

the dragon stars

Humanity's Colonisation of the Stars was a terrible thing to behold. They were not explorers, taking a brave step into the void. They were not adventurers, striding out towards the unknown.

They were refugees, fleeing the crumbling cradle that was Earth. Fleeing the plagues and the wars, the ever rising salty waves and the ever-receding water.

They did not take sleek and shining Starships, flying the flags of this state or that corporation. They did not plant pretty flags into the soil after landing. They crashed, and most burnt. No one knows how many fled, and no one can bring themselves to count the dead. No one can point at an unexplored star and say 'here be humans' or 'here be no humans.' They say 'Here de Dragons.'

Nevertheless, they are there. The luckiest of the luckiest of them managed to preserve the technology they left with. The others regressed, some further than others. It is estimated that there are more swords and spears used in warfare now than in any other time in history.

You're the luckiest of all. Your grandparents couldn't flee and didn't die and now here you stand, on *Dubrovnik*, moving among the stars like Humanity should have: Commanding, not Commanded.

dubrovnik

The Free and European Ship-State of Dubrovnik to give it the proper title, *Dubrovnik* is a constituent member of the Europa Organisation. It is not, as one might think, a Military vessel or a merchant trader. It is a City-State given a Hydrogen Fusion power plant, H₂/O₂ Thrusters, Alcubierre-White Jump-Warp Drives, Trow Class Strike Craft and one very large Rail/Coil Hybrid Mass Accelerator (Cannon).

Due to the lack of FTL Communications (asides from mail sloop) and it's somewhat unsurprising habit of moving all the time, *Dubrovnik* and its ilk (*Venice*, *Visby*, *Beirut* and the like) function rather more autonomously that you're average Member-State or Colony. For one thing, it doesn't properly participate in European Elections, unless by happy accident it is in European Space come Election period. Instead, it (like all of its fellows) has a dedicated remembrancer who speaks, but does not vote, on its behalf in the European Parliament.

Dubrovnik has a directly elected President and departmental (Life Support, Administration, Medical, Gunnery, the various Engineerings etc.) Heads. The President and Heads are elected to one year terms, and serve as the Ship's Executive. Legislative initiatives require a majority vote from the Heads and the voting Population (two thirds of each in event of a Presidential veto.) The Judiciary is self-regulating and independent of the other two Governmental Branches.

All of *Dubrovnik*'s sons and daughters Citizens serve twenty two years as 'Service Crew' (Conscripts) with two years of training from 18 to 20, and twenty years of service from 20 to 40, spending ten years shuffling from department to department, and ten years in a specialist field. After they have completed their Service period they are given the option to be moved to the reserves (which they will stay on, barring exceptions, the rest of their lives.)

The Non-Service Population do a number of things for a living. Many Menial jobs, on *Dubrovnik* in any case, have been automated away. A few of them do nothing, happy to live of their Basic Support Payments. Many of them are artisans of some sort of another, tinkerers or artists or composers or writers or singers or musicians etc.

A few of them, as might be expected, follow the world's oldest profession (and indeed, the *Dubrovnik* Sex Workers Union has been able to send the Ship grinding to a halt on occasion via Industrial action, and is currently attempting to get legislation passed banning a variety of Robotic alternatives to their trade.)

Life is quite good on *Dubrovnik*, all things considered. Bunks aren't bad, nice mix of places to stare through your porthole at. Acceleration's usually a nice 0.5G when it happens, and 0G is fun the rest of the time. But that's all changing now...

Because *Dubrovnik*'s and all it's ilk have new orders, and into the Dragon Stars they go.

what you'll need:

People! 3 or more is recommended. One of them shall be 'The Game Master.' This will be a title, bestowed upon one of the People you have collected. Following in with the *Dubrovnik* spirit, you may wish to elect him

or her. The Game Master serves as the Universe: They control the story, arbitrate rules disputes (and may overrule the written rules) and generally facilitate the running of the Game. They are necessary, and are not to be neglected, especially given they control every other person in the world not under the purview of the Players.

The other people are Players. They build characters, and take on the role of their characters within the world of *Dubrovnik*.

Six Sided Dice, at least eight between you (The Game Master may wish to have their own stock.)

Writing implements. Pencils are recommended (in conjunction with Rubbers) as well as paper for Note taking.

who'll you be:

The Players take on the role of members of *Dubrovnik*'s Special Operations Group: 'Shore Party' (Although you're often working on Ship as much as off it. Spy Rings don't bust themselves.)

what'll you do:

Your job is whatever is required of you by the Heads. That could be anything from providing security to a visiting EAF diplomat, to boarding a derelict Ship alongside *Dubrovnik*'s Espatiers (There are no Sapient Aliens. As far as is known) to landing on a world in the Dragon Star world to see if the Locals throw rocks or bullet at you.

But mostly, you'll be one of Europa's tools to influence in the Dragon Stars, before the Indians, the Chinese, the Brazilians or the ANZ-SEA-L do it. *Dubrovnik* will be trading, wheeling and dealing, carrying enough Von Neumann rated RapFabs and feedstock to kickstart Industrial Revolutions on a thousand worlds. Medicine, guns, mining equipment. If it exists, *Dubrovnik* can print it.

But so can *Macau*, *Mumbai*, *RDJ* and *Tokoyo*. Then there's the Wildcards like *Singapore* and *Kuala Lumpur*. With them business can be done, perhaps.

Pray you don't meet *Hong Kong*. But if you do...

Unfurl the Battle Ensign, Mobilise the reserves, batten down the hatches, charge the Accelerator and just try to run. You won't succeed, of course, but you'll feel better.

character creation

birth

First, pick from where your character came: *Highborn*, *Midborn* or *Lowborn*.

Highborn came from high gravity environments. Typically shorter, squatter, and tougher. Stereotypically musclebound.

Midborn came from roughly Earth Like gravity. Bog standard and boring. Stereotypically charming for whatever reason.

Lowborn came from low gravity environments. Typically taller, slimmer, and fragile. Stereotypically cerebral.

characteristics

Everyone has nine Characteristics: Three Matter, three Mind and three Ego.

matter:

Strength: How strong you are. A high Strength means denser, toned muscles and a better punching arm.

Dexterity: How good your muscle control is. A high Dexterity means you're quick with your hands and have good fine motor control.

Constitution: How tough you are. A high Constitution means you've got a strong back and that one punch won't knock you over.

mind

Knowledge: What you consciously know. A high Knowledge means you know when *Dubrovnik* was laid down, when it was launched, all of its Presidents and their term dates etc. etc.

Intuition: What you unconsciously know. A high Intuition means you just *know* when something is right or wrong, or what someone will do, even if you can't explain why.

Control: How good you are at organising, sorting and using information in your head. A high Control means you know that $47 * 47 = 2209$, not because you memorized it, but because you did it in your head just then.

ego

Charm: How good you are at talking to people. A high Charm means you'll never be without a friend or a bed-mate.

Will: How good you are at keeping yourself focused. A high Will means you can keep your mind focused and on the job, and not on the person trying to distract you.

Fortune: How lucky you are. A high Fortune means that you can do stupid reckless things and somehow come out the other end smiling.

Every character starts with one point in each of the nine Characteristics. In addition, every character starts with six unassigned points: Two in **Matter**, two in **Mind**, and two in **Ego**.

In addition, *Highborn* receive an additional two points to assign to **Matter**, *Midborn* receive an additional two points to assign to **Ego** and *Lowborn* receive an additional two points to assign to **Mind**.

gear

Your character has no specific gear. Instead they are assumed to have what they need to hand (the wonders of modern technology...) unless their Gear has been explicitly taken from them or lost. Note that without certain types of gear some actions cannot be done (Eg: Can't shoot someone without a gun.) The Game Master may also wish to penalise certain actions if gear is damaged, sabotaged, substandard or otherwise below par.

vitality

Add up your Constitution, Will, and Fortune. That is your Vitality. Don't lose it. You need it to live and stuff.

tests

A test is required every time a character does something with a reasonable a chance of failure. Things like trying to negotiate with the angry natives, trying to shoot that damn Sniper before he kills someone, staunch the bleeding before he kills him, sneak past that thug, etc. etc.

In order to do a test, declare what you're trying to do, then look at your characteristics. Pick two, each one from a different category (Eg: Dexterity and Intuition, not Dexterity and Constitution.) Justify why each one is relevant to whatever you're trying to do. (Example: Charm is **not** helpful when you're trying to shoot someone.) Note: Can't use Fortune for this!

Add up all the points you've got assigned to those two Characteristics. Grab than number of six sided dice and roll them, adding up all the results.

What you're doing whatever towards (Eg: They guy you're trying to shoot etc.) is also doing the same, this time to do some suitable reaction (Eg: 'Dodge' or 'Spot him sneaking past me' or 'not trip over my tongue and tell him what he wants to know.' Even if it's an inanimate object.)

Whoever gets the higher number does whatever they set out to do. If tied, use Fortune as a tie-breaker: Higher Fortune wins

the test by difference between scores. If Fortune scores are tied, re-roll the test.

wait, who goes first?

If you need to decide what order people act in, add up Dexterity and Intuition for each character, and run from highest to lowest, each person making one test then passing off to the next highest person until everyone has acted once, then go from the top again. If characters are tied, use highest Fortune. If still tied, all tied characters roll a six sided dice, highest result going first. If these results are tied, re-roll until results are not tied.

help! i got shot!

If you got shot, stabbed, had rocks fall on you or otherwise lost a test in such a way that you were physically damaged, reduce your Vitality.

For every full six your opponent's roll was above yours, deduct one point of Vitality, losing at least one each time.

help! i've got no vitality left!

Fall unconscious. You're now *Dying*! Whenever the Game Master feels like it (in situations with established move orders, every time the *Dying* character is due to take their test would be recommended) the Player controlling the *Dying* character rolls as many six sided dice as they have points in either Constitution or Will (Player's choice) adding the results together. If the result is equal to or higher than the number of times this 'try-not-to-die' test has been called for, you continue *Dying*. If you rolled lower, Bye!

fortune

Fortune's special. Fortune makes you special. You can't use it for tests in the usual manner. (Only characters belonging to Players get Fortune.)

You can use it, however, to re-roll any test that either you or someone else has taken immediately after the fact. *Any* test, even ones rolled by the Game Master (and the re-roll must be rolled openly.)

Every time you use Fortune, mark down how much Fortune you have expended. You may expend as much fortune as you have points in the Fortune Characteristic.

Game Master is at liberty to restore Fortune as he or she wills. (They are encouraged to reward funny and/or awesome feats.

we won! yay!

Congratulations on the success! Restore your vitality and Fortune to full. If the Game Master wills it, you may place another point in a characteristic

dubrovnik

name:

birth: lowborn-midborn-highborn

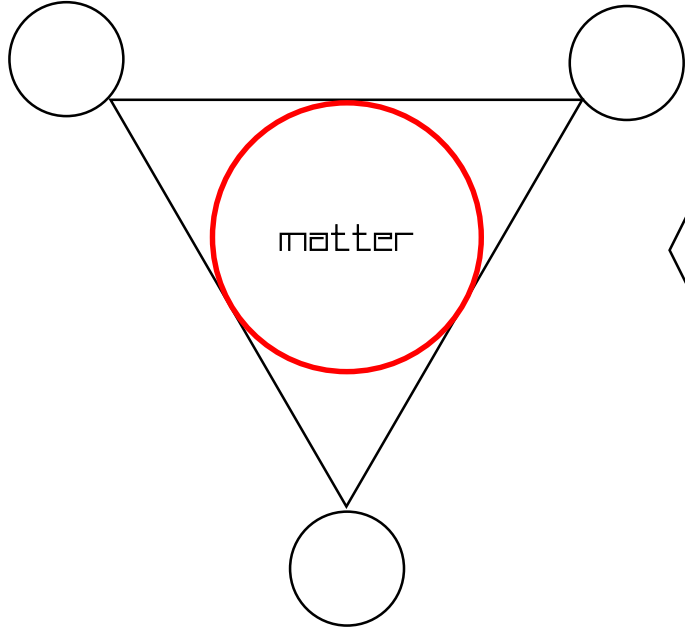
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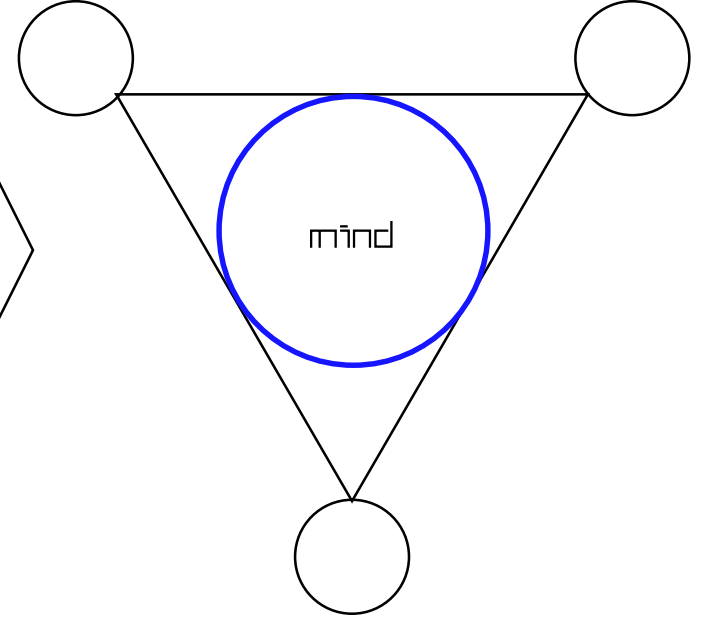
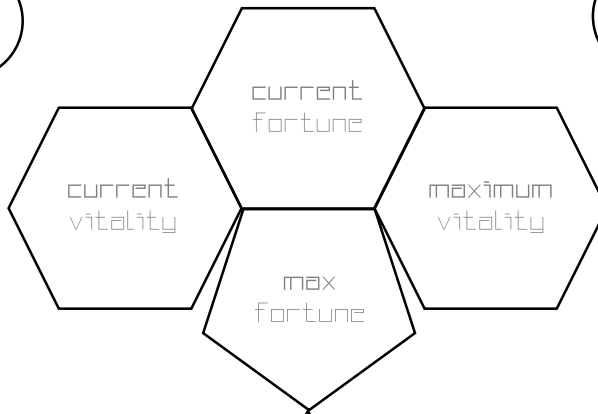
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knowledge

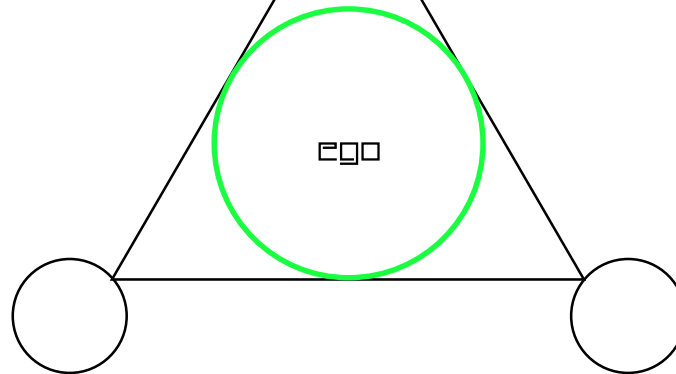
intuition



constitution



control



charm

will