



STEAMPUNKRESS VICTORY



ENGINEER'S MANUAL



STEAMFORTRESS VICTORY

ENGINEER'S MANUAL

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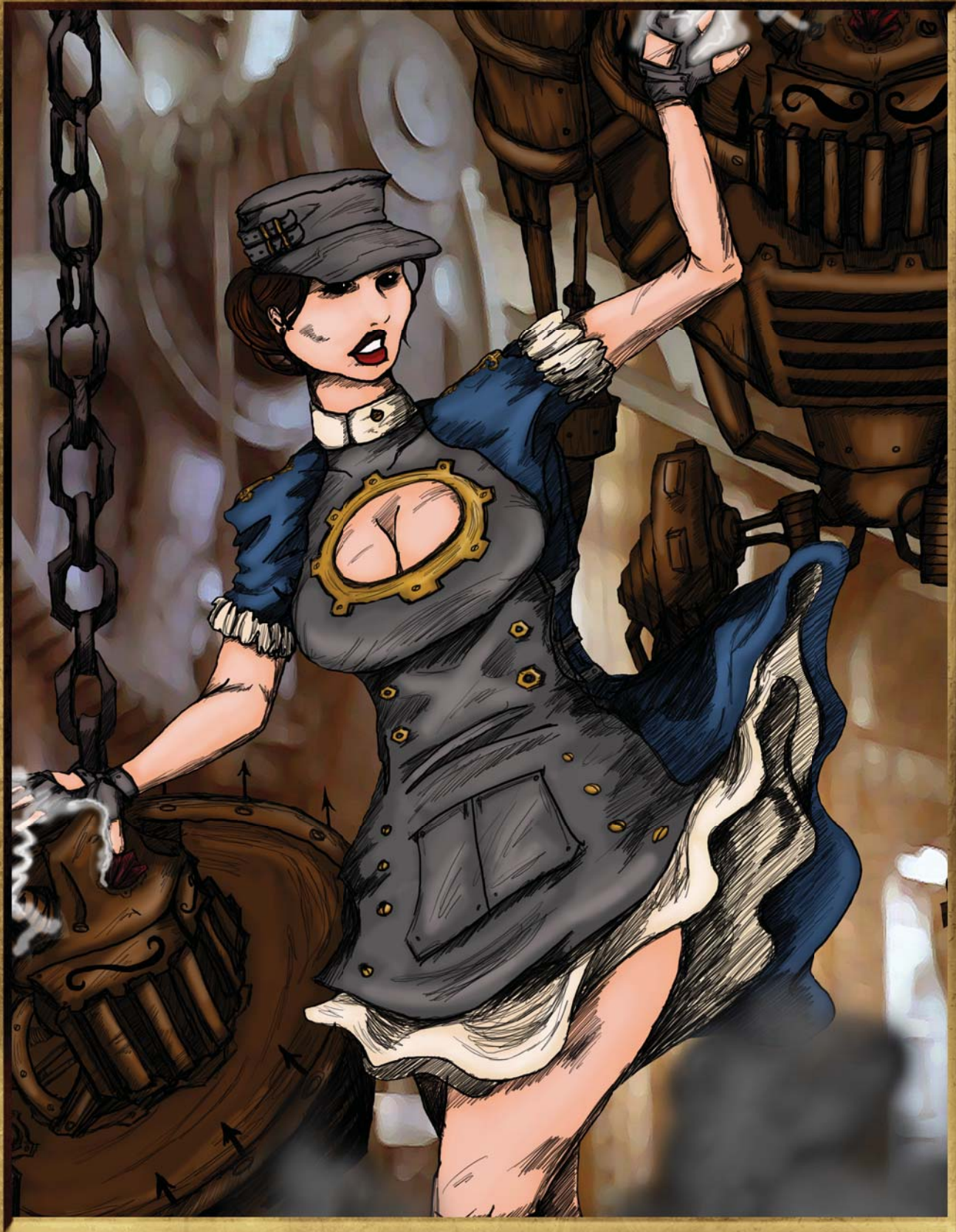
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ENGINEERING

1.1 A Quick Q and A

What is Steamfortress Victory?

Steamfortress Victory (SFV) is an easy to learn and quick-to-play role-playing game (RPG). For new role-players, a RPG is a predominantly tabletop game where the participants assume a Player Character (PC) and simulate that character's actions in a fictional setting. Most actions are verbally expressed "in character" or "as the character would do." Dice are used to resolve actions that are too complicated or too dangerous to simulate, such as combat. SFV uses ten-sided dice for all of its rolls with a target number of seven to achieve what is termed as a "Victory."

What is this book used for?

Steamfortress Victory: Engineer's Manual (EM) is a guide used in conjunction with **Steamfortress Victory: The Player's Workshop (PW)** to play a game of SFV. The *Engineer's Manual* is specially designed for the unique individual who is creative enough to run a group of players through a game of SFV.

I volunteered to "run" a game of SFV. What exactly does that entail?

A role-playing game is "run" or mediated by a 'game master' or in SFV, the **Engineer**. Like the engineer of a steam-powered locomotive, the Engineer of an SFV game session conducts and manages the PC's through a verbally expressed story. The Engineer is a judge, action director, and storyteller all rolled into one. Generally, the Engineer will lay out a scenario and ask for players' responses. Players will respond with actions or "in character" dialogue and the game proceeds from that point. As the game develops, the Engineer makes sure the PC's actions help dictate and flesh out a story. In addition to managing the game, the Engineer also assumes the roles of non-player characters or NPC's.

An NPC is a character that can be used as an adversary or a plot device. NPC's are controlled solely by the Engineer and have special character sheets.

The Engineer is a very important part of SFV because the game goes nowhere without him. Hence, Engineer's have their own book to work from. The *Engineer's Manual* is specifically designed for people charged with running SFV and contains several secrets about the world used to develop plot hooks for stories. If PC's read this section, it could ruin a twist or a mystery within the Engineer's story. Secrets make the story interesting, and by discovering the secrets before the game begins, the sensation of surprise and intrigue while be lost in the storytelling.

I am fuzzy on this whole concept of running a RPG. What does it mean to "run an RPG"?

When we refer to "running an RPG," we are talking about "facilitating play of the RPG." As an example of a role-playing scenario, let's say that the Engineer starts a storyline off with the PC's in a zeppelin traveling to Savannah. The Engineer would describe the interior of zeppelin, the passengers, and perhaps conversations occurring in flight. Then, he would ask the PC's "Are you doing anything in particular while you are on this flight?" The PC's would give a one to two sentence response, in turn, and the results of their responses would be resolved by the Engineer. An Engineer's resolution to PC actions can come in a variety of ways: a roll of the dice, described NPC reactions, verbalized storyline, or NPC dialogue. After resolution of the PC response, the game takes off from there and continues until the end of the Engineer's story.

Now that we have the basics out of the way, the next section will detail how you become an "Engineer" and what guidelines you have to abide by.

1.2 The Engineer's Code

Assuming the role of Engineer is the most challenging part to play in a session of SFV. You are the mediator, the author, and the head storyteller. No single player will have more responsibilities in a game session than you. With that having been said, this chapter contains the set of rules and mechanics you will need to uphold and adhere to, in order to make a game of SFV successful. The first set of rules you need to know are the Engineer's Code. They are the four rules in how to act as mediator in a game of SFV:

Engineering Rule No. 1

THE Golden Rule of Engineering

Your number one job and “prime directive” is to make sure the players have FUN! This is the essence of playing games. Role-playing games are unique in the fact that they are occasionally emotionally driven and are meant to be serious at times. They expect to have a good time playing and get a good break from the doldrums of reality.

Thus, in your role of Engineer, actively prevent negative play experiences (NPE's) from happening or continuing. If a rule stops the story flow or creates a NPE, change the rule. If a mood or overtone creates an NPE, change the vibe. If a player impedes the progress of a story or sends the Team off task, redirect the actions of that player. Upholding the Golden Rule is by no means a simple task, and the responsibility should not be taken lightly.

Engineering Rule No. 2

The Double F's of Engineering

Be FAIR and FLEXIBLE with your players. By extending a degree of fairness to your players, you can make their play experience more enjoyable while maintaining control over the game. Being flexible encompasses using your judgment to “bend the rules” when necessary. In short, dice don't always do what we want them to do. Bad rolls happen. If you don't like an outcome of a simulated event, then we encourage you to be creative and give players opportunities to change it.

Engineering Rule No. 3

Steering the NPC Engine

You are in charge of the NPC's. Use them wisely, and make sure they move the story along. Story flow and progress in your plot lines are essential to maintaining the Golden Rule. Make sure your cornerstone NPC's have specific purpose in a game.

Engineering Rule No. 4

The Final Call

If a rules contradiction arises, the Engineer makes the final call! Nothing kills a game quicker than a “Rules Lawyer,” so take charge and make sure your decision in a game play or story situation is the final one. We also ask you to think ‘outside of the box’ on occasion to resolve situations. Sometimes, dice and modifiers are not the “end all, be all” answer to action or situation resolution. You should adapt as necessary.



1.3 Creating Your Epoch

The first step in creating a game of SFV is to distinguish between the three game types where time scales are concerned. The three possible time scales a game of SFV can run are a Game Session, a One Shot, and an Epoch. The differences are as follows:

The Game Session: This is a single 2-4 hour session of SFV. Sessions are the smaller periods of game time in which One Shots and Epochs are played out in.

The One Shot: One Shots are one or more sessions of SFV revolving around a single storyline. In general, PC's used in a One Shot are played for those sessions only. When the One Shot ends, the storyline driving it ends as well. Depth points are not distributed during One Shot story arcs because the intent of the sessions is to play quickly instead of grow their PC's.

The Epoch: Epochs are the equivalents of “campaigns” from other role-playing games. An Epoch is a storyline in the world of SFV written by the Engineer and role-played out by the players' PC's. Epochs can last one game session or ten game sessions, it all depends on how big the scope of the adventure is. In general, one Epoch has the same PC's and players use the same PC's until the end of the Epoch. Once an Epoch has concluded, players can swap out PC's depending on the Engineer's story continuity. At the end of each Epoch session, the Engineer distributes Depth points to symbolize PC growth.

An Engineer will need to have some experience in two areas to run a successful One Shot or Epoch: authoring and storytelling. You will become an author when you write and form the literary components behind your group's sessions. You will become a storyteller when you verbally tell and role-play your One Shot or Epoch.

1.4 Authoring a Brief Moment in Time

Foremost, the Engineer is an author. Without your creative spark to ignite adventure in your Epoch, a role-playing session goes nowhere. This section provides you with a crash course in writing Steampunk 101. There are basically three steps to forming a good Steampunk story for an Epoch or One Shot. The steps are as follows: choose a story scale, flesh out a story genre, and pace the exposition.

Step 1: Choosing a Story Scale

Before you start waxing eloquent on airship battles and exciting locomobile races, you need to decide just how large you want your story to be. This is where you make the difficult final decision as to whether you are running a One Shot or an Epoch. To help you make your choice, here are some of the pros and cons of running each type.

One Shots

One Shots are fairly short stories, ideal for one to three game sessions. If your players are looking for a “quick and dirty” SFV experience, this is the Story Type you'll want to begin building. One Shots are simple to construct because they involve only one major plot, perhaps a snag or plot twist, and then a climax. The entire goal of the One Shot is get to the climax of the story at a quick pace. Choosing this option limits the scale of the Engineer's prep work considerably and allows the group to play and end quickly.

In general, the best One Shots revolve around personal stories of PC's and NPC's or a fast-paced intriguing plot hook like a train heist or a murder mystery. Some PC's have skeletons in their backgrounds which can be built into a good One Shot. These PC secrets can be used as plot hooks to get a story to the climax. An intriguing plot hook can function in the same manner. To make an intriguing plot hook into a One Shot, you should pick a solvable problem or task with a twist. The key to a good One Shot intriguing plot hook is making sure the action is fast-paced and resolution is eminent in one direction or another.

Epochs

Epochs are far different from One Shots because they encompass a main plotline with a series of sub plots. An Epoch's plot line may not climax for several game sessions as the PC's follow longer paths developed by the Engineer. Epochs can involve both small-scoped tales and vast Idyllic journeys. Small tales are based around a narrow range of adventuring. As an example, an Epoch with a limited scope may revolve around the PC's working for a single entity like a particular division of Silverhorn Industries. In contrast, an epic journey has the PC's play out an overarching story where the only consistent motivation is a driving goal, a Romance, or

a quest. Regardless of your preference in plot device, selecting the route of the Epoch sends your group's PC's on a long road where they will experience growth.

Step 2: Fleshing Out the Story Type

Once you have decided the scale of the game you are building, you should attach a Story Type to it. This means creating the setting and mode in which the RPG is played out in. One of the best things about the Steampunk genre, is that it is incredibly diverse and encompasses several other sub-genres. Unfortunately for Engineers, this is also the greatest obstacle to creating a good Epoch or One Shot. Luckily, we realize this and have provided you with options to choose from.

The SFV world boils down to six Setting Influences which can be best expressed across nine different Story Types. The best way to build a story is to choose an influence and then a Story Type to complement it.

Setting Influences

SFV is influenced by six peoples' work, of which, we have aptly named our Setting Influences: Da Vinci, Doyle, Merlin, Shelley, Verne, and Wells. These six inspirations are a good start in setting the flavor for your Epoch. Read through each and choose one, or if you an experienced author, select two or more to use as your initial muse for a tone.

Da Vinci

Leonardo DaVinci is the greatest, most prolific inventor of all time. He was a true Renaissance man and his work greatly influenced SFV's machines of war. By choosing this Setting Influence, you are going to lean toward the "portrayal of technology as art" inspiration for SFV. For your Epoch, build plot hooks that glorify technology and inspire players to create new Bloodore devices and vehicles. Use your villains in a very dedicated manner, as if they love machines and would gladly die to bring the "new mechanical life" into the world. Researching Da Vinci's engineering sketches may help provide additional descriptions for how diabolical Bloodore machines in this type of Epoch should look.

Doyle

The Doyle Setting Influence gets its moniker from the great author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who wrote the legendary Sherlock Holmes series. To write an Epoch in a Doyle mood, you must create a SFV setting filled with mystery and intrigue. Villains in this setting are distinctly important because their clandestine and subversive schemes will set the tone for everything else in the setting. In most cases, this will be a darker, more suspicious urban setting. The Unified States are a good place to build one of these Epochs because it has two incredibly grimy cities in Pittsburgh and New York. Both of these places are overpopulated and controlled by gangs, which make for a logical place to have characters run through a mystery.

Merlin

One of the more controversial views we at SFV have on the genre of Steampunk is that the Arthurian alchemist known as "Merlin" did a great deal to influence its fantasy aspect. SFV does not have a lot of "magic" per se, but it definitely has characters with unexplained powers. In a Merlin style Epoch, the players should tangle with elements of the unknown. Tesla Conductors and Bacchanalians would make excellent NPC's to include in this setting due to their uncanny powers and organic connection with Bloodore. Your story should be very strange and rely on surprising NPC's with unexpected supernatural complexities.

Shelley

Mary Shelley is the author of the classic novel *Frankenstein*. When most people think of Shelley's work, they conjure images in their imagination of Boris Karloff being electrified to life by a raving Dr. Frankenstein. This image is NOT SFV's influence from *Frankenstein*. Our influence is much darker and sinister. In the early 1900's, medical practices were, to say the least, "suspect." Countless stories were told of how graves were being robbed for dissection and bodies desecrated in the name of science. The Shelley Setting Influence is about the people and cities that abuse science to the point of creating horrible abominations of nature. Excellent places to build a Shelley Epoch are in either Vaughn Jean- Baptiste's Louisiana or the underground world of Savannah. Villains in this setting should be intensely strange, perhaps warped, having very odd perceptions of perfection.



Verne

The most widely accepted of all Steampunk settings comes from Jules Verne. His iconic *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* and *Journey to the Center of the Earth* embody high adventure and journeys into the unknown corners of the globe. This Setting Influence is likely the most self-explanatory because many people are familiar with Verne's work: pick an exotic location, add a bit of high velocity action, fantastical technology, and resolve the situation with a daring climax, most likely involving sea monsters or prehistoric animals. This is the best Setting Influence for an Airship Privateer Epoch.

Wells

The one man who is the most responsible for influencing SFV's world is H.G. Wells, which is fairly obvious from the "A Deaf Future" story at the beginning of the PW. The works of H.G. Wells are clearly the core of modern day science fiction, and using this Setting Influence, places your players in the SFV world of scientific romance, fantastical technology, and exploration of the unknown.

The best places in the Five Nations to play through a Wells influenced setting are Big Jim's New York City, about anywhere in the Confederation of Free States, and oddly, the Dakota Chiefdom. The Dakota Chiefdom is *pure* Wells because most people stereotype Native Americans as "tree-hugging" and a bit "shamanistic". While these are clearly parts of some of their cultures, we at SFV opted to go another route than the classic

"Old Ways Native." Our Native Americans *love* making technology their own and view it as a boon to destroy their would-be oppressors from east of the Mississippi River. This sort of juxtaposition is inherently a Wells influence.

As far as how a Wells Epoch is described to players, it should be filled with controversial technology which has a possible "abuse" factor to it and ultimately, have a moral learned from the stories. For example, in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, Moreau is using science to abuse the laws of nature to create abominations leading the main character to question whether or not we have responsibility for things we create. This is a classic moral narrative for a Wells story, and a good place to start when forming an Epoch.

Story Types

Once you have decided on the Setting Influence of your Epoch, you should look at Story Types or literary drivers for your game sessions. There are nine different Story Types that are common for game sessions in the SFV world:

A Higher Ideal

There are several Nationalists and True Romantic character types in SFV. The most common Story Type for an Epoch will be one that engages the PC's in a mission where they are using their skills to further a cause or an ideal. These Story Types revolve around plot hooks where PC's are pursuing a course of action, which may or may not lead to their inevitable self-sacrifice, in an effort of support an idea or movement they believe in. This is a common Story Type for an Epoch with Knights of Liberty PC's. To their core, the Knights' goal is to martyr themselves for a reunified American continent.

Dire Straits

Occasionally, the heroes in an Epoch will find themselves in life-threatening situations. The Dire Straits Story Type revolves around a group of PC's getting trapped in a situation and forced to react to save their skins. These stories are easy to set up and are of great interest because the plot twist comes from being thrust into an extraordinary set of circumstances from a seemingly mundane situation. The prequel SFV supplement, *A Day at the Fair*, is an example of this

Story Type, as Old Hat and the crew of the Impossible have the very poor luck of running into the *Victory* on its way to Chicago.

Espionage

Espionage is rampant in the SFV World. Whether it's a group of unruly Tesla Conductors trying to take down a defense grid or a Silverhorn Agent putting a wrench in Rothschild's assembly line, sabotage is widespread throughout the Five Nations. It is a good Story Type for difficult PC's who need a common cause to rally around. Espionage can be a for-hire proposition, a forced act, or a service trade. Nothing is a better rallying point than being forced by a more powerful group, under penalty of death, to pull the bolts out of a new Silverhorn boiler prototype!

For Hire

Mercenaries make the world go round. The most classic adventure hook in all of role-playing history starts with "So, you walk into the bar and you meet this guy offering money if you do a job for him..." This fits the For Hire scenario to the letter. Hopefully, as Engineer, you will make the plot hook more stimulating than that example, but you understand the general premise. Offer money or other valuables to the PC's in exchange for sending them on an adventure. This Story Type is a very good way of getting new PC's introduced to one another in an Epoch.

Merchants Lost, Adventure Gained

People have to make a living and this can be tough in the Five Nations. Every so often, salesmanship turns into adventure. This Story Type relies on the PC's just doing their respective jobs, and then being led into peril or the unknown. The game session could start upon a river vessel, where the PC's are running goods between the Nations, and end up with them trying to escape the Texan Armada through the mouth of the Mississippi. Regardless of the setting, this Story Type involves blue-collar workers or merchants being pushed out of their comfort zone by an on-the-job unexpected obstacle and striving to overcome it.

Mystery

The Mystery Story Type can be one of the most complex game sessions to create. It all starts with an inquiry or a conundrum and leads the PC's down a trail. Along the

trail, they collect different clues or bits of information that lead them to a conclusion as to how to solve it. The climax of this Story Type is generally an encounter with the mastermind behind the caper. In SFV, there are many sources of intrigue to build a mystery off of. Secret organizations like Knights of Liberty, the League of the Well-Crafted, the Invisible Calvary, or the Cocktail Club could provide a solid starting point for mystery. And, as you would expect, the Doyle Setting Influence works best with this Story Type.

The Supernatural

There are a few weird and unexplained phenomena in the SFV world. All tales depicting other worldly entities or ghostly horror can be classified as the Supernatural Story Type. To build a good Supernatural Epoch, you need to first decide what your supernatural element is. Is it a ghost or phantasm that haunts the PC's? Is it a new machine that opens a gateway to another dimension? Or could it be an extraterrestrial visitor? Regardless, if you are to choose this Story Type, you must tread lightly. SFV is based, primarily, on an alternative history, and although it does have fantasy elements, it is generally grounded in a tangible world and must be kept that way to maintain its integrity. Adding too many ghosts and goblins in one Epoch damages the "reality factor" of SFV, so keep your use of the Supernatural focused and as scientifically rationalized as possible.

Treasure Hunt

There is a great deal of unexplored territory in the Five Nations and treasures to be found. When the Great Steam War began, America was thrown into a state of chaos resulting in the misplacement of some of its valuables. Additionally, disputed states and territories once being explored by a "United" States were now up for grabs. The Treasure Hunt Story Type is about exploration and the discovery of something lost or yet unfound. It is one of the more captivating choices for game sessions because it encourages PC's to explore the new frontiers in search of fame and fortune. And remember, the "treasure" found doesn't have to be actual riches. In the world of SFV, lost information, ideas, or blueprints are often FAR more valuable than treasure.

There are many more possible Story Types to choose from. Try to find your own "authoring niche". The best designs for a game of SFV should come from an Engineer's own imagination.

Step 3: Pace the Exposition

Once you have chosen a Setting Influence and Story Type, you have a good structure for setting up your Epoch's main plot lines. As you write down the details of where the PC's will go and what they will be faced with, your main concern will be to pace how the exposition unfolds. One of the best ways to do this is by using NPC's as a stop-lock mechanism.

To illustrate the point, imagine a shipping canal. Barges on a shipping canal, like most major waterways, are controlled by a series of gates that lower and raise water levels accordingly. This allows barges to go up and downstream with relative ease. NPC's should work like these gates, increasing and lowering the intensity of your Epoch as your story plays out. For more information of creating quality NPC's, see *Chapter 3*. You will find a detailed explanation of how to make larger-than-life villains, heroes, and other expository NPC's.

On another note, it is never a bad idea to put your Epoch in short story form before trying to run your game sessions. Many successful game masters of the past have kept journals to chronicle their groups' adventures before, during, and after game sessions. As Engineer, you should do the same. Set up a journal where you write a short story before the game session, notes on PC actions during the game, and a brief synopsis of where your PC's are headed after the session ends. This will keep you on track with your storyline and you will run a more organized game.

The Final Step in Authoring: Creating Checkpoints

After completing the construction of your story, you need to assign Story Checkpoints in your tale. SFV is a game and most games have scoring involved. Our game is no different. Scoring in role-playing can be measured two different ways: PC growth and story advancement.

Story Checkpoints

Story Checkpoints are specific points of plot completion within a storyline. Whenever a PC solves a critical plot puzzle, successfully navigates an action scenario, or succeeds in an action or role-playing scene that advances the Team further into the Epoch, this counts as Checkpoint. Inserting Story Checkpoints into your SFV game sessions serves two purposes: creating

natural end points and helping PC's earn Depth. Story Checkpoints wind down scenarios because the players have accomplished something in their game session. In addition, the PC's who perform the action resulting in the completion of a Story Checkpoint receive one point of Depth.

It is entirely up to you as to where you insert Story Checkpoints in your storyline. As a guideline, find sections of your storyline where the *most* action or problem solving is occurring and insert the Story Checkpoint at the end of that sequence. This will break up the story into portions, allowing you to control the tale's flow more effectively.

Once you have finished authoring a story, you will need to tell it in game sessions. The next chapter gives you the ins and outs of storytelling.

1.5 Telling History

The most complicated part of running an Epoch is storytelling. Storytelling is an age old tradition of verbally telling tales to an audience. Each Engineer has his own style of telling a story, it's a skill which needs to be developed over time. It takes many game sessions of practice before you find your groove. Here are some storytelling tips for new Engineers:

Keep it simple. An effective storyteller is captivating and focused. Engage the players on one storyline at a time, don't go off on sub-plot tangents. Also, add a little bit of enthusiasm to your speech. You need to sound excited about your story to spark the imagination of your players because no one wants to listen to a story told in monotone.

Don't elaborate too much. One of the more common mistakes of new Engineers is to beat the details to death. Players, more than likely, don't really need to hear *everything* in a description of a person, place, or thing. Highlight and overview only the details that count. For example, if you are describing Phillip Silverhorn to a player, you would only focus on the prolific details like his stature, expression, and perhaps unique facial features. It would be poor storytelling to explain the color of the buttons on his jacket unless they were a plot point or critical to the setting.

Encourage the players to carry the tale. The best storytellers speak less than half of the time and let their players role-play out most situations in the storyline.

Your goals as Engineer are to encourage interaction between players and make the game fun. If you are constantly talking and explaining story details, your players are listening and not interacting. When you tell your SFV story, lead the players into conversations or points where group decision-making is necessary. Remember, game sessions are not all about you!

Manage your time and your group efficiently. Time at the role-playing table is precious. Treat it as such. Make sure the story maintains forward progress. Don't get hung up on any one particular part of the tale for an excessive amount of game time. An average role-playing session is about 2 to 4 hours long, and the group should be engaged in role-playing out your tale at least 90% of that time. So, be aware of the clock and make sure your group stays on point.

Use Visuals. A picture is worth a thousand words to an artist, but a hex map, dry erase marker, and miniatures are priceless to a storyteller. Sometimes verbal descriptions just don't cut it, and you need to draw a map of an area or two. This provides clarity in how the spaces are arranged and makes searching an area less confusing. Aside from maps, physically sketching a character may help players visualize a scar or a mark used in a plot hook. Steampunk, in its essence, is a very visual genre and the more images you can bring into your story, the richer an experience your players will have.



Dead air is boring. This is an old radio broadcasting expression, but it applies to storytelling as well. “Dead air” refers to points on a radio broadcast where no one is talking. The same scenario can occur in game sessions. There will be points where no one is talking at the table. Your job as Engineer is to break those points because they drag down the flow of your tale. The best way of breaking up “dead air” points is by asking reflective questions.

For example, let's say the group is at a crossroad in your story and are deciding what to do. Suddenly, the room goes silent and no one says a word because the group is engrossed in thought. This is where you might ask the question “So, what are the options again?” Your question will at least get the players talking and help you understand why they aren't moving forward.

These suggestions will go a long way to help you express your tale. Storytelling requires a great deal of passion for the tale being told. In short, the more enthusiastic you are about your tale, the more excited the players will be to role-play it out.

1.6 Denouement

The final duty of an Engineer is to distribute Depth points when a game session or Epoch winds down. Depth is SFV's equivalent of “experience points” and players accumulate Depth to advance in Fathom levels. Depth is given out for completing the four Role-Playing Protocols and whichever Story Checkpoints a player accomplishes. Depth is always given out at the end of a game session and Fathom leveling occurs at the beginning. The following section outlines the Role-Playing Protocols and how handing out experience for Story Checkpoints works.

Role-playing Protocols

Role-playing Protocols are norms of an SFV game session that every player is expected to demonstrate. One point of Depth is doled out every game session for each Protocol players portray. The specific Protocols are outlined as follows:

Protocol #1

Player Character Was Accurately Role-Played

(Worth +1 Depth)

Players are expected to play their PC with certain attitudes and dispositions consistent with the PC's background story and Romances. Adhering to Protocol #1 is commonly referred to as being "in-character". If a player stays in-character during role-playing segments and role-plays his Romance, then he is awarded one point of Depth at the end of the game session.

Protocol #2

Player Character Grew During the Game Session

(Worth +1 Depth)

One of the main Engineering themes of SFV is progression. Every PC must grow and learn something new to advance in Fathom. When you distribute Depth points for this Protocol, ask each player to explain how their PC gained knowledge, learned to hone a skill, or developed in an emotional capacity. If their answers are within reason and they can point to a specific instance in the game session where their PC developed further, they gain one Depth.

Protocol #3

Player Was On-Task

(Worth +1 Depth)

This is a simple way for players to earn one Depth point. All a player has to do during a session to get this point of Depth is to maintain focus on role-playing rather than distract the group. There are a number of ways players can get off-task in a session: starting side conversations, telling extensive non sequitur stories, or even playing around on a cell phone. This is SFV's system of rewarding the players that actually came to play!

Protocol #4

Completion of the Game Session

(Worth +1 Depth)

PC's earn Depth for making through a game session in one piece. If a PC sees a game session from beginning to end, they get a point of Depth for surviving.

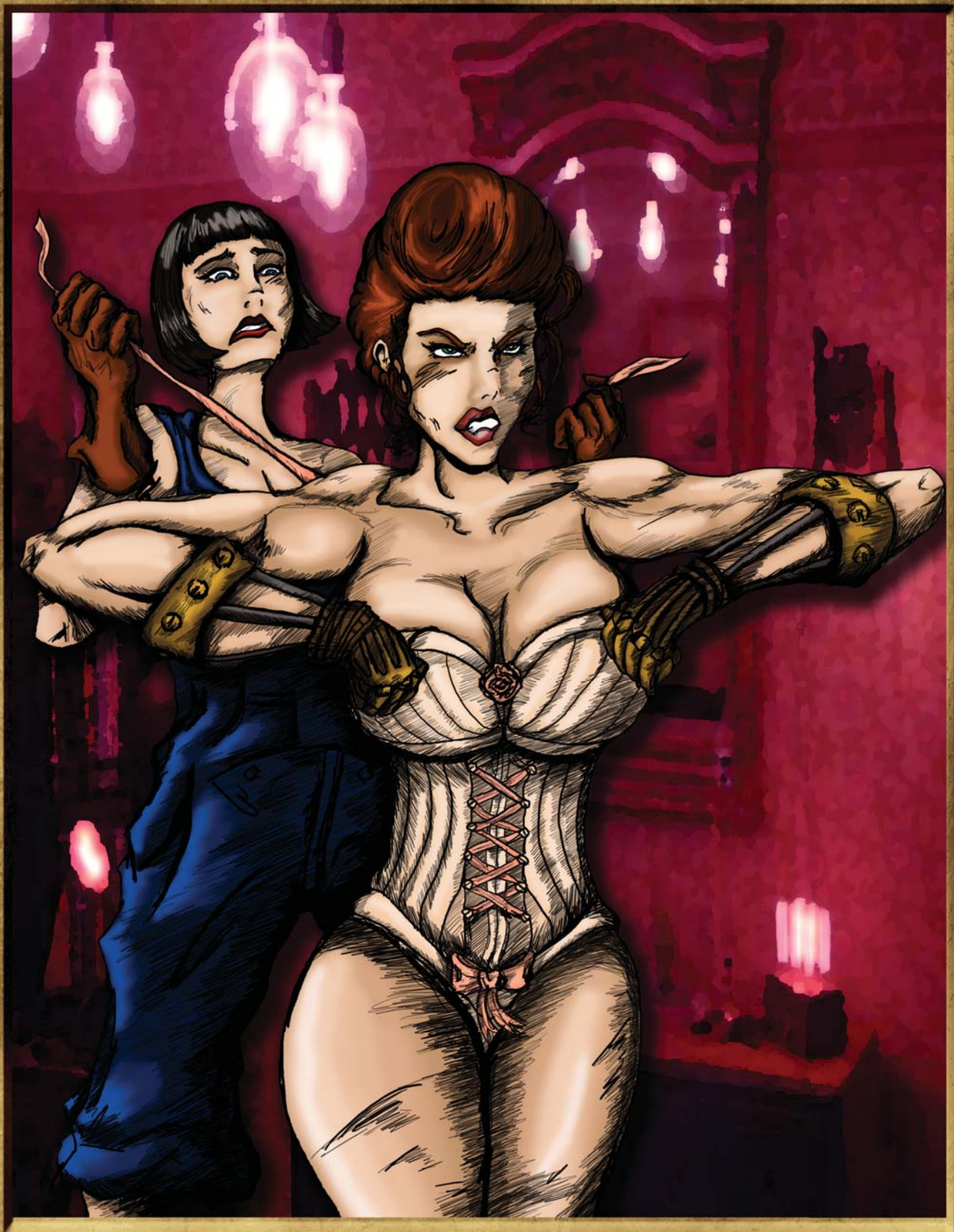
Giving Out Story Checkpoint Depth

After going through each of the first four Protocols privately with players, you can move on to handing out Depth for completion of Story Checkpoints. Each Story Checkpoint has a Depth value assigned before play. The Depth value of a Checkpoint can be anywhere between one and five, depending on its difficulty. The Checkpoint Depth is given to the player or players who accomplished the task or role-played the scenario that led to its completion. Checkpoint Depth can only be given out once per game session per Story Checkpoint. To give you an idea of how this mechanic works, read the following example:

Martin's PC, Lily Jen, has been given depth points for completing all four Protocols. The Engineer goes through his notes and finds that she role-played a scenario where she distracted a prison guard allowing the rest of her Team to free Mr. Garfield Goby from his cell. The Story Checkpoint occurred when Mr. Garfield Goby was released and was worth 2 Depth. Since Lily Jen's masterful performance was what made his release possible, Martin receives 2 Depth.

Leftover Boiler Points and Pressure Dice

At the end of a game session, players might be left with unused Boiler Points and Pressure Dice. Boiler Points are always washed away for next game session. All extra Pressure Dice get converted into Boiler Points at a 2 to 1 ratio for the next game session (rounded down.) For example, if a group ends a session with 11 Pressure Dice, they will receive 5 Boiler Points [11 Pressure Dice divided by 2; rounded down] to start the next game session. Moral of the story: Teams that save together, experience diminishing returns.



ADVANCED RULES

2.1 Engineer's Advanced Rules

The Engineer has a special set of rules for determining the outcome of events in their game session. This chapter gives you everything you need to appropriately assign modifiers to rolls, accurately describe the game effects of Romances and Nationalities, and run NPC combat actions. Additionally, this chapter outlines how to simulate vehicle combat and battles between War Machines.

2.2 Gauging Difficulty and Success

One of the Engineer's jobs is to "referee" or "mediate" the difficulty of PC actions. This is done through correctly applying modifiers to actions involving dice rolls. As stated in *The Player's Workshop*, modifiers can take the form of either a bonus or penalty. The following sections will explain to you the method used to decipher as to when and where to apply these modifiers.

When Does an Action Merit a Bonus?

A bonus is a positive modifier to a PC action. There are very few cases in which a PC should be given a bonus beyond their skill rank. In most instances, having a skill rank for a particular aptitude is enough of bonus to begin with. However, in game situations where there are "better than ideal" circumstances, an Engineer may choose to apply a bonus to an action.

Example

Jules, Brad's PC, is attempting to decrypt a secret message she's stolen from a Silverhorn transport. Jules is relaxing in a swanky hotel and drinking a hot cup of tea; she also has several old encoded messages as well as her books about ciphers in front of her. Normally, Brad would be asked to roll Brains and adding his Investigation skill to complete the Jules' action. However, since his PC has plenty of time to think while lounging in the hotel and the proper research material available, Brad gets an additional +2 bonus to the roll.

When Does an Action Incur a Penalty?

Avid role-players know that there is rarely an ideal situation. Not every action is performed under ideal situations, and is it "easy" to wound the main villain of a story. These types of actions require the Engineer to apply a penalty to them to reflect difficulty. To determine the proper penalty to give an action, begin by thinking of what the action is like without any penalties and then think of what would make that particular action more difficult. After the action has been visualized, categorize the action in one of the following grades of difficulty and apply the correlating penalty listed in the description.

Easy: This grade would be given to an action that is almost second nature for a PC to perform. Apply no penalty to an action in this grade and perhaps consider giving a bonus.

Example: A PC is driving a locomobile through the countryside with no traffic in sight. She makes a Hustle + [Piloting] roll. An Engineer might also give her a +2 bonus because it is clear sailing all the way to Pittsburgh!

Standard: A PC can perform this grade of action using his wits and a little skill. Standard actions always have a target number of 7 and incur no modifiers.

Example: PC Lily Jen is driving a locomobile off road across a desert. She make a Hustle + [Piloting] rol with no penalties involved.

Tough: In game terms, it is slightly more difficult to perform a Tough action than a Standard one. Labeling an action as "tough" indicates that it takes a little thought and effort to execute, even for a trained professional. Tough actions require concentration and time, thus they receive a -2 penalty to them.

Example: PC Lily Jen is driving a locomobile off road across the desert. While driving, she notices that her brake pads are worn and her steering wheel is damage. She makes a Hustle + [Piloting] roll. The Engineer applies a -2 penalty to the roll because it is a Tough action.

Hard: A Hard action is something that is physically strenuous or difficult to accomplish. Most Hard actions are a feat to perform consistently and have a high failure rate even with training. They incur a range of penalties from -3 to -5 depending on the Engineer's judgment.

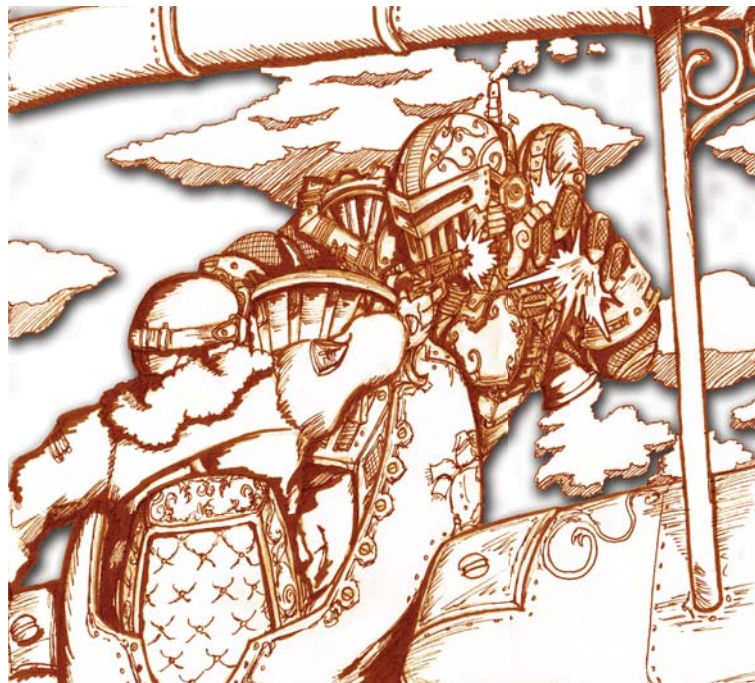
Example: PC Lily Jen is driving a locomobile off road across the desert. Halfway into the trip, Lily Jen encounters a series of sand dunes to navigate. She makes a Hustle + [Piloting] roll. The Engineer applies a -4 penalty to the roll because it is Hard to steer a locomobile while going up and down dunes without high functioning brakes or good tires.

Very Hard: A Very Hard action is exactly as it sounds; it is "very hard" to complete. PC's who try to perform a Very Hard action need to be experts in the skill attempted AND need a little bit of luck to come their way. The Very Hard actions carry a still penalty of -6 to -9.

Example: PC Lily Jen is driving a poorly maintained locomobile over some sand dunes. In the middle of navigating the dunes, her boiler bursts into flames. To make matters worse, she is being chased by a rogue Unicycle Tank which is firing its cannons at her. She makes a Hustle + [Piloting] roll. The Engineer applies a -8 penalty to the roll because it is Very Hard to control a flaming locomobile going up and down dunes without high functioning brakes or good tires while avoiding cannon blasts.

Almost Impossible: Very Hard actions are a bit excessive, but Almost Impossible actions are practically a miracle to achieve Victory at. This grade of action has a 99% failure rate and can only succeed through maxing out use of available Boiler Points and the attempting PC rolling a Decisive Victory ('Natural 10') on their attribute roll. We suggest very rarely applying this penalty to any PC action.

Example: PC Lily Jen is driving a poorly maintained locomobile over some sand dunes. In the middle of navigating the dunes, her boiler bursts into flames. To make matters worse, she is being chased by a rogue Unicycle Tank which is firing its cannons at her. It is clearly not Lily Jen's day because in the midst of all this chaos, she is unknowingly heading toward a 20 foot wide, 100 foot deep gorge. She makes a Hustle + [Piloting] roll to guide the fiery locomobile successfully to other side of the gorge. The Engineer assigns an Almost Impossible grade to this action and Lily Jen prays to whichever mystical deity she thinks will give her wings so she can fly across!



Assigning Cover Penalties

During combat, penalties can be applied to attacking PC's or NPC's to represent that they are hiding behind cover. The more dense the cover, the harder it is to hit a target. For example, a PC hiding behind a glass door is easier to shoot than one that is hiding behind a concrete one. Cover penalties fall into three categories based on the percentage of the PC or NPC that is obscured by the cover and density of the cover.

Light Cover: Up to 25% of the target is obscured or thickness of cover is the equivalent of 'wooded brush'. This incurs a -2 penalty to hit the target.

Medium Cover: 25% to 50% of the target is behind cover or thickness of cover is the equivalent of 'dry wall'. Any attacks made on this person suffer a -4 penalty to hit.

Heavy Cover: Only a small body part is visible: a hand, foot, or part of their head or thickness of cover is the equivalent of 'iron'. It is extremely difficult to hit; apply a -6 penalty.

Can Penalties Accumulate?

Penalties can be cumulative. They stack if the situation warrants it. For example, if a PC is trying to shoot at an NPC who is hiding behind a brick wall and is only partially visible, the PC would incur penalties for cover from both forms of cover. How penalties stack is all based on Engineer flexibility. Ultimately, the Engineer determines what penalties are acceptable for actions.

2.3 Romancing the Epoch

SFV emphasizes role-playing above all other elements; players are encouraged to immerse themselves in a PC and portray very different alter egos. The six Romances provided are meant to serve as guidelines for your players while role-play in each session. They are not limiting factors, but tools to help your game session attain more depth and emotion.

Romances are motivating factors, but not rigid paths to be followed to the letter. Each Romance is open to interpretation, and can be different between PC's. As an example, PC's who have the Inventor Romance aren't constantly in a lab coat or tinkering with their equipment; they just love to create new things. Fortune Hunters aren't simply mercenaries who only work for money, the idea of the romance is subject to individual opinion. In short, don't expect your players to act out their Romances to the exact description because it is not the idea behind them.

Game Effects of Romances

As discussed in *Chapter 1.6*, players who role-play their Romance as they interpret them are rewarded with +1 Depth at the end of each session. This encourages players to role-play their PC in a fun and believable manner. In game, if a PC chooses to act in a manner contrary to their Romance, they do not generate Boiler Points or Pressure Dice on their dice rolls for the duration of the game session. Additionally, if players continue to disregard their Romance when taking actions, the Engineer should apply a -1 penalty to their attribute rolls in each time it happens. This mechanic is designed to come into play mainly during dramatic situations. See the example below.

ROMANCE EXAMPLE

Brad's PC Jules has the Fortune Hunter Romance. Jules has a dilemma, Silverhorn Agents are getting away with the priceless Cross of Cortez at the same time her friend Ace is trapped in a cage with venomous snakes. Jules' Romance would have her pursue the treasure, but her friend's life is more important to her. By choosing to act against her Romance, Jules has just forfeited her ability to generate Pressure Dice and Boiler Points for the remainder of the game session.

2.4 How Nationality is used in Game Play

The Five Nations of 1900 are quite a different place than our United States. Having been in conflict for eight years, citizens of the Five Nations views of their neighbors vary greatly. Each nationality has an Overtone which explains how they are socially affected when interacting with a member of another nation. Each Overtone has a rating key word to describe how their attitude toward a specific nationality:

Enthusiastic

Warm and welcoming towards individuals of that nation, will go out of their way to make them feel comfortable. +2 bonus modifier to any Allure rolls with individuals of this nation.

Cordial

Kind and open towards individuals of that nation, will treat the person with respect. Add a +1 bonus modifier to any Allure rolls with individuals of this nation.

Neutral

No special treatment towards individuals of the nation.

Guarded

Open distrust toward individuals of that nation. Asking prices for goods and services will be 20% higher than normal. Apply a -2 penalty modifier to any Allure rolls with individuals of this nation.

Hostile

Hatred towards individuals of that nation; violence will likely occur if provoked. Vendors will deny the sale of goods and services. Give a -4 penalty modifier to any Allure rolls with individuals of this nation.

There are five different Nationalities, one for each of the Five Nations, that your characters can play thus far. In future supplements, we will introduce four new Nationalities: Mexican, Canadian, Louisiana, and Freeporter (Chicago). If one of your PC's decides to play a character from any of the To Be Announced Nations, then they have no nationality and view everyone as Neutral.

The Unified States of America

Unified States Overtones Towards Other Nationalities

Shogunate of the West: Neutral

Confederation of Free States: Hostile

Dakota Chiefdom: Guarded

Republic of Texas: Cordial

The Unified States has been at war with the Confederation of Free States for the greater part of the last decade. As a result, these two nations hate each other with a passion. People of the US view their southern counterpart with underlying contempt and bitterness; Citizens of the CFS arrogant fops bent on their manifest destiny. Silverhorn is portrayed as a ruthless dictator who has brainwashed the Confederation into worshipping him like a God.

The primary business of the Unified States is defense contracting, thus their relationship with the other nations has been less important politically. The citizens of the Unified States view the Dakota Chiefdom is as a very powerful, yet unrefined nation with skilled warriors, but untrustworthy due to their propensity to invade. They signed a deal with the Devil when they made a treaty with Silverhorn and the DC people will eventually be betrayed by him.

While relations with the Republic of Texas are friendly, they're mostly ignored by the Unified States. With few exports and technological inferiority, the Republic is largely viewed as a worthless sandbox. No attempts have been made to contact the Shogunate. Their xenophobic nature has convinced the Unified States to largely ignore them and to focus on their war efforts.

Unified States citizens can freely travel throughout the Five Nations, but will experience some prejudice going though the Confederation which is expected. In the Dakota Chiefdom and the Shogunate, whose people are incredibly xenophobic, Unified States citizens will be treated like a lower class of individual and have difficulty overcoming prejudice without cultural knowledge of customs.



The Confederation of Free States

Confederation of Free States Overtones Towards Other Nationalities

Unified States: Hostile

Dakota Chiefdom: Enthusiastic

Republic of Texas: Guarded

Shogunate of the West: Neutral

The Confederation began the greatest war that the world has ever seen, but the other nations do not view it with so much negativity as one would expect. Despite the destruction of Chicago, Counsel Silverhorn is considered a revolutionary yet Machiavellian leader. His nation has prospered economically, which makes the Confederation a wealthy business hub. Thus, the other nations look past the sins of the south and forward to the possibility of trade it brings.

Under Silverhorn's rule the Confederation has chosen its enemies wisely. While in open war with the Unified States, treaties have been signed with the Dakota Chiefdom and the Republic of Texas. Attempts have even been made to open trade with the Shogunate, but their stubborn leaders refuse to allow Silverhorn into Chang Tsing.

Citizens of the Confederation are treated well in all of the Five Nations. Their nation's wealth makes them "upper class" in the eyes of the poorer nations. The Dakota's treat them with the most respect, for without Silverhorn's aid their nation would be a fraction of its current size. The only nation that truly has a prejudice towards the Confederation is the Unified States. Many US citizens have not forgotten the destruction of Chicago and the ransacking of Washington, thus less articulate northerners will harass Confederation travelers.



The Dakota Chieftdom

Dakota Chieftdom Overtones Towards Other Nationalities

Unified States: Guarded

Confederation of Free States: Enthusiastic

Republic of Texas: Guarded

Shogunate of the West: Hostile

Due in part to their dealings with Silverhorn, the Dakota Chieftdom has prospered in the Steam-Age. With the most beautiful and largest natural landscape of the Five Nations, they have many popular tourist destinations and are revered among most Americans. However, Dakota Chieftdom people are still extremely guarded with most other nations. The only nations they truly have a positive relationship with are the Confederation and European countries. Simply put, anyone with enough money can be treated as an honored guest while in Dakota Chieftdom.

Chiefs in the Dakota Chieftdom have bred a war hawk culture, but this does not necessarily mean that people in the nation despise their enemies. In fact, the Dakota people have the least prejudice toward their adversaries out of any of the nations. The only people in the Five Nation the Dakota truly dislike are that of the Shogunate of the West. Dakota feel that by being turned away from the other side of the Rockies every time they send a trade caravan or emissary is an insult. Still, the Dakota have no intentions of starting a conflict with Shogunate as the “White Nations” are still a constant hassle and require a more watchful eye.

Republic of Texas

Republic of Texas Overtones Towards Other Nationalities

Unified States: Cordial

Confederation of Free States: Cordial

Dakota Chieftdom: Hostile

Shogunate of the West: Neutral; Cordial in the Southern end

The Republic of Texas is made up mostly of ranchers and small businesses, thus their people are fairly open to relationships with their neighbors. The Republic enjoys free trade with the Unified States and Confederation. They have had some contact with people of the southern half of the Shogunate, who are semi-receptive to exporting cheap leather goods and buying cattle. As a result of all these good relationships, Texan begrudge only one of the groups of people in the Five Nations: the Dakota Chieftdom.

Skirmishes with the Dakota have made trade with them very difficult because most Texans have an unwritten “kill on sight” policy. Oddly, the Dakota people do not reciprocate this animosity because they identify it as a function of war hawk culture. Texans, on the other hand, will never forget the battles over Oklahoma, and hate Dakota with a passion.

Texans can travel anywhere without being subject to serious prejudice. On occasion, people from the Unified States will mistake them for a Confederation citizen because of their accent, but otherwise, they are universally respected.

Texans can travel anywhere without being subject to serious prejudice. On occasion, people from the Unified States will mistake them for a Confederation citizen because of their accent, but otherwise, they are universally respected.



The Shogunate of the West

Shogunate of the West Overtones Towards Other Nationalities

Unified States: Guarded

Confederation of Free States: Guarded

Dakota Chiefdom: Hostile

Republic of Texas: Neutral

The people of the Shogunate of the West are masters of their own destiny. Their isolationism is a function of their culture, geography, and the will of the people. As a nation composed of mostly Chinese and Japanese immigrants, they use traditional Chinese characters known as *hanzi* for their writing system. Their language is an amalgamation of both languages known as “*nishi-ben*” or “West Language.” Additionally, the natural barrier of the Rocky Mountains keeps them from travelling too far on foot and forces visitors to take detours to make it to the Shogunate. With both these physical and language barriers, the Shogunate chooses to remain isolated from the other four nations.

The northern half of the Shogunate has not attempted to create relationships with the other nations. There have been strategic raids on Dakota supply lines and trade with Texan cattle ranchers by groups of merchants, but in general, they have not had much contact with any other nation outside of Japan and Canada. People of the Shogunate have been too busy cementing their own country to care about what happens in others.

People from the Shogunate very seldom travel to the East. Individuals from the Shogunate outside of their borders are looked upon with curiosity, awe, and hatred in the Dakota Chiefdom. Very few people know or understand their neighbors to the west.



2.5 War Machine Combat

There are special combat rules for large vehicles such as tanks, airships, and submersibles. These vehicles all fall into the category of War Machines. War Machines are several times tougher than a locomobile or unicycle, which allows them to take more damage. In many cases, these vehicles have armor plating. Therefore, their scale of damage is different than that of characters or smaller vehicles.

Hull Strength

Due to the size and fortitude of War Machines, new rules are needed to express their durability and damage threshold. To represent these values, there is one new damage tier added for these vehicles.

Hull Damage (HD)

The fourth tier of damage is **Hull Damage**, or **HD**. Only weapons with HD can cause damage to War Machines. Should targets without HD be hit, that target takes 10 TD, and there is no roll for damage. When a War Machines take their DT in HD, the vehicle is destroyed. War Machines cannot be damaged by weapons which inflict ID, WD, or TD.

Example 1 of Hull Damage

Josh's PC Mr. Goby is piloting a stolen Terra-Tread tank which is a War Machine. Only weapons that have the HD stat can cause damage to the tank. He encounters Silverhorn Militiamen firing rifles, which only inflict ID. However, these Militiamen have a trick up their sleeve, a Zeng 33 Rocket Launcher. The Zeng 33's rockets cause HD when it hits a Terra-Tread. Damage for the missile is 3d10 HD, and the roll comes up 5, 8, 9; causing 2 HD to Mr. Goby's tank.

Example 2 of Hull Damage

Bill's PC Ace fires a cannon which would inflict 1d10 HD on a stationary locomobile, a non-War Machine vehicle. The locomobile has a DT of 9, if it gets hit it will take 10 TD, enough to obliterate it.

Operating War Machines

One man cannot pilot, fire guns, and repair damage at the same time. In order for War Machines to be fully effective, several PC's or NPC's may be needed to man battle stations onboard the vessel. In a War Machine's

statistics is the stat called Fully Manned. Also, battle stations on the War Machine are listed. The possible battle stations for a crew member to occupy are: Pilot, Gunner, and Mechanic.

For the Pilot position, the PC or NPC is required to have Pilot skill of 2 or higher or an Engineering skill of 3 or higher. Without all Pilot positions filled, the War Machine cannot move. For War Machines with multiple Pilots, use the best Initiative out of all that have been rolled.

For the Gunner position, the PC or NPC is required to have Ranged Attack skill of 2 or higher or an Engineering skill of 3 or higher. Refer to each War Machine for penalties associated with not having all guns manned.

For the Mechanic position, the PC or NPC is required to have Engineering skill of 2 or higher or Book Smarts, Bloodore Science, or Gadgetry skill of 3 or higher. Without the Mechanic position filled, special abilities cannot be used and temporary repairs cannot be made to the War Machine while in operation.

Fully Manned War Machines can use all weapon damage and special abilities; operating with less limits the War Machine in movement, firepower, and special features.

BATTLE STATIONS EXAMPLE

Ace and his companions Jules and Mr. Goby have “acquired” a Unified States Terra-Tread Tank. The tank is Fully Manned with 4 people, and has the battle stations Pilot: 1, Gunner: 2, Mechanic: 1. With a Mechanic onboard, repairs can be made while the tank is in motion and the team can fire a short-range steam burst. The tank has two Gunner battle stations, one for the main gun and one for the side artillery. The one Pilot drives the War Machine.

Since they can't fill all four battle stations, the team decides to ignore the side Gunner battle station. Ace has an Engineering skill of 3, so he'll be the Mechanic. Jules has Piloting of 3, so he'll take on the role of Pilot. Mr. Goby only has Ranged Attack 1, but has Engineering of 3, so he's able to serve as a Gunner; he chooses to man the main cannon. The Engineer notes that the side guns cannot be fired unless another PC or NPC joins them in the tank.

War Machine Speed and Maneuverability

War Machines also have different rules for their movement during combat. While tanks may have amazing destructive power, smaller and faster vehicles can literally drive circles around them. Thus, there are four new levels to represent War Machine speed which are used in vehicle combat.

The Speed Levels are listed in an ascending order: Travel Speed, High Speed, and Combat Speed. Foot Speed is a unique speed designation for small vehicles or characters involved in the combat outside of vehicles. Each Speed Level affects application of combat penalties and combat cycle turn order. If two or more vehicles are moving at the same speed, Gunners incur no penalties due to speed differences. The speed level effects are as follows:

Travel Speed: This speed level is for when heavy vehicles or airships are moving at their normal speed. Vehicles attacking targets moving at Travel Speed receive no penalties on their attack rolls.

High Speed: Vehicles moving at high speed are moving faster than they normal would, but are not focused on avoiding incoming attacks. When making attacks against vehicles moving at High Speed, Travel Speed vehicles receive a -2 penalty, whereas vehicles at High Speed and people at Foot Speed receive no penalty.

Combat Speed: Combat Speed represents the Pilot of a vehicle moving and maneuvering at the optimal speed for both attacking and defending against other vehicles. Vehicles attacking targets moving at Combat Speed while at Travel Speed receive a -4 penalty to their attack rolls; High Speed receives a -2 penalty; and Foot Speed receives no penalty.

Foot Speed: This level of speed applies to any PC or NPC not inside a vehicle or any vehicle without the HD stat. During the combat cycle, participants moving at Foot Speed act first before vehicles; if there are multiple people at Foot Speed, roll Initiative for them normally. Vehicles attacking targets at Foot Speed while at Travel Speed receive a -2 penalty to their attack rolls; High Speed receives a -3 penalty; and Combat Speed receives a -4 penalty.

Shifting Speeds

At the beginning of each combat cycle, the Pilot may change a vehicles speed by one level. Should the Pilot

want to change speeds more quickly they can by rolling Hustle + [Piloting] with a Victory allowing the vehicle to shift two speeds. This does not use an action during the combat cycle, as they simply “step on the gas.”

War Machine Initiative

All War Machines have a Velocity score, but a speed level can supersede its use in combat. Before rolling Initiative, compare the speed level of the combatants. The highest speed always acts first. In the case that two or more combatants that are moving at the same speed, roll Initiative for them then determine the combat cycle normally.

Speed Level Changes vs. Non-War Machine Vehicles

Speed level changes can only be used in combat when both participants engage each other. If non-combat vehicles are willingly participating in combat with War Machines, the non-combat vehicles cannot gain initiative bonuses from speed changes because they are not built for the stresses of battle.

However, if a War Machine chooses to pursue a non-combat vehicle outside of the combat cycle, speed level changes do not apply to anyone involved in the pursuit. At this point, all vehicles would revert to using Velocity to determine initiative. War Machines cannot use Speed Levels outside of combat.

Combat Maneuvering

While moving at Combat Speed the Pilot may attempt to position their War Machine in ways that benefit them. This is represented by two special actions that the Pilot may take during combat. If a War Machine has more than a sole Pilot, these actions occur at the best Initiative but use all Pilot actions for that combat cycle.

Defensive Maneuvers

The Pilot uses this technique to attempt to avoid incoming enemy fire. The Pilot rolls Hustle + [Piloting]; a Victory applies the Pilot's Piloting skill + 3 as a penalty to all incoming attacks during the current combat cycle.

Opposing Pilots may attempt to “Keep Up” to negate the penalty. That Pilot spends a Boiler Point and rolls Hustle + [Piloting] with a penalty equal to the opposing Pilot's Hustle + [Piloting]. A Victory on this roll nullifies the penalty. This does not take an action for the combat cycle.

FIRING PASS EXAMPLE

Jules has evaded Raymond's tank long enough and decides to go on the offense for a change. In order to repair some of the damage to his tank, Raymond he foolishly dropped from Combat Speed to High Speed. Since Jules's tank is moving at a higher speed, his tank acts first.

Jules makes a roll to use a Firing Pass. He rolls 3d10 (his Hustle) with a net modifier of 0 (+3 for his Piloting skill, -3 for Combat Speed.) Jules rolls well and gets 6, 6, 7, a Victory! Mr. Goby who is gunning will receive a +4 bonus to his attack roll this combat cycle; +2 for Jules' Victory and an additional +2 for the speed difference.

Firing Pass

Using this technique, a Pilot tries to line up his War Machine's guns with a target. The Pilot rolls Hustle + [Piloting] with a -1 penalty for Travel Speed, -2 for High Speed, and -3 for Combat Speed; Victory results in any Gunners receiving a +2 bonus for their next attack during the current combat cycle. The bonus increases by +2 for each Speed Level higher they are than the target they're firing at.

Repairing During Combat

War Machines will often have a Mechanic battle station onboard. Aside from Mechanic actions which are in the War Machine description, Mechanics can make temporary repairs to vehicles while in motion. A War Machine can be repaired at any of the Speed Levels except for High Speed and Combat Speed. If a War Machine is in either of these two Speed Levels, they have to change a different level to make repairs.

The roll a Mechanic needs to make is based on which part of the War Machine he is repairing. To repair structural damage, a Mechanic rolls Work + [Engineering]. A Victory results in reinforcement to the damaged area and restores 1 HD. War Machines often have unique weapon systems or gadgetry onboard. If these features become damaged, a Mechanic can repair them by rolling Work + [Gadgetry] or Work + [Engineering] depending on the system damaged. A Victory fixes the component, allowing it to work as normal.



BUILDING VILLAINS

3.1 Making a Better Evil

Regardless of the adventure, the most memorable characters are usually center around the villain. Where would Prince Charming be without the Evil Queen in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*? What really would've happened to Norman without his Mother's intervention? Who would care about a *War of the Worlds* if the evil tripods never showed up with their heat ray? What would actor Bruce Campbell do without the walking dead? Game sessions of SFV are no different. Your group has gone through the intense process of creating the protagonists for your Epoch, and now, as the Engineer, your task will be to complement them with equally dynamic antagonists and supporting characters. As in most role-playing games, these are called 'non-player characters' or 'NPC's'. The following sections describe how to make villains, their Minions, and supporting characters to help progress your story along.

How to Build an Epic Villain

Villains are the central figures in any game, especially adventures in the Five Nations. The concept for a nefarious villain can come from anything: your favorite movie, a real character, or it could even be someone in your own life that has wronged you in some way. The process of designing a villain is much like creating a PC with a few extra twists. First, your villains must have a purpose to exist; why are they a villain? What is the reason he or she opposes your PC's in the Epoch? Is this villain specifically targeting one of your PC's, or do they have grander schemes within the Epoch?

Fleshing out a villain is a tough and time-consuming task. Keep in mind, a villain's motivators don't always have to make perfect sense or have a single layer. To make this process a little easier, we've put together a series of steps to construct a better evil. We call these the "Layers of Infamy". Every solid villain can be broken down into these layers of personality and by doing so, you will create a more in depth evil character.

The Layers of Infamy

Before moving onto the Layers, we have to preface them with a caveat. The Layers of Infamy work off of the assumption that true villains have the following traits fixed into their character:

#1 Villains are inherently evil to the core. They do not perform heroic acts unless they are abandoning their life as a villain.

#2 Villains all gravitate toward being evil because their mind is hard-wired that way. They are, in fact, practically incapable of performing a heroic act unless it serves an evil purpose such as deception or a lure.

The Layers of Infamy work for creating actual villains, not anti-heroes, mercenaries, or greedy individuals. You can still use the aforementioned non-villain characters in your story to fill nefarious roles and commit evil acts, but they don't make the cut as a villain. A villain doesn't commit evil acts because it benefits him, he does it because he enjoys it or it satisfies a craving in some way. Villains are unique NPC's and are integral to SFV.

Layer One: Choosing a Psychosis

A psychosis is defined as a loss of contact with reality which includes false beliefs and perceptions of the world around them. Most villains, whether they are classic ones like Cassius or modern ones like Hannibal Lecter, experience a warped perception of the people and spaces around them. On some level, every villain is either delusional about their own self worth or hallucinating about elements of their surroundings. The only difference between villainous personalities is the degree of delusion or hallucination. Thus, the foundation of your prospective villain is the simple question of "What is their major malfunction?"

A villain's psychosis is integral to how they act and approach situations. This is a powerful Engineering tool. It will help you determine how your villain will react to your PC's and how they cause havoc in your story. Here are a few sample psychoses to get your villain-building going:

Common Psychoses for Villains

Extreme High and Lows: Villains often experience highs from abnormal places and serious lows when they don't get their high. These mood swings are unpredictable and happen at whim. Villains become "villainous" when they continuously commit evil acts to get that high. It's all about what "floats" a villain's proverbial "boat". For example, if a villain gets a high off of being in charge, then he'll do about anything to stay in charge and will generally be paranoid of those closest to him in order to maintain his leadership.

Delusions of Grandeur: Henry VIII is the classic example of this type of psychosis. While he was King of England, Henry managed to off two of his six wives, rewrite the Bible as well as declare himself "Supreme Head of the Church of England", and approach the world as the most powerful ruler ever. If there was one man who was the prime example of experiencing Delusions of Grandeur, it was Henry VIII. This type of psychosis translates perfectly to villains who are looking to achieve power by any means necessary.

Delusions of Invulnerability: Some people think they are untouchable; villains who exhibit delusions of invulnerability have an unwavering belief in it. This is an excellent psychosis for powerful business men, crime lords, and masterminds because they all have feeling of utter imperviousness to anything and anyone.

Depression: Many villains are incredibly depressed human beings. Depression can manifest in a number of different forms: anxiety, panic, or even physical attributes. In most instances, villains who are depressed will find ways to take it out on the world. For example, Mr. Freeze, from the acclaimed *Batman* comics, lost his wife and went so far into depression that he managed to replace his veins with ice.

Paranoia: Certain villains are chronically paranoid. Someone is always out to get them and they are forced to commit atrocities to prevent being caught. This psychosis works particularly well for villains who are already on the lamb. They will do just about anything to avoid prison.



Personality Disorders: A personality disorder is a behavior or inner experience that chronically deviates from cultural norms. This type of villain exhibits clearly abnormal social function in pattern. Whether it is extra voices in his head or having a bizarre affinity for destruction, villains with this psychosis are truly not to be trifled with. You never know when or where they will break down and lash out.

Layer Two: Match the Psychosis to Neuroses

Once you have figured out what the primary trigger for your villain is, you can move onto the supporting problems. A neurosis is a functional mental disorder involving distress where the behavior is not socially unacceptable. Basically, it's the "little crazy" your villain portrays on a regular basis that gives him an edge. Neuroses can come in any form, and there are literally thousands of different types.

On pages 63 and 64 of *The Player's Workshop*, there are a number of manias and phobias to choose from. If a mania or a phobia is a little too extreme for your villain's demeanor, then try using amplified personality traits. For example, a villain who has a psychosis of being paranoid might outwardly be extremely irritable. Here is a quick list of amplified personality traits and quirks that can be used as a neurosis: misplaced anger, irritability, low self-esteem, impulsiveness, compulsive acts, obsession, daydreaming, negativity, cynicism, repetition of a single thought, aggression, isolation in social settings,

co-dependency, lethargy, and sociopathic displays for attention.

A villain's psychosis is the foundation of his character, but the neurosis truly adds flavor to the character brew.

Layer Three: Dark Romances

Now that you have figured out what makes your villain tick, it's time to add some polish to his character with a Romance. In SFV, all of the PC's and NPC's are in love with someone or something. The villains are a little different because when they act against their chosen Romance, their psychosis turns on them and causes mental confusion.

Defiler

A Defiler is the opposite of an Explorer. He is motivated by the same primal urge to explore new locales. However, whereas the Explorer feels complete while traveling with friends, the Defiler's joy comes from the destruction or perversion of these new places. They believe that the things they cannot have to be destroyed. A classic example of a Defiler villain persona is Ahab. Ahab was obsessed with catching the white whale in Moby Dick, and risks his life and the life of his crew in pursuit.

Mad Scientist

A Mad Scientist is the Inventor Romance with a much darker tone. Villains with this Romance will commit heinous crimes against humanity and generally do anything to get results in their work. They're fanatical in their goals and have no regard for the lives or safety of those around them. In addition, their work is often very twisted in nature and with a certain knack for "playing God". Dr. Victor Frankenstein is a good example of a Mad Scientist villain. He defied the laws of nature to bring a man back from the dead.

Nationalist

This villain type is the ultimate evil patriot. While the Nationalist may have their nation's best interest in mind, sometimes their plans border on the absurd. The Nationalist can be best described by the phrase "The road to Hell is paved with good intentions." For example, Maximillian Robespierre was the first national leader of France after the Revolution. His path to a new democratic France was paved with the blood of thou-

sands of innocents executed by the guillotine.

Narcissist

The foil of the Perfectionist is the Narcissist who is characterized by an amplified sense of self worth. The Narcissist seeks to become more powerful either through personal self-improvement or illicit means such as lies, theft, or even murder. These individuals have standards for themselves that no one will live up to. Professor Moriarty fits the bill of the Narcissist. He committed crime for the sake of committing crime perfectly and assuaging his ego, not for monetary gains.

Miser

Unlike their brethren, the Fortune Hunters, the Miser is driven only by his or her greed and lust for wealth. The Misers care about one thing and one thing alone, accumulating gold and wealth. The iconic Miser, Jacob Marley from Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, accumulated so much wealth at the expense of others that he ended up in chains in the afterlife.

True Romantic

The True Romantic mirrors its PC counterpart but with an evil connotation. These villains are in love with something or someone and obsessive in fulfilling their desires. They are often temperamental where their love is concerned and thrive off of evoking fear and hatred. The time-honored example of a True Romantic villain is Dracula. He sought to seduce unsuspecting damsels to replace his loss of feeling love over the centuries.

Layer Four: Fill in the Blanks

Now, that you have fully constructed your villain's psyche, make a PC Blueprint for him. Start your villain at a Fathom high enough to make him formidable for your Team. As the final touches to your villain, read over Chapter 3.5 and add one NPC Fathom Ability per every three fathoms he possesses. Adding these abilities can spice up a villain and will make them truly nefarious. With regard to gear and technology, these assets are entirely up to your discretion. Villains can have just about anything you want them to have; you merely have to justify it in the story.

Once you have wrapped up your villain's stats and general gear or technology, you can move onto to creating his followers, the lesser evil.

3.2 The Lesser Evil: Building Minions

Although you might call them “thugs” or “goons” or even “cannon fodder,” these legions of Minion NPC’s can be used as either speed bumps or serious threats to your PC’s. It’s fairly common for villains to have hired muscle to do the fighting. Minions are simple by nature, thus their construction is less involved.

In addition, reference our Quick Rolls system below to speed up your use of Minions in a combat scenario:

Quick Rolls

Keeping track of five or more Minions can be difficult, thus SFV has a Quick Rolls system to help manage the lesser evils. Start by assigning each Minion a Brawn, Hustle, and Iron value. Then give them a DT and a Velocity; although PC’s DT is always twice their Iron, tougher NPC’s can be assigned a higher value. The Quick Minion Table is provided to quickly assign stats. Once you have done that, follow the subsequent rules for controlling your Minions:

Minion’s in the Combat Cycle

Minions prefer to fight in groups, as they lack the



individuality of major villains. When rolling Initiative roll only once for all Minions adding Velocity to the roll normally. Use this value to determine where in the turn sequence the Minions will act. Minions who act together should always perform the same action such as punching or shooting at a PC.

Taking Actions

Minions typically do not have skills; they instead use a Combat Modifier for all of their actions. The Combat Modifier takes the place of any skill used in fighting: Melee, Ranged Attack, Grapple, Brawl, etc. Minions use their Non-Combat Modifier for any actions not directly related to making attacks such as Lift, Stealth, Ride, Diplomacy, Mettle, and so forth.

Minion Damage Threshold and Death

In cases where combat does not progress the story, it is sometimes desirable to reduce the Minion’s DT. For extremely fast combat, make it so that Minions either fall unconscious or flee when they take one point of WD. For normal combat, have Minions collapse when they receive one point of TD.

When the PC’s do damage to a group of Minions there are two options: PC’s may specifically ask to attack previously wounded Minions or you may simply pool the Minion’s total wounds, applying damage as necessary.

Supporting NPC’s

Beyond the role of antagonist, NPC’s are also used to assist PC’s and help move the story along. Supporting NPC’s are the Engineer’s best friend. Throughout the next few sections, you will be shown how to build supporting role NPC’s and use them to enrich your storytelling.

Pointing PC’s in the Right Direction

Not every NPC in your games sessions will be an epic villain or lowly Minion. Oftentimes the concerned citizens of the Five Nations will engage themselves with the PC’s either to lend a helping hand or to guide the PC’s to their next goal. While these NPC’s may not be as important as your villain, giving them a little bit of a



back story will add a level of depth to your Epoch. Ask yourself these questions:

1. Why is this NPC helping the PC's?
2. What knowledge does this NPC have that may help or hinder the PC's?
3. Is this NPC's role essential to the story?

Having good answers to these questions will make your NPC a useful tool in telling your story.

Tending the Shoppe

Shopkeepers in the Steam-Age sell everything from food and water to rare, exotic Bloodore technology. As the Engineer, one of your tasks is to quickly decide what goods a shopkeeper will have available for your players. Here are some questions to help flesh out your stores and their wares:

What kind of shop is this?

Does the owner sell legal or illegal goods?

Are any of his goods special or exotic in any way?

Does their Nationality affect their dealings with the PC's?

Answering these questions will elevate your shopkeepers from being boring and saying "What do you want?" to being interesting and having a true value to their store. Even if they are just minor players in your grand Epoch, spending time on the details of your shops adds more realism to your game sessions.

Consult the Quick NPC Table for determining stats for shopkeepers as you would other NPC's.

3.3 NPC Only Fathom Abilities

The mechanics for special abilities or unique actions mirror the format in the Player's Workshop by expressing them in terms of Fathom Abilities. Any ability a NPC possesses that is not explicitly detailed by their attributes, derived attributes, skills, or Genius is considered an NPC Fathom Ability. The following section describes the NPC Fathom Abilities found on high Fathom NPC's. These NPC Fathom Abilities can be given to Engineer generated NPC's, as long as they fit the requirements provided. *We strongly advise you not to give these abilities to PC's unless you are planning a very high-powered campaign.*

Airship Privateers

Acrobatics (Fathom 4)

NPC's with this Fathom Ability are known for doing back-flips, cartwheels, and spectacular leaps. These NPC's receive no penalties for fighting onboard Airships. They may also move and attack in the same combat cycle if fighting on deck. Reduce all ID that they take by 1. Lastly, on each combat cycle, they may dodge any one attack focused on them.

Fall on Your Sword! (Fathom 3)

NPC Privateers have a special technique they can use to remove a sword or pistol from a PC's hand. By charging an attack head on, a NPC Privateer can counter and manipulate his way to grabbing a PC's wrists. Then using a clockwise lean, they can rip a weapon out of that PC's hands and finish with a spinning attack. The end result: the PC is disarmed and gets attacked with his own weapon.

To use this attack, an NPC rolls his Hustle. If he gets 2 or more Victories on the roll, he automatically pulls off this devastating maneuver. The target NPC's weapon attack deals +2d10 WD, representing the stolen weapon being used on the target. The PC is also considered disarmed and cannot recover his weapon. NPC's cannot use this ability on a PC without a weapon or a weapon that cannot be disarmed such as Steam Soldier Gauntlet attachments.

Roman Boxing (Fathom 7)

Certain NPC Privateers have learned to fight exceptionally well while absolutely plastered on rum. The most prolific of these drunken boxers is none other than the most notorious lecher himself, Dread. He's perfected a style of fighting that relies on an opponent underestimating his sobriety, thus giving him an advantage to avoid and deflect attacks. Dread had originally dubbed this technique "Rum and Boxing", but due to his slurred speech at the time, it was heard as "Roman Boxing" which it has been referred to as thereafter.

Roman Boxing gives the NPC Privateer opponents' a -5 penalty to all of their attacks. In addition, it allows the NPC to take both an Active Guard and an attack in the same combat cycle.

Tacked to the Deck (Fathom 5)

Sometimes a NPC Privateer needs to keep a PC from moving around too much. The best ability for this is Tacked to the Deck. The NPC Privateer targets a piece of loose clothing, an errant chain, or even a foot or hand, and plunges their sword into it far enough where the blade goes clean through to the other side pinning the PC to a wall or floor. This renders the PC unable to maneuver to defend.

To attempt this ability, a NPC Privateer declares a target and rolls his Hustle + [Melee]. If he targeted a piece of clothing or chain and rolls two or more Victories, he staples the PC to the floor with his weapon and the PC suffers a -5 penalty to all rolls until he takes one combat action to make a Brawn roll to free himself. The NPC Privateer is disarmed unless he has a second weapon.

If the NPC was aiming for a hand or a foot, he needs more than two Victories to succeed and the attack does +1d10 TD. The PC takes 1d10 WD each round his hand remains pinned.

Bacchanalians

Gravelord (Fathom 10 Only)

There are a few people in the Bayou who have managed to find a way to cheat death! A NPC Bacchanalian who has the Gravelord ability has no Iron attribute on his NPC Blueprint. Instead, he automatically achieves Victory on all Iron rolls and has a permanent DT of 13. The NPC also cannot incur ID and does not experience character death until his head is severed from his body or he is incinerated. WD and TD still cause the NPC to fall unconscious.

Zombie Powder (Ghost Horsemen and Voodoo Riders only)

Zombie Powder is a special Bijou that Vaughn Jean-Baptiste gives to his men. This Bijou gives +2 Brawn and +2 Hustle while under its effects. While in combat or under stressful situations, the Engineer may roll 1d10 for Backfire. A Victory results in the Zombie Powder user either becoming brain damaged, reducing both Brains and Allure to 0 or the user entering a blood frenzy, gaining +2 ID to any damage that they deal.



Saturated (Fathom 7 Per Cocktail)

NPC Bacchanalians can have their blood saturated with a specific Bloodore drink. This gives them the drink's effects permanently. Backfire dice still apply and NPC's should never have more than two Saturations on a single Blueprint.

Dakota Braves

Living Wachabe (Fathom 8)

The Black Bear or Wachabe is the Sioux life guardian and God of strength. Dakota Braves with this Fathom Ability are considered guardians of the Sioux way of life and are regarded as walking Gods. Living Wachabe cannot be attacked by Dakota citizens who have a Fathom less than 9 and automatically succeed on all Allure related rolls.

Null Mind (Fathom 6)

Developed by Shadow Moon, this technique counters other Fathom Abilities that are lower than Fathom 6. Null Mind locks down any special combat actions the opponent would want to use. Whenever a Null Mind

user performs a normal attack, no Fathom Abilities can be used that combat cycle. Additionally, any damage caused by the Null Mind user causes his target to lose one Boiler Point.

Spirits' Return (Fathom 5)

The ancient Dakota religions have been abandoned by most of their people, but not all. NPC Dakota Braves following the shamanistic teachings of Shouting Thunder and Shadow Moon are rewarded by the Animal Spirits granting +4 to all of their Brawn and Hustle skills. Additionally, their physical appearance increases giving them a +3 to their Iron attribute and +6 to their Intimidation skill. The drawback to this ability is that the NPC has a Technology Level of 0 and can only use archaic weapons: knives, bows, and spears.

Duelist

Bai Ze Kenjutsu (Duelist 6; Song Xi Ling and her Shogunate Students Only)

The most famous Duelist in the Shogunate has developed her own fighting style that adapts to her adversaries. Named after a legendary beast from both Chinese and Japanese mythology, the Bai Ze told an aging Emperor the secrets of all the mystical creatures in the world. This fighting style may only be used in melee combat. Following any attack directed at the Bai Ze Kenjutsu user that NPC makes an immediate attack with an additional bonus equal to the modifiers made in the previous attack. This attack causes an additional 2 ID.

Feign Weakness (Duelist 7)

All of the great duelists know that you have to take risks to defeat a superior opponent. This ability allows an NPC Duelist to feign a weakness in defense by not stopping an opponent's attack. After he takes the damage, his next melee attack incurs no negative wound modifiers and has a damage bonus of +3d10 TD. The Duelist can still make this attack even if he is rendered unconscious.

Morido (Duelist 9; Slate and His Students Only)

This ability is reserved for NPC's who have trained with Slate Akicita personally and learned his exclusive swordsmanship style called *Morido* or "The Way of the Forest". Students of this style can do the following:

- Always choose the order of the combat cycle (If two NPC's possess Morido, have them roll off to determine who chooses. If Slate is present, he always goes first.)
- Take two combat actions.

If this ability is being used by Slate, he can take his combat actions or Boost whenever he wants in the combat cycle. Additionally, all of his melee attacks cause an extra +3d10 TD.

Head Shot (Fathom 6)

NPC Duelists are so good, that they end a duel in one sweeping attack, the ever-feared "Head Shot." To make a Head Shot, the Duelist must roll their [Hustle + Melee OR Ranged Attack]. If they get two or more Victories without the use of Boiler Points or Pressure Dice on the roll, then the Head Shot is successful. The target of the attack takes either a shot in the head from a ranged weapon, which does 5d10 TD, or if it was a melee attack, they get decapitated.

Knights of Liberty

Dual Genius (Fathom 4)

NPC Knights have the single most powerful ability of any Genius in the game. They can use Fathom Abilities from another Genius listed in *The Player's Workshop*, except for the Dakota Brave, up to Fathom 5. Generally, Fathom Abilities never overlap into other Geniuses in SFV. However, the Engineer needs as much flexibility as possible to create a multitude of diverse and interesting NPC's, so the Knights have the ability to have Dual Genius'. This NPC Fathom Ability may not be given to a PC Knight's squire.

Mad Hatters

Deux ex Machina (Fathom 8)

The Deux ex Machina Fathom Ability was originally built for The General to use exclusively, but it can be adapted to other Mad Hatters. The General's entire body was surgically enhanced by the League of the Well-Crafted into clockwork war machine. The only remaining human bits are his heart, spinal cord, brain,

and eyes; everything else is made of pressurized carbon-coated Bloodore. As a result, he does not incur dice penalties for wounds. His mechanical body also makes him stronger and faster. All of his rolls receive a +3 bonus during the combat cycle and an Iron bonus of +5. Finally, his body reduces all damage by -2 ID, -2 WD, and -1 TD.

NPC's with the Deux ex Machina ability are also considered Fathom 4 Steam Soldiers and have access to all of their Fathom Abilities.

Professional

High Stakes Treasure Hunter (Fathom 5)

What good is being insanely wealthy if you can't have a bit of fun at others expense? There is a select group of aristocrats in SFV who engage in games of travel and intrigue called High Stakes Treasure Hunting. These millionaires hide treasures in very dangerous places for other millionaires to risk life and limb to find. If an NPC Professional has this Fathom Ability, he has access to unlimited resources and wealth. The NPC also gets +3 to his Allure and +4 to all his Allure skills because his has become the "Most Interesting Man Alive."

Steam Soldiers

Harbinger of War (Fathom 5)

A war-hardened veteran is worth ten lesser men on the battlefield. NPC Steam Soldiers have seen many battles and tactics are flawless. NPC's may make an additional combat action in each combat cycle!

EP Resistant (Fathom 7)

This NPC Soldier is resistant to fire, freezing, rust, and electrical currents due to his Bloodore suit being fused with pressurized carbon. Also, his armor cannot be physically manipulated by Tesla Conductors.

Tesla Conductor

Amplified Attack (Fathom 8)

High Fathom Conductor NPC's can send scalding electric charges to their hands, feet, melee, or ranged weapons which do immense damage. Every attack done by an NPC with this ability does $[EP \times 1d10 \text{ WD}] + 1d10 \text{ TD}$. For example, if Dr. Hawkings with an EP of 6 used this ability, he would deal $6d10 \text{ WD}, 1d10 \text{ TD}$



to a target.

Shock Shield (Fathom 9)

Fathom 9 and 10 Conductor's literally can use their EP to create an electro-magnetic barrier to the outside world. They call it a Shock Shield. The Shock Shield prevents all ID and WD for their EP in combat rounds. As an example, if Silverhorn used a Shock Shield, he would prevent ID and WD for six rounds because his EP skill rank is 6.

Time Stride (Fathom 7)

This ability allows a NPC Conductor to use his EP to move exceptionally fast. The NPC can take up to three combat actions per round and has a Velocity of 4.

Building Your Own NPC Fathom Abilities

The previous section highlighted a number of possible NPC Fathom Abilities, but by no means are NPC's limited to these exclusively. We encourage you to create your own NPC Fathom Abilities and this process is further explained in the next chapter...

3.4 Bacchanalian Drink Creation

Are your players tired chasing the same old green fairy around the bar? It might be time to mix it up and create some fresh cocktails. The following sections contain the rules for developing brand new drinks for your PC's. As the Engineer, *you* have the final say in cocktail creation, including all Backfire effects. Overpowered cocktails can rapidly drain the fun from sessions of SFV, so make sure you scrutinize your Bacchanalian's creations with a careful eye.

The Top Shelf

PC's who want to create new cocktails are limited by their Fathoms. Bacchanalians can create a new cocktail starting at the second Fathom. From Fathoms two until six, they can make one new cocktail per Fathom. At Fathoms beyond six, they get two new cocktails per Fathom. By the time the Bacchanalian arrives at the tenth Fathom they should be full of good spirits!

Rolling Over

The attribute roll for a PC to successfully use a cocktail is Iron. However, for player-created cocktails, penalties of -1 or -2 should be applied as these drinks are custom creations that lack the time-tested recipes of the standard cocktails. In cases where Attributes besides Iron are rolled, penalties may be given up to -4.

Making New Cocktails

As long as the PC has ample in-game time to research and experiment with new cocktails, no rolls are necessary in creating a new cocktail. There should also be



a valid reason or plot hook in order to create the new cocktail. This can be as simple as wanting to impress a brawny teammate, giving a lecture to other Bacchanalians, or finding a rare herb that hasn't been tried in a cocktail yet. PC cannot create new cocktails "on the fly," in combat, or in stressful situations. The art of creating cocktails is a method and procedure that's closely guarded by Bacchanalians.

Backfire Dice

When adding Backfire Dice to new Cocktails, use the following guidelines:

Bijous: Use 1d10 Backfire Dice as described in the PW to reduce the affected skill or attribute. A Victory on the Backfire die reduces the skill or attribute by one per Victory rolled; the effect ends when a total penalty of -3 is applied to the attribute.

Jokers: Apply 1d10 to 4d10 Backfire Dice based upon the suit and effect. For Jokers that do not cause damage, 1d10 or 2d10 is appropriate. Joker effects that deal damage should incur more Backfire. Consider applying up to 4d10's worth of Backfire Dice.

Derbies: These drinks can have 2d10 – 4d10 Backfire Dice depending on the effect. A Victory rolled on these dice should negate the effect of the Derby.

New Bijous

Bijous are cocktails that give a PC a temporary boost in their Attributes. Here are the guidelines if a PC desires to create a new Bijou:

Skill Increases

One option for new Bijous is mixing them to raise a PC's skills. Not all skills can be raised with Bijous. Work skills require intuitive thinking, no cocktail modify this skill set. Bijous can only increase skills that involve use of sensory organs and physical prowess. For example, cocktails that heighten the PC's sense of smell would aid in using Investigation.

When creating skill altering cocktails, PC's can raise two skills by two points each. The Backfire penalty is similar to normal Bijous; -1 is applied to both skills should the Backfire roll be victorious.

Example

Ace, a Bacchanalian PC, has created a new Bijou, the "Muscle Tonic." It provides a +2 bonus to his Lift and Leap skills while active. Each combat cycle the Engineer rolls a 1d10 for Backfire, a Victory reduces both skills by 1.

Higher Attributes, But At A Cost

Another option for newly created Bijous is to have them add higher bonuses to rolls. Bonuses cannot go higher than +3 to a single attribute. Additionally, attribute penalties should be added to maintain a net bonus of +2. The penalties associated with these Bijous should be determined randomly, as to prevent the PC from creating the "Ultimate Martini" in which the penalty Attribute is trivialized.

Example

Ace has created another new Bijou, the "Alice's Emotion," which gives +3 Allure. When consumed, Ace receives a -1 penalty to a random Attribute.

Jokers

These cocktails effects are only limited by your PC's imagination. Almost any effect can be created as long as there's an appropriate penalty and a fair number of Backfire Dice associated with it.

Different Effects by Suit

The Lower Suits' effects are fairly minor. Damage caused by a Lower Suit Joker should be limited to 5 ID or less. Penalties associated with Lower Suit Jokers are relatively trivial. Usually they are a nuisance or hindrance that can be represented by a movement penalty or a skill penalty no greater than -2.

For the Greater Suits, the PC will create more potent effects. These Jokers may add WD to attacks, provide bonuses to die rolls, or have other perception-altering effects that can be used on multiple targets. Penalties associated with these Jokers might cause WD damage, alter the PC's actions in a combat cycle, or negatively affect the entire Team with penalties.

As PC's are limited in the number of Noble Suit Jokers that they have access to, these cocktails tend to be most potent. The most important aspect of creating new Noble Suit Jokers is to keep them balanced by applying a fair but sufficient number of Backfire Dice. Penalties

tied to Noble Suits should be excessive, possibly affecting the PC by negating the effect entirely or causing permanent damage to his body.

Derbies

Derbies are the most powerful drinks in SFV. They are so strong that they take 8 hours to become active. Abilities granted by Derbies are ultimately left to the imagination of the PC and the approval of the Engineer. As a result, the rules for creating Derbies are loose and open to whatever concept you and your players decide. As a guiding recommendation, consider applying penalties such as nullifying or halving the effect of the drink because of the drink's long preparation time.

THE DRAFT BOARD

GAME SET UP

SCALE OF STORY: EPOCH OR ONE SHORT STORY

NAME OF THE CHRONICLE:

SETTING:

STORY TYPE:

BRIEF PLOT SYNOPSIS

LIST PLOT HOOKS

DEVELOPMENT SCORING

STORY CHECKPOINT #1:

DEPTH VALUE: _____

STORY CHECKPOINT #2:

DEPTH VALUE: _____

STORY CHECKPOINT #3:

DEPTH VALUE: _____

STORY CHECKPOINT #4:

DEPTH VALUE: _____

STORY CHECKPOINT #5:

DEPTH VALUE: _____

THE TRAIN IS LEAVING THE STATION

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