TIL DAWN

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TIL DAWN

A WORLD OF ADVENTURE FOR

+FATE™
CORE SYSTEM

This is a game where people make up stories about wonderful, terrible,
impossible, glorious things. All the characters and events portrayed in this work
are fictional. Any resemblance to real people, cyborgs, drag queens, dragborgs,
borgqueens, or queen DJs is purely coincidental, but kinda hilarious.

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This is it. The chance of a lifetime for aspiring DJs all over the world. Only a select few squads get into the Planet's Next DJ Supersquad World Tour, which means just the best of the best, baby. This elite event is broadcast live all over the world, and the stakes are mega high. These DJ squads are about to get famous. After this, people everywhere will adore them and the multimedia sensory experiences they create.

All they have to do is survive the tour. This festival, broadcast for all to see, is infamous for its drama, and not just about the performance. Everything about these artists—who they are, how they identify, who they're dating, what their intimate past was—will be exposed like the electric insides of their cybernetic skins for the entire world to see. The interactive musical environments these DJs create all come from the heightened emotional states they tap into and share with their fans. It's easy to fall in love a hundred times a day when emotions are that raw, and for some DJs, this just makes their creations even better.

INTRODUCTION

Til Dawn focuses on exploring romance and queerness at an emotionally charged music festival. By performing emotions and body transformation by wearing various robotic and cybernetic DJ suits called **skins**, players can experiment with gender presentation and see how it affects both public and private relationships.

A huge inspiration for this Fate World of Adventure is *RuPaul's Drag Race*. Drag is a super visible pop-culture representation of how to queer our public performance of gender, both in attitude and dress. Another one is *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*, because much of the combat is social and metaphorically represented in DJ battles on stage. *Til Dawn* is basically a cross between the two!

Each player will create their own DJ, complete with a unique style, feelings, and approaches, and collectively they'll make up a DJ squad, a band working together to win the competition! Each session, squads will go up against each other in a battle of music. Individuality is important, but so is supporting your squad! The PCs can totally go against each other in this environment—even though the characters in the squad have got to stick together, their emotional reactions to each other can be extreme.

Til Dawn takes place about a hundred years in the future! Thankfully, trends come back around, and what is trendy now is of course trendy again a hundred years from now. If players are having trouble describing weird future styles off the cuff, it's real easy to just combine a few styles of the twenty-teens and voila: future media sensation.

The conflict in this setting has two speeds: social and musical. There is no physical combat! The "enemies" you'll go up against will mostly be media reps and other DJ squads. Prepare to enter a futuristic world of shade-throwing and music battles!

Media in 2121

Visual media in the year 2121 is far more expansive and inclusive than in the past. People are open and hungry for new experiences and new cultures, and want to learn how they can blend and merge rather than divide and conflict. They consume media so they can connect with others all over the world. Small, independent creators can share their unique voices, and anyone can access them. Lots of simple media sharing is completely free, shifting people's consumption from big media to the brands that people create out of their personalities and products.

Popular media often uses newer tech trends in video and sound. Projection mapping and neon are back in style, and retro 21st-century renaissance is a hot new thing. People are trying to create new hyperreal environments that seamlessly blend digital environments and real environments. Much of the new visual art makes use of the simulacrum: how can people make something out of an unexpected material and have it resemble something else?

The fusion of sensory experiences is also hot. Designers seek to create entertainment that enhances multiple senses at once or creates a feeling of synesthesia. Of all the tech out there that can create these experiences, the best are the DJ skins, which is what's making music festivals with DJ squads so popular. People want to be overwhelmed with feelings, but without needing some chemically altering substance.

Almost everyone has access to many tools to share social experiences through video, pictures, audio recordings, and virtual-reality mods. Especially with the popularity of hyperreality—virtual reality or video projections that seem real but are not—people love to push their technology to ultrapersonalized extremes, creating their own home environments and decorations, altering their fashion accessories and clothing, and making companions—animal, robot, or fantastical, but not human—that are incredibly lifelike. These illusions have generally been accepted as part of the design landscape.

Entertainment and news media have changed drastically as people have continued sharing their own stories. Often, media reporting groups are simply collectives of individuals with similar taste and style who gather funding to support their message and stories. Most movies are no longer created by big-budget studios in Hollywood. Now, most people have created their own elaborate films just by using handheld devices, which can do all things that movie cameras could do at the turn of the 21st century. The internet still exists, but it's much more complex and far more wireless, and almost everyone uses it daily, since it can be accessed even by the poorest in the world.

Music Styles

Music is all over the place, ever since the tools became more accessible in the 21st century. Anyone with some determination can put together some tunes. So there are many, many creators putting their stuff out there. Music can gain popularity through so many venues and is accessible to most humans, so basically there's just a lot of it. Record labels no longer exist as gatekeepers, either, so more marginalized voices can be heard. Despite this, power imbalances still exist—the oversaturated market makes it more difficult to connect artists with their audiences, so music festivals are still one of the best ways of getting out there.

Lots of music is still made unplugged, but the most popular stuff is all electronic and vocal. Much electronic music comes from natural sounds, but distorted and mixed to sound either very artificial or hyperreal. Many past genres of music still exist, but they've exploded and transformed. Like the memes and meta-context present in much pop media at the turn of the 21st century, music now contains multiple levels of inside information, imagery, and agenda—references upon references that cater to very specific audiences who can understand the code. Many of these ideas start small and grow until they become abstract symbols for a concept or a feeling.

The trendiest stuff are the multimedia experiences that our DJs specialize in. Music is no longer *just* sound—it's the festival, the culture, the fashion, the affinity groups who listen to it, and the visuals associated with all this. It's now a multisensory experience in ways that only new, pervasive technology can allow for. Music is a multitude.

DJ Skins

DJ skins are cybernetic suits designed to creature transmedia sensory experiences. They're part fashion, part technology, and all style, baby.

In the past, DJs created the visual and musical experiences of their concerts by using turntables, acoustic and electronic instruments, sound boards, live vocals, prerecorded sounds, computers, samples, speakers, video, and other stage effects. Over the years, all of this equipment got replaced with smaller and more ubiquitous technology. Combo tools that were easier to carry around and connect became popular, as did ambient sound devices and drone speakers, which could be very close to everyone in the venue at once, letting DJs project sound without giant speakers.

With the recent invention of DJ skins, though, the artist no longer needs all of this separate equipment. Now it's all contained within a wearable and articulated piece of cybernetics. Skins are completely customizable in size and design—anything from a praying mantis molded out of foam-like fabric to a robotic mech made of hard plastic. From this suit the DJ can emit sound, project video, and mix digital samples. Some use gesture technology to activate sounds and images, others use an elaborate set of props, and still others have collections of buttons programmed to do different things. They're called skins because, to DJs, they are like a second skin.

A skin's look often reflects the style of music and experience the DJ creates. They vary from pop-culture references to wild high fashion to things that just look alien for the sake of being weird. Skins are not only tools the DJs can use to create things, but also ways to modify their bodies. Arms can be extended by wearing skins designed as realistic prosthetics, for example. Some DJs embrace the tech style of the skins and go for looks that are very human–machine hybrids. Others use the technology to create things you might see in nature.

The materials used to create the skins allow for nearly limitless possibilities. They just have to fit a human body and can't really be bigger than ten feet. Every skin is designed for the DJ who will wear it, and sometimes famous DJ squads even have designers help to build newer and wilder looks.

The final thing that skins can do is evoke feelings the way molly and acid used to. People can still do drugs at concerts if they want to, but why do that when skins can emit emotion- and sensation-altering brain stimulations? The science is a little beyond most DJs, but, more or less, the stimulation hits the neurochemical spots in the brain that push different emotions and boom, that sensation can be transmitted to the audience through the receptor they plug into the base of their skull. Concert attendees can opt in or out of the specific experiences they're looking for based on the settings of their neuroreceptors. It's a much safer way to experience heightened feelings without needing to ingest herbs or chemicals.

Gender, Race, and Ability in 2121

The world has become much more inclusive of gender, race, and ability, but many people still hold onto conservative values. Among the DJs and performers on the circuit there's a broad spectrum of people and of gender and sexual expression—and the more experimental, often the better. Even among these weirdos, though, there's traditionalists who shy away from the newer, weirder forms of expression and inclusion.

Here's a few popular subcultures, but this list is by no means exhaustive.

- **Traditionalists:** They believe mostly in the gender binary, but very much welcome any expression of it, including trans expressions.
- **Genderfucks:** They want to push gender boundaries in every possible loud way.
- **Body Worshippers:** They are open to gender expressions outside the binary, and they want to look as "natural" as possible in their body construction to a particular gender expression, without many modifications.
- **Cyborgs:** They use machines and modifications to express gender in ways that were technologically impossible in the past.
- **Artists:** They are creating new looks that have never been associated with gender, things that look transhuman or alien in nature.

There are many more blended races now, and it's especially accepted to be of many different racial and cultural backgrounds. Most people value the intermingling of different backgrounds far more than the history and traditions of just one. The more complicated your past, the better! People often have many different racial features indicated in their skin tone, build, and facial structures, and these are modifiable too! Although it's still taboo to appropriate other people's racial identities in total, it's rather accepted to use plastic surgery to add variety and enhance certain features or body parts.

The advent of advanced prosthetics and robotics has made wheelchairs and other archaic mobility devices obsolete, allowing people to move more freely than before. Many diseases have been cured, though many birth defects have still not been solved. Accidents still happen too, sometimes leaving people with one less limb or eye. Cybernetics can help with a lot of this, as biomechanical parts can modify the human body in ways they simply couldn't before. While many people still identify as disabled because they need the cybernetics to help them, many others move seamlessly through society without their cybernetics being noticed at all.

Baby Shine Bright

Led by various divas, groups, and individuals from all over the world, the cultural movements of the future are as complex and nuanced as the places they come from. Right now, in the year 2121, trends from one hundred years ago are super popular! All things come back around in fashion, after all.

With the popularity of meme styles, mixing and remixing sounds and images from the 2000s through the 2020s is a hot trend. Conveniently for your players, they can take current trends from music and fashion and use them in play. An easy way to make current trends futuristic is simply to combine three current genres. This way, they're familiar and a little easier for the players to describe, but the mix still makes them totally futuristic.

CHARACTER CREATION

Time to make DJs for your supersquad!

Approaches

One of the main ways *Til Dawn* defines characters is through **approaches**, adjectives that describe the different ways a character can approach a situation or problem. Every character has six approaches—Chill, Dark, Fabulous, Fierce, Shady, and Technical.

- **Chill:** A chill approach is cold. It can be physically cold or icy in demeanor. It can send a shiver of excitement or anticipation down someone's spine, or raise goosebumps in fear. Chill can also be relaxed or cool.
- **Dark:** A dark approach is heavy with emo goth and punk aesthetics. It could be sad, angry, or brooding. It's full of shadows, vampires, and dark feelings. It could also be manipulative or, literally, under the cover of darkness.
- **Fabulous:** A fabulous approach is when you wanna look or behave or project absolute fabulousness. A fabulous hair toss. A fabulous hip sway. A fabulous beat drop. It's got flair, grabs attention, and is in some way completely extra.
- **Fierce:** A fierce approach is something a queen would have. Regal presence, like a diva or like the claws of a wild animal. Something so gorgeous it's awe-inspiring, with a sense of danger to it.
- **Shady:** A shady approach is full of insults. To be shady is to be critical or blunt about something that is obvious about someone else, in a kind of insulting or sarcastic way. It can also be funny or cute.
- **Technical:** A technical approach is all about the details. It's about applying knowledge to action. It's precision. An acute technological process. Something that is known within that art to be by the book.

You may notice that these all describe *how* a character does something, rather than *what* they're doing. That's intentional. Emotions and moods the swirling maelstrom of your character's life in *Til Dawn*. Whatever it is you're doing, you'll describe it through the lens of one of these six approaches.

So your first instinct is probably to pick the action that gives you the greatest bonus, right? But it doesn't work like that. Your approach will depend on how you describe your action, and you can't describe an action that doesn't make any sense. Would you Fabulously sneak past a knot of ravenous fans, hoping to avoid notice and get to your waiting car? No, that's being Dark. Would you Technically shut down a hater with a snide remark? No, that's being Shady. Circumstances constrain which approaches you can use, so sometimes you'll have to go with one that doesn't play to your strengths.

Ranking Your Approaches

When you make a character, choose one approach at Good (+3), two at Fair (+2), two at Average (+1), and one at Mediocre (+0). Your character's approaches will help you roleplay them, too—someone absolutely Fabulous will act very differently from someone more Dark.

Whenever you take an action in play, describe what you're doing, then choose the approach that best matches your description. Add that approach's bonus to your dice roll to determine how well your character performs the action you described.

Aspects

This game has lots of aspects! It's part of the fun, using as many descriptors for actions, sounds, and fashion as possible. It feels kinda frenetic, music in motion, like futuristic lingo. Feel free to use them wildly.

Characters in *Til Dawn* don't have a high concept or trouble. Instead, they start with these aspects:

- Your **performance**
- Your **relationships** with the other PCs
- Your **culture**
- Your **creativity**

When creating aspects, use the prompting questions in the following sections as a guide! You can look at these questions as you're trying to come up with meaningful aspects that tie into the setting and scenario.

GMs, printing out a few of these question lists will be helpful, so everyone can look at them simultaneously. Alternatively, the player can take turns asking each other these questions to prompt a conversation at the table. This is great for brainstorming if someone is slow or stuck or needs some extra inspiration.

Performance

Your character has a burning desire to perform and compete in the Planet's Next DJ Supersquad World Tour, and this drive says something unique about them.

- Why is it important that you compete?
- What usually prevents you from performing well?
- How does your performance epitomize your personality?
- Who do you owe for getting here?
- What kind of performer are you?
- Why do you love performing?
- What do you love about the audience?
- Why do you want to be famous?

Examples: I'm the Best and I'll Prove It; My Beetle Skin Is Who I Really Am; They're Gonna Know My Name; My Mom Will Love Me If I'm Famous; Performing Validates My Trans Identity

Relationships

Create a relationship with each other PC, and write down an aspect representing it. Talk to their player to come up with something that's satisfying for both of you. It doesn't have to be a positive relationship, or even a mutual one, but you can't impose something that makes their player uncomfortable.

- Who did you hook up with last week?
- Who do you have a secret crush on?
- Who do you wish would notice you?
- Who do you idolize?
- Who is like a younger sibling to you?
- Who do you wish you were?
- Who are you so done with?

Examples: Smooching Red on the DL; Shiva Makes My Heart Skip a Beat; TomBoye Is Such a Talented Dancer; Galadriel Can Miss Me with His Drama Bullshit

Culture

Every character comes from somewhere. Wherever yours is from, their origin informs their personality and their art.

- Were you considered "normal" in the city you grew up in?
- What types of people are you attracted to?
- How did being part of a minority group affect you?
- Did you have a lot of money?
- Do you love food? What kind?!
- Do you still wear fashion from your hometown?
- Are you proud of where you're from?

Examples: I Don't Belong in My Hometown; Curries Remind Me of Home; In It for My Family; Bling Just Like Harlem

Creativity

What is important about your character's music, style, and performance?

- What's so important about expressing yourself in different skins?
- What styles really inspire you?
- What music do you derive a lot of your sounds from?
- Where do you create a lot of your music?
- What contemporary musician (to the player) are you like?
- How is your music like your identity?

Examples: My Long Tentacle Arms Give Me Life; Glitter on Everything; Trip Hop or Die; Lady Gaga but Hindu

Squad Name

Once you've made some characters, come up with a DJ squad name! What do y'all call yourselves? What's your theme? What's your squad style, even though most of you have individual styles too?

For the squad style, think Kiss, or Gorillaz, or the Bangles, or Tribe Called Quest, or Shonen Knife. Have an overarching style, but don't all wear exactly the same thing. That would be gauche.

DJ Skins

During performances, your characters will wear various outfits called **skins**. Imagine the amazing costumes that idols and performers wear on stage now, but, like, robotic and futuristic and emitting emotional, sensational musical video arrays. They can be as simple or outrageous as desired—they could be pants, or they could be a ten-foot-tall rainbow-colored carapace with ten extra functioning bug arms. Ten feet is the maximum size, by the way, DJs.

Each character gets three skins, each represented by an aspect. The first skin is a **squad skin**, which embodies your squad's look and is shared by all the PCs. The other two skins, though, are unique to each performer and may be wildly different.

Here's an easy way to make a skin aspect: choose a **look**, a **media style**, and an **emotion** and combine them into something more. For example, you might combine "Dark," "Complex," and "Bliss" into MIDNIGHT OF BLISSFUL COMPLEXITY or THE COMPLEX EXPERIENCE OF DARKNESS AND BLISS. Or you might take "Sexy," "Chill," and "Hope" and write down SEXY CHILL TONES OF HOPE.

Check out the lists below if you need inspiration, but you can even come up with your own custom skin aspects. Also, feel free to name your skins!

Look

What does your skin look like?

- Goth
- Colorful
- Dangerous
- Playful
- Sexy
- Outrageous
- Kitschy

Media Style

What types of sound, light, and video does your skin create?

- Loud
- Soft
- Complex
- Scratchy
- Hard
- Erratic
- Smooth
- Vibey
- Mellow

Emotion

What emotions does your skin transmit?

- Melancholy
- Hope
- Rage
- Longing
- Excitement
- Confidence
- Bliss
- Lust
- Safety
- Hostility
- Spite

Consequences

Even though *Til Dawn* isn't a game about violent conflicts, there's still plenty of conflict in the characters' lives, and more-than-ample opportunities for people to get hurt—if not physically, then in *every other way imaginable*.

Characters have three consequences—one mild, one moderate, and one severe—but **no stress tracks**. When something bad happens to a character in *Til Dawn*, they *feel it*. It sticks with them. Every lost roll in a conflict changes them and their story.

DJ Skin Consequences

DJ skins have consequences too: one mild and one moderate. When you're attacked in a DJ battle, you can take the hit with your DJ skin instead of you. Your DJ skin is tied into your emotions, though, so when you start to lose confidence, your skin will begin to malfunction. Parts of the skin might break, or it might become duller and less impressive.

Also, once a skin is dead on stage, it's dead for the rest of the fight, gorgeous.

Recovering skin consequences is much like recovering normal ones. Mild skin consequences clear at the end of a DJ battle—it's just a minor repair, after all—but the moderate skin consequences require a Great (+4) recovery roll, though if you succeed you don't need to wait until the end of the next session.

Stunts and Refresh

Characters start with three free stunts and a refresh of 3.

If you want to make your own stunts in *Til Dawn*, make sure they heighten the emotional, cultural, and performative themes! Stunts that hook into DJ battles and social interactions create the coolest and most interactive outcomes.
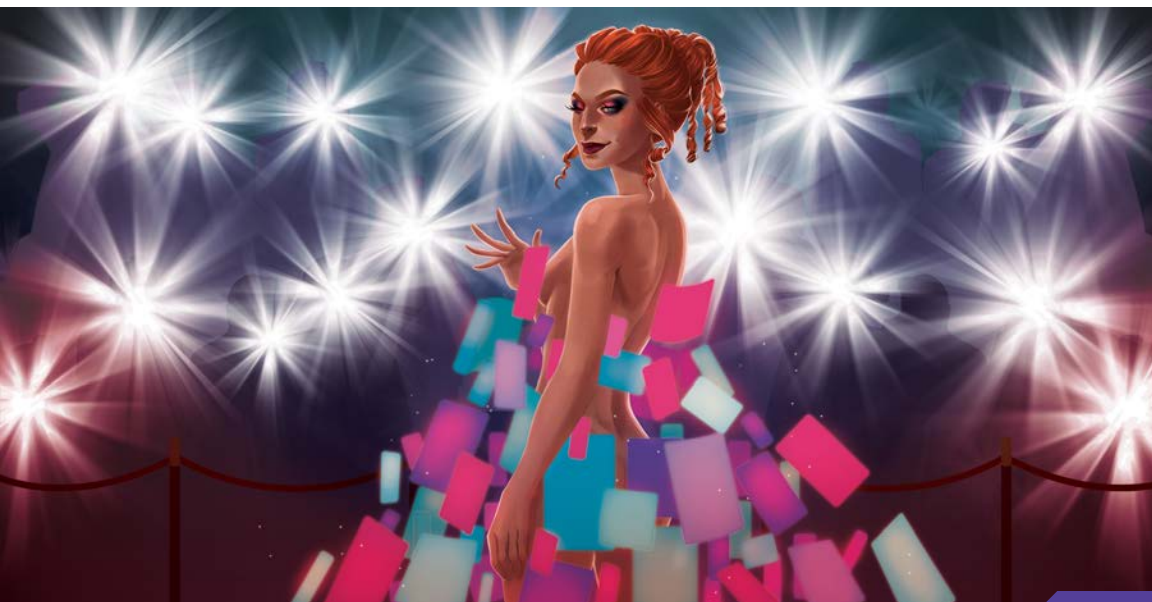
Example Stunts

Brood Master: You're excellent at making a show of brooding if someone's hurt your feelings or you didn't get what you want. When you use Dark to create a situation aspect related to your sullen mood, you can use a free invocation to make an NPC feel sorry for you and help you get what you want, as long as it doesn't put them in a tight spot.

Claws: You literally have animal claw implants that extend or retract depending on your mood. When you successfully defend with Fierce by "getting your claws out" and showing disdain for your attacker, you can spend a fate point to immediately deal a 2-shift hit to them.

Commanding Presence: People know to make way for the queen when you're around. When you walk through a crowd, you can spend a fate point to make any NPC DJs in the scene roll to overcome with Chill against a difficulty equal to your Fierce rating. For each NPC DJ who fails this roll, you get a boost that goes away at the end of the scene.

Detail-Oriented: It's the small things you tend to notice more than anyone else does. Is something missing or out of place, or is someone acting weird? When you enter a new place and take a quick look around, you can roll to create an advantage with Technical against Good (+3) opposition. You can spend the free invocation on this aspect to make the GM reveal one aspect about someone or something (such as the venue) in this scene.

De-escalation: If things are getting heated, you have a few techniques to calm people down. When you roll overcome using Chill to pacify someone and succeed, you can suppress one of their aspects, consequences, or conditions until the end of the scene.

Diva Heart: No matter what you do, you've got the heart of a diva beating in your chest, and sometimes you use that for good. Once per session, when you stand up for someone, you can roll Fabulous without spending an action to try to remove a condition from your relationship with them.

Epic Gown: There's just something about this outfit that's so original and amazing it blows people's minds. Once per session, you can create an advantage using Fierce to represent your fashion ensemble. Until the end of the scene, you can use a free invocation on the resulting aspect to either shut down a hostile NPC—they can't even approach you, you're looking so fierce—or utterly win over a non-hostile NPC—you're so fierce they can't keep away.

Flirty Bitch: When you create an advantage with Shady while flirting with the object of someone else's affection, you can invoke the resulting situation aspect to create trouble between them. This essentially takes them out of the scene while they argue with one another. When the scene ends, you can spend a fate point to keep both the situation aspect and their argument around. Otherwise, they make up when the scene ends and the situation aspect goes away.

Goth God: A dark soul lies deep in your heart and in the shiny black things you wear on stage. When you win an exchange in a DJ battle using Dark, you get a boost on top of whatever else your roll gets you.

History Buff: You know the ins and outs of music, performance, and DJ skin technology. Once per session, you can recite one fact about the history of any of these things and it becomes true! When you do, write down an aspect with a free invocation to represent your technical knowledge on the topic.

Ice Queen: You're cold. Ice cold. It takes a lot to get inside that castle wall around your heart and actually hurt your feelings. When you create a situation aspect related to your emotional unavailability, you get +1 to defend yourself against criticisms, provocations, or even attempts to get closer to you as long as that aspect remains in play.

Is That Gucci? You've got designer style, and it's so front-and-center the bling can be seen from the moon. Get +2 whenever you Fabulously create an advantage by showing off your fancy pants.

Laid Back to the Max: You're so chill, not much upsets you. When you're in an argument with someone and concede, you get an extra fate point.

Let's Dance: While dancing, you can get a read on someone's feelings through their physical cues. When you create an advantage while dancing with someone, you can force them to defend against your attempt with the same approach you're using.

Robotic: There's something very robotic about you. You really identify with all the technology, your emotions are somewhat rote much of the time, and you have a pretty strict routine. When someone attacks you or creates an advantage against you, you get +2 to Technically defend against it, as long as they're not using Technical as well.

Super Cool: You're so cool, you've got a fan club. When you Fabulously create an advantage by talking to your fan club, get +2 to your roll.

Super Sly: You're real observant and can easily hang around people talking without them noticing. When you Shadily listen in on a friend's convo to create an advantage, you can create *two* aspects, one about your friend and one about someone else in the conversation. You don't get any extra free invocations, though—you have to distribute the ones you earn between the two aspects. If you succeed with style, you can give one free invocation to each aspect or give both invocations to one aspect.

Throw Down: You're known for your cutting, hilarious insults, especially when you can make it personal. When you Shadily attack, invoking one of the defender's aspects gives you a +3 bonus instead of +2.

Tease: You use your big dark emo puppy eyes to flirt and attract attention. Whenever you're flirting with someone but turn them down, you immediately learn one of their aspects and get a free invocation of it.

Vid Beetle: Your beetle DJ skin is the best interactive vid enhancer on the market. Once per DJ battle, you can invoke its aspect for free.

CREATING STORIES

Stories in *Til Dawn* focus on social conflict, culture reflected through music, and performance, identity, and relationships! When thinking about how to create this setting, GMs, it can help to answer some questions about these themes:

- What is the nature of the characters' social conflict?
- How does this social conflict highlight something important about the character's identity?
- How does the music set they're playing affect the audience and touch on some key points in their culture at that moment?
- What relationship brings out the best and the worst in the character, and how can you encourage that?

If you're asking yourself these questions whenever the characters act, or whenever you create a new NPC, you'll be a golden child.

Throughout the rest of this chapter, we'll give various ways to help you tell *Til Dawn* stories full of emotion, drama, and culture.

Relationships and Conditions

Til Dawn features a lot of drama about relationships among people. Each PC has a relationship with every other PC, and the health and well-being of each relationship is represented by three **conditions**.

Conditions are prenamed aspects with a negative tinge. The more conditions a relationship has, the worse it is. The three relationship conditions are Awkward, Strained, and Not Speaking.

How does a relationship get a condition? If you ask the other person for a favor. It's got to feel pretty meaningful, though. "Hand me the hot sauce" doesn't count. "Can I borrow your new fav dress?" does. "I need to pretend we're not together so I can impress this cool guy" *really* does.

You're probably thinking, "Well, can't I just have my character say 'yes' when a friend asks me for a favor?" Absolutely you can, but there's no *drama* in that, and drama's kind of a big deal in *Til Dawn* (by which we mean it's the *biggest* deal).

The Big Ask

For this explanation, we'll call the character doing the asking the "asker" and the person they're asking the favor of the "friend." The friend gets a fate point from the GM just for hearing you out.

First, the asker's player describes *how* they're asking, then rolls to overcome with the most relevant approach. The difficulty of this roll starts at Mediocre (+0), but it can increase in a few ways.

- **Add +1 if the friend's matching approach has a different rating from yours.** Some fundamental differences between your personalities make it a little harder to get your point across. For example, if you're being Technical and your Technical rating is Good (+3) while your friend's is Average (+1) (or vice versa), you'd add +1 to the difficulty.

- **If the relationship already has any conditions,** increase the difficulty by 1 if it's Awkward, by 2 if it's Strained, and by 4 if you're Not Speaking. These are *cumulative*, so if it's Awkward and Strained, bump up the difficulty by +3.

- **Add +2 per aspect on the friend that might make granting this favor more unlikely.** Your request just rubs them the wrong way, and they'll have to overcome some intrinsic part of themself to go along with it. For example, if they have the aspect No One Upstages Me, your gentle request to let *you* take their solo tonight probably won't go over well.

Using Conditions

If your roll fails, you can give the relationship one or more conditions to grant a bonus to your roll as follows:

- Taking Awkward gives you +1 to your roll.
- Taking Strained gives you +2 to your roll.
- Taking Not Speaking gives you +4 to your roll.

You can also spend fate points to invoke aspects, as normal.

Like we said earlier, conditions are aspects, so they can be invoked and compelled against you—either of you. A creative GM could certainly find ways to invoke or compel them against *other* characters, as well. Every web of friendships gets a little wonky when a strand breaks, after all.

Aspects are always true, so be sure to reflect relationship conditions in the story, too. Play it up! If you're Not Speaking with someone, you're *not speaking*. "Gem, would you please tell Rainbow to clean up after herself if she's going to eat in my car? Thanks."

Removing Conditions

How can you mend an ailing relationship? Depends on how bad things are.

Awkward goes away when the two of you have a few minutes to talk about it, in character.

Strained sticks around until the two of you have a lengthy talk about it, at least partially in character. After you do, downgrade it to Awkward. If you're already Awkward, you can't downgrade Strained.

Not Speaking takes more significant effort. Because you're not speaking, you can't just talk it out. You'll probably have to communicate through intermediaries and feel each other out for a while. Even then, the eventual conversation between you two is likely to be a tough one. Whoever approaches the other first, you'll have to roll using an appropriate approach. Set the difficulty of this roll as if you were asking a favor—because in some ways, you are. If things are also Awkward and Strained, this roll will be very difficult indeed!

- If you succeed, downgrade Not Speaking to Strained, or downgrade it to Awkward if you're already Strained. If you're Strained *and* Awkward already, just remove Not Talking.
- If you fail, you're still Not Speaking—but the next time either of you tries to patch things up, you get a +2 to your roll. This bonus increases by +2 per extra attempt, so on the third attempt it's a +4, on the fourth it's a +6, etc. You'll get there eventually!

Whenever a relationship condition is downgraded or removed, both characters in the relationship get a fate point. Things are normal again, and your friendship is stronger than ever!

DJ Battles and Relationship Conditions

Sometimes your relationship with a friend can be strained by a shaky performance! See *"DJ Battles"* for more on how that can happen.

Focusing on Emotional Challenges

This setting doesn't have physical combat at all. *At all.* So, all of the conflict is social. Rivalries, jealousies, friendships, loves, crushes, and even just simple competition to be the best are some of the relationship conflicts that can drive the story. Conflicts between PCs are great! They're baked into the rules with relationship aspects and favors, ya know.

This drama also drives interactions with NPCs too, because it reveals weaknesses in the PCs for NPCs to poke at. Imagine your favorite reality competition show and the conflicts that those people have. Imagine an awkward family dinner, but instead of being at a table you're all on a tour bus. Remember all the tumultuous, passionate relationships you've had and the things that made them dramatic and passionate. Think of your favorite *Gilmore Girls* episode. Now, drop that on some DJ characters in the future!

You'll want to create some conflicts that can last many sessions and run through many venues, and some that will be done in one session and in one venue. Here are some ideas:

- Miscommunication
- Hidden agendas
- Jealousy
- Musical competition
- Heightened emotions
- Making something big out of something small
- Popularity contests
- Bullying
- Fallout from false media coverage
- Love triangles

Including Culture

Culture is what makes this weird futuristic world of music festivals and reality media feel more real. The more setting and surroundings the GM can include, the more the players will feel grounded in the world. We don't include an expansive description of the setting with every single object and ritual detailed. Instead, here's a trick for creating a future culture—just add about three vibrant features.

You could draw from the costume of the people on the street, the color of their skin, or what most of them are doing. Contrast what the festival-goers are wearing with what the local people the next town over are wearing. Consider the smells in the air, the flora and fauna, how flat or hilly the land is. How do the doors open here? How is it all different from the place the PCs were last session?

Some other great details you could include are everyday things like food and drink, what kinds of pets people have, and what the air smells like. You can flesh out the people who live there with broader things like how people get around the city, language barriers (even just misunderstanding accents or localisms), different neighborhoods, and what races are represented there and in what percentage. Other details about the city—like what industry flourishes there, local topography, and how the environment influences fashion—could help demonstrate what is motivating the NPCs.

Once it feels like you've got a good list of things, future it up. Add vehicles that would only exist one hundred years from now. Consider extreme weather outside of a bubble city. What future fabrics exist to enhance people's clothing, shoes, or sunglasses? What traditions stuck around from a hundred years previous?

Think about these in each area, and the GM can make a list of things that might be fun or compelling to include. Things that are different and that stand out.

You can include these details when framing scenes and when the PCs visiting places outside the festival grounds or interact with locals.

Depicting Cultures

Til Dawn is a global game, emphasizing play outside of Western and US concepts, but remember to be culturally sensitive as much as you can, since you're basing places and characters on real people in the world, living their lives in real places. When roleplaying a character of a different culture or race, it's easy to fall into using tropes and stereotypes, but this won't help you gain empathy for the culture and might even alienate them further. It's difficult to make cultures—they're complex things! But don't let the complexity hold you back.

Here are some simple steps to follow when depicting cultures outside your own:

- Treat the culture with respect—do five minutes of googling to see what might be normal there. Wikipedia is a pretty good resource for demographics and brief summaries of countries and cities.
- Familiarize yourself with some common tropes—*tvtropes.com* is a good place to start!
- Don't use accents, since it's easy to exotify or make fun of people with them.

Don't be afraid to speak up if a portrayal makes you feel uncomfortable. If anyone makes a mistake, it's easy to say "Oops! Sorry!" and change the idea or detail.

Advancement

Advancement works as in *Fate Accelerated*, with milestones happening at these times:

- **Minor Milestone:** At the end of a session
- **Significant Milestone:** At the end of a venue
- **Major Milestone:** At the end of three venues

STRUCTURING SESSIONS

Romance, social conflict, and emo drama are what drive the action in *Til Dawn*. Generally, you'll want to structure a session so there's one or two encounters with big NPCs, have a few individual scenes, and then amp it with a DJ battle. The battle will metaphorically resolve the situation, even if it causes even more sadness and emo-ness. After the battle, run a debrief scene to process any emotions about what just happened.

Try to have a few big planned encounters in mind, conflicts between the squad and another group or squad. That one's easy since it's so obvious, of course they're who the PCs are going to have a conflict with because…they have to compete! The shape of that conflict can change: Maybe they're not super antagonistic until the PCs egg them on. Maybe they're friends or family that the PCs now have to go up against! The big drama that'll be the focus of the session could have one of many causes, and you'll want to make that cause a centerpoint.

Once you have a big encounter or two down, consider tinier scenes that might involve conflicts or conversations between individual PCs and NPCs. Sometimes it's great to just have the conversations or conflict arise. Their relationships can take stress and grow in these situations. Try to pace a session so that there's a bunch of emotional encounters throughout the weekend of the festival that lead up to a conflict on stage.

Think about each session as being an episode of the broadcasted show of the tour that's happening in the current venue. The episode might drift into another session, and that's okay, but this basic structure will help you frame scenes and get ideas for what could happen next.

GMs, you can use the session structure below as a tool to guide the players through the story. Use it as a guide, not a hard and fast rule! Structuring sessions in this way also gives the players a way to prepare for later scenes, since they will know what's coming, so it gives them more agency! This is great news for the GM—less work to do!

stereophonic valkyrie uncertain about future following injury last month

Scene 1: One-on-One Confessionals

A one-on-one confessional with the media takes place with a character talking to a camera privately. Players, you can get into character or monologue a bit about what your character might do or feel going into the session. The first one of these might be a little awkward as you get into your character, but that's okay! You can also call for a short confessional to express feelings at any other time during the session.

GMs, you can use a confessional to prompt the players to reveal things about their characters or highlight parts of their background that will come to light during this session.

LowRez faces the camera, without their characteristic makeup and costuming. A digital screen moves behind them, showing a fanciful image of VHS glitches and cgi clouds.

GM: "So tell the camera a quick summary about you and why you're here. Hook the audience."

LowRez's player looks over their character sheet and decides to high-light their DJ skin aspects, which boil down to translating old media to a new audience in a sarcastic, self-referential, queen-bitch type of way.

LowRez: "Hey, I'm LowRez, cause I'm not fully rendered and I'm a real glitch. I'm here to, like, challenge your perceptions of deadmedia and remix some familiar memes for you. Get ready to experience...newstalgia."

Scene 2: In and Around the Arena

This scene can happen any time during the festival when characters aren't performing. A festival runs from Wednesday to Monday for the performers, and they have to be there to set up early and then potentially play multiple times during the weekend. It could be when they're setting up, during the day at other performances, or out and about in the city for a brief romp away from the festival.

Use these scenes to highlight the local culture outside of the venue, or to point out even cooler things about the venue. Bring the setting to life! This scene is also great for developing relationships among the PCs and NPCs, since it's when they'll have the most chances to interact. Great possibilities for emo drama all around!

> LowRez and Paganz are grabbing Thai tea at a local café just outside their venue.
>
> **LowRez:** "I dunno, I feel pretty anxious about performing tonight. Maybe it's just this venue? I'm not really sure how, like, Indonesians feel about old technology, or like, if they'll get it, y'know."
>
> **Paganz:** "I'm sure Indonesians have a similar relationship to tech as we do, Low. I mean, we wouldn't be performing here if they didn't want us here."
>
> Their social tech devices start beeping with notifications. Their convo has gone viral in just a few minutes. Looking at the angle it was filmed from, they spot its origin—a few local festival kids a couple tables over took the vid. LowRez confronts them.
>
> **LowRez:** "Whoa, wtf? Why'd you post that? That was personal."
>
> **Kid:** "Not when you're talking about my hometown culture it's not. C'mon, that was a little backwards."
>
> This conversation could lead into social conflict or more roleplaying, depending on the players' tastes.

Scene 3: Green Room Prep

The green room is where bands traditionally wait and prep before they go on stage. Here, the squad members can put on makeup, psych each other up, chat and gossip, or let loose with some interpersonal drama before they go on stage to play.

Players, in this scene you'll each pick out which skin you'll wear for the DJ battle! You can wear either your squad skin or one of your own skins, and you can describe what tweaks you've made to it just for this performance, and exactly what else you're wearing with it. This is where you can really get into your look and identity! Once you go on stage, you won't be able to switch your skin out, so pick carefully.

LowRez and their squad are getting ready in their green room—a trailer right next to the outdoor stage. LowRez is fretting about what to wear.

LowRez: "Really, though, all those comments on the vid of me that went viral have me really stressin'! Should I wear something, like, completely outrageous to be, like, fuck your opinions I'm woke, or should I just do something recognizable?"

LowRez's player says, "LowRez gestures to one DJ skin that's the same shape and size as they are, but with parallel chunks of the body splitting off to the left and right as though it were a VHS glitch come to life. Then they gesture to the other skin, causing the blank boy suit to come to life, with many political memes moving as though they were digitally projected on and around it."

Paganz: "I dunno, follow your heart! They're both lovely like you."

Scene 4: DJ Battle

The performance! At this point the squad will battle against a rival squad on stage, generally on the other side of the audience. You'll find all the details of DJ battles starting on page 30.

Scene 5: Debrief

Players, in this scene you can roleplay any kind of drama or fallout from what happened on stage. Let out those feels and be a total drama queen! Are you ignoring your best friend? Do you hook up with the roadie who's been flirting with you all this time? Work it out!

MASSIVE leaves the stage, and LowRez is suddenly getting tons of media attention, with a swarm of small press and fans surrounding them. Paganz is pretty off-put, knowing that really it has nothing to do with LowRez's performance and all about the scandal from earlier.

Paganz approaches LowRez with a snarky frown and attacks with Shady: "Hey Low, I'd like to see your actual 3D projections cause a scandal this popular."

LowRez, still surrounded by media, defends with Chill: "You're just jealous I've got actual opinions."

Scene 6: One-on-One Confessional

End the session the way you started it, with another confessional with the media. They'll want to know how you're feeling after your recent loss or defeat, who you're dating now, what you thought of this venue, that kind of stuff.

CREATING NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

When creating characters for the PCs to encounter, there's a lot of options! Imagine who would be at the music festivals and why. You might think of one or two minor characters to add into the town should the PCs venture out, but they can always run into festival NPCs outside of the festival grounds too.

Don't forget to create NPCs that embody the antithesis of the characters' identities and creative spirits. Those are typically the things GMs will want to help the players highlight in this game! Think about how you can make a PC's weird obsession with historical jams shine through an NPC's hatred of history.

Start with the people who will be on tour, who might be with the PCs through the campaign! The interesting thing about the other DJ squads in play is that how long they're there depends on when you insert them into the story. GMs, you don't have to create *all* the DJ squads before starting a session—you can reveal them during play to make your job easier. If the PCs lose, they might be still in the top three based on ranking. Find a way to keep them in the game even though they may have lost the battle.

In this section, you'll find rules for making stats for DJs. Normally, other NPCs won't need stat blocks or rules, but ones that become important to the players should get a couple of aspects to help further define them. Sometimes a "fan" or a critic with an axe to grind will become a genuine antagonist during the story, in which case they should be defined as if they were an NPC DJ.

DJs

These are probably the most important NPCs your players are likely to face, and you're going to need a lot of them! Lucky for you, they're easy to make.

1. Choose three approaches. Rate one at Good (+3), one at Fair (+2), and one at Average (+1).
2. Give them two aspects.
3. Name them.
4. That's it.
5. It's really only two or three steps, honestly.

DJ Squads

Making NPC DJ squads requires a bit of finesse! Before throwing one into a session, think about what the group might look like. They've got a style, an agenda, and a feeling. What they look like will provide a lot of the color for the session they'll appear in. If they are playful and colorful, the session might be more lighthearted. If they're dark and deceptive, there might be more sneaking around and sad feels.

An NPC squad is the emotional opposite of the PC squad, bringing out the insecurities and personalities of the PCs. Look at the big emotions that the players chose for their skins, and create NPC squads that represent the opposites of those emotions. There's likely a bunch of different emotions to cover here, and that's okay!

See if any patterns emerge in the NPC squad's opposing emotions—things like Cutesy and Immature or Aggressive and Loud. It's easier to stick to a big theme at first. If the NPC squad sticks around, you can develop and complicate them further.

Also, try to connect the feeling of the NPC DJ squad with the feeling of the current city. They could be polar opposite aesthetic to the venue or match it pitch-perfect—both are valid choices.

Making a Squad

First, choose or make NPC DJs equal in number to the players. A well-rounded DJ squad is more of a challenge to face, but one with a glaring weakness in one or two approaches can make for some surprises during a DJ battle.

SQUAD APPROACHES

As the competition goes on, say in the latter two-thirds, give all NPC DJs a small bonus (+1 or +2) to their approaches. There's a reason they got this far in the first place, and besides, DJ battles are the most dramatic when the odds aren't in your favor.

SQUAD CONSEQUENCES

Give the squad a pool of consequence slots. As it gets later in the competition, add more and more powerful consequence slots to the pool.

- At the start, an NPC DJ squad has mild consequences equal in number to its DJs. In the early battles of the competition—the first third or so—a DJ squad's consequence pool is limited to this.
- In the middle, add moderate consequences equal in number to half the DJs in the squad, rounded up.
- Near the end, double the number of mild consequences in the pool.

GMs, when a DJ in the NPC DJ squad loses an exchange during a DJ battle, you have a choice: fill in one or more of the squad's consequences to deal with the hit and save the DJ from being taken out, or let the hit go through and take out the NPC in question, removing them from the competition.

SQUAD PRESENTATION AND NAME

Figure out what they look like and how they present themselves, and give them a name! That's it! See? DJ squads are almost as easy to make as DJs.

Fans

Fans are more or less around to add drama. They're always around, they're always watching, and they're probably obsessed with the PCs—in good and bad ways! A fan could have amazing connections that could get the PCs a better spot in the competition, better representation from a media corp, or even upgraded tech for their performance. Fans could also present social strengths, providing comfort, love, or support to a PC in need. Or a PC could find themself with a problematic fan, someone who might want to harm them or their reputation.

Fans are interesting because they let you explore the power dynamics between stars and fans. How will the PCs treat them, and how will it reflect on them in the media? Players, you'll want to be wary to not abuse that power dynamic in problematic ways—for example, think about fans who are minorities and how that could easily turn into a trope.

Media

The media reps in *Til Dawn* are a pretty big deal as far as NPCs go! GMs, you'll want to create the names of the media companies that are covering the festival, what type of media they represent, and what their basic agendas are. Instead of fleshing out the companies, though, just come up with the NPC rep and attach a media company to them. The style of the NPC can represent the style of the company.

These NPCs are great to detail for a few reasons. The PCs will be interacting with the media quite a bit, and who they choose to interact with could create different types of drama and scenes. For example, they might choose the hyper-corporate mainstream media rep, or the alternative-styled one, because they want to be known by that audience and grow their fanbase. Manipulating the media could even create advantages for the PCs!

When creating media reps, think of the Stephen Colberts, Adam Levines, Ellens, and RuPauls of the world. They could be a show host, or a reporter, or maybe on a panel of judges for a popular show critiquing a livestream. Or perhaps they're a reality show critic, a virtual fan club expert, or a skin style enthusiast rep.

scores tallied. Aliens fall to sixth rank.

Groupies and Roadies

The DJ squad might acquire some hangers-on as they grow in fame and glory throughout the competition. These people might be friends who knew them from before, family who want to get in on the opportunity, or fans who've become trusted over time.

Groupies are people who tag along for the fun of the tour, and become like a road family. They party after a successful (or unsuccessful!) set, provide moral support, and maybe mooch off the experience and riches of the DJ squad. Groupies could be anyone, really, and there's a lot of room for creativity in where these characters come from and what they look like. It's an opportunity to show off a culture that the PCs haven't visited, maybe something really radical and strange! Or they could be really normal and everyday, a contrast to the wild world of DJ squads and the competition. Some variety here is great. Mechanically these NPCs could provide PCs bonuses or advantages, or help them out in a stitch.

Roadies are more like techs who help set up the stage and keep the tour hover van working. Technically the DJ squad doesn't need roadies, because they can do all the tech themselves, but if they want to create really elaborate stages or costumes, roadies could help. Roadies are technically savvy, so they might be fashion designers, sound nerds, festival artists, hackers, or sensation junkies.

Locals

The locals represent the actual place in the world the venue is located. Outside of the bubble of the music festival is this whole town with a history and culture! Think of representatives of this culture and interesting ways they could interact with the PCs to bring that culture to life. Hardly any culture is a monoculture—show some variety, maybe two NPCs with opposite opinions or styles, one very traditional and one very contemporary, for example!

Locals who might be wandering around outside the music festival could be from any walks of life. Business-owners, food-truck workers, kids on the street, photographers, tourists, random people running errands or taking a stroll. Use them to bring out the local feel some more!

Think about what kinds of encounters with local NPCs might be the most relevant to the story. What will highlight a character's mood, or heal it somehow, or cause more drama if needed?

DJ BATTLES

A DJ battle isn't something where DJs do any kind of physical harm to one another. It's more like a rap battle or a dance-off, where each squad is trying to outperform the other. DJ squads battle with their looks, their music, their video and audio projections, and their creativity and charisma.

The two squads, one PC and one NPC, are on opposite stages—though this can look different depending on the venue. Each member of each squad will take a turn battling, like in a physical fight, only instead of kicking and punching, they're dancing and mixing. Really, it's up to the GM and players how to describe the battle narratively. Think of all the live concerts and rap battles and dance-offs and kung-fu fights you've ever seen, and combine them to create the DJ battle!

Squad Ranking

At each venue, one DJ squad is pitted against another in a numerical ranking. GMs, you can randomly assign the rankings or ask the players where they'd like to be in the ranking. Have about as many DJ squads in the ranking as the number of venues the group would like to play!

As a result of a DJ battle, the DJ squads move up and down in the ranking. Squads don't get eliminated from the competition, though, unless something really dramatic happens. This lets PCs and NPCs to remain in the story, but still allows for some competition. Half of the tension is in moving up and down the rankings, and sometimes losing in a story is fun!

At the end of the competition, the highest-ranking DJ squad is the winner, but maybe other things become more important for the PCs than winning—who knows?

RANK	DJ NAME
01	WOLFE
02	SASHA VELVET
03	LE ROGUE
04	STELLA CLEMENTINE
05	GLITCHWITCH
06	THE ALIENS

Running a DJ Battle

DJ battles use the venue's map of approaches and columns to chart the audience's reactions. You'll need some kind of token for this—a small coin or die works, but if you've got something funkier, feel free to use it. We call this the **crowd token**. The closer it is to your squad on the map (page 32), the more they like you. At the start of the show, they're unbiased (usually).

At the start of the DJ battle, the higher-ranked squad chooses an approach. Place the crowd token on the venue map in the row matching the chosen approach, in the middle column.

To conduct a DJ battle, follow these steps:

1. **Each squad chooses a DJ to perform** with the current approach. Those DJs describe what the performance looks and sounds like, then both roll the dice.
2. **The DJ who gets the higher result moves the token** one column toward their stage, then deals a hit to the opposing DJ, as if it were an attack.

   - If it's a success with style, the winning DJ also gains a boost.
   - If it's a tie, both performing DJs gain a boost and then roll again. The crowd wants more from you two!

Winning Over the Audience

The first squad to earn **10 victory points** wins the DJ battle! You can earn victory points in these ways:

   - When you win an exchange, your squad earns **1 point**. If winning that exchange moved the crowd token adjacent to your squad's stage, your squad earns **2 points** instead.
   - When you take out an opposing DJ, your squad earns **1 point**.

Also, if you take out all of the opposing DJ squad, or if they concede, you win the DJ battle.

> Remember, players can take relationship conditions, in addition to consequences, to mitigate hits during the battle. Maybe the DJ before you set you up poorly for your performance, or upstaged you somehow.

Technical	*Technical*	*Technical*	*Technical*	*Technical*
Chill	*Chill*	*Chill*	*Chill*	*Chill*
Fabulous	*Fabulous*	*Fabulous*	*Fabulous*	*Fabulous*
Shady	*Shady*	*Shady*	*Shady*	*Shady*
Fierce	*Fierce*	*Fierce*	*Fierce*	*Fierce*
Dark	*Dark*	*Dark*	*Dark*	*Dark*

Squad A (left side) — **Squad B** (right side)
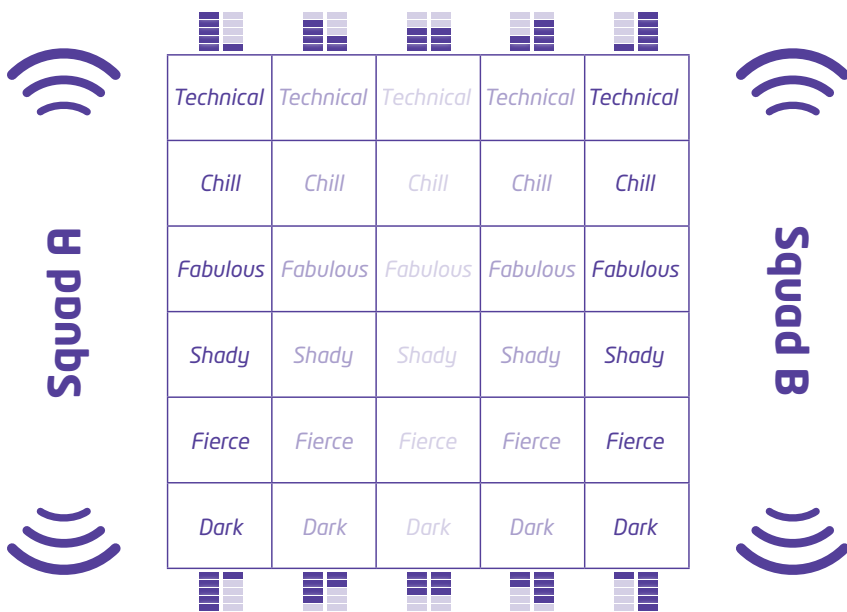
Changing the Mood

As the DJs play on stage, they might bring the audience over to their side.

If a DJ's performance moves the token to a column in their squad's favor, the squad can stick with the current approach, or pick a different DJ and approach.

If they pick a new approach but the token is still in any middle column, the new DJ is wrenching the music from one mood to another prematurely, and the crowd isn't quite ready for it. The DJ's squad must pay one fate point per row of difference. Technical and Dark are considered adjacent, so you can "loop" from the top to the bottom (and vice versa). Any DJs on the squad can pay this cost. For example, making a sudden change from Shady to Chill would cost two fate points, paid by one or two DJs.

If the token reaches the column adjacent to a squad's stage, they have the crowd in the palm of their hand. That squad **must** choose a new DJ and approach. Put the crowd token back in the center column of the new approach.

In this case, the approach change costs one less fate point. So here, if the new approach is in an *adjacent* row, the music flows smoothly from one mood to the next, and there is no fate point cost.

If it's *not adjacent*, the crowd doesn't like the jarring change in mood. The squad of the DJ who chose the new approach must pay the discounted rate of one fate point if it's two rows away, or two fate points if it's three rows away.

Any DJs on the squad can pay this cost. For example, if the new DJ suddenly takes the vibe from Fabulous to Dark, one or two DJs on their squad will have to pay a total of two fate points between them, but if they go from Fabulous to Shady, there's no fate point cost.

Once the new approach is set, the two DJs start a new round and roll as described on page 31.

FATE: WORLDS OF ADVENTURE

Battle Example

Tonight, four DJs have decided to square off against each other in order to settle a score. They're on the multilevel stages that ring the ancient Buddhist temple Borobudur.

Sasha Velvet and Le Rogue are up against Stella Clementine and Wolfe. Sasha is in her best Creature from the Blue Lagoon skin except more fabulous and femme, and Le Rogue has dressed to match, looking like some kind of demon from a Bosch painting. Opposite them on the ring stage are Stella and Wolfe, looking fierce. Stella is in all green mimicking the local floral patterns, and Wolfe is a full-on human with a tiger head. They stand opposite each other, waiting for the lights to come on and their battle to begin. Gorgeous 360-degree lighting highlights Sasha and Le Rogue as they begin to play.

ROUND 1

Squad A is ranked higher than squad B, so they go first.

- Sasha picks Dark, which is Good (+3), and rolls -1, for a total of Fair (+2). She spends one of her three fate points to invoke Genuinely Nightmarish Looks to reroll and gets a +2, so her total is now Great (+4).
- Wolfe rolls +3 and adds her Average (+1) Dark for a total of +4. She spends a fate point to invoke Won't Hesitate to Prove Her Superiority to add +2, for a total of +6.
- Wolfe wins the roll by 2 shifts. Sasha takes a mild consequence of Sweating.
- Squad B wins the exchange and moves the crowd token one column toward their stage, earning 1 victory point.

Sasha starts with an impressive lead, creeping around in her Lagoon digs and sending ambient swamp sounds out into the audience. She's not scary enough, however, because Wolfe swoops in with primal growls and a vid projection of a tiger walking through the audience—both thrilling and fun! The crowd loves it, much to Sasha's chagrin, and she starts sweating beneath her fishy DJ skin.
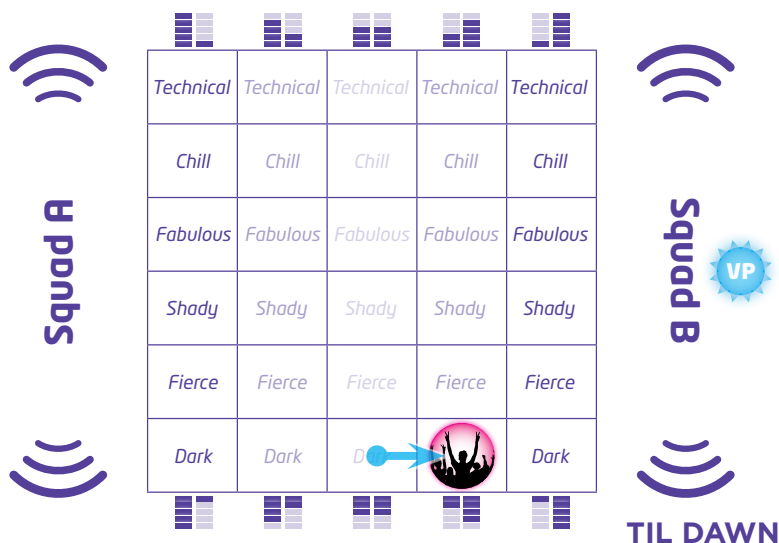
- Sasha rolls -2, spends a fate point to invoke the venue aspect Remnants of Ancient Spirituality for a reroll, and gets a -1 instead. Her total is Fair (+2).
- Wolfe rolls +1 and adds her Average (+1) Dark for a total of Fair (+2), then invokes Sasha's Sweating consequence for free to bring it up to Great (+4).
- Wolfe wins the roll by 2 shifts. Sasha chooses to take the hit with her DJ skin, giving it a mild consequence of Glitching.
- Squad B wins the exchange, and moves the crowd token another column toward them. That's enough to put it adjacent to their stage, which earns them two victory points.

Still skulking in her dark lagoon, Sasha begins to mix in more sounds that are local to the temple—bells, ancient Buddhist chants—and a dark vibe beat. Wolfe's tiger aesthetics are amped up to the max, a thunderous growl of lyrics and a cacophony of wild forest sounds amid tribal drums. Wolfe knows she's won when Sasha's sounds get a little glitchy and the crowd turns toward the tiger stage, dancing like they're a bunch of tigers themselves. She smiles with long fangs, and the crowd goes wild.

- Now it's squad B's turn to pick an approach, because they managed to get the crowd token adjacent to their stage.
- Stella Clementine steps up and chooses Technical, one of the two approaches next to Dark, and places the token in the middle column of that row.
- Squad A chooses Le Rogue to defend.
- Stella rolls -3, spends a fate point to invoke her aspect of Finely Tuned Historical Fashion Sense to reroll, and gets +0. Adding her Fair (+2) Technical gives her a total of Fair (+2).
- Le Rogue rolls -1 and adds their Average (+1) Technical for a total of Mediocre (+0). They invoke More Art Degrees than You for +2, for a total of Fair (+2).
- It's a tie, so each DJ gets a boost, and neither DJ takes a consequence.

Stella riffs off Wolfe's successful tigress performance and starts adding in her own sounds, stuff that's more feminine and full of retro 1950s lady singers. Psychedelic flowers project into the arena from her gorgeous dress, adding a delicate feel to the wild tiger. Le Rogue stands firmly in opposition to her, their Bosch demonesque dance seeking to turn the flowers into a slasher film, playing old sound bites of scream queens from Hitchcock movies. Oddly, the styles seem to mesh in this retro housewife horror movie kind of way, and the audience digs both their performances equally.

- Stella rolls +2 and adds her Fair (+2) Technical for a total of Great (+4), then invokes her boost to make it Fantastic (+6).
- Le Rogue rolls +0 and invokes their boost to reroll. The reroll's also a +0, though, so with their Average (+1) Technical, their total is only Average (+1). Le Rogue only has one fate point remaining and is reluctant to spend it here.
- Le Rogue's about to take a 5-shift hit. They mark their Awkward condition with Sasha, blaming her for setting them up poorly, which absorbs 1 shift, then they absorb the other 4 shifts by taking a moderate consequence, Rapidly Dwindling Confidence.
- Squad A wins the exchange and moves the crowd token one column toward their stage, earning 1 victory point.
- Because Stella succeeded with style, she gets a boost.

Stella doesn't hesitate a beat with that horror vibe, and redirects it into some creepy jungle feels and primal sounds, and her projections turn into palm-leaf shadows. It's gorgeous. Le Rogue, caught off guard, rushes to create the illusion of demons in the forest, but the images aren't defined well enough so they get lost in the arena's lighting. Le Rogue has never had a visual fail quite like this before and feels rather awkward and at a loss. The jungle vibes are now moving into a retro jungle techno beat, and Stella's imagery wows the crowd, making her the clear victor for this round. Stella and Wolfe pose together fiercely as the crowd goes wild.
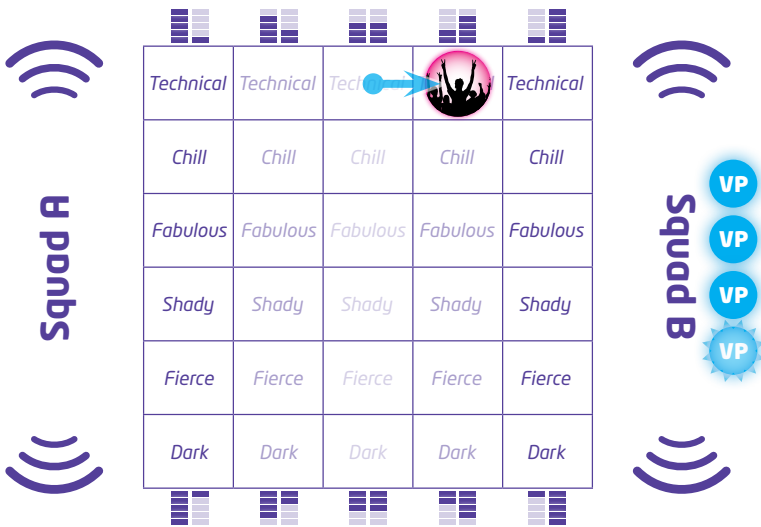
VENUES

The venues in the setting are all over the world to enhance the feeling of a futuristic global community. Each one mixes a location from our current year in real life with complicated race or identity politics and some kind of clean futuristic aesthetic. The intent here is to highlight the culture and architecture and how these will affect the competition. The culture will inform the types of NPCs at that venue as well as its details. Where are they, and what do they care about at this venue? Take this opportunity to bring in some local flavor and episodic NPCs.

You'll find more discussion about this in *"Depicting Cultures"* (page 20).

Each venue has these parts:

- **Two aspects** reflecting what makes this venue distinctive—its architecture, its history, the local culture, the character of the audience, or anything that sets the venue apart from the rest.
- **A venue map.** It can be as simple or decorative as you wish, but it must show two distinct performance stages with the audience in the middle. The audience is represented by a grid with six rows and, usually, five or seven columns (see page 32). The more columns, the tougher the crowd. Each row corresponds to an approach—from top to bottom: Technical, Chill, Fabulous, Shady, Fierce, and Dark. In a DJ battle, this map tracks the two squads' efforts to win the crowd over to their side (literally and figuratively).
- **A few notable locations**, like dressing rooms, a box office, and so on. Don't assume the players will know what's there. Indicate them on the map. Include these details not just to give the players a sense of their surroundings, but to make the scene more vibrant and alive, and to give them hooks for scenes before and after the battle.
- **Two or three faces**—important NPCs, like a stage manager, the owner, a journalist, or a rival DJ. Generally speaking, people the DJs will likely run into who have some strong connection to the venue.
- **A few cultural touchstones** that set this venue apart from most others, simply by virtue of where it's located and the people who've made it what it is.

Some venues also have a **venue stunt**, which makes it easier or harder to take certain actions or use certain strategies in DJ battles at that venue. Here are some examples:

- **Paint It Black:** This crowd likes it dark and brooding. Whenever a successful Fabulous roll would score victory points, it scores one less victory point.
- **Hometown Favorite:** The opposing squad is local. They start the DJ battle with 1 victory point, and during the DJ battle they treat all ties as successes.
- **You Better Work:** When a squad wins an exchange in the DJ battle, they can move the crowd token to Fierce or Shady, in addition to moving the token toward their stage.

Cape Town Megaplex

A hub of mixed musical influence for the past hundred years, this amphitheater emphasizes local noise and retro-millennia culture. It captures the feel of an urban, Die Antwood–style South Africa rife with colonialism while attempting to speak to a dirtier cyberpunk feel. The megaplex re-creates a giant mall from the turn of the 21st century, but attached to a huge arena with multiple stages, and the whole place has a chrome-and-graffiti warehouse feel.

Aspects: Chrome and Graffiti; Retro-Millennial Cyberpunk Atmosphere

Venue Stunt: By making a reference to retro millennial music or culture, you get +2 to Technical in the DJ Battle.

Notable Locations
- Mall converted into a skatepark so you can skate while listening to the performing DJs
- Multiple split stages like an indoor festival
- Public graffiti areas
- Ledges built above the mall to give the best views of all stages
- Pavilion of retro mall-food vendors
- Rent-a-drone store

Cultural Touchstones
- Complicated street slang
- Oceanside with surfing
- A history of European colonialism and taking back their local culture
- Acceptance of mixed heritage
- Gorgeous greens mixed with dirty city
- Building facades painted with bright colors
- Curry, Afrikaan, and Dutch foods

Sadie

ASPECTS
Rad Surfer Style; Access to Huge Audience

APPROACHES
Fabulous: Good (+3)
Fierce: Fair (+2)
Technical: Fair (+2)

NOTES
Surfer and fan. She has a guerilla drone vlog where she details her life in Cape Town and the shows she goes to. A great connection for extra visibility.

Jackson

ASPECTS
Connected with the Locals; Wouldn't Be Caught Dead Enjoying a Festival

APPROACHES
Dark: Average (+1)
Fierce: Good (+3)
Shady: Fair (+2)

NOTES
Anarchist and overall bad boy. He sells doses of illegal drugs to DJ fans and wishes there were fewer tourists in Cape Town. Secretly loves the festivals, though.

Fallingwater

Inspired by the Fallingwater architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, this stage is set amidst beautiful pines in picturesque mountains. Not far from universities and the Midwest US, the sensibilities here focus on escapism and youth. There's a heavy Americana aesthetic, a combination of warm athletic vests and flannel which never seem to go out of style. Much of the architecture is natural wood and stone, seamlessly blending in with the mountainous landscape.

Aspects: Clear Air and Mountainous Terrain; Heartwarming, Friendly Locals

Venue Stunt: The sound of nature here is much beloved. If you can work any of it into a performance authentically, you get a +2 with Chill during the DJ Battle.

Notable Locations
- Multiple levels of stages going up into the mountains and incorporated into man-made waterfalls
- Wooden and stone platforms for audiences to stand on
- Elevators scattered throughout to get people to the top quickly
- Hover food trucks
- Backstage dressing rooms scattered among the treetops
- Digital gate for the festival requires swipe of an implant

Cultural Touchstones
- A wood-and-stone look to everything constructed here
- A very Midwest-friendly culture, although God country is not too far away
- Hover tech is used a lot to get around the mountains
- Lots of hearty Americana meals with synth cow meat and corn
- Heavy security compared to other venues

Bobby

ASPECTS

Conservative Christian Values from Long Ago; Stupidly Argumentative

APPROACHES

Fierce: Average (+1)
Shady: Good (+3)
Technical: Fair (+2)

NOTES

A conservative Christian local who still holds down old-fashioned bigoted beliefs. He and his small group of friends want to dampen people's spirits and make them feel like outcasts, and so have bought tickets to attend the show just to do that.

Sara

ASPECTS

Small Robot Merch Maker; Happy-Go-Lucky Midwest Girl

APPROACHES

Chill: Good (+3)
Fabulous: Fair (+2)
Shady: Average (+1)

NOTES

Sara has lived here all her life, and these festival grounds are her home. A wandering fan, she'll follow DJs she falls in love with and make them super popular with all her hippie friends IRL. She makes her money selling merch she constructs the old-fashioned way, with small robot helpers.

Canyonlyfe

Embedded within the Grand Canyon, this stage's acoustics are like nothing experienced before. This setting juxtaposes natural mountainous heights and high-tech structures. Camping and hippie drug culture are still huge here, and making the trek across the canyon by foot is still popular. Lots of tourists come here from all over the world. An example of an old dream of young America.

Aspects: Canyon-Spanning Stages; Fantastic Acoustics

Venue Stunt: Canyons are great for festival aesthetics and a futuristic hippie lifestyle. If you celebrate this style and incorporate it in your performance, you can jump to any approach in a DJ battle without spending a fate point.

Notable Locations

- Stages inserted into the rock walls
- Various elevated platforms for audience to watch from
- A two-hour climb down into the canyon from the ridge
- A natural habitat barely disturbed
- The campgrounds where festivalgoers stay
- Natural rock caves used as dressing rooms and media centers

Cultural Touchstones

- Food drones that come from vendors at the top of the canyon
- Camping and drug culture
- No locals, only tourists
- Conservation versus exploitation of the natural habitats and animals

Auryn

ASPECTS

Expert Climber; Brand Manager

APPROACHES

Fabulous: Average (+1)
Fierce: Fair (+2)
Technical: Good (+3)

NOTES

Health nut and extreme climbing connoisseur, Auryn attends the festivals in Canyonlyfe to sell her lifestyle brand which includes healthy food, climbing fashions, and daily motivations. She's looking for another face to add to her brand and wants a DJ badly.

Montana

ASPECTS

Famous Cultural Painter; Down to Chill

APPROACHES

Chill: Fair (+2)
Fierce: Average (+1)
Technical: Good (+3)

NOTES

She attends the festival at Canyonlyfe every year and is a megafan of the area, living not far off in the idyllic and artistic Sedona. Montana's a famous painter and is working to create a temporary mural on the canyon walls for the festival, but is meeting some resistance from festival goers protesting her work despite the fact that it's 100% eco.

The Cancun Chain

Not far from the famous historical party town itself, this venue is actually a series of interconnected floating stages that lives on crystal blue waters. They call this venue "The Chain." In the century since this became one of the most accessible boozy tourist attraction for many people in the Americas, it still maintains its many fancy hotels and cheap tchotchke shops.

Aspects: Floating Water Stages; Tourist Party Town

Venue Stunt: Create a drink special with your DJ style or name in it, and whip up enough hype to sway the audience. Get +2 to any Fabulous approaches that DJ makes during the DJ battle.

Notable Locations

- Five floating stages and audience areas in one long connected chain.
- Lizard Island where visitors can meet and pet lizards.
- Boozewalk, a boardwalk along the turquoise water that's neon and plastic and full of overpriced mixed drinks
- Boat parking zones where fans can watch the festival from all kinds of hyped-up boats
- Dressing rooms are floating yachts and party locations behind the stages

Cultural Touchstones

Cancun has long been a cheap tourist town for young Americans and the festival venue has only enhanced that. Some exploited workers still try to make their living here, and while booze and tourist trinkets still make the best money, there is a culture of local traditional Mexican food and monuments to ancient gods. The colors here are gorgeous, buildings, architecture, and clothes all mimicking the tropical flowers and ocean tones.

Rosa

ASPECTS
Can Take You Down Easily; Security Boats

APPROACHES
Chill: Good (+3)
Shady: Average (+1)
Technical: Fair (+2)

NOTES
Head of security here at the island chains, where drunken debauchery and shenanigans need to be watched and contained. She's pretty level-headed and won't take any shit.

Leticia

ASPECTS
Not the Real Me; Professional Party Girl

APPROACHES
Fabulous: Good (+3)
Shady: Fair (+2)
Technical: Average (+1)

NOTES
Leticia created Party Girl Media Enterprises, a business located right here in Cancun. Famous for her ridiculous drunken stunts and tomfoolery, she makes other people famous by including them in her silly stories. Her party-girl attitude is all a character she's made up for the streamed live show, though—the real her is a media genius.

Viti Crater Festival Grounds

In the heart of Iceland is the Viti Crater, a large expanse of land with steam vents and beautiful turquoise lakes. Its picturesque views of the clouds and brown grasses and the constant smoke-like steam coming from the ground lend it a post-apocalyptic feel. Nobody really lives here, and the venue exists exclusively for the festival that happens every year.

Aspects: Mysteriously Steamy; Out in the Wilds

Notable Locations

- One large festival ground with stages on either side
- Giant sculpture garden that only lasts during the festival
- Vendors of steam suits, for people who want to stand in the steam
- Dressing rooms incorporated into the architecture of the stages

Cultural Touchstones

- Icelandic landscapes
- Touristy camping in the middle of nowhere
- A history of the new film industry using the land for their benefit
- Leans toward artsy styles
- Animal sanctuaries and connection to the land

Bjorn

ASPECTS

Creative No Matter the Cost; Over-the-Top Eccentric Persona

APPROACHES

Dark: Average (+1)
Fabulous: Good (+3)
Shady: Fair (+2)

NOTES

A renowned sculpture-garden artist who creates newer, bigger, stranger sculptures here every year. They're always larger than life, and *nothing*, not even *regulations*, will stand in his creative way.

Drifa

ASPECTS

Loves Animals More than Humans; Rad Icelandic Punk Style

APPROACHES

Chill: Average (+1)
Dark: Good (+3)
Fierce: Fair (+2)

NOTES

An animal lover and caretaker, she's in charge of the sanctuaries here where humans and animals can interact. A gentle soul but fiercely protective of her animal family.

Kyoto Biodome

One of the oldest cities in Japan, Kyoto boasts a vibrant historical tradition which informs their culture. The biodome creates all four seasons of the beautiful city, cycling through them every few days. Visitors say the most beautiful one is when the snow is melting and the cherry blossoms are in bloom. The historical traditions of the tea ceremony and wearing decorative kimonos for each season still feature heavily here.

Aspects: ALWAYS-CHANGING WEATHER; MEMORIES OF THE PAST

Notable Locations

- Three pairs of stages set at the edges of the biodome
- A center square focused on media interviews and cultural displays
- Dressing rooms beside the stages, cleverly camouflaged as beautiful trees and shrubs
- A cafe that serves traditional tea combined with hot new pastry inventions
- A stream replete with koi fish and small animals alongside

Cultural Touchstones

- Poetic focus on combining old and new aesthetics
- Celebration of traditions and where their contemporary culture comes from
- Gorgeous patterned nu-silk reminiscent of old kimonos
- Neat 3D tech that creates imagery in tandem with the biodome's natural habitats
- Delicious, delicate foods and drinks

Riku

ASPECTS

BIODOME SCIENCE; CULTURAL TRADITIONALIST

APPROACHES

Chill: Average (+1)
Dark: Fair (+2)
Technical: Good (+3)

NOTES

Riku controls the weather here in the biodome, monitoring its systems and making sure the habitats are perfect. Caretaker of the habitats, they're very careful to make sure none of the performances interfere with them.

Yua

ASPECTS

IN OVER HER HEAD; ADORABLE AND PURE

APPROACHES

Chill: Average (+1)
Fabulous: Fair (+2)
Technical: Good (+3)

NOTES

She's the youngest fan-club leader in Japan, just 13 years old. She's an organizing genius and knows how to lead her fellow young, mostly lady-leaning fans. Often she gets into trouble without realizing it.

EXAMPLE DJS

Sasha Velvet: Sasha's developed a taste in regal, nightmarish aesthetics. She likes to bank on the fact that fans are half in love with her and half terrified of her. Sasha's a somewhat traditional drag queen DJ, although genderqueer herself, dressing in spectacular lady drag. Her beats match her looks, reminiscent of horror b-movies and goth industrial sounds.

Le Rogue: This DJ is well known for being a walking piece of visual art. Their imagery, skins, and music all recall famous works of art throughout history. They're genderqueer and come from the Tehran Megaplex. It's rare that someone sees Le Rogue's actual skin color or shape, since is it hidden behind their elaborate skins.

Stella Clementine: Undeniably the reigning expert in vintage fashions, Stella rocks all kinds of feminine looks on stage and in her press reviews. Her fashion often outdoes her music, although it has a quaint, old-fashioned sound that often uses sound bites of actual instruments. Stella's a black trans woman from the New Canadian Wilds.

Wolfe: Wolfe prides herself in her ability to mutate into different animal forms in her skins. Each skin is a combo of some wild animals, creating new monsters with each combination. She's aggressive, loud, and angry, and so is her music. Wolfe is from the Pacific Waterdomes off the coast of Korea, a cis woman, and predominantly Korean in heritage.

GlitchWitch: This DJ's skills lie in channeling a combo of tech that's come before with tech that's on the verge. They become part human, part tech, in the most stunning visual and audial ways. They're from the UK, and their true form has never before been seen in public, always covered in chrome and bits of technology. They're a walking metaphor for the DJ skins.

Le Rogue

ASPECTS
More Art Degrees than You;
Expert Posing Skills

APPROACHES
Chill: Good (+3)
Shady: Fair (+2)
Technical: Average (+1)

Sasha Velvet

ASPECTS
Knows Your Darkest Secrets,
Genuinely Nightmarish Looks

APPROACHES
Dark: Good (+3)
Fabulous: Fair (+2)
Fierce: Average (+1)

Wolfe

ASPECTS
Won't Hesitate to Prove Her
Superiority; Primal Vibes

APPROACHES
Dark: Average (+1)
Fabulous: Fair (+2)
Fierce: Good (+3)

Stella Clementine

ASPECTS
Finely Tuned Historical
Fashion Sense; Takes Everything
Personally

APPROACHES
Fabulous: Good (+3)
Shady: Average (+1)
Technical: Fair (+2)

GlitchWitch

ASPECTS
Comes from the Future; Socially
Relevant Lyrics

APPROACHES
Chill: Fair (+2)
Fabulous: Average (+1)
Technical: Good (+3)

EXAMPLE DJ SQUADS

The Aliens

The Aliens are a squad of DJs similar to the boy bands of yore, where their style and brand are focused on romancing their fans. Instead of being boys, however, they're all genderqueer, and play up that aesthetic by wearing skins styled as alien bodies that make them look beautiful and inhuman. They're from the Mexico City Sprawl, so a lot of ideas of systemic oppression and dreams of freedom are present in their music and fashion. While each member has their own personal alien style, they trend as a group toward androgyny.

"The Romeo" Lito

ASPECTS
Too Many Emotions; I Want You to Love Me

APPROACHES
Dark: Fair (+2)
Fabulous: Good (+3)
Fierce: Average (+1)

"The Twins"
Sierra and Santiago

ASPECTS
Not Without My Sibling; Dreadfully Gorgeous

APPROACHES
Chill: Fair (+2)
Fabulous: Good (+3)
Technical: Average (+1)

"The Innocent" Angel

ASPECTS
Oops, Did I Do That?; Such a Tease

APPROACHES
Fabulous: Good (+3)
Fierce: Average (+1)
Technical: Fair (+2)

"The Brains" Val

ASPECTS
A Sinister Plan; Sexy Smarts

APPROACHES
Dark: Average (+1)
Shady: Good (+3)
Technical: Fair (+2)

"The Muscle" Dani

ASPECTS
I Can Lift You with One Hand; Flexxxxxxxxxx

APPROACHES
Chill: Good (+3)
Fierce: Fair (+2)
Technical: Average (+1)

Dollhouse

Dollhouse is a group of lady DJs who investigate the female form through performance and costume. They costume as different types of dolls, all femme coded, and work to deconstruct patriarchal ideas of how women should look and act. Oh, and they're all gay. They come from the Midwest Cloud Arcologies in the US.

"Shiny Doll" Nikki

ASPECTS

Blinding Lens Flares Around Outfits; Chrome AF Sounds

APPROACHES

Fabulous: Good (+3)
Fierce: Fair (+2)
Shady: Average (+1)

"Colorful Doll" Barb

ASPECTS

Those Colors Couldn't Go Together on Anyone Else; Chameleon Tech

APPROACHES

Fierce: Fair (+2)
Shady: Good (+3)
Technical: Average (+1)

"Pristine Doll" Taylor

ASPECTS

Everything in Its Right Place; Clean Vibes

APPROACHES

Chill: Fair (+2)
Dark: Average (+1)
Technical: Good (+3)

"Weirdo Doll" Alex

ASPECTS

Strange but in a Cool Way; All the Remixed Synths

APPROACHES

Chill: Average (+1)
Dark: Good (+3)
Fabulous: Fair (+2)

"Gorgeous Doll" Kat

ASPECTS

Epic Hair Toss; Lipstick Noise

APPROACHES

Chill: Average (+1)
Fabulous: Good (+3)
Shady: Fair (+2)

AN EXAMPLE SESSION IN BOROBUDUR

The Borobudur Sky Amphitheater is an ancient Buddhist temple in Indonesia that is the new home to a multilayered amphitheater. Connecting to three layers that rise above the temple toward the sky, it's no longer used as a religious site. It's now the stage for music and performances at these global festivals, and many of the historical elements are maintained by local Indonesian artists and cultural ambassadors. Hosting the festivals is one of the ways they gather funding for conservation of the ancient site. However, some local preservationists believe the technology supporting the amphitheater is designed poorly and will harm the temple, and they're working to sabotage the festival to prove it.

The amphitheater is located out in the jungles of Indonesia, with some small towns and villages within a short ride. The jungles themselves still contain many wild species of flora and fauna, which are conserved as carefully as the temple. Some of the poorer people from towns nearby often sneak into the festivals trying to sell handmade goods and designer drugs, and many of the local teens try desperately to get into the festival so they can see some of their favorite idols.

The structure of the stages and the theater still celebrate the temple's spiritual beginnings, and many of the people who come to festivals here have a spiritual agenda in their celebration of music and media (and psychedelics). The stone ruins that surround it in the jungle frequently double as smaller performance venues or pop-up dining experiences. It's a gorgeous fusion of ancient stone sculpture and brand new glass aesthetics.

Aspects: Remnants of Ancient Spirituality; Colorful Jungle Island Culture

Faces

Borobudur is a culture-shock mix of indigenous peoples and cosmopolitan festivals-goers from nearby countries and cities.

- **Anissa,** a local conservationist who's resorting to extreme measures to prove a point—even if it means people get hurt.
- **The Hellcats,** a rival DJ squad led by **Eight Speed** that's terrifying, talented, and…well, catty.
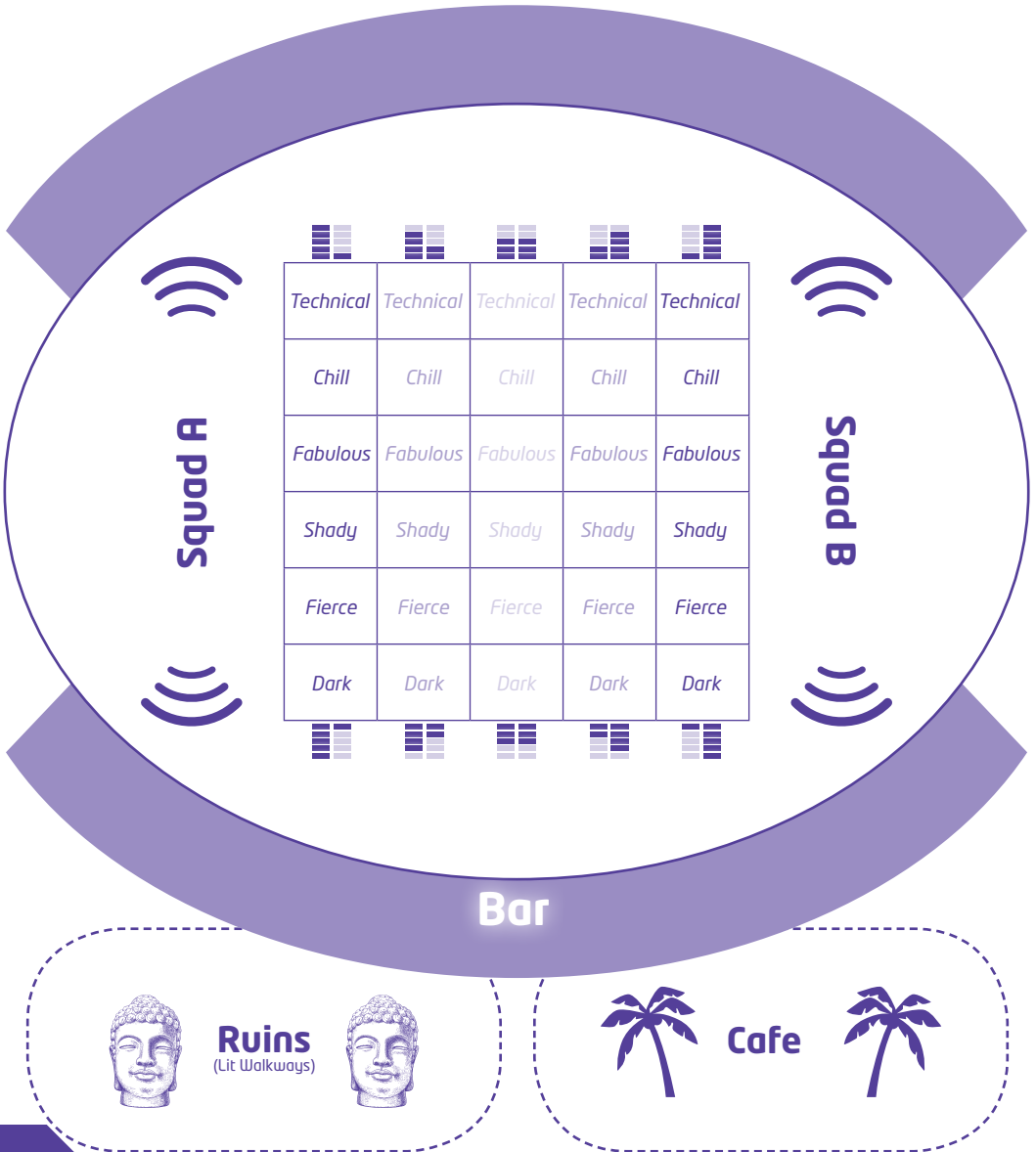- **Dallas,** a corporate media rep and talk-show host whose opinions can make or break an up-and-coming DJ squad.

Cultural Touchstones

- Intricately brocaded and brightly colored nano-silk textiles in pinks, oranges, and turquoises
- Delicious fried rice, natural not synthetic! An unusual treat in a mostly synthetic food world
- Dance moves inspired by a martial art called Silat in which cloth is used to manipulate limbs—the dancer's own, or a consenting partner's!

Notable Locations

Because this venue wasn't exactly purpose-built for life-altering musical performances, most of its notable locations are actually *outside* the venue itself.

- On the second tier, a traditionally decorated Indonesian bar with intricate, futuristic elements of etched neon and anti-grav pillow seats
- On the top tier, one continuous circular stage that glows a white light
- Lit walkways about the old original ruins and giant stone Buddha heads
- A cafe surrounded by palm trees in the nearby town

Technical	Technical	Technical	Technical	Technical
Chill	Chill	Chill	Chill	Chill
Fabulous	Fabulous	Fabulous	Fabulous	Fabulous
Shady	Shady	Shady	Shady	Shady
Fierce	Fierce	Fierce	Fierce	Fierce
Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark

Squad A

Squad B

Bar

Ruins
(Lit Walkways)

Cafe

Running the Session

At the start of the session, remember to do some intro monologues! Remember, throughout the session you can ask players for short confessionals whenever it feels narratively appropriate or fun, and encourage them to call for their own.

Then, create a few scenes. Here's a few scenes that might happen in Borobudur:

- **Public Confrontation with the Hellcats (at the Indonesian Bar):** The PCs go to the bar for drinks, but the Hellcats are there and putting on their public personas. The Hellcats are aggressive and overconfident in their ability to win, throwing shade every which way. How do the PCs respond?
- **Annisa's Protest (at the Lit Walkways):** Annisa's friends and fellow protesters are holding a protest about the festival happening here at the Borobudur Amphitheater. If the PCs ask around, they can learn that Annisa raised awareness of the problems with the site, but the government profited too much to make any changes. The last they heard, Anissa said the issue wouldn't be acknowledged until something disastrous happens.
- **A Romantic Interlude (at the Jungle Ruins):** The Jungle Ruins are absolutely gorgeous old stone amidst a wild landscape. There's a waterfall that belongs on postcards and tropical flowers of all sorts amidst the ancient landscape. It's absolutely transporting and a great place for any of the PCs to have a romantic encounter.
- **Media Scandal (at the Cafe in the Nearby Town):** The local cafe seems like a great place to grab a coffee and chill, but it's actually watched heavily by regular cafe-goers, who record the famous people who come there and sell whatever they get to the paparazzi. The media will spin the smallest and most innocent encounter here as something scandalous and terrible. The PCs don't know that, though!

All these scenes could easily lead to green room drama and contention among the PCs! Do they agree with Annisa's desire to preserve the ruins? Was it smart to have a public confrontation with the Hellcats before the DJ battle? Was someone jealous of someone else's romance? What scandal leaked about the PCs to make them more tense about their pending performance? All of this can fuel emotional roleplay during the DJ battle, too.

After the battle, in the debrief, how do the PCs resolve these problems? Do they stop Annisa from sabotaging the stage, make up with the Hellcats, break up with a lover, or use that scandal for more attention?

Then, do one more round of monologues, and finish up the session!

NPCs

Annisa

Young, idealistic, and resourceful. Of Indonesian descent, but combines traditional and futuristic fashion. She's smart and proud of her heritage.

Anissa doesn't believe the current technology supporting the amphitheater is functioning as well as it should, placing the whole site in danger, but virtually nobody agrees. However, she figures if she can secretly sabotage the festival, then people will start paying attention to the venue's flaws, and public opinion is bound to change. Sure, that's also going to do some damage to Borobudur itself, but if left unchecked, over time these oblivious tourists will wreak far more havoc on this once-sacred temple.

If left to her own devices, Anissa's sabotage could take many forms, all of them related to the temple's inappropriateness as a performance venue. When the story begins, she could've tried some plans already, giving the whole place a low-key paranoia vibe, or maybe her first efforts just happen to coincide with the arrival of the PCs. The longer she's been trying and failing to clear the place, the more desperate she is—and the more desperate she is, the more extreme her sabotage attempts, such as:

- Cutting power to the whole venue
- Poisoning the drinks in the bar by lacing its water supply (including the ice) with an herbal concoction of local toxic plants
- Releasing a basketful of blue pit vipers on the dance floor
- Weakening one of the column joints attaching the amphitheater to the temple, leading to a massive collapse

Annisa

ASPECTS

PROUD OF MY HERITAGE;
I'VE GOT FRIENDS AMONG THE LOCALS

APPROACHES

Cool: Great (+4)
Dark: Great (+4)
Fierce: Good (+3)

The Hellcats

The Hellcats are a DJ squad who are terrifying, talented, and…well, catty. Inspired by muscle cars, their aesthetic is reflected in their skins, their attitude, and their music. They're a mix of Asian and Latino mostly, and come from the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. The Hellcats often include industrial sounds of cars being built, raced, and crashed, all of which are now somewhat nostalgic, with the rise of global public transit and hydro transport.

Hover

ASPECTS
Hover Tech;
Real Particular About Details

APPROACHES
Chill: Fair (+2)
Dark: Average (+1)
Technical: Good (+3)

Tokyo Drift

ASPECTS
Actually from Tokyo;
Likes It Old-School

APPROACHES
Chill: Good (+3)
Shady: Average (+1)
Technical: Fair (+2)

Luxury

ASPECTS
All the Bells and Whistles;
Smooth Tunes

APPROACHES
Chill: Average (+1)
Fabulous: Good (+3)
Fierce: Fair (+2)

Nitris

ASPECTS
Will Win in a Race;
Likes Pressing Buttons

APPROACHES
Fierce: Fair (+2)
Shady: Average (+1)
Technical: Good (+3)

The leader of the Hellcats squad. Fierce, dramatic, and commanding. Ze wants to win. Zir name is a throwback to the muscle car, and zir style matches in red chrome. Eight Speed is black, genderqueer, and trends toward a femme body and style. Ze wears lots of shiny red things and dangerous spike heels, but zir DJ skin is kind of like a fashion version of the Dodge Hellcat, with various car-inspired elements, like exhaust-pipe-shaped wings, attached to zir body like armor or extensions of zir arms and legs.

Eight Speed

ASPECTS

ATTITUDE AS FIERCE AS MY STYLE; I'LL CRUSH YOU

APPROACHES

Dark: Fair (+2)
Fierce: Good (+3)
Shady: Average (+1)

STUNTS

Badass Bitch: Bitchy, but somehow in a way that's both intimidating and crush-worthy. When in a crowd, you can spend a fate point to make any NPC DJs in the scene make an overcome roll using Chill against your Fierce rating. For each NPC DJ who fails this roll, you get a boost that you can use until the end of the scene.

Hellcat: The hellcat skin is state of the art, with historical car details and interchangeable parts that would outdo any transforming robot. Once per DJ battle, you get a free invoke on its aspect.

Hot Rims: Those designer heels aren't wearing themselves. Get +2 when creating an advantage by fabulously showing off designer clothes that look like car parts.

Dallas

The head TripCorp media rep, who covers the PNDJSWT as a talk show host. She's cold, clever, and opportunistic—she won't hesitate to emotionally manipulate someone for ratings. Dallas is a blonde, white corporate-styled woman, dressed in all white and often a super-chic pantsuit. She's got a future headset and a flying camera always nearby.

Dallas

ASPECTS
> It's All for the Ratings; I Know What You Want

APPROACHES
Cool: Good (+3)
Fabulous: Fair (+2)
Shady: Fair (+2)

Squad A

Dark	Fierce	Shady	Fabulous	Chill	Technical
Dark	Fierce	Shady	Fabulous	Chill	Technical
Dark	Fierce	Shady	Fabulous	Chill	Technical
Dark	Fierce	Shady	Fabulous	Chill	Technical
Dark	Fierce	Shady	Fabulous	Chill	Technical

Squad B

DJ NAME:

DJ SQUAD:

TIL DAWN

APPROACHES

+4	+4	+4	+4	+4	+4
+3	+3	+3	+3	+3	+3
+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2
+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1
+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0
TECHNICAL	*CHILL*	*FABULOUS*	*SHADY*	*FIERCE*	*DARK*

ASPECTS

PERFORMANCE

CULTURE

CREATIVITY

CONNECTIONS

SKINS

SKIN ASPECT

SKIN ASPECT

SKIN ASPECT

MILD
2

MODERATE
4

MILD
2

MODERATE
4

MILD
2

MODERATE
4

CONSEQUENCES

MILD
2

MODERATE
4

SEVERE
6

RELATIONSHIPS

AWKWARD	*STRAINED*	*NOT SPEAKING*	*WHO*
1	2	4	
1	2	4	
1	2	4	
1	2	4	
1	2	4	
1	2	4	