HUNTER
THE VIGIL
SECOND EDITION

Kickstarter Manuscript Preview

Rules of the Hunt

Chapter Four: Rules of the Hunt dives into the rules for gameplay. It also offers rules for specific aspects of **Hunter** that includes investigation and socializing along with teamwork and Tactics.

Chapter Four: Rules of the Hunt

"Being brave means to know something is scary, difficult, and dangerous, and doing it anyway, because the possibility of winning the fight is worth the chance of losing it."

— Emilie Autumn, American Singer-Songwriter

This chapter contains the basic rules for playing **Hunter: The Vigil**. It also includes additional rules that expand your options when your characters take risks and work together in the name of the Vigil.

Rolling Dice

When your character is trying to accomplish something and the outcome is in doubt, you roll a number of 10-sided dice. The result of that roll determines whether your character *succeeds* and accomplishes their goal, or whether they *fail* and don't do what they set out to. Failure doesn't mean "nothing happens," just that your character doesn't get what they want and they're in for complications.

You might also score an *exceptional success* or suffer a *dramatic failure* (p. XX).

Dice Pool

The number of dice you roll depends on the action your character is taking. Most of the time, it's the value of one of your Attributes plus one of your Skills, or the value of two different Attributes put together; for example, fast-talking your way past a bouncer might be a roll of Manipulation + Subterfuge, which means you roll a number of dice equal to your Manipulation rating plus your Subterfuge rating. (Sometimes you'll roll a different pool, but those are special cases the text calls out when necessary.)

Circumstantial factors, appropriate equipment (or lack thereof), or opposition from another character can add or subtract dice from the total; see below.

The total number of dice you roll is called your *dice pool*.

The Storyteller determines the appropriate dice pool based on what you're trying to do and how you're trying to do it, using the descriptions of the various traits involved. In the above example, if you explained to the Storyteller that you weren't trying to lie your way past the bouncer but schmooze her into liking you enough to let you in, the Storyteller might revise the dice pool to Manipulation + Socialize.

Most of the actions described in this book tell you what the dice pool should be, but it's fine to come up with dice pools for other actions on an ad hoc basis. Just try to be fair and consistent — if you decide bashing down a door is Strength + Stamina in one session, it should always be Strength + Stamina unless the situation radically changes.

Roll Modifiers

Sometimes, fortune favors your character, or they're packing the right tools for the job. Other times, the odds are stacked against them or they don't have the right gear at all. The Storyteller should weigh how circumstances or equipment affect a character's chance of success and assign an appropriate *modifier*. A slight

advantage — picking an old and damaged lock — might be worth a bonus die, while a stressful situation — trying to pick a lock while people are shooting at you — might subtract three dice from your pool.

Dice Rolling Basics

• **Building a Pool:** Unless otherwise noted, a dice pool is always Attribute + different Attribute or Attribute + Skill.

• **Modifiers:** Bonuses add the indicated number of dice; penalties remove them. Unless otherwise specified, modifiers never exceed +/−5. Add all bonuses *before* subtracting penalties.

• **Successes:** Any die showing 8, 9, or 10 counts as a *success*.

• **10-again:** Any die that shows a 10 is counted as a success, then rerolled. Rerolled dice count successes as normal. Continue counting successes and rerolling as long as you keep rolling 10s.

Chance Die

If penalties ever reduce your dice pool to 0 or fewer dice, roll a single die anyway. This single die is called a *chance die*, and it follows slightly different rules.

Chance Die Basics

• **Success:** A chance die showing a 10 counts as a success.

• **No 10-again:** Do not reroll 10s on chance dice.

• **Dramatic Failure:** A chance die showing a 1 is a *dramatic failure* (p. XX).

Roll Results

Once you've rolled all the dice, counted all your successes, and finished any rerolls or other permutations, it's time to see how your character fared. On most actions, you'll only worry about whether your character succeeded or failed. Sometimes, however, the outcome of an action is more dramatic.

Roll Result Basics

• **Success:** 1-4 successes. Your character's action succeeds.

• **Exceptional Success:** 5+ successes. Your character's action succeeds *and* your character gains a beneficial Condition (p. XX). Usually, the Inspired Condition is the most appropriate. Specific actions might have additional effects on an exceptional success.

• **Failure:** 0 successes. Your character's action fails.

• **Dramatic Failure:** chance die shows a 1. Your character's action fails and something goes significantly awry. Specific actions might have additional effects on a dramatic failure. Otherwise, the Storyteller decides on an appropriate turn of events.

• **Voluntary Dramatic Failure:** Take a Beat and convert a failure into a dramatic failure, up to once per scene.

• **Risked Willpower Dramatic Failure:** 0 successes for an action on which you risked Willpower (p. XX). Take two Beats and apply the effects of a dramatic failure.

Additional Rules

These additional rules explain options that are unlocked through various Merits, Endowments, or other rules which intersect with the dice-rolling mechanics.

- **9-Again:** Reroll dice that show 9 or 10, as opposed to just 10. Keep rerolling until you get a result that isn't a 9 or 10. Certain Conditions, Merits, or other special circumstances may award you 9-again on specific kinds of rolls. If you gain 9-again on a roll that already had that quality, it becomes 8-again instead.

- **8-Again:** Reroll dice that show 8, 9, or 10 — any successful die — and keep rerolling as long as your dice show successes. Certain Conditions, Merits, or other special circumstances may award you 8-again on specific kinds of rolls. If you gain 8-again on a roll that already had that quality, it may become a rote action, at the Storyteller's discretion.

- **Extra Successes:** Assuming your roll succeeds, you get a number of extra successes added to your total. This permutation mostly applies to weapons, which add their damage bonus as extra successes on your attack roll.

- **Rote Actions:** When you've got plenty of training and the steps you need to follow are laid out in front of you, you've got a significant chance of success. When you make a roll with the rote quality, reroll any dice that do not show an 8, 9, or 10. If you're reduced to a chance die on a rote action, don't reroll a dramatic failure. You may only reroll each die once. Certain Conditions, Merits, or other special circumstances may award you the rote quality on specific kinds of rolls.

- **Successive Attempts:** When you fail a roll, you may be able to try again. Normally, you make successive attempts with your full dice pool. If time is short and the situation is tense, each subsequent attempt instead has a cumulative one-die penalty — so the third time a character tries to break down the door that's keeping her from chasing her prey, her roll suffers a −2 penalty. Successive attempts do not apply to extended actions.

- **Teamwork:** Working together is crucial for hunters fighting to overcome impossible odds. See p. XX for rules about teamwork, as well as special group actions called *Tactics*.

When to Roll Dice

You don't need to roll dice for every action you want to take. If your character isn't in a stressful situation — nobody's actively trying to tear his throat open or demolish the building as he works — you don't need to roll; as long as it's something your character could reasonably do, he just does it. As a general guideline, roll dice when a success or failure impacts the narrative.

When the dice hit the table, the Storyteller should have some idea of what happens if the roll fails or succeeds. Sometimes that's coded in the rules. If you fail on an attack roll, for example, you don't deal any damage. Other times, it's up to the Storyteller. If you fail a roll to jump between buildings to catch a group of necromancers, do you make it but fall on the other side, grab the next building by your fingertips, or plummet to the alley below?

Time

Time in the story can speed past or slow to a crawl compared to time in the real world. Weeks or months might pass in the space of few words, while a tense negotiation plays out in real-time — or takes even longer.

In addition to years, days, hours, and so on, **Hunter** also uses five units of dramatic time. These build upon one another, from shortest to longest.

• Turn — The smallest increment of time, a turn lasts for about three seconds. A character can perform a single instant action and move their Speed in a turn. Turns normally only matter in action scenes, like fights, chases, and other dramatic and stressful situations.

• Scene — Much like a scene in a play, a scene in a roleplaying game is the time spent dealing with a single, specific event. The Storyteller frames the scene, describing what's going on, and it's up to the players to resolve the event or conflict. A scene might be played out in turns (called an *action scene*), progress in real-time, or skip forward depending on dramatic necessity.

• Chapter (or Session) — A chapter is the collection of scenes that happen during one game session. From the moment you sit down and start playing to the point where you pack up your dice, you're playing out a chapter of your story.

• Story — A story tells an entire tale, following the dramatic arc of a related series of events. It might comprise several chapters or be completed in just one. It has an introduction, rising tension, a number of twists, and a climax that brings things to a conclusion.

• Chronicle — The big picture, a chronicle is the collection of interlinked stories that involve your characters. They might be linked by a common theme or overarching plotline, or they may only share characters and locations. As your story progresses, the players and Storyteller work together to create an ongoing chronicle by linking chapters together in thematic and dramatic ways.

Actions

Hunter: The Vigil rates each action by two criteria: how long it takes to attempt and whether another character opposes it. All actions fall into one category in both arenas: an action might be instant and simple (usually just abbreviated to "instant"), extended and contested, or reflexive and resisted, for example.

Actions by Time

• **Instant:** The action is resolved in a single roll. Unless otherwise noted, an instant action only takes a few seconds and takes up your *turn* in an *action scene*.

• **Reflexive:** The action takes no appreciable time or effort, and is resolved in a single roll, or may not require a roll at all. In an action scene, you can take reflexive actions on other characters' turns, and reflexive actions don't take up your turn. *Contesting* someone else's action is always reflexive.

• **Extended:** The action requires multiple rolls over time to complete; as such, an extended action is not usually an option in action scenes, unless otherwise noted.

Actions by Opposition

• **Simple:** No opposition. Calculate dice pool and roll results as normal.

• **Contested:** Calculate dice pool as normal and roll. The target rolls a dice pool specified by how they contest the action. If your total successes exceed the target's, your action succeeds; if their total successes exceed yours, your action fails. If you and your target roll the same number of successes, both of you reroll the same pools until someone comes out on top. The

exception is when hunters use teamwork; the primary actor always wins ties on contested actions in that case.

•   **Resisted:** Calculate dice pool, then apply a penalty equal to one of the target's Resistance Attributes (Stamina, Resolve, or Composure) or Defense. Roll, and calculate roll results as normal.

If you're not sure whether to use resistance or a contested action, use this guideline: Resistance applies in situations where the number of successes on the roll is an important factor. If what matters is just whether the roll succeeds or not, use a contested action. For example, combat applies Defense as a resistance because the number of successes on the roll determines how badly the attacker messes up his victim. A Tactic that traps a demon uses a contested action, because the number of successes you roll doesn't matter.

Extended Actions

Some actions require a great deal of effort over time and represent the sort of project you can abandon and resume later. Such actions are modeled as extended actions, and they're a little more complex than instant or reflexive actions.

When you take an extended action, the Storyteller determines how many total successes you require. Most actions require between five and 20 successes. Five reflects a reasonable action that competent characters can achieve with the right tools and knowledge. Ten represents a difficult action that's still realistic for a professional in the field. Twenty represents a very difficult action that even a particularly skilled character has trouble pulling off.

The Storyteller also determines the interval between rolls. If an action would take weeks to complete, she might consider one roll per week. If it's likely to take a day's work, one roll per hour makes for a solid timeframe.

Once those factors are determined, you make a number of rolls, counting up the total number of successes across all your rolls. If you earn the required number of successes before you run out of time, you accomplish your goal.

Extended Action Basics

•   **Multiple Rolls:** You roll your dice pool multiple times over the course of the action. Successes earned on all rolls count toward completing the action.

•   **Roll Limit:** You can make a total number of rolls equal to your base dice pool for the action, before factoring in any modifiers. The Storyteller may reduce this value if time is short.

•   **Time Interval:** Each roll takes a certain amount of time, determined by the Storyteller.

•   **Required Successes:** The Storyteller sets the total number of successes required for the action, usually between five and 20.

Extended Action Roll Results

These apply to each roll of an extended action. Specific extended actions may have additional effects.

Success: Add the successes earned on the roll to your running total. Work with the Storyteller to determine what steps your character takes toward his goal.

Exceptional Success: Choose one: Reduce the total number of successes required by your character's Skill dots, reduce the time interval for each following roll by a quarter, or apply the exceptional success result of the entire action when you complete your goal.

Failure: You face a setback. The Storyteller offers you a choice: Take a Condition (p. XX) of her choice or abandon the action. You can offer a different Condition if you think it makes sense. If you refuse or cannot agree on a Condition, you lose all accumulated successes.

Dramatic Failure: Lose all accumulated successes. In addition, the first roll on a subsequent attempt suffers a two-die penalty.

Use the following guidelines to decide when to call for an extended action vs. an instant action that takes a defined amount of time:

• **Time Pressure:** If the hungry ghosts manifest at dusk and the characters need to fix their car before that happens, the question of "how long does it take?" has real stakes and tension. If the characters aren't under time pressure, extended actions can feel like a lot of tedious rolling for no reason.

• **Take a Break:** Extended actions are best suited for things the character could conceivably abandon for some time and then resume later: fortifying a safehouse or researching a monster, for example. If it's something that has to be done all in one go, like preparing a magical binding ritual or casing a scene, it's probably better modeled as an instant action unless time is short.

Common Actions

The following list represents some of the more common actions characters might undertake in a **Hunter: The Vigil** game.

> **[PRODUCTION: DO A QUICK REFERENCE GRID FOR EACH OF THESE, AS IN COFD CORE P. 70]**

Argument (Instant and Contested; Intelligence + Expression vs. target's Resolve + Composure)

You try to sway someone with a rational argument. (If arguing with a crowd, use the highest Resolve in the crowd.) (See also Social maneuvering, p. XX.)

• **Success:** They accept the truth (or apparent truth) of your words.

• **Exceptional:** They're convinced and become recruits to your point of view, though they might change their minds if they find themselves at risk.

• **Failure:** They listen but are ultimately unaffected.

• **Dramatic:** You convince them of quite the opposite.

Carousing (Instant; Presence + Socialize or Streetwise)

You mix with a group, bringing fancy cocktails and flasks filled with whiskey, and use your gifts to loosen tongues and help strangers feel at ease.

• **Success:** You impress a party-goer for the night who might be willing to whisper secrets or go with you somewhere private.

• **Exceptional:** You make a friend you can contact again.

• **Failure:** You're a wallflower sipping on a drink in your hand you don't want.

• **Dramatic:** A faux pas reveals you don't belong in this social circle, and some people are wondering what you're really up to.

Fast-Talk (Instant and Contested; Manipulation + Subterfuge vs. victim's Composure + Empathy)

You may not be able to win the argument with facts, but you can try to get out of trouble with a little judicious spin.

• **Success:** The other party swallows your story.

• **Exceptional:** The other party believes you so thoroughly they're even willing to offer a little aid…though they won't put themselves at any kind of risk.

• **Failure:** The other party doesn't believe you.

• **Dramatic:** The other party has a good idea what the truth is.

Hacking (Extended and Contested; Intelligence + Computer vs. victim's Intelligence + Computer)

You overcome network security and computer passwords to gain access to digital files and resources.

• **Success:** You access the computer or network as though you had proper clearance, but you only have a short time before someone notices.

• **Exceptional:** You access the computer or network, and no one notices until you've got what you came for.

• **Failure:** You're locked out of the system and you can't access anything.

• **Dramatic:** You trip an alarm or corrupt your own flash drive beyond use.

Interrogation (Extended and Resisted; Manipulation + Empathy or Intimidation − victim's Resolve)

You try to dig secrets out of a reluctant informant. (See also Social maneuvering, p. XX.)

• **Success:** You get the information you were looking for; one piece per success rolled.

• **Exceptional:** You get the information you were looking for, and the informant is willing to continue cooperating.

• **Failure:** The informant blabs a mix of truth and falsehood — even he may not know the difference.

• **Dramatic:** The informant is so alienated or injured that he no longer reveals information.

Intimidation (Instant and Contested; Strength or Manipulation + Intimidation vs. victim's Resolve + Composure)

You try to get someone to do what you want by making them afraid of you.

• **Success:** They're coerced into helping you.

- **Exceptional:** They develop a lasting fear of you, which could make them easier to coerce in the future.

- **Failure:** They're unimpressed with your threats.

- **Dramatic:** They don't take you seriously, even if you knock them around a bit. They won't be doing what you want.

Investigating a Scene (Extended; Intelligence + Investigation)

You look for clues to what's happened in the recent past…or tidy up so that no one else can find them. (See also Investigation, p. XX.)

- **Success:** You find a clue of exactly the sort you need or manage to significantly confuse future investigators.

- **Exceptional:** You find a clue, and know exactly how it fits in, or you leave the scene immaculate and impossible to decipher.

- **Failure:** You find evidence, but it's damaged and hard to interpret. Or you miss a spot in your clean-up that you won't find out about until later.

- **Dramatic:** You find clues but you contaminate them, or you leave evidence of your presence.

Jumping (Instant; Strength + Athletics – (yards or meters of distance))

To get past an obstacle or out of danger, you leap into the air.

- **Success:** You clear the obstacle or avoid the danger.

- **Exceptional:** You may attempt another instant action in the air or upon landing.

- **Failure:** You don't achieve any significant distance at all — you jump too early, get a false start, or lose your nerve.

- **Dramatic:** The task not only fails, but you lose your balance.

Research (Extended; Intelligence + Academics or Occult)

Using your existing knowledge, you look for information on a current mystery. (See also Tactics, p. XX.)

- **Success:** You find the basic facts you were looking for.

- **Exceptional:** You find what you were looking for, which leads towards a much bigger score of information.

- **Failure:** You turn up a lot of promising leads, but they're all dead ends.

- **Dramatic:** You learn something, but it doesn't help. In fact, it sets you back. If using Occult, this could mean dangerously false assumptions.

Shadowing a Mark (Instant and Contested; Wits + Stealth or Drive vs. Wits + Composure)

You follow someone, perhaps in the hopes of ambushing them, or of finding out their destination. (See also Tactics, p. XX.)

- **Success:** You follow the mark to his destination.

*   **Exceptional:** You find some means by which you can continue following the mark, such as an unlocked entrance into the building he arrived at.

*   **Failure:** The mark senses he's being followed and manages to lose you.

*   **Dramatic:** You're caught, either by the mark or some observer that's become suspicious of you.

Sneaking (Instant and Contested; Dexterity + Stealth vs. Wits + Composure)

You're trying to avoid notice by someone, or something…or multiple somethings. Maybe you want to get into a place undetected. Maybe you're trying to break out.

*   **Success:** You avoid notice and get closer to your goal.

*   **Exceptional:** You avoid notice and get away before anyone has another chance to catch you.

*   **Failure:** You're noticed but still have the chance to slip away.

*   **Dramatic:** You attract a lot of attention…enough that now it's going to be hard to get out.

   [END QUICK REFERENCE]

Willpower

A hunter's Willpower represents their determination and ability to go above and beyond what should be possible to achieve their goals.

Spending Willpower

*   **Reflexive Action:** Unless otherwise specified, spending Willpower is a reflexive action.

*   **Roll Bonus:** Spend 1 Willpower to gain a three-die bonus on a single dice pool.

*   **Increased Resistance:** Spend 1 Willpower to gain +2 to *resistance* (see above) against a single action.

*   **Other Expenditures:** Other abilities may require Willpower expenditure, as noted under their **Cost**.

*   **Per Turn Limit:** Characters may only spend 1 Willpower per turn.

Regaining Willpower

*   **Rest:** Regain 1 Willpower after a full night's sleep.

*   **Anchors:** Regain full Willpower when meaningfully acting in accordance with your Virtue, up to twice per chapter; regain 1 Willpower when meaningfully acting in accordance with your Vice, up to once per scene (p. XX).

*   **Touchstones:** Regain 1 or full Willpower when defending your relationship with your Touchstones (p. XX).

*   **Experiences:** Spend 1 Experience (p. XX) to roll Resolve + Composure, with no modifiers. Regain 1 Willpower for each success rolled, up to your maximum Willpower. Even on a failed roll, regain 1 Willpower.

• **Risking Willpower Successfully:** Regain the Willpower you risked on a successful action *and* one more. (See below.)

• **Maximum Willpower:** Your total Willpower can't exceed your maximum (p. XX) unless otherwise indicated by a power or Condition.

Risking Willpower

Lighting a candle against the darkness isn't easy. By dedicating themselves heart, body, and soul to the Vigil, hunters can call upon reserves of dedication that far surpass anything an ordinary person can muster. Hunters who use Willpower stick their necks out, ignore the voice inside their head screaming for self-preservation, and stand up to powers beyond human ken.

A hunter's player can *risk* one point of Willpower instead of spending it to enhance a single action, once per scene. They may only do so when the action their character takes is in direct pursuit of the Vigil and carries some risk. The outcome of risking Willpower is determined by the roll results.

Examples of eligible actions include: attacking or defending oneself (or others) against a monster in a fight, interrogating a known monster's minion, sneaking into a monster's lair or a place that holds information about a known monster, resisting a monster's powers, and setting a trap for a monster.

The following actions are *never* eligible for risking Willpower:

• Perception-based actions and actions to investigate *possible* monster involvement, unless it's a Tactic.

• Avoiding ambush, resisting toxins or fatigue, and other actions to preserve the hunter's own safety at the expense of the hunt. However, protective actions on behalf of other people, such as warding someone else's house against a monster's entry, *are* eligible.

• Activating Endowments.

When a player risks Willpower, they may choose two of the following benefits to apply to a single roll:

• Gain a three-die bonus.

• Achieve exceptional success on three successes instead of five.

• Gain +1 to an attack's weapon damage bonus.

• Gain the 9-again quality.

• Remove the 10-again quality from an opponent's roll that contests yours.

• Enact a Tactic (p. XX), which counts as two benefits.

Risking Willpower Roll Results

• **Success:** In addition to the action's success, gain one Beat and regain the Willpower you risked *plus* another point of Willpower, up to your usual Willpower maximum.

• **Exceptional Success:** As success, with the action's usual exceptional benefits.

• **Failure** and **Dramatic Failure:** As the action's usual dramatic failure effects, and you gain two Beats. Your risked Willpower point remains spent.

Conditions

Conditions represent ways in which the story affects a character, and what they can do to move past those events. Players cannot "buy" Conditions; events in the game apply them and they remain until certain *resolution* criteria are met.

A character can only have one instance of a specific Condition unless each applies to a distinctly different circumstance — for example, they may be Informed about both the occult symbol he stayed up all night to research and the innerworkings of the corporation they infiltrated. Each Condition is resolved independently of each other. Various systems and supernatural powers bring Conditions into play, and the Storyteller can do so based on story circumstances.

For a full list of sample Conditions, see p. XX.

The listed resolutions for each Condition are the most common ways to end its effects; other actions may also resolve it if they would reasonably cause the Condition's effects to end. When a character resolves a Condition, the player takes a Beat. However, if a Condition has a natural time limit and then fades away without proper resolution, he doesn't take a Beat. If a Condition lingers beyond its relevance in the story, the player and Storyteller may agree to simply let it fade.

Some Conditions are marked as Persistent. These Conditions last for a long time and can only be resolved permanently with a specific and impressive effort. Once per chapter, a player may gain a Beat when a Persistent Condition impacts their character's life.

Improvising Conditions

A Condition typically consists of a modifier between +2 and −2 dice to a certain type of action, or to any action taken with a certain motivation. Conditions can also consist solely of roleplayed effects until resolution, such as the Shaken Condition (p. XX), in which the mechanical effect *is* the resolution.

A Condition resolves when the character does something significant to act on it, or when she addresses the original source. The sample Conditions in this book (p. XX) give examples of how to resolve them, but players can also resolve them following the conclusion of an event if the Storyteller feels that makes sense in the story. Resolution criteria for improvised Conditions offer a way for the Storyteller to encourage certain kinds of dramatic action, especially when they want a story point to have lingering effects on characters. For instance, a Condition that resolves when the character deals lethal damage to someone clearly reflects the violent nature of that story point.

It's best to keep the resolution criteria for a new Condition somewhat general, rather than requiring one specific action. For example, a Condition that resolves when the player commits any act of vengeance allows the player flexibility in exactly what the character does, while a Condition that resolves when the character kills a particular person restricts the player's options. More options are usually better.

Exceptional successes are the most common opportunities for creating new Conditions. When none of the given example Conditions seem to apply, or the player has an idea for a different way the momentous event affects their character, Storytellers should feel free to invent a Condition. The Storyteller can also invent Conditions whenever they want to offer Beats for

roleplaying significant behavioral or situational shifts, or for some mechanical effect that they want to impose, such as a lingering penalty.

Action Scenes

Sometimes it's useful to zoom in on the action and track movements moment by moment. Having a clear understanding of who does what in what order is useful and necessary in a game of **Hunter**, to prevent misunderstandings regarding who shot first.

Action scenes take place when multiple characters take actions in a short (or simultaneous) unit of time. To keep everyone's actions straight, they proceed by *turns* in order of *Initiative.* The most common action scenes are fights but are not limited to combat. They may also extend to tense, dramatic events where the hunters are pressured to act. These might include an escape from a burning haunted house or crumbling mine, a heist to steal a relic from a warlock's well-guarded library, or rescues to save victims trapped by their captors.

Turns

•   **What You Can Do:** On your turn, move up to your Speed and take one instant action, *or* move twice your Speed.

•   **How Long It Lasts:** A turn is roughly three seconds. If an effect says it lasts "until your next turn," it lasts until the beginning of your next turn.

•   **Order of Action:** Characters involved in an action scene take turns one at a time in order of Initiative, from highest to lowest.

•   **Cycle:** Once all characters involved in the scene have acted, the order of action returns to the character with the highest Initiative. Initiative can change from turn to turn, if for instance one character delays his action, or a supernatural power makes a character faster or slower.

Initiative

•   **Calculating:** When you come into the action scene, roll one die and add the result to your Initiative modifier (p. XX). This is the only roll in the game on which you treat the result of the die as a number rather than a success or not. Wielding a weapon inflicts a penalty to Initiative based on the type of weapon (p. XX).

•   **Delaying:** You may choose not to act when your turn comes up and instead act at any point later in the scene, even if the order of action resets. When you do act, change your Initiative to the Initiative you acted on for the rest of the scene.

•   **Surprise:** If the start of the action might take a character unawares, the Storyteller may call for a surprise roll. Roll the character's Wits + Composure, possibly contested by an opponent's relevant dice pool (Dexterity + Stealth for an ambush, Manipulation + Subterfuge if they lull you into a false sense of security, etc.). If the surprised character's roll fails, they cannot act or apply their Defense until their second turn.

Speed

Your character's Speed is the number of yards or meters they can travel in a single turn. This trait is a combination of their Strength, Dexterity, and a species factor that reflects age, physical configuration, Size, and other considerations. The species factor for a human adult is 5; that of a human child is 3.

Other species, such as horses and many monsters, have physical configurations that lend themselves to high travel rates.

Defense

Defense measures your character's ability to react to danger and mitigate harm to oneself. It's most often used when violence breaks out but is sometimes used to resist harm from other sources as well.

Defense Basics

• **Resistance:** Defense counts as a Resistance Attribute (p. XX) for any rule that interacts with Resistance (e.g. spending Willpower).

• **Multiple Hazards:** In an action scene, each time you resist an action with your Defense, you suffer a cumulative –1 penalty to Defense. This penalty goes away at the beginning of your next turn. You can choose not to resist an action with Defense; if you do, the penalty doesn't increase.

Tilts

Tilts apply temporary circumstances to both characters and the environment during action scenes. Outside action scenes, use Conditions instead.

Tilts do not grant Beats when they end, but the effects of a Tilt can easily cause a Condition. For instance, a character in a fight gets a handful of road salt flung into his eyes and receives the Blinded Tilt. When the action scene ends, this shifts to the Blind Condition. Resolving this Condition grants a Beat as usual. If the character enters an action scene again before the Condition is resolved, the Blinded Tilt applies again.

Tilts come in two forms: Personal and Environmental. Personal Tilts only apply to one character and include ways in which that character can overcome the effect. Environmental Tilts affect the whole scene and offer ways for individual characters to mitigate their effects.

For a full list of sample Tilts, see p. XX.

Violence

Few hunters avoid violence for long. Even those who prefer research to rifles come face to face with a monster eventually, and the Code doesn't like letting threats to humanity walk the streets unchecked. Protecting the innocent usually means spilling blood when the thing you're protecting them from has claws bigger than your head, and some hunters live for the kill more than anything. Hunters might even come into conflict with each other that can't be reconciled without them beating the living shit out of each other…and sometimes, other people get in the way of the Vigil, and have to be removed. Below are rules for resolving violent conflict.

Intent

Everybody wants something out of a conflict. The very first thing you need to do — before worrying about who attacks first — is determine what each character wants to get out of the fight. Boil it down into a simple sentence that starts with the words "I want:" "I want to kill that vampire," "I want the book Frances is holding," or "I want to rescue my cellmate."

Declaring Intent

• **By Violence:** Intent must be something achievable by violence within the current scene.

• **The Price:** If your intent doesn't include causing harm and your character ends up killing someone, lose one Willpower point.

Down and Dirty Combat

The Storyteller might decide your character can get what they want without focusing on the details of the fight. Maybe they're picking on a weak antagonist. Maybe the details of the fight aren't all that important. In these cases, the Storyteller can opt to use Down and Dirty Combat.

This system resolves the entire fight in a single roll. If multiple hunters have separate intents, such as one character trying to exorcise a spirit while another beats information out of a flunky, resolve each intent as a separate Down and Dirty Combat action. If the group only has one intent but multiple hunters are participating, they can use teamwork (see p. XX) on the roll. Players and the Storyteller must agree to reduce a fight to Down and Dirty Combat.

Action: Instant and contested; takes anywhere from 30 seconds to a few minutes.

Dice Pool: Combat pool (Dexterity + Firearms, Strength + Brawl, or Strength + Weaponry) versus either the opponent's combat pool (as above) *or* an attempt to escape (Strength or Dexterity + Athletics).

Roll Results

Success: Inflict damage equal to the difference in successes + weapon modifier and achieve your intent — including killing, if that was on the table.

Exceptional Success: As success and gain 1 Willpower.

Failure: You don't achieve your intent. If the opponent rolled a combat pool, suffer damage equal to the difference in successes + opponent's weapon modifier. Opponent escapes if they want to.

Dramatic Failure: The opposite of your character's intent happens, they're knocked out, or they suffer other serious consequences.

Detailed Fight Scenes

When the fight is a significant event in the story, or Down and Dirty Combat doesn't suit, these rules apply for this type of action scene.

Fight-Related Actions

The most common action in a fight is to *attack*. Characters can also *dodge* or push themselves to the limit, sacrificing Defense for greater effect.

Attack

All attack actions are instant actions. Unarmed, melee, and thrown attacks are resisted, while ranged attacks and touching an opponent are simple actions.

• **Unarmed Attack:** Strength + Brawl – Defense; bashing damage

• **Melee Attack:** Strength + Weaponry – Defense; lethal damage

• **Ranged Attack:** Dexterity + Firearms; lethal damage

- **Thrown Attack:** Dexterity + Athletics – Defense; lethal damage

- **Touching an Opponent:** Dexterity + Brawl *or* Dexterity + Weaponry; inflicts no damage.

- **Damage:** A successful attack inflicts damage equal to the number of successes rolled + weapon modifier (p. XX), if any.

- **Pulling Blows:** Set a maximum damage value up to the highest trait in your attack dice pool and grant the target +1 Defense. Your attack cannot inflict more than the maximum damage you set.

- **Offhand Attack:** Take a two-die penalty to attacks made with the character's non-dominant hand.

Specified Targets

A normal attack is aimed at the target's center of mass. You can aim for specific body parts by taking a penalty on your attack roll. Attacking a specific body part can bypass armor (p. XX) or inflict a Tilt (p. XX) on the target. Attacks against specified targets aren't a way to inflict extra damage or instantly kill people; that's covered by simply rolling a lot of successes on the attack action.

The following modifiers assume a target roughly human in size and shape. The Storyteller can adjust these for more unusual targets.

- **Arm (–2):** If damage exceeds victim's Stamina, inflicts Arm Wrack Tilt.

- **Leg (–2):** If damage exceeds victim's Stamina, inflicts Leg Wrack Tilt.

- **Head (–3):** If damage equals or exceeds victim's Size, inflicts Stunned Tilt.

- **Heart (–3):** If damage equals or exceeds 5, the attack pierces the victim's heart. This isn't instantly fatal but may have special effects against certain monsters (like vampires).

- **Hand (–4):** If the attack deals any damage, inflicts Arm Wrack Tilt.

- **Eye (–5):** If the attack deals any damage, inflicts Blinded Tilt.

Dodge

Dodging is a reflexive action, but after dodging your character loses their next turn.

- **Contested Attacks:** Attacks made against your character become contested instead of resisted until your next turn. Contest attacks with double your Defense as your dice pool, and unlike a normal contested action, your successes cancel out the attacker's successes on a one for one basis.

- **Multiple Attackers:** Apply the Defense penalty for multiple attackers before doubling. If your character's Defense is reduced to 0, roll a chance die.

- **Dramatic Failure:** Defense suffers a –1 penalty until your next turn.

Special Maneuvers

To enact any of the following instant actions, the character sacrifices their Defense until their next turn. If the character has already lost their Defense, by being surprised or attacked by enough opponents in one turn to reduce their Defense to 0, they cannot take any of these actions.

- **Charge:** Move up to twice your character's Speed and make an unarmed or melee attack.

- **All-Out Attack:** Make an unarmed or melee attack with a two-die bonus.

- **Aim:** Keep an opponent in your sights with a ranged weapon to gain a one-die bonus per consecutive Aim action on your next attack against that target, to a maximum of three bonus dice. Incompatible with autofire (below).

Other Actions

These are all instant actions.

- **Drop Prone/Stand Up:** Ranged attacks against prone characters suffer a two-die penalty but unarmed and melee attacks against prone characters gain a two-die bonus if the attacker is standing.

- **Reload a Weapon:** If rounds must be loaded individually, lose Defense until your next turn.

- **Killing Blow:** Inflict damage equal to your attack's dice pool + weapon bonus. Requires an unconscious, immobilized, or otherwise helpless target. May prompt a breaking point.

Unarmed Combat

These rules present special cases that come up when fighting without weapons.

Bite

Biting counts as an unarmed attack action.

- **Damage:** Human teeth inflict −1 bashing damage (so an attack that rolls only one success inflicts no damage). Animals and monsters may treat their teeth as weapons, with a bonus between +1 and +4.

- **Grapple Required:** Humans must first grapple an opponent to bite them.

Grapple

Grappling counts as an unarmed attack action. To start grappling, you have to grab your opponent.

- **Grab:** Make an unarmed attack. On a success, inflict no damage but start a grapple. On an exceptional success, also choose a grapple option to enact reflexively.

- **One Action:** All participants in the grapple act on the highest Initiative among them. The only action they can take is the grappling action.

- **Grappling:** Instant and contested; Strength + Brawl vs. Strength + Brawl. The character with the most successes chooses a grapple option to enact immediately, or two grapple options on an exceptional success. On a tie, the characters continue to grapple but nothing else happens.

Grapple Options

- **Break Free:** The grapple ends, and your character may take another instant action immediately.

- **Control Weapon**: Take firm hold of a weapon, either your character's or her opponent's. Lasts until your character's opponent chooses Control Weapon. Required for other grapple options.

- **Damage:** Treat the grapple action as an unarmed attack, inflicting damage equal to your rolled successes. If you have control of a weapon, this counts as a melee attack with the weapon's modifier.

- **Disarm:** Remove a weapon from the grapple entirely. Requires Control Weapon.

- **Drop Prone:** Throw all participants to the ground. Requires Break Free to stand back up.

- **Hold:** Immobilize an opponent. Both characters lose Defense.

- **Restrain:** Your opponent suffers the Immobilized Tilt (p. XX). Requires Hold. If your character uses equipment to restrain her opponent, she can leave the grapple.

- **Take Cover:** Any ranged attacks against your character automatically hit her opponent. Lasts until your next turn.

Ranged Combat

These rules apply when shooting at a moving target that can resist being shot by firing back, using Dread Powers, dodging, taking cover, etc.

Autofire

Automatic weapons can fire a short, medium, or long burst in place of a single shot.

- **Short Burst:** Uses three bullets. +1 bonus to attack action.

- **Medium Burst:** Uses 10 bullets. +2 bonus to attack action. Can attack multiple targets, up to three.

- **Long Burst:** Uses 20 bullets. +3 bonus to attack action. Can attack multiple targets, with no limit.

- **Multiple Targets:** −1 penalty per target after the first. Roll individually against each target.

Range

Ranged attacks suffer a dice penalty the farther away the target is. Ranged weapons have a short, medium, and long range listed on the weapons table (p. XX).

- **Short Range:** No penalty.

- **Medium Range:** −1

- **Long Range:** −2

Concealment

If the target of a ranged attack is partially or fully obscured, they are concealed. Concealment applies a penalty to the shooter's dice pool.

- **Barely Concealed:** −1 (hiding behind an office chair)

- **Partially Concealed:** −2 (hiding behind the hood of a car, with upper body exposed)

- **Substantially Concealed:** −3 (crouching behind a car).

- **Shooting from Concealment:** Barely concealed: no penalty; partially concealed: −1; substantially concealed: −2. You can ignore this penalty, but if so, you lose your own concealment until your next turn.

Cover

If a target's entirely hidden by a substantial object, they have found cover.

- **Tough Cover:** If the cover's Durability (p. XX) is greater than the attacker's weapon modifier, the attack can't penetrate the cover.

- **Less Tough Cover:** Subtract the cover's Durability from the attacker's damage roll. Both the object and the target take any remaining damage.

- **Transparent Cover:** If the cover is transparent (bulletproof glass, for example), subtract *half* the cover's Durability, rounding down. Both the object and the target take any remaining damage.

Covering Fire

With a weapon capable of autofire, a character can lay down covering fire to keep anyone from entering his target area.

- **Action:** Instant

- **Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Firearms

- **Bullets:** Uses 10 bullets.

- **Characters in Area of Effect:** On their next turn, they must either take cover within range of their Speed or drop prone, to avoid suffering damage equal to successes on covering fire roll + weapon modifier.

In Close Combat: Wielding a ranged weapon larger than Size 1 in close quarters grants the opponent (weapon's Size +1) as a bonus to Defense.

Shooting into Close Combat: Take a two-die penalty for each character involved in close combat with your target that you want to avoid hitting, or a four-die penalty if they're grappling your target. You can't selectively avoid targets this way with autofire.

Weapons and Armor

Weapons are one of the fastest ways to end a fight and help level the playing field between hunters and monsters. Armor keeps hunters safe and shields them from an antagonist's deadly attacks. Traits for specific weapons and armor are in the Appendix starting on p. XX.

Weapons

Ranged and melee weapons share certain common traits.

- **Type:** A weapon's type is a general classification that fits any number of specific weapons. A metal club might be a crowbar or a length of rebar, while a light revolver might be one of any number of .22-.38 caliber weapons.

- **Damage:** Added to successes rolled on attack to determine total damage inflicted.

- **Initiative:** The penalty to Initiative when wielding the weapon.

- **Strength:** The minimum Strength needed to use a weapon effectively. A wielder with a lower Strength suffers a −1 penalty on attack rolls.

- **Availability:** The cost in Resources dots or level of Social Merit needed to acquire the weapon.

Improvised Weapons

Characters who grab lamps and pool cues still stand a chance of dealing serious damage.

- **Use Existing Weapon Traits:** If it's close enough to a weapon in the chart on p. XX, use the associated weapon traits. For example, a pool cue might count as a sap.

- **Improvised Weapon Traits:** If it's not similar to a weapon in the chart, its damage modifier is (object's Durability −1); Initiative penalty and Strength requirement equal to weapon's Size.

- **Attack Modifiers:** −1 to attack roll. If successful, the improvised weapon takes the same damage it inflicts; Durability applies.

Armor

Armor provides protection against a variety of attacks and reduce damage from bullets, knives, and fangs.

Armor Basics

- **Ballistic Armor:** Each point of ballistic armor downgrades one point of lethal damage from firearms to bashing.

- **General Armor:** Each point of general armor reduces the total damage taken by one point, starting with the most severe type of damage.

- **Order of Operation:** If armor has both ballistic and general ratings, apply the ballistic armor first.

- **Minimum Damage:** When applying armor to an attack inflicting lethal damage, you always suffer at least one point of bashing damage from the shock of the blow.

Armor-Piercing Damage

Some weapons have an armor-piercing rating, usually between 1 and 3. When attacking someone wearing armor, subtract the armor piercing rating from the target's armor. Subtract from ballistic armor first, then general armor. Armor-piercing attacks in close combat subtract from general armor only.

When shooting at an object — or a person in cover — subtract the armor piercing quality from the object's Durability.

Injury and Healing

Characters can suffer three types of damage. Fists and feet, along with other kinds of low-impact trauma, deal *bashing* damage. Brass knuckles, knives, and speeding trucks deal *lethal* damage. Some horrifying powers deal *aggravated* damage. When something deals aggravated damage

directly, it's quite obvious. Flesh bubbles and sloughs away. Foaming pustules taint the victim's flesh. Blackened veins streak out from the site of the injury.

The following rules apply to humans and animals. Monsters have their own rules regarding the effects of damage (p. XX).

Suffering Damage

When a rule tells you to suffer an amount of damage, you mark off that many Health boxes, starting from the leftmost side and continuing to the right. A box marked with any kind of damage is called a *point*.

Damage Basics

•   **Bashing:** Mark bashing damage with a (/) in the leftmost empty box of the Health track.

•   **Lethal:** Mark lethal damage with an (X) in the leftmost box that is empty *or* filled with bashing damage. If you mark over bashing damage, move that bashing damage to the rightmost empty box of the track. If no empty boxes are left, that damage is overwritten but not moved.

•   **Aggravated:** Mark aggravated damage with an (*) in the leftmost box that does not already contain aggravated damage. If you mark over bashing damage, move that bashing damage to the rightmost empty box. If no empty boxes are left, that damage is overwritten but not moved. If you mark over lethal damage, move that lethal damage to the rightmost box that is empty *or* contains bashing damage. If no empty boxes *or* boxes containing bashing damage are left, that damage is overwritten but not moved.

•   **Upgrading Damage:** If your character suffers bashing damage but has no empty Health boxes in which to mark it, upgrade each point of bashing damage to lethal damage. If she suffers lethal damage but has no empty Health boxes *or* boxes marked with bashing damage, upgrade her leftmost Health box that's filled with lethal damage to aggravated damage.

Effects of Damage

•   **Wound Penalties:** If your character has any damage marked in their third-to-last Health box, they suffer a −1 penalty to *all* actions except Stamina rolls to stay conscious. This increases to −2 when their second-to-last Health box is filled, and −3 when their last Health box is filled.

•   **Unconscious:** If your character's rightmost Health box is filled with bashing *or* lethal damage, roll their Stamina every turn as a reflexive action. Failure means they fall unconscious until their rightmost Health box is empty.

•   **Bleeding Out:** If your character's rightmost Health box is filled with lethal damage, they suffers 1 lethal damage per turn until they receive medical attention (p. XX).

•   **Dead:** If your character's rightmost Health box is filled with aggravated damage, she is dead.

Example of Marking Damage

Cassidy has seven boxes of Health. She's just taken two points of bashing damage. Her Health boxes look like this:

[PRODUCTION: SEVEN HEALTH BOXES, FIRST TWO CONTAINING A SLASH]

If a vampire later bites her and deals a point of lethal damage, her Health boxes looks like this:

[PRODUCTION: SEVEN HEALTH BOXES, FIRST ONE CONTAINS AN X, SECOND AND THIRD CONTAIN A SLASH]

If Cassidy next suffered a point of aggravated damage, her Health boxes would look like this:

[PRODUCTION: SEVEN HEALTH BOXES. FIRST HAS AN ASTERISK, SECOND HAS AN X, THE THIRD AND FOURTH CONTAIN SLASHES]

Healing

Characters need time to heal once they've been beaten to a pulp. Normally, a character can heal without medical attention, though use of the Medicine Skill helps them recover (see below). The only exception is if a character has all her Health boxes full of lethal damage — they're bleeding out. they can't recover from that without urgent medical attention and emergency surgery.

Healing Basics

•	**Rightmost Box:** Natural healing only affects the rightmost point of damage. Once the rightmost box is cleared, healing time for the next-rightmost box starts.

•	**Bashing:** Clear bashing damage after 15 minutes of in-game time.

•	**Lethal:** Clear lethal damage after two days of in-game time.

•	**Aggravated:** Clear aggravated damage after a week of in-game time.

Example: Cassidy escapes the scuffle with the vampire and lays low for a while, eschewing hospitals to avoid awkward questions. Her health track looks like this at the end of the fight:

[PRODUCTION: SEVEN HEALTH BOXES. FIRST HAS AN ASTERISK, SECOND HAS AN X, THE THIRD AND FOURTH CONTAIN SLASHES]

Her rightmost wound heals first. Since it's a bashing wound, she clears it after 15 minutes. After another 15 minutes, her second bashing wound clears. Her lethal damage then heals over the course of the next two days. Finally, her aggravated wound heals over the course of the next week. In all, it takes a little over a week and two days for her to recover from her injuries.

Medical Care

Characters can use the Medicine Skill to speed up healing.

•	**Action:** Extended and simple

•	**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Medicine with a one-minute interval, for emergency treatment; Intelligence + Medicine with a one-hour interval for long-term hospital care.

•	**Benefits of Emergency Care:** Requires total successes equal to total damage the patient suffers. Successful treatment heals one point of bashing damage.

•	**Benefits of Long-Term Care:** Successful treatment downgrades one point of aggravated damage to lethal, or one point of lethal damage to bashing. Requires 10 total successes per aggravated wound, five per lethal.

•	**Long-Term Care Limitations:** Heals the leftmost injury first and can only downgrade one wound per patient per day.

Optional Rules: Beaten Down & Surrender

These optional rules only apply to people who would incur a breaking point for committing (or attempting) "murder." Monsters that don't have a problem killing people can ignore Surrender and never suffer the Beaten Down Tilt from damage taken. Hunters only abide by these rules if they suffer a breaking point (p. XX) in the process of taking damage or ignoring surrender.

• **Beaten Down:** A character who takes more than his Stamina in bashing damage or any amount of lethal damage suffers the Beaten Down Tilt (p. XX): they've had the fight knocked out of him.

• **Surrender:** A character can choose to surrender and give their attacker what they want. If your character surrenders, regain a point of Willpower and take a Beat. This signals the end of your participation in the fight. Your character's opponent must spend a point of Willpower to attack you.

If one side's intent involves violence for its own sake, their intended victims don't get Beaten Down and can't surrender. When someone wants to kill you, the only thing you can do is to try to stop them. Run like hell, unload a clip, or fight until one of you is left standing.

Sources of Harm

In addition to damage suffered in fights, characters face peril from a variety of sources. These are just a few of them.

Disease

Supernatural horrors and mundane diseases can expose hunters to sickness.

Disease Basics

• **Tilt:** During action scenes, sick characters suffer the Sick Tilt (p. XX).

• **Moderate Disease:** Outside action scenes, moderate sickness might impose a –1 or –2 penalty on actions where concentration or stamina are required.

• **Grave Disease:** Outside action scenes, grave diseases inflict a certain amount of damage at specified time intervals, as determined by the Storyteller. The sick character's player makes a reflexive Stamina + Resolve roll to resist; success means no damage this time.

• **Recovery:** Most diseases simply run their course over a certain amount of time. Others require a minimum number of successful resistance rolls, require medical intervention, or merely go into periodic remission as determined by the Storyteller.

• **Conditions:** The Storyteller may represent short-term illnesses with Conditions and long-term illnesses with Persistent Conditions, which earn players Beats whenever the illness causes significant harm or inconvenience for the character.

Poison

Whether from the sting of a venomous monster or a pinch of arsenic in the food, poison can lay even the craftiest hunter low.

Poison Basics

• **Tilt:** In action scenes, poisoned characters suffer the Poisoned Tilt (p. XX).

•	**Toxicity:** Outside action scenes, the Storyteller assigns the poison a Toxicity rating. The poisoned character suffers lethal damage equal to Toxicity. Mild poisons only inflict damage once. More severe poisons may inflict damage every hour or even every turn for a period of time determined by the Storyteller.

•	**Resistance:** The poisoned character's player rolls Stamina + Resolve – Toxicity every time the poison inflicts damage. Each success cancels one point of damage.

Drugs

Many hunters turn to alcohol and narcotics to escape the stresses of their lifestyle, and subtle menaces might drug a hunter to keep him off their game.

Drug Basics

•	**Tilt:** In action scenes, drugged characters suffer the Drugged Tilt (p. XX).

•	**Effects:** Drugs can have a wide variety of effects, ranging from dice penalties to imposing Conditions. Most drugs last for a scene, but some burn through a character's system more rapidly or linger for more time.

•	**Resistance:** A drugged character can shake off the effects temporarily by succeeding on a reflexive Stamina + Resolve roll. Depending on the potency of the drug, this roll might be required every hour, scene, or even turn.

Overdose

•	**Poison:** Characters who overdose on drugs treat the drug like a poison, with a Toxicity somewhere between 3 and 7. The drug inflicts damage once per hour.

•	**Duration:** The overdose typically runs its course after (8 – Stamina) hours, though the Storyteller may adjust that.

Electricity

Electric shocks inflict damage based on the strength of the current.

[BEGIN CHART]

SourceDamage

Source	Damage
Minor; wall socket	4B
Major; protective fence	6B
Severe; junction box	8B
Fatal; main line feed/subway rail	10B

[END CHART]

Electricity Basics

•	**Damage per Turn:** Electricity inflicts damage every turn if the current is continuous.

•	**Breaking Away:** Characters in contact with a continuous electrical current must succeed on a reflexive Strength roll to pull away.

•	**No Armor:** Worn armor provides no protection against electrocution.

Falling

In their line of work, hunters run the risk of getting shoved off rooftops by flying monsters or mind-controlled into jumping from bridges.

Falling Basics

• **Damage:** Falls of fewer than 30 yards inflict one point of bashing damage per three yards fallen. Falls of 30 yards or more inflict 10 lethal damage.

• **Armor:** At the Storyteller's discretion, armor may reduce damage from falls of less than 30 yards.

• **Reduced Damage:** If there's a reasonable way for a character to slow her fall, she makes a reflexive Dexterity + Athletics roll. Each success reduces damage from a fall of fewer than 30 yards by one point.

• **Soft Landing:** Landing in water or snow, or on another soft surface, may automatically reduce damage from falls of fewer than 30 yards at the Storyteller's discretion.

Fire

Hunters often play with fire, as it makes an effective weapon against monsters that are otherwise difficult to harm, but isn't easy to control. Fire automatically inflicts lethal damage per turn of exposure (no attack roll is required). The damage inflicted depends on both the size and intensity of the flames.

[START TABLE]

Size of Fire	Damage
Torch	1
Bonfire	2
Inferno	3

[END TABLE]

[START TABLE]

Heat of Fire	Damage Modifier
Candle (first-degree burns)	—
Torch (second-degree burns)	+1
Bunsen burner (third-degree burns)	+2
Chemical fire/molten metal	+3

[END TABLE]

Fire Basics

• **Combustion:** Exposure to fire for longer than a turn ignites anything combustible on the character; they continue to take full damage even after escaping the source of the flame.

- **Firefighting:** Fighting a fire typically requires an instant action but no roll. At the Storyteller's discretion, an action might immediately put out the fire (e.g. diving into water) or reduce its size by one level (e.g. stop, drop, and roll).

- **Armor:** Most armor can block its general rating in fire damage automatically for a number of turns equal to that rating.

- **Uncontrolled Blaze:** If an area containing flammable objects is set on fire, it may acquire the Inferno Environmental Tilt (p. XX).

Objects

Objects such as lead pipes, walls, and cars have three traits: Durability, Size, and Structure. Mostly, these relate to how easy the object is to destroy.

Object Traits

- **Durability:** How hard the object is to damage. Subtract Durability from any damage inflicted on the object. Durability has no effect against attacks that inflict aggravated damage.

[BEGIN TABLE]

Durability	Material
1	Wood, hard plastic, thick glass
2	Stone, aluminum
3	Steel, iron
+1	per reinforced layer

[END TABLE]

- **Size:** How large the object is. Objects smaller than Size 1 can fit entirely in a person's palm.

[BEGIN TABLE]

Size	Object
1	Pistol
2	Crowbar, sawn-off shotgun
3	Assault rifle
5	Door
10	Sports car
15	SUV

[END TABLE]

- **Structure:** An object's Structure equals its Durability + Size.

Damaging Objects

- **Damage:** Each point of damage removes a point of Structure. Objects do not differentiate between bashing and lethal damage.

- **Reduced Functionality:** Once it's taken more damage than its Durability, anyone using the object suffers a −1 die penalty.

- **Destruction:** When an object's Structure hits 0, it is destroyed.

- **Repair:** See p. XX for rules on how to repair damaged objects.

Equipment

Equipment, tools, and technology help to solve problems. Having the right tool for the job can mean the difference between life and death — or in **Hunter: The Vigil**, the difference between life and a fate worse than death. There is a list of sample equipment in Appendix I, starting on p. XX. This list is not all-inclusive but features many of the tools that hunters might have at their disposal.

Equipment is divided up by the Skills with which they typically assist. Mental equipment typically assists with Mental Skills, for example.

Equipment Traits

- **Availability:** The minimum level of a relevant trait a character must have to acquire the equipment with a single roll. Resources is the most often used trait, but other Social Merits or Skills may work at the Storyteller's discretion (e.g. Larceny to steal it, or Compact Status to take it out on loan from The Union's stockpile).

- **Size, Durability, Structure:** See above.

- **Dice Bonus:** The bonus the equipment adds to relevant actions.

- **Effect:** Any special rules that apply to using the equipment.

See p. XX for rules on how **Hunter** characters can build their own equipment, and p. XX for optional rules expansions for customizing gear and building monster traps.

Vehicles

A hunter may need to get across town in record time before the sun goes down, navigate rough terrain in an off-road vehicle to find the reclusive priest who can properly bless a specific talisman, or just run down a monster in the street with something that deals more damage than a bullet can.

Vehicle Basics

- **Dice Modifier:** Dice subtracted or added from the driver's Dexterity + Drive pools.

- **Size, Durability, Structure:** See "Objects," above.

- **Speed:** How fast the vehicle can safely go. Apply the vehicle's dice modifier (positive or negative) as an additional dice penalty when operating the vehicle above its safe Speed and treat all failures as dramatic failures. Penalties can't exceed −5.

- **Dangerous Maneuvers:** At safe speeds, only particularly dangerous maneuvers call for a roll; above the vehicle's safe Speed, sharp turns and other relatively common maneuvers also may require a roll. These are instant and simple actions unless characters are engaged in a chase (p. XX) or a contested action.

•   **Acceleration:** Vehicles normally increase their Speed by 5 per turn. With the High Acceleration modification, they gain 10 Speed per turn. Characters can take an instant action with Dexterity + Drive to increase normal acceleration by 5 Speed per turn.

•   **Examples and Modifications:** See Appendix 1: Equipment, starting on p. XX.

Crashes

Vehicles can crash into characters, other vehicles, or objects like lampposts and walls.

•   **Hitting Light Objects:** vehicle hits something equal to or less than half its Size. Object suffers one-tenth the vehicle's current Speed in bashing damage + half its Size (rounded down). Driver rolls Dexterity + Drive – vehicle's Dice Modifier; failure means the vehicle takes damage equal to half the struck object's Size + one-tenth its own Speed.

•   **Hitting Light Objects Deliberately:** requires an instant action with Dexterity + Drive – Defense if applicable. Add successes to damage inflicted on the victim, but not the vehicle or people inside; however, the driver must still roll again to avoid damage, as above.

•   **Hitting Heavy Objects:** vehicle hits something greater than half its Size. Both objects suffer one-half the other object's Size (rounded down) + damage based on one-tenth their relative Speeds. If the objects collide head on or perpendicularly, add the Speeds together and divide by 10; if they're moving parallel to each other, subtract the lower Speed from the higher and then divide by 10. Both drivers roll Dexterity + Drive; each success reduces vehicle damage by two.

•   **Damage to Driver and Passengers:** Damage that exceeds a vehicle's Durability is also applied to anyone in the car as bashing damage; safety equipment such as seat belts and air bags halves this damage.

Chases

A hunter may find herself running for her life when a witch calls for reinforcements or chasing down a fleeing pack of werewolves in a pickup truck rigged with silver weapons. In most action scenes, a character's Speed trait determines how much she can move. This means you can usually figure out who is faster without dice. The following rules let you turn the chase into the focus of the scene instead, adding excitement and drama.

Chase Basics

•   **Set the Terms:** By default, each party requires five total successes to prevail. Apply modifiers to this total as follows.

   [BEGIN CHART]

Circumstance	Modifier
Opponent's Speed is higher than yours	+1
Opponent's Speed is twice yours	+3
Opponent's Speed is at least 10 times yours	+5
Initiative modifier is higher than opponent's	-1
Initiative modifier is twice the opponent's	-2

Initiative modifier is at least three times the opponent's   -3

Your character knows the territory somewhat   -1

Your character knows the territory intimately   -3

Your Size is lower than your opponent's   -1

Opponent immune to fatigue +2

Actively dangerous environment   +1 to +3, Storyteller's discretion

Opponent starts with a one-turn lead +1

Opponent starts with at least a two-turns' lead   +2

   [END CHART]

•   **Determine the Edge:** Whoever has better manipulated the environment, terrain, and circumstances to his advantage based on the ever-changing situation gains the Edge, not counting circumstances listed above to modify required successes. If the character with the Edge isn't obvious, make a contested roll for each involved character using a relevant pool determined by the player, with Storyteller permission. Relevant Skills could include Athletics, Streetwise, Survival, etc. If the context of the scene changes significantly, determine who has the Edge again.

•   **Turns:** Each turn represents roughly 30 seconds to a minute of chase time. The character with the Edge rolls first. If she accumulates the requisite total successes before others have a chance to roll, she wins immediately.

> Optional Rule: Seizing the Edge
>
> In **Hunter: The Vigil**, characters often contend with foes who outclass them in sheer physical power, speed, or supernatural advantages. Introduce this optional rule if you want a chase to favor the underdog.
>
> After the side with the Edge determines the dice pool for the turn, each side predicts how many successes they will roll that turn. Write down these predictions and don't show them to anyone. After each roll, uncover that party's prediction. The first person to correctly guess how many successes they would roll gains the Edge for the next turn, regardless of contested rolls or circumstances.

Pursuit and Evasion

Both pursuit and evasion use the same chase action.

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Determined each turn by the side with the Edge, based on the current situation. You *can* use a different pool, but unless you have the Edge, you lose the 10-again quality on your roll and suffer a cumulative one-die penalty that increases each turn you don't have the Edge and use the wrong pool. These turns don't have to be consecutive.

Roll Results

Success: You overcome the immediate challenge and make headway. Add rolled successes to your running total.

Exceptional Success: As success and inflict the turn's terms of failure upon your opponent regardless of his roll.

Failure: Determined each turn by the side with the Edge, before dice are rolled. Choose from among the following: lose one accumulated success from your total, suffer two points of bashing damage or one point of lethal, or suffer an appropriate Tilt.

Dramatic Failure: As failure, and the Storyteller may impose a negative Condition as well.

Other Kinds of Chases

The chase system may also be used to represent other kinds of contests that fall outside the immediate timing of an action scene, such as tracking a monster through the woods by its trail, or as an alternative to the Social maneuvering system to finesse another character into a particular position or behavior.

Social Maneuvering

A hunter tries to banish a ghost by convincing it to let go of its obsession with its murderer. Two cells struggle to resolve their compact's desires to deal with a monster that affects both organizations. Agents from two conspiracies make equally tantalizing offers to recruit the cell, each with its own private agenda. All of these scenes are rich with potential drama and complexity, which might be undercut if they're resolved in a single throw of the dice. When you want to spotlight interpersonal relationships and conflicts that may be solved without violence, Social maneuvering is the system to use. It is a flexible set of rules that can work in tandem with other systems and offers more choices for Storytellers and players who prefer to resolve conflicts without always resorting to combat in their **Hunter** chronicles.

In a Social maneuver, you start by stating your character's *goal*. Maybe you want to convince the police chief to keep his officers out of the Tenderloin tomorrow night or get One-Eyed Jack to tell you where the Reverent Lodge of the Crow holds their sacrificial rites.

Once you and the Storyteller have agreed that the goal is reasonable, you'll have to overcome the other character's resistance by taking actions that make them more likely to agree to your terms. Successful actions open *Doors* (as in, "the door is open for further discussion," not literal doors).

How often you can try to open Doors depends on the *impression* your character makes — the more they like you, the more often you can try to sway them.

Goals

When using Social maneuvering, the first step is to declare your character's intended goal. This is as simple as stating what you want the subject to do and how your character is going about making it happen. You need only announce the initial stages, as the effort will likely occur over multiple rolls, reflecting different actions.

At this point, the Storyteller determines whether the goal is reasonable. A character might, with time and proper tactics, convince a rich person to give him a large sum of money. He probably isn't going to convince the wealthy individual to abandon *all* of his wealth to the character, though it might be possible to get him to name the character as heir, at which point the character can set about speeding up the inheritance process.

Doors

Once you've declared your character's goal, the next step is to determine the scope of the challenge. We represent this with Doors, which reflect a character's resistance to coercion: her social walls, her skepticism, their mistrust, or just his hesitance with intimacy. It's abstract and means different things in any given case.

Calculating Doors

•   **Baseline:** The subject starts with Doors equal to the lower of their Resolve or Composure.

•   **Breaking Point:** If the stated goal would be a *breaking point* (p. XX) for the subject, *and* the subject is aware of that fact, add two Doors.

•   **Aspiration:** If the stated goal is in opposition to one of the subject's Aspirations, *and* the subject is aware of that fact, add one Door. If the goal would clearly help the subject achieve an Aspiration, remove one Door.

•   **Virtue:** If the stated goal is in opposition to the subject's Virtue, *and* the subject is aware of that fact, add one Door.

•   **Adding Doors:** If things change such that the Breaking Point, Aspiration, or Virtue rules above apply during the Social maneuver, add Doors to the remaining total (two for Breaking Point, one each for Aspiration or Virtue). If your character goes back on her word during the maneuver, add two Doors.

Impression

The Storyteller sets the first impression based on any past history between the characters, the circumstances of their meeting, the nature of the favor being asked (if the acting character is asking right up front — sometimes it's a better idea not to lead off with what you want!) and any other factors she deems relevant. Most interactions default to an average impression, which makes the maneuver a long, drawn-out process. Your character can take steps to improve that such as meeting the subject at their favorite restaurant, wearing their favorite perfume, and so on. The Storyteller is the final arbiter of whether any particular action raises the impression level, but she should be open to working with the players to develop a plan.

Impression level determines how frequently you're allowed to roll to open the subject's Doors — the more they like your character, the more often you can roll. If the impression is too hostile, you might not be able to roll at all.

[BEGIN CHART: SHOULD BE ON THE SAME PAGE AS "IMPRESSION"]

Impression	Time per Roll
Perfect	One turn
Excellent	One hour
Good	One day
Average	One week
Hostile	Cannot roll

[END CHART]

Adjusting Impression

- **Favorable Circumstances:** A comfortable environment, appealing clothing, or similar pleasant situations can raise a hostile impression to average, or an average impression to good.

- **Actions:** Success on an appropriate action, like a Wits + Socialize action to create the ideal guest list for a party, can raise an average or good impression to excellent.

- **Soft Leverage:** A bribe, gift, or offer of service or payment raises the impression level one step if the subject accepts the offer.

- **Vice Leverage:** An offer that indulges the subject's Vice (or equivalent trait) raises the impression level one step if the subject accepts the offer.

Opening Doors

At each interval, you may make a roll to open Doors and move closer to your character's goal. The roll might be different each time, depending on the character's tactics. Some of the rolls might not even be social. For example, if your character is trying to win someone's favor, fixing his computer with an Intelligence + Computer roll could open a Door.

As Storyteller, be creative in selecting dice pools. Change them up with each step to keep the interactions dynamic. Similarly, consider contested and resisted rolls. Most resisted actions or contested rolls use either Resolve or Composure, or a combination of the two, but don't let that stand as a limit. Contested rolls don't necessarily require a Resistance trait. For example, Wits might be used to notice a lie, Strength to help a character stand up to threats, or Presence to protect and maintain one's reputation at a soiree.

Roll Results

Success: Open one Door.

Exceptional Success: As success and open an additional Door.

Failure: Open no Doors. Subsequent actions as part of the Social maneuver suffer a cumulative one-die penalty. The Storyteller may choose to lower the impression level by one step; if she does so, take a Beat.

Dramatic Failure: The Social maneuver fails utterly. No further rolls can be made. Any attempt to achieve the same goal must start from scratch, likely with a worse impression.

Resolution

The outcome of a Social maneuver is either success or failure. Don't confuse this with the success or failure of any particular action that's part of a Social maneuver; here we're talking about the whole thing.

Success

Once your character opens all the Doors in her path, the subject must act. Storyteller characters abide by the intended goal and follow through as stated. How they feel afterwards might vary, but they always do what you and the Storyteller agreed on.

Failure

A Social maneuvering attempt can fail utterly under the following circumstances:

- **Dramatic Failure:** The player rolls a dramatic failure on an attempt to open a Door.

- **Deception:** The target realizes that he is being lied to or manipulated. This does *not* apply if the target is aware that the character is trying to talk him into something, only if the target feels betrayed or conned.

- **Bad Impressions:** The impression level reaches "hostile" and remains so for the rest of the current story. The character can try again during the next story.

Forcing Doors

When a character just can't wait to get what she wants, she can *force* Doors open instead. This degree of urgency is high risk, high reward. Forcing Doors leads to burned bridges and missed opportunities but provides instant gratification.

- **One and Done:** Forcing Doors achieves the character's goal immediately in a single roll if successful. The roll takes a penalty equal to the opponent's Doors and the subject contests it as normal.

- **Hard Leverage:** Forcing Doors requires a threat, drugs, intimidation, blackmail, kidnapping, or other heavy-handed forms of coercion. Hard leverage that makes the character employing it suffer a breaking point removes two Doors if the base modifier would be −3 or less, or one Door if it would be −4 or higher.

- **Roll Results:** On a success, proceed to resolution as normal. On a failure, the subject is immune to further Social maneuvering from the character.

Social Maneuvering and Consent

Social maneuvering is designed to allow one character to manipulate or convince another character to perform favors or undertake actions. This system can be used for a variety of actions ranging from conning a mark or convincing a shell-shocked witness to provide them with information. It can work on groups as well.

Under a strict read of the rules, this system can also be used to seduce or abuse an intended target. A member of the Ashwood Abbey compact might seduce a vampire or a charming hunter turned slasher could lure a nurse back to their hotel room. The specific goal would be to "get that character to sleep with my character," the number of Doors is the decided, and impressions along with other factors play into the final result. This is not too different from how seduction and other, less carnal forms of persuasion actually work — the persuader tries to make the offer as enticing as possible.

The rules were designed to put the spotlight on the player and some hunters may opt to use Social maneuvering instead of resorting to violence. But, because the persuader's *player* makes the roll determining the outcome, the target is left without a way to say "no." As such, this system is intended for use by player-controlled characters vs. Storyteller characters instead of player vs. player. Storytellers are encouraged to let players make their own decisions. If one player's character wants to seduce, persuade, convince, or intimidate another's, let the players make their own decisions about what their characters do through roleplay.

Optional Rule: Negotiating Outcome

Social interactions in **Hunter** aren't always cut and dry. Sometimes, two players may want to willingly participate in a Social maneuver when one character is an antagonist attempting to undermine or thwart a fellow hunter. This modification may be used in the Slasher Chronicle

(page XX) when appropriate, provided all affected parties consent to this rule. Further, Social maneuvering does not prevent or stop a hunter from become a slasher; it can, however, slow them down.

In this situation, the characters' identities matter to the fiction; one player character is a subject and the other is the initiator. One is a hunter and the other is either a hunter turned slasher or one who's in danger of becoming one. For the purposes of this example, the subject is a hunter and the initiator is a hunter turned slasher. The slasher's goal is "come into my van alone."

First, gameplay proceeds as previously described up to the resolution stage. Once the player characters reach the resolution stage, the subject must choose a resolution:

Go with the Flow: If the subject does as requested and abides by the initiator's intended goal, their player takes a Beat (p. XX). The initiator's player does not earn a Beat. The hunter decides to go into the slasher's van alone; their player earns a Beat.

Offer Alternatives: The resolution stage proceeds as a negotiation, rather than a mandate, with two possible outcomes. The subject may choose to offer an alternative that benefits the initiator in some way. Instead of heading into the slasher's van alone, the hunter proposes they take her car instead.

This offer occurs between players and does not need to exist in the fiction — though it can when appropriate. The alternative must be truly beneficial and not a twist of intent. The Storyteller is the final decision maker to ensure the negotiation is fair. In some cases, it might make sense that one (or both) of the player characters incurs a Condition following their negotiation. Any further rules applied following the resolution are at the Storyteller's discretion; they should, however, be applicable to the fiction.

Investigation

Monsters hide their existence and predations from common awareness, lurking just beneath the everyday reality to which humanity clings. Police reports don't include the strange wounds on homicide victims' bodies that the medical examiner can't explain. People whose nightmares are more than just dreams deny anything is wrong, desperate to believe the horrors aren't real. A hunter trying to get to the bottom of these mysteries so she can get rid of what's causing them has a daunting task ahead of her — and connecting the dots can make for exciting stories.

When you want an investigation to play a large role in the tale, with entire scenes, chapters, or even stories dedicated to a single mystery, you can use this system rather than boiling it down to a single action. Characters uncover Clues they can use to benefit the later actions the investigation enables — for instance, hunters who investigate the scene of a gruesome killing to determine what kind of monster was involved can later use that information to track the monster down.

Investigation Basics

• **No Hard Answers:** The Storyteller doesn't need to come up with all the potential Clues and answers ahead of time. Letting the players fill some of them in themselves as they succeed in finding Clues gets them invested in the outcome and creates "a-ha!" moments. If players put Clues together to reach conclusions that don't match the outcome the Storyteller had in mind, she should consider changing it to match.

- **No Binary Rolls:** Failing to find information crucial to the characters' progress when players roll unsuccessfully only slows the game down to no satisfying end. Instead, the Storyteller should raise the stakes or introduce complications when a roll fails. Failure doesn't mean the players didn't find a Clue — instead, it means they miss out on extra benefits success would have afforded them and must adjust to new challenges.

- **Frame the Action:** The Storyteller can intersperse Clue-finding actions with other events in the story to keep the momentum going and give players opportunity to choose which set of heightening stakes to address first.

- **Clues:** Clues are a specialized type of equipment that represent objects, facts, and deductions. They have *elements* players can spend for benefits, either to solve a particular mystery or to stockpile for other uses: leverage in Social maneuvering, proof of supernatural influences in someone's life, etc.

Scope

First, the players declare a goal to accomplish via investigation. Decide how many total Clues the characters need to uncover to achieve their goal. For smaller-scope investigations, this usually falls between one and five Clues. For broad investigations spread out across the chronicle, the total should equal at least half the number of planned chapters and can range up to twice the number of planned chapters in an investigation-focused chronicle.

Interval

Each roll to find a Clue is an instant action but takes some amount of time based on the kind of action the players take. For instance, if a hunter cases a room from which a monster fled, it might only take a few minutes. If she's diving to a sunken ship to find a chipped goblet the monster owns, that could take an hour or more. The Storyteller can add challenges and obstacles to these attempts to turn simple die rolls into interesting scenes of their own — maybe the monster left behind a dangerous contaminant the characters must overcome to case the scene, or maybe the characters must traverse shark-infested waters to get to the ship. If they perform particularly well in these efforts, the Storyteller can offer bonuses to the roll to uncover the Clue.

Uncovering Clues

Once the characters get where they need to be, they roll to uncover the Clue.

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Varies. Players can use any pool that matches the action they take to uncover the Clue. The Investigation Skill is appropriate to case a scene or search through files and evidence, while other Mental Skills can be used to perform research, experiments, or autopsies. Social Skills can be used to interview witnesses or interrogate a monster's lackeys.

The pool suffers a cumulative one-die penalty each time the same Skill is used again in an investigation. However, if hunters use teamwork to uncover Clues, only the primary actor suffers this penalty, and only his roll contributes to further such penalties in the same investigation.

Roll Results

Success: Clue is uncovered, with one element plus one more if the character has four or more dots or a Specialty in the relevant Skill; each Specialty or Skill can only contribute to extra elements once per character per investigation.

Exceptional Success: As success, and the Clue gains one bonus element; character gains a beneficial Condition.

Failure: Clue is uncovered but incomplete: Its elements may only be used to uncover other Clues.

Dramatic Failure: Clue is uncovered but tainted. Each accumulated tainted Clue forces the player to ignore one success rolled on any future actions pertaining to the investigation; these are cumulative and all apply to each such roll. The Storyteller may impose an appropriate Condition as well.

Clue Elements

Players can spend Clue elements to add a one-die bonus per element to any roll pertaining to the investigation, including, but not limited to, rolls to uncover more Clues. A player can only spend elements from one Clue at a time, or Clues equal to her character's Investigation dots, whichever is higher. She may spend any number of elements at a time from a single Clue.

Elements from tainted Clues impose a two-die penalty when spent instead of a bonus; however, this is the only way to get rid of tainted Clues, since once all its elements are spent, it sheds its tainted nature.

Uncovering the Truth

Players don't need to roll to put their Clues together once the investigation is over. Once they accumulate the requisite number of Clues specified by the investigation's scope, the characters learn the truth.

Players may choose to uncover the truth before they've accumulated enough Clues, as long as they have at least one that isn't tainted. If they do, they still learn the truth, but the Storyteller introduces one major complication per Clue they fall short. Perhaps the monster escapes or takes a hostage. Perhaps cornering the monster would risk legal consequences or attract the wrong attention. Perhaps the monster is part of a larger group of monsters with which the hunters must now contend.

Building Equipment

While hunters can gain access to equipment of all kinds through purchase, borrowing, blackmail, or theft, some prefer (or are forced) to make it themselves. Sometimes, a hunter has to scrounge up a contraption made of duct tape and hairpins in the middle of an infiltration. Sometimes, she needs to pull together an ad hoc shotgun-toting mob before the undead horror catches wind and leaves town. If it will offer a bonus to an action, or would make actions possible that were previously not, it can be considered "equipment," and you can build it.

Equipment Types

• **Physical Objects:** the most common type. Items listed in the Appendix (p. XX) are physical objects, as are weapons and armor. Creative works also fall into this category.

- **Organizations:** small groups of people assembled to address a particular need, like a cadre of bodyguards or research assistants. Organizations built as equipment disband after one chapter unless purchased as Merits afterward.

- **Repositories:** collections of research materials and information sources on a particular topic, like a library of books, a database, or an assortment of security footage. This reflects gathering materials for repeated future use, not benefiting from an existing source. Repositories linger; if you purchase the Library Merit (p. XX) for a repository your character built, it stacks with the equipment bonus, to a maximum of +5.

- **Plans:** abstracted plans that orchestrate complex encounters with specific goals involving multiple people, like heists or rescues. A plan grants its bonus to all participants but ceases to exist when the endeavor succeeds or definitively fails. Plans can't grant bonuses to Tactics, as they are already plans.

- **Mystical Equipment:** anything that carries minor supernatural potency, such as a circle of protection using salt and bone, a protective amulet, or a werewolf trap made of silver.

Build Equipment Basics

- **Scope:** Build Equipment actions never take longer than the time between one scene and the next. If it can't reasonably be built in a few hours or less, the character needs to acquire it another way.

- **When to Roll:** If the character has plenty of time, isn't under any duress, and has dots in the relevant Skill equal to the equipment bonus a standard example would provide, don't roll. If the character is under pressure or in danger, roll. Likewise, if she's trying to build something beyond her casual expertise — i.e., something with an equipment bonus greater than her dots in the relevant Skill, something with higher traits than the standard example, or something the Storyteller determines is too complex — roll.

- **Built-In Penalty:** The roll always suffers a penalty equal to the intended equipment bonus. Each other intended benefit, like a new function, an increased trait, or access to a resource, counts as a one-die bonus for this purpose, as well as to determine whether to roll in the first place. Weapons impose a penalty equal to their weapon modifier; armor imposes a penalty equal to its highest armor rating (general or ballistic). Penalties can't exceed −5.

- **Requirements:** The Storyteller may require the use of Resources, Contacts, or other Merits, or a separate research action, to reflect extra effort necessary before you can roll. This should only apply to enhance the drama of the story or introduce interesting plot elements to the action.

These rules don't replace the need to discover a creature's weakness before creating ritual equipment to bind or ward against a particular monster; the best you can do is an equipment bonus or minor benefit without that information. See p. XX for how to use Tactics for more powerful rituals.

- **Time:** ranges from a few minutes to a few hours, but the important factors are whether you finish before something else happens, and what else happens in the meantime.

During an action scene, a Build Equipment action takes a number of turns equal to the built-in penalty; the Storyteller may rule that something can't be built during an action scene.

Build Equipment Action

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Determined by the type of equipment. Wits + Crafts for physical objects, or Wits + Expression for creative works; Presence or Manipulation + Socialize or Streetwise for organizations; Intelligence + Academics for repositories; Wits + Occult for mystical equipment; Wits + Composure for plans. The Storyteller or player can suggest alternatives if appropriate.

Roll Results

Success: You build the equipment.

Exceptional Success: As success and add one equipment bonus die or other benefit; bonuses still may not exceed +5.

Failure: You build the equipment, but it carries the Fragile (p. XX) or Volatile (p. XX) Condition.

Dramatic Failure: You fail outright and suffer a consequence at the Storyteller's discretion, such as taking damage from an explosive reaction, suffering a Condition like Leveraged or Embarrassing Secret, or leading a supernatural threat directly to your location.

Improvise

When you're dangling from a grappling hook 30 feet above the cold concrete with an angry vampire on your tail, you don't have the luxury of time. That Molotov cocktail you're mixing gets done now or never. That's where improvising comes in.

Improvising always takes place in action-scene timing.

Action: Instant; takes one turn

Dice Pool: Same as above. The Storyteller may rule that some equipment is too complex to be improvised.

Roll Results

Success: You build the equipment, but it carries the Fragile (p. XX) or Volatile (p. XX) Condition.

Exceptional Success: You build the equipment.

Failure: As dramatic failure.

Dramatic Failure: You fail outright and suffer a consequence at the Storyteller's discretion, such as taking damage from an explosive reaction, suffering a Condition like Leveraged or Embarrassing Secret, or leading a supernatural threat directly to your location.

Repair, Modifications, and Upgrades

A character may want to fix or alter a piece of equipment that already exists. These actions usually only apply to physical objects, though exceptions are possible.

These rolls use the normal Build Equipment action, with the following exceptions:

Repair, Modification, and Upgrade Basics

- **Built-In Penalty:** equals the *difference* between the object's current state and the bonus or benefits the player wants to add. Broken objects are considered to have an equipment bonus of 0. Partially functional objects may have a bonus only one or two dice lower than their usual bonus. For instance, if a computer would normally grant +2 to research rolls but won't start and is therefore currently at a 0, the roll to repair it would suffer a −2.

- **Increased Traits and New Functions:** treat each modification or upgrade as a +1 equivalent. You can replace one function with another at no penalty — for instance, reversing the function of a walkie talkie to cause interference instead of receiving signals.

- **Modifying Vehicles:** see p. XX.

- **Customizing Gear and Traps:** see p. XX.

Taking Your Time

You may build equipment as an extended action instead; you'll take no built-in penalty to any of the rolls. Instead, the target number of required successes equals the total intended bonus and benefits of the equipment +1.

Typically, players do this to avoid taking large penalties for complex equipment, or when they have small dice pools to begin with and don't want to risk a chance die. The Storyteller determines the time between rolls as usual. Overall success and failure work as normal for the Build Equipment action.

The Storyteller may also allow a player to build equipment that normally lies beyond the scope of this system, such as a car or a business, with an extended action. In this case, the time between rolls and total successes required should match the effort involved. Building a car may take a week between rolls and require 15 total successes, for example. Storytellers should keep in mind, however, that it's usually much easier to acquire such equipment in other ways, like stealing or purchasing a car, or using Social maneuvering to convince a potential business partner to take the bait. As a result, building this kind of equipment with extended actions should only be done if the player really *wants* to make it from scratch.

Teamwork and Tactics

A living nightmare of teeth and whirling shadows lunges for a lone hunter when they least expect it. Without backup, a solitary hunter is vulnerable and often finds themselves in mortal danger. When the shit hits the fan, hunters must find a way to uphold the Vigil. When they don't, they're in danger of falling into despair, taking dangerous risks, or becoming so corrupted they're no better than the monsters themselves. Even hunters who hate each other grudgingly acknowledge they must set aside their differences when it matters. Otherwise, they're easy prey for the darkness.

Hunters have two ways to work together. The first is *teamwork*: one person performs a single action, like breaking down a door or researching Bloody Mary, and the others help. The second is with *Tactics*. A Tactic is a specialized group action that is usually more complex than a single action. Tactics allow participants to roll dice in pursuit of a specific, desired outcome.

Teamwork

When two or more characters wish to help unravel a clue, break into a safe, or pick a lock, one person takes the lead. That character is the *primary actor*, and others who wish to help are called *secondary actors*.

To use teamwork, the following steps must occur in order:

• Primary actor assembles their dice pool.

• Secondary actors assemble their dice pools to match the primary actor's.

• Secondary actors roll dice.

• Primary actor rolls their dice pool. Secondary actors' roll results are then added or subtracted.

• Primary actor's roll results are calculated as normal.

While there are no prerequisites for teamwork, remember Skills are not interchangeable. The Skills in the roll *must* match for all participants; the primary actor sets which Skills they want to use. Each success from a secondary actor gives the primary actor a bonus die. If one of the secondary actors rolls a dramatic failure, the primary actor takes a four-die penalty.

Tactics

A hunter alone may not have what it takes to deal with a situation, no matter how well-prepared or trained he may be, but with several highly trained professionals working together, there is little they can't get done. Tactics are not just teamwork actions professionals can use, but instead represent self-contained group activities that require coordinated training and specialized instruction.

Only hunters can use Tactics, as learning them requires the cell to work together regularly to perfect the technique. They allow hunters to accomplish larger-scale goals using different dice pools by leaning on each other's strengths. Each Tactic is unique. Some have prerequisites that shape the dice pools and what the outcome might be. Others only function in specific situations, or may fail, even when successful, depending on the monster. Any hunter may choose to participate in any Tactic, but *only* hunters can. Many Tactics are designed for use in desperate or otherwise-impossible situations to save the day. A cell tracked a venom-spitting humanoid back to its lair and wants to corner the monster. A group found a nest of slimy, oozing eggs and plans to burn them. Tactics allow hunters to face the darkness because they're putting their faith in a leader and upholding the Code *together*.

> Teamwork Vs. Tactics
>
> Teamwork draws on similarities between hunters, while Tactics allow any hunter to participate. While Tactics do not necessarily involve a monster, in many cases they will — unlike teamwork. Tactics also exist as a tool to do something one hunter could not typically accomplish by themselves, whereas teamwork increases the chance for a single action's success.
>
> Storytellers should note that increasing threat levels may incur a greater desire for team-based actions, and Tactics are a great way of facilitating a possible win.

Tactics work similarly to teamwork actions with the following notes:

• **Risking Willpower:** To perform a Tactic, the primary actor must risk a Willpower point (p. XX) on its outcome, and they do so before anyone makes any rolls. Once the Tactic begins, the group must follow it through to its end, even if it goes horribly awry in the middle. Enacting the Tactic takes up both benefits of risking Willpower for the primary actor. All usual roll results for risking Willpower apply. Secondary actors may risk Willpower normally on their rolls if they wish.

• **Participants:** For a Tactic to work, multiple hunters are required. However, sometimes the number of players isn't enough. Storytellers are encouraged to be flexible during gameplay when a cell comes up short. Should more characters be required, consider adding Storyteller characters as secondary actors to round out the difference. Then, let the players roll dice for any additional secondary actors to complete the Tactic.

• **Multiple Moving Parts:** The secondary actors in a Tactic each perform their own actions, meaning they roll their own dice pools based on what they are doing rather than the same dice pool as the primary actor.

• **Initiative:** If a Tactic takes place during an action scene, all participants must delay their actions to the lowest Initiative among them so they can all act at the same time.

• **Time and Place:** Tactics aren't supernatural powers and don't automatically function if the situation doesn't allow it. For instance, Controlled Immolation doesn't work if the target is immune to fire, or if the environment is soaked in gasoline, and the primary actor requires a method to set the fire in the first place. Hunters work to set up situations that make their best options viable. If the characters enact a Tactic and discover through doing so that it was never possible to begin with — e.g. they didn't know the monster was immune to fire or the place was soaked with gasoline until after they used Controlled Immolation — the Tactic automatically fails.

Tactics Overview

The following is a view of what you will find in every Tactic description.

Requirements: Some Tactics have basic requirements the participants must meet to perform without penalty, such as a minimum number of dots in a particular Skill or Merit, or a type of Specialty. A participant without these requirements suffers a −1 for each dot or Specialty that falls short, in addition to suffering from any untrained penalties, on their roll.

In some cases, the requirements include a required action or presence of a circumstance, such as "target must be injured" or "during an investigation for Clues."

Action: Each Tactic specifies the type of action it uses; some Tactics may give options.

Dice Pools: Each Tactic includes a list of its dice pools for the primary and secondary actors, with a note in parentheses to indicate which roll goes with which action. Numbers in the parentheses after a listed pool for secondary actors denote the minimum and maximum number of participants for that pool. For instance, Dexterity + Firearms (1/2) means that one participant must use Firearms for the Tactic to work, but more than two using Firearms won't contribute any dice to the primary actor's roll.

Occasionally, an optional dice pool is included for secondary actors whose successes don't contribute dice to the primary actor's pool; instead, they grant the Tactic some other benefit,

noted under the roll results. These optional pools include (ND) in parentheses after the listed roll, meaning "no dice."

Primary Actor Roll Results: The roll results given for each Tactic generally affect the primary actor only. Secondary actors abide by the usual roll results for teamwork, given above, unless otherwise noted.

> For the Player: Tactics, Teamwork, and Endowments
>
> Tactics are all-hands-on-deck plans to perform a specific action, usually during a hunt. Teamwork, on the other hand, represents a considered effort to complete a task among similarly-skilled characters. Endowments are unique gifts a tier-three conspiracy grants to each, individual hunter as rewards for their service and status in the organization.
>
> Teamwork and tactics are group undertakings that carry more risk than a typical action and reflect cell members' natural desire to help one another. Action-related Endowments are tied to a specific hunter just like any other Endowment that does not require a roll. As such, only that hunter may utilize their conspiracy's blessings when a situation calls for it. If two hunters possess the same Endowment, they simply make two separate die rolls (or actions) if necessary.

Mental Tactics

The following Tactics use primarily Mental Attributes and Skills or are useful in primarily Mental contexts.

Bind/Ward

Hunting a spirit, a ghost, or a demon isn't as straightforward as shooting a monster with silver bullets; it requires arcane lore and a way to pin down the incorporeal or keep it out of a cell's safehouse.

Secondary actors gather the necessary materials and prepare runes, talismans, and rites in prescribed ways, marking out the desired area — drawing a binding circle, for instance, or lines of salt across doors and windows. Once the hunters have the monster where they want it, the primary actor finishes the job with the right kind of chanting or ritual actions, either trapping the foe within a particular area or warding a place against its entry. These materials and rituals vary depending on the specific entity; the hunters must learn what they are, per the Tactic requirements below.

This Tactic doesn't ensure the monster enters or leaves the desired area once the characters have prepared it; that requires other actions, or Tactics such as Corral or Lure.

Requirements: Primary actor: Occult 2. Secondary actors: Occult *or* Crafts 1. The characters must already know a weakness the creature has that can be used to bind or ward against it, and its identity if it's unique. If their information is wrong, the Tactic fails.

Action: Contested: Each secondary actor's roll requires 15 minutes to prepare the area. The primary actor's roll is Instant and Contested.

Dice Pools: Primary: Presence + Occult − Potency (for monsters) or Rank (for ephemeral entities). Secondary: Intelligence + Occult (preparing the area, 1/2); appropriate Attribute + Skill

roll or possessing dots of an appropriate Merit equal to or exceeding Availability (procuring required materials, 1/3).

The primary actor's roll may be modified by the size of the area being warded:

[TABLE]

Area	Modifier
Small area within a location, up to a six-foot area	+1
Single room, a vehicle	0
Two story, suburban building	−1

[END TABLE]

Larger structures levy increasing penalties; an additional −1 for every equivalent of a family home. Most superstructures, like skyscrapers, trains, government buildings, and hospitals are too large to be effectively warded.

Roll Results

Success: The ritual binds the monster within the confines of the area or prevents it from entering a warded location for a number of days equal to successes rolled. The monster can't break the binding or ward no matter what, but someone else can by disrupting the proscribed area.

Exceptional Success: As success, and the binding or ward lasts for an extra day.

Failure: The hunters fail to perform the Tactic.

Dramatic Failure: The monster disrupts the proscribed area before the ritual is complete or is too powerful for the hunters to contain. It may immediately use an automatically successful supernatural power without paying its cost or inflict a Tilt on a character or the environment.

Identification

Hunters must take care not to jump to conclusions about a potential monster too quickly, lest they accidentally murder an innocent human being. With careful observation, they can make a definitive call without having to show up on someone's doorstep and douse her with holy water when she comes to the door.

The secondary actors tail the target, collect evidence, and perform research. Then, the primary actor puts it all together.

If a secondary actor fails dramatically, the target captures or compromises that actor in some way in addition to the usual effects.

Requirements: Primary actor: Occult 2.

Action: Contested: Everyone must spend one hour researching or putting information together before rolling.

Dice Pools: Primary: Intelligence + Occult vs. Manipulation + Subterfuge + Potency. Secondary: Wits + Investigation (collecting evidence, 1/3, or 0/3 if someone tails the target); Wits + Stealth (tailing target, 1/1, or 0/1 if someone collects evidence); Wits + Occult (research, 0/3).

Roll Results

Success: The hunters discern whether the target is an ordinary human, a hunter, or a supernatural creature; if the latter, they learn the type of creature. They also learn one of the following about the target: one Anchor, one Aspiration, the location of her lair or home, or the identity of one character important to her. All participants gain the Informed Condition regarding the target.

Exceptional Success: As success, but players learn two specific pieces of information.

Failure: The hunters fail to learn anything.

Dramatic Failure: The target becomes aware of the investigation and takes one group of secondary actors by surprise with an ambush, an automatically successful supernatural power, or a disadvantageous circumstance.

Monster Lore

Too often, the information hunters need to prevail against their foes is badly diluted by urban legends and pop culture or hidden in forbidden tomes that haven't seen the light of day since their writers perished centuries ago. Even monsters that loom large in the public imagination, like vampires, usually don't follow the rules everybody "knows," and a hunter who relies on television for his lore is usually a dead hunter.

The secondary actors call in favors, consult with experts, locate hard-to-find resources, and shake down information brokers in the supernatural underground. Then, the primary actor hits the books and finds the key to stopping the threat. Each roll represents one hour of work.

Requirements: Secondary actors: 2+ in a relevant Social Merit, such as Contacts or Compact Status. Characters must research a specific type of monster.

Action: Extended: Successes required are 2x the monster's Potency.

Dice Pools: Primary: Intelligence + Occult. Secondary: Presence or Manipulation + Socialize (calling in favors/consulting with experts, 0/3); Resolve + Academics, Investigation, or Computer (tracking down rare resources, 1/3); Strength or Presence + Intimidation or Streetwise (interrogation, 0/2)

Roll Results

Success: For each successful roll within the extended action, the hunters learn one weakness the creature type in question generally possesses, one common Dread Power or other capability it usually has, or one piece of information about where it comes from and how it came to be. This doesn't grant information about a *specific* monster unless it's the only one of its kind. The primary actor gains the Informed Condition about the monster type.

Exceptional Success: As success, and the hunters learn one additional piece of information. They also learn whether a specific monster they're hunting follows the usual pattern or not, but it requires further investigation to find out how it differs.

Failure: The hunters fail to learn anything useful about the monster.

Dramatic Failure: The information the hunters discover is not only wrong but will lead to catastrophic results when used.

Profiling

Some monsters crawled out of malefic hellholes or were built by human hands, but many were once human themselves. Others have mortal minions whom savvy hunters can exploit, or cover

stories that give them false human identities. Those who can uncover dirt on who a monster or its lackeys really are and where they came from has leverage to use against them.

Secondary actors talk to witnesses, hack into databases, take incriminating photos, or dig into public records to collect information, and then the primary actor uses the gathered intel to profile the target and match it up to a human identity. It could be that of a monster's previous life or its current fake persona, or it could be someone who works for the monster — whichever is most relevant to the characters' goals.

At least two secondary actors must participate, and at least one must perform a non-research action. If a secondary actor fails dramatically, the target captures or compromises that actor in some way in addition to the usual effects.

Requirements: Primary actor: Empathy 2 and Investigation 2. Secondary actors: 2+ in the Skill used for the Tactic. Characters must already have basic knowledge of the target, such as from casing a crime scene or personal interactions.

Action: Contested: Everyone must spend one hour researching or putting information together before rolling.

Dice Pools: Primary: Intelligence + Investigation vs. Wits + (Subterfuge or Investigation) + Potency. Secondary: Presence or Manipulation + Persuasion (talking to witnesses, 0/2); Intelligence + Computer (hacking, 0/2); Wits + Stealth or Expression (taking photos, 0/1); Intelligence + Academics or Occult (research; 1/3)

Roll Results

Success: The hunters profile a monster and pinpoint a human identity associated with it, as above. They learn the following about the monster: its Anchors, one of its Aspirations, its Potency, and the rating of one of its Mental or Social traits (players' choice).

Exceptional Success: As success, and the players may ask one yes or no question of the Storyteller regarding what the target is likely to do next and receive an accurate answer.

Failure: The hunters fail to gather information.

Dramatic Failure: The monster catches wind of the investigation and deliberately plants false information, pointing the hunters definitively to the wrong person. The monster also learns information about one of the secondary actors as though it had successfully profiled her.

> Tactics and Investigation
>
> Tactics such as Identification, Monster Lore, and Profiling may be regarded as a shortcut in an investigation, since they take less time and effort than using the full-blown investigation system (see p. XX). This is by design; a Tactic is a risky gamble a cell can take to cut to the chase more quickly in exchange for potential dire consequences. Use the full system for larger and more complex mysteries, or when the characters want to play it "safe" (at least, more so). Use these Tactics for smaller, more focused investigations, or when the characters are ready to throw caution to the wind for a chance at pay dirt.

Sweep

Sneaking into monster lairs to find human hostages or steal powerful tomes from vampiric scholars is risky business. A cell needs to sweep the perimeter and meticulously check room by room to make sure no nasty surprises await them, both swiftly and thoroughly.

Secondary actors ensure access to every nook and cranny of the area, kicking down doors or picking locks, and uncover any hidden passages or cubbyholes where a monster could be lying in wait. Then, the primary actor does a final sweep to make sure the area is clear — and if it isn't, to clear it out by any means necessary or make sure everyone escapes with their limbs intact.

Action: Instant or Contested

Dice Pools: Primary: Wits + Composure. If one or more foes lie in wait in the area, each one contests the roll with Wits + Stealth + Potency. Secondary: Strength + Athletics or Dexterity + Larceny (opening portals, 1/5); Wits + Investigation or Survival (spotting hiding places/traps, 0/5)

Roll Results

Success: If the area is clear, the characters confirm this and need fear no ambushes or traps for the rest of the scene; the primary actor gains a +2 equipment bonus to any rolls to investigate the area. If not, the characters avoid any trap they come across, find anyone hidden in the area, and gain +2 to Initiative, Speed, and Defense for the first turn of any action scene that ensues.

Exceptional Success: As success, but the dice bonuses are +3 instead.

Failure: The characters find nothing of note.

Dramatic Failure: The characters miss something crucial — a trapdoor with zombies behind it, a monster behind a curtain, a trap they spring in their haste, or a prisoner they mistake for an enemy. Every foe present gets a surprise attack or other immediate advantage, such as grabbing an allied Storyteller character to use as a hostage or escaping without the possibility of pursuit. If a trap is present, the primary actor springs it and falls prey to its effects. If a prisoner or other ally is present, the primary actor makes an attack against them, ignoring Defense.

Physical Tactics

The following Tactics use primarily Physical Attributes and Skills or are useful in primarily Physical contexts.

Called Shot

Some monsters have particular weaknesses that require unwavering accuracy and a good, clear shot to strike. Others have claws, fangs, or bestial speed that give them the edge while standing toe to toe; taking them out first is a hunter's best chance to even the playing field. Either way, a cell can work to set one among their number up for the perfect blow.

The secondary actors bait the target into exposing the crucial part of its body and then tackle it to hold it in position. Finally, the primary actor takes the shot, whether with a hand-held weapon or a ranged one.

The primary actor takes the usual specified target penalty to his roll in addition to the target's resistance, as noted on p. XX.

Action: Resisted

Dice Pools: Primary: Strength + Weaponry or Dexterity + Firearms − target's Defense. Secondary: Manipulation + Persuasion or Subterfuge (baiting, 1/2); Strength + Brawl (tackling, 1/2)

Roll Results

Success: The opponent suffers the appropriate Tilt for a successful hit on the specified target, and the hunter's attack deals damage as normal with a +1 to his weapon modifier. The target takes a penalty to Initiative equal to the number of participants for the rest of the scene.

Exceptional Success: As success, and the Storyteller offers an immediate surrender in exchange for a non-lethal outcome to the scene. If the players accept, the Tactic's target submits to whatever fate the hunters choose that can be enacted within the current scene, such as capture or giving something up, as long as it doesn't involve further violence against the target.

Failure: The target evades the attack.

Dramatic Failure: The target twists or ducks at the last minute, and the primary actor makes a reflexive attack against the secondary actor closest to the target, ignoring Defense.

Capture

Hunters may wish to capture a monster rather than kill it, for any number of reasons. It's dangerous, but worth the risk — hunters can force a captive monster to provide information or perform services, use it as a hostage or lab specimen, or harvest it for parts.

The secondary actors corner the target and wrestle it to the ground, so the primary actor can secure it with rope, chains, a metal box, or whatever else is on hand.

Action: Contested

Dice Pools: Primary: Dexterity + Survival or Crafts vs. Dexterity or Strength + Athletics, or Brawl + Potency. Secondary: Wits + Athletics (cornering, 1/3), Strength + Brawl (wrestling, 1/3)

Roll Results

Success: The target suffers the Immobilized Tilt and takes a penalty equal to the number of participants to attempts to break free.

Exceptional Success: The target cannot attempt to break free at all for the rest of the current scene.

Failure: The target evades capture.

Dramatic Failure: The target breaks free, ruining whatever the characters tried to capture it with, and makes a reflexive attack on the nearest hunter, who loses Defense. Alternatively, the target fools the participants into thinking it's restrained, and may break out at any time.

Controlled Immolation

Fire is a staple weapon in a hunter's arsenal. It is a primal force that lights, warms, purifies, and destroys with primal abandon — the bane of many creatures that otherwise defy harm. Unfortunately, fire burns hunters, victims, and their gear, too. Controlling a blaze to target a monster without causing an accident requires bold and decisive action.

The primary actor sets the monster on fire and keeps it burning. Some secondary actors ensure it doesn't escape, while others keep the flames from spreading to other flammable objects (and people) in the area.

Action: Contested

Dice Pools: Primary: Stamina + Firearms or Athletics vs. Stamina + Athletics + Potency/Rank. Secondary: Wits + Weaponry or Brawl (contain the monster, 1/4); Wits + Survival or Science (contain the blaze, 1/5)

Roll Results

Success: Target is set on fire at the bonfire level, with torch-level intensity (see p. XX), and suffers the Blinded Tilt (p. XX). The flames don't spread beyond the target, and the target cannot put them out, no matter what it does. The hunters may continue to make the contested teamwork roll each turn to keep the Tactic going; as soon as the primary actor fails a roll or anyone decides to stop, the Tactic ends and the fire goes out immediately.

Exceptional Success: The monster remains on fire even after the hunters end the Tactic and must douse the flames in usual fashion.

Failure: The monster puts itself out.

Dramatic Failure: The monster is not set on fire, and all flammable objects in the immediate vicinity combust instead, giving the area the Inferno Tilt (p. XX).

Corral

Forcing giant, albino alligators to steer clear from snatching New Yorkers or head straight for a trap is no mean feat. Whether they're targeting an unusual cryptid or not, hunters must figure out what the monster fears to temporarily control their movement.

The primary actor threatens the monster, causing it to move in a specific direction at its full Speed. Some secondary actors ensure the monster has nowhere to hide while others herd it toward a dead end or trap.

Action: Contested

Dice Pools: Primary: Strength or Manipulation + Intimidation vs. Composure + Empathy + Potency/Rank. Secondary: Wits + Composure (keeping target in sight, 1/5); Manipulation + Subterfuge or Survival (herding target, 1/3)

Roll Results

Success: Target goes where the hunters wish. If it takes more than a turn to get there, the hunters must continue to make the contested teamwork roll each turn to keep the Tactic going until either the target arrives, the primary actor fails a roll, or anyone decides to stop. If the target arrives, the players may declare that something reasonably likely happens when it gets there, such as the monster opens a particular door or loses line of sight to someone in another room.

Exceptional Success: The hunters surround the monster upon arrival and may choose one character to take an immediate instant action regardless of Initiative.

Failure: The hunters lose track of the monster.

Dramatic Failure: The monster catches wind of the ruse. It may take an action immediately, regardless of Initiative, even if it has already taken one before Initiative resets.

Harvest

Not all hunts are about the kill. Hunters who want to study their prey or claim supernatural advantages for themselves need to harvest samples from monsters in the field, and few monsters sit quietly for the syringe.

The primary actor collects the sample, while some secondary actors hold the monster still and others provide the necessary knowledge to ensure they collect what they need.

Requirements: Any actor: Occult 2. Any actor: a Specialty related to the target's monster type in any Skill.

Action: Contested

Dice Pools: Primary: Dexterity + Medicine vs. Strength + (Athletics or Brawl) + Potency. Secondary: Strength + Brawl (restraining, 1/3); Intelligence + Occult (knowledge, 1/2 or 0/2 if characters have previously researched the monster)

Roll Results

Success: The primary actor collects one sample — they yank out a fang, extract a vial of blood, cut out a venom sac, etc. The hunters may continue to make the contested teamwork roll each turn to keep the Tactic going and collect another sample per additional turn. As soon as the primary actor fails a roll or anyone decides to stop, the Tactic ends. The primary actor gains the Informed Condition regarding the creature.

Exceptional Success: As success, but the hunters may also either collect a number of samples on the first turn of the Tactic equal to the total participants, or fully restrain the monster, inflicting the Immobilized Tilt.

Failure: The monster eludes the hunters.

Dramatic Failure: The monster lashes out at the primary actor, inflicting the Stunned Tilt, and automatically escapes any grapple or restraints.

Lure

Setting traps to turn the tables on would-be predators is useless without bait. Hunters who want to lure a monster out of hiding or to a particular location use this Tactic to make use of hard-won knowledge.

One secondary actor presents — or is — the bait, while others draw the target in with rituals or clever word of mouth, and carefully hide the ruse. Once they're ready, the primary actor drops the other shoe.

Requirements: Any actor: Occult 2. Characters must know something about the target they can use to entice it, such as an Aspiration, a weakness, or a favored type of victim.

Action: Contested: The primary actor's and baiting secondary actor's rolls take their actions, while other secondary actors' rolls take half an hour each

Dice Pools: Primary: Wits + Composure vs. Wits + Composure + Potency; Secondary: Presence + Persuasion or Subterfuge (bait, 1/1); Manipulation + Occult or Streetwise (drawing target in, 1/2); Dexterity + Larceny (concealing lure, 0/2)

Roll Results

Success: The target falls for the ruse or is drawn to the hunters by arcane rites, and comes to a place of their choosing, taking the bait. If the primary actor springs a physical trap, she automatically catches the monster. If she attacks, she takes it by surprise (p. XX). Other actions should similarly have their desired effects as long as they only take one turn; for instance, she may snap the perfect photo that proves the monster's existence or tear away a tarp to let in sunlight. However, the character who offered the bait remains within arm's reach of the monster — inside the trap, if they spring one.

Exceptional Success: The hunter who presented or posed as bait manages to get out of the trap or line of fire, and the monster can't target him for a full turn.

Failure: The monster does not fall for the ruse.

Dramatic Failure: The monster wises up to the lure and takes the hunters by surprise instead, ambushing them or preparing some worse fate that they walk into unawares. This reverse trap needn't be sprung immediately — the Storyteller can hold it in abeyance for a later dramatic moment.

Scatter

When a plan falls apart disastrously, the cell has to get the hell out of there and live to fight another day. Hunters are rarely so lucky as to stumble across opportunities to do that against superhuman foes, though, so usually, one of them has to take one for the team.

The primary actor coordinates the group's efforts to scatter and ensures they know where to meet up later, while most of the secondary actors find places to hide and escape routes without giving the plan away. One secondary actor instead stays behind to distract the threat.

Action: Contested

Dice Pools: Primary: Wits + Composure vs. Wits + Composure + Potency. Secondary: Dexterity + Stealth (escape, 1/5); Presence + Expression or Intimidation (distraction, 1/1)

Roll Results

Success: All participants except the distraction escape the scene immediately with no further harm or risk, and the primary actor gains the Informed Condition regarding the threat they escaped. The one left behind must fend for herself.

Exceptional Success: As success, and the character left behind automatically finds a way to escape the scene as well after a number of turns equal to the total number of participants.

Failure: The hunters fail to leave the fight, which continues.

Dramatic Failure: The players have a choice. The ruse fails completely, inflicting the Beaten Down Tilt on all participants and no one escapes; or they can successfully escape at the cost of letting the threat catch the distracting character outright and achieve its intent in the fight, as long as it isn't lethal. It might capture her, put her under a spell, or knock her unconscious and leave her lost and alone without her phone, for instance.

Social Tactics

The following Tactics use primarily Social Attributes and Skills or are useful in primarily Social contexts.

Adrenaline Rush

Taking on a foe with unholy advantages is daunting, to say the least. Hunters can pump each other up beyond reason to push themselves past their usual limitations and banish fear, for a time.

The secondary actors enact a ritual of sorts, and the primary actor leads it. It could be a literal rite, with focusing chants and blessings of aid, or it could be more akin to a football team's pregame traditions — or a little of both. The primary actor provides a capstone for the ritual to shove all the participants into overdrive.

Action: Instant

Dice Pools: Primary: Presence + Expression; Secondary: Resolve + Occult (rite, 1/6, or 0/6 if someone pumps the group up), Resolve + Empathy (pumping up, 1/6, or 0/6 if someone performs a rite)

Roll Results

Success: For the next full scene, the participants don't fall unconscious if their Health boxes fill with bashing damage, and they don't suffer wound penalties. They gain the successes on the primary actor's roll as a bonus to all Resistance traits for the purpose of resisting (not contesting) actions or supernatural powers that would inflict fear or cause them to question themselves, to a maximum of +5 or the number of participants, whichever is higher.

Exceptional Success: The primary actor may grant a beneficial Condition to all participants, rather than just herself.

Failure: The hunters fail to rile themselves up.

Failure: High on danger, the participants work themselves into a frenzy, losing their better instincts in the rush of adrenaline. They all suffer the Insane Tilt for the next full scene and can't end it early.

Freeing Mind

As people who survive on hard-won trust in their comrades, hunters fear mind control and demonic possession more than most horrors. When one among them is compromised, the other cell members exhaust all their options before admitting defeat and losing one of their own. This Tactic lets them fight through the false memories and feelings to restore someone's mind to the state it was in before a ghost, spirit, demon, or other antagonist took over. It is a social means of connecting to the person's mind as opposed to an exorcism which uses occult and religious methods to drive an unwelcome antagonist out of their body.

The primary actor antagonizes the target to force her subconscious into fighting the influence, while the secondary actors call upon bonds of friendship and shared experience to remind the target what she's fighting for. In certain circumstances, another secondary actor might need to fend off interruptions or outside attempts to poison the target against her fellows or stop the target from fleeing the scene.

This Tactic is an extended action, and the time each roll takes depends on the effect the hunters are up against. For an effect that would last a scene or less, each roll represents five minutes of work. For an effect that would last longer than a scene, each roll represents one hour of work.

If any participants devote rolls to controlling the situation and succeed, nothing from the outside may interrupt or sabotage the extended action. The target cannot attempt escape. If any of these secondary actors fails dramatically, the hunters must deal with an interruption, such as the target escaping or a monster crashing the party; the extended action can resume later without ending the Tactic, but all participants suffer a cumulative one-die penalty for each such dramatic failure rolled.

Requirements: The target must suffer a Mental or Social effect imposed by a supernatural power or phenomenon that causes her to act counter to her best interests or out of character. Examples include possession, a magical command, false love, or unnatural memory loss.

Action: Extended and Contested: Successes required are 2x the monster's Potency.

Dice Pools: Primary: Manipulation + Intimidation or Subterfuge vs. subject's Composure + Resolve + the Potency of the monster that inflicted the effect. Secondary: Presence + Persuasion or Empathy (appealing to emotions, 1/2); Wits + Brawl, Weaponry, or Intimidation (controlling the situation, 0/3, ND)

Roll Results

Success: The target spends a Willpower point; if she can't, the Tactic fails.

For simple effects like Tilts or single commands, the effect ends immediately. For more complex effects, such as those represented by Conditions or those that would last longer than a scene, the effect is suppressed for the rest of the current scene and the Storyteller offers a new, alternate way for the target to resolve the Condition or end the effect permanently, such as sacrificing something significant, gaining Willpower through their Virtue, or harming the monster that inflicted the effect.

For Persistent Conditions or effects that last longer than a day, the effect is suppressed for the rest of the current scene but can't be ended this way; however, the target gains bonus dice equal to their Resolve on the next roll they make to resolve or end it permanently. Conditions that resolve as a result of this Tactic still grant Beats as normal.

Exceptional Success: As success, but the target's player (or Storyteller, for characters they control) may instead end the effect immediately even if it's more complex. If they do so, Conditions grant no Beats for resolution.

Failure: The hunters fail to goad the target.

Dramatic Failure: The hunters do or say the wrong thing and prompt the target to either attack someone, ignoring Defense, or succumb to some side effect or worsening of the influence, and then escape the scene.

Expose

Sometimes it's more important to shine a light on the darkness and expose it for all the world to see than to simply get rid of it. With the right combination of investigative technique and clever setup, hunters can force their prey into tipping its hand.

The secondary actors find the right times and places to take pictures, catch the target on surveillance cameras, and record incriminating statements. Then, the primary actor corners the target and either holds the evidence over their head or blurts it out in front of just the right people — to hell with consequences.

If a secondary actor fails dramatically, the target captures or compromises that actor in some way in addition to the usual effects.

Requirements: The characters must already know or have the means to easily discover the identity and nature of the target, represented by a Condition like Informed, a previously successful Tactic like Identification or Profiling, Clues from an investigation (p. XX), or information the characters gained another way.

Action: Contested: Secondary actors spend an hour before rolling, the primary actor must spend five minutes.

Dice Pools: Primary: Wits + Presence or Manipulation vs. Manipulation + Subterfuge + Potency; Secondary: Wits + Investigation or Stealth (gathering evidence, 1/4); Wits + Socialize (finding key people to tell, 1/3)

Roll Results

Success: The hunters may inflict either the Leveraged (Primary Actor) Condition or the Notoriety Condition (p. XX) on the target, depending on whether they choose to blackmail the target or expose it once and for all. If they choose Leveraged, the target must submit to two requests to shed the Condition. If they choose Notoriety, their impressions for Social maneuvering with other hunters in the area improve by one for the rest of the story.

Exceptional Success: As success, and each hunter gains a temporary dot of a relevant Merit thanks to their efforts for the rest of the story. For instance, one might gain an extra dot of Status in his compact, while another gains a new Mentor eager to capitalize on her success, or a dot of Fame as a paranormal reporter.

Failure: The characters all gain the Leveraged or Notoriety Condition instead, at the Storyteller's discretion, depending on how the target turns the tables.

Creating New Tactics

Players may want to create their own Tactics in play, as situations arise that seem ripe for complex, team-based actions. A Tactic doesn't need requirements unless it's hard to imagine succeeding without a specific background or piece of knowledge. Most Tactics give players more options in combat than kill or be killed and help introduce fun complications to the story as the drama of their risks pays off — whether in success or in failure.

The Storyteller should work with the players to create a new Tactic using the following guidelines.

Concept

A good Tactic has a specific, desired outcome. Some Tactics can have any kind of target, while some only make sense when used against a monster. In general, Tactics can:

•   Combine what would normally be multiple and separate rolled actions into a single Tactic to save the characters time

- Grant benefits a simple teamwork action doesn't by itself

- Create new actions the characters can't otherwise perform with mundane Skills

- Allow the characters to do something in action timing that they otherwise can't

- Allow more people to contribute to a teamwork action than normal

Remember, Tactics incur great risk, so they should always confer greater benefits than a simple teamwork action on its own could achieve. Likewise, since every failure is dramatic, the stakes should be higher than usual.

Dice Pools

Keep in mind that secondary actors usually use different Skills than the primary actor does. Typically, Tactics also offer secondary actors more than one way to participate. Tactics allow all characters to shine with their various strengths as they work together to achieve a common goal, so keep that in mind when you're forming dice pools for your new Tactic.