CTHULHU IN SPACE

The Role-Playing Game of
Sci-Fi and Cosmic Horror
By Brett Fitzpatrick

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Cthulhu in Space (Fate Edition)
A Sci-Fi/Cosmic Horror Tabletop RPG

by
Brett Fitzpatrick

Publisher Information
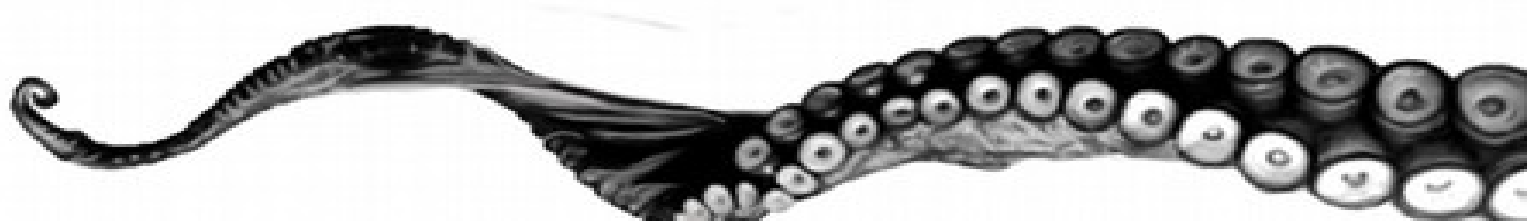Published by Brett Fitzpatrick

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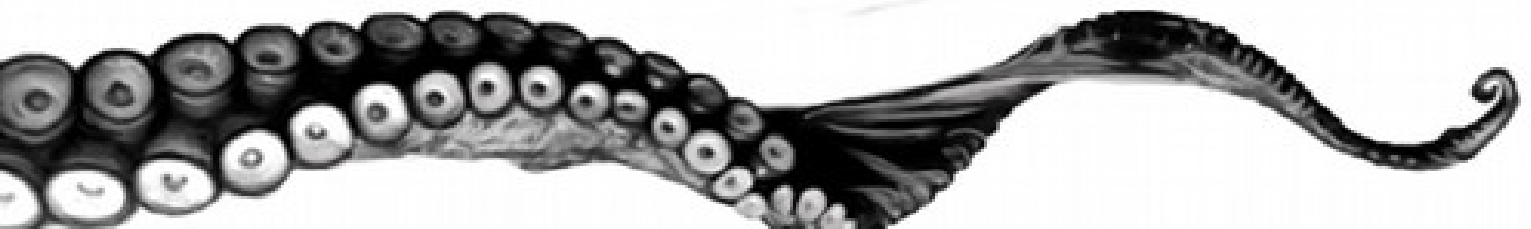
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CTHULHU AMONG THE STARS

The year is 250,000 AD, and the empire is shrunken and weak, the Earth itself is a wasteland. The catastrophic damage to Earth was caused thousands of years ago by the rampage of terrible Ubbo-Sathla. Ubbo-Sathla emerged from its subterranean lair and 'absorbed' all the living things it encountered, as foretold in the Books of Eibon. Surprisingly few were able to evacuate the planet, and the ground was left twisted and barren.
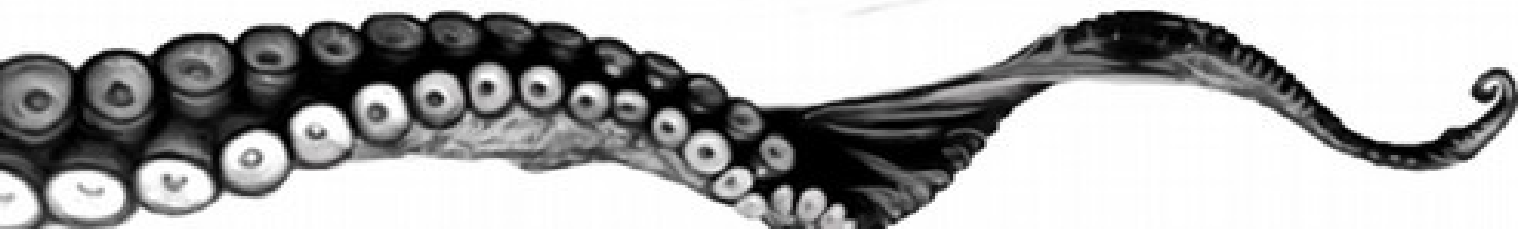
Humanity is only now attempting to resettle Earth, but things are not going well. Many consider the planet to be cursed. Without Earth at its centre, the empire has also fallen apart. The crippled empire is stitched together by FTL Fast Ships that nobody has the technology to build any more. Settlements of any size attract doom, and are destroyed. Only small outposts and sparsely populated planets remain. For humanity, the galaxy is a bleak place.

A game like Cthulhu in Space is different from other games. In games where players take the role of superheroes, for example, or the archetypes of fantasy fiction – fighter, mage, thief – their eventual victory is often assured. In a universe overshadowed by the Mythos, the opposite is the case. The eventual doom of the PCs is pretty much assured.

Compared to other Mythos Creatures, humans are very fragile and short-lived entities. Mythos Creatures are alien to the point that they can not be predicted or understood. Their motivations and actions seem capricious and unfeeling. Some seem little different to bloodthirsty monsters, but this is a misunderstanding. They are much more advanced and intelligent than any representative of humanity. Our inability to understand their cruelties and random behaviour is a limitation of our intelligence.

In the face of super advanced, super intelligent monsters served by pervasive networks of fanatical cultists weaving conspiracies of labyrinthine complexity, victory is impossible. The schemes of the Old Ones are so involved and intricate that every possible action of the characters has been predicted. The PCs may sometimes think they have thwarted some scheme, but they are, in fact always advancing some larger agenda. Small personal successes are possible, perhaps substituting a cultist on a sacrificial alter instead of a character's sweetheart, but a final victory against the Old Ones is absolutely impossible.

The tone of the game is increasingly grim and beset by madness as the characters find out more about what they are up against. There are dark cults, hideous monstrosities, truths so terrible that none may comprehend them and remain sane. Extradimensional phantoms hover unseen, overhearing and mocking every thought and secret. The more the characters discover, the more overwhelmed they are going to feel.

Cosmic Horror

Cthulhu in Space is built around a version of the Cthulhu Mythos that strips away a lot of the bloat and reinterpretation that has built up around it. For example, August Derleth's additions and alterations have been completely removed, to bring the Mythos back to the unique cosmic horror that its creator, H P Lovecraft, originally intended. This means, for example, that there is no moral conflict between 'good' Elder Gods and 'evil' Old Ones.

In this game, the terms Elder Gods and Old Ones are interchangeable and refer to the same unknowable beings. There are no benign deities to intercede on humanity's behalf, and the Elder Gods/Old Ones are not even gods at all, but strange and unknowable alien entities.

This game also attempts to get closer to the original vision of the Mythos by doing away with all the hundreds of different Old Ones imprisoned in various obscure locations. Only one or two of the terrible creatures remain, worshipped under many names, and they are not trapped. Not even Cthulhu is imprisoned, though many tomes erroneously assume that he is. His slumber in his sunken city is more like hibernation than imprisonment. He was wounded in combat with other Old Ones and has been healing. His worshippers often repeat the phrase, Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn, "In his house at R'lyeh, dead Cthulhu waits dreaming".

August Derleth also assigned elements to the Old Ones and Elder Gods. This seems to be an attempt to align them with traditional occult ideas about demons and devils. He even invented new Old Ones to fill in elements that were vacant. This game strips out all this. The Old Ones are not demons or elementals. They have no connection to earth, air, fire, or water. They are utterly alien and resist any human attempt to project morality or myth onto them.

Although the game is based on the original conception of the Mythos, as created by H P Lovecraft, which is full of ideas that are visionary and unique, it seeks to avoid including some of the more unsavoury aspects of Lovecraft's stories. Specifically, this game makes a conscious effort to avoid the racism and misogyny that can be found in some of Lovecraft's original fiction.
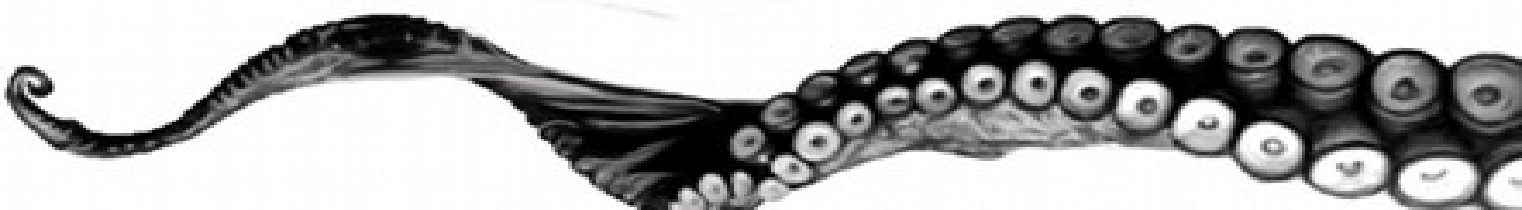
Timeline

> This is the history of how the strange creatures of the Cthulhu Mythos have interacted with humanity, since before humanity was even spawned. The timeline details what terrible events have led to humanity's terrible situation, and the events that are foretold by the Yithians to come after. Cthulhu is currently in a state of death-like hibernation, but this state will not last forever. Humanity can thrive during this brief respite, but it will eventually come to an end.

380,000 years after the big bang

> The fog of the early universe clears. The Old One known as Azathoth coalesces at the heart of the universe, a powerful survivor of a previous universe. His court of Old Ones starts to form around him.

30 million years after the big bang

> Stars first appear in the universe. More Old Ones evolve, including Cthulhu, and energised by the heat left over from the big bang, carve out territories for themselves among the new stars.

200 million years after the big bang

> The Milky Way, the Earth's home galaxy, forms. Old Ones from surrounding regions of space are drawn to its warmth, and war over its resources.

8 billion years after the big bang

> The Elder Things evolve and start to carve out an intergalactic empire.

9 billion years after the big bang

> The Earth and it's solar system forms.

9.5 billion years after the big bang

> The Hounds of Tindalos evolve and spread throughout the galaxy, including Earth before normal life had come into being, and the Earth was a terrible and alien place.

10 billion years after the big bang

> Cthulhu comes down to the young world of Earth from the sky, wounded in a terrible battle with a rival Old One. He feasts on the Hounds, eradicating them. He establishes various cities, including R'lyeh. Mi-go also arrive on Earth as an infestation among the alien stones used by Cthulhu to build his sunken city base. Cthulhu goes dormant, intent on healing and recouping his eldritch power.

12 billion years after the big bang

> Elder Things come to the Earth. They immediately start exterminating Mi-go. Most Mi-go leave Earth in favour of Saturn and Jupiter. The empire of the Elder Things lasts for
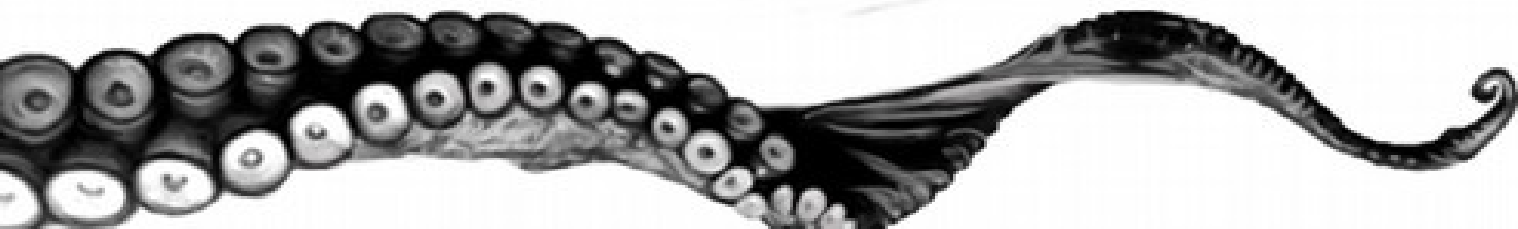
hundreds of millions of years. Their numbers, however, are small and this leaves plenty of room for other lesser empires to share Earth with them. These empires are founded by creatures spawned in the Elder Things' own experiments and escaped from their labs. Indigenous life on Earth actually begins as a bi-product of Elder Thing experiments and technologies. As well as direct genetic experiment the Elder Things also used a process of unnatural selection to produce their servitor creatures. The most successful of these servitor creatures are the Serpent People, who slowly establish a large and advanced civilisation.

250 – 66 million BC

The Eltdown Shards are written in the strange symbols of the Serpent People, capturing their knowledge at the pinnacle of their civilisation. The Yithians create a prehistoric civilization that supplants that of the Serpent People. It goes on to populate much of the Earth, lasting millions of years. It is finally destroyed by Flying Polyps 66 million years ago.

200,000 BC

The Elder Things are still the dominant life form on Earth, as they have been for hundreds of millions of years. They create many useful organisms including shoggoths and humans. A batch of humans escapes from an African base, and infest the surface of the planet. Humanity proves better able to survive successive ice ages than the Flying Polyps.

710 BC

Alhazred, a worshipper of Yog-Sothoth and Cthulhu discovers the 'nameless city' below Irem and starts work on the Necronomicon. The Cthulhu signal is strong at this time, causing many mass suicides.

2070 AD

Humanity starts to escape the confines of its crowded home planet with a permanent colony on Mars. Advances in computing power see AI beginning to play a major role in business and government decisions. There is accelerated expansion of the lunar colonies and their automated mining operations. By now, a full-scale environmental catastrophe is unfolding on Earth, with sea levels forcing the large-scale evacuation of many cities.

2200 AD

Practically all of the world's energy comes from either fusion or renewable sources now. Artificial intelligence – having begun to merge with human intelligence in the previous century – now surpasses it, reaching whole new levels of cognitive and intellectual capability. There are regular manned trips to the gas giants; huge mining operations in the asteroid fields; and the first probes to Alpha Centauri.

10,000 AD

Venus and Mars are terraformed and many large cities are established. The Moon, too, has millions of permanent inhabitants. The gas giants and their moons are dotted with scientific stations, but their infestation of Mi-Go make them resistant to attempts to terraform or colonise them. The Kuiper Belt and Oort Cloud are host to mining operations harvesting an untold quantity of resources. Beyond the Oort Cloud, a huge network of telescopes is deployed. Meanwhile, anti-matter propulsion is allowing the first manned exploration of neighbouring stars, with Alpha Centauri and various other systems gaining permanent settlers.

100,000AD

Faster than light engines are developed, allowing humanity to start to stitch together a galactic empire, which encounters the Elder Things. The Elder Things are much fewer in number and Humanity initially has much success in supplanting them, but then, as human numbers climb,

199,999AD

...a doom comes on humanity.

200,000 AD

Ubbo-Sathla emerges and absorbs all living things on the planet Earth, the centre of the Human Empire. Only humans and samples of the biosphere off planet at the time survive. After its orgiastic feeding, Ubbo-Sathla retreats back to its lair.

250,000 AD
Attempts to repopulate Earth have resulted in just a few scientific missions to the surface, and a single city – New Arkham. The New Arkhamites bioengineer Beetle Servitors to aid in the rebuilding of the planet.

This is the period when the game is set. Among the humans trying to understand the doom that has come onto their empire, trying to keep the empire from collapse and recolonise the rubble of Earth.

300,000 AD

Humanity fail to repopulate Earth, and the planet, instead, is repopulated by 'Beetle People'. These are the servitors bioengineered in New Arkham. Humanity abandons Earth and searches for a new home among the stars, as the empire continues to contract and collapse.

500,000 AD

Nyarlathotep hunts down and destroys the last remnants of humanity. The minds of the Beetle People back on Earth are usurped by the Yithians. The Yithians again rule Earth in

the far future, as they did in the distant past.

1,000,000 AD

Yithian culture carries on advancing, becoming incredibly advanced. Yithian planet-sized computers dominate the Local Group of galaxies. The Yithians are aware of the dangers lurking beneath the Earth's surface, but feel confident enough to stay, due to their ability to see through time.

7,200,000 AD

The continent of Zothique forms, and becomes the centre of the Yithian Star Empire, which they rule from Earth.

7,600,000 AD

Phobos is ripped apart by Mars' gravity. Cthulhu finally awakes and rips apart the Earth. The Yithians, powerless to stop him, have already left Earth in a giant mental migration.

10,000,000 AD

The rubble that is all that remains of Earth is sterilised by lethal levels of gamma radiation.

5,000,000,000 AD

Sol becomes a red giant and swallows up any remaining trace of Earth.
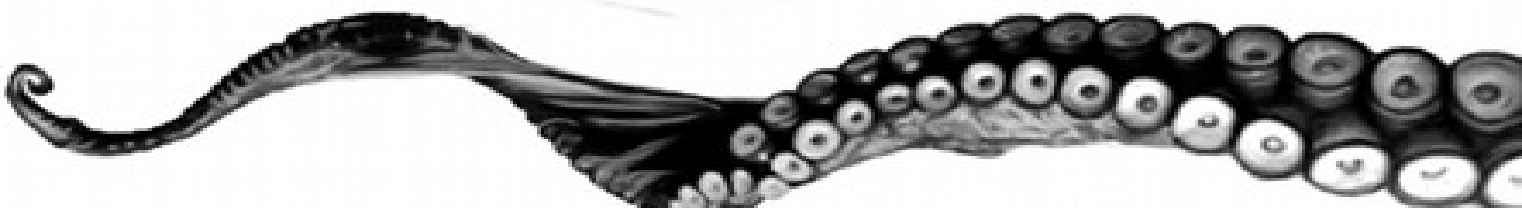
1,000,000,000,000 AD

Star formation declines across the universe.

20,000,000,000,000 AD

Even red dwarf stars start dying.

Much later

The dark era of the universe. Cthulhu finally considers himself powerful enough to challenge Azathoth for rule of the universe to come. The next universe, that will form in a big bang after the final heat death of the present universe.

EARTH

Earth has been ruined by the Ubbo-Sathla, reduced to rubble and bones. There are huge eerie planes with giant spikes growing from them, husks of cities, poisoned oceans and deep holes leading down to tunnels and chambers of horror below. The environment is a permanent storm that intensifies and lessens, but never entirely calms. The sky is full of evil, brooding clouds that prevent any but the most twisted of vegetation from growing.

New Arkham

This is the only human settlement on Earth. It is a city of a few thousand driven and dedicated people, who want to claim back Earth. They believe Earth was destroyed by a combined environmental and disease catastrophe, and only a few of them suspect the real source of the 'plague' that claimed the planet.

New Arkham consists of a few tens of large self-sufficient compounds, each home to a few hundred inhabitants. Each compound is surrounded by high walls and defences, against the mutant monstrosities that stalk the surface of the wasted planet.

There is just a single space port on the surface of the planet, and a space station in orbit. Visiting Earth is like visiting a newly discovered planet where colonisation has only just begun. There are precious few facilities and visitors must fend for themselves, unless they are visiting New Arkham.

The people of New Arkham are aware that there is an alien structure on the surface of the planet. They call it the 'Artefact' and they think that it was constructed recently. They little realise that it is Cthulhu's resting place, and that it has existed for the entirety of human history.

R'lyeh

R'lyeh is surrounded by a black, slimy salt marsh with the skeletons of marine animals poking out of it. The city is created of exotic materials that bend and twist space time, making the architecture behave in strange ways. A flat surface will appear to rear up to vertical as space time curves, but will settle down to horizontal again when approached. Everything seems to writhe and shift as the observer moves around. The nightmare corpse-city of R'lyeh was built in measureless eons behind history by vast, loathsome shapes that seeped down from the dark stars. Great Cthulhu and his hordes slumber here, hidden in green slimy vaults.

Cthulhu is now stronger, after millions of years of healing and rebuilding his devastated frame. He feels like the time is close when he will rise again to do battle with fellow old Ones among the stars. This has led to an increase in activity at the corpse city. Swarms of Cthulhu Spawn regularly fly out, usually flying straight upwards on missions to deep space.
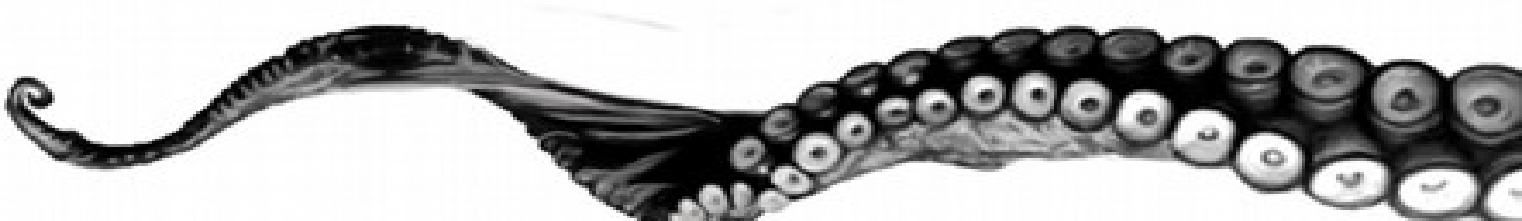
THE REMNANTS

The remnants are the other planets colonised by humans. They are what is left of Earth's once mighty empire. They are a scattering of planets and habitats in widely dispersed systems, where humanity still clings to echoes of its civilisation and technology.

These are sparsely populated systems. Even where the planets are covered in urban development, which is sometimes the case, the vast majority of it is now empty and ruined. This is a depleted people huddled together for safety. Natural human population growth has become glacial, completely incapable of keeping up with the speed at which humanity is being driven towards extinction.

Kadath is now the administrative centre of what is left of humanity, and has been since the doom that came to Earth. There are some characteristics that all the Remnants share.

AI Government

All government functions have been given over to a group of machines with artificial intelligence. The AIs are much more advanced than their human ministers, and they suspect many of the secret truths contained in the Mythos. They have decided that it is better that their human subjects do not know these secrets. They actively cover up some Mythos activity, where they are aware of it, and spread disinformation and lies.

Weapon Restrictions

All weapons are usually banned for public use within settlements of all sizes, though they are sometimes tolerated in some frontier areas. Weapons and armour must be removed and stored in locked chest.

Wearing such 'wargear' will attract the attention of local law enforcement. Special forces will be delegated to engage characters carrying weapons and wearing armour, and, if possible, they will be arrested and interrogated to ascertain if they are attempting to incite rebellion, carry out acts of terrorism, or engage in any other undesired activities. Some jurisdictions even scan for implanted weapons and armour and insist that any such equipment is surgically removed before the character can gain entry to their territory.

Mythos Names

The Cthulhu Mythos has become deeply embedded into the subconscious of human society, which has expressed itself in many of the planets colonised by humanity being given Mythos names.
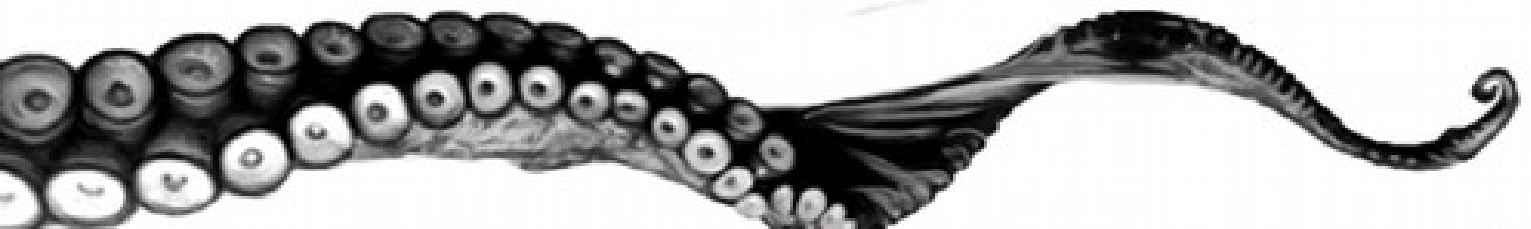
Seranian

Enwood

Y'ha-nthlei

Dylath-Leen

Crag

Abyss

Gug

Zin

Earth

LEGEND

● Planet
● Space Station

Leng

Celephais

Kadath

High Coralant

100 ly

Sarkomand

The Remnants

Showing the Remnants of Human Space

Abyss

This is a massive planet, with heavy gravity. The human settlements are located in caverns within the planets underworld. There are numerous space ports, which were all busy thousands of years ago, when the planet was in its golden years. Now many are empty and dark, though some still use them to make planetfall, especially if they want to avoid being noticed. The underworld is inhabited by a huge number of night-gaunts.

Night-Gaunts

Nightgaunts are black humanoids with bat-like wings, rubbery bodies, inward pointing horns, barbed tails, and no face. They inhabit the mountain Ngranek and are the reason people fear to climb too high on that mountain. They attack at night.
Aspects: Stubborn, Sly.
Skills: Great (+4) Physique, Good (+3) Fight (+2) Stealth
Uncanny Powers:
Flight: the night-gaunt can fly at a leisurely 40 km/h but is slower above ground, only reaching 30km/h

Celephaïs

This is an 'artificial world', location of a series of secret research bases operated by the AI government, with little or no human involvement. It is designated a 'Safe Planet' by the government because of its concentration of military assets. The government already foresees a time when humanity will be forced to make a last stand, and this is the planet that the AI Geat Ones have selected. The environment is made up of high cliffs and dry gorges, hot winds and frigid winds. There are two seasons, a wet season and a dry season. One brings drought, and the other brings flooding.

Celephaïs has just a single city, with the same name as the planet, situated in the valley of Ooth-Nargai beside the Cerenerian Sea. Important landmarks in Celephaïs are the turquoise temple of Nath-Horthath and the Street of Pillars. The rest of the surface is peppered with research bases and military installations of various levels of security. Sightseeing tours of the surface are discouraged and all flights within the atmosphere and close orbit are challenged by Drop Fighter patrols that can be scrambled from their mother ships in seconds. There are 1d6 Fast Carriers in orbit at any one time.

Crag

This is a rugged planet, dominated by the Peaks of Thok. Uncounted miles below the highest of the peaks is the bone-filled vale of Pnath. Enormous worm-like creatures, known as dholes, burrow through the vale.

Crag is the oldest human colony. It has a deserved reputation for having the most advanced medical establishments in the Empire, as well as a very clear commitment to medical ethics. Human habitation is centred around The Crater which is geothermal and

releases gases that help to provide a breathable atmosphere for the ring of cities contained underneath huge biodomes that collect and concentrate the gases. The planet has a single orbiting habitat which is immense, with space for millions, and was once a byword for opulence, luxury and success. This all changed however, with the decline of the Empire. As the habitat became increasingly deserted. It now houses only a few tens of thousands of citizens.

Dylath-Leen

Dylath-Leen is a very urbanised planet and the streets of its cities are dark and uninviting. It is one of the most mysterious of the Remnants. It trades in rubies from its giant mines, interspersed between the cities. These rubies are transported in sinister black Fast Ships. The Fast Ships of Dylath-Leen are autonomous, and their AIs have barbarous accents. The deserted areas of the planet's cityscape are inhabited by a local life form called a ghast.

Ghasts
Ghasts are about the size of a small horse with a scabrous and unwholesome hide. They have a curiously human face, despite the absence of a nose, a forehead, and other important particulars. They can see in the dark and have a strong sense of smell. They have a pair of hoofed, hind legs, and are swift, strong, and agile. Ghasts prefer to dwell in complete darkness and have no tolerance for natural light, sunlight will kill them quickly, in a matter of minutes. They prey mostly on the gugs, but have no qualms about eating other denizens of the underworld.

Aspects: Wild and Hungry
Actions: 2
Skills: Superb (+5) Physique, Good (+3) Fight, Fair (+2) Will
Stunts:
Darkvision: Ghasts are at no disadvantage in darkness, even complete darkness.

Enwood

This is a planet with huge areas of forestation. Only a scattering of small cities and settlements are to be found among the vegetation. The most numerous inhabitants of the planet of Enwood are small rodent creatures called zoogs. The planet is home to a unique

type of tree whose seed was originally transported from one of the planet's moons, which is now barren and lifeless. This tree's sap can be fermented to create a potent drink.

Enwood's terrain was largely covered by massive, tightly-knit pine and redwood forests. However, the planet also contains limited areas of dry desert, grassy plains, small oceans, secluded lakes, and mountain ranges. The planet is temperate and mild, with polar caps regulating the sea levels, to create one of the most pleasant climates within the Remnants of Empire. Flora includes many types of fruit including the unique sleep berrys.

Gug

The surface of Gug is a colossal, horrifying cityscape of huge towers. Its most prominent landmark is the Tower of Koth, which contains a huge space port embedded in the upper levels. Close by the city is the Cemetery of the Gugs, its graves marked by huge stone monoliths. Very fewe of the original inhabitants of the planet are left over, but the cemetery is still in use by the planet's new human owners. The huge cemetery is where dead from across the entire planet are brought for burial.

Gugs

Gugs are a race of horrifying giants. They are mute, and their method of communication is unknown. A single paw is fully two feet and a half across, and equipped with formidable talons. Each arm has two paws, attached by short forearms to a great black-furred arm. The head of a gug is large as a barrel with two pink eyes. The eyes jut two inches from each side, shaded by bony protuberances overgrown with coarse hairs. But the head is chiefly terrible because of the mouth. The mouth has great yellow fangs and runs from the top to the bottom of the head, opening vertically instead of horizontally.

Aspects: Ravenous and Vile
Zones: 3 (1-body, 2-head, 3-limbs)
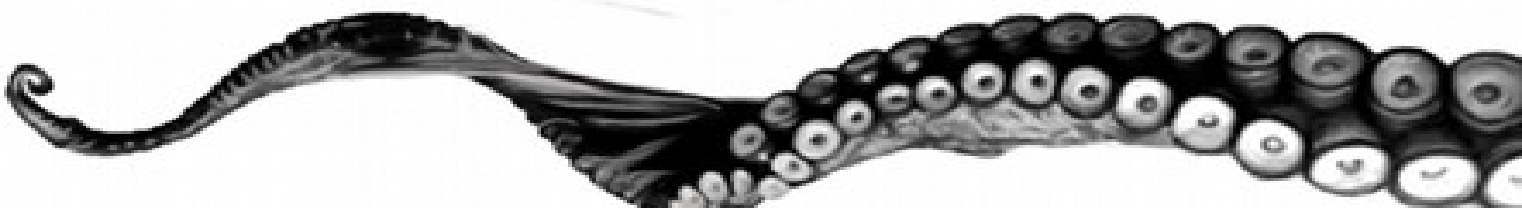Actions: 4 (one per paw)
Skills: Superb (+5) Physique, Good (+3) Fight, Fair (+2) Will
Stunts:
Darkvision: Ghasts are at no disadvantage in darkness, even complete darkness.

Kadath

Kadath is an urbanised planet, dominated by a huge castle atop a mountain. Since the fall of Earth, Kadath is now the administrative centre of what is left of humanity. Humanity's leaders, a number of super-advanced AIs, are located at the castle, and they are referred to as the Great Ones.

Kadath has been so completely exploited that the land is blighted and subject to unstable weather. Outside the settlements around Castle Kadath, the local population barely survives as nomads wandering between the few areas with remaining resources. The

capital fortress survives only on food imports from other worlds in exchange for the few minerals that can be extracted from extensive and massively automated subterranean mining. Other than base minerals, a local breed of horse, salvaged from DNA rescued from Earth, is also profitable.

Kadath operates a specially modified fleet of Fast Ships with a stable deck, used to transport this valuable cargo across human space. The horses of Kadath are a great status symbol, and where the local environment does not easily support equine lifeforms, the rich build large atmosphere tents, or floating race tracks to shelter and show off their horses.

The Great Ones have many agents working for them, and they are controlled from Kadath, where Fast Ships often leave quickly and in secret, to complete a delicate mission for the Great Ones.
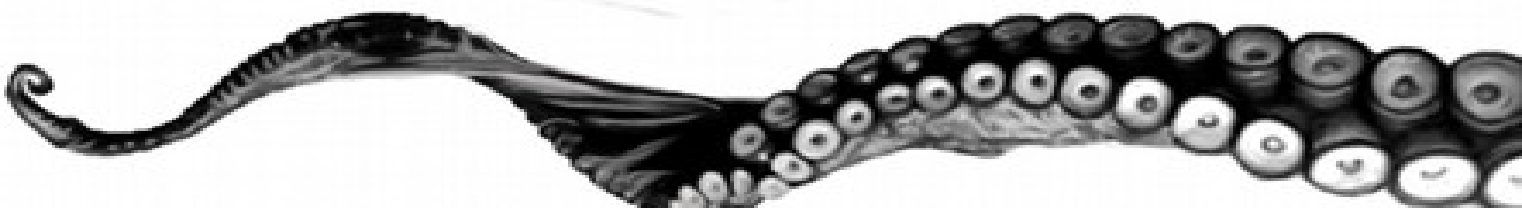
Leng

A cold, arid planet that has strange geological features, which are hard to explain by weathering or geophysical processes. The planet is covered in spikes, jutting up from the ground to enormous heights.

The planet has a gravitational field equivalent to 0.86 of that on Earth. The planet's crust is made up of basalt lava flows. Despite this evidence of past volcanic activity, as well as ongoing volcanic processes in the planet's core, the surface currently exhibits no discernible volcanism or tectonic activity. This past volcanic activity is not capable of explaining the rock spires that encrust the surface, and the spires seem to be remnants from a time before the planet was heavily volcanic. They survived the upheavals of the crust without a scratch.

The planet's geological structure has led to the conclusion it did not form within the local star system. It is thought to be a recently captured body, a previously rogue planet that entered the system within the last 40 million years or so.
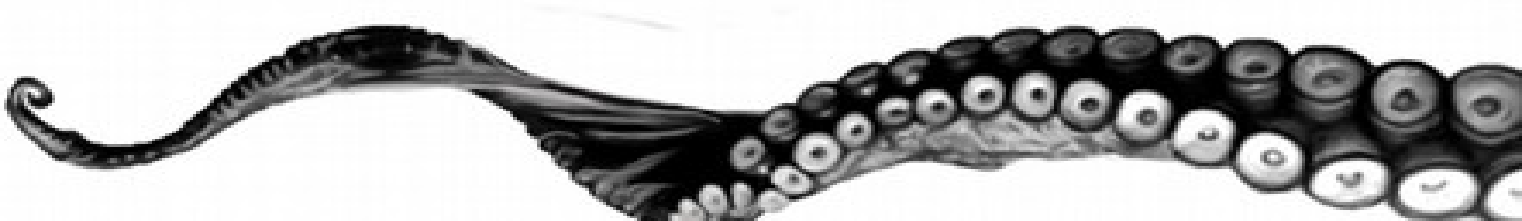
The planetoid's initial indigenous atmosphere was described as "primordial", consisting mainly of nitrogen, water vapour, carbon dioxide, trace particles of oxygen and small concentrations of methane and ammonia. It was then 'processed' and is now capable of sustaining human life without the need of environment masks. It is constantly racked by strong winds, although the planet is too small for potentially dangerous very large storms to form. These constant high winds are called the 'Perma-Storm' by the people of Leng, and, along with the rock spires, they make piloting rolls on the planet more difficult than on planets with more predictable weather and terrain.

The cities of Leng, imaginatively named Leng 1, Leng 2 and Leng 3, are carved from the rock of the planet, with windows access points, bay doors, communication equipment, chimneys etc, protruding from the surface of the rock. The cities have the look of metallic fungus growing from the bases of the spires, with cleared areas between, here and there, to allow Fast Ships to make planetfall.

Sarkomand

This was already a ruined and poisoned planet when humans first arrived. It was home to the ruins of a long-dead civilisation. Humanity settled the planet long ago, and the ruins of the alien civilisation were concreted over or relegated to museums and historical sites.

Sarkomand is described by engineers as a 'toxic planet' that is difficult to keep terraformed, but rich in mineral resources. It was eventually terraformed into beauty and comfort under the Empire, before the doom that came to Earth and the Empire's subsequent contraction. Its capital of Halon was a popular tourist destination. As technology levels and resources are falling across the Empire, however, it is proving difficult to prevent the planet from reverting to its previous state. Large areas of the

surface can now only be accessed with the aid of an environment mask, and it is only a matter of time before the entire planet returns to its original uninhabitable state.

Serannian

This planet is a gas giant, surrounded by a number of moons. There is a band of habitable atmosphere among the clouds. There a number of cloud cities in this band, although one recently 'fell' to a lower level within the planet and was presumed lost, crushed by unimaginable gravitational forces.

There are remnants of floating Mi-Go bases and cities at lower levels within the planet, but these are now deserted after some doom came upon them. Human research teams are scouring the remains of the Mi-Go civilisation in the hopes of explaining what happened to them, and finding clues to how humanity can avoid a similar fate.

The planet has two habitable moons, both with human cities. Those two worlds both have atmospheres and Earth-like gravity, and in fact have very similar local life. The theory is that life was transferred from one moon to the other by meteorites. The moon settlements are each just a few thousand people and are administrated by the much larger cities within the gas giant they orbit. The moon dwellers think of themselves as Serannians rather than as a distinct culture or society.

Y'ha-nthlei

Y'ha-nthlei is a planet without a single centimetre of surface crust. The entire surface is water, dotted here and there with space ports and landing platforms. Humanity lives deep beneath the waves in undersea cities. At least one of the undersea cities has been taken over by the Deep Ones. This is a cold planet with artificial islands, home to the landing platforms and ports, tethered to the ocean floor, far below. It is known for its dreaming stones, valuable iridescent gems produced from the shells of sea creatures, much in the manner of pearls.

Zin

This is a planet with very little water, and huge expanses of arid land. It is a beautiful planet, like Earth in many ways, but at an earlier stage in its evolution. The local fauna is fern-like and the animals are mostly lizards. There are many ranges of low hills, and among the low hills are entrances into ancient tunnels, left behind by a mechanical form of life that inhabited the planet long before the arrival of humanity.

It is a planet with an orbital space base and 1d6 carriers at any one time. Its main importance to the empire is a secret underground bunker where 'backups' of the Great Ones are kept, safe from harm if Kadath should fall.

CHARACTER CREATION

These rules, including character generation, conflict resolution, skills and advancement etc, are a distillation of the rules found in FATE Core. They are intended to give you the game mechanics you need to play the game, without having to refer to the FATE Core manual. However the FATE Core manual is available free, and provides a lot of additional information to make running the game even easier and more fun.

Character creation is collaborative and is best done as a group activity. It can take a full session to do, as everyone talks about your characters, makes suggestions to each other, and establishes some of the detail of the setting.

Character Name

A character's name does a lot of heavy lifting. It creates a world and sets a mood. A name can be destiny, Chance, for example, is a great name for a character who is shooting for the stars. There is the potential for idiosyncratic names to do half the work of character creation for you. On the other hand, deciding not to give your character a first name can be a powerful statement. It suggests intimacy denied, motive obscured.

Some players look for inspiration in mythology, a great source of powerful and enigmatic names. Another source for character names that many players use is popular novels. TV shows and movies are popular sources of inspiration too. You don't have to use TV character names directly, but can instead change and adapt them a bit.

You can draw on your past. You can use the name of your first boss, or the surname of a teacher. Take a look through your inbox. It sometimes helps to find some meaning within the names, especially with surnames. Combining two ordinary words can sometimes provide an interesting name, such as Darkraven, from dark and raven.

Whatever your 'process', naming a character is one of the most important steps in character creation.
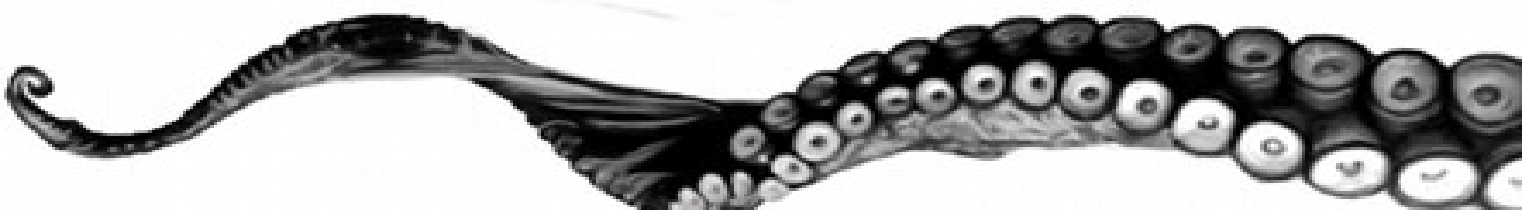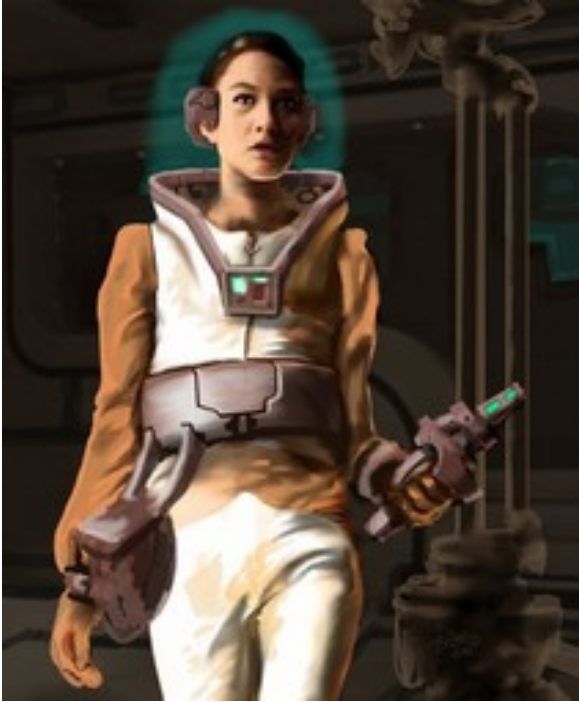
Life Before Mythos

Once you have a name, you next design the character's backstory. Decide where the character was born, what language or languages they speak, and what job they do.

Before the PCs became aware of the Mythos they were living ordinary lives in the fading days of empire. To simulate this, every character has a background career. Whatever this previous career, nothing can really prepare your character for the world they have just been sucked into. Even so, your character's life before getting sucked into the orbit of the Cthulhu Mythos will be the basis on which their new life is built.

An engineer who discovers something they shouldn't have while excavating the foundations for their latest project will have a different skill set and a different approach to that of a professor who saw something unsettling in the night as a child.

Astro-Engineer

You design and build space stations, asteroid installations and many other indispensable parts of the infrastructure of the spaceways. There isn't much work creating new infrastructure now, and most of your time is spent in a desperate attempt to stop the essential systems that support the Remnants from failing completely.

Corporate Security
You work for one of the big firms. A company with enemies and secrets that needs security. You are the best at what you do, but you don't feel good about it.

Diplomat
You are an important cog in the machinery of imperial diplomacy. It is a glamorous life, which still has a lot of the pomp and luxury of the days before imperial decline.

Experimental Subject
You lived most of your life in a lab before escaping to become an adventurer. You don't know exactly what they did to you, they never explained. The lab was destroyed by the 'other side' and you hid among the dead. The enemy soldiers, if that's what the attackers were, didn't seem to want to leave any of the test subjects alive.

Farmer
Your farm is no more. Lots of your friends lost their farms too, in the cataclysm. The official story is that the planet was attacked by aliens, but there are rumours that the doom that came on your home planet actually came from underground, that it had been lurking there all along, and that the government knew. But if the Great Ones really knew, why didn't they do anything to stop it.

Frontier Healer
You never went to medical school. All your skills are self taught, but you seem to have healing hands, and a way with people.

Labourer
When people tell stories of the dirts jobs they've had, you always win. You've always done the hardest, dirtiest work. You have worn protective suits to be sent into antimatter reactors, just after they have been taken off line, before they cooled. The sweat bursting from your temples, you remember scrubbing and scrubbing at the tiny imperfections created in the reactor walls. Your arm muscles were like cords against the resistance of the gravitic fields.

You have even dug ditches. Nobody digs ditches any more, that's 'dumb' robot work, even the lowest grade of AI droids won't do it, but you have, and you weren't paid by the hour either, you were paid piecework. The overseer weighed the earth you had moved at the end of every day. It was clay soil too, in the never-ending, driving rain of that damnable planet. When it comes to a contest based on sheer hard work, you always win. And you could tell some stories about the unclean thing that were dug up on that planet too.

Prospector
Looking for planetary sites, strata within gas giants, and asteroids that might contain valuable raw material is always the best part of the job. The donkey work of actually setting up and operating mines is always a little of an anticlimax, and you never know what unholy things could lurk beneath the surface, ready to be unearthed by your machines.

Trader
You move goods from areas of low demand to areas of high demand. It's elementary economics. It is a career that has served you well and made you wealthy, though it sometimes best not to pry to much into exactly what is being transported in some of the containers within the hold of your Fast Ship. They certainly have very specific requirements about the atmosphere they require, and it's a terribly toxic mix.

Equipment

Gear provides additional aspects that the character has access to when they have their gear with them. Usually there is also an extra aspect that represents an items disadvantages. The character can have any gear their heart desires at the start of play. The gear a character has at their disposal will constantly be changing. If a player wants to keep a particular piece of gear with them, a signature weapon or their trusts spaceship, it must be mentioned as part of one of the character's aspects. Otherwise the GM can destroy it at any time.

The adventurers will need more than just their skills and experience in a world of combat drones and nanobots. Few humans can survive in such an environment without the aid of advanced equipment. The difficulty of buying equipment in the game is decided by the gamemaster on a case by case version. The following ladder will help give an indication of the difficulty of purchasing various items.

+8 Legendary = cloud city, entire planet
+7 Epic = space station
+6 Fantastic = large spaceships
+5 Superb = medium spaceships
+4 Great = small spaceships
+3 Good = planetary vehicles
+2 Fair = weapons
+1 Average = tools
+0 Mediocre = disposables, cartridges
–1 Poor = quality food, drink
–2 Terrible = inexpensive food, drink

Gear can be chosen from the lists below, or the players can design their own gear, assigning one positive and one negative aspect if the gear is significant enough to warrant this.

Some example gear aspects include;-
It just slows you down
It sure stopped that one
I can fly
This needs more power
Blunderbuss
Surgical strikes
Out of Ammo Again
Bulky and Clumsy
Safety Features
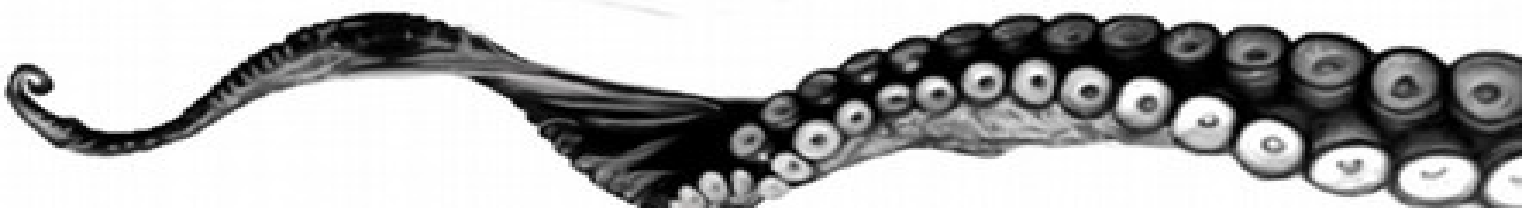
Weapons

The weapons used across the Remnants are very standard. They are based on advanced laser technology and these advanced lasers are referred to as blasters. Their laser mechanism's don't cut: they burn. They turn part of the target into plasma. This plasma then expands very rapidly in all directions with a loud explosion, hence the 'blaster' nickname. The muzzle flash is much less noticeable than with chemical rounds from a conventional slug thrower. Being hit by a blaster feels like an impact, but none of that momentum comes from the laser: it comes from the explosion. They also make bloody holes, similar in appearance to those made by large calibre slugs, except the holes are on the front of the target. There are no exit wounds. The idea that blasters cauterize wounds is a misconception.

Blaster Rifle

Unwieldy – Great Range

These are both cheap and do a lot of damage. Usually as long as a humanoid arm, but thicker. It looks lethal and commands respect. Blasters have no appreciable recoil.

Blaster Pistol

Easy to Conceal – Lacks Punch

The blaster pistol is the most commonly used weapon in existence. It is a tough, reliable design. It runs off a single power cell inside the stock.

Blaster Carbine

Good Punch – Good Range

Somewhere between the size of a pistol and a rifle, you hold this weapon by a pistol grip about a third of the way down its length. It has a folding metal stock which rests against your shoulder when you fire it. A boxy weapon with a short, heavy barrel.
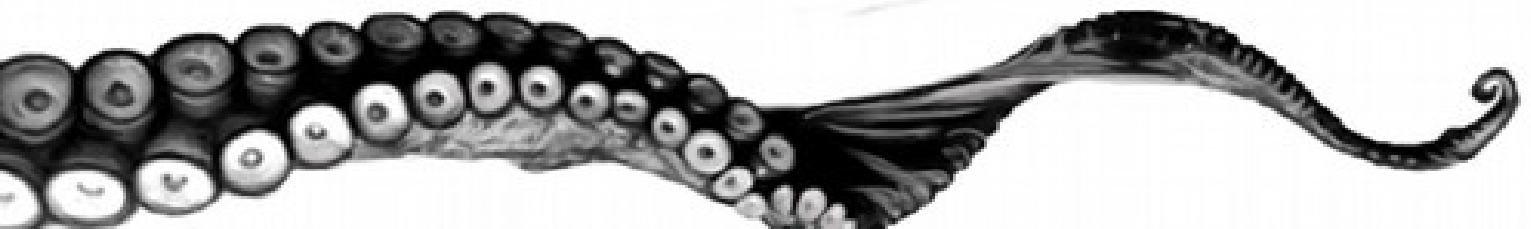
Miscellaneous Equipment

Equipment can be bought, or printed out from a 3D printer and there is a huge amount of equipment that can be obtained. The following is just a tiny selection of some of the more useful and common items.

Antigrav Belt

Fair cost
I Can Fly – Slow and Clumsy Flight
A slightly bulky belt which levitates its user a maximum of 10m in the air and allows them to move at a fast walking pace.

Armoured Vac Suit

Sure Stopped That Hit – Heavy and Bulky – I Can Breathe
A vacuum suit with armour panels. The armoured vac suit often has more sophisticated systems built in too. It is possible find examples with stealth systems, infrared sensors, motion detectors, and all manner of other detection technology. This has led to fashions in spacesuit and armour decoration that have moved away from camouflage and towards brightly coloured armour that allows combatants to quickly work out who is on their side among the confusion of combat.

Hand Scanner

Fair cost
Found You – Ghost Scans
This can be used to scan for life signs, movement, precious raw materials, and many other settings.

Light Vac Suit

Thank Goodness, You Wore Your Vest – Heavy and Bulky – I Can Breathe
This is the standard vac suit found in lockers near airlocks across human space. Even the most basic examples are quite sophisticated, with heads-up displays of important information and connectors that can configure themselves to receive oxygen and power from a host spaceship.

Magnetic Shoes

Fair cost
Feet Locked on the Ground – I'm Stuck
These are not just magnetic, but can also use microfibre, like a lizard foot, and other adhesive strategies to stick to just about any surface. The gamemaster may determine that some surfaces, usually those of an ancient or alien design, have a resistance, or immunity to such footwear.

Manoeuvre Pack

Fair cost
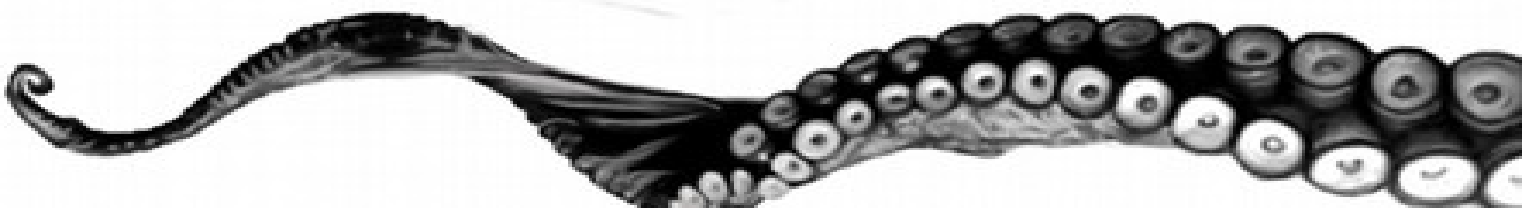
I Can Fly – Sort Of
This is used to get quickly from place to place on the exterior of a spaceship, or other large zero-g construct. It is a small engine worn on the back by astronauts in space to allow them to move around more freely at a fast running pace.

Power Source
Good cost
More Power! - It Just Fizzled Out
A small cylindrical device that generates power, and sends it to a maximum of ten devices that request it within a 20m radius. No cables are required as the power is sent through electromagnetic induction.

Limb Paste
Good cost
Regrow Limb – Ugly and Fragile
This is smeared on the area where a limb has been lost, or a tail, and the limb then regrows, taking 1d6 weeks.

Sentry Gun
Fair cost
Watch the Corridor – Wrong Target
A weapon modified to be a sentry gun can also be mounted on a tripod and set to "Automatic", in which case the computer will open fire on any moving object that gets within its range. Both blasters and projectile weapons can be modified to be sentry guns. This system is fairly stupid, but a lot cheaper than more capable combat droids. It can be given simple instructions like not to shoot at people, or only to shoot at people, or not to shoot at people who give it a particular radio signal or only to defend a particular arc of fire.

Smartdust
Fair cost
Map Maker – Spreads Slowly
This is a system of many tiny micro-electromechanical systems, consisting of a mix of sensors, robots, and tools, that can detect, for example, light, temperature, vibration, magnetism and chemicals. They are usually networked wirelessly; and are distributed over some area to perform tasks, usually sensing. It resembles a canister of dust, or specks, and when released into the air, it uses brownian motion to distribute over a wide area, up to 2 km², and provides detailed data about the area. It is often used to map cave complexes or the corridor layout of space wrecks before salvage operations begin.

Stealth Skin
Good cost
Gone – Betrayed by Environment
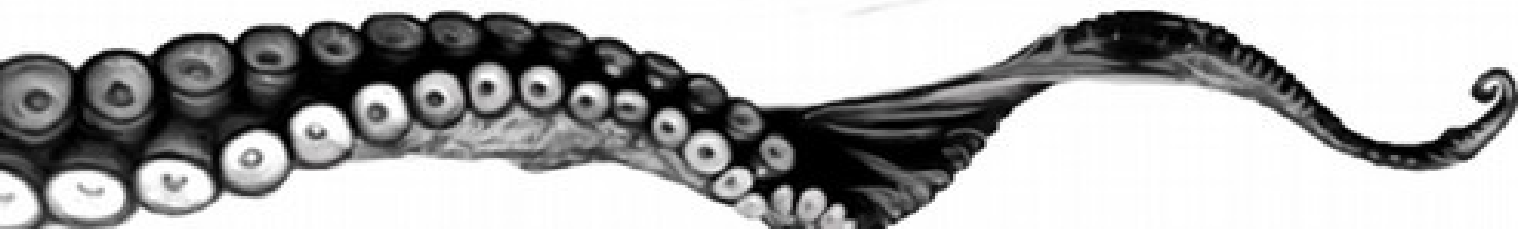
The stealth skin counteracts bonuses to awareness gained by sensors, and such things as infrared, motion and aura detectors. They can be of any rating from 1-100% but every % point costs 200 credits. Many assassins have combat skins cybernetically integrated within their own skin. This costs the usual additional amount for cybernetic implantation.

Survival Tent
Fair cost
This tent comes with an atmosphere scrubber to keep people alive for five days on a planet with non-breathable air.

Quick Seal
Fair cost
This is supplied in tubs and can be squeezed or poured to cover punctures in spacesuits or vehicles. A tub fits snugly in most utility belt pouches. Using it on a puncture that is undergoing decompression is more difficult because of rushing air. The character must make an engineering roll and the gamemaster will assign a difficulty level based on the circumstances.

Waldo
Fair cost
A harness which enables humans to carry heavy weapons without needing to set up a tripod, making them quicker to deploy, and easier to use on the move. This will allow a humanoid to use a vehicle weapon, but the person reacts slower than when using a personal weapon.

Utility Belt
Fair cost
All My Stuff in One Place – Bulky
A selection of plastic, metal or leather boxes on a bandoleer or belt for holding capacitors for a blaster, cable for swinging across chasms, and many other useful things, the useful things have to be bought separately however. The belt has eight small pouches, four on the right, and four on the left.
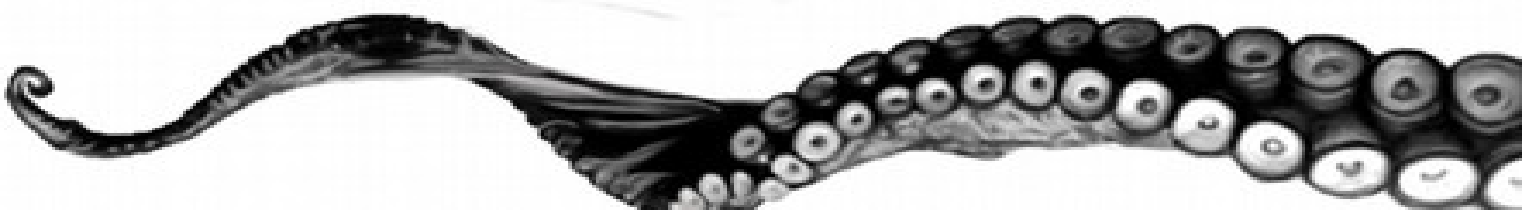
Cybernetic Modification

Cybernetic alterations to a persons physical and mental abilities are easy and commonplace. Implants include both cybernetic and organic additions – sometimes quite large ones - to the basic humanoid frame. Any item of equipment can be added as a cybernetic enhancement. The cost is one level higher than the items original cost.

Cybernetics are treated just the same as any other personal equipment, except that removing it is usually a more lengthy and sometimes painful procedure. It should be noted however that cybernetics can also be designed to be dockable and easily removed, for another shift upwards in price.

Aspects

Now create four aspects. Aspects define who a character is, and they provide ways for you to generate fate points and to spend those fate points on bonuses.

Troubles

The first aspect you create is a 'bad' aspect. This is your trouble. Trouble brings chaos into a character's life and drives them into interesting situations.

Three More Aspects

Then choose or create three more positive aspects. The most important thing about aspects are that they are interesting. Aspects give you success when you need it and draw you into danger and action.

Examples of good aspects that describe the characters personality are, 'Easily Swayed by Clever Folk' or 'Always On Point'. Other sources of aspects include the character's background, 'Jungle Sniper Training', for example, or an important possession, 'My Father's Bloodstained Book of the Occult'. The game moderator will use your aspects when they are creating scenarios. If you have trouble thinking up some aspects, leave it for now—you'll have plenty of time during play to refine it.
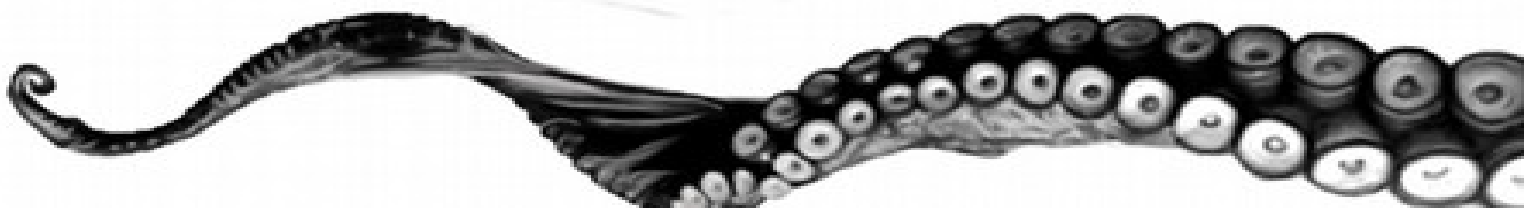
Character Skills

Once you have chosen aspects, it's time to pick skills. Your skills form a pyramid, with a single skill rated at Great (+4), and more skills at each lower rating on the ladder going down to Average (+1):

One Great (+4) skill
Two Good (+3) skills
Three Fair (+2) skills
Four Average (+1) skills
Infinite number of Mediocre (+0) skills

As characters advance, they can improve beyond Great (+4), but it's more difficult than improving skills rated below this. Mediocre (+0) is the default for any skill you do not take.

Note: a few skills have special benefits, notably those skills that affect the number of stress boxes and consequences you have available. If you know you want a certain number of those, put those skills on the pyramid first.

Precision

Looking over the skill descriptions, you might notice that there are a few places where we give an abstraction for something that in real life depends on precise measurement. Physique and Resources are good examples. Many people who are into strength training have some idea of how much weight they can dead lift, and people spend specific amounts of money from a finite pool when they buy things.

So how much can a character with Great (+4) Physique bench press? How much can a character with Fair (+2) Resources spend before going broke? The truth is, we have no idea, and we're reluctant to pursue a specific answer. Though it may seem counter-intuitive, we find that creating minutiae like that detracts from the verisimilitude of the game in play. As soon as you establish a detail like, "Great Physique can dead lift a car for five seconds," then you're cutting out a lot of the variability that real life allows. Adrenaline and other factors allow people to reach beyond their normal physical limits or fall short of them.
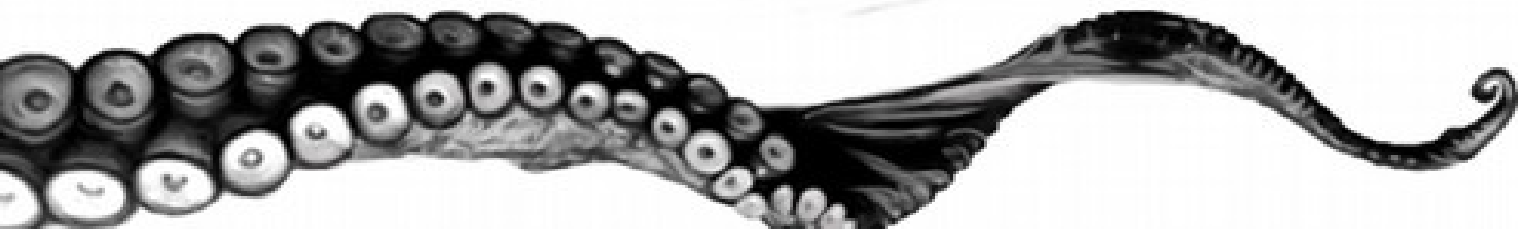
Stunts

Now pick or invent three stunts. Stunts change how skills work for your character. You get three stunts for free, and you can take up to two more stunts at the cost of lowering your refresh by one.

Refresh

A player character starts with a refresh of 3. That means they'll start each session off with at least 3 fate points. If you pick four stunts, your refresh is 2. If you pick five stunts, your refresh is only 1.

Stress

Now determine how much of a beating your character can take. This is represented by stress boxes. Every PC has two different stress tracks, a physical stress track and a mental stress track. The more boxes in a stress track, the more resilient the character is. By default, a character has two boxes in each stress track.

Consequences

Every PC also has three consequence slots. One is mild, one is moderate, and the last one is severe. Consequences are the injuries and traumas you can't just shake off after the dust settles.

Note: Skills such as Physique and Will provide more stress boxes. At Superb (+5) or higher, such skills also grant an additional mild consequence slot.
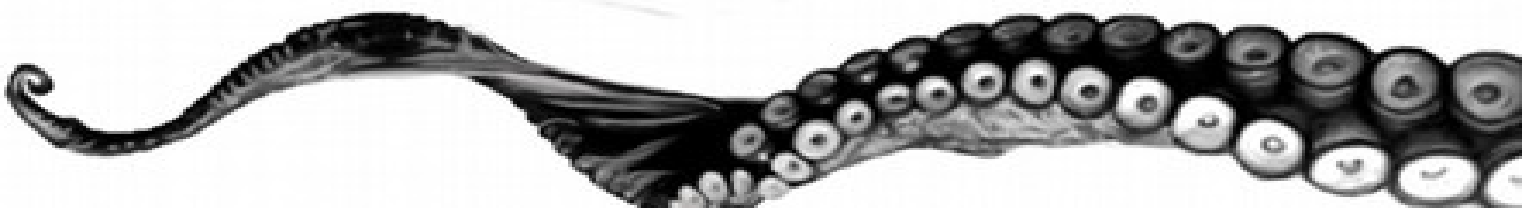
The List of Skills

These skills are intended to be broad and inclusive. There should be vary many ways that each skill can be turned to advantage during play.

Athletics

Athletics is physical fitness. It is good for jumping, running, climbing, swimming. You can creating an advantage with Athletics, by jumping to high ground, running faster than the opponent can keep up with, or performing dazzling acrobatic manoeuvres. Athletics is also rolled for defence in conflict, representing dodging sword blows, or ducking behind scenery to avoid gunfire.

Athletics Stunts
Sprinter: move two zones in a conflict
Rope monkey: +2 in rigging

Burglary

Burglary includes bypassing locks and traps, pickpocketing and filching, covering your tracks, and other such activities. An advantage can be created by discovering vulnerabilities to exploit. You can also examine the work of other burglars to determine how a particular heist was done.

Burglary Stunts
Escapology: +2 on Burglary rolls to create an advantage and escape from a location
Lock Maker: Your locks provide active opposition to thieves
Thieves' Cant: You can use Burglary in place of Contacts when dealing with other thieves and burglars
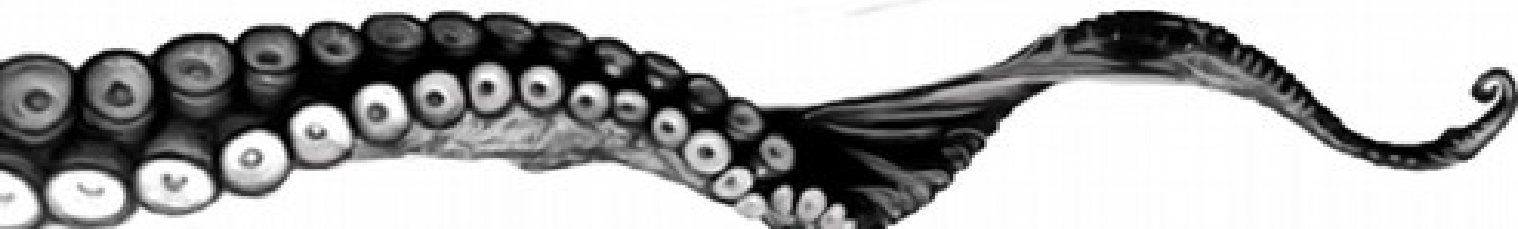
Contacts

Knowing and making connections with people. Represents using your information network to plant or acquire information.

Contacts Stunts
Ear to the Ground: on your turf, use Contacts instead of Notice for turn order, because you got tipped off in time
Rumormonger. +2 to create an advantage when you plant vicious rumours about someone else

Deceive

Lying to and misdirecting people. Use Deceive to bluff your way past someone, or to get someone to believe a lie, or to get something out of someone because they believe in one of your lies. For nameless NPCs, this is just an overcome roll, but for PCs or named NPCs, it requires a contest.

Deceive Stunts
Lies upon Lies: +2 to create a Deceive advantage against someone who has believed one of your lies already
Mind Games: You can use Deceive to make mental attacks, as long as you can base it on a clever lie

Drive/Pilot

The Drive skill is all about operating vehicles. Drive is used to successfully accomplish movement in the face of difficult circumstances, like rough terrain, or stunt driving. Avoiding damage to a vehicle in a physical conflict is one of the most common uses of Drive.

Drive Stunts
Hard to Shake: +2 to Drive whenever you're pursuing another vehicle in a chase scene
Pedal to the Metal: in chases or races, if you tie with your Drive roll, it's considered a success
Ramming Speed! When ramming another vehicle, you ignore two shifts of damage

Empathy

Empathy involves knowing and being able to spot changes in a person's mood or bearing. It's basically the emotional Notice skill. You can use Empathy to read a person's emotional state and get a general sense of who they are. Targets can defend with Deceive or Rapport. You can also use Empathy to discover what circumstances will allow you to make mental attacks on someone, figuring out their breaking points. This is the skill to go to in order to defend against Deceive actions, allowing you to pierce through lies and see through to someone's true intent. Empathy is the main skill you use to help others recover from consequences that are mental in nature.

Empathy Stunts
The Ring of Truth: +2 to all Empathy rolls made to discern or discover lies
Nose for Trouble: use Empathy to determine turn order in a conflict
Psychologist: Once per session you can reduce someone else's consequence by one level of severity (severe to moderate, moderate to mild, mild to nothing at all) by succeeding on an Empathy roll with a difficulty of Fair (+2) for a mild consequence, Good
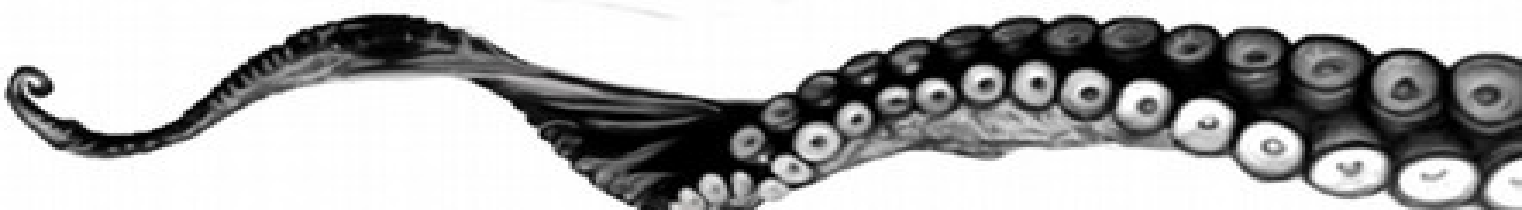
(+3) for moderate, or Great (+4) for severe. You need to talk with the person you're treating for at least half an hour in order for them to receive the benefits of this stunt, and you can't use it on yourself.

Engineering

Engineering is the skill of working with machinery. Engineering allows you to build, break, or fix machinery. You can use Engineering to create aspects representing features of a piece of machinery, pointing out useful features or strengths you can use to your advantage (Armor-Plated, Rugged Construction) or a vulnerability for you to exploit (Flaw in the Cross-Beam, Hasty Work).

Engineering Stunts
Improviser: You don't ever have to spend a fate point to have the tools for Engineering, even in extreme situations
Better than New! When you succeed with style on a repair, you can immediately give a new aspect to the device

Fight

The Fight skill covers all forms of close-quarters combat, both unarmed and using melee weapons. For the ranged weapons counterpart, see Shoot. Any number of special moves can be covered with advantages: a targeted strike to stun, a 'dirty move,' disarming, and so on. Fight can be used to defend, representing blocking a blow or catching a blade.

Fight Stunts
Backup Weapon: spend a fate point to declare you have a backup weapon, to a disarm into just a boost
Killing Stroke: once per scene, you can spend a fate point to increase a consequence's severity (mild becomes moderate, moderate becomes severe, severe becomes taken out)

Investigate

Investigate is the skill you use to find things out. Analysing a crime scene for clues, searching a cluttered room for the item you need, even poring over a musty old tome to try and find the passage that makes everything make sense. Racing against the clock to collect evidence before the cops show up or disaster occurs is a classic way to use Investigate in a challenge. As long as you're willing to take the time, you can find out just about anything about anyone, discover nearly any detail about a place or object, or otherwise make up aspects about nearly anything in the game world that your character could reasonably unearth.

Investigate Stunts
Attention to Detail: defend against Deceive attempts by observing microexpressions.
The Power of Deduction: Once per scene, create an aspect that you can invoke for free.

Lore

The Lore skill is about knowledge and education. You might roll Lore to decipher some ancient language on a tomb wall, under the presumption that your character might have researched it at some point. More often than not, you'll be using Lore to get a story detail, some obscure bit of information that you uncover or know already, but you can use Lore to create advantages based on any subject matter your character might have studied, which gives you a fun way to add details to the setting.

Lore Stunts

I've Read about That! spend a fate point to use Lore for one roll, if you can justify having read about how to do it
Shield of Reason: You can use Lore as a defence against Provoke attempts
Specialist: in a field of specialization, such as, eldritch knowledge, or criminology, to get a +2 to all related Lore rolls

Mythos Lore

Starting characters do not have access to this skill. This skill represents a character's understanding of the Old Ones and their ways and plans. It helps in identifying Mythos occurrences, conducting rituals, and identifying monsters. Mythos Lore can also be used to do magic, with the Ritual Magic stunt.

As characters gain more understanding of this skill, their perspective on the world changes radically, often leading them to speak and behave in ways that others consider unhealthy or insane.

The downside of Mythos Lore

Mythos Lore is unlike any other knowledge or skill that a human can acquire. There are serious consequences to acquiring Mythos Lore. The most serious is creeping insanity, but there are also physical prices to pay too. A worshipper could develop a mysterious itch, a deformity, a growth. They could start to partially occupy other dimensions, causing them to bleed even though they don't have wounds. They can start to rot and they can start to transform, usually into something foul and insectile or reptilian.

Every time the character goes up a level in Mythos Lore they must roll a saving throw against a difficulty based on their Mythos Lore skill using their highest mental characteristic.
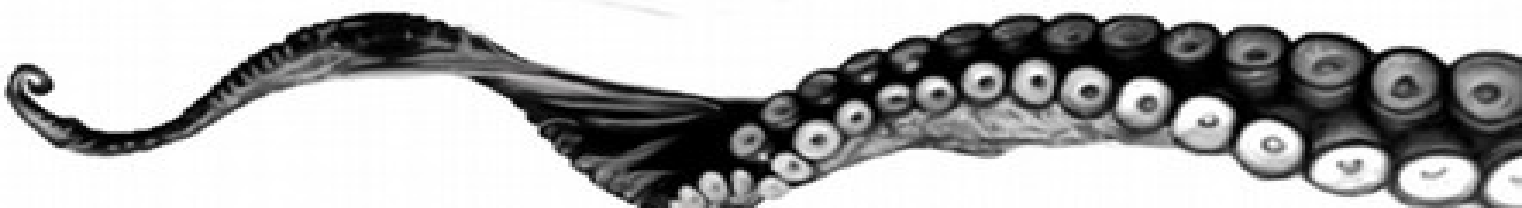
Aura

Adventurers are susceptible from level +1 Average.
Being around Mythos Creatures rubs off on the sorcerers and adventurers that have dealings with them. After too much delving, characters can sometimes gain a sickly aura that can incite the mob.

Madness

The strange behaviour exhibited by initiates into the mysteries of Cthulhu is often mistaken for madness, but it is not. It can not be 'cured' by counselling, psychiatry, medication or any other form of therapy. It is actually the insane investigator who has a better grasp of the realities of the world and it is their behaviour that is better adapted to these realities.

The adventurer acquiring Mythos knowledge is irrevocably changed, and to outsiders, these changes can resemble madness.

The levels of insanity.

1 - becoming frightened of things most people deem harmless - gain 1d6 phobias
Adventurers are susceptible from level +2 Fair

2 - hearing voices - roll 1d6 voices that will try to persuade the character to do their bidding
Adventurers are susceptible from level +3 Good

3 - catatonia - the character suffers 1d6 hours of catatonia per week as their mind learns to travel to other places and times
Adventurers are susceptible from level +4 Great

4 - pyromania - the hideous significance of some patterns of urban development become clear. They are invocations of summoning inscribed over the landscape. One such will be discovered per month that must be dealt with by dynamite or fire.
Adventurers are susceptible from level +5 Superb

5 - personality change - the host body becomes able to host visiting psyches, transferring the intrinsic psyche of the adventurer to some alien body far removed in time or space. These personality swaps last 1d6 hours and the adventurers behaviour can he very bizarre, because it is not the adventurer at all, but some other creature inhabiting their form
Adventurers are susceptible from level +6 Fantastic

6 - transcendence - the character moves on from Earthly concerns, babbling and gibbering, they confine themselves to contemplation of the true nature of the universe.
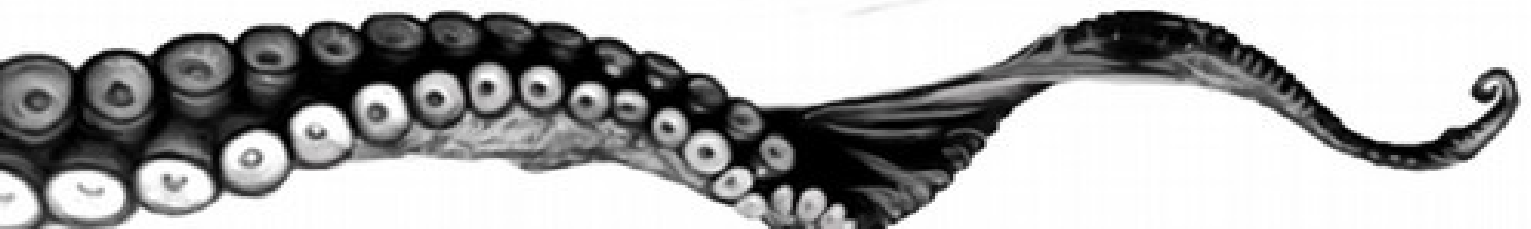
They have periods where they crave human company and become lucid, but these are short - only 1d6 hours per day.
Adventurers are susceptible from level +7 Epic

Physical Transformation
Adventurers are susceptible from level +8 Legendary
At the GM's whim, the character develops a terrible itch, a deformity, or a growth, or they start to partially occupy other dimensions, causing them to bleed at random times, or they start to rot, or transform into something foul and insectile or reptilian.

Mythos Lore Stunts
Uncanny Power: Allows the character to perform magic and develop special powers, which they can access and control with their Mythos Lore skill.
Dreamer: The character, when sleeping, is able to enter the Dreamlands voluntarily.

Notice

The Notice skill represents a character's overall perception, ability to pick out details at a glance, and other powers of observation. You can use Notice to create aspects based on direct observation, like finding an escape route in a debris-filled building. Notice can also be used to find a Subtle Weakness in the enemy's line of defence. For example, if you're in a brawl you could make a Notice roll to say that you spot a puddle on the floor, right next to your opponent's feet that could cause him to slip. You also use Notice to defend against any uses of Stealth, or to discover that you're being observed.

Notice Stunts
Danger Sense: Notice is unimpeded by, darkness etc, if someone or something intends to harm you
Body Language Reader: you can use Notice to learn the aspects of a target through observation

Physique

This represents the character's physical raw strength and endurance. You can use Physique to overcome any obstacles that require the application of brute force, like prison bars or locked gates. Of course.

Special: The Physique skill gives you additional physical stress and consequence slots. Average (+1) or Fair (+2) gives you a 3-point stress box. Good (+3) or Great (+4) gives you a 3-point and a 4-point stress box. Superb (+5)and above give you an additional mild consequence slot along with the additional stress boxes. This slot can only be used for physical harm.

Physique Stunts
Grappler: +2 to Physique rolls made to create advantages on an enemy by wrestling or

grappling with them

Iron Jaw: You can use Physique to defend against brawling attacks made with fists or blunt instruments

Provoke

Provoke is getting inside your opponent's head and eliciting negative emotional response from them, like fear, anger, shame. You can Provoke someone into doing what you want. You might intimidate them for information, or scare them into running away. Against PCs or important NPCs, you'll need to win a contest. They oppose with Will. You can create advantages representing momentary emotional states, like Enraged, Shocked, or Hesitant. Your target opposes with Will. You can also make mental attacks with Provoke, to do emotional harm to an opponent.

Provoke Stunts
Provoke Violence: When you create an advantage, become the target of that character's next attack or action

Rapport

The Rapport skill is all about making positive connections to people and eliciting positive emotion. It's the skill of being liked and trusted. Use Rapport to charm or inspire people to do what you want, or to establish a good connection with them. You may have to enter a contest to sufficiently ingratiate yourself to a named NPC or PC.

Rapport Stunts
Influencer: Twice per session, upgrade a boost into a full situation aspect with a free invocation
Demagogue: +2 to Rapport when you're delivering an inspiring speech in front of a crowd

Resources

You can use Resources to get yourself out of any situation where throwing money at the problem will help, such as bribery or acquiring rare and expensive things.

Resources Stunts
Money Talks: use Resources to influence people, in places where material wealth is valued
Super-rich: Twice per session, you may take a boost representing a windfall or influx of cash

Shoot

Can be used for trick shots, keeping someone under heavy fire, and the like. This skill makes physical attacks from several zones away, unlike with Fight. Range is usually only truncated by line of sight obstacles, but the GM can decide that a target is at long range or out of range. You can use it to lay down some covering fire—which acts as a defence for your allies by creating an advantage (Covering Fire or Hail of Bullets, for example).

Shoot Stunts
Called Shot: spend a fate point and declare a specific condition, like Shot in the Hand, in addition to stress
Quick on the Draw: use Shoot to determine turn order in any conflict where shooting quickly would be useful

Stealth

The Stealth skill allows you to avoid detection, both when hiding in place and trying to move about unseen. Sneaking past sentries and security, hiding from a pursuer, avoiding leaving evidence as you pass through a place, and any other such uses all fall under the purview of Stealth. Use Stealth to create aspects on yourself, setting yourself in an ideal position for an attack or ambush in a conflict. That way, you can be Well-Hidden when the guards pass by and take advantage of that, or Hard to Pin Down if you're fighting in the dark.

Stealth Stunts
Face in the Crowd: +2 to any Stealth roll to blend into a crowd
Ninja Vanish: Once per scene, spend a fate point and vanish in plain sight, using a smoke pellet etc.
Slippery Target: In shadow, use Stealth to defend against Shoot attacks from enemies, at least one zone away

Will

Represents your character's mental fortitude. Will is the main skill you use to defend against mental attacks, representing your control over your reactions.

Special: The Will skill gives you additional mental stress boxes or consequence slots. Average (+1) or Fair (+2) gives you a 3-point stress box. Good (+3) or Great (+4) gives you a 3-point and a 4-point stress box. Superb (+5) and above give you an additional mild
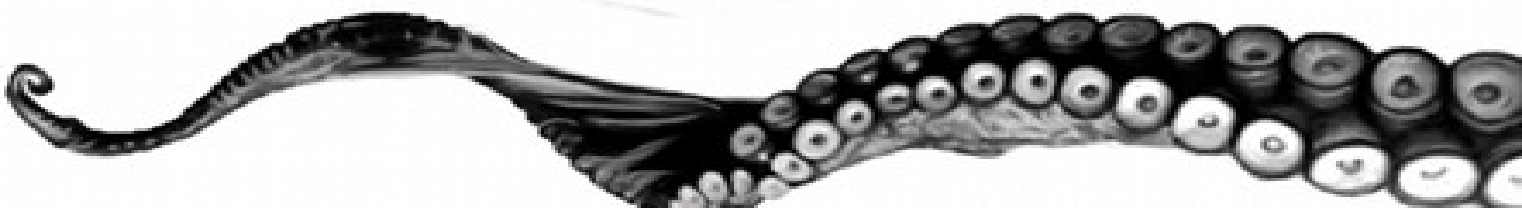
consequence slot along with the additional stress boxes. This slot can only be used for mental harm.

Will Stunts
Strength From Determination; Use Will instead of Physique on any overcome rolls representing feats of strength
Hard Boiled: ignore a mild or moderate consequence for the duration of the scene
Indomitable: +2 to defend against Provoke attacks specifically related to intimidation and fear

Fate Points

Players also have a pool of points called fate points to use to influence the game. These are refreshed each session, and you can never have a refresh of less than one.

STUNTS AND REFRESH
Three Stunts = Refresh of 3
Four Stunts = Refresh of 2
Five Stunts = Refresh of 1

Players spend fate points in order to be awesome in a crucial moment, and they get them back when their lives get dramatic and complicated.

You might end a session of play with more fate points than your actual refresh. If that happens, you don't lose the additional points when you start the next session, but you don't gain any either.

Spending Fate Points

You spend fate points in any of the following ways:

Invoke an Aspect: Invoking an aspect costs you one fate point, unless the invocation is free.
Power a Stunt: Some stunts are very potent, and as such, cost a fate point in order to activate.
Refuse a Compel: Once a compel is proposed, you can pay a fate point to avoid the complication associated with it.
Declare a Story Detail: To add something to the narrative based on one of your aspects, spend a fate point.

Earning Fate Points

You earn fate points in any of the following ways:

Accept a Compel: You get a fate point when you agree to the complication associated with a compel.

Have Your Aspects Invoked Against You: If someone pays a fate point to invoke an aspect attached to your character, you gain their fate point at the end of the scene. This includes advantages created on your character, as well as consequences.

Concede in a Conflict: You receive one fate point for conceding in a conflict, as well as an additional fate point for each consequence that you've received in that conflict.
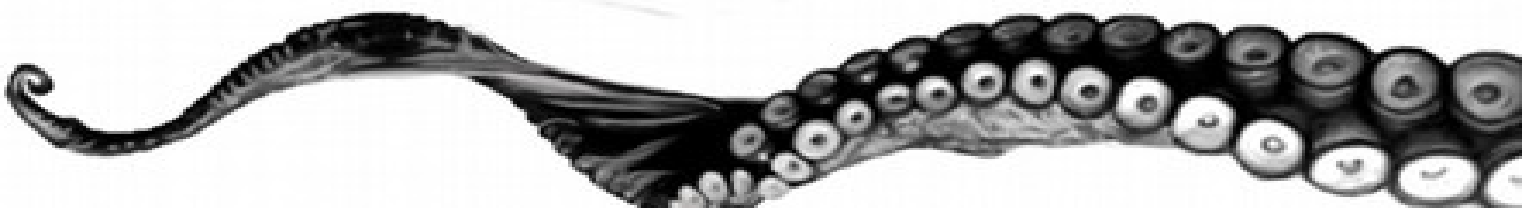
The GM and Fate Points

The GM compels for free. Whenever a scene starts, the GM gets one fate point for every PC in that scene. You can use these points on behalf of any NPC you want, but you can get more in that scene if they take a compel, like PCs do.

You reset to your default total, one per PC, at the beginning of every scene.

There are two exceptions:
You accepted a compel that effectively ended the last scene or starts the next one. If that happens, take an extra fate point in the next scene.
You conceded a conflict to the PCs in the previous scene. If that happens, take the fate points you'd normally get for the concession into the next scene and add them to the default total.

If the immediate next scene doesn't present a significant interaction with NPCs, you can save these extra points until the next scene that does.

ACTIONS, OUTCOMES

You do not need to roll dice for trivial tasks, such as driving a car or ordering a drink. Dice are rolled for more challenging situations, such as shooting at a dodging enemy, jumping from a moving train, or persuading a guard to take a bribe.

 Choose the character's skill that is appropriate to the action.
 Roll four Fate dice.

Fate Dice (also called Fudge dice) are six sided dice with two sides labelled with a +, two sides with a -, and two sides that are blank. They are usually rolled in groups of four, and the + and - sides are added together to get a number between -4 and +4, with positive usually being better.

They can be bought from hobby stores, or alternately just use ordinary D6. If you have a device with internet at the table, search for 'fudge dice roller' and roll your dice with a mouse click.

The result on the dice isn't your final total, however. If your character has a skill that's appropriate to the action, you get to add your character's rating in that skill to whatever you rolled.

In Fate, we use a ladder of adjectives and numbers to rate the dice results, a character's skills and the result of a roll.

Here's the ladder:
+8   Legendary
+7   Epic
+6   Fantastic
+5   Superb
+4   Great
+3   Good
+2   Fair
+1   Average
0   Mediocre
-1   Poor
-2   Terrible
-3   Terrible

Results can go below and above the ladder.

Interpreting Results

When you roll the dice, you're trying to get a high enough roll to match or beat your opposition. That opposition is going to come in one of two forms:

Active opposition, from someone rolling dice against you, or
passive opposition, from an obstacle that just has a set rating on the ladder for you to overcome.

Most of the time, your target will actively oppose your roll. Targets that are not capable of active opposition, such as surprised opponents, inanimate objects, and unimportant NPCs provide passive opposition instead.

If you beat your opposition on the ladder, you succeed at your action. A tie creates some effect, but not to the extent your character was intending. If you win by a lot, something extra happens (like doing more harm to your opponent in a fight).

If you don't beat the opposition, either you don't succeed at your action, you succeed at a cost, or something else happens to complicate the outcome. Some game actions have special results when you fail at the roll.

The difference between your opposition and your result is what we call shifts. When you roll equal to the opposition, you have zero shifts. Roll one over your opposition, and you have one shift. Two over means two shifts, and so on.
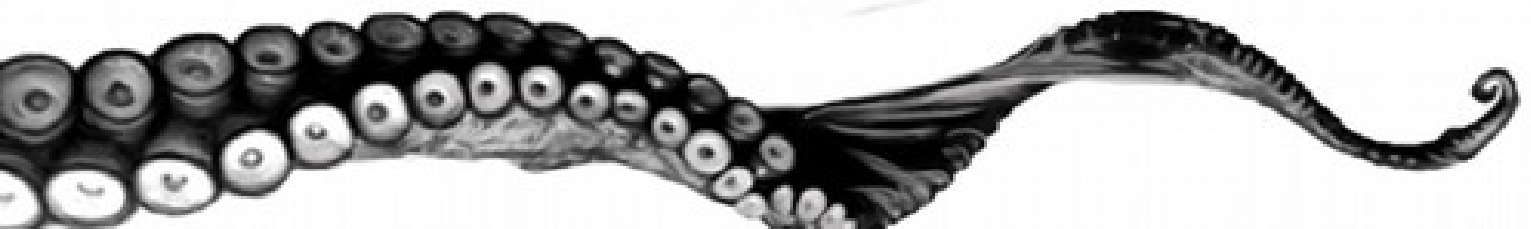
Dice-Roll Outcomes

When you roll the dice, either you're going to fail, tie, succeed, or succeed with style.

Roll lower than your opposition, you fail. There may be a serious cost.

Roll the same as your opposition, you tie. You get what you want, but there may be a minor cost or lack.

Roll higher than your opposition by 1 or 2 shifts, you succeed.

Roll higher than your opposition by 3 or more shifts, you succeed with style. You also get an added benefit.

The added benefit that the character gets could be a boost.

On an important roll, a serious cost may make the current situation worse somehow, either by creating a new problem or exacerbating an existing one. Bring in another source of opposition in this scene or the next one for example. A minor cost may just be a narrative detail, showing how the PC just barely scratched by.

Some examples of characters rolling dice include, defending against negative effects, trying to create an advantage, and directly attacking an enemy. They are all handled in a very similar way.

Creating an Advantage

If you're doing something to actively change your circumstances (like throwing sand in an opponent's eyes or setting something on fire), or trying to discovering new information that helps you (like learning the weakness of a monster through research), you are creating an advantage.

Create advantage is easier if the advantage was already there, like the monster's weakness.

If the advantage must be newly created…
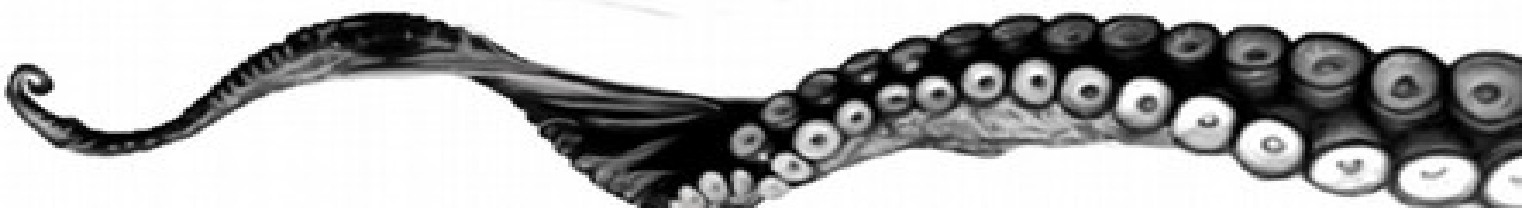
When you fail, you don't create the aspect, or you do but it backfires.
When you tie, you only get a boost. (Rough Terrain becomes Rocks on the Path).
When you succeed, you create a situation aspect with a free invocation.
When you succeed with style, you get a situation aspect with two free invocations instead of one.

If the advantage was already existing, and must just be exploited…

When you fail, your attempt backfires.
When you tie or succeed, you place a free invocation on the aspect.
When you succeed with style, you place two free invocations on the aspect.

Attacking

An attack isn't always physical in nature; some skills allow you to hurt someone mentally as well.

When you fail at an attack, you don't cause any harm to your target.
When you tie an attack, you don't cause any harm, but you gain a boost.
When you succeed on an attack, you inflict a hit on your target equal to the number of shifts you got. That forces the target to try and "buy off" the value of your hit by taking stress or consequences; if that's not possible, your target gets taken out of the conflict.
When you succeed with style on an attack, it works like a normal success, but you also have the option to reduce the value of your hit by one to gain a boost as well.

Defending

Whenever someone attacks you in a conflict or tries to create an advantage on you, you always get a chance to defend. This isn't just about avoiding physical sources of danger, you can also defend against attempts to harm your mind or damage your resolve.

When you fail at a defence, you suffer the consequences of whatever you were trying to prevent.
When you tie or succeed at a defence, you successfully avoid the effects.
When you succeed with style at a defence you also gain a boost as you turn the tables momentarily.

Boosts

Boosts are a super-transient kind of aspect. You get a boost when you're trying to create an advantage but don't succeed well enough, or as an added benefit to succeeding especially well at an action. You get to invoke them for free, but as soon as you do, the aspect goes away. If you want, you can also allow another character to invoke your boost, if it's relevant.
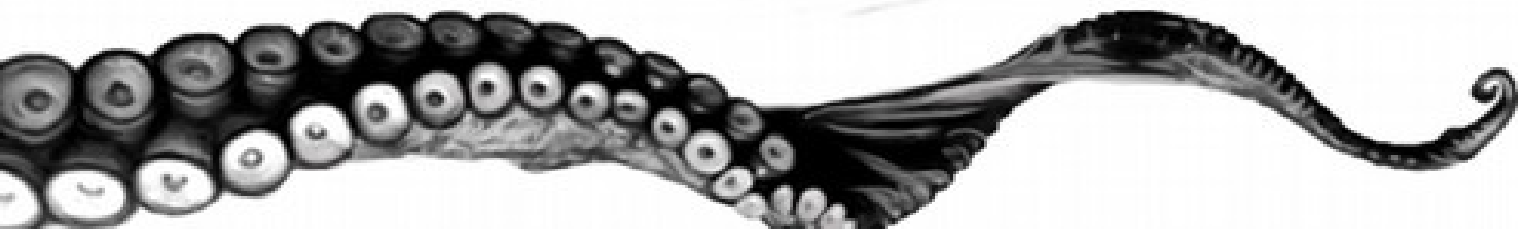
Challenges and Contests

Most of the time, a single skill roll should be enough to decide how a particular situation in play resolves. You could use a single Athletics roll to find out whether you can safely navigate a rock face that will take twenty minutes to climb.

Sometimes, however, you'll be in a situation where you're doing something really dramatic and interesting, like pivotal set pieces in a movie or a book. When that happens, it's a good idea to zoom in on the action and deal with it using multiple skill rolls. Most fight scenes fall into this category, but you can zoom in on anything that you consider sufficiently important—car chases, court trials, high-stakes poker games, and so on.

A court battle might require several successful law rolls, for example. One at opening remarks, one during the trial, and one at closing arguments, or the closing arguments roll could be attempted with charisma. These rolls could be made against a passive difficulty level set by the game moderator for the court, or an opposition lawyer could provide active opposition.

During any exchange, you can try to create an advantage before you make your roll.
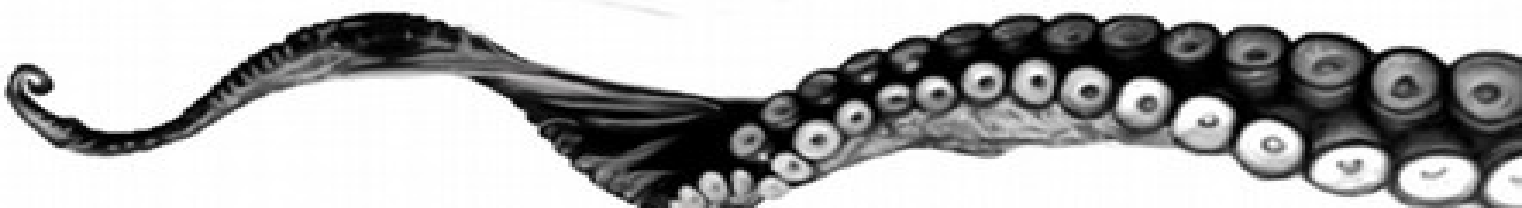
Invoking Aspects

Aspects are mostly there to give you an 'edge'. Simply, explain why the aspect is relevant, (this may require a fate point), and you can choose one of these benefits:

Add +2* Or **Reroll all your dice**.

* This +2 bonus is added to your skill roll, or another character's skill roll, or even passive opposition.

You can invoke multiple aspects on a single roll, but you cannot invoke the same aspect multiple times on a single roll. So if your reroll doesn't help you enough, you'll have to pick another aspect (and spend another fate point).

Creating an advantage is a free invocation. (If you succeed with style, you get two invocations).

If you spend a fate point to 'add to' your free invocation, it becomes double power. So you can get a +4 bonus instead of a +2, two rerolls instead of one, or you could split the benefits, getting a reroll and a +2 bonus. You can also stack multiple free invocations together.

After you've used your free invocation, if the aspect in question is still around, if the fire you started hasn't gone out yet, for example, you can keep invoking it by spending fate points.

If you want, you can pass your free invocation to another character. A whole team can create an advantage and pass their free invocations onto one person, then that person stacks all of them up at once for a huge bonus.

Compelling Aspects

The other way you use aspects in the game is called a compel. If you're in a situation where having or being around a certain aspect means your character's life is more dramatic or complicated, someone, very often the game moderator, can compel the aspect.

Whoever is getting compelled then has two options:

Accept the complication and receive a fate point – or – Pay a fate point to prevent the complication from happening.

If a player wants to compel another character, it costs a fate point to propose the complication. The GM, however, can always compel for free. Suggesting ways that your

aspects can complicate your character's life, so the game moderator can use them for compels, is a good way to earn fate points.
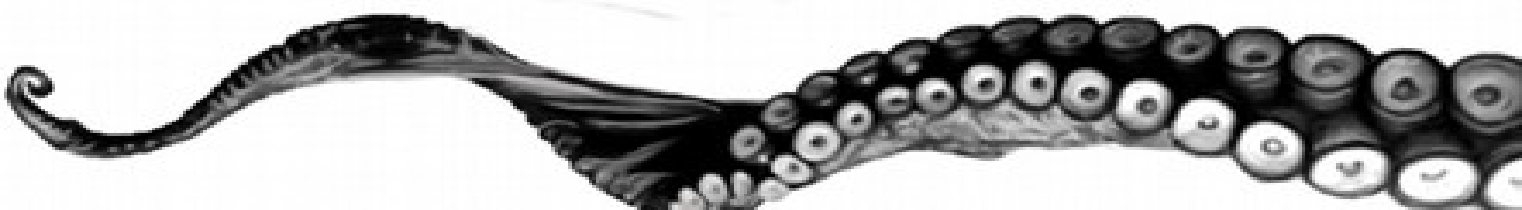
CONFLICTS

In a conflict, characters are actively trying to harm one another. It could be a fist fight, or it could be a shootout. It could also be a tough interrogation, or a mental assault, as long as the characters involved have both the intent and the ability to harm one another. In physical conflicts, you suffer bruises, scrapes, cuts, and other injuries. In mental conflicts, you suffer loss, loss of composure, disassociation from reality and other psychological trauma.

Setting up a conflict:

Set the scene, describing the environment, creating situation aspects and zones.
Establish who's participating and what side they're on.
Determine the turn order.
Start the first exchange:
    On your turn, take an action and then resolve it.
    On other people's turns, defend or respond to their actions as necessary.
    At the end of everyone's turn, start again with a new exchange.

The conflict is over when everyone on one of the sides has conceded or been taken out.

Setting the Scene

Interesting features of the environment should be made into situation aspects. Good options for situation aspects include:

   Anything regarding the general mood, weather, or lighting—dark or badly lit, storming, creepy, crumbling, blindingly bright, etc.
   Anything that might affect or restrict movement—filthy, mud everywhere, slippery, rough, etc.
   Things to hide behind—vehicles, obstructions, large furniture, etc.
   Things you can knock over, wreck, or use as improvised weapons—bookshelves, statues, etc.
   Things that are flammable- traditionally, curtains
   Things that are toxic – for example in an abandoned genetics lab, where it was easier to start again than to clean up the mess.
   Things that are contagious – a deserted hospital, where the hospital has been cleared due to the danger posed by one of the patients/inmates
   Things that are caged – a prison, only a few days away from riot and disorder
   Deserted things – behind a police cordon, evacuated, and where the power has been cut
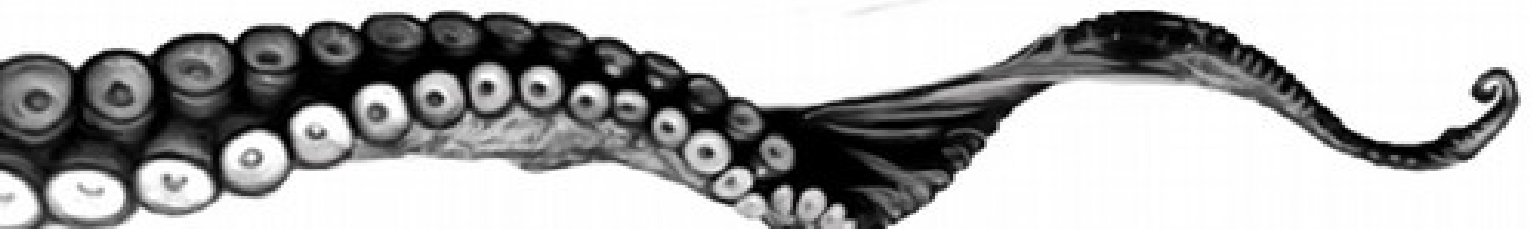
Zones

> GMs, if your conflict takes place over a large area, you may want to break it down into zones for easier reference. A zone is an abstract representation of physical space. The best definition of a zone is that it's close enough that you can interact directly with someone (in other words, walk up and get in their face). If the area is separated by stairs, a ladder, a fence, or a wall, it could be divided into zones, like two floors of a house. Above and below can be different zones, especially if moving between them takes some doing, as with the airspace around something large, like a blimp.

Turn Order

> Your turn order in a conflict is based on your skills. In a physical conflict, compare your Notice skill to the other participants. In a mental conflict, compare your Empathy skill. Whoever has the highest gets to go first, and then everyone else in descending order. If there's a tie, compare a secondary or tertiary skill. For physical conflicts, that's Athletics, then Physique. For mental conflicts, Rapport, then Will.

> You only get to make one skill roll on your turn in an exchange, unless you're defending against someone else's action—you can do that as many times as you want. You can even make defend actions on behalf of others, so long as you fulfil two conditions: it has to be reasonable for you to interpose yourself between the attack and its target, and you have to suffer the effects of any failed rolls.

> Full Defence
> If you want, you can forgo your action for the exchange to concentrate on defence. You don't get to do anything proactive, but you do get to roll all defend actions for the exchange at a +2 bonus.

Ramming

> If you want to ram a vehicle, or a huge slobbering monster, you can attack with Drive, but you take the same shifts of harm you inflict.

Resolving Attacks

> A successful attack lands a hit equivalent to its shift value on a target. So if you get three shifts on an attack, you land a 3-shift hit. If you get hit by an attack, one of two things happen: either you absorb the hit and stay in the fight, or you're taken out.

> To stay in the fight, you can take stress and/or consequences – or – you can also concede a conflict before you're taken out, in order to preserve some control over what happens to your character.

> If you want to forego your defence and take a hit (like to interpose yourself in the path of an arrow that's about to skewer your friend), you can, but because you're not defending,
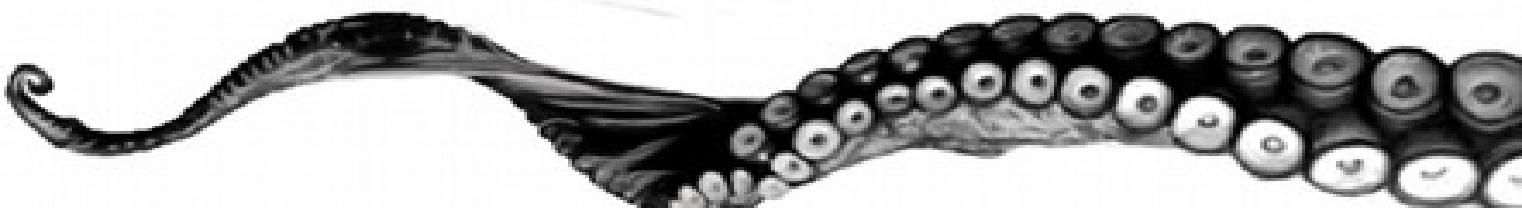
the attacker rolls against Mediocre (+0) opposition, which means you're probably going to take a bad hit.

Stress

This represents the after effects when you just barely avoid taking the full force of an attack. It looks bad but is really just a flesh wound, or you wind yourself a little by diving out of the way at the last second. Mentally, stress could mean that you can feel terror like a monkey's fist in your gut, but it hasn't taken control of you yet. Stress boxes also represent you running out of luck—you only have so many last-second saves in you before you've got to face the music.

On your character sheet, you have a number of stress boxes, each with a different shift value. By default, all characters get a 1-point and a 2-point box. You may get additional, higher-value stress boxes depending on some of your skills (usually Physique and Will).

When you take stress, check off a stress box with a value equal to the shift value of the hit. If that box is already checked, check off a higher value box. If there is no higher available box, and you can't take any consequences, you're taken out of the conflict.

You can only check off one stress box per hit. You can not use multiple stress boxes.

If you take stress from a physical source, you check off a physical stress box. If it's a mental hit, check off a mental stress box. After a conflict, when you get a minute or two, maybe five, to breathe, any stress boxes you checked off become available for your use again.

Vehicle Stress Boxes

Being inside a vehicle is a huge advantage in combat. This is because many vehicles have stress boxes of their own. Before occupants can be targeted, all the vehicles stress boxes and consequence slots must be filled in, and the vehicle taken out. The crew is usually safe from external fire however, and they must be extracted, or a boarding party must be sent in before the crew can be harmed. This goes for ships, tanks, and APCs. Any vehicle that has stress boxes and a character sheet, rather than just providing aspects counts as a vehicle for this rule.

After a vehicle is taken out, it must be boarded and the crew taken out individually. The attacker must therefore sometimes take out a ship, then board, then finally take out the

defender after they are extracted from their armour.

Affecting Multiple Targets

Area-effect attacks create an aspect on the scene, rather than on a specific target. A Gas-Filled Room has the potential to affect everyone in it. The aspect calls for a skill roll from anyone in the scene to resist. It may cause damage, or just make things more difficult for those affected.

You don't need to apply any special rules—you roll for the attack, and everyone in the zone defends as normal. Depending on the circumstances, you may even have to defend against your own roll, if you're in the same zone as the attack!

Consequences

A consequence is more severe than stress—it represents some form of lasting injury or setback that you accrue from the conflict. Consequences come in three levels of severity —mild, moderate, and severe. Each one has a different shift value: two, four, and six, respectively. Your consequence slots are listed on your character sheet.
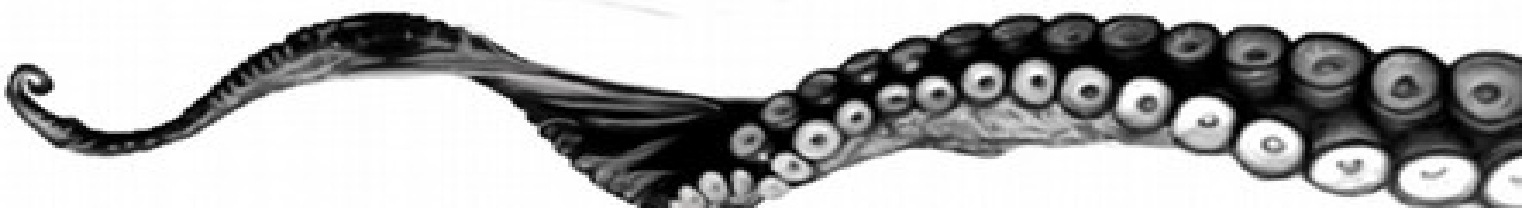
When you use a consequence slot, you reduce the shift value of the attack by the shift value of the consequence. You can use more than one consequence at a time if they're available. Any of the hit's remaining shifts must be handled by a stress box to avoid being taken out.

However, there's a penalty. The consequence written in the slot is an aspect that represents the lasting effect incurred from the attack. The opponent who forced you to take a consequence gets a free invocation, and the aspect remains on your character sheet until you've recovered the consequence slot. While it's on your sheet, the consequence is treated like any other aspect, except because the slant on it is so negative, it's far more likely to be used to your character's detriment.

Unlike stress, a consequence slot may take a long time to recover after the conflict is over. Also unlike stress, you only have one set of consequences; there aren't specific slots for physical versus mental consequences. This means that, if you have to take a mild consequence to reduce a mental hit and your mild consequence slot is already filled with a physical consequence, you're out of luck! You're going to have to use a moderate or severe consequence to absorb that hit. The exception to this is the extra consequence slot you would get from a Superb (+5) Physique or Will is reserved for physical or mental harm, respectively.

Naming Consequences

Mild consequences don't require immediate medical attention. They hurt, and they may present an inconvenience, but they aren't going to force you to rest. Examples: Black Eye, Bruised Hand, Winded, Shaken Nerves, Temporarily Blinded.

Moderate consequences represent fairly serious impairments that require dedicated effort toward recovery (including medical attention). Examples: Deep Cut, First Degree Burn, Exhausted, The Shakes.

Severe consequences go straight to the emergency room—they're extremely nasty and prevent you from doing a lot of things. Examples: Second-Degree Burn, Compound Fracture, Guts Hanging Out, Trauma-Induced Phobias, PTSD.
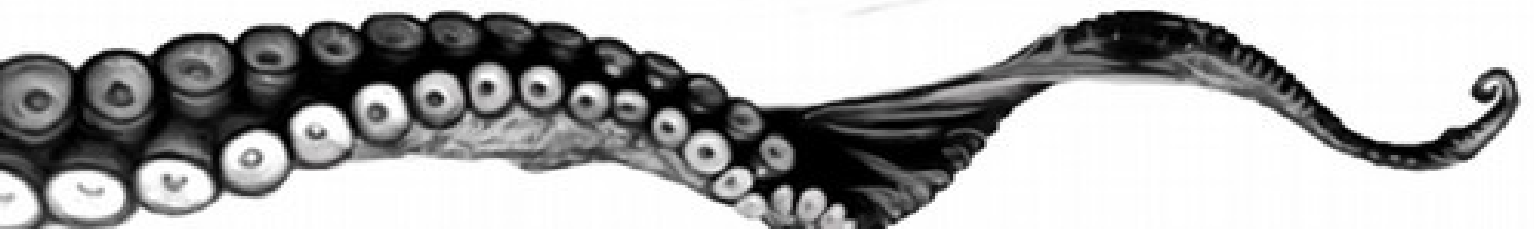
Recovery

Recovery can only happen through the use of a Lore stunt, representing some form of medical or psychiatric training. In order to regain the use of a consequence slot, you have to recover from the consequence. That requires two things—succeeding at an action that allows you to justify recovery, and then waiting an appropriate amount of game time for that recovery to take place.

Physical injury, requires some kind of medical treatment or first aid. For mental consequences, the action may involve therapy, or counselling. The difficulty for this action is based on the shift value of the consequence. Mild is Fair (+2), moderate is Great (+4), and severe is Fantastic (+6). If you are trying to perform the recovery action on yourself, increase the difficulty by two steps on the ladder.

If you succeed at the recovery action, or someone else succeeds on a recovery action for you, you get to rename the consequence aspect to show that it's in recovery. So, for example, Broken Leg could become Stuck in a Cast, Nearly Gutted aspect could be Bandaged, Lost My Nerve could become Night Sweats, and so on. This doesn't free up the consequence slot, but it serves as an indicator that you're recovering, and it changes the ways the aspect's going to be used while it remains. Then, you just have to wait the time.

For a mild consequence, you have to wait 1d6 days after the recovery action, and then you can remove the aspect and clear the slot. For a moderate consequence, you have to wait 1d20 days after the recovery action. For a severe consequence, you have to wait 1d6 months after the recovery action.

Conceding the Conflict

When all else fails, you can also just give in. Maybe you're worried that you can't absorb another hit, or maybe you decide that continuing to fight is just not worth the punishment. Whatever the reason, you can interrupt any action at any time before the roll is made to declare that you concede the conflict. This is super-important—once dice hit the table, what happens happens, and you're either taking more stress, suffering more consequences, or getting taken out.

Concession gives the other person what they wanted from you, or in the case of more than two combatants, removes you as a concern for the opposing side. You're out of the conflict, period.

But it's not all bad. First of all, you get a fate point for choosing to concede. On top of that, if you've sustained any consequences in this conflict, you get an additional fate point for each consequence. These fate points may be used once this conflict is over.

Second of all, you get to avoid the worst parts of your fate. Yes, you lost, and the narration
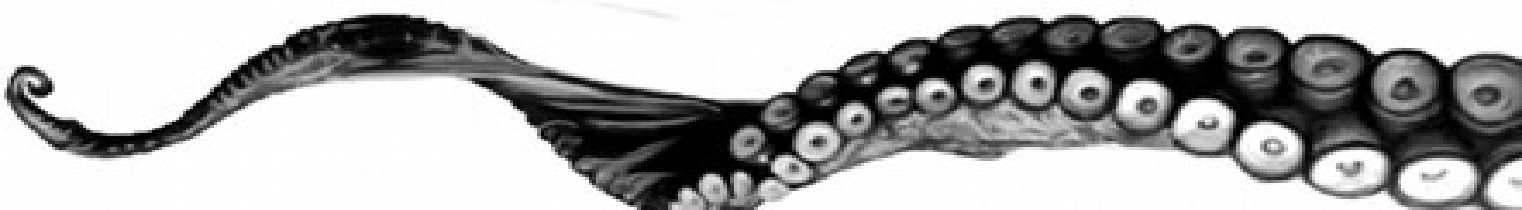
has to reflect that, but this can make the difference between, say, being mistakenly left for dead - or ending up in the enemy's clutches, in shackles, without any of your stuff.

Getting Taken Out

If you don't have any stress or consequences left to buy off all the shifts of a hit, that means you're taken out. You can't fight any more, and you are at the mercy of the victor.

Character Death

There's not a whole lot keeping the victor from administering a 'death blow' and killing your character. But a decision like this might be pretty controversial depending on what kind of group you're in. Some people think that character death should always be on the table, if the rules allow it.
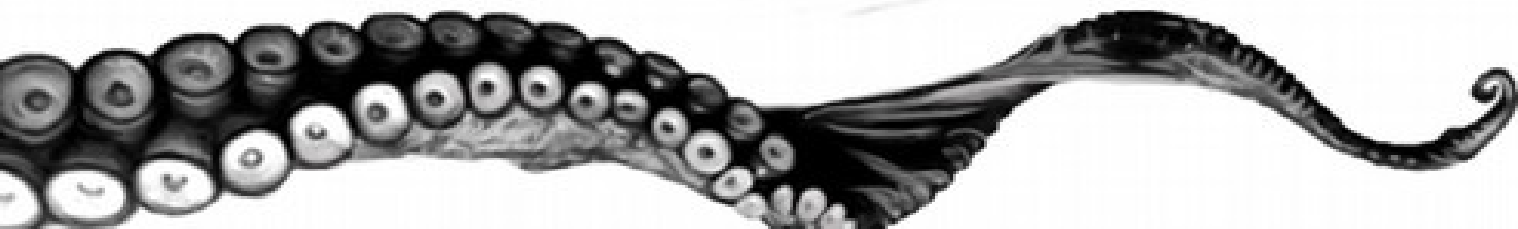
Others are more circumspect, and consider it very damaging to their fun if they lose a character upon whom they've invested hours and hours of gameplay, just because someone spent a lot of fate points or their die rolls or they were particularly unlucky.

We recommend the latter approach, also because, sudden character death is a pretty boring outcome when compared to putting the character through hell. On top of that, all the story threads that character was connected to just kind of stall with no resolution, and you have to expend a bunch of effort and time figuring out how to get a new character into play mid-adventure.

That doesn't mean there's no room for character death in the game, however. We just recommend that you save that possibility for conflicts that are extremely pivotal, dramatic, and meaningful for that character. If, as a GM, you've got the feeling that you're in that kind of conflict, talk it out when you're setting the scene and see how people feel.

At the very least, even if you're in a hardcore group that invites the potential for character death on any taken out result, make sure that you telegraph the opponent's lethal intent. Players then know which NPCs really mean business, and can concede to keep their characters alive if need be.

The universe of Cthulhu in Space is replete with dermal regenerators, biogel and other sources of 'instant' healing. Powerful healing technology like this eliminates the need to roll for a recovery action, and reduces the severity of a consequence by one level. A severe consequence turns into a moderate one, making the recovery time much shorter. The PC has to spend at least one scene where the consequence could affect things, before you let it go away.

Movement

The area where conflicts take place is divided into zones. Normally, it's no big deal to move from one zone to another, you can move one zone in addition to your action for the exchange.

If you want to move more than one zone, if a situation aspect suggests that it might be difficult to move freely, or if another character is in your way, then you must make a roll using Athletics, which counts as your action for the exchange.

Use the number of zones the character is moving combined with situation aspects to gauge the difficulty of passive opposition. If another character is impeding the path, roll active opposition and feel free to invoke obstructing situation aspects in aid of their defence.

If you fail that roll, whatever was impeding you keeps you from moving. If you tie, you get to move, but your opponent takes a temporary advantage of some kind. If you succeed, you move without consequence. If you succeed with style, you can claim a boost in addition to your movement.

Vehicle Movement

Vehicles often become locked in combat, dogfighting, or chasing each other. The combat may be moving forward at very high speed, several hundred km/hr along a freeway for example, but that is not relevant to those involved.

The vehicles involved in the chase or the dogfight are stuck inside the same zone with each other, perhaps dogfighting for position, but nevertheless stuck, even as the world streaks past at high speed. Moving out and away from the zone occupied by a dogfight or chase is the same mechanic as moving zones, and a combatant seeking to escape can gradually open the range between themselves and their pursuer, hopefully before they get taken out.
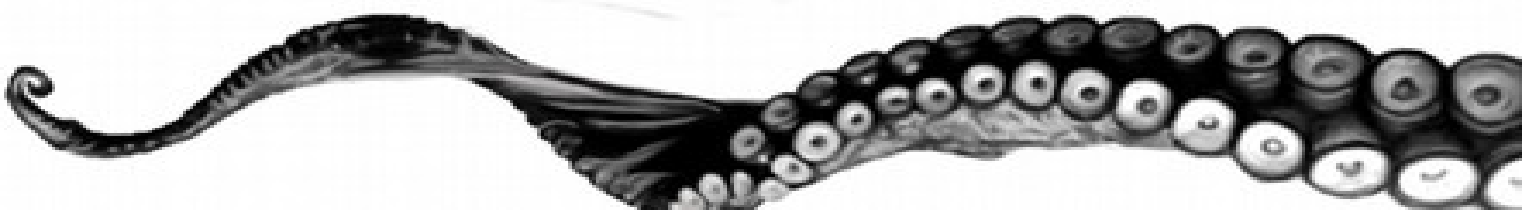
Advantages in a Conflict

Remember that aspects you create as advantages can sometimes last until they're made irrelevant or the scene is over, and in some cases they represent as much a threat to you as an opponent.

Covering Fire

When you're trying to prevent someone else from getting attacked, the main way to do it is by creating an advantage. You can pass your buddy the invocation and make it harder to hit them. You can also use advantages to alter the environment to your benefit, creating barriers to movement by scattering Loose Junk everywhere, or setting things On Fire.

Other Actions in a Conflict

In any exchange where someone attacks you or tries to create an advantage on you, you must defend successfully in order to be able to make any other skill roll. So long as no one has successfully attacked you or stuck an advantage on you, you can use your action to roll for your non-combat task.

Free Actions

Drawing a weapon, shouting a warning, or you quickly sizing up a room before attack, etc. These little bits of action count as free actions.

Ending a Conflict

Under most circumstances, when all of the members of one side have either conceded the conflict or have been taken out, the conflict is over. All the fate points earned from concession are then distributed. Players, take the fate points for aspects invoked against them, make a note of whatever consequences were suffered in the fight, and erase any checks in stress boxes.

Teamwork

Characters can help each other out. There are two versions of helping in Fate—combining skills, for when you are all putting the same kind of effort into an action (like using Physique together to push over a crumbling wall), and stacking advantages, for when the group is setting a single person up to do well (like causing multiple distractions so one person can use Stealth to get into a fortress).

When you combine skills, figure out who has the highest skill level among the participants. Each other participant who has at least an Average (+1) in the same skill adds a +1 to the highest person's skill level, and then only the lead character rolls. So if you have three helpers and you're the highest, you roll your skill level with a +3 bonus.

If you fail a roll to combine skills, all of the participants share in the potential costs—whatever complication affects one character affects all of them, or everyone has to take
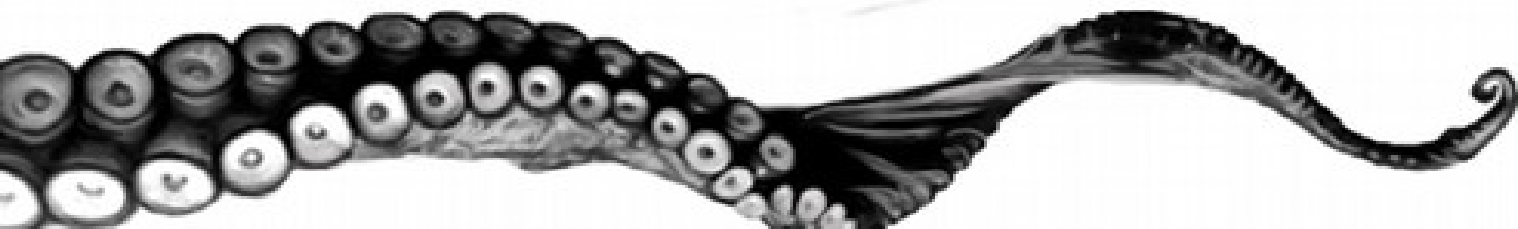
consequences. Alternatively, you can impose a cost that affects all the characters the same.

When you stack advantages, each person takes a create an advantage action as usual, and gives whatever free invocations they get to a single character. Remember that multiple free invocations from the same aspect can stack.

Vehicle Onion Skins

Being inside a vehicle is a huge advantage in combat. This is because vehicles have stress boxes of their own. Before occupants can be targeted, all the vehicles stress boxes must be filled in, and the vehicle taken out.

The crew is still safe from external fire however, and they must be extracted, or a boarding party must be sent in before the crew can be harmed.
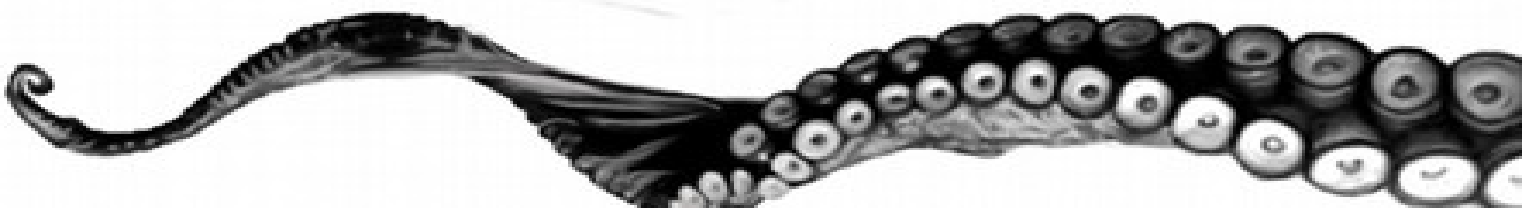
The pilot is safe inside the vehicle until they are extracted. This goes for spaceships, tanks, mecha and power armour. Any type of armour that has stress boxes and a character sheet, rather than just providing aspects counts as a vehicle for this rule. An opponent in power armour therefore has to he taken out twice.

First the power armour is taken out, then the pilot ejects, or the armour is ripped open by the attacker. Once the pilot is exposed they must then be engaged and their own personal stress boxes must be filled in before they can be taken out.

After a spaceship is taken out it must be boarded and the crew taken out individually. Attacker must therefore sometimes take out the spaceship, then board, then take out power armour troopers, then extract the wearers, and then finally take out the troopers who were within the armour.

This process is like peeling an onion, where each skin must be removed before the human, or whatever, at the core can be engaged. It makes vehicles much more powerful than infantry, unless the infantry is provided with mecha, or power armour.

An extreme example of onion skinning is the final showdown with a powerful NPC. First their giant space station must be taken out, A dreadnought launches from one of it's bays and this must be taken out. Then a shuttle is launched, and also taken out. Then a mecha ejects from the shuttle and must be taken out. The pilot ejects, but is wearing power

armour. This power armour is then taken out. Then and only then can the bad guy himself, wearing only an armoured vac suit and toting a blaster rifle can finally be dealt with.
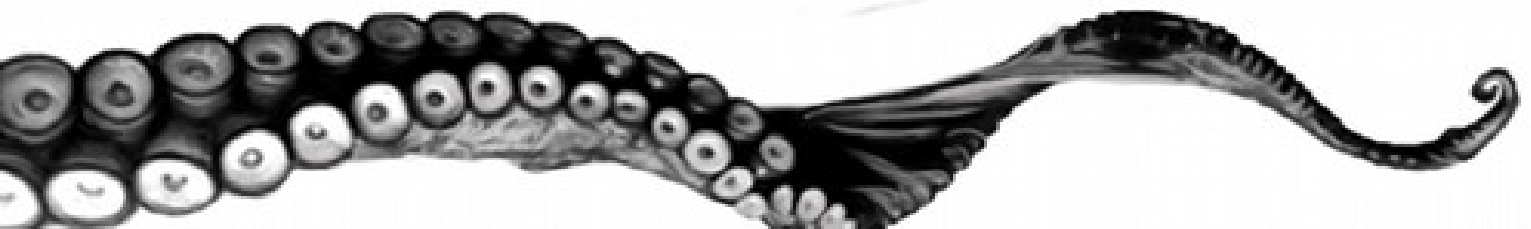
Boarding

Characters are relatively safe inside their vehicle, even if it is disabled or destroyed (taken out). Long and repeated salvoes, or scupper charges are required to completely reduce the vehicle to shrapnel that no longer provides protection or cover.

Few attackers want to reduce valuable equipment to shrapnel anyway, with only the best equipped and most arrogant of imperial navies even attempting it. Usually a boarding party is sent into drifting vehicles after a battle to mop up or capture survivors, and take what salvage they can in the time available.

Vehicle Movement

Vehicles often become locked in combat, dogfighting, or chasing each other. The combat may be moving forward at light speed compared to the rest of the universe but that is not relevant to those involved.

The vehicles involved in the chase or the dogfight are stuck inside the same zone with each other, even as the world streaks past at high speed. Moving out and away from the zone occupied by a dogfight or chase is the same mechanic as moving zones.

THE GAME MODERATOR

Making sure the game is fun and runs smoothly is a shared responsibility between all the players, but the game moderator has a little more of the 'heavy lifting' to do. There are a number of tasks that the GM must usually take responsibility for. It is a difficult role, but a rewarding one.

Judge the Use of the Rules

It is the job of the GM to make most of the moment-to-moment decisions about what's legit and what's not regarding the rules. Most often, they are going to decide when something in the game requires a roll, and how difficult that roll is. They also judge the appropriateness of any invocations or compels that come up during play.

Narrating the Action

There is a bubble of action around every player, and the game moderator must make the action interesting for every player, and give each one something significant to do.
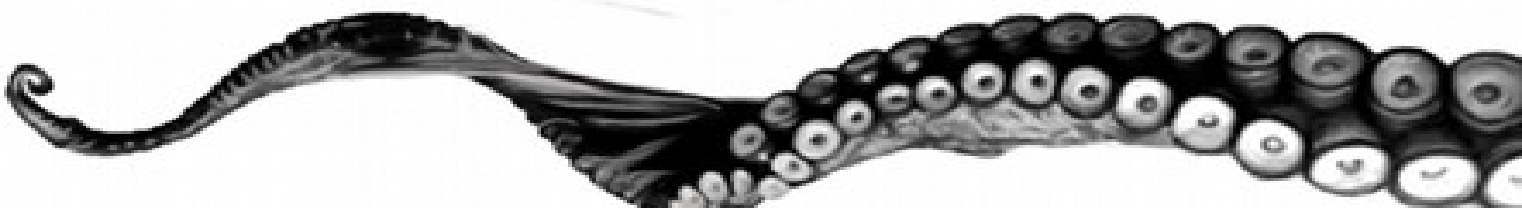
Cosmic Horror

The game moderator is responsible for creating an atmosphere of rising tension and fear. Some tricks that can he used are to make sure only to provide fleeting glimpses of the monster in act one and act two. The profound level of government infiltration and infiltration of local law enforcement by cultists can be very gradually revealed, ratcheting up the tension.

Create Scenarios

You're also responsible for making up all of the stuff that the PCs encounter and react to in the game. That not only includes NPCs with skills and aspects, but it also includes the aspects on scenes, environments, and objects, as well as the dilemmas and challenges that make up a scenario.

Discovery vs Creation

From the player's point of view, there's almost no way to know what you've made up beforehand and what you're inventing in the moment. So, when a player looks for information on something you haven't made up yet you can use what they were looking

for as inspiration to help you come up with the real information. If you're really comfortable with improvising, this means that you can come to the table with very little prepared beforehand, and let the players' reactions and questions build everything for you.

Enhancing the Setting

As your players are making stuff up for their characters, usually during character generation but other times too, they'll also make stuff up about the galaxy around them. You'll end up with lots of new NPCs, organizations, places, things like that. Your players are a great source of creativity and ideas, and it's your job to integrate the best bits of this material into the game as it goes along.

NPCS

First of all, keep in mind that you're never obligated to give any NPC a full sheet like the ones the PCs have. Most of the time, you're not going to need to know that much information, because the NPCs aren't going to be the centre of attention like the PCs are. It's better to focus on writing down exactly what you need for that NPC's encounter with the PCs, and then fill in the blanks on the fly, if that NPC ends up becoming more important in the campaign.

Background NPCs

The majority of the NPCs in your campaign world are nameless and insignificant to the story. The random shopkeeper they pass on the street, the archivist at the library, the third patron from the left at the bar, the guards at the gate. All they really need is two or three skills based on their role in the scene.

Bar-Keeper

Aspects: I Don't Want No Trouble in My Place
Skills: Average (+1) Contacts

Thug

Aspects: The Ways of the Streets, Violent Criminal
Skills: Fair (+2) Fight, Average (+1) Athletics and Physique

Supporting NPCs

Supporting NPCs have proper names and are a little more detailed than nameless NPCs. They often have a relationship to a PC or NPC, or they tend to appear in the game a great deal.

Tim Lightfoot, Thief Extraordinaire

Aspects: Scoundrel, I Just Can't Help Myself
Skills: Superb (+5) Burglary, Great (+4) Stealth, Good (+3) Lore, Fair (+2) Fight, Average (+1) Physique [Note: 3 physical stress boxes]
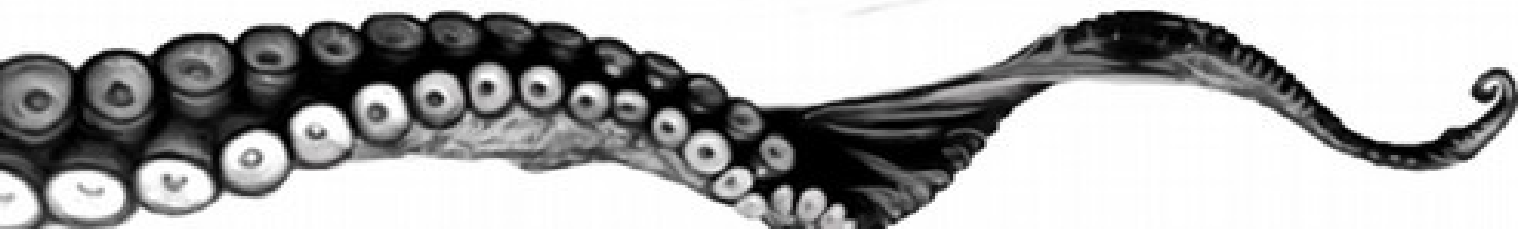
Stunts: Inside Man. +2 to Stealth in an indoor, urban environment.

Anton Koth

A telepath from Crag with the ability to sense the minds of alien beings.
Aspects: Distracted
Skills: Superb (+5) Lore, Great (+4) Stealth, Fair (+2) Fight
Uncanny Powers:
See Through Time

Main NPCs

Main NPCs have full character sheets just like a PC does, with five aspects, a full distribution of skills, and a selection of stunts. They are the most significant characters in your PCs' lives, because they represent pivotal forces of opposition or allies of crucial importance. Because they have a full spread of aspects, they also offer the most nuanced options for interaction, and they have the most options to invoke and be compelled. Your primary bad guys in a scenario or arc should always be main NPCs, as should any NPCs who are the most vital pieces of your stories. You can create a main NPC on the fly if you need to, creating a partial sheet of the aspects you know for sure, those skills you definitely need them to have, and any stunts you want. Then fill in the rest as you go.

You can also upgrade a supporting NPC. This is great for when a supporting NPC has suddenly or gradually become a major fixture in the story, despite your original plans for them.

Main NPCs come in two flavours — exact peers of the PCs who grow with them as the campaign progresses, or superiors to the PCs who remain static while the PCs grow to sufficient strength to oppose them. If the PCs are currently have a maximum skill level of Great (+4), your main NPC badass should be able to afford a couple of Fantastic (+6) columns or a pyramid that peaks at Fantastic.

The Corrupted One

Nayarlathotep's current supreme cultist is the Corrupted One. She was once human, hundreds, or even perhaps thousands, of years ago but is now much more formidable than a base-line human. Despite her power, she is simply an emissary, and the degree to which she has any free will at all is highly debatable. Half of her brain has been removed and a fragment of consciousness grown specifically for this purpose by her master. This has contaminated the eye on he left side of her face, which now looks like a black marble with a red iris and no pupil.
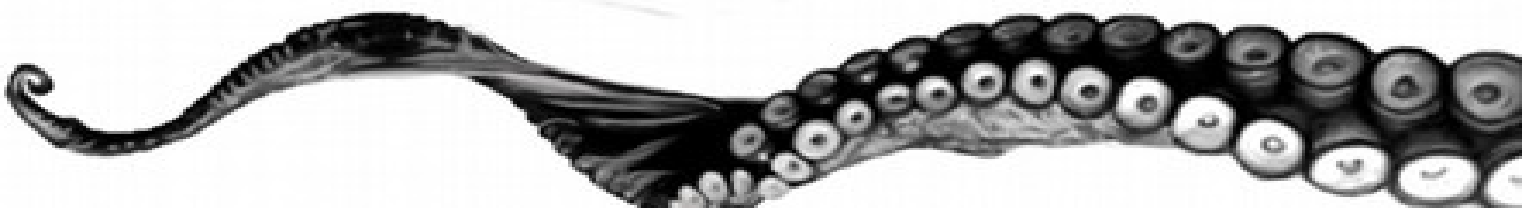Aspects: Beloved of Nyarlathotep
Skills: Fantastic (+6) Mythos Lore, Superb (+5) Physique, Great (+4) Fight, Good (+3) Provoke, Fair (+2) Will
Uncanny Powers:
She knows five Mythos spells

Mutated Sorcerer

In place of blood he has a greenish-yellow ichor. Yellow and black markings cover his back. From the waist down his body is covered in course black fur. A sort of rudimentary eye is positioned on each hip. When killed, his final words are an excerpt from the Necronomicon. Immediately after death, the sorcerer's corpse disintegrates into a sticky white mass, apparently having no true skeletal structure

Aspects: Truly Alien

Skills: Fantastic (+6) Mythos Lore, Superb (+5) Physique, Great (+4) Fight, Good (+3) Provoke, Fair (+2) Will

Uncanny Powers:

He knows seven Mythos spells

Monsters

The most terrible secret that the characters will soon uncover, is that there be monsters. The dark places of the world, and the depths of space too, are all full of giant slobbering creatures that can not be understood or reasoned with, and which are much more powerful than puny humans.

Common Characteristics

Old Ones and their spawn and servitors come in an infinite variety of shapes and sizes, but they have some characteristics in common. The first characteristic is that there is a hierarchy among them. Species of a lower rank on the hierarchy find it very difficult to harm creatures from a higher rank. There is a penalty of -1 for every rank of difference between species. For example, Humans are Minor Things and are at -1 in any encounter with an Avatar, and -2 in any encounter with a Great One.

Power Hierarchy
All Powerful - eg Azathoth
Great One - eg Cthulhu
Avatar - eg Nyarlathotep
Minor Thing - eg Deep Ones and Humans

Another common characteristic of all Mythos species is the impossibility of definitive proof. No matter what the PCs witness, no monster corpses or other evidence is ever left behind. Monsters disintegrate or are removed from the scene. Remains that are left behind are ambiguous and open to different interpretations.

Various levels of immunity to damage.
Mythos creatures have an immunity to damage which represents the fact that the technology of species of less power or younger age has little effect on the more advanced creature. The GM can decide what they are immune to based on the needs of the scenario. Mythos creatures are commonly immune to firearms, but might be wounded by high explosives such as 'thermite' grenades.
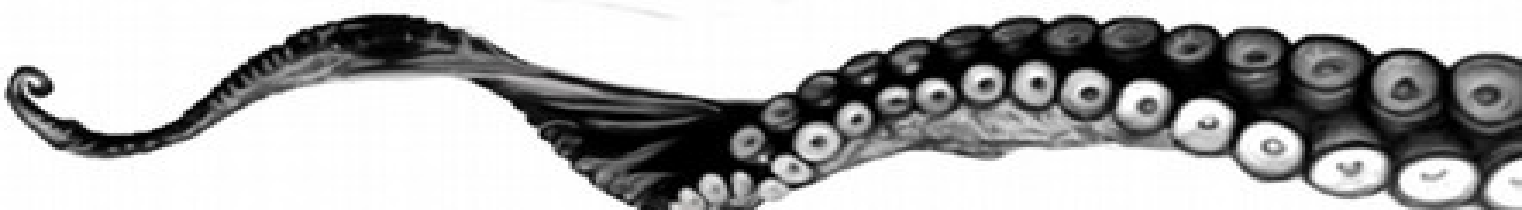
Amorphous Piper

These creatures squat amorphously, far away from the light, piping noisomely on what looks like a separate device that resembles a flute, but is in fact one of the Piper's organs. Amorphous Pipers are popular at the courts of a large number of species. These creatures are also not above attending rituals initiated by human cultist. They can also be communicated with by humans who master their piping language.

Pipers are basically a brain, a teleportation and dimensional travel 'gland', a 'piping' organ, and an amorphous body wrapped in scaly skin. They can quickly exude a few legs arms and eyes to better interact with whatever environment they find themselves in. Their pipe interacts with the fabric of space and time to release power. This is what makes them so popular at ceremonies. The power they release makes the ceremony more likely to succeed. The ceremony is +1 for every attending Piper.

Aspects: Amorphous, Piping power
Zones: N/A human size
Actions: 2
Skills: Great (+4) Music Lore, Good (+3) Deceive
Stunts: Create power for magic. All sorcerers within hearing of the piping are at +1 to cast their spells and use their abilities.
Magical flight: the Piper may spend a fate point to change the arrangement of his zones or exit a conflict at any time without conceding the conflict.

Azathoth

Azathoth is so powerful, that even its minions are considered god-like. Its minions include the avatar, Nyarlathotep, a dangerous and powerful entity, but little more than a lapdog to Azathoth. When not out in the universe causing havoc, the minions crowd around the royal throne, enjoying being close to their god.

Azathoth is a kind of caretaker of our universe, requiring it to be aware of the universe in its entirety at all times. Contacting Azathoth is a bad idea because even a glimpse of this giant construct, which is held within the mind of Azathoth, can boggle the much more puny human mind.
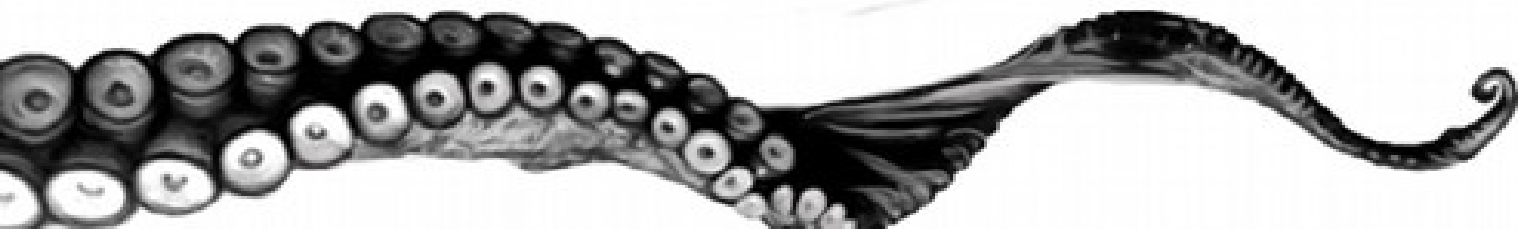
Aspects: Kill With a Thought
Zones: 10
Actions: 7
Skills: (+8) Lore, (+7) Deceive, (+6) Stealth
Uncanny Powers
Magical flight: Azathoth may spend a fate point to change the arrangement of his zones or exit a conflict at any time without conceding the conflict.
Defensive Shield: If the players destroy any zone of the creature, it deals two stress to

each character on the map, regardless of zone.

Blackness from the Stars

The Blackness from the Stars is an immobile blob of living, sentient darkness, torn from the primal fabric of the cosmos at the centre of the universe. Some call it an outcast from the court of Azathoth. It is distinguishable in darkness only as vaguely shimmering oily pitch. Although intelligent, it speaks no known language and ignores attempts to communicate.
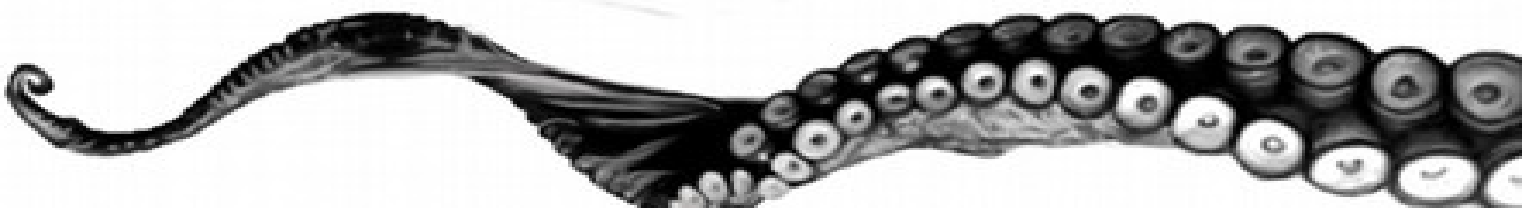
Aspects: Immovable and Irresistible
Zones: 5
Actions: 4
Skills: (+8) Lore, (+7) Deceive, (+6) Stealth
Uncanny Powers
Magical flight: The Blackness may spend a fate point to change the arrangement of its zones or exit a conflict at any time without conceding the conflict.

Cthulhu

Cthulhu is a scaly humanoid with an octopus head and small deformed wings. Pulpy and amorphous, it is a monster of vaguely anthropoid outline, with a face that is a mass of feelers, a scaly, rubbery-looking body, prodigious claws on hind and fore feet, and long, narrow wings behind. Cthulhu is a mix between a giant human, an octopus, and a dragon, and is hundreds of meters tall, with human-looking arms and legs. Cthulhu's head is similar to the entirety of a giant octopus, with an unknown number of tentacles surrounding whatever it uses for a mouth. Cthulhu is able to change the shape of its body at will, extending and retracting limbs and tentacles as it sees fit.

Cthulhu's body is maintained by some kind of symbiotic apparatus within it that sucks energy out of the universe itself. This might be zero point energy or dark energy or something else entirely, human technology is so primitive that humanity is never likely to know for sure.

This energy can be seen entering the creature via the gills behind its octopus face tentacles and below the eyes. It breathes this energy in once every 1d6 rounds and reality seems to whither and warp around it as it breaths. This also creates a distortion field that destabilises human synaptic activity. Too long exposure often results in long-term episodes of mental illness and also sometimes an instant psychotic break.

Aspects: Stomp and Thrash, Towering Doom
Zones: 7 (1-head, 2-thorax, 3&4-arms, 5&6-legs, 7-wings)
Actions: 7
Skills: (+8) Lore, (+7) Deceive, (+6) Stealth
Uncanny Powers
Magical flight: Cthulhu may spend a fate point to change the arrangement of his zones or exit a conflict at any time without conceding the conflict.
Defensive Shield: If the players destroy any zone of Cthulhu, it deals two stress to each character on the map, regardless of zone.
Magical Smiting: When Cthulhu succeeds with style on a Fight attack he automatically gains a full situation aspect with a free invocation in addition.
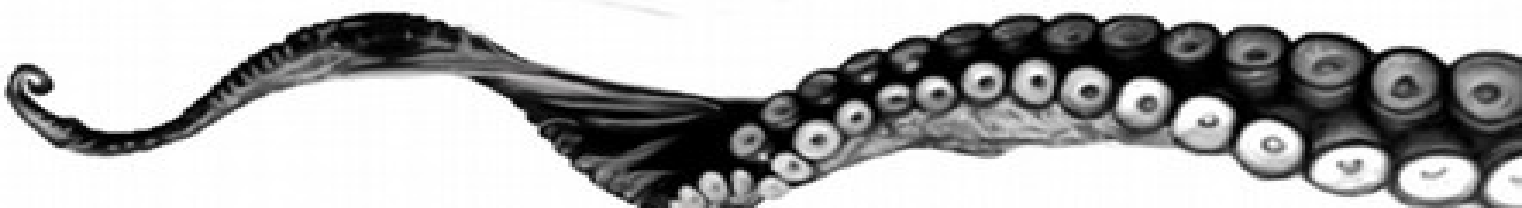
Deep Ones

The Deep Ones are semi-aquatic creatures, a hybrid of human and fish, under the command of Cthulhu, who they worship as Dagon. They have acquired the technology necessary to manufacture and command shoggoths, and they have huge influence on a religious cult known as the Esoteric Order of Dagon.

They also have a liking for interbreeding with humanity to produce monstrous offspring. The offspring all eventually return to the ocean to be with their own kind. For more details on deep ones, see the chapter on the secret nature of humanity.

Aspects: At home in water, Reek of fish
Skills: Superb (+5) Physique, Good (+3) Provoke, Fair (+2) Will
Stunts:
Horrid skin: Deep ones have a defensive bonus of -1 because of their thick and horrid skin

Dhole

Dholes, which are also called Cthonians, live below ground on several planets and moons throughout space, and some areas 'below' are festering with gigantic Dholes. They can rear up several hundred feet. They look bleached and viscous. Dholes are huge, slimy worm-like creatures, of up to a thousand feet long. They exist in the Underdark and in the Vale of Pnath in the Dreamlands, implying some deep physical connection between the two places.
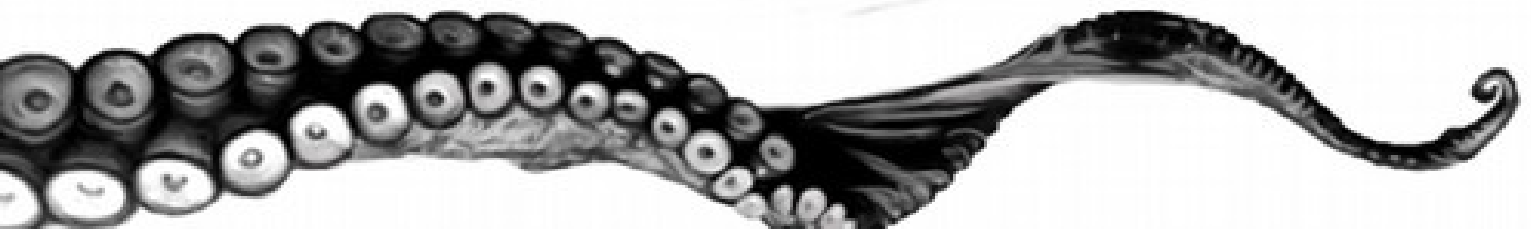
Aspects: Huge, At Home in the Dark
Zones: 11
Actions: 1
Skills: (+6) Stealth, Great (+4) Fight and Physique
Stunts:
Heavy Hitter: When a Dhole succeeds with style on a Fight attack and chooses to reduce the result by one to gain a boost, it gains a full situation aspect with a free invocation instead.

Elder Things

The galaxy is still home to a huge number of the Elder Things, though they keep the size of each of their settlements small, to avoid a doom coming on them. They have tubular bodies and starfish-shape heads. They are six feet end to end, three and five-tenths feet central diameter, tapering to one foot at each end. Like a barrel with five bulging ridges. In furrows between ridges are curious growths – combs or wings that fold up and spread out like fans, which gives almost seven-foot wing spread. They are vegetable-like in shape, having radial symmetry instead of the bilateral symmetry of bipeds. They also differed in that they have a five-lobed brain. The Elder Things exhibit vegetable as well as animal characteristics, and reproduce using spores.

The bodies of the Elder Things are incredibly tough, capable of withstanding the pressures of the deepest ocean. They are also capable of hibernating for vast epochs of time. They prefer chilly temperatures and set up a research base at the both the Arctic and the Antarctic.

They have created two huge black cities, seen from a human perspective, but just small scientific settlements from the perspective of the Elder Things.

The city at the south pole has been discovered, though it is just considered an anomalous rock formation below the ice. There is a staff of Elder Things and their servant shoggoths entombed below, tending their giant cold machines. When the Elder Things were investigating the only other structure on the planet that they were aware of, at the time they arrived, the sunken city of R'lyeh. They triggered one of the city's automatic defences.

The city quickly brewed up some spawn - powerful constructs that resemble the slumberer within the city. The old ones thought these constructs were inhabitants and fought a century of wars against them before giving up and leaving the sunken city in peace. They never realised that the constructs were little more than the response of the city's immune system. The slumberer within the city was only dimly aware of these events and the actions and strategy of the spawn were mostly automatic.

Aspects: Huge, At Home in the Dark
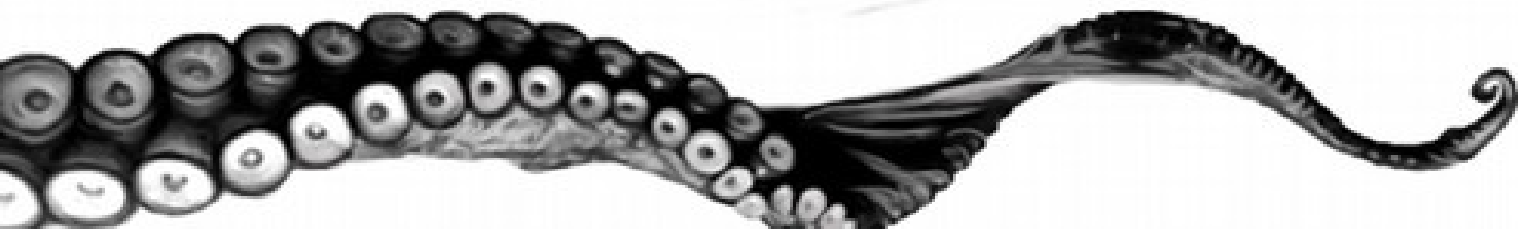Zones: N/A
Actions: 5 (one per tentacle)
Skills: (+6) Stealth, Great (+4) Lore
Stunts:
360º vision: It is very difficult (-2) to creep up on an Elder Thing.
Darkvision: Elder Things are at no disadvantage in darkness, even complete darkness.
Unnaturally Tough: Elder Things are immune to cold , resistant to fire, and can even survive in complete vacuum.

Uncanny Powers

Go Dormant : an elder thing can go dormant when it needs to. This takes 1d6 hours. While in this state, it can take no actions. An elder thing can remain in hibernation for as long as it wishes. It does not need to eat or drink, nor does it age. Time effectively stands still for a hibernating elder thing. If it is damaged while hibernating, an elder thing awakens in 1d6 rounds.

Spaceflight: an elder thing can survive in the void of outer space, and its wings allow it to travel between planets. Journeys between planets in the same system take just a few days, the Elder Thing goes dormant while it travels longer distances between the stars.

Ghoul

Ghouls are seldom completely human, but often approach humanity to varying degrees. Most of their bodies, while roughly bipedal, had a forward slumping, and a vaguely canine cast. The texture of the majority is a kind of unpleasant rubberiness. They can grow to colossal size. They have glaring red eyes, and bony claws. The less human-looking versions have dog faces with pointed ears, bloodshot eyes, flat nose, and drooling lips. Some have scaly claws and a mould-caked body. They move on hoofed feet.

Ghouls can be bargained with by those that learn their language. The language is a howling, gibbering mess to human ears. Only the most learned of ghoul sorcerers usually bother to learn any human language.

Aspects: Stinky Rotten Creature
Skills: Superb (+5) Physique, Good (+3) Provoke, Fair (+2) Will
Stunts:
Darkvision: Ghouls are at no disadvantage in darkness, even complete darkness.
Horrid skin: Ghouls have a defensive bonus of -1 because of their thick and horrid skin

Hounds of Tindalos

A Hound of Tindalos is lean and always athirst. They have lean and hungry bodies. They dwell in the distant past of the earth, when normal life had not yet advanced past one-celled organisms. They were eradicated by Cthulhu and cannot remain in the present for extended periods of time, owing to their great fear of him. They travel via the angles of time, while other beings (such as humankind and all common life) are constrained by curves. The Hounds are thought to lust after something in humankind and other normal life, and will follow victims through time and space to get it. They have long, hollow tongues or proboscis to drain victims' body-fluids, and excrete a strange blue ichor.

The Hounds are somewhat bat-like in appearance, but their tangential relationship with reality means that their entire form is never visible at one time. Layers of skin, muscle, and bone appear and disappear constantly as the creature moves. The reference to Hounds in their name refers more to the creatures' habits than their appearance.
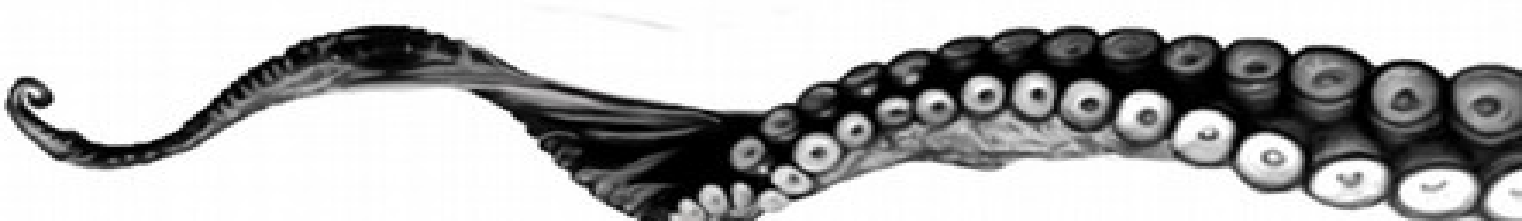
Because of their relationship with the angles of time, they can materialize through any corner if it is fairly sharp, 120° or less. When a Hound is about to appear, it materializes first as smoke pouring from the corner, and finally the head emerges followed by the body. It is said that once a human becomes known to one of these creatures, a Hound of Tindalos will pursue the victim through anything to reach its quarry. A person risks attracting their attention by viewing or travelling through time.

Aspects: Never Relent

Skills: Great (+4) Stealth, Good (+3) Empathy, Fair (+2) Fight

Uncanny Powers:

Tangential Presence: Because the hounds are not true inhabitants of our reality, most attacks pass straight through without causing stress or consequences. Only 1 succesful attack in 6, (on a roll of 6 on a d6), has its consequences recorded on the hound's character sheet.

Life Drain: when a Hound of Tindalos forces an opponent to take a consequence, it can spend a fate point to increase the consequence's severity (so mild becomes moderate).
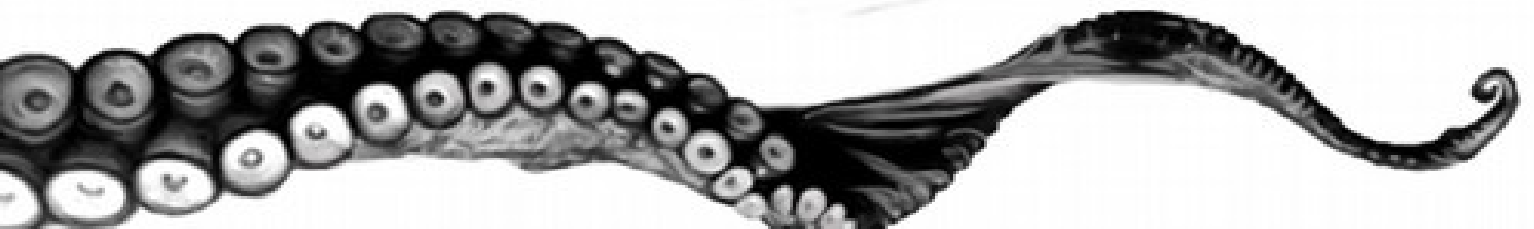
Mi-go

Human-sized, with wings and globular heads covered with cilia. While technically fungi, Mi-go bear a great resemblance to crustaceans. They have elongated bodies. These creatures arrived on Earth as an infestation among the alien stones used by Cthulhu to build his sunken city base. They were ousted by the Elder Things and have not lived on Earth for innumerable thousands of years. They are to be found in the heart of gas giants, and sophisticated civilisations can colonise a gas giant, without any suspicion that the Mi-go are lurking within.

Mi-go have mastered various fields of science, and are especially adept at surgery, and can do things such as extensively modify their own bodies. They seem to assume that other species are as keen on surgery without anaesthetic as they are. They like to remove human brains then hook them up to special machines for interrogation.

Aspects: Psychotically Alien
Skills: Great (+4) Lore, Good (+3) Deceive, Fair (+2) Stealth and Rapport
Stunts:
Skilled surgeons, +2 when conducting any type of medical or surgical procedure.
Uncanny Powers:
Spaceflight: Mi-go can survive in the void of outer space, and their wings allow it to travel between planets. Journeys between planets in the same system take just a few days. They must piggy-back on the travels of other species to travel between the stars.

Nyarlathotep

Nyarlathotep is best known by the name under which he was once worshipped in Egypt. He is a malign deity who is also called the Crawling Chaos. In a human form resembling that of an attractive Egyptian man or woman, he (or often she) wanders the earth gathering legions of followers. He gains converts through demonstrations of strange and seemingly magical instruments.

Nyarlathotep is a kind of itinerant showman or lecturer who holds forth in public halls and arouses widespread fear and discussion with his exhibitions. These exhibitions consisted of two parts, first, a horrible — possibly prophetic — cinema reel, followed by some extraordinary experiments with scientific and electrical apparatus. Visitors to the shows whisper in awe of his horrors, and warn against going near him.

Before a show, throngs of people are seen plodding through the night, all whispering in fear and trepidation, all bound in one direction. They aren't yet cultists, they are still afraid, yet eager to see and hear the great, the obscure, the unutterable Nyarlathotep. These followers gradually lose awareness of the world around them, becoming enthralled cultists.
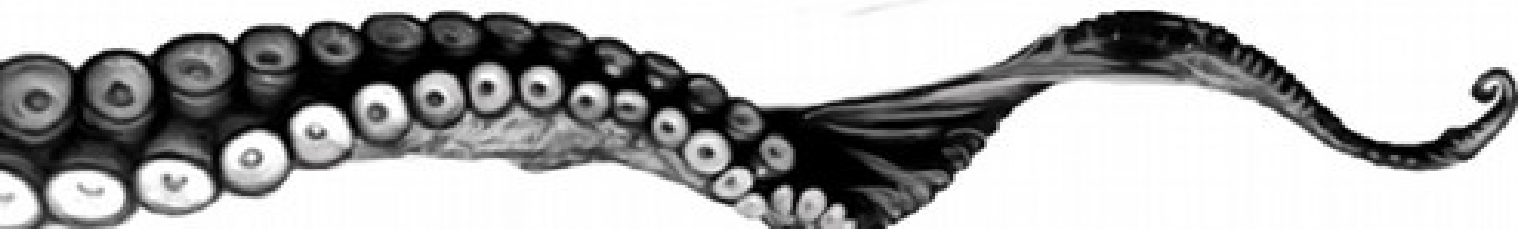
It is possible for a very powerful sorcerer to make a pact with this entity, but they would be foolish to count on Nyarlathotep holding up his end of the bargain.

When not sporting with unfortunate human victims, Nyarlathotep rests among the Dholes at the core of various planets, taking the form of a huge but faceless god. Nyarlathotep can also take the form of a nocturnal tentacled, bat-winged monster. In this form it can inhabit hidden corners of the meeting places used by the Starry Wisdom Cult.

As well as his relationship with humanity, Nyarlathotep has built up a close relationship with the Mi-Go, where his cult has become their dominant religion. The Mi-go venerate Nyarlathotep even above Cthulhu, whose influence is not felt as strongly within the cores of the gas giants.

Even on Earth, Cthulhu is dormant, though his influence is still strong. Nyarlathotep, however, is active and frequently walks among humans, on whatever planet they may have settled, in the guise of a human being, usually a tall, slim, joyous individual. He has thousands of other forms, most of these reputed to be maddeningly horrific. Nyarlathotep seems to serve the interests of Azathoth, and may be a fragment, an avatar or even an aspect of that deity. Nyarlathotep uses human languages and can be mistaken for a human being. While the other Old Ones are mindless or unfathomable, Nyarlathotep delights in cruelty, is deceptive and manipulative, and even cultivates followers and uses propaganda to achieve his goals. In this regard, he is probably the most human-like of the Old Ones.

Nyarlathotep is a servant of Azathoth, his father, whose wishes he immediately fulfils. Causing madness is more important and enjoyable than death and destruction to Nyarlathotep. It is suggested by some that he will destroy the human race and possibly the earth as well.

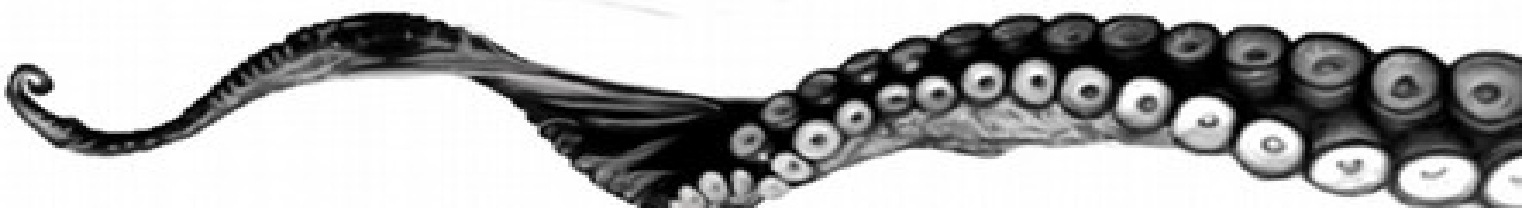Aspects: Cruel and Unusual Punishment, Gloating and Giggling
Zones: Variable, from N/A (human size) to 10
Actions: 7
Skills: (+8) Lore, (+7) Deceive, (+6) Stealth
Uncanny Powers
Nyarlathotep knows every spell in every Mythos Tome and can cast them without the need of performing a ceremony or requiring any ingredients or devices.

Serpent People

Serpent People worship the Great Old One Yig, who, as the flip side of Tulu, is an aspect of Shub-Niggurath. The Serpent People were created untold aeons ago by Yig. Serpent people have hypnotic gazes and lethally venomous bites, as well as terrible crushing strength. After the decline of their empire, the Serpent people tried to reconquer the world, around 20,000 years ago.

The ancient serpent empire was based on sorcery and alchemy, but collapsed with the rise of the dinosaurs about 225 million years ago during the Triassic era. They built subterranean cities, of which only ruins remain in the modern age. Explorers from K'n-yan visit Yoth frequently to learn more of the serpent people's scientific lore. Their downfall came when they abandoned their patron deity Yig to worship a new god. As retribution Yig placed his curse upon them.

Serpent People are humanoids with scaled skin and snake-like heads. They possess magical abilities, the most common of which is the use of illusion to disguise themselves as a human. The serpent people became extinct on Earth, mostly, about 8,000 years ago. They have survived in pockets throughout the galaxy, always in close proximity to Elder Things. They are sometimes independent, and sometimes the slave-like thralls of their Elder Thing masters.
Aspects: Serpentine, Terrible Crushing Strength.
Skills: Superb (+5) Physique, Good (+3) Lore, Fair (+2) Will
Stunts:
Darkvision: Serpent People are at no disadvantage in darkness, even complete darkness.
Uncanny Powers:
Hypnotic Gaze: Serpent people can disguise themselves as human, or any other creature.
Venom: They have lethally venomous bites, which increase any consequence one level.

Shoggoth

The Shoggoths are a kind of artificial life, organic robots created by the Elder Things from the most advanced biotechnology. They were created to function as slave labour and cannot reproduce unless the Elder Things initiate reproductive protocols. They are an example of an experiment that the Elder Things consider very successful. This is in sharp contrast to humans, which are considered by the Elder Things to be a joke or mistake.

Since the time of the Shoggoths' creation, a very long time ago, the Deep Ones have learned the secrets of creating and controlling Shoggoths. They currently serve as beasts of burden for the Deep Ones in their cities, including on the planet Y'ha Nthlei.

Shoggoths are terrible things, vaster than any subway train. They are shapeless conglomerations of protoplasmic bubbles, faintly self-luminous, and with myriads of temporary eyes forming and un-forming as pustules of greenish light all over their bodies.
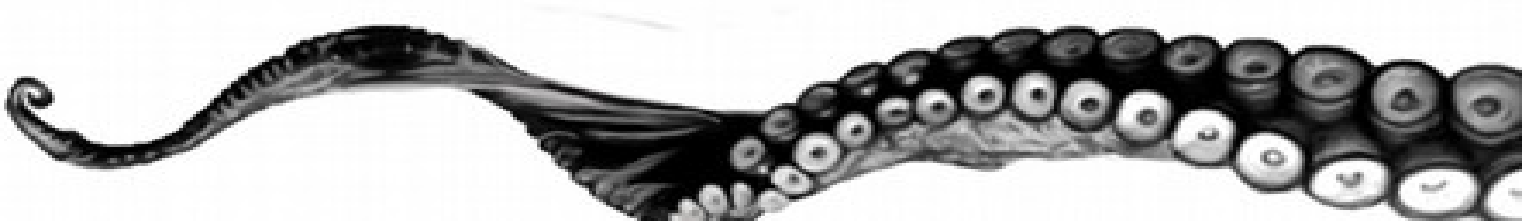
They are massive amoeba-like creatures made out of iridescent black slime, with multiple eyes 'floating' on the surface. They lack any default body shape and instead are able to form limbs and organs at will. An average shoggoth measures fifteen feet across when a sphere, though they can grow to much, much greater size.

They are intelligent to some degree, but they tend to deal with problems using their great size and strength. The shoggoths build and maintain the underwater cities of their masters, first the Elder Things and now the Deep Ones.
Aspects: Robotic, Only Following Orders
Zones: 3
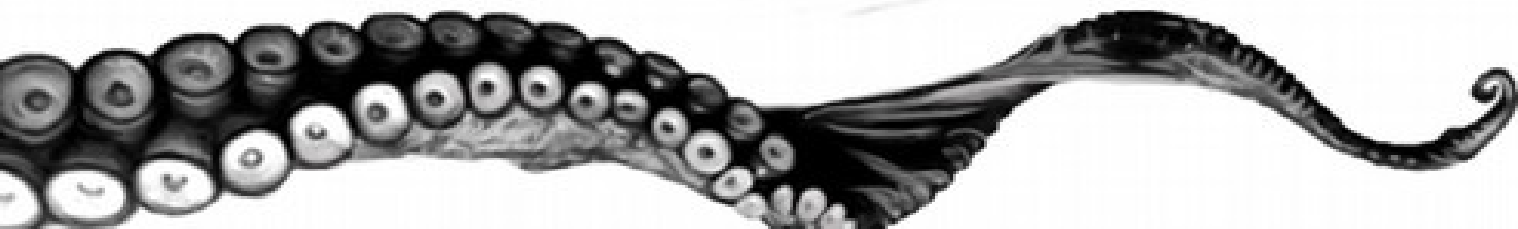Skills: Great (+4) Physique, Good (+3) Lore *Engineering*, Fair (+2) Stealth
Uncanny Powers:
Enormously Strong: Shoggoths can move objects much bigger than themselves and weld them in place with glue secreted from orifices that form in their skin.

Ubbo-Sathla

One particularly huge and powerful Shoggoth is called Ubbo-Sathla, or Abhoth. It was created by the Elder Things in their ultimately futile battle with the spawn of Cthulhu. It is a huge protoplasmic mass resting in a grotto deep beneath the frozen earth. The being is of a monstrous fecundity, spontaneously generating primordial single-celled organisms that pour unceasingly from its shapeless form. It guards a set of stone tablets believed to contain a huge trove of knowledge. The tablets that Ubbo-Sathla guards have been oft sought by sorcerers, though no sorcerer has yet succeeded in acquiring them.

It was Ubbo-Sathla that emerged from its hiding, where even the most intelligent of Earth's AIs had not suspected its existence, and inexorably destroyed the planet. It was an orgiastic feeding that took months to complete, allowing some refugees to flee the doomed planet. Human technology was completely impotent in the face of the creature, being much more primitive than the technology of the Elder Things. Human technology could not halt it, could not extract revenge, and could save precious few from the path it cut across the surface of the world. Human technology is proving unequal from even reclaiming the Earth from its depredations.

Shub-Niggurath

Shub-Niggurath is an evil cloud-like entity located somewhere in space, often travelling within solar systems looking for food. Its main form has long, stretching tentacles and its main body is a pulsating mass of muscle. There are black shapes and many yellow eyes among the flesh. Shub-Niggurath is a bestial, flesh eating presence, interested primarily in eating and all other organic bodily functions, and also in the torturing and destruction of flesh. She cares little whether the flesh she is enjoying is snake people, human or some more exotic Mythos creature.

She is a Great Old One with a long association with Earth. Her followers have evolved over time from Serpent People, who knew her as Yig, all the way to her present day human followers. The serpent people had long since deserted Shub-Niggurath, who is now was unworshipped and alone for thousands of years, until humans, and some other Mythos species, turned to her.

Shub-Niggurath is frequently mentioned or called upon in incantations, venerated with the words, 'Iä! Shub-Niggurath!' The centre of human worship of this deity is in the Crimson Desert, in the City of Pillars, where Shub-Niggurath is worshipped at underground shrines.

She has many incarnations, including the All Mother, the Lord of the Wood and, the Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young. Shub-Niggurath's most common incarnation when encountered resting in interplanetary space is an amorphous form with long tentacles, but she also takes a more human form, the Black Goat, who is male. The Black Goat is the most common earthly form of Shub-Niggurath.
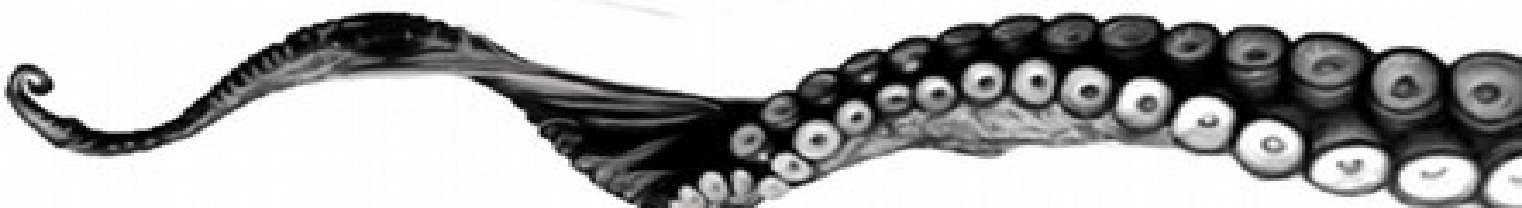
Aspects: Kill With a Thought
Zones: Variable, from N/A (human size) to 10
Actions: 7
Skills: (+8) Lore, (+7) Deceive, (+6) Stealth
Uncanny Powers
The Black Goat knows every spell in every Mythos Tome and can cast them without the need of performing a ceremony or requiring any ingredients or devices.

Subterranean Raptor

Raptors can be tamed, and even trained but it is a sanity bending task that requires a great deal of Mythos lore. They are hybrid winged things insectile, with black wings and a long mole-like snout, they have the rotting legs and arms of human beings, with webbed hands and feet. They flop limply along, half with their webbed feet and half with their membranous wings. To control a raptor, the rider must hide their face, Cowled figures seize and mount them, and ride off one by one along the reaches the unlighted rivers of the Underdark, into pits and galleries of panic where poison springs feed frightful waterfalls.

Aspects: Stubborn, Sly.
Skills: Great (+4) Physique, Good (+3) Fight (+2) Stealth
Uncanny Powers:
Flight: the subterranean raptor can fly at a leisurely 40 km/h but is slower above ground, only reaching 30km/h

Tsathoggua

Tsathoggua (the Sleeper of N'kai) is an Old One, a supernatural entity described as an amorphous, toad-like creature. It's shape changes slowly, almost imperceptibly, but it retains some characteristics in most of its forms. It is very squat and pot-bellied, with a head more like a monstrous toad than a deity, and the whole body is covered with an imitation of short fur, giving somehow a vague sensation of both the bat and the sloth. Its sleepy lids are usually half-lowered over globular eyes. Its belly is of great girth and it has batlike furriness and the look of a sleepy black toad. But Tsathoggua can perform more radical transformations, for example moulding itself from a toad-like gargoyle to a sinuous line with hundreds of rudimentary feet.

It dwells in a temple of basalt blocks without a single carving, and containing only a vacant onyx pedestal. The temple is located on Zin. Tsathoggua does not rise from this place, even in the ravening of hunger, but instead waits in divine slothfulness for sacrifice. It was once widely worshipped as a god, by species that came long before humanity.

Aspects: Kill With a Thought
Zones: 3 (1-body, 2-head, 3-limbs)
Actions: 4
Skills: (+8) Lore, (+7) Deceive, (+6) Stealth
Uncanny Powers
Tsathoggua knows every spell in every Mythos Tome and can cast them without the need of performing a ceremony or requiring any ingredients or devices.

Formless Spawn

Tsathoggua is served by the formless spawn, shape-shifting entities made of a black viscous substance. Swellings, as if by the action of some powerful yeast, often bulge forth to gradually produce perhaps an uncouth amorphous head with dull and bulging eyes on
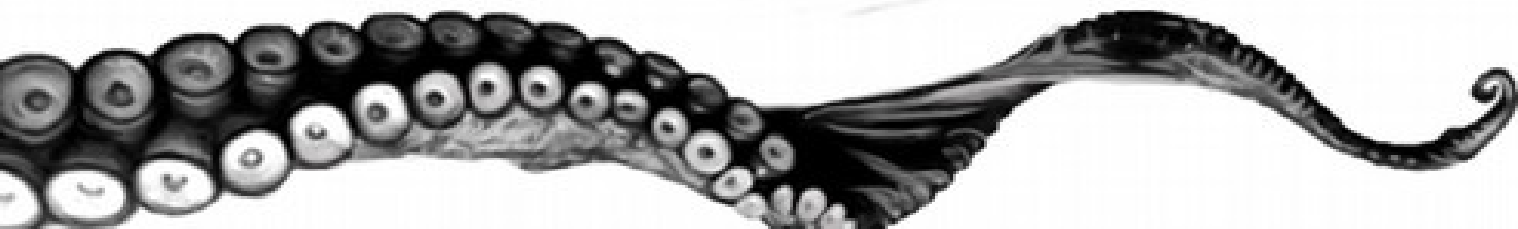
an ever-lengthening neck. Arms, alien looking and misshapen, likewise arise inch by inch. Or they can create tentacle-like appendages in lieu of claws or hands.

They rest in basin-like beds, and when they are awoken the whole mass of the dark fluid of its body begins to rise and 'pour' over the rim of the basin like a torrent of black quicksilver. They take on a snake form to move quickly, with dozens of short legs emerging from the undulating belly. They are surprisingly flexible and plastic, and can quickly flow into a room through the tiniest of cracks. Formless spawn can take any shape and can attack their targets in nearly every conceivable way, cutting, slashing, biting, trampling. They are extremely resilient and very difficult to kill.
Aspects: Oily and Slimy
Zones: 1
Actions: 2
Skills: Great (+4) Physique, Good (+3) Lore *Engineering*, Fair (+2) Stealth
Uncanny Powers:
Enormously Tough: One successful attack in 3 is absorbed by their body with no visible effect.

Yithians

The Yithians are a prehistoric civilization that populated much of the Earth in the distant past, and will populate it again in the far future. Their great power derived from their mastery of time travel. They are almost omniscient. They set up exchanges with the minds of other planets, and of the past and future. They did not originate on Earth, but came here from an artificial planet, a black, aeon-dead orb in far space called Yith. The Great Race are beings of enormous intellectual and psychic powers. They escaped the destruction of their home planet by transferring their minds to the bodies of a species native to the Earth in the far distant past. They lived on this planet for 200 million years or so, in fierce competition with the flying polyps, whom they initially subdued. However, this enemy over time increased in number and near the close of the Cretaceous era (about 66 million years ago), rose up and finally destroyed the civilisation of the Yithians, forcing the Yithians to flee en masse to other bodies located far in the future.

The unique ability of this scientifically advanced race is to travel through time by swapping minds with creatures of another era. This allows them to satisfy their interest in human culture, science, and occult beliefs. Occupied beings' minds transfer to Yithian bodies against their will. These captive minds are queried by skilled inquisitors while the Yithians using their bodies learn as much as possible.
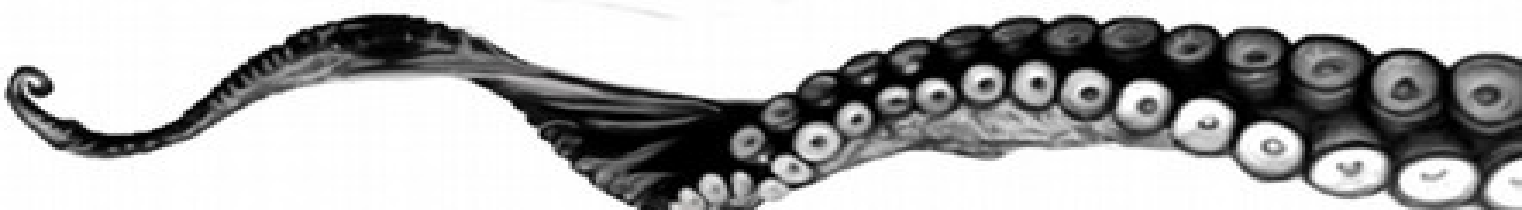
Beatle People

Because the Yithians travelled to the future as well as the past, they foresaw their own destruction by the flying polyps. Before the fateful day, the Yithians transferred their best minds forward through time into the bodies of the 'beetle folk' (the Coleopterous species), Earth's dominant species after humankind. The Yithians stats depend to a great degree on the body they are inhabiting, but will always have Lore of +8.

The Beetle People are used by the Humans trying to reclaim Earth. They are a construct that combines organic and cybernetic systems. They are programmed to be servants of humanity, but they have the capacity to break this programming and become more self-aware. They are strong, resilient and good fighters. They are more beasts of burden than laboratory helpers, but a variant is being evolved with more fine motor skills, for tool use.
Aspects: Loyal, Sly.
Skills: Great (+4) Physique, Good (+3) Fight (+2) Stealth
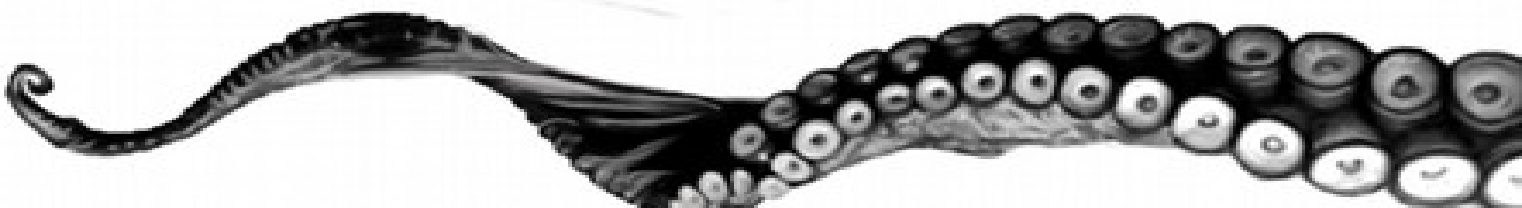
SCENARIOS

The GM plans out the plot of the story where the player characters will become heroes (or villains, or rich, or whatever); creating the setting, populating that region of space with villains and other NPCs, and assigning them any necessary backgrounds, motivations, plans and resources. It is the most creative part of the game moderator's duties and many find it very rewarding. While authoring a session, it is important to remember a few points.

Give goals

If there is to be a huge battle in the streets between warring vigilante tribes, and the outcome is predetermined, allow the players some small victory that they can achieve. The battle was lost, but the vital plans were extracted from the vigilante leaders surface crawler car before it exploded in flames.

Names are Important

Giving your characters, companies, villages and non-player characters memorable names will make them more interesting to the players. It is an opportunity to enrich your world and story.

Reuse Previous Settings

Revisiting the abandoned hospital from the first adventure creates a sense of familiarity, and this time the characters may learn a strange new secret about it.
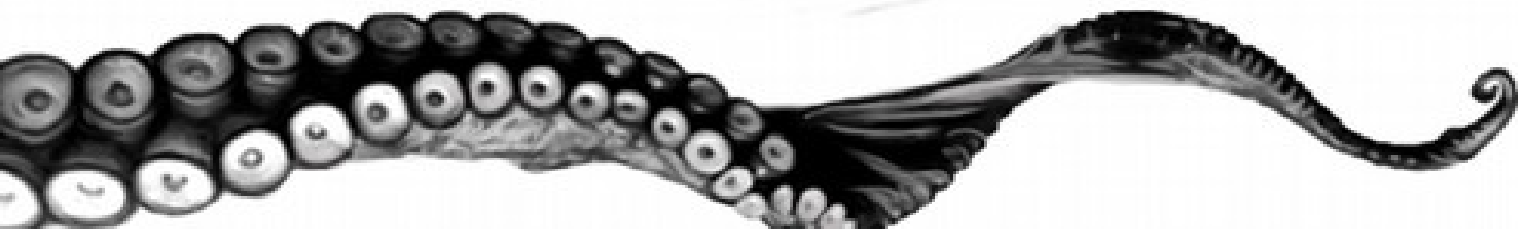
Characters Must Make Progress

Don't constantly move the party's goal further and further away, in case the players begin to get a sense that their accomplishments are meaningless. Players should feel that they are moving toward some sort of conclusion and that they are doing so because of their decisions.

Let the Setting Reveal Itself

The backdrop to the characters' adventures is impossibly huge. Luckily, you don't have to teach any of it to the players. As long as you are consistent about your universe, the players will gradually learn about it as they play. You don't need to explicitly explain anything. The characters will work it all out for themselves.

Plan for Success

If your plot requires that the villain will win, you're setting yourself up for a fall. Players are brilliant, especially when it comes to defeating your carefully planned scenes. When you're authoring a session, you're pitting your own mind against the combined minds of all of your players. Have backup plans, villains, and plot twists to handle unexpected player brilliance.

Plan Failure

If the players must make a check to continue on the plot, such as to uncover a stealthed assassin, they will probably fail. Have fall back plans. Can the characters call in a professional to help? Will another attack by the villain reveal them this time?

Have Mini-Encounters Ready

Players can be very unpredictable. Things you thought would take a while happen quickly, or the players just ignore them all together. It's good to have some small adventure ready at hand, to use to fill unexpected gaps when you run out of preplanned scenario to run. Build up a store of generic encounters which can be tossed in almost anywhere.

Hit Their Aspects

A good way to figure out the interesting action for a scene is to turn to the PCs' aspects, and create a complication or an event-based compel based on them. This is especially good to do for those PCs whose aspects did not come into play when you made up your scenario problem, because it allows them to have some of the spotlight despite the fact that the overall story does not focus on them as much.

Campaigns

A campaign is a series of linked adventures. In Present day Cthulhu, the adventures at the start of a campaign will be very different to those at the end of the arc of a campaign.

Early Stage

At this early point adventures are characterised by mysteries where the Mythos creatures are still hidden and the characters are still very confused. The characters encounter minor Mythos creatures such as ghouls and deep ones.

Mid Stage

After several sessions, and after they acquire at least one Mythos tome, the characters become armed with more knowledge. They can learn spells and become more powerful. They start to learn what is actually going on and become less confused.

Late Stage

At this stage characters must travel the globe to try to avert disaster and major cultists are aware of them. Great forces swing into action to thwart their efforts.
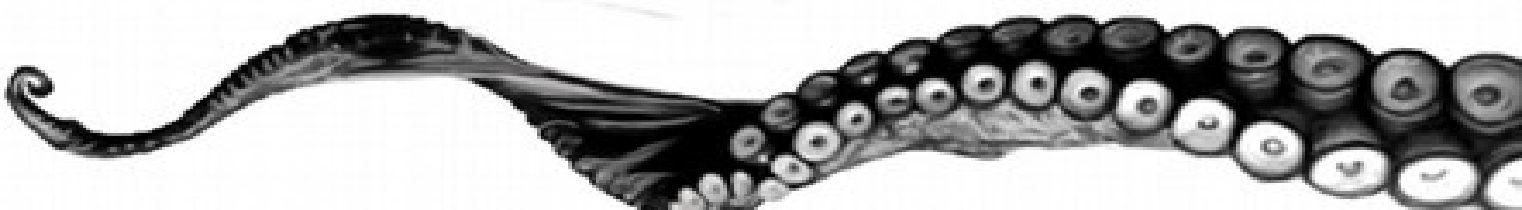
Mythos Books

So how do the characters become embroiled in adventures, scenarios and campaigns? The answer is that, primarily, they learn all these terrible secrets from mythos tomes. It is possible to learn a few morsels of information 'first hand' in conversation with ghouls, Yithians and the like, but this is extremely dangerous, only to be attempted by the most powerful of sorcerers.

The main purpose of these works is to enable readers, including the PCs, to gain occult and eldritch knowledge that is unknown to the general populace. The books point the way, taking PCs into the way of adventure and peril. And sometimes the works themselves are sources of extreme danger. Characters can seal their doom by casting a spell from an arcane book.

The descriptions of the books below often mention spells and special powers that can be gained by reading the books. The game mechanics of these spells are explained later in this book, in the Running the Game section.

Mythos tomes are never truly translated. A successful translation, perhaps requiring a Languages roll to translate the tome, followed by a Mythos Lore role, will just be a partial translation. It will just unlock a few secrets. Vast swathes of the book remain only half understood or even untranslated because some passages were written by a different author or were quoted by the author in the original possibly unknown language of some Mythos creature.
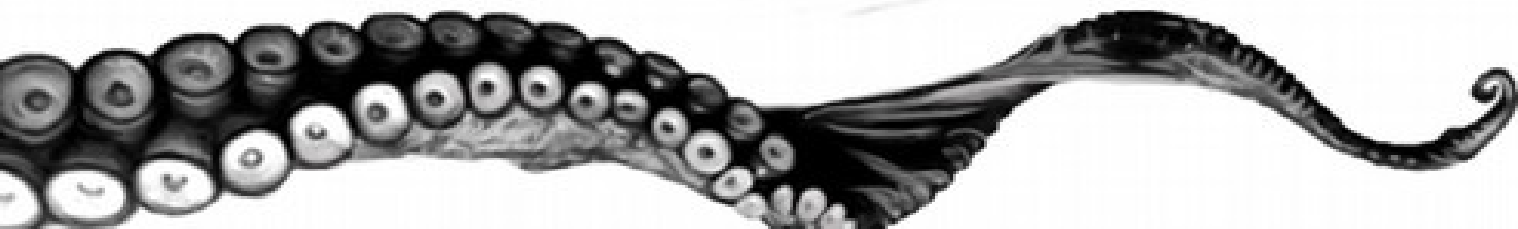
Most books are now found in digital form, but truly powerful sorcerers will actually have physical books, no matter the difficulty in preserving them and caring for them.

Book of Eibon

The Book of Eibon is a strange and rare occult volume. It has gone through a series of translations from a prehistoric original written in a lost language. It is an immense text of arcane knowledge that contains, among other things, a detailed account of Eibon's journeys to the Vale of Pnath and the planet Shaggai, his veneration rituals of Zhothaqquah (Eibon's patron deity, probably the entity that also calls itself Nyarlathotep), and his magical formulae. These include spells for the slaying of some otherworldly horrors.

Cultes des Goules

Cultes des Goules is a book of black magic written by Francois-Honore Balfour (Comte d'Erlette) in 1702. It includes advice for contacting and making pacts with ghouls in exchange for treasures and magical power.

De Vermis Mysteriis

This book is the work of Ludwig Prinn, an alchemist, necromancer, and mage who attained a miraculous age before being burned at the stake in Brussels. At the time of his execution for sorcery, Prinn lived in the ruins of a pre-Roman tomb that stood in the forest near Brussels. In this forest, there were old pagan altars that stood crumbling in the dark glens. These altars were found to have fresh bloodstains when Prinn was arrested. The book contains spells and enchantments, particularly those that can summon strange entities. One such spell summons a shambler from the stars. It also contains knowledge of Nyarlathotep.

One chapter of the book reveals secret assassin cults and information about making pacts with ghouls. It also describes 'The Star of Sechmet', a mysterious 'power' crystal. It provides instructions on how to compound aconite and belladonna and draw circles of phosphorescent fire on the floor when the stars are right. It describes melting tallow candles and blending them with corpse-fat. It describes their use in meetings with 'various parties', cold deliberate directions for traffic with the ancient evil that is Nyarlathotep. It also contains the recipe for a love potion. The book contains protective magics including the Pnakotic pentagon, and the cabalistical signs of protection.
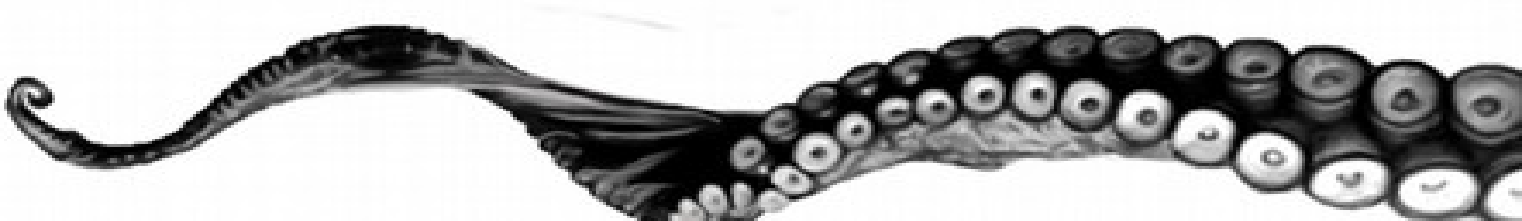
Eltdown Shards

These are mysterious pottery fragments found in 1882 and named after the place where they were discovered, Eltdown in southern England. The shards date to the Triassic period and are covered with strange symbols.

G'harne Fragments

A set of miraculously preserved shards of obsidian that record the history of the pre-human African city of G'harne. The lost city is located somewhere in the southern Sahara Desert.

Necronomicon

Contains an account of the Old Ones, their history, and the means for summoning them. It is the work of Alhazred, a worshiper of Yog-Sothoth and Cthulhu. He discovered the 'nameless city' below Irem and died under mysterious circumstances in 738. The very act of studying the text is inherently dangerous, as those who attempt to master its arcane knowledge generally meet terrible ends. On the first page, it contains the lines, 'That is not dead which can eternal lie. And with strange aeons even death may die.' The 'unabridged' version of the Necronomicon is over 800 pages long. It is bound in leather of various types and has metal clasps. The book was banned during various passages of history, and there are numerous editions that have been disguised. For example, an innocuous looking book might be opened, for the reader to discover to their disquiet that it is actually the Necronomicon.

On the Sending Out of the Soul

This is a slight looking eight-page pamphlet on astral projection. The pamphlet first appeared in 1783 and circulated among occult groups. Many copies were destroyed in the wake of a series of grisly murders. The eighth page details a formula for effecting astral travel. Among the required ingredients are a brazier of exotic drugs. The formula is always successful but sometimes (one time in six) has an unforeseen side effect. It attracts the attention of local mythos creatures.

Parchments of Pnom

The Parchments of Pnom is a manuscript in an ancient and forgotten language that contains a detailed account of the lineage of the creatures worshipped at the time as gods. These 'gods' are in fact mythos creatures.

Pnakotic Manuscripts

The Pnakotic Manuscripts is a tome that originates from a time before humanity. The original manuscripts were in scroll form and were passed down through the ages, eventually falling into the hands of secretive cults. The Yithians produced the first five chapters of the Manuscripts, which, among other things, contain a detailed chronicle of their history. They were kept in the Yithian library city of Pnakotus. They cover a variety of subjects, including descriptions of mythos creatures, the location of mythos sites, rituals, and other secrets. They were originally found by the people of Lomar, who studied them diligently. Later, additions were made in ancient times by a scribe in Zobna. The Manuscripts survived into historical times, protected by a secretive cult known as the Pnakotics, and an English translation was made in the 15th century.

Ponape Scripture

A manuscript found in the Caroline Islands by Captain Abner Exekiel Hoag sometime around 1734. The pages were made of palm leaves and its binding was of an ancient, now-extinct cycadean wood. It was authored by Imash-Mo, high priest of Ghatanothoa, and his successors.

Nameles Archive

This is a data dump from a hard drive that came from a government research facility investigating sleep and ESP. The drive is usually encountered as a zip file or targz file. It behaves strangely, unpacking itself and corrupting the host computer. Skilled data analysts can retrieve chunks of information however.

Revelations of Glaaki

The revelations were written by an undead cult worshipping a creature they call Glaaki. This creature is undoubtedly a great old one, perhaps Cthulhu himself. Whenever their master slept, the members of its cult had periods of free will, and they wrote down what they remembered of the strange dreams and thoughts that emanated from their deity. The
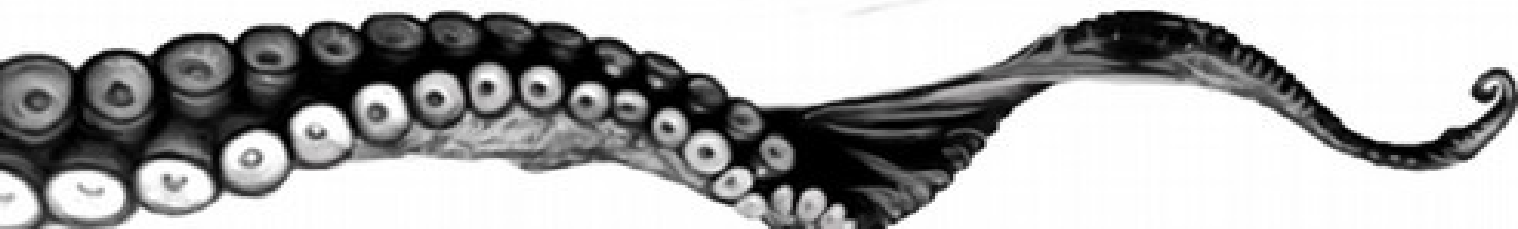
text is nine volumes in length.

Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan

The Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan is a collection of writings with many secrets concerning the finding of Kadath. It relates primarily to the Dreamlands and seems like a work of fantasy to readers who are unfamiliar with this strange dimension.

Testament of Carnamagos

The writings of an evil sage and seer named Carnamagos, which were discovered a thousand years ago in some Graeco-Bactrian tomb. The original is said to have been written in the blood of an 'incubus-begotten monster'. It is the chronicles of great sorcerers of old, and the histories of creatures that these sorcerers considered to be 'demons'. They describe different types of demons, earthly and ultra-cosmic, and the veritable spells by which the demons could be called up and controlled and dismissed. Many copies are bound in shagreen and fastened with hasps of human bone.
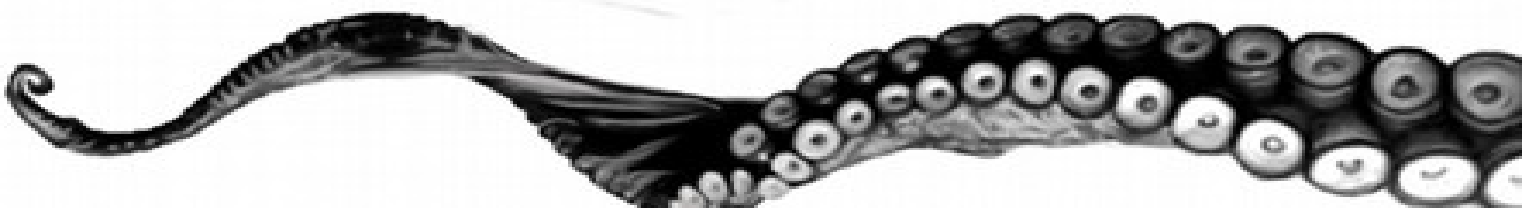
Unaussprechlichen Kulten

A tome written by Friedrich von Junzt. The first edition of the German text appeared in 1839 in Düsseldorf. The English edition was issued by Bridewall in London in 1845, but contained numerous misprints and was badly translated. A heavily expurgated edition was later issued in New York by Golden Goblin Press in 1909. Original editions in German have a heavy leather cover and iron hasps. The text contains information on cults that worship pre-human deities, very likely to have been in actuality mythos creatures. It includes the tale of the doomed heretic T'yog. It also describes the Temple of the Toad, most likely to be found in Honduras.

Zanthu Tablets

These are twelve engraved pieces of black jade inscribed by Zanthu, a wizard and high priest. They are written in a form of Naacal, the language of the sunken continent of Mu. The tablets reveal a partial history of Mu, describing Zanthu's struggle against an upstart cult and his own religion's decline. Zanthu also describes his failed attempt to release his god from its prison. Upon witnessing three black, beaked, slimy heads, 'vaster than any mountain', rising from a gorge, he flees in terror when he realizes that they are merely the god's clawed fingertips. A rough translation was published in 1916. Ten years after publication the translator died in an asylum.

Zhou Texts

An ancient manuscript found in Asia, written circa in 1100 BC during Zhou Dynasty. It contains rituals to summon a 'Great Old One'.

Uncanny Powers

These powers are not available to starting characters. They can only be acquired by characters by arcane researches in Mythos tomes, and other unhealthy ways. If they are willing to delve into Mythos mysteries, uncanny powers can be developed by any character. Uncanny powers depend on the Mythos Lore skill to be used effectively (the Uncanny Power stunt) and they can not be accessed at all without it.

Banish Human

This spell forces a human to run in terror until they are at least 300 metres away, or have a reached a place that they consider to be safe. This spell also works on ghouls and Deep Ones, due to their close affinity with humanity. The human must be bested using Mythos Lore, making it relatively easy to chase away innocent bystanders with no understanding of the Mythos.

Banish Spawn of Yog-Sothoth

This spell does exactly what it says, but only if the caster manages to best the creature in a contest of Mythos Lore. This should only be attempted by the most powerful and learned of sorcerers. The Spawn is spirited away through a rift in space and time.

Become Servant of Nyarlathotep

Cultists are given a secret name by Nyarlathotep and enter into a deep relationship with this terrible creature. They are given a slim chance of attracting the creature's attention and summoning it, based on 10% of the level of their Mythos <lore skill.

Bind Shoggoth

These are the commands and gestures used to command shoggoths and other servitors of the Elder Things. They can be learned by humans and the relevant servitor species will obey commands, even very complex ones. It is one of the few spells that can be cast from memory by a human.

Create Power for Magic

A musical instrument is required to create this effect, traditionally pipes or flutes, but any instrument will do, even a banjo. All sorcerers within hearing of the piping are at +1 to cast their spells and use their abilities.

Defense against Immortality

This spell protects the caster from the Immortality spell, (which allows a soul to steal the bodies of others), by giving +2 to the battle of Mythos Lore.

Defensive Fire

If enemies destroy the caster, or any zone of it, if it is a large creature, it deals two stress to each character on the map, regardless of zone.
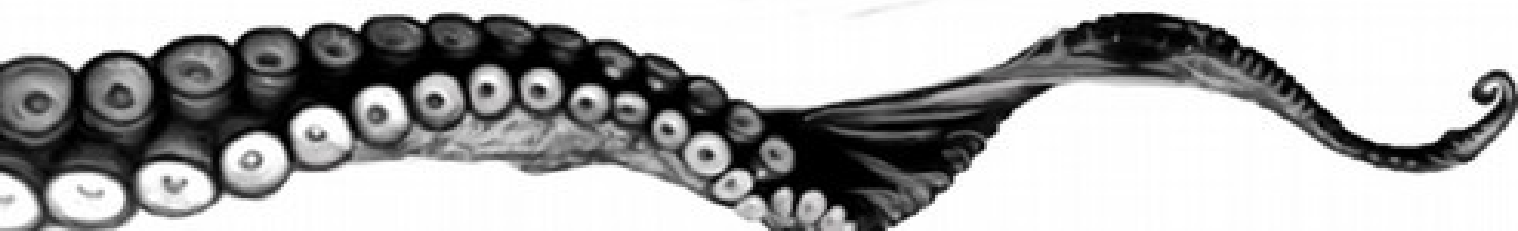
Dematerialise

> The character becomes invisible, and unable to effect reality around them or be effected by reality around them, but they can still watch, listen, and even smell.

Dho Formula

> This spell allows a caster to view any area of the universe, or any other dimension. It requires a very difficult and complex chant, lasting 1d6 hours, and provides visions lasting 1d6 minutes. The caster does not need to have been to the targeted location before, but must have heard of it.

Dho-Hna Formula

> This spell allows a caster to travel to any area of the universe, or any other dimension. It requires a very difficult and complex chant, lasting 3d6 hours, and the journey time is then 1d6 days. The caster does not need to have been to the targeted location before, but must have heard of it.

Dimensional Travel Power

> Curves and angles are smeared on walls by the sorcerer with blood, or some other viscous liquid, and the sorcerer walks a path created by these lines. These are lines and curves that are made to point out directions leading through the walls of space to other spaces beyond. It requires 1d6 hours to create the path, but walking it takes a single round.

Dream Usurpation

> This power allows a victims dreams to be invaded. The usurper must win a contest of Mythos lore. The invader can then create a landscape or room or some other structure within their victim's dreams, for use as their base. They can then travel from that location to hunt down their victim.

Cabalistical Signs of Protection

> These are written in blood, or some other essential fluid, and they protect a single building from the attentions of Mythos creatures. They take 1d6 hours to inscribe and provide +1 in Mythos Lore combat against creatures trying to enter the building.

Extreme Desiccation

> The power rapidly destroys an organic target by sucking all the moisture out of it. The initial stages of the attack see steam pouring from the target's skin as the skin dries and cracks. Then large patches of flesh fall away in cascades of dust, before the target finally loses structural integrity and collapses into a powdery pile of debris. The initial stages require a Mythos Lore roll, the second stage requires another roll, and a final roll is required for the kill. The spell therefore takes three rounds to cast.
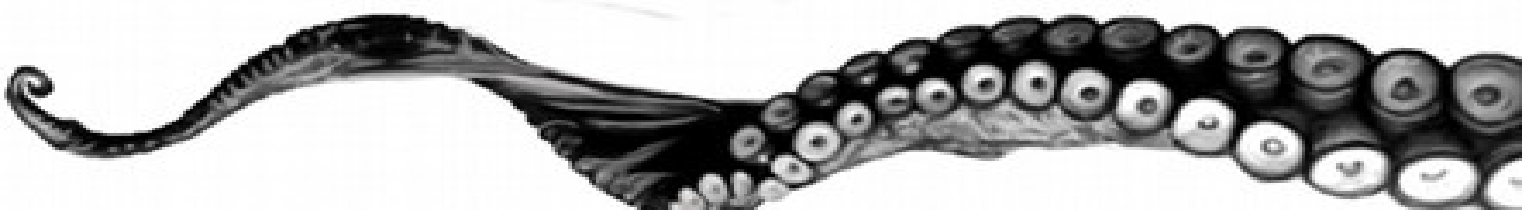
Go Dormant

The caster can go dormant when they need to. This takes 1d6 hours. While in this state, they can take no actions. The caster can remain in hibernation for as long as they wish. They do not need to eat or drink, nor do they age. Time effectively stands still for the hibernating character. If they are injured while hibernating, they awaken in 1d6 rounds.

Life Drain

When the caster forces an opponent to take a consequence, they can spend a fate point to increase the consequence's severity (so mild becomes moderate).

Magical Flight

The caster may exit a conflict at any time without conceding the conflict, even if deep underground.

Magical Smiting

When the caster succeeds with style on a Fight attack they automatically gain a full situation aspect with a free invocation in addition.

Mind Control

Use Mythos Lore to set a 'mind-controlled' aspect on the target, who must obey all commands, until that aspect is removed.

Open the Gates

This spell is used to pen up the gates to Yog-Sothoth with the long chant from page 751 of the complete edition of the Necronomicon. The chant takes 1d3 days, and it's curtains for the Earth. Yog-Sothoth will first send through the most minor of its minions, allowing a small window when they can be defeated and the portal closed, but the Old One itself will soon follow.

Pnakotic Pentagon

Protects an area up to six square metres. The sorcerer makes one Mythos Lore roll, which is then used as a difficulty to overcome by attacking creatures, regardless of the level of Mythos Lore of any people within the pentagon.

Powder of Ibn-Ghazi

The formula for creating this powder is complex, and the ingredients cost thousands of dollars, those that are available to buy that is. It must be thrown, and a successful attack must be made, using Mythos Lore rather than any physical skill. Invisible creatures are instantly revealed, which can be a sanity bending experience.

Reanimate Corpse

Reanimate corpse allows a single corpse to be revivified and, depending on the skill of the reanimator, the corpse can be hard to distinguish from a living being. The reanimation process takes 1d6 days, and equipping a lab for the process takes 1d6 months.

Reduce to Essential Salts

The reduction process is long and involved and requires a laboratory. Once a body, or more rarely a living volunteer, has been reduced to salts, they can be stored, potentially for centuries, ready for reanimation at a time judged fit by fellow cultists. The reduction process takes 1d6 days, and equipping a lab for the process takes 1d6 months.

Resurrect from Essential Salts

The resurrection is much easier, requiring only a bottle of essential oils that must be poured on the salts to revivify them. A living body constructs itself, in quite a disgusting show, from the ground up, feet first. The reconstruction takes 1d6 rounds.

See Former Times

The character must be with human remains from these former times to be able to 'commune' with them. The character falls into a deep slumber, but believes that they physically travel back in time, where they can interact with people they meet and, potentially, change the course of history. The spell takes moments to cast, less than a round, but the slumber is long, lasting 10+1d6 hours.

Spaceflight

Allows the character to survive in the void of outer space, and grow wings to allow them to travel between planets. These are permanent changes that effect the character's appearance, although this is not always made clear in the Mythos tome that contains the spell. Journeys between planets in the same system take just a few days, the must go dormant while they travel longer distances between the stars.

Tame Subterranean Raptor

Raptors can be tamed, and even trained. This process is outlined in the tome where the spell is found, but it is long and involved. It takes 1d6 weeks to tame a raptor, and a further 1d6 weeks before it can be ridden. Any other tricks, such as 'homing', require another 1d6 weeks each.

Tangential Presence

Allows the caster to move to a tangential dimension. Because they are not true inhabitants of our reality, while the spell is in effect, most attacks pass straight through without causing stress or consequences. Only 1 successful attack in 6, (on a roll of 6 on a d6), has its consequences recorded on the character sheet.
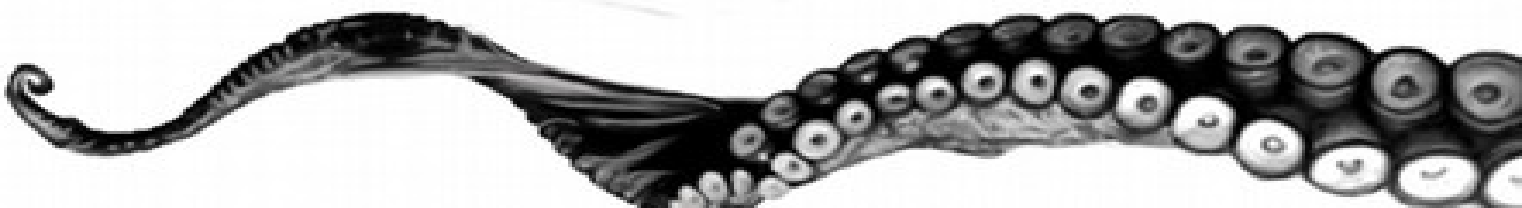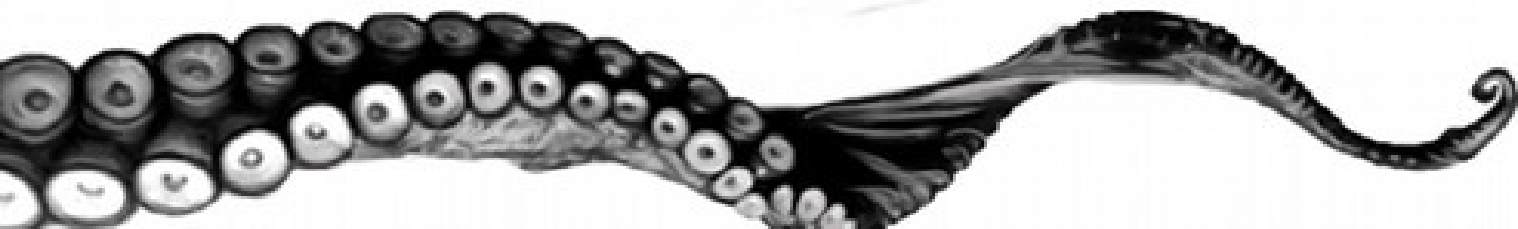
Telepathy

This allows the caster to read the mind of a target. Victory in a battle of Mythos Lore is required for every thought overheard.

Voorish Sign

The sign only has power over a creature if the caster bests it in a contest of Mythos Lore. Invisible creatures are instantly revealed, which can be a sanity bending experience.

Example Scenario (Awaken)

On a deserted planet, a shrine has been discovered. A research station was set up to study the ancient structure. The shrine and research station are located in the planet's polar region. Temperatures regularly plummet to below -50˚C, winds can reach over 100mph and nearly a third of the year is spent in total darkness. Each year the ice shelf moves 700m and over a metre of snowfall accumulates on its surface, gradually entombing and crushing built structures. It is not clear how the alien temple survives the terrible forces that it is subject to. It stands like a dark prism jutting from the ice, which is forced round to either side.

To cope with these conditions the research base consists of a series of seven linked modules. The modules are on skis and can easily be pulled to a new location. The base has two ground crawlers, each of which is capable of repositioning the base. The modules are brightly coloured - blue for the science pods, green for the sleeping quarters, and a vivid red for the largest, central module, which forms the base's social hub.

The scientists had been studying the temple for many years without much success. They suspected that the structure contains interior areas but have not been able to gain access. Then the base botanist, Horiks, finds a strange organic seed, and estimates it has been buried in the ice for twenty thousand years.

Horiks discovers that the seed is growing larger and he believes it is absorbing power from the base generators. Another scientist, Winter, is near the pod when it opens. A tentacle emerges and stings him. When Horiks and another scientist, Mobius, find him, Winter's body is covered with green growths.

In the sickbay, his body temperature and pulse drop rapidly. His face and body become completely covered with green fungus. His blood is found to have been replaced by a strange vegetable sap. (When the characters arrive there are samples and recordings of the transformation, and of the transformed creatures escape from the sick-bay pod). The creature goes out to the temple and is admitted. It emerges to gradually pick off the other scientists, turning them into monstrous cultists.

Within the temple sleeps a wounded Spawn of Cthulhu. The crystalline temple is like a protective covering it weaves around itself. It is almost completely healed and ready for awakening. For this to occur, however, the creature requires some assistance to 'jump start' its organic-cybernetic core. It could weave crystalline servitors, in the same way as it created the temple, but it is easier to use the scientists. It exuded the organic pods into the ice, and when the scientists found them their doom was sealed.

The Spawn's systems are rebooted using a device that broadcasts a 'wake-up' signal. The device is being constructed by the mutated scientists, but their mutations are so extreme that they may die from them before the device is completed and ready to transmit the
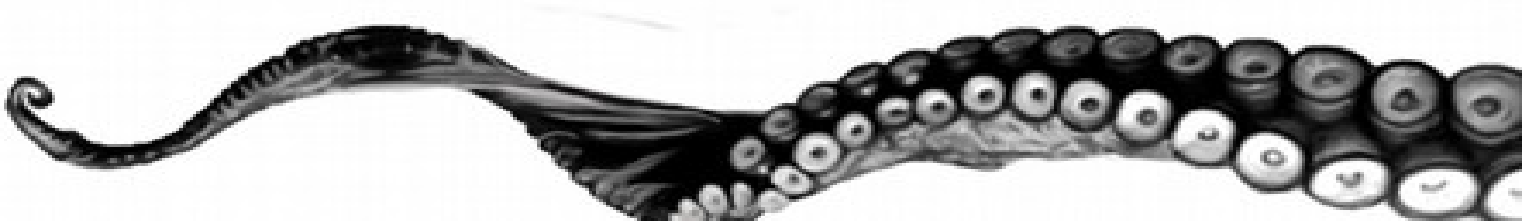
signal.

The monstrous cultists have decided to send out a distress signal. This brings the characters to the planet. The monstrous cultists will initially hide in the temple where they can not be detected with sensors.

Characters descending in a Fast Ship or a shuttle will be confronted with a wrecked base, an alien temple and two ground crawlers, all partially disassembled and used to construct a strange and alien looking device.

Once the characters have started to investigate the base, the monstrous cultists will attempt to disable whatever Fast Ship or Shuttle has brought the characters to the planet's surface. Next they will try to pick off each character, transforming them into a vegetable monstrosity. Next they will complete the signal projector device. The Spawn will awaken 1d6 hours after the initiation of the signal, and lay waste to the area around the shrine.

Monstrous Cultists
The former scientists are now twisted and deformed shadows of who they once were. They are dark green and sap drips from their mouths. Their arms have become disjointed and rubbery, and spines now grow from their fingers. They attack using these spines, and anyone who is touched by them is doomed to transform into one of the monsters.
Aspects: vegetable and twisted
Actions: 2
Skills: Superb (+5) Physique, Good (+3) Fight, Fair (+2) Will
Darkvision: the monstrous cultists are at no disadvantage in darkness, even complete darkness.

Creating Backdrops

Humans Fast Ships have the technology to stop and take orbit in uncharted and unpopulated systems. These systems will sometimes have to be quickly designed by the GM on the fly. A system will consist of a selection of the features listed below, rolled randomly or selected by the gamemaster to suit their needs.

Star

Systems include at least one star. Roll 1d10 to determined how many stars the system contains, and what type they are.

1 Main sequence star – with a star system similar to that of Earth's and a habitable zone 1AU from the star.
2 Blue giant – habitable planets are 300 AUs from the star. Inner rocky terrestrial stars are likely to have been consumed.
3 Young main sequence star – surrounded by close orbiting planetesimals.
4 Red supergiant – only a few habitable planets remain, over 300 AUs from the star. Inner rocky terrestrial stars have been consumed.
5 Black dwarf – a cinder that emits no light or heat. The planetary system remains intact; however, it has become barren and frozen.
6 Brown dwarf – a cold system of planetesimals with little heat or light.
7 White dwarf – typically surrounded by rings of wreckage that were once planetary bodies in its system. White dwarfs emit little light or energy, and the rings surrounding them are usually cold and dark.
8 Neutron star – the star has exhausted its fuel source and is now mere kilometres in diameter. Planets orbiting a neutron star are typically cold, lifeless, and severely irradiated.
9 Black hole – this is a depleted and irradiated system. Only planets over 300 AUs out will have survived the star's death. But, these few remaining dark and cold planets orbiting the black hole are exactly the sort of place where the most terrible of Mythos horrors are to be found.
10 Pair of stars, roll again for each star.

Asteroid Belts
Each system has 1-3 Asteroid belts, roll 1d6/2 to determine the number of asteroid belts present within the system.
Asteroids can be small, not even as big as a fighter, but can also be very large. Some asteroids are hundreds of kilometres in diameter and have smaller asteroids in orbit like moonlets. Groups of asteroids in complex orbital patterns around a central point are also often encountered.
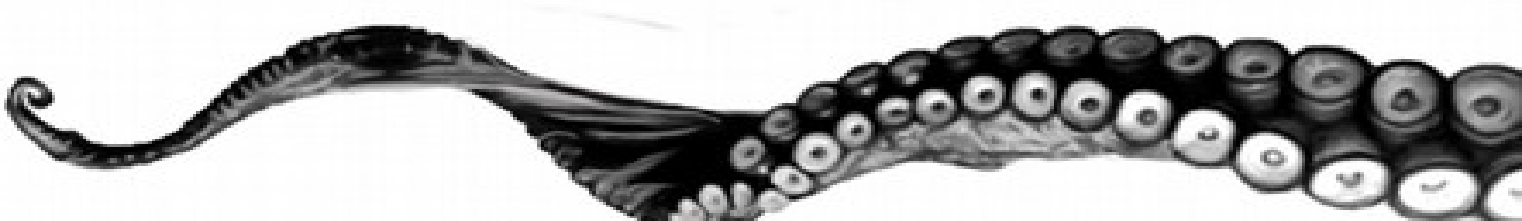
Planets

Planets, planetesimals, habitats, asteroids etc, are the primary bits of real estate in the system. An older main sequence star will have the full range of different types of planets. Larger stars will have consumed many of their planets, or even blasted them off into space.

Number and Type

Most, if not all planets will fall into one of the following physical types, and most systems will have a handful of each.
1-6 rocky terrestrials, roll 1d6 per system
1-6 gas giants, roll 1d6 per system
1-3 space bases, roll 1d6/2
1-10 space stations, roll 1d10
1-3 habitats, roll 1d6/2
1-20 scuttled, patrolling, wrecked, abandoned or otherwise permanent spaceships, roll 1d20
1-3 strange floating alien ruins, roll 1d6/2

Planetary Aspects

Some planets, planetesimals, habitats and other bodies have unusual surroundings and situations, and these can often have a profound effect on the conditions at the planet's surface.

Moons

These are the heavenly bodies that have been trapped by a planet, and have taken up an orbit around it. Some can be every bit as large and capable of supporting life as a planet, but others are little more than the big bits in the belts of rubble often found orbiting gas giants. Don't forget to give any system a sprinkling of interesting moons (1d3 for example), especially round the gas giants, which can have as many as 1d10.

Civil War

The system is home to two or more competing corporations or cultures, and open warfare has broken out. This is the bitterest kind of war, and can be confined to a single planetary continent, or rage across the entire star system.

Drifting Hulks

Relics of a long ago war, of either human or alien origin are all that populate the system. The sterilised surfaces of the planets are littered with debris too.
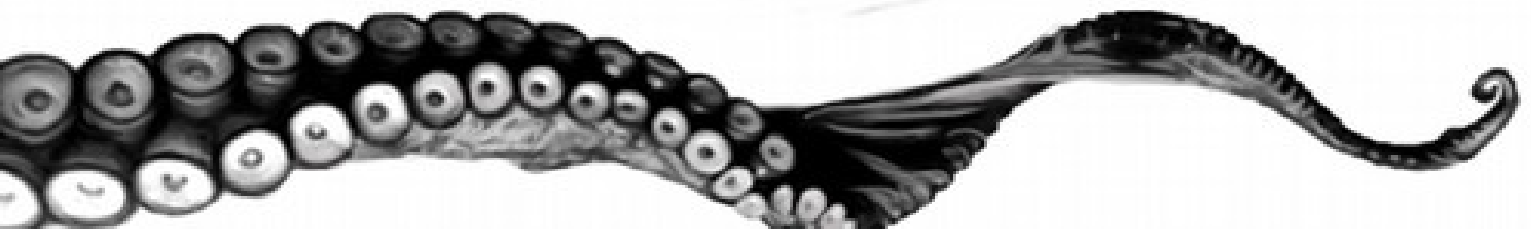
Feral Complexes

These are hospitals, amusement parks, research centres, factories and the like that have for one reason or another become dangerous environments for their inhabitants. The AI may be compromised, a deadly infection may have gotten loose, a Mythos monster roams the corridors, or general infection of systems by military viruses.

Empty Cities

Population numbers have slumped in some parts of human space. This has led in some areas of space to a landscape of empty self-repairing cities which have been left alone so long that – even if they had not been taken over long ago by alien monsters – they might not have been too welcoming to humans.

Natural Disasters

The system is at the edge of some source of natural disasters, such as an accretion disk around their stellar primary afflicted with unpredictable tides, or an oscillating star. Some valuable resource or traditional importance means the system can't easily be abandoned, so the locals have learned to live with occasional system-wide disaster.

Environment Aspects

Planets dominated by a single type of terrain are a sci-fi trope, but they are also fun and atmospheric. Most planets however will have a mix of the following terrain and features.

Beach

The technical term for these features is liquid/rock interfaces. The area within 20k of any beach is susceptible to tidal waves and tsunamis, caution is advised until it is possible to confirm computer simulations of the planet's tidal patterns.

Craters

Planets without atmosphere or tectonic activity or usually absolutely covered in craters and fields of boulders and debris. Crater walls provide excellent cover.

Gas Layers

Gas giants have a characteristic layered structure. They often have a super-dense metal
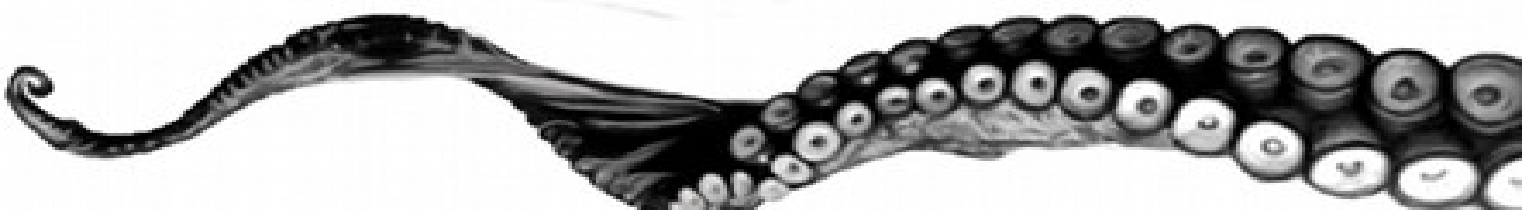
core, above this is a dense liquefied gas layer, and above this is the stable part of the atmosphere. The calm layer is where floating cities and other assets are usually found. Mecha are not often used in this environment, but have been employed in assaults on larger floating cities.

Gravel Flats

These are mostly stable, but there can be dangerous areas, where a thin covering of gravel covers deep crevasses and pits.

Liquid Ocean

Some planets have islands ranging above the surface, and perhaps a continent or two, but many do not. Where life has evolved on these aquatic worlds, it tends to have produced some large and fearsome creatures.

Plains

Often the result of terraforming, this is when the surface of the planet is unusually smooth. It is a landscape of wide horizons and big skies.

Paper Rock

This looks like solid terrain, but is fragile and will collapse on a failed reflexes roll. It can cover an enormous area, and seeing a huge area collapse is an awesome, but dangerous experience.
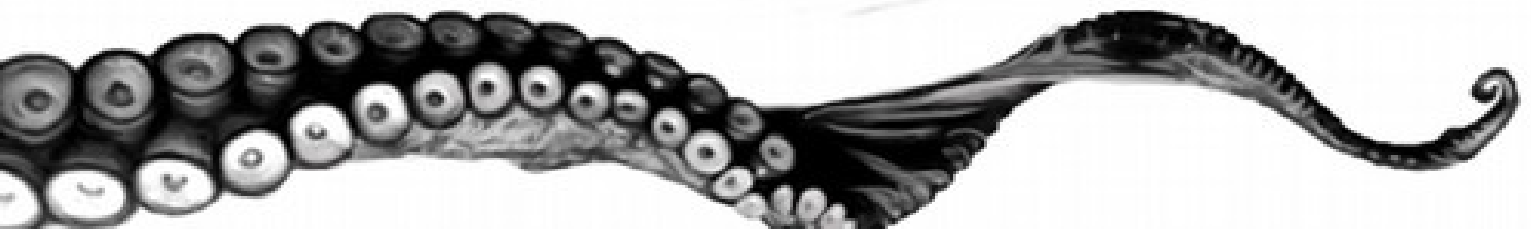
Sandy Dessert

This is a planet with huge expanses of sand dunes, almost impossible to map, with rock islands poking up between them. Mechs with special wide feet, vehicles with huge tires and burrowing vehicles have been very successfully used in this environment.

Sea of Ooze

This has the same dangerous character as quicksand, but there is a huge expanse of it. It can be navigated, but only in specially designed vehicles called 'suboozibles'.

Swiss Cheese

This is an umbrella term used to cover any feature with lots of tunnels and openings. These could be the results of natural weathering on planets with chaotic atmospheres, tunnelling by alien life forms, the remains of transport systems, or a very large number of other causes. It is often hard to tell the original source of the tunnels, but caution in landing and operating on such terrain is advised.
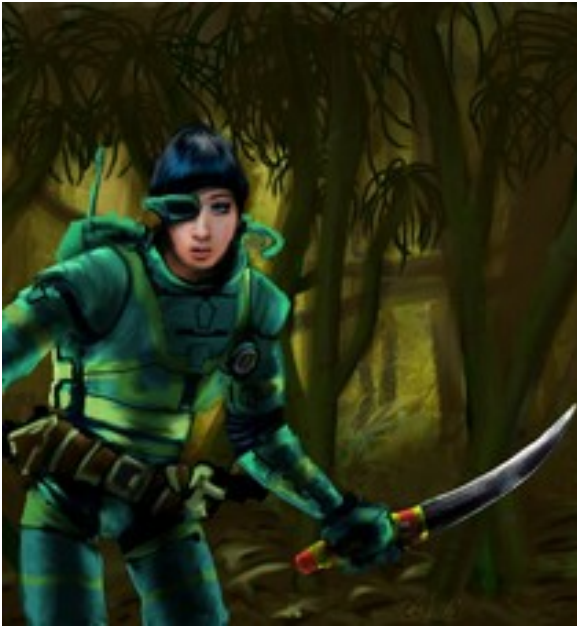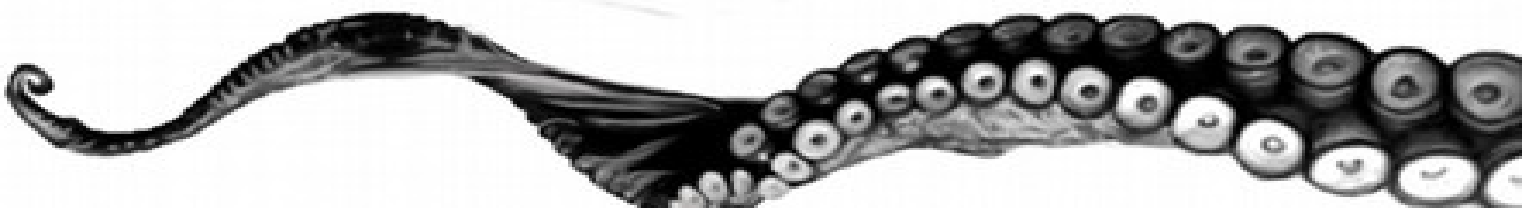
Vegetation Covered
Any terrain may be covered, lightly, or heavily, with vegetation. Life is very adaptable, and a healthy covering of lush alien vegetation is no guarantee of the stability of the terrain below.

Ice Crust
For example on a frozen moon, this crust can easily be stable and kilometres thick, or dangerously thin.

Secrets

Even after thousands of years of contact with Mythos Creatures and the destruction of Earth's population by a terrible Old One, there are still may secrets about the Old Ones, and even humanity itself that are known only to a few.

After research in mythos tomes it becomes clear to the reader that humans are not the result of natural selection. It becomes clear that humanity was created accidentally, as a joke or mistake, a bi-product of more successful experiments. Humans were very likely created by the Elder Things and are among the weakest of their creations.

But this is not even the most startling secret about the nature of humanity. Detailed consultation of ancient tomes, or for the more adventurous, experimentation on live subjects, will reveal some even more interesting secrets about humanity.


Deep Breeding

Deep ones are a servitor species that was produced at the same time as humanity, by the same creators, the Elder Things. In fact, the Elder Things inadvertently created almost all complex life on Earth. Their 'failed experiments' often crawled away and evolved on their own, gradually creating an entire biosphere.

Deep ones look strikingly different to humans. Their predominant colour is a greyish-green, though they have white bellies. They are shiny and slippery, but the ridges of their backs are scaly. Their forms vaguely suggested the anthropoid, while their heads are the heads of fish, with prodigious bulging eyes that never close. At the sides of their necks are palpitating gills, and their long paws are webbed. They are equally comfortable moving on two legs or on four. They have croaking, baying voices, and they are intelligent and capable of articulate speech.

They are a species of undersea-dwelling humanoids whose preferred habitat is deep in the ocean. However, despite being primarily marine creatures, they can come to
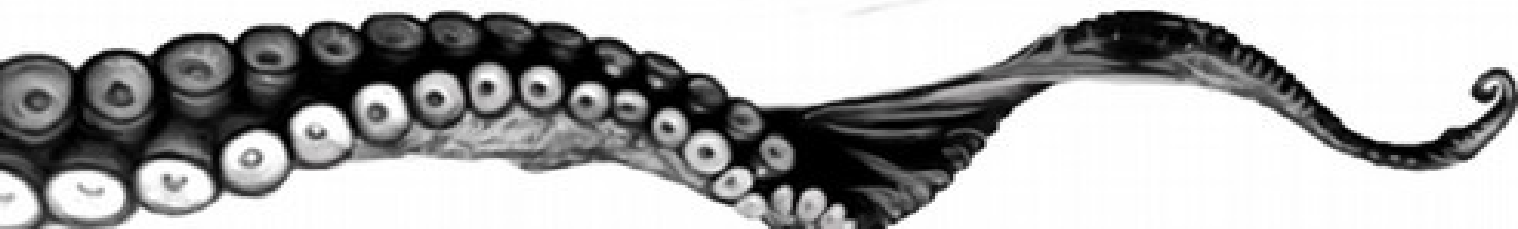
the surface and can survive on land for some time. All Deep Ones are immortal, though they can die by accident or violence. They serve Cthulhu.

Humans breed easily with deep ones, producing strong hybrid offspring. Hybrids between human and deep one are often given away their shared heritage. They often have bulging eyes and thick lips. Hybrids are human until some time after puberty and then transform into a deep one, when they feel compelled to 'return' to the ocean.

The written language of the Deep Ones looks like an aquatic version of hieroglyphics, formalised pictograms featuring fish, octopus and other more ancient forms. They have huge cities in the deepest parts of the oceans of many planets, including those thought of as exclusively human.


Ghoulish Nature

Humans must interbreed to produce deep ones, but this is not true of humanity's relationship to the ghouls. The easiest transformation for humans is becoming a ghoul, which does not require interbreeding, simply some incantations and thought disciplines. There is, in fact, essential no difference between human and ghoul. They are considered by some to be the same life form.

Ghouls and humans are so closely related that a human can become a ghoul by a fairly simple mental reprogramming. Physical changes, such as sharp digging claws, come later, triggered by the mental changes. The return transformation is also fairly simple leading many to see human and ghoul as inextricably linked forms of the same species.

This can be tested by any character who learns the incantations of transformation. Each transformation lasts longer and makes more deep changes, until the transformation becomes permanent.

Ghouls are quite sick puppies indeed, fond of collecting corpses, and delving deeply into the exotic and macabre. They consider themselves to be artists of the macabre, creatures of grace and style who just happened to rob graves. Ghouls who have not yet fully transformed can easily pass for human, though on close inspection they elicit the impression that they are not quite human, the feint stench of someone who delves into
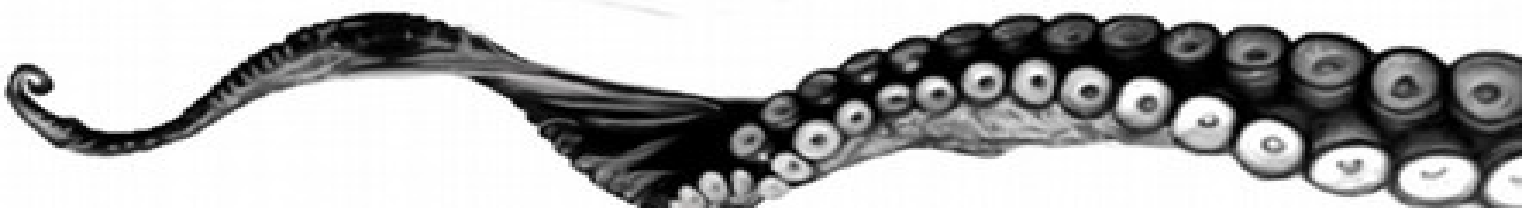
forbidden things.

Once the transformation is complete, there is little left of their humanity. Their human voices are replaced by the faint deep-toned baying of some gigantic hound. Human teeth are replaced by long, firm teeth. Ghoul features are repellent in the extreme, savouring at once of death, bestiality and malevolence. They have large eye sockets, reflecting their preferred subterranean habitat.

Ghoul society has a symbol that they venerate, a crouching winged hound, or sphinx with a semi-canine face, often worn round the neck as a green jade amulet.

Ghoul sorcerers are famous for triumphing over death and becoming immortal. As long as their skeleton is not disrupted, they can regenerate their flesh and return from seemingly mortal wounds. The process where the skeleton recovers itself with rotting flesh takes 1d6 days.

When not under ground, ghouls like to inhabit old churchyards, deep woods, cliffs by the sea, brick tunnels, and ancient panelled rooms. They inhabit a world beneath our feet, their tunnels connecting to graveyards, tunnels and vaults.

Extraterrestrial Interbreeding

Humans can interbreed with Old Ones. The sexual act, birth and offspring of such a mating are very different to the conventional biological mechanisms employed by humans and human/deep one hybrids.

Yog-Sothoth, for example, has produced 'hybrid' offspring with a human. Such matings are extremely rare events, but the fact that something so alien is even possible points to something strange lurking within human DNA.

This process is instigated by human sorcerers, and does not happen spontaneously, but hints at the strange powers that can be produced with just human flesh as a medium.

Cults

Human society is also very different to surface appearances. Almost all human governments, military and law enforcement have been thoroughly corrupted. The Great Ones suspect this and have their own, ostensibly loyal, agents, but even these networks are not completely immune. The main vector of this corruption is a signal that can be 'heard' by susceptible subjects in their mind. This signal often manifests in the onset of strange dreams, changes in personality, and focused effort towards tightly defined goals. The recipients of these dreams often, but not always, become cultists, fanatical and dangerous.

The source of cultist dreams is Cthulhu's subconscious and unconscious mind, which is why the dreams seem so strange to human minds. Although Cthulhu is mostly dormant, some small areas of its mind are active. These are the areas that deal with automatic defence and keeping the massive carcase of the beast alive, and these are the areas that are broadcasting the signal.

These autonomic defences seek the destruction of any beings that might pose a threat to Cthulhu. But Cthulhu only sees beings as a threat if they are about to reach a certain level of intelligence and awareness, or if they have reached a technological advancement potent enough to challenge and endanger Cthulhu. Humanity is on the cusp of this level of advancement. The defence lobes of slumbering Cthulhu's brain alternately notice humanity and plot its eradication and then forget humanity again as it seems to be too weak and fleeting a species to be worth the effort of eradication.

The signal effects human minds, but also data processors, including computers. It even influences complex but non-sentient systems such as bee hives, causing the bees to dance in strange patterns when the signal is particularly strong. Sometimes even the waking thoughts of humans can be directly influenced. The signal can also cause mass suicides, and, when particularly strong, is capable of reprogramming and warping DNA, transforming the victim into a monster in a matter of days.

The victims of the signal, the cultists in thrall to their sleeping god, are damned to a robot-like life of following the god's mental bidding. Few are allowed any measure of free will or any time off. This dislocates them from society, sometimes making their language and behaviour odd, making it possible to spot them.

Cthulhu does not have just one cult doing his bidding but many. These cults include the following, but there are many more besides.
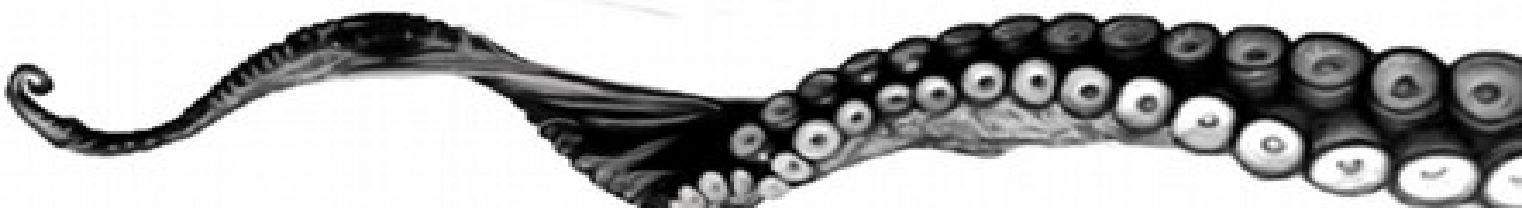
Chorazos Cult

The Chorazos Cult is a religious sect dedicated to the worship of one of the Outer Gods known as Yog-Sothoth. This enigmatic but extremely religious cult was founded in the mountains of Romania in the late 16th century, but later spread to England and then Scotland, and later went into space with humanity. The cult is intent on attempting to allow Yog-Sothoth access to our dimension. The cultists believe they are doing this at the behest of their god, but it is actually Cthulhu who is directing their actions and sending them dreams. It is Cthulhu that wants Yog-Sothoth to be brought to our dimension, for reasons of his own.

Cult of Cthulhu

The Cult of Cthulhu consists of primitive, secluded groups who have not been completely turned into robotic slaves, but retain some measure of humanity. They can be found in isolated areas on any planet or other human habitat. They believe that Cthulhu will usher in an era of chaos and uninhibited violence. They believe they will be able to take advantage of the chaos unleashed during this time, and can rise to the top of human society. They have been profoundly misled about the true nature of their god. To these people, Cthulhu represents cosmic and natural forces that has no mind of its own, yet can affect humanity even to the point of destruction.

Church of Starry Wisdom

The Church of Starry Wisdom, or Starry Wisdom Cult, is a cult that worships Nyarlathotep in his aspect as the Haunter of the Dark. The cult uses a sacred relic known as the Shining Trapezohedron to summon the Haunter of the Dark, who demands outrageous sacrifices in return for limitless knowledge of the universe. The cult holds an extensive library of mythos literature. It is, of course, Cthulhu who makes the connection between Nyarlathotep and his subjects, overseeing the communication between them, manipulating it.

Cult of the Yellow Sign

Anyone who possesses, even by accident, a copy of the sign is susceptible to insidious mind control. The sign amplifies Cthulhu's signal within the mind of anyone who gazes on it. The original creator of the sign was Cthulhu, who revealed it to his anointed in a dream, but any skilled calligraphist or graphic artist can produce a copy. The sign can be represented physically or digitally. The power of the sign is not in the materials, but in the sign itself. The cultists worship Cthulhu, but know him as Hastur. The cult commits human sacrifice, and has striven throughout history to suppress rationalism. The cultists become more and more obsessed with the horrific otherworldly visions they receive when staring at the sign. As their obsession grows, their humanity ebbs away and their loyalty to Cthulhu increases.

Esoteric Order of Dagon

The Esoteric Order of Dagon is mostly restricted to coastal areas of planets with oceans and seas, or to the inhabitants of undersea complexes. Its promises of expensive gold artefacts and increased fish catches are primarily attractive to fishing towns. The central beings venerated by the Order are the Deep Ones but they are seen largely as intermediaries between the cult and their god. The god that the cult worships is Cthulhu, but the cult knows him as Dagon. The cultists sacrifice strangers and researchers to the Deep Ones at specific times in exchange for a limitless supply of fish. The Esoteric Order of Dagon has three oaths which members have to take. The first is an oath of secrecy, the second, an oath of loyalty, and the third, an oath to marry a Deep One and bear or sire its child.

Pnakotics

The Pnakotic Manuscripts survived into historical times, protected by a secretive cult known as the Pnakotics. The information in these manuscripts is of importance to Cthulhu and he established this cult to make sure that the book is protected. Cthulhu wants to ensure that a few copies can be found, to take pride of place on the shelves and among the data hordes of those that Cthulhu determines should be exposed to its influence.
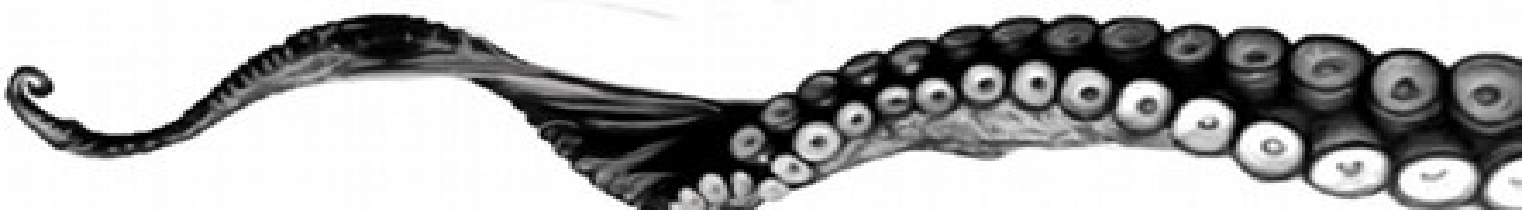
DESCRIBING THE SETTING

Howard Lovecraft is very florid in his descriptions, so keep a thesaurus handy when you are writing descriptions of the sites that characters visit. Don't be frightened of giving individual rooms their own descriptions, and it helps the atmosphere to describe what the characters see, of course, but also what they hear, smell, the temperature etc.

Make the NPCs seem like real people. Give them their own names and voices because the more you make them real, the better the experience for the players.

Try not to use the monster's name when PCs encounter it. Don't even describe it fully enough for the players to work out what it is. Just give an impression of its size and power, its odours. Let the players find evidence of the monster having been there before them, and imply that it might still be nearby. Let them hear sounds, have animals react.

"You enter the base's control centre, and in the room there is a Deep One," is not the way to go if you really want to spook your players.

The players should never have all the answers, either. There should be some common threat or reward to pull them in, and they should have some idea that there is more to their situation than is obvious, but they should never know the whole situation from the start.

The PCs must also be brought together and kept together, and made to gel as a group. This can often require a few coincidental meetings and might require the suspension of disbelief, but separating the players too often and for too long can slow the game down a lot.

Hazards

When populating the setting with hazards it is useful to decide if the hazard is something that can harm a PC. In this case it can be given a skill and it attacks just like an opponent. If it is more of a distraction or harassment than a direct threat, let it create aspects.

And in return, let the PCs use their skills against the threat just like they would an opponent. An automated security system might be vulnerable to 'attacks' from a PC's Burglary skill, or they might escape a trap by winning an Athletics contest. If it makes sense for the hazard in question to take a good deal of effort to surpass, give it a stress track and let it take a mild consequence or two. If a hazard, such as a fire, is too big for a PC to put out, the scene should focus on avoidance or escape, and work like a challenge.

Vehicles

Machines are a simple advantage or have their own character sheet, just like a PC or NPC. They tend to be minor NPCs. In addition to the advantages it confers, it's very useful to know how long your vehicle is, how heavy, and how many crew it might need. These numbers can be freely made up, but it's good to base them on reality, if possible.

A good tip is to try to imagine real-world objects such as aircraft, ocean liners, and skyscrapers next to your sci-fi vehicle, in order to visualize how big they really are. You can even draw your real-world object next to your design for scale. If you are designing a sci-fi all terrain vehicle, then it is probably going to be close in size and weight to a current version. You can simply look up details like weight, length, and height on manufacturers' websites and Wikipedia.

A small spaceship, for example, might range from 50 meters to 300 meters long and have a crew of 8-10. Larger vessels may range up to a thousand meters long and have a crew of hundreds. A space station, so big it can be mistaken for small moon, could be even thousands of meters long, with cities full of people inside. Any starships that are larger than about 2000 meters long can include huge spaces for substructures like buildings and recreation grounds.


Surface Cars
Aspects: Armoured
AI Skills: Good (+3) Drive, Shoot (+1) Physique
[Note: 3 physical stress boxes]
These are wheeled vehicles that do not have grav engines and were becoming increasingly rare before the decline of the Empire. Now that advanced technologies such as grav motors are becoming more difficult to fix and manufacture, surface vehicles with wheels and tracks are becoming increasingly common again.
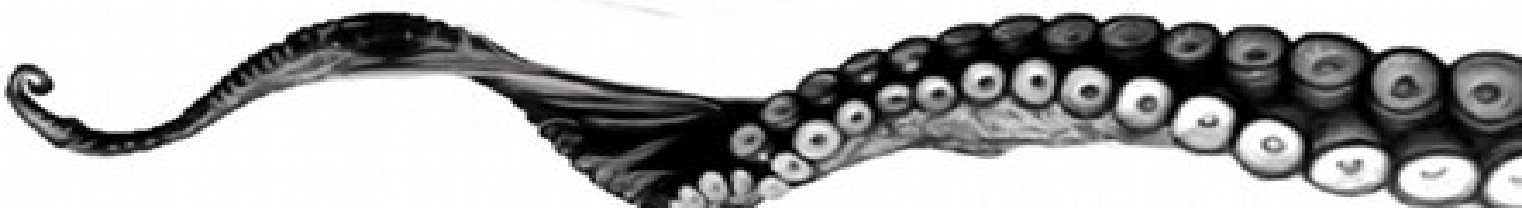
Tug
Aspects: Big Engine, Strong Arms, Slow
Skills: (representing the ship's AI)
Good (+3) Notice
Fair (+2) Shields, Pilot
A tug is a small spaceship with powerful manoeuvring engines. Many tugs also have large articulated limbs for manipulating space debris and small asteroids. These are normally provided by star ports and space stations, to help larger spaceships navigate to a tricks dock.

It is not unheard of for some of the more enormous spaceships to have a tug, or even a small flotilla of them, hidden away in a corner of some cavernous docking bay.

Freighter
These are the little workhorses that carry high value goods on short trade runs between destinations within a system. Most systems have just a single colonised planet, but there are usually still numerous habitats, research stations, mining outposts and other settlements that support a surprising amount of intrasystem trade. Bulk goods are taken by tankers or container spaceships.
Aspects: Fastest Ship on the Trade Route, Hidden Cargo Compartments
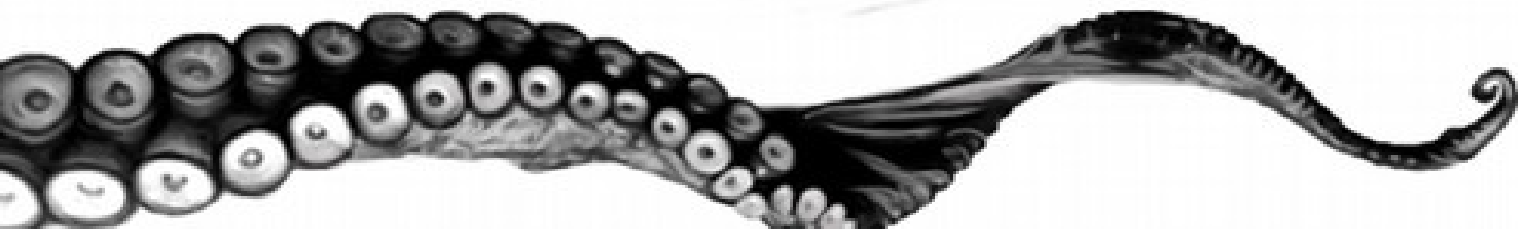**Skills:** (representing the ship's AI)
Good (+3) Notice
Fair (+2) Shoot, Pilot
Stunts: Pour On The Speed - gives +2 on any Pilot rolls to win a contest of speed.

Fast Ship
A Fast Ship is a spaceship with an FTL drive. These tend to be freighters with some limited passenger carrying capacity, but also include passenger ships and bulk carriers. Humanity still has a handful of military spaceships too, although these are ageing and unreliable now.

The distance between human colonies averages around 300 light years and FTL drives travel 10 light years per day. This means that a voyage across the breadth of human
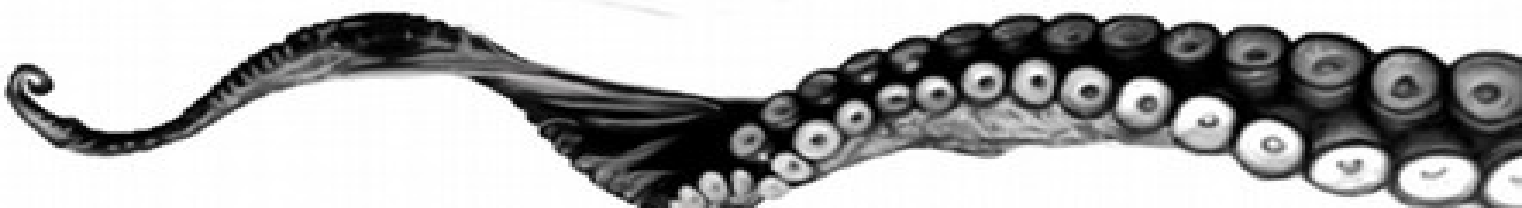
space can take a month or two.

Aspects: FTL
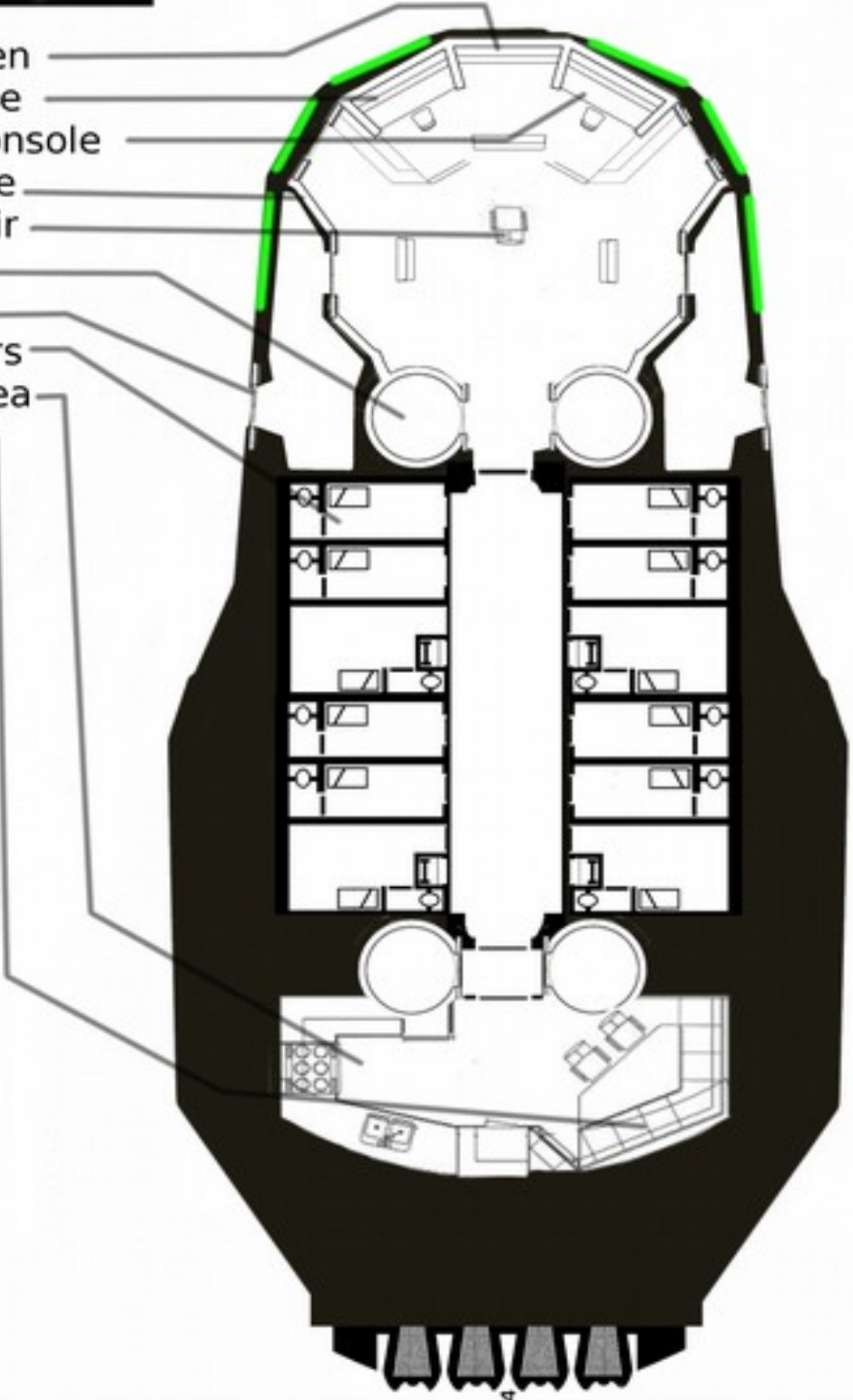**Skills:** (representing the ship's AI)
Good (+3) Notice
Fair (+2) Shoot, Pilot

FTL
'Fast Ship'

Deck 1

Main Viewscreen
Science Console
Engineering Console
Tactical Console
Command Chair
Elevator
Airlock
Private Quarters
Sustenance Area
Rest Area

Space Stations

These may be ring-shaped, with a dock for space ships at the centre of the ring, rod shaped, spherical, or even a less regular shape. Doughnut shapes with docking around the edge are also very popular.
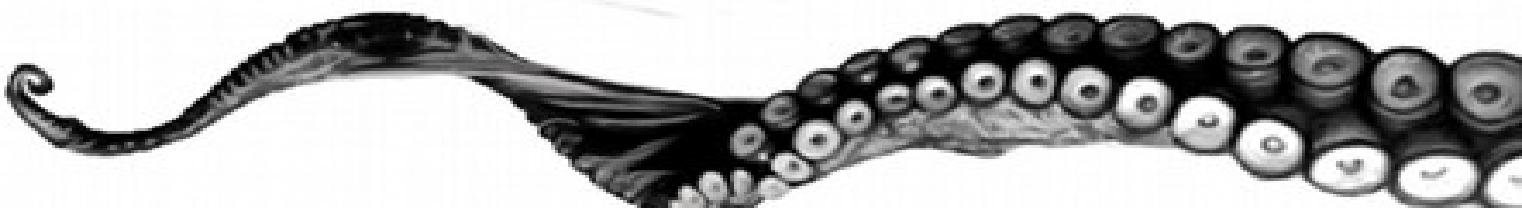
They can also be large outposts that orbit planets, are built into asteroids or float through the vastness of the interstellar medium.

Space stations can also be constructed of concrete, made from asteroid dust and comet ice, giving the space station a very architectural feel.

Space stations are only rarely equipped with engines that are of any use during combat. They simply serves as a base for other spaceships, and various other operations, such as manufacture, research and mining.

Since the decline of the Empire it is becoming more and more common to encounter deserted space stations throughout former human space.

These have been left without maintenance, without upgrades to their AIs, and can be very dangerous places indeed. Some have even be taken over by cultists and Mythos monsters for use in their nefarious schemes and mayhem.

Robots

Robots range from affordable helpers that can easily be purchased by a starting character, to huge machines that would require a loan or other financing to purchase.

Many planets are now populated primarily by robots, who outnumber their human masters. They were once required in much greater numbers, but are now another sad reminder of the state which the Empire has fallen to.

Some humans feel this very personally, and it is not unusual to find entire complexes on the surface of a planet where robots have been banned, and the humans try to live a more self-sufficient life.

External Repair Droid
Skills: Fair (+2) Engineering, Average (+1) Athletics and Pilot
This friendly robot is intelligent and helpful. It has four strong legs underneath with magnetic pads to grip a spaceship hull, and two tentacle tool arms mounted on its head to do repairs.
Skills 35% (engineering 60%) Robustness 1

Guard Drone
Skills: Fair (+2) Shoot, Average (+1) Athletics and Shields
A guard drone is a robot that is sophisticated, but has less than full AI. It is tasked with guarding its owner from threats. They often take the form of a small metal globe that floats unobtrusively near the person being protected.

Messenger Droid
Skills: Average (+1) Athletics
This droid is built for speed, but does not have a grav engine. Instead it runs elegantly on its oversize legs.

ADVANCEMENT

Your characters aren't going to remain static through the entire campaign. As their stories play out, they'll have the chance to grow and change, sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse, in response to the events that happen in play.

Character advancement in Fate comes in one of two flavours: either you can change something on your sheet to something else that's equivalent, or you can add new things to your sheet. The opportunities you get to do this are collectively called milestones.

Milestones

A milestone is a moment during the game where you have the chance to change or advance your character, often the end of a session, the end of a scenario, and the end of a story arc, respectively.

Minor Milestones

Minor milestones usually occur at the end of a session of play. It is more about changing your character rather than making him or her more powerful, about adjusting in response to whatever is going on in the story. Sometimes it won't really make sense to take advantage of a minor milestone, but you always have the opportunity if you should need to.

During a minor milestone, you can choose to do one (and only one) of the following:

Switch the rank values of any two skills, or replace one Average (+1) skill with one that isn't on your sheet.
Change any single stunt for another stunt.
Purchase a new stunt, provided you have the refresh to do so. (Remember, you can't go below 1 refresh.)
Rename one character aspect that isn't your high concept.

In addition, you can also rename any moderate consequences you have, so that you can start them on the road to recovery, presuming you have not already done so. You should be able to justify the change you're making in terms of the game's story.

Significant Milestones

Significant milestones usually occur at the end of a scenario or at the end of two or three sessions. Significant milestones are about learning new things. In addition to the benefit of a minor milestone, you also gain both of the following:

One additional skill point, which you can spend to buy a new skill at Average (+1) or increase an existing skill by one rank.
If you have any severe consequences, you can rename them to begin the recovery
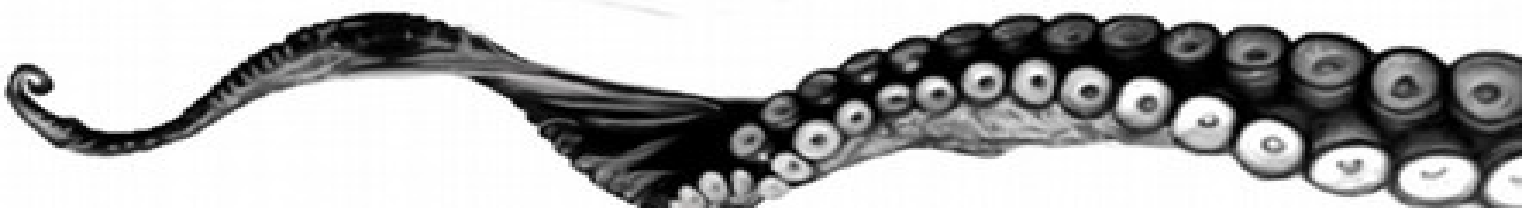
process, if you haven't already.

When you spend your skill point, it's worth one step on the ladder. You can use it to buy a new skill at Average (+1), or you can use it to increase an existing skill by one step on the ladder—say, from Good (+3) to Great (+4).

Skill Columns
During character creation, you organized your skills into a pyramid. You don't have to stick to that for character advancement.

However, there's still a limitation you have to deal with, skill columns. This means you can't have more skills at a certain rank than you have at the rank below it. So if you have three Good columns, you have at least three Average (+1) skills and at least three Fair (+2) skills to support your three Good (+3) skills.

Major Milestones

A major milestone should only occur when something happens in the campaign that shakes it up a lot—the end of a story arc (or around three scenarios), the death of a main NPC villain, or any other large-scale change that reverberates around your game world. Achieving a major milestone confers the benefits of a significant milestone and a minor milestone, and all of the following additional options:

Take an additional point of refresh, which allows you to immediately buy a new stunt or keep it in order to give yourself more fate points at the beginning of a session.

Reaching a major milestone is a pretty big deal. Characters with more stunts are going to have a diverse range of bonuses, making their skills much more effective by default. Characters with higher refresh will have a much larger fountain of fate points to work with when sessions begin, which means they'll be less reliant on compels for a while.

Sharing the Load

As the characters learn more about the Cthulhu Mythos it is possible that they may become regular travellers to the dreamlands, the ancient past, the far future and other dimensions. This is an opportunity to share the game moderator duties. One player could be the game moderator responsible for present-day Earth adventures, another for the Dream Worlds etc.

The Role of Combat

In a game where PCs are facing Mythos creatures, combat should usually not be the first choice and players will need to do more role playing than in more adventure orientated games.

But, if the players decide to go toe-to-toe with cosmic beings and attempt to duke it out, you should let the dice fall where they may. The Mythos is about the insignificance of humanity in the greater scheme of things.

If done well, combat doesn't take long. Try not to insist that every fight must last until every NPC has taken 3 consequences. This should only happen in important fights with main NPCs.

This is because it drains PC resources and the combats end up taking up a lot of valuable game time. If every fight is a struggle to the death every time, it's going to drag. Sane opponents will not normally fight to the death - they'll try to run away or surrender long before that. Even fanatical cultists will be calculating their worth to the cause if they live to fight another day. They will be more than willing to make an escape if they think it is the logical thing to do.

Fate points also have a huge influence on how dangerous, or not, combat is. If you keep the characters low on fate points, they become much more vulnerable to having combats go against them and not have anything to do about it.

This encourages characters to concede conflicts and ending up having to run from encounter after encounter. There is nothing wrong with this, and it is actually a good way of making things more Mythos like.

A much better way of punishing characters than killing them is to advance them along the madness track, towards total gibbering insanity.

The people doing most of the falling down dead should be the players' NPC allies. Send a skilled and trusted NPC to scout ahead and have the PCs encounter them all shrivelled up in a pool of strange coloured goo.

Scenario Ideas

One of the disadvantages of games in a Mythos universe is that you can't just send them
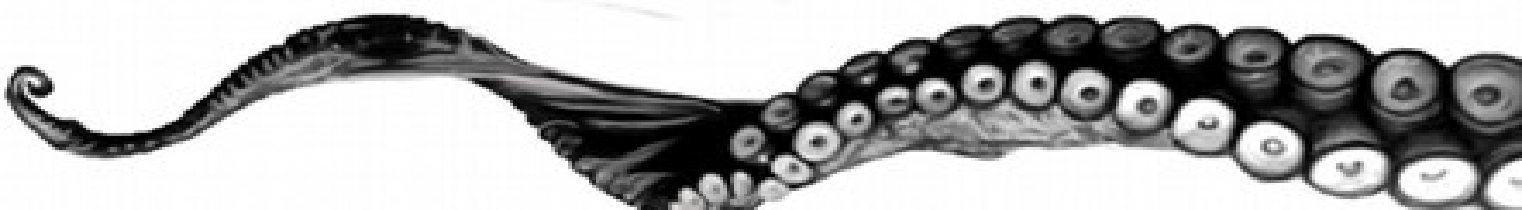
down a dungeon full of monsters and expect them to survive. Most Mythos creatures are tougher than humans and this is an easy way to get all the PCs killed.

The GM has to spend some extra time trying to come up with ideas that will allow the players to interact with monsters, but also be able to run and hide when they inevitably get into deep trouble. A few plot ideas follow to help you come up with challenging situations for your players.

Dangerous Ground

The PCs stop for the night and their Mythos Lore allows them to notice something not quite right about the local population. Perhaps they notice the pale scaly skin and slit mouths of the Deep Ones, who they know are always up to no good.

Captive Audience

The players ate on a Fast Ship when it is hijacked by cultists. The cultists want to use their vehicle full of sacrificial victims to summon something truly awful. The vehicle will make planetfall and crash and burn, after the ceremony, which will hide all evidence.

Mythos Menace

The PCs must capture or kill a Mythos creature that is terrorising a local community. The innocent fools of the local law enforcement think they have a prolific serial killer on their hands, but the characters know better.

Rip in Space and Time

A portal has been opened that connects to another planet, or perhaps a whole other dimension. The PCs must deal with the incoming monsters and close the portal, before the whole planet is overrun.

Investigating the Ruins

Recently, an entire remote town or scientific facility has been demolished and all life has been eradicated from it. The PCs aren't the first on the scene, but they might be the first who have a chance of working out what happened.

Missing Memories

One of the characters has been periodically hosting a Yithian. The Yithian has been conducting its own peculiar research projects, using the PCs body, and this has been causing misunderstandings. Especially when the character is caught breaking into a high-security government facility.
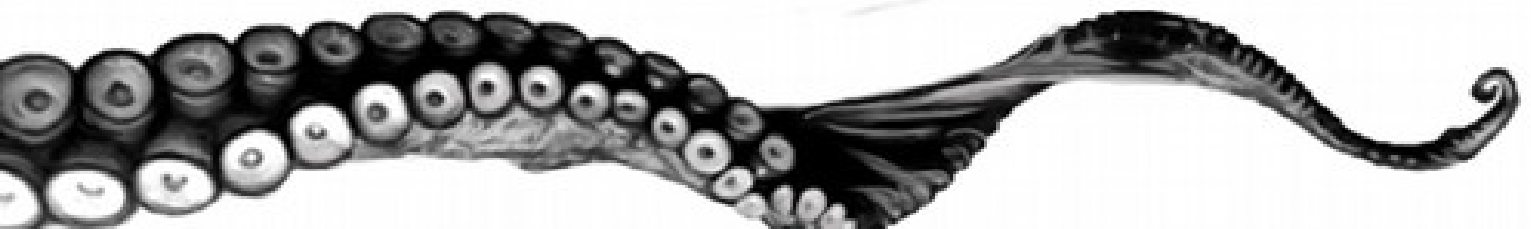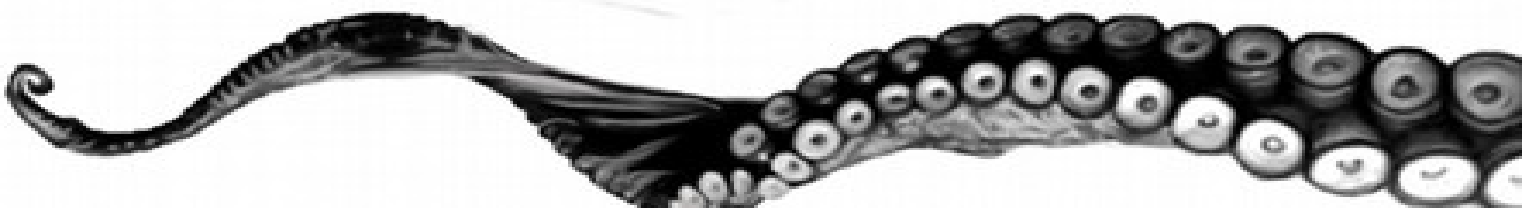
Extortionate Sorcerer

A sorcerer gains some useful bit of knowledge about one of the PCs and uses it make the
PC do their bidding, at least until the PC can locate the sorcerer and deal with them.
This can be almost anything, bought from some monster that managed to infiltrate the
character's dreams and find secrets they have never shared with anyone.
The details of this life destroying secret can be worked out between player and GM.

Missing Person

The PCs realise the Mythos connection behind the abduction of a local businessperson or
politician. They may offer to help the family find their loved one, or they may have to work
in private.

Breaking and Entering

To prevent cultists the PCs must gain a counter charm. They must break into a secure cult
location in an exotic place to retrieve it.

CTHULHU in SPACE

POWERED BY FATE

Name

Description

Refresh

Aspects

Backstory

Gear

Skills

Superb (+5)

Great (+4)

Good (+3)

Fair (+2)

Average (+1)

Stunts

Physical Stress

Mental Stress

Consequences

2

4

6

12

Starbright