THE STRANGE™

PLAYER'S GUIDE

BY BRUCE R. CORDELL AND MONTE COOK

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CREDITS
Writers/Designers Bruce R. Cordell and Monte Cook
Rules Developer Monte Cook
Creative Director Shanna Germain
Proofreader Ray Vallese
Cover Designer and Lead Artist Matt Stawicki
Graphic Designer Sarah Robinson

Artists
Brenoch Adams, Reece Ambrose, Dreamstime, Joe Slucher, Lee Smith, Grzegorz Pedrycz, Matt Stawicki,
Cyril Terpent, Tiffany Turrill

Monte Cook Games Editorial Team
Scott C. Bourgeois, David Wilson Brown, Eric Coates, Ryan Klemm, Jeremy Land,
Laura Wilkinson, George Ziets

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The shots from Jim's Glock 41 echoed through the office building's plain white corridor. The security guards returned fire. Karen rounded the corner, breathing hard, to stand behind Jim and Matt.

"Diane can't initiate the translation with this gunfight going on," she told them. "Even if I help her hasten, it'll still take too long."

"Uh, we're doing our best," Matt said. He lifted the device he was holding. It looked a little like a label maker, but it emitted a green blast of energy that sent a suddenly paralyzed guard crashing to the floor.

Without hesitating, Karen stepped in front of the two men, amid the hail of bullets, and began to talk. She talked of beauty and family and childhood. The hallway grew silent except for the sound of her voice. Guns were lowered. A guard took off his helmet, seemingly intent on not missing a word that she said. All of them stared at her as if she were the only person in their world.

Karen finished quietly, and the guards continued to stare. "That will hold them for a while," she whispered to Matt and Jim. "Let's move."

The three of them ran to the CEO's office. They had already ransacked it and found a map of the September Project's secret base. But the map hadn't shown any location on Earth. Rather, it showed another world—Ardeyn, a recursion built and hosted in an alien data network that they called the Strange.

Diane sat cross-legged on the mahogany desk. Matt locked the door and Jim pushed a heavy bookcase in front of it. The team took positions around Diane without a word. They had translated before, and they all knew their roles. They closed their eyes, drawing upon their quickened talents that came from a connection to the Strange itself.

They focused on Ardeyn.

They'd been there before, but that didn't mean that the process was easy or foolproof. It was a place of magic and dragons, once fictional but now given a reality of its own thanks to the Strange. It was a frightening place to go, but no more frightening than the offices of a major corporation with murderous security guards and a secret agenda that threatened more than one world.

Minutes later, they opened their eyes. They stood in the exact spot where they'd left Ardeyn last time they were there—a forest clearing in the Green Wilds. Jim stood in glistening armor and both Matt and Karen wore leather jerkins. Diane's blue and gold robes trailed across the tall grass, and she held a long staff covered in glowing runes. It took a few moments to acclimate to the new context around them. They were different people, yet the same, and they stood in a meadow that could not be found on Earth.

The map, part of the context of Earth, didn't come with them, but it didn't matter. Matt's memory was sharp. "This way," he pointed. "We don't have much time."

Welcome to the Strange, a place containing many alternate worlds called recursions. When fictions on Earth leak into the Strange, they become limited realities of their own.

As a character playing **THE STRANGE™**, you have a unique connection to the Strange—you're quickened, which means you can visit and explore these recursions, defend them (and Earth) from threats large and small, and maybe even create a few recursions of your own!

This book is *The Strange Player's Guide*, not the full rulebook. The *Player's Guide* offers a brief overview of the setting and the rules of the game, and provides all the information you need to create a character so you can play The Strange, explore various recursions hosted by the dark energy network, and discover its wonders and dangers for yourself. To help you begin exploring right away, we've provided you with an assortment of pregenerated characters (see page 82).

In a roleplaying game, the players take on the roles of people in a fictional world (though the fictional world you begin playing in The Strange looks a lot like modern-day Earth). Each player creates a character to portray, and together, the players create a story. In their imagination, the players experience the same challenges and rewards that their characters experience. To facilitate this, the rules of the game govern whether characters succeed or fail at what they try to do.

In addition to the players who are the characters in the story, there is another player—the game master—who is not only the arbiter of the rules but also the crafter of the narrative. The game master (GM) introduces complications, enemies, allies, twists, and surprises into the story. He or she should have a copy of The Strange corebook, which includes all the information from this book, plus much more. If you have additional questions about The Strange, the worlds within it, or the terms used throughout this book, your GM should be able to answer them using the corebook.

The Strange is all about exploration and story. In the game, your character will discover wonders of alternate recursions, and in them, alternate rules of existence including magic, mad science, psionics, and more. You will uncover mysteries to solve and meet interesting people who populate all these recursions. You will discover dangerous foes in the form of demons forged of corrupted dead souls, genetically engineered clone soldiers, mutants living in the aftermath of the apocalypse, and even some of your favorite (or most feared) characters from literature, brought to life in a recursion! You'll also discover that the alien data network that hosts these many worlds around Earth also seeds them with odd bits of flotsam called cyphers that will aid your characters in whichever recursion they visit.

The key to playing The Strange is the story. The way to "win" this game is to come away with a great tale. Always remember that your character is one of the main heroes in a fabulous narrative that blends many genres, including horror, science fiction, fantasy, and modern-day espionage. The many recursions of The Strange are amazing places, and the challenges and setbacks you face are part of that story. Through your character, you will discover things unlike anything you've dreamed of and in so doing craft a tale with your friends that you'll always remember.

Read through How to Play the Strange (page 8), and then jump right in and make a character. You don't have to read through every character option right away—just choose a type, descriptor, and focus that sound interesting, and get going!

Whole new worlds beckon, and all of them are Strange.
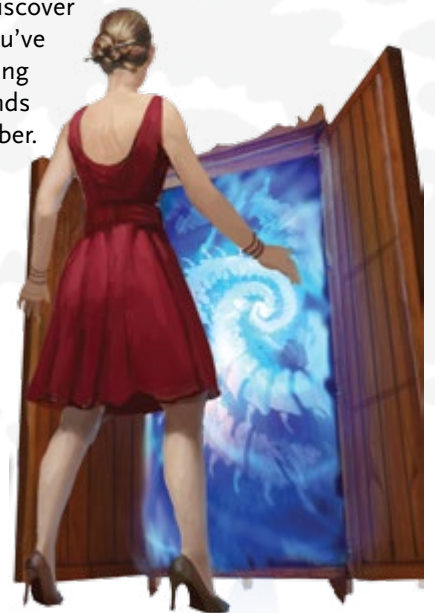
WELCOME TO THE STRANGE

FROM THE DESK OF LEAD OPERATIVE KATHERINE MANNERS

Welcome. You're here because you've sworn to defend the Earth from all threats of the Strange. For that, you have the organization's heartfelt gratitude. Now it's time to get down to business.

As an operative of our organization, you're expected to commit certain critical and confidential pieces of information to memory. That information includes what you'll find in this briefing dossier. Please read the entire document, then read it again. You know what to do with it after that.

Thank you for your prompt attention,

Katherine J. Manners

STRANGE PRIMER

The Strange is a network created by ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ aliens several billion years ago. Estate researchers believe the Strange was built to allow intergalactic travel. It's unknown at this time what went wrong, but the builders lost control of their creation. In the course of passing aeons, the Strange became something wild, chaotic, and without rules or laws (which is why we also call it the Chaosphere).

NATURE OF THE STRANGE

Think of the Strange as its own boundless realm—as a separate universe underlying our own. The Chaosphere has no direct relationship to matter and space as we understand it: There is no up or down, there is no ground beneath a visitor's feet in most places, and merely gazing into its lawless void damages the human brain ("alienation" is the preferred term for the pain and derangement most operatives experience upon visiting the Strange).

PLANETOVORES

Creatures live in the Chaosphere. The worst of these are called planetovores. They thrive on the fact that no rules bind them within the Strange. We call these creatures planetovores because a) the Estate has good evidence that one tried to consume our planet when Earth first discovered the Chaosphere; and b) because they ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓.

Planetovores can't normally reach areas where natural laws restrict the environment, such as on Earth. But bridges up to Earth can be made, either accidentally or purposefully. Finding or constructing such a bridge seems to be the main goal of all planetovores and their intermediaries. Preventing that from happening, by whatever means necessary, is the Estate's primary mission.

RECURSIONS IN THE STRANGE

Stable regions called recursions exist within the Strange. Recursions are like tiny, self-contained universes. Each one operates under a particular set of rules, which means that planetovores have almost as difficult a time entering a recursion as they do entering Earth. In fact, a recursion can act as a barrier for preventing a planetovore from getting to Earth, thanks to the presence of the recursion's rules.

Earth and the visible universe operate under a familiar set of rules, called Standard Physics. But different recursions often operate under alternate sets of rules. The Estate has classified the following additional laws under which recursions operate: Magic, Mad Science, Psionics, Substandard Physics, and ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓.

RECURSION OF ARDEYN

Ardeyn is a recursion where magic works, dragons live, and creatures that might as well be demigods exist. Ardeyn's creation was the unanticipated side effect of computer researcher Carter Morrison's discovery of the Strange, and the Estate was founded in his memory. Carter Morrison's whereabouts are unknown at this time.

Ardeyn is populated by humans and a race of people called qephilim—please ask your lead for a qephilim visual reference at this time. The Estate has several agents embedded in Ardeyn, and its largest field office covertly operates in the city of Hazurrium. One of our main activities is keeping tabs on the Betrayer. Though the Betrayer is not a planetovore, we suspect he aspires to become one.

RECURSION OF RUK

Ruk operates under the law of Mad Science, and it appears to be populated with Earthlings. Don't be fooled. Ruk comes from someplace else in the universe and has been hiding in the Shoals of Earth for thousands of years, possibly much longer. Ruk contains more factions than the Estate can track. We believe the most dangerous to be a faction named the Karum, who believe that if Earth were destroyed, Ruk would be free. Obviously, we—you—cannot let that happen.

OTHER RECURSIONS

Most recursions are created through what we've come to understand as "fictional leakage." The upshot of this is that you can probably find aspects of your favorite fictional universe rendered as a recursion. Yes, that means that somewhere around Earth is a recursion featuring Star ▬▬▬▬▬▬. Note: That is no excuse to ▬▬

BADGES

As an operative, you are required to carry your Estate badge while on campus and off, unless you are working undercover. Your badge allows you to gain entry to Estate buildings and into areas of those buildings for which you are cleared. **Badges are to be displayed above the waist at all times while on campus.**

TRANSLATION AND YOU

During your time with the Estate, you'll translate between recursions. Sometimes new operatives find the process of transforming into someone with different abilities and maybe a different shape to be disconcerting. If you become distressed or confused after translating, tell another operative immediately. Enemies of the Estate often target addled operatives first.

CYPHERS

As a beginning operative, you've been issued one or more cyphers. A cypher is a small device that can create a single, often spectacular effect. A cypher may look ordinary, but each one is something special—a manifestation of the Strange that we don't fully understand. We expect you to use your cyphers to accomplish your missions. Hoarding cyphers is imprudent and a waste of needed resources; replacement cyphers are always around the next corner for someone with your abilities.

OTHER QUESTIONS

Please bring urgent questions, concerns, requisitions for equipment, or vacation requests to one of the Estate leads or chiefs. For everything else, please rely on your own discretion. That discretion is why we invited you to become an operative of the Estate.

Explore • Defend • Create

HOW TO PLAY THE STRANGE

The key to the Strange is the story. The way to "win" this game is to come away with a great tale.

The rules of The Strange are quite straightforward at their heart, since all gameplay is based around a few core concepts.

This section provides a summary of how to play The Strange. It's a great place to gain a sense of how the game works.

The Strange uses a twenty-sided die (d20) to determine the results of most actions. Whenever a roll of any kind is called for and no die is specified, roll a d20.

The game master (GM) sets a difficulty for any given task. There are 10 degrees of difficulty. Thus, the difficulty of a task can be rated on a scale of 1 to 10.

Each difficulty has a target number associated with it. The target number is always three times the task's difficulty, so a difficulty 3 task has a target number of 9. To succeed at the task, you must roll the target number or higher.

Character skills, favorable circumstances, or excellent equipment can decrease the difficulty of a task. For example, if a character is trained in climbing, she turns a difficulty 6 climb into a difficulty 5 climb.

This is called decreasing the difficulty by one step. If she is specialized in climbing, she turns a difficulty 6 climb into a difficulty 4 climb. This is called decreasing the difficulty by two steps.

A skill is a category of knowledge, ability, or activity relating to a task, such as climbing, forensic science, or persuasiveness. A character who has a skill is better at completing related tasks than a character who lacks the skill. A character's level of skill is either trained (reasonably skilled) or specialized (very skilled).

If you are trained in a skill relating to a task, you decrease the difficulty of that task by one step. If you are specialized, you decrease the difficulty by two steps. A skill can never decrease a task's difficulty by more than two steps.

Anything else that reduces difficulty (help from an ally, a particular piece of equipment, or some other advantage) is referred to as an asset. Assets can never decrease a task's difficulty by more than two steps.

You can also decrease the difficulty of a given task by applying Effort.

To sum up, three things can decrease a task's difficulty: skills, assets, and Effort.

If you can decrease a task's difficulty to 0, you automatically succeed and don't need to make a roll.

TASK DIFFICULTY

TASK DIFFICULTY	DESCRIPTION	TARGET NO.	GUIDANCE
0	Routine	0	Anyone can do this basically every time.
1	Simple	3	Most people can do this most of the time.
2	Standard	6	Typical task requiring focus, but most people can usually do this.
3	Demanding	9	Requires full attention; most people have a 50/50 chance to succeed.
4	Difficult	12	Trained people have a 50/50 chance to succeed.
5	Challenging	15	Even trained people often fail.
6	Intimidating	18	Normal people almost never succeed.
7	Formidable	21	Impossible without skills or great effort.
8	Heroic	24	A task worthy of tales told for years afterward.
9	Immortal	27	A task worthy of legends that last lifetimes.
10	Impossible	30	A task that normal humans couldn't consider (but one that doesn't break the laws of physics).

WHEN DO YOU ROLL?

Any time your character attempts a task, the game master (GM) assigns a difficulty to that task, and you roll a d20 against the associated target number. When you attempt to hack a computer, fire a pistol at a vampire, jump from a burning vehicle, analyze a genetic sample, persuade the guard to let you go in exchange for a bribe, craft an object, use a psychic talent to control a foe's mind, or translate into another recursion, you make a d20 roll.

If you attempt something that has a difficulty of 0, no roll is needed—you automatically succeed. Many actions have a difficulty of 0. Examples include walking across the room and opening a door, using a special ability to negate gravity so you can fly, using an ability to heal your friend, or activating a device (that you already understand) to erect a force field. These are all routine actions and don't require rolls.

Using skill, assets, and Effort, you can decrease the difficulty of potentially any task to 0 and thus negate the need for a roll. Walking across a narrow wooden beam is tricky for most people, but for an experienced gymnast, it's routine. You can even decrease the difficulty of an attack on a foe to 0 and succeed without rolling.

If there's no roll, there's no chance for failure. There's also no chance for remarkable success (in The Strange, this usually means rolling a 19 or 20 and is called a special roll). Thus, while you are not required to roll if you decrease the difficulty of a task to 0, you always have the option to do so.

COMBAT

Making an attack in combat works the same way as any other roll: the GM assigns a difficulty to the task, and you roll a d20 against the associated target number.

The difficulty of your attack roll depends on how powerful your opponent is. Just as tasks have a difficulty from 1 to 10, creatures have a level from 1 to 10. Most of the time, the difficulty of your attack roll is the same as the creature's level. For example, if you attack a level 3 technician, it's a level 3 task, so your target number is 9.

Players make all the die rolls when playing The Strange. If a character attacks a creature, the player makes an attack roll; if a creature attacks a character, the player makes a defense roll.

The damage dealt by an attack is not determined by a roll—it's a flat number based on the weapon or attack used. For example, a spear always does 4 points of damage.

ARMOR

Your Armor characteristic reduces the damage you take from attacks directed at you. You get Armor from wearing physical armor (such as a thick leather jacket or chainmail) or from special abilities. Like weapon damage, Armor is a flat number, not a roll. If you're attacked, subtract your Armor from the damage you take. For example, a leather jacket gives you 1 point of Armor, meaning that you take 1 less point of damage from attacks. If a street thug hits you with a knife for

THE STRANGE GLOSSARY

GAMING TERMS

Adventure: A single portion of the campaign with a beginning and an end. Usually defined at the beginning by a goal put forth by the PCs and at the end by whether or not they achieve that goal.

Campaign: A series of sessions strung together with an overarching story (or linked stories) with the same characters. Often, but not always, a campaign involves a number of adventures.

Character: Anything that can act in the game. While this includes PCs and human NPCs, it also technically includes creatures, aliens, mutants, automatons, animate plants, and so on.

Game Master (GM): The player who doesn't run a character, but instead guides the flow of the story (and runs all the NPCs).

Nonplayer Character (NPC): Characters run by the GM. Think of them as the minor characters in the story, or the villains or opponents. This includes any kind of creature as well as people.

Party: A group of player characters (and perhaps some NPC allies).

Player Character (PC): A character run by a player rather than the GM. Think of them as the main characters in the story.

Player: The players who run characters in the game (maybe you, unless you're the GM).

Session: A single play experience. A session usually lasts a few hours. Sometimes one adventure can be accomplished in a session. More often, one adventure is multiple sessions.

THE STRANGE TERMS

Artifact: A major device with powers beyond the norm that typically can be used more than once to produce the same result.

Cypher: A self-contained snippet of "god code" taken from the Strange that creates a one-time effect within a limited area, usually an effect that can break a recursion's rules or a prime world's natural laws. A cypher reliably translates between recursions and even up to Earth.

Dark Energy: Roughly 70% of the universe is made of dark energy. It permeates the cosmos and is accelerating the expansion of the universe. It's what scientists who are not quickened or who otherwise remain oblivious to the truth call the Strange.

Moves: An ability that is specific to vectors.

Paradox: A character type in The Strange that breaks the rules of reality, whether using science, the power of the mind, spells, or something else entirely.

Quickened: A unique connection to the Strange that gives PCs a portion of their type abilities.

Recursion: A self-contained universe within the Strange, no matter how large or small, that has its own unique set of laws that govern the reality within it.

Recursor: Someone who leaves Earth to explore recursions and the Strange.

Revision: An ability that is specific to paradoxes.

Spark, the: The touch of consciousness and self-awareness that can (but does not always) occur in beings native to a recursion. The spark tends to spread virally once it occurs.

Spinner: A character type in The Strange that spins tales, spins lies, or spins a version of the truth that makes others see things in a whole new way.

Strange, the: An alien data network of what Earth scientists call "dark energy" that lies just outside what we know. Also known as the Chaosphere.

Stranger: A creature from the Strange (or, perhaps more often, a recursion) that comes to Earth.

Translation: The process of moving between Earth and a recursion, or between recursions. Recursors say they translate "up" to Earth if coming from a recursion or the Strange, or translate "down" to a recursion if coming from Earth.

Twist: An ability that is specific to spinners.

Vector: A character type in The Strange that uses persistent force to accomplish goals and overcome problems.

2 points of damage while you're wearing a leather jacket, you take only 1 point of damage. If your Armor reduces the damage from an attack to 0, you take no damage from that attack.

When you see the word "Armor" capitalized in the game rules (other than as the name of a special ability), it refers to your Armor characteristic—the number you subtract from incoming damage. When you see the word "armor" with a lowercase "a," it refers to any physical armor you might wear.

WEAPONS

Typical physical weapons come in three categories: light, medium, and heavy.

LIGHT WEAPONS inflict only 2 points of damage, but they reduce the difficulty of the attack roll by one step because they are fast and easy to use. Light weapons are punches, kicks, clubs, knives, handaxes, rapiers, and so on. Weapons that are particularly small are light weapons.

MEDIUM WEAPONS inflict 4 points of damage. Medium weapons include swords, shamshirs, maces, crossbows, small-caliber firearms, and so on. Most weapons are medium. Melee weapons that could be used in one hand (even if they're often used in two hands, such as a quarterstaff or spear) are usually medium weapons.

HEAVY WEAPONS inflict 6 points of damage, and you must use two hands to attack with them. Heavy weapons are huge swords, big guns, massive axes, talwars, slaughter accelerators, and so on. Anything that must be used in two hands is probably a heavy weapon.

BONUSES

Rarely, an ability or piece of equipment does not decrease a task's difficulty but instead adds a bonus to the die roll. Bonuses always add together, so if you get a +1 bonus from two different sources, you have a +2 bonus. If you get enough bonuses to add up to a +3 bonus for a task, treat it as an asset: Instead of adding the bonus to your roll, decrease the difficulty by one step. Therefore, you never add more than +1 or +2 to a die roll.

SPECIAL ROLLS

When you roll a natural 19 (the d20 shows "19") and the roll is a success, you also have a *minor effect*. In combat, a minor effect inflicts 3 additional points of damage with your attack, or, if you'd prefer a special result, you could decide instead that you knock the foe back, distract him, or something similar. When not in combat, a minor

effect could mean that you perform the action with particular grace. For example, when jumping down from a ledge, you land smoothly on your feet, or when trying to persuade someone, you convince her that you're smarter than you really are. In other words, you not only succeed but also go a bit further.

When you roll a natural 20 (the d20 shows "20") and the roll is a success, you also have a *major effect*. This is similar to a minor effect, but the results are more remarkable. In combat, a major effect inflicts 4 additional points of damage with your attack, but again, you can choose instead to introduce a dramatic event such as knocking down your foe, stunning him, or taking an extra action. Outside of combat, a major effect means that something beneficial happens based on the circumstance. For example, when climbing up a cliff wall, you make the ascent twice as fast. When a roll grants you a major effect, you can choose to use a minor effect instead if you prefer.

In combat (and only in combat), if you roll a natural 17 or 18 on your attack roll, you add 1 or 2 additional points of damage, respectively. Neither roll has any special effect options—just the extra damage.

Rolling a natural 1 is always bad. It means that the GM introduces a new complication into the encounter.

RANGE AND SPEED

Distance is simplified into three categories: immediate, short, and long. (The inhabitants of Ruk and many other recursions have units of measurement different from those of Earth, but for ease of use, all distances have been converted to approximate U.S. standard and metric units.)

IMMEDIATE DISTANCE from a character is within reach or within a few steps. If a character stands in a small room, everything in the room is within immediate distance. At most, immediate distance is 10 feet (3 m). This can also be called "close range."

SHORT DISTANCE is anything greater than immediate distance but less than 50 feet (15 m) or so.

LONG DISTANCE is anything greater than short distance but less than 100 feet (30 m) or so. Beyond

that range, distances are always specified—500 feet (152 m), a mile (2 km), and so on.

Basically, it's not necessary to measure precise distances. Immediate distance is right there, practically next to the character. Short distance is nearby. Long distance is farther off.

All weapons and special abilities use these terms for ranges. For example, all melee weapons have immediate range—they are close-combat weapons, and you can use them to attack anyone within immediate distance of you. A thrown knife (and most other thrown weapons) has short range. Many guns have long range (though some have longer range, when specified). A paradox's Exception ability also has long range.

A character can move an immediate distance as part of another action. In other words, he can take a few steps over to the control panel and activate a switch. He can lunge across a small room to attack a foe. He can open a door and step through.

A character can move a short distance as his entire action for a turn. He can also try to move a long distance as his entire action, but the player might have to roll to see if the character slips, trips, or stumbles as the result of moving so far so quickly.

For example, if the player characters (PCs) are fighting a group of sark, any character can likely attack any sark in the general melee—they're all within immediate range. Exact positions aren't important. Creatures in a fight are always moving, shifting, and jostling, anyway. If one sark stayed back to use his crossbow, a character might have to use her entire action to move the short distance required to attack that foe. It doesn't matter if the sark is 20 feet (6 m) or 40 feet (12 m) away—it's simply considered short distance. It does matter if the sark is more than 50 feet (15 m) away because that distance would require a long move.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Experience points (XP) are rewards given to players when the GM intrudes on the story (this is called GM intrusion) with a new and unexpected challenge. For example, in the middle of combat, the GM might inform the player that he drops his weapon. To intrude in this manner, the GM must award the player 2 XP. The rewarded player, in turn, must immediately give one of those XP to another player and justify the gift (perhaps the other player had a good idea, told a funny joke, performed an action that saved a life, and so on).

Alternatively, the player can refuse the GM intrusion. If he does so, he doesn't get the 2 XP from the GM, and he must also spend 1 XP that he already has. If the player has no XP to spend, he can't refuse the intrusion.

The GM can also give players XP between sessions as a reward for recovering interesting artifacts or making discoveries during an adventure. You don't earn XP for killing foes or overcoming standard challenges in the course of play. The Strange is all about exploration, discovery, and creation.

Experience points are used primarily for character advancement (for details, see Creating Your Character, page 13), but a player can also spend 1 XP to reroll any die roll and take the better of the two rolls.

CYPHERS

Cyphers are manifestations of the Strange that have a single use. A character can carry cyphers and use them during the game. You can't bear many cyphers at a time because they cancel each other out if in too close a proximity. Gathering cyphers together in one place (such as your purse or daypack) is impossible.

Characters will find new cyphers frequently in the course of play, so players shouldn't hesitate to use their cypher abilities. Because cyphers are always different, the characters will always have new special powers to try.

There are two kinds of cyphers: anoetic and occultic.

ANOETIC CYPHERS are simple to use: a pill to swallow, a small handheld device with a switch to flip, or a bomb to throw.

OCCULTIC CYPHERS are more complex and more dangerous, but they often have better and more interesting effects. An occultic cypher counts as two cyphers for the purpose of determining how many you can bear at the same time.

OTHER DICE

In addition to a d20, you'll need a d6 (a six-sided die). Rarely, you'll need to roll a number between 1 and 100 (often called a d100 or d% roll), which you can do by rolling a d20 twice, using the last digit of the first roll as the "tens" place and the last digit of the second roll as the "ones" place. For example, rolling a 17 and a 9 gives you 79, rolling a 3 and an 18 gives you 38, and rolling a 20 and a 10 gives you 00 (also known as 100). If you have a d10 (a ten-sided die), you can use it instead of the d20 to roll numbers between 1 and 100.

CREATING YOUR CHARACTER

This section explains how to create characters to play in a game of The Strange. When you're ready to build your first character, check out the Character Creation Walkthrough on page 92 and the character sheets on page 94, or try one of the pregenerated characters starting on page 82.

When creating a character, you'll make several decisions that will shape your character, so the more you understand what kind of character you want to play, the easier character creation will be. The process involves understanding the values of three game statistics (Might, Speed, and Intellect) and choosing three aspects that determine your character's capabilities (descriptor, type, and focus).

Every character starts the game at the first tier. Tier is a measurement of power, toughness, and ability. Characters can advance up to the sixth tier.

CHARACTER STATS

Every player character has three defining characteristics, which are typically called "statistics" or "stats." These stats are Might, Speed, and Intellect. They are broad categories that cover many different but related aspects of a character.

MIGHT: Might defines how strong and durable your character is. The concepts of strength, endurance, constitution, hardiness, and physical prowess are all folded into this stat. Might isn't relative to size; instead, it's an absolute measurement. An elephant has more Might than the mightiest tiger, which has more Might than the mightiest rat, which has more Might than the mightiest spider.

Might governs actions from forcing doors open to walking for days without food to resisting disease. It's also the primary means of determining how much damage your character can sustain in a dangerous situation. Physical characters, tough characters, and characters interested in fighting should focus on Might.

SPEED: Speed describes how fast and physically coordinated your character is. The stat embodies quickness, movement, dexterity, and reflexes. Speed governs such divergent actions as dodging attacks, sneaking around quietly, and throwing a ball accurately. It helps determine whether you can move farther on your turn. Nimble, fast, or sneaky characters will want good Speed stats, as will those interested in ranged combat.

INTELLECT: This stat determines how smart, knowledgeable, and likable your character is. It includes intelligence, wisdom, charisma, education, reasoning, wit, willpower, and charm. Intellect governs solving puzzles, remembering facts, telling convincing lies, and using mental powers. Characters interested in communicating effectively, being accomplished scientists, and being respected theologians should stress their Intellect stat.

POOL, EDGE, AND EFFORT

Each stat has two components: your Pool and your Edge. You have a Might Pool and Might Edge, a Speed Pool and Speed Edge, and an Intellect Pool and Intellect Edge. Your Pool represents your raw, innate ability, and your Edge represents knowing how to use what you have. A third element ties into this concept: Effort. When your character really needs to accomplish a task, you apply Effort.

POOL

Your Pool is the most basic measurement of a stat. Comparing the Pools of two creatures will give you a general sense of which creature is superior in that stat. For example, a character who has a Might Pool of 16 is stronger (in a basic sense) than a character who has a Might Pool of 12. Most characters start with a Pool of 9 to 12 in most stats—that's the average range.

When your character is injured, sickened, or attacked, you temporarily lose points from one of

your stat Pools. The nature of the attack determines which Pool loses points. For example, physical damage from a sword reduces your Might Pool, a poison that makes you clumsy reduces your Speed Pool, and a psychic blast reduces your Intellect Pool. You can rest to regain lost points from a stat Pool (this is called recovering points in a Pool), and certain special abilities or cyphers might allow you to recover lost points quickly.

EDGE

Although your Pool is the basic measurement of a stat, your Edge is also important. When something requires you to spend points from a stat Pool, your Edge for that stat reduces the cost. However, Edge doesn't subtract from any damage you take.

For example, let's say you have a mental blast ability, and activating it costs 1 point from your Intellect Pool. Subtract your Intellect Edge from the activation cost, and the result is how many points you must spend to use the mental blast. If using your Edge reduces the cost to 0, you can use the ability for free.

Your Edge is probably different for each stat. For example, you could have a Might Edge of 1, a Speed Edge of 1, and an Intellect Edge of 0. You'll always have an Edge of at least 1 in one stat. Your Edge for a stat reduces the cost of spending points from that

stat Pool, but not from other Pools. Your Might Edge reduces the cost of spending points from your Might Pool, but it doesn't affect your Speed Pool or Intellect Pool.

A character who has a low Might Pool but a high Might Edge has the potential to perform Might actions consistently better than a character who has a Might Edge of 0. The high Edge will let her reduce the cost of spending points from the Pool, which means she'll have more points available to spend on applying Effort.

EFFORT

When your character really needs to accomplish a task, you can apply Effort. For a beginning character, applying Effort requires spending 3 points from the stat Pool appropriate to the action. Thus, if your character tries to dodge an attack (a Speed roll) and wants to increase the chance for success, you can apply Effort by spending 3 points from your Speed Pool. Effort lowers the difficulty of the task by one step. This is called applying one level of Effort. (You can also apply Effort to increase damage, as described in the next section.)

You don't have to apply Effort if you don't want to. If you choose to apply Effort to a task, you must do it before you attempt the roll—you can't roll first and then decide to apply Effort if you rolled poorly.

Applying more Effort can lower a task's difficulty further: each additional level of Effort reduces the difficulty by another step. Applying one level of Effort lowers the difficulty by one step, applying two levels lowers the difficulty by two steps, and so on. However, each level of Effort after the first costs only 2 points from the stat Pool instead of 3. So applying two levels of Effort costs 5 points (3 for the first level plus 2 for the second level), applying three levels costs 7 points (3 plus 2 plus 2), and so on.

Every character has an Effort score, which indicates the maximum number of levels of Effort that can be applied to a roll. A beginning (first-tier) character has an Effort of 1, meaning you can apply only one level of Effort to a roll. A more experienced character has a higher Effort score and can apply more levels of Effort to a roll. For example, a character who has an Effort of 3 can apply up to three levels of Effort to reduce a task's difficulty.

When you apply Effort, subtract your relevant Edge from the total cost of applying Effort. For example, let's say you need to make a Speed-based roll. To increase your chance for success, you decide to apply one level of Effort, which will reduce the difficulty of the task by one step. Normally, that would cost 3 points from your Speed Pool. However, you have a Speed Edge of 2, so you subtract that from the cost. Thus, applying Effort to the roll costs only 1 point from your Speed Pool.

What if you applied two levels of Effort to the Speed roll instead of just one? That would reduce the difficulty of the task by two steps. Normally, it would cost 5 points from your Speed Pool, but after subtracting your Speed Edge of 2, it costs only 3 points.

Once a stat's Edge reaches 3, you can apply one level of Effort for free. For example, if you have a Speed Edge of 3 and you apply one level of Effort to a Speed roll, it costs you 0 points from your Speed Pool. (Normally, applying one level of Effort would cost 3 points, but you subtract your Speed Edge from that cost, reducing it to 0.)

Skills and other advantages also decrease a task's difficulty, and you can use them in conjunction with Effort. In addition, your character might have special abilities or equipment that allow you to apply Effort to accomplish a special effect, such as knocking down a foe with an attack or affecting multiple targets with a power that normally affects only one.

EFFORT AND DAMAGE

Instead of applying Effort to reduce the difficulty of your attack, you can apply Effort to increase the amount of damage you inflict with an attack. For each level of Effort you apply in this way, you inflict 3 additional points of damage. This works for any kind of attack that inflicts damage, whether a sword, a crossbow, a mind blast, or something else.

When using Effort to increase the damage of an area attack, such as the explosion created by certain paradox revisions, you inflict 2 additional points of damage instead of 3 points. However, the additional points are dealt to all targets in the area. Further, even if one or more of the targets in the area resist the attack, you still inflict 1 point of damage to them.

When applying Effort to melee attacks, you can choose to spend points from either your Might Pool or your Speed Pool. When making ranged attacks, you may spend points only from your Speed Pool. This reflects that with melee you sometimes use brute force and sometimes use finesse, but with ranged attacks, it's always about careful targeting. When applying Effort to make mental attacks or similar, you spend points from your Intellect Pool.

MULTIPLE USES OF EFFORT AND EDGE

If your Effort is 2 or higher, you can apply Effort to multiple aspects of a single action. For example, if you make an attack, you can apply Effort to your attack roll, and apply Effort to increase the damage.

The total amount of Effort you apply can't be higher than your Effort score. For example, if your Effort is 2, you can apply up to two levels of Effort. You could apply one level to an attack roll and one level to its damage, two levels to the attack and no levels to the damage, or no levels to the attack and two levels to the damage.

You can use Edge for a particular stat only once per action. For example, if you apply Effort to a Might attack roll and to your damage, you can use your Might Edge to reduce the cost of one of those uses of Effort, not both. If you spend 1 Intellect point to activate your mind blast and one level of Effort to decrease the difficulty of the attack roll, you can use your Intellect Edge to reduce the cost of one of those things, not both.

STAT EXAMPLES

A beginning character is fighting a security guard in a server farm. She swings a pipe wrench at the guard, which is a level 2 creature and thus has a target number of 6. The character stands atop a desk and strikes downward at the guard, and the GM rules that this helpful tactic is an asset that decreases the difficulty by one step (to difficulty 1). That lowers the target number to 3. Attacking with a pipe wrench is a Might action; the character has a Might Pool of 11 and a Might Edge of

0. Before making the roll, she decides to apply a level of Effort to decrease the difficulty of the attack. That costs 3 points from her Might Pool, reducing the Pool to 8. But they appear to be points well spent. Applying the Effort lowers the difficulty from 1 to 0, so no roll is needed—the attack automatically succeeds.

Another character is attempting to convince a different guard to let him into a private office to speak to the company's chief operating officer. The GM rules that this is an Intellect action. The character is third tier and has an Effort of 3, an Intellect Pool of 13, and an Intellect Edge of 1. Before making the roll, he must decide whether to apply Effort. He can choose to apply one, two, or three levels of Effort, or apply none at all. This action is important to him, so he decides to apply two levels of Effort, decreasing the difficulty by two steps. Thanks to his Intellect Edge, applying the Effort costs only 4 points from his Intellect Pool (3 points for the first level of Effort plus 2 points for the second level minus 1 point for his Edge). Spending those points reduces his Intellect Pool to 9. The GM decides that convincing the guard is a difficulty 3 (demanding) task with a target number of 9; applying two levels of Effort reduces the difficulty to 1 (simple) and the target number to 3. The player rolls a d20 and gets an 8. Because this result is at least equal to the target number of the task, he succeeds. However, if he had not applied some Effort, he would have failed because his roll (8) would have been less than the task's original target number (9).

CHARACTER TIERS AND BENEFITS

Every character starts the game at the first tier. Tier is a measurement of power, toughness, and ability. Characters can advance up to the sixth tier. As your character advances to higher tiers, you gain more abilities, increase your Effort, and can improve a stat's Edge or increase a stat. Generally speaking, even first-tier characters are already quite capable. It's safe to assume that they already have some experience under their belt. This is not a "zero to hero" progression, but rather an instance of competent people refining and honing their capabilities and knowledge. Advancing to higher tiers is not really the "goal" of player characters, but rather a representation of how characters progress in a story.

To progress to the next tier, characters earn experience points (XP) by going on adventures and discovering new things—the Strange is about exploration and discovery of the recursions hidden "beneath" Earth. Experience points have many uses, and one use is to purchase character abilities. After your character purchases four character abilities, he

or she goes up to the next tier. Each benefit costs 4 XP, and you can purchase them in any order, but you must purchase one of each kind of benefit (after which you advance to the next tier) before you can purchase the same benefit again. The four character abilities are as follows.

INCREASING CAPABILITIES: You gain 4 points to add to your stat Pools. You can allocate the points among the Pools however you wish.

MOVING TOWARD PERFECTION: You add 1 to your Might Edge, your Speed Edge, or your Intellect Edge (your choice).

EXTRA EFFORT: Your Effort score increases by 1.

SKILLS: You become trained in one skill of your choice, other than attacks or defense. A character trained in a skill treats the difficulty of a related task as one step lower than normal. The skill you choose for this benefit can be anything you wish, such as climbing, jumping, persuading, or sneaking. You can also choose to be knowledgeable in a certain area of study, such as history or geology. You can even choose a skill based on your character's special abilities. For example, if your character can make an Intellect roll to blast an enemy with mental force, you can become trained in using that ability, treating its difficulty as one step lower than normal. If you choose a skill that you are already trained in, you become specialized in that skill, reducing the difficulty of related tasks by two steps instead of one.

Players can also spend 4 XP to purchase other special options in lieu of gaining a new skill. Selecting any of these options counts as the skill benefit necessary to advance to the next tier. The special options are as follows:

• Reduce the cost for wearing armor. This option lowers the Might cost by 1 and lowers the Speed reduction by 1.
• Add 2 to your recovery rolls.
• If you're a vector, select a new move. The move must be from your tier or a lower tier.
• If you're a spinner, select a new twist. The twist must be from your tier or a lower tier.
• If you're a paradox, select a new revision. The revision must be from your tier or a lower tier.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTOR, TYPE, AND FOCUS

To create your character, you build a simple statement that describes him or her. The statement takes this form: "I am a [fill in an adjective here] [fill in a noun here] who [fill in a verb here]."

SKILLS

Sometimes your character gains training in a specific skill or task. For example, your focus might mean that you're trained in sneaking, in climbing and jumping, or in social interactions. Other times, your character can choose a skill to become trained in, and you can pick a skill that relates to any task you think you might face

The game has no definitive list of skills. However, the following list offers ideas:

Astronomy	Forensic science	Mechanical repair
Balancing	Geography	Perception
Biology	Geology	Persuasion
Botany	Healing	Philosophy
Carrying	History	Pickpocketing
Climbing	Identifying	Riding
Computer science	Initiative	Smashing
Crafting	Intimidation	Sneaking
Deceiving	Jumping	Strange lore
Escaping	Lockpicking	Swimming

You could choose a skill that incorporates more than one of these areas (interacting might include deceiving, intimidating, and persuading) or is a more specific version of one (hiding might be sneaking when you're not moving). You could also make up more general, professional skills, such as engineer, architect, or sailor. Other recursions might suggest still more skills. In Ardeyn, for example, magical lore might be a skill. If you want to choose a skill that's not on this list, it's probably best to run it past the GM first, but in general, the most important aspect is to choose skills that are appropriate to your character. You can also choose to learn another language as a skill if it becomes important or useful.

Remember that if you gain a skill that you're already trained in, you become specialized in that skill. Because skill descriptions can be nebulous, determining whether you're trained or specialized might take some thinking. For example, if you're trained in lying and later gain a benefit that grants you skill with all social interactions, you become specialized in lying and trained in all other types of interactions. Being trained three times in a skill is no better than being trained twice (in other words, specialized is as good as it gets).

Only skills gained through character type abilities (such as a vector's moves or a paradox's revisions) or other rare instances allow you to become skilled with attack or defense tasks.

If you gain a special ability through your type, your focus, or some other aspect of your character, you can choose it in place of a skill and become trained or specialized in that ability. For example, let's say you're a paradox and one of your revision abilities is translation (the process that allows you to travel from one recursion to another). When it's time to choose a skill to be trained in, you can select translation as your skill (specifically, translation initiation). Doing so would reduce the difficulty every time you attempt a translation roll. Each ability you have counts as a separate skill for this purpose. You can't select "all revisions" as one skill and become trained or specialized in such a broad category.

Thus: "I am an *adjective noun* who *verbs*." For example, you might say, "I am a Tough vector who Is Licensed to Carry" or "I am a Skeptical paradox who Works the System."

In this sentence, the adjective is called your *descriptor*.

The noun is your character *type*.

The verb is called your *focus*.

Even though character type is in the middle of the sentence, that's where we'll start this discussion. (Just as in a sentence, the noun provides the foundation.)

Character type is the core of your character. In some roleplaying games, it might be called your character class. Your type helps determine your character's place in the world and relationship with other people in the setting. It's the noun of the sentence "I am an *adjective noun* who *verbs*."

You can choose from three character types: paradox, spinner, and vector.

Descriptor defines your character—it flavors everything you do. Your descriptor places your character in the situation (the first adventure, which starts the campaign) and helps provide motivation. It's the adjective of the sentence "I am an *adjective noun* who *verbs*."

You can choose from several character descriptors, such as Intelligent, Lucky, and Sharp-Eyed.

Focus is what your character does best within a given

recursion. Focus gives your character specificity and provides interesting new abilities that might come in handy. Your focus also helps you understand how you relate with the other player characters in your group, and in the recursion you find yourself in. It's the verb of the sentence "I am an *adjective noun* who *verbs*."

Focus usually changes when your character translates from one recursion to another. Descriptor and type do not change. For example, if you start out as a Tough vector who Is Licensed to Carry on Earth, you might become a Tough vector who Integrates Weaponry in Ruk. This change can reflect a similarity in flavor or a drastic change if you desire it. The above example, using Is Licensed to Carry and Integrates Weaponry, reflects a similarity in flavor (because both foci deal with using weapons). If you then went to Ardeyn and became a Tough vector who Practices Soul Sorcery, however, that would reflect a drastic change. Either way is fine, however—it's up to you.

There are many character foci to choose from, including Entertains, Solves Mysteries, and Works the System, but you can only select from a subset at any one time based on what recursion you are in. Once you've selected a focus for a particular recursion, it doesn't change. If you later visit a never-before-seen recursion, you may have the option to choose a new focus for it (while losing access to the focus you had in the previous recursion).

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Character types and foci grant PCs special abilities at each new tier. Using these abilities usually costs points from your stat Pools; the cost is listed in parentheses after the ability name. Your Edge in the appropriate stat can reduce the cost of the ability, but remember that you can apply Edge only once per action. For example, let's say a paradox with an Intellect Edge of 2 wants to use his Exception ability attack a foe, which costs 1 Intellect point. He also wants to increase the damage from the attack by using a level of Effort, which costs 3 Intellect points. The total cost for his action is 2 points from his Intellect Pool (1 point for the attack plus 3 points for using Effort minus 2 points from his Edge).

Sometimes the point cost for an ability has a + sign after the number. For example, the cost might be given as "2+ Intellect points." That means you can spend more points or more levels of Effort to improve the ability further.

Many special abilities grant a character the option to perform an action that she couldn't normally do, such as projecting rays of cold or attacking multiple foes at once. Using one of these abilities is an action unto itself, and the end of the ability's description says "Action"

to remind you. It also might provide more information about when or how you perform the action.

Some special abilities allow you to perform a familiar action—one that you can already do—in a different way. For example, an ability might let you wear heavy armor, reduce the difficulty of Speed defense rolls, or add 2 points of fire damage to your weapon damage. These abilities are called *enablers*. Using one of these abilities is not considered an action. Enablers either function constantly (such as being able to wear heavy armor, which isn't an action) or happen as part of another action (such as adding fire damage to your weapon damage, which happens as part of your attack action). If a special ability is an enabler, the end of the ability's description says "Enabler" to remind you.

BACKGROUND

Background is a vital part of your character. It's not just your backstory, but it involves how much you already know about the Strange, recursions, translating, and so on. It's possible to start with a character who knows nothing about the Strange. This is perhaps best for players who have never played the game before. For more experienced players, it's possible to start the game with some or even substantial knowledge of the Strange and all related topics.

RECURSORS AND THE SPARK

Anyone who leaves Earth to explore recursions and the Strange is called a *recursor*.

The spark is what recursors call a full awareness of one's self and one's place in the world—both the immediate world and the larger world (the Strange and various recursions). On the prime world of Earth, every intelligent being is self-aware. That's not always true in a recursion. Some inhabitants of a recursion might simply be more like puppets or robots, simply fulfilling a function or playing a role. Such inhabitants who become aware of themselves and exert free will and sentience have "gained the spark."

Having the spark doesn't directly equate to knowledge of the Strange or recursions, but a character who doesn't have the spark can never understand the Strange or recursions. For example, on a recursion that is basically Sherlock Holmes's London, most of the inhabitants just wander the streets carrying out appropriate actions like extras in a movie. If confronted, they truly believe that they are in London, on Earth, in the 19th century. If they have (or gain) the spark, they have a chance of learning and understanding that this isn't actually true.

On Earth, everyone has the spark. In Ardeyn, about

80 percent of the inhabitants have the spark. In Ruk, nearly 100 percent do. On a more typical recursion, that number might be more like 10 percent. Some recursions might not have any inhabitants with the spark.

All PCs, regardless of origin, have the spark.

QUICKENED

Quickened characters are those who have the spark and, in addition, possess a unique connection to the Strange. Quickened characters are very rare, and they may exist only on Earth or in recursions in Earth's "shoals." (These shoals include Ardeyn, Ruk, or other "nearby" recursions.) Beings on other prime worlds and their nearby recursions might not have this quality, ever, which separates Earth from the rest of the universe.

This, of course, is only theory.

Only quickened characters can translate without the help of a special object (like a gate). A quickened character's connection with the Strange allows her to wield amazing abilities, including a paradox's revisions, a vector's moves, and a spinner's twists.

All player characters, regardless of origin, are quickened.

BACKGROUND OPTIONS

Your type, descriptor, and focus all help provide a few details about your background. However, another component, independent of these but just as important, is the answer to this question: "How did you become aware of the Strange?" There aren't game mechanics associated with this, but it is vital to note, because it will drive the kinds of adventures (and your character's reactions to them) that you have at the beginning of your campaign. If your character has never heard of recursions or the Strange, you'll likely spend the first few adventures discovering these concepts. If your character starts out already an agent of the Estate, you'll jump right to more involved adventures.

Obviously, your background varies greatly depending on where you are from. While the default assumption in the game is that your character comes from Earth, that doesn't have to be the case. You could be a quickened character from Ardeyn, Ruk, or even elsewhere.

The following background options are possible ways your character became aware of the Strange. That awareness led you to the point where the game begins, whether as an operative of a secret organization, a freelance recursor, or in some other situation described by your GM.

IGNORANCE IS BLISS: You have never heard of the Strange. You're a well-trained physical specimen of humankind—tough, fast, and smart—and you have no belief or interest in anything beyond what you can directly experience. If things around you seem to go your way, it's just skill and luck.

Advancement: You practice, and you learn new skills. You eat right, exercise, and train. If the Strange has something to do with your abilities, your understanding of that seems to have no bearing on your improvement, so why bother? You've always advanced and improved on your own terms—why stop now?

STRANGE ENHANCEMENTS: You excelled at all that you set out to do, but everyone has their limits, right? That was when you discovered a line of nutritional supplements that produced some interesting results. They were hard to get, however. You got involved with an organization to get access to the supplements, and you found that they could teach you steps beyond pills and dietary additives that could take you to even greater heights. Some of the processes and treatments were odd, but their results were undeniable, and you found no evidence of them being unsafe.

You eventually learned that they wouldn't work for everyone. In fact, you were one of a very limited group of people who had a connection to something...strange.

Advancement: You need to continue to use the supplements and treatments provided by your rather secretive benefactors. With each new step you take in

their program, your abilities increase. But will there be a price to pay later? Can you get these enhancements from another source? Time will tell.

CONFRONTING THE IMPOSSIBLE: There came a point where you found that you could do things that others believed impossible. Being an inquisitive sort, you began looking for an explanation. It took a long time, but you learned that you weren't alone. There were others who had similar abilities and experiences. While some believed it to be mystical, others saw it as science.

Advancement: The more you learn about the Strange and your connection with it, the more things make sense to you. You continue to learn, research, and explore. The answers are out there, and the only way to discover them is firsthand. To keep moving forward, you have to keep moving.

SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENT: You believe your understanding of the Strange is better than most because you've applied the scientific method. Thanks to many experiments, you developed a verifiable (verifiable to you, at least) theory regarding the true nature of the cosmos. Alas, the more you know, the more you question. The vastness of the dark energy network that underlies the real universe is mind-blowing.

On the other hand, your studies have shown you how to tap into the Strange. You find that you are best able to channel your abilities by using one or more scientific apparatus you built specifically to serve that purpose. Whether your apparatus is bulky or sleek, you can create amazing effects to change the environment around you.

Advancement: You must continue to conduct your experiments. The Strange is cosmic, too much for a mortal mind to even come close to fully comprehending, but that's what draws you onward. When your stats improve or you learn new skills, it's because your latest experiments have confirmed a new theory you've been working on.

You've made many advances, but to make a leap forward, you'll have to gain access to a lab with better equipment or find the time to upgrade and build more of your own.

ESOTERIC ENCOUNTER: Years of study, diligence, and adherence to your religion, esoteric order, or new-age philosophy finally bore incredible dividends. You discovered the Strange as the result of an encounter with a being you don't completely understand, but which you believe to be a representative of your faith. It showed you the kind of power that it could grant you in its name, and you swore to honor whatever

favors it required of you. With your oath complete, a brain-searing blaze of understanding quickened you to the Strange. The secrets hidden in dark energy, the nature of cyphers, and the true dangers that swim in the Strange are now known to you.

You also learned how to call upon your abilities—minor miracles of directed thought, meditation, or prayer—that allow you to be a force for change in the world.

Advancement: You must continue your studies with the religious book, strange library, online conspiracy forum, or other source that led to your first interaction with your benefactor. Although it left you to your own devices, it promised to return soon to exact the favor you owe it. When your stats improve or you learn new skills, it's because you have mapped another teaching or dogma to that which has quickened inside you. When you gain a new ability, it's the result of long hours of study, prayer, or practice with your particular lore.

At some point in your career, if your benefactor hasn't yet returned, you'll need to find it again to advance your studies.

STRANGE ACCIDENT: You haven't always been different; in fact, you were completely normal before the accident. In the accident's aftermath (whether you woke from a coma, were seemingly unaffected by radiation exposure, pulled yourself from a crash with hardly a scratch, or recovered from the bite of a mysterious creature), you discovered a new ability. Namely, the power to change the world around you—in small ways at first, but in larger and larger ways as you explore your strange new gifts.

Advancement: The more you use the powers you already have, the more they quicken additional abilities and skills. Practice makes perfect, and it seems to be the primary way you have of strengthening your gifts. However, you think it's possible that in order to awaken the upper end of your power, you might need to replicate your original accident.

WINNER: Certain card games, especially the many variations of poker, count on skill and luck, but they rely most of all on a player's ability to interact, read, and persuade fellow players—and you know all about these things. You're a pro at learning an opponent's betting strategies, picking up on tells, and bluffing, which is how you won several major tournaments. During one such hand, you went all-in with a stone-cold bluff, and one of your opponents called you on it. That's when your abilities were awakened. When you revealed your cards, you convinced everyone that you had the winning hand, despite the evidence of their senses.

Advancement: You might have a connection to the Strange, but it comes through your ability to analyze odds, manipulate cards, and keep track of numbers. Therefore, you must continue to practice. When you improve, it's because you have honed your skills or unlocked a new ability through repetition.

COMBAT: You joined the military. Proving yourself a natural leader on and off the field of battle, you gained a command. Those under you respected you, did as you ordered without complaint, and were loyal. None of that mattered when your last skirmish was FUBAR, which is when you learned your people would also die for you. When you woke in a military hospital with severe injuries, you discovered that almost everyone in your command was missing or dead. After you finished treatment, you were out of a job and starting a life with pain that will probably never go away completely. Having nothing left, you turned inward and embraced your ability to make others see things your way. You'd always sensed it lingering at the edges of your consciousness, but you finally spent the time exploring and developing your potential. That's when you quickened to the Strange.

Advancement: Your connection to the Strange is most acute when you're devising strategies, issuing orders, and feeling combat surge around you. That's when your abilities come most easily. When you improve, it's through actual use. You believe that to gain the highest level, you may have to undergo another extreme test in battle, not unlike the original skirmish that changed your life.

GRIFT (ALMOST) GONE WRONG: You learned early that you could mislead other people to your own benefit. Call it social engineering or grifting, the process was the same: Approach a victim with a plan, elicit his interest through enticement using a variety of tricks, and, finally, make off with his goods. It worked beautifully for years, until your confidence game went as wrong as it could possibly go when you tried to grift someone who was quickened. You discovered you were the target of an even more elaborate con. But instead of leaving you bereft, the conner took you in as a sort of apprentice, showing you a whole new level of control.

Advancement: Just as with regular confidence tricks, practice is key to maintaining and improving your abilities. When your capabilities improve, it's because you've continued to hone your cons. The greater your successes, the more you're inspired and able to unlock even more Strange abilities, such that one day you aspire to con reality itself.

CHARACTER TYPE

Character type is the core of your character. Your type helps determine your character's place in the world and relationship with other people in the setting. It's the noun of the sentence "I am an adjective noun who verbs."

You can choose from three character types: vector, paradox, and spinner.

VECTOR

Vectors are action-oriented people: athletes, soldiers, firefighters, hunters, and explorers. They overcome challenges in a straightforward, physical way. When something needs doing, they do it. They are characterized as much by their motivation as their physical talents.

Vectors have great strength, stamina, and speed. It may seem that this is the sum total of the source of their abilities, but eventually they learn that in some small way, these abilities also originate with a connection to the Strange. These abilities—called *moves*—allow them to perform feats that normal people cannot do.

Most vectors frequently train their bodies hard, and they have a background involving intense physical activity: sports, combat, occupations that involve action and exertion as well as skill. Vectors can be mountain climbers, rescue workers, and anything else of a similar vein.

VECTOR STAT POOLS

Stat	Pool Starting Value
Might	10
Speed	10
Intellect	8

You get 6 additional points to divide among your stat Pools however you wish.

Vectors in Society: Vectors are respected and sometimes even idolized for their abilities and prowess. They are often natural leaders, because vectors are not simple brutes but driven, motivated individuals who figure out what they want and go out and get it.

Vectors in Groups: Vectors take challenges head on, but they also help to defend and protect their friends. They might be the first one up a hill, but they also turn around to help the rest. They are leaders.

Vectors and the Strange: To begin with, a vector might not even know that the Strange—or anything remotely like it—exists. Most vectors are more interested in doing things than wondering about the origins of their abilities.

Vectors learn to look for cyphers and items that help them do what they do best. Items that improve combat and defense, that enhance their physical abilities, or that are outright weapons hold great value.

Advanced Vectors: As vectors gain more experience, their physical talents grow, as expressed by their moves. Their strength, dexterity, and stamina improve. They jump farther and run faster. But eventually they move past such simple things. They learn combat techniques of all kinds and eventually can push the limits of reality with their physical accomplishments.

VECTOR TIERS

FIRST-TIER VECTOR

First-tier vectors have the following abilities:

Effort: Your Effort is 1.

Physical Nature: You have a Might Edge of 1, a Speed Edge of 1, and an Intellect Edge of 0.

Cypher Use: You can bear two cyphers at a time.

Defensive: You are trained in Speed defense actions when not wearing armor. Enabler.

Practiced With All Weapons: You can use any weapon. Enabler.

Physical Skills: You are trained in your choice of two of the following: balancing, climbing, jumping, running, or swimming. Enabler.

Translation: You can participate in the process of traveling to another recursion. Each time you do, you

can choose to initiate, hasten, or ease a translation. If you choose to hasten or ease the process, someone else in the group must initiate the translation.

As a vector, you are most effective at easing a translation. This easing advantage allows group members to acclimate more quickly after the translation is complete.

In order to translate, you must know that the recursion you are translating to exists. The GM will decide if you have enough information to confirm its existence and determine what level of difficulty is needed to reach the destination. Action to initiate.

Moves: You take the straightforward approach and accomplish what you need to do using physical means. You can perform feats of strength and speed that others cannot. You call these *moves*. Some moves are constant, ongoing effects, and others are specific actions that usually cost points from one of your stat Pools.

Choose two of the moves described below. You can't choose the same move more than once unless its description says otherwise.

- **Bash (1 Might point):** This is a pummeling melee attack. Your attack inflicts 1 less point of damage than normal, but dazes your target for one round, during which time the difficulty of all tasks it performs is modified by one step to its detriment. Action.
- **Endurance:** Any duration dealing with physical actions is either doubled or halved, whichever is better for you. For example, if the typical person can hold their breath for thirty seconds, you can hold it for one minute. If the typical person can march for four hours without stopping, you can do so for eight hours. In terms of harmful effects, if a

poison paralyzes its victims for one minute, you are paralyzed for thirty seconds. The minimum duration is always one round. Enabler.
- **Fleet of Foot:** If you succeed at a difficulty 2 Speed roll to run, you can move a short distance and take an action in the same round. Enabler.
- **No Need for Weapons:** When you make an unarmed attack (such as a punch or kick), you can choose whether you make the attack as if using a medium weapon or as if using a light weapon. Enabler.
- **Pierce (1 Speed point):** This is a well-aimed, penetrating ranged attack. You make an attack and inflict 1 additional point of damage. Action.
- **Practiced in Armor:** Vectors can wear armor for long periods of time without tiring and can compensate for slowed reactions from wearing armor. You can wear any kind of armor. You reduce the Might cost per hour for wearing armor and the Speed Pool reduction for wearing armor by 2. Enabler.

SECOND-TIER VECTOR
Second-tier vectors have the following abilities:

Physical Skill: Choose one skill in which you are not already trained: balancing, climbing, jumping, running, or swimming. You are trained in that skill. Enabler.

Skill With Defense: Choose one type of defense task in which you are not already trained: Might, Speed, or Intellect. You are trained in defense tasks of that type. Unlike most moves, you can select this move up to three times. Each time you select it, you must choose a different type of defense task. Enabler.

Reach Beyond (3 Intellect points): When you use

Reach Beyond, you can access training in a skill provided by a focus you have in another recursion. You must have used the skill in its proper recursion at least once before. You can use the skill once. To use it again, you must use Reach Beyond again. Enabler.

Moves: Choose one of the following moves (or a move from a lower tier) to add to your repertoire. In addition, you can replace one of your first-tier moves with a different first-tier move.

- **Enable Others:** You can use the helping rules to provide a benefit to another character attempting a physical task. This requires no action on your part. Enabler.
- **Quick Recovery:** Your second recovery roll (usually requiring ten minutes) is only a single action, just like the first roll. Enabler.
- **Range Increase:** Ranges for you increase by one step. Immediate becomes short, short becomes long, and long becomes 200 feet (61 m). Enabler.
- **Skill With Attacks:** Choose one type of attack in which you are not already trained: light bashing, light bladed, light ranged, medium bashing, medium bladed, medium ranged, heavy bashing, heavy bladed, or heavy ranged. You are trained in attacks using that type of weapon. Enabler.
- **Spray (2 Speed points):** If a weapon has the ability to fire rapid shots without reloading (usually called a rapid-fire weapon, such as the submachine gun), you can spray multiple shots around your target to increase the chance of hitting. This move uses 1d6 + 1 rounds of ammo (or all the ammo in the weapon, if it has less than the number rolled). The difficulty of the attack roll is decreased by one step. If the attack is successful, it deals 1 less point of damage than normal. Action.
- **Wreck:** Using two hands, you wield a weapon or a tool with a powerful swing. (If fighting unarmed, this attack is made with both fists or both feet together.) When using this as an attack, you take a –1 penalty to the attack roll, and you inflict 3 additional points of damage. When attempting to damage an object or barrier, you are trained in the task. Action.

THIRD-TIER VECTOR
Third-tier vectors have the following abilities:

Expert Cypher Use: You can bear three cyphers at a time.

Skill With Attacks: Choose one type of attack in which you are not already trained: light bashing, light bladed, light ranged, medium bashing, medium bladed, medium ranged, heavy bashing, heavy bladed, or heavy ranged. You are trained in attacks using that type of weapon. Enabler.

Moves: Choose one of the following moves (or a move

from a lower tier) to add to your repertoire. In addition, you can also replace one of your lower-tier moves with a different move from a tier lower than third.

- **Experienced With Armor:** The cost reduction from your Practiced in Armor ability improves. You now reduce the Might cost per hour and the Speed Pool reduction by 3. Enabler.
- **Ignore the Pain:** You do not feel the detrimental effects of being impaired, and when you are debilitated, you ignore those effects and experience the effects normally associated with being impaired instead. (Dead is still dead.) Enabler.
- **Lunge (2 Might points):** This move requires you to extend yourself for a powerful stab or smash. The awkward lunge increases the difficulty of the attack roll by one step. If your attack is successful, it inflicts 4 additional points of damage. Action.
- **Resilience:** You have 1 point of Armor against any kind of physical damage, even damage that normally ignores Armor. Enabler.
- **Slice (2 Speed points):** This is a quick attack with a bladed or pointed weapon that is hard to defend against. The difficulty of the attack roll is decreased by one step. If the attack is successful, it deals 1 less point of damage than normal. Action.
- **Successive Attack:** If you take down a foe, you can immediately make another attack on that same turn against a new foe within your reach. The second attack is part of the same action. You can use this move with melee attacks and ranged attacks. Enabler.

FOURTH-TIER VECTOR
Fourth-tier vectors have the following abilities:

Physical Skill: Choose one skill in which you are trained but not specialized: balancing, climbing, jumping, running, or swimming. You are specialized in that skill. Enabler.

Moves: Choose one of the following moves (or a move from a lower tier) to add to your repertoire. In addition, you can also replace one of your lower-tier moves with a different move from a tier lower than fourth.

- **Arc Spray (3 Speed points):** If a weapon has the ability to fire rapid shots without reloading (usually called a rapid-fire weapon, such as the automatic pistol), you can fire your weapon at up to three targets (all next to one another) as a single action. Make a separate attack roll against each target. The difficulty of each attack is increased by one step. Action.
- **Capable Warrior:** Your attacks deal 1 additional point of damage. Enabler.
- **Feint (2 Speed points):** If you spend one action creating a misdirection or diversion, in the next round you can take advantage of your opponent's lowered defenses. Make a melee attack roll against

THE AESTHETICS OF TYPE ABILITIES

When translating to a new recursion, many things change their appearance: cyphers, equipment, even characters. A PC's type abilities also look different in a new place. Essentially, all type abilities (revisions, twists, and moves) visually and aesthetically conform to the context of their current recursion; an ability gained from a PC's type looks appropriate to the recursion where it's used.

For example, a paradox's Exception revision, which jolts a target with "a confluence of fundamental forces," doesn't have a dramatic visual display on Earth and might appear as ordinary as a falling bookcase or shelf, or be apparent only in its result, such as when a target stumbles and cries out. However, in Ardeyn, Exception might look like a blazing series of sorcerous runes rotating around the target, needling it with bolts of magic. In Ruk, it might look like static discharge from a nearby surface, a biofeedback command where the target's body turns against itself, or some kind of haze of battle spores sprayed by the paradox at the target. And so on, for any of the various recursions a PC translates into.

Another example: A spinner who is using Fast Talk, which can convince a target to take one reasonable action on the next round, looks just like someone talking normally (if very persuasively) on Earth. In Ardeyn, an observer might note a sorcerous blue flame in the spinner's eyes as the ability is used to temporarily bewitch the target. And in Ruk, an observer might note that the spinner breathes out a haze of delicious pheromones, briefly making the target susceptible to her suggestions.

An ability's look, sound, and even smell can be chosen by the player, by the GM, or by both parties working together. The GM should decide whether the ability's aesthetics work within the context of the recursion.

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that opponent. The difficulty of the roll is decreased by one step. If your attack is successful, it inflicts 4 additional points of damage. Action.

- **Increased Effects:** You treat rolls of natural 19 as rolls of natural 20 for either Might actions or Speed actions (your choice when you gain this ability). This allows you to gain a major effect on a natural 19 or 20. Enabler.
- **Runner:** Your standard movement distance becomes long. Enabler.
- **Skill With Attacks:** Choose one type of attack in which you are not already trained: light bashing, light bladed, light ranged, medium bashing, medium bladed, medium ranged, heavy bashing, heavy bladed, or heavy ranged. You are trained in attacks using that type of weapon. Enabler.

FIFTH-TIER VECTOR

Fifth-tier vectors have the following abilities:

Adept Cypher Use: You can bear four cyphers at a time.

Physical Skill: Choose one skill in which you are trained but not specialized: balancing, climbing, jumping, running, or swimming. You are specialized in that skill. Enabler.

Moves: Choose one of the following moves (or a move from a lower tier) to add to your repertoire. In addition, you can also replace one of your lower-tier moves with a different move from a tier lower than fifth.

- **Jump Attack (5 Might points):** You attempt a difficulty 4 Might action to jump high into the air as part of your melee attack. If you succeed, your attack inflicts 3 additional points of damage and knocks the foe down. If you fail, you still make your normal attack roll, but you don't inflict the extra damage or knock down the opponent. Action.
- **Mastery With Defense:** Choose one type of defense task in which you are trained: Might, Speed, or Intellect. You are specialized in defense tasks of that type. Unlike most moves, you can select this move up to three times. Each time you select it, you must choose a different type of defense task. Enabler.
- **Parry (5 Speed points):** You can deflect incoming attacks quickly. When you activate this move, for the next ten rounds you reduce the difficulty of all Speed defense rolls by one step. Enabler.
- **Physical Adept:** Any time you spend points from

VECTOR CONNECTION

Roll a d20 or choose from the following list to determine a specific fact about your background that provides a connection to the rest of the world. These connections mostly assume your character begins on Earth. Adapt them if you hail from a recursion, or create your own fact.

ROLL	BACKGROUND
1	You were a star high school athlete. You're still in great shape, but those were the glory days, man.
2	Your brother is the lead singer in a really popular band.
3	You went to the Olympics and took home a silver medal and two bronze medals.
4	You were a cop, but you gave it up after encountering corruption on the force.
5	Your parents worked for the Peace Corps, so you spent much of your young life traveling the world.
6	You served in the military with honor.
7	You received a scholarship from the September Project foundation, which paid for your schooling. Now they seem to want a lot more from you.
8	You went to a prestigious university on an athletic scholarship, but you excelled in class as well as on the field.
9	Your college roommate is now a member of the United States House of Representatives.
10	You used to be a middle school teacher and an athletic coach. Your students remember you fondly.
11	You worked as a small-time operative for the mob until you were caught and served some time in jail, after which you tried to go straight.
12	You owe money to a number of people and don't have the funds to pay your debts.
13	An organization called the Estate has been attempting to recruit you for some time, but you've put them off.
14	You were kidnapped as a small child under mysterious circumstances, although you were recovered safely. The case still has some notoriety.
15	You were a young, professional athlete caught in a doping scandal. Your career ended in shame.
16	While working on an oil rig in the Pacific, you saw some strange lights come up out of the sea and fly away.
17	You own your own small health food restaurant.
18	You were a DJ at a local radio station.
19	Your sister is the owner of a sporting goods store and gives you a hefty discount.
20	Your father is a colonel in the U.S. Marine Corps with many connections.

your Might Pool or Speed Pool on an action for any reason, if you roll a 1 on the associated die, you reroll the die, always taking the second result (even if it's a 1). Enabler.

- **Skill With Attacks:** Choose one type of attack, even one in which you are already trained: light bashing, light bladed, light ranged, medium bashing, medium bladed, medium ranged, heavy bashing, heavy bladed, or heavy ranged. You are trained in attacks using that type of weapon. If you're already trained in that type of attack, you instead become specialized in that type of attack. Enabler.

SIXTH-TIER VECTOR

Sixth-tier vectors have the following abilities:

Physical Skill: Choose one skill in which you are trained but not specialized: balancing, climbing, jumping, running, or swimming. You are specialized in that skill. Enabler.

Moves: Choose one of the following moves (or a move from a lower tier) to add to your repertoire. In addition, you can also replace one of your lower-tier moves with a different move from a tier lower than sixth.

- **Again and Again (8 Speed points):** You can take an additional action in a round in which you have already acted. Enabler.
- **Mastery With Armor:** When you wear any armor, you reduce the armor's penalties (Might cost and Speed reduction) to 0. If you select this move and you already have the Experienced With Armor move, replace Experienced With Armor with a different third-tier move because Mastery With Armor is better. Enabler.
- **Spin Attack (5 Speed points):** You stand still and make melee attacks against up to five foes within reach, all as part of the same action in one round. Make a separate attack roll for each foe. You remain limited by the amount of Effort you can apply on one action. Anything that modifies your attack or damage applies to all of these attacks. Action.

- **Shooting Gallery (5 Speed points):** You stand still and make ranged attacks against up to five foes within range, all as part of the same action in one round. Make a separate attack roll for each foe. You remain limited by the amount of Effort you can apply on one action. Anything that modifies your attack or damage applies to all of these attacks. Action.
- **Skill With Attacks:** Choose one type of attack, even one in which you are already trained: light bashing, light bladed, light ranged, medium bashing, medium bladed, medium ranged, heavy bashing, heavy bladed, or heavy ranged. You are trained in attacks using that type of weapon. If you're already trained in that type of attack, you instead are specialized in that type of attack. Enabler.

VECTOR EXAMPLE

Rob wants to play a vector. He wants to be fast more than strong or tough, so he puts 2 points into his Might Pool and 3 points into his Speed Pool, saving 1 for his Intellect Pool. His Pool totals are Might 12, Speed 13, and Intellect 9. He has a Might Edge of 1, a Speed Edge of 1, and an Intellect Edge of 0. As a first-tier character, his Effort is 1. He chooses running and jumping for his physical skills. He gains Translation and chooses Bash and Endurance as his moves.

He can bear two cyphers. The GM gives him a pill that will restore 4 points to his Might Pool and a small device that will knock a creature unconscious if touched with it.

For his descriptor, Rob chooses Brash, which adds 2 more points to his Speed Pool, making it 15. It also gives him training in initiative tasks and overcoming intimidation.

For his focus, he chooses Looks for Trouble. His character is a rough customer. This allows him to inflict 1 additional point of damage with melee attacks and gives him training in healing.

For his equipment, Rob gets a first aid kit, a utility knife, a cell phone, and a choice of two weapons. He chooses a 9mm pistol and a knife. The knife is a light weapon, so he decreases the difficulty of attack rolls with it, but it inflicts only 2 points of damage. In his hands, however, it inflicts 3 points. The 9mm pistol is a medium weapon, so it inflicts 4 points of damage. The pistol comes with a magazine of fifteen bullets. He wears a leather jacket, which is light armor.

Rob is a Brash vector who Looks for Trouble.

PARADOX

Paradoxes are the mad scientists, the sorcerers, and the breakers of the rules of reality. They are not bound by what others believe to be true.

Paradoxes derive their abilities from a connection to the Strange, regardless of where they claim their power originates. With those abilities—called *revisions*—they can transgress the laws of reality and alter the rules of a recursion. The Strange permeates the cosmos, though it's hard for anyone not quickened to its presence to interact with it like paradoxes (and spinners and vectors, in their own ways) do. Though most paradoxes refer to their special abilities as revisions, some refer to them as knacks, prayers, spells, or psychic gifts.

Many paradoxes come from a background that includes extensive training of a scientific, technical, religious, or spiritual nature. They could also have experience in an esoteric order. As a result, they have an aptitude with equipment, paraphernalia, or rituals that may aid them in their pursuits.

PARADOX STAT POOLS

Stat	Pool Starting Value
Might	8
Speed	8
Intellect	12

You get 6 additional points to divide among your stat Pools however you wish.

Paradoxes in Society: Paradoxes are often treated with respect due to the esoteric knowledge that their backgrounds provide; whether scientists, engineers, priests, shamans, or psychics, paradoxes are usually part of a meritocracy. If a paradox were to reveal the possession of paranormal abilities, society at large would react according to the nature of the location.

On the prime of Earth and recursions from the same mold, the paradox would likely be subject to a lot of derision, some fear, and possibly some official interest. In places like Ruk, and especially in places like Ardeyn, where such things are more common, these abilities wouldn't gain much notice.

Paradoxes in Groups: Though paradox talents may be remarkable, their knowledge is often their most valuable asset to a group. Many paradoxes possess valuable expertise in areas such as geography, botany, medicine, and lore. When the party comes upon unsettling clues, relics, artifacts, cyphers, creatures out of distant recursions, or other elements of the Strange, the paradox usually has an idea about how to best analyze and deal with the situation.

Paradoxes and the Strange: Paradoxes don't actually perform miracles, though it can seem like that to other people. But the explanation is far more strange. Every paradox knows something about the Strange. In addition to the Strange being the source of their power, it can be endlessly fascinating to a paradox. Whenever elements of the Strange such as cyphers (and related artifacts), Strangers, or new recursions are discovered, a paradox is the first to try to understand its meaning and significance.

When it comes to cyphers and related artifacts, paradoxes are not especially choosy. On the other hand, a paradox can carry only so much equipment, which means a smart paradox is generally drawn to items that provide protection, give ranged artillery options, and grant travel to and protection within recursions.

Advanced Paradoxes: As paradoxes gain more experience, they typically learn new and more powerful revisions. They start out with abilities that allow them to acquire secrets, travel to new recursions with a lot of effort, affect matter, and bend laws of nature in small ways, but eventually they can learn to break the laws of nature, destroy matter, and skip through several recursions using only an effort of will.

PARADOX TIERS

FIRST-TIER PARADOX
First-tier paradoxes have the following abilities:
Effort: Your Effort is 1.
Aptitude: You have an Intellect Edge of 1, a Might Edge of 0, and a Speed Edge of 0.
Expert Cypher Use: You can bear three cyphers at a time.
Knowledgeable: You are trained in one area of knowledge or technical expertise of your choice.

Strange Training: You are trained in general topics regarding the Strange, which allows you to attempt to understand and identify related phenomena, including the effect of a particular cypher. Strange training is also sometimes called Strange knowledge or Strange lore.

Practiced With Light Weapons: You can use light weapons without penalty. If you wield a medium weapon, increase the difficulty of the attack by one step. If you wield a heavy weapon, increase it by two steps.

Translation: You can participate in the process of traveling to another recursion. Each time you do, you can choose to initiate, hasten, or ease a translation. If you choose to hasten or ease the process, someone else in the group must initiate the translation.

As a paradox, you are most effective at initiating a translation. This initiation advantage provides you with additional opportunities during the process of translating.

In order to translate, you must know that the recursion you are translating to exists. The GM will decide if you have enough information to confirm its existence and determine what level of difficulty is needed to reach the destination. Action to initiate.

Revisions: You can tap into the Strange to affect the world around you. When you use a revision, you essentially revise reality.

Most revisions require that you spend 1 or more Intellect points (and have a free hand that you use to direct the release of the revision's effect). If no Intellect point cost is given for a revision, it functions continuously without needing to be activated. Some revisions specify a duration, but you can always end one of your own revisions any time you wish.

Select two revisions from those described below. You can't choose the same revision more than once unless its description says otherwise.

- **Closed Mind:** You are trained in Intellect defense tasks and have +2 to Armor against damage that selectively targets your Intellect Pool (that normally ignores Armor). Enabler.
- **Exception (1 Intellect point):** You pick one creature within long range. The target is jolted by a confluence of fundamental forces for 4 points of damage. If the target you select is not native to the recursion where you attack it, its senses are overwhelmed. On a successful attack, in addition to taking 4 points of damage, it cannot act on its next turn. Once exposed to this revision, a non-native creature normally can't be affected by the sense-overwhelming portion of this attack again for several hours. Action.
- **Levitate Creature (2+ Intellect points):** You can

PARADOX CONNECTION

Roll a d20 or choose from the following list to determine a specific fact about your background that provides a connection to the rest of the world. These connections mostly assume your character begins on Earth. Adapt them if you hail from a recursion, or create your own fact.

ROLL	BACKGROUND
1	When you were mugged, you used your revisions to kill the mugger. Now you're trying to stay one step ahead of the police detectives who are trying to solve the murder.
2	An experiment you conducted in your garage blew up, caused your home to burn down, and killed some of your family. You still dream about it sometimes.
3	You once belonged to a monastery. When the others learned of your abilities, some thought you were touched by the divine. Others did not.
4	You gave a homeless person enough to stay inside during the course of a brutal storm. That person now owes you a great favor.
5	Your mother was a member of the Quiet Cabal before she died, where she was respected by many. Those who knew her are fond of you, but they also expect great things from you.
6	Your father was a politician who left office in some disrepute, and you never learned the full story about it.
7	You were a code-breaker for the military until you decoded a message that implicated your superior in something foul. Rather than face her, you got yourself dishonorably discharged.
8	You revised the world in a public place and were noticed. You've gained notoriety, as well as death threats from religious fanatics.
9	You studied at one of the most prestigious schools in the world, but you got in by cheating.
10	You headed a small church, and though you left to pursue your own strange journey, the congregation still tries to lure you back to the pulpit.
11	You were a night guard before you gained the ability to revise reality.
12	You had a successful career writing stirring greeting cards, but you were let go after one of your cards caused a rash of suicides.
13	You hacked websites for cash until you crossed the Estate, which sent agents to locate you. When they brought you in, you agreed to join them.
14	You were an anthropologist who found something strange in a burial site—something you published, though it got you thrown from the ranks of respectable researchers.
15	When you were an envoy working overseas, you made friends with several foreign diplomats, some of whom you still contact.
16	You worked for a famous psychic, though she threw you out when she realized your powers were real, as opposed to her tricks.
17	You made a mint online with digital currency, but thanks to a computer crash, you lost everything. You're determined to build up your nest egg again.
18	As a political refugee, you are often treated with suspicion.
19	You are fit as a fiddle, but most would think of you as obese.
20	Your dog can talk because it is native to a recursion where such an ability isn't unusual, though it was a shock to you when you first found out.

temporarily bend the fundamental force of gravity on a creature or object (no larger than yourself) that is within long range. The target's level can be no more than 2 above your tier. On a successful attack, an affected target floats an immediate distance over the ground for one round. A levitating target hovers just above the ground, able to take actions, but unable to gain purchase through physical contact.

Each round after the initial attack, you can attempt to keep the target aloft by spending 1 additional Intellect point and succeeding at a difficulty 2 Intellect task. If your concentration lapses, the target drops back to the ground. You can't directly move a levitating object with this revision, but strong winds, a hearty push by someone else, or other forces can move the target. Action to initiate.

- **Premonition (2 Intellect points):** Despite appearances, reality is quantum and noncausal, which means a careful observer can discover information leaks. You learn one random fact from a person or location that is pertinent to a topic you designate. Alternatively, you can choose to learn a creature's level; however, if you do so, you cannot

learn anything else about it later with this revision. Action.

- **Shatter (2 Intellect points):** You interrupt the fundamental force holding normal matter together for a moment, creating the detonation of an object you choose within long range. The object must be a small, mundane item composed of homogeneous matter (such as a clay cup, an iron ingot, a stone, and so on). The object explodes in an immediate radius, attacking all creatures and objects in the area for 1 point of damage.

Because this is an area attack, adding Effort to increase your damage works differently than it does for single-target attacks: for each level of Effort applied to increase the damage, add 2 points of damage to each target. If you increase the damage through Effort, even if you fail your attack roll, all targets in the area still take 1 point of damage. Action.

SECOND-TIER PARADOX

Second-tier paradoxes have the following abilities:

Reach Beyond (3 Intellect points): When you use Reach Beyond, you can access training in a skill provided by a focus you have in another recursion. You must have used the skill in its proper recursion at least once before. You can use the skill once. To use it again, you must use Reach Beyond again. Enabler.

Revisions: Choose one of the following revisions (or a revision from a lower tier) to add to your repertoire. In addition, you can replace one of your first-tier revisions with a different first-tier revision.

- **Force Shield (2+ Intellect points):** You call up a field of shielding energy that grants you +1 to Armor for ten minutes. You can increase the Armor bonus by spending Effort. Each additional level of Effort increases the Armor value you gain by 1. Action.
- **Gate Key (4 Intellect points):** You can secure (or unlock) a regular door or other object that can be closed or opened, such as a drawer, laptop, satchel, book, window, and so on, even if it can't normally be locked. You can also lock (or open) a permanent or semipermanent recursion gate, including translation gates and inapposite gates. To unlock or lock the target, you must touch it.

If the object is locked and you wish to unlock it, succeed at an Intellect task with a difficulty set by the GM (usually equal to the level of the lock or effect holding the object closed). On a success, the target is unlocked.

You automatically succeed in locking an object if that is your goal; an object or gate is locked at a level equal to 4 + your tier. Action.

- **Mind Reading (4 Intellect points):** You can read the mind of a creature you can see within short range.

You gain access to its surface thoughts for up to one minute as long as it is within range. Action to initiate.

- **Plasma Arc (2 Intellect points):** You induce an ionized arc of plasma to leap between two targets that you can see and that are within short range of each other. Both targets must also be within long range of you. You roll an attack for each target separately. If you successfully attack only one target, it takes 4 points of damage from the intense heat. If you successfully attack both targets, each takes 4 points of damage. Effort applied to one attack counts for both, but you must abide by your Effort level limit for each action. Action.
- **Revise Flesh (3 Intellect points):** You can revise flesh with your touch in one of two ways. When you touch an impaired or debilitated character, you can choose to move the character up one step on the damage track (for example, a debilitated PC becomes impaired, while an impaired creature becomes hale). Alternatively, you can grant a character a +2 bonus to his recovery roll if you use this ability on the PC during a rest. Action.

THIRD-TIER PARADOX

Third-tier paradoxes have the following abilities:

Adept Cypher Use: You can bear four cyphers at a time.

Revisions: Choose one of the following revisions (or a revision from a lower tier) to add to your repertoire. In addition, you can replace one of your lower-tier revisions with a different one from a tier lower than third.

- **Energy Protection (3+ Intellect points):** Choose a discrete type of energy that you have experience with (such as heat, sonic, electricity, and so on). You must be familiar with the type of energy; for example, if you have no experience with a certain kind of extradimensional energy, you can't protect against it. You gain +10 to Armor against damage from that type of energy for ten minutes. Alternatively, you gain +1 to Armor against damage from that energy for one day.

Instead of applying Effort to decrease the difficulty of this revision, you can apply Effort to protect more targets, with each level of Effort affecting up to two additional targets. You must touch additional targets to protect them. Action to initiate.

- **Eye for the Strange:** You see a "shimmer" around creatures and objects that are not native to the current recursion and around native creatures that possess the spark. If you spend an action concentrating on a non-native target with such a shimmer, you can see the form it originally possessed prior to translating to the current

recursion (if it went through an inapposite gate, it retains the shimmer, but may not look much different). Enabler (although you can use an Action to enhance, as stated).

- **Force at Distance (4+ Intellect points):** You temporarily bend the fundamental law of gravity around a creature or object (up to twice your mass) within short range. The target's level can be no more than 2 above your tier.

On a successful attack, an affected target is caught in your telekinetic grip, and you can move the creature up to a short distance in any direction each round that you retain your hold.

A creature in your telekinetic grip can take actions, but it can't move under its own power. Each round after the initial attack, you can attempt to keep your grip on the target by spending 2 additional Intellect points and succeeding at a difficulty 2 Intellect task. If your concentration lapses, the target drops back to the ground.

Instead of applying Effort to decrease the difficulty, you can apply Effort to increase the amount of mass you can affect. Each level of Effort allows you to affect a creature or object twice as massive as before. For example, applying one level of Effort would affect a creature four times as massive as you, two levels of Effort would affect a creature eight times as massive, three levels can affect a creature sixteen times as massive, and so on. Action to initiate.

- **Psychic Precision:** You are trained in any mental revision or mental ability that comes from a cypher, an artifact, or your focus. For example, you are trained when using Mind Reading because it's a mental ability, but not when using Plasma Arc. Enabler.

- **Recursion Viewing (5 Intellect points):** An observer with the ability to revise reality knows that space and distance is an illusion. You concentrate to create an invisible, immobile sensor at a location within a recursion you have previously visited or viewed (at the GM's discretion, you may have to succeed at an Intellect task if the location is somehow warded). The sensor lasts for about an hour. Once it is created, you can concentrate to see, hear, and smell through the sensor whether you are somewhere else on the recursion or on a connected prime. The sensor doesn't grant you sensory capabilities beyond the norm. Creating such a sensor on the prime world of Earth requires that you spend a level of Effort. Action to create; action to check.

FOURTH-TIER PARADOX

Fourth-tier paradoxes have the following abilities:
Revisions: Choose one of the following revisions

(or a revision from a lower tier) to add to your repertoire. In addition, you can replace one of your lower-tier revisions with a different one from a tier lower than fourth.

- **Gate Exit (9 Intellect points):** You create one end of a translation gate. The gate exit does not connect to anything unless you earlier created a different gate exit within another recursion, in which case that exit and the new one connect, creating a translation gate. Unconnected gate exits last for about a month or until destroyed. After two gate exits link up to form a translation gate, the gate lasts for about a year or until destroyed. (Like all objects, translation gates have levels that speak to their ability to withstand harm. The translation gate exit you create with this ability is level 5.)

You can create a permanent translation gate by using this revision every day for seven days on either exit of a connected translation gate. One hour to initiate.

- **Invisibility (4 Intellect points):** You bend light around you, becoming invisible for ten minutes. While invisible, you are specialized in stealth and Speed defense tasks. This effect ends if you do something to reveal your presence or position—attacking, performing a revision, using an ability, moving a large object, and so on. If this occurs, you can regain the remaining invisibility effect by taking an action to focus on hiding your position. Action to initiate or reinitiate.

- **Mind Control (6+ Intellect points):** You control the actions of another creature you touch. This effect lasts for ten minutes. The target must be level 2 or lower. After you have established control, you maintain mental contact with the target and sense what it senses. You can allow it to act freely or override its control on a case-by-case basis. Instead of applying Effort to decrease the difficulty, you can apply Effort to increase the maximum level of the target. Thus, to control the mind of a level 5 target (three levels above the normal limit), you must apply three levels of Effort. When the Mind Control revision ends, the creature doesn't remember being controlled or anything it did while under your command. Action to initiate.

- **Rapid Processing (6 Intellect points):** You or a target you touch experiences a higher level of mental and physical reaction time for about a minute. During that period, the target modifies all Speed tasks by one step to its benefit, including Speed defense rolls. In addition, the target can take one extra action at any time before the revision's duration expires. Action.

- **Warp World (5 Intellect points):** You tug on the fundamental laws of the recursion to create a zone of distraction and confusion around a creature you can see within long range for one minute. All

attacks against the target are modified by one step to the attacker's benefit, and all attacks made by the target are modified by one step to its detriment. If the target attempts an attack and fails, it automatically hits one of the target's allies if an ally is in range of that attack.

FIFTH-TIER PARADOX

Fifth-tier paradoxes have the following abilities:

Master Cypher Use: You can bear five cyphers at a time.

Revisions: Choose one of the following revisions (or a revision from a lower tier) to add to your repertoire. In addition, you can replace one of your lower-tier revisions with a different one from a tier lower than fifth.

- **Draw From Fiction (7 Intellect points):** You produce, as if from thin air, a level 5 creature of a kind you have previously encountered in a recursion that you have visited. The creature you name appears through a transitory inapposite gate and remains for one minute. The creature is drawn back to its home recursion when the revision ends. The creature acts as you direct. It appears through an inapposite gate, and at the GM's discretion, it may face difficulties according to the rules of the location you draw it into, such as suffering a step penalty to some or all tasks it attempts. As a level 5 creature, it has a target number of 15 and a health of 15, and it inflicts 5 points of damage. Action.
- **Exile (7 Intellect points):** You send another creature you can see within long range to the recursion of its origin or (if the creature is not native to a recursion) to one you've previously visited. The target must be level 5 or lower, and you must succeed on an attack. If successful, the creature is exiled through a transitory inapposite gate. If the creature resists, all its actions are modified by two steps to its detriment for one minute.

 Exiled creatures can't return to the recursion you exiled them from under their own power for seven days (even if they have the ability to move between recursions or if they find a gate).
- **Force Focus (6 Intellect points + 2 Might points):** You exchange your current focus for the focus you possessed in an alternate recursion (or connected prime) for up to one hour. Doing so is a transgression of reality and the rules of translation, which means that it saps both your Intellect Pool and your Might Pool. While you retain the forced focus, your appearance is a hybrid of your current appearance and what you look like in the recursion or prime whose focus you are borrowing. You can use your current focus while the forced focus is

active. Action to initiate.

- **Knowing the Unknown (6 Intellect points):** Tapping into the immense processing capacity of the Strange, you ask the GM one question and get a general answer. The GM assigns a level to the question, so the more obscure the answer, the more difficult the task. Generally, knowledge that you could find by looking somewhere other than your current location is level 1, and obscure knowledge of the past is level 7. Gaining knowledge of the future is impossible. Action.
- **True Senses:** You can see in complete darkness up to 50 feet (15 m) as if it were dim light. You recognize holograms, disguises, optical illusions, sound mimicry, and other such tricks (for all senses) for what they are. Enabler.

SIXTH-TIER PARADOX

Sixth-tier paradoxes have the following abilities:

Revisions: Choose one of the following revisions (or a revision from a lower tier) to add to your repertoire. In addition, you can replace one of your lower-tier revisions with a different one from a tier lower than sixth.

- **Drag Through Hell (9 Intellect Points):** You send a creature within immediate range that you can see into one of a number of recursions filled with brimstone, hellfire, and demons. On a successful attack on a target of up to level 7, the target is pulled through a transitory inapposite gate and takes 6 points of damage as it is dragged through the hellish recursion behind some unspeakable monstrosity. If you concentrate, you can attempt to keep the target translocated with a new action and a new attack roll each round. Each round the target remains translocated, it suffers another 6 points of damage. If the target returns before dying (or if the initial attack wasn't successful at pulling the target into a hellish recursion), all tasks the target attempts on its next turn are modified by two steps to its detriment. Action.
- **Force Unification (13 Intellect points):** You briefly align the fundamental forces of existence, creating a point where they merge into a single interaction at a location you can see. This allows you to briefly rewrite one rule of the recursion where you are currently located. The effect can be dramatic, but it is always local and lasts anywhere from one round to a minute, depending on the nature of the change. Possibilities include changing the color of the sky, causing an eclipse, halving (or doubling) gravity, changing the speed of light, and similar effects. The GM will decide if your brief annotation of the laws of existence is reasonable, how long it

will last, and what level of difficulty is needed to achieve it. Action.

- **Index Recursion (7 Intellect Points):** You feel a mental tug toward the nearest recursion gate that you don't already know about. You discern the location of and distance to that gate (translation or inapposite), and you learn enough information regarding the general nature and theme of the recursion it connects with to enter it directly using Translation. Action.
- **Master Translation (5+ Intellect points):** When you initiate a translation, you can choose to also hasten and/or ease it. To do so, expend the Intellect cost to trigger this revision as you begin the translation trance. Then you can apply one level of Effort to ease or hasten the translation (instead of applying Effort to decrease the difficulty), or two levels of Effort to both ease and hasten the translation. You must know that the recursion exists; the GM will decide if you have enough information to confirm its existence and determine what level of difficulty is needed to reach the destination. Action to initiate.
- **Usurp Cypher:** Choose one cypher that you carry. The cypher must have an effect that is not instantaneous. You destroy the cypher and gain its power, which functions for you continuously. You can choose a cypher when you gain this ability, or you can wait and make the choice later. After you usurp a cypher's power, you cannot later switch to a different cypher—the ability works only once. Action to initiate.

PARADOX EXAMPLE

JD wants to play a paradox. He figures he'd like to be a tad more defensive and tougher, so he puts a point each into Might and Speed, bringing each Pool up to 9. The other 4 points go into his Intellect Pool, making it 16. His paradox is something of a brain. He has an Intellect Edge of 1, a Might Edge of 0, and a Speed Edge of 0. As a first-tier character, his Effort is 1. He is trained in the Strange. He gains Translation as an automatic revision, then chooses Shatter and Premonition, giving him an offensive boost and a way to find things out.

He can bear three cyphers, but the GM gives him two: an occultic cypher (which counts as two cyphers for this purpose) and an anoetic cypher. The occultic cypher is an orb that can be thrown down to form a temporary portal into (and out of) a linked recursion. The other cypher is a device that allows the paradox to fly for up to one minute when attached to his belt.

For his descriptor, JD chooses Skeptical, which adds 2 more points to his Intellect Pool, bringing it to a whopping 18! The descriptor also gives him training in identifying things and seeing through various sorts of tricks.

For his focus, he chooses Solves Mysteries. His character is a scientific-minded investigator. In fact, he decides that he works in a police crime lab. This gives him training in perception and the ability to use points from his Might Pool or Speed Pool for Intellect tasks.

For his equipment, JD gets a laptop, a flashlight, a utility knife, a cell phone, and a choice of two weapons. He chooses a pair of brass knuckles and a light pistol. Both are light weapons, so they decrease the difficulty of attack rolls, but they inflict only 2 points of damage. He chooses to have no armor, since being a paradox doesn't give him any practice with it, and it might hinder him more than help in the long run. The GM generously allows him to have a crime scene investigation kit instead.

JD is a Skeptical paradox who Solves Mysteries.

SPINNER

Spinners are striking individuals, and they possess a personality that allows them to spin tales, spin lies, or spin a version of the truth that makes others see things in a whole new way. If anyone is going to make a friend of an enemy, bluff a way into a high-security compound, or mislead a world-devouring planetovore, it's a spinner. Whether through leadership, influence, or behind-the-scenes manipulation, a spinner pushes things in the direction she wants them to go.

Some spinner abilities could be attained through practice by anyone with some talent, but a spinner has an underlying facility: everything a spinner accomplishes is quickened by her connection to the Strange. A spinner's abilities—called *twists*—can be used to adjust, distort, and exploit.

SPINNER STAT POOLS

Stat	Pool Starting Value
Might	9
Speed	9
Intellect	10

You get 6 additional points to divide among your stat Pools however you wish.

Spinners in Society: Spinners are entertainers, grifters, and leaders. Some are comedians of rare and delicious talent, able to galvanize their audiences with humor and truth. Others are leaders who truly inspire those beneath them with their integrity, stirring words, and loyalty. Some are introverts who use their power to persuade while using computers, and they are renowned hackers (under an alias), seemingly able

to break nearly any security procedure with enough time. And of course, some are clever con artists always a few steps ahead of marks whose dishonesty, irresponsibility, and greed make them easy victims.

Spinners who share their gifts with others are prized members of society, and they are well respected for what they know and can do. Sometimes, everything would fall apart if not for the connective social web a spinner can weave. On the other hand, spinners who use their persuasive abilities to benefit only themselves are distrusted at best and reviled at worst. After all, a spinner makes an ideal thief.

Spinners in Groups: Spinners often serve as the glue that binds a group together, and if they are not elected to be the leader, they provide a valuable service by advising the group, especially when it comes to interacting with others. Many spinners can handle themselves in a fight (or at least get clear of one), which means that vectors in a group don't need to spend much time protecting spinners when weapons are drawn.

Spinners and the Strange: Most spinners have told everyone so many different stories about how they got their abilities that sometimes it's hard for even them to remember the truth. But each has a specific story.

A spinner may not know what the Strange is or understand its true nature, but every spinner is

cognizant of having a connection to something unique. Spinners recognize cyphers and recursions as being elements of that specialness. Already masters of persuasion, spinners are drawn to cyphers or artifacts that expand their options in other areas. Thus, a spinner might want an enhanced piece of armor, a Strange weapon, and so on.

Advanced Spinners: Experienced spinners continue to learn twists, including how to best convince others to do as they're told, but they can also choose to hone other skills to round out their abilities, especially in combat.

SPINNER TIERS

FIRST-TIER SPINNER
First-tier spinners have the following abilities:
Effort: Your Effort is 1.
Quickminded: You have an Intellect Edge of 1, a Might Edge of 0, and a Speed Edge of 1.
Cypher Use: You can bear two cyphers at a time.
Practiced With Light and Medium Weapons: You can use light and medium weapons without penalty. If you wield a heavy weapon, increase the difficulty of the attack by one step.
Manipulator: You are trained in deceiving, persuading, or intimidating (choose one).
Translation: You can participate in the process of traveling to another recursion. Each time you do, you can choose to initiate, hasten, or ease a translation. If you choose to hasten or ease the process, someone else in the group must initiate the translation.

As a spinner, you are most effective at hastening a translation. This advantage allows you to decrease the time it takes to translate to a recursion.

In order to translate, you must know that the recursion you are translating to exists. The GM will decide if you have enough information to confirm its existence and determine what level of difficulty is needed to reach the destination. Action to initiate.
Twists: You manipulate things, including people, machines, organizations, and objects—anything and everything. Some twists are constant, ongoing effects, and others are specific actions that usually cost points from one of your stat Pools.

Choose two of the twists described below. You can't choose the same twist more than once unless its description says otherwise.
- **Enthrall (1 Intellect point):** While talking, you grab and keep another creature's attention, even if the creature can't understand you. For as long as you do nothing but speak (you can't even move),

SPINNER CONNECTION

Roll a d20 or choose from the following list to determine a specific fact about your background that provides a connection to the rest of the world. These connections mostly assume your character begins on Earth. Adapt them if you hail from a recursion, or create your own fact.

ROLL	BACKGROUND
1	One of your parents was a famous entertainer in his or her early years and hoped you would excel in the same medium.
2	When you were a teenager, one of your siblings went missing and is presumed dead. The shock rent your family, and it's something you've never gotten over.
3	You were inducted into a secret society that claims to hold and protect esoteric knowledge opposing the forces of evil.
4	You lost one of your parents to alcoholism. He or she may still be alive, but you'd be hard pressed to find forgiveness.
5	You have no memory of anything that happened to you before the age of 18.
6	Your grandparents raised you on a dairy farm far from bustling urban centers. You like to think the homeschooling you received prepared you for anything.
7	As an orphan, you had a difficult childhood, and your entry into adulthood was challenging.
8	You grew up on the reservation. When you left, most of your friends thought you were abandoning the tribe.
9	As a child actor, you were loved and adored. As an adult, less so.
10	You have an annoying rival who always seems to get in your way or foil your plans.
11	You've worked yourself into the position of spokesperson for a medium-sized company.
12	Your next-door neighbors were murdered, and the mystery remains unsolved.
13	You have traveled all over the world, and during that time you accumulated quite a collection of strange souvenirs.
14	Your high-school sweetheart ended up with your best friend. Now ex-best friend.
15	You are part of a maligned minority, but you work to bring the injustice of your status to public attention.
16	You're part-owner of a local bar, where you're something of a whiz in creating specialty cocktails.
17	You once talked an expensive watch off a powerful executive. In so doing, you earned the executive's enmity.
18	You used to act in a traveling theater, and they remember you fondly (as do people in the places you visited).
19	You won an Aspiring Writers of Tomorrow contest for a short story you wrote, and now you have a couple of offers from publishers to write a novel.
20	Someone stole your identity, drained your bank accounts, and is wanted in connection to a series of violent crimes.

the other creature takes no actions other than to defend itself, even over multiple rounds. If the creature is attacked, the effect ends. Action.

- **Fast Talk (1 Intellect point):** When speaking with an intelligent creature who can understand you and isn't hostile, you convince that creature to take one reasonable action on the next round. A reasonable action must be agreed upon by the GM; it should not put the creature or its allies in obvious danger or be wildly out of character. Action.
- **Sleight of Hand (1 Speed point):** You can perform small but seemingly impossible tricks. For example, you can make a small object in your hands disappear and move into a desired spot within reach (like your pocket). You can make someone believe that he has something in his possession that he does not have (or vice versa). You can switch similar objects right in front of someone's eyes. Action.
- **Spin Encouragement (1 Intellect point):** While you maintain this twist through ongoing inspiring oration, your allies within short range modify the difficulty of one of the following task types (your choice) by one step to their benefit: defense tasks, attack tasks, or tasks related to any skill that you are trained or specialized in. Action.
- **Spin Identity (2+ Intellect points):** You convince all intelligent creatures who can see, hear, and understand you that you are someone or something other than who you actually are. You don't impersonate a specific individual known to the victim. Instead, you convince the victim that you are someone they do not know belonging to a certain category of people. "We're from the government." "I'm just a simple farmer from the next town over." "Your commander sent me." A disguise isn't necessary, but a good disguise will almost certainly be an asset to the roll involved. If

you attempt to convince more than one creature, the Intellect cost increases by 1 point per additional victim. Fooled creatures remain so for up to an hour, unless your actions or other circumstances reveal your true identity earlier. Action.

- **Understanding (2 Intellect points):** You observe or study a creature or object. Then, the next time you interact with that creature or object, the difficulty of the related task is reduced by one step. Action.

SECOND-TIER SPINNER

Second-tier spinners have the following abilities:

Skills: You are trained in one task of your choosing (other than attacks or defense). If you choose a task you're already trained in, you become specialized in that task. You can't choose a task you're already specialized in.

Reach Beyond (3 Intellect points): When you use Reach Beyond, you can access training in a skill provided by a focus you have in another recursion. You must have used the skill in its proper recursion at least once before. You can use the skill once. To use it again, you must use Reach Beyond again. Enabler.

Twists: Choose one of the following twists (or twists from a lower tier) to add to your repertoire. In addition, you can replace one of your lower-tier twists with a different twist from the same lower tier.

- **Babel:** After hearing a language spoken for a few minutes, you can speak it and make yourself understood. If you continue to use the language to interact with native speakers, your skills improve rapidly, to the point where you might be mistaken for a native speaker after just a few hours of speaking the new language. Enabler.
- **Efficiency (2 Intellect points):** You can make a weak rope last longer, coax more speed from a motorcycle, improve the clarity of a camera, jury-rig a light to be brighter, speed up an Internet connection, and so on. You increase an object's level by 2 for one minute, or treat the object as an asset that reduces an associated task's difficulty by two steps for one minute (your choice). Action to initiate.
- **Escape (2 Speed points):** You slip your restraints, squeeze through the bars, break the grip of a creature holding you, pull free from sucking quicksand, or otherwise get loose from that which is holding you in place. Action.
- **Hand to Eye (2 Speed points):** This twist provides an asset to any tasks involving manual dexterity, such as pickpocketing, lockpicking, games involving agility, and so on. Each use lasts up to a minute; multiple uses replace the previous use. Action to initiate.

- **Pierce (1 Speed point):** This is a well-aimed, penetrating ranged attack. You make an attack and inflict 1 additional point of damage. Action.
- **Spin Ideal (3 Intellect points):** After interacting with another creature who can hear and understand you for at least one minute, you can use a twist to attempt to temporarily impart an ideal to the target that you can't otherwise convince it of.

An ideal is different than a specific suggestion or command; an ideal is an overarching value such as, "all life is sacred," "my political party is the best," "children should be seen, not heard," and so on. An ideal influences a creature's behavior but doesn't control it.

The imparted ideal lasts for as long as befits the situation, but usually at least a few hours. The implanted ideal is jeopardized if someone friendly to the creature spends a minute or more bringing the target back to its senses. Action.

THIRD-TIER SPINNER

Third-tier spinners have the following abilities:

Expert Cypher Use: You can bear three cyphers at a time.

Skill: You are trained in one task of your choosing (other than attacks or defense). If you choose a task you're already trained in, you become specialized in that task. You can't choose a task you're already specialized in.

Twists: Choose one of the following twists (or twists from a lower tier) to add to your repertoire. In addition, you can replace one of your lower-tier twists with a different twist from a tier lower than third.

- **Blend In (4 Intellect points):** When you Blend In, creatures still see you, but they attach no importance to your presence for about a minute. While blending in, you are specialized in stealth and Speed defense tasks. This effect ends if you do something to reveal your presence or position—attacking, performing a twist, moving a large object, and so on. If this occurs, you can regain the remaining period of effect by taking an action to focus on seeming innocuous and as if you belong. Action to initiate or reinitiate.
- **Grand Deception (3 Intellect points):** You convince an intelligent creature that can understand you and isn't hostile of something that is wildly and obviously untrue. Action.
- **Mind Reading (4 Intellect points):** You can read the surface thoughts of a creature within short range, even if the subject doesn't want you to. You must be able to see the target. Once you have established contact, you can read the target's thoughts for up to one minute. If you or the target moves out of range,

the connection is broken. Action to initiate.

- **Oratory (4 Intellect points):** When speaking with a group of intelligent creatures that can understand you and aren't hostile, you convince them to take one reasonable action on the next round. A reasonable action must be agreed upon by the GM; it should not put the creature or its allies in obvious danger or be wildly out of character. Action.
- **Spray (2 Speed points):** If a weapon has the ability to fire rapid shots without reloading (usually called a rapid-fire weapon, such as the automatic pistol), you can spray multiple shots around your target to increase the chance of hitting. This move uses 1d6 + 1 rounds of ammo (or all the ammo in the weapon, if it has less than the number rolled). The difficulty of the attack roll is decreased by one step. If the attack is successful, it deals 1 less point of damage than normal. Action.
- **Telling (2 Intellect points):** This twist provides an asset to any tasks attempting to deceive, persuade, or intimidate. Each use lasts up to a minute; a new use (to switch tasks) replaces the previous use. Action to initiate.

FOURTH-TIER SPINNER

Fourth-tier spinners have the following abilities:

Skills: You are trained in one task of your choosing (other than attacks or defense). If you choose a task you're already trained in, you become specialized in that task. You can't choose a task you're already specialized in.

Twists: Choose one of the following twists (or twists from a lower tier) to add to your repertoire. In addition, you can replace one of your lower-tier twists with a different twist from a tier lower than fourth.

- **Anticipate Attack (4 Intellect points):** You can sense when and how creatures attacking you will make their attacks. You reduce the difficulty of Speed defense rolls by one step for one minute. Action.
- **Feint (2 Speed points):** If you spend one action creating a misdirection or diversion, in the next round you can take advantage of your opponent's lowered defenses. Make a melee attack roll against that opponent. The difficulty of the roll is decreased by one step. If your attack is successful, it inflicts 4 additional points of damage. Action.
- **Quick Wits:** When performing a task that would normally require spending points from your Intellect Pool, you can spend points from your Speed Pool instead. Enabler.
- **Read the Signs (4 Intellect points):** You examine an area and learn precise, useful details about the past (if any exist). You can ask the GM up to four

questions about the immediate area, but each requires its own roll. Action.

- **Suggestion (4 Intellect points):** You suggest an action to another creature within immediate range. If the action doesn't seem completely at odds with the creature's nature, the creature follows your suggestion. The creature must be level 2 or lower. The effect of your suggestion lasts for up to a minute.

Instead of applying a level of Effort to decrease the difficulty, you can apply it to increase the maximum level of the target you can affect by 1. When you use this twist, you immediately learn the creature's level (if you didn't already know it). If its level is higher than 2, you can immediately apply levels of Effort to increase the maximum level allowed (up to that creature's level).

When the effects of the twist end, the creature remembers following the suggestion, but believes that it chose to do so willingly. Action to initiate.

FIFTH-TIER SPINNER

Fifth-tier spinners have the following abilities:

Adept Cypher Use: You can bear four cyphers at a time.

Skills: You are trained in one task of your choosing (other than attacks or defense). If you choose a task you're already trained in, you become specialized in that task. You can't choose a task you're already specialized in.

Twists: Choose one of the following twists (or twists from a lower tier) to add to your repertoire. In addition, you can replace one of your lower-tier twists with a different twist from a tier lower than fifth.

- **Arc Spray (3 Speed points):** If a weapon has the ability to fire rapid shots without reloading (usually called a rapid-fire weapon, such as the automatic pistol), you can fire your weapon at up to three targets (all next to one another) as a single action. Make a separate attack roll against each target. The difficulty of each attack is increased by one step. Action.
- **Energy Protection (4+ Intellect points):** Choose a discrete type of energy that you have experience with (such as heat, sonic, electricity, and so on). You must be familiar with the type of energy; for example, if you have no experience with a certain kind of extradimensional energy, you can't protect against it. You gain +10 to Armor against damage from that type of energy for ten minutes. Alternatively, you gain +1 to Armor against damage from that energy for one day.

Instead of applying Effort to decrease the difficulty, you can apply Effort to protect more targets, with each level of Effort affecting up to two additional

targets. You must touch additional targets to protect them. Action to initiate.

- **Jury-Rig (5 Intellect points):** You quickly create an object using what would seem to be entirely inappropriate materials. You can make a bomb out of a tin can and some household cleaners, a lockpick out of aluminum foil, or a sword out of broken furniture. The level of the item determines the difficulty of the task, but the appropriateness of the materials modifies it as well. Generally, the object can be no larger than something you can hold in one hand, and it functions once (or in the case of a weapon or similar item, is essentially useful for one encounter). If you spend at least ten minutes on the task, you can make up to a level 5 item. You can't change the nature of the materials involved. You can't take iron rods and make a pile of gold coins or a wicker basket, for example. Action.
- **Skill With Attacks:** Choose one type of attack in which you are not already trained: light bashing, light bladed, light ranged, medium bashing, medium bladed, medium ranged, heavy bashing, heavy bladed, or heavy ranged. You are trained in attacks using that type of weapon. Enabler.

SIXTH-TIER SPINNER

Sixth-tier spinners have the following abilities:

Skills: You are trained in one task of your choosing (other than attacks or defense). If you choose a task you're already trained in, you become specialized in that task. You can't choose a task you're already specialized in.

Twists: Choose one of the following twists (or twists from a lower tier) to add to your repertoire. In addition, you can replace one of your lower-tier twists with a different twist from a tier lower than sixth.

- **Battle Management (4 Intellect points):** As long as you spend your action each round giving orders or advice, the difficulty of attack and defense actions by your allies within short range is decreased by one step. Action.
- **Skill With Attacks:** Choose one type of attack, even one in which you are already trained: light bashing, light bladed, light ranged, medium bashing, medium bladed, medium ranged, heavy bashing, heavy bladed, or heavy ranged. You are trained in attacks using that type of weapon. If you're already trained in that type of attack, you instead become specialized in that type of attack. Enabler.
- **True Senses:** You can see in complete darkness up to 50 feet (15 m) as if it were dim light. You recognize holograms, disguises, optical illusions, sound mimicry, and other such tricks (for all senses) for what they are. Enabler.

- **Word of Command (6 Intellect points + level 6 cypher):** You utter a word so powerful that to fully empower it, you sacrifice a level 6 or higher cypher in your possession. You issue your Word of Command to one creature within long range that you can see. It does not have to hear you to be affected. Targets native to Earth are affected if you succeed on an Intellect attack to persuade. Targets native to a recursion or the Strange (including planetovores) are automatically affected.

Affected targets must obey the command for several hours before they're free to act as they wish. Targets that are attacked while under the effect of your command can defend themselves. Typical commands include "Retreat," "Calm," "Come," and "Stay." The GM decides how the target acts once a command is given. Action.

SPINNER EXAMPLE

Torah wants to play a spinner. She is drawn to the idea of persuading people over to her way of thinking. She puts 3 of her additional points in her Intellect Pool (raising it to 13), 2 points in her Speed Pool (raising it to 11), and 1 point in her Might Pool (raising it to 10). A beginning spinner has an Intellect Edge of 1 and a Speed Edge of 1, and as a first-tier character, her Effort is 1.

Torah gains the Translation twist automatically. For her other two first-tier twists, she takes Fast Talk and Enthrall. She's a good speaker and quick-witted. She chooses to be trained in persuasion.

Her character can bear two cyphers. The GM decides that one item is a temporary tattoo that gives Torah a +1 bonus to her Intellect Edge for one hour, and the other is oil for her knife that, when applied, treats the next attack as if she rolled a 20.

Torah still needs to choose her descriptor and focus. For her descriptor, she picks Clever to complement the hacker idea, so she adds 2 to her Intellect Pool, raising it to 15. The Clever descriptor also means she is trained in lies and trickery (which works for a hacker), defense rolls against mental effects, and identifying or assessing things. Unfortunately, she doesn't excel at reading, studying, or remembering details. She apparently would rather act in the moment than plan ahead.

For her focus, she decides on Works the System. At first tier, she can Hack the Impossible, which seems to complete the hacker idea.

She starts with a laptop computer, a smartphone, and a weapon of her choice. Torah chooses a knife. The knife is a light weapon, so she decreases the difficulty of attack rolls with it, but it inflicts only 2 points of damage.

Torah is a Clever spinner who Works the System.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTOR

Your descriptor defines your character—it flavors everything you do. The differences between a Lucky paradox and a Brash paradox are considerable. The descriptor changes the way those characters go about every action. Your descriptor places your character in the situation (the first adventure, which starts the campaign) and helps provide motivation. It is the adjective of the sentence "I am an adjective noun who verbs."

Descriptors offer a one-time package of extra characteristics that include abilities, skills, or modifications to your stat Pools. Not all of a descriptor's offerings are positive character modifications. For example, some descriptors have inabilities—tasks that a character isn't good at. You can think of inabilities as "negative skills"—instead of being one step better at that kind of task, you're one step worse. If you become skilled at a task that you have an inability with, they cancel out. Remember that characters are defined as much by what they're *not* good at as by what they *are* good at.

Descriptors also offer a few brief suggestions of how your character got involved with the rest of the group on their first adventure. You can use these, or not, as you wish.

You can pick any descriptor you wish regardless of whether you're a paradox, spinner, or vector.

APPEALING

You're attractive to others, but perhaps more important, you are likeable and charismatic. You've got that "special something" that draws others to you. You often know just the right thing to say to make someone laugh, put them at ease, or spur them to action. People like you, want to help you, and want to be your friend.

You gain the following characteristics:
Charismatic: +2 to your Intellect Pool.
Skill: You are trained in pleasant social interactions.
Resistant to Charms: You're aware of how others can manipulate and charm people, and you notice when those tactics are used on you. Because of this

DESCRIPTORS	
Appealing	Sharp-Eyed
Brash	Skeptical
Clever	Stealthy
Fast	Strange
Graceful	Strong
Intelligent	Tough
Lucky	

awareness, you are trained in resisting any kind of persuasion or seduction if you wish it.

Initial Link to the Starting Adventure: From the following list of options, choose how you became involved in the first adventure.
1. You met a total stranger (one of the other PCs) and charmed him so much that he invited you to come along.
2. The PCs were looking for someone else, but you convinced them that you were the perfect person to join them instead.
3. Pure happenstance—because you just go along with the flow of things and everything usually works out well.
4. Your charismatic ways helped get one of the PCs out of a difficult spot a long time ago, and she always asks you to join her on new adventures.

BRASH

You're a self-assertive sort, confident in your abilities, energetic, and perhaps a bit irreverent toward ideas that you don't agree with. Some people call you bold and brave, but those you've put in their place might call you puffed up and arrogant. Whatever. It's not in your nature to care what other people think about you, unless those people are your friends or family. Even someone as brash as you knows that friends sometimes have to come first.

You gain the following characteristics:
Energetic: +2 to your Speed Pool.
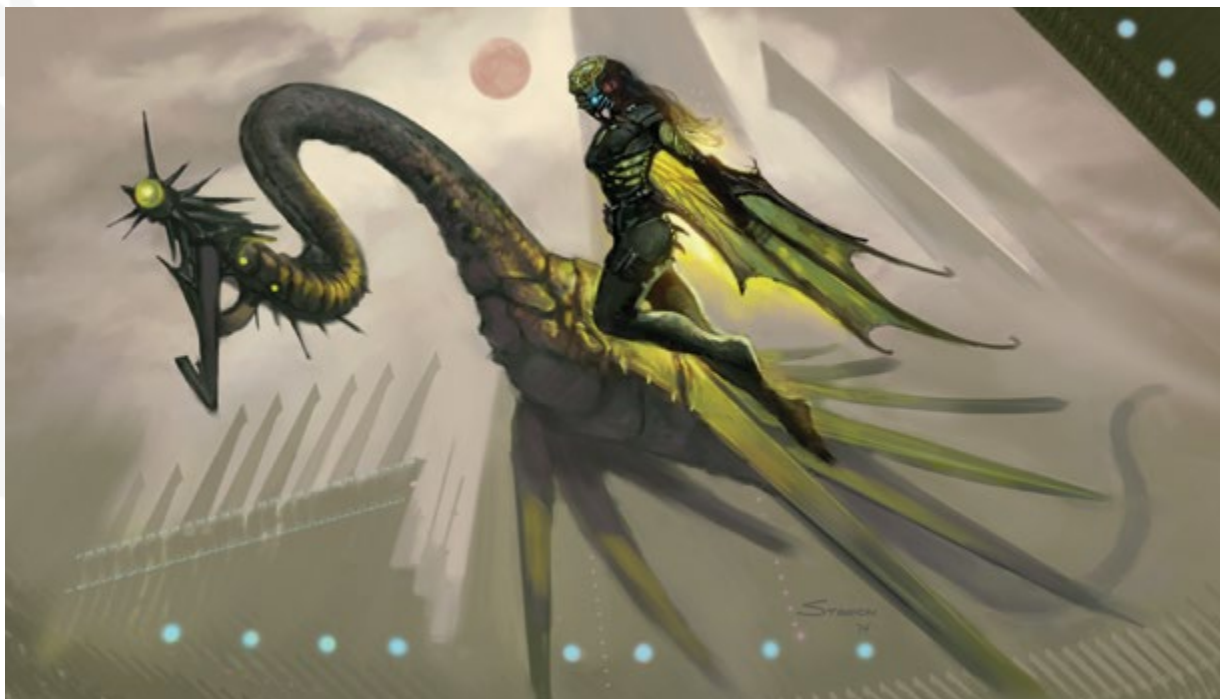
Skill: You are trained in initiative.

Bold: You are trained in all actions that involve overcoming or ignoring the effects of fear or intimidation.

Initial Link to the Starting Adventure: From the following list of options, choose how you became involved in the first adventure.

1. You noticed something weird going on, and without much thought, you jumped in with both feet.
2. You showed up when and where you did on a dare because, hey, you don't back down from dares.
3. Someone called you out, but instead of walking into a fight, you walked into your current situation.
4. You told your friend that nothing could scare you, and nothing you saw would change your mind. She brought you to your current point.

CLEVER

You're quick-witted, thinking well on your feet. You understand people, so you can fool them but you are rarely fooled in return. Because you easily see things for what they are, you get the lay of the land swiftly, size up threats and allies, and assess situations with accuracy. Perhaps you're physically attractive, or maybe you use your wit to overcome any physical or mental imperfections.

You gain the following characteristics:

Smart: +2 to your Intellect Pool.

Skill: You're trained in all interactions involving lies or trickery.

Skill: You're trained in defense rolls to resist mental effects.

Skill: You're trained in all tasks involving, identifying, or assessing danger, lies, quality, importance, function, or power.

Inability: You were never good at studying or retaining trivial knowledge. The difficulty of any task involving lore, knowledge, or understanding is increased by one step.

Additional Equipment: You see through the schemes of others and occasionally convince them to believe you—even when, perhaps, they should not. Thanks to your clever behavior, you always start out with an additional $200 (or the local equivalent) whenever you appear in a new recursion for the first time.

Initial Link to the Starting Adventure: From the following list of options, choose how you became involved in the first adventure.

1. You convinced one of the other PCs to tell you what she was doing.
2. From afar, you observed that something interesting was going on.
3. You talked your way into the situation because you thought it might earn you some money.
4. You suspect that the other PCs won't succeed without you.

FAST

You're fleet of foot. Because you're quick, you can accomplish tasks more rapidly than others. You're not just quick on your feet, however—you're quick with your hands, and you think and react quickly. You even talk quickly.

You gain the following characteristics:

Energetic: +2 to your Speed Pool.

Skill: You are trained in running.

Fast: You can move a short distance and still take another action in the same round, or you can move a long distance as your action without needing to make any kind of roll.

Inability: You're a sprinter, not a long-distance runner. You don't have a lot of stamina. The difficulty of any Might defense roll is increased by one step.

Initial Link to the Starting Adventure: From the following list of options, choose how you became involved in the first adventure.

1. You jumped in to save one of the other PCs who was in dire need.
2. One of the other PCs recruited you for your unique talents.
3. You're impulsive, and it seemed like a good idea at the time.
4. This mission ties in with a personal goal of your own.

GRACEFUL

You have a perfect sense of balance, moving and speaking with grace and beauty. You're quick, lithe, flexible, and dexterous. Your body is perfectly suited to dance, and you use that advantage in combat to dodge blows. You might wear garments that enhance your agile movement and sense of style.

You gain the following characteristics:

Agile: +2 to your Speed Pool.

Skill: You're trained in all tasks involving balance and careful movement.

Skill: You're trained in all tasks involving physical performing arts.

Skill: You're trained in all Speed defense tasks.

Initial Link to the Starting Adventure: From the following list of options, choose how you became involved in the first adventure.

1. Against your better judgment, you joined the other PCs because you saw that they were in danger.
2. One of the other PCs convinced you that joining the group would be a good idea.
3. Your quick reflexes saved one of the other PCs from a precarious situation, and they invited you along to say thank you.
4. A reward was offered, and you need the money.

INTELLIGENT

You're quite smart. Your memory is sharp, and you easily grasp difficult concepts. This aptitude doesn't mean that you've had years of formal education, but you have learned a great deal in your life, primarily because you pick things up quickly and retain so much.

You gain the following characteristics:

Smart: +2 to your Intellect Pool.

Skill: You're trained in an area of knowledge of your choice.

Skill: You're trained in all actions that involve remembering or memorizing things you experience directly. For example, instead of being good at recalling details of geography that you read about in a book, you can remember a path through a set of tunnels that you've explored before.

Initial Link to the Starting Adventure: From the following list of options, choose how you became involved in the first adventure.

1. One of the other PCs asked your opinion of the mission, knowing that if you thought it was a good idea, it probably was.
2. You saw value in what the other PCs were doing.
3. You believed that the task might lead to important and interesting discoveries.
4. A colleague requested that you take part in the mission as a favor.

LUCKY

You rely on chance and timely good luck to get you through many situations. When people say that someone was born under a lucky star, they mean you. When you try your hand at something new, no matter how unfamiliar the task is, as often as not you find a measure of success. Even when disaster strikes, it's rarely as bad as it could be. More often, small things seem to go your way, you win contests, and you're often in the right place at the right time.

You gain the following characteristics:

Luck Pool: You have one additional Pool called Luck that begins with 3 points, and it has a maximum value of 3 points. When spending points from any other Pool, you can take one, some, or all the points from your Luck Pool first. When you make a recovery roll, your Luck Pool is one additional Pool to which you can add recovered points. When your Luck Pool is at 0 points, it does not count against your damage track. Enabler.

Advantage: When you use 1 XP to reroll a d20 for any roll that affects only you, add +3 to the reroll.

Initial Link to the Starting Adventure: From the following list of options, choose how you became involved in the first adventure.

1. Knowing that lucky people notice and take active advantage of opportunities, you became involved in your first adventure by choice.
2. You literally bumped into someone else on this adventure through sheer luck.
3. You found a briefcase lying alongside the road. It was battered, but inside you found a lot of strange documents that led you here.
4. Your luck saved you when you avoided a speeding car by a fortuitous fall through an open manhole. Beneath the street, you found something you couldn't ignore.

SHARP-EYED

You're perceptive and well aware of your surroundings. You notice the little details and remember them. You can be difficult to surprise.

You gain the following characteristics:

Skill: You're trained in initiative actions.

Skill: You're trained in perception actions.

Find the Flaw: If an opponent has a straightforward weakness (takes extra damage from fire, can't see out of his left eye, and so on), the GM will tell you what it is.

Initial Link to the Starting Adventure: From the following list of options, choose how you became involved in the first adventure.

1. You heard about what was going on, saw a flaw in the other PCs' plan, and joined up to help them out.

2. You noticed that the PCs have a foe (or at least, a tail) they weren't aware of.
3. You saw that the other PCs were up to something interesting and got involved.
4. You've been noticing some strange things going on, and this all appears related.

SKEPTICAL

You possess a questioning attitude regarding claims that are often taken for granted by others. You're not necessarily a "doubting Thomas" (a skeptic who refuses to believe anything without direct personal experience), but you've often benefited from questioning the statements, opinions, and received knowledge presented to you by others.

You gain the following characteristics:

Insightful: +2 to your Intellect Pool.

Skill: You're trained in identifying.

Skill: You're trained in all actions that involve seeing through a trick, illusion, rhetorical ruse designed to evade the issue, or lie. For example, you're better at keeping your eye on the cup containing the hidden ball, sensing an illusion, or realizing if someone is lying to you (but only if you specifically concentrate and use this skill).

Initial Link to the Starting Adventure: From the following list of options, choose how you became involved in the first adventure.

1. You overheard other PCs holding forth on a topic with an opinion you were quite skeptical about, so you decided to approach the group and ask for proof.
2. You were following one of the other PCs because you were suspicious of him, which brought you into the action.
3. Your theory about the nonexistence of the supernatural can be invalidated only by your own senses, so you came along.
4. You need money to fund your research.

STEALTHY

You're sneaky, slippery, and cautious. These talents help you hide, move quietly, and pull off tricks that require sleight of hand. Most likely, you're wiry and small. However, you're not much of a sprinter—you're more dexterous than fleet of foot.

You gain the following characteristics:

Quick: +2 to your Speed Pool.

Skill: You're trained in all stealth tasks.

Skill: You're trained in all interactions involving lies or trickery.

Skill: You're trained in all special abilities involving illusions or trickery.

Inability: You're sneaky but not fast. The difficulty of all movement-related tasks is one step higher for you.

Initial Link to the Starting Adventure: From the following list of options, choose how you became involved in the first adventure.

1. You attempted to steal from one of the other PCs. That character caught you and forced you to come along with him.
2. You were tailing one of the other PCs for reasons of your own, which brought you into the action.
3. An employer secretly paid you to get involved.
4. You overheard the other PCs talking about a topic that interested you, so you decided to approach the group.

STRANGE

People are strange, but none more than you. You never quite fit in, so places that should have been familiar were strange, and people who you should have known were strangers. For all you know, everyone else thought the same of you. Sometimes even perfectly paved streets seemed uneven when you felt particularly out of place. But all that changed when you learned the truth: the Strange exists, and you are Strange.

You gain the following characteristics:

Versatile: +2 to your Intellect Pool, +1 to your Speed Pool.

Skill: You're trained in all actions that involve recognizing and understanding the Strange, its effects, and its denizens, including identifying translated visitors from alternate recursions, as well as identifying and understanding cyphers.

Alternatively, you're trained in either fractal surfing or Chaosphere navigation. Whichever skill you choose, it grants you a −1 buffer against positive factors of alienation for being exposed to the Strange.

Sense Something Strange: You can sense whether creatures of an alternative recursion, creatures of the Strange, Strange cyphers, or other related phenomena are active in situations where their presence is not obvious. You must study an object or location closely for a minute to get a feel for the situation.

Inability: Because you often seem as strange to others as they do to you, people have a harder time interacting with you, sometimes to the point where they can't recall your name. The difficulty of any task involving charm, persuasion, etiquette, or deception is increased by one step.

Initial Link to the Starting Adventure: From the following list of options, choose how you became involved in the first adventure.

1. A dream guided you to this point.
2. You need money to fund your studies.
3. You believed the mission would be a great way to learn more about the Strange.
4. A creature from another recursion came through an inapposite gate. Before it died, it told you where you could learn more.

STRONG

You're extremely strong and physically powerful, and you use these qualities well, whether through violence or feats of prowess. You likely have a brawny build and impressive muscles.

You gain the following characteristics:

Very Powerful: +4 to your Might Pool.

Skill: You're trained in all actions involving breaking inanimate objects.

Skill: You're trained in all jumping actions.

Additional Equipment: You have an extra medium or heavy melee weapon.

Initial Link to the Starting Adventure: From the following list of options, choose how you became involved in the first adventure.

1. One of the other PCs was kind to you in the past, and to thank her, you offered to watch her back.
2. One of the other PCs convinced you that joining the group would be in your best interest.
3. You lost a bet and had to take someone's place on this mission.
4. The PCs recruited you after learning about your physical abilities.

TOUGH

You're strong and can take a lot of physical punishment. You might have a large frame and a square jaw. Tough characters frequently have visible scars.

You gain the following characteristics:

Resilient: +1 to Armor.

Healthy: Add 1 to the points you regain when you make a recovery roll.

Skill: You're trained in Might defense actions.

Additional Equipment: You gain an extra light weapon whenever you translate to a different recursion.

Initial Link to the Starting Adventure: From the following list of options, choose how you became involved in the first adventure.

1. You're acting as a bodyguard for one of the other PCs.
2. One of the PCs is your sibling, and you came along to watch out for him.
3. You need money because your family is in debt.
4. You stepped in to defend one of the PCs when that character was threatened. While talking to her afterward, you heard about the group's task.

CHARACTER FOCUS

Your focus makes your character unique. No two PCs in a group should have the same focus. Your focus gives you benefits when you create your character and each time you ascend to the next tier. It's the verb of the sentence "I am an adjective noun who verbs."

When you choose a character focus, you get a special connection to one or more of your fellow PCs, a first-tier ability, and perhaps additional starting equipment. A few foci offer slight alterations of talents used by paradoxes, spinners, and vectors. Each focus also offers suggestions to the GM and the player for possible effects or consequences of really good or really bad die rolls.

As you progress to a new tier, your active focus grants you more abilities. Each tier's benefit is usually labeled Action or Enabler. If an ability is labeled Action, you must take an action to use it. If an ability is labeled Enabler, it makes other actions better or gives some other benefit, but it's not an action. An ability that allows you to rain fire down on foes is an action. An ability that grants you additional damage when you make attacks is an enabler. You can use an enabler in the same turn as you perform another action.

Each tier's benefits are independent of and cumulative with benefits from other tiers (unless indicated otherwise). So if your first-tier ability grants you +1 to Armor and your fourth-tier ability also grants you +1 to Armor, when you reach fourth tier, you have a total of +2 to Armor.

ABIDES IN STONE

Your manifestation in Ardeyn is that of something made, not something born: You are a golem. Your stone body, carved to resemble a humanoid, is nonetheless more akin to statue than flesh. Unlike a statue, you can move, speak, and feel pain. Your rock body means that it takes a lot to damage you, but once damaged, your wounds are not quite as easy to recover from.

As someone made of animate stone, you typically do not wear clothing, although your stone skin is usually carved to appear as if you're wearing it. Such carved clothing could be elaborate armor, robes, or stylistic ridges and ripples.

Golems are most often vectors, but a stone paradox or spinner is a dangerous combination.

Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.

1. Pick one other PC. She roused you from a long period of inactivity, and you feel indebted to her for returning you (perhaps accidentally) to mobility.
2. Pick one other PC. You were once convinced that he wanted to reduce you to rubble, but you have since grown to think that what you believed wasn't true, or at least no longer is so.
3. Pick one other PC. She knows the secret of your origin, but whenever she speaks of it, you forget it. Perhaps you suffer from a curse?
4. Pick one other PC. If you go berserk, you'll never attack that character.

Equipment: A pouch, a chisel and hammer, one weapon of your choice, and 200 crowns.

Minor Effect Suggestion: You step on the target, and your immense weight prevents it from moving on its next turn.

Major Effect Suggestion: You break a weapon, shield, or piece of armor the target was using.

Tier 1: Golem Body. Your stone body was carved to resemble either a human or qephilim wearing elaborate (though much eroded) clothing from the Age of Myth. You gain +1 to Armor, +5 to your Might Pool, and +1 to your Might Edge. You do not need to eat, drink, or breathe (though you do need rest and sleep). You move more stiffly than a creature of flesh, which means you can never be trained or specialized in Speed defense rolls.

Furthermore, you are practiced in using your stone fists as a medium weapon. Enabler.

FOCI TABLE

Ardeyn
Abides in Stone
Carries a Quiver
Channels Sinfire
Embraces Qephilim Ancestry
Lives in the Wilderness
Practices Soul Sorcery
Shepherds the Dead
Slays Dragons
Wields Two Weapons at Once (D)
Works Miracles

Earth
Conducts Weird Science
Entertains (D)
Is Licensed to Carry
Leads (D)
Looks for Trouble (D)
Operates Undercover (D)
Solves Mysteries (D)
Works the System

Ruk
Adapts to Any Environment (D)
Infiltrates
Integrates Weaponry
Metamorphosizes
Processes Information
Regenerates Tissue
Spawns

Special
Translates (D)

(D) denotes a draggable focus

Golem Healing. Sorcery is what animates you and gives you your own kind of life. While that sorcery allows you to be healed in a fashion similar to that of living flesh, your stone form is more difficult to repair than flesh: You are unable to use the first, single-action recovery roll of the day that other PCs have access to. That means your first recovery roll on any given day requires ten minutes of rest, the second requires an hour of rest, and the third requires ten hours. Enabler.

Tier 2: Golem Grip (3 Might points). Your attack with your stone fists is modified by one step in your favor. If you hit, you can grab the target, preventing it from moving on its next turn. Attacks or any attempts to break free made by a grabbed target are modified by one step to the target's detriment while you hold it. The target could use its action to attempt to break free of your grip instead of attacking, which requires you to make a Might-based roll to maintain your grip. If the target doesn't break free under its own power, you can continue to hold it each round as your subsequent actions, automatically inflicting 4 points of damage each round by squeezing. Enabler.

Tier 3: Trained Basher. You are trained in using your stone fists as medium weapons. Enabler.

Golem Stomp (4 Might points). You stomp on the ground with all of your strength, creating a shock wave that attacks all creatures in immediate range. Affected creatures take 3 points of damage and are either pushed out of immediate range or fall down (your choice). Action.

Tier 4: Deep Reserves. Once each day, you can transfer up to 5 points among your Pools in any combination, at a rate of 1 point per round. For example, you could transfer 3 points of Might to

Speed and 2 points of Intellect to Speed, which would take a total of five rounds. Action.

Tier 5. Specialized Basher. You are specialized in using your stone fists as medium weapons. Enabler.

Still as a Statue (5 Might points). You freeze in place, drawing your sorcerous energies deep into your stone core. During this time, you lose all mobility as well as the ability to take physical actions. You cannot sense what's happening around you, and no time seems to pass for you. While Still as a Statue, you gain a +10 bonus to Armor against damage of all sorts. Under normal circumstances, you automatically rouse to normal wakefulness and mobility a day later. If an ally you trust shakes you hard enough (with a minimum cost of 2 Might points), you rouse earlier. Action to initiate.

Tier 6: Ultra Enhancement. You gain +1 to Armor and +5 to each of your three stat Pools. Enabler.

ADAPTS TO ANY ENVIRONMENT

Rukians have interacted with the Strange for far longer than anyone on Earth or Ardeyn. Far longer. They know about the importance of context when it comes to translating from one recursion to the next. And now you know how to harness that concept to give yourself an advantage anywhere you go. By using the concepts of recursion, you allow your body to thrive in all manner of hostile environments. You are the ultimate survivalist.

You probably don loose, comfortable clothing

that breathes in hot weather but keeps you warm when it's cold. Muted in color, it blends into most environments.

Adaptors travel, and they do so fearlessly. They look any threat in the eye (metaphorically or not) and know that it cannot hurt them. They are explorers, adventurers, spies, thieves, warriors, rescuers, and protectors. They can be any character type.

Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.

1. Pick one other PC. If that character is next to you and takes no action other than to remain next to you, he shares your adaptive qualities.
2. Pick one other PC. You fear that character is jealous of your abilities, and you know that jealousy can lead to problems.
3. Pick one other PC. She has something in her possession that you want. How you attempt to get it is up to you.
4. Pick one other PC. Out of the blue, that character

CHANGING FOCUS AFTER TRANSLATION

Your focus can change when you move between Earth and a recursion, or between recursions, through the process of translation. The upshot is that if your focus is Solves Mysteries on Earth, it might be Shepherds the Dead in Ardeyn. (Your equipment and perhaps your race and background also change, but your descriptor and type do not.)

YOUR NEW LOOK AND DRESS

Every time you translate to a new recursion, your appearance, equipment, and focus could change. Each focus indicates your new equipment, and it provides guidance on what you might be dressed like. Unless you specifically choose a focus that changes your physical appearance all the time (like Abides in Stone or Embraces Qephilim Ancestry), your character might look physically very much the same regardless of which recursion you translate to. In fact, unless you specifically tell your GM that you're going for a new physical look, a different gender, or even a different race (among those available within a particular recursion), the GM and every other player should assume that your underlying physical appearance remains the same. For example, your character—a muscular athlete with dark hair and a narrow face wearing a leather jacket and shooting a pistol on Earth—might be a muscular knight with dark hair and a narrow face wearing chainmail wielding a sword in Ardeyn. You look like the same person, but the context is different.

DRAGGABLE FOCI

Some foci are draggable. This means that if you start with a focus in its proper context, you can keep it when you translate to another world. You're "dragging" your focus with you. If you have a draggable focus but decide to change your focus when you translate, you cannot regain the draggable focus again unless you return to the original world to which it is tied. From there, you can drag it again if you wish. Thus, if you start on Earth with the Leads focus, you can keep it if you wish, dragging it with you to Ardeyn. If, however, you then translate to Ruk and choose not to drag it with you, opting to pick another focus, such as Infiltrates, you can't regain Leads until you return to Earth. In short, a draggable focus must actually be "dragged" from one recursion to the next. This process could allow you to have a different focus on the same recursion for different visits, and that's acceptable.

When you drag a focus, your equipment recontextualizes as best as possible. You likely choose new weapons and armor appropriate to the recursion, and other gear is replaced with similar items if possible (the GM and player should work together to determine the specifics).

Draggable foci are marked with a (D) in the table. Note that the Translates focus is special. You cannot start with this focus, but you can adopt it after any translation you undertake, and since it is draggable, you can keep it after your next translation. Unlike other draggable foci, you can regain Translates after translating to any new recursion.

At the GM's discretion, players can choose to give their character a draggable focus in a world other than the one the focus is normally associated with. For example, you might want to start an Ardeyn character with an Entertains focus or a Ruk character who Solves Mysteries. Other than starting equipment, there shouldn't be much trouble quickly adapting a draggable focus to originate in any recursion.

recently paid you a compliment and was very nice to you. What you make of that and how you handle it is up to you.

Equipment: Ruk clothing, light armor, one weapon of your choice, a bag of light tools, a breather, an umbilical, and an account with 50 bits.

Minor Effect Suggestion: You recover 2 points to one of your Pools.

Major Effect Suggestion: You recover 6 points to one of your Pools.

Tier 1: Defend. You gain +1 to Armor against all attacks—even mental ones, and even if they specifically state that they ignore Armor. Enabler.

Heal. You add 1 to all recovery rolls you make. Enabler.

Tier 2: Breathe (2 Might points). You can breathe safely in any (or no) atmosphere or in any substance for one hour. Enabler.

Tier 3: Move (3 Speed points). For one hour, you can move without hindrance through any type of terrain that isn't a solid barrier. Enabler.

Tier 4: Restore. Your normal ten-minute and one-hour recovery roll periods are now one action. Your normal ten-hour recovery roll period is now one hour. You need only one hour of sleep (or complete rest) per day to function. Enabler.

Tier 5: Resist. You have a special +10 to Armor against any kind of environmental damage. This doesn't include direct attacks, but it does include ambient damage and damage from "passive" sources. For example, you are—at least in part—protected from the damage of a raging fire around you, falls from a great height, crushing water pressure, acidic mist, and so forth. Enabler.

Tier 6: Survive. You gain an additional +1 to Armor against all attacks, even if they specifically state that they ignore Armor. You also gain 3 points to add to each of your three stat Pools. Enabler.

Subsist. You do not need to eat, drink, or breathe to live, although if you go past the normal bounds of your body in this regard, the difficulty of all tasks is increased by two steps until you can eat, drink, and breathe normally. Enabler.

CARRIES A QUIVER

In Ardeyn, the longbow and the crossbow are the ranged weapons of choice for most warriors, human or qephilim. The archer is a skilled combatant, deadly in any fight. With a keen eye and quick reflexes, you can eliminate foes at range before they reach you. A good archer also learns to make arrows and bows. You probably wear no more than light armor so you can move quickly when needed.

Many archers are vectors. You can use this focus with crossbows instead of bows if you wish.

Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.
1. Pick one other PC to be the true friend who gave you the excellent bow that you currently use.
2. Pick two PCs (preferably ones who are likely to get in the way of your attacks). When you miss with a bow and the GM rules that you struck someone other than your target, you hit one of these two characters.
3. Pick one other PC. You've seen that character admiring your archery skills many times. Perhaps she would like a lesson? (You won't know until you ask.)
4. Pick one other PC. When this character helps with your fletching or bowyery, the time taken is halved.

Equipment: Ardeyn clothing, light armor, a well-made bow, two dozen arrows, another weapon of your choice, an explorer's pack, tools for fletching, and 400 crowns.

Minor Effect Suggestion: Hit in a tendon or muscle, the target takes 2 points of Speed damage as well as normal damage.

Major Effect Suggestion: The target is pinned in place with an arrow.

Tier 1: Archer. To be truly deadly with a bow, you must know where to aim. You can spend points from either your Speed Pool or your Intellect Pool to apply levels of Effort to increase your bow damage. Each level of Effort adds 3 points of damage to a successful attack. Enabler.

Fletcher: You are trained in making arrows. Enabler.

Tier 2: Covering Fire (2 Speed points). In a round where you attack with your bow, if you fire an additional arrow, the difficulty of attacks made by the target is increased by one step. Enabler.

Tier 3: Trained Archer. You are trained in using bows. Enabler.

Master Fletcher. You are specialized in making arrows. Enabler.

Tier 4: Quick Shot. If you roll a natural 17 or higher with a bow attack, instead of adding damage or a minor or major effect, you can make another attack with your bow. This attack reuses the same Effort and bonuses (if any) from the first attack. Enabler.

Master Bowyer. You are specialized in making bows. Enabler.

Tier 5: Phenomenal Archer. You are specialized in using bows. Enabler.

Tier 6: Powerful Shot (2 Might points). You inflict 3 additional points of damage with a bow. The Might points spent to use this ability are in addition to any Speed points spent on the attack. Enabler.

CHANNELS SINFIRE

Lotan's fire burns with the sin of a fallen god. Fire burns flesh, and sin burns the mind. Thus by the Maker's will, Lotan's fire is contained at Ardeyn's core, so it does not sicken any except those who make the forbidden journey to look upon it.

You, however, were among the few who could sense the sinfire burning within the core. You understood its potential as a weapon, dared the screaming nightmares that afflicted you, and finally allowed the sinfire to pass through you without burning you—without burning much of you, anyhow. Because of the fire you wield, you eventually learned to sense the sins of others, which is why you are sometimes called a sinfire inquisitor.

You probably wear red and black, or perhaps orange and red. Runes that depict accusation and punishment are stitched into the hem of your coat or robes.

Although most sinfire inquisitors are paradoxes, sinfire-wielding spinners and vectors are quite fearsome.

Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.

1. Pick one other PC. He knows of a sin you committed in your youth (not on the order of murder, but more like negligence that led to a bad outcome).

2. Pick one other PC. You know but haven't yet revealed a piece of knowledge that bears on her past. She doesn't know you know.

3. Pick one other PC. For some reason you can't discern, he is completely immune to all of your abilities related to sinfire.

4. Pick one other PC. You feel strangely protective toward that character and don't want to see her come to harm.

Equipment: Ardeyn clothing, light or medium armor, one weapon of your choice, an explorer's pack, a candle and 10 matchsticks, and 300 crowns.

Minor Effect Suggestion: A transgression the target committed against someone or something it values flashes before its eyes, which dazes it for one round, during which time the difficulty of all tasks it performs is modified by one step to its detriment.

Major Effect Suggestion: Make an immediate Sinfire Touch attack against the target as part of your turn, even if the target is up to long range away from you.

Tier 1: Sinfire Touch (1 Intellect point). Your hands burst into flame. If you touch a creature, you can choose to either inflict 3 points of damage from heat or inflict 1 point of Intellect damage that ignores Armor.

Alternatively, you can use this ability on a weapon. If you imbue a weapon with sinfire, that weapon inflicts 1 additional point of fire damage for ten minutes. Action for touch or to imbue; enabler for weapon.

Tier 2: Discern the Sins (2 Intellect points). You can sense a significant baleful act that a creature within short range has committed during its life—if it has committed any. To do so, you must be able to see your target and spend an action concentrating on it. If the target has committed something the GM decides is a sin, you sense the possibility, though not the specific sin or sins.

For the next minute, you can use your Sinfire Touch attack on that target at long range, even if you can't see the target (though you do have to know the target is in range). If an attack you make deals damage, you also learn the nature of one of the sins committed by the target. Action to initiate.

Tier 3: Sinfire Blast (3+ Intellect points). You unleash a conflagration of sinfire, burning up to three targets within short range (make an Intellect roll against each target). This burst inflicts either (your choice) 5 points of fire damage or 3 points of Intellect damage (the latter ignores Armor). For each 2 additional Intellect points you spend, you can make an Intellect

attack roll against an additional target. Action.

Tier 4: Resist Temptation. When you defend against attacks and effects that would compel you to act in a way you'd prefer not to, the difficulty is modified by two steps to your benefit. Enabler.

Tier 5: Certain Punishment. When making an attack with sinfire, once per minute you can reroll any attack roll you wish and take the better of the two results. Enabler.

Tier 6: No Forgiveness. When making a sinfire attack that deals heat damage, you deal 2 additional points of damage. When making a sinfire attack that deals Intellect damage and ignores Armor, you deal 1 additional point of damage. When you imbue a weapon with sinfire, it gains the same bonus to damage (including the option to deal Intellect damage). Enabler.

CONDUCTS WEIRD SCIENCE

You could be a respected scientist, having been published in several peer-reviewed journals. Or you might be considered a crank by your contemporaries, pursuing fringe theories on what others consider to be scant evidence. Truth is, you have a particular gift for sifting the edges of what's possible. You can find new insights and unlock odd phenomena with your experiments. Where others see a crackpot cornucopia, you sift the conspiracy theories for revelation. Whether you conduct your enquiries as a government contractor, a university researcher, a corporate scientist, or an indulger of curiosity in your own garage lab following your muse, you push the boundaries of what's possible.

You probably care more about your work than trivialities such as your appearance, polite or proper behavior, or social norms, but then again, an eccentric like you might turn the tables on that stereotype too.

Paradoxes make the most obvious mad scientists.

Equipment: Street clothes, science field kit, light tools, a pen knife, a smartphone, and $2,000.

Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.

1. Pick one other PC. The character believes your experiments once cured someone close to her of a fatal condition. You're not sure if you did, or if the condition just went into remission.

SINS IN ARDEYN

The act of betraying the Seven Rules of Ardeyn is considered a sin. When the spirit of a dead creature is drawn to the Night Vault, the weight of sin upon it determines its fate in that dreary realm. The list below has the Seven Rules of Ardeyn, in brief, and provides some examples of the acts against those rules that are considered sins.

THE SEVEN RULES OF ARDEYN

COMMERCE. Accumulation of obscene levels of wealth in the face of poverty
DEATH. Murder
DESIRE. Give a Stranger or Lotanist access to Ardeyn (usually because of lust or greed)
LAW. Theft of another's livelihood
LORE. Lies meant to harm another
SILENCE. Failure to aid another when it is within your power to help
WAR. Cowardice that betrays a trust

2. Pick one other PC. You created a scientific instrument designed to give this character a restful night's sleep, but you now fear unanticipated long-term side effects.
3. Pick one other PC. You're pretty sure that one of your experiments when you were younger and brasher is responsible for giving him a connection to the Strange. The PC might know this, or he might just vaguely remember you from long ago.
4. Pick one other PC. She asked you to design a gun that could shoot through walls. You took the cash, but you are still working on the prototype.

Minor Effect Suggestion: You learn one additional piece of information in your analysis.

Major Effect Suggestion: Foes within sight are dazed for one round upon seeing your strange creation or its results. During this time, the difficulty of all tasks they perform is modified by one step to their detriment.

Tier 1: Lab Analysis (3 Intellect points). You analyze the scene of a crime, the site of a mysterious incident, or a series of unexplained phenomena, and you maybe learn a surprising amount of information about the perpetrators, the participants, or force(s) responsible. To do so, you must collect samples from the scene. Samples are paint or wood scrapings, dirt, photographs of the area, hair, an entire corpse, and so on. With samples in hand, you can discover up to three pertinent pieces of information about the scene, possibly clearing up a lesser mystery, and pointing the way to solving a greater one. The GM will decide

what you learn and what the level of difficulty might be to learn it. (For comparison, discovering that a victim was killed not by a fall, as seems immediately obvious, but rather by electrocution, is a difficulty 3 task for you.) The difficulty of the task is modified by one step in your favor if you take the time to transport the samples to a permanent lab (if you have access to one), as opposed to conducting the analysis with your field science kit. Action to initiate, 2d20 minutes to complete.

Scientist: You are trained in one area of scientific knowledge of your choice.

Tier 2: Modify Device (4 Intellect points). You jury-rig a piece of mechanical or electrical equipment to make it function above its rated specs for a very limited time. To do so, you must use 1d6 × 100 dollars in spare parts, have a field science kit (or a permanent lab, if you have access to one), and succeed at a difficulty 3 Intellect-based task. When complete, using the device modifies all tasks performed in conjunction with the device by one step in the user's favor, until the device inevitably breaks. For example, you could overclock a computer so research tasks using it are easier, modify an espresso maker so that each cup of coffee made with it is better, modify a car's engine so that it goes faster (or its steering, so it handles better), and so on. Each use of the modified device requires a depletion roll of 1–5 on a d20. Action to initiate, one hour to complete.

Tier 3: Better Living Through Chemistry (4 Intellect points). You've developed drug cocktails specifically designed to work with your own biochemistry. Depending on which one you inject, it makes you smarter, faster, or tougher, but when it wears off, the crash is a doozy, so you use it only in desperate situations. You gain 2 to your Might Edge, Speed Edge, or Intellect Edge for one minute, after which you can't gain the benefit again for one hour. During this follow-up hour, every time you spend points from a Pool, increase the cost by 1. Action.

Tier 4: Extensive Training. You are specialized in one area of knowledge of your choice. Enabler.

Just a Bit Mad. You are trained in Intellect defense rolls. Enabler.

Tier 5: Weird Science Breakthrough (5 Intellect points). Your research leads to a breakthrough, and you capture a fragment of the Strange within an item, imbuing it with a truly amazing property, though you can use the item only once. To do so, you must use 1d6 × 100 dollars in spare parts, have a field science kit (or a permanent lab, if you have access

to one), and succeed at a difficulty 4 Intellect-based roll to create a random cypher of up to level 2. The GM decides the nature of the cypher you create. Attempting to create a specified cypher increases the difficulty by two steps. Creating a cypher does not allow you to surpass your normal cypher limit. Action to initiate, one hour to complete.

Tier 6: Incredible Feat of Science (12 Intellect points). You do something amazing in the lab. This takes a full day of work (or longer, depending on the circumstances) and 1d6 × 10,000 dollars in parts and materials. Possible incredible feats include:
• Reanimate and command a dead body for one hour.
• Create an engine that runs on perpetual motion.
• Create an inapposite gate that remains open for one minute.
• Transmute one substance into another substance.
• Cure one person with an incurable disease or condition.
• Create a weapon designed to hurt something that can't otherwise be hurt.
• Create a defense designed to protect against something that can't otherwise be stopped.

Improved Weird Science Breakthrough. When you successfully use Weird Science Breakthrough, you can create a cypher of up to level 6. Enabler.

EMBRACES QEPHILIM ANCESTRY

You are a qephilim, which means your ancestors were servitors of the Incarnations. During the Age of Myth, qephilim were semi-divine in their own right, and builders of the first civilizations in Ardeyn. The ancient qephilim thrived for thousands of years before Lotan shrugged, toppling most of those ancient empires and birthing humans that some saw as a curse. Later, when War betrayed the Maker and the Incarnations went away, so too did the semi-divine nature of the qephilim, who became mortal creatures. Because a trace of the old blood remains strong in you, because you've uncovered ancient scrolls regarding qephilim power, or due to a reason you don't yet fully comprehend, that power from days of yore wakes in you once more.

Your ebony skin, elongated jaw, and expressive ears mark you as a qephilim, but your mythlight is brighter and more pure than that of other qephilim, granting you grace obvious to anyone who sees you. Some might attempt to worship you, but others see you

as a heretic for impersonating the ancient qephilim. Therefore, you often dim your glorious mythlight and enhanced abilities when possible.

Paradoxes, spinners, and vectors are equally likely to embrace qephilim ancestry.

Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.
1. Pick one other PC. She thought you were an avatar of a secretly returned Incarnation for a while, but she has since grown to treat you as a peer.
2. Pick one other PC who is a human. You were very suspicious of that character at first, believing that he, as a human, might secretly be a Lotanist. You've since damped your accusations.
3. Pick one other PC. She seems potentially interested in learning the lore of qephilim, and you like to regale her with your tales. It's up to her whether your sense is accurate.
4. Pick one other PC. He knows your true nature, even if no one else does.

Equipment: Ardeyn clothing, armor of your choice, two weapons of your choice (or a weapon and a shield), a relic in the shape of a badge worn by one of the ancient kindred, an explorer's pack, and 400 crowns.

Mythlight Abilities: When you perform moves, revisions, or twists that would normally use force or other energy, they instead use the semi-divine energy of your mythlight. For example, an Exception attack is a confluence of fundamental forces, but when you use it, the effect appears as if manifest from a pulse of your mythlight. This alteration changes nothing other than the type of damage.

Minor Effect Suggestion: Your mythlight absorbs a tiny charge from your successful action and feeds it back to you. You gain a +1 bonus to similar actions involving the same task (such as attacking the same foe).

Major Effect Suggestion: Your mythlight pulses with divine glory. Make an immediate attack against that foe (using the same stat as the action that caused the major effect). If the attack succeeds, it inflicts 4 points of damage from divine radiance.

Tier 1: Kindred. Choose a kindred from those indicated below. Your kindred indicates the Incarnation your ancestors served and that now manifests in you as a related semi-divine ability.

War: You inflict 1 additional point of damage with weapons. Enabler.

Death (1 Intellect point): You invoke the visage of death. Flesh-decaying energies attempt to wrest the spirit from the flesh of a living creature you can see, inflicting 2 points of damage that ignore Armor. Action.

Commerce: You are trained in interacting (deceiving, intimidating, and persuading), and in tasks related to trade, barter, and bookkeeping. Enabler.

Lore: After spending a day with you, once per day each of your friends can decrease the difficulty of a single task by one step. Enabler.

Silence: In silence, you watch. You are trained in perception tasks, initiative, and stealth. Enabler.

Law (3 Intellect points): By quoting a law that bears on the situation, you prevent a foe that can hear and understand you from attacking anyone or anything for one round. Action.

Desire: During rests, your friends and comrades are so content to be in your company that they add 1 to their recovery rolls. Enabler.

Qephilim Lore. You are trained in all topics related to qephilim. Enabler.

Tier 2: Mythlight Lance (2 Intellect points). You can fashion a lance of divine radiance from your mythlight and hurl it at a target. This is a ranged attack with short range that deals 4 points of damage from divine radiance. Action.

Tier 3: Sentinel (3 Intellect points). A target you select within immediate range is marked with a rune of angelic protection for one minute. You can mark only one such target at a time. If the target would be attacked, make an Intellect-based roll. If successful, the attacker must choose a different target for its attack. Action.

Arbiter (3 Intellect points). A target you select within short range is marked with a rune of angelic abandonment for one minute. You can mark only one such target at a time. During that time, all attacks upon it are modified by one step in the attacker's favor. Action.

Tier 4: Glory of the Divine (3+ Intellect points). Your mythlight pulses with divine radiance, which ignores flesh and directly assails the immortal spirits of up to three targets within short range (make an Intellect roll against each target). This burst inflicts 3 points of Intellect damage that ignore Armor. For each 2 additional Intellect points you spend, you can make an Intellect attack roll against an additional target. If you spend 1 additional Intellect point, all targets who are successfully hit are also blinded for one round. Action.

Tier 5: Apportation (4 Intellect points). You call a physical object in Ardeyn to you. You can choose any piece of normal equipment on the Ardeyn equipment list, or (no more than once per day) you can allow

the GM to determine the object randomly. If you call a random object, it has a 15% chance of being a cypher or an artifact, a 45% chance of being a piece of Ardeyn equipment, and a 40% chance of being a bit of worthless junk. You can't use this ability to take an item held by another creature. Action.

Tier 6: Flight (4+ Intellect points). You can fly through the air for one hour, during which time your mythlight blazes. For each level of Effort applied, you can affect one additional creature of your size or smaller. You must touch the creature to bestow the power of flight (during which time it is outlined in the gleam of your mythlight). You direct the other creature's movement, and while flying, it must remain within sight of you or fall. In terms of overland movement, a flying creature moves about 20 miles (32 km) per hour and is not affected by terrain. Action to initiate.

ENTERTAINS

You are an entertainer: a singer, dancer, poet, storyteller, or something similar. You perform for the benefit of others. Naturally charismatic and talented, you have also studied to master your art. You know old poems, songs, jokes, and stories, and you're skilled at creating new ones, too.

You probably wear flamboyant or at least fashionable clothes and use cosmetics, tattoos, or hair styling for dramatic effect.

Spinners are the ideal choice for an entertainer, but vectors and paradoxes can be entertainers too, incorporating more physical performance or seemingly magical tricks into their entertainment, respectively.

Connection: If this is your initial focus, choose one of the following connections.
1. Pick one other PC. This character is your worst critic. Your abilities to help or inspire others don't function for her.
2. Pick one other PC. The two of you go way back. You have been friends for a very long time.
3. Pick one other PC. You find this character vastly entertaining (whether they are intentionally entertaining is up to you).
4. Pick one other PC. This character is your biggest fan and loves everything you do.

Equipment: Clothing, smartphone, some sort of entertainment item (musical instrument, MP3 player, sketchbook and pens, bag of magic tricks, book of

jokes or poetry, and so on) and $300.

Minor Effect Suggestion: You enchant the target, who remains enchanted as long as you focus all your attention on keeping it that way.

Major Effect Suggestion: The target is forever favorably disposed toward you.

Tier 1: Levity. Through wit, charm, humor, and grace, you are trained in all social interactions other than those involving coercion or intimidation. During rests, you put friends and comrades at ease so much that they gain +1 to their recovery rolls. Enabler.

Tier 2: Inspiration. Through stories, songs, art, or other forms of entertainment, you inspire your friends. After spending a day with you, once per day each of your friends can decrease the difficulty of a task by one step. This benefit is ongoing while you remain in the friend's company. It ends if you leave, but it resumes if you return to the friend's company within a day. If you leave the friend's company for more than a day, you must spend another day together to reactivate the benefit. Enabler.

Tier 3: Knowledge. Your stories and songs contain truth. You are trained in two areas of knowledge of your choosing. Enabler.

Tier 4: Calm (3 Intellect points). Through jokes, song, or other art, you prevent a living foe from attacking anyone or anything for one round. Action.

Tier 5: Able Assistance. When you help someone with a task, you always reduce the difficulty of the task by one step regardless of your own skill at that task. Enabler.

Tier 6: Master Entertainer. Your Inspiration ability works more effectively, allowing your friends to decrease the difficulty of a task by two steps rather than one step. Enabler.

INFILTRATES

A large portion of Ruk society is based on subtlety, guile, and stealth. Your body has been genetically altered to make you the perfect infiltrator. Your muscles, nerves, and even flesh have been engineered to aid you in your task, and eventually you gain the ability to emit spores that affect those you

attempt to sneak past.

Infiltrators are spies, agents, thieves, assassins, or information gatherers. They often wear slicksuits and face-concealing masks (sometimes spore filter masks).

Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.
1. Pick one other PC. This character inadvertently foils your actions, or at least makes them more difficult. If this PC is within immediate range of you, the difficulty of any action that you take related to this focus is increased by one step.
2. Pick one other PC. No matter how hard you try, you cannot seem to hide from him.
3. Pick two other PCs. The three of you worked as a team on a mission long ago, but you had a falling out.
4. Pick one other PC. That character is your vat-sibling, and thus you look very much alike.

Equipment: Ruk clothing, light armor, one weapon of your choice, a bag of light tools, an umbilical, and an account with 50 bits.

Minor Effect Suggestion: Your opponent is so startled by your moves that it is dazed, during which time the difficulty of all tasks it performs is modified by one step to its detriment.

Major Effect Suggestion: All opponents within short range are so startled by your moves that they are dazed, during which time the difficulty of all tasks they perform is modified by one step to their detriment.

Tier 1: Stealth. Your physical form is designed to be lithe and quiet. Your flesh even reflexively alters its tone to suit your surroundings. All this is an asset for stealth-related tasks. Enabler.

Tier 2: Impersonation. You can subtly change your features and alter your voice dramatically. This is an asset for any attempts at disguising your identity. Enabler.

Flight Not Fight. If you use your action only to move, the difficulty of all Speed defense tasks is reduced by one step. Enabler.

Tier 3: Awareness (3 Intellect points). By utilizing the All Song, you become hyper-aware of your surroundings. For ten minutes, you are aware of all living things within long range, and by concentrating (an action) you can learn the general emotional state of any one of them. As with most connections to the All Song, connection to it requires an umbilical and a place to connect.

Tier 4: Invisibility (4 Intellect points). Thanks to mind-clouding spores and light-bending secretions on your flesh, you become invisible for ten minutes. While invisible, you are specialized in stealth and Speed defense tasks. This effect ends if you do something to reveal your presence or position—attacking, using an ability, moving a large object, and so on. If this occurs, you can regain the remaining invisibility effect by taking an action to focus on hiding your position. Action to initiate or reinitiate.

Tier 5: Evasion. You can't be good at getting in if you don't survive getting out. You are trained in all defense tasks.

Tier 6: Control. You use trickery, well-spoken lies, and mind-affecting skin secretions to make others temporarily do what you want them to do. You control the actions of another creature you touch. This effect lasts for one minute. The target must be level 3 or lower. You can allow it to act freely or override its control on a case-by-case basis as long as you can see it. Instead of applying Effort to decrease the difficulty, you can apply Effort to increase the maximum level of the target. Thus, to control the mind of a level 6 target (three levels above the normal limit), you must apply three levels of Effort. When the duration ends, the creature doesn't remember being controlled or anything it did while under your influence. Action to initiate.
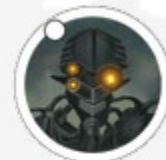
INTEGRATES WEAPONRY

Most weaponry of Ruk contains biomechanical elements akin to your own biology; you are spawned from the same original fugitive craft. You've given yourself a special connection to the recursion by adhering to the directions of the True Code, at least where it touches upon the use of weapons. This adherence explains why those like you are sometimes called weaponauts. Though not feared as much as egosomes, weaponauts are considered to have their own psychological issues.

You likely wear brightly colored clothing or armor with "WEAPONAUT" decals. You have one or more elaborate holsters or scabbards where you carry your weapons when they are not integrated.

Many weaponauts are vectors, but sometimes a spinner might choose this focus, combining it with light weapons for best effect.

Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.

1. Pick one other PC. That character gave you your first heavy weapon, and you've been fascinated by him ever since.
2. Pick one other PC. That character seems very leery of you (this might just be your perception).
3. Pick one other PC. She knows a secret of yours.
4. Pick one other PC. That character looks like someone who wronged you long ago, but you're not sure if you're right.

Equipment: Ruk clothing, light or medium armor, one weapon of your choice, an umbilical, and an account with 50 bits.

Integrated Weapon Abilities: If you perform revisions, or certain twists or moves, your attacks look like they came from your integrated weapon. These alterations change nothing other than the appearance of the effects.

Minor Effect Suggestion: Your attack knocks the target from its feet, or at your option, knocks it back up to 20 feet (6 m).

Major Effect Suggestion: A creature of level 5 or less becomes intimidated by your integrated weapon and flees if you allow it. If you do not allow it, the creature still loses its next turn trying to get away.

Tier 1: Part of Me. You attach a weapon you can normally use into the flesh at the end of one of your arms. The weapon becomes a natural extension of your arm. While integrated, you inflict 1 additional point of damage while using the weapon, though you lose the use of that hand. The weapon can be a heavy weapon and still leave your other hand free; however, if you do integrate a heavy weapon, all physical tasks you attempt using your free hand are modified by one step to your detriment. If you integrate two weapons (one for each hand), you cannot attempt tasks that require the use of hands, nor can you make more than one attack with one integrated weapon on your turn. Action to integrate; action to remove. Enabler once integrated.

Practiced With Integrated Weapons: You can use all integrated weapons without penalty. Enabler.

Tier 2: Weapon Defense. While you have a weapon integrated, you are trained in Speed defense rolls. Enabler.

Tier 3: Trained Integration. You are trained in using all attacks made with integrated weapons. Enabler.

Tier 4: Rapid Attack (4 Speed points). You can make an attack as part of another action with your integrated weapon (possibly a second attack); however, the difficulty of the attack increases by one step. Action.

Tier 5: Phenomenal Integration. You are specialized in all attacks made with integrated weapons. Enabler.

Tier 6: Weapon Frenzy (6 Speed points). You can attempt to attack every creature within range, but you cannot choose which targets to attack and which to spare because you go into a weapon frenzy and attack everything indiscriminately. If attacking with a weapon that uses ammunition, you can make only as many attacks as you have ammunition. Roll each attack separately. Action.

IS LICENSED TO CARRY

You're a proficient adversary when armed. Hundreds of hours of training mean that you don't crack when under fire; you take care of business before the bad guys even know you're there. Those who are Licensed to Carry might be cops, crooks, hunters, or citizens interested in protecting themselves.

You dress in clothing that allows you either to conceal your weapon or to quickly access it, and preferably both, which is why you're probably known for your trench coat.

Vector gun users are likely soldiers or hunters. Spinner gun users are often criminals or cops. A paradox who Is Licensed to Carry is probably rare but might be a detective or a gun enthusiast.

Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.
1. Pick one other PC. In the recent past, while doing a little target practice, you accidentally winged him, leaving him badly wounded. It is up to that PC to decide whether he resents, fears, or forgives you.
2. Pick two PCs (preferably ones who are likely to get in the way of your attacks). When you miss with a gun and the GM rules that you struck someone other than your target, you hit one of these two characters.
3. Pick one other PC. You can see that the character needs some advice on how to handle a firearm.
4. Pick one other PC. You're not sure how or from where, but this character has a line on guns and ammunition and can get them for you for half price.

Equipment: Clothing, light or medium armor, two weapons (one of which must be a firearm and three magazines of ammo), a cell phone, and $800.

Minor Effect Suggestion: After being hit on the side of the head, the target is deafened for a few minutes.

Major Effect Suggestion: An artery hit causes the

target to bleed for 1 point of damage each round until the target succeeds at a difficulty 3 Intellect or Speed task to bind the wound.

Tier 1: Gunner. You inflict an additional point of damage with guns. Enabler.

    Practiced With Guns: You are practiced with using guns and suffer no penalty when using one.

Tier 2: Careful Shot. You can spend points from either your Speed Pool or your Intellect Pool to apply levels of Effort to increase your gun damage. Each level of Effort adds 3 points of damage to a successful attack, and if you spend a turn lining up your shot, each level of Effort adds 5 points of damage to a successful attack instead. Enabler.

Tier 3: Trained Gunner: You can choose from one of two benefits. Either you are trained in using guns, or you have the Spray ability (which costs 2 Speed points): If a weapon has the ability to fire rapid shots without reloading (usually called a rapid-fire weapon, such as the automatic pistol), you can spray multiple shots around your target to increase the chance of hitting. This move uses 1d6 + 1 rounds of ammo (or all the ammo in the weapon, if it has less than the number rolled). The difficulty of the attack roll is decreased by one step. If the attack is successful, it deals 1 less point of damage than normal. Being trained in using guns is an Enabler. Spray is an Action.

Tier 4: Snapshot. You can make two gun attacks as a single action, but the second attack is modified by two steps to your detriment. Enabler.

Tier 5: Legendary Gunner: You can choose from one of two benefits. Either you are trained in using guns (or specialized if you are already trained), or you have the Arc Spray ability, which costs 3 Speed points: If a weapon has the ability to fire rapid shots without reloading (usually called a rapid-fire weapon, such as the automatic pistol), you can fire your weapon at up to three targets (all next to one another) as a single action. Make a separate attack roll against each target. The difficulty of each attack is increased by one step. Being trained in using guns is an Enabler. Arc Spray is an Action.

Tier 6: Special Shot. When you hit a target with your gun attack, you can choose to reduce the damage by 1 point but then hit the target in a precise spot. Some of the possible effects include (but are not limited to):
• You can shoot an object out of someone's hand.
• You can shoot the leg, wing, or other limb it uses to

move, reducing its maximum movement speed to immediate for a few days or until it receives expert medical care.
• You can shoot a strap holding a backpack, armor, or similarly strapped-on item so that it falls off. Enabler.

LEADS

Using charisma, natural leadership, and perhaps some training, you command the actions of others, who follow you willingly. You are a politician, a captain, a leader, or a manager. Your skills allow you to make people do what you want, but you also have the wisdom to know what actions would be best for your followers and allies.

    Since you need the respect of others, you probably dress and carry yourself in such a way that inspires, endears, or intimidates. You have a voice suited to barking orders that can be heard even on a noisy battlefield.

    Spinners make excellent military leaders, but a vector could easily lead a group of explorers or a team of soldiers. A paradox might be the head of a group of scholars or scientists, or might have a group of bodyguards as followers.

    Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.
1. Pick one other PC. That character was once a follower of yours, but you have since grown to think of her as a peer.
2. Pick one other PC. Independent and stubborn, he is not affected by your abilities.
3. Pick one other PC. She introduces you to the follower you gain at Tier 2.
4. Pick one other PC. You were once very close with that character in the distant past.

    Equipment: Very nice clothing, leather jacket, a computer of your choice, a smartphone, a car, and $1,500.

    Minor Effect Suggestion: The next time you attempt to command, captivate, or otherwise influence the same foe, the difficulty of the task is decreased by one step.

    Major Effect Suggestion: The foe is influenced, captivated, or otherwise affected by your ability for twice as long as normal.

Tier 1: Natural Charisma. You are trained in all social interactions, whether they involve charm, learning a person's secrets, or intimidating others. Enabler.

Good Advice (1 Intellect point). You have a clear mind for determining the best way to proceed. When you give another character a suggestion involving his next action, the character is trained in that action for one round. Action.

Tier 2: Follower. You gain a level 2 nonplayer character (NPC) follower who is completely devoted to you. You and the GM must work out the details of the follower. As a level 2 follower, it has a target number of 6 and a health of 6, and it inflicts 2 points of damage.

You'll probably make rolls for your follower when he takes actions. A follower in combat usually doesn't make separate attacks, but helps you with yours. On your action, if the follower is next to you, he serves as an asset for one attack you make on your turn.

If the follower dies, you gain a new one after at least two weeks and proper recruitment.
Enabler.

Tier 3: Command (3 Intellect points). Through sheer force of will and charisma, you issue a simple command to a single living creature, which attempts to carry out your command as its next action. The creature must be within short range and be able to understand you. The command can't inflict direct harm on the creature or its allies, so "Commit suicide" won't work, but "Flee" might. In addition, the command can require the creature to take only one action, so "Unlock the door" might work, but "Unlock the door and run through it" won't. Action.

Capable Follower. Your first follower increases to level 3. As a level 3 follower, it has a target number of 9 and a health of 9, and it inflicts 3 points of damage. Enabler.

Tier 4: Captivate or Inspire. You can use this ability in one of two ways. Either your words keep the attention of all NPCs that hear them for as long as you speak, or your words inspire all NPCs (of your choosing) that hear them to function as if they were one level higher for the next hour. Action.

Capable Follower. Your first follower increases to level 4. As a level 4 follower, it has a target number of 12 and a health of 12, and it inflicts 4 points of damage. Enabler.

Tier 5: Band of Followers. You gain six level 2 NPC followers who are completely devoted to you. (They are in addition to the follower you gained at second tier.) You and the GM must work out the details of these followers. If a follower dies, you gain a new one after at least two weeks and proper recruitment. Enabler.

Tier 6: Mind of a Leader (6 Intellect points). When you develop a plan that involves your followers, you can ask the GM one very general question about what is likely to happen if you carry out the plan, and you will get a simple, brief answer. Action.

Capable Followers. Your first follower increases to level 5. As a level 5 follower, it has a target number of 15 and a health of 15, and it inflicts 5 points of damage. Each of your level 2 followers increases to level 3. Enabler.

LIVES IN THE WILDERNESS

You dwell in the wilds. You probably have done so most, if not all, of your life, coming to understand the mysteries of nature, weather, and survival. The ways of flora and fauna are your ways.

Your rough, rugged clothing shows little concern for style. Most of the time, covering yourself in natural smells to keep your scent from arousing suspicion in the wilderness is more important than bathing to keep yourself presentable to other humans.

Vectors are most likely to live in the wilderness, perhaps working as guides, hunters, trappers, scouts, or trackers. A paradox that does so might be seen as a nature priest or wild wizard.

Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.
1. Pick one other PC who isn't from the wilderness. You can't help but feel a little contempt for that character and the "civilized" ways she exhibits, which show disdain for all things natural and (to your mind) true.
2. Pick one other PC. In the past, you helped this character find a way back to civilization from the wild or you provided healing.
3. Pick one other PC. You don't know why, but it seems that this character spooks animals in a way that is upsetting to you.
4. Pick one other PC. This character seems as adept in the wilderness as you are—well, almost—and you have to respect him for that.

Equipment: Ardeyn clothing, light or medium armor, two weapons of your choice (or one weapon and a shield), an explorer's pack, and 300 crowns.

Minor Effect Suggestion: A foe that is a natural creature flees rather than continue to fight you.

Major Effect Suggestion: A foe that is a natural creature becomes warily passive.

Tier 1: Wilderness Life. You are trained in climbing and swimming tasks. Enabler.

Wilderness Lore. You are trained in wilderness navigation and in identifying plants and creatures. Enabler.

Tier 2: Living Off the Land. Given an hour or so, you can always find edible food and potable water in the wilderness. You can even find enough for a small group of people if need be. Further, since you're so hardy and have gained resistance over time, the difficulty of resisting the effects of natural poisons (such as those from plants or living creatures) is decreased by one step. You're also immune to natural diseases. Enabler.

Tier 3: Animal Senses and Sensibilities. You are trained in listening and spotting things. In addition, most of the time, the GM should alert you if you're about to walk into an ambush or a trap that is lower than level 3. Enabler.

Wilderness Explorer. While taking any action (including fighting) in the wild, you ignore any penalties due to natural causes such as tall grass, thick brush, rugged terrain, weather, and so on. Enabler.

Tier 4: Wilderness Awareness (4 Intellect points). Your connection to the natural world expands to a degree that some would call supernatural. While in the wilderness, you can extend your senses up to a mile in any direction and ask the GM a very simple, general question about that area, such as "Where is the raider camp?" or "Is my friend Maltrose still alive?" If the answer you seek is not in the area, you receive no information. Action.

Tier 5: The Wild Is on Your Side (5 Intellect points). While you're in the wilderness, foes within short range are tripped by rocks, tangled in vines, bitten by insects, and distracted or confused by small animals. The difficulty of any tasks performed by those foes is increased by one step. This effect lasts for ten minutes. Action to initiate.

Tier 6: One With the Wild (6 Intellect points). For the next ten minutes, natural animals and plants within long range will not knowingly harm you or those you designate. Action.

Master of the Wild. While you're in the wilderness, your Might Edge, Speed Edge, and Intellect Edge increase by 1. When you make a recovery roll in the wilderness, you recover twice as many points. Enabler.

LOOKS FOR TROUBLE

You are a fighter. A scrapper. You like nothing more than to take off the kid gloves and confront your opposition in the most direct way possible. You don't hide, and you don't shirk. You take things head-on in a physical way. Your friends all likely feel better about going into danger with you at their side or their back.

You probably wear bright colors—yellow, pink, or red—to help you stand out. You might even wear a T-shirt with a printed obscenity for added style.

Obviously, vectors excel at looking for trouble, but any character type can be more physical and up-close too.

Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.

1. Pick one other PC. Due to past experiences, you watch over her. That PC is your default charge regarding your tier 2 ability, if you have not named someone else.
2. Pick one or two other PCs. They seem pretty tough, and you're secretly hoping that at some point you'll see who's tougher—you or them.
3. Pick one other PC. If this character is within immediate range when you're in a fight, sometimes she helps, and sometimes she accidentally hinders (50% chance either way, determined per fight). When this character helps, you gain a +1 bonus to all attack rolls. When she hinders, you suffer a –1 penalty to attack rolls.
4. Pick one other PC. You used to be in a relationship with that character, but it's long since over.

Equipment: Street clothes, light armor, two weapons of your choice (one of which must be a melee weapon), a first aid kit, a utility knife, a cell phone, and $400.

Minor Effect Suggestion: The target is also dazed for one round, during which time the difficulty of all tasks it performs is modified by one step to its detriment.

Major Effect Suggestion: You destroy a piece of equipment worn or held by your opponent.

Tier 1: Brawler. You inflict 1 additional point of damage in melee (including with your bare fists).

Wound Tender. You are trained in healing.

Tier 2: Protector. You designate a single character to be your charge. You can change this freely every round, but you can have only one charge at a time. As long as that charge is within immediate range, he

gains an asset for Speed defense tasks because you have his back.

Straightforward: You are trained in one of the following tasks (choose one): breaking things, climbing, jumping, or running.

Tier 3: Lethal Battler. Choose one type of attack in which you are not already trained: light bashing, light bladed, medium bashing, medium bladed, heavy bashing, or heavy bladed. You are trained in attacks using that type of weapon. Enabler.

Tier 4: Knock Out (5 Might points). You make a melee attack that inflicts no damage. Instead, if the attack hits, make a second Might-based roll. If successful, a foe of level 3 or less is knocked unconscious for one minute. You can use Effort to improve this ability. For each level of Effort used, you can affect one higher level of foe, or you can extend the duration for an additional minute. Action.

Tier 5: Epic Fighter. Choose one type of attack in which you are already trained: light bashing, light bladed, medium bashing, medium bladed, heavy bashing, or heavy bladed. You are specialized in attacks using that type of weapon. Enabler.

Tier 6: Juggernaut. You add 5 points to your Might Pool, and you inflict 1 additional point of damage with melee attacks. Enabler.

True Healer. You are specialized in healing.

METAMORPHOSIZES

You possess a radical biomodification that allows you to unlock metamorphic forms called chrysalides that are hinted at in the All Song. Chrysalid forms are a frontier of Ruk science, and they can prove actively dangerous to your allies and possibly even to you. But, oh, the power!

Many do not trust you and consider you dangerous, and for good reason. Metamorphs are most often vectors, but chrysalid forms can enhance any character.

You wear either loose clothing that you can doff quickly, or specially made Ruk clothing that can handle whatever chrysalid shape you choose to take.

Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.
1. Pick one other PC. You never attack him while

metamorphosized.
2. Pick one other PC. If that PC spends three consecutive turns using an action to calm you, you can revert to your normal form without having to make a roll.
3. Pick one other PC. Something about this character enrages you while you are metamorphosized. If he was within sight when you changed, you gain a +1 bonus to all rolls during that particular metamorphosis. If he's within range, you always attack him.
4. Pick one other PC. You have been friends since childhood.

Equipment: Ruk clothing, light armor, one weapon of your choice, an umbilical, and an account with 70 bits.

Minor Effect Suggestion: While you're transformed, an unsuspected aspect of your chrysalid form sprays the target with dazing enzyme. The target is dazed for one round, during which time the difficulty of all tasks it performs is modified by one step to its detriment.

Major Effect Suggestion: While you're transformed, an unanticipated aspect of your chrysalid form encapsulates the target in a translucent sheath of tissue. The target must spend an action to free itself. Until it does, attacks against it are modified by one step to the attacker's benefit.

Tier 1: Battle Chrysalid (2 Intellect points). You can change and gain a battle chrysalid for up to one hour. In this new form, you add 4 points to your Might Pool, add 1 to your Might Edge, add 2 points to your Speed Pool, and add 1 to your Speed Edge. Claws sprout from your hands, serving as a medium melee weapon. Action to change; action to change back.

Practiced With Chrysalid Attacks: You can use all attacks in any chrysalid form without penalty. Enabler.

Tier 2: Devourer Battle Chrysalid (3 Intellect points). You can change and gain a Ruk-eater battle chrysalid for up to one hour. In this new form, you add 8 points to your Might Pool, add 1 to your Might Edge, add 4 points to your Speed Pool, add 1 to your Speed Edge, and gain +1 to Armor.

Mouth stalks protrude from your body, which serve as a medium weapon. If you become impaired or debilitated, you lose control over your own voracious appetite. Each round, you automatically inflict 1 point of damage on yourself (ignoring Armor) as your mouth stalks self cannibalize. Action to change; action to change back.

Tier 3: Trained Chrysalid. You are trained in using all attacks you gain while in a chrysalid form. Enabler.

Tier 4: Flyer Battle Chrysalid (5 Intellect points). You can change and gain a flyer battle chrysalid for up to one hour. In this new form, you can fly a short distance each round, and you add 4 points to your Might Pool, add 1 to your Might Edge, add 2 points to your Speed Pool, and add 1 to your Speed Edge. Wingblades sprout from your arms, allowing you to fly and serving as a medium melee weapon. Action to change; action to change back.

Tier 5: Specialized Chrysalid. You are specialized in using all attacks you gain while in a chrysalid form.

Tier 6: Monstrous Battle Chrysalid (7 Intellect points). You can change and gain a monstrous battle chrysalid for up to one hour. In this new form, you add 10 points to your Might Pool, add 2 to your Might Edge, add 6 points to your Speed Pool, add 2 to your Speed Edge, and gain +2 to Armor.

Your arms become huge, hammerlike appendages, serving as a large melee weapon. Your body is also covered with spikes, so that if anyone strikes you in melee, they suffer 1 point of damage. Further, you can throw spikes as a medium weapon with short range. Action to change; action to change back.

OPERATES UNDERCOVER

Espionage is not something you know anything about. At least, that's what you want everyone to believe, because in truth, you've been trained as a spy or covert agent. You might work for a government or for yourself. You might be a police detective or a criminal. You could even be an investigative reporter.

Regardless, you learn information that others attempt to keep secret. You collect rumors and whispers, stories and hard-won evidence, and you use that knowledge to aid your own endeavors and, if appropriate, provide your employers with the information they desire or sell what you have learned to those willing to pay a premium.

You probably wear dark colors—black, charcoal grey, or midnight blue—to help blend into the shadows, unless the cover you've chosen requires you to look like someone else.

Spinners operate well while working undercover, but a paradox's abilities or a vector's physicality make interesting combinations as well.

Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.

CHRYSALID

While in a chrysalid form, you can't spend Intellect points for any reason other than to try to change to your normal form before the one-hour duration is over (a difficulty 2 task). In addition, your target selection includes any and every living creature within short range, whether enemy, ally, or bystander. If multiple targets are in range, you always choose the nearest (or, barring that, the biggest) target. After you revert to your normal form, you take a –1 penalty to all rolls for one hour. If you did not defeat a real enemy while metamorphosized, the penalty increases to –2 and affects all your rolls for the next day.

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1. Pick one other PC. The character knows your real identity (if that's a secret) or that you work undercover (if that's a secret), and has kept that information private until now.
2. Pick one other PC. You know an important secret about her, but she is unaware that you know.
3. Pick two other PCs. You know about an important connection between these two that even they don't know about.
4. Pick one other PC. No matter how you hide or disguise yourself, this character always seems to know where and who you really are.

Equipment: Street clothes, disguise kit, light tools, duct tape, a weapon of your choice, a pen knife, a smartphone, and $700.

Minor Effect Suggestion: You can immediately attempt to hide after this action.

Major Effect Suggestion: You get a +2 bonus to Speed defense rolls for one round.

Tier 1: Investigate. You are trained in perception, cryptography, deceiving, and breaking into computers. Enabler.

Tier 2: Disguise. You are trained in disguise. You can alter your posture, voice, mannerisms, and hair to look like someone else for as long as you keep up the disguise. However, it is extremely difficult to adopt the disguise of a specific individual without a disguise kit at your disposal. Enabler.

Tier 3: Agent Provocateur. Choose one of the following to be trained in: attacking with a weapon of your choice; demolitions; or sneaking and lockpicking (if you choose this last option, you are trained in both). Enabler.

Tier 4: Pull a Fast One (3 Intellect points). When you're running a con, picking a pocket, fooling or tricking a dupe, sneaking something by a guard, and so on, you treat the task as if it were one level lower. Enabler.

Tier 5: Using What's Available (4 Intellect points). If you have the time and the freedom to scrounge for everyday materials in your environment, you can fashion a temporary asset that will aid you once to accomplish a specific task. For example, if you need to climb a wall, you could create some sort of climbing assistance device; if you need to break out of a cell, you can find something to use as lockpicks; if you need to create a small distraction, you could put together something to make a loud bang and flash; and so on. The asset lasts up to a maximum of one minute, or until used for the purpose you fashion it. One minute to assemble materials; action to create asset.

Tier 6: Trust to Luck (3 Intellect points). Sometimes, you've just got to roll the dice and hope things add up in your favor. When you Trust to Luck, roll a d6. On any even result, the task you're attempting is modified by two steps in your favor. On a roll of 1, the task is modified by one step to your detriment. Enabler.

Assassin (5 Might points). If you strike a foe of level 3 or less with a weapon you're practiced or trained with, you kill the target instantly. Action.

PRACTICES SOUL SORCERY

You can mold souls like an artisan can mold clay. You begin your training by learning how to install your own soul in a phylactery you wear as a ring or amulet. You soon learn to attract the lost souls of the dead who evaded the Night Vault and house them in rings you wear, figurines you carry, and even tattoos you sport. A soulmancer (as someone who Practices Soul Sorcery is sometimes called) at the height of her power might wear a ring on each finger, each one resonant with a particular ability or piece of knowledge a resident soul possesses.

You wear robes stitched with runes of spirit warding, spirit luring, and spirit calming. The runes have no intrinsic power, but they help you concentrate when you wield your soulmancy.

Soulmancers are most often paradoxes and spinners, but a vector (a soul warrior) is a frightening

enemy to have.

Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.

1. Pick one other PC. One night after perhaps too much celebrating, you brazenly promised to return his dead sibling, parent, or friend back to life. Later, you realized that power was far beyond your abilities, and might always be.
2. Pick one other PC. She once saved your life.
3. Pick one other PC. Due to an oddity of your ability, if that character is standing next to you, she also gains the benefit of your phylactery.
4. Pick one other PC. That PC has confided in you that he is suspicious of your craft, and he half suspects you to be a secret adherent of the Betrayer, Lotan, or some off-recursion interest.

Equipment: Ardeyn clothing, light armor, one weapon of your choice, an explorer's pack, a phylactery, a handful of rings set with semiprecious gems, and 100 crowns.

Minor Effect Suggestion: The target's soul is tweaked, causing the target to stumble and drop whatever it's holding.

Major Effect Suggestion: The target's soul is dislodged before settling back in place; this dazes the target.

Tier 1: Phylactery. Your soul is installed in a ring or amulet. This insulates you somewhat from pain, granting you +1 to Armor, and you are trained in Intellect and Might defense tasks.

If your phylactery is destroyed for any reason, your soul returns to your body, and you lose all benefits of this ability until you can construct a new phylactery, which is a process requiring a day of labor and a suitable ring or amulet worth at least 100 crowns. Until you construct a new phylactery, all your stat Pool maximums are reduced by 1 point. Enabler.

Tier 2: Clothe Spirit (3 Intellect points): A lost spirit takes up residence in a piece of jewelry you wear or in a tattoo on your body. With this ability, you can clothe the spirit in the physical body of another creature no more than twice as large as you for up to an hour before the spirit must depart and return to the jewelry or tattoo that normally houses it.

The target body can be any dead body within short range. The body can also be that of a sleeping creature that you touch (to clothe the spirit in a sleeping body, you must touch the body and make an Intellect attack). If you clothe the spirit in a living, sleeping creature, upon waking that creature retains no memory of having been the vessel for a spirit, except perhaps in the hint of a dream.

The resultant "clothed spirit" is a level 2 creature

devoted to you. You and the GM can work out the details of your particular spirit, independent of the body it inhabits. You'll probably make rolls for it when it takes actions (but see below for combat). The clothed spirit acts on your turn. As a level 2 creature, it has a target number of 6 and a health of 6. It can produce a terrifying Soul Scream once per day that attacks up to three designated living targets within short range. If a target of the Soul Scream is affected, it cannot take any action other than movement on its next turn. (A clothed spirit doesn't physically attack other creatures, but it can spend its action to serve as an asset for any one attack you make on your turn while it is embodied.)

If the body housing the spirit takes 6 points of damage or if an hour passes (whichever comes first), the soul returns to whatever item you house it in; if the body was a living, sleeping creature, it wakes up (with 6 points of damage to deal with). Action to clothe spirit.

Tier 3: Soul Rider. If your phylactery is separated from you, you can concentrate to see, hear, and smell through it. Your sensory capabilities aren't greater than normal, except in one way: you can sense the environment around the phylactery even if it's in another creature's pocket, bag, pack, or similar container. A few feet of earth, a foot of stone, or an inch of metal blocks your ability to see. Action.

Improved Clothe Spirit. The spirit you create with Clothe Spirit increases to level 3. As a level 3 creature, it has a target number of 9 and a health of 9, and you can call it up to twice a day. Its Soul Scream is unaffected, other than it being a higher-level attack. Enabler.

Tier 4: Vicious Soul (4 Intellect points). A lost spirit of a vindictive qephilim takes up residence in a piece of jewelry you wear or in a tattoo on your body. You can coax it to enter either you or an ally within short range who allows it. Upon installation, the vessel (you or the chosen ally) gains the following benefits: add 10 points to Might Pool, add 2 to Speed Edge, add 4 points to Intellect Pool, and add 2 to Intellect Edge. The vicious spirit doesn't care to distinguish its enemies, and it randomly attacks any creature it can see and reach. You or the allied vessel can attempt a difficulty 3 Intellect task each round to eject the vicious soul. Afterward, whoever hosted the raging soul loses 1d6 points from its Might Pool and 1d6 points from its Speed Pool. Action to initiate.

Improved Clothe Spirit. The spirit you create with Clothe Spirit increases to level 4. As a level 4 creature, it has a target number of 12 and a health of 12, and you can call it up to three times a day. Its Soul Scream is unaffected, other than it being a higher-level attack. Enabler.

Tier 5: Soul River. You can mold souls. If you succeed at a difficulty 4 Intellect-based task, you can transfer up to 5 points among your Pools, or among your Pools and another willing creature's Pools, in any combination, at a rate of 1 point per round. For example, you could transfer 3 points of Might to an ally's Speed Pool, and 2 points of Speed to your own Intellect Pool, which would take a total of five rounds. Each time you attempt to use this ability, the difficulty becomes one step higher; the difficulty resets to 4 after your next ten-hour rest. Action.

Tier 6: Escape the Vault. If you are slain in Ardeyn, your spirit is drawn to your phylactery instead of the Night Vault, assuming the phylactery is not also destroyed. Your soul is housed for ten days in your phylactery, after which you are reincarnated in a new body identical to your old body at or near where your phylactery resides. You return with nothing but your phylactery. After you enjoy this benefit, you cannot do so again for one year (so if you die again before a year elapses, your spirit falls to the Court of Sleep, who are likely unhappy that you cheated them once).

Alternatively, you can attempt to pull another soul out of the Night Vault and reincarnate it as a living creature. You can do so only if you know the full name of the creature, if you have something of its body or a cherished possession, and if it has not been dead for more than one year. The spirit must also be available to return. After you use this alternative, you cannot use it or the option to return yourself to life described above for one year. Enabler.

Improved Clothe Spirit. The spirit you create with Clothe Spirit increases to level 5. As a level 5 creature, it has a target number of 15 and a health of 15, and you can call it up to four times a day. Its Soul Scream is unaffected, other than it being a higher-level attack. Enabler.

PROCESSES INFORMATION

While Ruk science enhances the physical bodies of many who live there, for you the enhancement is all to your brain. Your neural connections are faster, your memory is greater, and eventually you learn to use these enhancements to patch yourself into the All Song like no one else.

Your abilities probably do not have visible manifestations, although some processors have enlarged craniums or small plugs or artificial

attachments on their skulls.

Processors are most often paradoxes, followed closely by spinners.

Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.

1. Pick one other PC. You have information about one of her biggest secrets.
2. Pick one other PC. You became friends with this character through the All Song.
3. Pick one other PC. When he stands next to you, the difficulty of any task involving the All Song is increased by one step.
4. Pick one other PC. You remember seeing this character once before, long ago, but you can't recall where, and it bothers you.

Equipment: Ruk clothing, light armor, one weapon of your choice, a healing kit, an umbilical, and an account with 50 bits.

Minor Effect Suggestion: You spontaneously regain 1 point to your Intellect Pool.

Major Effect Suggestion: You gain an unexpected bit of information from the All Song about the situation at hand or someone involved.

Tier 1: Knowledge Storehouse. You can choose three different areas of knowledge—history, geography, botany, quantum mechanics, and so on—in which you are trained. Enabler.

Storage Capacity. You gain 4 points to add to your Intellect Pool.

Tier 2: Gliding Through the All Song. You can access the All Song from anywhere in Ruk without the need of an umbilical. You are trained in All Song navigation. Enabler.

Processing Power. You add 1 to your Intellect Edge. Enabler.

Tier 3: Unearth Knowledge (4 Intellect points). You can access the All Song with such sophistication that you can ask the GM one yes-or-no question and get an answer. The task difficulty varies but is typically 3. Action.

Tier 4: Find the Undoing (4 Intellect points). Through observation and access to the All Song, you determine the weaknesses, vulnerabilities, qualities, and mannerisms of a single creature. The GM should reveal the creature's level, basic abilities, and any obvious weaknesses (if any). The difficulty of all actions you attempt that affect that creature—attack, defense, interaction, and so on—is reduced by two steps. Action.

Tier 5: Self-Preservation. Your enhanced mental abilities give you training in both Speed defense and

Intellect defense. Enabler.

Tier 6: The Speed of Thought. Any time you would normally need to use Speed, you can use Intellect instead. This includes your Intellect Edge as well as your Intellect Pool. Enabler.

REGENERATES TISSUE

Your body possesses a natural ability to heal its own hurts. You've accelerated this through biomodifications and self-directed surgeries, which is why some refer to you as an egosome. Sometimes egosomes are denigrated for looking out only for their own interests, but from your point of view, who's better able to look out for yourself than you?

You wear regular Ruk clothing and simple light armor—no need to call attention to your ability to withstand hurts that would kill others.

Vectors usually choose to regenerate tissue, but any type would find it useful to have an extra lease on life.

Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.

1. Pick one other PC. Because of a similarity in your genetic heritage, if that character is standing next to you when you use your Regeneration ability, 2 points are also restored to either her Speed Pool or her Might Pool.
2. Pick one other PC. You cannot heal that character with your tier 3 ability for some reason.
3. Pick two other PCs. Due to a genetic link, when all three of you are within immediate range, you all add 1 to your recovery rolls.
4. Pick one other PC. That character knows a secret about your past.

Equipment: Ruk clothing, light armor, one weapon of your choice, an umbilical, and an account with 70 bits.

Minor Effect Suggestion: You spontaneously regain 1 point to either your Speed Pool or your Might Pool.

Major Effect Suggestion: You spontaneously regain 2 points to any of your stat Pools.

Tier 1: Regeneration (1 Intellect point). You restore 1d6 + 1 points to either your Speed Pool or your Might Pool. This ability is a difficulty 2 Intellect task. Each additional time you use this ability, the task difficulty increases by one step. The difficulty returns to 2 after you rest for ten hours. Action.

Tier 2: Immune to Toxins. You are immune to disease and poisons whose level is equal to or less than your tier. When you make a defense roll to resist a higher-level toxin, the difficulty is reduced by two steps. Enabler.

Tier 3: Induce Regeneration (2 Intellect points + 3 Might points). You cut a piece of your flesh free and apply it to another creature's wound. Your transplanted regenerating flesh restores 1d6 points to one of the creature's stat Pools. This ability is a difficulty 3 Intellect task. Each time you attempt to transplant regenerating flesh to the same creature, the task difficulty increases by one step. The difficulty returns to 3 after that creature rests for ten hours. Action to make cutting; action to apply.

Tier 4: Generate Carapace (4 Might points). The outer layers of your skin calcify, giving you +2 to Armor. However, this kills the outer layers of your skin, which sheds within ten minutes. By then, a new layer of skin is ready to take the shed skin's place. Action to initiate.

Tier 5: Greater Regeneration (6 Intellect points). You restore your Might Pool and Speed Pool to their maximum values. This ability is a difficulty 2 Intellect task. Each additional time you use this ability, the task difficulty increases by one step. The difficulty returns to 2 after you rest for ten hours. Action.

Tier 6: Rhizome Seed. Your consciousness and knowledge are concentrated into a rhizome tendril that protrudes a few inches (7 cm) from the back of your neck. You function normally, although the seat of your consciousness is located in the rhizome, not your brain. This shift provides several benefits:

- When you defend against mental attacks, the difficulty is modified by one step to your benefit.
- You can detach the rhizome as an action and mentally and remotely control your body at long range.
- You can shift your point of view between the rhizome and your body (or the reverse) as an action (but if you shift your point of view away from your body, your body falls limp until your attention "returns").
- If your body is slain and the rhizome escapes, it can take root and regrow you completely in three days.

The rhizome seed, while detached from your body, is a mobile level 1 creature. As the seed, you have a target number of 3 and a health of 3, and you inflict 1 point of damage with a spike. You have Armor 3 and an immediate movement speed, though you can deploy a fluffy vegetable "wing" to drift on strong winds. If the rhizome seed is destroyed while detached from your body, you die. Enabler.

SHEPHERDS THE DEAD

You have a spiritual connection to the Night Vault, where dead souls wander in an extensive series of subterranean tunnels beneath Ardeyn, chased by umber wolves until caught or collected by the Court of Sleep...or caught by you. You have a way with wandering souls, almost as if you were a member of the Court of Sleep yourself, and you can call dead spirits to you.

Shepherds usually wear distinctive robes and a variety of symbols, often with macabre imagery. Runes stitched across your cloak help you concentrate on your abilities.

Shepherds of the dead are most often paradoxes and spinners.

Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.

1. Pick one other PC. When spirits of the departed whisper to you, as they often do (you've learned to ignore it), that character can sometimes hear what they say.
2. Pick one other PC. She came to you with questions for a departed friend, family member, or enemy.
3. Pick one other PC. You may or may not have told him this, but the spirits whisper to you that he is destined to die soon.
4. Pick one other PC. You owe that character a great debt in crowns.

Equipment: Ardeyn clothing, light armor, one weapon of your choice, an explorer's pack, incense and 10 matchsticks, and 400 crowns.

Spirit Abilities: When you perform moves, revisions, or twists that would normally use force or other energy, they instead use spirit energy. For example, an Exception attack is a confluence of fundamental forces, but when you use it, the effect appears as if delivered by a ghostly revenant whose touch drains life energy. This alteration changes nothing other than the type of damage.

Minor Effect Suggestion: You can ask an additional question of a spirit you question.

Major Effect Suggestion: The spirit you are questioning knows a surprising amount of information about the topic.

Tier 1: Question the Spirits (2 Intellect points). You can call the spirit of a dead creature to you and petition it to answer a few questions (usually no more than three before the spirit fades). To do so is a two-step process, and calling the spirit is potentially the easiest step.

First, you summon a spirit. You must have personally known the spirit when it was a living creature, or you must have an object that was owned by the spirit when it was a living creature and know the spirit's full name, or you must touch the physical remains of the creature. The spirit must be the essence of something that once lived in Ardeyn, and be free to join you.

If the spirit responds, it can manifest as an insubstantial shade that answers for itself, it can inhabit an object or any remains you provide, or it can manifest as an invisible presence that you speak for.

The spirit may not wish to answer your questions; the second step is persuading or convincing the spirit to help. You can attempt to "psychically wrestle" the spirit into submission (an Intellect task), or you can attempt to convince the spirit with diplomacy, deception, or perhaps even blackmail ("Answer me, or I'll tell your children that you were a devotee of Lotan," or, "I'll destroy this relic that belonged to you").

The GM determines what the spirit might know, based on the knowledge it possessed in life. Action to initiate.

Tier 2: Spirit Accomplice. A level 3 spirit of a dead human, qephilim, or other creature of Ardeyn accompanies you and follows your instructions. The spirit must remain an immediate distance from you—if it moves farther away, it fades away at the end of your following turn and cannot return for a day. You and the GM must work out the details of your spirit accomplice, and you'll probably make rolls for it when it takes actions. The spirit accomplice acts on your turn, can move a short distance each round, and exists partially out of phase (allowing it to move through walls, though it makes a poor porter). The spirit takes up residence in an object you designate, and it manifests as either an invisible presence or a ghostly shade. Your spirit accomplice is specialized in one knowledge skill the GM determines.

The spirit is normally insubstantial, but you may spend an action and 3 Intellect points for it to accrete enough substance to affect the world around it. As a level 3 creature with substance, it has a target number of 9 and a health of 9. It doesn't attack creatures, but it can spend its action to serve as an asset for any one attack you make on your turn while it is substantial.

While corporeal, the spirit can't move through objects or fly. A spirit remains corporeal for up to ten minutes at a time, but fades back to being insubstantial if not actively engaged. If your spirit accomplice is destroyed, it reforms in 1d6 days, or you can attract a new spirit in 2d6 days. Enabler.

Tier 3: Command the Dead (3 Intellect points). You can command a spirit or animated dead creature of up to level 5 within short range. If you are successful, the target cannot attack you for one minute, during which time it follows your verbal commands if it can hear and understand you. Action to initiate.

Tier 4: Wraith Cloak. At your command, your spirit accomplice wraps itself around you for up to ten minutes. The spirit automatically inflicts 4 points of damage to anyone who tries to touch you or strike you with a melee attack. While the wraith cloak is active, the difficulty of all tasks you perform to evade the perceptions of others is decreased by one step. Enabler.

Tier 5: Call Dead Spirit (6 Intellect points). At your touch, the remains of a creature dead no longer than seven days appears as a manifest (and apparently physical) spirit. The raised spirit persists for up to a day (or less, if it accomplishes something important to it before then), after which the spirit fades away and cannot be returned again.

The raised spirit remembers everything it knew in life and possesses most of its previous abilities (though not necessarily its equipment). In addition, it gains the ability to become insubstantial as an action for up to a minute at a time. The raised spirit is not beholden to you, and it does not need to remain near you to remain manifest. Action to initiate.

Tier 6: Umber Judge. When you slay a creature with an attack, if you choose, its spirit (if unprotected) is immediately pulled from its body. A portion of its soul energy infuses you, and you regain 1d6 points to one of your Pools (your choice). Then the spirit is ferried to a special cell hidden in the Night Vault of Ardeyn. Only you know where the spirit is located, which means the spirit cannot be questioned, raised, or restored to life by any means unless you allow it.

Improved Command the Dead. When you use your tier 3 Command the Dead ability, you can command undead of up to level 7.

SLAYS DRAGONS

Of all the threats that plague Ardeyn, dragons number among the most feared. But you decided to stand up to that fear by eradicating its source, even though it means putting yourself in more peril than if you just fled like everyone else who hears rumors of a dragon's approach. Even if you give your life, others will tell the story of your bravery.

Usually heavily armed and armored knights, dragon slayers are often afforded great respect.

Dragon slayers are most often vectors, but a spinner or paradox's abilities would be useful against a dragon as well.

Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.

1. Pick one other PC. You saved him from a dragon (though not by defeating the dragon, which is still out there).
2. Pick one other PC. You tried but failed to save her loved one from a dragon. You still bear the burn scars.
3. Pick one other PC. He knows the name and lair of a dragon, but for some reason he won't share that information with you.
4. Pick one other PC. That character shows potential in the art and philosophy of dragon slaying. You would like to train her but aren't sure she's interested.

Equipment: Ardeyn clothing, armor of your choice, a talwar (a greatsword) or a lance, another weapon of your choice or a shield, an explorer's pack, and 600 crowns.

Minor Effect Suggestion: You can immediately move up to a short distance after this action.

Major Effect Suggestion: You can immediately take a second action during this turn.

Tier 1: Dragon Sword. You are practiced with greatswords and lances. Enabler.

Dragon Bane. You inflict 1 additional point of damage with weapons. When you inflict damage to creatures more than twice as large or massive as you, you inflict 3 additional points of damage. Enabler.

Dragon Lore. You are trained in the names, habits, suspected lairs, and related topics regarding dragons in Ardeyn. You can make yourself understood in the language of dragons. Enabler.

Tier 2: Will of Legend: You are immune to attacks that would captivate, mesmerize, charm, or otherwise influence your mind. Enabler.

Tier 3: Trained Slayer. You are trained in using greatswords and lances. Enabler.

Improved Dragon Bane. When you inflict damage to creatures more than twice as large or massive as you, you inflict 3 additional points of damage. Enabler.

Rider. You are trained in riding any kind of creature that serves as a mount in Ardeyn. Enabler.

Tier 4: Fight On. You do not suffer the normal penalties for being impaired on the damage track. If debilitated on the damage track, instead of suffering the normal penalty of being unable to take most actions, you can continue to act; however, the difficulty of all tasks you attempt increases by one step. Enabler.

Tier 5: Specialized Slayer. You are specialized in using greatswords and lances. Enabler.

Heroic Dragon Bane. When you inflict damage to creatures more than twice as large or massive as you, you inflict 3 additional points of damage. Enabler.

Tier 6: Slayer (2 Might points). You inflict 3 additional points of damage with a greatsword or lance, regardless of your target. (This ability means that against creatures more than twice as large or massive as you, you inflict a total of 12 additional points of damage.) Enabler.

SOLVES MYSTERIES

You are a master of deduction. With a keen eye for detail and a quick wit, you can use a selection of clues to figure out what really happened when others are left scratching their heads. While a character that solves mysteries might be thought of as a detective or an investigator, a professor or even a scientist might also be a mystery solver.

You wear sensible clothing and comfortable shoes, walking that fine line between practical and stylish. You might carry a briefcase for all the tools you require to solve mysteries.

Although any character type works well in this arena, each one likely approaches the task differently. A paradox might solve mysteries through research, a spinner through talking to people, and a vector

through taking the direct approach and breaking down a few doors.

Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.

1. Pick one other PC. She is the true friend who got you started reading mysteries and detective fiction, which led to your current obsession.
2. Pick one other PC. That character does not seem to trust or like you, but you feel compelled to win him over.
3. Pick one other PC. This character is a good sounding board. After you talk to her for an hour, you gain an asset on any knowledge-based task you are trained in.
4. Pick one other PC. You were rivals with him in some endeavor in the past.

Equipment: Street clothes, light or medium armor, two weapons of your choice, laptop computer, flashlight, utility knife, cell phone, and $300.

Minor Effect Suggestion: You discover an additional clue about the mystery you are attempting to solve.

Major Effect Suggestion: When you solve a mystery, the target of your revelation is stunned, unable to move or act for a round, by your dazzling wit.

Tier 1: Investigator. To really shine as an investigator, you must engage your mind and body in your deductions. You can spend points from your Might Pool, Speed Pool, or Intellect Pool to apply levels of Effort to any Intellect-based task. Enabler.

Sleuth. Finding the clues is the first step in solving a mystery. You are trained in perception. Enabler.

Tier 2: Out of Harm's Way. No matter how careful, an investigator sometimes ends up in a scrap. Knowing how to survive is more than half the battle. You are trained in Speed defense tasks. Enabler.

Tier 3: You Studied. To be able to put two and two together to reach a deduction, you have to know a few things. You are trained in two areas of knowledge of your choosing (as long as they are not physical actions or combat related) or specialized in one area. Enabler.

Tier 4: Draw Conclusion (3 Intellect points). After careful observation and investigation (questioning one or more NPCs on a topic, searching an area or a file, and so on) lasting a few minutes, you can learn a pertinent fact. This ability is a difficulty 3 Intellect task. Each additional time you use this ability, the task difficulty increases by one step. The difficulty returns to 3 after you rest for ten hours. Action.

Tier 5: Diffuse Situation. During the course of an investigation, your questions sometimes elicit an angry or even violent response. Through dissembling, verbal distraction, or similar evasion, you prevent a living foe from attacking anyone or anything for one round. Action.

Tier 6: Seize the Initiative (5 Intellect points). Within one minute of successfully using your Draw Conclusion ability, you can take one additional, immediate action, which you can take out of turn. After using this ability, you can't use it again until after your next ten-hour rest. Enabler.

SPAWNS

Sometimes you can't trust anyone but yourself. It's good to have allies, but what ally is more invested in watching your back than you—or at least, a version of yourself that you spawned from your own flesh? You can spawn clones, which not only help you out in a fight, but also aid you in puzzling out problems, lending a hand when necessary, and sometimes even comforting you when you need a shoulder to lean on.

The gene grafts that gave you your powers also give your eyes and fingernails a strange reddish hue. You wear loose clothing that doesn't get in the way of you spawning off a copy of yourself.

Spawners are often spinners because they enjoy having a rapt audience, but any type finds it useful to have extra help.

Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.

1. Pick one other PC. Your clones never seem to get along with him, though you don't necessarily feel the same.
2. Pick one other PC. Your clone is love with that character.
3. Pick one other PC. You had a much closer relationship with that character in the past.
4. Pick one other PC. That character can never seem to keep straight which of you is the clone, no matter what you do.

Equipment: Ruk clothing, light armor, one weapon of your choice, an umbilical, and an account with 30 bits. And a clone.

Minor Effect Suggestion: Your clone trips the target and knocks it to the ground, or pushes the target out of immediate range (your choice).

Major Effect Suggestion: Your clone makes an immediate attack against the target.

Tier 1: Friend in Yourself. Your clone accompanies you and follows your instructions. The clone looks, talks, and acts like you, but it is not as effective as you in many ways. It evokes your descriptor and type, but it doesn't actually have those abilities. It is a level 2 creature with a target number of 6 and a health of 6, and it inflicts 2 points of damage.

You'll probably make rolls for your clone when he takes actions. A clone in combat usually doesn't make separate attacks, but helps you with yours. On your action, if your clone is next to you, he serves as an asset for one attack you make on your turn. If your clone dies, you can spawn another in 1d6 days. A subtle psychic bond you share with your clone enables it to think, which restricts the number of active clones you can have at once (normally just one). Enabler.

Tier 2: Psychic Bond. The psychic bond you share with your clone improves. Through the bond, you can communicate telepathically at any range within the same recursion. If you wish to temporarily intensify the bond, you can use an action to sense what your clone senses until your next turn. Enabler.

Tier 3: Helpful Clone. If you attempt a task and get help from your clone, even though your clone is not trained or specialized in that task, you benefit as if it was. Regardless of how trained (or untrained) you are for the task, if your clone spends its action to help you, the difficulty of the task you attempt is reduced by one step. Enabler.

Tier 4: Covering Clone. Your clone is more concerned about your well-being than its own, and if it is standing next to you when you're attacked, you have cover—the difficulty of Speed defense rolls is decreased by one step. If the attack would hit you without the cover provided by your clone, the attack hits your clone instead.

Improved Clone: Your clone increases to level 4. As a level 4 creature, it has a target number of 12 and a health of 12, and it inflicts 4 points of damage. Enabler.

Tier 5: Force Spawning (5 Might points). You force a clone to spawn from you in a matter of seconds, even if you already have one or more active clones. But Force Spawning is immensely taxing, and you are pushed one step down the damage track until after your next recovery roll. The resultant clone is a level 3 creature that is another clone of you, but it lasts only a minute. As a level 3 creature, it has a target number of 9 and a health of 9, and it inflicts 3 points of damage. When it expires at the end

of a minute, it slumps like melting wax. Action to initiate.

Tier 6: Psychic Transfer (5 Intellect points). You can switch minds between yourself and your clone within long range through your psychic bond. You have access to all your skills and abilities while in the body of your clone. Your original body is treated as the level 5 clone (though it has all your equipment), and your mind in the clone body is treated as if it was you. You can make the switch permanent or switch back as a separate action. Action.

Improved Clone. Your clone increases to level 5. As a level 5 creature, it has a target number of 15 and a health of 15, and it inflicts 5 points of damage. Enabler.

TRANSLATES (SPECIAL FOCUS)

NOTE: This focus becomes available only after you've translated at least one time. After that, you can choose this focus in whichever recursion you translate to.

You have known something about the Strange for most, if not all, of your life. This intuitive understanding has given you knowledge of recursions, the entities that dwell within it, and, recently, how to move into those worlds that you previously saw only in your dreams.

You cannot start with this focus no matter where your character originates. Upon your first translation (or anytime thereafter), when you translate, you can adopt this focus.

Connection: You cannot start with this focus, so it offers you no special connections.

Equipment: You have clothing appropriate to your current recursion, plus whatever your Recursion Treader ability allowed you to bring from your last recursion. (This means that upon adopting this focus, even for the first time, your Recursion Treader ability takes effect immediately.)

Minor Effect Suggestion: The next time you attack a creature native to the recursion you selected with Recursion Lore (see Tier 1), the attack is modified by one step in your favor.

Major Effect Suggestion: A foe native to a recursion that you selected with Recursion Lore (see Tier 1) surrenders if you give it a chance to do so.

Tier 1: Recursion Treader. When you translate, you can designate one mundane item that translates along with you. The item takes on the context of the new recursion, if applicable, as decided by the GM. For example, if you want to take an AK-47 assault rifle to Ardeyn, the weapon becomes a particularly well-machined crossbow that fires bolts fast enough to be

a rapid-fire weapon. On the other hand, if you bring your smartphone to Ardeyn, it becomes a crystal sphere without much use, since most of the benefits of a smartphone rely on its connection to an Earth-based network.

The item must be small enough that you can carry it with one hand.

Recursion Lore. You are trained in general topics relating to Ruk, Ardeyn, or a recursion of your choice (not Earth), which grants you knowledge of organizations, entities, creatures, threats, lands, and other general topics related to the recursion.

Tier 2: Improved Reach Beyond. Your type grants you the second-tier ability called Reach Beyond (see the description in the vector, paradox, or spinner section). When you call on that ability, you need spend only a single Intellect point to activate it. Enabler.

Tier 3: Translation Savant. When you translate, in addition to choosing to initiate, ease, or hasten, you can also choose to emulate the special capability granted by type, regardless of your own type.

Vector: Acclimation time is reduced to one round when you ease a translation, as if you were a vector. If you are a vector and choose this option for a particular translation, acclimation time is nil.

Paradox: When you initiate a translation and make a translation roll, you get one automatic retry on a failed translation roll, as if you were a paradox. If you are a paradox, you get two retries without having to first roll on the Translation Failure table.

Spinner: Concentration time is reduced to ten minutes when you hasten a translation, as if you were a spinner. If you are a spinner and choose this option for a particular translation, time is reduced to an action.

Tier 4: Follow Through Fiction. Once you have interacted, fought, or observed a creature for at least a minute, you are specialized in tracking it from recursion to recursion, even if the trail has gone cold for up to thirty-three days. You sense a faint energy signature of the creature's passage. This ability also means that you can track a creature from one place in a recursion to another place within that same recursion, but only if it has translated (or traveled through an inapposite gate) within the last thirty-three days.

Tier 5: Master of Form (5 Intellect points). Choose one Tier 1 through Tier 4 ability from a focus you have had in the past. You gain access to that ability—spending additional points normally if required—for one hour. This is true even if the ability, for example, normally requires magic and the recursion you are

currently in does not have functional magic. If the ability requires an object, device, or weapon, you must have it or a very close approximation.

Tier 6: The Traveler. The residual charge you gain from moving into a new recursion is amplified. For up to a day after you enter a new recursion, your Might Edge, Speed Edge, and Intellect Edge increase by 1. During that same period, when you make a recovery roll, you recover twice as many points.

WIELDS TWO WEAPONS AT ONCE

You can hold a weapon in both hands, ready to take on any foe. You fight with two weapons in combat, sometimes called dual wielding. Your weapons can be melee or ranged. A fearsome warrior, quick and strong, you believe that the best defense is a strong offense.

You probably sheathe one weapon on each side or wear both crossed behind your back. They are likely your most prized possessions, and you might have names for them.

Dual wielders are most often vectors.

Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.

1. Pick one other PC. You have trained with this character so much that if the two of you stand back to back in a fight, you both gain a +1 bonus to Speed defense tasks.

2. Pick one other PC. This person recently mocked your combat stance. How you deal with this (if at all) is up to you.

3. Pick one other PC. The two of you once served on a combat-related mission together.

4. Pick one other PC. You notice that this character is also skilled with weapons, and regardless of how you feel about her otherwise, you can't help but give her respect.

Equipment: Ardeyn clothing, light armor, two light weapons of your choice, an explorer's pack, and 200 crowns.

Minor Effect Suggestion: The target is intimidated and flees as its next action.

Major Effect Suggestion: You can make an immediate additional attack with one of your weapons.

Tier 1: Dual Light Wield. You can use two light weapons at the same time, making two separate

attacks on your turn as a single action. You remain limited by the amount of Effort you can apply on one action, but because you make separate attacks, your opponent's Armor applies to both. Anything that modifies your attack or damage applies to both attacks, unless it's specifically tied to one of the weapons. Enabler.

Tier 2: Double Strike (3 Might points). When you wield two weapons, you can choose to make one attack roll against a foe. If you hit, you inflict damage with both weapons plus 2 additional points of damage, and because you made a single attack, the target's Armor is subtracted only once. Action.

Tier 3. Dual Medium Wield. You can use two light weapons or medium weapons at the same time (or one light weapon and one medium weapon), making two separate attacks on your turn as a single action. This ability otherwise works like the Dual Light Wield ability. Enabler.

Tier 4: Dual Defense. When you wield two weapons, you are trained in Speed defense tasks. Enabler.

Tier 5: Dual Distraction (4 Speed points). When you wield two weapons, your opponent's next attack is hindered. As a result, the difficulty of your defense roll against that attack is reduced by one step, and the difficulty of your next attack is reduced by one step. Enabler.

Tier 6: Whirling Dervish. When you wield two weapons, you can attack up to six times in one round as a single action, but you must make each attack against a different foe. Make a separate attack roll for each attack. You remain limited by the amount of Effort you can apply on one action, but because you make separate attacks, Armor applies to each of them. Anything that modifies your attack or damage applies to all attacks (positively or negatively), unless it's specifically tied to one of the weapons, in which case it applies to only half of the attacks. Enabler.

WORKS MIRACLES

You manipulate matter and time to help others, and you are beloved by everyone you encounter. Some people consider you a representative of the Maker, or perhaps an Incarnation in training. Perhaps they're right—the source of the energies that you now wield is a mystery to you; for all you know, they are a gift from a power from beyond the world. One thing is for certain—you represent the idea that some magic is inherently good and affirming.

Although the assumption might be that miracle workers are most often paradoxes, it is in fact spinners who likely make the best of their kind.

Connection: If this is your starting focus, pick one of the following connections.
1. Pick one other PC. This character quietly suspects that you're a messiah or a supernatural being. You can choose whether or not you're aware of this suspicion.
2. Pick one other PC. Your healing powers never seem to work on this character, but when he stands next to you, everyone else gains +1 to their recovery rolls. You don't know why.
3. Pick two other PCs. Your healing powers work on them only when they are next to each other.
4. Pick one other PC. You attempted to heal this character's friend and failed.

Equipment: Ardeyn clothing, light armor, one weapon of your choice, an explorer's pack, a healing kit, and 200 crowns.

Minor Effect Suggestion: The target is healed for 1 additional point.

Major Effect Suggestion: The target is healed for 2 additional points.

Tier 1: Healing Touch (1 Intellect point). With a touch, you restore 1d6 points to one stat Pool of any creature. This ability is a difficulty 2 Intellect task. Each time you attempt to heal the same creature, the difficulty increases by one step. The difficulty returns to 2 after that creature rests for ten hours. Action.

Tier 2: Alleviate (3 Intellect points). You attempt to cancel or cure one malady (such as disease or poison) in one creature. Action.

Tier 3: Font of Healing. With your approval, other creatures can touch you and regain 1d6 points to either their Might Pool or their Speed Pool. This healing costs them 2 Intellect points. A single creature can benefit from this ability only once each day. Enabler.

Tier 4: Inspiration (4 Intellect points). Through mental inspiration and the manipulation of time, one creature you choose within short range is granted an additional, immediate action, which it can take out of turn. Action.

Tier 5: Undo (5 Intellect points). You turn back time a few seconds, effectively undoing a single

creature's most recent action. That creature can then immediately repeat the same action or try something different. Action.

Tier 6: Greater Healing Touch (4 Intellect points). You touch a creature and restore its Might Pool, Speed Pool, and Intellect Pool to their maximum values, as if it were fully rested. A single creature can benefit from this ability only once each day. Action.

WORKS THE SYSTEM

You've knocked around a lot and run afoul of the law a few times, but you've evaded authorities on a variety of fronts more often than not. That's because you are adept at noticing flaws and exploits in systems, whether those systems are civil laws, investment regulations, computer codes, games of all sorts, and similar artificial constructs. Once you notice and fully comprehend a system, you can manipulate it to your own ends.

You are a manipulator, but you likely keep a term like that to yourself. Tell people you're an entrepreneur—that always sounds good.

Those who work the system are most often spinners.

Connection: If this is your starting focus, choose one of the following connections.
1. Pick one other PC. You turned her failing grade into a passing one, fixed an immigration issue, made a driving offense disappear from computer records, or managed some similar aid for that character.
2. Pick one other PC. You're aware that he knows an incriminating or embarrassing secret about you.
3. Pick one other PC. Whenever he is next to you, the difficulty of tasks involving interactions with people or attempts to use machines is increased by one step.
4. Pick one other PC. Whenever you charm or persuade others, this character always gains the same benefits of your actions as you do.
Equipment: Street clothes, a weapon of your choice, a laptop computer, a smartphone, and $500.

Minor Effect Suggestion: You learn something completely unexpected but useful.

Major Effect Suggestion: You can immediately take a second action during this turn.

Tier 1: Hack the Impossible (3 Intellect points). You can persuade automatons, machines, and computers to do your bidding. You can discover an encrypted password, break through security on a website, briefly turn off a machine such as a surveillance camera, or disable an automaton with just a moment's worth of fiddling. Action.

Computer Programming: You are trained in using (and exploiting) computer software, you know one or more computer languages well enough to write basic programs, and you are fluent with Internet protocol. Enabler.

Tier 2: Connected. You know people who get things done—not just respected people in positions of authority, but also a variety of online hackers and regular street criminals. These people are not necessarily your friends and might not be trustworthy, but they at least owe you a favor. You and the GM should work out the details of your contacts. Enabler.

Tier 3: Confidence Artist. When you're hacking into a computer system, running a con, picking a pocket, fooling or tricking a dupe, sneaking something by a guard, and so on, you treat the task as if it were one level lower. Enabler.

Tier 4: Confuse Enemy (4 Intellect points). Through a clever bit of misdirection involving a flourish of your coat, ducking at just the right moment, or a similar stratagem, you can attempt to redirect a physical melee attack that would otherwise successfully hit you. When you do, the misdirected attack hits another creature you choose within immediate range of both you and the attacking foe. This ability is a difficulty 2 Intellect task. Enabler.

Tier 5: Work the Friendship (4 Intellect points). You know just what to say to draw a little extra effort from an ally. That, combined with your connection to the Strange, grants one creature you choose within short range an additional, immediate action, which it can take out of turn. The creature uses the action you give it however it wishes. Action.

Tier 6: Call in Favor (4 Intellect points). A guard, doctor, technician, or hired thug in the employ of or allied with a foe is secretly your ally or owes you a favor. When you call in the favor successfully, the target does what he can to help you out of a specific fix (unties you, slips you a knife, leaves a cell door unlocked) in a way that minimizes the risk of the target revealing his divided loyalties to his employer or other allies. This ability is a difficulty 3 Intellect task. Each additional time you use this ability, the difficulty increases by one step. The difficulty returns to 3 after you rest for ten hours. Action.

EQUIPMENT

Different recursions possess different equipment—some primitive, some quite advanced. That said, certain basic types of equipment exist across many recursions. If a PC can purchase a piece of gear via normal means, then it is considered equipment.

I tems that can't be purchased at a shop because of their scarcity or power are likely artifacts or cyphers. For example, while on Earth, normal player characters don't have ready access to military-grade hardware such as missiles or jet aircraft. In Ardeyn, PCs can't just purchase magic wands or rings of power. In Ruk, despite all the sci-fi advances of the culture, even more advanced alien technology from distant stars can't be had simply by wanting it. All these would be considered examples of artifacts within a given recursion.

Equipment does not translate from one recursion to the next—characters who go to another recursion get new, equivalent equipment, appropriate to that context. The only items that characters take with them when translating to a new recursion are cyphers (though the form of the cypher often changes, the effect stays the same) and the rare artifact that comes directly from the Strange. Because both cyphers and Strange-based artifacts are linked to the Strange and not a specific world, they adapt to whatever context they are in.

CURRENCY AND PRICES

Many recursions have their own currency or, as on Earth, many currencies. Within a given society, methods exist for exchanging currency with relative ease. When translating, PCs may have a sum of currency appropriate to that location (bits in Ruk or crowns in Ardeyn, for example) depending on their types and foci.

The equipment lists use denominations in the currency appropriate to the recursion where the gear can be purchased. These lists are all very generalized and simple, with prices painted in broad strokes. The GM has a lot of room to vary pricing or currency. In

The Strange, money and wealth are rarely anything other than a means to an end. In the case of Earth equipment, we have defaulted to the dollar, but other currencies could be used instead—and they should be used if a game is set in a place where dollars aren't used. In some recursions, barter might be an acceptable means of exchange.

Some GMs might want to skip over worrying about things like the price of mundane equipment. You can track how often the characters change clothes and how many different pairs of pants they have if you want, but most groups will end up just ignoring that level of detail, and that's fine.

That's why the equipment lists focus on really useful gear needed for adventures, and less on truly mundane items such as toothbrushes or oil to leather your horse's saddle.

Of course, the availability—or lack thereof—of a needed item can be an interesting story point in any recursion.

ENCUMBRANCE

Weights of objects are not listed, because the game rules assume that how much a character carries is not tracked. If the GM determines that a character is carrying too much equipment, though, he should either (1) assign a difficulty and ask for a Might action, or (2) assign the weight a Speed and Might cost to be deducted from the appropriate Pool. Method 1 is useful when a character wants to carry a single heavy object for a limited time—for example, moving a hefty iron safe out of a bank and loading it into a pickup truck bed. Method 2 works well for long-term encumbrance, such as when a character dons a backpack full of survival gear and sets off across the tundra.

When assigning a Speed and Might cost, the Speed cost is a penalty assessed immediately, and it remains until the character is unburdened. The lost Speed points aren't recovered through rest or other means—only when the burden is removed. The Might cost is a continuing cost deducted each hour, and

those points are recovered normally. The Speed cost and the Might cost are always the same: 1 point for each, 2 points for each, or 3 points for each. Wearing armor has a similar cost for the same reasons.

ARMOR

Characters expecting danger frequently wear armor. Even the simplest of protective coverings helps against physical attacks, and more sophisticated or heavier armor protects against even graver threats.

You can wear only one type of armor at a time—you cannot wear a medium tactical vest over a light tactical vest, for example. However, Armor bonuses from multiple sources combine to provide a total Armor rating. For example, if you have a ballistic helmet that gives you +1 to Armor and wear a medium tactical vest that gives +2 to Armor, you have a total of +3 to Armor.

Not all characters are practiced with all armor. Although anyone can wear any armor, doing so can be taxing. Wearing armor costs you Might points and reduces your Speed Pool. You can rest to recover these lost Might points in the standard manner, even if you're still wearing armor. The Speed Pool reduction remains as long as you wear the armor, but the Pool returns to normal as soon as you remove it. Some vectors and certain other characters have abilities that reduce the costs and penalties of wearing armor.

Armor	Might cost per hour	Speed Pool reduction while worn
Light	1	2
Medium	2	3
Heavy	3	5

WEAPONS

Not all characters are familiar with all weapons. Vectors know their way around most types, but spinners prefer light or medium weapons, and paradoxes usually stick to light weapons. If you wield a weapon that you're not at least practiced with, the difficulty of making an attack with that weapon is increased by one step.

Light weapons inflict only 2 points of damage, but they reduce the difficulty of the attack by one step because they are fast and easy to use. Light weapons are punches, kicks, knives, handaxes, light pistols (.22 caliber), and so on. Weapons that are particularly small are light weapons.

Medium weapons inflict 4 points of damage. Medium weapons include katanas, nightsticks, medium pistols (such as a 9mm pistol), and so on. Most weapons are medium. Anything that could be used in one hand (even if it's often used in two hands, such as a 9mm pistol) is a medium weapon. However, a .22 caliber rifle, despite being used in two hands, is also a medium weapon because of its small caliber.

Heavy weapons inflict 6 points of damage, and you must use two hands to attack with them. Heavy weapons are huge swords, heavy pistols (such as a .357 Magnum revolver), shotguns, high-caliber rifles, and so on. Most anything used in two hands is a heavy weapon.

EARTH EQUIPMENT

The Earth equipment presented below represents general examples of useful items in the game and is not an exhaustive list. If you want more comprehensive choices (for Earth equipment, anyway), go to any store you want and look around. Your character is free to purchase pens, blue jeans, liquid soap, rubber gloves, umbrellas, sticky tape, nylon fishing line, candy, and a hundred more similar items, just as you are.

ARMOR

Light (1 point of Armor)	Price
Leather jacket	$200
Trench coat, with liner	$200

Medium (2 points of Armor)	Price
Armored tactical vest	$1,000

Heavy (3 points of Armor)	Price
Full body armor	$2,000

WEAPONS

Light (2 points of damage)	Price	Notes
Nightstick	$20	
Hunting knife	$60	
Light handgun	$300	Short range
Unarmed (punch, kick, elbow)	—	
Whip	$40	

Medium (4 points of damage)	Price	Notes
Machete	$200	
Compound bow	$500	Long range
Medium handgun	$700	Long range
Medium bladed weapon	$800	
Submachine gun	$1,000	Rapid-fire weapon
3-foot pipe wrench	$200	Also tightens pipes

Heavy (6 points of damage)	Price	Notes
Katana	$800	
Medieval greatsword	$1,000	
Heavy handgun	$1,300	Long range
Rifle	$2,000	300-foot (100 m) range
Assault rifle	$3,000	Rapid-fire weapon
Shotgun	$350	Immediate range

SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT

Item	Price	Notes
Mini GPS tracker	$200+	Self-powered
Telephoto lens × 100	$400	Comes with mount
Nightvision goggles	$1,000	Requires a connection with military or other agency
Pen video camera	$50	Press to record
Concealed microphone	$100	Record or transmit
Concealed camera	$150	Record or transmit
Motion sensor	$100	Audible or silent alarm
Disguise kit	$120	Asset to disguise tasks

Automation "smart home" kit	$300	Wi-Fi network hub for motion sensor, hidden camera, hidden mic, and so on
Electronic key fob	$800	Wireless entry to most cars with such locks
Software malware package	$250	Pwn a target's laptop, computer, or smartphone

OTHER EQUIPMENT

Item	Price	Notes
Complete first aid kit	$50	Adds 1 to recovery rolls for rests longer than one round (ten uses)
Smartphone	$300+	Some phones talk back if talked to
Flashlight	$10	Bright light at immediate range, dim light at short range
Duct tape	$5	Useful for so many reasons
Straitjacket	$450	
Handcuffs	$35	Comfort fit costs extra
Padlock with keys	$10	
Geiger counter	$250	
Bolt cutter	$50	
Cigar lighter, flameless	$50	Wind won't blow out torch
Gas mask	$150	
Everything else	*	If you can buy it in real life, you can buy it while on Earth

ARDEYN EQUIPMENT

In Ardeyn, the standard currency is the "crown." The equipment presented in this section includes general examples of the kinds of items available in Ardeyn and is not meant to be an exhaustive list.

ARMOR

Asset	Price	Notes
Shield	30	Asset for Speed defense tasks

Light (1 point of Armor)	Price
Leather jerkin	30
Hides and furs	20
Qephilim-craft coat	4,000

Medium (2 points of Armor)	Price
Brigandine	50
Chainmail	60
Relic breastplate	5,000

Heavy (3 points of Armor)	Price
Plate armor	150
Scale armor	120
Incarnation-blessed plate armor	10,000

WEAPONS

Light (2 points of damage)	Price	Notes
Club	5	
Dagger	10	
Sabre	20	

Shortbow	80	Long range
12 arrows	10	
Sickle	10	
Unarmed (punch, kick, elbow)	—	
Whip	20	

Medium (4 points of damage)	Price	Notes
Battleaxe	30	
Bow	40	Long range
12 arrows	10	
Crossbow	50	Long range
12 medium bolts		
Flail	30	
Hammer	20	
Javelin	10	Short range
Mace	20	
Polearm	30	Often used two-handed
Quarterstaff	12	Often used two-handed
Spear	20	Can be thrown up to long range
Shamshir (scimitar)	35	
Trident	25	

Heavy (6 points of damage)	Price	Notes
Greataxe	50	
Heavy crossbow	70	Long range, action to reload
12 heavy bolts	35	
Lance	40	Often used on a mount
Maul	40	
Talwar (great shamshir)	55	

OTHER EQUIPMENT

Item	Price	Notes
Backpack	20	
Bedroll	2	
Book	150	Asset to roll concerning book topic after thirty minutes spent reading
Burlap sack	3	
Chalk, 7 pieces	3	
Crowbar	20	
Disguise kit	120	Asset to disguise tasks
Explorer's pack	150	50 feet (15 m) rope, three days' rations, three spikes, hammer, warm clothes, sturdy boots, and three torches
First aid kit	100	Asset to healing tasks
Grappling hook	30	
Lockpicks	50	
Matchsticks (10)	10	
Musical instrument	50–1,000	
Pouch or other small container	5	
Rope (50 feet / 15 m)	20	
Signal horn	10	Audible for 3 miles (5 km)
Spikes and hammer	30	
String (200 feet / 60 m)	1	
Tent	30	
Torches (2)	5	

Comestibles and Clothing

Ale/wine/other alcohol (glass)	2	
Ale/wine/other alcohol (bottle)	12	
Boots or shoes	10	
Nargila (water pipe)	30	
Nargila tobacco	2	
Clothing	10	Fine clothing: up to 50 crowns
Meal	2	Very nice meal: up to 50 crowns
Rations for one day	15	

RUK EQUIPMENT

In Ruk, the standard currency is the "bit," and all of it is virtual, monitored through the All Song. In other words, each individual has an account, and transactions are conducted by accessing the All Song and making instantaneous additions or subtractions to the accounts one does business with.

ARMOR

Light (1 point of Armor)	Price
Second skin	10
Plastiskin	15
Slicksuit	20

Medium (2 points of Armor)	
Carapace	55
Lifesuit	90
Spiked carapace	75

Heavy (3 points of Armor)	
Heavy carapace	350
Heavy spiked carapace	400
Bio-armor	1,000

WEAPONS

Light (2 points of damage)	Price	Notes
Blowgun	1	Short range
12 darts	3	
Finger needle	2	Excellent for delivering poisons
Knife	1	Can be thrown up to short range
Needler	5	See further notes
Magazine of 10 needles	3	
Quiver shiv	50	Ignores Armor
Spore pistol	10	See further notes
Ammo pod (12 shots)	5	
Stun ammo pod (12 shots, level 3)	15	
Stun ammo pod (12 shots, level 5)	40	

Medium (4 points of damage)	Price	Notes
Caustic sprayer	20	See further notes
Deathblade	5	
Longsword	3	
Mace	3	
Spike pistol	20	Long range, self-generates ammo

Spine lance	40	See further notes
Spear	3	Can be thrown up to long range

Heavy (6 points of damage)	Price	Notes
Heavy spear	5	
Pole axe	5	
Slaughter accelerator	55	See further notes
Spike rifle	35	Long range, self-generates ammo

OTHER EQUIPMENT

Item	Price	Notes
Binoculars	10	
Breather	8	
Clothing	3	
Disguise graft	25	
Healing kit	25	Asset to healing tasks
Heavy tools	3	
Flashlight or headlamp	5	
Light tools	3	
Pod launcher	20	
Spore filter mask	20	
Umbilical	10	
Wing glider	7	

FURTHER NOTES

WEAPONS

Caustic Sprayer: Sprays a stream of caustic fluid to short range. It can be used as a rapid-fire weapon.

Deathblade: A longsword fitted with a poison dispenser. The poison then lasts until used.

Needler: This is a pistol-like weapon that fires projectiles up to short range. It can be used as a rapid-fire weapon. If loaded with poison and a magazine of needles, each needle is poisoned.

Slaughter Accelerator: Fires a burst of flechettes up to long range. It can be used as a rapid-fire weapon.

Spine Lance: Long wandlike device that plugs directly into the user's spine. Inflicts bioelectric damage. At a cost of 5 Might points to the wielder, it can inflict 6 additional points of damage in a single attack.

Spore Pistol: Fires a stream of caustic spores up to short range. It can also be loaded with spores that keep a living target who fails a Might defense roll from taking an action on their next turn rather than inflicting damage.

ARMOR

Bio-Armor: Fully sealed suit of self-repairing, living armor that provides full life support and nutrients to the wearer indefinitely, in any environment.

Carapace: Organic armor plates. Can be medium or light, and covered with spikes. Spiked carapace inflicts 1 point of damage on any foe striking wearer in melee.

Lifesuit: Light bodysuit that also provides an hour of life support in any environment. (Life support function recharges every day.)

Plastiskin: Light armor that also provides mild protection from the elements.

Second Skin: Armor so light it is nigh indistinguishable from flesh.

Slicksuit: Light bodysuit with a coating that makes it extremely hard to grasp. The difficulty of any attempt by the wearer to slip free of a grasp, of bonds, or through a tight space is reduced by one step.

OTHER EQUIPMENT

Breather: Allows wearer to breathe safely for four hours. One use.

Healing Kit: Contains three injections that restore 2 points to Might Pool.

Pod Launcher: Launches grenade pods up to long range.

Spore Filter Mask: Wearer is immune to spores of level 3 or lower, and the difficulty of all breathing-related Might defense actions is decreased by two steps.

Umbilical: When connected to All Song outlets in Ruk, provides a direct interface with the All Song, allowing for communication with anyone in the recursion, as well as general information inquiries (an Intellect task).

Wing Glider: Backpack-like device that, in one action, sprouts wings and allows the wearer to glide in the wind or from high places, moving a short distance each round. Maintaining the glide is an action each round.

TRANSLATION

One of the most important aspects of The Strange is the process of moving between recursions (or between a prime world such as Earth and a recursion). When characters complete this process, it's called translation. These aren't the complete translation rules—your GM will have additional details—but they provide a basic understanding of the process.

The process of translation does what it sounds like—it changes someone so that he "fits in" to the context of the new recursion. He exchanges his current dress, some of his abilities and equipment, and possibly even how he looks for new clothes and skills that fit the recursion. Sometimes translation is initiated by the PCs. Other times, translation occurs thanks to some kind of gate that connects different recursions.

Translation is not teleportation. It does not involve physical travel. Instead, your character's consciousness moves to a newly created physical form appropriate to the context of the recursion he is translating to. In other words, your character appears in a new body, with new equipment. When translating to Ardeyn, you might take on the physical form of a qephilim, with chainmail armor, a battleaxe, and a crossbow, even though on Earth you were a librarian with a smartphone. Your race and gender may also change from recursion to recursion.

The character's new form is in all ways still that character. His descriptor, his type, and most of his stats do not change. His focus likely *does* change to one appropriate to the new recursion. In Ardeyn, a character might become a sorcerer. In Ruk, a bioengineered warrior.

TRANSLATION TIME

A four-hour trance precedes each translation; once the trance is complete, actual translation is instantaneous if the initiating character succeeds on a translation roll. The trance time can be cut in half,

or even down to just ten minutes or less, if characters work together to hasten the translation.

TRANSLATION ACCLIMATION

The physical stress of translation imposes an acclimation period on recursors. During acclimation, a PC is unable to access any focus abilities from the previous recursion or the recursion just entered (unless the focus is the same because the PC dragged it along). This acclimation period can last up to an hour, though it often requires as little as one round if a vector eases the translation.

INITIATING A TRANSLATION

Quickened characters have the ability to translate themselves and several companions between recursions. In any translation not involving a gate, a quickened creature or character must initiate the translation.

To initiate, the character must have one of the following:
- An object from the destination recursion (an object probably delivered through an inapposite gate)
- A likeness (art, photo, sculpture) of the destination that sufficiently evokes the actual recursion (a still from an Earth movie that helped shape a recursion through fictional leakage isn't usually sufficient— the likeness works best if it *actually* depicts the destination recursion)
- Knowledge of three specific and related details about the destination recursion
- A recursion key

A character does not need any of the above if she has been to the destination recursion before. If she's already been to the recursion, not only can she get there, she can appear in the exact same spot that she left.

If the character has any of these objects or experiences, she can put herself into a meditative trance. If the character doesn't have any help

hastening the translation from another PC, the trance takes four hours to complete.

TRANSLATION TRANCE

If a trance is interrupted for more than a couple of minutes, it is ruined and must be started again. As the trance progresses, all characters participating in the translation see a vision of the Strange: a region of void filled with repeating fractal patterns spiraling off into infinity. As the trance continues, the destination recursion slowly begins to resolve, becoming more and more defined as the end of the trance approaches. Whether it becomes completely clear or the vision shatters to nothing depends on the translation roll the initiator makes.

TRANSLATION ROLL

When the trance ends, the character initiating the translation makes an Intellect-based roll with a difficulty equal to the target recursion's level (every recursion has a base level). Success means that the character and all designated allies within immediate range successfully translate to the target recursion (or back up to Earth). Failure means that the translation still probably occurred, but with side effects.

If a PC initiating a translation has never visited the target recursion before, a successful translation drops her and her allies into the recursion's default destination.

Paradox Initiation Advantage: Although anyone can modify any aspect of the translation, paradoxes are better initiators. When a paradox makes a translation roll, she gets one automatic retry on a failed translation roll. So when a paradox attempts to translate to Earth (which is level 5) and fails to roll a 15 or higher, she can immediately roll again without having to first roll on the Translation Failure table. On her second roll, she can choose to use Effort, or not, regardless of whether she used any on the initial roll. If she fails a second time on the same translation attempt, it's time to get out the d100.

HASTENING A TRANSLATION

If one PC initiates a translation, a second character can join into the translation trance and speed the four-hour process up so it takes only two hours. This is called hastening the translation. Any PC can take the hastening role in the translation effort and cut the translation trance down by half. Multiple hasteners, however, can't speed this process further. Someone hastening the translation shares the vision of the initiator.

From the perspective of the character who takes the hastening role, the job is all about finding shortcuts and taking care of side tasks. The hastener enters the trance with an eye toward efficiency and economy of effort. Hastening a trance means taking some of the burden from the initiator by strengthening the connection to the details about the target recursion or focusing more strongly on the object from that recursion, improving the visualization of the destination recursion and taking care of other minor but necessary elements of the trance to take the load off the initiator.

Spinner Hastening Advantage: Although anyone can modify any aspect of the translation, spinners are better hasteners. A participating spinner cuts a translation down to just ten minutes (instead of cutting it down to two hours, if a character other than a spinner hastened the effort).

EASING A TRANSLATION

If a player character initiates a translation, another character can join into the trance and ease the acclimation time after translation so that an acclimation that would normally take one hour takes only ten minutes. This is called *easing* the translation. Any PC can take the role of easing the translation effort, though multiple easers can't decrease acclimation time any further. Someone easing the translation shares the vision of the initiator.

From the person easing the translation's point of view, most of the stress and physical testing of the translation falls on his shoulders. While part of the translation trance, the easing character concentrates on the health of each participant, prepares everyone's body and mind for the coming transformation, and bolsters well-being and fortitude. The translation fugue that follows after a creature moves into a new recursion is akin to natural inflammation; the body's response to a challenge is to try to fight it off. The job of someone easing a translation is to ease that natural response and make the body accept the change in as little time as possible.

Vector Easing Advantage: Although anyone can modify any aspect of the translation, vectors are the best at easing. A participating vector allows acclimation in just one round (instead of ten minutes, or one hour if no one eases the translation).

HELPING WITH A TRANSLATION

If initiation, easing, and hastening are already being covered by other player characters, additional PCs can still play a role in improving the chance of a successful translation.

Additional characters can enter the trance and provide aid, according to the rules for helping with tasks (which means that characters could choose to become trained or even specialized in translating).

Anyone helping a translation shares the visions of the other participants; she can see the resolving target recursion and mainly focuses on the same tasks of the character who initiated the translation.

TRANSLATION ABEYANCE

When a character translates, her original physical form—the one she leaves behind—disappears. It goes into abeyance and, for all practical purposes, is gone. As soon as she returns, her physical form from that recursion is instantly recreated, usually in the same place as she left. She once again has the form and equipment she was carrying before translating away from that recursion.

Similarly, if a character translates to a recursion or prime world he has already visited, he usually appears where he left, in the same form that he had when he left. However, the location may be modified if another character is initiating the translation. A group translating together is not split up when they appear in the new recursion; they appear wherever the initiator of the translation would go, whether that location is chosen by game rules, the GM, or the initiator.

CYPHERS AND TRANSLATION

Tied to the Strange and not to any one world, cyphers are (usually) the only kind of equipment characters carry that translates with them. Cyphers may take a new form appropriate to the new recursion, but their powers remain the same. Just as with characters, cyphers translate to a form that "fits in" with the rest of the recursion. So what appears as a magical music box in Ardeyn might appear as a colorful vuvuzela on Earth.

RECURSION KEYS

A recursion key provides "mental directions" to a quickened character, allowing her to translate to a specific site within a specified recursion (as opposed to the last place she visited in that recursion or the default location if she's never visited there before). The key is not a gate—the recursor must initiate a translation and succeed on the translation roll normally. On a successful roll, everyone participating in the translation appears in the location specified by the key.

Recursion Keys Do Not Translate: Most recursion keys are cyphers, which means they are single use, and thus dissipate as soon as a character uses them.

TRANSLATION EFFECTS ON DISABILITY, DISEASE, AND HEALING

When a character's consciousness moves to its new physical form via translation, that new form may or may not retain some attributes of the original body. Characters with missing limbs, those who are blind or deaf, and those with other physical abilities may find their limbs, eyesight, or hearing restored, and other disabilities lessened or completely missing. This can work the other way too—for example, a fully sighted person may find himself blind when he lands in a new recursion.

On the other hand, translation doesn't normally allow someone to erase a serious disease, eradicate the effects of extreme age, or cure other fundamental illness upon appearing in a new recursion. Likewise, translation doesn't provide healing; it doesn't change stats (unless a focus specifies a change), elevate a PC on the damage track, and so on. If a PC is mind controlled, cursed, or under the effects of some other weird effect, he remains so after translation. (That is, unless the PC finds himself in a recursion that doesn't contain the law the effect requires to function. In that case, the effect fades after a minute. The effect returns if the PC travels to a recursion operating under the requisite law.)

Rarely, a recursion key is not a cypher. These unusual keys are created by quickened creatures or formed via natural occurrences, and are especially sought after because they can be used more than once.

If a character wants a created key to go into abeyance with the rest of her gear, she must hold it in her hand during translation. Otherwise, the key gets left behind. Left-behind keys (such as a painting on a wall or a sculpture) would allow anyone who knew about a recursion's existence (and knew how to use the key) to follow her to the exact site in the recursion.

Recursion Key Aspects: A recursion key can take many forms: an actual key, a playing card, a sculpture, a painting, and so on. When a quickened character studies or handles a recursion key, she can attempt an Intellect-based roll (the difficulty of which is usually equal to the level of the key's related recursion).

On a success, the character recognizes the key as something that allows her to translate to a specific location within a recursion. However, without actually using the key, the character usually can't tell which recursion the key is for or where in the recursion the key might take her.

Crafting a Recursion Key: Crafting a recursion key uses the rules for crafting, building, and repairing an item, except as follows:

A quickened character who has visited and studied a particular location for at least one day can attempt to create a recursion key for it. To craft the key after the day of study, the character must spend at least one week crafting the key in the form she desires using materials appropriate to the key's form (paint and canvas for a painting, metal shaping/cutting tools for an actual key, and so on).

At the end of the specified time, a PC attempting the process must spend 1 XP and attempt an Intellect-based roll whose difficulty is equal to the level of the recursion (or area of the recursion the key opens) + 2. On a successful roll, the recursion key is created. On a failed roll, she can retry. If she does, normal rules for retrying apply: the PC can retry, but she must use Effort.

TRANSLATING TOO OFTEN

Translation puts a certain amount of strain on a creature. Thus, any character attempting to translate more than once within a single day finds that the process grows more difficult each time. The second time someone attempts to initiate, ease, hasten, or help with a translation in a given day, the difficulty of the task increases by one step.

This is true for the whole group, even if only one of the characters participated in a translation earlier that day. For example, a paradox who was participating in her first translation of the day would still find the difficulty of the translation roll increased by one step if any other participant has initiated, hastened, eased, or helped another translation within the previous 24 hours.

All penalties are cumulative, which means that if two characters had participated in one translation in the last 24 hours, the difficulty for the paradox would increase by two steps. If two characters had participated in two translations each during the last 24 hours, the difficulty of the paradox's translation roll would increase by four steps.

TRANSLATION SPECIAL EFFECTS

Rolling very well (19 or 20) during translation results in potentially great benefits to the translating characters.

Minor Effect (19): Acclimation time is zero. The difficulty of all tasks relating to the translating characters' new foci is decreased by one step for one hour.

Major Effect (20): Acclimation time is zero. The difficulty of all tasks relating to translating characters' new foci is decreased by one step for one day.

STRANGE

TIER	EFFORT	XP
1	1	0

Arlo Coulton

IS A **Sharp-Eyed** **vector** WHO

Is Licensed to Carry ON **Earth**

• MIGHT • • SPEED • • INTELLECT •

MIGHT			SPEED			INTELLECT		
POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE
10		1	16		1	8		0

• SKILLS •

0 Initiative
0 Speed Defense
　(w/no armor)
0 Balancing
0 Running

0 Perception

• ATTACKS •

	MOD	DAM
9mm pistol		5
Hunting knife	−1	2

• SPECIAL ABILITIES •

Find the flaw: GM describes an
　NPC's weakness, if it has one
When not wearing armor, trained
　in Speed defense
Translation (better at easing)
Pierce (1 Speed point)
Fleet of Foot
Gunner: +1 damage with guns

• EQUIPMENT •

0 ARMOR

Clothing
Binoculars
Cell phone
9mm pistol with 3 magazines of ammo (medium
　ranged weapon)
Hunting knife (light melee weapon)

$720 MONEY

• CYPHERS •

2 LIMIT

Sniper module (level 6)
Darksight (level 5)

• RECOVERY ROLLS •

☐ 1 ACTION　☐ 10 MINS　(1D6+) **1**　☐ 1 HOUR　☐ 10 HOURS

• DAMAGE TRACK •

☐ **IMPAIRED**
+1 EFFORT PER LEVEL
IGNORE MINOR & MAJOR
EFFECT RESULTS ON ROLLS
COMBAT ROLL OF 17-20
ONLY DEALS +1 DAMAGE

☐ **DEBILITATED**
CAN ONLY MOVE AN
IMMEDIATE DISTANCE
IF SPEED POOL IS ZERO
YOU CANNOT MOVE

THE STRANGE

· ADVANCEMENT ·

(You must have four of these to advance in Tier. Cost = 4XP each.)

☐ **INCREASE CAPABILITIES**
+4 points into stat Pools

☐ **MOVE TOWARDS PERFECTION**
+1 point to the Edge of your choice

☐ **EXTRA EFFORT**
+1 point into Effort

☐ **SKILL TRAINING**
Train in a skill or Specialize in a pre-existing skill

☐ **OTHER**
Refer to The Strange corebook

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

· BACKGROUND ·

Arlo owes money to a number of people and doesn't have the funds to pay his debt.

In the recent past, while doing a little target practice, Arlo accidentally winged Dr. Sybil Holloway, leaving her badly wounded. It is up to Sybil to decide whether she resents, fears, or forgives Arlo.

· PORTRAIT ·

· NOTES ·

STRANGE

TIER	EFFORT	XP
1	1	0

Vanessa Torgue

IS A **Tough** **vector** WHO

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

Wields Two Weapons at Once ON **Earth**

MIGHT

POOL	CURRENT	EDGE
16		1

SPEED

POOL	CURRENT	EDGE
10		1

INTELLECT

POOL	CURRENT	EDGE
8		0

SKILLS

0 Might Defense

0 Speed Defense
    (w/no armor)
0 Running
0 Hiding

ATTACKS

	MOD	DAM
Nightstick	−1	2
Nightstick*	−1	2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

+1 to Armor, +1 to recovery roll
Gain an extra light weapon when
    you translate to new recursion
When not wearing armor, trained
    in Speed defense
Translation (better at easing)
Practiced in armor: reduce Might
    cost and Speed reduction by 2
Bash (1 Might point)
*Dual Light Wield: 2 light weapon
    attacks as one action

EQUIPMENT

2 ARMOR

Street clothes
Leather jacket (light armor)
Nightstick (light weapon)
Another nightstick (light weapon)
Camping gear

$200 MONEY

CYPHERS

2 LIMIT

Curative (level 6)
Electrical grenade (level 5)

RECOVERY ROLLS

| 1 ACTION | 10 MINS | 1D6+ **2** | 1 HOUR | 10 HOURS |

DAMAGE TRACK

IMPAIRED
+1 EFFORT PER LEVEL
IGNORE MINOR & MAJOR
EFFECT RESULTS ON ROLLS
COMBAT ROLL OF 17-20
ONLY DEALS +1 DAMAGE

DEBILITATED
CAN ONLY MOVE AN
IMMEDIATE DISTANCE
IF SPEED POOL IS ZERO
YOU CANNOT MOVE

CONSTRUCTING YOUR CHARACTER

USE THE PRIMARY SHEET TO DESCRIBE YOUR
CHARACTER ON YOUR STARTING RECURSION

USE A FOLDED RECURSION SHEET FOR EACH
ADDITIONAL RECURSION IN YOUR GAME

THE INFORMATION ON A RECURSION SHEET MAY
CHANGE FROM ONE RECURSION TO ANOTHER

RECURSION ▷ PRIMARY

• ADVANCEMENT •

(You must have four of these to advance in Tier. Cost = 4XP each.)

☐ INCREASE CAPABILITIES	☐ MOVE TOWARDS PERFECTION	☐ EXTRA EFFORT	☐ SKILL TRAINING	☐ OTHER
+4 points into stat Pools	+1 point to the Edge of your choice	+1 point into **Effort**	Train in a skill **or** Specialize in a pre-existing skill	Refer to The Strange corebook

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

• BACKGROUND •

Vanessa is a native of Ardeyn, but no one on Earth knows it (she thinks). An evil sorcerer laid a curse on her when Vanessa turned 16, which she escaped by translating to Earth and taking up a new life. Things were hard at first while she adjusted, but Vanessa has made it work.

Vanessa noticed that "Flip" is also skilled with weapons, and regardless of how she feels about him otherwise, she can't help but respect him for that.

• PORTRAIT •

• NOTES •

↑ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↑

THE STRANGE

TIER	EFFORT	XP
1	1	0

L. G. Babcock III

IS A **Appealing** **spinner** WHO

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

Operates Undercover ON **Earth**

• MIGHT •   • SPEED •   • INTELLECT •

	MIGHT			SPEED			INTELLECT	
POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE
9	0		12	1		15	1	

• SKILLS •

T/S		T/S	
T S		T S	
T S		T S	
T S		T S	
T S		T S	
T S		T S	
T S		T S	
T S		T S	
T S		T S	

- O/S Pleasant social interaction
- O/S Persuading & Deceiving
- O/S Investigation
- O/S Resist. persuas'n & seduc.
- O/S Perception
- O/S Cryptography
- O/S Breaking into Comps.

• ATTACKS •

	MOD	DAM
9mm pistol		4

• SPECIAL ABILITIES •

Practiced with light and medium weapons

Translating (better at hastening)

Enthrall (1 Intellect point)

Spin Encouragement (1 Intellect point)

• CYPHERS •

2 LIMIT

Stim (level 5)

Temporary shield (level 5)

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

• RECOVERY ROLLS •

☐ 1 ACTION   ☐ 10 MINS   **1D6+ 1**   ☐ 1 HOUR   ☐ 10 HOURS

• DAMAGE TRACK •

☐ **IMPAIRED** — +1 EFFORT PER LEVEL / IGNORE MINOR & MAJOR EFFECT RESULTS ON ROLLS / COMBAT ROLL OF 17-20 ONLY DEALS +1 DAMAGE

☐ **DEBILITATED** — CAN ONLY MOVE AN IMMEDIATE DISTANCE IF SPEED POOL IS ZERO YOU CANNOT MOVE

• EQUIPMENT •

0 ARMOR

Street clothes
Disguise kit
Light tools
Duct tape
Pen knife
Smartphone

9mm pistol with 3 magazines of ammo (medium ranged weapon)

"Sleep inducer" headset (made by Dr. Holloway)

$700 MONEY

·ADVANCEMENT·

(You must have four of these to advance in Tier. Cost = 4XP each.)

☐ INCREASE CAPABILITIES	☐ MOVE TOWARDS PERFECTION	☐ EXTRA EFFORT	☐ SKILL TRAINING	☐ OTHER
+4 points into stat Pools	+1 point to the Edge of your choice	+1 point into Effort	Train in a skill or Specialize in a pre-existing skill	Refer to The Strange corebook

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

·BACKGROUND·

As a child actor, L.G. was loved and adored. As an adult, less so, so L.G. keeps it a secret.

Torah Bishop knows that L.G. was a child actor, but has kept that information private . . . so far. In addition, Dr. Holloway made L.G. a "science" machine that allows L.G. to get a good night's sleep.

·PORTRAIT·

·NOTES·

STRANGE

TIER	EFFORT	XP
1	1	0

Torah "the Windmill" Bishop

IS A **Brash** ~~DESCRIPTOR~~ **spinner** WHO

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

Looks for Trouble ON ~~RECURSION~~ **Earth**

• MIGHT •   • SPEED •   • INTELLECT •

POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE
10	0		14*	1		10	1	

• SKILLS •

T/S		T/S		T/S	
		0	Initiative	0	Deceiving
		0	Ignoring fear/ intimidation	0	Healing

*16 w/out armor

• ATTACKS •

	MOD	DAM
Weighted baseball bat		5*
Submachine gun		4

• SPECIAL ABILITIES •

Practiced in light and medium weapons
Translation (better at hastening)
Fast Talk (1 Intellect point)
Sleight of Hand (1 Speed point)
*Brawler: +1 damage in melee (including with bare fists)
Wound Tender: Trained in healing

• EQUIPMENT •

1 ARMOR

Street clothes
Leather jacket (light armor; 2 points subtracted from Speed Pool; costs 1 Might per hour)
Weighted baseball bat (medium weapon)
Submachine gun (rapid-fire medium weapon)
First aid kit
Utility knife
Cell phone

$400 MONEY

• CYPHERS •

2 LIMIT

Strength enhancer (level 6)
Armor reinforcer (level 5)

• RECOVERY ROLLS •

☐ 1 ACTION   ☐ 10 MINS   **1D6+ 1**   ☐ 1 HOUR   ☐ 10 HOURS

• DAMAGE TRACK •

☐ IMPAIRED — +1 EFFORT PER LEVEL. IGNORE MINOR & MAJOR EFFECT RESULTS ON ROLLS. COMBAT ROLL OF 17-20 ONLY DEALS +1 DAMAGE

☐ DEBILITATED — CAN ONLY MOVE AN IMMEDIATE DISTANCE IF SPEED POOL IS ZERO YOU CANNOT MOVE

↕ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↕

STRANGE

• ADVANCEMENT •

(You must have four of these to advance in Tier. Cost = 4XP each.)

☐ **INCREASE CAPABILITIES**
+4 points into stat Pools

☐ **MOVE TOWARDS PERFECTION**
+1 point to the Edge of your choice

☐ **EXTRA EFFORT**
+1 point into Effort

☐ **SKILL TRAINING**
Train in a skill or Specialize in a pre-existing skill

☐ **OTHER**
Refer to The Strange corebook

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

• BACKGROUND •

Torah is part owner of a local bar, where she's something of a whiz at creating specialty cocktails.

Arlo and Vanessa seem pretty tough . . . and Torah secretly hopes that at some point she'll see who's tougher—her or them. In addition, Torah knows that L.G. was a famous child actor, despite the fact that he hides it.

• PORTRAIT •

• NOTES •

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

STRANGE

TIER	EFFORT	XP
1	1	0

Dr. Sybil Holloway

IS A **Lucky** **paradox** WHO

↓ RECURSION ET HERE ↓

Conducts Weird Science ON **Earth**

• MIGHT •   • SPEED •   • INTELLECT •

POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE
8	0		8	0		18	1	

• SKILLS •

T	
S	
T	
S	
T	
S	
T	
S	
T	
S	
T	
S	
T	
S	
T	
S	

O **Setting up experiments**

O **Knowledge of the Strange**

O **High-energy physics**

• ATTACKS •

	MOD	DAM
Light handgun	-1	2

• SPECIAL ABILITIES •

Luck Pool: 3 floating Pool points
Advantage: When XP used to reroll d20, add +3
Practiced with light weapons
Translation (better at initiating)
Premonition (2 Intellect points)
Shatter (2 Intellect points)
Lab Analysis: Analyze samples from scene of interest to learn pertinent facts

• EQUIPMENT •

O
ARMOR

Street clothes
Science field kit
Light tools
Pen knife
Smartphone
Light handgun (light weapon)

$1,700
MONEY

• CYPHERS •

3
LIMIT

Force screen projector (level 6)
Meditation aid (level 6)
Phase changer (level 5)

↑ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

• RECOVERY ROLLS •

☐ 1 ACTION   ☐ 10 MINS   (1D6+) **1**   ☐ 1 HOUR   ☐ 10 HOURS

• DAMAGE TRACK •

☐ IMPAIRED — +1 EFFORT PER LEVEL. IGNORE MINOR & MAJOR EFFECT RESULTS ON ROLLS. COMBAT ROLL OF 17-20 ONLY DEALS +1 DAMAGE

☐ DEBILITATED — CAN ONLY MOVE AN IMMEDIATE DISTANCE IF SPEED POOL IS ZERO YOU CANNOT MOVE

STRANGE

CONSTRUCTING YOUR CHARACTER

USE THE PRIMARY SHEET TO DESCRIBE YOUR CHARACTER ON YOUR STARTING RECURSION

USE A FOLDED RECURSION SHEET FOR EACH ADDITIONAL RECURSION IN YOUR GAME

THE INFORMATION ON A RECURSION SHEET MAY CHANGE FROM ONE RECURSION TO ANOTHER

RECURSION ▷ PRIMARY

· ADVANCEMENT ·

(You must have four of these to advance in Tier. Cost = 4XP each.)

- ☐ **INCREASE CAPABILITIES** +4 points into stat Pools
- ☐ **MOVE TOWARDS PERFECTION** +1 point to the Edge of your choice
- ☐ **EXTRA EFFORT** +1 point into Effort
- ☐ **SKILL TRAINING** Train in a skill or Specialize in a pre-existing skill
- ☐ **OTHER** Refer to The Strange corebook

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

· BACKGROUND ·

Sybil studied high-energy physics, and found something strange in her experiments—something she published, although it got her thrown out of the ranks of respectable researchers.

Sybil created a scientific instrument designed to give L.G. a restful night's sleep, but she now fears unanticipated long-term side effects. In addition, Arlo Coulton accidentally winged Sybil during firearms practice a few months ago. She's fine now, and has yet to decide how she feels about him after the incident.

· PORTRAIT ·

· NOTES ·

CHARACTER CREATION WALKTHROUGH

Follow these steps to create your character for The Strange.

1 GET PREPARED

If you're using the character sheets in the back of this book, make a two-sided photocopy of the main character sheet (pages 94 and 95) to create your character in her homeworld (which is most likely Earth).

Along the top of the sheet, you'll see a place to write your character's name, descriptor, type, focus, and starting world or recursion. Beneath that, you'll see a place for all of your character's stats, skills, abilities, and equipment.

On the back of the sheet, you'll see a place for your character's background, portrait, notes, and advancement tracking.

2 CHOOSE YOUR CHARACTER DESCRIPTOR, TYPE, AND FOCUS

Starting at the top of the sheet, record your character's name, descriptor, type, and focus to complete the sentence.

For this example, let's say I am an Appealing vector who Conducts Weird Science on Earth.

3 FILL IN YOUR STAT POOLS, AS DETERMINED BY YOUR TYPE

First, take a detailed look at your type, because that's where you'll get your Pool starting values. Fill in those values under Might, Speed, and Intellect Pool.

For my vector, my starting values are Might 10, Speed 10, and Intellect 8, plus 6 additional points to spread between the Pools. I'm going to add 3 points to Might, 1 to Speed, and 2 to Intellect, for totals of: Might 13, Speed 11, and Intellect 10.

Your descriptor might also add to your Pools. Feel free to check your descriptor now to see if it gives you additional points, and, if so, add them to the appropriate starting Pool.

My descriptor of Appealing gives me +2 to my Intellect Pool. This increases my starting stat Pool numbers to Might 13, Speed 11, and Intellect 12.

4 FILL IN YOUR EDGE STATS, AS DETERMINED BY YOUR TYPE

My vector has a Might Edge of 1, a Speed Edge of 1, and an Intellect Edge of 0.

5 WRITE IN ADDITIONAL STATS AND ABILITIES, AS DETERMINED BY YOUR TYPE

Note any Effort, skills, and cypher limits, as well as any special abilities provided by your type. These include moves, revisions, and twists. Be sure to write down the cost (if any) of any special abilities and to note whether you are trained (T) or specialized (S) in a skill.

My vector has an Effort of 1 and a cypher limit of 2.

Under Skills, I'll note that I'm trained in Speed defense when not wearing armor. I am also trained in two skills of my choice. I'll choose jumping and running. All of these will be listed as skills under Speed, and I'll mark the T to show that I'm trained (not specialized) in them.

Under Special Abilities, I'll note that I am Practiced With All Weapons. All of the PCs can also translate as a special ability. As a vector, I am most effective at easing a translation.

As a vector, I can also choose two moves, so I'll take Bash and Fleet of Foot.

6 WRITE IN ADDITIONAL STATS AND ABILITIES, AS DETERMINED BY YOUR DESCRIPTOR & FOCUS

If you haven't already added any additional points from your descriptor and focus to your starting Pools, do so now. Add any additional skills or equipment from your descriptor and focus as well.

Appealing means that I am trained in pleasant social interactions and resisting persuasion or seduction; I'll list these as trained skills under Intellect.

I'll also add that my focus, Conducts Weird Science, means that I am trained in one area of scientific knowledge of my choice. I'll add chemistry to my skills list under Intellect.

Most foci also give you a special ability. Feel free to look at your focus now and add any special abilities.

My focus, Conducts Weird Science, gives me a special ability called Lab Analysis.

7 CHOOSE YOUR POSSESSIONS, AS DETERMINED BY YOUR TYPE

The possessions that you start the game with are dictated by your type and include weapons, armor, packs, and other gear. If you wear armor, or if you have a special ability that grants you Armor, note the total amount of Armor in the space provided.

Check to see if your descriptor gives you additional possessions, such as equipment or extra money.

My focus allows me to start the game with street clothes, a science field kit, light tools, a pen knife, a smartphone, and $2,000.

8 LIST YOUR ATTACKS

Attacks are based on your chosen weapons and your moves, revisions, or twists.

My focus doesn't include a weapon, so I will ask my GM if I can spend some of my money to purchase a medium handgun for $700.00. Then I can list that weapon as doing 4 points of damage.

9 ADD YOUR STARTING CYPHERS

Your GM will provide you with starting cyphers, if any.

10 INCLUDE YOUR BACKGROUND

The aspects of your character can help define your background. Your type gives you some general information about your experience in the world and society, your descriptor gives you an initial link to the first adventure, and your focus gives you a connection to the other PCs. You can list these on the back of your character sheet.

For my link to the first adventure (descriptor), I'll say that I got involved by pure happenstance. For my connection to another PC (focus), I'll talk to one of the other players, and we'll work it out that he asked me to design a gun that could shoot through walls.

11 DURING PLAY, NOTE DAMAGE TRACK, RECOVERY ROLLS, AND XP

During gameplay, keep track of how many recovery rolls you've used each day and where you are on the damage track. (If you're hale or dead, you won't need to mark anything; otherwise, it's important to make a note of your status on the damage track.) The 1D6+ box is for recording the amount that you add to your recovery rolls; this number is usually your current tier, but it can be altered by various modifiers.

Additionally, note what tier you are and how many experience points you currently have.

Last, there is space on the back to mark off your advancement progress, which allows you to track how you spend XP to advance to the next tier.

12 KEEP GOOD NOTES

The notes section is designated for events and experiences that happen to your character once the game begins.

13 ADDING A NEW RECURSION

When your character is ready to go to a new recursion, print out the recursion sheet (page 96). You'll see that if you fold it along the FOLD HERE line and wrap it horizontally over the main character sheet, it fits perfectly over the parts of the character sheet that could change when you go to a new recursion.

When you switch recursions, your clothing, belongings, and focus are likely to change (unless you're using a draggable focus). Thus, you'll want to add any new stats and equipment that you gain from your focus. Your cyphers will carry over to the new recursion, but you'll want to make a note about their new appearance after you translate. You can also add a new portrait to the back side, if your character's appearance changes (some foci, such as Embraces Qephilim Ancestry, provide you with a new appearance, or you can work out a new look with your GM).

When I translate to Ardeyn, I choose a new focus. Thus, I change from an Appealing vector who Conducts Weird Science to an Appealing vector who Embraces Qephilim Ancestry. Now I look like a qephilim, and I trade my Earth focus equipment, abilities, and skills for ones that work with my new focus in Ardeyn.

THE STRANGE

TIER EFFORT XP

NAME

IS A DESCRIPTOR TYPE WHO

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

FOCUS ON RECURSION

• MIGHT •
POOL | CURRENT | EDGE

• SPEED •
POOL | CURRENT | EDGE

• INTELLECT •
POOL | CURRENT | EDGE

• SKILLS •

T S	T S	T S
T S	T S	T S
T S	T S	T S
T S	T S	T S
T S	T S	T S
T S	T S	T S
T S	T S	T S
T S	T S	T S

• ATTACKS •
MOD DAM

• SPECIAL ABILITIES •

• EQUIPMENT •

ARMOR MONEY

• CYPHERS •

LIMIT

• RECOVERY ROLLS •

1 ACTION 10 MINS 1D6+ 1 HOUR 10 HOURS

• DAMAGE TRACK •

+1 EFFORT PER LEVEL

IMPAIRED — IGNORE MINOR & MAJOR EFFECT RESULTS ON ROLLS
COMBAT ROLL OF 17-20 ONLY DEALS +1 DAMAGE

DEBILITATED — CAN ONLY MOVE AN IMMEDIATE DISTANCE IF SPEED POOL IS ZERO YOU CANNOT MOVE.

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

The STRA∧GE

RECURSION ▷ PRIMARY

•ADVANCEMENT•

(You must have four of these to advance in Tier. Cost = 4XP each.)

☐ **INCREASE CAPABILITIES**
+4 points into stat Pools

☐ **MOVE TOWARDS PERFECTION**
+1 point to the Edge of your choice

☐ **EXTRA EFFORT**
+1 point into Effort

☐ **SKILL TRAINING**
Train in a skill or Specialize in a pre-existing skill

☐ **OTHER**
Refer to The Strange corebook

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

•BACKGROUND•

•PORTRAIT•

•NOTES•

↕ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↕

↕ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↕

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

FOCUS

ON RECURSION

•INTELLECT•
•SPEED•
•MIGHT•

POOL CURRENT EDGE

•SKILLS•

•SPECIAL ABILITIES•

•EQUIPMENT•

MONEY

ARMOR

•ATTACKS• MOD DAM

•NOTES•

•PORTRAIT•

FOLD HERE