

DEVIANT

the renegades

Kickstarter Manuscript Preview #4



Deviant: The Renegades Manuscript Preview #4

Chapter Four: Storytelling System

There's a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part! You can't even passively take part! And you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels ... upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you've got to make it stop!

— Mario Savio

This chapter contains the basic rules for playing **Deviant: The Renegades**. More information, including optional systems and examples of play, can be found in the **Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook**.

Traits

In addition to the supernatural traits of the Remade, **Chronicles of Darkness** characters have mundane traits common to Baselines, Remade, and other monsters alike. Attributes are raw potential, Skills are trained abilities, and Skill Specialties are specific areas of training in which a character excels. Willpower is the extra effort a character can bring to bear in a stressful or dangerous situation, when success is crucial or hangs by a thread.

Finally, a Baseline possesses Integrity, a personal Virtue and Vice from which he can draw strength and refill his Willpower, much the same way a Remade derives Willpower from her Conviction and Loyalty.

Attributes

Attributes represent essential traits that every character possesses by default. These serve as the foundation to most rolls in **Deviant: The Renegades**. The nine Attributes are split into three categories; Mental, Physical, and Social. If a game rule refers to a “Social roll,” or a “Mental action,” that means an action that uses the appropriate Attribute category. A character with five dots in an Attribute has reached the peak of human potential within that ability.

Mental Attributes

Mental Attributes reflect your character’s acuity, intellect, and strength of mind.

Intelligence

Intelligence is your character’s raw knowledge, memory, and capacity for solving difficult problems. This may be book smarts, or a wealth of trivia.

Attribute Tasks: Memorizing (Intelligence + Composure, instant action)

Wits

Wits represents your character’s ability to think quickly and improvise solutions. It reflects your character’s perception, and ability to pick up on details.

Attribute Tasks: Perception (Wits + Composure, reflexive action)

Resolve

Resolve is your character's determination, patience, and sense of commitment. It allows your character to concentrate in the face of distraction and danger, or continue doing something in spite of insurmountable odds.

Attribute Tasks: Resisting coercion (Resolve + Stamina, reflexive action)

Physical Attributes

Physical Attributes reflect your character's bodily fitness and acumen.

Strength

Strength is your character's muscular definition and capacity to deliver force. It affects many physical tasks, including most actions in a fight.

Attribute Tasks: Breaking a barrier (Strength + Stamina, instant action), Lifting objects (Strength + Stamina, instant action)

Dexterity

Dexterity is your character's speed, agility, and coordination. It provides balance, reactions, and aim.

Attribute Tasks: Keeping balance (Dexterity + Composure, reflexive action)

Stamina

Stamina is your character's general health and sturdiness. It determines how much punishment your character's body can handle before it gives up.

Attribute Tasks: Staying awake (Stamina + Resolve, instant action)

Social Attributes

Social Attributes reflect your character's ability to deal with others.

Presence

Presence is your character's assertiveness, gravitas, and raw appeal. It gives your character a strong bearing that changes moods and minds.

Attribute Tasks: Good first impressions (Presence + Composure, instant action)

Manipulation

Manipulation is your character's ability to make others cooperate. It's how smoothly she speaks, and how much people can read into her intentions.

Attribute Tasks: Poker face (Manipulation + Composure)

Composure

Composure is your character's poise and grace under fire. It's his dignity, and ability to remain unfazed when harrowed.

Attribute Tasks: Meditation (Resolve + Composure, extended action)

Skills

Whereas Attributes represent innate ability, Skills reflect behaviors learned and honed over a lifetime. These are things that could be practiced or learned from a book. Similarly to Attributes, Skills are divided into Mental, Physical, and Social categories.

Skills do not receive free dots at character creation. Skills without dots are deficient or barely capable. Skills with a single dot reflect a cursory training. Two dots is sufficient for professional use. Three is a high level of competency. Four is outstanding, and five is absolute mastery of the discipline. When creating your character, prioritize categories. The primary category receives 11 dots, the secondary receives seven, the tertiary four.

Sample actions are listed for each Skill; these lists are just common actions, and should not be taken as comprehensive guides to where Skills can apply. We also suggest dice pools, but it's important to look at the context of the scene, and apply the best Attribute + Skill combination for the events at hand. Also remember that equipment and environmental modifiers can shift a dice pool. We've listed some sample equipment and factors that could enhance Skill usage.

Using a Skill with no dots incurs a penalty. For Physical and Social Skills, it levies a -1 die penalty to the roll. For a Mental Skill, it's a -3 die penalty.

Mental Skills

Mental Skills are largely learned, as opposed to practiced. They reflect knowledge and procedure, lore and understanding.

Academics

Academics is a broad Skill representing your character's higher education and knowledge of the arts and humanities. It covers language, history, law, economics, and related fields.

Sample actions: Recall trivia (Intelligence + Academics, instant action), Research (Intelligence + Academics, extended action), Translation (Intelligence + Academics, extended action)

Sample contacts: Accountant, College Professor, Head Librarian, Lawyer, Rare Book Dealer

Suggested equipment: Internet access (+1), Library (+1 to +3), Professional consultant (+2)

Specialties: Accounting, Anthropology, Art History, History, Law, Literature, Religion, Research, Translation

Computer

Computer is your character's advanced ability with computing. While most characters in **Chronicles of Darkness** are expected to know the basics, the Computer Skill allows your character to program computers, to crack into systems, to diagnose major problems, and to investigate data. This Skill reflects advanced techniques and tricks; almost everyone can operate a computer for email and basic internet searches.

Sample actions: Hacking a system (Intelligence + Computer, extended action, contested if against a security administrator or other hacker), Internet search (Wits + Computer, instant action), Programming (Intelligence + Computer, extended action)

Sample contacts: AI Researcher, Hardcore Computer Gamer, White-Hat Hacker

Suggested equipment: Computer system (+0 to +3, by performance), Custom software (+2), Passwords (+2)

Specialties: Data Retrieval, Graphics, Hacking, Internet, Programming, Security, Social Media

Crafts

Crafts reflects your character's knack with creating and repairing things. From creating works of art to fixing an automobile, Crafts is the Skill to use. Some Deviants must use Crafts to "heal" inorganic parts when injured.

Sample actions: Appraisal (Wits + Crafts, instant action), Counterfeit item (Intelligence + Crafts, instant action), Create art (Intelligence + Crafts, instant action), Repair item (Wits + Crafts, instant action)

Sample contacts: Automotive Engineer, Makerspace Enthusiast, Police Sketch Artist

Suggested equipment: Point of reference (+1), Quality materials (+2), Tools (+1 to +3, depending on utility and specialty), Well-equipped workplace (+2)

Specialties: Automotive, Cosmetics, Cybernetics, Fashion, Metalworking, Graffiti, Jury Rigging, Painting, Repair, Sculpting

Investigation

Investigation is your character's skill with solving mysteries and putting together puzzles. It reflects the ability to draw conclusions, to find meaning out of confusion, and to use lateral thinking to find information where others could not.

Sample actions: Examining a crime scene (Wits + Investigation, extended action), Solving riddles (Intelligence + Investigation, instant or extended action)

Sample contacts: Conspiracy Buff, Medical Examiner, Private Investigator

Suggested equipment: Forensic kit (+1), Unrestricted access (+2), Reference library (+2)

Specialties: Autopsy, Body Language, Crime Scenes, Cryptography, Intelligence Analysis, Lab Work, Riddles

Medicine

Medicine reflects your character's knowledge of the human body, and of how to bring it to and keep it in working order. Characters with Medicine can make efforts to stem life-threatening wounds and illnesses.

Sample actions: Diagnosis (Wits + Medicine, instant action), Treating wounds (Intelligence + Medicine, extended action)

Sample contacts: Chronic Patient, EMT, Surgeon, Sympathetic Conspiracy Bio-Tech

Suggested equipment: Medical tools (+1 to +3), Trained assistance (+1), Well-stocked facilities (+2)

Specialties: Anesthesiology, First Aid, Pathology, Pharmaceuticals, Physical Therapy, Surgery

Occult

The Occult Skill is your character's knowledge of things hidden in the dark, legends, and lore. While the supernatural is unpredictable and often unique, the Occult Skill allows your character to pick out facts from rumor.

Sample actions: Identify the sliver of truth (Wits + Occult, instant action), Relate two similar myths (Intelligence + Occult, instant or extended action)

Sample contacts: Anthropology Professor, Neo-Pagan Author, Weird Hermit Down the Street

Suggested equipment: Well-stocked library (+2)

Specialties: Angels, Cryptids, Divergence, Divination, Ghosts, Local Legends, Witchcraft

Politics

Politics reflects a general knowledge of political structures and methodologies, but more practically shows your character's ability to navigate those systems and make them work the way she intends. With Politics, she knows the right person to ask to get something done.

Sample actions: Cut red tape (Manipulation + Politics, extended action), Identify authority (Wits + Politics, instant action), Sully reputations (Manipulation + Politics, extended action)

Sample contacts: Fixer, Political Blogger, Union Leader

Suggested equipment: Official position (+1 to +5, by Status)

Specialties: Bureaucracy, Church, Corporate, Local, Organized Crime, Scandals

Science

Science is your character's knowledge and understanding of the physical and natural sciences, such as biology, chemistry, geology, meteorology, and physics.

Sample actions: Assess variables (Intelligence + Science, instant or extended action), Formulate solution (Intelligence + Science, extended action)

Sample contacts: Bomb-Making Anarchist, Drug Supplier, Experimental Physicist, Geology Professor

Suggested equipment: Reference library (+1 to +3), Well-stocked laboratory (+2)

Specialties: Alchemy, Genetics, Nanotechnology, Neuroscience, Physics, Virology

Physical Skills

Physical Skills are those practiced, trained, and learned through action.

Athletics

Athletics reflects a broad category of physical training and ability. It covers sports, and basic physical tasks such as running, jumping, dodging threats, and climbing. It also determines a character's ability with thrown weapons and archery.

Sample actions: Acrobatics (Dexterity + Athletics, instant action), Climbing (Strength + Athletics, extended action), Foot chase (Stamina + Athletics, contested action), Jumping (Strength + Athletics, instant action, one foot vertically per success)

Sample contacts: Parkour Enthusiast, Personal Trainer, Physical Therapist, Professional Athlete

Suggested equipment: Athletic shoes (+1), Rope (+1)

Specialties: Acrobatics, Archery, Climbing, Jumping, Parkour, Pursuit, Swimming, Throwing

Brawl

Brawl reflects your character's ability to tussle and fight without weapons. This includes old-fashioned bar brawls as well as complex martial arts.

Sample actions: Breaking boards (Strength + Brawl, instant action), Hand-to-hand fighting (covered in the Violence section, p. XX)

Sample contacts: Club Bouncer, Self-Defense Teacher, Sparring Partner

Suggested equipment: Brass knuckles (+1)

Specialties: Boxing, Dirty Fighting, Grappling, Grenades, Martial Arts, Throws

Drive

Drive is the skill to control and maneuver automobiles, motorcycles, boats, and even airplanes. A character can drive a car without Drive dots; the Skill relates to moments of high stress, such as a high-speed chase or trying to elude a tail. It's assumed that most modern characters have a basic ability to drive. As well, Drive can reflect your character's skill with horseback riding, if appropriate to her history.

Sample actions: Impressive maneuvering (Dexterity + Drive, instant action), Pursuit (Dexterity + Drive, contested action), Tailing (Wits + Drive, contested action)

Sample contacts: High Speed Courier, News Chopper Pilot, Street Racer

Suggested equipment: Performance vehicle (+1 to +3)

Specialties: Ambulances, Evasion, Motorcycles, Off-Road Driving, Pursuit, Stunts

Firearms

Firearms reflects your character's ability to identify, maintain, and otherwise use guns. This Skill covers everything from small pistols, to shotguns, to assault rifles, and anything else related.

Sample actions: Firefights (see p. XX for more on how firearms violence works)

Sample contacts: Gun Store Owner, Local Law Enforcement, Conspiracy Bagman

Suggested equipment: See p. XX for a full list of firearms

Specialties: Firearms Lashes, Handguns, Rifles, Shotguns, Trick Shots

Larceny

Larceny covers intrusion, lockpicking, theft, pickpocketing, and other (generally considered) criminal activities. This Skill is typically learned on the streets, outside of formal methods. However, stage magicians and other entertainers learn these skills as part of their repertoire.

Sample actions: Bypass security systems (Dexterity + Larceny, extended action), Lockpicking (Dexterity + Larceny, extended action), Pickpocketing (Dexterity + Larceny, contested action)

Sample contacts: Burglar, Parole Officer, Security Consultant, Shady Pawn Shop Owner

Suggested equipment: Crowbar (+1), Crowded area (+2), Lockpicks (+2), Partner in crime (+1)

Specialties: Breaking and Entering, Concealment, Lockpicking, Pickpocketing, Safecracking, Security Systems, Sleight of Hand

Stealth

The Stealth Skill reflects your character's ability to move unnoticed and unheard, or to blend into a crowd. Every character approaches Stealth differently; some use distraction, some disguise, some are just hard to keep an eye on.

Sample actions: Losing a tail (Wits + Stealth, contested action), Shadowing (Dexterity + Stealth, contested action)

Sample contacts: Agent, Bow Hunter, Lookout from a Former Job, Navy SEAL

Suggested equipment: Binoculars (+1), Dark clothing (+1), Smokescreen (+2), Spotters (+1)

Specialties: Camouflage, Crowds, In Plain Sight, Shadowing, Stakeout, Staying Motionless

Survival

Survival represents your character's ability to "live off the land." This means finding shelter, finding food, and otherwise procuring the necessities for existence. This could be in a rural or urban environment.

Sample actions: Foraging (Wits + Survival, extended action), Hunting (for animals, Wits + Survival, extended action)

Sample contacts: Off-the-grid Survivalist, Rough Sleeper, Scout Master

Suggested equipment: Survival guide (+1), Survival knife (+1)

Specialties: Foraging, Hunting, Navigation, Shelter, Tracking, Weather

Weaponry

Weaponry is the ability to fight with hand-to-hand weapons, from swords, to knives, to baseball bats, to chainsaws. If the intent is to strike another and harm him, Weaponry is the Skill.

Sample actions: Attacking another (see p. XX for more on Weaponry fighting)

Sample contacts: Fencing Instructor, Gang Member, Western Martial Arts Enthusiast

Suggested equipment: See p. XX for a full list of weapons

Specialties: Chains, Clubs, Improvised Weapons, Swords, Weaponry Lashes

Social Skills

Social Skills are those governing interpersonal relationships.

Animal Ken

Animal Ken reflects your character's ability to train and understand animals. With Animal Ken, your character can charm beasts or even rile them to violence, under the right circumstances.

Sample actions: Animal training (Manipulation + Animal Ken, extended action), Cowing an animal (Presence + Animal Ken, contested action)

Sample contacts: Cat Lady, Rodeo Horse Trainer, Zoo Veterinarian

Suggested equipment: Treats (+1), Whip (+1)

Specialties: Calming, Canines, Manticores, Reptiles, Training

Empathy

Empathy represents your character's ability to read and understand others' feelings and motivations. This helps discern moods, or read deceptive behavior in discussion. It is not inherently sympathetic; one can understand another's positions without agreeing with them.

Sample actions: Finding someone's pain (Wits + Empathy, contested action), Sense deception (Wits + Empathy, contested action), Soothing nerves (Manipulation + Empathy, instant action)

Sample contacts: Shoulder to Cry On, Police Profiler, Psych Student

Suggested equipment: Muted clothing (+1), Relaxing environment (+2)

Specialties: Calming, Emotion, Lies, Motives, Personalities, Trauma

Expression

The Expression Skill reflects your character's ability to communicate. This Skill covers written and spoken forms of communication, journalism, acting, music, and dance.

Sample actions: Composing (Intelligence + Expression, extended action), Performance (Presence + Expression, instant action)

Sample contacts: Investigative Journalist, Political Speech Writer, Reclusive Poet

Suggested equipment: Quality instrument (+1 to +3)

Specialties: Dance, Drama, Electrokinesis, Journalism, Musical Instrument, Singing, Speeches

Intimidation

Intimidation reflects your character's ability to influence others' behavior through threats and fear. It could mean direct physical threats, interrogation, or veiled implications of things to come.

Sample actions: Interrogation (Wits + Intimidation, contested action), Stare down (Presence + Intimidation, contested action)

Sample contacts: Barroom Tough Guy, High-Powered Executive, Police Interrogator

Suggested equipment: Fearsome tools (+2), Gang colors (+2), Isolated room (+1)

Specialties: Interrogation, Stare Down, Supernatural Displays, Torture, Veiled Threats

Persuasion

Persuasion is your character's ability to change minds and influence behaviors through logic, fast-talking, or appealing to desire. It relies on the force of your character's personality to sway the listener.

Sample actions: Fast-talk (Manipulation + Persuasion, extended action), Firebranding (Presence + Persuasion, instant action), Seduction (Manipulation + Persuasion, extended action)

Sample contacts: Car Salesman, Con Artist, Speech Coach

Suggested equipment: Designer clothing (+1 to +3), Reputation (+2)

Specialties: Confidence Scam, Fast-Talking, Inspiring, Seduction, Sermon, Sob Story

Socialize

Socialize reflects your character's ability to present herself well and interact with groups of people. It reflects proper (and setting-appropriate) etiquette, customs, sensitivity, and warmth. A character with a high Socialize is the life of the party.

Sample actions: Carousing (Manipulation + Socialize, instant action), Fitting in (Wits + Socialize, instant action), Getting attention (Presence + Socialize, instant action)

Sample contacts: Drinking Buddy, Event Planner, Society Matron

Suggested equipment: Drugs (+1), Knowing people (+1), Money (+1 to +5)

Specialties: Clubbing, Country Clubs, Frat Parties, Fundraisers, Seedy Gatherings, Tent Cities

Streetwise

The Streetwise Skill is your character's knowledge of life on the streets. It tells her how to navigate the city, how to get information from unlikely sources, and where she'll be (relatively) safe. If she wants to get something on the black market, Streetwise is how.

Sample actions: Finding a shortcut (Wits + Streetwise, instant action), Working the black market (Manipulation + Streetwise, instant action)

Sample contacts: Bartender in a Rough Part of Town, Drug Dealer, Undercover Cop

Suggested equipment: Burner phone (+1), Known nickname (+2), Valuable contraband (+1 to +3)

Specialties: Access Tunnels, Black Market, Gangs, Navigation, Rumors, Undercover

Subterfuge

Subterfuge is the ability to deceive. With Subterfuge, your character can lie convincingly, project hidden messages in what she says, hide motivations, and notice deception in others.

Sample actions: Disguise (Wits + Subterfuge, instant action), Lying (Manipulation + Subterfuge, contested action)

Sample contacts: Con Artist, Crooked Politician, Out-of-work Actor

Suggested equipment: Costume supplies (+2), Fake ID (+1)

Specialties: Conceal Deformity, Detecting Lies, Doublespeak, Hiding Emotion, Misdirection

Skill Specialties

In addition to Skills, your character possesses Skill Specialties. These are refinements of the broader Skills. These should be narrower than the main Skill, and help to define your character's particular expertise. For example, your character might have three dots in Firearms, but a Specialty in Rifles. He's capable with all guns, but particularly good with rifles. If you look to the Skill descriptions, you'll see example Specialties. The Storyteller is the ultimate arbiter of what constitutes a Specialty and what doesn't; Specialties that are too broad or too narrow can hurt the story or never come into play.

If a Specialty applies to your roll, add a die. Multiple Specialties may apply to a single roll, within reason. If you find yourself going to great lengths to justify a Specialty, it probably shouldn't apply.

Skill Specialties let you flesh out your character and offer a mechanical benefit. When creating your character, let Specialty choice guide his development. For example, there's a huge difference between a character with Brawl 4 (Bar Fights) and Brawl 4 (Aikido).

Integrity

Instead of Conviction and Loyalty as described on p. XX, Baselines use an Advantage called Integrity which represents the health of their souls and senses of self. Baselines risk **breaking points** when they suffer psychological stress, including witnessing the supernatural (unless they're used to it.) Killing another human being is always a breaking point; but the Storyteller and players should work together to define a few situations that would constitute a breaking point for each character.

Characters using Integrity roll Resolve + Composure when they reach a breaking point, with modifiers for high or low Integrity (8–10 gives +2 dice, 7–6 is +1, 3–2 is –1 and 1 is –2) or situational modifiers decided by the Storyteller. Whether the character succeeds or fails, reaching a breaking point applies a Condition such as Guilty, Shaken, or Spooked. Failing the roll means the character loses a dot of Integrity. Dramatically failing grants a Beat and changes the Condition to a worse one like Broken, Fugue, or Madness. Only exceptional success escapes a negative Condition; the character regains a point of Willpower and takes a Beat instead. Characters at Integrity 1 continue to suffer breaking points but cannot go to Integrity 0. Integrity may be raised after a protracted period of rest (and, potentially, counseling) for 3 Experiences per dot.

Virtues and Vices

Virtue and Vice are Anchor traits Baseline characters possess instead of Conviction and Loyalty. Virtue is a point of strength and integrity in the character's life, Vice is a place of weakness. This is just a brief touch on the topic; for more, look to **The Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook**.

When choosing Virtues and Vices, use the following guidelines:

- Both should be adjectives that describe dominant personality traits. Don't use physical descriptions.
- Traits that describe existing Advantages, Attributes, or Skills similarly do not apply. For example, "Strong," or "Composed," would not work as a Virtue.
- Virtue should be a point of self-confidence and self-actualization, but something easy and tempting to ignore. It's a higher calling, if she chooses to walk the talk.
- Vice should contrast Virtue as a short-term, quick source of distraction from the world. It should be a hiding place when you're weak.
- Virtue and Vice must be different. The same adjective could work as both a Virtue and Vice in some cases, but a single character must have two different ones.

Whenever a Baseline character acts in accordance with her Vice, she regains one spent Willpower. When she takes meaningful actions in accordance to her Virtue, she regains all spent Willpower. She can only recover Willpower from her Vice once per scene, and her Virtue twice per chapter.

Speed

A character's Speed is the number of yards or meters she can travel in a single turn. This trait is a combination of her Strength, Dexterity, and a species factor that reflects her age, physical configuration, Size, and other considerations.

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

[CHART]

Factor	Species
1	Turtle
3	Human toddler
5	Human adult
8	Wolf
10	Caribou
12	Horse
15	Cheetah

[END CHART]

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 complications are headed their way.

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 that will be called out when needed.)

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 will 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 chapter, it should always be Strength + Stamina unless the situation radically changes.

Circumstance and Equipment

Sometimes, fortune favors your character, or they're packing the right tools for the job. Other times, the odds are stacked against you or you 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.

The 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.

Permutations

Deviant: The Renegades has a few variations in how dice rolls work.

- **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 Variations, 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 imprisoning trafficked victims of the conspiracy, her roll suffers a -2 penalty. Successive attempts do not apply to extended actions.
- **Teamwork:** Working together can be vital for resisting the conspiracy. See p. XX.

When to Roll Dice

You don't need to roll dice for many actions. 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.

When the dice hit the table, the Storyteller should have some idea of what will happen if the roll fails, as well as if it 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 while escaping a pack of Manticore dogs, do you make it but fall on the other side, grab the next building by your fingertips, or plummet to the alley below?

Actions

Deviant: The Renegades 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 resolves 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 resolves 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.

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, **Deviant** 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 play out in turns (called an *action scene*), progress in real time, or skip forward depending on dramatic necessity.
- Chapter — 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 complete 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. A common theme or overarching plotline might link them, or they may only share characters and locations. As your story progresses, the players and Storyteller work together to create an ongoing chronicle.

Permutations

Many Adaptations, Variations, and other capabilities grant effects that can only be once per chapter, or have effects that last until the end of the chapter.

At the Storyteller's discretion, a chapter that covers an unusually long period of in-game time (a week or more, especially if two eventful periods are broken up by a long stretch of uneventful downtime) may allow multiple uses of a per-chapter ability without resorting to an Adaptation. Similarly, a chapter that takes place over the course of less than a day, in-game, might not allow a character to call on the same effect twice without Adaptations.

In the same vein, if a character invokes an effect that lasts until the end of the chapter when the current chapter is nearly over, the Storyteller may allow the character to benefit from it until the end of the *next* chapter, instead.

Per-scene and per-story limits are similarly subject to Storyteller modification.

Such limitations in use and duration exist to prevent overuse of especially impactful abilities. For the most part, Adaptations allow players to overcome these limits (at a price), so making exceptions isn't usually necessary. But remember that these restrictions are not intended as a straightjacket for the Storyteller or the story. As always, any ad hoc modification to the regular mechanics should be clearly communicated ahead of time, with general guidelines settled upon by the troupe before the chronicle's beginning.

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.

- **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.

Contested or Resisted?

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, violence applies Defense as a resistance because the number of successes on the roll determines how badly the attacker messes up his victim.

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 will have 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 you determine those factors, 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 has taken 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.

When to Use Extended Actions

As Storyteller, when should you call for an extended action vs. an instant action that takes a defined amount of time? Use the following guidelines:

- **Time Pressure:** If the truck containing the Coactive-creating idol is about to leave the dig and the cohort 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 an abandoned building as a crash space, for example. If it's something that has to be done all in one go, like finding clues in a murder scene before the police arrive, 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 **Deviant: The Renegades** game. They are presented here in a highly condensed form; for more detailed discussions of many of these actions, see the **Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook**.

[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 high spirits with you and using them to loosen tongues.

- **Success:** You make a single-serving friend who might be willing to pass secrets or go with you somewhere private.
- **Exceptional:** You make a friend you can contact again.
- **Failure:** You end up a wallflower, with a drink in your hand that you don't even want.
- **Dramatic:** A faux pas reveals that you don't belong...and maybe even hints at your dread purpose.

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 that 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 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 will notice until you've gotten 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 will no longer reveal 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/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.

- **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.

- **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 character's Willpower represents her determination and her ability to go above and beyond what should be possible to achieve her goals.

Deviant and Baseline characters regain one point of Willpower from a full night's sleep, unless a Scar says otherwise.

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 in their descriptions.
- **Per Turn Limit:** Characters may only spend 1 Willpower per turn (unless otherwise noted).

Conditions

Conditions represent ways in which the story has affected a character, and what he can do to move past those events. Players don't 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 particular Condition unless each applies to a distinctly different circumstance — for example, he may be Informed about both the occult symbol he stayed up all night to research and the inner workings of the conspiracy he infiltrated. He'd resolve each independently. Various systems and supernatural powers bring Conditions into play, and the Storyteller can do so based on story circumstances.

A list of sample Conditions can be found on 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. A player can only earn one Beat by resolving Conditions in each scene.

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 can gain a Beat when a Persistent Condition impacts his character's life.

Improvised Conditions

Storytellers shouldn't feel limited by the list of Conditions in the Appendix (p. XX). As a rough guideline, 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. A Condition resolves when the character's done something significant to act on it, or when she addresses the original source. The sample Conditions later in this book have examples of how to resolve them, but you can also resolve them after other events if it makes sense in the story.

If play bogs down as you search for the right Condition, just improvise one and keep things going. If you can't think of one at all, don't worry — just award a Beat and keep going without a Condition.

Lingering Conditions

Conditions are designed as reminders that events that happened earlier in the story have repercussions later. Usually, Chekhov's gun applies — if you put the Condition on stage, it should fire by the end of the story. But stories are slippery things, and sometimes a story thread represented by a Condition is better to drop for the sake of the overall narrative.

For example, an emotional state like Inspired might no longer be relevant to events in the game because a long time has passed, or it might have been the result of an interaction with a character you don't care about anymore. In those cases, it's perfectly fine to just cross off the Condition. We recommend awarding a Beat as if resolving it, but that's at the Storyteller's discretion.

We recommend doing this sparingly, but the bottom line is: If a Condition doesn't feel relevant to the story anymore, just let it go.

Action Scenes

Sometimes it's useful to zoom in close on the action and track things moment by moment, with a clear understanding of who does what in what order. These are *action scenes*, and to keep everyone's actions straight, they proceed by *turns* in order of *Initiative*. The most common action scenes are fights, but the Storyteller can call for one any time complex things are happening very quickly, like an escape from a conspiracy's facility or a car chase.

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 has reset. 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.

Defense

Defense measures your character's ability to react to danger and mitigate harm to herself. 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 resolves, 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 list of sample Tilts, see p. XX.

Violence

Renegades are driven to confront their abusers, and Devoted to defend their charges. Conflict — often violent conflict — is inevitable. These rules help the troupe manage scenes of violence.

Intent

Everybody wants something out of a conflict. The very first thing you need to do — before worrying about who attacks first or anything like that — 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," as in "I want Agena's key card," or "I want to rescue Tom."

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. This doesn't apply to Deviants attacking a Conviction Touchstone or defending a Loyalty Touchstone.

Optional Rules: Beaten Down & Surrender

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

A character can choose to surrender, giving his attacker what she wants. If your character surrenders, regain a point of Willpower and take a Beat, and stop participating in the fight. Your character's opponent must spend a point of Willpower to attack him.

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 her, whether you run like hell or unload a shotgun at her.

These optional rules only apply to people who would incur a breaking point for committing (or attempting) murder.

Down and Dirty Combat

The Storyteller might decide that your character can get what she wants without focusing on the details of the fight. Maybe she's picking on people weaker than her. Maybe the fight's not the important thing going on with regards to the character's intent. 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 characters have separate intents, resolve each intent as a separate Down and Dirty Combat action. If the group only has one intent but multiple characters are participating, they can use teamwork (see p. XX) on the roll. Players can call for Down and Dirty Combat, with the Storyteller's approval. Storyteller characters might deal damage as a result of a Down and Dirty Combat, but they can't initiate one.

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: Do not 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, or she's knocked out or suffers other serious consequences.

Detailed Violence

When the fight is a significant event in the story, or Down and Dirty Combat doesn't suit, use these rules. Violence like this is an action scene (p. XX).

Actions in a Fight

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 the victim's Stamina, it inflicts the Arm Wrack Tilt.
- **Leg (-2):** If damage exceeds the victim's Stamina, it inflicts the Leg Wrack Tilt.
- **Head (-3):** If damage equals or exceeds the victim's Size, it inflicts the Stunned Tilt.
- **Heart (-3):** If damage equals or exceeds 5, the attack pierces the victim's heart.
- **Hand (-4):** If the attack deals any damage, it inflicts the Arm Wrack Tilt.
- **Ear (-4):** If the attack deals any damage, it inflicts the Deafened Tilt.
- **Eye (-5):** If the attack deals any damage, it inflicts the Blinded Tilt.

Dodge

Dodging is a reflexive action, but your character can only do it if she hasn't taken an action yet this turn, and it takes up her action for the 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. Don't reroll ties; if you cancel out all the successes, the attack simply fails.
- **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 her Defense until her next turn. If the character has already lost her Defense, for example by being surprised or attacked by enough opponents in one turn to reduce her Defense to 0, she 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.

Unarmed Violence

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 Violence

These rules present special cases that come up when shooting at people.

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

Thrown weapons have a short range of (Strength + Dexterity + Athletics – object’s Size) yards/meters, doubled for medium range, and doubled again for long range.

Aerodynamic objects double each range — so an aerodynamic object’s long range is {(Strength + Dexterity + Athletics) * 8} yards/meters. Characters can only throw objects with a Size less than their Strength.

Concealment

If the target of a ranged attack is partially or fully obscured, she has concealment. 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 you lose your own concealment until your next turn.

Cover

If a target’s entirely hidden by something substantial, he’s in 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. 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 turn a fight into a murder, but sometimes the best defense is a good offense. Armor, meanwhile, keeps a character from grievous harm. Traits for specific weapons and armor are in Appendix One: Equipment, 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 attacks, including 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

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.

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 leftmost 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 leftmost 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 leftmost 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 her third-to-last Health box, she suffers a -1 penalty to *all* actions except Stamina rolls to stay conscious. This increases to -2 when her second-to-last Health box is filled, and -3 when her last Health box is filled.

- **Unconscious:** If your character's rightmost Health box is filled with bashing *or* lethal damage, roll her Stamina every turn as a reflexive action. Failure means she falls unconscious until her rightmost Health box is empty.
- **Bleeding Out:** If your character's rightmost Health box is filled with lethal damage, she suffers 1 lethal damage per minute until she receives medical attention (p. XX).
- **Dead:** If your character's rightmost Health box is filled with aggravated damage, she is dead.

Example of Marking Damage

Experiment 18 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 Manticore later bites her and deals a point of lethal damage, her Health track looks like this:

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

If Experiment 18 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 will help him recover (see below). The only exception is if a character has all her Health boxes full of lethal damage — she's bleeding out. She can't recover from that without urgent medical attention and emergency surgery.

Deviant characters heal at the same rates as Baseline characters unless a Variation or Scar says otherwise.

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: Experiment 18 escapes the Manticore and goes to ground, avoiding hospitals for fear of the Conspiracy. 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 stops the character from bleeding out and 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, 5 per lethal.
- **Long-Term Care Limitations:** Heals the leftmost injury first and can only downgrade one wound per patient per day.

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

Becoming Remade is no protection against malady, and the rough lives they live can expose Renegades to all manner of contagions.

Disease Basics

- **Tilt:** In 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 that require concentration or stamina.
- **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 a venomous Manticore or Devoted's Variation or the drug-laced darts from a Conspiracy agent's gun, poison can lay even the hardiest Remade 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

Some Deviants turn to alcohol or other drugs to push away the horrors they've survived.

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 for an hour or scene (one turn, in action scenes) by succeeding on a reflexive Stamina + Resolve roll, with a -1 to -3 penalty based the potency of the drug (use -2 as the default).

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]

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.

Explosions

Whether it's a Devoted's grenade or fire catching a laboratory fuel tank, Renegades sometimes find themselves caught by explosive blasts. Even if they aren't hit by the flames and shrapnel, the concussive force can send bodies flying and deafen bystanders.

Explosion Basics

An Explosion has four traits: the Damage of the blast, the blast area, the Force, and which Tilts it inflicts.

- **Damage and blast area:** Represents the initial detonation. Anything and anyone within up to twice the explosion's blast area suffers levels of automatic damage (no attack roll is required). At ground zero, touching the explosive or within reach of it, the damage is aggravated. Within the blast area it's lethal, and within twice the blast area (secondary blast area) it's bashing. Objects downgrade damage equal to their Durability (aggravated to lethal, lethal to bashing, and cancelling bashing).
- **Force:** Represents the concussive force. As well as the automatic damage from the blast, anyone hit by an explosion suffers additional damage. Roll Force as an attack dice pool. Defense does not apply unless a power would grant Defense against Firearms. Mundane armor applies half its ballistic rating and none of its general rating. Supernatural armor is applied fully. If the attack is successful, add the explosive's Damage rating as extra successes. The damage is aggravated at ground zero, lethal within the blast area, and bashing within twice the blast area.
- **Tilts:** Nearly all explosions inflict the Deafened Tilt on anyone within twice the blast area. Most also inflict the Knockdown and Stunned Tilts, and some inflict the Inferno Tilt.

Extreme Environments

The human body is not built to withstand extreme heat, cold, air pressure, and other harsh weather. Extreme environments are rated with a level from 1 to 4, depending on the severity of the environment. While characters are exposed to these conditions without a Variation or equipment to protect them, they suffer the level of the environment as a dice penalty to all actions. After a number of hours equal to the character's Stamina, he takes bashing damage equal to the environment's level once per hour. In the case of a Level 3 exposure, the damage is lethal instead of bashing. Level 4 environments cause lethal damage each *turn* after a number of turns equal to the character's Stamina.

Damage caused by extreme environments cannot heal until the character is back in a safe environment.

Extreme Environment Basics

- **Penalty:** Characters suffer a penalty to all actions equal to the environment's level.
- **Level 1-3 Damage:** After (Stamina) hours of exposure to level 1-3 environments, characters suffer damage equal to the environment's level for every hour. At levels 1-2, the damage is bashing. At level 3, it's lethal.

- **Level 4 Damage:** After (Stamina) *turns* of exposure to level 4 environments, characters suffer 4 lethal damage every turn.
- **No Healing:** Characters cannot heal damage from extreme environments until they are no longer in an extreme environment.

[BEGIN CHART]

Environment Levels

Level Example Environs

1 Light snow, heavy storms; too cold to sleep safely; air pressure causes shortness of breath; sweltering sun can cause first-degree burns

2 Heavy snow; cold causes physical pain and potential hypothermia; sun quickly causes first-degree burns, can cause second-degree burns with time

3 Desert exposure; heat rapidly causing second-degree burns

4 Desert sandstorm, severe hurricane, tornado, tsunami

[END CHART]

Falling

Deviants can find themselves leaping from great heights to avoid worse danger.

Falling Basics

- **Damage:** Falls of less than 30 yards/meters inflict one point of bashing damage per three yards/meters fallen. Falls of 30 yards/meters or more inflict 10 lethal damage.
- **Armor:** At the Storyteller's discretion, armor may reduce damage from falls of less than 30 yards/meters.
- **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 less than 30 yards/meters by one point.
- **Soft Landing:** Landing in water or snow, or on another soft surface, may automatically reduce damage from falls of less than 30 yards/meters at the Storyteller's discretion.

Fire

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; he continues 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).

Acid

Strong acids and other highly corrosive chemicals automatically inflict lethal damage per turn of exposure (no attack roll is required). The damage inflicted depends on the coverage and the intensity of the chemical.

[START TABLE]

Coverage Damage

Splashed (<10% surface area)	1
Sprayed (<25% surface area)	2
Doused (<50% surface area)	3
Immersed (entire body)	4

[END TABLE]

[START TABLE]

Intensity Damage Modifier

Mild acid/base (dilute hydrochloric acid)	—
Moderate acid/base (battery acid)	+1
Strong acid/base (fuming nitric acid)	+2
Super-acid or similar (fluorosulfuric acid)	+3

[END TABLE]

Acid Basics

- **Countermeasures:** Neutralizing an acid requires an instant action but no roll. Flushing the exposed area with water will neutralize a mild or moderate acid but has no effect on strong or super-acids, which require a chemical neutralizer. At the Storyteller's discretion, an action might immediately neutralize the chemical's effect (e.g. diving into water) or reduce its coverage or intensity by one level (e.g. applying baking soda)
- **Armor:** Most armor can block its general rating in acid damage automatically for a number of turns equal to that rating.
- **Objects:** Acid can deal Structure damage to objects, which halve their Durability (rounded up) against this source of damage.
- **Acid Attacks:** Hurling or spraying corrosive chemicals at a target is usually a thrown attack. A successful attack splashes the victim (1 damage + intensity), while an exceptional success sprays the victim (2 damage + intensity). A dramatic failure instead exposes the attacker (1 damage + intensity).

Radiation

Deviants can find themselves within a source of ionizing radiation or more otherworldly energies. Some unfortunate Remade are radiation sources themselves.

- **Intensity:** The Storyteller assigns an Intensity value of 1 (X-Rays) to 5 (Ground Zero)
- **Exposure:** Each Intensity notes an interval of time. After intervals equal to Stamina, a character exposed to radiation suffers bashing damage equal to Intensity every interval.
- **Healing and Repeated Doses:** Characters cannot heal radiation damage while still exposed to the radiation. Characters who leave and return within the story track intervals as though they had not left.
- **Protection:** Equipment designed to effectively shield human beings against radiation adds its dice bonus to the character's Stamina for determining how long its wearer can stay in a contaminated environment.

[TABLE PLEASE]

Radiation Intensity

Intensity	Interval	Example
1	Weeks	Examining a mildly radioactive object. X-Rays and other medical sources.
2	Days	Examining a highly radioactive object. Most laboratory research sources.
3	Hours	Visiting the area of a radiation leak after the fact
4	Minutes	High-Energy sources. The inside of shielded experiments and reactors.
5	Turns	Ground Zero

[END TABLE]

Teamwork

When two or more characters work together on a single action of any kind, one person takes the lead. He's the *primary actor*, and his player assembles his dice pool as normal. Anyone assisting him is a *secondary actor*, and rolls the same pool before the primary actor does.

Secondary Actor Roll Results

Success: +1 die to the primary actor's roll for each success earned, cumulative for each secondary actor's success.

Exceptional Success: As success.

Failure: Primary actor receives no bonus dice.

Dramatic Failure: As failure, and -4 dice to the primary actor's roll, cumulative for each secondary actor's dramatic failure. Primary actor must continue.

The primary actor's roll results are as normal for the action the group undertakes.

More participants don't always mean better results, however. Every action has a point of diminishing returns at which too many cooks are in the kitchen. This number usually ranges from three to six, depending on the action, at the Storyteller's discretion. Excess participants' rolls grant no bonuses to the primary actor's pool, and may levy penalties instead at the Storyteller's discretion.

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. See p. XX for more examples of objects and creatures of various Sizes.
- **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 **Deviant: The Renegades**, the difference between life and a fate worse than death. You can find a list of sample equipment in Appendix 2: Equipment, starting on p. XX.

Equipment is divided up by the Skills it typically assists with. 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. Sufficient Resources nearly always obviates the need for a roll, but as conspiracies tend to track it (see p. XX), Remade characters often use other Social Merits or Skills (e.g. Larceny to steal it).
- **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 **Deviant** characters can build their own equipment.

Social Maneuvering

Most of the time, when a player's character wants another character to do something, it can be resolved in a single Social action. The Remade intimidates the bouncer, spins a convincing lie, or gives a rousing speech. Sometimes, though, the character doing the persuading spends time getting on the other character's good side, gradually wearing them down until they do him favors or undertake actions. When that's the case, Social Maneuvering is the system to use.

In a Social maneuver, you start by stating your character's *goal*. Once you and the Storyteller agree that the goal is reasonable, you have to overcome the other person'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.

Social Maneuvering and Consent

We recommend reserving this system for use by player-controlled characters on Storyteller characters rather than on other players' characters. If one player's character wants to seduce, persuade, convince, or intimidate another, leave it up to roleplaying and let players make their own decisions about what their characters do.

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, skepticism, mistrust, or just hesitance toward intimacy. It's abstract and means different things in every given case.

Calculating Doors

- **Starting Doors:** 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.
- **Conviction and Loyalty:** If the stated goal would cause the Remade to Falter, add Doors equal Conviction or Loyalty (whichever applies). If it would clearly support Conviction or Loyalty, remove Doors equal to half Conviction or Loyalty (as applicable), rounded up. Touchstones also suffer an additional bonus or penalty when attempting social maneuvers against the Deviant (p. XX).
- **Adding Doors:** If things change such that the Breaking Point, Aspiration, Virtue, or Touchstone rules above apply during the Social maneuver, add Doors to the remaining total. 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: 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 you 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 aligns with her Touchstones, 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.

The total effect of Doors

You may have noticed that the Social Maneuvering system boils down to a way to track the long-term shifts in difficulty to persuade a particular character to do a

particular thing. That's intentional, and it's why if the character will never reoccur, it's often easier to just roll a Social instant action instead.

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 has opened 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 will 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 the character is lying to him or manipulating him. This does *not* apply if the target is aware the character is trying to talk him into something; only if he 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.

Player vs. Player Resolution

If you allow players' characters to be the targets of Social maneuvering, resolve the resolution stage as a negotiation with two possible outcomes. The subject chooses to abide by the desired goal or offers a beneficial alternative.

Go with the Flow

If the character does as requested, and abides by the intended goal, his player takes a Beat (p. XX).

Offer an Alternative

If the subject's player chooses, he may offer an alternative that's beneficial to the initiator, and the initiator's player can impose a Condition (p. XX) on his character to reflect that alternative. This offer exists between players; it does not need to occur

within the fiction of the game, though it can. The alternative must be truly beneficial and not a twist of intent. The Storyteller adjudicates.

The initiator's player chooses a Condition to impose on the subject. It must make sense within the context of the scenario.

Investigation

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 later actions the investigation enables — for instance, learning the daily routine of a Progenitor.

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 can consider changing it to match.
- **No Binary Rolls:** Failing to find information crucial to the characters' progress when players fail rolls 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* that players can spend for benefits, either to solve a particular mystery or to stockpile for other uses: leverage in Social maneuvering, proof that someone is entangled in the Web of Pain, 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 a strongly 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. The Storyteller can add challenges and obstacles to these attempts to turn simple die rolls into interesting scenes of their own. 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 and Physical Skills can also contribute, given an appropriate justification — such as asking around for rumors of conspiracy activity or breaking into someone’s house to steal a keycard.

The pool suffers a cumulative one-die penalty each time the same Skill is used again in an investigation. However, if characters 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 4 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 a negative 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.

Chases

A Renegade can often find herself fleeing from agents of the conspiracy, or chasing down her targets herself. In most action scenes, a character's Speed trait determines how much she can move. This means that generally, you can 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 one turn lead	+1
Opponent starts with at least 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, re-determine who has the Edge.
- **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 **Deviant: The Renegades**, characters may 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 Devoted back to his base of operations through a city, or as an alternative to the Social maneuvering system (p. XX) to finesse another character into a particular position or behavior.

Building Equipment

With the conspiracies watching for economic activity and other obvious paper trails, Renegades needing specialized equipment they can't gain through borrowing, blackmail, or theft are sometimes forced (or prefer) to make it themselves. If it would 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 Appendix One (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.
- **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.
- **Mystical Equipment:** anything that carries minor supernatural potency, such as a circle of protection using salt and bone.

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.
- **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 threat directly to your location.

Jury Rigging

Sometimes, a character needs to build equipment without time for preparation or even much thought. Jury rigging 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 Jury Rugged.

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 on the Build Equipment action.

Dramatic Failure: As dramatic failure on the Build Equipment action.

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/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 a +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/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.

Taking Your Time

You may build equipment as an extended action instead, taking 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.

Chapter Five: Antagonists

*Bees will not work except in darkness; Thought will not work except in Silence:
Neither will Virtue work except in Secrecy*

Maurice Maeterlinck, *The Treasure of the Humble*

Deviant: The Renegades is a storytelling game of fury and revenge against the people responsible for destroying their lives. All Remade are pursued by conspiracies, both those responsible for their transformation and those that wish to use their new nature to further their own agendas.

The Ones Responsible: Conspiracies

The Remade in their multitude of unique forms all have one thing in common — they've been used as a tool. Conspiracies need resources and the Remade are simply the grist to achieve them. To organizations devoted to high-minded goals pursued with a religious zeal, a few sacrifices are worth the end results. The Remade rarely see eye to eye with their tormentors or whatever pseudo-scientific quackery they peddle.

Look anywhere, and just below the surface of society, a conspiracy could exist. Flourishing in secrecy and darkness, they've grown plentiful off the growth of modern bureaucracy, lax oversight, and societal ignorance. Their goals are as varied as the cruelties they've inflicted on their subjects. Some conspiracies are simply the profit seeking activities of corporations that know this activity is a bridge too far, if discovered by the public. Others are enclaves of spurned academics looking to prove theories so outlandish it's a stretch to claim them as pseudo-scientific quackery.

Dynamic Solutions has found the new future of electronic war within the seething grey matter of combatants. As soon as they retrieve their first run prototypes they'll be unveiling the project to the highest bidder. Inside a tech giant the Moderation Team's algorithm has been running perfectly — every alpha test subject they've run it on has shown a 23% growth rate in harmonious societal behavior. The Lemure Study Group has a stone, and every third week it speaks a new surgical procedure. As long as they feed it the medical waste, their patient survives. The "ancient" matriculation rites of the Fraternity of Saturn require a ragged apostle, but nothing so mundane as a homeless vagrant will do anymore, not if they want to get anywhere in life.

The only true, universal facts of conspiracies are their willingness to destroy individuals' lives to achieve their goals and their fear of being discovered. Not every desire for privacy is the same.

Some conspiracies are organs of larger organizations, like governments or corporations, that know their actions are a step too far in the minds of the populace, while others seek control, knowing the secrets they wield would be reproduced without them if they were ever let into the light.

The Web of Pain Chronicle

Behind every locked door and in every encrypted file are hints of something deeper. No matter who is killed or what files are destroyed there are always clues of more connections to the conspiracy. When a Deviant finally destroys a conspiracy, they discover, much to their horror, that this organization is only one of many groups bound together in the Web of Pain. For conspiracies, the sort that traffic in the unnatural and inhuman means establishing connections with others who do likewise. While these are occasionally relationships of loyalty or mutual admiration, many conspiracies look at other organizations as ignorant charlatans competing for resources they need.

The Web of Pain ensures that the pursuit of revenge is never entirely over. Behind every hurt are a thousand more. Behind every perpetrator are a hundred equally deserving of retaliation. Descending into the Web of Pain is traveling a road of scars. For some Renegades, it may be the only path to finding balance. For most, it will ultimately lead to their dissolution.

Origins

Every conspiracy has an origin somewhere in society. While they may move beyond their humble origins, the deepest roots of a conspiracy inform much of their philosophy and methods.

Government

It may begin with an off-the-books program the military never officially ended, or stem from a bureaucratic accident leaving a high security posting operating in permanent blackout for the last three generations. A minor bureau chief may find an object in the archives or a required survey that turns into an object of extreme veneration. The perfected standards of structural safety code might just naturally lead those eccentric employees in the field to found their own cult. Even small municipal governments have many posts civilians are completely unaware of that could someday birth a conspiracy. Governmental conspiracies, no matter their origin, can all rely on one thing: the implicit authority that comes with saying that they're with the government. Often, conspiracies hiding within government institutes have connections to other agencies who, even if totally unaware of the conspiracy, are still obligated to respect bureaucratic protocol. Thus, even a conspiracy with no expertise in a field can easily find someone who does.

Corporate

A corporate conspiracy may be a small portion of a larger corporate group or an entire corporation secretly engaging in illicit experiments to enrich themselves. Conspiracies exist in every field of production, from contractors doing cleanup for others to high finance managing. With the infinite novelty of capitalism comes a horrific market ecosystem for conspiracies. No two corporate conspiracies approach their take on Divergence the same way, and while many may have started as groups driven by the bottom line, that can radically alter as they establish themselves. Some conspiracies, founded as research efforts trying to understand the full possibilities of a medical breakthrough, transform into a zealous association of augmentation obsessives. Others attempt to cover up an unfortunate side effect of creating cutting edge alloys

from a dimensional rift, but can't help but think of the possibilities of making viable human colonists for such a place. The resources of a corporate conspiracy depend highly on the size of the corporation and how much sway they hold over the company. A rogue department may be running on a shoestring budget trying to fund their own hidden activities with their intended purpose. By contrast, a corporation entirely devoted to a conspiracy has more money than sense to throw at whatever problems come their way.

Cult

Many conspiracies have aspects of a religion, but a cult conspiracy was a religion before it ever entered the Web of Pain. It may have even once been part of a larger ordained religion or it may have been a new religious movement. Some cults become conspiracies by invoking or trafficking with alien or godlike beings discovered by their members. Other cults, due to their isolationist practices, stumble on the remains of old conspiracies, something they can use to make the faithful stronger and better. Some are simply in the wrong place at the right time, their secret knowledge a matter of coincidence rather than piety. Religious conspiracies are less connected to the rest of the world than other groups in the Web of Pain. With some glaring exceptions, a cult conspiracy relies more on its community of faith than easy access to the wealth of a national government or corporate finance. Their strengths lie in the community of faith, both their service and also a testament to the cult's ability to present themselves as charismatic diplomats.

High Society

The saying goes that idle hands are the devil's playthings, and few are less occupied than the upper echelons of society. Conspiracies that take root in high society may be the result of boundary pushing hedonism or directly responsible for a family existing in high society at all. Every old money family has to start somewhere, and not all of them can claim to be descended from kings and landed gentry. A high society conspiracy may start as innocently as being the patron of a researcher as an object of curiosity and amusement or start as violently as covering up the death of a gated community's favored son. Conspiracies operating in high society don't operate by the same rules as other people — most think of consequence as something to be faced by others. Whether they were born to the way of life or clawed their way up to it, the conspiracy members have been promised success by any means necessary.

Criminal

A conspiracy from criminal origins has never been on the right side of the law. For the conspiracy, working behind covers and in coded language has always just been business as usual. The only difference is now they're trading human body parts with an antediluvian entity for relics dredged up from an endless pit. While some of the problems remain the same for criminal conspiracies, especially when it comes to law enforcement, they suddenly have very new ways of dealing with them — allies willing to disappear any problem for insight into their secrets and fascinating toys that break the old game of cops and robbers. What criminal conspiracies lack in legitimate power to abuse they make up for in practical know-how and sometimes more relaxed ethical rubric than people coming from "legitimate" society.

Motivations

Conspiracies are human institutions, and so they share the diverse motivations of the people who share membership in them.

Some seek knowledge, either for its own sake or because of its potential to benefit humanity — or so they tell anyone who will listen. Their curiosity invariably leads them to secret and forbidden lore, propelling them to inhuman acts. For them, triggering the Divergence and subjecting Deviants to invasive study are unfortunate and necessary sacrifices made in the name of progress.

Other conspiracies are driven by the dynamics of power — whether political, financial, military, or religious. They might seek to maintain the status quo or abolish it, to elevate themselves or merely overthrow those who currently sit on the throne. The power they seek might be one they once had but lost, or they may be new entrants in the great games. Without exception, they believe themselves natural arbiters of who should have power and how it should be used. Such conspiracies permit themselves to create or recruit Remade (forcibly, if necessary), and they expect the Broken to obey them without question.

A handful of conspiracies begin with good intentions. Their founders took in runaway Deviants and hid them from abusive Progenitors. Or they invited Remade to use their remarkable abilities to do some good in the world, offering fair wages and at-will employment. Most do not last long, quickly running afoul of conspiracies that do not hesitate to use blackmail, abduction, or murder to destroy their rivals and claim the Broken who were under their protection. Those that hope to survive need to get tough, to overcome their reluctance to resort to underhanded or violent means of furthering themselves. In consequence, even the most benign conspiracy invariably provides safe havens to a few bullies, sadists, or killers who are willing or eager to bloody their hands in furtherance of the conspiracy's goals.

By far the most common motivation is control. Everyone experiences the supernatural at least once in their lives. This encounter strips away all pretense that the world works as advertised and leaves behind deep feelings of helplessness. Although many work to forget, not all walk away completely. Some seek out the creatures and powers lurking in the shadows, first to understand, and then to command. For such conspiracies, the Remade are the weapons they forge to defend against, defeat, and ultimately eradicate the monsters that hide in the world. Although many profess to do so on the behalf of all of humanity, most settle for merely protecting themselves.

Methodologies

Each Deviant is unique, and each conspiracy that manages to unlock the secrets of Divergence attains it through its own methods. However, patterns emerge.

Many attempt to augment human beings with technological components, replacing soft flesh with designer plastics and biocompatible metals. Others use technology to try to cheat death with solid state computing bricks to take over for the human nervous system that they've helpfully shut down. The use of technology is not limited simply to invasive surgery and prosthesis. A conspiracy may simply need test subjects for their matter transmitter or to see what exactly the side effects of supra dimensional radiation are. Others still have a variety of therapies, surgeries, procedures, drugs, tinctures, and infusions that are ready for living human flesh.

At the other end of the spectrum are conspiracies that need a vessel for occult biology, energy, or relics, someone who can hold something, either literally or metaphysically. They create Deviants with rituals, artifacts, and a slapdash occult method designed more to the conspiracy's goals than as a functioning world view. They implant the eggs of things that live outside the world in the brains of victims and invite lemures into the ragged shadows of unwitting volunteers. Their

created Deviants are the unfortunate side effect of attempting true substantiation of otherworldly allies and objects of worship alike. The human body is simply the gate through which the true divine was supposed to pass, not be arrested like so much ancient plumbing.

Then there are the conspiracies that have by coincidence or design located the cracks in the walls of the world. Designers of cognitive behavioral therapy that regresses a human being physically to an animal form, unwritten fictions that play out in their readers' heads as alternative lives, a one-time telephone call with the creator — *their* creator — spelling out their destiny as plain as a straight line. These are the works of visionaries and monsters alike, which seem to have little grounding in either scientific fact or the magics of the world. They are simply oddities which leave their heavy mark on anything that touches them, inexplicable and esoteric even to those that wield them.

Some conspiracies are scavengers, incapable of causing Divergence in victims, or unwilling to do so. These go out of their way to recruit from other groups in the Web of Pain, whether by subterfuge, force, or contractual agreement. Some cast themselves as charities or as enemies of Progenerative conspiracies with whom they secretly have an ongoing, mutually beneficial relationship, redirecting the destructive energy of Renegades into more constructive projects as Devoted, reinforcing the Web of Pain. Others are obsessive collectors of inexplicable phenomena.

Dependencies

No conspiracy can truly stand entirely on its own. Organizations form dependencies on each other in the Web of Pain, dependent on others to assist them and feed desires the nascent conspiracies can't reliably get on their own. Most conspiratorial alliances form over a simple need for resources. A fresh supply of cadavers does not grow on trees, but a mafia-owned crematorium is more than willing to supply them. This is especially true for conspiracies whose obsessions intersect in novel ways, coming to agreements to aid each other through material exchanges. These ties allow groups that would normally risk their safety to gain materials to instead trade within the Web of Pain. A government conspiracy, while fully capable of gaining access to signals intelligence, might find it difficult to justify their attempts to move a ton of phosphorous across the country — but a corporate conspiracy has no problem doing that as a favor.

Safety is not always a given in the shadows. Conspiracies hide themselves to avoid reprisal and judgement from the outside world for their actions, but this survival strategy makes them vulnerable to other things that lurk there. Beyond vengeful creations, many conspiracies have good reason to fear other members of the Web of Pain. What may seem perfectly harmless to one organization another might regard as heresy. All it takes is a few of these crisis points to make one overzealous conspiracy take a swing at another. Similarly, more successful organizations win the enmity of jealous rivals. Strong alliances discourage outright war between rival conspiracies, forcing them to engage in diplomacy or, at worst, espionage.

More than anything, conspiracies look for kindred groups that comprehend their drives and philosophies. Of course, the concepts kinship can form over can be troubling, ranging from fraudulent psychological disciplines to similar ghoulish political leanings. Conspiracies often tie themselves to ideologically aligned groups even if they're not necessarily to their advantage. To seek community is human, and conspiracies, despite the brutalities they inflict on others, are ultimately human groups. Academics in the Web of Pain still desire the praise and insight of

peers, religious leaders seek commonalities in disparate faiths, and laypeople still look for others who understand their reasons for harvesting the dead for a living.

Conspiracy Traits

In **Deviant: The Renegades**, conspiracies as organizations play a large role in pursuing the Remade, not just as individual agents but also an organization wielding wealth and influence to bring home their prodigal creations. In game terms, each conspiracy has Traits like a character.

Standing

All conspiracies have an advantage called **Standing** which is representative of the material and supernatural power of those subordinate to the conspiracy's leadership, as well as their prominence within the Web of Pain. As Standing increases, the conspiracy wields greater power to achieve its goals, including bringing Renegades to heel.

Standing ranges from 1 to 10 dots. Those rare conspiracies with more than five dots of Standing are difficult to discover and dangerous when threatened. They have far more resources to burn through to cover up a problem and have almost always progressed further in their own mysterious goals.

Standing determines the starting number of **Nodes** (areas of influence) and **Icons** (special capabilities) a conspiracy has, as well as the number of Attribute dots it has, its maximum rating in its Attributes, and the number of **conspiracy actions** it can take each chapter. A conspiracy can increase its Attributes and numbers of Nodes and Icons by completing **Projects** through **downtime actions**.

Standing and Scale

Standing often indicates how large and powerful a conspiracy is, as well as how far its reach extends beyond its base of operations. As a general rule:

Standing 1-2: Locally influential or regional but diffuse.

Standing 3-5: Regionally influential, or global but diffuse, or local but ubiquitous.

Standing 6-8: Globally influential, or regional but ubiquitous, or having a small presence in otherworldly places.

Standing 9-10: Global and ubiquitous or influential in otherworldly places.

TABLE

Standing	Maximum	Base Nodes*	Conspiracy Icons	Base Attribute Points*	Trait
1	3	1	8	5	1
2	5	1	10	5	1
3	7	2	12	7	2
4	9	2	14	7	2
5	11	3	16	9	3
6	13	3	18	9	3

7	15	4	20	12	4
8	17	4	22	12	4
9	18	5	24	15	5
10	21	5	26	15	5

* For each additional member of the cohort beyond the first who is pursued by the same conspiracy, increase the number of Attribute points by 2 and the number of Nodes by 1.

[END TABLE]

Nodes

Conspiracies can range in size from a few individual researchers to government entities employing thousands. This is represented by the conspiracy's Nodes, which are the specific capabilities and organizations that make up the conspiracy. Nodes are further divided by their function within the conspiracy into four categories: Hierarchical, Temporal, Exploitative, and Structural. The various Nodes of a conspiracy are connected by Linchpins, the individual character who represents the authority and effectiveness of their respective Nodes.

Hierarchical Nodes are the beating heart at the center of the conspiracy and include some of the most secretive members. These Nodes are the central nervous system of the organization, keeping their subordinate Nodes running according to conspiracy principles and choosing the best course of action for their future. The Linchpins of Hierarchical Nodes are the face of the Remade's suffering: charismatic CEOs, zealous demagogues, shadowy boards of directors, or even Devoted who have taken the conspiracy for their own.

Temporal Nodes are the conspiracy's material holdings and power in the world. These temporal holdings can be as varied as the conspiracy's themselves, such as ownership of all local news media, extreme financial wealth, trained combat personnel, or esoteric libraries. Linchpins of temporal Nodes could be Devoted, hunters of the most dangerous game, demagogue politicians, or publicly loathed financiers.

Exploitative Nodes are a conspiracy's ability to exploit and derive resources from the wider world. These Nodes are representative of their resources for manipulating the outside world as well as organizations that the conspiracy has sway in. This may be a ring of agents used for corporate espionage, the surgical teams that process test subjects, a relentless legal team, sleeper agents in law enforcement, or the blackmail held above a Deviant's family that prevents them from asking questions. Linchpins of exploitative Nodes may be the Progenitor responsible for the Remade's transformation, a barely controlled Feral infiltrator, a highly placed agent in law enforcement, or the ritual master of the conspiracy.

Structural Nodes are the logistical portions of the conspiracy, responsible for keeping it running. These Nodes represent the bureaucracy and diplomats that keep the conspiracy efficient internally as well as externally connected to the Web of Pain. This may be the human resources department of a corporation, crime scene cleaners, the accounting department performing financial fraud in the conspiracy's favor, underworld fixers that unite interested parties, a fleet of unmarked black vans, or unpaid graduate students. Structural Linchpins may be the administrator in charge of volunteer harvesting, a lead researcher for the conspiracy, a political officer responsible for weeding out dissent, a zealous loyalist looking to please their keeper, or a young ideologue responsible for internet recruiting.

Linchpin

Each Node has a **Linchpin** character who is the face for that part of the organization. Linchpins can be leaders of their particular sections of the conspiracy, memorable characters, or even just weak links in the conspiracy's hierarchy. These may be targets the cohort has yet to discover or some of the people the Renegades most vividly remember from their torturous time in captivity.

Icons

As conspiracies continue their experimentation into the unnatural and strange, they work tirelessly to expand their power and influence. Some make breakthroughs or discover objects that allow them to harness strange powers. Others use mundane means to wield undue influence over the institutions and populations that surround their centers of power. Mechanically, an Icon represents objects or individuals under the sway of the conspiracy that give them access to unique abilities or powers. Each Icon is attached to a specific Node in the conspiracy, and if that Node is destroyed or subverted the conspiracy loses access to that Icon.

Some examples of appropriate Icon abilities include:

- **Harmonious Community Interaction Algorithm:** Members of the Moderation Team offer specialized management training to all members of the conspiracy, teaching them how to direct the collective behavior of the common people. The conspiracy enjoys the 8-Again quality on relevant Finesse rolls, and its members gain one dot in the Fast-Talking Merit.
- **Unquestioning Populace:** The people of Providence do not talk about the conspiracy for fear of the Local Mafia. Attempts to interrogate witnesses regarding the conspiracy's activity within the city limits suffer a -2 penalty. The conspiracy's next surveillance roll enjoys a +2 bonus after any chapter during which the characters attempted to research the conspiracy by talking to local Baselines.
- **Pillars of the Community:** Members of the conspiracy's Community Outreach Team are active in local charities and other philanthropic endeavors — from fundraisers for first responders, to priceless gifts to local museums, to college scholarships for local students. This helps them appear to be good corporate citizens even during terrible scandals. Members of the Node add one dot to their effective Status whenever their past philanthropy might influence their audience. Once per chapter, as a conspiracy action, the Node can downgrade one point of lethal damage to the conspiracy's Association to bashing damage or heal a point of bashing damage.
- **Mnemonic Therapy Chamber:** Members of the conspiracy who work in the Dynamic Problem-Solving Department benefit from a Scar-free version of the Precognition 2 Variation. The Node's chief researcher benefits from Precognition 3, instead.
- **Stone Guardians:** If these strange Devoted have a name other than the one given to them by The Lumure Study Group, they have not yet found a way to express it to the conspiracy in their quiet language of enamel scraping enamel. Increase the effective bond rating of any Devoted associated with this Node by one step (Acquainted to Personal, or Personal to Obsessive). If already Obsessive, add a further 1 Attribute point, 4 dots of Skills, and 2 Magnitude of Variations.

Attributes

Conspiracies use a simplified set of the Power, Finesse, and Resistance categories instead of the usual nine Attributes.

Power describes the conspiracy's ability to get things done by itself or in the shortest amount of time possible. When a conspiracy uses Power, its actions are based on the Temporal Nodes that it has available to it. When a conspiracy wants to start a manhunt, needs to make a breakthrough and consequences be damned, wants a local ordinance passed now, or just needs somebody dead, it's utilizing Power.

Finesse describes the conspiracy's ability to leverage resources at its disposal and others'. When a conspiracy uses Finesse, its actions are based on the Exploitative Nodes that it has available to it. When a conspiracy wants to manipulate others, synthesize the work of its researchers, or play other conspiracies against each other, it's utilizing Finesse.

Resistance describes the conspiracy's resolve in their actions, loyalty, and willingness to do whatever it takes to complete their goals. When a conspiracy uses Resistance, its actions are based on the Structural Nodes that it has available to it. When a conspiracy needs to purge the organization of whistleblowers, safely absorb new discoveries into their worldview, or perform experiments far in excess of anything they've attempted before it's utilizing Resistance.

Conspiracies begin with 8 dots of Attributes to place in Power, Finesse, and Resistance. They then add bonus Attributes for Threat Response, gaining two dots for each Standing and two dots for each additional player Deviant associated with the conspiracy. No Attribute can be raised higher than the maximum rating for a conspiracy of its Standing. Each Attribute starts at zero before dots are applied but must be raised to at least 1. Conspiracies do not have Skills, but also don't suffer unskilled penalties.

Conspiracy Actions

The amount of force a conspiracy can bring to bear on the Remade changes with its Standing. Minor conspiracies are forced to focus on one or two avenues of retrieval, while influential ones can make the Broken's life a living hell. Mechanically, a conspiracy has a limited number of **conspiracy actions** they may take against the Deviants in a chapter based on their Standing. This trait also informs the number of downtime actions (p. XX) the conspiracy is able to take.

A conspiracy action creates a short-term narrative complication for the cohort. This could be sending a capture or elimination team against the Deviants, but could just as easily involve blackmail against their loved ones, psychological warfare, or exposing the Renegades to public scrutiny. See page XX for more detail on the mechanics of conspiracy actions.

Anchors

Conspiracies have a **Virtue** and **Vice**, which represent the conflicting drives within the organization. Virtues represent the defining attitude towards sacrifice to further their goals such as Zealous or Remorseless. A conspiracy with the Virtue of Zealous follows the Principles of their group, believing the benefits of the sacrifices far outstrip the harm. Vices represent what the organization considers permissible indulgences in thought or action that could be actively harmful to the conspiracy's goals. Vices are often expressed as things like Truthful or Compassionate. A conspiracy with Truthful is an open and sharing community that genuinely believes in the conspiracy's beliefs, and its members find it difficult to keep their work secret from their loved ones — for good or ill.

Principles

Each conspiracy has three defining statements of founding philosophy called **Principles**, which are the guiding mission statements of the conspiracy. All are long-term goals and are rarely challenged as long as the conspiracy feels safe in its current status quo. Only aggressive action by Renegades or rival conspiracies is likely to force the Principles into conflict. Familiarity with a conspiracy's Principles can provide the Broken with the leverage they need to fight it.

Characters may discover Principles through play and narrative. As the cohort begins to map and dismantle the conspiracy, they gain an understanding of the desires and drives of their tormentors. The Storyteller may choose to reveal Principles after the successful cooption or destruction of a conspiracy's Node.

Challenging Principles

Conspiracies are comfortable predators by nature, content to remain at the center of their webs of influence, waiting to exploit, torture, and destroy those who stumble onto them. Both the machinations of other conspiracies and the actions of Renegades in pursuit of revenge can challenge the very Principles a conspiracy is founded on.

Each of the following can challenge a conspiracy's Principles:

- **Stress:** The conspiracy begins a new action past their action limit.
- **Loss:** The opposition destroys a Node with accompanying major loss of human life or by eliminating its Linchpin.
- **Exposure:** The conspiracy has been exposed to the larger world either through one of the covert agents being weeded out or a former member of the organization blowing the whistle.
- **Conflict:** The conspiracy is brought into active war with another conspiracy in the Web of Pain.

When a Principle is challenged it creates a **crisis point** within the conspiracy that is resolved as a downtime action (p. XX).

Conspiracy Creation

At the beginning of a **Deviant: The Renegades** chronicle, every Remade cohort is being pursued by at least one conspiracy. This section provides a step-by-step breakdown of the process, along with guidelines for creating a conspiracy and their Web of Pain.

Note these are guidelines walk through the process of creating a single conspiracy. If a cohort is being pursued by multiple conspiracies it will be necessary to go through the process several times. Rules for running multiple conspiracies can be found on p. XX.

Step One: Concept

The first step to creating a conspiracy is to decide with the players what kind of organization you're creating. You probably have some idea of who the conspiracies are by the time you begin this process. If the chronicle features an Invasive whose body is suffused with Bronze Age analog computers, they probably came from a conspiracy who has some interest in ancient technology. Are they doing this for occult purposes looking to make a mechanical oracle? Is the conspiracy looking to advance their own cutting-edge cybernetics with ancient secrets lost to the eons?

Consider also what role the conspiracy plays in the Web of Pain. If the chronicle features multiple conspiracies with similar backgrounds, such as several conspiracies enmeshed in the military industrial complex, this will create a very different dynamic than the unlikely union of rogue surgeons, the military industrial complex, and a fraternal brotherhood of occultists. This may be desired if the players want a game of conspiracies that see each other as fertile ground for conquest the moment they've fixed the security risk posed by the Remade. Consider what each conspiracy brings into the Web of Pain and if that's the sort of story you want to create. Is the chronicle about the unexpected alliances of the Web of Pain pitting the troupe against a truly bewildering group of antagonists or focusing on the backbiting and cruelty of corporate conspiracies? Speak with the troupe about what sort of group they're looking to have their vengeance against.

*Alice is storytelling a short chronicle of **Deviant: The Renegades** for her friends Arran, Luke, and Monika. Her friends have all decided for the time being the main conspiracy the story will be focusing on is Luke's corporate researchers, a profit-before-ethics company who has earned itself a prominent place in the Web of Pain peddling the secret of Divergence to others. Monika and Arran playing Amanda and Miguel have decided that, for the time being, their own Progenitors have other projects to deal with, and are not pursuing the cohort. Besides, the conspiracy really has it out for Arran's character after he smashed up one of their labs. That is already a strong concept, and Alice decides she'll build that out into something suitably intimidating. The name for the conspiracy comes to mind almost immediately: Omics Enterprises, the sort of bland corporate naming that an unsuspecting person would forget almost immediately.*

Step Two: Standing and Determine Threat Response

At the start of the chronicle, each active conspiracy's Standing ranges from 1 to 6, depending on the threat level (p. XX). Conspiracies introduced later in the chronicle can have a Standing from 1 to 10, depending on the Standing of current conspiracies and the means by which they were introduced (p. XX).

Conspiracies with multiple Renegades in their sights tend to be more potent and to have more resources to bring to bear. If multiple Deviants are pursued by the same conspiracy, then for each additional Deviant add two dots during Attribute allocation and one additional Node during conspiracy creation.

Having worked through character creation with her friends already, Alice knows they've decided to start at the Invasion threat level. Looking it up, Alice makes a note that the conspiracy will be starting at Standing 4, and because there are two additional Deviants she'll get four more Attribute dots and two extra Nodes to play with. Her friends were looking for a challenge, and Omics Enterprises is going to be scary enough to give them one.

TABLE

Threat Level	Conspiracy Standing
Mutation	1
Hyperplasia	2
Dysplasia	3
Invasion	4

Metastasis	5
Metamorphosis	6

END TABLE

TABLE

Additional Deviants	Additional Points	Additional Nodes
1	2	1
2	4	2
3	6	3
4	8	4

END TABLE

Step Three: Principles and Anchors

Choose three Principles for the conspiracy. These are the foundational concepts that outline the organization’s reason for existing. Principles at a glance give a summary of the sort of organization the conspiracy is and further differentiate two separate conspiracies that otherwise both are interested in genetic engineering and corporate profiteering. Additionally, at this step choose a Virtue and a Vice for the conspiracy that are evocative of the individuals within the conspiracy.

Choosing Principles and Anchors should be a collaborative process between the Storyteller and players. These provide context for what makes the conspiracy tick and why it pursues the cohort. They also give the Renegades a tool for hitting the enemy where it hurts most.

Luke’s background gives Alice an idea for the conspiracy’s first Principle: “Profit is a Reason unto Itself,” which the rest of the troupe agrees on easily, knowing that the only thing that guides Omics Enterprises is the largest return on their investment. The troupe considers what they know about Omics and decide that the next two Principles will be “I Before Us” and “In with the New.” The conspiracy is ruthlessly self-interested and also true neophiles, always looking to improve themselves — just not ethically.

For Virtue and Vice, they consider what exactly counts as a Virtue for this group of people, but decide on Diligent. Members of the conspiracy are willing to sacrifice by working hard and long at their jobs to get ahead of the others in the office. For a Vice, they choose Selfish, which is fully indulged by the corporate culture of the conspiracy but does make them rather vulnerable to petty office politics that can have lethal consequences in the Web of Pain.

Step Four: Nodes and Linchpins

Nodes inform some of the most prominent tools and resources at hand for the conspiracy. Each Node is defined as a physical location or a social organization that is either a component of the conspiracy or secretly influenced by the conspiracy. Then, each Node is classified as a Hierarchical, Temporal, Exploitative, or Structural Node, depending on its function within the conspiracy. For more information on the Node classifications, see p. XX.

Each player whose character is connected to the conspiracy should have an opportunity to define one of its Nodes (including Linchpin). This is a Node with which the character has had direct

contact, whether prior to his Divergence, soon after, or more recently (such as one he is currently assessing as a potential target for his wrath). The Storyteller decides on the nature of any of the other Nodes and their Linchpins.

Alice looks up the number of starting Nodes for a Standing 4 conspiracy and considers carefully what sort of abilities a conspiracy like Omics Enterprises would have. She already knows that Luke and Monika want to use the extra Nodes Amanda and Miguel bring to mark down representatives from their respective Progenitors, and Arran determines that destroying one of the conspiracies laboratories has made his character painfully aware of Omic's new security team (formed after Arran's character's break-in), so Alice has eight more to play with. Alice decides first-off she must have a Node representing the conspiracy's leadership, so she puts Omics Board of Directors down right away. The researchers are the characters Lee personally encountered, but the true individuals responsible for his suffering is Omic's leadership.

Next, Alice decides the sort of things a malevolent science startup needs to be able to do. She writes down two rival research labs, a PR department, and a corporate legal team. For the Linchpins she notes down the two feuding scientists, both of whom would be happy to see the other disappear, a security officer with a score to settle with Arran, the two-faced managing director of Omic, and a corporate lawyer whose main job is blackmailing those who raise a fuss about disappearances. She considers where else the conspiracy has its fingers and decides that Lee was turned over by the cops for a reason. Alice writes down a corrupt local precinct that's getting citywide acclaim for their tough on crime stance, with a crooked station chief more than happy to suggest some places to dispose of the unwanted. Deciding that Omics has a heavier hand on the city than just the police, Alice also writes down the city council with a city counselor Linchpin who is secretly sitting on the Omics' board as a minor partner, the city's records department with a corrupt coroner who covers up mysterious deaths, and a hospital whose chief administrator sees to the care and maintenance of Omic's Devoted. With only one Node left, Alice decides that the conspiracy needs something a little stranger to emphasize their status in the Web of Pain. For her final Node Alice writes down a Temporal Node she labels as the Urban Renewal Efforts with the Linchpin of the Crawler. Lee has become an urban legend in the time since he was released, but that doesn't mean all the Needle Man stories are necessarily about him. Alice decides the conspiracy managed to headhunt a Deviant from a much more powerful conspiracy they'd prefer not to anger and have won its affection by allowing it free reign against anyone they can't threaten with town hall or a lawsuit.

Finally, Alice looks over her Nodes and assigns each of them a classification so she knows what sorts of actions she can perform with them. It's obvious to Alice that the board of the directors is the Hierarchical Node of the conspiracy. Without them, the entire place breaks apart. She marks down the security team, urban renewal, the legal team, and one of the labs as Temporal Nodes. Next, she decides the city council, cops, records department, hospital, and other lab will all be Exploitative Nodes. Alice considers making the PR team one as well but decides they're a Structural Node instead. After all, everyone already expects a big corporation to be a little sleazy. The PR team isn't for the benefit of the outside world but controlling the people already inside Omic's web. With all of that out of the way, she assigns her two bonus Structural Nodes as connections to Amanda and Miguel's conspiracies with Linchpins of underground sales associates for the respective conspiracies.

Step Five: Icons

Each conspiracy begins with a number of Icons dependent on their Standing, each tied to one of their Nodes. Before the chronicle begins, the Storyteller and players should work together to create half the Icons (rounded up) with which the conspiracy begins, creating their own or using the examples on p. XX. The Storyteller decides the nature of any remaining Icons.

Now that Alice has created her conspiracy, she decides on the Icons that feel appropriate to the organization. Omics Enterprises gets two Icons at the beginning of the chronicle. Arran suggests that Omics has just rolled out a new weapon suite for its security team. The troupe settles on giving the Cutting Weaponry Lash (Deadly, Insidious [Stamina], Soporific) 2 Variation to members of that Node. They're not going let somebody smash up their labs without seeing the power of genomics.

For the second Icon, Alice elevates the Crawler, attaching it to the Urban Renewal Efforts Node and increasing its effective bond by two steps. The Crawler isn't just a powerful Loyalist. He also has a personal connection to Lee, seeing the Renegade as his rightful prey, so Alice builds him as a Devoted with an Obsessive bond and grants him a further +1 Attribute dot, +4 Skill dots, and +2 Magnitude of Variations. For the time being the conspiracy has the Crawler on a short leash, but it's only a matter of time before the powerful Remade make the conspiracy desperate enough to let go.

Undefined Nodes, Linchpins, and Icons

While it can be useful for the Storyteller if she has all the details of a conspiracy figured out before the chronicle begins, this isn't a necessity. Especially when dealing with large, high-Standing conspiracies, the Storyteller may choose to leave one or several Nodes, Linchpins, and Icons undefined until such time as an appropriate one presents itself.

Step Six: Attributes

Conspiracies begin with 8 dots of Attributes to place in Power, Finesse, and Resistance. They then add bonus Attributes for Threat Response, gaining two dots for each Standing and two dots for each additional player Deviant associated with the conspiracy.

Alice has 18 Attribute dots and considers the sort of organization that Omics Enterprise is. She decides that, as a powerful research corporation, they're going need to be well rounded in both Finesse and Power but their Resistance might be lacking due to the conspiracy's self-interested office culture. She settles on Power and Finesse of seven with a Resistance of four.

Step Seven: Building the Web of Pain

The conspiracy gains a number of connections to other conspiracies equal to its number of Structural Nodes. Additionally, the Storyteller may choose to give one direct connection between the conspiracy's Hierarchical Node and another conspiracy, indicating a deeply entrenched ally.

Alice looks at the conspiracy as it currently stands and makes note of the two conspiracies she knows Omic Enterprises acts as an intermediary for. Then she considers if there is an external connection between her last Structural Node and who it might lead to. After some consideration Alice decides that Omic's PR Manager has a connection with another smaller conspiracy, the House of Mammon, which is looking to insinuate itself into Omic Enterprises and take it over from the inside. That should provide some interesting fireworks if the Remade ever discover it. Finally, she considers if the Hierarchical Node is subordinate to another conspiracy, but decides

that the board of directors is acting independently: the chronicle is already going to be wild enough with three other conspiracies just waiting in the wings.

Playing with Multiple Conspiracies

Many **Deviant: The Renegades** chronicles will feature only a single conspiracy as the cohort's current antagonist. Although this conspiracy may have tenuous connections with other conspiracies, the cohort will not need to deal with the rest of the Web of Pain directly until they have dealt with their current enemies. Some chronicles, however, will include the machinations of multiple conspiracies with some frequency, whether because the players' characters were not made by the same one or because the chronicle's setting suggests multiple active conspiracies.

When running a chronicle with multiple conspiracies, the Storyteller should choose one to be the focus of each story. A conspiracy in focus functions normally, while the other, inactive conspiracies usually act in the background, busy as they are with concerns other than the Renegades. Inactive conspiracies do not perform conspiracy actions during the chapter and only generate one Effort during downtime.

The exception to this is when the focus of the current chapter is a war between two (or, more rarely, more than two) conspiracies. In this case, each conspiracy is limited to a single conspiracy action directed toward the cohort. The rest of their actions must be directed at maneuvering against one another.

Temporal or Exploitative?

Sometimes the difference between Temporal and Exploitative Nodes can be hard to decide, especially when it comes to armed mercenaries, which many Remade discover conspiracies seem heavily invested in. A Temporal Node indicates the mercenaries are part of the conspiracy, a corporate troubleshooting team that is invested in the principles of the organization or at least the paycheck provided by it. Dynamic Solution's temporal Node of Dynamic Problem Solving represents their own in-house PMC, a variety of veteran operatives who aren't just employees, they're also customers. An Exploitative Node by comparison represents a well-placed agent or sway within a group that allows the conspiracy to get others to do the dirty work for them. For example, the Fraternity of Saturn's exploitative Node of Brother Allen Pond FBI representing the fraternity's ability to place their quarry on a variety of wanted lists and allow that agency to solve the problem for them.

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Optional Rule: Mapping the Conspiracy

Instead of keeping conspiracies as loose agglomerations of Nodes and abilities the troupe may instead choose to track the individual portions of a conspiracy physically. During conspiracy creation, the Storyteller chooses a basic structure for the conspiracy. Conspiracies act like a road map, with Renegades only able to pick up leads on the "bottom" facing portion of the conspiracy, the rest being too obscured from the world by cloak and dagger to be easily investigated. However, insulated from the outside world, it becomes more difficult for a conspiracy to use a Node for action. For every level of connection from the exterior of the map the conspiracy takes a -1 penalty to use that Node for actions, but any attempt by the cohort to research that Node suffers the same penalty. Under this rule each Node must be connected either

to a Structural Node or a Hierarchical Node as these are the glue that keep a conspiracy running together. Some example forms conspiracies may take include:

- **Hierarchical Pyramids:** These organizations are stepped pyramids with the Hierarchical Node at the top and branching layers of Nodes connected to several reliable Structural Nodes. Conspiracies in this form have various tiers that may rarely interact with each other or even understand what the level above them does with only the layers closest to the Hierarchical Node understanding the true scope of the order.
- **Alliances:** This conspiracy is either one or two straight horizontal lines of interconnected Nodes. By far the least communicative and least organized conspiracy type these are often cells or loose confederacies of individual actors working together to keep each other safe in the Web of Pain. A Hierarchical Node in this conspiracy represents either the founders that are keeping the conspiracy on task or an overall “commander” that gives objectives for each cell to complete at their own pace.
- **Overseers:** The conspiracy is a single Node in the center with a circle of Nodes ringing it. The most overbearing conspiracies sometimes it’s not enough to delegate to others. These conspiracies are the most vulnerable to losing their leadership and collapsing under their own weight when that presence is gone, however this centralized organization makes them excellent at interacting with the outside world. Sometimes larger forms of this conspiracy structure exist with an inner circle of Nodes that protect the Hierarchical Node.
- **Corporate Ladder:** This conspiracy is one or two vertical lines with the Hierarchical Node crowning it. This type of organization significantly distances the conspiracy’s leadership from threats though it does significantly limit the resources that can be utilized at a given time to solve the problem effectively.

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Using Conspiracies in Play

The following systems are used to model the actions of the conspiracy within the Web of Pain and in its pursuit of Renegades over the course of the chronicle.

Conspiracy Actions

Inside their webs of power, a conspiracy knows that given time and patience, it will complete its goals. The only things that stand in its way are the dual threats of discovery and the interference posed by Renegades. Conspiracy actions describe the ways the conspiracy brings its power to bear against the cohort to capture, control, or stop them in their tracks. Unlike downtime actions (p. XX), these nearly all revolve around the players’ characters, seeking to affect them in some way even if they are not the ones directly at risk.

A conspiracy may push itself past its available resources to achieve more aims. However, doing so invites serious consequences. **A conspiracy that begins a conspiracy action past its action limit takes 1 lethal damage and causes a challenge to their Principles (p. XX).**

All conspiracy actions are reliant on a surveillance roll which determines the overt response they are able to muster against the deviants.

Step One: Surveillance

At the beginning of every chapter, the conspiracy rolls for surveillance to see if they've managed to catch a hint of the player Remade in their dragnet. The actions of the characters during the previous chapter modify this roll, particularly if they involve Overt Variations, Scars, or Merits.

Surveillance

Dice Pool: Conspiracy Standing + Highest-rated Overt Variation or Scar activated/manifested in the previous chapter

Suggested Modifiers (total bonus/penalty cannot exceed +/-5): No Overt Variation/Scar used during current story (-5). Abandoned Loyalty Touchstone known to the conspiracy (-3). Living off the grid (-3). Homeless (-2). Recently changed residences (-1 for different building to -3 for new city). False identity (-1 for false name to -3 for new body). Unemployed (-1). Own a cellphone or car (+1). Recently harmed (+1) or destroyed (+3) a Node. Used an Overt Merit (+ half Merit dots of highest-rated Merit, rounded up, if one-time use; + full Merit dots if multiple uses of Overt Merits). Connected through social media (+2). Used modern information technology (+2). Had a steady job or bank account (+2). Checked into a hospital (+2). Rent an apartment (+2). Own a house (+3). Recently arrested (+3) or escaped custody (+5). Created a significant public scene involving Overt Variations/Scars (+3) or multiple such incidents (+5).

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Success: The conspiracy may take actions as normal against the cohort for the chapter.

Exceptional Success: The conspiracy's first action this chapter does not count against their maximum actions.

Failure: The conspiracy may only take actions against known accomplices and allies of the cohort.

Dramatic Failure: The conspiracy may take no actions against the cohort or their allies, this chapter.

Omics Enterprises is looking to reacquire their wayward creations, now that they've seen just how effective those failed experiments can be when properly motivated. Their previous surveillance actions have all failed. The Renegades have been very good at covering their tracks. This chapter, however, Alice the Storyteller rolls four successes for the conspiracy's surveillance. They've caught scent of the trail.

Step Two: Threat Response

The conspiracy selects from its available Nodes the kind of intrusion it is attempting to throw into the Deviants' plans. A threat response must be logically drawn from the conspiracy's available resources and influences.

Alice looks over Omics Enterprises' Nodes and decides they're going to go through their crooked law enforcement to deal with this problem. This is a job for subtlety and it draws much less attention if their agents deal with the Remade rather than their own private security.

The Best Defense

Conspiracies are reactive by nature, and they do not have unlimited resources to commit to threats. Each time one of the conspiracy's Nodes, Linchpins, or Projects

comes under attack by the Renegades, it counts as a conspiracy action. Attacking a conspiracy's concerns can therefore diminish its ability to pursue the cohort, and can even force it into a crisis point by bringing its total number of conspiracy actions above its safe limits.

Step Three: Establish the Structure

The Storyteller determines what complication the conspiracy seeks to visit upon the Renegades and how it intended for it to play out. A conspiracy attempting physical violence may send their armed enforcers to capture the cohort at their hideout, or maybe, having been tipped off about their break-in at a laboratory, sent a team to ambush them there. Conspiracies looking to influence allies of the Broken may send teams to pay off the erstwhile friends of a Deviant, or, more radically, kidnap them for hypnotic programming.

Ask the big questions of what a confrontation scene is going to look like. If a conspiracy is sending armed agents to face the cohort in broad daylight, consider what their goals are. Are they planning on their agents utilizing violence or using threats against their unaware families to force the Renegades to stand down?

After some consideration Alice decides that Omics has found hints of the neighborhood that the Remade are laying low in. Deciding the best course of action is flushing the rabbits from the brush, they tip off their owned officers and leave behind several bodies with conspicuous needle wounds. The conspiracy is planning on the officers bursting in on the Renegades and either taking them into custody or retrieving the bodies on the way to the city morgue.

Step Four: Create the Dice Pool

The Storyteller creates a dice pool based on the appropriate Attribute for the Node it is utilizing.

Conspiracy Action

Dice Pool: Attribute

Suggested Modifiers (total bonus/penalty cannot exceed +/-5): The Deviants are publicly known and feared (+3). Action is led by a Linchpin (+2). The conspiracy is cooperating with another organization (+1 to +3). Conspiracy has lost a Node or Linchpin this chapter (-1 to -3). Utilized Node is infiltrated by another conspiracy (-2). Using an inappropriate Node for the action (-2). Conspiracy is in revolt (-3).

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Success: The conspiracy creates the complication and sets the stakes for the outcome scene.

Exceptional Success: The conspiracy creates the complication and sets the stakes for the outcome scene. The conspiracy learns of a new potential target for future conspiracy actions.

Failure: The conspiracy action occurs, but the Deviants' players add a complication to the confrontation.

Dramatic Failure: As a failure. Additionally, the cohort gains intelligence on the shape of the conspiracy, learning of a Linchpin or Node location connected to the action.

Alice puts together her dice pool for Omics Enterprises attack. Because the Node is Exploitative and Omics is just guiding another organization (albeit an armed one) to the Renegades, she decides the Attribute should be Finesse, which is 7. Alice rolls five successes and takes note of what an exceptional success means: not only is the conspiracy's maneuver successful, but they learn something about the Deviants' lives from the action. Alice decides the police detectives casing the block run a license plate for one of the Remade's cars, only to find it belongs to Lee's sister. That's going to cause problems in the future.

If Omics had failed the conspiracy action, then the player cohort would have had a chance to modify the outcome of the action before resolving it.

Step Five: Determine the Warning

Each conspiracy action creates narrative indicators of the peril that is about to strike their intended target. For Deviants with their ear to the ground this can be a vital warning of trouble brewing in the short term. Even in secretive operations there are security leaks and accidents that expose the truth.

After some consideration Alice says that even though the police have kept tight-lipped about the discovered dead bodies, it has started trending on local social media, and especially about the police department's refusal to comment on them.

Step Six: Set the Stakes

The Storyteller determines the terms of the confrontation and what sort of action the conspiracy had planned. The Storyteller may announce the parameters of the action to the players such as violence, pursuit, diplomacy, infiltration, or theft. A conspiracy that is sending their trained soldiers anticipates violence, while one that is pulling a false flag operation to place a Devoted amongst the cohort is planning for there to be an infiltration. If the conspiracy failed in step four then instead the targeted characters get to add a complication to the stakes. Some examples include:

- The characters recognize an alternative way of resolving the confrontation. Such as talking down armed goons or shooting unarmed diplomats.
- The cohort gets the drop on the action, ambushing the operatives.
- The Remade establish a rapport with a Devoted or had a previously undiscovered connection with them, giving them much-needed intelligence on the conspiracy's Nodes or Projects.
- An infiltrator's indoctrination is not as successful as originally believed, giving the cohort the opportunity to make a powerful ally or at least do a good deed.
- Some aspect of the operation goes embarrassingly public, being covered by commentators in a hard-to-silence area like national news media or online.
- Operation-critical materials are accidentally left behind or are exposed to an unintended third party either sympathetic or completely unaware of the cohort.

Because Omics Enterprises rolled a success, Alice sets the stakes for the scene. She knows that Omics would prefer the Renegades alive but will settle for dead if that's what they can get. This chapter, the cohort chose their Conviction over their own safety and ignored the warnings in

order to discover more of the shadowy conspiracy. Alice decides complication rears up when the cohort has returned to their hideout to remove a bullet. She narrates the police getting the drop on the exhausted cohort as they stumble back to their hiding place and makes it clear they're in a position where their options look like arrest or another vicious fight with armed detectives.

If the conspiracy had failed their roll then the Remade would have been able to add a complication to the situation. They might consider making one of the detectives one originally responsible for having gotten rid of Lee in the first place, but clearly shocked seeing what has become of him. It could be the perfect opportunity for Lee to extract some payback, but it might give him the leverage they need to talk their way out of this.

Step Seven: Resolve Action

The Storyteller introduces a scene based on the stakes and response, and the players' characters address the complication it represents.

Square Peg, Round Hole

A conspiracy that's desperate may choose to take a conspiracy action with a Node that is completely unsuited for a task. A Linchpin character for an Exploitative Node in a hospital may find themselves required to assassinate a doctor they suspect of aiding fugitive Deviants with a Power action. A Progenitor from a Temporal Node may be tasked with inspiring his Manticore "children" into a killing fury with a Resistance action. A keeper of a cult's laws of a Structural Node may be put in the position of shepherding the zombie enforcers loaned by another conspiracy with a Power. When this happens the conspiracy action takes a -2 penalty.

Downtime Action

Unlike the individual Deviants who oppose them, a conspiracy has the luxury of being in more than one place at once. While tracking down a Renegade that has escaped their clutches may occupy some members of the conspiracy, others may continue the great work of the conspiracy: expanding their influence, gaining more power, or shattering more lives in the name of progress.

As a chronicle develops, a conspiracy naturally grows more powerful and influential if it isn't stopped. Downtime actions reflect this constant process of self-improvement.

Anatomy of Downtime Actions

Downtime resolves according to the following steps.

Step 1: Plan Projects

The Storyteller determines any long-term plans that the conspiracy is pursuing, such as the creation of new Icons, the pursuit of their own shadowy goals, or the subversion of the Renegade's allies to their own side of the war. If the conspiracy does not start a Project or invest their Effort into an ongoing Project, that Effort is lost.

Step 2: Generate Effort

The conspiracy generates Effort for each conspiracy action not taken this chapter. The conspiracy may suffer 1 lethal damage to their Association (p. XX) to generate additional Effort.

The Storyteller decides which Projects the conspiracy is currently working on. There is no limit on how many ongoing Projects the conspiracy may have, though they are limited in which they may complete by the amount of Effort they can reasonably generate.

Step 3: Resolve Crisis Points

If the actions or the Renegades (or the conspiracy exceeding its maximum number of conspiracy actions) challenged any of the conspiracy's Principles, this chapter, these are resolved now.

Step 4: Set the Stage (Optional)

Conspiracies are complex ecosystems of individuals with their own reasons for joining and who have very different views of their founding Principles. They are also, for the most part, objectively more reprehensible people than are the Renegades who oppose them. This optional rule gives the game a more cinematic television experience seeing the interior lives of the potentially large cast of human monsters who all consider themselves the protagonists of their own stories.

At the end of each chapter, each player takes on limited control of a single character in the service of the conspiracy. The Storyteller may choose to provide as wide or narrow a selection as she wishes. Linchpins and Conviction Touchstones are a good choice, but it could also include a member of the capture crew the Renegades gave the slip, a friend whom the conspiracy has convinced to betray one of the Remade, or even a witness to the Deviants' actions whom conspiracy members are interviewing.

The players then play out a brief conversation or scene involving these characters. This can highlight schisms in Principles, determine conspiracy strategy for the future, and show conspirator (and bystander) reactions to the exploits of the Renegades.

Projects

The pursuit and capture of Renegades is but one minor function of the greater founding principles of a conspiracy. When not trying to claim their wayward creations, most conspiracies have their own missions to accomplish, from acquiring a rival corporation to digging up the remains of their founder sealed beneath the governor's mansion.

Downtime actions further the long-term Projects the conspiracy is carrying out. The core of downtime actions is the generation of Effort, which is used to generate new influences and narrative effects for the conspiracy. Effort is the difference between an organization growing smoothly, and everything the conspiracy has worked for being pulled apart by their own vengeful creations.

Effort

A conspiracy generates Effort when it is not actively opposing or pursuing Renegades. For each conspiracy action unused by the conspiracy at the end of a chapter they generate 1 point of Effort. Effort can't be stockpiled to be spent later. They're either used for an ongoing Project immediately, or the excess labor is squandered by the conspiracy.

Once the conspiracy has put forth enough Effort, they may complete the Project.

Complexity

The Complexity of a Project indicates just how much Effort the conspiracy will need to put into the Project to bring it to fruition. Small Projects that barely affect the local population or only in small, esoteric ways may only merit a single point of Effort, while Projects that bring entire populations around to a conspiracy's way of thinking may require as many as 10. Once a conspiracy has spent enough Effort to complete the Project, the results of the Project go into effect at the beginning of the next chapter.

[BEGIN TABLE]

Complexity Example

1 Gain the temporary obedience of a group of people unrelated to the Renegades or a single member of their social network. Create or recruit a Manticore or Deviant appropriate to the conspiracy's Standing. Cause minor changes in the status quo, such as getting a symbol included in city iconography. Grant a Linchpin character access to three dots of Social Merit(s) appropriate to the relevant Node until the end of the chapter. Move an existing Icon from one of the conspiracy's Nodes to another. Assimilate a Node another conspiracy has abandoned.

3 Demand the loyalty of a large group of people unrelated to the Renegades or a single member of the players' characters' inner circle. Gain access to a new Icon. Cause substantial changes to the status quo, such as making a portion of conspiracy lore or belief a beloved character or saying.

5 Subsume a smaller organization or political entity into the conspiracy. Replace a previously lost Temporal, Exploitative, or Structural Node, complete with Linchpin (must be in some way connected to the conspiracy's current holdings). Cause significant alterations to the status quo, such as making a Principle a publicly tenable belief.

7 Subvert operatives in an organization that operates on a national scale. Replace a previously lost Hierarchal Node (complete with Linchpin). Cause serious changes to the status quo, such as normalizing open recruitment by the conspiracy.

10 Seize citywide control of local governance, operating freely and openly. Deploy an Icon with world-shaking properties. Cause major changes to the status quo, such as gaining the adoration and loyalty of the public or seizing control of a place of occult power from the supernatural creatures that laid claim to it. Create a new Node (complete with Linchpin) or increase an Attribute by one.

[END TABLE]

Projects and Nodes

Each Project is connected to a Node that narratively represents the group within the conspiracy finishing, guarding, or stewarding the Project until it comes to fruition. Once the conspiracy begins a Project, but before it comes into play, anything that destroys its connected Node disrupts the Project. This causes the loss of any Effort the conspiracy has already invested in the Project.

Resolving Crisis Points

By nature, conspiracies are resistant to change, confident in the elegance of their Principles. Some events, however, can inspire a collective crisis of faith known as a crisis point (p. XX).

Whenever a conspiracy faces a crisis point, in addition to suffering lethal damage to its Association (p. XX), the conspiracy must respond in one of the following ways:

- Replace one of its Linchpins with another.
- Shifts one dot of an Attribute to another.
- Lose a point of Effort from an existing Project.
- Suffer an additional 1 lethal damage to Association, which does not trigger a crisis point.

Narratively, these changes come about from the conspiracy attempting to maintain control in an increasingly disorganized environment. If the cohort had a direct hand in causing the crisis point, the Storyteller may allow them to choose the effect of the crisis point from the options above.

Conspiracy Versus Conspiracy

Although conspiracies often coexist peaceably and can benefit considerably from their relationships with other conspiracies, they sometimes come into conflict over territory and resources, including control over Deviants. A conspiracy that means a rival conspiracy harm has three ways of handling the conflict: sabotage, subversion, and war.

Sabotage

Sabotaging a rival conspiracy involves interfering with its ability to accomplish its goals — disrupting supply chains, intimidating employees, or passing along information about delicate Projects to hostile Renegades. This is a downtime action with no Complexity. Each point of Effort the saboteurs spend inflicts a point of bashing damage to the target's Association and uses one of the target's conspiracy actions, potentially inflicting lethal damage and a crisis point, if this pushes the target beyond its conspiracy action limit.

Subversion

The conspiracy attempts to compromise a rival slowly. This is a downtime action with a Complexity equal to the targeted organization's Standing, and it must target a Node the attacker is aware of (including ones connected via Structural Nodes). Successfully completing the Project replaces the Linchpin of the Node with a loyal agent. This also grants the attacking conspiracy knowledge of all the other Nodes connected to the subverted Node, offering future fronts in their war of subversion. The victim of a concerted subversion attack may be unaware of what is going on until only their leadership remains loyal to the conspiracy's Principles. Successfully compromising the last Hierarchical Node of a conspiracy allows the infiltrators two choices:

- Completely subsume the target conspiracy into their own, adding its Nodes and Icons to their conspiracy. If the subverted conspiracy's Standing is equal to or greater than the interloper's, the attacking conspiracy also gains one Standing, complete with additional Attributes.
- Place the target conspiracy on a leash connected to one of their Structural Nodes. In this case, the subordinate conspiracy becomes the puppet or catpaw of the attacker. The dominant conspiracy can direct the subordinate to take conspiracy actions on its behalf. Although these still count against the maximum number of conspiracy actions the dominant conspiracy can take, attacks or crisis points the subordinate conspiracy suffers do not normally impact the dominant conspiracy.

For example, if a Standing 3 conspiracy relegates a Standing 1 conspiracy to its puppet, it may demand that the subordinate take a conspiracy action on its behalf each chapter, leaving the puppet to suffer the consequences of that action while leaving itself a free conspiracy action to convert into Effort. It can instead force the subordinate conspiracy to take two conspiracy actions, but this causes the subordinate conspiracy to go over its action limit for the chapter, inflicting lethal damage to its Association and causing a crisis point. If the subordinate conspiracy was instead a Standing 5 conspiracy, the dominant conspiracy could only demand it take two conspiracy actions before the master conspiracy begins suffering Association damage and crisis points for exceeding its own action limits.

War

The conspiracy attempts to annihilate a rival. Going to war is significantly more dangerous for everyone involved. This is a downtime action with no Complexity. Instead, every point of Effort generated towards the war effort deals 1 lethal damage to the target's Association. The conspiracy can continue the war as long as they wish, until either the other conspiracy is completely destroyed or the organization is too weak to continue action.

The shadow wars of conspiracies are rarely one-sided affairs. Loyal officers on both sides suffer "accidents," precious libraries are torched, and expensive facilities that took time to create are vandalized. Both conspiracies may generate Effort towards destroying the other side. Lower-Standing organizations often have a hard time surviving a war with a conspiracy significantly larger than them, unable to muster the resources to hit them in enough places to really make the bigger group hurt.

War tends to end poorly for both conspiracies involved. Unless one conspiracy has the overwhelming advantage of size and situation, these conflicts can delay both conspiracies' goals and severely damage both groups. In the Web of Pain, these sorts of conflicts rarely stay private, either. Other connected conspiracies, both ally and enemy, join the conflict, some more than willing to take advantage of the chaos and some that want to ensure the peace no matter who they will have to put down.

Discovering the Conspiracy

The difficulty of pursuing revenge against a conspiracy is finding its independent parts. Except for the most hierarchically driven conspiracies, most are secretive and autonomous, operating in the shadows to avoid discovery. Renegades looking to dismantle their tormentors must first discover exactly how the organization is put together before they can fully strike back.

Deviants looking for a target to hit must attempt to discover a vulnerable or exposed portion of the conspiracy's Nodes. This process adheres to the normal rules for investigations (see p. XX), but special modifiers often apply to research a conspiracy or one of its Nodes.

Suggested Modifiers (total bonus/penalty cannot exceed +/-5): The Node's Linchpin is the Progenitor of a member of the cohort (+3). Cohort has the aid of a whistleblower (+3). The cohort was the target of a recent conspiracy action originating from the Node (+2). Node operates in public view (+1). Target is a Hierarchal Node (-1). Conspiracy has never been targeted by a conspiracy action originating from the Node (-1) or its conspiracy (-2). Conspiracy takes special care to conceal the Node's existence from the public (-2). The lead is years old (-3).

Node Destruction and Subversion

A Deviant looking to put some capability of a conspiracy on hold for the immediate future is attempting to destroy a Node. While the concept is simple in theory, in practice, it may require radical action. For many sorts of Nodes, such as research labs, libraries, or front businesses, this may require vandalism, arson, or even violence. Against infiltrators and planted double agents in other organizations, it may demand public exposure, blackmail, or forcing them out with scandal.

A Node is considered destroyed when it is no longer accessible to the conspiracy or no longer able to serve its intended application. Alternatively, if the Linchpin of a Node is taken out of action (whether killed, abducted, or convinced to abandon the conspiracy), the Node is similarly destroyed, unable to function without their supervision. When a Node is destroyed, the conspiracy takes 1 lethal damage to its Association and loses access to that Node for all actions, as well as control of any Icons or Projects attached to it. This may permanently stall downtime actions if the conspiracy has no sort of specialized abilities to replace it.

Instead of destroying a Node, a Deviant may try to subvert it. If a Deviant gains leverage over a Linchpin, whether with blackmail or threats, they may take partial control of the Node. A subverted Node functions as normal for the conspiracy but also provides any benefits of the location to the Deviant, allowing them to make use of the Node's resources, administrative access, or position to help their own lonely crusade.

Project Discovery and Prevention

Merely thwarting a conspiracy's attempts to capture, control, or neutralize the cohort may consume much of a Renegade's time, but these little victories do nothing to stop the enemy from achieving its goals. The cohort may uncover one of the conspiracy's Projects entirely by accident or after careful investigation:

- **Inquiry:** Using the Investigation system (p. XX) to uncover a potential lead on the conspiracy's current actions.
- **Serendipity:** A lead is discovered from a failed conspiracy action (p. XX), giving some clue of what the conspiracy is up to.
- **Informant:** The cohort becomes aware of any Projects that are connected to or rely on a subverted Node to function.

Every Project within a conspiracy is connected to a specific Node until its completion and implementation. This may represent the team of technicians putting the finishing touches on the newest invention, the kennels newly bred Manticores are stored in until they're let loose, or even a marketing firm in charge of the memetic plague the conspiracy is about to unleash. Destroying this Node before the Project's completion can set back the plan or even permanently stop it. When a Node connected with a conspiracy Project is destroyed, the conspiracy loses all Effort they have invested in it.

Harm, Healing, and Purges

Harming a conspiracy takes more effort than just harming its agents. A conspiracy tracks damage using Association, a measure of the size and loyalty of its following. Conspiracies have Association equal to 3 + Resistance. Association boxes act like Health boxes (p. XX) when the conspiracy suffers damage.

Instead of corresponding to physical damage, Association tracks how many members the conspiracy has and how loyal they are to the cause. Bashing damage indicates fear or worry for personal safety, distracting individuals from their jobs. Lethal damage reflects a growing panic with the conspiracy's mission or the member's safety. Aggravated damage is outright factional war within the organization, as members of the conspiracy try to escape the life. Common sources of Association damage include the following:

- **Bashing:** Subversion by an enemy conspiracy; Renegades carry out a significant and successful act of sabotage against the conspiracy or intimidation of its members
- **Lethal:** Wartime attacks by an enemy conspiracy; Renegades destroy an Exploitative, Structural, or Temporal Node, whether by eliminating its Linchpin, carrying out a major attack, or exposing its crimes to the public; conspiracy exceeds its conspiracy action limit for the chapter
- **Aggravated:** The conspiracy began the preceding chapter with an Association track filled with lethal damage and did not perform a purge to clear it; Renegades destroy a Hierarchal Node

Once a conspiracy's Association track is filled with lethal damage, it enters a vulnerable state of extreme disorganization, gradually crumbling into its constituent parts unless it performs a purge. In such a state, the conspiracy loses the ability to pursue downtime actions and takes one aggravated damage per chapter as the population of the conspiracy disperses or joins uncommunicative rival factions. Once the Association track is filled with aggravated damage, the conspiracy completely dissolves, leaving nothing behind but rumors of its existence and the survivors whose lives it destroyed. Other conspiracies can scavenge the leftover Nodes and Icons of the now defunct organization. Allowing a conspiracy to crumble away from disorganization can be a cathartic event for Renegades, but cohorts often rankle at letting so many of those responsible just walk away without answering for what they have done.

Conspiracies gradually recover from most setbacks, as their subordinates slowly forget the terrors of the past. At the end of any chapter in which the conspiracy suffered no damage to its Association, it downgrades damage to its Association equal to its Standing — aggravated to lethal, lethal to bashing, and bashing healing entirely. However, any damage the conspiracy suffers during the chapter prevents this gradual restoration of institutional confidence.

A conspiracy may also undertake a purge to restore order and calm to panicking conspiracy members. Purges take one of four forms, each of which is a conspiracy action:

- **Expel:** The conspiracy cuts its losses and severs ties with a Node closest to those making trouble. The conspiracy destroys a Node and any Icons attached to it, but clears all damage from Association. The absolute destruction prevents characters from following the destroyed Node's connections to any of the conspiracy's other Nodes, unless they had already made contact with those Nodes.
- **Reform:** The conspiracy chooses to make an illustrative example of one of its dissenting members, showing there are many ways to serve the cause. The conspiracy selects a Node and makes an immediate conspiracy action with it. This action does not count towards a conspiracy's maximum actions per chapter. The Node is destroyed after being used this way, but the conspiracy clears all damage from Association.

- **Reclaim:** The conspiracy cannibalizes its own for resources to further its goals and reaffirm the Principles they are founded on. The conspiracy permanently reduces its Power, Finesse, or Resistance by one and clears all damage from Association.
- **Resignation:** Rather than attempting to fix the failing organization, the conspiracy makes a desperate push to achieve its goals. The conspiracy destroys up to its Standing in Nodes and gains that amount of Effort to spend on downtime actions.

How A Conspiracy Dies

Sometimes the Remade get exactly what they want and finally put a stop to the actions of a conspiracy. When a conspiracy falls into one of the following categories, it is considered destroyed. If survivors of the organization attempt to rebuild it from the ashes, it may look the similar but is a significantly different organization then it once was.

- **Dissolution:** The conspiracy's Association track is filled with aggravated damage, whereupon its surviving members abandon their posts and flee en masse.
- **Decapitation:** The conspiracy's last Hierarchical Node is destroyed, causing the conspiracy's remaining Nodes to dissolve into their constituent parts.
- **Desolation:** The conspiracy drops below its Standing in Nodes, collapsing under its own weight as it becomes unable to support its needs.

When a conspiracy is destroyed, all remaining Nodes and Icons remain in the wild and can be acquired by another group in the Web of Pain with a downtime action. If Nodes are not destroyed or subsumed by another conspiracy, then they may become the basis for a new conspiracy in the world.

Going Deeper

Renegades rarely find vengeance so simple as killing the person who pulled the switch or invoked the seven forbidden names. Wherever they search, they find clues of deeper mysteries and of organizations that enthusiastically pushed their tormentors onward. Every clue hints at someone else who made this possible. After a conspiracy has been destroyed, the Renegades responsible may descend deeper into the Web of Pain and start uncovering secrets of the original conspiracy's allies.

When the players' characters destroy their first conspiracy, they may immediately make a connection with a new conspiracy using all destroyed Nodes as Clues with one element each (p. XX). The troupe collectively decides whether this new conspiracy is the former's Inheritor, Rival, or Master.

- **Inheritor:** An inheritor conspiracy was previously subordinate to the now destroyed conspiracy. They may have previously been kept on a short leash by the organization, or perhaps much of their own understanding of Divergence is reliant on their predecessor conspiracy. An Inheritor conspiracy starts at one Standing lower than its predecessor.
- **Rival:** A Rival conspiracy was another conspiracy that had both competed and cooperated with the predecessor conspiracy. They may be attempting to absorb the territory and assets now freed up by their rival's destruction or looking to avenge the loss of such brilliance from the world. A Rival conspiracy starts at the same Standing as the predecessor conspiracy.

- **Master:** A Master conspiracy was in some way controlling the Predecessor conspiracy, secretly behind the scenes another pulled the strings that made all this tragedy play out in the first place. A Master conspiracy starts with one more Standing than the predecessor conspiracy.

A new conspiracy starts with Nodes and a pool of Attribute dots appropriate to its Standing. If a new conspiracy unconnected to other conspiracies already in play is discovered (or discovers the cohort), its Standing is based on the average total Magnitude dots of the cohort's Variations (rounded down):

[TABLE]

Average Total Variation	Magnitude	Standing
2	1	
5	2	
7	3	
10	4	
12	5	
15	6	
17	7	
20	8	
25	9	
30	10	

[END TABLE]

The Devoted

Some Remade slip the shackles of the conspiracies who kept them, tormented them, and reshaped their lives. Others, however, never know this taste of dicey freedom or their fraught independence. They stay nestled in the iron embrace of those who made them, safe from truth and choice and the many dangers of the outside world. For this, the Devoted are forever grateful and owe their mutable lives to those who changed them.

The lives of the Devoted are dictated by the conspiracy that reared them. Some fortunate Devoted may have time to themselves to pursue their personal joys: favorite TV shows or hobbies, or other mundane things. Others are bound tighter to their leash, every minute of every hour spoken for, dictated by scientists, engineers, and dubious medical professionals. Only those who escape eschew this control. The Devoted realize they are volatile aberrations and that this structure is for the best. Without it they'd lose control and destroy themselves or harm others. For others still, it may never occur to them that a life can persist outside the conspiracy's walls. Conspiracies make little effort to convince their creations to leave, so why would any Remade seek a free life?

The Open Door

To say the life of a Renegade is fraught with challenges would be a tremendous understatement. They are hounded on all sides by opposition, by the unpredictability of their bodies, and by the

fear of rejection by their peers. With the world arrayed against them, is it any wonder that some Renegades reject their hellish livelihood — such as it is — and return to the conspiracies they fled? Or yet that some Remade never leave? The world outside the sterile conspiracy compounds will chew up and spit out new Renegades. Why would anyone leave? Yet, they do, and when they eventually crawl back, ruined and empty, the conspiracies welcome them.

Prodigal Children

The hardships of attempting to live an ordinary human life become insurmountable. A Renegade's body won't stop changing, shifting every time she glances in the mirror. Life was better when she had a routine — awful body-altering drugs and all — and a reliable roof over her head. Scars fester, leak, and mutate. It interrupts sleep, keeping the Renegade from focusing on the day-to-day. The people who made her could stop this. Maybe they'll take her back, she thinks, maybe not even with a price.

The easiest way for the Remade to become Devoted is to return to the conspiracy's fold. Depending on the conspiracy, this return may come with a price, while others may at least appear to welcome their prodigal creation home with open arms. Perhaps the only asking price is the character's freedom. Either way, if the character returns to a conspiracy after being a Renegade, she becomes Devoted.

Children by Adoption

The Remade does not have to return to the conspiracy that made her. Another conspiracy can just as easily open its doors to a wayward Deviant, promising her a life free of pain and torment, for nothing more than the price of her independence. Remade can return to any conspiracy willing to take them in, and are not required to crawl back to their conspiracy of origin.

The Enemy's Face

Devoted make excellent recurring antagonists for a Deviant chronicle. These enemy Remade cling to their kept lives, the dark reflections of the cohort and a warning of what could have been. Entangled with the players' characters' stories, Devoted appear when the characters are at their lowest to grind them beneath their boots, claim their pathetic lives, or cajole them back to the welcoming arms of their mutual conspiracy. These encounters should be intense, dangerous, and deeply personal. The four archetypes listed below function as guidelines for designing the Devoted who will appear in the chronicle. These antagonists are intended to be built collaboratively between Storyteller and players, with a sliding scale for the antagonists' involvement with the players' characters.

Four Archetypal Devoted

The **Rival**: Whether an individual foil to a specific character, or the one left behind when a group escaped, a Rival is not out for blood. A rival wishes to see her counterpart(s) defeated and humiliated, with all their plans foiled. Rivals are the most well-rounded of the Devoted archetypes, ideal for a recurring threat. These Storyteller characters always have some personal entanglement with one or more of the player's characters: the most common background being another Deviant created at the same time who chose stay (or was unable to escape). However that story unfolded, the rival likely still harbors festering resentment. Rivals should be designed to counterbalance and challenge the cohort.

The **Stalker**: Where Rivals often face the cohort directly, Stalkers provide a stealthier, more subtle opposition. Stalkers are frequently engineered in response to the escape of the players' Remade. They pursue and track the players' characters, observing them, recording their lives, sending snippets of data back to their conspiracy, and, eventually, aid in the characters' capture. Most Stalkers do not have a history with their prey, and were created specifically to return rogue Broken. As Storyteller characters, Stalkers have spent their entire changed lives observing and pursuing, so it is not uncommon for them to develop obsessions with one or more of the players' characters. This does not have to be a romantic obsession, but should always verge on uncomfortable. Stalker characters should be designed to be skulking observers first and dangerous fighters second.

The **Assassin**: Remade are valuable assets, the result of months or years of investment and labor. Ideally, a conspiracy dispatches a Stalker and gets its lost creations back in one piece. When attempts to recover the Remade alive fail, conspiracies fall back on Assassins, the final, lethal choice. Conspiracies create Assassins as general weapons; creatures designed for slaughter and war, and it is these grim-faced huntsman that are turned loose upon the players' characters. Assassins may have Rival or Stalker type relationships with the players' characters, or they may simply be forces of nature kept on a leash until the conspiracy has need for them. The players and Storyteller should discuss what kind of threat they'd like to see, when creating an Assassin. Though often a major enemy featuring in a single chapter or story, Assassins can become repeat antagonists if the characters evade their initial attack.

The **Warden**: Where Assassins are made to kill, Wardens are made to preserve and protect. Remade are dangerous and volatile, so when a conspiracy creates one that is more obedient and stable than the others, they become a Warden. Wardens keep the other Deviants in line and bring lost Remade back to the fold. Ostensibly this is done with love and care — a Warden wants their charges to be safe and secure above all else. Wardens designed in opposition to the players' characters may have been their former guardians, overseers, or supervisors who failed in their task and let the Broken escape. This antagonistic relationship can be as intimate as the players desire. Like Stalkers, Wardens focus more on capture than the kill, but rather than stealthy observers Wardens present a social threat as they attempt to convince the characters to surrender and come quietly. They only have the characters' best interests at heart, after all.

Making the Devoted

Devoted serve the story as personalized antagonists, foils, and nemeses who punctuate the chronicle with their repeat presence. Rivals and Stalkers tend to be directly personal: having relationships with one of the players' characters, rather than the entire group, while Assassins and Wardens have connections to the entire cohort. Storytellers and players collaborate to create these antagonists, building them based on the severity of the relationship: Acquainted, Personal, Obsessive. Begin building the Devoted with the same character creation as players' characters (p. XX).

- **Acquainted**: Acquainted characters have 2 additional Attribute points, 5 additional Skills, and 2 additional Variation dots, and any Scars that may go with them. Antagonists at this level of engagement have a familiar but not intimate relationship with one of the player's characters. These Devoted might be unfeeling guards who knew the character's face from her time imprisoned in the conspiracy's experimental cells, a former middle-manager half-transformed by the same cruel procedures but given a longer leash for his cowed obedience, or a

cellmate of a few days who remembers snatches of bonding conversation but failed to form a lasting or meaningful relationship. These types of Devoted view the players characters with little more regard than passing recognition — they know her name and likely know what was done to her, but little more.

- **Personal:** At the Personal level, the bond between antagonist and player’s character is more intense - they may have been intimate or lovers, or shared a friendship forged in trauma. Assign 3 additional Attribute points, 8 additional Skills, and 4 additional Variation dots plus relevant Scars. This level of entanglement indicates a character who might have been a partner in the experiment. Perhaps the Personal-level Devoted character signed up for the same “medical trial” with the player’s character and was left behind when she managed to escape. They might have been former colleagues both doing research towards the same genetic modifications, each pushing the other towards greater and more volatile changes while the player’s character quit the program without telling her compatriot. They could also have been a teacher, especially if the conspiracy the Renegade came from has religious associations. The Devoted imparted valuable lessons in controlling their Variations before the Renegade made her escape.
- **Obsessive:** Antagonists designed at the Obsessive level cannot let their damaged relationship with the players’ characters go. They are singularly focused on the downfall of the character or characters with whom they are entangled. Apply an additional 4 Attribute points, 12 additional Skills, and 6 additional Variation dots plus any relevant Scars. If the antagonist is being designed by the group of players, add one extra Skill, and Variation dot for each player beyond the first who wishes to be entangled with the character. Whatever created this degree of relationship, it was consuming and traumatic; something unforgettable in the worst possible way. This Devoted character may have been lovers with the transformed, perhaps they even agreed to sign up for the program together, holding hands with barely contained fear as they signed their lives away. If not lovers, perhaps they were instead close friends and the Devoted perceives the Renegade’s choice to leave as the ultimate betrayal. What once was love and partnership now burns as spurned hatred. The Obsessive wants nothing more than to be back together with the Renegade who abandoned her, no matter what the cost. The Storyteller should avoid creating an Obsessive character who has no emotional connection to any of the players’ characters. These types of Devoted are always deeply personal, not just a stalker who observed the players’ characters from across the room and let negative feelings fester.

Growing Threats

Powerful Renegades attract the attention of powerful Devoted, both as a matter of narrative and a means of ensuring the players’ character continue to face real challenges.

When introducing Devoted during the chronicle, the Storyteller may instead determine starting Magnitude of Variations based on the Standing of the conspiracy that created them, rather than based on the Threat Level of the chronicle.

Particularly with Obsessive Devoted, the Storyteller may elect to award Experiences to these antagonists at the same pace as each of the players’ characters earn it (or the average number of Experiences, if using individual Beats). The Storyteller may spend these at his sole discretion, or invite players to make some purchase decisions on behalf of their greatest Remade foes.

Nemeses

Like their Renegade counterparts who achieve Catharsis and become Guardians, Devoted become consumed by Fury and become Nemeses. When one of the Devoted's Conviction exceeds her Loyalty, she fills with endless hatred, transforming into a Nemesis. Often, this occurs when someone kills one or more of her Loyalty Touchstones, leaving her with more sworn enemies to destroy than people to protect.

If one of the players' characters pushes a Devoted into this state, her entanglement jumps immediately to Obsessive, regardless of its previous status. If she was already at the Obsessive level, she instantly increases all her Attributes by 1 (and therefore any derived stats) and immediately gains one new Variation (with any accompanying Scar).

Devoted Form

Being Devoted means giving up on personal freedoms for personal gain. While the Renegades buck their leash and choose to live a life of scarcity and pain, the Devoted embrace what the conspiracy has given them — it is a *gift* only fools throw away. Some Devoted might justify their loyalty, saying they are playing a long game and intend to rebel when the time is right or when they have amassed enough power to do so. Others own their choice to remain, choosing to believe in a “just” cause, while others still delude themselves with the kind of sweet lies one whispers to keep doubts away. Regardless of what a Devoted tells herself to sleep at night, she still wakes up in her conspiracy-granted cell, looks at her conspiracy regulation walls, and does her conspiracy ordered duty with flawless obedience. Some may call this life a cage, living as a kept pet or a prized possession, but who would rather live under a bridge, suffering and hungry? Who will help you when your own body rebels?

Systems: Devoted reverse the effects of Conviction and Loyalty when compared to Renegades.

- Newly created Devoted have 3 Loyalty and 1 Conviction, plus whatever their Origin grants.
- After a scene in which the Devoted performs some service for a Loyalty Touchstone, she gains one Willpower and takes a Beat. Once per chapter, when she risks danger or suffers in the pursuit of a Conviction Touchstone, she regains all Willpower.

Identifying Variations and Scars

When dealing with a Remade opponent, knowing his capabilities and vulnerabilities can be the key to defeating him. However, not all Broken wield obvious Variations, and most Scars are not immediately obvious to a casual observer. The genre abounds with cases where a Deviant's enemies were able to identify and exploit his weaknesses, and so this system is designed to allow players' characters (and their opponents!) do just that.

A character can only identify a Variation or Scar when it is active (or manifested). Whether the Variation/Scar is Overt or Subtle, the dice pool and suggested modifiers are the same.

Dice Pool: Wits + relevant Skill. This is usually Occult for Variations and especially exotic Scars, Medicine for Physical Scars, and Empathy for Mental and Social Scars.

Suggested Modifiers (total bonus/penalty cannot exceed +/-5): Attempting to identify a Clade Variation of a Clade other than the observer's (-2). Circumstances in the scene make it highly unlikely the Scar will come into play, such as a Remade with the Native Environment Scar while

in that environment (-1 to -2). Circumstances in the scene make it more likely the Scar will come into play, such as a Deviant in the same scene as the object of his Phobia (+1 to +3).

Variation/Scar is one the observer has seen before (+1), studied closely (+2), or has himself (+3). Observer has relevant exotic sensory equipment or senses (+1 for Unseen Sense Merit to +3 for Specialized Sense 3).

Identify Overt Variation or Scar

Action Type: Reflexive

Roll Results

Success: The observer identifies one of the target's active Overt Variations or Scars (name and Magnitude).

Exceptional Success: As a success, but the observer also learns more specific details (the trigger for his Involuntary Stimulus, for example, or the specifics of his Bane).

Failure: The observer only notices the obvious effects but doesn't associate it with a specific Variation or Scar.

Dramatic Failure: As failure, but the observer misidentifies the Variation or Scar.

Identify Subtle Variation or Scar

Action Type: Extended (one roll per turn in action scenes; one roll every several minutes in other scenes)

5 Successes: Identify the Variation or Scar and its general effects (name and Magnitude).

Each additional two successes yield an additional key detail about the Variation/Scar — effects, Deviations, Variation/Scar entanglements, specifics (which Specialized Senses, for example, or what triggers Power Failure).

Example Characters

Madeline “The Wall” Hager, Rival Devoted

Quote: *"I remember what you said. I'll see you destroyed if it's the last thing I do!"*

Background: A low-level clerk at Dynamic Solutions, Madeline's department manager took notice of her hard work ethic and commitment to taking on overtime hours, and put her name forward for a reward. Usually this meant pizza parties or free company swag, but Dynamic Solutions had other things in mind for their hardest working, most loyal employees willing to donate so much of their time. Assuming this meant a promotion, Madeline went along with it.

She went into her annual review anticipating praise, a small increase in pay, and a change in job title, but her supervisor only spared her a forced smile as two Dynamic Solutions Talent Acquisition Team members put a blackout bag over her head and injected sedatives. They reshaped her into something else: something big, something powerful, something terrifying. Talent Acquisitions considers her their most successful experiment yet. The rest ended messily, or made the mistake of trying to leave.

Madeline remains ever a good employee. She doesn't blame Dynamic Solutions — after all they made her something when she was nothing, just a wage slave chained to a desk. Now she can punch through walls. Who else can boast such a thing? She brims with misdirected rage at her

former life: at her former coworkers for readily turning her over to brutal experiments and with everyone in her former life for saying she'd never make anything of herself.

Appearance: Madeline at first appears little, ordinary, and innocuous besides having a bit of unusual bulk. This is a ruse, for her true Remade form is a towering mass of muscle, bulging subdural plates and raw, unchecked fury. Before activating her Variations, she has dark hair, dark eyes, glasses, and dresses in earth tones and other subdued colors. These give way to the monster within once her array of power has been activated.

Storytelling Hints: Madeline used to be small and unassuming but has been transformed into powerhouse of raw might. Once set on a path, she is an unstoppable force, an inexorable juggernaut.

Origin: Exomorph

Clade: Coactive

Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3; Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2; Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Skills: Academics 1, Athletics 1, Brawl (Grappling) 1, Empathy 3, Expression 3, Firearms 1, Intimidation (Physical Displays) 3, Investigation 4, Persuasion 3, Politics 3, Science 1, Socialize 1, Stealth 2, Subterfuge 2, Weaponry (Improvised) 1

Merits: Dauntless, Investigative Aide (Investigation), Investigative Prodigy 1, Fast Talking 2, Living Progenitor 3, Prized Experiment

Willpower: 6

Stability: 6

Conviction 1

Loyalty 3

Aspiration: Find an excuse to break something or hurt someone

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Speed: 10 (12)

Health: 8 (13)

Size: 5 (10)

Acclimation: 1

Controlled Scars: Preparation (Social; Gigantic) 2

Persistent Scars: Bane (Physical; Draining; Blessing, Immunity) 4*

Variations: Blessing (Albatross) 3, Gigantic 3, Immunity (Deviant Variations) 3

* Madeline cannot approach lit safety spotlights and suffers intense pain when caught in their direct light.

Tristan "Echo" Howe, Assassin Devoted

Quote: *"Come quietly or die. Those are your choices."*

Background: For Tristan, their options after high school narrowed: not quite bright enough to make college work, not quite skilled enough to enter a trade. They made a choice that many young people coming of age in the early twenty-first century did: they joined the military. After a few tours in Iraq, Tristan was offered a new and exciting opportunity. They took it out of curiosity and the promise of a six-figure paycheck.

They entered the training program with two dozen others in the early summer and by winter Tristan no longer recognized their own face. A few more months later, and whatever was left of their personality had been replaced by a focused desire for violence. They have become a perfect weapon, honed to a clean, unthinking point. Wherever the government points them, they go, and they execute their job with horrifying ruthless efficiency. Their commanding officers give Tristan a target, and the Devoted learns everything possible about them before beginning their bloody task. Tristan Howe doesn't really exist anymore. They are the Echo, a flawless weapon, an empty shell of a person-become-weapon.

This experiment has been successful beyond any of the military scientists' wildest dreams.

Appearance: Tristan retains a general human form: one head, two arms, two legs, but the similarities end there. Their body is elongated and strange, reformatted for every imaginable type of movement — joints snapping and ligaments uncoiling as they drop from unexpected places. Tristan's hands have been reshaped into rending claws which they use to shred opponents, but remain dexterous enough to handle firearms. The military dresses them in a bulletproof bodysuit to better protect their perfect weapon.

Storytelling Hints: Dispatching the Echo is a last resort. They will pursue the players' characters until their job is complete, even if this means temporary defeat and an escape to attack again later. Encounters with the Echo are violent and dangerous, and only the most silver-tongued of characters can dissuade them from their bloody task. Storytellers looking to include this deadly force of nature should consider what the players' characters have done to earn such a threat sent after them.

Origin: Epimorph

Clade: Mutant

Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 3; Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl (Claws) 4, Computer 3, Crafts 2, Drive 1, Firearms (Rifles) 4, Intimidation 3, Investigation 4, Medicine 3, Persuasion 1, Politics 2, Science 2, Stealth (Ambush) 3, Subterfuge 2, Survival 2, Weaponry 4

Merits: Dauntless, Demolisher 3, Grappling 2, Hardy 2, Iron Skin 2

Willpower: 7

Stability: 8

Conviction: 2

Loyalty: 3

Aspiration: Bring down a target

Initiative: 7

Defense: 4

Speed: 12

Health: 8

Size: 5

Acclimation: 3

Involuntary Scars: Involuntary Stimulus (Physical; Insistent; Cutting Brawl Lash) 2

Persistent Scars: Conspicuous Appearance (Social; Brachiation) 3, Frozen Heart (Social; Hypercompetence) 2, Glitch (Mental; Anomalous Biology) 2

Variations: Anomalous Biology (Breathless, Heartless) 2, Brachiation 3, Hypercompetence (Firearms) 3, Cutting Brawl Lash (Deadly, Forceful, Piercing) 2*

* Tristan's claws activate whenever they become fully submerged in water.

Weapons/Attacks:

[START TABLE]

Type	Damage	Dice Pool	Special
Claws	2L 8	Armor Piercing 2;	inflicts Knocked Down Tilt)

[END TABLE]

Ian "Cipher" Temple, Stalker Devoted

Quote: *"I can find anything you need. Just give me five minutes."*

Background: With college applications looming, Ian needed money. He had good grades, but not quite good enough for a scholarship. He was athletic and talented, but not the star of the team. Getting a good education would be expensive, and his family couldn't afford to foot the bill. Ian came across a flyer advertising a paid study looking for young men in his age bracket. A few internet searches on the sponsoring company turned up reputable information, so he volunteered. What followed was a blur, and he doesn't fully remember any of it. When he asks, his handlers tell him not to worry, to focus on his job. He doesn't think he's always been able to climb walls; no, that's probably new. Ian only has the vaguest recollection of a life before his time as one of the Devoted, half-recalled dreamlike snippets of parents and siblings, so it has never occurred to him that he might escape his life as a prisoner. He continues to live his life day to day, job to job, losing a little piece of his memory each time he activates his powers.

Appearance: Slender and wiry, Ian was once a handsome, young black man but has become something between chameleon and human. Ian's hands and feet have been shaped into grasping, sticky paws. He keeps himself almost entirely covered up, preferring dark clothing in grays or navy blues to better blend in with shadows. His clothing is otherwise utilitarian: close fitting and made of material that minimizes sound while moving. When he is not scuttling barefoot across a ceiling, he moves awkwardly in ordinary shoes as his feet have been transformed to facilitate his unusual method of locomotion.

Storytelling Hints: Ian only remembers what the conspiracy has told him, and he believes that by pursuing and observing the characters, he will be given the keys to unlock the secrets of his life before. He derives genuine pleasure from his duties as a stalker, ferreting out information, overhearing critical conversations, and infiltrating spaces he doesn't belong and does not see any of these activities as wrong or immoral. Ian's first instinct when confronted with violence is to flee or to hide, the latter of which he is exceptionally skilled at doing.

Origin: Epimorph

Clade: Chimeric

Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3; Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Skills: Academics 1, Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Computer 2, Investigation (Profiling) 3, Larceny (Burglary) 2, Medicine 1, Science 1, Stealth (Shadowing) 3, Streetwise 2, Survival 2, Weaponry 2

Merits: Area of Expertise (Stealth: Shadowing), Investigative Aide (Stealth), Patient, Resources 2, Shiv 1, Stabilizer 2, Street Fighting 2

Willpower: 6

Stability: 6

Conviction: 2

Loyalty: 3

Aspiration: Learn something about the cohort

Initiative: 6

Defense: 6

Speed: 10

Health: 8

Size: 5

Acclimation: 1

Persistent Scars: Amnesia (Mental; Camouflage, Face Thief) 3, Conspicuous Appearance (Physical; Brachiation, Predator's Cunning) 3

Variations: Brachiation (Spider) 2, Camouflage (Invisible) 2, Face Thief 2, Predator's Cunning (Uncanny) 3

Eve "Hellbender" Strang, Warden Devoted

Quote: *"Come with me, friends, this way to safety."*

Background: Eve Strang thought she was signing up for a pharmaceutical drug trial, but after putting her name in ink on all the paperwork, the conspiracy revealed the truth. This was an experiment to build a sturdier, unstoppable person. The final candidate would, ideally, be able to work tirelessly, endure any hardship, and become the perfect bloodhound. Having already signed away her freedom legally, and being too poor to afford an attorney to dispute it, Eve agreed to

the conspiracy's terms. Months of extended treatments, drugs, tests, surgeries, and worse followed. Others in the program died or fled. Some shifted wildly out of control. Eve stayed miraculously stable through the whole trial, and for that she was rewarded with a job. She'd witnessed so many other Deviants go rogue when they should have endured, so she happily agreed to become the conspiracy's dragnet, an unsleeping force that would return the lost to home. Her persistence and aggressively protective nature earned her the moniker "Hellbender" after the species of lizard with the same nickname.

Appearance: Eve "Hellbender" Strang is tall, lean, and sharp-featured with straight, platinum blonde hair and a cold stare. She wears a calf-length double-breasted black trench coat tailored enough to appear professional, but also loose enough to conceal weapons. Beneath it her clothes are practical, bordering on plain, intended for ease of movement. The Hellbender walks with purpose and the inexorable confidence of a person who feels no pain.

Storytelling Hints: What humanity remains within her clings to compassion — Eve truly cares for the safety of prodigal Remade and believes that her efforts to return them to their conspiracies is what's best. She herself must regularly undergo therapy and treatment to maintain her tremendous power and without it, she would crumble and die. If she needs such things, surely others do, too, and she's more than willing to help them understand.

Origin: Autourgic

Clade: Invasive

Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3; Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Skills: Academics 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Drive 1, Empathy (Deviants) 3, Expression 2, Firearms 2, Intimidation 3 (Scare to Safety), Investigation 3, Medicine 1, Persuasion (Deviants) 4, Politics 2, Science 2, Socialize 1, Stealth 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2, Survival 1

Merits: Direction Sense, Good Samaritan, Lifeline 2, Resources 2, Shared Suffering, Tolerance for Biology

Willpower: 6

Stability: 6

Conviction: 2

Loyalty: 4

Aspiration: Protect another Deviant from harm

Initiative: 6

Defense: 6

Speed: 11

Health: 8

Size: 5

Acclimation: 1

Controlled Scars: Tribulation (Mental; Meditation; Omnicompetence) 4

Persistent Scars: Dependency (Physical; Fatigued, Sluggish, Submissive; Anomalous Biology, Healing Touch) 4, Paranoia (Mental; Onomantic Influence) 3

Variations: Anomalous Biology (Bloodless, Heartless, Painless, Tireless) 3, Healing Touch 4, Omnicompetence 4, Onomantic Influence (Invoke Name) 3

Armor: 1/3 (Kevlar vest)

Quislings of the Flesh: Human Conspirators

Conspiracies aren't made up of monsters of scales and metal. Even if the person pulling the switch wasn't themselves human, which is extremely rare, most of the people who run the labs, set up experiments, and dispose of evidence are, well, people. They have families, hobbies, and annoyances just like anyone else in the Chronicles of Darkness. When they go home at night, do they hug themselves in the darkness, ridden with guilt? Or do they fall into a sound sleep, safe in the knowledge that they are advancing the evolution of the human race?

Humans of all kinds make up a conspiracy. The CEO making decisions on her yacht is just as human as the janitor mopping the blood off the floor in the operating theater. They all have their reasons for being there, and they all have their own reactions to what happens in the halls of the conspiracy they're a part of.

For Money

One of the most common reasons people work for a conspiracy is the paycheck. Many don't think too hard about the implications of the corporation's or the hospital's policies. They collect their checks, clock in and out, and treat it as a 9-to-5 job.

This doesn't mean all, or even most, of the conspiracy members don't know what's going on. Janitors see things in quiet hospital rooms that make them vomit in the bathroom later.

Accountants meet Remade at the office Christmas party and see them for what they are. The Chief Financial Officer signs off on orders for endangered animal parts, ECT machines, restraints, and vats of formaldehyde. A Progenitor requires a massive infrastructure to create a Deviant, and many of those people aren't bound to the conspiracy by anything other than their livelihood.

While whistleblower laws nominally protect those who talk, conspiracies are not noted for their adherence to ethical jurisprudence. They might pay the fine, but whoever talks might be found floating in a river a day later. Or they might be terminated after failing to meet a sudden load of unreasonable demands placed on them, and found hanging in their closet several months, or even weeks, later. Or they might be paid off and sent to live in the Caribbean. It really depends on the conspiracy.

Those at the very top of the food chain might also have this motive, but they are creating Broken to make money, not to scrape by on a salary. These corporate overlords are extremely dangerous, due to the number of underlings at their disposal. If something cuts into their bottom line, then they will cut right back to restore profitability and prevent future threats to cashflow.

For Knowledge

The search for truth, change, or a higher form of life consumes many who become Progenitors, including scientists, occultists, and doctors. The desire for understanding and discovery

motivates such conspirators, whether it is proving a seemingly laughable theory, curing a bizarre supernatural illness, or unlocking the secrets of a lost cult.

These conspirators are often among the most loyal to the conspiracy because they cannot continue their work without its aid. While some treat their creations with a degree of kindness, many regard their test subjects as little more than lab rats, and the Broken that result as valuable only insofar as they cooperate with their creators.

While these conspirators are far less numerous than those who are just in it for the money, they are what most Renegades picture when they plan their assault on the conspiracy. These people have a personal stake in the conspiracy: intellectual property, college credits, possibly even some emotional attachments. They are often heavily protected due to their intimate knowledge of the conspiracy's projects, and they will not go down without a fight (and possibly a healthy amount of begging).

However, they are not always enemies. One Deviant's torturer might be another's savior. They can be negotiated with and even worked with for extended periods of time — but they always want the knowledge that results.

For the Pain

Many Renegades would like to think that their conspiracy was founded on a pedestal of absolute evil. The employees are all cringing underlings or abusers-in-training, their Progenitors are cackling mad scientists, and the heads of the conspiracy are omnipotent puppeteers in the shadows. The truth is usually much more complex. Many Progenitors think they are doing the best for the human race, the accountants and administrative assistants are just doing their jobs, and the CEO plays at being a Silicon Valley startup prodigy who is too far removed from his people to know or care about what they're doing.

However, this is not always the case. Many who join a conspiracy know exactly what they're signing up for. They're willing to fudge numbers, buy secondhand needles, and do whatever is necessary to continue creating and torturing Remade to exercise their own need for power. Conspiracies deal in unethical (or at least highly questionable) experiments and business practices, so staying in operation means finding people who are willing to look at those behaviors without going to the FBI or the ethics board. And such people are often those who are willing to look the other way in exchange for the conspiracy letting certain personal habits slide, too. In short, even relatively benign conspiracies attract the worst kinds of people, at least some of the time.

These people are extremely dangerous and often lurk in odd or unexpected areas of the conspiracy. A cell guard for Remade might enjoy torturing them, but there also might be a head of marketing who wields her power like a whip, or a janitor who has learned to use the ECT machine. They may play a long game, befriending a Remade only to betray her later, or they may launch themselves at a Renegade while she's casing the facility. Each one is different, and each one is always looking for a new victim to bully and abuse.

Sample Characters

These are templates for your human conspiracy members. Feel free to use or modify them as necessary.

Administrative Assistant

“Sure, I have access to that spreadsheet. Can I see your badge?”

She’s the conduit through which most of the conspiracy’s information flows, a Linchpin in their affairs. There might be one, ten, or a hundred like her, but all of them hold unique keys to the organization’s information. A lot of Renegades overlook administrative assistants, considering them mere pawns. A smart Remade knows better. A good administrative assistant can make anyone disappear or destroy precious data with the stroke of a key or the push of a button.

Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 3; Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3; Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

General Dice Pools: Find a Smoking Gun 6, Destroy Damning Evidence 6, Deal with Difficult Person 7

Combat Dice Pools: Duck! 3, Outrun Pursuer 5

Initiative Modifier: +3

Defense: 2

Health: 8

Willpower: 7

Size: 5

Speed: 7

Doubles as: Information security technician, personal assistant, accountant, grey-hat hacker

Executive

“I understand your concerns. Why don’t we step into my office and discuss it further?”

The executive sits at the heart of the conspiracy. Whether in the know, or totally in the dark, the executive directs the overall agenda and policy of the conspiracy. Some are mere figureheads. Some really are the menacing corporate overlords they appear to be.

Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 4; Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2; Presence 5, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

General Dice Pools: Inspire Conspirators 9, Make Important Call 6, Money Laundering 5

Combat Dice Pools: Call for Backup 7, Small Pistols 4

Initiative Modifier: +6

Defense: 2

Health: 7

Willpower: 8

Size: 5

Speed: 9

Doubles as: Financial adviser, mob boss, chief of surgery, university president

Graduate Student

“Can’t talk. Need coffee.”

There is no single type of grad student in a conspiracy. Their fields vary widely — from science and engineering to history and religion. They are suckered in by the promise of a stipend, of cheap housing, of credit, of free food. Most do their duty and leave; after all, the abuse isn’t any worse than any other academic institution. Some, though, become whistleblowers, or even Remade.

Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 2, Resolve 3; Strength 2, Dexterity 1, Stamina 4; Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

General Dice Pools: Find Cheap Food 5, Frantic Research 7, Strong Stomach 6

Combat Dice Pools: Frenzied Punching 4

Initiative Modifier: +4

Defense: 1

Health: 9

Willpower: 6

Size: 5

Speed: 8

Doubles as: Well-meaning journalist, underpaid intern, janitor who knows too much

Nurse Practitioner

“How are you feeling today? Any change in those nightmares?”

Nurse-practitioners are much cheaper to keep on staff than doctors, and have a better bedside manner. Many conspiracies employ them, hoping their Remade will stay Devoted due to their kindness, rather than turn Renegade. Sometimes, it even works.

Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 4; Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 4

General Dice Pools: Diagnosis 9, Cut It Out 7, Bedside Manner 5

Combat Dice Pools: Improvised Weaponry 5

Initiative Modifier: 7

Defense: 3

Health: 8

Willpower: 8

Size: 5

Speed: 10

Doubles as: General practitioner, head nurse, ER technician, mad scientist

Private Military Contractor

“Code Delta Radio, I repeat, Code Delta Radio!”

Some conspiracies have the money and reach to hire groups of mercenaries to protect their most valuable assets. These men and women make sure that the Deviants don't escape, the Progenitors remain safe, and nosy reporters and moles are kept out of the organization.

Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 4; Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Presence 1, Manipulation 1, Composure 4

General Dice Pools: Identify Problem 7, Small Group Tactics 7

Combat Dice Pools: Automatic Firearms 7, Knockout Punch 6, Subdue Busybody 7

Initiative Modifier: +7

Defense: 3

Health: 8

Willpower: 8

Size: 5

Speed: 12

Doubles as: Military police, terrorist insurgents, private security

Professor of Biology

“So, if you insert the package via the xiphoid process, you should be able to connect it here...”

No one pays academics better than conspiracies with money. Biology and medical professors are often the backbone of Remade creation. While they are rarely Progenitors themselves, they often create the plans for Progenitors to work from.

Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 1, Resolve 3; Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3; Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 5

General Dice Pools: Biological Blueprints 9, Explain Anomaly 7, It Just Might Work! 5

Combat Dice Pools: Panicked Flailing 3

Initiative Modifier: +6

Defense: 1

Health: 8

Willpower: 8

Size: 5

Speed: 7

Doubles as: Mad scientist, infosec department head, mid-level technical management, sadist

Slavetaker

“You know, I heard there was this amazing cache of pre-Columbian artifacts in the ruins beyond the river. It's just a rumor, of course, but...”

Not all people involved in the creation of Deviants practice medicine or engineering. Some just get lucky and know where to put people to force them to change. Some pose as adoption

agencies and buy up Born Deviant children. Others seed rumors for urban explorers and archeologists, luring them to places of mystical power. Once the target undergoes the Divergence, her Progenitor uses her as an indentured servant, often abusing her and reminding her how grateful she should be that someone wants her.

Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 3, Resolve 4; Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3; Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

General Dice Pools: Charm 7, Lure 7

Combat Dice Pools: Hand-to-hand 5, Taser 4

Initiative Modifier: 8

Defense: 3

Health: 8

Willpower: 9

Size: 5

Speed: 11

Doubles as: Con artist, smuggler

Whistleblower

“Please don’t tell them it was me.”

Every conspiracy has its weak link. The whistleblower can be anyone, but is usually someone the upper echelons overlook.

Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 4; Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 1; Presence 1, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

General Dice Pools: Paranoid Bastard 7, Damning Evidence 8

Combat Dice Pools: Frantic Brawling 4, Escape 7

Initiative Modifier: +6

Defense: 4

Health: 6

Willpower: 6

Size: 5

Speed: 11

Manticores

Humans are not the only creatures capable of being Remade. Animals are candidates for Divergence as well, and many of the conspiracies find them to be not only perfect subjects for experimentation, but also much easier to control once the changes have been made. Animals have no souls, and therefore aren’t prone to the Instabilities and fluctuations their human counterparts suffer. Manticores are also far less likely to turn on their masters, and those that do can be put down with little regret.

Manticores can be trained to do specific jobs, and are often Remade with traits intended to enhance their abilities in those areas. Among the conspiracies, Manticores are primarily used for hunting down escaped Deviants, guarding the labs and homes of the corporation's most prominent members, and spying on rivals and Renegades that might be plotting against them. Manticores can also make good companions, detecting sources of a Renegade's bane nearby and warning them away, or being a walking, purring Faraday cage that adds a degree of security to her hideout.

Not all Manticores are created in a lab or intentionally twisted by magical means. Some are animals that happened across an improperly-discarded barrel of chemicals and took a long, fateful drink of tainted water. Others were in the right place at the right time: a flock of birds whose migration path flew them through a beam of interdimensional energy; a fox that caught and ate an escaped lab rabbit, its blood teeming with nanobots.

Conspiracies have the best access to Manticores. They possess the resources, the materials, and the facilities to make them, and can tailor a new breed to their exact specifications. These Remade animals have loyalty and obedience coded into their DNA. Every cell is a tracking device. If they require any sort of upkeep, their Progenitors can provide it or breed out the need in the next generation.

People in a conspiracy's upper echelons keep Manticores as both pets and protectors. More than one CEO has put in a request for an ever-vigilant watchdog after a midnight visit from a Renegade in the apartment she once thought impregnable. Devoted bring Manticores along to sniff out their targets. The Broken's roommate might say he's not home, but the crow on the Devoted's shoulder detects another heat signature inside the flat.

Though conspiracies use Manticores in the pursuit, capture, and subdual of Renegades, they aren't the only ones with access to the animals. Some Remade free lab-grown Manticores during their escapes, and find one of the animals has followed them home. Others happen upon them out in the wild, expecting to find another transformed human at the end of a strange trail, only to find a Manticore, instead. Some Renegades — especially Autourgics — create Manticore companions of their own. A cohort with a Manticore in their midst often values the animal just as strongly as their human members.

Enhanced Hunting Hound

Quote: [low growling, with an odd tinny buzz underlying it]

Background: Its predecessors were hunting dogs: retrievers and hounds, terriers and curs. They bred it for keen senses, superior tracking ability, fearlessness around the roar of a gun. It has as many ancestors who won Best in Show as it has plain old mutts who survived through sheer scrappiness. They threw in a bit of wolf — of course they did. But then they got creative. They spliced in bat-like sonar and added venom sacs behind their teeth that mix a sedative into the dog's saliva, the better to knock out its victims. They implanted a playback device in its ears, so it can recall its victims' voices and listen for their low, frightened murmurs wherever they might hide. They replaced its corneas with cameras, so the hound's masters can see what it sees and play it back to study later.

Now the dog is trained to heed its Devoted master's commands. They search the streets together, the hound with the Renegade's scent in its nose and her voice in its ears. If she's out there, it will find her.

Description: At first glance, the hunting dog resembles a finely bred black Labrador retriever, but it's too big for its breed, and sleeker than a lab ought to be. It occasionally emits a clicking noise rather than a bark, and cocks its head to listen for the results. It has two sets of snakelike fangs, longer and sharper than the other teeth in its maw. When it catches a victim and bites down, its sedative-laced saliva enters the target's bloodstream and renders her unconscious. The hound sits beside the target, guarding her until its master arrives and bundles the target away.

Storytelling Hints: The hound can hunt in packs or alone, and responds quickly to its master's commands. It doesn't usually display the viciousness or aggressiveness of other breeds, but will certainly use its power to intimidate prey. Once the dog has its target's scent, it follows it almost single-mindedly. Its Progenitor bred its need for sleep down to a minimum, and stimulant packs implanted under its skin can give it several extra hours of useful, uninterrupted tracking time.

Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 4; Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5; Presence 2, Manipulation 0, Composure 1

General Dice Pools: Aggressive Growl 5, Chase 7, Tracking 8

Combat Dice Pools: Bite 7, Tackle 6

Variations: Brachiation (Bounding) 1, Cutting Brawl Lash (Deadly, Envenomed, Soporific) 2, Sensor Array 2

Initiative: 5

Defense: 7

Health: 7

Willpower: 0

Size: 4

Speed: 12

Weapons/Attacks:

[START TABLE]

Type	Damage	Dice Pool	Special
Bite	2L 7	Inflicts	Drugged and Poisoned Tilts

[END TABLE]

Ferals

Sometimes, the process of Divergence breaks a Remade's soul too deeply for him to hold on to his humanity. Along with his sense of self, the drive to protect other humans or seek revenge on his Progenitor simply never takes root, making him Feral. Often, this violent change is accompanied by powers too great for the Remade to control, or mutations that reshape his form into something far stranger than his mind can bear.

Yet, some of these Deviants manage to wrest a modicum of control over their fluctuating powers and deteriorating bodies. They regain a measure of self-awareness, and succeed in making their Variations and Scars subside, for a time, though the threat of Instability is always lurking.

Conspiracies seek Ferals out for several reasons. When they're the result of an experiment gone horribly wrong, it behooves the conspiracy to get rid of the evidence and protect the organization. However, sometimes they want the Feral for her powers. A Feral on a leash can be an extremely potent weapon — more unpredictable than a Manticore, but the tradeoff is in the sheer amount of power the Feral can wield. A conspiracy with a captive Feral can force him to astrally project into a Renegade's hideout and spy on them. A Feral who is a Face Thief can steal his target's identity, committing a crime that gets the Renegade arrested and puts her in the conspiracy's control. Conspiracies can be far less subtle, sending the Feral straight in to the Renegade's home — or to where his Loyalty Touchstones live — to strike out with his Lashes and do as much damage as he can.

Once a Feral loses control over his powers, he poses a terrifying danger to anyone in his path. He might emit pheromones that cause anyone in their range to turn violent, or send massive bolts of lightning tearing through buildings. He grows to impossible heights and crushes anything in his wake, or fades entirely from view, striking out at his enemies from seemingly nowhere. It is often up to Renegades to subdue him, which puts them at risk not only of the conspiracies finding them, but also of triggering their own Instabilities.

Ferals who have a handle on their powers and have retained a degree of clarity can also be potential allies for Renegades. Their time on the run from conspiracies gives them a keen understanding of how those organizations work, and they may have spent some time entangled with one, either as a participant in creating other Remade or as a prisoner and tool. Most Ferals are extremely cautious, to the point of paranoia. The slightest hint that a Renegade could lead the conspiracy to her door is enough to spook her and send her even further off the grid. Alternately, a Feral who feels she's been betrayed by a Remade or members of his cohort could decide to unleash her rage on them all. Killing them, after all, gets rid of the problem.

Chloe Kincade, The Girl with a Thousand Faces

Quote: "I don't know who I am, some days. Maybe today I'll be you."

Background: Chloe always thought she'd be a famous surgeon someday. She focused her studies on facial reconstruction, interning under the best in the field. She read journal articles voraciously, and wrote letters to their authors asking questions that belied her brilliance. When a recruiter from a biomed company reached out to her with an exciting opportunity to work on cutting-edge procedures, she jumped at the chance.

The methods the company employed were beyond her understanding. The materials and pharmaceuticals they used weren't any she'd ever heard of, and the equipment approached Clarke's Law-levels of complexity.

Chloe remembers examining the machine the doctors used one night while she was alone in the lab. Maybe there was a short in the system. Maybe she didn't calibrate it correctly. Maybe she just stood in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Next thing she knew, she was across the room, on the floor, her face burning. When she looked in the mirror to assess the damage, there was nothing there, her features melted or blurred or fused into a blank slate. She's not sure how she saw anything, how she was able to breathe, or how the scream got out.

Chloe ran, and stole the faces of the people she passed along the way.

Description: Chloe's face changes too often for any photos to be reliable. She takes faces from the young and old, and from across all genders. She's of average height, flat-chested, and sturdily built, and wears clothes to match whichever persona she's adopting.

Storytelling Hints: Chloe hardly remembers what she looked like before her Divergence, but she's stopped mourning who she used to be. The constant face-shifting has unmoored her from any true sense of self, and she discards personas the way most people discard fast food wrappers. Within a week of wearing a new face, the features deteriorate, and Chloe goes out to seek a new one. She doesn't only steal a person's looks. She tries their personality on as well.

Her former employer has been searching for her for over a year, without realizing how many times she's returned to the lab wearing one of her old colleague's faces to steal information.

She's grown adept at switching faces to lose herself in a crowd. If she's being followed, she'll attempt to circle back and tail the person who was tailing her first.

Origin: Pathological

Clade: Invasive

Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 2; Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2; Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Skills: Academics 4, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Expression 3 (Technical Writing), Larceny 2, Medicine 4 (Plastic Surgery), Politics 2, Persuasion 2, Science 4 (Biology), Socialize 2, Stealth 2, Subterfuge 3, Survival 3

Merits: Anonymity 5, Fast-Talking 4, Hypervigilance

Willpower: 5

Stability: 6

Conviction: 0

Loyalty: 0

Aspiration: Live someone else's life

Initiative: 5

Defense: 2

Speed: 9

Health: 7

Size: 5

Acclimation: 1

Persistent Scars: Addictive Variation (Physical; Lingering; Face Thief) 3, Paranoia (Mental; Environmental Adaptation, Hyper-Competence) 2

Variations: Environmental Adaptation (Urban) 1, Face Thief 4, Hyper-Competence (Medicine)