

Scarlet Wake

bring it on.

Play-Test Rulebook

Revision 1

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Special Thanks to:

The Forge (www.indie-rpgs.com) and all its members.

All play-testers of Scarlet Wake will receive their name in the credits of this rulebook when it is published if they send me an email letting me know their name. Those who also post their play-testing experiences to the Scarlet Wake forum (<http://eclipse.netlab.com.au/forums/index.php>) may also receive a free copy of the fully illustrated (by me) final version of Scarlet Wake when it is published.

Additionally, if you are a Scarlet Wake play-tester and you need play-testers for your own game, I will play your game and give you at least the same amount of feedback you give me.

If you review this game and email me with a link to the review (narehel@yahoo.com.au), then I will send you a free copy of the finished Scarlet Wake rulebook when it is published.

I'd love to hear your thoughts about this game, so visit my forums or send me an email to let me know.

Thank you, Ben O'Neal

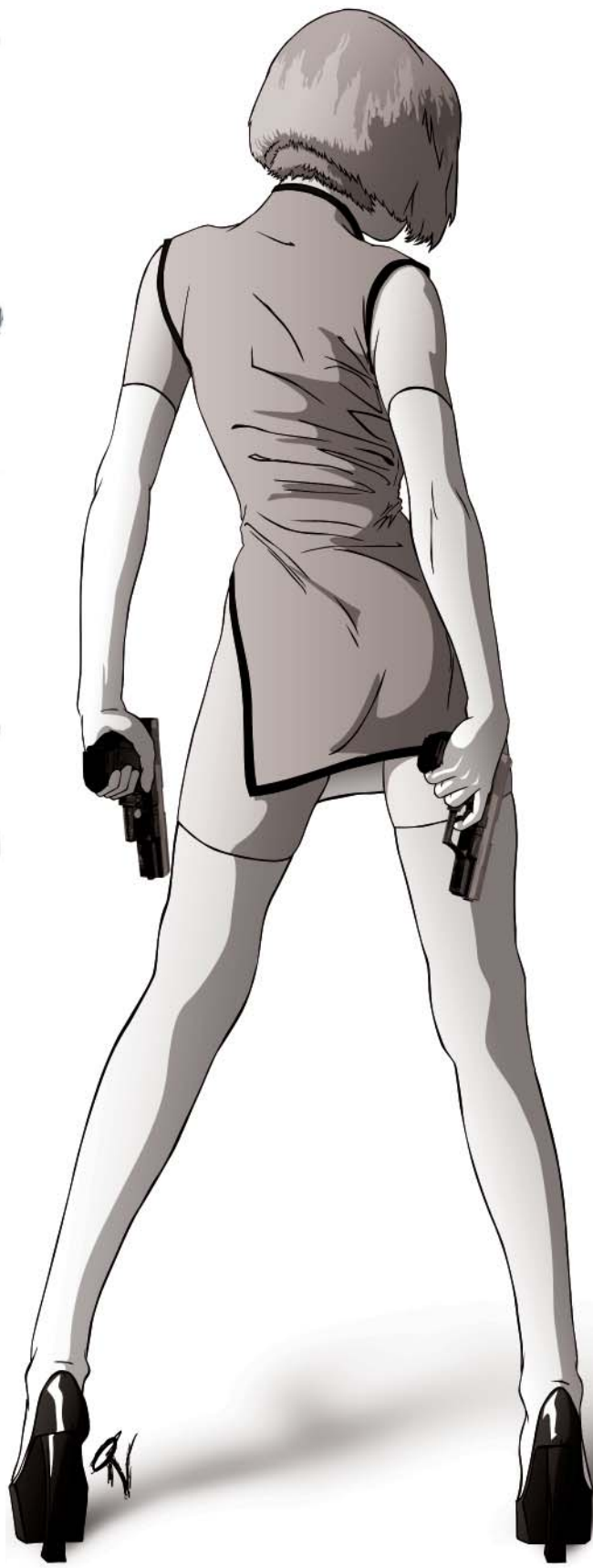


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Introduction

Scarlet Wake is game about pain, hate, and bloody revenge. With a strong focus on tactics, gambling, and inter-player competition, Scarlet Wake asks "Are you cool enough to be even cooler?" In Scarlet Wake, your character truly is limited only by your imagination.

This game is intended to be played over several nights, as player's characters work towards killing those who have wronged them, and all who stand in their way. The game ends when all players have killed all those on their kill-list. Scarlet Wake was designed to work with between 3 and 6 players, but 4 players works the best. All players have their own characters, and all players are involved at all times.

These rules include everything you will need to play, and all players should either have their own copy, or have read these rules and are able to share a copy. This rulebook will take you through creating your character, planning the challenges he/she will face, how to kill and do other stuff, how to improve your character, and how to make life harder for the other players, while keeping the game fun for all involved.

Playing Scarlet Wake

All players create a single character, referred to as their PC (Protagonist Character). They also create a list of 5 characters who their PC seeks revenge against. These 5 characters are known as Bosses, and the list is simply known as The List. Some of these Bosses (or all of them, it's up to you) will have other characters who protect them, like their gang, hired goons, or employees, and these characters are known as Peons.

Each player takes turns being a Protagonist, playing their PC, while the other players play the Antagonist Characters (ACs), such as the Peons and Bosses. When a player is playing the ACs against a PC, that player is known as an Antagonist. In most cases, there will be one Protagonist,

and the other players will be Antagonists, but there are many opportunities for multiple players to be Protagonists playing their PCs against only one or so Antagonists.

Protagonists narrate the results of any rolls they make, having full power over their PC. They also have power over how many Peons come at them each Wave, though no control over the Rank of the peons sent at them (see Chapter 4: Doing Stuff, and Chapter 6: Competition).

Antagonists have total power over the ACs, over which Rank Peons get played and when, and the use of Kick to increase the challenges for a PC (see Chapter 6: Competition).

What you need in order to play

Throughout this rulebook, dice will be referred to using the convention: XdY, where "X" is the number of dice, "d" stands for "die" and "Y" is the number of sides on that die. So "d6" is a six-sided die, and 3d6 means "Three six-sided dice".

In order to play, you will need about 5 or 6 of each of the following die types: d4, d6, d8, d10, d12. You will also need a copy of the character sheet, a pencil, an eraser, and you will need to know the rules in this rulebook.

So grab your dice, create your character, and get with the killing!

Disclaimer

In this rulebook "you" will sometimes be used in reference to your character. It is up to you, as a real human player, to know when the rules are referring to your imaginary character, or you as the person you are. If you are ever confused about this distinction, Scarlet Wake is not the game for you. I am not responsible if you kill someone as a result of this game, or harm yourself, or anyone else, or suffer any loss whatsoever, or commit any crime. In short, I cannot be held responsible for anything at all you ever do. By reading past this page, you are agreeing to these terms.

Character Creation

Your character in Scarlet Wake is represented by their Character Sheet. The Character Sheet records all important aspects of your character, and also the challenges you wish them to face. A Character Sheet is provided at the back of this rulebook. Character Sheets look like the picture on the next page, and below is a description of the various important parts to help you learn your way around the Character Sheet.

Your Character Sheet

Here I will guide you around the Character Sheet, to help you familiarize yourself with the important traits of your PC. The picture on the next page shows the Character Sheet, with various areas labelled with numbers. These areas are explained below:

1: This half of the page is dedicated to your character, recording all the important things you need to know for playing your character.

2: Your character's Name. You will notice a little box next to your Name, don't worry about that yet, we will come back to it briefly when dealing with The List in chapter 3, and more in Chapter 6: Competition. Right now, the most important thing is that you Name your character with a cool Name.

3: These three traits: Style, Weapon and Luck, are the basic primary traits of your character. At least one of these will be involved in almost everything you ever do. More detail concerning the traits is given later in this chapter.

4: Grudge and Honour. These two traits are strongly tied together, in that if you lose Grudge, you gain Honour, and if you lose Honour, you gain Grudge. You'll have to work to make sure you do more gaining than losing.

5: Fire and Fuel. These two traits are very powerful ways to increase your character's ass-kicking power. Whenever you take damage, you record this as Fuel, and you can "burn" Fuel to give you Fire, which adds to your Action Pool (see 6).

6: Your AP (Action Pool). This shows how many of each die type you have available to roll when doing stuff.

7: Notes. You can use this section to write down anything important you might need to remember about your character, or just to describe them in more detail.

8: The List. This half of your Character Sheet is devoted to your list of Bosses and their Peons. You work your way from 1 through to 5, and everything you need to know about each Boss you can record here (see Chapter 3: The List).

9: Kick. This is a resource that goes up every time you gain Fuel (take damage). It does not go down when you burn Fuel, and in fact, you can't use it in any way at all. Kick is a resource for Antagonists to use against you, so keep that in mind when you want to benefit from Fuel (see Chapter 6: Competition).

10: Boss and Peon traits. Here you can record the names of each Boss, 1 through to 5, their traits, and the Peons that stand between you and them. Each Boss must have a Name, and a score for that Name equal to how many players have that same Boss on their list. For example, if three players have the same Boss on their List, then the Name score for that Boss is 3.

The other traits of Bosses are the same as your own, except that instead of having a Grudge trait, they have a Crime trait, which measures how much they have wronged you.

Peons are recorded here according to Rank. 'R1' means 'Rank 1 Peon', so here is where you record how many Peons of each rank a Boss has.

Finally, the AP of each Boss is simply their Action Pool, and shows how

Your Style adds to your AP whenever you are doing something impressive. This is probably going to be most of the time.

Weapon: This trait measures how cool your character's weapon(s) of choice is(are). A score of one means the weapon is not very cool, while a score of 5 means the weapon is as awesome as a weapon can be.

Write a brief description of your character's weapon next to your score. Some examples might be "A Black Katana", or "Two Automatic Pistols". You decide what weapons you want your character to have based on their Weapon score (if you think a sniper rifle is the coolest thing in the world, but the character only has a Weapon score of 3, then don't say the character has a sniper rifle until they have a Weapon score of 5).

Your Weapon adds to your AP whenever you are wielding it, either to attack someone, or to threaten someone. Again, this will probably be most of the time.

Luck: This trait simply measures how lucky your character is at having things go their way. A score of 1 means your character is barely lucky enough to be alive, and a score of 5 means they often find things turn out well for them.

You must specify a lucky charm that your character possesses which is the source of their Luck. It can be anything, so long as it is not a part of them. An example might be "Pendant from Father", or "Bullet from a Chest Wound".

Your Luck adds to your AP so long as you are in possession of your lucky charm.

Grudge: This trait measures how much your character hates those on The List for what they have done to them. A score of 1 means they want them dead, and will try to see that happen, while a score of 5 means that they will chase them into the pits of hell in order to wear their skin as a hat.

Write a brief description of why they hold their Grudge against those

on The List next to your score. Some examples might be "Killed Wife and Children" or "Murdered Parents".

Your Grudge adds to your AP whenever you are rolling against something that is between you and one of the 5 names on your List, and always when you are rolling against anyone on your List.

Honour: This trait measures both how much your character can forgive and how much they are willing to cooperate with others rather than fighting them. It can only be increased by allowing a Boss to live, or working with another PC to share the killing of a Boss.

Write a brief description of the things you have done to increase your Honour next to your score.

Your Honour adds to your AP in nearly every roll you make, with only a few exceptions.

Fire: This trait measures your character's rage and ability to bounce back when beaten down. Fire can only be increased by "burning" Fuel. Any points of Fuel can be burnt into Fire at a 2:1 ratio, meaning that if you burn 4 points of Fuel, you gain 2 points of Fire.

Additionally, Fire "spreads", meaning that if you burn more than 10 Fuel, you gain another Fire trait (which is why there are so many little boxes next to Fire on the Character Sheet). For example, if you burn 16 points of Fuel, the first 10 will give you a Fire trait of 5 (which is the maximum any trait can be), and the next 6 Fuel will give you another Fire trait of 3 right next to the first one. So by burning 16 Fuel, you can add 1d12 and 1d8 to your AP.

Fire only lasts for one full encounter. You can only burn Fuel before the first Wave of an encounter, and any Fire gained this way only lasts until the person or people you are fighting or are about to fight are dead. For example, if you burn all your Fuel into Fire against one person, then, a minute after you kill them, you encounter another enemy, your Fire for this new encounter will be zero.

Fuel: This is how you record all damage done to your character. The maximum amount of Fuel you can handle is calculated by adding up all the scores of all your traits, then doubling the result. If your Fuel exceeds the maximum, you are forced into a Bind (see Chapter 5: Growth)

You can burn Fuel into Fire to increase your character's AP (see Fire, above). Any Fuel burnt this way is gone.

Every time your Fuel increases, increase your Kick by the same amount. For example, if you take 6 points of damage, thus increasing your Fuel by 6, then you must add 6 to your Kick.

Fuel only ever decreases when you burn it into Fire. It does not go down after a Bind, or for any other reason than burning it for Fire.

Kick: This trait measures how many points of Fuel you have gained. Kick can only be used by the Antagonists playing against you. At any time they desire, Antagonists can use up Kick to increase the challenges you face in various ways (see Chapter 6: Competition). So remember that whenever you gain Fuel, you are also giving the Antagonists more power to challenge you.

Creating Your Character

You start the game with 8 points to distribute amongst your Style, Weapon, Luck, and Grudge traits as you see fit. At this stage, you cannot put any points into any of the other traits. To make this easy to see, these traits are the ones with the asterisks next to them on your Character Sheet. The minimum you can put into these four traits is 1, and the maximum is 5.

Now your character needs a name. The name cannot be a real name, it must be at least two words, and at least one of these must be a noun. A nice easy convention is 'adjective noun'. For example, all the example characters in this rulebook are named according to 'colour creature', such as "Amber Ghost", and "Crimson Fiend".

You also need to go through all your traits and describe briefly the ac-

tual characteristics of the traits. For example, your must describe what style your character fights with, so you might use adjectives such as: smooth, swift, menacing, cold, or sadistic.

Finally, you need to start thinking about their story. Why are they seeking revenge? Who are the people they are seeking revenge against? Why did these people wrong your character in the first place? You will need to develop deep answers for these questions and more, because this is how you will drive your character through the game (see Chapter 7).

In *Scarlet Wake*, your character's coolness is all that matters. You can have anything you want for your character if you think it fits. They can be filthy rich, dirt poor, have gadgets for every occasion or rely on their wits. If you think they'd have it, then they do.

Tips for Character Creation: Creating your character is the most important part of playing *Scarlet Wake*. It is more than just writing up numbers and names on your character sheet, it is also generating the entire reason for their existence in the game. The first time this will become apparent is when you must narrate your first scene, known as a Snippet (see Chapter 7: Playing). Ask yourself:

"What happened to my PC to make them seek vengeance?"

"What events led up to this?"

"How was my PC involved in the first place?"

"How can I break up this story so that I can play it out?"

"How is my PC going to go about seeking vengeance?"

"What sort of personality does my PC have?"

"Do they value anything?"

"Do they have any unique characteristics, such as scars, limbs, clothing, and other quirks?"

It will also help tremendously to imagine how you want your PC to move, talk and do stuff, because you will be spending a large amount of time narrating these things.

The List

The List is a record of the people upon whom your character seeks bloody retribution. These five names are the reason your character exists right now, and they will not rest until all five are dead. The number 5 name on that list belongs to the most vile of the 5, the one who you will chase to the ends of the earth to bring justice to. The one responsible for it all. Your PC will work down the list, killing each Boss from 1 to 5.

You get to create all the Bosses on The List, everything about them, including the people who you must kill to get to them, known as Peons. There are a few rules you must follow though, and this chapter presents two alternative methods of creating your List. The rigid method is a simpler and quicker method, whilst the flexible method allows greater control over your character's story and the challenges they will face.

But first, let's familiarise ourselves with Bosses and Peons.

Bosses

Just like your own character, Bosses are defined by their scores in various traits. Bosses have 5 traits: Name, Style, Weapon, Luck, and Crime. Crime is the only trait that differs from your own character's traits, and represents the extent that this Boss wronged your character. In this way it is the mirror of your Grudge trait, in that your Grudge measures how much you hate those on your List, and Crime measures how much each Boss is deserving of that hate. Bosses do not have Fuel, Fire, or Honour.

Just as Bosses have Crime instead of Grudge, so to do they have Karma instead of Fuel. When you take damage, you add it as Fuel, but when a Boss takes damage, it adds to their Karma. When you have reached your maximum Fuel, a Bind is triggered (see Chapter 4: Doing Stuff), but when a Boss has reached their Maximum Karma (MK), they are dead (or in some other way incapacitated, depending on the effect you want).

Whenever you force a Boss on your List into Maximum Karma, you gain their Name score, and add it to your own. If this would increase your Name score to more than 5, then the extra Name gets added as permanent Fire. For example, if you have a Name score of 3, and you kill a Boss with a Name of 4, then your Name score would increase to 5, and you would gain a permanent Fire score of 2, which is treated as part of your Name score for the purposes of determining its use in your Action Pool.

Peons

Within the game world, Peons can exist for infinite reasons, depending on the Bosses they protect against you. But mechanically speaking, they exist for one main purpose: to get slaughtered whilst damaging your PC enough to give you a decent amount of Fuel. Most Bosses will be too difficult for you to beat without using Fire, especially once the Antagonists have a supply of Kick to use against you.

There are 5 different types of Peons in Scarlet Wake, measured according to Rank. Peon Ranks range from R1 (Rank 1) to R5 (Rank 5), with R5 being the toughest. A Peon's Rank determines their Maximum Karma (MK) and Action Pool (AP). An individual Peon's MK is equal to their Rank, meaning that an R2 Peon will have an MK of 2, and an R5 Peon will have an MK of 5.

A Peon's AP is a number of d4 equal to their Rank. This means that an R3 Peon rolls 3d4 to do anything, and an R5 Peon rolls 5d4 to do anything.

Rigid List Creation

First, you must give each Boss a Name, using the same rules as when you made your PC's Name.

It is a good idea to make your List in collaboration with the other players, so that you can choose which Bosses you will have appear on each other's Lists. The reason for this is twofold: Firstly, when a Boss appears on more than one List, it is worth more to anyone who kills it. Secondly, you can all make sure that the spread

of shared Bosses is equal, so that no player is left out of the Boss sharing (which would lower the rewards they could receive). The rules for having a Boss appear on more than one List are as follows:

- Any Boss can appear on more than one List.
- Any Boss on more than one List must be the same number on each List (a Boss at number 4 must be at number 4 on all Lists).
- No Boss can appear on all Lists, there must always be an Antagonist available.
- The traits for a shared Boss must be the same on all Lists.

Boss Traits

The number of points you must distribute among the traits of each Boss varies according to their order in The List. Bosses higher in the order are tougher, while those lower are weaker.

Creating a Boss uses exactly the same process as creating your character, except where you start with only 8 points to distribute amongst your PC's traits, each Boss starts with a greater amount, depending on their position in The List. The table below shows how many points each Boss has. You must distribute all of these points among any traits you choose (except Name, which can only increase by that Boss appearing on multiple Lists).

Rigid Boss Creation

Boss #	Trait Points	Maximum Karma
1	12	24
2	14	28
3	16	32
4	18	36
5	20	40

We can see that the number 1 Boss has 12 points to be distributed amongst their traits and an MK of 24, the next Boss at number 2 has 14 points to be distributed among their traits and an MK of 28, and the number 5 Boss has 20 trait points and an MK of 40.

In addition to creating the Bosses on The List, you must also create the Peons that protect them.

You have a total of 50 Peons that you can spread among the 5 Bosses any way you wish, but you must use all 50. These 50 Peons are made up of 10 Peons of each Rank (so 10 R1's, 10 R2's, etc.)

All this can be seen in the table below, which shows the different Ranks of Peons, the MK and AP of each Rank, and how many you have to distribute amongst your Bosses.

Peons

Rank	MK	AP	Number
R1	1	1d4	10
R2	2	2d4	10
R3	3	3d4	10
R4	4	4d4	10
R5	5	5d4	10

Hint: Think about how much Fire you are likely to need to take down each Boss, and distribute Peons accordingly.

Example Rigid Boss Creation

In order to illustrate how to create a Boss from start to finish using the rigid method, here is an example of how to create a Boss that will be number 3 on The List.

Step 1: First I pick a name. Let's call this Boss 'Grey Golem'. He appears on two other player's Lists, so his Name score is 3.

Step 2: Now I look at the table on page 8, and see that a number 3 Boss has 16 points to distribute among their traits. So I give him Style:3, Weapon:4, Luck:4, and Crime:5. According to the table, he also has a Maximum Karma of 32.

Step 3: Now he needs Peons. This Boss is a big-time corporate guy, so these Peons will be mostly security guards, but he'll also have two tough-guy personal bodyguards. With this in mind, I give him 6 R2 Peons (the security guards) and 2 R5 Peons (the bodyguards).

Step 4: Finally, I look at all of Grey

Golem's traits including his Name score, and I work out his AP. He has two traits at 3 (Name and Style), two traits at 4 (Weapon and Luck), and one at 5 (Crime). So Grey Golem's AP is 2d8, 2d10, and 1d12 (see page 5, under 'Character Traits').

Flexible List Creation

This method is identical to the rigid method right up until defining the Boss traits. However, there are two additional rules for sharing a Boss if one or more players are using the Flexible method:

- Any player using the Rigid method must be the one to define that Bosses traits, and any players using the flexible method must still "pay" for those traits as if they had bought the scores themselves (see below).
- All players sharing a Boss must pay the same points for both Boss traits and Peons, but the result is only as if one player had paid. For example, to raise a Bosses style score to 4, all players who share that Boss must pay 4 trait points.

For the above reasons, it's best if all the players in a group use the same method.

Boss Traits

You have 80 points to distribute among any of the Bosses' traits. This means you can make the number 5 Boss weaker than the number 2 Boss, or any other combination you want. Keep in mind, however, that you must spend all 80 points on your Bosses' traits, so by making one weaker, you must make another stronger.

To figure out the Maximum Karma a Boss has, simply figure out how many points you have spent on their traits, and multiply this by 2. For example, if you have given a Boss the following traits: Style:3, Weapon:4, Luck:2, and Crime:2; then their MK would be 22 (11 multiplied by 2).

Peons

You have 150 points to spend on creating Peons for your Bosses, and you must spend all 150.

When using these 150 points to buy Peons for your Bosses, you must consider the cost of the different Rank Peons. The cost of a Peon is equal to it's Rank. For example, if you want a Peon of Rank 3, then you must pay 3 points, and ten Rank 3 Peons would cost 30 points. The table below shows the 5 Ranks of Peons, their Maximum Karma (MK), Action Pool (AP), and point cost.

Peons

Rank	MK	AP	Cost
R1	1	1d4	1
R2	2	2d4	2
R3	3	3d4	3
R4	4	4d4	4
R5	5	5d4	5

So with your 150 points, you could conceivably buy 150 R1 Peons, or 30 R5 Peons. However, it's a much better idea to buy a range of different Rank Peons and spread them among your Bosses with consideration for the potential Fire you could gain from them.

Example Flexible Boss Creation

In order to illustrate how to create a Boss from start to finish using the flexible method, here is an example of how to create a Boss that will be number 5 on The List.

Step 1: First I pick a name. Let's call this Boss 'Gold Chimera'. She appears on three other player's Lists, so her Name score is 4.

Step 2: This Boss is the mastermind behind my PC's grief, but isn't particularly awesome compared to the other Bosses on The List, because she is oldish and kinda frail. She's still pretty tough, but she's not what she used to be. So I give her Style:2, Weapon:3, Luck:5, and Crime:5. This means I have spent 15 points on her, so her MK is 30, and I have 65 points left to distribute among the other Bosses.

Step 3: Now she needs Peons. Lot's of them. This Boss is big on her minions, so these Peons will be members of her private army. With this in mind, I

give her 20 R2 Peons and 10 R3 Peons, costing me a total of 70 out of my 150 points. The other 80 points will give the other Bosses their Peons.

Step 4: Finally, I look at all of Gold Chimera's traits including her Name score, and I work out her AP. She has one trait at 2 (Style), one trait at 3 (Weapon), one at 4 (Name), and two at 5 (Luck and Crime). So Gold Chimera's AP is 1d6, 1d8, 1d10, and 2d12 (see page 5, under 'Character Traits').

Tips for List Creation: In order to get the most out of your play experience, you should ensure that each Boss on the list has a well developed reason for being there. Ask yourself:

"How does my PC know this Boss?"

"What did this Boss do to my PC to earn my PC's wrath? How does this justify their position on The List?"

"What sort of character is this Boss?"

"What is their occupation?"

"How did they get where they are today?"

"How will they react to my PC?"

"Do they have any unique quirks or characteristics, such as scars, tattoos, a limp, or whatever?"

"What sort of personality do they have?"

There is no real reason to write all this stuff down, because some of it may change as you play and further develop your own PC. But it is a great idea to start thinking about all this stuff when making your List, and it will really help you later on when you have to narrate scenes with these Bosses and describe them for the Antagonists to play.

Peons are a little easier. For starters, considering your answers to the above questions, you should be able to imagine the sorts of Peons each Boss will have. Will they be security guards? Employees? Friends? Soldiers? Mercenaries? Mafia thugs? Fans (if your Boss is a famous person)? Ninjas?

All you really have to do is justify why each Boss has Peons, and why they have as many as they do. You don't have to consider why the Peons have the Ranks that they do. The types of Peons that they are (thugs, ninjas)

will only help you when you are narrating your slaughter of them.

If you have developed your Bosses and Peons well, you will find playing is much easier, and your descriptions to the Antagonists will be much clearer, allowing them to play the Bosses, Peons, and other Antagonist Characters in a way that fits your PC's story.

My final tip for creating Bosses and Peons is to keep in mind that YOU are the one creating the challenges that your PC will face, and so it is up to you to make sure that you don't make things too easy (you won't gain enough Fuel for Fire, and you'll constantly fall into Binds) or too hard (again, you'll constantly fall into Binds). This game relies very strongly on good strategy and tactics, and it's surprisingly easy to shoot yourself in the foot without knowing it.

Once you have created your PC and The List, you have everything you need to play the game from beginning to end, written right there on your Character Sheet. Good Luck!

Karma

Your PC has a trait called Fuel, which is how you track the damage that they receive in a fight, and which also can be burnt off to give you a serious advantage in the form of Fire (see Chapter 4: Doing Stuff). However, Bosses, Sub-Bosses, and Peons do not have Fuel. Instead, they have Karma.

Unlike Fuel, Karma cannot be burnt away, and cannot decrease except by being healed with Kick by the Antagonists (see Chapter 6: Competition). It does not decrease with time. This means that if you damage a Boss, then, as part of your story, many months go by before your return to finish the job, that Boss will have the same amount of Karma as when you left them.

When a character has taken enough damage to exceed their Maximum Karma, then they can no longer influence the story, either by being dead or rendered obsolete in some other way.

Doing Stuff

Blowing heads off, sending limbs flying, painting the decor red, maiming, threatening, cooperating, gambling, escaping, racing, hacking, and kicking ass: these are just some of the fun things your character will be doing in Scarlet Wake. This chapter is all about how you do stuff. First, we'll deal with the most important part of Scarlet Wake: kicking ass, before moving on to other stuff.

Kicking Ass

For the majority of combat situations you are likely to get into, you will use all your traits in your AP. Any time you want to do something, you roll your AP, and your opponents will roll their AP against you.

Waves

In Scarlet Wake, combat is measured in Waves. A Wave can consist of a bunch of enemies engaging you, or a single opponent. A Wave does not last for any specific length of time, and can be anything from a few brief seconds to a minute, depending on how the players narrate the events. Additionally, a Wave does not consist of any set number of attacks or defences, but instead has as many attacks as the players narrate. However, each Wave only has one roll for all participants, made at the beginning of the Wave.

Here's how a Wave works:

Step 1: The Protagonist gives one of four different types of signal to the Antagonists. The four types of signal are:

- Holding up a number of fingers equal to how many Peons you want sent against you.
- Holding both hands out, palms up, and waving them towards you. This gestures "Bring It On", and tells the Antagonists to send all the remaining Peons at you. If there are no remaining Peons, this is the gesture to send the Boss.
- Pointing at the Antagonists.

This tells them to send the Boss at you without the Peons. If you make this gesture, you cannot burn Fuel, and you cannot kill the Boss. Essentially this is to allow you to trigger a Bind (See Chapter 5: Growth).

- Holding both your hands in raised fists, palms facing you, and extending the middle finger of both hands. This tells the Antagonists that you think you are way too hardcore for your own good, so they should send all the Peons AND the Boss against you. This is also an open invitation for them to spend all your Kick against you. If you manage to kill everyone in this encounter without falling into a Bind, then you gain double the Name points from killing this Boss and you have proven to the world that you are cool enough to be the coolest. If you fall into a Bind or leave the encounter with someone left alive, you will have proven yourself to be an idiot, and you lose all your Name points.

Step 2: The Antagonists narrate how the Peons (or Boss) are advancing on the PC, and this narration can be as creative as the Antagonists wish. The Antagonists roll the dice for the Peons or Boss, at the same time as the Protagonist(s) roll their AP.

Step 3: The Antagonists add up all the dice for the Peons or Boss, the Protagonist(s) add up their AP(s), and the results are spoken aloud. The Protagonist(s) then choose how they will distribute the points of the rolls, before narrating the outcome of the Wave, describing the resulting carnage in graphic detail.

Damage

Damage to a PC is recorded as Fuel on your character sheet, but damage to Peons and Bosses is recorded as Karma. When you have taken enough damage to make you exceed your maximum Fuel, your PC is forced into a Bind. When a Peon or Boss has taken enough damage to exceed their Maximum Karma, they are dead or otherwise rendered incapacitated.

In a Wave, if the PC's roll is

higher than the opponent's roll, then the PC can avoid all damage, dealing the difference as damage to the opponent. If the opponent's roll is higher, then the PC cannot avoid damage, but can still choose to take more damage in order to deal damage to the opponents.

For example, Violent Angel rolls 27, and her opponents roll 34. No matter what, Violent Angel will take at least 7 damage this Wave, and if this is all she takes, she cannot deal any damage in return. However, she can choose to take more damage, "freeing up" some of her own roll to deal damage against her enemies. She chooses to take a total of 14 damage, allowing her to deal 7 damage to her enemies. Peons that take damage without dying "sit out" the next Wave as they deal with the pain.

In the next wave, she rolls 32, and her opponents roll 29. Violent Angel can deal 3 points of damage to her enemies without taking any herself.

The Protagonist decides where damage is dealt and how, and narrates the result for the other players.

Make sure you remember to keep track of the damage you take with your Fuel trait, and make sure to update your Kick too. If you ever exceed your maximum Fuel, you are forced into a Bind (see Chapter 5: Growth).

Other Stuff

There will be a few times where you will want your character to do things that don't involve killing other people. In these circumstances, it is important to consider what traits are involved in your AP, and who you are being opposed by. All actions that aren't being hindered by another character automatically succeed if you want them to. This isn't a game about falling off cliffs or failing to pick locks, Scarlet Wake is about doing what needs to be done to bring your wrath upon your enemies.

However, if you are trying to do something which is opposed by another character, then you must roll against them to see who wins. This section will provide the guidelines for when each trait should contribute to

your AP, and give a few examples of specific tasks.

Name: Are the people you are rolling against familiar with you or your reputation? Are you identifiable as yourself (not wearing a mask or hidden somehow)? If you answered yes to both of these, then you should use your Name trait in your AP.

Style: Are you moving around in a vaguely impressive way? Are you speaking with someone in a vaguely impressive way? If so, you should use your Style in your AP.

Weapon: Are you holding your weapon? Does it help your cause to be holding your weapon? If so, then you should use your Weapon trait in your AP. It is important to note that this means your exact weapon, as written on your Character Sheet. No other weapons can ever give you a Weapon trait score.

Luck: Do you have your lucky charm? If so, you should use your Luck in your AP.

Grudge: Do you hate the person you are rolling against? Are you rolling against a person because they are preventing you from killing a Boss? If so, you should use your Grudge in your AP.

Honour: Are you NOT trying to overcome a Dilemma? If so, you should use your Honour in your AP.

If there is ever any question as to which traits to use in a roll, the above guidelines are the final arbiters. If you answer "No" to any of the above questions, then you don't use that trait in your AP.

The above guidelines apply to PCs, Bosses, Sub-Bosses, and other non-Peon characters. This means that in some circumstances your PC may be rolling different traits in their AP than the character they are rolling against (especially in Binds).

When rolling against a Peon for any reason, including Binds, Peons always use their full AP as defined by their Rank.

Examples

Amber Ghost: Amber Ghost is trying to overcome a Bind to improve her Style. She has been stripped naked, tied up, and gagged by Boss number 2 on her List. She is currently laying under a tarp in the back of a truck, which her Boss is driving to the local abattoir, where he and his friends are planning to go to work on her while she is still alive. She needs to escape her bonds.

She cannot move, and has no possessions, so she cannot use her Style, Weapon, or Luck traits for her AP. She rolls her AP with Name, Grudge and Honour, and gets 15. At the same time, the Antagonists roll for the Boss, to see how well he tied the bonds on Amber Ghost, using his Name, Style, Luck, and Crime traits, but not Weapon (he wasn't using his weapon to tie the bonds). They roll for the Boss and get 13.

Amber Ghost escapes the bonds and removes her gag, grabs a crowbar from the tool box in the ute next to her, and readies herself to bring the pain to this Boss.

Jade Templar & Sapphire Knight: Jade Templar and Sapphire Knight have decided that because they both want to kill Boss number 3 on their Lists, but aren't willing to share the kill, that they will race each other to the Boss, with the winner getting to take on the Boss alone. They agree on making 5 rolls, with the winner of the most rolls winning the race. They aren't using their Weapon trait for their rolls, but all their other traits are important.

Jade Templar rolls 21, 17, 28, 36, and 25 while Sapphire Knight rolls 30, 23, 27, 23, and 22. Jade Templar won the third, fourth, and fifth rolls, so he arrives first, and gets to kill Boss number 3 alone. According to the competition rules in chapter 6, both Jade Templar and Sapphire Knight took damage during the race, and must narrate accordingly after each roll. Overall, Jade Templar gained 15 Fuel (and 15 Kick), and Sapphire Knight gained 17 Fuel (and 17 Kick).

Onyx Dragon: Onyx Dragon has been defeated and humiliated. A million miles from nowhere and naked, his face swollen and bloodied, he struggles to run along the empty road in the harsh sun.

He is going to attempt to increase his Weapon to 4, and his Weapon is his fists. His lucky charm has been stolen, so all he can roll to improve his Weapon is his Style, Weapon, and Honour, and he'll be rolling against these same traits all at 4. He rolls 23 for himself, and the Antagonists roll 18 for the difficulty of increasing his Weapon.

With every step of every mile, he pushes himself, conditioning his fists against anything he passes: trees, road signs, wildlife, anything. When he pushes too far and collapses in exhaustion, he punches the ground with every breath. His hands bruised, cut, and bloodied, he punches on. Days later, his forearms are thicker, harder, and he grins with satisfaction as he punches a hole clean through another steel road-sign: "Next Town: 35 Miles".

Bringing the Pain: Fuel and Fire

Fire can make a difficult battle, easy, or an impossible one, achievable. It is your most powerful resource. By taking damage which increases your Fuel, you are building up the means to really lay the smack down on your opponents, by burning that Fuel into Fire.

When you burn Fuel, you must decide how much you wish to burn. This number must be an even number, because you will be dividing it by 2 to figure out how much Fire you gain. For example, if you burn 24 Fuel, you would gain 12 Fire.

Because no trait can ever be higher than 5, you must split your Fire up into bundles of 5. Using the above example, you would have 5, 5, and 2, which would add 2d12 and 1d6 to your Action Pool.

You can only ever burn Fuel before the first Wave of an encounter, so if you gain Fuel in a fight, you cannot use it till the next encounter.

Growth

Each one of your character's traits can be increased, and each one is increased in different ways with different rules. This chapter shows you what you have to do to make your character as cool as they can be.

Making a Name For Yourself

Increasing your Name trait is easy. All you have to do is kill a Boss on your List. When you do, you add that Boss's Name score to your own. However, if you have shared the killing of a Boss with another PC, then you split the Name score between the PCs, rounding up when necessary.

For example, if you alone kill a Boss who appears on The Lists of two other PCs (meaning that Boss's Name score is 3), then you add 3 to your Name score. If you shared the kill with one other PC, then you would both increase your Name traits by 2 (3, divided by 2, rounded up). If all three of the PCs killed that Boss, then each one would increase their Name trait by 1 (3 divided by 3).

See Chapter 6: Competition for more information on sharing a Boss.

If you gain enough Name to increase your Name trait above 5, then any extra points are recorded as permanent Fire, which is treated as an extension of your Name score. This means you cannot use it unless you can use your Name, it counts towards your maximum Fuel, it counts towards your AP, and it counts in determining if you are a winner at the end of the game (see Chapter 8: Endgame).

Becoming More Stylish

If you want to increase your Style, and let's face it, of course you do, then you must first get yourself into a Bind (see "A Bind in a Box", this page). Once you are in a Bind, you must narrate your way out of it, passing rolls when necessary (see Chapter 4: Doing Stuff).

There are rules for this narration. For starters, you must deal only with the present; you cannot include

A Bind in a Box

A Bind is triggered any time a PC takes enough damage to reach their maximum capacity of Fuel. When a Bind is triggered, the Antagonists must narrate the PC into a very difficult and horrible circumstance, which the PC must be able to feasibly escape from. The rules for narrating a Bind are as follows:

- You cannot kill the PC.
- You cannot control anything that the PC says or does, but you can control what they cannot do, so long as you give a good reason for why they can't do it.
- You cannot cause any permanent injury to a PC without the player's explicit consent.
 - The Bind must be a truly terrible circumstance.
 - The Bind must be escapable.
- Only 3 rolls are allowed to escape a Bind, but a success on one is all that is needed.
 - Once the conditions of the Bind have been set, you cannot introduce any more conditions, and must leave the PC to escape without further difficulties.

anything from your character's past, whether it was that morning or ten years ago. For this reason, this narration is known as a Present Narration. A Present Narration has 3 phases which must be followed in order to increase your Style and escape the Bind:

Phase 1: You must narrate how your character struggles in futility against the circumstances of the Bind, including what they are thinking, and how they are feeling.

Phase 2: You must make any rolls necessary to overcome the Bind, narrating the outcomes of each roll as you go.

Phase 3: You must narrate your overall escape from the Bind, and what your PC is thinking and feeling at that moment.

If you fail to escape the Bind in Phase 2, the Antagonists get to narrate the consequences of your

current Bind. These consequences cannot include death or permanent injury, but they can be nasty things like putting your PC into a coma or leaving you stranded somewhere. You then fail your Present Narration, and cannot increase your Style trait. Now you are free to continue the narration of your PC.

Upgrading to a Cooler Weapon

So you've made your PC, given them an awesome weapon, and now you want an even cooler one (or two). What do you do? Well, first you need to decide exactly what would be cooler than your current weapon. This could be anything, from grabbing another one (if there's anything cooler than a sword, it's two swords), to upgrading your existing one, to getting a new weapon entirely. You are free to decide.

Now you must decide where you can get this added coolness. Are you going to commission it from a famous weapon smith? Are you going to kill the possessor of this great weapon? Are you going to convince someone to give you a family heirloom?

You must also specify the exact Weapon trait that this weapon will bring, narrating why it is so cool.

Once you have decided what needs to be done to get the weapon and what the weapon's score will be, you must get it. To do so, you have two main options: kill the possessor, or bribe, buy, or obtain it from someone. You must narrate the whole thing, designating other players to play the roles of the other characters involved.

Killing for your weapon: The score of your desired weapon will be the score of all the traits of the possessor. If you want a weapon with a score of 4, then all the possessor's traits will be 4. You must defeat them in combat without using Fire.

This possessor can never be a Boss. What sort of freak are you anyway to want a weapon that belonged to a person you loathe more than anything in the world?

Buying your weapon: This covers all non-lethal means of obtaining a weapon. Again, the score of your desired weapon is the score of all the traits of the possessor of the weapon. In this case, however, you will only be rolling some of your traits, those that are relevant to the task at hand (see Chapter 4: Doing Stuff), against the traits that are relevant for the possessor.

Getting Lucky

Everyone wants to get lucky, but few are good at it. The first thing you must do, is get yourself into a Bind (see 'A Bind in a Box', previous page). Now that you are in a Bind, you must narrate your way out of it, passing rolls when necessary (see Chapter 4: Doing Stuff).

There are rules for this narration. For starters, you must introduce your character's past, bringing this into the present. For this reason, this narration is known as a History Narration. A History Narration has 4 phases which must be followed in order to increase your Luck and escape the Bind:

Phase 1: You must narrate how your character struggles in futility against the circumstances of the Bind, including what they are thinking, and how they are feeling.

Phase 2: You must narrate a series of scenes and events in your PC's past which at first must seem to have nothing to do with the present Bind. It is important that by the end of this phase, you have provided enough information that the other players can see how your past will help you escape from the Bind.

Phase 3: Back in the present, you must make any rolls necessary to overcome the Bind, narrating the outcomes of each roll as you go. If your phase 2 was narrated well, the Antagonists must allow you to re-roll once any failed rolls that relate to your past.

Phase 4: You must narrate your overall escape from the Bind, and what your PC is thinking and feeling at that moment.

If you fail to escape the Bind in Phase 3, the Antagonists get to

narrate the consequences of your current Bind. These consequences cannot include death or permanent injury, but they can be nasty things like putting your PC into a coma or leaving you stranded somewhere. You then fail your History Narration, and cannot increase your Luck trait. Now you are free to continue the narration of your PC.

Nursing Your Grudge

So you think you know what hate is do you? Well, here is how you can prove it. To really test your Grudge, you must face a Boss, and introduce a Dilemma. A Dilemma is something that your PC feels very strongly about, and which threatens to prevent them from killing this Boss. A few examples might be: the Boss is pregnant, and your character feels very strongly about not taking the life of an unborn child; the Boss is the father or mother of your PC's child, who they thought was dead; the Boss turns out to be your PC's long-lost parent or sibling.

There are a few rules for how you must face and overcome a Dilemma, which must be narrated in 3 phases:

Phase 1: You must narrate the introduction of the Dilemma, and must narrate how your character feels about the situation, and why it is a true Dilemma for them.

Phase 2: You must roll your Grudge trait against the Bosses Luck trait. If you win, your Grudge increases by 1 point, and you have proven that your hate is stronger than any other emotion you might feel. If you lose, you cannot bring yourself to kill that Boss, and you lose 1 point of Grudge, but gain 1 point of Honour. If you wish, you can sacrifice that point of Honour to have the Antagonists make the Boss attack you anyway.

Phase 3: You must narrate the overall outcome of the Dilemma, and how your PC is reacting to that outcome emotionally.

If you fail the Dilemma, and keep your Honour, then you don't receive the Name for that Boss. However, this rule can be over-ridden by unanimous decision that your hunting of that

Boss was spectacular enough that you would definitely make a name for yourself despite not killing them.

You can introduce multiple Dilemmas per Boss, but each one must be new.

Earning Honour

Some say Honour is the only thing that can't be taken from you. Some say it is the only true measure of a person's worth. Whatever you believe, there are only two ways you can increase your Honour. The first, is to allow a Boss to live by failing a Dilemma as discussed above. The second, is to accept another PCs offer to share the killing of a Boss (see Chapter 6: Competition).

Fluke Rolls

In a combat situation, if you and your opponent(s) roll the same result, it's no big deal: no-one takes any damage. But what about when you are rolling for a win/lose situation, like trying to escape a Bind, overcome a Dilemma, or improve your Weapon? In these circumstances, rolling the same result as your opponent allows you to make a Fluke Roll. Here's how it works:

First, determine if your result was even (2,4,6, etc.), or odd (1,3,5, etc). This will determine the possible stakes for your Fluke Roll. Then you make your Fluke Roll (a re-roll) with the consequences of success or failure determined by the result of the initial roll.

If the initial roll was even, and you win on your Fluke Roll, your trait increases by 2, instead of 1. If you lose the Fluke Roll, you simply fail the attempt as usual.

If the initial roll was odd, and you lose on your Fluke Roll, your trait decreases by 1. If you win the Fluke Roll, then your trait increases by 1 as usual.

This is shown in the table below:

Initial Roll	Lose Fluke Roll	Win Fluke Roll
Even	0 to trait	+2 to trait
Odd	-1 to trait	+1 to trait

Keep in mind though, that this only applies to circumstances where you can succeed or fail with a single roll, and this should only ever apply when you are attempting to increase one of your traits via methods described earlier in this chapter. To re-cap, this means that a Fluke Roll can only really apply to attempts at increasing your Style, Weapon, Luck, and Grudge.

Binds in Detail

A PC's current Fuel can never exceed their maximum Fuel. This means that if a PC's maximum Fuel is 26, then their current Fuel can never be more than 26. However, a Bind is only triggered when a PC's Fuel would exceed their maximum Fuel. How does this work? Well, say your PC has a maximum Fuel of 26, and they currently have 24 Fuel. If they take 2 points of damage in the next Wave, then they would write down "26" as their current Fuel, but will not have triggered a Bind. However, if they had taken any more than 2 damage, or if they took more damage next Wave, then they would still write down "26" as their current Fuel, but now they will have triggered a Bind.

It should be noted that Fuel cannot decrease in any way other than to burn it into Fire. So if you get out of a Bind, you will still have your maximum Fuel, so any further Fuel you take will immediately trigger another Bind.

It should also be noted that Kick only increases when Fuel increases, so just because you might take more damage than your maximum Fuel allows, does not mean you take more Kick than the amount you write down as Fuel.

When a Bind is triggered, you immediately lose narration rights over your PC, and the Antagonists narrate the outcome of that Wave, before beginning a new scene to narrate the conditions of the Bind.

Whilst narrating the conditions of a Bind, you cannot control the PC. You may narrate things which happen to the PC beyond the PC's control, such as being knocked unconscious, moved, beaten, tormented, gagged, bound,

etc. but you cannot narrate how the PC reacts to these things or what they say.

Whilst you cannot cause any permanent injury to a PC, you are allowed a huge range of freedom within this rule. This is because in *Scarlet Wake*, "Permanent injury" is defined as: "any injury which could not reasonably heal within a year". Additionally, any psychological injury which does not have a brain-damage component (which would be permanent) is automatically allowable within this rule. Of course, if a PC's player explicitly agrees to it, then you can inflict permanent injury to a PC, thus ignoring this rule.

When narrating the conditions of the Bind, you must keep in mind that there must be a conceivable way for the PC to escape from it. When actually attempting to escape from a Bind, all a player needs to do is think up a suitable plan of escape, and roll to see if this plan succeeds. Such escape plans should cover all the details of the Bind, and should be sufficient to completely escape the situation. For example, if part of the conditions of a Bind are that your PC is in a bag and bound in chains, then the plan should include a narration for how they can free themselves of the bag, so that they can unlock the padlock on the chains, then free themselves of both bag and chains. Only one roll is required per escape plan, regardless of complexity, and your AP for this roll will be determined by the details of your escape plan (see Chapter 4: Doing Stuff for details about which traits may apply). Only 3 rolls are allowed to escape a Bind.

Once you have set the conditions of a Bind, the player has the remainder of that scene to escape from the Bind. You cannot add any more conditions than those set initially. For example, if you fail to specify what a PC has on their person, the player may narrate that they have a lockpicking kit in their pocket, and use this in their escape plan, and you cannot change this by adding a condition such as "Oh yeah, you were naked in that bag".

Competition

Scarlet Wake is a game which encourages player competition. You must prove that you and your PC are cool enough to be even cooler. You must be able to handle anything they throw at you, no matter how depraved or horrible. Furthermore, you must occasionally face the other PCs head-on, as you vie for the killing rights of Bosses. This chapter deals with the rules of conduct when you are Protagonist, when you are an Antagonist, and when your PCs must compete to kill a Boss.

Protagonist Codes of Conduct

The role of playing your PC is the easiest, and the hardest. It is easiest in the sense that you are in control of your PC, and you have the final say in practically everything that happens to them (with the exception of Binds). It is the hardest in the sense that you must be on top of everything, managing the logistics of your rolls and creating appropriate narrations on-the-fly. You must also drive the scenes, making sure that there is never really a lack of stuff happening. Equally difficult is simply coming up with a suitable storyline for your PC and the Bosses (see Chapter 7: Playing, and also Chapters 2 and 3).

Sometimes, you will find your PC in the same scene as another player's PC, and at these times, you (and they) must work to share the spotlight equally. If you feel that another player is not putting in an equal effort to the scene, or if they are hogging it, you can appeal to the Antagonists for them to step in and ensure that the spotlight is shared equally. Hopefully, this will never have to happen.

Whenever possible, you must designate certain Antagonists to play the roles of ACs in the current scene, even if each Antagonist is handling more than one character. When assigning these players to these roles, you must provide them with a brief but useful description of the important aspects of that AC, and then you

must let them play them as they wish. However, if there is something really important you wish to happen, you can tell the Antagonist how the character must react, kinda like how a director tells the actors how they must portray a line. It is suggested you only do this when absolutely necessary.

It is also your duty to make sure your scenes do not go for too long or too short compared to the other player's scenes. If the other players feel you aren't putting in enough effort, or are getting too carried away, you must adjust your playing. When in doubt, majority rules.

Antagonists

The rules for being an Antagonist are somewhat more formalised. You must, at all times, remember that it is the Protagonist's scene, and their story. You can have a lot of fun within these boundaries, but there are a few things you can't do:

- You can't decide what a PC does, or what happens to them. However, you may make suggestions, but it's up to the Protagonist to decide, because it's their story.
- You can't steal the spotlight from the PC, or introduce new characters of your own. You may make suggestions though, and you can develop a character that the Protagonist gives you, but you can't make this character more important than the PC. You must also play ACs in the way the Protagonist needs you to.
- You must share the control of Peons and Bosses with any other Antagonists, either by rotating control or splitting it up. This includes the narration rights that come with them.
- You must consult all other Antagonists when deciding to spend Kick, and a majority vote wins. This goes for both choosing to spend it in the first place, and how it is spent.

These above rules are not negotiable, but your group may add more if they feel the need.

On the other hand, there are a few things which you have absolute rights

over. These include:

- How an AC is played. Whilst the Protagonist can decide what needs to be achieved with this character, It's up to you to decide how this character is going to go about it. Furthermore, Protagonists can never play any character other than their own PC.
- Kick. The Protagonist has no say in your spending of Kick in any way.
- Narration rights over how ACs enter Waves, but not over how they exit them.
- Any information or details that the Protagonist doesn't provide. This means that if the Protagonist doesn't say that there isn't a piano in the far corner, then you can decide that there is. You can add to the environment or the ACs in any way that isn't contrary to what the Protagonist describes. Maybe there is a motorcycle nearby, or maybe this AC is wearing a bulletproof vest: if the Protagonist didn't say otherwise, then you can add it. If there is any contention about something which you or another Antagonist add, majority rules.

These above rules are not negotiable, and your group cannot add any more without total consensus. If there is any concern over who gets to narrate what, see the "Narration Rights" section in Chapter 7: Playing.

Spending Kick

The name "Kick", comes from the saying "Kick'em while they're down", and this is exactly what Kick is all about. Kick is the Antagonist's real power. With it, the challenges for a PC can be drastically increased, and tactics of a Protagonist can be stopped dead. In short, Kick is the Antagonist's best friend.

You can use Kick at any time where it is appropriate to a scene, and when it would make life harder for a PC. The only rule is that to signal the use of Kick, all Antagonists must wear a sinister grin at the same time.

The different ways Kick can be spent are shown in the table below, along with how much Kick must be spent in order to achieve the effect.

Kick effects and Costs

Effect	Kick Cost
Introduce Peons	variable
Heal a Boss	2
Increase Boss traits	3
Deprive a PC of a trait	5
Can't Run, Can't Hide	10
Introduce a Sub-Boss	20
Cause a PC roll to fail	30
Kill a PC	50

Introduce Peons: For every point of Kick you spend, you can introduce a Rank 1 Peon, or increase the rank of an existing Peon by one. For example, you could pay 10 Kick to introduce two Rank 5 Peons, ten Rank 1 Peons, or increase ten Rank 3 Peons to Rank 4 Peons.

Heal a Boss: For every 2 points of Kick you pay, you can remove 1 point of Karma from a Boss or Sub-Boss. For example. If a Boss currently has 10 points going towards their Maximum Karma, then you can pay 20 Kick to remove all of them. You can only do this once per Boss, per encounter. So if a PC is fighting in an encounter with one Boss and one Sub-Boss, then you can heal the Boss once and the Sub-Boss once during that encounter.

Increase Boss traits: For every 3 points of Kick you pay, you can increase a trait of a Boss or Sub-Boss by 1 point. For example, if a Boss has a Crime of 4, you can spend 3 Kick to increase that trait to 5. When you increase traits this way, make sure to increase their Maximum Karma.

Deprive a PC of a trait: For 5 Kick, you can dictate that a PC cannot use a particular trait for the next 5 Waves, losing that die from their AP. The only traits which can be deprived this way are Name, Weapon, Luck, and Grudge. A PC cannot be deprived of more than 3 traits at a given moment through this method. All you have to do is pay the Kick, and declare

which traits cannot be used for the next 5 Waves, and the Protagonist must justify narratively why this is so. Example justifications might include:

- Name: The opponents do not actually know the PC, or do not care.
 - Weapon: The PC loses their weapon temporarily.
 - Luck: The PC's lucky charm gets ripped off or falls off somehow.
 - Grudge: The PC finds themselves respecting their opponents too much.
- The PC must also narrate how they get their trait back.

Can't Run, Can't Hide: By spending 10 Kick, you can prevent a PC from leaving their current encounter for 5 Waves. For example, if a PC decides to run away from an encounter in order to avoid being forced into a Bind, then you can prevent them from doing so for at least the next 5 Waves.

Introduce a Sub-Boss: Sub-Bosses are the unique creations of the Antagonists. They cannot be controlled by the Protagonist, and control of them must be shared amongst the Antagonists. To bring them into play, you must pay 20 Kick out of the PC's Kick score, and narrate their entrance, including who this Sub-Boss is, and why they are interested in killing the PC.

When they enter play, Sub-Bosses have exactly the same traits as the PC they are opposing, with the only exceptions being that they do not have Honour, Fuel, or Fire (only PCs can have these traits). They have Maximum Karma equal to the sum of their traits multiplied by two (like all Bosses). If the PC's traits increase while a Sub-Boss is alive, the Sub-Boss' traits increase accordingly.

Cause a PC roll to fail: By paying 30 Kick, you can cause any PC roll to fail. This only works when a roll can fail or succeed, so it doesn't work when fighting. This is particularly nasty when a PC is trying to overcome a Bind you set for them. Don't forget your sinister grin!

Kill a PC: This effect has two conditions. One, you must pay the 50

Kick, and two, it can only be used when a PC fails a Bind, during the stage where you narrate the consequences.

When you kill a PC this way, that PC's Protagonist player remains in the game as an Antagonist, and also gets 40 Kick, which they can add to any player's Character Sheet any time they choose. Thus, if you kill a player's PC, they can now kill any other PC that fails a Bind with 10 or more Kick.

Competing for Boss Killing Rights

If your List has names shared on other Lists, and it really should, then there will inevitably come a time when you are faced with a choice: share the kill, or take it for yourself. In this section, we'll see how these situations are handled.

As will be discussed in Chapter 7: Playing, play revolves around players narrating scenes for their PCs. When a player is seeking to kill one of the people on their List, and that person is also on another player's List, then both players must compete with each other. There must always be a fight before players can cooperate, and choosing to cooperate or not must follow certain rules.

Whenever it has been identified that a player is attempting to kill a Boss that appears on more than one List, then all players whose Lists contain that Boss enter the scene (with appropriate narration of course). There must be a fight between all the PCs. This fight does not have to be a literal fight, but could instead be a race or some other contest, but it must involve at least as much risk for injury as a fight does, and is handled exactly as a fight, only with different narration. An example of this can be seen on page 11 under the "Jade Templar & Sapphire Knight" example, where these two characters are racing, and must narrate the damage they receive in accordance with the events of the race.

For this fight, Fuel cannot be burned. The winner is the last one standing, and the losers are the PCs who have reached their maximum Fuel (triggering a Bind). The winner gets

to kill the Boss alone, keeping all the Name points for themselves. The losers must deal with their Binds. However, at any point during the fight, a PC can make an offer of cooperation.

Offers of Cooperation: When two or more PCs cooperate, they can kill the Boss together, and must split the Name points between them, rounding up where necessary. By sacrificing 1 point of Honour, a PC can offer to cooperate with another PC. If that PC accepts the offer, they gain 1 Honour, and the PC who offers cooperation regains their point of Honour that they just sacrificed.

However, if a PC sacrifices 1 Honour to make an offer of cooperation, and the other PC rejects that offer, then the fight continues, but the outcome can have varying effects:

- If the PC who rejects cooperation wins the fight, then they don't have to share the Boss.
- If the PC who rejects cooperation loses the fight, they also lose 1 point of Honour, and are left with a Bind, which the player of the winning PC defines.
- If the PC who offers cooperation wins the fight, then they don't have to share the Boss, and they regain the point of Honour they sacrificed to make the offer.
- If the PC who offers cooperation loses the fight, then they gain 1 point of Grudge, and are left with a Bind, which the player of the winning PC defines.

Multiple PCs Competing for Bosses: The above rules work exactly the same for multiple PCs, only becoming slightly more dynamic in how the players can choose to interact with making offers of cooperation.

Additionally, when three or more PCs are fighting, all players roll once, and the player with the highest roll decides how they are going to distribute their damage between the opponents, the player with the next highest roll does the same, and so on, until all damage has been distributed. The player who takes the most damage narrates the outcome of that Wave.

The Troubleshooting Rule

If you are finding that some of your players don't seem to be very creative or interesting in their narrations, then try this rule out.

At the end of every session, each player writes on a small piece of paper the name of the player who they thought narrated the coolest stuff that session. Get one player to count these votes, and determine who had the most votes for coolest narrations. That player gets to choose one of two rewards: either they can add 1 point to any of their character's traits; or, they can subtract 1 point from any trait of any other player's character.

If two or more players are tied for votes on having the coolest narrations, then these players must write down on scraps of paper which reward option they intend to use, and who they will use it against. These scraps of paper are then revealed simultaneously, and then are carried out. This step is simply to prevent players changing their minds about the rewards they choose based on the decisions of the other player(s).

This rule is only intended for use when one or more players in a group are not putting as much effort into their narrations as they could and would like to. If this rule does work, then consider abandoning it after a few sessions. If it does not work, meaning the quality of narrations does not increase, then discontinue using this rule, and evaluate whether there is in fact a problem with the narrations. If there is a problem, and your group feels this problem is infringing on their enjoyment of the game, then perhaps it would be best for your group if the problem player does not play this game with you. There are plenty of other enjoyable games available which may be better suited for your group, and there's no point playing a game if you or your friends are not having fun with it.

Playing

Now that you are familiar with all the rules of the various aspects of Scarlet Wake, it's time to bring them all together. This chapter will first present the way play is structured, and then provide a demonstration of most of the rules in practice through an example of play.

Play Structure

Scarlet Wake has seven levels which define play, from broad to specific. These seven levels are: Game, Session, Turn, Scene, Event, Encounter, and Wave. Each level contains all the levels after it, and following are the definitions of each:

Game: A game is defined by a group of players playing Scarlet Wake from Character Creation to Endgame, each one having cleared their Lists. This may span many days, which need not be consecutive. A game usually contains several sessions.

Session: A session is any period of time spent playing the game relatively uninterrupted, usually anywhere between 2 to 8 hours. It is probably possible for an entire game to take place in a single session, but this is rarely the case. A session usually contains a few turns.

Turn: A turn is a period of time where one player plays their PC, and the others are Antagonists. They may be joined by other PCs during certain scenes, but this is still considered that players turn. A turn can last no more than 3 scenes, after which time the next player has their turn.

Scene: A scene is a period of play under the control of a single player consisting of a definite beginning, and a clear end, often marked by a change in location, mood, time, or the end of an event. A scene can only have one event, and cannot last more than 10 minutes.

Event: An event is signified by any

clearly significant occurrence in the story, such as the killing of a Boss, an attempt to increase a trait (failed or succeeded, see Chapter 5: Growth), or the revelation of something important about one of the characters.

Encounter: An encounter can sometimes seem a little hard to define, but it's really quite simple. An encounter is defined as a period of time within a scene during which a PC is engaged in successive Waves with no significant pause in combat. A significant pause in this context means being forced into a Bind, a scene change, or the death of all current opponents. A typical example might be a single encounter during which all Peons are fought, and then a separate encounter where the Boss is fought. If there is any doubt about whether an encounter has ended or not, or where an encounter ends and a new one begins, majority rules.

Fuel can only be burnt into Fire between encounters, never during one.

Wave: Waves are periods of variable lengths of in-game time where a single roll made by the Protagonist is opposed by a single roll made by the Antagonists to determine damage dealt to either party. Waves are defined in more detail on page 12 in Chapter 4: Doing Stuff.

Organizing the Levels

To play Scarlet Wake, it is important to organize each level properly, moving from game down through to Waves. This section will help you organize these levels to ensure play is fun and runs smoothly.

Organizing a Game: The first step is to get together with a few of your friends with whom you wish to play this game, let them know about the general gist of the game, and ask if they'd be interested in playing it with you.

Now that you have a group of friends to play Scarlet Wake with, the next step is to organize a time for the

first session, and to ensure that each player has read this entire rulebook before this first session. You should anticipate an ideal session length of around 4-6 hours, and pick a time where everyone can make it without any conflicts with other commitments.

Next, you all need to ensure that each player will have time and opportunity to play in all subsequent sessions until Endgame is reached. Few things are as annoying as starting a really fun game and never finishing it.

Finally, you all need to agree on the general style that you will bring into this game. See the end of Chapter 8: Endgame for a bunch of ideas about the styles you can play *Scarlet Wake* in. All players should have plenty of time to think about how they are going to fit their character into the style of the game before the first session is started.

Organizing Sessions: All players should have a shared understanding of how long a specific session will run for, where and when it will be held, and how each player is going to arrive and leave. This is absolutely crucial.

Almost as crucial, is the provision of food for the session. A common agreement is that each player brings something, such as chips, drinks, lollies, chocolates, or whatever, so long as all players are contributing to the available food. Sometimes it is agreed that the "host" doesn't need to bring food, because they are providing the setting.

Finally, double check that each player has at least a working understanding of the rules, and that each player has enough dice of the right types. At least one player must have a copy of this rulebook during the session.

The very first session should at least partially be spent with each player creating their character. This is important because it allows Bosses to be shared optimally, and it also gets everyone thinking about the game so they are all ready when it starts. You should allow for about an hour for everyone to create their characters and organise their Lists.

Organizing Turns: The first part of any play session should be to establish the turn order. This is easily done by each player rolling a d12, with the highest roll having first turn, and the next highest roll going second and so on. If two players roll the same number, they get to re-roll to see which plays first of the two. It usually helps if players sit around a table in the order of their turns, though sometimes this is not possible (such as with couples).

Each turn consists of no more than 3 scenes, and it is left to the individual players how they will spend those scenes. However, for the very first turn for each player, the first scene must be a Snippet of their character's past, a narration of the evil which has pushed them into hunting those on the list. You will see an example of this later in this chapter in the play example.

When a player's 3 scenes are over, the focus shifts to the next player, for them to have their 3 scenes.

Organizing Scenes: With the exception of Snippets, scenes must begin with the Protagonist designating Antagonists to play the roles of key characters for the scene. When doing so, you must provide them with enough info to help them roleplay that character, such as a brief description of their appearance, personality, motivations, and quirks.

During a scene, a Protagonist can only roleplay their PC, and all other characters must be handled by the Antagonists. A Protagonist can tell an Antagonist what they want from a character, but it is the Antagonist's role to play that character as they see fit in accordance with the Protagonist's descriptions.

Snippet scenes must be narrated as the first scene for a player's first turn, and every scene immediately following the killing of a Boss. A Snippet scene must reveal something about the PCs past, something about their hunting of those on The List, or something personal about them which has or will have relevance to their story. A Snippet scene cannot be used for Growth.

64 Scene Locations

On a train.
 In an alley.
 In a night-club.
 At a movie.
 On a bus.
 At the beach.
 In a hospital.
 On the highway.
 In a dirty apartment.
 On a busy street.
 In the desert.
 On a plane.
 At an awards ceremony.
 In a penthouse.
 At the pool.
 In a dojo.
 At someone's house.
 In the jungle.
 On a boat.
 In a military base.

In a casino.
 In an office building.
 In a graveyard.
 At a public school.
 At an internet cafe.
 On an island.
 In a seedy motel.
 At a restaurant.
 Somewhere famous.
 At an abattoir.
 At a construction site.
 In a secret lair.
 In a dungeon.
 In the middle of nowhere.
 On a live TV set.
 In a park.
 On top of a building.
 In a prison.
 In a factory.
 At a brothel.
 In a warehouse.
 In a church.

In a hotel.
 On a battlefield.
 In a submarine.
 In a research laboratory.
 At the zoo.
 In a mansion.
 In the middle of a protest.
 On a snowy mountain.
 In a castle.
 On a cliff-face.
 In a helicopter.
 Somewhere haunted.
 At a concert.
 At an airport.
 Wherever you are now.
 In cyberspace.
 In a bar.
 At a major sporting event.
 In a police station.
 At a birthday party.
 At a wrecking yard.
 On a parade float.

When it is your turn, use a die to show which scene you are up to, to help the other players be certain about the ending of your scenes. Remember, no scene can last for more than 10 minutes, unless all the players agree on a new time-limit, and strictly adhere to it.

Organizing Events: Whenever you begin a scene, you should have a clear idea about the event that this scene will lead up to, and at least a rough idea about how it will proceed. Only significant occurrences can count as an event. Such occurrences might be the killing of a Boss, doing everything required to increase a trait (regardless of whether or not you succeed), or revealing something very important about your PC or one of the Bosses on your List. If you fail to do any of these things within the time you have to narrate a scene, then you can still finish an event in the next scene, but you should try to press harder. Scarlet Wake is not a game about admiring the flowers. There are only 3 things important in this game: being cool, kicking ass, and becoming cooler.

That said, you have total narrative

power over events and your PC, so you can narrate them any way you choose.

Organizing Encounters: There really isn't much you need to do to organise an encounter. Simply initiate a Wave with the gestures in Chapter 4 and you're in an encounter. Stop the Waves and do something else and you're out of the encounter. Simple. On a grander scale, however, you might want to give some thought about when you want encounters and what purpose they serve. It's usually best to use Peon encounters before you take on the Bosses, and to gain as much Fuel as you can from the Peons.

Organizing Waves: The only real advice I can give you is to try to get a feel for how many Peons you can handle for each Wave. Try not to waste them by calling on too few, though sometimes this can be better than calling on too many. Practise makes perfect!

Narration Rights

This section is essentially a distilling of points covered in various sections throughout this rulebook, presented in one place for

easy reference.

It should be noted that whilst one player may have narration rights over a particular aspect of the game, this does not in any way preclude other players from making suggestions or requests. It only means that this player has the final say.

Wave Narration: Antagonists have full narration rights over how opponents enter a Wave, including descriptions of things like what weapons they have, how they are moving, special effects, what they look like, any sounds they make, and how the scenery is used.

Protagonists have full narration rights over how the opponents leave the Wave, including how the PC interacts with them, the result of this interaction, and how they may die.

Antagonists narrate before the roll, and Protagonists narrate after the roll.

Encounter Narration: Antagonists can spend Kick to introduce new Peons or Sub-Bosses to begin an encounter with a PC whenever they want. They have full narration rights over the entry of these characters and the initiation of the encounter.

Protagonists have full narration rights over the ending of any encounter, and over the beginning of an encounter with any characters on their Lists (including Peons).

Event Narration: Antagonists have narration rights over how all non-PC characters are played, but cannot prevent a PC from reaching the focus of an event. The goal is not to obstruct the Protagonist's story, but to participate in its telling. You have every right to spice things up and bring your ACs to life, but keep in mind the direction that the Protagonist needs.

Protagonists have narration rights over what events will be sought after, and how they will unfold. Remember though, that you can only control your own PC, so you will need to cooperate with the Antagonists to give them enough information about their characters and the general

direction you are aiming for.

Both Antagonists and Protagonists need to cooperate and work off each other by contributing equally to the renditions of the characters and the fleshing out of the scene.

Scene Narration: Antagonists have the right to introduce almost anything into a scene, from details about surrounding structures or props, to information about the situation. However, Protagonists have the right to refuse anything introduced this way if it deviates too strongly from their goals for their PCs story.

Protagonists have full narration rights over a scene, where it is located (see "64 Scene Locations" on previous page for some ideas), how their PC sees and reacts within that scene, as well as their motivations. Protagonists also have the right to override most things that the Antagonists may introduce into a scene, but this should rarely be necessary. In fact, it is often far easier to work collaboratively with the Antagonists to set a scene, because it shares the workload around.

There are a few exceptions to the above rules. When narrating a Bind, Antagonists have full narration rights over the scene of a Bind, and this goes for any narrations of Bind consequences if the PC fails to escape. Additionally, Antagonists have the right to end a scene if the Protagonist goes over the 10 minute scene limit.

Antagonists can never control how a PC is played, and Protagonists can never control how an AC is played.

Play Example

The following is a short example of how a game of Scarlet Wake might play out. There are 3 players; **Jodi**, **Andy**, and **Mark**. **Jodi's** PC is Violent Angel, and for this example we are only going to deal with her first turn to play her PC. Player names will be in **bold**. Player actions such as speaking out-of-character will be in **bold**, while commentary by me about what's happening will be *italicised*.

The End is the Beginning. Chapter 1.

We begin our example with the first turn, which was decided by rolling a d12 to be Jodi's turn. All the players are sitting around a table with their character sheets and dice in front of them, with drinks and munchies within easy reach of everyone. Because it is her first scene in her first turn, Jodi must narrate her first scene as a Snippet.

Scene 1: Looking down at her character sheet to jog her memory, Jodi begins narration of the Snippet through the eyes of her PC:

Jodi: A frozen shock cracks through her bones, instantly forcing her mind awake and her eyes wide open. Suddenly her chest burns like fire, and convulsions rack her body. Her movements feel slow, as if being held back, and all she sees is a few shining white spots, sparkling amidst a blackish blue wash. Fear tears her mind open, and what is revealed terrifies her more, and in that instant she knows she is dying, drowning. She tries to scream, but her body is again racked by convulsions which threaten to break her in half, and her lungs burn hotter. Flailing wildy, she seeks the surface, unmoving. She struggles harder, fueled by pure panic and burning pain, unmoving. Through a distant cold numbness, she feels her feet bound and weighted. A human anchor in a dark cold void, only her screaming pain and the sparkles of the moon on the surface to witness her end.

And now she floats, eyes unblinking, watching as tiny pale specks float through the water before her, their delicate dance in slow motion. Her hair drifts before her eyes like blackened fingers, reaching out to touch her... and in her last moment of awareness, she reaches out to the black fingers which seek to engulf her...

... and finds a hand, attached to a figure in white, as all turns to dark, and life is snuffed away.

Jodi decides that she wants to keep the other players guessing, so she declares the beginning of the next scene, and must now distribute this

scene's important character roles to the other players.

Jodi: Ok that was scene one...

Mark: Awww what?! What the hell just happened?

Jodi: Shhh. Andy, you're gonna play a tall and attractive young cop, but he isn't particularly bright. He's investigating a murder, and right now he's at the victim's house, searching for clues. Mark, you are going to play a short, balding, grumpy detective at the same house. This detective has only seen pictures of the victim after she died. In case you had't guessed, the victim is my character, and you're at her house.

Mark: Ok, cool.

Andy: Alright.

Jodi: There are also a bunch of other cops there, searching for clues. Ready?

Ok. I awake with a start, staring at a grey blur until my eyes focus on a familiar ceiling. I look around, to find myself in my room. Sitting up, I try to remember what happened, but my head hurts when I try. I look around my room again, and notice that it seems different somehow, but I can't recall exactly how it was supposed to look. It just feels different. Then I notice something that I'm sure I've never seen before: a black sword with a silver serpent engraved into the sheath, resting on my couch. I walk over to it, and as I pick it up, it suddenly feels right, as if it is a part of me, and I feel somehow whole. Suddenly, I hear voices coming... Jodi gestures towards Andy.

Andy: "Look, I'm telling you, I've been through her room already, there's nothing in here but some clothes and candles. This girl loved her damn candles..."

Jodi: As I hear that, I quickly look around, astonished to see all the candles in my room! I've never liked candles! Worse, all the candles are black, and look as if they've been used before.

Andy: The two cops stop outside the door, one of them continuing: "... and if you ask me, she was probably into the occult, what with all the candles being black and all." The other cop says "Maybe she just liked the colour, did you ever think of

that? Anyways, Barker says we gotta go over everything one more time, so we are gonna go over everything one more time." I open the door to the room.

Jodi: You see me standing inside, dressed in a full-length white dress with a black coat over the top, holding a shiny black and silver katana. I look slightly startled and afraid, like I was expecting intruders, but wasn't really ready to deal with them.

Andy: "Woah", says a tall and handsome cop. "Holy..." says the other one, who looks like a total rookie. Both of them draw their guns and aim at you. "Put down the sword ma'am."

Jodi: I pause for a moment, then sheath my sword. "What the hell are you doing in my house?"

Andy: *Turning to Mark:* **Dude, you play this other cop with me.** *Mark nods.* "Ma'am, this is a crime scene. This isn't your house, the lady who lived here died. How did you get in here?" I don't lower my gun.

Jodi: I am thrown for a second, as I look at all the black candles around the room, but the rest of it looks exactly the same. I look confused, but I say: "This IS my house, and as you can see, I'm clearly not dead." As soon as I say that, hundreds of images burn through my mind, too fast to notice, but a few of them linger for just long enough for me to see: a man dressed all in white, radiating light and warmth, holding a golden quill; two men's faces staring at me as they lean over a railing, growing smaller rapidly; a woman wearing way too much make-up and a too-short skirt, accepting a thick wad of cash from a man in a grey pin-stripe suit; a vial of blue liquid in a purse. Too many images, and I collapse into unconsciousness.

Mark: Ok, we both carry you into the lounge room, lay you on a couch, and tell the detective about you.

Jodi: As I come to, I see you all standing around in my lounge room. The first thing I notice is that I feel like something is missing from me, and I find myself feeling around for my sword.

Mark: "Is this what you're looking for?" I hold up the sword, admiring its beauty.

Jodi: I nod. "May I have it back, please?"

Mark: I take a seat on a couch facing you. "That depends ma'am. First, I'm going to need to ask you a few questions, and you're going to have to give me a few answers."

Jodi: "What do you want to know?"

Mark: "What are you doing here, and how did you get in?"

Jodi: "This is my house. I just woke up before I found you lot in here." I'm developing a scowl as I talk.

Andy: "That's what she said before. But Tommy searched that room no more than an hour ago, and he never saw no sleeping lady."

Mark: *Nodding:* "You look familiar ma'am, have we met before?"

Jodi: I notice that this detective does look familiar, but I can't think of why. "I don't think so." I turn to the good-looking cop, "I'm telling the truth, maybe "Tommy" wasn't doing his job. I DID just wake up, and this IS my house. What the hell are you guys doing here, and why are you interrogating me in my own home?"

Mark: "We're investigating a murder ma'am, the murder of the lady who lived here. So you see, this can't be your house, because you aren't dead."

Jodi: As you say that, another barrage of images sears through my mind, most disappearing as soon as they appear. But one sticks out above the others, a man in a grey pin-stripe suit, handing money to a prostitute; taking money from a man dressed in black; tying down a screaming man and cutting him up with a butcher's knife; pushing a little girl on a swing; tying her down to a table as she whimpers... the images end in a blinding flash, with the man's face burned into my vision like a negative. As the image fades, that face is replaced by the same face, as I look at the detective.

Mark: "Woah, are you alright ma'am, you sorta blanked out on us there."

Andy: "That's what happened before sir, right before she collapsed."

Jodi: "I'm fine." I do my best to

keep a calm face while I talk. "Maybe you're right. I don't know how, but this place looks almost exactly like my home. I, ahh, had a long night out last night. I must have come here without realising it wasn't my own home, then broken in to the bedroom when I found that my key didn't work. Maybe that cop didn't notice me because I usually sleep very still. Can I have my sword back please? Then I can be on my way."

Mark: I lean forward in my couch, nodding slowly, before reaching out and placing the sword on the coffee table. As I lean back, I say: "It's a very nice sword ma'am, but I'd like to know two more things before I can let you go. First, Where'd you get that sword, and why did you have it on you when we found you? I can't imagine anyone going out for a night on the town while carrying a weapon like that."

Jodi: "It's, umm, a very important family heirloom. My grandfather earned it in service to the Japanese army in World War II. I take it with me everywhere recently because I had a break in a little while ago and lost some other very special things, and I don't want to lose this. Not many people are willing to trouble a drunk girl with a sword." I try to think where the sword really came from, and why I want to hold it so bad, but trying only hurts my head. "What was the second thing?"

Mark: I nod slowly. "Fair enough. The second thing I'll need to know is your name."

Jodi: "My name? Violent Angel."

Mark: **Can I have the detective recognise that name?** *Jodi nods. Ok.* My face goes pale as I realise how I recognise you. "YOU!" I yell as I reach for the sword.

Jodi: I grab it before you, and instantly I feel whole. I feel right. I have it drawn a split second later.

Jodi gives Mark and Andy a signal to begin a Wave, by holding up 3 fingers. This Boss has 5 R2 peons, and 2 R3 Peons.

Mark: **Andy, whad'ya reckon? 2 R2s and an R3?**

Andy: **Sounds good.**

Mark: The detective leaps backwards over the couch, and one of the cops who was in the kitchen comes around the corner in response to the detective yelling, when he sees you there with your sword drawn, he immediately draws his pistol.

Andy: The tall cop pulls his gun too, and he's standing next to the couch that the detective just jumped over. Another cop who was in the hallway runs in when he hears the commotion, and dives at you from behind.

Mark and Andy roll 7d4 for the Peons (2 R2 peons with 2d4 each, and 1 R3 Peon with 3d4). They roll a total of 16.

Jodi rolls her AP, which is 1d4, 2d6, and 1d8. She rolls a total of 15.

Andy: **We got 16.**

Jodi: **15. But I'm going to take an extra 2 points of damage so I can kill one of the Peons. So I take 3 points of Fuel.**

Jodi writes down 3 Fuel on her Character Sheet, and also adds 3 to her Kick.

Jodi: **Ok.** In my disorientation from the exhilaration of holding the sword, I don't notice the cop behind me until he smashes into me and knocks me down. Unfortunately for him, I manage to twist as we fall, and he lands with my sword in his neck.

Jodi notes on her Character Sheet that there is one less R2 Peon left for this Boss. She then holds up 4 fingers, signalling for 4 Peons.

Andy: **Both R3s and two R2s?** *Mark nods.* Ok, the tall guy opens fire at you. Behind him, two more cops appear with guns drawn.

Mark: The cop from the kitchen is positioning himself for a better shot whilst protecting the detective.

Mark and Andy roll 10d4 for the 2 R3s and the 2 R2s. They roll a total of 28.

Jodi rolls her AP, and rolls a total of 17.

Andy: **28.**

Jodi: **17, so I will take at least 11 Fuel this Wave. Hmmm. Ok.**

Jodi updates her Fuel, increasing it from 3 to 14. She only has a maximum Fuel of 16. She also increases her Kick from 3 to 14.

Jodi: I do my best to use the dead cop's body as a shield, but a few bullets manage to hit me in the leg and my left arm. I scream out in pain but it's barely audible over the gunshots. Blood is splattering everywhere as my human shield is peppered with bullets.

Jodi holds up 3 fingers, signalling the Antagonists to send 3 Peons against her.

Mark: 2 R3s and an R2 Andy?

Andy: Yep. Wanna deprive her of her Weapon?

Mark: Heheheh, yeah!

Jodi: Doh!

Andy: Ok Jodi, we're spending 5 of your Kick to deprive you of your Weapon for the next 5 Waves.

Mark: I'll count the Waves on this d6. This one will be the first.

Jodi: Ok. I try to move my sword, but I find that it is stuck in this cop's neck.

Jodi decreases her Kick to 9.

Andy: When they hear your screams, the cops figure they must have shot you. Two of them jump onto the couch with their guns pointing at you, moving closer so they can be sure.

Mark: The cop that is near the detective has you lined up, ready to fire if you make a wrong move.

Mark and Andy roll 8d4 for the 2 R3s and the R2. They roll a total of 23.

Jodi rolls her AP without her Weapon trait, which removes her d8. She rolls a total of 10.

Mark: 23.

Jodi: 10. Crap!

Andy: Woohoo! Bind! Do you wanna narrate this Bind Mark?

Mark: How about I narrate the end of the Wave and the scene, and you narrate the Bind?

Andy: Sounds good.

Mark: The tall cop looks down at your bleeding body, with your sword stuck in the neck of his comrade. He holsters his pistol and cuffs you, before pulling you roughly to your feet. "Should we call an ambulance?" he asks the detective. "Nah. Bitch killed Ryan, I've got a better idea." The last thing you see is his fist. **And that's the end of scene 2.**

Andy: When you finally open your eyes, everything looks very dark and

murky. When your eyes adjust, you notice a dim lightbulb hanging from a dark and dirty ceiling. You are lying on your back on a hard wooden table, with your hands and feet tied to each corner with coarse rope. When you look at the table, you can see that it is very dark and stained in places, and there is a butcher's knife resting next to you. Your sword is sitting on a shelf on the wall. You can hear voices coming from behind a door at the top of some stairs in the corner of the room, which is starting to look like a basement.

Mark: Awesome dude.

Jodi: Hmmm, ok. I take it the detective was the one who tied me up, so I'll be rolling against him huh?

Andy: Yeah.

Jodi: Alright. When I see the knife and realise where I am, I really start to freak out. Tears start streaming down the sides of my face, and I twist and turn as best as I can to try to pull free of the rope. My wrists and ankles start to bleed, and I'm trying hard not to cry or scream. My mind becomes filled with images of the detective cutting pieces off a man and a little girl as they scream horribly. **I'm going to try to push myself off the table, then smash myself down into it hard enough to break the table. I'll be using my Style, Luck, and Grudge. What's the Boss rolling?**

Mark: It should be his Name, Style, Luck, and Crime.

Mark rolls for the Boss, rolling a total of 11.

Jodi rolls for Violent Angel, and rolls 13.

Mark: 11, What'd you get?

Jodi: 13. Sweet! I gain Style!

Jodi increases her Style trait by 1 point, replacing the d6 that her Style contributed to her AP with a d8.

Jodi: Well then. I lift myself up as high as I can, and with all my strength, I smash myself into the table, breaking it in half as I crash onto the floor. I quickly untie my hands and feet and filled with fear-fueled rage, I grab my sword as the detective comes down the stairs. **And that's the end of that scene, and also the end of my turn.**

Endgame

When all Bosses on all Lists are dead, each player narrates one last scene, describing the outcome from the perspective of their PC. The game is now officially ended, and it's time to determine who won the game.

Winning

Winning the game is a matter of being the most successful at improving your PC and killing Bosses. To determine this, add up the scores of all these traits: Name, Style, Weapon, Luck, Grudge, and Honour. Whoever has the highest total, is the winner, and everyone else is a loser.

If you are the winner, make sure you gloat and rub it in, by dancing, poking fun, throwing things at the losers, grinning annoyingly for the next week, and reminding the losers at every opportunity of how much cooler than them you truly are.

If you are a loser, you suck, and clearly aren't cool enough to play anything.

I'm just kidding. You can still play solitaire.

Once More Into the Breach?

If you want to play another game, even with new characters and a new style, you must use half your total score from the last game as the number of points you have to distribute among your character's traits when you create them (see Chapter 2: Character Creation). You can only do this if you were a loser from the last game. If you won the last game, you must start with the standard 8 points.

For example, if you were a loser last game, and the total of your character's traits was 24, then you would start this next game with 12 points to distribute between Style, Weapon, Luck, and Grudge. The winner would only have the standard 8 points. That'll teach the bastard for rubbing it in like an asshole.

Cameo Appearances by...

One rule which you may choose to implement in your future games is to allow old characters from previous games to appear on The Lists of new characters, or to be potential Sub-Bosses for the Antagonists to introduce with Kick. This can be quite a fun way to play, especially when you get to kill your old characters in epic battles. Or even better, other player's characters.

The reasons for doing so could be many, and might even be the basis of your new character's concept. For example, maybe when your old character killed one of the Bosses on their List, they actually killed your new character's mother, while they watched unseen, vowing revenge.

Play Style Ideas

In the examples in this rulebook, I have used a style of a modern world similar to our real world (with perhaps a hint of a supernatural bent), but where swords and stuff are still used.

This section is devoted to all the various ways you can play Scarlet Wake and have a blast.

Some Styles

Movies: Scarlet Wake is ideal for duplicating the experience of certain types of movies. Some examples might be Kill Bill, The Crow (the original, not those blasphemous sequels), The Count of Monte Cristo, and even The Princess Bride with the right narrative style. Others that can be easily adapted might include many Hong Kong action flicks, horror movies, and hell, basically any movie where killing is a valid way to resolve problems.

Other Games: Another style well suited for Scarlet Wake is other games. Some examples might be Diablo 2, Neverwinter Nights, and Blood Rayne. In fact, any game with a focus on action and progressing through enemies of increasing difficulty could be easily duplicated with Scarlet Wake.

Genres: Sci-fi, horror, action, fantasy, these are all viable and fun options for Scarlet Wake styles. Genres like romance, and soap-operas are not going to work too well with Scarlet Wake, and if you were even thinking of playing Scarlet Wake with them, put down this rulebook, step away, turn around, and never touch this book again.

Implementation

It's remarkably easy to implement any style you want into Scarlet Wake. Follow the steps for character creation as usual, and in fact, you don't even have to change a single rule at all. All you need to do to colour your Scarlet Wake play experience with a new style, is approach your narrations with the style in mind.

For example, if you want your character to be a magician, simply write "Magic" next to her Weapon trait, and narrate your actions with your spells. If you want to give your character X-Men powers, simply write something like "teleportation" next to your Style trait, and take this into account when narrating scenes, like saying "I teleport behind this guy and kick him clean across the room, before teleporting again an instant later and appearing behind the next guy...". If you want your character to have lasers for arms, well... you get the idea.

Vampires, angels, demons, swashbucklers, mutants, zombies, cops, assassins, magicians, soldiers, pirates, thieves, and monsters; these are all great ideas for characters and styles which you can easily play in Scarlet Wake without needing to change a single rule. Of course, you can change the names of some traits if you feel it would help your chosen style.

Denouement

I hope you have as much fun playing this game as I had making it. You can email me at narehel@yahoo.com.au with your thoughts on this game.

Visit the Scarlet Wake website at: <http://eclipse.netlab.com.au>

Credits

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Tristan Leftwich
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Matt Murray
Chris M.

Your name here?

Contribution and Inspiration
(In no particular order)

Ralph Mazza (for giving me the first push)
Sydney Freedberg (for miscellaneous help)
Ben Lehman (more good suggestions)
Chris M. (helpful advice and enthusiasm)
Andrew Morris (excellent help with editing)
Mike Holmes (for helping me understand game theory)
M. J. Young (more help with game theory)
Ron Edwards (for the GNS theory and the Forge)
And numerous others who have posted to my topics and provided valued responses.

Thank you.

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