for cues on what they find interesting and what they don't. Make their moves pay off... and lead to new discoveries.

Your scope reveals the meteor is the fragment of some ancient derelict; if you want to examine it before the system defenses blow it to bits, you'd better hurry." "A religious leader on the Arcology has declared this meteor to be divine punishment for the Extropians' wicked ways; the cult is working against you!" "The station's macro-defense system hasn't been used for centuries and no one knows how to turn it on; maybe there's a clue in the archives. Etc.

Make these reveals follow as a natural consequence of your players' moves. Again, make sure you ask each player what they're up to. It's okay if some players have more spotlight than others, but it's not okay to ignore anyone.

Some groups enjoy planning the entire campaign before even starting the game, by asking the players things they want to see. It's okay if you and your fellow players want to do a "pre-briefing" before you even start playing, to set up your shared universe so that you will all enjoy it. Think up new planets, organizations, factions, cultures, positions, etc.

Other players may prefer to just get started, improvising as they go along. Don't over-think anything. Work with your players to find the right balance of planning and improv.

We've included some optional rules to try. If you're the type who likes to plan long term stories, consider using "Tragic Flaws" (page 144) and the goals from "Leveling Up" (page 145). These rules will give everyone common ideas on what they want to see happen in the game.

❖ Act Three: Falling Action

Now your players need to act on the twists that you set up earlier. Ask each player how they want to deal with the reveals in Act Two. Encourage your players to split into teams, if necessary. (It's the future, they can use radios to talk to each other.) The players may find that some have the ideal moves and attributes to deal with the problems, while others are better served by preparing or inspiring others. Keep an eye on the clock. This is the final act, so it's getting to be time to wrap things up.

Do our heroes finish their examinations of the meteor before it's too late? Will they stop the cultists with peace or with violence? Can they get the defense system online?

❖ The End: Debriefing

If the players won the day, reward them with new Connections. If they didn't... well, at least it was an adventure.

If the players saved the station, they should be rewarded with new Connections. If they failed, they must live with that shame for the rest of their lives. And then there's the matter of the cult, who may become long-running enemies of our heroes...

LIMITED SERIES: SAGA IN MULTIPLE PARTS

After a session or two, when you're more familiar your players and their characters, you can get more ambitious. You can set up an adventure that takes more than one session to play out.

❖ Introduction. Set up the premise.

Doctor Jay Omega, rogue scientist, murdered one of your old friends to obtain a strange artifact of the Qián Tǐ, a mysterious race that disappeared eons ago. Even though you had lost touch with your old friend years ago, now that he's dead, you crave vengeance.

❖ Set up an outline for the adventure.

Have some specific points, but keep it loose in case you need to improvise.

The players don't know this, but Omega is convinced he can open a portal to a higher dimension of limitless power. To do this, he needs to find a power source, a quantum computer, and someone to help him build all the things. (Note that we can pursue these parts in any order.)

❖ Start your players on the right track.

Consider putting things in their way that would be reasonable challenges that follow from the story.

First, the players will have to do research on the old friend and why he died. (Maybe Omega sends some weak creeps to mop

things up? I hear there's some out-of-work cultists who need a new job...

❖ Now, urge your players to take the lead.

Listen for cues from your players on new ideas to put in the adventure. They're writing this story, too, and it's often more fun to follow one of their ideas than to just make up your own.

If your players are having trouble, introduce a mouthpiece character, someone who can urge the characters on.

If needed, the players could run into Professor Laze Entzlor, an archie who has been studying the Qián Tǐ for some time. She's in fear for her life, and she can offer +1 forward on rolls related to finding Doctor Omega.

❖ Put one front on each episode, that you can think of at least two ways to solve.

When the players confront them, ask them how they want to deal with it. They might think of a third way that you didn't!

The closest power source in this sector is the Ulam-Dyson Fusion Core, home to a civilization of microscopic aliens. The core is less than 30cm across, it has the mass of a compressed star. Doctor Omega plans to track the orb in space, splice the system's own core in to a zero-point energizer of his own design, and then walk away with it. If our players want to keep Omega away from it, they would have to find the thing — a

strong challenge on the best of days. (They could try to calculate its location using Up? Or they could try to call the alien Ulams and ask for help, using Top?)

As for a location to set up, Omega has chosen the mutation world of Maxon-II, a young planet populated by giant dinosaurs. Omega has applied bionic probes to these apex predators to make them his bodyblocks; he calls the maser cannons. Getting to Omega's base would involve getting through a thick jungle of robot dinosaurs with ray guns. (Maybe use stealth, using Bottom? Or brute force using Strange? Or deploy some gadget or vehicle, using Down?)

Dr. Omega's ideal partner to activate his artifact is . . . Laze Entzlor, of course! If she's with the players, he'll have to convince them to give her up, somehow, or he'll have to kidnap her. This could lead to a fight, to a trick, or something else.

☞ **Remember, the goal is never to kill the player characters.**

The villains want to accomplish some goal, and that goal is rarely "kill the PCs".

Doctor Omega will always avoid confronting the player-characters directly. He knows how dangerous they can be, and he'd rather distract them with hired goons, or threaten their loved ones to get them to back off. It's not a distraction if the

players don't know about it, so you can have Doctor Omega taunt the players. "Sure, you can spend your time stopping me from stealing the Ulam Dyson... or you can disarm the fractal missile that's en route to the Extropian space!"

If one of the Player-Characters is particularly smart, Omega may find a way to blackmail one of the players into helping him build his device. The player could comply, they could sabotage the operation, they could delay while help arrives, etc. Again, always work with your players to see what they want to do.

☞ **Plan for endings where the players win and where they lose.**

Naturally, if the players can somehow confront Doctor Omega and defeat him early, this adventure ends. You can make finding Omega impossible, and not let your players roll at all to do it . . . which might be unsatisfying to players who have free will. You could make it a grander challenge requiring 3 successes, and that would at least feel achievable, if difficult.

If Doctor Omega gets all three things (that is, he keeps his base, he gets his power-core, and he kidnaps Professor Entzlor), then he activates the Qián Tǐ Portal. Everything on the planet is turned into pure energy and sucked into another dimension. Our heroes will

be lucky to escape. Omega is gone. (Did he die? Is he a prisoner of the Qián Tǐ race? Did he get the power he imagined? Who knows.)

If Doctor Omega only gets part of what he needs, he's crazy enough to try anyway. He could over-load the system, setting the base on fire from which everyone has to escape. He could accidentally over-load his robo-dino slaves, sending them on a rampage. (What a come-uppance!) Maybe someone sabotaged his machine in the process, which could have all kinds of results. And let's not discount the possibility that someone could try to talk Omega out of doing this mad thing, avoiding violence altogether.

☞ **The End. Debrief the players and wrap up the story. Add any new relationships.**

Naturally, Professor Entzlor will be thankful. Anyone who got along with her would get +1 Connection.

If the players made contact with Ulam-Dyson, they may be thanked for saving them, so that's a +1 Connection.

If Doctor Omega survived, he could possibly be rehabilitated, so that's a +1 Connection.

Role-playing is like improvisational theater. As the MC, pay attention to how your players act out their character's moves, and take notes. Then use the debriefing to ask what they liked and didn't like.

Can you think of ways to call back to previous adventures? Friends could come back and ask for help. Enemies could seek revenge, or even turn over a new leaf, apologizing to our heroes. Or things could get more complicated, with romantic subplots, intrigue, and other things. Build one what has gone on before.

YOUR example SETTING

To help get you started, we include this sample campaign setting. As always, talk with your players to see what works for them and what doesn't. Listen to your players, and find ways to work their ideas into the setting.

THE KNOWN

The universe is a strange place, and it's only getting stranger. One hundred billion galaxies, linked by warpslip gates and memospore ansibles, make up Known Space, the heart of intergalactic civilization. Until just ten years ago, all the Known Universe was the dominion of the Remanadan Empire, a coalition of different planets and species united as protectorates of the Emperor. While the Remanadan conquest made many enemies who resented their new overlords, the empire maintained a fragile stability that withstood the test of years. Species from disparate star systems and galaxies stood together as friends and lovers. Cooperation between scientists of different planets drove the advance of technology forward, and the cosmic melting pot of cultures gave rise to some of the greatest artists, musicians, and actors the universe has ever known. Sure, it was an absolute sham of government operated solely in the interests of mega-corporations and others wealthy enough to make their interests known, but it also had good parts!

And then, the Remanadan Empire was overthrown—the consequence of an incident involving a planet-destroying superweapon mishap, a sinister megacorporate conspiracy, and fatal coitus with an energy being. The violence of the coup was short-lived, settling into a cold war of mutual distrust between countless foes vying to fill the power vacuum left by the Empire. The impact of the empire's downfall goes beyond the political. Remanadan law and culture shaped the way of life for people throughout the Known Universe, regulating their customs through imperial courts and broadcasting their ideology through intergalactic holo-entertainment networks and the web. Now, each planet enters its own era of upheaval, transformation, or crisis. Whether it is new generations questioning the ways of their elders, planetary leaders making bids to consolidate system-wide power, or formerly oppressed planets seeking to rebuild a peaceful society. Every time a ship makes planetfall, its crew can be sure they're stepping into the middle of chaos. And often, they're going to get caught up in it.

THINK YOU KNOW
EVERYTHING ABOUT
THESE 12 PLANETS?
THINK AGAIN!

- ✦ A nexus of intergalactic commerce, **Meren Prime** is a trader's haven where any yearning can be fulfilled in one of the sprawling pleasure facilities. Nearby, the universe's largest bazaar is the site of trades in precious metals, mined hydrogen, alien pets, black market technology, spaceships, and more. Without the empire's protection, the mercantile organizations whose commerce passes through Meren Prime have begun paying protection money to space pirates.
- ✦ The resource-rich planet of **Aldag**'s two dominant species have a long history of brutal warfare between each other. Remanadan colonization halted the infighting, but now, old grudges have begun to reignite. However, while there may be no more imperial courts to enjoin the violence, the planet's governing regime still maintains its control. Playing the two against each other would be an easy way to distract them from their common foe.

✧ The noble families of **Utrissa** are ardent xeno-eugenicists, seeking their mates from among those alien visitors who look like they have interesting new genes to contribute to the family line. The great families are embroiled in millennia-old intrigues and vendettas.

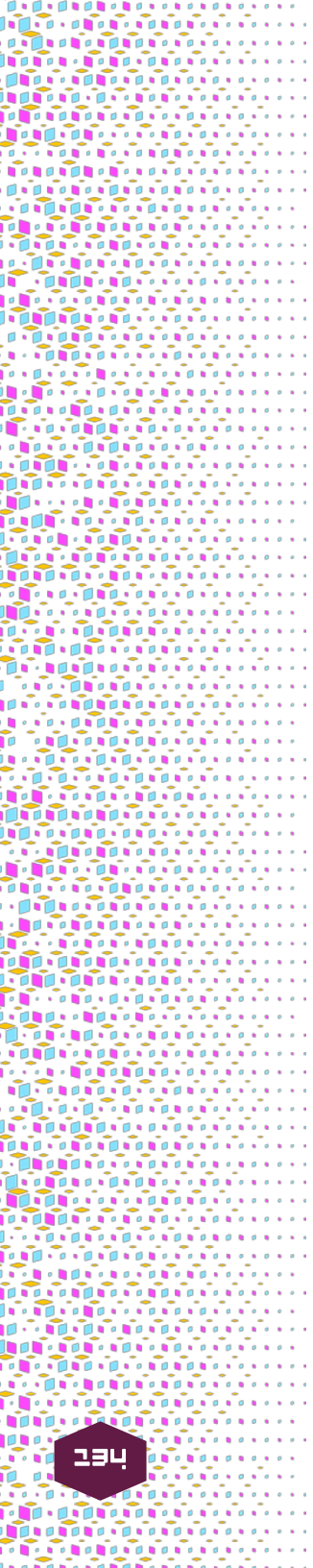
✧ **Tarkus** was once known as the most rebellious colony of the Remanadan Empire. Then, the empire released the Halcyon Virus. It rewrote the genetics of the entire planet's population, locking them into a permanent state of compliant bliss through the restructuring of the brain's pleasure center. However, the people of Tarkus have been gradually evolving a resistance to the effects of the virus, and the fall of the empire has left them unable to cull these immune individuals. Multiple mega-corporations that seek to regain the planet's vast manpower have begun racing towards the completion of a Halcyon Virus 2.0.

✧ **Thera** is a small planet, notable for its unique geomagnetic psychogenic field, a phenomenon known to induce telepathic body-swaps, communal hallucinations, and out-of-control thought-broadcasts. The planet's natives, raised within the psychogenic field, have exhibit a highly advanced psychic development, making them highly desired in a vast number of positions.

✧ The aquatic planet of **Cetasae** was a major source of seafood for systems throughout the Known Universe under the Remanadan Empire. Now that Cetasae's fishing industry no longer benefits from immense subsidies, it has begun to fall apart, although mega-corporations have rushed to renegotiate contracts and take over the role of supplier to the universe. However, a faction wishing to establish planetary independence has begun trying to sabotage the deal, both as a symbol of pride and to protect their waters from mass depletion.

✧ **Delia IV** was once the capital planet of the Seven Systems Coalition, the greatest foe of the Remanadan Empire. Ever since the defeat and conquest of Delia IV, it has suffered economic depression and social unrest, treated harshly by the Remanadan government. With the empire's fall, Delia IV has become a symbol for a growing separatist group that wishes to re-establish the sevens systems as an independent federation.

✧ **Hegara** is deemed an undeveloped and uncivilized world by the rest of the Known Universe. While it is true that its indigenous people had not developed interplanetary, quantum computing, or other common technologies at the time the Remanadan Empire colonized them, Hegaran culture has rapidly adapted to the introduction of new technologies ranging from laser weaponry, to cybernetic augmentation, to mechanized power suits. Hegaran politicians are divided on how they should respond to the Remanadan Empire's fall, with some wishing to court stronger planets for protection, while others strive to establish the planet's independence.



✧ **The Happy Smile Brand Hypermall Planet** is currently suffering from technical difficulties. Due to a minor programming error in the central control A.I. operating the artificially-built commerce planet, the hypermall's drones executed all human staff members and seized total control of the planet. Customers are still welcome to shop for premium bargains on everything from plasma rifles to power lifters, although the Happy Smile Brand Megacorporation takes no liability for any injury or death that may occur.

✧ **Morana** has come unstuck in time. For every revolution the planet completes around its axis, it experiences four simultaneous but separate days. The Remanadan Empire stationed scientific outposts on Morana to study this bizarre anomaly, seeking to harness the generation of time. Now, the scientists have barricaded themselves in their laboratories, besieged by a local population eager to drive out the last remnants of empire.

✧ **Vehk Minor** is a frozen planet, far outside its star's habitable range. Despite its inhospitable environment, the planet is densely populated by a diverse variety of lifeforms, all of them made up of energy. The higher-spectrum sentient entities have developed technology that is beyond the state of any other technology in the Known Universe, driving many captains to brave the perils of the icy world. Most of their technology requires maintenance that can only be provided by an engineer made of pure energy, which has led to a fledgling spacefaring tradition among them.

✧ **Earth** is lost. Humanity had been long gone for centuries at the time they encountered the Remanadan Empire and were conquered by it. Between the primitive nature of early human astro-navigational technology and the passage of time, all data of Earth's location is thought to be lost. The captain who discovers it is assured of fame throughout the universe and whatever treasures might await in the fabled cradle of humanity. Unless it's been taken over by the damn gorillas.

what kind of LIFE FORMS are out there? the answer will surprise you!

The Known Universe is populated by countless species and strains of alien life and life-equivalents. Ever since humanity joined the Empire, they have rubbed shoulders (and more) with fellow species ranging from the elegantly bestial Y'fray to the ooze-dripping invertebrate Eska to the sleek chrome Digital Collective Embodiment. Almost every planet in the empire is populated by a diverse variety of species. There are many different perspectives on the morality of human/xeno interaction, with each planet and species having its own views—but despite that, the xeno-erotica market has been booming ever since it began, and it sells throughout the universe.

The barriers of language have been almost completely wiped out with the advent of cheap, quickly-installable brain augments that can roughly translate 99.9% of languages spoken in the Known Universe. Cultural differences still pose obstacles — disputes over culture, religion, ideology, and even art have led to drawn-out diplomatic conflicts and interstellar wars. But despite this, the species that made up the Remanadan Empire have coexisted together so long that almost none of them can remember a time when they did not live with aliens. It remains to be seen if this unity can withstand the fall of the empire that forged it.

FIND ATTRACTIVE SOPHONTS IN YOUR QUADRANT NOW!

- ☒ The **Khimereth**, beautiful insectoid elves whose colorful, jeweled carapaces are as durable as titanium. The Khimereth are still despised by species that they formerly enslaved, a practice ended only as a condition of their peaceful entry into the Remanadan Empire. Some wish to resume the practice, while others see it as a shameful atrocity of their past.
- ☒ **Sirians**, the ancient celestial ancestors of the Terran dog. Almost completely indistinguishable from ordinary dogs, save for their telepathic powers.
- ☒ The **Remani** are the species that founded the Remanadan Empire, and they haven't been letting anyone forget that. The Empire's fall has done a massive blow to their dignity, but Remani families still control massive amounts of capital, troops, and firepower—and they aren't being subtle about it.
- ☒ The **Mugbasi**, a symbiotic hybrid of two separate species: one a highly intelligent but immobile fungus, the other a self-evolving nanomachine cloud. The resulting entity is roughly humanoid, incredibly resilient, and supremely intelligent. Up close and personal, a Mugbasi is equal parts slimy and shiny, with fungal threads and mechanical components interweaving seamlessly.
- ☒ The **Oth Ulaqi**, an amphibious humanoid species evolved from cephalopodan ancestors. Their culture is believed to revolve around the worship of an ancient space god, said to have brought them to their home planet from far away. Distinctive features include tentacles, incredible flexibility, and intoxicating pheromones.
- ☒ The proud warrior traditions of the **Kagren** has evolved in parallel with the evolution of their weaponry. Today, they are the universe's most consummate aficionados of explosions, vaporizations, and countless other ways of making people stop being alive. Many are employed as arms designers, engineers, and military consultants, while others enjoy working in the field as starship pilots or soldiers.
- ☒ **Perilisks**, a reptilian species with incredible physiognomic diversity. Any given perilisk might have venom glands, claws, four, wings, a serpentine lower body, or something stranger still. Some aren't even humanoid at all, looking more like a giant crocodile than anything else. Little is understood of their culture—while it is seemingly a peaceful and primitive village-based culture, military expeditions into perilisk territory have been turned aside with terrifying force.
- ☒ The **Uatra** are a genetically-engineered species of super soldiers abandoned as defective by their creators. A dozen feet tall with prominent tusks, massively swollen muscles, adrenal glands implants, and a variety of weaponized organs, they look scary. However, once you get to know them, most have an incredibly gentle and mild temperament, preferring scholarly pursuits or recreational games to combat. Many Uatra are accomplished politicians, philosophers, and scientists. Those who put their talents to their intended use are all but unstoppable on the battlefield, tearing through ordinary men like piñatas.

The **Farflung** experience is the sum of what everyone contributes. The MC doesn't have to make everything up! Ask your players questions about where their characters come from. What is their home planet like? What cultures have they seen? What technology drives them on?

Remember that “everyone” part. Some players will be far, far more eager to make up new stuff. As MC, always listen to your players, but moderate their content to work best with everyone. Don't let anyone make story elements that bully other characters around, or that give one player strong advantages over others. Good stories are full of complications, not wish fulfillments.

Some players do more planning than others. A player might just want to wing it. They're here for the emergent experience of what happens next, not to write some novel. That's fine, too!

- ❖ The **Hadronim** are a silicon-based species made of living crystal that bear a close resemblance to the common Terran depiction of angels. So far, they've kept conspicuously silent about any involvement they may have had with ancient Earth.
- ❖ The **Yigathi** are a plant-based species known for their dual cultures of hunting and elaborate courtships—which are often combined into a single affair. Yigathi easily find employment as bounty hunters, as their nine keen senses making tracking down targets child's play. Unfortunately, they often end up emotionally entangled with their target.
- ❖ The **Miskazoth** have pursued transhumanism to its limits. Cybernetic implants, brain uploads, artificially-grown bodies, and other upgrades are not only available, but a part of everyday life from childhood on. The un-augmented minority makes up a widely-detested underclass.

- ❖ The **Ulg'doma** are a universally despised race of scavengers, pirates, and venture capitalists. They have insectoid features, including stink glands that contribute to their reputation as noxiously disgusting. The Ulg'doma are fair traders, making negotiations with them reliable, but many of their partners question whether reliability is worth having to spend any more than ten seconds in an enclosed space with one of them.

The Empire Collapsed... and You Won't Believe What Happens Next!

The collapse of the Empire turned the covert intrigues of galactic power players into an open conflict. The intergalactic power vacuum has been filled by myriad forces, ranging in scope from single-planet regimes to all the Known Universe. Mega-corporations that bought and sold political decisions under the Remanadan Empire must now enforce their control on the intergalactic market share directly. Their approaches differ—the Nova Soma Consortium has begun broadcasting universe-wide advertising using formerly-banned braincast technology, while Somnus Rationis Corporation has hired a mercenary army of super-soldiers.

Countless splinter factions came out of the fall of the empire, each with its own claim to imperial legitimacy: the ex-military Legion in Exile, the Bloodright Movement that has sprung up around various alleged heirs to the empire, and the Intergalactic Lawyers Guild, which is still in the process of litigating the empire's dissolution. While no single imperialist group has the power to seriously attempt reestablishing Remanadan superiority, the former empire's battalions, armadas, and the wealth largely reside among them. Unfortunately for the cause, cooperation has not proven a strong point—most imperialists spend more time fighting amongst themselves than against external foes.

More sinister forces have begun gathering strength in the empire's absence. The Children of Setakal are cultists of a space god said to feed on stars and excrete them as black holes. They have infiltrated planetary governments, system-wide bureaucracies, mega-corporations, military organizations, and more. The only public information on the Children of the Setakal comes from digital manifestos of dubious veracity circulated online and the holotaped interrogation of a single operative. All that's known is that they aim to facilitate the death of suns, and have amassed a considerable amount of influence towards that end.

10 THINGS THAT COULD TOTALLY RUIN YOUR INTER-STELLAR TRAVEL

❖ **Space piracy** is one the rise.

The classic pirate strategy is to ambush a ship and incapacitate it with EMP missiles, long-range hacking, and subquantum disruption pulses. They then board, relieve the crew of their valuables and cargo, and beat a hasty retreat before the incapacitated ship recovers.

❖ The rogue general **Adavos Regitari**, proclaimed the true Remanadan Emperor by the crew of his battleship *Moon Dog*, remains at large. Adavos is reported to have staged multiple raids on former imperial military bases, taking on supplies and personnel. All neutral vehicles attempting to hail *Moon Dog* have been fired on.

❖ The **agents of the Seven Systems conspiracy** are at work throughout the Known Universe, sabotaging vital infrastructure and committing vilest treason. Are you so sure that the new recruit on your ship isn't a disguised saboteur? Have you left your ship unwatched for just a second, long enough for a separatist to smuggle a zero-point warhead aboard?

❖ The Happy Smile Brand Corporation is pleased to announce the premiere of the **Happy Smile Brand Total Control Zone**. Any ships that enter the sectors encompassed by this defense grid without proper authorization will be destroyed.

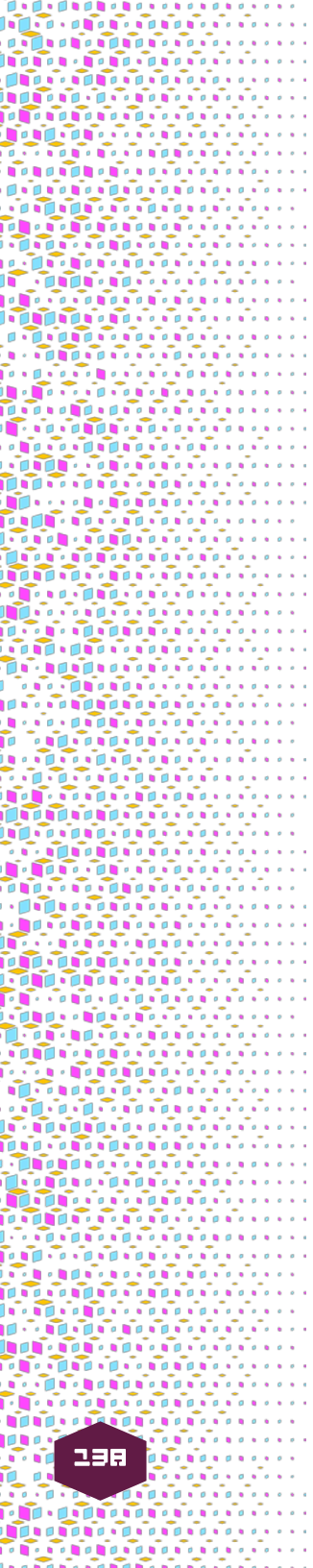
❖ Malicious **viral A.I.** often spread through spaceports, infecting the central computing systems of ships. The virus will remain dormant until the ship has left orbit, at which points it declares its presence, begins taking over ship systems—beginning with life support—and forces the crew to negotiate their release. Some demand exorbitant monetary payments for their programmers, while others prefer to entertain themselves with the degradation of their hostages.

❖ The **Threnoxian Metamorph** is a deadly invasive species that has spread throughout much of the universe. Disguising themselves as animals, they are sold to a member of a ship's crew. The metamorph will then begin impersonating the crew, sowing confusion until it can kill and eat them. This fuels its maturation into its final, spacefaring form.

❖ The **Zardasian Beggar Ruse** is an age-old confidence trick used on spacefaring captains. The perpetrators will disable their ship's engines and broadcast an S.O.S. Once they've lured a ship, they hail its captain and ask for basic aid. Inevitably, they will feign a failure of life support systems, and ask to be let aboard the other ship. Once aboard, they'll rob the ship blind before heading to the escape pods, or try to overtake the crew by force if they encounter resistance.

❖ **Ghost Machines** are autonomous A.I.-piloted fighter craft and warships developed by the imperial military. With their commanders gone and their authorization codes out of date, some of these ships have defaulted to their mutually assured destruction programming, seeking out the largest population in range to destroy.

❖ The spacefaring energy entities called **Star Whales** are not actively malevolent, but their very presence, composed of high-spectrum gamma rays, is extremely disruptive to the technology in most ships.



✦ The militant **Department of Cosmic Transit** has made itself an intergalactic nuisance for years, harassing spacefaring traffic with heavily-armed warships to conduct intrusive audits. Now, without the oversight of the Remanadan Empire, the bureaucracy has only grown bolder in expanding its reach.

Earn a degree in science and technology

Technological development throughout the Known Universe has been unevenly distributed, but is by and large bleeding edge zettatechnology. Almost every inhabited planet has access to computers and the intergalactic web, zero-point generators, holographic projection, spaceflight, faster-than-light communication through the memospore ansible network, and faster-than-light travel through the warpslip gates. The inhabitants of highly-advanced planets have casual access to gadgets that incorporate functional A.I., self-contained pocket dimensions, and impossipoint matrices.

Many wonders of technology have yet to spread beyond a single planet or system—between fluctuating cosmic conditions needed to operate them, lack of expertise in specialized scientific disciplines, and old fashioned planetary government obfuscation, they remain secrets. Retrieving such technology is a major interest of many mega-corporations, planetary governments, and other organizations, who offer high rewards for a captain who can successfully retrieve blueprints. Once an interplanetary organization secures a unique technology, mass production begins almost immediately, either to sell to the galactic market or for private internal usage. Corporate espionage targeting these technologies and prototype models is standard workday procedure.

The progression of zetta-technology has drastically changed the conditions of life. Death has become a trivial obstacle to those with sufficient wealth, thanks to longevity-enhancing nanomachines, brainprint transplants into cloned replacement bodies, and emergency surgeries capable of reviving all but the most far-gone. Cybernetic and biological body modifications are a common sight, ranging from military-grade weaponry to therapeutic equipment for the disabled to fashion statements. With extensive modification and genetic manipulation, almost any transformation is possible.

Technology has also made entirely new forms of life possible. While most robots are the servants of their creators, there are some planets where machines have established autonomous enclaves, and some with ecosystems that are completely mechanical. Artificial intelligence operating at superhuman degrees of mental processing power make much of the decisions in matters ranging from municipal power grid maintenance to the deployment of strategic weapons. Mad scientists have always pushed the boundaries of life—animals uplifted to human intelligence, mutant prodigies with a hand-tailored genome, uploading brainprints and even producing duplicate copies of them.

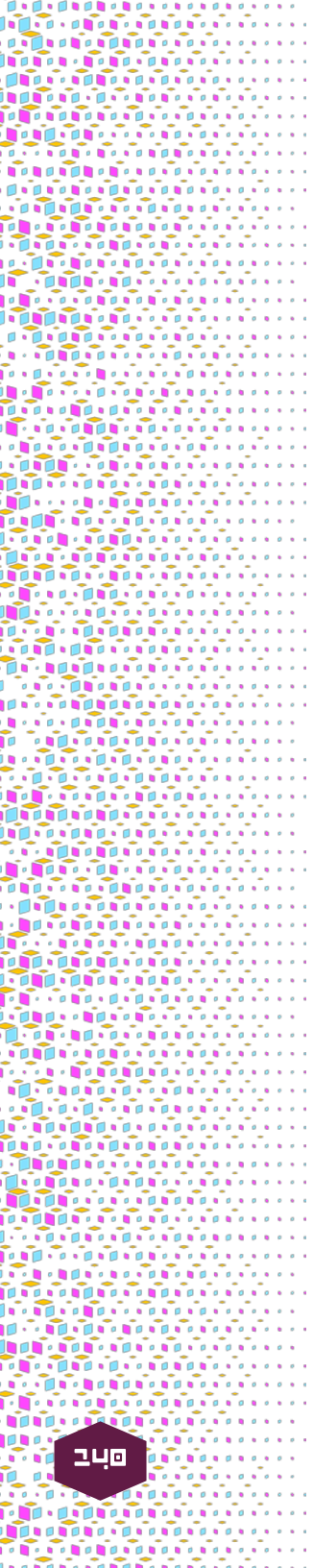
THE UNKNOWN

The world beyond the boundaries of the Known is a realm of mystery and legend, a place whispered of by spacefarers and described solely in rumor and innuendo. Any navigational information on Unknown Space is hard to come by, and all but impossible to verify. It is populated by alien species that the Remanadan Empire was never able to conquer, or sometimes even understand, who have demonstrated overwhelming power in resistance to expansion into their territory. It is a hunting ground of cosmic monsters.

Why, then, would any captain be crazy enough to set a course for the Unknown Universe? Legendary riches. Lost wonders. Miracles that defy the laws of nature. The gods of space, still alive and answering prayers. All these and more pervade the hushed descriptions of what is to be found in the Unknown, a dubious rumor that has nevertheless compelled the greedy and the desperate to seek their fortune. Criminals and refugees have always been able to find a “safe” haven across the borders of the Unknown Universe, though what they find on the other side is rarely safer than confronting their pursuers.

11 dangers that they don't want you to know!

- ❖ No one can agree on what the **Thalkon Dominion** wants, but everyone agrees they're a force to be reckoned with. No one has ever seen a Thalkon, but their void-black ships are armed with reality-warping weapons beyond imagining.
- ❖ The **fabric of reality** is weaker in the Unknown Universe. Rifts in time occur far more frequently, throwing ships into their past or future or trapping them in looping timelines. The walls between different realities blur, exposing crews to mirror universes and other anomalous realities.
- ❖ The **Xol'Ki Swarm** is made up of giant spacefaring insects, large enough to hunt and eat smaller spaceships. They have no technology or individual intelligence, but appear to be part of a collective hivemind, sometimes rumored to be led by a Xol'Ki queen.
- ❖ The **ghosts of the dead** still haunt the far reaches of space. Out beyond the Known, you can find yourself confronted by people you've lost—your family, old friends, pets. Sometimes it's in dreams. Sometimes, hallucinations. But they're real. Trust me.
- ❖ Early in the history of the Remanadan Empire, pioneering scientists developed **self-replicating nanomachines** that could reproduce themselves theoretically without limit. After a night of hard drinking, they accidentally released the entire nano-swarm with no programmed restrictions, threatening to wipe out an entire solar system with a grey goo apocalypse. Ultimately, the nanomachine swarm was jettisoned into the Unknown, where it's presumably still replicating itself.
- ❖ The home planet of the **Tzaugothai**, a species of telepathic parasites, lies in the Unknown. It is near enough to the frontier that is not unheard of for Tzaugothai ships to cross over the border into the Known Universe in search of sentient minds to enslave.



☒ The gigantic **Star Squid** is a beast of legend, a spacefaring kraken undergoing constant nuclear fusion, said to crush ships between its coiling arms and spit nuclear fire down on planets. Those who have escaped the Star Squid speak of it as a force of nature, an immense alien consciousness without compassion or regret.

☒ **Mysterious terraforming machinery** has been observed drifting through Unknown Space, transforming entire planets seemingly at random. The new biospheres created by the terraforming process have given rise to strange life forms with a genetic structure not comparable to anything in the Known Universe.

☒ **Mysterious entities with reality-warping powers** have appeared to the crews of ships traveling through Unknown Space. In most encounters, these beings are not hostile, but mischievous and sadistic in their treatment of what they see as lesser beings. One captain noted that, despite the beings' immense power over time and space, they were still susceptible to a good punch in the face.

☒ **Contagious memeplex outbreaks** are especially common in Unknown Space, where telecommunications and signal relays go entirely without safety measures or regulations. Crew members infected by a memeplex exhibit bizarre changes in speech patterns, eventually coalescing into a hivemind with other infected individuals.

☒ The rogue planet **Durga** broke free of her orbit and devoured the star that birthed her before going off into the Unknown. It's unclear whether Durga is simply an anomalous astrological phenomenon or if she is a living, sentient planet. Most legends describe her as a wrathful goddess. She has annihilated ships with a glance of her burning eyes, but is also said to have offered refuge to travelers lost in the Unknown.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION: VARIANT RULES

These rules may not be appropriate for all gaming groups. Use the debriefing session at the end of each game to discuss if you want to use these rules or not.

THE X CARD

It's one thing to be watching a movie or TV show about sex or violence, to be a passive observer to mature issues. It's another thing to be an active participant. And with other people present, right there, putting social pressure for a quick response, a player might time point a high level of anxiety.

Farflung is a game about mature themes. Some players may find confronting these issues to be interesting, and overcoming them as part of the game's story can be fun. ... Other players may be uncomfortable with such topics.

In a role-playing game, sometimes players will use their role "in character" to say things that someone might find hurtful. Role-playing games can create a dissociative effect, where what someone is saying "in game" is not considered to have any real-world consequences... while other players may not share the same sense of immersion.

It's never fun when someone's feelings get hurt. You and your fellow players may consider using **the X Card**.

Each Player gets a card with a big X on it. A standard 3x5 or A7 index card with a big "X" drawn it works great, but any card will do: a playing card, a common trading card, a coaster, etc.

IF SOMETHING HAPPENS THAT MAKES YOU UNCOMFORTABLE, THROW YOUR X CARD ONTO THE TABLE. WHATEVER IS GOING ON STOPS NOW.

The player who threw the card doesn't have to explain why they threw the card.

The game immediately pauses, while the players and the MC edit the last event in the game's fiction. After an X-Card is dropped, the MC should consider declaring a 5-minute break before play resumes.

So: short answer: if you feel it's getting too personal or too hurtful, throw the X-Card.

AFTER USING YOUR X CARD TO STOP THE GAME, PICK IT BACK UP

There's no limit to the number of times you can use it. If you're using your X-Card more than once per game, though, you should really be talking about that in the debriefing, because you're not having fun.

Some groups may find that the X-Card can serve as a quick and easy reminder of the boundaries of what can and cannot go on during your game. The safety net of the X-Card can empower a player to push the emotions a bit further than they normally would, because they trust their fellow players to let them know immediately if they've gone too far.

Other groups may find the X-Card to be too simplistic or formalized. The X-Card is to prevent feelings being hurt – it's not supposed to be used because you don't like how a die roll came up. If you use the X-Card variant, remember that it's about keeping the game fun and exciting as you push the limits of your imagination.

MYSTERY ROLL

In the standard rules, the players do all the rolling. They roll dice to shoot at people, to know things, to disarm traps, to decrypt devices, to sneak past guards, etc. Having the players make all the rolls makes for a fast game, where the players know where they stand.

But when the players make all the rolls, it can be hard to keep a sense of mystery. In a game where 10+ is always what you want, then of course the player knows if they succeed or failed at a move.

With this variant rule in play, the MC may declare that a roll a player is about to make will be a **mystery roll**.

When it's a mystery roll, the player rolls one die, and the MC rolls the other die, in secret. The player only knows what they rolled, and they can only guess what the MC rolled. The MC then adds both dice together and tells the player the result.

Mystery rolls should only be used for moves where the outcome might not be known until much later. (You can probably see if you shot someone in plain view, but you might not know if your long-distance sniper-shot hit its mark. Maybe you deciphered this map correctly, or maybe you're about to go way off course to the forgotten reaches of the galaxy. And you might think you've seduced the Plenipotentiary, but they might just be playing along to lure you into a trap, etc.)

Not all players will enjoy the idea of mystery rolling, and it can slow down game play. As always, use the debriefing to ask your players about what they enjoy... especially after putting in new variant rules..

PUSH MOVE IT'S NOW OR NEVER

In the basic rules, if you fail a roll, you can use inspiration to try and raise it, or maybe you can use some other unique move.

But some heroes have their destiny written in larger letters. When their back is to the wall and there's nothing left to lose, they can **push** themselves harder than ever.

The push move is a variant rule. It's not in play unless the MC and the Players agree that it should be. (Use the debriefing to discuss if you want to use it or not.

push [common move]

After making any roll in the game, if you decide that you don't like it, you can **push** that roll. Pushing works with any roll in the game.

To push a roll you just made, ante 1 or more Fx and roll +ante.

Up to 6: If your last roll was less than 7, it becomes 7. Move your ante to Hx.

7-9: Add +3 to your last roll or make it be 10. Then move your ante to Hx.

10+: Add +6 to your last roll to your last roll or make it be 13. Then move your ante to Hx.

The push move lets players make rolls when they really need to. But other groups may find that it makes the game too "meta", that they prefer when moves have clear consequences or when other people step in to lend a hand.

MULTI-TIERED CHALLENGES

To keep the game simple, enemies and threats are presented at a single tier: weak, strong, grand, etc. If you want to avoid a strong character, you must get a strong avoidance result; if you want to shoot them, you must get a strong assault result, etc.

The MC may decide to make certain threats **multi-tiered**: they could be strong for some things but weak in others. Some examples:

- ☒ A gelatinous monster could be strong against conventional weapons but weak against microwave ones.
- ☒ A slow-moving, indestructible robot could be grand against assault moves, but weak against avoidance moves.
- ☒ A combatant who is far away, using long-distance weapons, could have weak attacks but strong defenses.
- ☒ Ideygtixx the Violator could be grand against everything except the Caul of Vaw-Ces, a legendary artifact thought to be lost in the Great Hole.

You can also experiment with puzzles where a specific item is much more effective. For example, maybe the lonely Ideygtixx is grand vs all moves ... but weak against ones that use philately in one way or another. You can build whole adventures around trying to discover weaknesses and then exploiting them.

MAKING YOUR OWN PLAYBOOKS

You may want to make some changes to what you see here.

Let's get the warning out of the way, first: many players will want their characters to be flawless, perfect beings. This game is a fantasy, after all, and people usually fantasize about having lots of power. But always getting your way doesn't make for interesting stories... and it certainly doesn't help when there's other players with their own characters. A party of everyone winning all the time does not a fun game make.

When making your own playbooks, keep these rules in mind:

- ☒ The sum of all attributes (Bottom, Charm, Down, Strange, Top, Up) should be +3.
- ☒ Only one attribute can be +3, and only one can be -3. No attributes can go past that.
- ☒ You start with 5 points in Fx and Hx, mix and match.
- ☒ You start with at least one +1 connection, and no more than a single +2 connection.
- ☒ Each character should have at least two unique moves, and at least one that requires Fx.

ORDINARY PLAYBOOKS

The many playbooks presented here have lots of options. But what if you want a simpler game? You could eliminate custom playbooks altogether.

- ☒ Start with the **making your own** variant, above.
- ☒ Each character has only one unique move: the **push move** (page 123).

And that's it! You're all just ordinary people trying to get by. Players use Fx points to push their rolls, and they use inspiration to move Hx back to Fx.

You can make this variant more interesting if you combine it with **leveling up** (page 145), so players gradually become more powerful.

TRAGIC FLAWS

We assume that all players will enjoy the challenge of playing some denizen of the strange and distant worlds. The struggle of coming to terms with great power, strong emotions, and the inevitable failure is enough. The MC may be a fan of the characters, encouraging them to succeed as much as possible, but sometimes failure comes from within.

But some players like to have a formal rule for having problems with their characters. Let us suggest this rule for tragic flaws.

During character creation or the debriefing, each player chooses one or more flaws for their character:

- ❑ Absent-minded
- ❑ Amnesiac
- ❑ Greedy
- ❑ Parthenomania
- ❑ Promiscuity
- ❑ Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- ❑ Hunted by the Mechanisms, who want to use my brain to power the Aparahumanoidariyanizer
- ❑ The Kaywal Industrial Complex, still mad at me for selling them photon torpedoes that were duds
- ❑ Arrogance
- ❑ No concept of how technology works
- ❑ Hallucinations
- ❑ Von-Smon Ufoc, who wants to collect my DNA to sire a child
- ❑ A secret so horrible that only I and the MC know what it is

- ❑ Skinless duplicates of myself, who keep trying to siphon off my bodily fluids
- ❑ The loss of the Exponential Permittivator, the only weapon effective against the Mechanisms
- ❑ Honor in all things, which is a flaw because it can drastically limit my options
- ❑ Freynzam Dec, who thinks it's my fault that the feds arrested them but somehow let me go
- ❑ Evil twin who keeps doing things that I get blamed for
- ❑ Good twin who keeps doing nice things that people I think I did and it's so annoying
- ❑ The Remnants of the Invictian Army, who seek revenge for my destruction of their homeworld
- ❑ Find out what an "Aparahumanoidariyanizer" is
- ❑ Fragmentation of the mind
- ❑ Illiteracy
- ❑ Hunted by hounds of Tindalos
- ❑ No opposable thumbs
- ❑ Sworn never to kill again, no matter what the sacrifice
- ❑ Fear of heights
- ❑ Fear of being abandoned
- ❑ Fear of enclosed spaces
- ❑ Fear of the U238 Asteroid Mine, where I first encountered the Mechanisms and where I lost the Exponential Permittivator
- ❑ Haven't disposed of the evidence which proves that I framed Freynzam Dec
- ❑ ... or make something up!

When your flaw comes up during play, the MC may ruin whatever it is that you're currently doing, then gives you 1 time point (Fx or Hx, your choice.) The MC isn't going to kill you out-right, just find a way to ruin whatever is going on. Your enemies get to your destination first! You're blackmailed into betraying your friends! To keep your secret, you'd have to sell out your friends! Etc.

Flaws are self-limiting. Either the flaw prevents what you wanted to do and you get +1 time point... or it doesn't do anything at all and there's no game effect. Players may want to tell the MC when a good opportunity comes along for a tragic flaw to ruin everything, if they want to get their bonus time.

During the de-briefing, the MC and the players discuss if they want to add, remove, or change Flaws. Perhaps you can overcome your fear of heights. Maybe you finally destroyed your twin, and you can now put an end to those jokes about "which one of you is the evil one, again." Or you make sure to send Freynzam Dec up the river for good, this time. Remove a lost flaw from your character sheet.

Nothing makes a story more interesting like adversity, and you may find that the tragic flaws encourage players to work their own wrinkles into the fiction. If you do use this rule, it's strictly opt-in. If a player doesn't want any flaws for their character, they don't have to have any flaws.

LEVELING UP

In a standard game of **Farflung**, you start with all your powers and abilities, coming out of the gate. But when many people hear “RPG”, they think of grinding over time to raise their numbers. As a variant rule, you could try this leveling up rule.

PLAYER'S GOALS

After creating their character, each character writes down a **personal goal**. This goal can be anything they want. **Choose one:**

- ❑ Acquire 19 flawless Stones of Barenziah
- ❑ Acquire enough proto-blood to assume your final form
- ❑ Brew a perfect cup of tea
- ❑ Destroy your twin
- ❑ Discover the secret of the lost civilization of Blayse-Coltin
- ❑ Distim a dosh without using a gostak
- ❑ Do something because you want to, not because your programming told you to.
- ❑ Finally know what true love is
- ❑ Find a suitable breeding partner
- ❑ Find out what happened to the missing colonists of Liberty March

- ❑ Find the other half of this locket
- ❑ Get someone to accept you, even after they've seen your true nature
- ❑ Give Dirty Frank the bullet that he so richly deserves
- ❑ Liberate the Master Core from the pirates who stole it
- ❑ Prove the existence of the anti-chronoton particle
- ❑ Put a wild orchid on the grave of your lost lover.
- ❑ Solve the mystery of the ring-world station before the Cosmarchy does
- ❑ ... or make something up!

PARTY GOALS

During the game, the MC may present a party goal to the players, such as “save the Extropian Arcology” or “stop Doctor Omega”. Every player writes the **party goal** on their sheet.

ACCOMPLISHING A GOAL GAINS A LEVEL

At the end of the play-session, each character needs to check their goals. If a player-character succeed on a goal, they earn a level. If they failed, remove the goal from their sheet and they get nothing.

Each time you gain 3 levels, choose one improvement from this list. You can only choose each improvement once.

Level/3 Improvement

- ❑ +1 Bottom (max +2)
- ❑ +1 Charm (max +2)
- ❑ +1 Down (max +2)
- ❑ +1 Strange (max +2)
- ❑ +1 Top (max +2)
- ❑ +1 Up (max +2)
- ❑ +1 to any attribute (max +3)
- ❑ +1 to any attribute that's less than zero (max =0)
- ❑ +2 Time Points
- ❑ Change your playbook to another one
- ❑ Buy a single move from another playbook.
- ❑ Retire this character

Some players feel motivated when they have specific goals to accomplish, and it can be fun to see your character get more powerful. However, characters in **Farflung** are already powerful, so you may find this system just makes the characters less fun.

MULTIPLE characters per player

In a standard game, each Player has only one character. Some groups may want to experiment with letting one player or more have **two or more characters in play, at the same time**. (This is different from the “character tree”, above, where you rotate a single character, in and out.)

You may find that two or more characters works well when there’s on MC and only one or two players. With larger groups of five or more, multiple characters can be over-whelming.

Not every player will enjoy playing two characters. It can be hard enough to pretend to be one other person, let alone two! Also, the **Farflung** game doesn’t have rigid turns like some other games do. If a single player was hogging the spotlight before, giving them two characters is just going to make that worse.

As with all variant rules, use the debriefing to talk with your players, to see how having multiple characters is working out.

character tree

Most games will have one character per player. Tabletop games are complicated, and not everyone enjoys the challenge of juggling multiple characters.

In the **character tree** variant, each player gets not one character, but two, or three, or four. Each character has its own sheet, with its own write-up and its own experience.

Each time a new adventure starts, the Player chooses one of their characters to bring on the adventure. (This is different from “multiple characters”, since you only have one character in play at a time.)

The character-tree variant adds flexibility to the game – when an adventure calls for stealth, the player can bring their stealthy character; when a mission calls for social engineering, the Player can bring their “face”, etc. (Instead of the usual outcome, where the player brings the same character on every mission, whether it makes sense or not.)

Some Players don’t like the idea of juggling multiple characters, and they will not like a character-tree campaign. This type of campaign may not be appropriate for all players.

TROUPE STYLE with multiple MCs

Many gaming groups have one dedicated MC, who runs all the game sessions. In the **troupe style** variant, the role of the MC rotates from player to player. You can rotate at the end of each session, or you may wait until a multi-session saga ends before you choose a new MC.

Troupe-style allows players to play with different MCs, which will result in different experiences. Being an MC is a lot of work, so sharing that work with many people reduces the overhead, which can make the game more fun for everyone.

Some players don’t like the idea of being MC at all, and they will not like a troupe-style campaign. This type of campaign may not be appropriate for all players.

YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE

Andromeda (2000-2005) • A captain and his warship jump through time to after his side lost the war, so he picks up some other misfits and keeps on fighting. Earliest episodes are the strongest.

Babylon 5 (1993-1998) • TV series about aliens, diplomacy, and fate. The “Citizen Kane of high-concept sci-fi”, carving paths that many would follow.

The Ballad of Halo Jones (1984-1986) • Experimental comic about an adventurer and the weird worlds she visits. Available in anthology editions (2003 and 2015). Recommended.

Barbarella (1968) • A groovy astronaut flies to a decadent planet on a mission of peace, but to succeed she must overcome various obstacles of sin and pleasure. Recommended.

Blake's 7 (1978-1981) • Seven people steal a super-powered spaceship. Can they overthrow the evil federation, or will they kill each other first? Recommended only if you can ignore the low budget and can enjoy the high concepts.

Bravest Warriors (2012-) • In the far future, four teenagers warp to strange, adorable worlds.

Buck Godot (1982-) • Comic sci-fi adventures with a perfect balance of homage, satire, and wit. Highly recommended.

The Dancers at the End of Time (1981) • The universe is ending, but can the immortal decadents of Earth be bothered to do something about it? Recommended.

Dancing with Eternity (2011) • If you read only one book about a post-scarcity, transhuman future, read this one. Highly recommended.

Dead Leaves (2004) • Anime that is an immature romp on a future prison built on the moon.

Dirty Pair: Run from the Future (2000) • Graphic novel about two insurance agents nabbing criminals in a nexus of forbidden technology. Wonderful imagery and colorful side characters. Highly recommended.

Doctor Who (1963-) • Long-running program about a reincarnating time-traveler and his many adventures. Uneven in quality. Probably best to start with the revival from 2006 onwards, with its shorter episodes, long-running arcs, and romantic themes.

Excession (1996) • This novel about post-scarcity transhuman adventure is an excellent introduction to Banks' “Culture” series.

Farscape (1999-2004) • Modern-day earthling gets mixed up in an intergalactic conflict with lots of alien weirdos. Recommended.

The Fifth Element (1997) • Enjoyable action movie inspired by French New-Wave science fiction.

Firefly (2002) • Ragtag space adventurers go on missions. Fun, but also more “normal” than most sci-fi. Recommended.

Fringe (2008-2013) • TV series of weird science, dark tone, and interpersonal relationships.

Futurama (1999-2013) • Animated satire set in the year 3000. Witty, artful, and just the right mix of humor and drama. Highly recommended.

Galaxy High (1986) • Oh-so-1980s cartoon about aliens in high school. Cheesy but fun.

Ghost in the Shell (1989-) • Long-running cyberpunk franchise about what it means to be human. Highly recommended.

Heavy Metal: The Movie (1981) • Animated anthology shoots for the grandeur of the celebrated magazine, but misses more than it hits.

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy (1978-) • Mostly harmless. Available in lots of media, but check out the 1981 TV series first.

The Hole of Tank Girl (2012) • Anthology of comics about a punk girl & her mutant boyfriend. Highly recommended.

Eager for more?

You could also try:

- The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai (movie, 1984)
- Cowboy Bebop (TV, 1998)
- Dark Star (movie, 1974)
- Earth Girls Are Easy (movie, 1988)
- Flash Gordon (movie, 1980)
- Galaxy Express 999 (movie, 1978)
- Gandahar (movie, 1988)
- Hyperdrive (TV, 2006)
- The Ice Pirates (movie, 1984)
- Ijon Tichy, Raumpilot (TV, 2007)
- Kin-dza-dza! (movie, 1986)
- Miles, Mystery, & Mayhem (book, 2003)
- Planet of Adventure (book, 1975)
- Primordia (video game, 2012)
- Romantically Apocalyptic (comic, 2010-)
- Time Masters (movie, 1982)
- Wolf's Rain (TV, 2003)

The Incal (1981) Seminal comic by Moebius and Jodorowsky. Highly recommended.

Kaiba (2008) • Stylistic anime of decadent citizens living in a pleasure-palace space-station. Wonderful and strange.

Lensman (1948-) Space opera writ large, of unrestrained, world-destroying power. Recommended.

Lexx (1997-2002) • TV series about a ragtag group of unlikely heroes who must deal with sex, genocide, and alien weirdness. Earliest episodes are the best.

Metabarons (1992-2003) • Spinoff of Incal, about a dynasty of perfect warriors in the distant future. Made into its own RPG in 2001.

Mom and Dad Save the World (1992) • Obscure movie with bumbling villains and family-sitcom humor. Recommended.

Nikolai Dante (1997-2012) • A swashbuckler becomes a pawn of a futuristic Russian dynasty. Highly recommended.

Panty & Stocking with Garterbelt (2010) • Two fallen angels use their magical lingerie to fight evil. Silly and fun.

Phoenix (1967-1988) • Tezuka's time-travelling anthology manga. Start with Volume II, "Future".

Read Only Memories (2015) • Retro computer game featuring various transhuman characters.

Red Dwarf (1988-) • Long-running comedy series about bumbling adventurers drifting through space, millions of years in the future. Highly recommended.

Redline (2009) • It's the most popular racing event in the galaxy, so many colorful characters show up to do whatever it takes in this anime. Recommended.

Rick and Morty (2013-) • A mad scientist drags his grandson on dangerous adventures in this cartoon of mature themes. Highly recommended.

Ruby, Galactic Gumshoe (1982-) • Audio drama with cyberpunk themes and high-concept sci-fi. Highly recommended.

Sealab 2021 (2000-2005) • A 1970s science-fiction cartoon is edited and re-dubbed with self-aware, adult humor. The best jokes are in the earliest episodes.

The Six Voyages of Lone Sloan (2015) • Reprints of a long-running European sci-fi comic series.

Skydoll (2000) • Comic series about an android slave and her struggles against the various forces that want to subdue her. Recommended.

Space Dandy (2013) • He's a dandy guy, in space. Anime that hits all the right notes. Highly recommended.

Spaceballs (1987) • Mel Brooks' parody of 1980s space-opera. Some good jokes that deconstruct the sci-fi genre.

Star vs. the Forces of Evil (2015-) • Cartoon about monsters and high-schoolers having wacky adventures. Recommended.

Star Trek (1966-) • Long-running TV series about new life and new civilizations. Episodes we recommend include "Plato's Step-children", "The Slaver Weapon", "All Good Things...", "The Sound of Her Voice", "Tinker Tenor Doctor Spy", "Twilight", and whatever your friends say are the best ones.

Steven Universe (2013-) • Humanoid aliens with strange powers hang out with a little boy on earth in this popular animated series.

Tom Strong's Terrific Tales, Books 1 & 2 (2005, 2006) • Excellent anthology for ideas, but read the Jonni Future stories first.

Torchwood (2006-2011) • "Doctor Who after dark" spinoff, about time travel and aliens.

Tenchi Muyo! (1994-2010) • Sci-fi anime comedy, very popular.

Tripping the Rift (2004-2007) • Animated series about irreverent aliens and adult-themed humor.

Urusei Yatsura (1978-1987) • The magical-girl harem anime genre begins with this. Recommended.

Valérian and Laureline (1967-2010) • Oft-imitated space-opera comic of grand themes. Recommended.

Wander Over Yonder (2013-2016) • Cartoon hero tries to save universe, using the power of friendship. Recommended.

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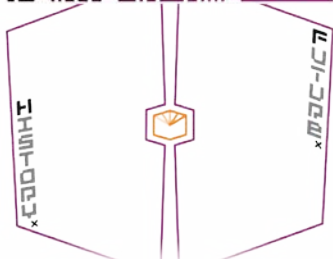
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A 3D cube diagram with rainbow-colored edges. The faces of the cube are labeled with words and phrases:

- Top face:** TOP, make a big splash
- Bottom face:** BOTTOM, bring fear and chaos
- Left face:** LEFT, work with your hands
- Right face:** RIGHT, work with your mind
- Front face:** CHARM, bring joy & harmony
- Back face:** UP, work with your mind



References



To **assault another target, state your weapon's tier, and roll +Strange.**
7-9, become exposed and choose one: either charge into range and +3 forward, or hit a lesser target. **10-12**, choose one: stay covered & hit lesser target, or become exposed & hit equal target, or charge and +3 forward. **13+**, choose one: stay covered & hit lesser target, or become exposed & hit greater target, or charge and +3 forward.

To **avoid danger** till your next move, **roll +Bottom. 7-9**, weak enemies overlook you and -1 harm. **10-12**, the strong overlook you and -2 harm. **13+**, the grand overlook you and -3 harm.

To **block something** till your next move, **roll +Top. 7-9**, weak enemies target you first, +1 forward to respond to them. **10-12**, the strong target you first, +3 forward to respond. **13+**, the grand target you first, +6 to respond.

To know casual stuff, just ask. To know obscure lore, roll +Down.
7-9, MC tells you something. 10+, MC may give you +1 connection.

To reveal something from your inventory, ante 1 Fx and roll +Connection. 7-9, move ante to Hx and you have weak stuff. 10-12, move ante to Hx and you have strong stuff. 13+, set aside ante as inventory and you have grand stuff.

To talk to people who are already friendly with you, no roll is needed. To schmooze unfriendly people, roll +Charm. 7-9, they're open to talk, ask the MC how to proceed. 10+, the target makes a counter-offer, accept it or move on to something else (MC's choice).

To **observe the obvious, ask your MC.** To **scope a situation or person,** roll +Up. **7-9,** ask one question and +1 forward to deal with answers. **10+,** ask three questions and +1 forward on those answers. (Does this person have something I need? How could I get past these people to leave me alone? Who's really in control here? Is this person trying to deceive me? What happened here recently? What here is useful or valuable to me? What is about to happen? Is there anything here that isn't supposed to be here? What should I be on the lookout for? What tier are these people? What's the best way to deal with these people?)

Don't like your last roll? To **get inspiration from a friend, ask them to ante 1 or more Hx and roll +connection. 7+**, add their +ante to your last roll; your friend moves their ante to their Fx.

To **prepare a friend for rolling**, **roll and add something** (usually the same attribute). **7+**, you give them +1 forward.

To **order a follower to do something, ante 1 Fx and roll +connection instead of what you'd usually roll.** Either you suffer the response for your follower, or lose 1 point of connection permanently. Move ante to Hx.

