

# DEMON

## Next door

A Divine Blood Supplement  
By Luke Green





*Just because you're not out saving the world doesn't mean your life is boring or easy. Civilians, even supernatural ones, have their own struggles to deal with.*

*This weekend is the big Steel Knights tournament. You've got to settle on your army list, 3D print the minis and paint them. Maybe some judicious use of telepathy will give you insight on the other teams?*

*You had to fire someone at the store and all his friends quit the same day. You have to rebuild the staff and corporate is watching. Wouldn't it be just the wrong time to be called away because your kid showed off at school and people freaked out?*

*An off-hand comment about Lovecraft causes a friend to suddenly become angry. When you try to remind her that it's silly to get upset over sci-fi nonsense she pulls down her shirt collar to show you her gills.*

*Whether you want to play a pure slice-of-life campaign or simply want to add some flavor to the civilians your heroic characters deal with, this book provides useful information.*

#### **Included within:**

- A brief history of The Community and a summary of some of its practices.
- A discussion on the lives of civilian Gods and Demons.
- Samples of pop culture in the Divine Blood universe ranging from Precious Puppies to cosmetic gene mods.
- Gameplay advice on how to focus on making mundane issues into entertainingly absurd situations and obstacles.
- Several new sample Advantages and four new playable species suggested by backers and players of the game.



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By Luke Green

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*This workbook is the shared property of:*

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*Read at your own risk!*

*I will curse you!*

*can she do that?*

*If anyone else ever reads this, I guess we'll find out*



## FOREWORD

Normally when one plays a roleplaying game, the expected content involves action, adventure and people with amazing skills taking on incredible tasks. When the setting involves a hefty dose of the supernatural this seems almost guaranteed. The average player sits down to the table expecting to play a superhero of one sort or another. That's been the standard sort of play as far back as Dungeons and Dragons, where characters can eventually reach the status of such mythical demigods and heroes as Theseus, Beowulf, Merlin or even Old Monkey in extreme cases.

The Divine Blood setting is certainly no stranger to this sort of storyline. Between the stories that have been published so far in the fiction, there have been evil empires, nameless abominations, battles between secret societies, mecha combat, espionage, dealings with ghosts and a death or two. If you want to run a campaign of heroes with powers and skills beyond the normal, that's perfectly within the capability of the game. Most of the rules that we dealt with in playtesting are focused on that sort of playstyle.

However, battle and the supernatural is not the limit of what the Divine Blood setting is about. Alongside the more fantastical story elements standard to an adventure setting given above, the published fiction has also included high school debates, trying out new restaurants, job interviews, dealing with bad family situations, parenting foibles, tolerating sibling stupidity, teasing close friends, drunk drivers, school discipline, dealing with strange fandoms and plenty of casual conversations about random stuff. This is not the usual sort of fare a gaming campaign is about, and most game rules aren't designed to focus much on such day to day concerns. They're usually the sort of things that just get role-played out with little to no dice-rolling going on. The Fate systems rules make it possible to focus on these elements of a story and, indeed, build entire scenarios around something as simple as a school fundraising fair.

To put it simply, as much as Divine Blood is about the myths, sci-fi and fantasy that I have enjoyed, and still do enjoy, it is also about the sitcoms that I grew up with and those ludicrous day-to-day situations that still pop up in my regular life.

Now there comes an obvious question, "if this sort of story element is stuff that is usually roleplayed out, why bother making rules to simulate it?" This is a very good question and if the focus of your campaign is around action, danger and fighting evil, then really there isn't much need for mechanics to represent the difficulty of studying for a chemistry final or trying to land a sweet job. If anything, those are complications to the more pressing concerns of trying to avoid getting turned into a sacrifice by the Disciples of the Evil Eye. However, if the focus of your campaign is a Divine Blood version of High School Musical, then those systems can provide both structure and the element of chance.

Rules give our brains something to base the boundaries of expectation around. Things like statistics and odds allow us to identify when a task is difficult or easy and when we accomplish that task within the framework of the rules, there is a feeling of accomplishment. In the Fate system especially, the Aspects work as road-signs indicating the sort of elements each player wants included in their game experience. They thus can be used as seeds for the GM or another player to add to the story in a way that appeals to everybody.

Then there is the element of chance. Granted, this game is built using the Fate systems which reduces the influence of the dice significantly as compared to games like Dungeons and Dragons. In a game where it is possible to build up bonuses that can more than triple the maximum result of any die roll, one wonders just why anybody bothers rolling the dice at all. It seems like whether or not the character succeeds is up to the whim of the player and to an extent you are correct. It is possible for a player to simply blow all of their resources on achieving one amazingly awesome result on a particular test. However, those deliberately awesome results require either several rounds of



preparation to create temporary Aspects with free tags or else blowing large amounts of Fate Points all at once. The second also requires the attempted task to align favorably with multiple Aspects of the character, his opponent and the environment. However, the dice do have an influence. A bad roll may necessitate the expenditure of a Fate Point, or simply be allowed to pass. A good roll may turn a humdrum event into something impressive and noteworthy. For a character working outside his comfort zone, outside the purview of his Advantages and Aspects that random chance is the only thing they've got going for them.

To further describe what I mean, let us take the example of a fight scene. It is possible for a group of people to sit down and work out just how a fight scene will happen without the need for any sort of rules at all. This happens all the time with writing teams for various movies and television series. It is also quite fun when done well. However, in a gamer setting you run the risk of someone coming in and saying "my character beats up all the bad guys, problem solved" and refusing to back down or share the glory with anybody else. Granted, something like that is unlikely to occur, and the individual in question is unlikely to be invited to another freeform gaming table, but smaller scale disagreements are more likely and more prone to be initially overlooked. In addition, the sense of accomplishment that will come out of freeforming the scene is one of "look at this great story we told" rather than "wow, that was a tough fight." I enjoy both types of accomplishment, but they are different and sometimes you want one more than the other.

Whether you use systems or not, roleplaying a bunch of high schooler students building a booth event for a fundraising fair can be quite fun. However, once you add systems to building and running the booth, it becomes a challenge in and of itself rather than simply being an amusing side-element to the story.

As a reminder, you do not have to use rules to roleplay. I was part of a freeform roleplaying group for close to four years which was exceedingly fun

and still gives me plenty of fond memories. If you choose to use rules, you do not have to use the rules I created for the Divine Blood game. There are plenty of other systems that can fit just as well.

## Lists of Influences

### Comic Books and Manga

- *Archie Comics*
- *Azumanga Daioh*
- *K-On*
- *Lucky Star*
- *Oh My Goddess!*

### Games

- *The Sims franchise*

### Movies

- *The Incredibles*
- *Mannequin*
- *My Best Friend is a Vampire*
- *Sky High*
- *Splash*
- *Teen Wolf*
- *Zoom: Academy for Superheroes*

### Television

- *The Addams Family*
- *The Adventures of Pete and Pete*
- *Bewitched*
- *Cheers*
- *Chuck*
- *Clarissa Explains it All*
- *Full House*
- *Happy Days*
- *I Dream of Genie*
- *Mad About You*
- *\*M\*A\*S\*H\**
- *The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya*
- *Mork and Mindy*
- *The Munsters*
- *News Radio*
- *Red Dwarf*
- *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*
- *Saved by the Bell*
- *Scarecrow and Mrs. King*
- *The Secret World of Alex Mack*
- *Third Rock From the Sun*
- *X-Men Evolution*

### Webcomics

- *Atomic Laundromat*
- *Eerie Cuties/Magic Chicks/Dangerously Chloe*
- *El Goonish Shive*
- *The Hero Business*
- *Sandra and Woo*
- *Vampire Cheerleaders*
- *Waspi Square*



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# THE COMMUNITY





## ORIGINS

While a lot of terms and practices were suggested and agreed on at the Beijing Conference of 1815, the term Community was not one of those. Nobody is sure when, exactly, the word “community” was first capitalized and used to describe the population of supernatural in the world. It was already in use by the time of the First World War and many think it came into popularity sometime around the turn of that century. The loosely connected society has never had the sort of need or unity to sit down and choose a specific name to refer to itself as and, as a result, the term developed naturally in the way slang and language often does.

The origins of the movement toward a civilian society of supernaturals itself is even more nebulous. While the most vocal scholars within the Families and Community point to the Beijing Conference as the logical beginning point for cooperation between supernaturals, most historians agree that the Conference itself would not have been successful without a fairly extensive level of pre-existing communication between the myriad groups that eventually attended that historical meeting.

The first recognized society composed of multiple species and small families of Talents was the Faerie Court, which had unified several of minor races and numerous tribes of humans under their dominion. As that empire began to crumble during the Age of the Gods, the various psychics and non-humans split apart and scattered throughout the world. Their numbers in comparison with the bulk of ordinary humans was much smaller and they eventually settled as isolated families or individuals. The non-humans were less prone to this and would usually come together in somewhat larger than average groups, but even then there was a larger number of small isolated colonies of various non-humans rather than any official connection. For the most part, these psychics and non-humans came to identify themselves first as a member of the local dominant culture with their unusual heritage being a secondary thing. By and large they existed in peace with the surrounding humans.

The Purges changed that. Four Demons and three Gods were set upon the world to clean up what some in their cultures saw as messes. Large groups of humans and non-humans were wiped off the face of the Earth and some Gods and Demons were murdered trying to defend them. Eventually, these acts of genocide became too egregious for the perpetrators to conceal and Lilith and Vishnu both stepped in to put a stop to it. There is very little reliable information on the Purges amongst the mortal population as one of the primary targets was the elimination of knowledge about the Gods and Demons. It is because of this period that the mistaken belief that the Immortals were spirits or entities rather than physical beings began. Both Nirvana and Yomi pushed that misconception as much as possible in order to make it easier for them to fade into the background as they stopped interfering directly in mortal politics. Unfortunately, while the Purges were stopped and punished, the dark times for supernaturals did not come to an end.

Mortals quite rightfully regarded the results of the Purges with horror and terror. The sheer level of power and might displayed by some of the Purges in the last few days before they were stopped stuck in the minds of many aristocrats and priests. These influential witnesses began to look nervously at the reports they had of other psychics and supernaturals in their area. Witch hunts began in earnest soon after the Purges were incarcerated in the Abyss or Tartarus. No one wanted to face the possibility of another such thing happening again. Isolated as they were, most of the supernatural made for easy targets for these fear-driven crusades around the world.

The species that had difficulty blending in with human society had the hardest time facing these threats and several more non-human species failed to survive in the face of it. Many of those that were able to conceal themselves still found themselves forced to pick up and leave as people began to grow suspicious of them. Many of these exiles found camouflage amongst such wandering groups as the gypsies for at least a short time. The practice of such nomadic groups' tendencies to



leave each other signs as warnings and information about the area was picked up by the supernatural and eventually they were communicating between various small pockets of refugees.

Most of the displaced supernaturals did not enjoy the nomadic lifestyle and actively sought a place to settle down. Some found refuge with the Families, others left the Earth in favor of traveling into the cosmology of pocket dimensions. Most, however, clustered together for strength in numbers and set about to establish their own towns or even neighborhoods. Sometimes the seed for such a settlement was the discovery of an individual or family which the mortal witch hunts had failed to uncover. In other cases they simply found an unclaimed and undeveloped patch of land to work themselves.

Beforehand, many supernaturals spent their time studying magic or sorcery. Or else they would dabble in figuring out their own inborn or species-related Talents. They had occupations such as being the local wise woman, hunting or something that otherwise fit with what they were capable of. If they needed firewood or clothing, they could speak to one of the other residents in their area and trade either services or coin to get what they needed. Now, however, they were being forced to handle all of those day to day needs themselves. As a result, these larger colonies of supernatural quickly began to drift away from esoteric psychic-oriented occupations and acquire a broader base of skills within their group.

This broadening of talent also served as camouflage since now supernaturals weren't basing their occupation on what they were but on what their community needed and they were capable of learning. If these villages seemed insular or stand-offish, that was rarely a concern. After all, most of the small villages of the world were distrustful of outsiders in the same way. If other communities of supernaturals were known to be in the area, then the two groups would make introductions and establish a system of communication to warn each other of developments in the area. Secrecy was definitely the primary concern of the group.

European and Middle Eastern supernaturals faced the worst of this period as they were further decimated by the Black Death, which itself sparked new interest in witch hunts. Groups within the rest of the world still clustered together more or less, but as the fear and fervor died off, they found that their countrymen began to slowly become more tolerant of the psychics and non-humans they found. As the European nations began to reach out with their ships to colonize distant lands, they brought their fear and hatred of the supernatural with them. This finally began to slow and then stop during the late 1700's.

It was in the wake of the last witch hunts that the Beijing Conference was planned and convened. It took nearly two decades before word spread throughout all the various small communities that had sprung up to secure themselves against the mundanes of the world. It took another two years for everyone invited to travel to Beijing. The conference itself started in 1815 and lasted most of the year after which the various representatives and leaders went back to their own to share what was decided.

The most important thing these representatives brought back was both the communication with other distant and disparate groups of supernaturals and the agreed upon system of signs and signals to be used to communicate the presence of a community in the area. In the beginning, defense and secrecy were still the primary concerns of these groups, but as Psyche began to develop and the Families left their own strongholds to start to protect these less militant groups, the focus shifted from surviving to living.

From 1800 onward, much of the world became safer for those with supernatural gifts. It became more common for normal humans to live side-by-side with non-humans and psychics and share in the community's safety. The larger groups formed in the interest of self-defense and the growing tendency of meeting normal humans willing to tolerate or even completely accept these others resulted in previously devastated populations starting to make a revival. Periodic population



*So where'd you all get help with this?*

Aunt Lilitu or some other Yomi-side Aesir tutored me until I was 12. Since then I mostly just access memories of previous incarnations at my current age.

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surges, each tending to be more productive than the last, began to occur with greater frequency.

By the time of 2012, the Community had developed into what it now was: a group of civilians who mostly depended on Psyche and certain Families for protection while they focused on living their lives. Secrecy has slowly become a secondary or even tertiary concern and in much of the Community there is a slow push and hope that they will soon no longer need to hide. Incidents of normal humans hunting them have become much more uncommon and the activities of criminal psychics are mostly controlled by Psyche. All of this, but especially their civilian mindset, has made the Community the most laid back and complacent of the secret societies in the world.

### THE COMMUNITY IN THE WORLD

The Community interacts with the normal world on a day to day basis with little to no trouble. They get up in the morning, go to work or school and then come home in the evening like anybody else. There is very little that is immediately obvious to set them apart. In recent history, the rise of genetic testing as a standard operating procedure in more places has caused the Community to withdraw from more aspects of society than they used to; something which makes many of them feel restricted and which may be a factor in pushing the move toward going public faster than Psyche wants to happen.

The Community used to consist of mostly isolated small town and villages, but the modern world has begun to alter that. A fair number of what used to be isolated Community villages have found themselves swallowed by a growing city, creating neighborhoods within the larger metropolitan areas. Psyche is establishing "havens" in various cities as an enclave providing for local non-humans who cannot easily fit in for one reason or another. This has been another facet in the greater tolerance and acceptance of those outside the Community, especially as more mundanes tend to become connected to the Community through friendship, employment or marriage.

Schools are another place where the Community used to be isolated but is growing more integrated with the world at large. When the entire village or town was part of the Community, it was easy to make sure all the students in the local school were also Community. With the changing populations and growing urban areas, most originally Community public schools have found themselves with a significant number of outsider students. In addition, drawing and redrawing of district lines has resulted in Community children getting sent to more average schools. At first this was addressed by trying to create private schools for the Community specifically, but operating costs have pushed even most of those schools to accept students from outside the Community. The mixing of Community and non-Community children has invariably produced the occasional breach of secrecy. Most of these have been peaceful and contributed to the growing complacency and desire to shed the traditions of secrecy.

The teaching of how to deal with psychic abilities is mostly handled outside of the schools, as has been done for generations. Talents often receive tutoring from other people who have the same or a similar Talent. Nonhumans are usually taught how to deal with things by their families. Trained skills like sorcery, feng shui and magic are taught in an apprentice style or difficult to find trade schools. One of the advancements that came with unifying terms for psychic phenomena was the fact that it is possible to become a professional quality shaper or magician even if one doesn't start training until after high school. The majority of Talents and nonhumans only receive enough training in their abilities in order to maintain their health and avoid accidents. Skills like feng shui, shaping and magic are considered to be high-skill positions similar to doctors, lawyers and engineers and are usually not trusted without some sort of authority, usually Psyche in the Community, vouching for their abilities. Channeling is rarely learned outside of the Families, while it has many applications outside of combat, the perception is that it is primarily a warrior's skill and most of the Community show no interest in it as a result.

*My parents worked with me mostly, but my cousin helped a little before she moved to the States.*

UHH, THERE'S MUM, OF COURSE, MR. HARKER, EIJA HAD LESSONS WITH A SISKIND DEATH-SEER, AND THERE WAS THE GUY WHO TAUGHT US GUN-SAFETY, DOES THAT COUNT? UH. . EIJA?

*There's not enough room here, sorry.*

O-O. What the bloody... Hell?

*That's awesome!*



A sizeable minority of the Community makes a living on magic, shaping or an inborn Talent, but most of the Community have jobs entirely unrelated to their supernatural nature. They usually get hired on by employers that are also part of the Community and a fair number of them are actually self-employed. When one member of the Community ends up in a managerial position at a local fast-food place, for example, it is likely that other members of the Community will be hired on as positions become available. Psyche also tries to keep a list of employment possibilities available from a large variety of career tracks, including positions which nonhuman races can apply for without concern.

Up until the Burmese expansion in the 1960's, it was unusual but not unheard of for members of the Community to enlist in their nation's militaries. As medical examinations of enlistees have gotten more thorough, this has become less common. Currently, the standard operating procedure of recording a genetic code, mostly as a last resort posthumous identification method, has resulted in the fact that non-humans, human looking or otherwise, avoid dealing with the military even if they would like to be able to help defend their chosen country. In countries where there is a



draft or required military service, this can result in some creative measures taken to keep the individual from being called up. In countries where the government is more or less aware of the Community, such as the CRCMP, Japan and Korea, this is less of a concern as the government cooperates in keeping the privacy of Community members who enlist.

Law enforcement in the Community is generally handled locally and quietly. Crimes are rarely reported to any police organization with a primarily non-Community membership. If there is a local Psyche office, then they are usually contacted

about investigating the situations. Even in cases where there is a small town with a predominantly Community law enforcement organization, such as the local Sheriff's office, a lot of criminal activity will be handled off the books to avoid any sort of investigation into the Community at large. Japan, Korea and the CRCMP have more direct contact with the Community and thus the official law enforcement is more likely to be a safe direction for the Community to turn.

The Community does not usually have to worry about such things as falsifying identities. Most of the bloodlines have existed for longer than modern identity tracking methods, have their own



doctors and often have their own neighborhood government. There has never been a need for the Community to fake a Social Security Number and even sapient beings that can't blend in well like wolven or ravens have official identities on record. Some of the non-humans have to act through representatives or power of attorney authorizations to avoid causing a stir when they go to the bank, but now the growth of online businesses has made even that a vanishing need.

Large hospitals are typically avoided by supernaturals unless there's no other recourse. The Community prefers to keep its faith in its own doctors and the facilities supported by Psyche. Especially once non-humans are taken into account, there's too much of a chance of a hospital geared toward humans killing a patient by accident because they are unaware of a medical quirk. The Community is also much more likely to be able to tell apart an actual physical malady requiring a doctor and a case of corruption or a curse requiring a healer or exorcist.

On the matter of religion, most of the Community engages in a private examination of spirituality with only a handful trusting organized religions. Philosophies such as pantheism, agnosticism and atheism have a higher rate of instance in the Community than they do outside of the Community. When a member of the Community joins a religion it is rarely if ever one of the radical strains, preferring groups less likely to treat the supernatural as inherently evil. Some of the non-humans in the Community used to have some shocking traditions of their own, but centuries of being forced to depend on humans and other non-humans for mutual securi-

ty have caused such traditions to largely decline within the Community. The sidhe and lemurians are the two groups that have continued aspects of their own cultures while still having a significant number as members of the Community. In fact, the Faerie Court has remained active as a terrorist organization for thousands of years though it is tremendously weakened from its glory days as a tyrannical empire.

The growth of the science-fiction and fantasy fanbase as well as such hobbies as roleplaying has given rise to an outlet for many members of the Community. A substantial minority of the Community can be found to own a small handful of RPG titles, which they will sometimes carry around with them. Events like Halloween and sci-fi conventions tend to draw members of the Community,

especially those nonhumans that have difficulty blending in. It creates excellent cover for them to discuss things about their life in the open and have people simply dismiss it as part of a game or fandom. However, most of the Community considers it to be a little weird to get involved in such things, especially if you don't really enjoy the activities being used as camouflage.

In the past, and still in the present, it was the standard for members of the Community to try to conceal any unusual colorations. With the advent of cosmetic genetic modification, this has become less of a concern to youngest generations. After all, even people outside of the Community can be seen with hair colors that might have seemed impossible in earlier times. Still, it is a tradition that has maintained most of its strength. In addition, there was a moderate-

***In the Divine Blood setting "unusual colorations" means colors that are flat out impossible in the real world. Colors that exist in one ethnicity but not another are not considered unusual enough to conceal. For example, blonde hair and blue eyes are most common in Caucasians in the Divine Blood world but do occur rarely in all phenotypes. Finding a naturally blonde Japanese person outside the supernatural community would be a 1 in 10,000 chance.***

***Note that some versions of what we would call normal hair colors are so vivid that they are considered unusual and worth concealing. For example, the aforementioned blonde Japanese person would likely have a normal real world mix of blonde and light brown hairs. However, if they were a child of Amaterasu, they would have nearly golden hair out of a comic book or fairy tale.***



ly famous string of serial murders in Korea around the year 2009 where all the targets were individuals who had unusual hair colors. The killings simply stopped with no one ever caught and the killer has become something of an urban legend to the Community youth of that country since then. As a result, dying hair is still very common and Community members usually dye their hair to be less stand-out.

Part of the process of paving the way for the Community and the supernatural to become public knowledge again has resulted in the growth of a population of men and women who have come to believe in the supernatural but have little to no actual knowledge about it. A lot of these people have done exhaustive research into what they believed was the legitimate history of the occult and have come out with a plethora of bizarre and illogical theories about the way things actually work. These people are referred to as New Agers by most of the psychic population. Typically when a New Ager meets someone from the Community the result is fairly volatile as the Community considers most New Agers in a range between pitifully moronic to absolutely hilarious and most New Agers tend to think that members of the Community are “too blind to see the truth of the universe.”

## COMMUNITY SPECIES

While the Community is the largest society of supernaturals in the world, it doesn't represent the entire population. Psyche is of the belief that the Community represents as much as half the supernatural population on Earth. The truth is that the proportion of the supernatural population that is represented by the Community, even if the Families are included, is somewhere between thirty and forty percent. Most of the species on Earth have at least some representation within the Community.

As with the population of supernaturals as a whole, the Community is overwhelmingly human. However, where non-humans do appear, they tend to gather. They like to stay close to others like them. Solitary non-humans are rare save for a handful of species like Chiang-shih, dryads and a couple of others.

The Community has lived needing to depend on each other through most of its existence so racism is not pervasive. It is not, unfortunately, absent. Lemurians have the most trouble with this currently though other species have their own issues. There's something about every species that can trigger a negative reaction. Deliberate violence and hate is the rarest of expressions of prejudice in the Community. The most common is unthinking ignorance and offensive assumptions. Most are unaware of the offensive nature of their attitudes.

### Chiang Shih

Chiang shih have always preferred their own company to the company of other species. They are also one of the species that finds the human form ugly. After the rise of the Empire of Myanmar, the Chiang shih have been scattered over the world and their numbers are now dwindling. They mostly live a hermit like existence, interacting via the internet and rarely leaving their homes even to meet another Chiang shih. Very few are communal enough to make an effort to be part of any society, much less the Community.

### Demon

It is only in the last year that a report of direct contact with Demons has come to Psyche revealing that they are, in fact, a species with a physical body. Prior to this it was assumed that Demons were entities, spirits similar to ghosts but which had never had a mortal life to compare to. It was assumed magi made contact with these entities and simply provided the Life-Force for them to accomplish whatever spell was asked of them. The majority of the Community still believes this. The recent report is still being discussed by the Psyche regional directors as it contradicts centuries of assumptions regarding the inherently hostile nature of Demons as well as their basic nature.

Demons have no presence within the Community beyond the indirect connection through the occasional magus. Half-Demons usually end up sheltered by either Nirvana or Yomi, but it is likely that a handful might have been taken in by the Community if they have no contact with their Immortal parents.





### Dryad

The Community views dryads with pity, something which often rankles the dryads. No matter how intelligent or talented an individual dryad proves to be, most of the Community tends to focus on the fact that they are psychic cripples, more likely to kill themselves than to produce a psychic phenomenon of note. Oreads are viewed with rather more curiosity than pity, though their immortality in combination with their ability to actually store reserve life-force within the stunted dryad vine parasite can make people slightly nervous as well.

### Dvergar

The dvergr are one of the species that is presumed by most people to be extinct in the wake of the Purges. A handful of small families survived to the modern day but they are relatively rare. Most live outside of the Community itself, but a rare individual keeps contact with other supernaturals. Many are unaware that there has been a sudden population boom since the US organization Socrates Group has made contact with societies of dvergr and other purged races that live in the Earth's cosmology. Most of this influx of dvergr is focused in New England, though they make appearances near several major US naval facilities.

### Gargoyle

There are very, very few gargoyles in the Community. They are an isolationist species with extensive holdings in the cosmology surrounding Earth with rumors of a major shard somewhere deeper. They consider humans and most of the other species of Earth to be dangerous primitives. They have bad memories of the Faerie Court's oppression as well as the manipulation of the Immortals and have shut themselves off from most of the Earth. The Community is aware of the location for a handful of the major gates to a gargoyle shard, such as the Pine Barrens in New Jersey, and generally avoids them. Psyche is aware of a few more and the fact that the Soviet collapse resulted in the invasion of one of the gargoyles' larger known shards. A small handful of exiles from the gargoyles' rigidly controlled society have worked themselves into the Community. An even smaller handful of gargoyle spies, transformed to an outwardly human appearance, have infiltrated the society in order to keep an eye on it. Nobody in the Community quite knows how to deal with gargoyles since most encounters with them are with decidedly hostile portal sentinels.

### God

As with Demons, Gods were recently believed to be bodiless entities rather than physical beings.



Wait. "Presumed?"





The same report regarding the nature of Demons has also discussed direct contact, conflict actually, with the Gods. A second report from Japan discusses an individual with similar blue facial marks having been rescued as a bystander during a small confrontation with some Van Helsing bikers. The Community perspective is that Gods are inherently well-intentioned as compared to Demons, but that they lack understanding of mortals which causes problems. This is why white magic invoking residents of Nirvana is tolerated while black magic invoking Yomi is considered evil and dangerous. Regardless, the Community does not particularly trust the Gods due to a combination of past history and the perception that they don't understand mortals very well. Gods themselves are almost never in contact with the Community, and haven't revealed their identities on the rare occasions there is contact. Like with Half-Demons, there may be a few Demi-Gods within the Community, but the large majority live within the Heralds or Faustians' purviews.

### Gorgon

The Community tries to keep familiar with the human bloodlines that include the potential to create gorgons. However, most of the gorgon bloodlines are still unidentified and most gorgons are born outside any sort of support structure and end up as akira. Not all born gorgons end up expressing their nature and will live through life appearing as humans. Gorgon families that are in the Community have an easier time recognizing when a member of the family is a gorgon who has simply not yet expressed rather than a human. If desired, they are often able to help provoke or prevent an expression of the gorgon traits.

### Human

Humans are easily the largest population within the Community. Well more than half the population is human. Most of the humans in the Community have either inborn psychic Talents or else have learned to practice a psychic skill such as shaping or magic. However, in recent years there has appeared a small but growing population of humans with no psychic ability beyond what the average person has. There is a lot of intermarriage

between humans and other species within the Community but sheer proportions keep the majority of human relationships with other humans.

### Jurougumo

This group of spider-descended sapients is disappearing slowly over time. The reason for this is their consistent tendency to find humans more attractive than their own kind. The species has become more and more human with every generation and it is fully expected that the last jurougumo will be born sometime within the next century or two. After that, there will simply be families of humans that descend from this species. The jurougumo themselves are not concerned with the thought that they are becoming a subset of humanity though there are rare individuals that are trying to encourage purity and saving the species. There has been a lot of change in the species within the past thousand years and modern jurougumo would be considered as less than half-blooded by those old enough to remember the jurougumo from the past nor do the small number of ancient jurougumo that have some form of incidental immortality recognize the modern species as their own kind. Most of the remaining jurougumo families belong to the Community.

### Kitsune

Most kitsune live within the Community. They are a gregarious and friendly people for the most part. That said the kitsune are secretive about the nature of what they are. Most especially they have kept their ability to absorb the body, mind and soul of a willing person a deep secret. Likewise, they rarely speak of the kumiho, insane kitsune that abuse their gestalt ability in the hopes of building great power. Most of the Community simply considers the kitsune to be odd or eccentric and the idea that they have secrets, let alone of such a nature, is rarely if ever thought of.

### Lemurians

Lemurians have faced a large amount of prejudice in the last hundred years. This is a direct result of the manipulations of one HP Lovecraft. While most of the Community is well aware that Lovecraft's stories were racist propaganda, there are some that persist in considering the lemurians to be dirty, stupid, violent and perverse. This percep-







tion has spread, with varying degrees of severity, to other species and Talents that display aquatic abilities. The larger lemurian colonies mostly keep to themselves but they are not the severe isolationists that the gargoyles are especially since most lemurian colonies have a close relationship with a nearby group of humans. There is regular interaction between the Community and the lemurian colonies. There are also a handful of lemurian families that consider themselves part of the Community.

### Raven

There are a number of colonies of ravens within the Community, though it is suspected that there are many more colonies throughout the world, and possibly the cosmology, which are not part of the Community at all. As one of the species that cannot pass for human without outside help, ravens usually depend on the Community so that they can interact with the world at large. Ravens within the Community usually have a legal existence that allows them to maintain a life via the

internet or through intermediaries. Ravens practice polyandry, which means women usually have multiple boyfriends or husbands. This can make some humans and other non-humans uncomfortable. This can especially result in trouble if a raven woman begins courting a male of another species.

### Seraph

The seraphim are a Purged race like the dvergr, but none were known to survive for much longer after the Purges were recalled and punished. There are no seraphim in the Community as a result. However, unknown to the Community, there has recently been an influx of this species through contact between Socrates Group and certain dimensional shards. This influx of seraphim population is focused mostly around US naval bases but most especially seems to have occurred in New England.

### Sidhe

The sidhe ran the Faerie Courts, possibly one of the most deservedly reviled organizations to walk the Earth. In the modern times, most sidhe are

*This section keeps mentioning Socrates Group. What is that?*

*It's a US Naval research project, I think Mitera has done some jobs for them occasionally*



independent and the Faerie Court has been limited to minor terrorist acts for centuries. Independent sidhe prefer to have a large number of acquaintances and friends as a shield in case the sidhe of the Faerie Court come for them. The Courts are very much a sidhe boogeyman. There is a wide variety of personality amongst the sidhe, but they all have an obsession with making deals which they will honor as completely as possible. The sidhe have unusual relationship traditions that others within the Community often find disturbing. Namely, sidhe have little to no problem with romantic relationships between siblings and even less problem with adultery as long as no one points it out. Part of this is due to the fact that sidhe prefer to marry other sidhe despite being sterile with each other and requiring other species to reproduce. There is also occasional suspicion that a strange sidhe might secretly, or even unknowingly, be loyal to the Courts.

### Succubus

Like the seraphim, the succubi are another presumed extinct race that is making a comeback due to contact with Socrates Group. Their reputation as sexual creatures is largely believed by

Community scholars to be a result of the mistreatment and enslavement of the handful that survived the Purges before they finally vanished from the Earth. It should be noted that a small number of succubus children have been lost in the last fifty years or so. It is relatively easy for the navy to keep an eye out for a lost dvergar or seraph child entering the system due to the fact that dvergar are hermaphroditic and seraphim are asexual, both traits of which stick out in medical records. Succubi, however, appear as normal human girls until their mid-teens. As a result, there have been a small handful of akira succubi appearing in the human population of late. It is likely that at least one of these has entered the Community though they have not been identified as the presumed extinct succubus yet.

### Therianthrope

Almost every therianthrope family is part of the Community. They are a very social and communal people that enjoy having contact with others. Therianthropes do not have large colonies like most other non-humans, but instead exist in pockets as individual families throughout the world. Therianthropes can usually be found



Doing what?

*Collecting relics, mostly. I think one was a defunct shard gate, but it's all harmless stuff.*

Read this section and say that again, Eija.



So, basically, all werereatures are actually wolves? *Umm, no, all therianthropes are descended from wolves.*

*And they're werewolves.*

*Most of them.*

wherever the Community is. Also, as one of the few species with a genetic heritage that is at least as aggressive as humanity, they have not suffered a dwindling of numbers as a result of blending with humanity. Children of therianthropes and humans have roughly even chances of being therianthrope or human, though the tendency of therianthropes to have larger families means that their numbers are actually growing despite often marrying outside the species.

### Troll

Another of the purged species, trolls survived in small pockets similar to the dvergr. Also like the dvergr, most of them live outside the Community. The fact that their children appear perfectly human until puberty, when male children become trolls, has resulted in the fact that trolls often emerge as akiras in the general population. As with several of the other species that suffered from the Purges, Socrates Group has encountered large populations of trolls in the cosmology which are starting to filter back into the Earth. Trolls from bloodlines that have been on Earth since the Purges are usually quite bitter and cynical, sometimes very easily matching the stereotypical hostility of trolls from most stories. Trolls that have recently come via contact with Socrates Group, or whose family has been in the Community for a long time, tend to be much more accepting and friendly. Trolls are always male and their male children always become trolls while their daughters show some traces of the heritage usually in the form of purplish skin, increased strength and a much higher rate of possessing active Talents.

### Vampyr

Most vampyr are akira that have no idea what they are. Modern medical science usually identifies them as humans with genetic oddities and they are often diagnosed with a laundry list of medical disorders. Since vampyr usually have human parents and human children with multiple generations between the appearances of a vampyr in the bloodline, it can be very difficult to identify bloodlines that contain the potential to produce this species. Gorgons appear with much more frequency in their own bloodlines. When a vampyr

is identified, the Community tries to approach the individual and any family with the hope of being able to provide for future generations.

### Wolfen

Wolfen primarily exist on their own in colonies within the supposedly wild and untamed portions of the Earth. It is not believed that they have any settlements outside of Earth. Very few wolfen live within the Community, but it is not unknown for the telepathic wolves to make an appearance in one town or another. Some families of wolfen have acquired the ability to shapeshift into the appearance of other canines and have taken to fitting in by pretending to be dogs.

## COMMUNITY FRIENDLY REGIONS

### Australia

Australia has proportionally the largest Community populations in the world. This is despite a general absence of Psyche support in the area. There are several small towns which were originally settled by supernaturals leaving Europe or Asia for one reason or another and many of these towns have remained effectively isolated to the modern day. Physical distance from most of the world's hot spots has also resulted in the Families tending to establish branches in Australia for those of its members that have no interest in more dangerous occupations. Recent political changes have been a cause for concern and Psyche has finally started looking at establishing a regional office in the area.

### Far East

Japan, Korea and the Cultural Republic of Chinese and Mongolian Peoples all have governments that maintain a general awareness of the Community and even of the existence of non-human sapients. In these regions, the Community is even more relaxed than would be normal for other places in the world. Even the two US States in the region, Okinawa and Shandong, are more likely to have elements within the state government that are substantially more aware of the Community than the rest of the United States government. There is a large and healthy collection of Community settlements throughout these countries. In

16

So the ones that are werereatures are still descended from wolves?

*Yes, but not all weres are therianthropes. Some are human.*

Doesn't being a werethingy automatically make you not human?

*No. No it doesn't.*



addition, Psyche's global headquarters is located in Osaka, Japan. It used to be in Beijing, but that changed when Burma took over most of South Asia to create the current Empire of Mynamar.

### **North America**

The United States and Canada have very healthy populations of the Community. Most of these can be found in the regions with wider open spaces such as the American Midwest or closer to the wilderness for Canada, but most of the larger cities have a good population of psychics or even nonhumans. The main issue for the Community in North America is the rampantly invasive journalistic media. American members of the Community are likely to be more confident that an FBI agent will stay out of their business than a reporter. There is also a strong brush of fundamentalist religious organizations which they believe would paint them as evil and satanic merely because they exist.

### **Northern Europe**

Similar to Australia, many of the Community towns have remained isolated away from outside influence in the far Northern European countries; however, the populations here are much smaller. The build up to World War II saw a large number of the Community leaving the region for other parts of the world and the Cold War afterwards left the region too active with espionage to prove attractive for the Community to return. That said, like in the Far East, there is a fair bit more governmental awareness of non-humans in Northern Europe than in the rest of the world. Northern Europeans mostly did not involve themselves in the witch hunts of the Middle Ages and thus it remained a relatively safe place for supernaturals throughout that time.

### **Southern Africa**

South Africa and many of the surrounding countries have recently become far more stable encouraging the Community to relax and for others to come to these regions from other, less secure areas. A large number of formerly South American Community residents have started taking up lives in these regions. However, the instability of Central Africa has persisted in keeping some wary of

coming to the area. Unfortunately, their economy does not make it easy for people coming in to find jobs and this has limited the number of Community immigrants.

### **Western Europe**

After the witch hunts stopped during the Age of Reason supernaturals started trickling back into Western Europe. World War I and World War II disrupted this trend and left many thousands dead and some species even vanishing from knowledge, but in the Cold War, the tendency has returned. France and Spain especially have a healthy population of the Community. It remains a smaller proportion in comparison to America, the Far East or especially Australia, but they are insistently making a comeback. The population crisis in Europe has even opened up several economic opportunities for the people coming in to take advantage of. Britain has a stronger than average Community as well, mostly living under the shadow of the Breholm Family bloodlines. However those are mostly native families going back thousands of years. Immigration to England has been heavily discouraged by some of the government's policies which seem sinister to outsiders.

## **COMMUNITY UNFRIENDLY REGIONS**

### **Burma**

The Empire of Myanmar is not a particularly safe place for anybody. It is a militant, imperialistic country ruled primarily by men and women interested in increasing their own personal power. The Community in general does not exist within its borders. Most of the supernaturally inhabited villages and towns that were in the region were scattered to other countries, been obliterated or simply vanished from knowledge. It is expected that at least a handful of the psychics and nonhumans ended up in Imperial hands, but most either escaped or died.

### **Eastern Europe**

Most of Europe has relatively sparse populations of supernaturals owing to the tendency of Europeans to burn them at the stake for several hundred years. Western and Eastern Europe started seeing a return of such populations in the



late 19th and early 20th Century, however, the rise and collapse of the Soviet Union has left much of Eastern Europe inhospitable to the Community. This is largely due to the fact that; even discounting the ten-year conflict between the States, the Germans and Czechoslovakia; most of the region is crisscrossed in war zones between factions. Sometimes these wars cool down for a while and a semblance of normalcy enters the region before it heats up again. There are pockets of supernaturals that have remained stuck in the region, but most of them can hardly be called civilians.

### Middle East

Fundamentalist religious groups have a great deal of influence in the Middle East. Active witchcraft laws exist on the books of most countries from the North African Alliance to Afghanistan. Most of the public understanding of psychics and the supernatural is informed by the rhetoric of various extremist Abrahamic groups rather than on any sort of observation. Most families and non-humans have left the region for other countries, though some remain that have not been able to afford such a journey. The best case scenario for a psychic or supernatural is to be found in the North Africa Alliance as they will only deport or exile the proved “witch” while much of the rest of the Middle East will execute them. Several of the countries have worked with certain religious leaders to arrange for some psychics to be categorized as blessed of God or Allah, but the criteria established is extremely restrictive and most of the so categorized psychics and nonhumans end up pressed into government service as part of the requirement for the categorization.

### Russia

Large portions of Russia are isolated and lonely, seemingly making a nearly perfect place for the Community to establish a presence now that the Soviet Union has collapsed. Unfortunately, the chaotic nature of that collapse has resulted in Russia being crisscrossed with various warlords each of whom wish to cut their own place out of what was left of the USSR and with several having an eye on rebuilding the Union themselves. The chaos makes it a very unstable place for anybody

and psychics and nonhumans are especially at risk as their potential to be seen as military or intelligence assets.

### South America

Until recently, South America was a fairly safe place for the Community. However, since the end of World War II, there has been rising violence against the Community and especially organized targeting of non-human colonies. This is most prevalent in Brazil and the countries immediately bordering it, but the trend is felt everywhere. Most of the Community is trying to leave the area while a few remain to stubbornly hold on to their homes. Psyche quite rightfully suspects the source of this violence is Brazil and correctly believes it is a resurgence of the Thule Society.

## GENERATIONAL ATTITUDES

There are five categories of generational attitudes within the Community. They represent broader age ranges than the literal definition of a generation and there are numerous exceptions within each category. These are trends rather than rules.

### The Previous Generation (Ancestors) (200+ years of age)

Most mortal species have a life expectation of around ninety years old though a rare handful can get to two hundred fairly easily. Beyond that is the realm of those with Talents that add to an exceptional lifespan and those that have acquired some form of agelessness. There are a decent handful of people in the Community that can lay claim to centuries of years under their belt and one or two that can remember millennia. Individuals older than two hundred still remember when supernatural communities considered secrecy worth killing for. The situation in South America or even Burma would seem to be very familiar to them with places like North America or Australia seeming to be exceptions to the rule. This does depend somewhat on what region they are from, of course. Northern European and Far Eastern ancestors would tend to be more tolerant of outsiders. Also, individuals that stay close to the shorter lived world would tend to be far more optimistic. The more isolated



and hermit-like of these long-lived individuals tend to be more paranoid and distrustful.

### The Decisive Generation (Great-Grands) (100-200 years of age)

The average life expectancy of most mortal species is ninety years old, making the appearance of individuals, even humans, as old as one-hundred and thirty not all that unexpected even in public society. Most mortals do not live past two-hundred years, barring the sources of lifespan mentioned in the section on ancestors. Great-Grands tend to be much more thoughtful and optimistic than most ancestors. In general, this is the generation that made the decision that they needed to eventually be part of the world again and consciously stopped using darker means to protect themselves. These mark the start of when the Community moved toward being primarily civilian in mindset.

### The Transition Generation (Grands) (50-100 years of age)

Strangely enough, this group tends to be more judgmental and suspicious than the Great-Grands. The staggered decision to stop killing to protect themselves unless necessary caused a fair amount of trouble and it is this generation that lived through such things as World War II or Lovecraft's manipulation of the US military to exterminate non-humans. They tend to hold to stricter application of secrecy though they agree with the prior generation that killing should be a last resort. They are likely to regard any stranger spending time with their family very closely and unforgivingly.

### The Comfortable Generation (Parents) (30-50 years of age)

This age range tends to be a lot more laid back. They mostly come from lives after the previous generation escaped areas such as the Soviet Union or the Empire of Burma. They in general saw the suspicion of the prior generation to be unwarranted and approached life with a very relaxed attitude. Most of them have friends both in and out of the Community and many ended up marrying outside of the known population of supernaturals. This is the first of the generational groups that has a significant population of humans that were neither born with a Talent nor ever decided to learn sorcery or magic.

### The Careless Generation (Kids) (30- years of age)

These members of the Community are largely divorced from any of the hardships of the previous generations. They have grown up in safe parts of the world alongside people without any psychic ability and while they have all heard of a Van Helsing or even know someone killed by one, very few of them have seen violence themselves and it remains something that happens to other people. While the previous generation thought the secrecy concerns from the past were unwarranted, this generation tends to only pay lip service to the idea of secrecy and only worry about it in the most obviously dangerous situations. The rising acceptance of sci-fi and fantasy in mainstream culture as well as their own tendency to mainly talk about other topics has worked to keep them concealed for the most part.

## SIGNS AND PORTENTS

The Community makes use of a number of signs to inform others within the Community of the nature of various businesses and deliver other sorts of information. Some of these symbols are subtler than others, especially in the modern world. Most of them were decided upon close to two hundred years ago at the Beijing Conference. Since then, a handful of new ones have been added on and there is a growing tendency to advertise entirely through Psyche or word of mouth rather than use many of these symbols in their décor.

### Alchemical Symbols

The sight of an alchemical symbol on a storefront advertises the services of a working magician. The precise symbol varies from magician to magician, though the meaning of the symbol usually pertains to whatever sort of formula and potions they specialize in. Some prefer a subtle symbol while others will stylize them and even incorporate them into a public logo. The front businesses vary, but things like candle shops, cleaning companies, bars, hairdressers and butchers are common. Some magicians, especially those specializing





in healing, acquire a pharmacy doctorate and establish a conventional pharmacy as well.

### All-Seeing Eye

This started as a prank by some Community teens who decided they wanted to see if they could make a New Ager believe that the Illuminati was watching them. Since then, the prank has spread and it has become a common thing for mischief-minded Community youth to harass New Agers by tagging their places of business with this symbol. Other famous symbols of supposed conspiracies have been used over time.

### Border Runes

Initially, Communities of psychics and non-humans tried to avoid settling within large groups of average people so the use of these runes was rare. Over time, as the younger cities grew around and absorbed Community towns and villages, they became more common. These are commonly placed so that they are easily visible when leaving the Community. As the Community grows then the old runes are altered to show that they are no longer showing the border between the Community and the outside world.

### Breholm Trees

This is another symbol that is not directly one of the Community symbols but is well known to most of the Community. Members of the Breholm branch families will generally have a pair of holly trees somewhere on their property that has been manipulated to grow into an exact replica of the two that flank the gates of the Breholm stronghold in south Britain. This is a practice that has been going on for well over four thousand years. In modern times, some of the Community and other Families question the wisdom of even the non-combatant Breholms displaying the trees, assuming it would draw enemies. Most Breholms, regardless of their surname, feel that it serves as a warning as well as a declaration. Like most Families, the Breholm are known for reacting vigorously to attacks on any of their noncombatant members. The detractors from the practice point out that vengeance still leaves the avenged dead.

### Butterfly

Not technically a Community symbol, Psyche uses the butterfly as a symbol. This is partially due to their use of butterfly paper as a means of secure communication. It is assumed that the use of the talisman informed the naming of the organization since Psyche is a Greek word that can mean both butterfly and soul. While their public logo itself does not use the butterfly, butterflies often appear near Psyche facilities. These can be graffiti, murals, photographs or even children's stickers. Some Psyche facilities create sanctuaries for actual living butterflies. It is usually easy for the Community to tell a random butterfly from one that indicates Psyche, but there are occasionally still moments of confusion. Psyche doesn't usually leave most of their locations secret from the local Community in any case and often simply provides an address.

### Dreamcatcher

Dreamcatchers are often hung in places where a healer does business. Since dreamcatchers have become a rather popular decoration in recent years, those displayed by the Community are often "wrong" in some way or another. They are designed with inappropriate materials, hung in easily seen but unusual places or otherwise made to stand out. In general, the dreamcatchers used by the Community look more like commercialized fad decorations than something that means anything. Healers primarily have knowledge of treating Life-Force maladies such as corruption. Many are also exorcists skilled in identifying and removing curses. Magicians have some methods to treat physical conditions, some Talents can actually heal the body and shapers can also ease some of the suffering of a body or fortify it, but for physical diseases and injuries most healers will direct the patient to a medical doctor. In Communities, a healer or exorcist will often be on staff at a doctor's office often acting as a receptionist when not needed. Some rare exorcists also have a medical degree in physical medicine as well and can serve both needs.

### Endless Knot

The endless knot is a symbol that has appeared in cultures all over the world from the Celts and



Norse to the Chinese and Tibetans. Among the Community its use generally marks the presence of a legitimate feng shui shih. Variations in the displayed knot indicate the schools of feng shui studied, the mentor, and the degree of accomplishment attained. Recognized masters are allowed to register their own variations with Psyche and other such organizations. Psyche maintains a discrete but public website giving a rundown of how to read knots and someone adapted the Survey Says app into a dedicated app for identifying knots through a photo.

### **Hammer and Bell**

Usually appearing in the form of a wind chime, the hammer and bell represents the workshop of an enchanter. Given the need for other skills in the crafting of talismans and other such psychic related equipment, the shaper in question usually operates some other sort of business as well. Jewelers, carpenters, artists and even florists are common. There will usually be other ways to tell what sorts of tools are created. For example, a hammer and bell accompanied by a rose motif would indicate the presence of a sidhe shaper who specializes in the creation of hallows while a hammer and bell formed or including quartz in some way would indicate a human shaper specializing in the creation of talismans.

### **Labyrinth**

Usually a motif in the wall art or something similar, the handful of magi in the Community advertises their services using these mage-like symbols. Only white magi advertise their services due to the persistent belief that Demons are evil and that any magus who deals with them are either currently evil or soon to be. Most of these magi have no actual direct connection with the Gods outside of their appeal for spells and almost none of them have ever reached the point of being an avatar. They are mostly taught, mentor to student, out of select tomes. Unlike magicians and sorcerers, the magi outside of those directly allied with one Immortal group or another have not standardized their training of the casting of spells. Magi do a rare trade in the Community and usually have another trade to make ends meet.

### **Totem Poles**

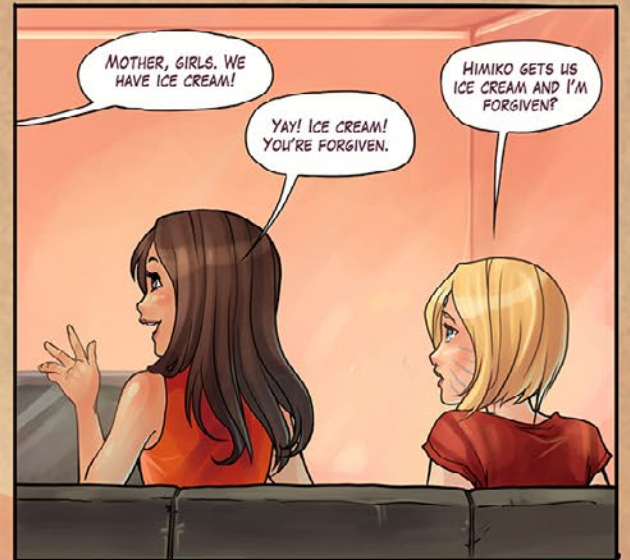
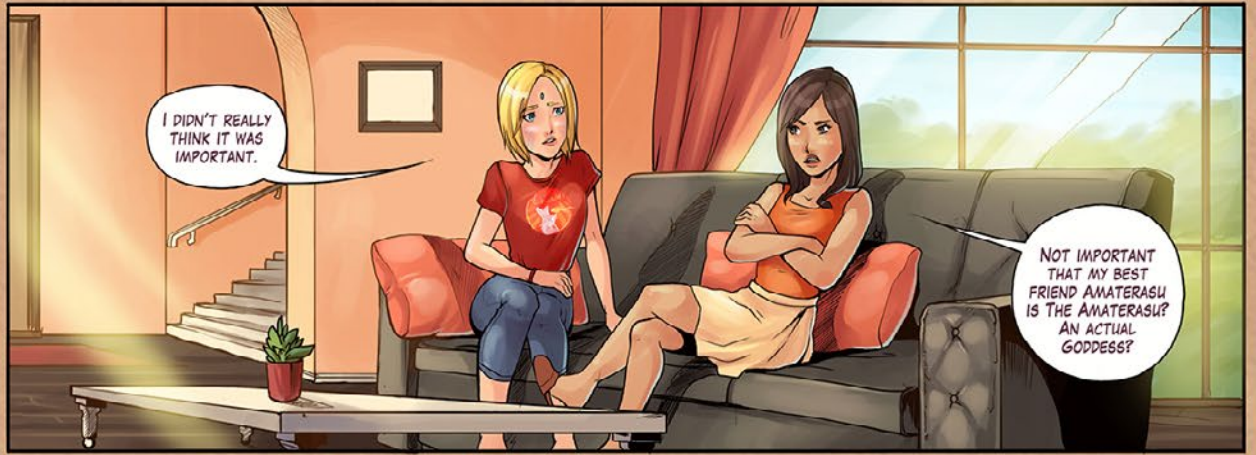
One of the most blatant of the symbols used by the Community, totem poles are used by restaurants to advertise that they have cuisine appropriate for non-human diets. The figures on the totem pole usually represent which species the restaurant can most easily accommodate. The poles are often modified to styles appropriate to the restaurant so that a Mexican restaurant will have the figures of the pole cut in a Mexican style while a Japanese restaurant would have Japanese style sculpting. More recently, Community restaurateurs have taken to depicting a totem pole in wall art rather than actually have a totem pole since many consider it gaudy. Menus further point out the appropriate meals for each species by clever use of menu item names and fanciful menu art.

### **Yantras**

These geometric figures are used heavily in Hinduism and Buddhism, which makes them moderately unusual for most Community symbols which are usually obscure symbols that aren't in regular use by large segments of the world population. As such the yantras used by the Community, like the dreamcatchers, are usually modified in some way from the traditional and proper designs. To the Community it represents that a particular place houses a working shaper. Like with magicians and alchemical symbols, these are often unique to individual shapers and imply something of their preferred specialties.



# NIRVANA AND YOMI CIVILIANS





The Community may be the largest population of supernatural beings by far, encompassing about a third of the supernatural population, but they are not the only population of supernaturals. They are not even the only civilian population of supernaturals. There are a handful of others, including the Immortals of Yomi and Nirvana.

At any given time, there are roughly one hundred fifty-thousand Demons and around eighty thousand Gods actively living on Earth. Perhaps two-thirds of the Gods and a little less than half the Demons are children, usually a recently reincarnated Immortal clearing their subconscious of hundreds of years of clutter by returning to childhood and growing up again. A little less than half of the remainder are Heralds and Faustians attending to some assignment or another. What are left are almost entirely civilian Gods and Demons who happen to make their home on Earth. Surrounding each Earth-dwelling Immortal is a usually a small cadre of humans, Demi-Gods and Half-Demons.

Demons and Gods try to live near or in neighborhoods where tattoos are a traditional part of the culture. This is to provide themselves with camouflage to explain their facial marks. While the number of people maintaining the old tattooing traditions has faded, they still remain quite common and it has been a long time since the Gods and Demons stood out and told people who they were. It is long enough that most people have forgotten exactly what they are and it is only the practice of High Magic that even keeps the Community believing they are still around.

The presence of both Gods and Demons was weakest on Earth immediately following the suppression and arrest of the Purges and those who gave them orders. It took hundreds of years for them to recover some level of trust with any mortals, longer for the Demons than the Gods thanks to heavenly propaganda. However, as the Compact stretched on and Immortals faded from the thoughts of the mortals, they slowly built up connections and even families on Earth. In addition, at that point their populations had been

depleted by untold ages of intermittent warfare with each other.

Gods and Demons typically raise their young on Earth. Most of these are young reincarnated Gods and Demons as it has been rare for many to be born in any given time period. The current time period has one of the highest birth rates of new Gods and Demons for as long as can be remembered at a rate of somewhere between two and seven Immortals born every five years within the last hundred-year time-span, with the higher end of that scale occurring within the last twenty years. This is including the use of the homunculus rituals but not including humans that have been elevated to Gods or Demons. Demi-Gods and Half-Demons are significantly more common, with a couple hundred being born each year.

Immortal children are often placed with mortal connections or family and raised on Earth, but with connection to Nirvana or Yomi, depending on their allegiance. It is not incredibly common for there to be another Immortal on hand to watch over them, though important figures will often have a bodyguard team assigned to them. Most of the Nirvana and Yomi families encourage the child to make contact among the mortals around them. This fairly regularly results in an expansion of the network of mortals that Gods and Demons depend on but its primary purpose is to enforce the concept of mortals as people and friends.

Actual newborn children, rather than reincarnates, are usually raised on Earth similarly to reincarnates, but in most cases, at least one Immortal parent will be directly on site. This extends to Demi-Gods and Half-Demons, in which case the parent might be the only Immortal on site. There are, of course, exceptions. Similar to mortal culture, Gods and Demons with demanding positions often have trouble finding time to be with their children. There are some Immortals that haven't even seen their children directly. However, most Immortals are fascinated with the newborn and there are a few superstitions about souls that are fresh from whatever it is the death-seers can't see past their lights.





Immortals have much smaller groups than the Community does, usually not larger than fifty individuals with the rare group up to hundred. Almost half the Immortals on Earth live with only their immediate guardians, if children, or friends if just living on Earth. In addition, Immortals avoid other non-humans. This is less about prejudice than it is concern that word will get back out to the mortals in general as to what the Gods and Demons really are, but it does mean that the Immortals are out of touch with other nonhumans.

These groups usually have better communication due to the Orochi and Ashvattha mindscapes. While the Community has no real official communication system to get in contact with the separate settlements, the Gods and Demons are truly integrated on a global and extradimensional level. It is not quite to the point where “what one knows they all know” can honestly be said, too many Immortals keep their own secrets, but it takes deliberate effort to prevent communication between an Immortal and their nation. Still it is as close as exists in the world to having a universal, instant awareness.

Once an Immortal reaches twelve years old in their current incarnation, they gain the right to access any memories they have up to their current age. Most generally prefer to leave those memories sitting until they hit majority and avoid distracting themselves from their current lives. Still, self-curiosity is pervasive among Immortals so most tend to peek at one or two old memories. This can sometimes cause a noticeable change in behavior, especially if there was a traumatic memory that was looked at, but it is believed that the current persona is strong enough to at least see past childhoods without being shaken too badly (Exceptions to this allowance may be made in the case of extremely traumatic past childhoods). Before that age, they are aware of their names and natures; they also keep the strongest aspects of their personalities intact from one incarnation to the next.

Children that are half-Immortal in one way or another receive a range of treatment by their

divine parent. Over-protectiveness is not uncommon since Demi-Gods and Half-Demons are not protected by the sort of safeguards that exist around Immortals to prevent accidents from claiming the life of a citizen (and whichever citizen in the other mindscape the Compact chooses to kill to maintain the truce). Rarely, Immortals might feel like they don’t want to deal with their children at all, for fear of keeping them from standing on their own two feet.

The mortal children growing up among those connected to the Gods and Demons have outwardly normal lives. The mortal children are often given more direct information on the nature of their family, friends and occasional foster-siblings at around twelve years of age. Before that they are aware that their family is special in some way and have definitely witnessed psychic phenomena including such things as teleportation, which is something almost nobody outside those connected to Yomi or Nirvana (or the Tinuviel Seat of Avalon) have witnessed.

Another unusual facet about parentage amongst Immortals as compared to most other species is the varied ways that they have of producing a child. Reproduction via sexual intercourse remains the most common form of reproduction, but it is a plurality, not a majority. The Immortals have long had methods of producing a child between two individuals without the need for sex and it is entirely possible for a God or Demon to have parents who are platonic friends rather than current or former lovers. In some cases, the conception of a child was part of an exchange of services rather than as a result of love or friendship. There is also the fact that homunculi, children conceived and brought to term in artificial wombs, are relatively common among both groups. With homunculi, it is entirely possible that an Immortal’s biological parents have never even met, much less had any sort of relationship.

These issues of parentage are rarely a problem for the Immortals as they are all commonly accepted within their society. They will, of course, usually avoid bringing the subject up to mortals, but it’s



not something that lingers on the mind and has to be suppressed so that is not usually an issue. There are some exceptions. The Goddess Nyx, daughter of Hecate, is well known to be shunned by her mother, resulting in her Conjunction title of “the Unwanted Child”.

Issues are more common with the mortal children of the Immortals. While good relationships remain the most common, there is often some level of resentment between the mortal child and the Immortal parent. This is especially true if the Immortal is either overprotective or else absent from the child’s life. However, there also tends to be some level of disappointment from half-Immortal children who find that their parents do not match their image of what a God or Demon should be. Likewise, some Immortal parents can also have high expectations of their children and put pressure on them to take certain paths.

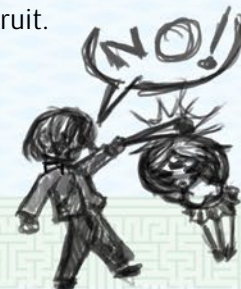
While the Community simply doesn’t often stand out from common society, Gods and Demons on Earth are actively forbidden from doing so. Immortals wishing to be actors will generally be limited to community theater since professional employment as such is barred, for example. Internet activities are strictly monitored. Writing under a pseudonym is allowed, as is creating art of one sort or another. By comparison the lingering secrecy of the Community makes celebrity difficult for them and the genetic checks on political figures makes that avoided, but such careers are not expressly forbidden as they are with the Immortals.

The ban on wide scale influence of humans and other mortals has resulted in Immortals and those connected to them actually spending less time paying attention to the direction of the world at large. They have a tendency to come across as old-fashioned in a lot of ways and are only somewhat aware of the tides of human development and politics. They are often surprised by what they see as sudden developments which many people in the world have seen coming for years. This is especially true of things that would be common place in Nirvana or Yomi but which

they had no idea humans in general were close to. The fact that a lot of these advancements are being made circumventing psychic techniques is still something most find amusing and tends to make them assume most of the news reports are overstating the extent of these advances. This trend can also lead to unfortunate statements. For example, a fair number of Gods and Demons are rather unaware that the term “deep one” is now considered a racial slur. When they still had regular contact with lemurians Deep One had been the preferred term of reference.

There are few marriages among the Immortals. Most of the time, relationships last up to the next time the God or Demon chooses to reincarnate, at which point both sides of the relationship usually go their separate ways. A significant number continue the relationship on to the next incarnation. There are also the occasional individuals that reincarnate together, though that does not guarantee that a romantic relationship will continue between them. For the most part, the few existing marriages are primarily political in nature rather than love matches. Gods and Demons have not yet married a mortal and there are only a few instances of Gods and Demons marrying each other.

There is a growing idea that Yomi and Nirvana should not just come to peace, but to actually unite. This attitude can be primarily found among civilians, Heralds and Faustians, but has crept into almost every faction. The primary area of disagreement the unificationists have within their own ranks is in regards to the nature of the unification. Many Nirvanites are in favor of completely erasing all the bits of Yomian culture that they feel is uncouth or harmful. A smaller group of Yomians is in favor of destroying the system of Houses in Nirvana. These vocal extremists among the unificationists are the primary reason the movement isn’t growing as fast as it could be. It both creates conflicts in their own ranks and gives a bad impression to those they would like to recruit.





## NIRVANA

Nirvana is an idyllic place in which each of the major Houses and most of the minor ones have significant tracts of land to call their own. Even individual citizens are capable of having houses on large pieces of land. The temperature is lightly humid and there is clean, deep water to swim within between each of the many islands that form the land. The massive Ashvattha, a rune tree roughly the size of a small mountain that provides the bulk of Nirvana's surplus mana and mental processing ability, towers over the shard from the center, casting a comforting shade on the surrounding landscape.

In the conflict between the two Immortal realms, Nirvana has been the lucky faction. It is a massive shard, one of the largest ever known to have been constructed almost the size of some of the smaller States in the US or European nations. It was always intended to hold Ashvattha, the massive rune tree at its center. It is not currently close to the capacity it was designed to hold. Every citizen of Nirvana and many of their mortal connections could live in Nirvana if they wanted to. The shard can produce pretty much everything they need for life and for the creation of runes. The only reason they continue to go back to Earth is because they want to.

The reason Gods, and the odd Nirvanite Demon, continue to head back to Earth varies from Immortal to Immortal. For most it is as simple and innocent as the fact that they have family or friends among the mortals. Or perhaps that they enjoy something that Earth has which Nirvana doesn't. Some others have positions that require them to monitor the Earth for some reason such as keeping watch on areas of seismic activity or protecting reincarnates.

Nirvana's citizens are fairly well assured that their way of life is probably the best that anybody could lead. Combined with the disconnection from the culture of the world at large, this has caused some to take on a somewhat unintentionally condescending attitude towards outsiders. This is

especially true with citizens of Yomi, whom they feel live in an absurdly archaic and chaotic system that must be horrible to deal with.

Most citizens of Nirvana consider Earth to be a place to spend one's childhoods rather than a permanent place to live. Those that engage in relationships with mortals will occasionally try to suggest to their mortal partner that they come with them to Nirvana, though most end up remaining on Earth. Even those that have long-term assignments to Earth tend to actually live in Nirvana and maintain an Earth-based residence only for appearances and the occasional need to entertain. As a result, a lot of Earth-based Nirvanite homes tend to have rather bland or stale decoration schemes.

Gods tend to be very introspective and independent thinkers on the subject of religion. They approach it from an abstract point of view that can often seem very clinical to an outsider. This leads most Gods toward more general philosophies on the universe rather than to organized religions. The two most common viewpoints for Gods are atheism and agnosticism, though which is more popular fluctuates over time. Theism and pantheism jockey for a not so distant third position. Those belonging to specific organized religions are rare.

One prominent exception to the general attitude of ignoring organized religions is the fact that many Japanese Gods and Demons in both Yomi and Nirvana practice Shinto. This can get confusing to other Immortals. The Shintoist Immortals would comment that the living owner of certain names isn't as important as what the name represents to the faith, but to many it still looks as if Amaterasu is giving offerings to herself somehow. Some others have accused them of maintaining the ancient attitudes of getting mortals to treat them as truly supreme spiritual beings, but most deny that charge. Currently in middle school, Amaterasu points out that there are Christians named Jesus so why can't she be named Amaterasu and still be different from the Amaterasu she worships. She tends to gloss over the fact that she pre-dates human civilization significantly.



Marriages are more common amongst those living in Nirvana than those living in Yomi. Most of these marriages exist with the head of a particular house and primarily serve to give the spouse some sort of authority over the other members. Adultery is common, but accepted well enough if the individuals in question are discrete. As long as an honest attempt at discretion is made, no one is likely to think one way or another about such incidents, but if the unfaithful spouse makes no attempt to keep things private, it can be seen as an insult. Devoted married couples do exist, but are far rarer than couples which remain devoted to each other without ever going through a ceremony of any sort.

## YOMI

While Nirvana is a virtual paradise, Yomi is an overcrowded mess. It is roughly the size of New York City dominated by a central mountain around which the Orochi is wrapped. Coming out from the center are fields of tall biological structures which were initially designed to serve as buildings but lie predominantly empty and primarily exist to feed Orochi. The residents of Yomi are pushed to the very outer edge of the shard in a space that is not even a mile wide but which lines the circumference of the shard's borders. This residential area has the same reptilian seeming biological buildings as what Orochi feeds on, but they are usually much older since they are not devoured with regularity.

The shard was never intended to hold something on the scale of Orochi, but they need the gigantic companion familiar in order to keep in pace with Nirvana's power levels. The eight-headed serpent needs remarkably little food given its mountainous size, but that need still dominates the production Yomi is capable of. Beyond that, Yomi itself was not meant to hold so many people as it currently does. Talk about creating a separate shard for a living space has been made, but no serious attempt has come out of it. Individual Demons have created their own shards as a way to alleviate the space issues, but creating something on the scale of Yomi or Nirvana would be bound to attract attention from Nirvana. Until the current truce becomes a full peace, the Demons are not willing to commit

the expertise and resources necessary to get a new shard made.

Overcrowding in Yomi has resulted in there being far more citizens of Yomi on Earth than there are citizens of Nirvana. There are Demons who haven't spent more than a week in Yomi over the past thousand years, and that's if the durations of all their visits were totaled. There are also a fair number of individuals who set up squats within the fields devoted to Orochi in order to have a little privacy. This is safer than it sounds since Orochi is telepathically connected to all of the Gods and Demons in Yomi and will hold off on eating until a building is safely evacuated, but it does mean that the majority of such squatters move every few months. The Immortals who are the most well off in Yomi have living quarters that might look fairly cramped in comparison to the least well off citizens of Nirvana. Lilith herself lives in five rooms attached to the main administration building.

The atmosphere of Yomi is filled with sulfur and can be uncomfortably thick to visiting mortals and the very rare member of Nirvana that manages to get in somehow. Due to their capability as shapeshifters both Demons and Gods can adapt to the sulfur easily. In fact, Demons generally find it pleasant. On Earth, Demons and other regular residents of Yomi often end up filling their residences with heavy incense or the like. A number of Demons smoke as well in order to keep something of home with them. This can sometimes be overwhelming to other species, especially those with a good sense of smell. Demons that are planning on spending a long period of time on Earth generally make the effort to adapt themselves to the thinner atmosphere, but prefer to have heavy scents around regardless.

Demons and other citizens of Yomi are slightly more prone to joining organized religions than Gods are. There are a number of theories as to why this is so, including the idea that Demons tend to be less introspective and have an easier time focusing on a concrete concept such as a God as defined by one of the many human religions. Others think it is due to the increased amount

*Hel, you could simply ask me to draw something for you.*

There is no need.







No.  
That's not it.

of time living on Earth seeping in. Whatever the reason, it is harder to track a definite overall trend in religion with Demons, they tend to remain very individualistic. That said, atheists and agnostics maintain a narrow majority over other sorts of religious perspectives.

Relationships in Yomi are more fluid than those in Nirvana and most siblings only share a single parent between them. Long term, exclusive relationships tend to be rare and casual sexual relationships are a lot more common. Marriages are almost unheard of and are generally private affairs of oaths between individuals rather than having a particular ceremony. Between this attitude and the greater numbers of Yomians that have permanent residence on Earth, there are a far larger number of Half-Demons than Demi-Gods in existence. Unfortunately, the bad reputation that Demons have due to the lingering impact of Nirvana's now defunct propaganda campaign against them has left them with a smaller number of Yomi-loyal mortals that aren't blood related to Demons or Yomian Gods.

No!

Don't be silly.

## ASCENDANTS

Gods and Demons are the only two species that have a reliable, in that it produces the same results every time, method to change someone's species. It is, actually, the basis of how they originally became what they now are in the first place. There are limits, currently, the only species that they can ascend are humans, but this is largely because they have not looked into adapting the process to any of the minor species on Earth yet. In addition, for most people the process just falls flat.

Human Demi-Gods and Half-Demons can be ascend-

ed with pretty much no difficulty; other humans have much less success. From what the Gods and Demons can tell, it seems that somewhere around one in a hundred mortals can successfully become Immortal. They have reduced the ratio of failures significantly by grooming individuals and evaluating them based on past success stories, but less than a third of candidates with active psychic abilities succeed to make the change. The rate of success drops for the second and successive attempts to ascend to the same species. Since the cause isn't something they can sense with the Understanding, many assume it to be a psychosomatic issue.

The Immortals are divided over why the rate of success is so low. Some think that the determining factor exists outside the range of what the Understanding can perceive. For those that think this way, it is something within the soul. Others don't believe that anything lies beyond the Understanding and assume that they have simply overlooked something within the mountains of information they have available on the process. Regardless, attempts continue to be made to make the process more efficient.



OK, this is closer.



This is literally my family on both sides.

While Yomi and Nirvana both have the capability, neither has bothered to create facilities to ascend anyone to the species that dominates their rival nation. Originally, this was due to a desire to maintain some level of purity, and that attitude persists to some degree. However, more recently the assumption that a peace is on the horizon has made it seem as if there is little point to do so. As of this point in history, ascension is the most common source of Immortals with the blood of both Gods and Demons. Former half-Immortals account for close to three-fifths of all existing mixed blood Immortals.

### DEFECTORS, EXILES, RESCUES AND ABDUCTIONS

In the days before the Gods were the Gods and the Demons were the Demons, there had been no consideration that any would defect to join the other side. Both sides were primarily insane and rigid in their denial of the other group such that the thought of turning one of their enemy was on the verge of blasphemous. That movement also started with Lilith and Vishnu. In the period before the two rulers renewed the state of war between the Immortal nations, several Gods and Demons had the chance to see how the other side lived and many chose to leave their culture of birth for that of their prior enemies. By the time war had renewed, it was too late to keep the idea out of the minds of either group.

Defection is the most common motivation which results in an Immortal leaving one realm and joining the other. In the case of defection, the Immortal in question will deliberately sever themselves from the collective mindscape they are current part of and join the other side as quickly as possible. Most of the time, though not in all cases, the Immortal in question will have made contact with someone from the other side first and been very careful to keep their plans out of the general pool of psychic knowledge within the mindscape.

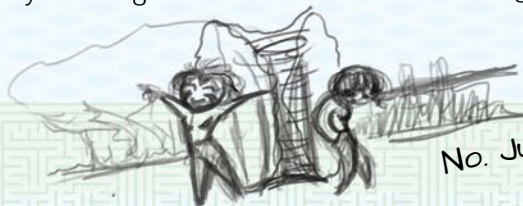
They are not always successful at this and many have ended up in Tartarus or the Abyss for attempting to trade sides. As time has passed, both the Shadows and Eyes have grown more relaxed on

this matter. Partially this is because it has grown less common in recent centuries and partially because it is mostly civilians defecting who don't have any particular Talent or knowledge that is particularly sensitive. Rumor persists on both sides that some of the defectors are actually spies and one or two such individuals have been caught in the past.

Defectors generally embrace their culture, as it is often the attraction of that culture that drew them to defect. As such, Gods that defect often behave more in tune with Demonic values than Divine ones. This is not totally true, there have been a handful of healer Gods, mostly of limited capability, that have defected simply because they felt Yomi needed them more than Nirvana did. Likewise, a handful of defections have occurred due to a relationship with someone on the other side. Even in those cases, however, defectors are more willing to embrace their new culture than other instances of switching sides. Susano'o is one of the stand out examples of this.

Exile is much less common. Ostensibly it is a punishment laid down by the head of a House or by one of the charismatic recognized authorities of Yomi. However, the premise of the punishment is usually transparently false, neither Yomi nor Nirvana leadership want to actually throw someone out of the mindscape. Even separated from the collected power and knowledge of the other Immortals as well as Orochi or Ashvattha, an Immortal still possesses the Understanding. A loose Immortal would likely grow insane quickly and prone to cause all sorts of problems. This is assuming that the rival doesn't rescue the exiled soul quickly and take them, and all their collected knowledge, into their own mindscape.

In reality, exiles are often exiled because they are not safe in their native realm. Some threat to their life exists, usually detected by thoughts leaked into the mindscape by the plotters. In most cases the Eyes of Ra or Shadows are able to identify and suppress the rogue element before any action needs to be taken. However, in some cases a leader will begin to doubt that the threat will be found in



No. Just. No.



time. In such cases, the potential victim is exiled after illicit connections are made with the other side to rescue the exile. In Yomi, where there is no House system, the exile has much less in the way of an official cover and are often called runaways or the like.

Exiles maintain their old values much more fervently than defectors do. An example of this is Hel Logesdottir, a Demoness raised in Nirvana, she was sent to Yomi to protect her from possible repercussions following Loki's murder of Baldur. She is very much more like a God in her attitudes; including being rather disdainful of the favor system and disliking what she perceives to be the chaos of Yomi society. Exiles, however, in general remain loyal to whichever mindscape they are part of. It is also a point that most individuals who take the option of exiling someone to protect them have unification leanings. They want to see both Yomi and Nirvana do well. In any case, most exiles are relatively average Gods and Demons with little capability of protecting themselves.

Ever since the Compact was established, it has become impossible for a Yomian to kill a Nirvanite without risk and vice versa. Whenever an Immortal dies, the Compact chooses someone else to die as well. Some believe that the Compact chooses to kill someone important to the killer, or else someone that will keep the truce in existence, but most believe it to be random. Unable to kill enemy agents or witnesses, it became the policy to seal them instead. Most of these agents were sealed within the official prisons of either side, but there are times when someone is targeted without sanction, sometimes by people from their own nation. It is theorized that many of Zeus's victims exist in seals hidden around the globe.

Most of these targets of disappearance are sealed in out of the way locations in manners that prevent anyone from locating them or even have an easy time finding them in the mindscape. Often times, by the time they are found, they are so deeply insane that there's no guarantee that any of their original personality or knowledge will pass through a reincarnation.

It is policy of both Yomi and Nirvana to assimilate such rescues immediately to minimize the damage. At that point, the rescue enters a new incarnation and neither Vishnu nor Lilith allows the separation of any underage immortal regardless of circumstances.

Taking advantage of the rescue policy, some elements in either side of the conflict began the practice of trying to "rescue" individuals that came under anything that could be considered danger. The most recent attempt by this was an attempt by the sons of Thor to rescue Hel Logesdottir from Yomi and bring her back to Nirvana. In general the well-intentioned attempts such as that are failures as the abducted individual has the ability to refuse to cooperate with the ascension device and be tied into the other mindscape. It is the more malicious methods that are of concern as there are a handful of methods in existence to forcibly sever an Immortal from their mindscape and then accelerate the degradation of their mind. This means they fall under the classification of a rescue when brought to the other side. The abductors are usually punished immediately, but they are rarely the ones giving the orders.

For most intents and purposes, rescues and abductees often end up as entirely new people when they are reincarnated and their sanity is restored. Rescued Immortals have at least an even chance of keeping most of their personality, even if they have little to no guarantee of it. Abductees are usually minors and thus the vast majority of their memories are left sealed in the other mindscape. Even if they regain access to those memories somehow, they'll be as viewed as if watching a recording rather than feeling like something that happened to them.

Death-seers consider the actions which lead to these tabula rasa scenarios to be worse than murder. When a person is murdered, their self at least remains intact within their soul. But if the very self is obliterated, even leaving the body alive, then the person is effectively destroyed. They believe, rightly or wrongly, that the soul will never be able to remember that person.





In some cases, defections and exiles can go poorly and result in being similar to a rescue or abduction as well. Hel's exile, for example rather famously occurred about five days shy of reaching majority in that incarnation. The modern day Hel still strongly identifies with her Nirvanite upbringing, but much of her personality is vastly different from the way she was in Nirvana.

## DEMONIC DEMI-GODS AND GODLY HALF-DEMONS

This is the smallest population of Immortals, those that have both Gods and Demons as biological parents. The first of these beings were the Norns: Urd, Verdandi and Skuld; who were born of the union between Vishnu the High King of the Gods and Lilith the Queen of the Demons. The rumors of the relationship between these two vary widely. Some think they retain a love for each other and are separated only by their duties to

their people. Others think the war only persists because Lilith and Vishnu keep it alive out of some petty hate for each other. The truth is unknown and the few of their other lovers or spouses either don't know or refuse to say.

As with what happens when a mortal bears the child of an Immortal, the blending of bloodlines does not work the same way as it does when two mortals of differing species conceive a child. The child of a God and Demon will be either a God or a Demon but with a reservoir of their other parent's Life-Force that can be tapped. With mortals, it is possible that their mortal Life-Force can be changed to match that of the Immortal Life-Force, but when the mix is between God and Demon, there is nothing that can change that. This gives these hybrid Immortals a very high potential for power and makes some people nervous.

In addition, these hybrids thought processes are neither entirely God nor entirely Demon; though they tend to lean more heavily in the direction of whichever species they were born as. This does not apply to morality and ethics; values are learned things not instinctual. Nor does this affect how capable they are of using their minds; the intellect still requires development and exercise. What this does mean is that Demonic Demi-Gods tend to understand abstract thinking much better than most Demons while Godly Half-Demons tend to be quicker to form conclusions than most Gods. There are other differences here and there, all rather subtle. Some Immortals are uncomfortable around those with blood from both species and will tend to assume that any mental oddity, perceived or legitimate, is a result of the mixing of blood.

## HERALDS AND FAUSTIANS

Of the major organizations within Nirvana and Yomi, the two that have the most contacts with civilians are, respectively, the Heralds and the Faustians. However, neither of these groups are really civilians themselves.

Heralds are less an organization than they are an occupation. Nearly every House within Nirvana has supported the training of at least

Once **31**  
again, this  
is literally  
most of  
my family.

Really?

House Aesir,  
at the  
forefront in  
reproductive  
experimen-  
tation for  
forty-thou-  
sand years.

I thought  
Zeus was  
recognized  
as the most  
promiscuous?

House Aesir,  
at the  
forefront in  
CONSENSU-  
AL repro-  
ductive  
experimen-  
tation for  
forty-thou-  
sand years.



one herald to act as their representation and agent in Nirvana society. Only extremely small houses lack the services of a herald. Heralds could act as lawyers, social workers, business representatives or any of a number of other services. Most are also skilled with healing as well, for example, most of the Elysium Providers have training as Heralds. They are all trained magi and are the most knowledgeable about which Gods are trustworthy to cast spells from and how to hide things from the mindscape that one wishes to be private.

Any civilian Nirvanite is likely to see a herald regularly, usually the same one. There are independent heralds that attach themselves to specific Earth-bound settlements and there are heralds that are assigned to watch over an area by the Eyes of Ra, who consider the heralds in their employ a less intimidating form of monitoring. Heralds of specific Houses will be sent on tasks for that House amongst mortals. Many heralds act as guardians for recently reincarnated Immortals.

Not all heralds are Immortal. There are a large number of human heralds, some of whom have been in families that have been heralds for generations. In fact, most of the heralds assigned to Earth in some regard are mortal. Mortal heralds are no less capable than Immortal heralds, save by the difference in experience that several centuries can make. Even with the gap in ages, some mortal heralds prove to be surprisingly competent individuals. Amongst other things, it was a mortal herald that first intercepted Ethlinn Geisthexe and delayed her long enough for the Eyes of Ra to capture her while simultaneously keeping the Shadows from successfully arresting the woman.

In civilian life, heralds most often deal with petty disagreements, changing Nirvanite resources to mortal currency, negotiating contracts and agreements, or looking in on guardians and their reincarnates. Of course, the most likely reason a herald might be connected to a civilian population is that they are acting as a guardian currently and will thus have to deal

with all the trials, tribulations and joys of being the legal guardian of a child.

By contrast, Yomian Faustians make an effort to keep their interactions with the civilians of Yomi to a minimum. Faustians deal primarily with the mortal criminal element. Their stated goal is to lead on criminals deeper into debt via black magic, along the way using them to undermine the power bases of other local criminals. Eventually, the target reaches a point when a few well-chosen favors can bring them and whatever criminal infrastructure they've built up crashing down. This is a dangerous occupation that most Faustians want to keep civilians distant from it either because of the headaches of dealing with amateurs or to protect their innocence.

Faustians don't really have any official reason to interact with Yomian civilians and, indeed, many within Yomi tend to get decidedly uncomfortable with the usually glamorous, sidhe-like members of the organization. Of particular distaste to most Demons within Yomi is the way the Faustians make use of the favor system, which many still consider to be a sacred exchange of trust rather than a tool with which to destroy someone. That said Faustians have connections to the Yomi civilian society that they cannot simply ignore. In addition, similar to the heralds, many Faustians are mortals with connections to mortal civilian life as well.

The most common reason Faustians end up involved in civilian life is because they are taking a period of time to lay low after some activity or another. In most cases they would tend to dig in somewhere that takes most of the people they want to protect out of the line of fire. However, whether they know the people around them or not, they still end up surrounded by civilians and possibly getting drawn into local situations such as civil protests, bake sales, community theater and other such absurd things.



# POP CULTURE





One thing that permeates the day-to-day life of the average civilian in the safer parts of the world is the ebb and flow of popular trends. There are all manner of entertainments and fashions that exist throughout the world ranging from movies to cosmetic genetic modification.

## BODY MODIFICATION

### GENETIC MODIFICATION

One of the more controversial results of genetic research is the ability of a person to pay to have their genetic code modified in a way that results in blatant physical changes. Most of these modifications remain expensive despite advances in the process reducing the cost of supplies and training. There is a lot of talk that the expense of these procedures is due to the desire of certain parts of society that they never become common, another possible influence is likely the greed of the companies and doctors providing the treatment.

Most of these mods are designed to be reversed relatively easily, though it requires paying for another modification. In addition, these mods are not normally inherited by the children of the affected individuals. Acquiring a characteristic to pass on to the next generation generally has lots of governmental restrictions involved. Most of the modifications that have just become available to the public over the last five to ten years have been available to the Community and other supernatural societies for hundreds of years via the work of shapers specializing in transformation.

Whether someone goes to a shaper or a doctor to acquire a genetic modification, reputable centers will request a psychological evaluation prior to going through with the treatment. The intensity of the evaluation ranges from a formality to being almost invasive depending on the level of change that is involved. Transformations cause some level of trauma to the subject, both mental and physical, and usually take a week or more for them to take hold and for the subject to recover from the procedure. They are expensive to get and expensive to undo and they are treated as a major

decision. In most countries it is illegal to have even the least impactful of these procedures performed on a minor and even the legal guardian cannot wave that protection.

The Community and supernatural societies in general are rarely interested in decorative genetic modification. Most of them prefer to fit in rather than stand out. Those that are interested are more likely to trust a shaper than a medical doctor. In addition, the prices charged by most shapers are significantly less expensive. That said, shapers focused on transformation usually work with the Families and focus on more practical things like permanent enhancements rather than on cosmetic modifications and they are thus more difficult to make contact with.

### COLORATION MODS

These are the most common and least controversial genetic modifications available. Changes to the color of the hair or eyes are relatively easy and actually fairly inexpensive. It is conceivable for most people to be able to save enough money for a procedure like this to be performed. The range of common colors is easily available as are many exotic colorations. These procedures have hit or miss effectiveness on psychics with unusual hair colors seeking something more normal. Sometimes, the odd coloration is an independent mutation but sometimes it is tied to a particular Talent, as is the case with death seers. When the coloration is an independent mutation it can be changed easily, but if it is as a result of some Talent or another, then the psychic's body begins to correct the issue. The speed at which coloration mods revert in this case varies from psychic to psychic.

### EXOTIC MODS

Considered silly by most of the supernatural population and considered abhorrent by a large number of conservatives and traditionalists in the common population, exotic mods include the addition of things like tails and the alteration of ears to be like cat ears. Unusual skin colors and other odd additions, such as horns, are also

*I'm really not sure how to feel about this.*  
*Well if people start making themselves into 'fake' non-humans won't the real ones be able to walk around easier?*  
*Not that.*



included in this category. Shapers are fairly easily able to accomplish these effects but, again, most consider it silly. These sorts of mods are also fairly easy for the modern cosmetic geneticist, who currently make their living mostly on mods like breast enhancement or reduction; however, exotic modifications have not yet been approved to be offered to the public. They are currently in human trials in most countries but are already legal in a handful of countries, most notably Japan. It should be noted that the attitude of species unable to pass as human is mixed with regard to these mods. Some look forward to their being allowed so that they can walk amongst humans with little problem. Others find the idea of fakes offensive.

### ETHNICITY MODS

These sorts of modifications can be as extensive or minor as the client desires. One might want to have naturally wavy or curly hair. Someone else might want epicanthic folds to appear a little bit Asian. In other cases, someone might want to change their apparent ethnicity entirely. There is a lot of ranting back and forth about these cosmetic modifications with lots of claims of being an attack on the purity of bloodlines now that it is sometimes difficult to tell if someone is a “real” member of the ethnicity they appear to be. Depending on which country one has the procedure done, the approval process can range from difficult to onerous with the cost rising as well. In the US, Australia, the NAA and the CRCMP the expense is usually a major expenditure for someone in the middle class, and usually out of reach of the lower classes. Many other countries are substantially more expensive and may even be illegal. In fact, having had this procedure performed may make it technically illegal for you to travel into certain countries. As with other transformations, shapers generally offer lower costs for this, however, the supernatural population in general is usually less concerned with traditional ethnicity. Given the frequency with which intermarriage between species occurs, marriage between ethnic groups is usually a non-issue (exceptions do exist; prejudices are hard to predict or eradi-

cate). For example, the Coel Family, known for its experiments with talisman bullets, is a mixture of European and African heritage.

### PIERCING

Piercings have become relatively popular in the most recent decade; multiple ear piercings are quite usual for women and only mildly surprising for men. More extreme piercings are less common but still more frequent than they were ten years ago. Psychics and other supernatural types have a mixed view on piercings. Some worry that the piercings would be a distraction that provokes an episode of lost control. Others simply consider them decorative. Most shape-shifters avoid any sort of piercing and find the thought of changing shape with such a thing to be cringe worthy. In addition, unusual metal allergies are more common among the supernaturals thus resulting in jewelry for such individuals being of a more costly variety of metal.

### TATTOOS

While most people in the world do not mark their skin, tattoos are still an extremely common sight in the world and have been for centuries. Blue and red facial tattoos are especially common amongst families with a long history of dealing in white or black magic respectively. Numerous cultures and bloodlines, supernatural and otherwise, have practiced the art of wearing tattoos for thousands of years. At the base of this is the encouragement of the Immortals who have used the consistent popularity of tattoos as a sort of camouflage for themselves and their young reincarnates around the world. It is hardly uncommon to see even a person with facial tattoos in a business environment, much less tattoos along the arm or back. For the cultures that use tattoos, the tattoos are very important and have specific meanings, more whimsical and personal tattoos, such as that of a favorite cartoon character, are generally regarded as distasteful as compared to more traditional, proper tattoos. In some of these cultures, refusing a tattoo can be seen as an act of childish rebellion.

*Then what?*

*Hey! I wonder how much reversal costs. This would be great for cosplay! Oh*



## ENTERTAINMENT

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### BOOKS

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New books rarely if ever get a print run any longer. Aside from the buying and selling of vintage volumes, books are largely sold in an electronic format. For those who want a physical copy of the book, most brick and mortar bookstores have print on demand capabilities. A customer can browse through display copies of the books, or look through the store's catalog for a greater variety and then request the printing of a specific title. Depending on the quality of the bookstore's printing capabilities, and how careful the procedures are, this can take anywhere from twenty minutes to two hours. Print copies are substantially more expensive than electronic downloads, which usually cost little more than the price of soft drink.

Self-publishing is a common past time which has flooded the market with all manner of books. Self-published books can be ordered electronically or in print online with most companies. Brick and mortar stores make a policy of being selective about which independent novels are included in their catalogs in order to insure some level of quality. This has often led to the reputations of some companies being pickier than others.

### COMICS

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As with books, most comics do not appear in print unless a print copy is specifically ordered. There are a wide number of webcomics in circulation on the internet and a number of sites dedicated to following or reviewing the various titles. Most of the webcomics are free to view and make their money off of connected merchandise or from selling advertisement space. There are a handful of sites that require a running subscription in order to view them, but that usually only works for the major recognized names.

The inclusion of Okinawa as a State within the United States has Japanese and American comics continuously play off of each other. There is quite a bit of bleed over in style and plot between both

cultures, with further additions from the Chinese culture prevalent in Shandong. One bleed over of culture is the general acceptance of the dojinshi sub-culture, which mostly includes amateur artists and authors using the characters of established titles in their own stories. Some titles are more tolerant of such things than others and attempts to curtail the process of things entering the public domain have been an ongoing legal matter within the creative markets.

### MOVIES

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#### John Bai

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This series of movies is actually based on a series of novels written by a British ex-pat living in the CRCMP, Ian Fleming, starting sometime in the wake of World War II. The stories detail the adventures of a CRCMP intelligence agent, one of the Youxia, originally set against the back drop of the Cold War. At first many of the villains were either Burmese or Russian, but as the franchise moved on it became more usual for the villain to be an independent mastermind or even part of a fictional secret society that was supposedly aimed at building power for itself.

The John Bai character is characterized by his cunning, deadpan wit, martial arts capabilities and his way with women. Having lived in the CRCMP and occasionally meeting actual psychics and non-humans, Fleming dealt with psychic powers and the like in most of his books though Bai himself was always noted as being very highly skilled rather than having any supernatural ability. The movies originally heavily downplayed or even ignored this facet of the stories but have started to toy with them more in the last fifteen years, likely due to Psyche involvement in production.

The original John Bai was portrayed by an actor and martial artist known as Bruce Lee. In later years he focused more on his martial arts though has directed a handful of well-regarded movies. There have been a total of five actors who have played the Youxia in the last fifty years to varying degrees of success, including Bruce Lee's own son, Brandon. Unfortunately, Brandon Lee decided





to move out from under his father's shadow and stopped portraying the Youxia agent after two movies. He took the lead role in a superhero-horror film called *The Crow* and died due to an accident on set. Arguments over the best Bai range from the playful to the heated.

At one point, a spin off franchise based on the idea of a female Bai was attempted. The initial concept was that the character Jane Bai was the original agent's daughter, but the fanbase remains confused as to whether she is a daughter, sister or whether the name "Bai" serves as a code name given to different agents at different times. Some fans have even had the suggestion that Bai was made a woman for a specific mission. Michelle Yeoh portrayed Jane in the first three movies, after which the idea was buried for twelve years. The character has occasionally been brought back to

usually mixed results before being buried for years again. Two other actors have portrayed Jane, but virtually none of the fanbase thinks any of them did as good a job as Yeoh did in the originals.

The franchise has recently been rebooted, supposedly dropping the timeline that had accumulated over the previous forty-five years of movies. Michelle Yeoh is now portraying the agent's superior "M" causing many of the fanbase to once again ignore the studio's statements on the matter. The popular assumption is that the current "M" is Jane Bai and the mother of the newest Bai.

## SPORTS

### Upright Games

In the late 1970's, when uprights began to appear among the civilian population some underground



competitions started to be held. These were originally impromptu events created on the fly by bored construction workers or rich private owners, or simple bets between one crew and another. Eventually, some of these events became semi-regular and began to attract a crowd. In the 1980's the first codified set of events and rules were created and sports uprights began to be designed for use by various teams. The typical events are races, obstacle courses and construction challenges but there are a handful of mock combat games. The machines involved are roughly as expensive to maintain as a cutting edge racing car.

Most of the uprights used by the professionals have the most advanced power systems allowed for civilian use but a number of amateurs still modify diesel-based uprights for their own informal events. Most countries require a lot of oversight and permits for the legal performance of such sports, but underground events continue and are typically much more dangerous than the professional sports of the same kind. These are often considered blood-sports by the more official teams and events all of whom try to encourage people to stick to their own open invitational events. A number of amateur enthusiasts claim that the official leagues have pushed to make getting permits more difficult so they can keep out competition for their audience and control the population of competitors more directly.

## TABLE - TOP GAMES

### Community Theater

Community Theater is a slice-of-life urban fantasy game produced by one of several publishers that originally had Psyche backing. The primary purpose of the game is to introduce people to the concept of supernaturals living among them but it also serves to provide cover for a large number of Community members to talk about their daily lives in public. A large number of supernaturals within the Community own copies of the game, but given the subject matter is often their daily lives, only a few of them actually play it. There is an expansion to the game called Family Matters which deals with the Families and is played substantially more by

actual Community members since it focuses on the apparent lives of adventure that the Families have. The actual Families range from being ambivalent to hostile in regards to that expansion.

Community Theater presents its vision of the world predictably through the eyes of the Community. As such, it portrays Gods and Demons as being bodiless entities rather than a physical species and species such as succubi, dvergr and seraphim are either not mentioned or very inaccurately portrayed as they are still thought to be extinct. This also means that the game assumes a much smaller population of non-humans and psychics than actually exists.

Unfortunately, the game is written from a very human-centric viewpoint and subtly paints several non-human species in a negative light. Species from outside the Community at large, such as gargoyles, receive the most blatant negative treatment, but sidhe and lemurians also have a number of elements to their portrayal that is rather stereotypical in nature. This has been pointed out with increasing regularity of late, especially as the proportion of non-humans in the Community has continued to increase. A small number of quiet boycotts of the game are on-going and Psyche has pulled their support away from the title. The game continues as it remains profitable as a niche product with groups outside the Community and the lack of public awareness about the supernatural makes it impossible to protest more effectively.

### Steel Knights

There are a large number of wargames representing modern armies in existence, most of which include uprights as units but Steel Knights is known for being built around the use of uprights. It is mostly sold and played with thick card-stock chits to represent the various vehicles, but there are numerous designs available online which someone can use with a 3D printer to produce their own miniatures for the game. While the commercially available game focuses primarily on uprights, it does possess units for infantry and other vehicles such as helicopters and tanks. The basic rules are based on a simplified version of a



wargame model that had been used by the North African Alliance military in the 1970's and gained popularity with wargame enthusiasts during the early 1980's.

## TELEVISION

### Beautiful People

There is a growing trend in the television industry towards beauty standards which are unrealistic and unhealthy for anyone not sidhe, God, Demon or Visionary. This is one of the common things pointed to as a sign that the Faerie Court has infiltrated the entertainment industry. The assumption is that the sidhe of the Court are trying to acclimate the rest of the world to consider only beings like them as attractive. There have been many protests regarding such things as Photoshopping films or even requiring actors to have cosmetic surgery or genetic treatments performed.

### Hold the Line

This war drama was originally going to be called Stark's Boys but the title ended up not being used due to legal issues with Marvel Comics. The original series focused on the 101st Upright Battalion deployed during the Burmese Expansion in the early 60's. It was released in 1965 partially as part of an Okinawan push for statehood. The show was widely popular in America, China and Japan but received criticism from displaced Indian nationals who claimed it depicted the Indian military as incompetent and always in need of rescue.

The original series remained on television for six years, quite a bit longer than the length of the actual American involvement in the continuing Burmese-Indian conflict. The series has been referenced by a North African Alliance series focused around a fictional intelligence organization's efforts to clear the corruption of the NAA intelligence community and expose



These shows are the reason I got into upright design. I have the complete set.

Oh, which series?

I don't think you understand what I mean by "complete."

foreign agents from various other countries, a very transparent version of the real Ministry of the Economy as it slowly took on an intelligence role. It has also been mentioned by a CRCMP series featuring the Youxia organization, including a handful of incidents that had supernatural elements. These references, including several guest appearances of actors from the original series, were made canonical when a sequel of the original series was set in the Czech and German Wars making this one of the few legitimately international fiction franchises.

The color of the recent series has been changing significantly. While the Burmese occupation of India has been ongoing since the early 60's, America was only directly involved in the brief period of the Burmese Expansion. In contrast, the Czech and German Wars have been grinding on seemingly endlessly. While the Czech attack on New York remains a hot point amongst most Americans, the involvement in the German War seems increasingly wasteful. A spin-off show featuring the doctors of a mobile hospital unit set in the recent war was originally made as a comedy but has been turning more and more into a very serious anti-war drama.

### Precious Puppies

This cartoon was initially aimed at a children's audience and featured a number of magical dogs of one sort or another. Precious Puppies have been around for a good thirty or forty years and the most recent incarnation has proven to be wildly popular and not just with the target audience.

There are a large number of older kids and even adults who find the Precious Puppies television show to be very entertaining.

The basic premise of the show involves following the adventures of one or more of the canine characters experiencing a life lesson. The series tagline is "The Power of Friendship" and



learning to trust in one's friends and ask for help when it is needed is a common theme.

Most of the characters in the series are male though the Princess Tiangou, modeled on a Chinese guardian hound, is a prominent recurring female character. Other characters include Shuck, based on the legend of the black dog; Tindal, based the hounds of Tindalos from Lovecraft's stories; Kirby, a crebus; Lou, a Celtic hound; Prince Sirius, a star dog.

There is a line of toys that goes along with the show and most recently was released a special limited edition Ebony Sparkle Shuck, designed to show Shuck with his season three finale power up. These toys were announced and released on the same day, creating a large number of impromptu Puppy-Cons all over the world. In some places, a sneak preview of the full season four opening two-parter was shown in the nearest theater, revealing that a new character had been added: Fenny the wolf pup, based on the Fenris Wolf.

### Psyche's Programing

Psyche quietly sponsors a number of television shows geared towards their goal of bringing the supernatural eventually back into the public eye. Most of these programs are documentaries researching the possibility of psychic powers or other supernatural phenomena. However, there are also several sitcoms out with a supernatural flare to them that aim at making non-humans and psychics accepted as everyday regular people. While Psyche does not have direct control over many of these productions, they usually try to place at least one person with decent knowledge about the supernatural in the consulting teams. Unfortunately, most of the people who are publicly recognized as experts in the field of the supernatural are New Agers with no legitimacy. Whether intentionally frauds or simply mistaken about the truth, these more recognized experts commonly speak out about the "errors" in many of the shows that Psyche money goes to.

## VIDEO GAMES

### Consoles

While consoles have been progressively losing ground against personal computers for almost two decades, they still hold a sizeable portion of the gaming market. Consoles provide the advantage of allowing developers to design with a known set of performance specs in mind and they also have a large number of devoted fans.

The Nintendo and Medici companies from Japan and Italy respectively have held large market shares since the early eighties and have kept that by balancing classic approaches and innovation. Relative newcomers such as Sony and Microsoft have acquired a comfortable niche for themselves by broadening their use beyond just gaming. Meanwhile the other classic game companies such as Atari and Rosario have slowly gone out of business. Sega remains in business and profitable but tends to be viewed as "old fashioned". Eon is a new company specializing in Virtual Reality games and consoles. They have been making tremendous headway of late with their Strange console.

### Da Vinci

There are a large number of classic videogames with simple gameplay that are attributed to Japan and the United States. Some of the most well-known include Pac-Man and Space Invaders. Of the three countries most connected with the creation of video games currently, Italy came rather late to the stage with only one title being thought of from this time-period in relation to it: Da Vinci. The premise of the game was the player controlling an assistant to the legendary genius Da Vinci and having keep the workshop in order despite the messes left by other assistants and Da Vinci himself.

The game has inspired a number of incarnations in different genres of game play. This included the first multi-player version appearing in 1985 and a first-person version appearing in 1992 for the Medici Console where up to four players could wander the workshop keeping their areas clear and ruining those of their opponents and using

*Hel cleans my clock at this game.*

*She only has one usable arm.*

*Amateurs*

*The actual Wolf of Slaughter was not available for comment.*

*I've been trying, but he's avoiding me recently.*

*Umm...what?*



various methods such as booby traps to defend their own area. At least one version of the game took a stab at The Da Vinci Code to imply that all the supposed clues in Da Vinci's work came from assistants trying to interfere with each other.

### Virtual Reality

Virtual reality started to enter the commercial market soon after the turn of the century and has been developing since then. There was a sudden surge in the quality of video reality games with the de-classification of certain military drone-control programs allowing former military programmers to make use of software previously considered matters of national security in many nations. As of yet, the sensations are limited to visual and auditory information transmitted via a headset with controls managed via hand and arm motions. There are some experiments with cybernetic connections to computers in the test stages that may later see an advance in this regard but the public knowledge of such implants is that they're terribly limited compared to standard interfaces still.

### City of Paragons II

A sequel to a previously popular superhero centric MMO, City of Paragons took advantage of advances in computing power to create a very free-form character development and advancement system wherein players created their own skills by a combination of main mechanic, special effect and supplementary mechanic. There is a wide range of potential synergies that results in a wide-variety of character concepts. In the early days this resulted in only a handful of build-types appearing even despite the ability to rearrange one's build fairly easily, but the introduction of the organizations and tileset editing changed that.

Whereas before all missions and enemies were designed by the GMs, now players could design their own enemy sets and mission features tied to their designed groups. These player-made sets were entered into the game database allowing for random missions to use them. Suddenly, a build that previously dominated the entire game found itself faced with enemies designed to target the holes in that build. It now became necessary to

keep track of which of hundreds of enemy sets were being used in a mission, especially as the original player of the mission earned more resources with which to enhance the power of their enemy set or add more trap modules to existing tilesets.

As part of keeping the elements to a manageable size, it also became possible to attempt missions to destroy or cripple various organizations so that they would leave the pool of available enemies. This required players to sink more resources into keeping their designed enemy group in play and sometimes causing them to rise from the ashes after they've previously been destroyed as one player or guild put resources into rebuilding them as a faction.

The developers have continued with their own stories and NPCs, but in general the discussion of the game revolves around the player created enemy groups and rivalries between player groups over enemy factions that seem designed to be personal nightmares for specific teams. The rivalries range from friendly to aggressive, with some threats or accusations of bleeding over into real life occurring.

### Character Creation Programs

Sometime in the early 2000's, a roleplaying game released its character avatar generator as a separate program for a modest cost and it saw a lot of interest generated. Since then, a large number of MMOs, RPGs and other games that use customized avatars have released separate programs allowing for independent generation of avatars. While these programs are nowhere near as flexible in the creation of full scenes as other 3D modelers, they are powerful enough for average users to create their own character portraits for use as online avatars, account portraits, paper and pencil character portraits and the like in short time. At the current time, there are about five major character design programs with extensive package options. Each of these programs focuses on a certain sort of art style ranging from anime stylization to more photo-realistic and even to more cartoonish designs.

*I have a few of these programs.*

--  
--  
What?

*A few generally means closer to five than to fifty.*



BASIC ELEMENTS





## DRAMA, NOT DANGER

Most of the characters in a Demon Next Door campaign will be living in a safe part of the world far away from the sort of dangers one can expect to find in the dark corners of the Earth. They won't be facing nameless monstrosities or assassins from secret societies or the like. The fate of the world does not hinge on your character's ability to turn in those TPS reports, find the perfect gift for a significant other or answer question 17 on the math final. It's likely that not even the fate of the neighborhood hangs in the balance. Many would suggest this sounds a bit boring and you might very well be one of those people and this campaign style might not be for you. However, the lack of real danger does not mean a lack of real stress.

Think of your own day to day lives and how often you feel like you're at your wits' end trying to solve some problem or another. The world might not be over because you failed to turn in your homework, but it might feel like that to you. Likewise, if you go to a lot of trouble to find a gift which your significant other barely even acknowledges, you feel quite hurt. On the other hand, if you ace a test or impress your SO, then you're likely to feel just about as wonderful as can be. It's really no different from the fact that we stress and exult over the ebb and flow of success and failure in a game played with paper, pencil, dice and imagination.

A Demon Next Door campaign should be designed to focus on these sorts of stressors. Your focus isn't going to be on the situations that come out all right easily and with little effort. If your campaign is focused around the staff of a pizza delivery place, you're not going to be focusing on every single customer from every single day. You're going to focus on the stressful situations. Think of just about any sitcom episode that you've ever seen and consider how they turn a simple task into an odyssey of errors and mounting desperation. That's the essence of what you're trying to reproduce in this campaign.

*Such as bringing homework to sick classmates.*

*What's complex about that?*

*Yeah, Damiir, that's easy.*

**WAIT, ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT**

## SCHADENFREUDE AND DAILY FANTASY

It might seem unusual to base a roleplaying game with psychics, werewolves and other supernatural types but instead of focusing on action and danger you focus instead on the same sort of problems that we deal with day in and day out in our real lives. When you think about it, however, this is probably the one sort of roleplaying that everybody has done at least once or twice in our lives.

We've all been stuck in line behind a rude, overly demanding customer and wished that we could just step forward and shout them down. Most of us have been asked the question "what superpower would you want to have" and when we say why it is usually to solve some daily problem rather than to go off and become a superhero. A lot of us have probably wished that we could pull off a fantastic prank. Of course, many of us have wished for the courage to speak to that attractive man or woman across the room.

Whereas the usual adventure and action based roleplaying allows us to engage in a complete escapism, roleplaying in the everyday world gives us the chance to follow through with a lot of the fantasies we dare not attempt in real life or else get a bit of entertainment from the idea of watching someone else suffer and deal with the same problems that we do all the time. This is the same sort of vicarious escapism that sit-coms fulfill in us. Of course, regardless of whether the campaign is intended to be comedic or serious, the situations the characters find themselves in are likely to be exaggerations of real life problems.

*Or the power to curse people with detention.*

**HUH? IS YOOJI'S AUTHORITY A POWER NOW?**

*I'm not sure he's talking about me.*

**THEN WHO?**

## SUPERNATURAL, NOT SUPERHEROES

No comment.

Grab any ten people off the street and you're likely to find that most of them have never been in any fight more dangerous than a simple brawl resulting in little more than a short-lived bruise. Of course, this would change if you were to look at a rougher part of town or into a place that is actively suffering from war or an oppressive regime. In Divine Blood, the supernatural population is large enough that this, in general, remains as true

*The above statement is redacted by authority of Avalon.*





for the psychics and non-humans as it does for mundane people unaware of the supernatural. Pick any ten supernaturals, and you're likely to find that most if not all of them have never been in anything close to a life or death situation.

It is assumed that most of the characters in a Demon Next Door campaign either know about the supernatural or else are supernatural themselves. However, it also assumes that characters, by and large, are not interested in following a life of conflict. They might spend a lot of time developing their powers, or they might ignore them completely, but for most of them coming up with ways of attacking people isn't something they'd ever think about without being prodded. The average psychic or non-human regards their abilities in the same way most people regard being unusually strong, intelligent or good with people. It's just something they do.

This isn't to say that you can't have a badass or wannabe superhero on the team if someone wants to play that, but the nature of this campaign is such that combat focused abilities are less likely to get used and someone who goes out of his way to be a superhero is more likely to be a source of trouble than anything else. This can be deliberate on the part of the player, of course, and it can be a very amusing character type to have on hand, but it should remain clear that battle is not likely to happen in many sessions and very unlikely to get very dangerous.

## CAMPAIGN CREATION

### CAMPAIGNS

One of the first things that must be considered when running a Demon Next Door style campaign is what exactly will be the focus of the characters and gameplay. Saying "it's about the normal everyday life of the supernatural" covers a vast amount of territory so when creating a campaign it might be best to start with what the characters have in common. This is usually a shared location, circumstance or task. Regardless of what it is, the Campaign Aspect helps give the characters a bit of common ground.

### Akiras in the Wild

At the current time, there are a large number of people out there spontaneously developing psychic Talents. Likewise, the growing population of non-human sapients has resulted in making it more difficult for the supernatural world to keep track of all of its members. Whereas before it was relatively easy to make sure an orphaned nonhuman or Talent ended up with people that could understand them, now some have ended up in the regular system with any human child.

In this sort of campaign, the players have no contact with any of the established supernatural societies. There's nobody for them to fall back on to explain what the hell is going on in their life. They don't have the Community, the Families, Avalon, Heralds, Faustians or even a government think tank to give them advice. They have to figure out about mindscapes and corruption all on their own and they have to decide what it is they're going to do with these new abilities.

This campaign assumes the characters will be young since most supernatural abilities come either in early childhood or in puberty. Adults are far less likely to suddenly develop supernatural abilities. Mundane friends and family might also be good character concepts. So might an "expert" who is finding out that all his beliefs about psychic abilities are actually wrong. At the extreme end, someone who stumbled upon an instruction manual for magic, shaping or even channeling might also fit. Self-taught psychics aren't usually called akiras unless they're really irresponsible, but it fits the play style.

You'll want to further define what the characters have in common. Maybe one of them is a scientist that is interested in studying these fascinating abilities as well as helping these young people deal with this strangeness. Maybe they're all students at the same middle school or high school (more rarely college). Maybe they're all just in the same neighborhood, which begs the question as to why did several people spontaneously generate Talents or such in one neighborhood?





Note that while this supplement assumes that the focus will be on day to day life, it is easy to conceive that a bunch of akira and their friends immediately start playing superhero. Depending on mood that could go hilariously or horribly wrong, but masked vigilante-ism in Divine Blood doesn't usually last long. Some society or another usually ends up noticing and reigning in the akira in question. If they're lucky it's someone like Avalon or Psyche.

### Gamer's United

In this case, the characters are going to all be part of the same gaming group. The manner of gaming that is focused on isn't important. It could be the local poker players or perhaps a chess club. It could certainly be a tabletop roleplaying group. Or maybe they focus on adventure board games instead. They might be a diehard historical wargaming group, or a very melodramatic gothic LARP group. Whatever the game, the characters are all involved in it.

This presents the combination of allowing characters from a wide variety of backgrounds and ages while still having a tight focus on what the campaign revolves around. In addition, as gamers, most players and GMs will have lots of personal stories from which they can produce a storyline or three. Think of all the troubles involved in your own gaming life and then imagine that with people who have actual supernatural powers as well.

The primary focus in this campaign will likely be on the situations surrounding the game. Someone has to get the snacks. A time has to be agreed upon. What happens if somebody falls ill and can't make it to a session? The GM needs time to plan the game. You have to decide what board games are going to be played this time around. Those new miniatures need to be painted and you have to make sure that it's the right brand of paint. Also, don't forget to reserve that room at the gaming store ahead of time.

The primary challenge here is the existence of a game within a game. It can be a temptation to roleplay out your characters roleplaying their characters or making their plays. This can be fun,

but it can also be very complicated. It is best in these sorts of campaigns to keep the individual games being played as background events. Sometimes it can be interesting to roleplay out some confrontation over gameplay, such as an argument between a power-gamer and a rules lawyer, but the focus should be on that confrontation rather than game being discussed.

### Government Sponsored

Contrary to popular belief, not every government program dealing with psychics is geared toward military or intelligence applications. The government believes they're rare enough for those sorts of programs to be more common than pure research, but the pure research programs do exist. Even in cases where a psychic is being groomed for later military or espionage work, they still remain people and have the standard foibles of people. This is especially true if dealing with teenagers or college students.

In a government sponsored campaign, at least one of the characters is likely to be Talent meaning that they have some inborn supernatural ability. Any character that is not a psychic is likely to be some government worker attached to the program. This could be medical personnel, teachers, soldiers, maintenance workers or any of a number of other things. On the other hand, all the characters could be psychics of one stripe or another with the non-psychic personnel being NPCs. The rarest mix would be if the players decide to play the government personnel and all the psychics are NPCs.

There is the question as to whether the program being focused on is one isolated from the public or if the characters are integrated. In the former case, any prior day-job or schooling would no longer be an issue and the psychic characters would be receiving an education or paycheck from whichever government is sponsoring them. In the latter case, the psychic characters would likely have to balance out their day-jobs and school lives with the responsibilities put on them by this government program. This is especially true if the government is allowing them to remain in the public only as long as certain criteria are met.

We should totally do this. *No.* Hey! I just purchased both Edition Netherwalk! Let's go cyberpunk!  
I'll call Karl. *No!* Amber! *No!* *Damn it.*  
*It's called texting, people! Why have this conversation here when you can use a phone?!?*  
*Is this conversation why I suddenly have an email asking about what cybernetics I want?*



Dangerous missions are not likely to occur in a Demon Next Door campaign, though this situation is ripe for becoming a hybrid campaign. It is more likely you'll see instances of a psychic kid adapting to life on base or in a lab. Depending on the psychic's history this could be a positive change similar to what you see in Annie, admittedly not a movie with paranormal powers, or it could be a massive headache, such as seen in Chuck. Expect supernaturally accomplished pranks, baseball games played in the vicinity of expensive government equipment and lots of scientists with a number of weird theories and even weirder experiments to figure out how psychic powers work.

### Office Work

Most supernaturals have regular lives and that means a day job of some sort or another. Most of these jobs are very commonplace. Perhaps there's a vampyr working at a library. Maybe an information technologies company sub-contracts a tech that works from home and happens to be a chiang shih. Maybe there's an entire branch of a newspaper that is run by supernaturals and runs stories about the Community under the guise of tongue-in-cheek reporting of stuff that most would think belongs in the Enquirer. Maybe it is a small gaming company putting together an independent product. Whatever the case, they have a regular job that draws most of their attention.

The focus of an office work campaign is around people that all share an employer in some form or fashion such that they are frequently interacting with each other. It could be a single supernatural person with a bunch of normal colleagues, or it could be a completely supernatural group. Perhaps the employers are aware of the nature of their employees, or perhaps not. On the other hand, it might be a bunch of normal people who find that their employers are supernatural somehow.

The same daily problems of company policies and annoying clients are likely to dominate the game. Reports have to be filled. Time sheets have to be signed. Tasks have to be completed. The characters may feel tempted to use whatever supernatural abilities they have to speed up

their work. Alternately, a normal coworker might always push them to break out the "superpowers" to make life easier. Of course, the question is whether they can get away with it without attracting attention from people that shouldn't be aware of such things.

Another thought might be the supernatural business that is aimed at a supernatural clientele. For example, imagine all the troubles a restaurant that caters to non-humans would have when they're juggling issues on the diets for several different species. Or perhaps the characters work in a business that creates and sells talismans or other psychic tools which are convenient but not terribly dangerous, such as a sweater that cancels out the wearer's body odor. This might be an interesting situation for someone previously outside the Community, or any other supernatural society, to fall into.

### School Shenanigans

This is probably the most likely of scenarios as supernatural high school students are an often done situation. The characters would be supernaturals, or perhaps normal people that just learned about the supernatural, that all go to the same school. This school could be a college or high school, in some cases it might be a middle school. Regardless, the characters attend the same school and likely attend the same after-school club or else are part of the same circle of friends. Teachers as player characters are more than possible.

There are any of a number of potential storylines for this and it doesn't take much effort to find stories that are focused around this concept. Both Western and Japanese television is full of examples of high school students with special powers balancing their powers with their everyday life. For a Demon Next Door Campaign, this is likely to look more like Sabrina the Teenage Witch or the Wizards of Waverly Place than it is going to look like X-Men: Evolution or Kamen Rider.

One thing that would be a significant factor in most school campaigns would be cliques. During

*This section strikes me as familiar.*

**HUH. ME too.**



school, people of many varied interests and attitudes are forced together. Once they get out into adult life these social circles continue to exist, but they start to distance themselves from each other. In school, all the groups are very much crammed together. It might be the popular kids in high school or the frat boys in college. Perhaps your mechanics club has a rivalry over university funding with the physics club. Maybe someone would like to see the occult club disbanded because it's all a bunch of nonsense anyway. Maybe the rich kids think they deserve more than everybody else. There are all sorts of reasons that any two particular groups might not get along, which can lead to some interesting intrigues and alliances between cliques.

Another thing that is often central to the concept of a school campaign is rival schools and sporting events. School rivalries can be fierce and provoke all manner of misbehaviors and wacky hijinks. If one or both schools have a significant supernatural presence, this can only get more ludicrous. Especially once things get out of hand and members of both schools start trying to fix things before everybody is exposed to the world at large. Typically, this is focused around athletic events like soccer and football games but any sort of event can be a target for a rival. Perhaps there is a chess competition that members of both schools are attending. It could also be that both schools decide to try and sabotage the other school's prom. The possibilities are endless.

### Welcome to the Community

Whereas the Office Work campaign focuses around a work place and School Shenanigans focuses around a school, this campaign focuses around a neighborhood. They characters might be from a range of ages and have different interests and jobs, but they all live the same area. In this case, things like school and jobs are a side issue that occasionally comes up while the main spotlight is on where the characters live. It is likely to be literally dealing with Community, but it could also end up being a Yomi or Nirvana neighborhood.

Community events are likely to be the main action of this campaign. Perhaps one of the characters decides to run for city council or the school board. Meanwhile, another character is trying to track down a bunch of items that "accidentally" got sold at a garage sale by a relative or significant other. Someone else is trying to organize a neighborhood festival for the end of the month. Even one of these story arcs has the potential to have lots of obstacles placed in their way. Imagine if all of them are happening at once.

This is a good place for one of the characters to be someone new to the supernatural. Perhaps the family of an akira has moved to the neighborhood under suggestion from the people that found out about them. Maybe some normal person ended up buying property in the middle of the Community and stumbled onto the fact that the people around them had psychic powers. In these cases, the majority of players should probably be the newcomers and the focus of the story instead changes to being introduced to the supernatural world. In this case, a Community with a strong non-human presence is ideal since it gives a great variety of things to discover. Of course, the bake sales and other local events are still going to be showing up with regularity.

The main issue is to make sure that the characters are drawn together for some reason. Making sure each character has connections with two other characters goes a long way to making sure each player sees the other characters' business as their own. Without the narrower field of a work place or school situation, where common interests are easier to form, player cooperation is essential. However, this doesn't mean there has to be character cooperation. In order to keep the game interesting, each player should make sure that there are some avenues of invitation for other players to have their characters interfere in their interests. This could be anything from trying to help each other to trying to get in each other's way.



## THEMES

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Whereas the Campaign Aspect mostly focuses on the physical or social circumstances of the characters, Theme Aspects mostly focus on more abstract goals. You could say that the Campaign Aspect represents the issues that are immediately in the face of the character while the Theme Aspect represents issues that the player wants to tackle whether or not the character wants to. In a Demon Next Door campaign, the Theme Aspect represents the segment of life that the characters are likely to have the most consistent trouble with. Unlike the sample Campaign Aspects above, these are left rather bland to indicate broad categories. Feel free to spice up the Aspect to fit your desired feel exactly.

### Absurdly Normal

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In a campaign with this theme, it is likely that almost all of the characters will be supernatural in some way. In fact, in order to play up on different situations it would often be best if they were supernatural of a type about which there were several well-known preconceptions. Vampires and werewolves are perfect examples of this especially given how much pop culture gets wrong about them. Often times there will be one character that is normal or else only recently discovered that they were supernatural. The drama of the campaign would come from the gulf between the expectations of what life as someone with psychic powers or inhuman heritage should be and what it actually is. Without that newcomer, there's not much awareness of the gap.

The problem is that this sort of theme would mostly revolve around the reactions of one newcomer and the sort of actions they would take which leads to problems that need solving by the rest of the group. While it is possible to design a campaign this way, it is difficult to do without neglecting other players. This can be eased slightly in cases where there are mutual misconceptions about things. Perhaps the person who just moved in has immigrated from someplace like Germany or India, where there is active warfare, and everybody expects them to have harrowing tales of survival

only to learn that they lived in a mostly safe area and never had trouble. In the same group there might be a lemurian about whom many of the other supernatural might make some assumptions that are at least slightly wrong.

In any case, this theme is likely to be a temporary one. After what is normal is established, the game will want to move on to another theme of some sort. It can be very difficult to manufacture circumstances where the dichotomy of what supernatural life is expected to be versus what it is. Having proactive characters is very much a help here. While this campaign can survive and even benefit from one player whose character is reticent and reluctant or even unwilling to deal with other people, the majority of the characters should be willing to ask questions and insist on answers. People roleplaying the wallflowers should be expecting to face a relentless tide of interest and have plans for amusing ways their character would react.

### Discovery

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A theme focused on discovery is one where the characters are driven to learn more about themselves and the world around them. Secrets will be in abundance. Sometimes these secrets will be deliberately hidden from the characters and other times they will simply be a matter of the characters not being in an ideal situation to find the answer. Regardless, the primary focus should be on learning secrets.

Every character should have some sort of driving need to learn something. This could be a simple matter of overwhelming curiosity or something more complex like learning that they're not human and needing to find out exactly what it is they are. In any case, the characters should be operating from a position of little knowledge. A good pair of examples would be government sponsored psychics or akira trying to figure the limits of their Talents without the benefits of connection with the Community. For that matter, a member of a supposedly extinct species appearing within the Community would also qualify. The discovery does not need to be focused on the supernatu-





ral element of the world. It could be some more personal sort of discovery, such as figuring out what career you want to have or an adoptee trying to track down their birth parents.

The primary concern in planning is to make sure that all the player quests for discovery are intertwined somehow. As with many of these themes, and the Fate system in general, there will be a lot

of taking turns in the spotlight. But it shouldn't become completely separate stories for each character. When designing characters, players should make sure that something about them might be of interest to one or more of the other characters' primary subplot. In some cases, one character might know things someone else would be interested in but either have no knowledge that the information is needed or else be actively keeping it secret for some reason.

Discovery is the flip side of the secrecy theme described below. The difference being that the characters are on the side pushing to unveil the secrets rather than on the side of trying to conceal the secrets. In addition, in a secrecy campaign, the characters aren't necessarily interested in learning or uncovering secrets but simply in protecting their own, in that regard, a theme of discovery is often more proactive than one of secrecy.

### Growing Up

This theme is primarily for games focusing on characters from the teens to the twenties. In this case most or all of the story lines will be focused concepts that have to do with growing up. This can be physical issues such as puberty or learning to control one's Talents, or it can be matters of emotional and mental maturation. This could be the traditional standard of receiving The Talk from one's parents and discovering gender issues; or it could be a matter of following through with promises and responsibilities.

A lot of young adults will start going through things that they don't think other people can understand. The brain starts going through a lot of development, increasing the capability for long-term planning and abstract thought. Several physical changes occur around this time. Things that the character was used to before are now changing completely. Very often people in the teens and young twenties don't want to admit that they are having trouble figuring things out and adapting to the new paradigm. This period of life is one of embarrassment and frustration for many.

This is also a period of changing from a carefree existence as a child to a life of responsibility as



an adult. For most people, the first sacrifices they have to make start coming in this time period. They have to sacrifice time with friends in order to study for a test. Or perhaps they'll sacrifice their test preparation in order to go out and have fun. Maybe they want to buy some item or another and need money for it, so they have to get a job. Unless the character has had a rough childhood where they've had to take care of themselves already, this is likely to be a rough transition.

All of that has yet to take into account the addition of psychic powers and nonhuman sentient species. Almost every Talent growing up has had to deal with leaks and the occasional episode. Kids that stumble on a book teaching shaping, magic or channeling have to work out corruption issues on their own. Different species mature at differing rates. A changeling that was orphaned and separated from people that know what he or she is will usually have to deal with the transformation from appearing human into whichever species they truly are. And, of course, they have to deal with learning to keep discrete.

### Relationships

When relationships are primary theme of the game most of the characters should have a subplot for their characters that focus on a relationship of some kind. This could be the most common love interest sort of relationship; it could be a friendship or a family relationship. For that matter it could even be an adversarial relationship. In any case, the intention should be to watch the relationship develop, change, mature or fall apart.

In this particular campaign theme, the overall setting and plot primarily exist to serve as fodder for developing the subplots of the individual characters. Story events should interweave in ways to provide tension on every characters' lives. In a work place of some kind, for example, the challenges brought up by the work place primarily should

serve to provide obstacles to the player character's managing their relationships. Maybe you're required to work overtime and have to cancel a night out with your family. Maybe your love interest gets promoted above you. Maybe your rival is unfairly blamed for something they had no control over and you have the chance to help or hurt their standing in the company.

The player characters' various relationship subplots should be interwoven to at least some degree. If there is little to no connection between the various relationships, then the game becomes a lot of players taking turns on the stage. The success or failure of one player to mend fences with their rival should affect the lives of the other characters. The same should be true for another character's family issues. It might even be that two player characters have relationships with the same NPC. One PC might be the best friend of another PCs rival and their love interest might be the sibling of yet another. Trying for two points interlinking each character remains a good idea.



In other themes, relationships might be considered safe and can be taken for granted. Perhaps your character's girlfriend or brother is just a matter of background unimportant to the current game. You might not even have an Aspect related to such

relationships. They're just something that goes on. In this sort of campaign, any relationship should be rocky. Whether familial, romantic or anything else, it should be a struggle to maintain or reach the relationship level your character desires.

At a certain point, you might want to consider either changing Aspects so that the relationship you were working on becomes stable and start working on a new one, or you might want to change the theme of the campaign entirely. This is natural, angst is really only interesting in the process of resolving it. A perpetually unresolved

*My oh my. There is quite a bit of erasing going on in the margins of this section. I think some people have some issues to work out with each other. <3*

*Why can I read my name not quite erased here?*



issue will eventually grow stale. But if that romantic infatuation matures into one of starting a new family or that rivalry becomes a business partnership, the nature of the story changes. Also note that relationships can degrade as well, perhaps the former love-birds are now bitter towards each other or someone has realized that a particular friend is a toxic relationship.

### Secrecy

This theme assumes that the characters are a lot more concerned with keeping their nature secret than the average member of the current generation of the Community. The storylines will mostly deal with threats to revealing the supernatural to individuals or groups. This threat can either come about because of the characters' actions, such as if they decide to engage in a bit of psychic powered pranking, or it can come from a Kolchak, a slang term for an outsider with invasive curiosity who wants to prove to the world that the supernatural is real regardless of the impact on people. Or it can be just a situational matter where no one person's actions are threatening to reveal a secret but just the circumstances have brought things to a point where it can be a worry.

In campaigns where secrecy is a primary theme, it is best if the characters are in a situation that has them mixing with the general public. If the characters are all government sponsored psychics then a campaign in an isolated research facility hidden in the Utah desert is not going to have much to worry about from secrecy on a daily basis. Likewise, a campaign set in a small town run by the Community isn't going to have much problem either. Now, if the Community or government program is set in New York or Edo or someplace similar, then secrecy becomes more of a legitimate concern.

This can also refer to personal secrets. Perhaps each of the player characters has some secret of their own that they are keeping from the other characters or the Community at large. Depending on whether the mood is comedic or drama oriented, this could be a ridiculous or very serious secret. Perhaps there's a raven whose secret is that they really don't like much music. It's a fairly harmless

secret but its worthy for a comedic game given the fact that most ravens are music lovers. A more serious secret would be if a seraph feels a desire to express themselves as either a man or a woman when most of their species consider the concept of gender to be alien.

If you want a real challenge, you can mix and match a lot of different character types that normally would not interact and have the players focused on trying to keep their character's secrets from the other characters. Perhaps one of the characters is half-Immortal, another is an akira of some sort, a third is a member of the Community, a fourth is connected to Socrates Group, a fifth is part of some completely different governmental psychic program and a sixth is an entirely normal person. This is a challenging concept since a lot of the conflict will be between players rather than with NPCs. Furthermore, this is likely to be conflict without hostility. Even if the characters are all friends and involved through some other means; such as a gaming group, school or work place; the theme would be that they still feel a need to hide the truth about themselves from everybody else. While this is not common on the scale of six individuals from different societies, this is unfortunately more common in Divine Blood than it should be. One of the major problems facing the world right now is the fact that groups who should be allied tend not to talk to each other. In some cases, they're not even aware of each other. This lack of communication between the more benevolent factions is pervasive.

### Slice of Life

To one extent or another, every Demon Next Door campaign is a Slice of Life campaign. It is the default assumption of the sort of campaign played. In this case all the above themes will likely be played out to a greater or lesser extent at one point or another. There is no one focus aside from portraying the daily life of civilians in the world of Divine Blood.

A general slice of life campaign is the hardest to actually plan directions for since there's not an overall theme to focus on. Take a look at your



characters and their Aspects carefully. One might have a character focused around a relationship such as trying to attract the affection, or even just the attention, of some popular student in school. Another character might have a secret that they want kept from the rest of the group. One might be searching out information on who and what they are. There's any number of possible ways that the characters might mix and match the above themes.

On the other hand, it creates the most freedom for character creation. Having a specific theme for the game assumes that each player will make that theme a heavy part of their character concept. This won't usually be a terribly difficult thing to do, but the situation where a particular theme does not interest one of the players is always going to be a problem. For example, a number of the above themes require a very proactive player who initiates action regularly but some players are uncomfortable with that play style. A player who is more reticent and reactive would have troubles getting involved in a game of discovery, for example, but might deal well with a theme of secrecy, as such having a general theme of "slice of life" helps accommodate a greater range of players.

This theme is not so much about a particular focus as it is about just free-flowing through the lives of the characters. For inspiration you'll want to look at slice of life television shows such as American sitcoms and slice-of-life anime. The way these shows take a common everyday occurrence or headache and blow it up into ridiculous proportions is exactly what you're going for. On the other hand, if you're not seeking comedy, you might review the sort of dramas and soap operas where situations are still blown out of proportion but are played straight and serious.

## Moods

Campaign Aspects represent the most obvious issues facing the characters. The Theme Aspects represent the emotional and abstract issues that the players want to tackle. Mood Aspects represent the way the entire campaign is treated. This governs how permanent and serious the conse-

quences of any particular action might be as well as how serious characters take things. As with the Theme samples, these sample Campaign Aspects are left as broad and somewhat bland labels allowing individual groups to give them their own particular flavor.



## Comedy

Comedy is the default mood assumed by Demon Next Door and most of the examples referenced in the paragraphs. In this case, consequences are primarily played for laughs and even large social setbacks are treated as nothing particularly important. The comedy might come from slapstick physical jokes or it might come from awkward social situations. Some groups might prefer a more intellectual sort of comedy.

Life tends to be unlucky for characters in a comedic campaign. This is not an all-encompassing statement; there are plenty of examples of comedy where the main character is known for encountering extremely good luck one situation after the next. However, the suffering of others, especially when that suffering is self-inflicted and relatively consequence free, tends to produce more humor than their good fortune. In fact, in a lot of cases with the individual who has extremely good fortune it is actually their rivals or antagonists



that provide the humor as they consistently fail to overcome the main character.

Regardless of whether you plan to focus on social awkwardness or physical slapstick, try to limit how much you bend the laws of physics. No matter what, *Divine Blood* is not a cartoon universe where air-brakes allow a character to stop a crashing plane. Instead of bending physics, bend probability. This has the added benefit that absurd situations are often comedic in and of themselves. As to what manner of silly circumstances leads a character to re-enacting the *Dogs Playing Poker* picture with a bunch of cigar smoking wolven disguised as dogs, that's entirely up to you.

### Drama

Dramatic stories are the exact opposite of comedic stories. Drama takes everything seriously. The situations dealt with in the game are not so obviously absurd on their face because the consequences that come with them are no laughing matter. Dramatic campaigns are more likely to have lasting changes to the situation and are less likely to ever reset to square one.

When something comes into the spotlight in a dramatic campaign, it is always a serious issue. Characters in such storylines will have far more excitement and stress over the course of a five-month campaign than most people will see in their entire lives. As with comedy, bad luck is going to be more common than good luck, but both will happen. There is always something happening in the characters' lives and it is always a crisis. It might even seem like they take turns facing the slings and arrows of outrageous fortunes.

In a drama campaign, physical situations are going to be less common than social or mental challenges. Mental conflicts and challenges in particular will be very common. Dramatic stories often have characters struggling to come to grips with some new revelation or another. Too much in the way of physical encounters, especially combats, starts to lead the campaign away from *Demon Next Door*, but if that's what your group wants, so be it. The characters are also less able to get away with absurd decisions. Getting arrest-

ed, hospitalized or needing a psychologist are not going to be entirely unexpected consequences.

### Soap Opera

Soap opera mood stories are a mix of comedy and drama. This label has more to do with the common perception of soap operas than on what they are actually like. Soap opera campaigns are based on convoluted and inter-connected story arcs that are hard to keep track of. Individual situations might seem entirely serious, but trying to give a summary of the overall plot might require flowcharts and some water to keep the throat from drying out.

Things in a campaign with a soap opera mood are always played straight. Whatever is in front of the characters right now is serious and could conceivably result in serious consequences that would quite thoroughly ruin a character's life. The awkward situations and physical slapstick that gets a laugh in a pure comedic game is going to be rare or even absent. The comedy from a soap opera is not coming from the individual situations, but from the absurdity of the overall tableau of plot.

Campaigns that have this sort of mood are likely to suffer from what would otherwise be called plot cancer. Everything is connected to everything else. Almost nobody dies and if they do, they come back later with proof that it was faked somehow. There are likely loose ends to prior storylines all over the place. Sometimes the players will go back to those loose ends, other times they will be left hanging until someone asks "whatever happened to X". Of all the campaigns, this is the mood that is most likely to have the ridiculous situation mentioned under *Secrets above* where six people from different societies are all trying to keep major secrets from each other while still being close friends.

### Hybrid Campaigns

Just because *Demon Next Door* focuses on campaigns that are entirely centered on safe civilian lives doesn't mean they have to be. Warriors, field agents, mecha pilots and spies are all people too and face the same day to day annoyances. In addition, the information in this book can simply be used to further detail characters in a more traditional campaign.

THIS IS  
FAMILIAR  
AS WELL.

Indeed,  
this seems  
to cleave  
fairly close  
to certain  
things.





Missions in these sorts of campaigns are likely to be episodic and short, often not lasting even an entire session. In fact, it might be worthwhile to summarize most missions as a challenge or contest rather than a full scenario. The primary purpose of these missions is to give the characters something to talk about, or talk around if trying to keep a secret from somebody, when they're in between missions. You only need a few stand out details and the dangerous missions are unlikely to present a long story arc. That said, if a character has absolutely horrible luck on one mission and almost gets killed, then a significant other might get concerned if they hear the character is being assigned to hunt the same enemy later in the campaign.

The primary focus is still on daily life. Characters have to deal with requisition forms to get the proper equipment for a coming operation. Managing personal funds and maintaining a cover, if they have one, is another issue. They may be faced with a favor coming from a family member or other connection to take on some off the books operation such as rescuing a kidnapped family member or getting a little revenge. Instead of having persistent story arcs coming from evil

### Sample Hybrid Campaigns

- **The After Op:** *The characters are intelligence operatives, Special Forces, psychic freelancers or other sorts of characters who often operate alone or in small groups.*
- **All in the Family:** *The characters are members of one of the Families, the primarily human organizations that consider themselves the nations and militaries of the supernatural mortals.*
- **Battlefield Living:** *The characters live in an active warzone and are probably part of one of the groups involved in the fighting. This can be military personnel or civilians taking shelter at a military base.*
- **Survival in Tyranny:** *The characters live in a part of the world ruled by tyrannical forces. This could be Germanic Brazil, the Empire of Myanmar, the chaos of Russia or even some places in the British Empire. Regardless, the characters are trying to maintain a normal life in the face of oppression. Could very easily shift to a more traditional game focused on rebellion.*
- **Undercover Studies:** *The characters are undercover at a school posing as students or teachers in order to act as a layer of security for the children of various VIPs that attend the school.*
- **Lilith and Vishnu:** *The characters are members of Yomi and Nirvana and thus not really supposed to be even talking to each other, but two or more of the characters have an emotional bond of some sort that drives them to ignore the dictates of the truce between the Immortals. Other characters are connected to them in some way and may be aiding the characters in keeping the situation under wraps, or they might be unaware in which case you have a bit more PC conflict than usual. Either way, the characters have to balance their loyalties to each other and their people.*

masterminds, terrorists or witches, the characters' main plot is in dealing with parents, spouses, friends and coworkers.

This might be especially useful in a situation where the characters are friends in civilian life but each have different duties. The characters might know about each other's careers or they might be keeping each other in the dark. Regardless, treating the individual missions as challenges and contests rather than full scenarios allows each character to be a solo hero and then come back to talk shop with the other characters later.

These campaigns do not mean that a full combat scenario can't be run. This is similar to how a standard campaign might break up the usual investigation or combat with a scenario focused around their civilian life. If the players enjoy that, then the campaign might slowly shift away from Demon Next Door to being a more traditional action and adventure campaign. This is fine, let that happen. In fact, take the advice in this section and turn it around, using the daily issues to create challeng-

es and contests, and then you have some good ways to spice up a traditional campaign with a little bit more daily life.



# GAMEPLAY ADVICE





## ON THE USE OF UNCERTAINTY

Most of the advice below is going to increase the “crunchy” parts of the game by stretching out the scene structures present in the Divine Blood RPG as adapted from Fate Core. Divine Blood is a crunch-heavy variation of Fate so this may not be to the taste of some players and GMs. The key to remember is that the mechanics exist to serve the enjoyment of the game. Some groups will enjoy the increased granularity and others won’t. This likely won’t even be the same from scene to scene.

Different people are going to be interested in focusing on different parts of a story. Someone who prefers heavy social interaction will likely want to spend a lot of time in the Homecoming Dance scene. Someone who likes engaging in a bit of kingdom building might appreciate having a more focused look at the intricacies of guiding the fate of the franchise restaurant their character manages. You want to use the mechanics that help enhance the flavor desired by the players and GM and ignore the ones that get in the way.

The primary thing that mechanics add to a game is uncertainty. This may sound odd since the various stats and advantages a character has increase the certainty of succeeding at various tasks, but that is based on the existence of the uncertainty provided by Difficulties and Tests in the first place. The more rolls you make the less precise control you have over what occurs because more details have been left up to chance.

Strangely enough, the players who are most interested in certain types of situations will be more interested in having more uncertainty involved in those situations. This is likely because they get their fun out of problem solving and overcoming obstacles. The increased uncertainty over smaller and smaller details gives them challenges to face. By contrast they don’t want to spend time focusing on other situations at all. The player that is heavily interested in the Homecoming Dance might be perfectly happy with summarizing the Homecoming football game in a very small number of rolls taking maybe five to ten minutes and then

only because it will provide context for the dance. The player focusing on managing his franchise might not be interested in spending any time at all on his home life and will just simply decide what happens at home rather than make any rolls at all. As players, the more interested we are in a particular type of situation, the more likely we are to want to have less control over it. When we have the allowance of precise control we are far more likely to simply generalize things.

This all boils down to the golden rule of roleplaying: which is to use what is fun and to ignore what isn’t. Consider an ongoing election for a town council position or sheriff or the like. In some games it might be only tangentially connected to the plot or any of the subplots and will only act as a bit of flavor over which the GM has total control. In other games, it might become moderately important at some point and the players might have some influence over the result due to something they do but the game might not spend more than one or two scenes directly involving it, leaving the winner up to a combination of the roll of some dice and the players’ willingness to spend their resources to affect the outcome. In yet another game, the players might be directly involved at every stage of the election from beginning to end it might even be the focus of an entire campaign and the end result will primarily be determined by dozens of dice rolls and the expenditure of lots of Fate Points, Stress and Consequences. In all likelihood, the last example election will have the most detailed and dramatic story of all three situations.

## ASPECT BASED SUCCESS AND DIFFICULTIES

This section focuses more on general gameplay than on Demon Next Door campaigns specifically and the examples compare a Demon Next Door style character to a similar concept from a more danger oriented game. It is easy to assume an objective manner of determining difficulties for different tasks. Most games approach obstacles in this manner. If a particular rock requires a Difficulty 4 test then it requires that same Difficulty 4 test from everybody. Strands of Fate operates



somewhat from that line of thinking and it is easy to default to that line philosophy.

*Rhiannon Kincaid from this book and Freddy Lopez from the core book each have the **Occultist and Circle Expert** Advantages as well as **Craft 3**. From a purely objective, mechanics-based frame of mind, these two characters are equally capable in the crafting of a ritual space or usable circle. This creates something of a problem because while they both come cultures steeped in psychic study (The Families and Yomi respectively), Rhiannon is a teenaged student from a campaign focused on hijinks and character interaction and while Freddy has been a shaper for over a decade and has spent much of that time in life and death conflict with the Thule Society.*

The obvious answer to this issue is to make use of the Aspects of a character.

*Rhiannon has the Aspect **Impatient with the Basics (Willpower)** which the GM can Compel to force her to reroll an action or take a -2 on it. In another way, the GM can offer her a Fate Point to say that something goes wrong based on her rushing over the basics.*

*By comparison Freddy's related Aspects are all positive with his troubles and negative Aspects being mostly related with his fixation on revenge and a general blindness to outside concerns. It is a bit more difficult, though not impossible, to rationalize Compelling his Aspects to make a shaping task more difficult and he has more Aspects that are helpful to him in such cases.*

The downside to this method is that if it is overused the exchange of Fate Points becomes more or less routine and a lot of the tension that comes from a GM offering a Fate Point fades away. If you can be reasonably assured that the Compel is coming, you can plan around it.

In many cases, it is preferable to define the Difficulty a character faces based on how difficult a task is relative to what they have faced before. In this case you would look at the various Aspects that the characters have and come up with a Difficulty that makes sense. The Core book

touches on this in several places, but still focuses on presenting objective methods for setting and modifying Difficulties. However, in play you might find it easier to consider the charts to be assuming an average person with no relevant Aspects. In this line of thinking, the charts represent a starting point in determining how high a Difficulty should be set.

*Rhiannon's Defining Aspect is **Future Theoretical Shaping Genius** while Freddy's is **Collector and Maker of Occult Things**. Their Extraordinary Skills are **Voracious Thirst for Shaping Theory (Knowledge)** and **Clever Shapings (Sensitive)**. While all of these Aspects speak of talent and skill, they also show that Rhiannon is still in the process of learning her craft while Freddy is an old master.*

*Rhiannon's tutors give her the assignment to create a circle to power an electronic device. This is a relatively basic task which Rhiannon considers boring but still requires finesse and can be messed up if attention is not paid. So the GM would set up a Challenge using Craft, Knowledge and Manipulative. She would likely spend some time before hand setting up her workspace to have some helpful Aspects for the Challenge. The GM might set the Difficulties at Craft 6, Knowledge 5 and Manipulative 4. These aren't particularly difficult rolls given her advantages, but still have a good chance of failure. The Difficulties were chosen based on her total bonus to the selected rolls (+5, +4 and +4 respectively.) It is likely that at least one Fate Point will need to be spent here unless she sets up some maneuvers beforehand.*

*In another game, Freddy might decide to set up a similar circle and because his Aspects represent someone who's been doing shaping and enchanting for a long time, the GM might simple ask him to make one simple Overcome Craft action against a difficulty of 4. This was likewise chosen based on the character's capabilities and because the Difficulty is less than the bonus he is likely to have and because it is only a single roll, he is unlikely to need a Fate Point here.*

There is also the matter to consider of whether or not failure or success at a particular endeavor



is interesting or not. This usually relates to the campaign's moods and themes. If failure doesn't really present any interesting results you might forgo a roll entirely.

*Rhiannon comes from a Demon Next Door campaign focused on drama and comedy. Failing this homework assignment is a big deal for her. It'll cause embarrassment as well as eat into her free time, unless she gives up entirely and accepts a failing grade. Freddy is in a dark and violent campaign dealing with the Thule Society and, occasionally, the Faerie Court. If he wants to power a TV with a circle that is largely just flavor. As such the GM really doesn't need to test him and can just say "that sounds awesome, you're good."*

The Aspects can also be used to justify a difference in the scale of two characters' successes or failures. A result that would be a partial success for one character might be a total success for another. Failure for one character might be catastrophic while for another character it might merely be annoying.

*If Freddy wanted to set up his entire apartment to be powered entirely on Chi and Vitae without resorting to public electricity at all, the GM might set him a Challenge with the same exact difficulties as those facing Rhiannon making just one small circle meant to power a personal device or small TV. In this case there really are some interesting results that can happen if he fails so we have him roll. Likely, Rhiannon wouldn't even be allowed to try to do that in one challenge. To do something similar she might have to spend several weekends of time putting it together and even then it is likely to be a lot quirkier. This is because she's a student and Freddy is a master.*

*As for the scope of failures we discussed this in regards to Rhiannon a little bit above. In her attempt to create a working circle for providing usable electrical power an overall failure could mean getting a failing grade on the project. In contrast, a success with cost might mean that she has to give up her free-time in order to finish the assignment and thus can't go to another character's party that night. Another possible success with*

*cost is that the project works reasonably well at first but then fails when demonstrating it for her tutor. Of course, her project might also result in a fire or the destruction of whatever electrical device she attached it to. I hope it wasn't important.*

*As we have said with Freddy, the sort of results that a failure on a single circle powering one item might cause aren't particularly interesting. Given his Aspects the idea that he would make a serious enough mistake to start a major fire with one circle is very unlikely.*

*However, if we consider the concept of the more complex network of circles discussed above, the failure results we gave Rhiannon for her single circle project make sense for Freddy's complex multi-circle design. Fire, loss of time, destruction of property all fit the failure of the more complex project. Another success with cost result might be that everything looks perfectly fine but that there is a leak somehow that may just lead enemies to Freddy's current hideout.*

*Rhiannon attempting the same complex multi-circle creation in short time would likely find that catastrophically bad failure results become possible. This could mean up to and including large explosions and hospital stays, both problems that Freddy is unlikely to deal with.*

This approach extends to how you should handle Power Advantages with differing Power Aspects.

*Both Rhiannon and Freddy have Exorcism rituals. Freddy has spent more points on his ritual so it is objectively better, but we're going to assume that both had similar designs with only the Aspect being different. Rhiannon's Exorcism has the Aspect **Spiritual First Aid** while Freddy's has the Aspect **What They Can Place, I can remove**. Looking at the two aspects it is clear that Rhiannon's ritual is not meant to be used against extensive corruption or complex curses while Freddy's ritual is heavily specialized in dealing with intentional, directed assaults and curses. Rhiannon's Power Aspect justifies making any Severe Consequence or more complex Curses either beyond the capability of her ritual or having an increased diffi-*



culty. Meanwhile, Freddy's ritual might not work as well as Rhiannon's against simple and naturally occurring curses and corruption.

The biggest challenge to this method is when you have two characters working together who have differing Aspect driven levels of competence in the same task. This would usually happen if one character is the group's recognized expert and the other does the same sort of stuff as a side thing. In this case the less competent character should be given the chance to aid the primary character with maneuvers or other such things. In all likelihood the assistance should push the chance and scale of success up significantly.

*In the unlikely chance that Rhiannon and Freddy were to ever work together on creating something it is unlikely that Rhiannon would be taking the lead on the Challenge. Before each Challenge test, Rhiannon performs her own test attempting to provide a useful Aspect for Freddy to make use of on the main test. The majority of the drama and spotlight are still on Freddy when he rolls for the overall success or failure, but Rhiannon gets her spotlight whenever Freddy uses one of the Free Invokes she has created for him. In the end, her help might be the difference between the final product getting the Aspect **Functionally Powered by Chi and Vitae** or instead getting the Aspect **Power to Spare**.*

The problem of mixing power and competence levels won't as often happen in a Demon Next Door campaign unless one of the players is running a teacher of psychic skills and a second is running one of their students. Even in that case, the fiction involved in Demon Next Door campaigns is unlikely to produce a particularly severe difference in competence. The question of vastly differing power levels, such as having a non-psychic middle schooler in the same group as a first-tier Goddess, will be examined further in later supplements though the solution to that isn't much different. If you can consider how writers find ways to make both an incredibly skilled but human archer and an unstoppable green giant equally relevant, then you can find ideas for how to handle this situation.

## CONTESTS AND CHALLENGES OVER CONFLICTS

The majority of situations that occur within a Demon Next Door campaign can easily be rendered with Contests and Challenges rather than Conflicts. In any given situation you should figure out whether or not a particular issue can be resolved with either of the first two before you move straight to a Conflict. Consider the nature of the competition involved and decide which of the three Cs is most appropriate.

Taking the example of trying to get an NPC to go on a date with you, the most obvious method would be to run a Mental Conflict as one character tries to breach the walls of the other's defenses in order to lay on Consequences like Smitten, Rejected or the like. But consider whether or not this flagrantly combative method is entirely necessary. You might instead simply have the wooing character run a Challenge to see how well they go about impressing the target of their affections into dating them. On the other hand, you might have a Contest between the PC and a rival (PC or NPC) with regards to the affection of the love interest. The participants of the Contest need not both be romantically interested. This could be a case of the potential SO competing with the BFF or family member who doesn't approve of the match.

The downside of both, of course, is that, depending on how the conflict goes, both sides of the situation will come out mentally exhausted and in a vulnerable condition should something else pop up that threatens their emotional well-being. This works well if the personal dynamic of the two characters is similar to that of Petruchio and Katherina or Ranma and Akane where the earlier interactions are full of a lot of emotional (and physical) attacks.

*Clint Faerbolg and Jennifer Summers have a rather adversarial relationship. Among other things, Clint has referred to Jennifer as "Deep One" on at least one occasion and Jennifer has stuck his head in a popcorn machine once in retaliation. Realistically speaking these two would be very unlikely to have any romantic interest in each*

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Okay would someone explain to me why "Deep One" is an objectionable term now? This was something they named themselves.

HAVE YOU READ SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH BY HP LOVECRAFT?

Outside the Hound of Tindalos contribution to Precious Puppies I have no interest in Lovecraft's stories.

READ It.

If you insist. If only to see what sort of book would encourage you to actually read.

I believe I understand now.



other, but they also rather easily fit the contentious couple trope popular in anime and superhero stories. If their players ever decided to try out that relationship, then the initial attempts at getting a relationship started would likely be Conflicts until a first date is accomplished.

For less bloody, metaphorically speaking, courting sessions you might instead set the two up as opposite sides in a Contest. In this case neither side is trying to hurt the other but while one side is interested in pursuing the romance the other is not. This might also do for situations where both sides enjoy making jibes at each other and either don't have a romantic interest or are unaware that they have feelings for each other. At this point you get something more like the interaction between Beatrice and Benedick or some versions of Batman and Catwoman. Each contest comes out with a winner of that particular round but nobody has any lingering consequences to face.

*Dionysus has been trying to woo Nene, the assistant tailor that works at a shop he stumbled on recently while shopping for prom clothes. The oni has been friendly but very clearly demonstrated a lack of interest in dating a high schooler. When Dionysus decides to bring a gift to her, they enter a contest where Nene tries to politely refuse the gift while Dionysus tries to convince her to take it.*

A last romantic example of this situation would be the case where one character is trying to court another who is completely blind to the attentions, at least initially. In this case the focus of the unrequited feelings isn't going to be directly engaging the attempt at all, being unaware of it. The target, instead, is to get the character to even take notice of the other person at all. This is best represented as a Challenge with the unaware character providing passive resistance. This becomes rather like Hinata's attempts to get Naruto to notice her (by contrast, Naruto's attempts to woo Sakura are more like a Conflict).

*William Brasco has developed an interest in Forrest Mason and has been attempting to get*

*the injured athlete to realize that the half-kitsune finds him attractive. So far Forrest has been focused on the recent loss of his hoped for athletic career due to the injury he received and hasn't noticed much else. William is trying to be a bit subtle in this regard since he isn't sure if Forrest is even interested in guys. As such his attempts to date have been Challenges.*

In any case, in a romance subplot any one of these paths would likely be only used to advance the plot one direction or another. You could resolve an entire romance subplot in one Conflict, Challenge or Contest, but if romance is the focus, you'll want the scope of success for each interchange to be less broad. The character might make their crush realize they have feelings only to have the crush freaked out by it and requiring the players to enter a different sort of interchange.

This same line of thought can be used for a number of situations. Sometimes it will be perfectly obvious that a Contest or Challenge is the best way to go about things, such as if you are running a talent show in the game, or maybe a mini-war-games tournament. In other cases, the situation might not be so obvious. For example, in a martial arts tournament or sparring match, the immediately obvious tact might be to have a Physical Conflict, but in most such circumstances the opponents aren't actually out to hurt each other. In which case, a Contest is probably the best way to run such matches. Likewise, the average Debate tournament will be best run as a Contest rather than a Conflict. For that matter, most fist fights between civilians might be best run as Contests since they rarely result in severe injury.

Depending on the nature of your campaign you might never find a real need for a Physical Conflict and Mental Conflicts would likely only occur when emotions are running high and the stakes are very personal rather than merely just another board meeting, high school academics tournament or neighborhood potluck. As to Social Conflicts, those will be more common in some ways but not likely within the frame work of a single scene as one might expect.



## CONTEST VARIATIONS

There are two main issues when dealing with Contests over Conflicts. The basic structure of a Contest involves two parties rolling against each other in an attempt to garner three victories at which point the contest ends. This can end in as little as two rounds of rolling when someone wins a roll with style. It also seems to leave other people sitting on the sidelines. By the looks of it, it is ill-suited for complex multi-sided situations and there are some who will feel dissatisfied when a Contest ends too quickly or when they have to watch from the sidelines. There are some variations that can be used to address this situation.

### Sideline Support

In a Contest you will have one player rolling the actual contest roll, but you might allow other players to provide support. In each round of a Contest, players have the option of performing a Maneuver in order to create an Aspect to help them get through the round. The downside being that if they fail the Maneuver that they cannot roll in the Contest at all, making it easier for the other side to gain a victory since they're rolling against a passive difficulty.

Instead, you might grant other characters in the situation the opportunity to aid their chosen representative or else hinder the opponents. This can represent a number of different things in the fiction. For example, in a football game one player might be rolling the final contest roll with the other players making rolls representing forcing openings in the opposing line, blocking tackles or even cheering from the literal sidelines to give a morale boost. In a case of a debate or presenting a proposal to a town council, one person might be rolling for giving the actual argument while someone else makes a roll providing research on the subject and a third pulls off some shenanigans to keep the opposition from getting some paid off expert to the meeting in time to testify, thus cutting off the opposition's Maneuver. In the case of asking for a date, a person might have given the prospective suitor some advice while someone else cut off some rumors placed against him and a third talked him up to the intended significant other.

*Rhiannon Kincaid wants to get her family off her case about her decision not to learn how to fight. She's planning to present her case to the elders of her family. When the day comes, Rhiannon is nervously trying to get ready for the first round. To help her out, Rhiannon's friend David Mason performs a maneuver to give her a **Pep Talk** which steels her nerves for the coming contest.*

The rolls in question do not have to be happening concurrently. You can easily allow some rolls to represent flashbacks. For example, perhaps in the second round of a sparring match the opposition tries to make a Maneuver of tampering with their person's gloves to coat them in a knockout drug, but one of the players rolls to Defend representing their own character intercepting that attempt. That all occurred in the past and happens as a flashback before getting back to the boxing Contest.

*On the second round of the contest, David is in the gallery unable to directly talk to Rhiannon but when Rhiannon's player suggests a maneuver where she remembers a conversation with her grandfather in an earlier session, he notes that he was also in that scene and had been vocal. The GM allows him to roll the maneuver. His attempt fails but since it was his action, not Rhiannon's, she still gets to roll on the Contest round.*

In some cases, these sideline actions might have more long-term impact. For example, if you are trying to get a scoop on some other newspaper, then one of the support players might perform a maneuver to send the opposing support on a Wild Goose Chase which will force them to have to deal with that Aspect before they can go back to helping their main representative. In a paintball match, one of the players might find that their character has been eliminated from the match by another team's Maneuver. They can still attempt support, but unless they are willing to cheat they are limited in how they can do so by the fact that they have the Aspect Eliminated.

*Out of the corner of his eye, David notices through a window that Rhiannon's rather militant Aunt Sersei is walking down towards the audience hall with a deliberate speed to her step and some*



files in her hand. He realizes that she's coming to make her argument to the Family leaders and decides to at least delay her. He walks out of the room and starts heading toward the kitchen, "accidentally" bumping into Sersei and causing the woman's files to scatter across the garden. This forces Sersei to deal with the **Files to the Wind** Aspect before she can appear in the audience chamber. This delays her just long enough for the elders to agree with Rhiannon's request for pressure to be taken off her to submit herself for martial training.

The addition of Maneuvers, counter Maneuvers, Defenses and the like will extend the Contest's length and add a bit more drama to the situation. If the primary representative is avoiding taking Maneuvers themselves, in order to avoid losing the opportunity to make a Contest roll, for instance, then you might also consider rotating the main participant each time. In a football game, perhaps the primary representative in the first roll is the quarterback versus the defense captain followed by a cheerleader vs. cheerleader main roll to hype morale, then two coaches giving half-time advice and so on. In a legal case, one Contest roll might actually be between the researchers with the lawyers rolling support by making an Aspect such as *Well-Applied Research* so that their Persuasive abilities help out but that it is the weight of the evidence itself which will most win that round.

### Moving Goal-Line

The normal goal in a Contest is to be the first to acquire three victories which can make for a very short Contest in some cases. This is often good since you might not want to spend too much time on a particular competition, but in other cases you want to extend the drama. The addition of sideline support mentioned above can already extend the time spent on a Contest, but you may still come to a case where a particular person isn't in a place where they can receive much active support and there's limited rationale to have flashback support but you want it to be dramatic anyway.

In this situation, you might decide to alter the number of victories needed to win the Contest. For example, you might apply volleyball rules and suggest that a player needs to win the Contest by having at least two more victories than their opponent. This would mean that the player would have to be the first person to get three or more victories and also have two victories more than their opponent.

*Alexei Kanst is taking part in Steel Knights tournament where the goal is to either eliminate the opposing team's forces or else to control a certain number of strategic points for a set number of rounds. Through some bad luck, Alexei's team has lost their big hitters and the opposing team already has two victories in the Contest. He has reasoned that his recon upright doesn't stand much of a chance in direct conflict with the other team's heavies and instead decides to avoid conflict and try to win the match on points. He uses his higher speed and maneuverability to capture a point getting a success with style and giving both sides two victories. In the following round his opponents manage to capture a point as well advancing to three victories. However, because they don't have two or more victories over Alexei, the GM rules the Contest will continue.*

Another option is to allow for circumstances that remove victories. Perhaps you might allow a person who succeeds with style on the Contest roll to remove a victory from their opponent rather than gain an extra victory themselves. In situations where the contestants tie their rolls and a twist occurs, you might remove a victory from everybody rather than add an Aspect to the scene. This creates a definite feel of back and forth that might go well with a debate type situation or any situation where ground is gained and lost.

### Three or More Sides

Another issue with Contests is in the nature of their essentially two-sided construction. However, it is fairly easy to construct a Contest between three or more people competing for the



same goal. The easiest way to do this is to run it as a standard two-sided Contest featuring the two most story centric characters as the two sides. Then you would have the other sides of the Contest appear as complications whenever a tie occurs.

*There are three candidates for the position of general manager in Kallistos Machren's store besides herself, but the largest amount of drama is between Kallistos and one Gregory Lasern. As such, the other two candidates only have an impact on things when a tie is rolled between Kallistos and Gregory.*

That method works best when you are dealing with NPCs and one PC. If you are dealing instead with multiple PCs each looking for the same goal, you can simply have everybody roll against each other with the person who gains the highest result winning the victories for that round. In this case, you might want to increase the number of victories necessary to win by one for each contestant or team more than two. So that a three-way competition requires four victories to end and a four-way competition requires five. This primarily works if you have several groups all rushing to achieve the same goal, such as three separate stores trying to get the best numbers in their regions and thus earn a bonus from head-office for the achievement.

*Rhiannon and her friends David, Michael and Leslie discover that there is a Steel Knights gaming event occurring the grand-prize of which is a Complete Series Blu-Ray Special Edition Collection of Hold the Line and all four of them want to win the show. Instead of a series of two-player battles in tournament style, all participants take part in a grand-scale free-for-all using miniatures acquired from a random purchase pack. As the primary interest of this is the battle between the PCs, the GM leaves the NPCs as potential complications and sets up a Contest between the four PCs requiring five victories to win.*

In other cases, you might have people trying to achieve separate but overlapping goals or you

may just want to have more details to use than you would get from a single contest. Perhaps two people are chasing a third and also trying to keep the other person from catching up to that third person. In this case, you also will want to simply have all three roll against each other, but calculate it for three separate Contests. This can continue to be extended as things get even more complex, as often happens at least once or twice in any slice of life anime or sitcom.

*Cloudwatcher is trying to get information on an event that they want to blog about. The adze swarm is normally rather laid-back but the blog does give them their leisure money so some effort must be made because the event coordinators are trying to keep this information quiet. To make matters more complex, another blogger is trying to get the same information ahead of Cloudwatcher and a gossip from a rival event is trying to seed false information.*

*As it stands, Cloudwatcher is in a contest with the event coordinators, the rival blogger and the gossip. The GM sets this up as six overlapping contests. All four involved roll a test determined by their choice of action. On round one, the gossip rolls 3, the rival blogger rolls 2, Cloudwatcher rolls 4 and the event coordinators roll 5.*

Victory Count	
<b>Cloudwatcher vs Rival – 1/0</b>	<b>Event vs Rival – 2/0</b>
<b>Cloudwatcher vs Gossip – 1/0</b>	<b>Event vs Gossip – 1/0</b>
<b>Cloudwatcher vs Event – 0/1</b>	<b>Rival vs Gossip – 0/1</b>

*On round two, they roll again, the rival and event get 3, Cloudwatcher and the gossip get 4. Due to the ties, the GM creates an Aspect of **Multiple Claimants to the Title of Information Officer** to represent the confusion created by the gossip posing as event staff.*



Victory Count	
<b>Cloudwatcher vs Rival – 2/0</b>	<b>Event vs Rival – 2/0</b>
<b>Cloudwatcher vs Gossip – 1/0</b>	<b>Event vs Gossip – 1/1</b>
<b>Cloudwatcher vs Event – 1/1</b>	<b>Rival vs Gossip – 0/2</b>

On round three, Cloudwatcher Compels the Aspect created by the tie to give the rival a -2 on their roll resulting in the rival getting a 1, the Event getting a 6, the gossip getting a 2 and Cloudwatcher getting a 3.

Victory Count	
<b>Cloudwatcher vs Rival – 3/0</b>	<b>Event vs Rival – 4/0</b>
<b>Cloudwatcher vs Gossip – 3/0</b>	<b>Event vs Gossip – 3/1</b>
<b>Cloudwatcher vs Event – 1/3</b>	<b>Rival vs Gossip – 0/3</b>

This results in the rival losing all of his contests and going home with the false information gained from the gossip. Cloudwatcher fails to get the information they wanted but do now realize the presence of the gossip and still have a story to write about the attempts to sabotage the event. The event remains secure in the information it protects and the rumors seeded by the gossip only really fool the one blogger who is going to have a really bad week after posting.

### Challenge-Ception

This is another case of stretching out the situation to allow for more tension, drama and chances for things to go wrong. Assume that there is a particular goal that you have set before your players or which they have set for themselves. It is an interesting goal but you and the rest of the players feel that a simple

Challenge is not really exciting enough. In order to give everyone some spotlight and highlighting the situation you might decide to split the problem into a Challenge for each individual player involved and use the combined results of those Challenges to determine the end result of the task at hand. This is basically a Challenge which uses Challenges instead of simple rolls to determine success.

Perhaps some players are trying to start a business. You could boil it down to a single Challenge with each player making one roll and determining the overall success of opening day from that. On the other hand, you might have one player run a Challenge trying to come up with an advertising campaign, a second player has to handle getting the physical place of business up and running, a third is dealing with the bureaucratic matters of registering trademarks and purchasing web domains and the fourth is perfecting whatever actual product or service is being sold. Each of these four situations is broken down into its own Challenge, for example, the product developer has to develop the prototype or beta, test it and then respond to the results of the test, each of which is its own roll.

The “Day at the Fair” booth subplot calls for the characters to make challenges attempting to support the booth, or at least avoid damaging it, in each scene of the scenario. This is one challenge per player across each of four scenes. In a three player game this is a total of twelve challenges, each of which will produce a positive or negative Aspect which will come into play in the Contests at the end of the scenario where each player gets to roll against another booth for one of the up-for-grabs titles.

In some playthroughs, the players have replaced the Challenges at each scene with other interactions. For example, Clint Faerbolg has been known to sabotage other booths and more than once characters have engaged in Contests when NPCs came to their booth to try out the games or when going to other booths to try out those challenges.



## THE USE OF MANEUVERS VERSUS ATTACKS

The end result of a maneuver is generally short term. Even if the target doesn't take the time to use an Overcome on the maneuver, it will in general go away on its own. By comparison, consequences of Moderate and higher severity will last for days, weeks or months of time even assuming that a player has the good fortune to get treatment for it immediately and is lucky on their rolls to deal with the injury. This difference matches up fairly well with the idea of consequence free vs. lasting consequences that one sees in the comparison of comedy and drama.

If you are going to have a character haul off and hit someone in a fit of pique the obvious choice of action is an attack. After all, you are setting out to hit and damage them. That is fine if your narrative intention is to attempt to leave a lasting consequence on the other person but if you're only doing it because you think it would be funny for your character to hit someone for what they said, it's likely not the best choice of action. Instead consider using a Maneuver to apply an Aspect of Slapped Silly or Right in the Jewels or the like.

In addition, Maneuvers actually make it easier to place noticeable effects on an opponent than with attacks. In a normal attack you would have to deal with the enemy's Stress Track and possibly their Armor, if they have it. The primary weakness of this method is that you cannot Take Out someone using maneuvers alone unless you drive them to concede, which they are allowed to do at any time. Again, however, if you want to have a petty fist fight between friends that isn't going to have any risk of hospitalizing someone, then that isn't really a weakness.

This extends to mental and social conflicts as well. When you use a mental attack; the feelings that you are inflicting on a person linger and make them vulnerable to further manipulation or browbeating. A social attack will negatively impact their reputations in some manner. At the extreme end you can give someone a mental breakdown or completely ruin their reputations. This is perfectly

fine when looking for serious drama, but it kills the joke in a comedy situation most of the time.

For example, a Maneuver might produce a short term Aspect of Egg on Her Face (literal or figurative) with which you might get people laughing at the target for the scene, but her overall reputation isn't going to take any lasting damage. If she was the High School Queen Bee before, she'll continue being so. By comparison, a Severe Consequence of Public Humiliation will last most of the rest of the school year and continue to provide problems for the target all the time, which will drastically affect her use in the campaign. In another case, an Aspect of Talked in Circles might represent some momentary confusion while Doubt Everything You Knew is something that could potentially lead to that character changing their Aspects.

*As mentioned before, Clint Faerbolg has been known to use the "D O" term with regards to Jennifer. Being part of Yomi culture he doesn't really understand the implications but he knows it pisses her off. Given that on a normal day he can wipe the floor with her, he doesn't care much and it builds his "tough guy" persona. On one particular event, however, he pissed her off enough by expanding on his use of the term and opening up all of Jennifer's **Chip on her Shoulder** and **Descent from Innsmouth** Aspects for justified use. Jennifer's player didn't want to do lasting damage to Clint, however and opted for a maneuver of **Head in a Popcorn Machine**. And then they ended up in Greta Van Hout's classroom after the dryad volunteered to deal with them instead of the Vice Principal.*

Sometimes, a lasting Consequence might be constructive toward a story you want to tell. For example, if a character gets in a fist fight and ends up having to spend the rest of the day at work with a black eye and trying to get around that to do their job while people flock to you with remedies to make the swelling stop or question you about how you acquired it. Along the same lines, consider the number of anime and sitcom episodes that begin with a character being humiliated in some way and spending the entire rest of the episode repairing



the damage. These are examples of legitimate Consequences being used to enhance the comedy of the situation.

## SOFT TAKE-OUTS

The normal assumption for take outs is that when someone is Taken Out that they have a Defeated Consequence applied to them. This is because the normal assumption is that you've battered through an opponent's guard to stab at them from Hell's dark heart, alternately you used your wiles to break down their defenses and wrap them around your little finger to play with, or maybe brought a combination of evidence, testimony and argument to court enough to have them convicted for life or so on. However, strictly speaking, the only thing that being Taken Out means with certainty is that the target is effectively no longer in that scene.

Permanent character removal is rare in most storylines that focus on day to day life. As such it is recommended that you avoid using Defeated Consequences when someone is taken out. Characters in a fight will mostly get to the end with some bruises and maybe a black eye or concussion. The result of losing a Mental Conflict should be getting forced to drop an argument or else becoming smitten with a suitor rather than a totally broken spirit. Being Taken Out in Social could result in some minor public humiliation rather than major legal or administrative problems.

*Torben Belenos is hoping to "invite" one of the non-human players to come with him so that he can prove that supernatural people actually exist. Miki Kwan gets into a social conflict with him, initially as a delay but manages to get lucky and is about to take him out. However, the characters don't want to actually have him end up arrested because once the police get involved it would just increase the risk of the supernatural being revealed. As such, instead of giving a Defeated Consequence of Arrested for Attempted Kidnapping(P), Miki decides that after a barrage of questions and facing her recording device repeti-*

*tively while people watch, Belenos decides to flee back to his trailer before the police show up.*

Make sure to discuss the matter with your players. In general, this will mostly be a problem in Physical Conflicts and be the least trouble in Mental Conflicts. It is going to be very rare for a player to take someone out in Mental Conflict and state that they want to completely break someone's spirit, drive them insane or so on. More often they're just going to want to win the immediate argument. By contrast, most other games have taught us that physical battle has to result in significant injury and the immediate thought when given the opportunity to narrate how you win a battle is to describe how you kill someone.

## CONCEDE DEFEAT

This goes along with the idea that a Demon Next Door campaign should feature drama but not danger. In general, you don't want any character to suffer a consequence above moderate. Most civilians are not going to have the will to persist in their goals past suffering a Moderate Consequence. There isn't going to be a fight to the death and the antagonists aren't usually going to try to get you arrested or break your spirit. The most common sort of conflict in civilian life is a relatively harmless brawl, the spread of vicious rumors or a shouting argument cut off when both sides decide to leave.

*Jadis's sister-in-law is trying to pressure her into taking some lessons in tactics and self-defense. Having no interest in fighting or conflict, the shapeshifter resists the pressure and it turns into an argument. Eventually, Jadis suffers a Major Mental Consequence Made to Feel a Burden from her sister-in-law. She decides to concede defeat to avoid the risk of heavier Consequences stating that if her own teaching schedule allows for it, she will look into self-defense classes.*

With regard to NPCs, for minions and other lower powered antagonists, consider reducing their severe consequence to a moderate. Try to concede before the characters are Defeated and encourage players to use soft take-outs rather than actual

I do not have a dark heart!

There are two  
L's there. Hel

Oh, nevermind.



Defeated Consequences. Likewise, when you manage to Defeat a player, avoid applying actual Defeated Consequences. Doing this allows you to keep the same antagonists in circulation since most of their injuries or stresses are only going to take a day or so to recover from.

When also using soft take-outs, you might get to a situation where a player realizes they can avoid being taken out by taking a Severe Consequence but opt to allow themselves to be taken-out instead because that is likely to be a soft take-out and not require nearly as much recovery time as a Severe Consequence. This fits right in with the mood most slice of life style games will have. Also note that a person does not normally get Fate Points this way, however, there is nothing to prevent a GM, or even a player, from offering a Fate Point in exchange for allowing a character to be Taken Out. Players and GMs alike should avoid taking advantage of this assumption in most cases as this is a situation that works best when there is trust involved.

This isn't to say that you have to rule out Severe, Extreme and Defeated consequences entirely, merely that they should not be common for either NPC or player. In some cases, the players are going to get in a situation that leaves them with a broken leg for a month, being the pariah at work after screwing up a big sales day or suffering from a bout of depression. In a dramatic focused campaign rather than a comedic one, you might want to allow for serious consequences to occur more frequently, though you'll want to make that clear for your players before you spring it on them.

*Quincey Haile's Aspects describe a potentially angsty and dramatic storyline in the nature of her abusive home life. She ends up coming home late after a drama club rehearsal went long and her mother enters into a vicious Conflict with her which ends with Quincey suffering the Extreme Consequence Contemplating Suicide (P). This is a moment of angst that would fit in well with a dramatic campaign or acting as a stand out point in an otherwise comedic campaign.*

## ALTERNATE CONSEQUENCE TYPES

There is nothing to say that the end of a sword fight has to result in a Physical Consequence. There have been cases involving brilliant sword-play exchanging back and forth only to end with a massive Mental Attack performed as the PC stopped her blade just short of the throat of her opponent in a display of complete dominance and mastery. Not a single Physical Consequence was laid, but the NPC suffered a Defeated Mental Consequence that left his confidence shattered. That particular instance came from a more standard action/adventure situation but it works with the slice of life and civilian campaigns as well.

One example of this would be if a person were to lose a fist fight in public then instead of applying a Physical Consequence when you take them out, you might instead declare that their reputation has been hurt by the defeat. In the case of teenagers, this would mean that the school population no longer takes you seriously as a threat. By contrast, in the case of a couple of adults, this might mean some problems at work or with the law over the fight. In either case, any sort of physical injury that wasn't already placed during the Conflict would be pure flavor to the scene. Someone might have a Moderate Consequence of having a black eye for the rest of the day, but their major Consequence is having to explain to their boss why they were fighting with a customer in the middle of the store.

*Kallistos Machren won the contest to gain the general manager's promotion but unfortunately her co-worker Gregory thinks he should have won. After getting drunk, Greg decides to confront Kallistos and taking a swing at her as she's locking up on her first night as the official general manager. Even with her body-hardening ability, the fight is difficult for Kallistos but she manages to eventually take the drunken idiot out. Instead of ending with a Physical Consequence however, she opts to give him the Social Consequence of **You're Fired (P)**. The GM agrees that it fits the scenario being similar to scenes from various television dramas where something similar happened. Kallistos then considers picking up some self-defense classes or perhaps practicing her skin-hardening Talent so that it is less painful.*



## PLAYER CHARACTER CONFLICT

Demon Next Door campaigns are likely to see a lot of conflict between player characters. Think of how often in our lives we get in the way of our friends and family, or how often they get in the way of what we want. Players might even end up playing characters that dislike each other intensely. This is perfectly fine and can be extremely enjoyable as long as the conflict remains between the characters and doesn't reach the players.

When deciding whether or not to provide an obstacle for another player, make sure to communicate with them. You don't want to accidentally stomp all over what they are working toward building up as a primary point of character development, but sometimes acting as a hindrance for another character helps that player fulfill his character goals. Aspects are a good thing to look at for this, but nothing beats talking over ideas with the other player in between games.

In some cases, you and the other character might be set up as rivals from the get go. Perhaps you and your friend decide that both of your characters are vying for the same love interest. Your characters are going to be spending a lot of time trying to show each other up. Make sure the interplay is balanced. The dice will have some influence over the give and take of the situation but the players also have control in the form of choosing whether or not to spend Fate Points to alter those rolls. A constant string of losses for one character can still be dramatic and this is a situation that has occurred in a number of TV shows. For example, it might lead to a character realizing that a crush they have is one-sided and bring them to move on.

Between you and the other player, you should have some idea as to where exactly you want to go with the situation, but realize that desires can change. In addition, the circumstances of the campaign will likely end up changing the preferences for how your situation ends up. This can end up in a surprising circumstance where the characters find themselves no longer direct rivals,

for example if they are both promoted in ways that makes their continued success depend on each other.

In general, it is better for player conflict to be a fluid affair rather than consistent enmity. While two particular characters might frequently come against each other over one particular subject, they might very well commonly find themselves in agreement against a third character's position on another subject. That third character might normally find themselves in agreement with the first on several things, but have a disagreement with a fourth. Characters might find each other annoying, but be still willing to work together.

Also, a character rivalry is one way to distribute Fate Points. Since players can Compel each other's Aspects in the same way a GM does, it is easy enough for the players of two rival characters to instigate an argument or fight purely for the purpose of getting Fate Points from a character that has a lot to a character that has very little. This works both mechanically and thematically since it nicely represents those moments when two characters blow up at each other just ahead of some event where they will have to work together. They will likely keep to maneuvers rather than attacks in order to avoid dealing lingering damage. Of course, if they aren't careful, they might end up hurting each other more than helping each other. As a GM do not punish them for this tactic, but if they do roll low and decide to Succeed with Cost, that cost may very well be a Consequence that lingers into the next scene.

*The PCs are coming up to a major situation and Clint has almost no Fate Points. Jennifer, meanwhile, has more Fate Points than she knows what to do with. As such, they decide to arrange a little spat ahead of going with the group to handle Adrian Rocha's counter-strike. Clint instigates the fight by insulting Jennifer for getting other people to fight her battles allowing Jennifer to respond by explaining to him just what calling her a "Deep One" means. After a couple of rounds neither of the characters has suffered a Consequence but Jennifer has Compelled a few of Clint's Aspects*



and passed Fate Points over to him. Clint concedes the “fight” with the idea that he’s actually going to think about things this time. He gets a Fate Point for conceding the Fight but no more than that because he suffered no Consequences. This way both he and Jennifer head into the Conflict with Adrian Rocha with Fate Points at hand.

## SELF-INFLICTED SOCIAL ATTACKS

There are times when the characters are their own worst enemy. This is especially true when a character has to come up with a cover story on the fly to conceal some sort of secret. Under pressure, some characters will come up with a potentially reputation damaging distraction. In such a circumstance, successfully fooling somebody might come back to bite you almost immediately.

An example of this is the classic “kiss me” ploy seen in movies and television for decades. This is potentially harmless when out in the city and nobody you know is likely to see you, but once you pull it in an area where people know you then rumors start to fly. This is especially true if you make a habit of using that sort of tactic and have used it with multiple individuals.

*Jade Millican is an intelligence agent in her mid-thirties who happens to still look sixteen due to being an oread and stuck at that physical age. She has been assigned as security at a high profile school. While investigating with Lachlan, another intelligence agent who is posing as a teacher, some of the other students pass by to see Jade and the teacher talking together. In order to prevent the wrong sort of rumors, Jade immediately starts blatantly and aggressively coming on to the other agent, much to his obvious distress. Her deception roll is successful and the passing students buy the idea that Jade is harassing Lachlan. The GM asks Jade to roll her own Persuasion against the result of her Deception and Jade unfortunately ends up doing 2 Social Stress to herself. For the rest of the day, rumors about Jade’s interests in older men are frequently heard but, as no consequence has been dealt, no one really takes it seriously.*

Of course, false displays of public affection aren’t the only potentially damaging behaviors that can be used. Other examples seen in various stories include faking substance abuse problems, faking membership in some group with a bad reputation, pretending to be investigating something in a semi-paranoid manner and any of number of other cover stories of dubious wisdom.

Normally this would not be a problem unless the player failed and opted for success with cost, the cost in question being social stress equal to the amount by which the Deception failed. You might also choose to Compel some relevant Aspect to represent this Deception coming around to haunt them. However, sometimes the chosen method of distraction is just so laden with absurdity or so double-edged that simply letting them get away with it seems to demand some cost. This could still be calling for them to pay a Fate Point.

As an option, the GM can run these sorts of tactics as a sort of self-inflicted social attack. In this case, let the player make their desired deceptive action as normal. Once it is successful, then have them roll their own Persuasion against itself as an attack. Any stress dealt by the attack is dealt to their own social track. Congratulate them on having just started rumors about themselves.

The original Deception has to be successful before you do this. If the target doesn’t believe what the character is selling, then they’re not going to be telling anyone about it. If the player fails the Deception then they can always opt to have a success with cost, basically acting so outrageous to sell the trick that the resultant rumors are that much worse. In which case add a bonus to the self-inflicted attack equal to the amount they missed the Deception by. However, if the player decides to simply fail, then there will likely be no social attack to go along with it.

This is not necessarily limited to active Deceptions. If a character convinces a group of NPC friends to do something a little bit weird and completely refuses to explain what it is all about, then it is entirely possible that it will get their friends to start talking about how out of charac-



ter they were acting and wondering if anything is going on. In this case, managing to power through questions and concerns to get the favor done might still arouse questions. The character could end up finding themselves getting the names of therapists, facing interventions and other such well-intentioned intrusions.

*Leah Killian is trying to mobilize the cheerleaders to help her look for one of her newly discovered supernatural friends who's gone missing. She has difficulty with the Persuasion roll but decides to succeed with cost. As a result, she convinces several cheerleaders to drop what they're doing and help out but some of them get a little bit annoyed with being asked to drop everything and the GM asks her to roll Persuasion against Persuasion. In an unlikely occurrence Leah suffers a Mild Consequence of **Strained Team Bond**. For the next day or so Leah is going to have to try to make things up to her cheerleader friends.*

It is also possible to tailor this mechanic for use with psychological issues. If a character has a phobia of tight spaces and they have to get through a crawl space for some reason, then it is reasonable to have them face difficulties. Using the character's own stats to run a Mental attack, such as their Willpower against itself, is a good way to represent their own unreasonable fears working against themselves. This can also be considered a way to run other issues such as OCD or addiction. In a more traditional game, you can use this against someone dealing with the guilt of having killed someone. Regardless, as compared to the self-inflicted Social attacks, this is more likely to be an application of a character's Aspects than a result of their actions. As such, using this mechanic with a Mental attack should almost always be considered a Compel and result in a Fate Point for the character.

Self-inflicted attacks, whether Mental or Social, can be used either seriously or comically. In the latter case, the resultant consequences are likely to be much less severe than in the former case. Used comically, a student covering the real point of conversation with a teacher by pretending to

flirt with him will result in gossip and occasional insults being directed her way. Used in a more serious matter, the teacher and student are likely to find themselves under investigation, bringing an unwanted spotlight onto their actions. In general, try to match the use of the mechanic to the intended mood of the action. A player who is being deliberately silly will more likely appreciate a comical application of this mechanic than a serious one.

If you take this option, you should make sure that it is enhancing the fun rather than hampering it. There are players that find it hilarious and consider it a good punchline to their own actions. One such player provided one of the new Expert Advantages in this book. Other players will find it needlessly punitive given the other options that already exist for the GM to replicate questionable plans resulting in backlash. Tailor the use of this mechanic to your group.

## UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

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Unintended consequences are at the center of a lot of stories but we're going to focus on slice-of-life style situations rather than more serious ones. As an example, assume a player is trying to run a Challenge that involves getting a project ready in time for a meeting but rolls poorly on one of the rolls. He chooses to succeed with major cost and gets everything he needs put together just fine. Unfortunately, when he gets to the meeting, it turns out that he left behind a mess or screwed up some job in the works that caused a coworker he's friendly with to be completely unprepared for the meeting. Now he has to decide whether to own up to his error or perhaps see his friend fired.

In another case, someone might want to win a race and come just short in the end and doesn't have any Fate Points to spend. You might decide to offer the character a chance to succeed at the end with the cost of suffering a Consequence. The nature of the Consequence could be as simple as a Broken Arm suffered when you throw yourself over the finish line or it could be a Questionable Victory due to the fact that your opponent only



lost because of some matter of coincidence and several people consider your victory to be unfair or even ill-gotten. Dealing with the Consequence might take an entire storyline.

You might also use Unintended Consequences as a Compel. For example, if one of the NPCs is a shy student with a horrible home life who only really comes to life on the stage and one of the players completely steals the leading role from her, especially if they used unfair means, then it might result in a storyline of heavy drama, especially if they didn't know about the NPC beforehand. In another circumstance, a character's recent successes might uncover this situation that they hadn't known about before leading to a comedic sequence of hijinks as they try to help out.

*After firing Gregory, several of the workers friendly with him quit, leaving Kallistos with a severely understaffed store. She now has to work up a new schedule and hire new employees in order to take up the slack left by the rats jumping ship.*

#### EXTENDED CONFLICTS, CONTESTS AND CHALLENGES

The standard situation which is resolved by Conflicts, Contests and Challenges are situations which are resolved over the course of a few minutes or hours: a bully taking the chance to humiliate someone publicly, an argument over how to deal with a problem, an attempt to get someone to date you, planning the perfect party, prepping for a game night, a fistfight or so on. However, the same framework can be used for more situations that play out over a longer period of time, especially when using the various suggestions above which can increase the complexity of the basic Challenge or Contest structure.

In particular, Social Stress and Consequences take longer than Physical and Mental Consequences to clear if you are using the default Strands of Fate style specific recovery times rather than basing on the number of scenes, sessions or milestones that have passed the way Fate Core judges recovery. In such case, Social Stress lasts for the entire day and as such, a Social Conflict can be played out over hours

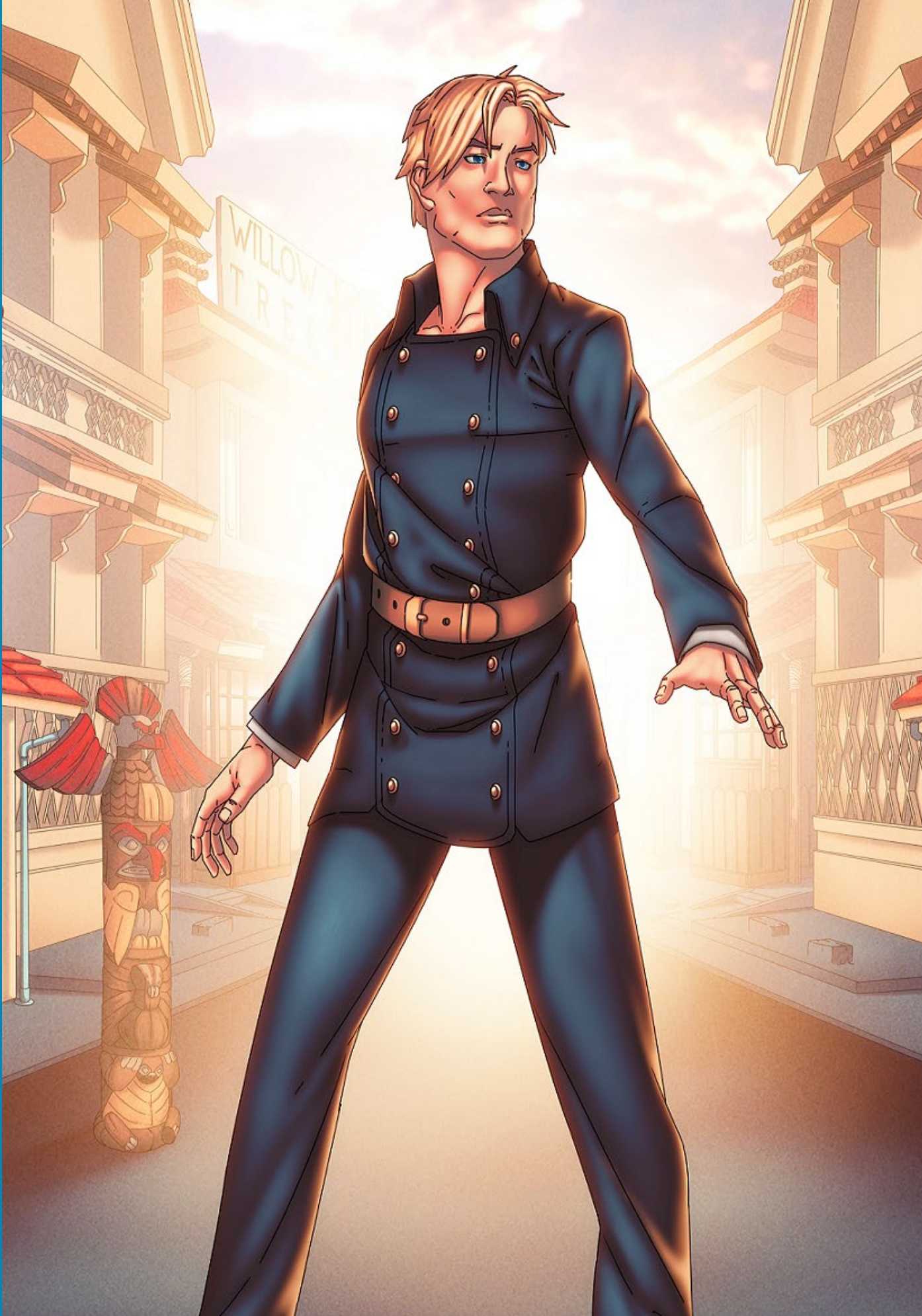
and since Consequences can take days to clear you can even play it out over days. In this case, instead of your coworker setting up a public humiliation they may be spreading rumors about you or undermining your efforts over several weeks. In fact, you can use this as a subplot threading through several other storylines.

As another example you might run something like an election as an extended contest over several sessions maybe determining whether or not the players or their opposition have gained a victory based on the results of the scenes of that session and keeping track of when one side or the other gains three or more total victories. In this case, the development of a twist could be an entire subplot or scene that creates an obstacle or opportunity for both sides that distracts them from directly confronting the election.

*Kallistos has to prove her skill as a manager despite the problems facing her after Gregory was fired. If she doesn't manage to improve matters at the restaurant she is fairly certain to be fired. The GM has placed her in an extended Contest against the restaurant. At least once a session, the GM creates a problem for the galatea manager related to the restaurant. These problems include creating a schedule, hiring new staff, dealing with bad costumers, having a health inspection and other such situations. If Kallistos comes out of the Contests and Challenges the winner she marks a Victory, if she fails then the restaurant marks a Victory. If it is unclear whether she succeeded or not, there is a tie and something weird happens that will probably affect the next session. After five sessions Kallistos manages to reach three Victories and her bosses are reasonably satisfied with her performance meaning the pressure is off for now.*



# CHARACTER CREATION GUIDELINES





## ABILITIES AND ADVANTAGES

The suggestions for purchasing Abilities for Demon Next Door campaigns is largely the same as for other campaigns. Have Abilities mostly at 2 with one or two 3's augmented for specific tasks by Advantages is generally the easiest way to do things. As far as maximums go, you'll probably want to set an initial maximum stat level at around 4 which gives a good level of flexibility within the Abilities. Most of the time, your characters will have Psychic stats ranging between 0 and 2 since these are mostly civilians that don't have much interest in such things. However, you may end up having a character or two who is a civilian making their living on Psychic abilities and thus justifying Metabolic, Manipulative and Sensitive scores of 3 or 4.

In general, you're going to want to avoid combat centric Advantages since battle and danger are not a central focus of this style of campaign. If you are playing a Demon Next Door campaign focusing on the between mission lives of the heroic or mercenary types, then the amount of combat centric Advantages you take will depend on how much of the combat takes place on-screen. If it is all off-screen, you might want to leave the combat abilities to just Aspects. For that matter, Advantages that would normally be considered not important enough to stat out in a combat centric game might make more sense to do so in a Demon Next Door game.

*One of the example spells for Domains and Realms in the core book is a Susano'o sourced spelled that makes clothing wet. This spell would have minimal use for a campaign focused on hunting beasts and would probably be best represented as a basic maneuver rather than statting it out but when you get to a college or high-school hijinks based games it begins to have a lot of in-game utility and the repeat use of it probably justifies giving it stats.*

The higher-powered Rings mostly exist to allow for characters that have a broader range of skills and powers. While a lot of skills and powers can

be covered simply with Aspects, sometimes you and your players will desire a higher degree of granularity in character creation. However, it does become something of a challenge at the higher power levels to find Advantages that you can purchase to fit the theme. In general, Demon Next Door will work just fine in the lower Rings from Ring 12 to Ring 10.

## ASPECTS

The main dividing line between a Demon Next Door campaign and other campaigns is the sort of Aspects involved. This is generally the truth of any campaign but it bears discussion. You are going to want to have Aspects that focus on the reputation and personality of a character more than on their ability to handle a fight. Consider the overall tone of the campaign as well. If the campaign is going to focus on comedy then a lot of the Aspects may relate to rather petty concerns with a touch of absurdity. If you're going for a dramatic sort of storyline then the Aspects will probably relate to serious emotional issues.

*Dima Zaman has a lot of Aspects that mostly fit a comedic story arc. Including Aspects like **Full Blown New Ager** to represent that she thinks she knows everything there is about the supernatural while actually being almost completely wrong; or **Hey, I'm gothy and stuff! Stop Ignoring me! (Persuasion)** to highlight the fact that she is at least a mild attention junkie. Her Ambition Aspect, **To Write the Perfect Game**, is actually a somewhat lofty ambition that would require some real effort and discipline, but combined with some of her other Aspects you can easily see her ignoring outside commentary especially since she's **Close-Minded to the Possibility Her Beliefs are Wrong (Reasoning)** and the fact that her Conviction is **I Do What I Will**. She presents the possibility of a lot of aggressive and confrontational sort of comedy.*

*Bruce Walters, by contrast, presents a lot more in the way of high drama. He is a **Senator's Son** and plans **To Be a Real Statesmen** while being **Blind to the Downside of Politics**. He's*



also in the crosshairs of his **Mother's Political Enemies**. These and his other Aspects set up a high potential for putting some serious, real-life problems in Bruce's way. Disillusionment, social sabotage and other such things are the sort of situation he's likely going to have to face in a campaign. He does have a handful of more light-hearted Aspects, such as A **Snappy Dresser (Resources)** or being **Popular All Around (Persuasion)** but a quick look at his Aspect list feels more like a serious drama than a sitcom.

Chiko Sawatoru is a bit more of a mix. She has a lot of comedic possibility in the form of a Defining Aspect of **High Queen Bee** and a Conviction of **I have people to do that for me** but she also has some heavy drama in her Aspects such as **Starting to notice she's locked in a closet** and **Vehicle for her Parent's Desires (Willpower)**. This represents the fact that she has let her parents define her identity for most of her life and she is just now starting to realize things about herself that conflict with what her parents want her to do for them. While a lot of her appearances will involve her being the stereotypical spoiled corporate princess, the story arc represented in her Aspects will eventually lead her into conflict with her parents and her own emerging sexuality.

In some cases, especially in hybrid campaigns that mix some level of action and danger with between mission drama or comedy, you'll have characters that have taken an interest in fighting or actually participate in dangerous, combat oriented activities as an occupation. You also might eventually have a Demon Next Door campaign that features powerful and well-trained psychics who simply haven't had the need for much crisis training or battle-skill.

Clint Faerbolg is a wannabe tough guy. This is represented by some of his Aspects such as **Gung-Ho Half-Demon; Demons are Warriors, not Merchants; and Boxing Classes Every Week (Strength)**. However, this is modified by Aspects such as **Never Been in a Real Crisis**

and the rather petulant "**Mom, Demons don't bake cookies.**" (**Persuasion**) Specialty Aspect. One thing to notice about the first three is that only the Aspect about boxing classes actually confirms any real experience. The other two simply convey attitude. This all sets Clint up as someone with the potential to someday be a good warrior, but who is very much untested and unaware of the realities of a fight.

Chei Green, on the other hand, has a lot of Aspects that show that he comes from a troubled background. His Defining Aspect is **Low-Income Thug** and he has the Conviction that **Everything is a Fight**. Most of his other Aspects give him a story arc that fits the Demon Next Door campaign, however, including his ambition **To Escape the Trap** referring to his desire to get out of poverty and the fact that **Everybody thinks I'm a Criminal (Persuasion)** which implies that, despite his Burglar Advantage, he hasn't actually committed crimes yet (otherwise the word "thinks" would have been "knows"). Chei represents a fish out of water character who would often be the person other characters turn to when hijinks go wrong enough that something turns physical, or in those moments when a bit of high drama turns to a bit of danger.

Jaina Siskind is a therianthrope shapeshifter married into the renowned Siskind family. The campaign she's in focuses on the domestic side of the Sorcerer Families and involves a lot of high-powered psychics. She herself is a masterful shapeshifter able to take on multiple forms and mix and match them easily. Her Defining Aspect is **Civilian Shapeshifting Virtuoso and Instructor**. Civilian is added to highlight the fact that she is not a warrior. Virtuoso was chosen over Master for its artistic implications where as Master implies a more general sort of competence. She also has the Aspect **No Taste For Violence (Willpower)** as an Inferior Skill. These Aspects will color the situation whenever she happens to get into a battle, often making things difficult for her.



## NEW EXPERT ADVANTAGES

### Adult Sense

Possessed by teachers and parents alike, this is that uncanny ability for knowing when some child is about to stick their hand in the proverbial cookie jar. You have a +2 bonus to Perception to detect when a child is about to do something problematic, accidental or otherwise giving you time to try and prevent it.

### Bureaucratic Hero

For some people, red tape is this unyielding substance born of frustration and petty power-trips. In your case, it is more like a string puzzle that you can manipulate into ever more amazing shapes. You gain a +2 bonus to actions made to circumvent red-tape without consequence.

### Carouser

Some people just seem to be made to party. As long as you're having a good time, you can take whatever chemistry, biology and life can throw at you. . You gain a +2 to Endurance and Willpower rolls made to resist fatigue, intoxication, intimidation or other conditions as long as you're enjoying a rousing good time.

### Don't Think About It

Sometimes you just need to compartmentalize a phobia for a few minutes so that you can do something to keep yourself from dying. You suffer 2 less Stress from self-inflicted Mental Attacks.

### Exhibitionist

Your behavior is so unabashedly strange and outrageous that it is sometimes difficult for people to figure out how to attack your reputation. +1 bonus to Willpower Social or Mental defenses when using your own outrageous behavior to deflect attacks on your esteem or reputation.

### Gamer

**Others only adopted the game. You were born to it, molded by it. You are a gamer.** Choose a particular kind of game which you are exceptionally skilled at. You gain a +1 to rolls involving the rules and strategies of that kind of game. The categories could be as broad as Board Games,

Card Games and Video Games; or as narrow as Ancient Board Games, Classic Board Games, Cooperative Board Games, Traitor Board Games, Strategy Board Games and so on. You should check with your GM how broadly or narrowly they want to define these categories for their campaign.

### Gossip-Monger

Gossip flows through you like water flows through rivers (or maybe a sewer). In any case, you always seem to be hearing new bits of news and finding someone to pass it on to. You gain a +1 bonus to rolls made to learn and spread new pieces of gossip.

### In the Name of Occultism

You are very passionate about researching the supernatural. You might not actually know anything substantial about it, but your passion is intense and often wins you arguments. You gain a +2 bonus on all Social rolls in which you need to convince another person to do what you say regarding the occult if the other person believes you know more than they do.

### Just Being You

Someone is weird. The weirdness attracts attention and discussion, often ridicule. The weirdness happens every day and becomes expected. Thus the weird becomes the normal. That's where you sit. The weird has become the normal. You suffer 2 less Stress from self-inflicted Social Attacks.

### Manager Material

The primary task of a manager is to make decisions about the best possible course to efficiently and effectively run a business. . Gain a +1 bonus to Reason rolls for solving problems related to the procedures of a business, club or other organization.

### Neighborhood Watch

You know just about everybody and everything in your neighborhood, school, workplace or other area and have an eye for when something is amiss. Gain a +1 bonus to Perception or Empathy rolls made to notice something unusual about people or things in your neighborhood.



### News Hound

You might be particularly obsessed with figuring out the source of a rumor. Perhaps you have an instinct for this sort of thing. You may have even been taught the arcane concept of responsible journalism. Gain a +1 bonus when tracing gossip, rumors and leads to their source.

### Passion of the Artist

Your ability to charm and seduce a person sometimes seems to be unrelated to your actual personality. Whether you're a wilting violet or a horrible bore normally, you becoming bizarrely alluring when you are discussing a piece of your art present in the scene. Use Craft in place of Persuasion when seducing or charming someone using your art as a prop.

### Rational

You do not give in to purely emotional appeals. When someone tries to conceal a hole in their argument by raising emotional intensity or spouting a torrent of nonsense, you have an easy time cutting through the smokescreen. +2 bonus on all rolls to Overcome Blocks created by attempts to blind reason with nonsense and emotion.

### Romantic Advisor

You have a way with advising people on romantic matters. Large nose and tragic deaths are fortunately not required to have this Advantage. Gain a +2 bonus made to rolls intended to help someone else succeed at romance.

### Slippery Wrestler

A wrestling match with you is likely to be as much an exercise in frustration as trying to win a thumb war against someone with a double-jointed thumb. You gain a +2 bonus to resist any maneuvers related to pushing, pulling, tripping, restraining or pinning your character.

### Teacher's Pet

When you have a way of ingratiating yourself with people in authority, you might hear the name of this advantage fairly often. You gain a +2 bonus to Persuasion rolls involving your superiors.

## NEW HEROIC ADVANTAGES

### Casual Conversationalist

You have a knack for discussing every subject with such a level of casual attitude that nobody thinks there's anything important being discussed. You're the sort of person that can talk about top secret, classified materials on the open street and be sure that nothing will leak. You seem to have a sense of when it is safe to talk. By spending a Fate Point, you can insure that nobody listens in on you for the scene regardless of what the topic of conversation is. If your character is already under surveillance when this advantage is activated, the GM instead tells you that you have a vague sense of being watched.

### Corporate Family

You have a strong family connection with the upper echelons of a powerful corporation. You gain a new Character Aspect (maximum seven) related to this connection and a +1 bonus on all Persuasion rolls when interacting with employees of the company or people that see you as a celebrity.

### Dramatically Skilled

You are so exceptionally skilled at some craft that people are awed to simply watch you do it. This could be setting up product displays in a store, writing memos, answering phones, creating charts, football, racing, cooking, robotics, gaming or even something that is intended to be a performance art like singing or acting. Maybe you do it on purpose, maybe you have no idea how impressed people are. Either way you draw a crowd. You can use your Craft ability in place of Persuasion in order to impress and draw a crowd as long as you are engaged in your chosen specialty. In addition, Fate Points you spend on actions to keep the audience entertained with your skill give a +3 bonus instead of a +2.

### Hip to be Square

You follow the rules and do what's expected of you and yet somehow still manage to have a reputation for being cool despite it all. You have a +2 bonus to resist peer pressure or calm down authority figures. You can sacrifice this bonus



Minaba.

Minaba.

Naiki

Both.

HEY, WHAT DID I DO?

Minaba.

to gain a +3 bonus to a Persuasion roll made to convince someone of an action that would normally be frowned upon socially since someone like you would only be in favor of such things if they were absolutely necessary. If you do sacrifice your bonus, it returns as if it were a Mild Social Consequence taking at least a day to recover.

### Shenanigans and Hijinks

You have a knack for involving yourself in weird situations that have a tendency to spread beyond you in strange, but occasionally beneficial ways. Once per scene you may spend a Fate Point to perform a Maneuver to place an Aspect on a scene that you are not directly involved in representing the unexpected Rube-Goldbergian results of something you did somewhere else. If successful, you can take actions to aid allies or hinder opponents as long as the action makes sense as something that could happen as a result of the Aspect you placed. If the Aspect is removed, you can no longer aid the scene.

## NEW POWER ADVANTAGES

### Swarm Body

<b>Sample Aspects:</b>	Body of Spiders, Cloud of Insects
<b>Base AP Cost:</b>	2
<b>Activation:</b>	See Below
<b>Power Type:</b>	Touched

The character primarily operates as a single individual but is actually made of a large number of tiny individual bodies being controlled by a single mind. This provides some benefits and also presents some difficulties as well.

The most obvious benefit is that purely physical weapons have decidedly minimal impact on a character that has a swarm body. The character typically only suffers stress from conventional firearms and hand-weapons.

At the GMs discretion, some weapons or Advantages might allow for an opponent to attempt to deal Consequences. For example, an opponent might invoke a Shotgun Aspect to be

able to disrupt a large amount of the swarm or a channeller might invoke their Enhanced Agility Aspect in order to individually target the swarm with their weapons or punches.

The character is also able to flow through small spaces or around obstacles and reform on the other side. This requires a Sensitive Maneuver with a Difficulty dependent on how far the character's body is stretched out. This check is required each round that the stretching continues.

Situation	Difficulty	Example
No spread required	0	Passing through jail cell bars.
Spread within normal reach	2	Passing through a mail slot.
Spread up to normal double reach	4	Passing through a long tube.
Spread across a zone	6	Spreading weight over a field to avoid triggering mines.

Unfortunately, the nature of the character's body presents some dangers. Gasses and chemicals are able to filter easily amongst the component bodies. As such gas or chemical attacks have double the normal bonus when targeting a character with a swarm body. Likewise, the smaller doses needed to affect the individual bodies means that a gas which is only disorienting or distasteful to a human can be lethal to a swarm body.

High winds might scatter the character beyond their ability to maintain cohesion and unity, causing injury or even death. Finally, when performing anything that might be considered a difficult feat of strength relative to their Ability they cannot take supplemental actions due to the amount of focus needed to coordinate the swarm.

### Modifiers:

**+1 (Dispersion Mastery)** – The character gains a +2 to perform maneuvers involving stretching their body. This can be taken twice at Ring 8 or higher and three times at Ring 4 or higher.

**+2 (Weightless)** – The character is made up of flight capable components and thus does not



usually register significant weight. However, they are not able to fly for extended periods without rest and so the swarm as a whole remains grounded to conserve energy.

**+2 (Flight)** – The character's individual components are capable of sustained flight allowing them to use Slow and Agile flight. The character must already have the Weightless modifier. This allows the character to purchase Flight modifiers found in Strands of Fate and Strands of Power.

**+3 (True Swarm)** – The character is able to spread their components out and operate as a unit over an extended period of time. This requires a Difficulty 6 Sensitive Maneuver to begin with and lasts for a scene. During this time, the character gains the Aspect Swarming and may perform a number of actions within their own zone equal to their rank in Sensitive. Alternately, they can choose to attack any number of targets within the zone they cover.

**+0 (Ageless)** – While the component bodies might fail and die due to age, the soul and intellect that controls the group is fine simply cycling through new bodies.

## NEW SPECIES TEMPLATES

### SPECIES TEMPLATES DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

The species templates below and those in the core book are designed as one way to represent an average member of a non-human species in the Divine Blood setting. These are options only and only rarely will you come across something like "Swarm Body" which is more or less a necessity for the adze. If you want to play a galatea with a weaker version of armor, that is doable. Some sidhe will use tattoos and other methods to tamp down their inherent beauty so the Unnerving Perfection Advantage can be downgraded to simply Striking Looks.

The species templates are designed so that it is entirely possible to purchase them from Advantage Points. When I include Specialty Aspects that are part of the species, they are priced with the

assumption that these will be taken in addition to the standard five Specialty Aspects every character gets. Likewise, Expert Advantages are assumed to be taken from the pool of Advantage points rather than the three Experts every character gets for free. Most of the Power Advantages are not given a specific Power Aspect because these will be different from character to character.

Aspects and Advantages included are meant to represent widespread capabilities and situations that face a particular species. As an example, if you look between the adze, chiang shih and vampyr in this book and the core book you will find that only the vampyr has a template granted Aspect highlighting their diet. This is because the adze and chiang shih live primarily in the Community where acquiring the necessary supplements and protein drinks is relatively easy while vampyr mostly don't realize what they are and have to go through the red-tape of having prescriptions and going to a pharmacy for their dietary needs, probably at greater expense. Being vampires doesn't generally cause the adze and chiang shih any problem so it was not included as a template granted Aspect. A vampyr within the community might replace the Rarefied Diet and Light Sensitivity (Endurance) Aspect with something else like Dracula Jokes and Garlic Gifts (Persuasion) to represent the fact that they manage their light and diet problems just fine but get a lot of teasing from other people they know in the Community.

The price of each species template is kept to 6 AP or below. This allows every one of these species templates to be added to a character at even Ring 12, assuming the player sacrifices 2 Refresh. Some of the templates represent more limited examples of the species. This is why the various methods of teleportation, magic, shaping and channeling don't appear on the templates for Gods and Demons. All those abilities are trained rather than inherent so they were left off to keep the price at 6 AP even if teleportation is a near ubiquitous skill for the Immortals. It is also why there is both an immature and mature version of the succubus, since the range of powers they display is expensive to model precisely in this system.





## ADZE

The Adze are colonies of swarming insects that usually look something like certain species of biting flies. Normally, they maintain an illusion of a humanoid form by holding close together and projecting a human face. They are vampiric, feeding on blood, usually that of live-stock but they can live comfortably on the same protein mixes *chiang shih* and *vampyr drink* as well. In general, younger swarms have to remain close together and when separated too far will essentially die, though individual insects may survive operating on pure mechanical instinct. Adze will occasionally produce the start of a new individual within their swarm. This usually occurs after interaction with a second adze but can occasionally occur spontaneously. This second swarm will generally spend a year forming within their parent until they are capable of sustaining themselves. It takes about ten to twelve years for an adze swarm to mature fully once they become independent.

### Sample Defining Aspects:

Adze Hermit, Pest Control Sentient Swarm, Adze Insect Rights Advocate

### Power Advantages:

Swarm Body (Weightless), Illusion (Personal Only, Illusory Disguises)

<b>Package Cost:</b>	6 AP (Swarm Body: Weightless 4 + Illusions: Personal, Illusory Disguise 2)
<b>Life-Force Stress:</b>	Highest Physical + Empathy
<b>Life-Force Name/Color:</b>	Cohesion/Magenta

### Average Life Expectancy:

Roughly 80 years due to inbreeding within the swarm. There are numerous ways for an adze to basically maintain unlimited lifespan but most either don't know the methods or consider it unimportant. A carefully maintained internal breeding program and occasional shaping rituals to tweak the genetic diversity are two possible explanations. Any PC with a similar explanation can purchase the 0 pt ageless modifier on Swarm Body.





### Suggested Power Advantages:

Animal Whisperer (usually insects only), Exchange, Flight (Strands of Fate/Strands of Power), Morph (Strands of Fate/Strands of Power), Poison, Telepathy

### CHIJOU ONI

The oni were originally a sidhe-created slave race made to do physical labor and act as brute enforcers. They were large, red-skinned and brutish beings with little to no sense of self. Eventually an oni tasted a liquor of some sort and discovered that the alcohol suppressed the fugue state they were designed to live in. The oni rebelled soon after this discovery and most left Earth to take up residence in the shards. Those that remained on Earth interbred heavily with the humans and similar races resulting in the species diverging. The earthborn “chijou” oni eventually evolved to a nearly human appearance with only a small pair of horns appearing on their forehead to betray them. These horns are usually concealed with a hat, bandana or similar such head-covering. One out of every hundred oni is born with the bright red skin of ancient myths. Oddly, the divergence from their ancestors has caused some of their sidhe heritage to more clearly emerge. They tend to be attractive from a human point of view and they are very close to true-breeding with close to four-fifths of the children of inter-species matches being full oni. They do not, however, require non-oni to reproduce and do not possess the disturbing perfection of the sidhe. Chijou oni are often stronger and tougher than they appear to be due to a consistent low-level psychic body enhancement.

### Sample Defining Aspects:

Oni Liquor Connoisseur, Horned Human Trafficking Activist, Oni with an Iron Bar

### Specialty Aspects:

Drunkerer Means Smarterer (Willpower), Inexplicable Strength (Strength)

### Expert Advantages:

Striking Looks

### Heroic Advantages:

Herculean Strength, Unyielding Fortitude



### Power Advantages:

**Weakness:** The less alcohol in the oni's system, the more difficulty they have expressing their own opinions and personality. At complete sobriety, the oni effectively can't perform social actions and has a 0 Willpower except when a request or order contradicts an order from a recognized authority.

<b>Package Cost:</b>	3 AP (Expert Advantage 1 + 2 Specialty Aspects 1 + 2 Heroic Advantages 4 – Weakness 3)
<b>Life-Force Stress:</b>	Highest Psychic + Persuasion
<b>Life-Force Name/Color:</b>	Joy/Rose

### Average Life-Expectancy:

100 years

### Suggested Power Advantages:

Armor, Awe, Super Endurance (Strands of Fate/Strands of Power), Super Strength (Strands of Fate/Strands of Power), Terrify

## GALATEA

The galatea are named for the legend of the statue that was brought to life by Aphrodite as a reward to the sculptor Pygmalion. They appear to be human with stone-like colorations including unusual swirls and patterns. Most use make-up and hair dye to appear human, though the legalization of exotic gene-mods in Japan has encouraged some Japanese galatea to walk out in their natural colors. Others will blame their coloration on albinism, melanism and similar conditions affecting skin coloration. They are most known for their ability to temporarily harden their skin to a stone-like consistency in order to provide themselves with a substantial amount of physical protection though most claim that it is uncomfortable. Galatea require a much higher calcium content to their diet than most species and are evolved to include bone in their diet. Contrary to rumor, they do not eat rocks and typically do not appreciate the suggestion.

### Sample Defining Aspects:

Professional Statue, Stony-Faced Soldier, Living Marble Beauty





**Power Advantages:**

Armor (Improved 3, Ablative 2 – Provides AR: 4 with Stress Track OOOO)

<b>Package Cost:</b>	6 AP (Armor: Improved 3, Ablative 2 – 6)
<b>Life-Force Stress:</b>	Highest Psychic + Endurance
<b>Life-Force Name/Color:</b>	Form/Grey

**Average Life-Expectancy:**

About 120 years

**Suggested Power Advantages:**

Further Armor modifiers, Body Weaponry (Strands of Fate/Strands of Power), Super Endurance (Strands of Fate/Strands of Power), Super Strength (Strands of Fate/Strands of Power)

**NEKOMATA**

Nekomata are shapeshifting two-tailed cats who are capable of presenting a human disguise. In their natural state, they appear as human-sized versions of small cats equally comfortable on two or four feet and front paws with long fingers and opposable thumbs. Most notable about the nekomata is that they have exceptionally long native life-spans and a rather slow childhood. From birth they appear to be common house cats, though some will show signs of wild cat heritage and the digits on their front paws will be longer than normal. Somewhere between fifteen to twenty years old they begin to grow a second tail and develop the ability to take human form at which point they start to grow in size until they hit adulthood between the age of thirty and forty. Nekomata usually have multiple births and often keep a large number of domestic cats as camouflage for any children they have, though it is unusual for a nekomata to start a family at less than a century of age. Approximately one out of eighty nekomata is vampiric and require the same sort of protein drinks and supplements as vampyr and Chiang Shih or else a blood centric diet. Nekomata have a particular fondness for low magic and from ancient times have been accused of grave-robbing in order to acquire ingredients to their potions.





**Sample Defining Aspect:**

Crazy Cat Lady, Vampiric Cat Burglar, Cat in a Human Suit

**Power Advantages:**

Doppelganger: Gender Shift, Illusion (Personal Illusion only, Human Disguise, Uses Metabolic. This represents their human appearance as most nekomata aren't as capable as other shapeshifters. More accomplished nekomata should purchase Morph instead), Body Weaponry: Retractable

<b>Package Cost:</b>	6 AP (Doppelganger 2 + Illusion 2 + Body Weaponry 2)
<b>Life-Force Stress:</b>	Highest Psychic + Reasoning
<b>Life-Force Name/Color:</b>	Mau/Pale Teal with occasional pearly fog-like patches.

**Average Life-Expectancy:**

500 years

**Suggested Power Advantages:**

Animal Whisperer, Cloaking, Death Seer, Enhanced Agility (Strands of Fate/Strands of Power), Exchange, Growth (Strands of Fate/Strands of Power), Morph (Strands of Fate/Strands of Power), Transmogrification (Strands of Fate/Strands of Power), Shapeshifting (Strands of Fate/Strands of Power), Shrinking (Strands of Fate/Strands of Power)

**NEW SKILL TEMPLATES**

Similar to the species templates, the skill templates are simply suggestions. In fact they are even more so than the species templates are since there is a much wider range of Aspects and Advantages that work to creating, say, a fast food employee than a kitsune. Skills and occupations rarely have anything like the biological restrictions that separate one species from another.

Contrary to the way the species templates are designed, the Aspects listed are simple suggestions and are not included in the cost of the Package. You would fill them in to one of your standard Character or Specialty Aspect options as normal. However, the suggested Expert Advantages are assumed to come from your Advantage points rather than the free Experts just like with the species templates.

As with the species template, you are free to modify these to create cheaper or more expensive packages as you desire.

**ACTIVIST**

An activist is characterized by the attitude of trying to make things better for the people around them. They all tend to be people who are used to facing hostility but their approach tends to vary. Some approach activism from a position of information and research while others focus on emotional arguments. Regardless of their preference, the best also keep to logic and rationality. Unfortunately, this category can also include individuals who may be well-intentioned but approach things in ways that will only harm their cause as well as those who are more interested in the spotlight than the cause. In addition, even if they are honest believers in their cause, the cause itself might be faulty.

**Sample Character Aspects:**

Social Justice Warrior; Non-Human Rights Activist; Well-Meaning Meddler

**Suggested Specialty Aspects:**

Well-Educated and Reasonable (Persuasion); Emotions Lead the Way (Willpower); Social Media-Fu (Persuasion)

**Abilities:**

They likely have a 3 in Willpower. Those that appeal to emotions will probably have good Persuasion or Empathy. Those that appeal to logic and research will likely have good Reasoning or Knowledge. Those that ignore facts and logic might have low Knowledge. Those faking it will likely have good Deception.

**Expert Advantages:**

Choose Two: Academic, Chewbacca Defense, Favored Rival (Bigots), Legal Eagle, Silver Tongue, Well-Known

<b>Package Cost:</b>	2 AP
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**EDUCATOR**

This includes teachers, principals, tutors and company training specialists. The purpose of an educator is to provide other people with the instruction that



they need to be able to accomplish a particular task. Teachers will often have to deal with the reputation that it is a career for people unable to handle a “real” job. In addition, some people come into the teacher career expecting it to be an easy task. The best teachers spend every year keeping up to date on their profession and the newest studies and methods while the worst will set themselves up as antagonists out to defeat their students. As with any career there are a rare number of teachers who have made their occupation into a source of modest wealth but these are normally freelance instructors hired to teach specialty skills like figure dancing or else run efficiency seminars for companies.

#### Suggested Character Aspects:

Literally An Ancient History Teacher; Grumpy Adversarial English Teacher; Ever-Smiling Motivational Speaker

#### Suggested Specialty Aspects:

Patience of Legend (Willpower); Trained in the Newest Methods (Knowledge); Phoning In the Instruction (Persuasion)

#### Expert Advantages:

Choose two: Academic, Doctorate (Education), Doctorate (specialty subject), Professional (Educator), Professional (specialty occupation), Scary, Smooth Over, Tide of Trivia

<b>Package Cost:</b>	2 AP (Expert Advantages 2)
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### GEEK

Geeks tend to be very passionate about their interests. Get them talking and they just might not know when to stop. While the stereotypical geek tends to be into interests like gaming, comics, science-fiction and the like; this template also extends to die-hard sports-fans, fans of particular musical groups, people who watch and keep track of soap operas or pretty much any subject for which there is a large amount of trivia and the propensity for bizarre enthusiasm once the subject is brought up.

#### Suggested Character Aspects:

Body-Painted Football Fan; Comic Book Collector; Screaming Fanboy (Fangirl)

#### Suggested Specialty Aspects:

Knows the band’s history better than the band does (Knowledge); Gotta Collect Them All (Willpower); Outrageous Costumes (Resources)

#### Expert Advantages:

Choose two: Academic, Artist, Book Worm, Chewbacca Defense, Digital Spider, Doctorate (Subject of Passion), Game Shark, Tide of Trivia

#### Heroic Advantages:

Choose One: Geek Speak (Strands of Fate/ Strands of Power), Hip to be Square, Shenanigans and Hijinks

<b>Package Cost:</b>	4 AP (Expert Advantages 2 + Heroic Advantage 2)
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### GOSSIP

Gossips focus on learning and either controlling or spreading rumors. This includes high school tongue-waggers and political spin doctors. The motivations for a gossip vary from person to person. A number of gossips don’t realize what they’re doing and spread rumors by accident. Others just can’t resist showing off by revealing themselves to be the first person to know something. There are malicious rumor mongers and the occasional blackmailers as well as those that use rumors to achieve a specific aim. This template could also easily be tweaked to create several types of journalist.

#### Suggested Character Aspects:

Campaign Public Relations Officer; Spiteful Gossip; Chatterbox Teenager

#### Suggested Specialty Aspects:

Can’t Keep a Secret (Willpower); Mastered the Word of Mouth (Persuasion); Tailored Slip of the Tongue (Deception)

#### Expert Advantages:

Choose two: Con-Man, Gossip-Monger, Natural Empath, Neighborhood Watch, News Hound, Sense Deception, Tide of Trivia

<b>Package Cost:</b>	2 AP (Expert Advantages)
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## HOME - BOUND ADULT

There are a lot of different causes for why a person would choose to stay home rather than go out to work. In the case of non-humans unable to normally pass as human, they might actually do most or all of their work from their home. Some might have a disability that keeps them stuck in the house. In another case, they might simply be focused on taking care of the children as per the stereotypical housewife or the newly emerging house-husband.

### Suggested Character Aspects:

Freelance IT Tech; Agoraphobic Hearth Goddess; Kid-Wrangler Extraordinaire

### Suggested Specialty Aspects:

Juggling Clients and Children for Barnum and Bailey's (Reasoning); Stifled and Restless (Willpower); Everything I need is here (Resources)

### Expert Advantages:

Choose two: Adult Sense, Digital Spider, Good Investment, Professional (Domestics), Professional (Parenting), Professional (Profession)

<b>Package Cost:</b>	2 AP (Expert Advantages 2)
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## JOCK

Jocks are actively involved in a physical sport of some kind. They are often focused on glory or reputation. This can be personal glory, being mostly desiring to achieve something and feel the sense of accomplishment, or public glory, basking in the fame and privileges that typically come with athletic excellence. Quite often, they have a single-minded focus and can let other aspects of their life slide. While the majority are nice enough people there is no doubt that some jocks are self-important or even narcissistic brutes and bullies. The difference between a sports-geek and a jock is usually the fact that the jock focuses the majority of their life on actually playing the sport while the geek focuses on celebrating the sport whether or not they play.

### Sample Character Aspects:

Would-be Olympic Swimmer; Star Quarterback; Cheer Team Captain

### Sample Specialty Aspects:

Amazing Body Control (Agility); Efficient and Enduring (Endurance); Self-Important Attitude (Empathy)

### Expert Advantages:

Choose two: Acrobat, Athlete, Carouser, Fleet of Foot, Free Runner, Monkey Man, Reliable Assist, Strong Heart

<b>Package Cost:</b>	2 AP (Expert Advantages 2)
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## MANAGER

Ideally, a manager's task is to make sure that the right people are being set to the right tasks which are performed in the best way. They have to set the schedules, assign positions and establish procedures in order to make any project run smoothly. Managers should be expected to know how to perform at the various tasks in a project and be able to fill in if it's an emergency. A good manager will have a project or business running smoothly and keep both their employees and clientele happy. Of course, there are plenty of bad managers out there. Bad managers will do things like not put any effort into setting a schedule, looking for someone to blame rather than fixing a problem, refusing to work even in an emergency or micromanaging and doing the jobs of the employees rather than their own job.

### Suggested Character Aspects:

Who Manages the Manager?; Promising Young Leader; Don't forget the "with" in "Work with your team."; There's no "I" in team

### Suggested Specialty Aspects:

Best Scheduler Ever (Reasoning); "You're not doing it right, get out of the way." (Persuasion); I Know this store better than anybody (Knowledge)

### Expert Advantages:

Choose Two: Bureaucratic Hero, Manager Material, Professional (Manager), Rational, Teacher's Pet

<b>Package Cost:</b>	2 AP (Expert Advantages 2)
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## SAMPLE CHARACTERS

### RHIANNON KINCAID (RING 12)

Aspects	
<b>Defining</b>	Future Theoretical Shaping Genius
<b>Ambition</b>	Discover Something No One Else Has
<b>Background</b>	Sorcerer Born and Bred
<b>Conviction</b>	The World Needs More Researchers than Warriors
<b>Disadvantage</b>	Emotionally Isolated

<b>Agility</b>	1	<b>Endurance</b>	2
<b>Perception</b>	2	<b>Strength</b>	1
<b>Craft</b>	3	<b>Knowledge</b>	2
<b>Reasoning</b>	2	<b>Willpower</b>	3
<b>Deception</b>	2	<b>Empathy</b>	1
<b>Persuasion</b>	2	<b>Resources</b>	2
<b>Manipulative</b>	1	<b>Metabolic</b>	1
<b>Sensitive</b>	1		

Stress			
<b>Physical</b>	000	<b>Mental</b>	00000
<b>Social</b>	0000	<b>Chi</b>	0000

Aspects	
<b>Extraordinary</b>	Voracious Thirst for Shaping Theory (Knowledge)
<b>Foe</b>	I Was Expected to be a Warrior (Persuasion)
<b>Gear</b>	Small Library of Psychic Manuals and Theories (Resources)
<b>Help</b>	Online Community of Teenaged Inventors (Persuasion)
<b>Inferior</b>	Impatient with the Basics (Willpower)

#### Expert Advantages

- Circle Expert
- Occultist
- Engineer (Talismans)

#### Heroic Advantages

Feng Shui

#### Power Advantages

- **Shaping:** Promising Student Shaper; Master Shaper; 15 Ritual Points
- **(4) Life-Force Sight:** Environmental Analysis Ritual (Easy Focus, Extended Vision, Vision of Flows)
- **(5) Illusions:** Story-Time Circles (Audible Illusions, Mobile Illusions, Permanent)
- **(4) Exorcism:** Spiritual First Aid (Accelerated Ritual x3 – Each roll takes 5 minutes instead of an hour)

Refresh: 2

#### Facility: Home Workspace

- Shaping Ritual Space Rating 2

#### Gear:

Texts on shaping theory, Small supply of uncut quartz, Teenager's laptop, Panic Button (quartz talisman, break to alert family of emergency), video game library

<b>Advantage Points:</b>	-2 Refresh (+3 AP – Total 6 AP), Shaping: Master Shaper (1 AP), Feng Shui (2 AP), Shaping: 15 Ritual Points (3 AP)
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#### Bio:

Rhiannon is unusual in her family in that she has no interest at all in a career as a warrior. She is far more interested in pushing the boundaries of what can be done with sorcery and especially shaping. While her decision not to take part in the military training common to her cousins and other siblings has been supported by her parents, she continues to face a lot of ridicule and thinly veiled disapproval from the rest of her family. Some have even suggested that she's a coward. Rhiannon tries to ignore all of it and focus instead on her desire to discover something that further narrows the distance between a Talent and a Sorcerer.



## DIONYSUS MAENAD (RING 11)

Aspects	
<b>Defining</b>	Party Animal on the Prowl
<b>Ambition</b>	See Father in Tartarus
<b>Background</b>	First Former House Tinnia to see the Light
<b>Conviction</b>	Life is Meant to Party
<b>Disadvantage</b>	Prone to Going Overboard

<b>Agility</b>	2	<b>Endurance</b>	3
<b>Perception</b>	2	<b>Strength</b>	1
<b>Craft</b>	3	<b>Knowledge</b>	2
<b>Reasoning</b>	2	<b>Willpower</b>	2
<b>Deception</b>	2	<b>Empathy</b>	3
<b>Persuasion</b>	2	<b>Resources</b>	2
<b>Manipulative</b>	1	<b>Metabolic</b>	1
<b>Sensitive</b>	1		

Stress			
<b>Physical</b>	0000	<b>Mental</b>	0000
<b>Social</b>	0000	<b>Chi</b>	0000

Aspects	
<b>Extraordinary</b>	Wine in the Blood and on the Mind (Craft)
<b>Foe</b>	Some people just don't like fun (Persuasion)
<b>Gear</b>	Rune Flask of Wine (Resources)
<b>Help</b>	Usually a Party Around (Persuasion)
<b>Inferior</b>	Sliding Scale of Judgment and Inebriation (Reasoning)

### Expert Advantages

- Artist (Wine-Making)
- Carouser
- Silver Tongue

### Heroic Advantages

- Five Minute Friends

### Power Advantages

- **Domain:** God of Wine
- **Rote:** Juice to Wine (Maneuver, Difficulty 5)
- **Self-Evolving:** Fruit of the Vine, Luminous Being, Ageless
- **Regeneration:** Perfect Health
- **Medium Travel:** Alcohol Will Take You Places
- **The Understanding**

**Refresh:** 1

### Facility: Home Estate

- Party Supplies, Persuasion (Party) Rating 3

### Gear:

Rune Flask of Wine (Difficulty 3 Manipulative to refill with desired wine, if desired can produce raw alcohol as well), Music Player, Fashionable Clothes, Video Game Console, Hangover Remedies

<b>Advantage Points:</b>	-4 Refresh (+6 AP), One Heroic Advantage (2 AP), Domain: Maneuver (2 AP), Regeneration (1 AP), Self-Evolving: Luminous Being, Ageless (2 AP), Medium Travel (3 AP)
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### Bio:

Outwardly he doesn't seem to be much more than any other high schooler trying to score some alcohol on a fake license, which is odd because he really doesn't need to buy wine. The only stand out feature besides his clear girth and ready smile are the blue vine-like marks on his face. A lot of the adults he knows grumble about him being a proof of being careful what one names their child. Of course, they don't realize that he literally is the God of Wine. he is simply at the start of a new reincarnation and getting close to majority and regaining his full memories.



## NENE GASHIMA (RING 11)

Aspects	
<b>Defining</b>	Oni Assistant Tailor
<b>Ambition</b>	Open Up My Own Shop
<b>Background</b>	Youngest of Three
<b>Conviction</b>	You Can Do It
<b>Disadvantage</b>	We Shouldn't Have to Hide

<b>Agility</b>	2	<b>Endurance</b>	3
<b>Perception</b>	2	<b>Strength</b>	1
<b>Craft</b>	3	<b>Knowledge</b>	2
<b>Reasoning</b>	2	<b>Willpower</b>	3
<b>Deception</b>	1	<b>Empathy</b>	3
<b>Persuasion</b>	2	<b>Resources</b>	2
<b>Manipulative</b>	0	<b>Metabolic</b>	0
<b>Sensitive</b>	0		

Stress			
<b>Physical</b>	000	<b>Mental</b>	00000
<b>Social</b>	00000	<b>Chi</b>	000

Aspects	
<b>Extraordinary</b>	Flair for Color and Personality (Craft)
<b>Foe</b>	"No, Officer, I HAVE to drink alcohol" (Persuasion)
<b>Gear</b>	Notebook full of Clothing Sketches (Resources)
<b>Help</b>	Semi-Famous Siblings (Persuasion)
<b>Inferior</b>	Easily Flustered when Surprised (Persuasion)

Racial Aspects
Drunkerer means Smarterer (Willpower)
Inexplicable Strength (Strength)

### Expert Advantages

- Professional (Retail)
- Smooth Over
- Eye for Crime
- Artist (Visual Design)
- Striking Looks

### Heroic Advantages

- Signature Item: Notebooks full of Clothing Sketches
- Herculean Strength
- Unyielding Strength

### Power Advantages

• **Weakness:** The less alcohol in the oni's system, the more difficulty they have expressing their own opinions and personality. At complete sobriety, the oni effectively can't perform social actions and has a 0 Willpower except when a request or order contradicts an order from a recognized authority.

**Refresh:** 5

### Facility: Apartment

- Hidden Alcohol Stashes Everywhere, Resources Rating 3

### Gear:

Bottles of Alcohol, Tailor's Gear, Design Notebooks, Empty Notebooks, Bicycle

<b>Advantage Points:</b>	Weakness (+3 AP), Two Extra Specialty Aspects (1 AP), Two Extra Expert Advantages (2 AP), Three Heroic Advantages (6 AP)
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### Bio:

Nene is the youngest of three brothers and sisters. Both of her siblings have parlayed their lovingly adversarial relationship into a successful YouTube channel, where most people assume the oni horns are simple costume pieces. While Nene has been roped into a handful of their podcasts, usually without warning, she doesn't much enjoy being dragged into that spotlight. Her eventual goal is to simply own her own small shop and selling hand-made clothes for a living. As an oni, she needs to drink a regular amount of alcohol every day to keep her personality. Unfortunately, she is still under-aged and has demonstrated less skill than most oni in being discrete with her alcohol consumption. As a result, she has been the introduction to both the Community and chijou oni dietary needs for three different police officers.



## Cloudwatcher (Ring 10)

Aspects	
<b>Defining</b>	Laid Back Adze Blogger
<b>Ambition</b>	Maintain a Leisurely Lifestyle
<b>Background</b>	Spawned in Security and Comfort
<b>Conviction</b>	Don't Stress Life
<b>Disadvantage</b>	Slow to take a Stand

<b>Agility</b>	2	<b>Endurance</b>	2
<b>Perception</b>	2	<b>Strength</b>	2
<b>Craft</b>	3	<b>Knowledge</b>	2
<b>Reasoning</b>	2	<b>Willpower</b>	1
<b>Deception</b>	2	<b>Empathy</b>	3
<b>Persuasion</b>	2	<b>Resources</b>	2
<b>Manipulative</b>	1	<b>Metabolic</b>	0
<b>Sensitive</b>	2		

Stress			
<b>Physical</b>	0000	<b>Mental</b>	000
<b>Social</b>	0000	<b>Chi</b>	00000

Aspects	
<b>Extraordinary</b>	Engaging Wordsmith (Craft)
<b>Foe</b>	Rules and Deadlines are such a Drag (Persuasion)
<b>Gear</b>	Excellent Voice to Text App (Resources)
<b>Help</b>	Recognized in the Counter Culture (Persuasion)
<b>Inferior</b>	Time Management Should be a Thing (Willpower)

Extra Aspects
Ear for a Good Story (Empathy)
Connoisseur of Livestock Blood (Perception)

### Expert Advantages

- News Hound
- Artist (Writer)
- Digital Spider

### Power Advantages

• **Swarm Body:** Cooperative Swarm Weightless, Dispersion Mastery

• **Illusions:** Talented Illusionist Illusory Disguises

**Refresh:** 5

### Facility: Blogger's Desktop

• **Craft:** Blogging Rating 3

### Gear:

Smartphone with Voice to Text App, Digital Camera, Supply of Gourmet Blood, Top Line Computer, Laptop

<b>Advantage Points:</b>	Two Extra Specialty Aspects (1 AP), Swarm Body: Weightless, Dispersion Mastery (5 AP), Illusions: Illusory Disguises (3 AP)
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### Bio:

Cloudwatcher is a pretty laid back sort of person and tends to give other people the impression that they add a bit in the way of extra herbs to their protein drinks. Fortunately, there isn't much that Cloudwatcher really needs or wants and that keeps expenses down. What little bills do come the adze's way are generally handled by the modest but steady income Cloudwatcher receives from a blog they maintain online. The only luxury the adze admits to is a preference for sampling actual blood rather than sticking to the more common protein drinks. Cloudwatcher has become a bit discerning about the differences in flavor from one species, or even select breed, to the next. They do find the idea of sampling sentient blood barbaric and, like many adze, consider the concept of intimate feeding that occurs among other vampires (especially those that practice some sort of vampiric culture rather than having a legitimate biological need) to be rather disgusting. Unfortunately, the swarm's laid back nature tends to mean that they don't stick their neck out or take a stand for much, preferring to just let things happen and stay out of the way.



**FUR-CRAFTER AKA "FURRY" (RING 10)**

Aspects	
<b>Defining</b>	Urban Wolfen Tailor
<b>Ambition</b>	I'd Like to Design a Successful Label
<b>Background</b>	Dissatisfied with the Wolfen Lifestyle
<b>Conviction</b>	I Like Making Second Skins
<b>Disadvantage</b>	Hard for a Wolf to walk around town

<b>Agility</b>	2	<b>Endurance</b>	2
<b>Perception</b>	3	<b>Strength</b>	2
<b>Craft</b>	3	<b>Knowledge</b>	2
<b>Reasoning</b>	2	<b>Willpower</b>	2
<b>Deception</b>	1	<b>Empathy</b>	2
<b>Persuasion</b>	2	<b>Resources</b>	3
<b>Manipulative</b>	0	<b>Metabolic</b>	1
<b>Sensitive</b>	2		

Stress			
<b>Physical</b>	0000	<b>Mental</b>	0000
<b>Social</b>	0000	<b>Heart</b>	00000

Aspects	
<b>Extraordinary</b>	Have to Dodge the Animal Control Officers (Persuasion)
<b>Foe</b>	Tailored Clothes for Every Body Type (Craft)
<b>Gear</b>	Custom Tools and Animal Helpers (Resources)
<b>Help</b>	Building Reputation Among the Community (Persuasion)
<b>Inferior</b>	People Keep Looking at the Teeth (Persuasion)

**Expert Advantages**

- *Artist (Tailor)*
- *Professional (Small Business Operation), Headquarters*

**Power Advantages**

- **Mindlink:** *Surprisingly Erudite Mental Speech*
- **Growth:** *Horse-Sized Wolf*

- **Shrink:** *Cat-Sized Wolf*
- **Body Weaponry:** *WR 2 – Claws and Fangs*
- **Animal Whisperer:** *Surrogate Hands - Herd Instinct*
- **Weakness:** *No Hands or Physical Speech*

**Refresh:** 5

**Facility:** *Hidden Tailor's Shop*

- *Craft: Tailoring Rating 4*
- *Workshop, Defense Concealment Rating 6*

**Gear:**

Wolfen Tailor's Harness, Custom tools for use by mice and birds, Collar and license, Desktop Computer, Expensive Stereo and a large digital music library

<b>Advantage Points:</b>	+1 Metabolic (1 AP), Animal Whisperer: Herd Instinct (5 AP), Body Weaponry (1 AP), Grow (1 AP), Shrink (1 AP), Mind Link (1 AP), Weakness (+1 AP)
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**Bio:**

Fur-Crafter was not born among the city-dwelling wolfen, many of whom are able to disguise themselves as dogs, but rather is a native of one of the very isolated deep wilderness wolfen colonies. While their psychic abilities afforded them a lot of the same base comforts of modern technology, such as air-conditioning, sanitized water and the like, he was dissatisfied with the simple life-style and drawn to the city. Of particular interest to him was the tendency of other species to create second skins for various purposes. As a younger wolfen, new to the city, he had managed to gain himself a paying position as a security guard for a human tailor in the Community and was thus able to observe closely how the clothing was made and began practicing on his own in his spare time. Eventually he was able to save enough money to buy his own shop in a hidden away alley safe from annoying animal control officers.



## KALLISTOS MACHREN (RING 10)

Aspects	
<b>Defining</b>	Stone-skinned Restaurant Manager
<b>Ambition</b>	Provide for my Family
<b>Background</b>	Widowed Mother of Two
<b>Conviction</b>	People Should be Able to Walk in the Light
<b>Disadvantage</b>	Constant Fight for Respect

<b>Agility</b>	2	<b>Endurance</b>	3
<b>Perception</b>	2	<b>Strength</b>	2
<b>Craft</b>	1	<b>Knowledge</b>	2
<b>Reasoning</b>	3	<b>Willpower</b>	3
<b>Deception</b>	2	<b>Empathy</b>	2
<b>Persuasion</b>	3	<b>Resources</b>	1
<b>Manipulative</b>	0	<b>Metabolic</b>	2
<b>Sensitive</b>	0		

Stress			
<b>Physical</b>	00000	<b>Mental</b>	000000
<b>Social</b>	0000	<b>Form</b>	00000

Aspects	
<b>Extraordinary</b>	Exceptional Money Management Skills (Resources)
<b>Foe</b>	Misogynists and Humanocentric Jerks (Persuasion)
<b>Gear</b>	Cell Phone Constantly on Hand (Resources)
<b>Help</b>	There's Always the Haven (Persuasion)
<b>Inferior</b>	Constant Stream of Bills (Resources)

### Expert Advantages

- *Manager Material*
- *Professional (Restauranteur)*
- *Professional (Parenting)*
- *Fearless*

### Heroic Advantages:

- *Tenacious*

### Power Advantages:

- **Armor:** *Painful Transformation, Improved 3, Ablative 2. AR: 4, Ablative 0000*

**Refresh:** 5

### Facility: Home Sweet Home

- *Resources Workshop – Rating 1*

### Gear:

Old model smartphone, Used Car, children's pet fox "Robin", Decent Television, Personal Computer

<b>Advantage Points:</b>	One Extra Expert Advantages (1 AP), One Heroic Advantage (2 AP), Armor: Improved 3, Ablative 2 (6 AP)
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### Bio:

Kallistos's husband was a construction worker who died in a recent accident. As she had been the one managing the family funds up to that point, she was immediately aware that the insurance money wouldn't keep her family afloat for long. Public welfare tends to poke too far into a person's life for anybody not-human to feel safe going to it. She could turn to the local Haven but would prefer to stay on her own two feet if possible. With a lot of the Community businesses not currently hiring she's taken a job with a nearby restaurant outside the Community and has recently been promoted to manager. She's managed to pass off her skin-tone as a genetic quirk, which is true enough, but still uses heavy make-up to seem more human.



## ALEX KANNO (RING 9)

Aspects	
<b>Defining</b>	Nerdy Newbie Neko-Romancer
<b>Ambition</b>	Complete my Autograph Collection
<b>Background</b>	Precocious Kitten in Youth
<b>Conviction</b>	Ghosts are People too
<b>Disadvantage</b>	Nekomata Necromantic Notoriety

<b>Agility</b>	2	<b>Endurance</b>	2
<b>Perception</b>	2	<b>Strength</b>	2
<b>Craft</b>	2	<b>Knowledge</b>	2
<b>Reasoning</b>	3	<b>Willpower</b>	2
<b>Deception</b>	2	<b>Empathy</b>	3
<b>Persuasion</b>	2	<b>Resources</b>	2
<b>Manipulative</b>	0	<b>Metabolic</b>	1
<b>Sensitive</b>	2		

Stress			
<b>Physical</b>	0000	<b>Mental</b>	0000
<b>Social</b>	0000	<b>Chi</b>	00000

Aspects	
<b>Extraordinary</b>	Young at Heart (Willpower)
<b>Foe</b>	Some People Just Hate Cats (Persuasion)
<b>Gear</b>	A Spirit Bell (Resources)
<b>Help</b>	A Little Spectral Aid is not Amis (Persuasion)
<b>Inferior</b>	Forgets Other People Can't See Ghosts (Reasoning)

### Expert Advantages

- *Occultist*
- *Tide of Trivia*
- *Silver Tongue*

### Power Advantages

- **Doppelganger:** *Gender Shift (What Breed Shall I Be Today?)*
- **Morph:** *Human Form*
- **Body Weaponry:** *Cat's Claws – Retractable*

- **Death-Seer:** *Tongue of the Dead, Practiced Death-Seer Blood-Eyed Cat*

**Refresh:** 6

### Facility: Home Entertainment Center

- *Sentient Cat Edition – Resources: Entertainment Rating 3*

### Gear:

Spirit Bell (Reed-Crafted Bell Collar, +1 to actions dealing with ghosts and entities)

<b>Advantage Points:</b>	Doppelganger: Gender Shift (2 AP), Morph – Human (3 AP), Body Weaponry: Retractable (2 AP), Death-Seer: Tongue of the Dead, Practiced Death-Seer (5 AP)
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### Bio:

Alex has been able to see ghosts for as long as the cat can remember. They're just always there. Sometimes one ghost or another doesn't want to be bothered and will hide themselves, but, unless in a warded area of some sort, where there's people there are ghosts. For the first forty years of her life as a kitten and then a young cat Alex had the good fortune to encounter the ghosts of a handful of famous people: singers, actors and such; and got started on a rather odd autograph collection. Alex still hopes to meet a really legendary person, like someone from history, but understands that most of those have passed on a long time ago. In the meantime, Alex is making a living acting as a mediator with various ghosts as most death-seers do. Unfortunately, the age old reputation of grave robbing and soul-trapping that nekomata have has provided some difficulty for getting a career going.



## JADIS SISKIND (RING 8)

Aspects	
<b>Defining</b>	Civilian Shapeshifting Virtuoso and Instructor
<b>Ambition</b>	See the Supernatural go Public
<b>Background</b>	Therianthrope Prodigy
<b>Conviction</b>	Limits are all in your Head
<b>Disadvantage</b>	Worries of a Witch Hunter's Wife

<b>Agility</b>	2	<b>Endurance</b>	2
<b>Perception</b>	2	<b>Strength</b>	2
<b>Craft</b>	2	<b>Knowledge</b>	3
<b>Reasoning</b>	2	<b>Willpower</b>	3
<b>Deception</b>	1	<b>Empathy</b>	3
<b>Persuasion</b>	2	<b>Resources</b>	2
<b>Manipulative</b>	0	<b>Metabolic</b>	4
<b>Sensitive</b>	0		

Stress			
<b>Physical</b>	0000	<b>Mental</b>	0000
<b>Social</b>	0000	<b>Spirit</b>	0000000

Aspects	
<b>Extraordinary</b>	Makes Learning Fun and Easy (Reasoning) (P)
<b>Foe</b>	Married into the Siskind-Petran Feud (Persuasion)
<b>Gear</b>	A Shapeshifter's Necklace (Resource)
<b>Help</b>	The Siskind take care of their Civilians (Persuasion)
<b>Inferior</b>	No Taste for Violence (Willpower)

### Expert Advantages

- *Smooth Over*
- *Professional (Educator)*
- *Artist (Shapeshifting)*

### Heroic Advantages

- **Persistent Specialty:** *Makes Learning Fun and Easy (P)*

### Power Advantages

- **Shapeshifting:** *Shapeshifting Virtuoso (Themed Changes: Natural Animals, only. 12 points to redistribute.)*
- **Transmogrification:** *Partial Shifts and Hybrid Forms (Master of the Flesh, Swift Shape)*
- **Enhanced Smell:** *Wolf's Nose, Passive*

**Refresh:** 4

### Facility: Teaching Space

- *Metabolic: Shapeshifting Rating 3*

### Gear:

Shapeshifter's Necklace (Pine-Cone Fetish, +2 to Shapeshifting), High End Sedan, Excellent Computer, Smartphone, Panic Button (Quartz Talisman, break to alert Siskind family of emergency)

<b>Advantage Points:</b>	-2 Refresh (+3 AP – Total 21), +1 Metabolic (1 AP), One Heroic Advantage (2 AP), Shapeshifting: Themed Changes (7 AP), Transmogrification: Master of the Flesh, Swift Shape (6 AP), Enhanced Smell: Passive (2 AP)
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### Bio:

Most therianthropes learn to control their shapeshifting enough so that they don't have to deal with accidentally changing form. For many, the process of shape-shifting is an extended one that can take up to an hour simply because they've never had need for it to be faster. Going about in animal form is something done occasionally, often while on family holiday. Jadis was different. She loves shapeshifting and her first change occurred well before puberty. Now, as an adult, she has gone well past the limitations associated with the word "werewolf" into being a very fluid shapeshifter. When she met her husband, Eiger Siskind, many expected that she would join in his career but has instead remained a civilian and focuses on the art of shapeshifting for its own sake. Further she has taken the career of tutoring other young shapeshifters to learn how to push their own abilities.







