ROLEPLAYING THE POSSIBILITY WARS™

TORG

WEST END GAMES

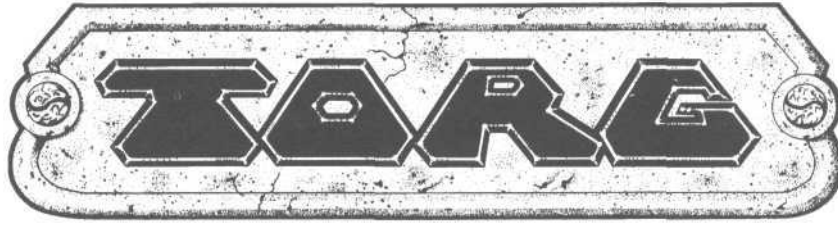RULEBOOK

The Near Now ...

Later today, early tomorrow, sometime next week, the world began to end.

They came from other cosms — other realities — raiders joined together to steal the Earth's living energy ... to consume its possibilities. The Possibility Raiders brought with them their own realities, turning portions of our planet into *someplace else*.

Led by the Gaunt Man — self-proclaimed Torg of the cosmverse — the High Lords each claimed a piece of the Earth for themselves. Baruk Kaah, Pharaoh Mobius, Lord Uthorion, Pope Jean-Malraux I, Kanawa-sama, and the Gaunt Man; each has established his primitive, pulp, dark fantasy, cyberpapacy, high tech, or horror realms on our world, setting the conquest in motion.

But the invasion did not go as the Gaunt Man planned. His millennia of preparation did not take into account the Storm Knights — men and women who weathered the raging reality storms that transformed the planet, retaining their own realities when everything around them changed. Through their actions, these heroes neutralized the Gaunt Man and helped bring the Infiniverse into being. By reflecting the cosmverse over and over, all possibilities became real in an infinite instant. If Earth was destroyed in one cosmverse, there was a chance that it would survive in another. The conquest had been delayed ... for now.

Now, throughout the Infiniverse, on a million-million Earths, the remaining High Lords battle to control the awesome possibility energy of Earth — to become the Torg. And if the Storm Knights cannot stop them, then every Earth will die ...

Roleplaying the Possibility Wars ™

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Introduction

Now it is three months after the initial invasion of Earth, and the invaders' boundaries have stabilized. The Gaunt Man's land of horror extends across Indonesia and Malaysia, though he is no longer there to maintain it. Kanawa controls Japan and parts of the Far East; Mobius holds northern Africa and the Middle East under the sway of the New Empire of the Nile. France, dark and grim, is united by the God-Net of the Cyberpapacy, and the United States and Canada struggle against the shamanistic powers of Baruk Kaah's Living Land. Only in Britain and Scandinavia is there a glimmer of hope, as the Lady Ardinay has arisen to replace the evil Lord Uthorion — though there are rumors that Uthorion still walks the Earth.

And the High Lords are in turmoil; without the Gaunt Man to lead them, they scrabble for power, for the ultimate power of immortality that accompanies the title of Torg.

The rules and background in this box, and the campaign you create with them, describe one of the many Earths now reflected throughout the Infiniverse ... what happens on your Earth, what direction the Possibility Wars take on your world, will be very different from what happens elsewhere — but what you and your players create can and will effect the entire Infiniverse.

What Is Roleplaying?

Roleplaying is simply another way of playing games. Most familiar board games have controlled rules. At the other end of the spectrum are games like Cowboys and Indians, otherwise known as "Let's Pretend." Let's Pretend can be fun, because we get to take on the *role* of a hero, and we control the action and make the game play the way we want it to. The trouble with Let's Pretend is the "I-got-you-no-I-got-you-first" arguments — because Let's Pretend has no *rules.*

Consider roleplaying as Let's Pretend with rules. There is a referee, also called a *gamemaster,* who judges disputes. The gamemaster also sets the scenes and creates the story lines that the players experience through their *characters.* The characters are really the heart of the roleplaying game.

Each player takes the *role* of one character, a participant in the great story being woven by the gamemaster, who plays the roles of all the other characters in the story, called *gamemaster characters.* The player characters' actions will directly affect that story, often changing the course of events in significant ways. The back-and-forth storytelling aspects, the playing of new and unfamiliar roles, and the freewheeling format of the action are what make roleplaying games so challenging and exciting.

Torg: Roleplaying the Possibility Wars

Torg is a multi-genre game system that does what no other game before it has done. It combines the action of the pulps, the heroic adventure of fantasy, and the grim situations of future technology into one all-encompassing game system with one coherent, compelling story!

There are a lot of roleplaying games on the market, and most use similar mechanics to achieve interactive storytelling. In *Torg,* we introduce two brand new concepts.

The first is evident when you open the box: the *Torg* interactive drama cards. These are more than just character cards or equipment cards — they actually help the gamemaster and players control the flow of action, and add to the dramatic storytelling by creating plots and subplots that really fit into an adventure.

The second innovation concerns the nature of interactive storytelling itself.

In other roleplaying games, the players interact with the world created by the gamemaster — and that's it. In *Torg,* West End Games has created the computer-moderated *Infiniverse Interactive Campaign Game,* a newsletter that allows your entire gaming group to interact with other gaming groups across the country, and with West End itself, to make the Possibility Wars progress the way *you* want!

Getting Started

In this box you will find the Rule Book (which you're reading now), the World Book, the Adventure Book, the Drama Cards, the Infiniverse Interactive Campaign Game, and a 20-sided die.

After reading this introduction and the "To the Point" section that follows, the next thing to do is read the Player Section of this book. Imagine yourself as a Storm Knight in the world of *Torg,* opposed to the High Lords of the invading realms, dedicated to freeing Earth and its many reflections from tyranny.

After that, if you're planning on just being a player, stop reading. The game and the world of *Torg* will be more exciting for you if you don't know all the secrets of what's going on.

If you want to be a gamemaster, read the World Book next, to get a feel for the background of *Torg.* Then you can come back and read the rules in the Gamemaster Section of this book. When you're ready to run an adventure, read the Adventure Book.

Infiniverse: The Interactive Campaign Game is a newsletter full of useful and interesting information, but can be read last, after you're comfortable with the system.

So, get started with "To the Point," and keep reading the Player Section after that. You'll be ready to play in no time!

To the Point

There are a lot of pages in this box, but you don't need to read all of them to have fun. The mechanics of the *Torg* game are not very difficult at all.

This page explains the essential systems of *Torg;* reading it will make learning the game much easier.

Values and Measures

Torg uses a unique system of "values" and "measures" to translate back and forth between the game and the real world. A *value* is a quantity measured in a way that can be used in the game (such as a *weight value* of 11). A *measure* is a measurement from the real world (such as "160 pounds"). Measures can be translated into values and vice versa, but that is a task for the gamemaster.

Attributes and Skills

All characters have the same attributes, though not in the same quantities. All characters have skills, but types of skills vary from character to character. Skills are rated by *adds*, which is the number you add to your character's base attribute to get the value for that skill. So, a character with a base attribute of 10 and a *running* skill add of 3 would have a *running* value of 13.

The Die Roll

The die included with the *Torg* game is printed with the numbers from 1 to 20. You roll the die each time your character tries to use a skill value or attribute value to accomplish a task.

Whenever a player rolls a 10 or a 20 on the die, he may roll the die again, adding the next roll to the first 10 or 20. The player may keep rolling and adding, until a number which isn't a 10 or 20 appears. He adds in this final number to obtain the *final die roll.*

Generating a Total

Compare the final die roll to the *bonus chart* printed at the bottom of your character template. Beneath each range of final die rolls is a corresponding bonus number. The sum of your skill value and the bonus number is called the *action total.*

Some actions require you to obtain two totals, the first to determine if you succeeded at the action, the second to tell you how well you did. You get a second total by adding the same bonus (the die is *not* rolled again) to a different value after your action succeeds. The second total is called an *effect total.*

Beating a Difficulty Number

Some actions are harder than others. Whenever the gamemaster calls for an action total, she also sets a difficulty number for the deed. Your character succeeds if your action total is equal to or greater than the difficulty number. If your total is lower, you fail.

Possibility Energy

Storm Knights (player character heroes) can store possibility energy, energy which can temporarily alter the world around them in a variety of ways to allow characters to perform amazing feats.

The Axioms

Each of the invading realms has its own reality. The key to what can and cannot exist, what does and does not work, are the *axioms.* The axioms describe the levels of four basic traits of a world: magical, social, spiritual, and technological.

If an axiom is not high enough to support an activity, performing that activity creates a *contradiction* in that realm. The possibility energy of the realm is organized so as to enforce the axiom levels, eliminating contradictions. The immediate effect of the axiom laws is that equipment spells and certain creatures foreign to a realm will not work as well in that realm.

Combat

A combat round represents 10 seconds of "game time." In each round, one side gets to perform all its actions; then the other side performs its actions. Initiative is determined by flipping the top card of the drama deck. The side that has the initiative goes first.

Damage

Once a character is hit, a second total (the *effect total)* determines damage. The attacker's damage value is his *Strength,* possibly modified by a melee or missile weapon, or the damage value of the weapon itself (for firearms and other weapons that provide their own energy). The difficulty is the target's *Toughness* (or armor value). The more the difficulty number is exceeded, the more the target is damaged.

Stormers and Storm Knights

As a result of the Possibility Wars, certain people on Earth reach what is called a *moment of crisis.* At that moment, the person gains the ability to manipulate possibility energy, for good or for evil.

The Raiders call these beings *Stormers.* Those that oppose the Raiders prefer to call themselves *Storm Knights.*

Your character is a Storm Knight, opposed to the High Lords of the invading realms. Your goal is to free the Earth from the varying realities and stop the Raiders before they consume the living power of the planet. If they succeed, the world dies.

Those are the basics. Now you're ready to get to the details ...

Player Section

Chapter One

Creating a Character

" There may be some people who are born heroes ... but the rest are just folks in a desperate situation who do what most folks wouldn't—they win."

— *Colonel Robert Blanchard, Philadelphia Defense Force*

*T*org: Roleplaying the Possibility Wars is a game that tells of the great struggles between the Possibility Raiders and the heroes of Earth. To take part in these stories you'll need a *character. A* character is a representation, in game terms, of a hero in the world of *Torg.* Here's how you create your own character.

Selecting a Template

There are 24 *character templates* printed in the World Book. The templates describe the types of characters central to the stories of the Possibility Wars. Some are from Core Earth, the portion of Earth not yet conquered by the Possibility Raiders. Others are renegades from the realms of the raiders. Each template has basic game information for the character, as well as background material about the character's motives, and what sort of world he comes from.

Choose a template that appeals to you. You should realize that a character template is only an outline, a character sketch; you provide the imagination and detail that brings the character to life. Not all Soldiers of Fortune, National Heroes, or Doubting Clerics are alike.

However, a group should be balanced. Each character has different abilities — some can fly aircraft, and others are good at medicine. Some come from the invading realms, and have skills not available to characters from Core Earth. Characters from other realms are limited, though, when it comes to Core Earth skills; your Curious Mage may be really hot with magic, but driving a Toyota south on 1-71 may be beyond her. Try to get together with the other players and choose your characters with balance in mind.

Copying Templates

The templates are bound in the World Book; photocopying them is a good idea. Each page is divided into two templates, and they are printed front and back. The front of each template has all of the numbers and data necessary for playing the game, while the back has the character's background. Cut the photocopies apart, making sure you have both the front and back parts of your template. If you don't have access to a photocopier, write down the necessary information on a blank sheet of paper. You can refer back to the book to jog your memory about the background; you don't have to copy all of it onto your sheet.

Your character template is your playing piece for *Torg.* You'll want to have your template in front of you when you play, penciling in changes as the game progresses.

Customizing Templates

Next you customize your template, making the character more like what you want him to be. To do this, you'll need to know something about attributes, skills and action values.

Attributes and Skills

All characters have *attributes.* An attribute is defined as an ability that all living beings have. One character may have more of an attribute, such as strength, than another, but all characters have a *Strength* attribute.

There are seven attributes in the game—*Dexterity, Strength, Toughness, Perception, Mind, Charisma* and *Spirit.* We sometimes abbreviate them as DEX, STR, TOU, PER, MIN, CHA, and SPI. The first three are broad measures of physical ability, the next two gauge your character's mental prowess, while the last two measure his spiritual ability. The number listed next to each is *the attribute value.* An attribute of six is poor, eight is average, an attribute of 10 is quite good, and 13 is the normal maximum for Core Earth humans.

Skills are abilities that not every character has. They are usually abilities that can be taught, although some have to be acquired in peculiar ways — in the pulp realm, for example, some skills can be acquired only through a "freak scientific accident which altered the character forever."

Your character template lists all of the skills initially available to your character. One of the skills already has a number (3) filled in on the template. This is your character's best skill, or *character tag* skill. All characters based on the same template — the Soldier of Fortune, for instance — have the same attribute values and tag skills. But you choose the rest.

Choosing Skill Adds

You get to choose which of the available skills your character has, and how good he is at each skill. You have 13 points to distribute among the skills listed on your template. The points are called *adds* (short for 'additions'), and you write down the number of adds allocated to each skill in the "Adds" column. Follow these rules when distributing adds:

1. You must distribute all 13 adds (and no more than 13).

2. You may not allocate more than *three* adds to any one skill. The tag skill

Enter a Soldier

Suppose you choose to be a Soldier of Fortune. This is what the character template looks like:

At the top of the template enter your name, your character's name, "10" in the "Possibilities" box, an age, a height, a weight, and a sex. Decide how you want your character to look, and write a brief description in the "Appearance" section. Other details, such as clothing, posture, and mannerisms, are yours to make up. The more detail you put into a character, the more interesting he will be to play.

In this example Paul Murphy has decided to play a Soldier of Fortune; he names the character Quin Sebastian. The numbers in the attribute boxes are Quin's attribute values, while the skill adds are written next to the skill names. The 3 next to *fire combat* was already printed on the template: *fire combat* is Quin's tag skill. After thinking about Quin for a bit, Paul decides not to take *climbing* or *running* as skills, and then distributes his 13 adds as shown on the sheet.

already has three adds, so no more may be allocated.

3. You do not have to allocate adds to every skill on your template. If you do not allocate at least one add to a skill, your character does not have that skill. Skills printed in **boldface** cannot be used at all if you don't allocate at least one add.

4. All characters must allocate at least one add to the *reality* skill.

5. Give adds only to skills, not attributes.

Figuring Skill Values

Next to each skill on your template is a column labeled "attribute." In this column is an abbreviation for the attribute on which the skill is based.

Example: On the Soldier of Fortune template are listed *dodge* and *fire combat,* both of which have "DEX" listed in the attribute column next to them. Both skills are based on *Dexterity.* The template also lists *first aid* with "PER" listed in the next column. *Perception* is the base attribute for *first aid.*

The rightmost column is labeled "Value." Here is where you record your character's value for that skill. A *skill value* is equal to your character's **skill add plus the base attribute value.** If your character has not taken an add in a particular skill, do not record a value for that skill.

Example: Quin has a *dodge* add of 2 and a *Dexterity* value of 11, for a *dodge* value of 13. Quin has no *running* skill so he records no value for *running.*

A Brief Look at Action Values

In the stories you play in *Torg,* your character will be confronted with obstacles of all kinds, from primitive tribesmen with shamanistic powers to rickety rope-bridges suspended over dizzying chasms, to pulp gangsters with ruthless henchmen. The outcome of the story often hinges on how, or whether or not, your character overcomes such obstacles.

Whenever your character is confronted by an obstacle, her action value will help determine success or failure. *Action value* is the collective term for both skill value (when you use a skill) and attribute value (when you use no skill, just your raw attribute). However, as we know, life is very variable, and what you can do easily one time may be much more difficult the next time you try. If this weren't true, for example, bowlers would always bowl perfect games!

So, in *Torg,* when your character faces an obstacle, you roll the 20-sided die and consult the *bonus chart* on your character sheet, adding the bonus number there to the action value to get an *action total.* Obviously, the higher your character's values are, the better he is at performing certain tasks, and the better his chance for success.

Equipment

Your template lists your character's starting equipment. All characters begin with some tools of the trade, including weapons. Many begin with money, although the currency is not always what Core Earth locals would consider cold hard cash. Your character is considered to have had time to equip from his home realm as well as from Core Earth. If you want to purchase equipment for your character, see the equipment section on page 132 of this book.

Character Connections

How your character fits in with the rest of the characters is important. Who you know and how you know them helps you decide how to act in a given situation. In heroic fiction, characters who are friends move mountains to help each other or to defeat a common enemy. Connections are possible ways you have of knowing the other characters in the group, a way of starting the heroic bond important to adventure fiction.

Try to come up with a reason your character would feel friendship toward at least one other member of the party. Talk it over with the other players and the gamemaster to come up with connections which make sense. Not all characters need to love each other, and you may even want some dramatic tension between them, but there has to be enough chemistry to bond the group together through all of the travails and troubles ahead—after all, adventuring isn't as much fun if you have to do it alone.

Here are some ideas of how characters might know each other:

Escaped Together

The characters may be from the same cosm, in which case they may have joined forces while fleeing a High Lord's minions. Characters from Core Earth might meet each other in a city while taking refuge from the invaders.

Called

If characters are from different cosms, perhaps one was called to seek the other(s). A character who is called (by a deity, a message from another cosm, or simply by "destiny") has a good reason to leave his home cosm.

Same Home Town

The characters may be from the same home town or region. The attachment to their home area gives the characters an element upon which to share a sense of loyalty.

Previous Missions

The characters may have worked together before. The players should agree on the extent and nature of their previous experience. Characters from the same cosm could have more of a shared past than characters from different cosms.

Employee

One of the characters might have employed the other. A character with status or wealth, such as the Disgruntled Corporate, may have hired the Soldier of Fortune to perform a dangerous mission, or to act as a bodyguard.

Relatives

Any characters from the same cosm can be relatives. Relatives often like each other, but even when they don't they usually feel an obligation to each other. If another character is your relative, think about their relationship with the rest of the family. Was your family ravaged by the Possibility Raiders? If your family is still intact, do you know where they are?

Reputation

If a character is famous, or has a reputation, other characters may seek him out. In the disorganization and upheaval following the Possibility Raiders' invasion of Earth, charismatic figures could attract other characters, giving the group a focus. Perhaps a National Hero fought in a highly publicized battle, or a Doubting Cleric's parish church became a rallying point for opposition to the invasion.

Previous Institution

Characters may have spent time at the same school or university. They may have worked for the same company, or held government posts in the same agency. Maybe they served in the military together.

Current Institution

The characters may be attending or working for the same institution. This list is like that above: government agencies, the military, private corporations or foundations. Perhaps they work for the Red Cross in disaster relief; there is certainly plenty of disaster to go around.

The Rest of the Sheet

Most of the remaining sections of the *Torg* character sheet are self-explanatory. There are two things, though, that bear further explanation.

Cosm

A cosm is a reality, *a* dimension which is physically separate from other worlds and other realities. Each character has *a home cosm,* which is where he is from, and which describes the sort of reality he is used to living in. Core Earth is the cosm of Earth, the Earth not under the control of a Possibility Raider — the Earth we are used to. Each of the other realms on Earth is part of a cosm under the control of a Possibility Raider, called a High Lord.

Characters not from Core Earth are presumed to have had good reason to quarrel with the High Lords or their minions; being a possibility-rated character (having the *reality* skill on your template) is reason enough for someone connected to a High Lord to take notice of you.

For a brief overview of the cosms, see the World Book.

Possibilities

All templates begin with 10 Possibilities (unless noted otherwise). Enter "10" in the Possibilties box. Possibilities help your character succeed against terrible odds, just like a hero of fiction.

Can I Play Something Else?

Twenty-four templates is quite a lot, but what if the exact sort of character you want to play isn't one of them? The character templates are provided to make creating a character quick and easy, but there are other ways.

The first choice is to tinker with a template. Talk the changes over with your gamemaster to make sure your character fits into the sort of game she plans to run.

If none of the templates suit your taste, you can create a template from scratch. The rules on page 141 tell you how. We recommend that you take a template for your first game; creating your first character from scratch can take a good deal of time.

Start Now

Choose your character template and customize it. Then, read the rest of the Player Section. Better yet, if there are other players who have read or played the game, have them explain the basics to you. Then you'll be ready to go!

Chapter Two

The Basics

"Knowledge of the basics may not always save your life, but it certainly enhances your probabilities."
— *Dr. Hachi Mara-Two*

This chapter teaches you enough of the rules to play. The rules are covered in greater detail in the Gamemaster Section, but only the gamemaster really needs to read those chapters.

Values and Measures

Because *Torg* uses a unique system to translate back and forth between the game and the real world, we've created terms to distinguish game numbers from "real" numbers. *A value* refers to a quantity measured in a way which can be used in the game, such as a *Strength* of 11. A *measure* is a measurement from the real world, such as "150 pounds." Measures can sometimes be translated into values, and vice versa, but that is a task for the gamemaster (see Gamemaster Chapter Two). For instance, the gamemaster has a way to find out whether a *Strength* value of 11 is enough to lift a measure of 150 pounds.

Attributes and Skills

All characters have the same attributes, though not in the same quantities. All characters have skills, but types of skills vary from character to character. Skills are rated by *adds,* which is

the number you add to your character's base attribute to get the value for that skill.

Example: Quin Sebastian has *land vehicles* add of 1. *Perception* is the base attribute, with a value of 9. Whenever Quin tries to drive or operate a land vehicle, his value is 9+1 or 10.

What If I Don't Have a Skill?

Sometimes your character is faced with an obstacle requiring a skill he doesn't have an add for. In this case, the character acts *unskilled.*

When performing an unskilled action, use the base attribute for that skill as the skill value; in addition, a character performing an unskilled action loses the roll again on 20 benefit (see "The Die Roll," on page 13). This limits his chance of gaining great success or performing really difficult feats.

Example: Quin needs to pick a lock. He does not have the *lockpicking* skill, but he has a *Dexterity* of 11. His *lockpicking* value is 11, and he does not get to roll again on a 20.

Some actions may not be taken by unskilled characters. The skill descriptions (Gamemaster Chapter Three) specify which actions may not be attempted unskilled. For example, Quin would fail any attempt at surgery as *medicine* may not be used unskilled.

If a skill is printed on your character's template, your character can learn the skill. If it is not, your character may not begin the game with an add in that skill; she may be able to learn it later, after she has gained some knowledge of the world. For example, a character whose home cosm is the

Living Land cannot start with *air vehicles* skill, but it is possible that the character may later learn the skill.

The Die Roll

The die included with the *Torg* game is printed with the numbers from 1 to 20. You roll the die each time your character tries to use a skill value or attribute value to accomplish a task. The higher the roll, the better your character does at the action he is trying.

There is a roll-again rule which lets some rolls get really large, allowing characters to perform the same spectacular feats as heroes in fiction. Whenever a player character rolls a 10 or a 20 on the die, the player may roll again, adding the next roll to the first 10 or 20. If the next roll is also 10 or 20, the player may keep rolling and adding, until a number which isn't a 10 or 20 appears. He adds in this final number to obtain the *final die roll*.

Example: Paul rolls a 10, and being lucky follows it with a roll of 20; his third roll is an 8, for a final die roll of 38 (10+20+8).

Generating a Total

In *Torg*, the success of all actions is determined by an *action total*. To generate an action total, roll the die as explained above and compare the final die roll to the *bonus chart* printed at the bottom of your character template. Beneath each range of final die rolls is a corresponding bonus number. **The sum of your skill value and the bonus number is called the action total.**

Example: The gamemaster asks Paul to generate Quin's *land vehicles* total. If Paul rolled the 38 from the previous example, his bonus number would be 11. Quin's *land vehicles* value is 10; the *land vehicles* total is 21 (11 + 10).

A negative bonus number reduces the value. Adding a negative number is just like subtracting.

Example: The gamemaster calls for another *land vehicles* roll from Quin. Paul rolls a 2. The bonus is -10; Paul subtracts 10 from Quin's *land vehicles* value of 10, to generate a total of zero.

As shown on the bonus chart, if you are lucky enough to get a roll larger than 50, your bonus number increases by one for every five points (or part thereof) of the final die roll in excess of 50.

Example: A spectacular series of rolls yields a final die roll of 73! This is 23 points higher than a 50, so dividing by five and rounding up gives a bonus of five more than the maximum shown (13). The bonus number is 18 (13 + 5).

The Effect Total

Some actions require you to obtain two totals, the first to determine if you succeeded at the action, the second to tell you how well you did. You get a second total by adding the **same bonus** (the die is *not* rolled again) to a different value after your action succeeds. The second total is called an *effect total*.

The most common use of an effect total is combat. You generate the first total to hit, and the second to deter-

mine the extent of damage. The second total is usually referred to by its function; "damage total" for determining damage, "speed total" for movement in a chase, and so on.

Example: *The whine and twang of bullets hitting too close caused Quin to gun his Land Rover to top speed along the ridge, with the troops of the Nile Empire in hot pursuit. As he careened down a hill, a familiar outcropping of trees brought a lump of hope to his throat; he brought the Land Rover to a screeching halt. With a shout of glee, he pulled aside the camouflage netting at the side of the road, revealing a cache of serviceable anti-armor missiles he had previously hidden. Seconds later, as one of the enemy jeeps came over the hill, Quin opened fire.*

Quin's *heavy weapons* value is 12. The missile has a damage value of 27. Paul rolls a 14 (bonus of 1) for a *heavy weapons* total of 13. The gamemaster says 13 is a hit. Quin's player then checks for damage. Adding the missile's damage value of 27 to the bonus of 1 yields a damage total of 28.

As *the missile struck home, the lead jeep flipped out of control and began to burn. The other jeeps scattered and headed for cover. Grinning broadly, Quin dashed back to his Rover. That ought to slow them for awhile.*

Beating a Difficulty Number

Some actions are harder than others. Whenever the gamemaster calls for a skill or attribute total, she also sets a difficulty number for the deed. Your character succeeds **if your total**

THE BONUS CHART

Bonus Chart

Die Roll	1	2	3 4	5 6	7 8	9 10	11 12	13 14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21 25	26 30	31 35	36 40	41 45	46 50	+5
Bonus #	-12	-10	-8	-5	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	+1

is equal to or greater than the difficulty number. If your total is lower, you fail.

The Gamemaster Section has rules for setting the difficulty numbers.

Example: *With a hairpin turn followed by a sharp left, Quin found himself in a narrow defile, safe for the moment. His grin was interrupted by the squeal of the Land Rover's brakes as he brought the vehicle to a stop five feet from the edge of a deep gorge. Quin could hear the sound of the remaining pursuit closing in.*

Paul decides that Quin is going to jump the Land Rover across the cliff. The gamemaster informs him that as Land Rovers do not fly, the jump is almost surely fatal; he assigns the task a difficulty of 22. Paul checks Quin's *land vehicles* value; it's a 10.

He rolls a 20, followed by a 10, followed by *a* 13; a final die roll of 43! The bonus number for this roll is 12. The total is 22, just enough for Quin to make it!

"Grow wings," growled Quin as he backed up, then gunned her forward. The Land Rover roared in response, throwing the soldier back against the seat as the vehicle leaped across the gorge, bouncing roughly on the other side. Quin howled in triumph.

Opposed Actions

If you are opposed by another character, his attribute or skill totals are often your difficulty number. If your total equals or exceeds your opponent's attribute or skill total, your action succeeds.

Sometimes your opponent's total will not include a bonus (i.e., no die roll). Then you must exceed his raw attribute or skill value with your total.

Example: Quin has a *dodge* value of 13. An opponent would have to get a total of 13 or better to hit Quin with a pistol shot.

Possibility Energy and Storm Knights

Storm Knights can store possibility energy, energy which can temporarily alter the world around them. This is the energy the Possibility Raiders seek, and is perhaps the heroes' most powerful tool for defeating the schemes of the High Lords. It can be used in a variety of ways to allow characters to perform amazing feats.

Possibilities and the Die Roll

When attempting an action, you may spend one Possibility and roll the die again, adding the number rolled to the final die roll. No more than one Possibility may be spent on any one action. You may spend a Possibility **after** seeing your first roll. As possibility energy is so potent, any extra roll that is less than 10 counts as a 10 (but, of course, does not grant further rolls unless the extra roll is actually a 10 or 20).

Example: In the gorge-jumping example above, Quin got very lucky. What if he had been a little less lucky, rolling a 20 followed by a 9 (die roll of 29, giving a bonus of 9) for an action total of 19? Since the difficulty was 22, the first answer is that the Land Rover crashes in flames at the bottom of the gorge, as the jump fails. For Quin's player the better answer is to spend a Possibility and roll the die a third time, adding the number to his final die roll; if Paul gets a 12 on the third roll, the final die roll is 41, giving him a bonus number of 12 for a total of 22. Quin safely makes the jump.

Countering Possibilities

Whenever an enemy spends a Possibility to alter a die roll, your character may cancel the extra die roll by spending a Possibility himself. You must counter at the moment the enemy spends a Possibility, **before** the die is rolled. Both points are spent, and there is no extra roll. This works both ways — the gamemaster characters can spend Possibilities to counter your extra rolls as well.

Example: Count Von Starker is firing a pistol at Quin with a skill of 13.

He needs a total of 13 to hit Quin.

The gamemaster rolls a 7, for a bonus of -2; the shot will miss. The gamemaster announces that Von Starker is spending a Possibility on the shot; Paul says he will counter. Both Quin and Starker cross off one Possibility, and the roll stands.

Countering Effects

Characters may spend a Possibility to rid themselves of the effects of damage. No more than one Possibility may be spent to rid your character of damage (see "Combat" later in this chapter) from a single blow. Possibilities spent to avoid damage may not be countered.

Example: Quin is hit by a shot from a .38! The gamemaster tells Paul that Quin has suffered a wound, and a knockout. Paul grimly spends a Possibility; Quin is only shaken by the shot.

The crack of the pistol was followed by a searing pain as the bullet struck Quin in the shoulder. "Just a flesh wound," he muttered, as his Uzi spat death into the night.

Possibilities and Reality

Reality works differently between one cosm and another (see "The Axioms" later in this chapter), and possibility energy constantly flows to maintain the reality — meaning that equipment, magic, and even skills from your home cosm might not work so well in an alien cosm.

A character in a foreign cosm may spend a Possibility and cocoon himself in a "reality bubble" for 15 minutes. During that time, everything — technology, magic, etc. — works for that character as it would work in his home cosm. There are restrictions, but leave those to the gamemaster.

Example: Quin is in a "pure zone" of the New Empire of the Nile. In the pure zone of a lower tech level, his Uzi simply does not work. If he wished, Quin could spend a Possibility to make the automatic weapon work for 15

minutes. During this time, Quin's other equipment (his night scope, his antiseptic spray, his tear gas grenades) would also work.

Possibilities are a powerful tool for getting your character out of a jam. But once you spend them they are gone, so spend them wisely.

Non-Combat Interaction

In *Torg,* interaction between characters is very important. Your abilities with these skills can be as useful, if not more so, than your ability in combat. The interaction skills are: *charm, persuasion, intimidation, taunt, trick* and *test of wills.*

Charm

Charm is used to change the attitudes of characters you meet. The base difficulty for *charm* is the target character's *willpower;* if the target has no *willpower* skill, use his *Mind* instead. A successful *charm* improves the target character's attitude toward your character. There are five possible attitudes: *enemy, hostile, neutral, friendly,* and *loyal.* To make a *charm* attempt you must tell the gamemaster what you are saying or doing that would improve the target's attitude toward you.

Each successful *charm* **temporarily** improves the target character's attitude by one step — from *hostile* to *neutral,* for example. After a time (at the gamemaster's discretion), charmed characters return to their *base attitude,* which was the character's attitude toward you before the charm attempt began.

Charming characters who like you is easier than charming characters who hate you. The gamemaster will let you know how well you've done in a *charm* attempt.

An unsuccessful or minimally successful *charm* prohibits your character from any further *charm* attempts on his target (for a while, anyway), although you may "press the issue". If

you roll better than you need to *charm* a character, you can continue to *charm.*

Pressing the Issue

If you fail a *charm,* or if your *charm* is only minimally successful, you must stop the *charm* attempt, unless you want to risk *pressing the issue.* This simply means that you ignore your first failure and try again.

If you press the issue, you are allowed one more attempt, regardless of how successful you are. As usual, a successful result improves the target's temporary attitude one step.

However, if you press the issue and *fail,* the target character's attitude is immediately **worsened,** as he is now aware that you have been putting on the charm.

Example: *Crowfire sat herself down by the campfire. She had long ago noticed the tension in the other seated warriors, but chose to ignore it. The shaman, Iwesaka, emerged from the Stone Meeting.*

"We have disturbing hews, my people," the shaman intoned. *He whirled to stare at Crowfire. "We have a traitor among us, a traitor who has betrayed us to the Walking Dead!"*

Crowfire stood up to face the shaman. "It saddens me to see that you misunderstand me and my actions. I thought we were friends, Iwesaka. Do you not remember the times that we hunted together? Was I not honorable, always?"

Crowfire has a *charm* value of 14. Her player tries to *charm,* rolling a 10 followed by a 14 for a final roll of 24 (bonus of 8). Crowfire's *charm* total is 22. The gamemaster says that is enough to temporarily bump the shaman from *hostile* (his base attitude) to *neutral,* and that Crowfire may continue to *charm.*

Crowfire tries again, getting a *charm* total of 18. The gamemaster announces another, minimal success, saying the shaman seems to have undergone a real change of heart and is *now friendly* toward Crowfire. Does she want to press the issue? The player stops right there; she doesn't want to take a chance on losing what she's already gained.

The shaman looked down, shame and memory playing across his face. "Perhaps you have been misjudged,"

he said with relief, "but the time to decide right and wrong is during the light hours. We shall talk on this in the morning."

After a successful *charm,* a character's **base attitude** toward your character might improve by one step. Your gamemaster will let you know.

Persuasion

The base difficulty for *persuasion* is the target's *willpower* value; if the target does not have the *willpower* skill, use his *Mind.*

Persuasion is used to persuade a character to take a suggested course of action. You can *persuade* a character to see things your way even if you do not *charm* him (but it's usually easier if you do). When you *persuade* a character, you have to tell the gamemaster exactly what you are trying to get him to agree to, such as "Crowfire wants the MP to agree to let her past the checkpoint." If you fail your *persuasion* attempt, you may not try to *persuade* the target character any further on any subject. *Persuasion* is made against the current attitude of the target, including any improvement due to *charm* (obviously, the *persuasion* attempt must be made soon after the *charm,* or the target will return to his base attitude).

The extent to which a character agrees to your suggestion depends on his current attitude toward your character. Even if you successfully *persuade* a hostile character, he is unlikely to do as much for you as would a friendly character.

Example: *"Hold on a minute, Starker,"* Quin said boldly as he desperately cast about for a way to stay his execution. *"I have information you might wish to hear. I suggest you put down the gun."*

Paul is trying a desperate *persuasion* on an enemy character. In typical fashion he gets a huge roll and actually succeeds at *persuading* Starker. This does not mean he can have Quin order his deadly enemy to jump out a window — but Starker will stop and listen to what Quin has to say.

The villain considered for a moment, then smiled. "Certainly," he said. "But no tricks, now, or I'll gun you down like a dog."

Intimidation

Intimidation is used to prevent another character from taking action against your character, or at least to reduce his bonus against you. It can also be used to gain information from a character. The target of an *intimidation* is the other character's *intimidation* or *Spirit*.

If your *intimidation* is successful enough, the intimidated character's actions are reduced in effectiveness. A really successful use of *intimidation* (called an attempt to *awe* a character) prevents the character from acting against you as long as you do not attack him. He might even give up, or give in.

Example: *Quin arched his head over the hedgerow, taking in the sight of five guards near the factory fence. He and The Yellow Crab, a pulp-inspired hero from the New Empire of the Nile, were here to investigate rumors that Kanawa Ltd. was linked to the Possibility Raiders. They had to get inside.*

The Crab grabbed Quin's arm. "Let me take care of them, Quin."

The Crab tries to *intimidate* the guards. His *intimidate* value is 12. The *Spirit* of the guards is 8. Chris, the Crab's player, generates a total of 14. The result is good, but not great.

"I suggest you do nothing foolish, for 1 ... I am the Yellow Crab!" The guards hesitated for a second, then drew their weapons and blazed away wildly. The Crab dove for cover as the frightened guards' shots went wide.

Intimidation can also be used to interrogate a captive. In this case, the target's attitude toward the person or thing you want information about helps determine your chance for success.

Example: *"So tell me," Quin said, smacking the club into his hand with a steady, dangerous sound. "When is the raid planned?"*

Bob Dvorak

Quin is using *intimidation* to gain information from a captured Nile Empire shocktrooper with a *Spirit* of 9. The shocktrooper is loyal to his master, and will not reveal any information unless Quin gets a very high level of success. If the subject was a Nile Empire stoolie who was neutral about Dr. Mobius (High Lord of the Nile Empire), a smaller roll would suffice.

A failed interrogation roll means that no further information may be gained by that questioner from that target.

Test of Wills

Test of Wills (short form: *test)* is used to slow your opponent's reactions. With spectacular success, you can actually get an opponent to flee or surrender with a *test.* The target of a *test* is the other character's *test* skill or *Mind.*

Taunt

Taunt is used in a manner similar to *persuasion,* but is most often used to **force** a character to act rather than **preventing** her from acting. The target of a *taunt* is the other character's *taunt* or *Charisma.*

When you *taunt* an opponent, you should tell the gamemaster what effect you'd like the *taunt* to have. If your total is high enough and the gamemaster allows the effect, the opposing character will do what you want.

Example: *The Crab stared at the shopkeeper in mock disbelief. "You want me to pay* what *for the horse? Have you forgotten all the teachings of your parents, just because you're too fat to go to worship on Holy Days? That price is usury!"*

As you can see, the Yellow Crab is *taunting* his opponent. Chris says he would like the *taunt* to make the shopkeeper ashamed so that she will give the Crab the horse. Chris then generates a *taunt* total of 18. The shopkeeper's *taunt* value is just a little too high for Chris to get full effect; however, the gamemaster rules that the *taunt* has caused the shopkeeper to lower her price by 20 percent.

Trick

Trick is also similar to *persuasion,* in that it can be used to force an opponent to act in a specific way.

The use of a *trick* allows a check against the target's *trick* or *Perception* with the object of slowing him down or negating his action. You should announce a desired effect before rolling for the *trick.* If your total is high enough, the opponent acts as you desire.

Combat

"The object of life is the death of your enemies."

— *Kurst of Orrorsh*

In a roleplaying game, combat isn't often fought on a board. Usually, the combat situation is described to you by the gamemaster; she describes your surroundings, your opponents and what actions your enemies are taking. Then she goes around the table asking each player what his character is doing this round. When she comes to you, tell her what your character is doing, and what skills he is using. **If you have a defensive skill, you are always assumed to be using that skill passively unless you state you are taking an active defense** (see "Defensive Skills" on page 18).

How Long Does It Take?

A combat round represents 10 seconds of "game time." Resolving a combat round takes longer than 10 seconds of real time, but for your character only 10 seconds have passed.

Who Goes First?

In each round, one side gets to perform all its actions; then the other side performs all its actions. Actions are *not* simultaneous. Initiative is determined by flipping the top card of the drama deck (see Player Chapter Three).

The side that has the initiative goes first. Of the characters on a side, the one with the highest *Dexterity* value goes first; the other characters act in descending order of *Dexterity.*

How Many Things Can I Do?

While there are many different types of action your character can take, you may only roll the die for one of them in any round.

The possible actions are: *attack, defend, maneuver, movement, simple action, intimidation, taunt, test of will,* and *trick.*

Action Descriptions

An *attack* action is the action your character takes to damage a target. An attack action always requires a die roll.

A *defend* action is the use of a defensive skill such as *dodge* or *melee defense* (see below). You do not have to roll a die, but if you do your defense will be increased.

Maneuver gets your character to a better position than before (see Player Chapter Three).

A *movement* action allows your character to move faster than his base movement rate. You may roll for a movement total to try to increase your character's speed.

A *simple action* is one such as shouting commands, flipping a switch, or similar easy tasks which require no die roll to perform.

An *intimidation* is a check against your opponent's *intimidation* or *Spirit* value. A successful *intimidation* gives you a tactical advantage (see Player Chapter Three).

A *taunt* is a check against your opponent's *taunt* or *Charisma* value.

A *test of will* is a check against your opponent's *test* or *Mind.*

A *trick* is a a check against your opponent's *trick* or *Perception. A* successful result on *taunt, test,* or *trick* wins you a tactical advantage.

Note: A simple action and/or a passive defense may be combined with any other action.

Defensive Skills

Some skills can make your character harder to hit. If your character has the *dodge* skill, his *dodge* value is the difficulty number for an opponent's fire combat or missile attack. This is called a *passive* use of the skill because no die roll is involved.

Your *melee* skill may also be used as a defensive skill, if you have a melee weapon; your *melee* value is the difficulty number for an opponent's unarmed or melee attack. Your *unarmed combat* skill value is the difficulty number for an opponent's unarmed attack if you do not have the *melee* skill or a *melee* weapon.

Active Use

A defensive skill may be used *actively*, if you announce your action as the use of a defensive skill (such as *dodge*). You may generate a defensive skill total for all attacks against your character in the round in which you announce active defense.

When rolling a bonus for an active defense, **treat all bonus numbers of less than one as one.** This makes sure your character does better by taking an active defense instead of passive.

Example: Quin decides to evade P-slug fire from the Kanawa guards (he takes an active *dodge)*. His *dodge* value is 13. The guards open fire, generating attack totals of 13 and 16. Paul's *dodge* total cannot be lower than 14 against the first attack, so the first guard misses. Against the second guard, Paul rolls and generates a total of 17. Quin just barely evades the second shot.

Declare whether or not you are rolling for your defensive skill prior to the rolls of your attackers. If you use an active defense, you may not roll for any other action that round. This is true even if the attackers roll so poorly that an active defense is not needed; your character is still focused on avoiding attack that round.

Attack Skills

Attack skills *include energy weapons, fire combat, heavy weapons, unarmed, melee,* and *missile.* Magic and spiritual skills can sometimes be used as attack skills. When using an attack skill, if your skill total is equal to or higher than the difficulty number of the attack, your character hits his opponent. The difficulty number is either an opponent's defensive skill, or his *Dexterity* if he has no skill.

Damage

"Hitting an adversary is necessary but not sufficient."
— *Dr. Hachi Mara-Two*

Once a character is hit, a second total (the *effect total)* determines damage. The attacker's damage value is his *Strength,* possibly modified by a melee or missile weapon, or the damage value of the weapon itself (for firearms and other weapons that provide their own energy). The difficulty is the target's *Toughness* (or armor value). The more the difficulty number is exceeded, the more the target is damaged. Your gamemaster will tell you the specific effects.

Remember that to get an effect total, you use the same bonus number that generated the first total.

Example: Quin's Uzi has a damage value of 17. His roll to hit was 15 for a bonus of 2; this gives a second total of 19 (17+2). The guard has a lined vest with an armor value of only 12, so Quin did damage.

Types of Damage

A character can suffer up to three types of damage when he takes a blow: *shock, knockout condition* and *wounds.* An additional, temporary effect called a *knockdown* is also possible. When your character is hit, the gamemaster will tell you what kind or kinds of damage the character takes.

Shock damage is expressed as a number. Record shock damage in the "Damage" section of your character template. When the total number of shock points taken equals or exceeds your character's *Toughness,* he falls unconscious.

Knockout conditions represent blows to vulnerable areas. Knockout conditions are marked by the letters "K" and "O." The gamemaster will tell you if you take a K blow; record this on your template. If a character with a K-condition takes another K blow, two additional shock points are taken. If a character with a K later gets an O, he is knocked unconscious.

Wound damage is damage that lingers. There are four levels of wound severity: *wounded, heavily wounded, mortally wounded,* and *dead.* When your character takes a wound, record this on your template. Wounds are cumulative: a *heavily wounded* character who takes another *wound* is now *mortally wounded,* and so forth. When a character reaches the *mortally wounded* level, he will soon die unless he receives medical attention.

Another possible result is a knockdown. This represents the force of the blow physically knocking a character off his feet. A character who has been knocked down may only defend for his next action.

Possibilities and Damage Reduction

A player may spend a Possibility to reduce the damage his character takes from the current blow. Each Possibility may do three of the following:

1. Remove three points of shock damage from the blow.
2. Remove a knockout condition from the blow.
3. Remove a knockdown result.
4. Remove one level of wound.

A player may spend one Possibility to reduce damage from a single blow. The Possibility is spent **after** the blow is taken. Cards (see the next chapter) that act as Possibilities may be spent in **excess** of one.

Example: A guard gets off a good shot at the Yellow Crab, resulting in a *wound*, a K, and four shock points. Chris spends a Possibility to rid the Crab of the *wound*, the K-condition, and three shock. The Crab takes one shock point.

Example: In a hail of gunfire, Quin takes a *mortal wound*, a "KO" and five points of shock. Quin needs to stay

conscious, but he has already taken some shock damage. One Possibility gets rid of three points of the shock damage, and the K, leaving Quin with the ability to remove only one wound level; he ends up with a *heavy wound.* If he had a "hero" or "drama" card, he could eliminate all the remaining damage.

Healing

Each type of damage takes a different amount of time from which to recover.

Shock damage is removed at a rate of one point per minute. The O portion of a KO is removed in one minute. A character regains consciousness when her total shock damage taken is less than her *Toughness,* and she is not KOed. A K requires a half an hour to go away.

Once a day, beginning with the day after the wound was taken, a wounded character is entitled to a healing roll. The "skill value" is the character's *Toughness* (a measure of his or her vitality as well as resistance to damage) and the difficulty number is the character's *Toughness* as modified by the wound level. If the healing check is successful, the wound improves one level. An attending physician can help your character make a healing check (your gamemaster will explain how).

Example: Quin has taken a *heavy wound* in combat. The next day Quin makes a healing roll. The skill value is his *Toughness,* an 11. The difficulty number is his *Toughness* plus 3, a 14. He rolls a total of 12. The wound does not improve. Quin should probably seek medical attention, a fact that the Yellow Crab helpfully points out.

WOUND HEALING CHART

Wound Level	Difficulty #
Wound	*Toughness*
Heavy Wound	*Toughness* +3
Mortal	*Toughness* +6

First Aid

A successful *first aid* check stabilizes a mortally wounded character, preventing him from dying. In addition, *first aid* removes all shock and knockout conditions, and lets the treated character regain consciousness. A character cannot be permanently healed by *first aid.*

Movement in Combat

On your template, to the right of the skill section, is a section for your movement rates and values; the movement rate given is in meters per round. The rate assumes you are running (or otherwise moving) full tilt.

You may announce a movement action and generate a movement total to try to go faster than your movement rate. Movement is like a defensive skill in that any bonus less than one is treated as one when you make an active movement roll. Ask your gamemaster for advice.

If you are walking, you can walk 10 meters per round. Any movement at a rate greater than 10 meters per round is considered running.

The Axioms

Each cosm has its own reality; dragons which are real in fantasy are not physically possible in the Living Land of the primitives, and would have a miserable existence in Core Earth. The key to what can and cannot exist, what does and does not work, are the *axioms.* The axioms describe the levels of four basic traits of a world: magic, social, spiritual, and technological.

Example: Quin Sebastian comes from Core Earth. Core Earth's magic axiom is rated at 7, the social at 21, the spiritual at 9 and the tech at 23. Core Earth is a lot more advanced technologically than spiritually or magically.

If an axiom is not high enough to support an activity, performing that activity creates a *contradiction* in that cosm. For example, using an automatic pistol in the fantasy realm of Aysle would cause a contradiction.

The possibility energy of the cosm is organized so as to enforce the axiom levels, eliminating contradictions. If a creature needs a certain level of magic to survive, and a cosm does not provide that level, the creature will soon die. If a piece of equipment needs a certain tech level to function, it can fail if used in a cosm of lower tech. Certain social inventions, such as credit, democracy, or even money, are not possible at very low social levels, and would not be understood by denizens of those cosms.

The immediate effect of the axiom laws is that equipment, spells and certain creatures foreign to a cosm will not work as well in that cosm. Your gamemaster has more details.

The Reality Skill

Characters with the *reality* skill are called *possibility-rated characters,* because they can store possibility energy using this skill. Possibility-rated characters are better connected to the possibility energy of their cosm, giving them several advantages over non-rated characters. For example, non-rated characters, or Ords, roll the die again only on a 10, giving them far less of a chance of performing a spectacular feat.

Uses of the Skill

If your equipment or abilities fail because of the difference in realities, your *reality* skill may get them to function once again. You may try once per round to get your equipment or abilities working.

The *reality* skill may be used to invoke a *reality storm,* a contest between two possibility-rated characters from different cosms. The contest is fierce and quite dangerous, ending with one opponent stripped of all his Possibilities. A storm can drain you of Possibilities, cause increasing physical damage to the area, transform you over to the reality of your attacker, even lock you into a swirling maelstrom of primal possibility energy, a cycle of creation and destruction which

may never end. Reality storms are therefore to be used only with extreme caution. They can destroy your character.

Ords

The Possibility Raiders coined the term "Ords" as a derogatory contraction of "ordinaries" when referring to beings without the *reality* skill. The usage has become common in all the cosms. While Ords are more restricted than possibility-rated characters, they can be quite powerful, as the only criterion for being an Ord is the lack of a *reality* skill. The largest giant in the fantasy realm, with strength enough to lift buildings, would still be considered an Ord if he did not have the *reality* skill.

Stormers and Storm Knights

When the Possibility Raiders invade a cosm, one consequence is the huge reality storms caused by the intermixing of two separate axiom sets. These storms, filled with possibility energy that wrack and warp reality, often create the conditions by which heroes reach their potential and become possibility-rated characters. As the Raiders observed that these heroes were found most frequently in the wake of a storm, they called them "stormers."

One hero, a Tolwyn Tancred of the Aysle cosm, decided to use the truth in the Possibility Raiders name, but to coin a more noble title. She created the term *Storm Knights* to refer to those heroes who oppose the High Lords and the other Possibility Raiders.

Story Structure in the Game

The game of *Torg* consists of placing your character in stories which the gamemaster has plotted. Your choices for your character, combined with the rules of the game, determine the outcome of the story. You 'win' the game by achieving a favorable outcome for your character. Since *Torg* is a game structured around storytelling, the rules reflect the structure of stories. The following definitions are referred to throughout the rules.

An *adventure* is a complete story. The player characters confront the main problem or conflict in the story, and achieve a final success or failure.

An *act* is a large portion of the story in which the characters solve a problem or obtain a goal necessary to go on to the next step in the story. A *Torg* adventure usually has from two to five acts.

A *scene* is a portion of an act. The action in a scene is continuous. If the story makes a jump in time or place, then the scene has changed. If the characters are still dealing with a character or situation introduced in a scene, then that scene has not yet ended.

An *event is* an action or situation confronting the characters in a scene. A scene may have more than one event. Events introduced in a scene are resolved in a scene, but may trigger other events in other scenes.

Awards

"Guys who do a tough job are good; guys who do a tough job and learn something from it are heroes."
-Rick Alder, NYPD

Your character can be awarded from zero to three Possibilities per act. The more heroic your character is, the more great deeds performed and opponents defeated, the greater the number of Possibilities awarded at the end of the act. To be awarded three would require an exceptional effort on the part of your character.

At the end of a successful adventure, the gamemaster may reward your character by giving him additional Possibilities, usually from six to 12.

You can save these points and use them to alter die rolls and lessen damage in the next adventure, or spend them to improve your character's attributes and skills.

Improving Attributes and Skills

Improving a skill costs a variable number of Possibilities depending on how skilled you already are. The better you are, the more difficult it is to improve your skills. You improve a skill one add at a time, i.e. if you want to improve a skill from four to seven you would have to buy skill five, then six, and finally seven. You may not skip steps, although you may improve more than one level at a time if you have enough Possibilities.

To increase a skill costs a number of Possibilities equal to the skill add purchased. Increasing a skill add from three to four would cost four Possibilities. To gain the first add of a new skill costs two Possibilities if your character can find a teacher, five Possibilities if self-taught. Gaining a skill that cannot be used unskilled costs five Possibilities if taught, 10 if untaught. If a skill requires knowledge not native to your character's cosm the cost of learning the skill is doubled.

Example: Yellow Crab picks up *test of wills* for two Possibilities, and ups his *science* add to three for three Possibilities. He's interested in learning *divination magic,* but that would cost him 10 Possibilities, since he cannot find a teacher and the skill cannot be used unskilled.

Improving Attributes

Attributes may also be improved, but at a far greater cost. An attribute may never be improved beyond the racial maximum.

Improving an attribute costs Possibilities in the same manner as improving a skill, but the cost is *tripled.*

Example: If the Crab wanted to improve his *Dexterity* attribute from 10 to 11, it would cost him 33 Possibilities.

Chapter Three

The Drama Deck

"The drama of life! If only we could do without it!"
— *Father Christopher Bryce*

Torg uses drama cards to mimic the ebb and flow of action in an adventure story. The gamemaster deals a hand of four cards to each player, but does not deal himself a hand. The rest of the cards are placed into *the drama deck.* When cards are discarded they are placed face up in the *discard pile* to the side of the drama deck. When cards are flipped by the gamemaster they are placed in front of the deck in the *action stack.*

Some gamemasters may not want to run *Torg* with the cards. While we strongly urge that they do so, they will tell you at the beginning of the game if they are not.

During normal scenes, when the player characters are searching a room, discussing among themselves, etc., time passes at about the same rate in the game as it does during real life. At these times, cards may be played at any time during the scene (see "Your Hand," below, for more details).

During a scene that involves a chase, combat, or other conflict (for more details see Chapter Six in the Gamemaster Section), action is divided into *rounds.*

During a scene with rounds, only one card may be played each round (see next page). Each round, the gamemaster flips a card from the drama deck and places it on the action stack. Even if the action is not combat and is not proceeding in 10-second increments, the gamemaster might still flip cards to mark the beats and to regulate the amount of action each character performs in a given part of the scene. The cards affect the flow of the action by giving the initiative to one side or another, and by introducing additional dramatic elements. The cards have text which explains many of their functions.

Standard Versus Dramatic Scene

The gamemaster sets the tone of a scene depending upon how important the scene is to the story. Ordinary scenes are called *standard* scenes. In a standard scene, the player characters have the edge; the pace is quick and the action fast. In a *dramatic* scene, your party is faced with a tough situation, or a conflict central to the story. The cards are stacked against you - only clever play, good cards, or luck will save the day. The pace is slower and more intense, as there is more at stake and the odds are greater.

Initiative and Advantage

The card on top of the action stack determines which side of a conflict has initiative and what advantages or disadvantages, if any, the sides have. The deck assumes there are two sides to any conflict: the hero side, consisting of player characters and their allies, and the villain side, which is composed of all of the characters opposed to the heroes. If the action includes true neutrals, those who are simply caught in the way, they are lumped with the heroes for card purposes.

The faction listed on the left half of the encounter line has the initiative. An "H" stands for hero and "V" stands for villain. Any other advantages, disadvantages, or instructions are listed next to the appropriate faction.

USING THE CARDS

Players' Hands (only the gray side is important)

Action Stack (gamemaster plays here; only the orange side is important).

Discards

Drama Deck

A SAMPLE CARD

"Flavor" Text (no effect on play)

Standard Encounter Line

Approved Action

Dramatic Skill Box

64 — Card ID Number

They strike!

S: H Fatigue   V —
D: H —   V Up
Act: DEFEND/TAUNT

Skill   A B

May be played as an additional Possibility.

Hero

Dramatic Encounter Line

Player Effect

THE CONFLICT LINES

64
They strike!
S: H Fatigue   V —
D: H —   V Up
Act: DEFEND/TAUNT

A faction can have one of the following advantages: *flurry, inspiration,* or *up.* A faction can have one of the following disadvantages: *break, confused, fatigue, stymied* or *setback.* The gamemaster will explain what these effects mean when they appear on the encounter lines. A "—" means that no advantage or disadvantage is in effect.

The dramatic text above the conflict line ("They're on the run!") is included for flavor, and has no effect on play.

Your Hand

The four cards dealt into your hand are separate from the rest of the drama deck. Ignore the part of each card with the orange border; you are interested only in the half with the gray border, which gives you advantages over your opponents by increasing a skill value or bonus, or by allowing you to "break the rules" in some specific way.

During parts of scenes that are not progressing by rounds, you may play cards directly from your hand, at any time during the scene. But when the action begins to go in rounds (when the gamemaster starts flipping cards onto the action stack), you can only play cards from your "card pool."

Card Pools

When a scene is progressing by rounds, you build a *card pool* by setting cards face up, aside from your hand. In a round, you may add one card to your pool if your character takes an action that would help move the scene along (whether he succeeds or not). If your character is taking an action that does not directly contribute to the events in the scene, the gamemaster might not allow you to put a card into your pool that round.

During rounds, you may **not play a card for its advantage directly from your hand,** only from your pool. At any time during a round, you may spend the cards in your pool in any combination you wish, from one card in your pool to all the cards in your pool. The only restriction is that you may not play cards, ask the gamemaster what effect you've had so far, and then play more cards. You must play all the cards you intend to play before finding out what effect you've had.

Example: *Quin veered sideways as the giant's club smashed down behind him. The shock was enough to tumble him off his feet. He let loose a burst from the Uzi, but the bullets had little effect on the behemoth. As the giant raised his club for another blow, Quin aimed carefully. He had only one more chance.*

After three rounds of combat, Paul has built up a pool of three cards. Quin fires in the next round, getting a damage total of 17. Paul figures this is not enough to really hurt the giant, and announces that he will expend his entire pool on this shot. After playing all three cards, his damage total increases to 26.

The club whistled down, but Quin's final burst caught the creature square in the head, bringing the giant crashing to the ground, bellowing in agony.

Approved Actions

On the top card of the action stack is a line labeled "Act:" which stands for *approved actions*. The line lists two actions, or "any" which means *any* of the following seven actions are approved: *Attack, Defend, Trick, Test, Taunt, Intimidate,* or *Maneuver.* **If your character** *succeeds* **at an approved action, you** *draw* **a card** from the drama deck; you can then add a card from your hand to the character's pool as usual. An attack is considered successful if you hit, even if you do not damage your opponent. A defense is successful as long as you are attacked and not hit. Your gamemaster may disallow certain actions in certain cases.

You can play a card into your pool if you fail at an approved action or even if you take an unapproved action, but you can't draw a new card from the deck. Taking approved actions is the only way you can build the really large pools that are necessary to affect impressive opponents. Otherwise you will run out of cards.

Example: *"Your mother was a human!" the Crab cried to the lizard-man, "you're a pitiful excuse for a warrior!" He danced backward as two thrown spears suddenly appeared quivering in the ground.*

In the first round, the "Act:" line shows *Trick/Taunt.* Chris elects to have the Crab try a *taunt*, and he succeeds! Chris draws a card from the drama deck and adds it to his hand. He then plays one card from his hand to his pool. If Chris had attacked instead, he could still have added a card to his pool, but he would not have been able to draw a new one first.

Playing for the Critical Moment

Once per act a player may play as many cards from her hand as she wishes directly into her card pool; these cards must be used to affect one character's action for that round only. This is called the character's *critical moment* in an act.

Example: *The Carredon's gurgling roar dispersed the fog long enough for Crowfire to see where it had flung Quin, who lay unconscious at the base of a boulder. The Carredon's head turned toward Crowfire with the grating creak of heavily armored hide. The young warrior had to do something or they would all die.*

Crowfire already has two cards in her pool. The pool is worth +3 to Crowfire's attack. Doubting that is enough to do any harm to the massive beast, Winter, Crowfire's player, declares this to be Crowfire's critical moment. She plays her remaining three cards on her shot. Thinking frantically, Winter declares that Crowfire is shooting for one of the beast's nostrils. The music swells in the background.

Winter spends two cards on the hit, for a +6 bonus. She spends another on the effect total, for a +3. She rolls a 14, which is good, but not good enough. Winter plays her "second chance" card and rerolls, getting a 10 followed by a 17, for a 27 and a total of +15 to hit and +12 damage.

The Carredon bellowed, rearing back on its hind legs in shock and pain. Crowfire pulled Quin to his feet.

"Hurry. If we make it into the deep fog it will have trouble finding us now that tracking by smell is so painful."

Losing Cards

Enemy action can actually remove cards from your pool through *tricks, tests,* and *taunts* used by the villains. If a villain successfully uses one of these skills on your character, the gamemaster may remove some of the cards from your pool. Part of the tension of the card play is in knowing how long to wait before expending your pool.

Trading Cards

You may trade cards in your pool with cards in another player's pool (if the scene is not in rounds, you may trade cards in your hand with cards in another player's hand). The other player must agree to the trade. You may trade at any time. You may trade more than one card, but for each card you trade to a player you must receive a card from that player. You may not just give or receive cards. This limit helps assure that all the characters in a story take part in the story, rather than feeding cards to a single player.

When you are trading cards, try to imagine what your character might be doing in the story which would explain the card trade. This adds to the story and the fun of the game.

Example: *Quin lay exhausted, recovering from his injuries while the Yellow Crab prepared camp. Crowfire attempted to hunt for some food for the evening.*

Winter rolls a 1. Crowfire's *survival* total is 0 — no food tonight. She has no cards that could help. Chris offers to trade a "second chance" card, but he must think of an action he can take that will make the trade make sense in the context of the story. When he does so, the trade is made.

"Hunting was bad,' said Crowfire as she sat by the campfire.

"I have heard that in the Living Land, if you think like the fog, animals cannot sense your approach," offered the Yellow Crab.

Crowfire blinked and rose from the fire. Two hours later she returned carrying a dead Crosktreckt.

Francis Mao

Replenishing Your Hand

At the end of each scene, pick up the cards from your pool (but see "Special Cards," below) and put them back in your hand; then reduce your hand down to four cards by discarding the extras. After that (or if you have fewer than four cards to begin with), you may discard one card you no longer wish to hold in your hand. Now draw to fill your hand to four cards. Knowing which cards to discard and when to discard them is an important skill in *Torg*.

Card Descriptions

Special Cards

There are three types of cards that are specially tinted with only gamemaster colors; these cards do not count against your hand total of four at the end of a scene. Once played, they remain on the table (they are considered to be "in your pool" even if the scene is not in rounds) until they are used, or until the end of the adventure. These three types of cards are *subplot* cards, *connection* cards, and *alertness* cards.

Subplots

A *subplot* is a story within a story. In *Torg,* a subplot card adds an additional wrinkle to the story as told by the players and the gamemaster. A subplot card assigns your character a role to play or a motivation which helps guide your character's actions. When you put a subplot card into your pool, you might suggest to the gamemaster how this subplot applies to your character. Subplots are gamemaster-tinted cards, so they do not count against your hand total when replenishing your hand, and they are not picked up once placed in your pool. If you would rather not play a subplot, you may discard the subplot instead of putting it in your pool; you gain one Possibility for doing so.

The gamemaster can disallow any subplot card that he feels does not fit in the story. If the gamemaster disallows a subplot, discard the card and gain one Possibility. Once you accept a subplot, you cannot later discard it for a Possibility. If you and the gamemaster accept a subplot, put the subplot in your pool, where it stays until the end of the adventure. As a bonus for accepting a subplot, you receive one extra Possibility at the end of **each act**.

If someone plays the "campaign" subplot card, that player may choose a subplot which he wishes to make a fixture for the campaign. If the player who has the subplot agrees, and the gamemaster agrees, the subplot continues over several adventures.

Alertness

Alertness lets your character notice an item or clue you otherwise would have missed. You must place it into your pool normally, but once there, the gamemaster keeps track; when there is a clue to be found, and all characters have missed their chance to notice it, the gamemaster discards your *alertness* card and gives you the clue.

Alertness is a gamemaster-tinted card, and so does not count against your total of four cards when replenishing your hand; it remains in your pool until it is used.

Connection

Connection lets your character know someone in the area who can help you. This does not mean that you won't have to expend considerable effort finding the person, but you can be sure there is someone available.

A *connection* must be placed into your pool normally, but once there it acts like an *alertness:* the gamemaster keeps track of when it is activated (which may not be exactly when you wanted). It does not count against your hand limit, and remains in your pool until used.

Example: *"Face it soldier, we're lost,"* said the Crab. Quin scanned the fog of the Living Land in hopes of recognizing a distinctive landmark.

"Look, Quin," the Crab continued. *"The way I see it we can either walk around until we bump into something that eats us, or we can sit here until something finds us and eats us. I, for one ..."* The Yellow Crab finished his sentence by sitting down. Quin ignored his companion and began examining nearby trees for blaze marks or other signs of habitation.

Paul plays a *connection* card from his hand, leaving it face up on the table. He looks imploringly at the gamemaster, who nods. Nothing happens at that moment, but now Paul knows there is someone in the area who can help them — if he can only find who it is.

"Come on, let's keep moving," growled Quin.

Cards That Increase Value and Bonus

Many of the cards in the deck are *action, coup de grace, presence, adrenalin,* or *willpower.* These cards allow you to add to a bonus or attribute value. If a card increases one of your character's **values**, the increase lasts from the time you play the card from your pool, until the end of the round, or until the gamemaster flips the next card on the action stack.

Action

The *action* card allows you to increase your bonus number for any action by three. It cannot be used passively, since it increases your bonus and not the underlying value.

Adrenalin, Willpower and Presence

Three cards, *adrenalin, willpower* and *presence,* add directly to the attribute value. While they can be used for one of several attributes, each card can only add to one attribute value at a time (you must say which value is increased when you play the card).

Coup de Grace

The *coup de grace* card increases only the *effect* value of your action; if you fail on the first total, the *coup de grace* is no help.

Possibility Cards
(Hero and Drama)

Two types of cards, *hero* and *drama*, can be used as additional Possibilities; these cards are actually better than Possibilities since you can expend a Possibility normally, and *then* play the card for yet another roll. You can also use these cards as Possibilities to negate damage, in excess of the one normally allowed.

The *drama* card can be played as a hero card or, if saved until the end of the adventure, can be redeemed for *three* extra Possibilities.

Other Cards

These cards may all be played from your pool normally, but each has other restrictions, as listed.

Escape

Escape allows your entire party to escape an encounter. There is only one *escape* card in the deck. In order to use the *escape* card, it must be the first card played into your pool when a scene of rounds begins. The gamemaster will then have time to arrange the necessary circumstances.

Haste

A *haste* card gives you an extra action during a round. It may be played any time, even in the middle of the villains' actions.

Glory

Glory cards can only be played in rare circumstances. During **dramatic** situations, should your character's final die roll be 60+ on any action, you may play this card. The reward for the adventure is increased by three Possibilities for all players. *Glory* cards also help you in the fight against the High Lords by making it easier for you retake conquered territory. If such a situation arises, your gamemaster will explain.

Master Plan

A *master plan* card lets you take a card that has just been discarded, in exchange for the *master plan*, which is placed on the discard pile. You must play the *master plan* immediately after the card you want has been discarded. The card taken goes in your pool if the *master plan* was in your pool.

Monologue

The *monologue* card allows you to stop all hostile action while your character make a dramatic speech. (If the conflict in question is openly violent, the odds of anyone listening to reason are small.) The effect of the card lasts a round or more. There is only one *monologue* card in the deck. Your gamemaster may require you to actually perform the monologue in order for this card to work.

Opponent Fails

You play an *opponent fails* card immediately after the gamemaster tells you that the opponent has successfully acted upon you. The card "rewrites the script" so the action fails. This is the ultimate defensive card.

Second Chance

Second chance lets you immediately retry an action after you have failed the first time. Play the card immediately after the first failure; the first die roll is ignored.

Seize Initiative

Seize initiative allows you to either keep the card currently on the action stack on the stack for one more round, or to flip again for this round if you don't like the one just flipped. *Seize initiative* may be played at the beginning of a round, just before the card flip (if you wish to keep the current card) or just after (if you wish to flip a new card).

Supporter

The *supporter* card lets you add three to another player's total, after she has rolled for her action but before the gamemaster has announced the result.

Rally

The *rally* card lets all players discard as many cards as they wish and immediately draw to refill their hands to four cards (ignoring, for this purpose, all cards currently on the table). There is only one *rally* card.

Leadership

Leadership lets you play up to two cards from your hand or pool into other players' hands or pools; then you may discard any or all of your remaining cards and immediately refill your hand to four cards (ignoring, for this purpose, all your cards currently on the table).

Idea

The *idea* card simulates those brainstorms fictional characters always have. Whenever you are stumped as to what your character should do next, the *idea* card can get you a hint from the gamemaster.

STOP

You've read everything you need to be a *Torg* player. Try the solo adventure to get a feel for what roleplaying is like, then try a real game of *Torg.* If you want to be a gamemaster, read the Gamemaster Section starting on page 37.

Chapter Four

The Lizard and the Lightning

A *Torg* Solo Adventure

By now you should understand enough about the rules to begin playing — but there are important non-rules elements of the *Torg* game that you have yet to encounter.

What makes a good play session is really the *story*. The players each take the *role* of a single character in this story, while the gamemaster acts as the *storyteller by* crafting the basic plot, keeping the events flowing smoothly, and acting the parts of the minor characters in the tale.

As a player, you will be called upon to speak, act, and make decisions for your character. In short, you *become* the character. We recommend that you play through the following short solitaire adventure in order to familiarize yourself with the concept of "playing" a character. What distinguishes solitaire adventures from ordinary *Torg* adventures is the fact that no gamemaster is necessary for play. All of the gamemaster's functions are handled by the paragraphs below, as you will see.

The Lizard and the Lightning

Mission Accomplished! You pat yourself on the back for a job well done as you swing your twin-engine aircraft through the cloudy skies over Minneapolis, Minnesota, just on the fringe of the realm known as the Living Land. You've suc-cessfully delivered a planeload of perishable drugs to the resistance fighters based in the Twin Cities, and now you're heading back to your home base near Springfield

Ahead, the blue skies are slowly melting into an ugly shade of gray as a thick mist begins to swell over the ground, obscuring your view of the plains below. Something definitely seems wrong. Perhaps this adventure isn't over after all.

To play this solo adventure, you'll need a pencil, paper, a 20-sided die, and a copy of the sample character found on page 8.

Begin the adventure by reading the section labeled *"1."* Each section describes a situation and asks you to make a choice or test your character's abilities. The results of these choices and tests will then lead you to another section ("go to section 12"). The adventure will tell you when you're finished.

The drama deck is not used while playing this adventure.

After you finish, try the adventure again. This time, make different choices and notice how they affect the outcome.

In this adventure, you will take on the role of Quin Sebastian, a fearless member of the resistance movement that is trying to prevent Baruk Kaah (the High Lord of the Living Land) and his minions from overrunning the sector of Core Earth that borders the Living Land. For a greater challenge, Quin only has three Possibility points available for this adventure.

1

You fly on for another half hour before you find what's causing the darkening skies: a fierce reality storm is brewing up ahead. As you approach, you hear a deafening roar and catch sight of fickle lightning bolts dancing near the storm's heart.

It's decision time. You can either continue on your present course, which will take you right into the heart of the storm, or you can turn back to avoid the storm completely.

You figure the odds are about a thousand to one of making it through the storm unscathed. One small bene-fit, though: if you do have to land, it's unlikely any hostiles on the ground will see you.

On the other hand, if you turn back over the Living Land, the alien axioms might prevent your plane from func-tioning. Even if you keep it working, you have limited fuel — if you fly around for too long, you will certainly have to land before you reach Spring-field.

• *If you want to head into the storm, go to section 45.*

• *If you want to try to avoid the storm, go to section 51.*

2

DO NOT MAKE A TICK MARK FOR THIS PARAGRAPH. The Edei-nos warrior attacks you with his war stick. His *melee weapons* value is 13.

Roll the die for a bonus, and add it to the warrior's *melee weapons* value as discussed on pages 12-14 (don't forget, the warrior rolls again on 10s). If the total exceeds 12 (your *melee weapons* value, used defensively), you have been hit. (This means that you are hit on a roll of nine or higher — check to see for yourself).

• *If he misses you, go to section 19.*

• *If you are hit*, the stick strikes a painful blow! Add the same bonus to 11 (this is the warrior's damage value with his club). Since you don't know all the rules for assessing damage, use the following:

Effect total = 10 or less: no damage.
Effect total = 11-14: one shock point.
Effect total = 15-17: two shock.
Effect total = 18+: three shock.
Record your shock damage on your scrap paper. If the total shock damage you've taken so far equals or exceeds your *Toughness* (11), you are knocked out. After each blow, you can spend one Possibility to avoid taking the shock damage from that blow.

• *If you're still up, go to section 19.*

• *If you're knocked unconscious, go to section 13.*

3

The engine sputters once, then re-sumes its steady roar. Unfortunately, all this flying around has depleted your fuel to the point where it's no longer safe to stay aloft. With no other choice available, you quickly bring the plane in for a gentle landing at the very edge of an open field. Hopping out quickly, you take a look at your surroundings.

Go *to section 46.*

4

The first order of business is to get away from the plane: someone might have seen you come down. You gather the necessary items from your vehicle and set off into the nearby forest, wondering which way to go from here. Your musings are interrupted by a low, menacing hiss.

An Edeinos warrior, bearing an oddly shaped war club, stands before you on the forest path. Moving with amazing speed, the lizard man rushes at you!

Go *to section 2.*

5

The storm is fierce and your plane is badly damaged, but you're an experi-enced pilot. Skillfully avoiding the worst of the turbulence, you manage to glide in amid rain and lightning for a semi-powered landing at the very edge of an open field. At least you're sure that no one could have seen you come down! The plane lurches to a stop as the sky begins to clear above you.

Go *to section 38.*

6

The forest trail ends ahead of you. Time to backtrack.

Go to *section 37.*

7

Having made it across the gorge, you continue on your way. After a time, you emerge from the forest path into a clearing, only to find yourself face-to-face with six Edeinos warriors, each armed with a spear — and a menacing stare.

Thinking furiously, you remember that there are two Edeinos tribes in this area; unfortunately, they are quite different.

If these Edeinos are of the Furrek-Dah tribe, then they are fanatic follow-ers of Baruk Kaah and will slay you out of hand. Your only chance is to take advantage of the Furrek tradition of single combat: if you quickly issue a challenge, you'll only have to fight one of them for your freedom. They look big and strong, but it's better than fighting all six.

On the other hand, if these are members of the Ahh-Keht, then they are one of the renegade Edeinos tribes working against Baruk Kaah. Chal-lenging them would be a mistake, but a quiet parley might get you through alive. Just as you come to a decision, you notice an X pattern painted on the backs of the warriors' hands.

• *If you want to issue a challenge, go to section 41.*

• *If you want to persuade them to let you pass, go to section 25.*

8

You fight the controls as you descend, but the plane is too badly damaged. The pounding rain and the desperately rough air don't make things any easier, and with a gut-wrenching sensation the plane skips off a stand of trees and plunges nose-first to the ground!

As you pull yourself, groaning, from the wreckage of the plane, the storm begins to clear around you. You've taken a *heavy wound* (see page 18) in the crash. If you spend one Possibility, you are only *wounded.* If you spend two Possibilities, you are not wounded at all. Mark your wound status on your character template now.

Go *to section 38.*

9

Quietly, calling upon every ounce of woodscraft you possess, you advance into the forest. Because of your amazing stealth, the Edeinos warrior doesn't seem to be aware of your presence. Of course, the distant rumbles of thunder covering the sounds of your passage didn't hurt your cause.

You peer cautiously through the brush at the lizard man. The warrior looks nervous, as though waiting for something. You wonder if it would be better to wait and observe, or simply to attack.

• If *you continue to wait and watch, go to section 31.*

• If *you attack, go to section 19.*

10

The warrior you are examining has something painted on his hand that catches your eye, and you remember that the Edeinos use such markings to distinguish between tribes. The faint spiral-shaped markings place this warrior as a member of the Furrek-Dah, a malevolent band of Baruk

Kaah's followers. The Furrek are bad news; they are numerous, fanatical, and powerful. You definitely want to avoid them.

In fact, the odds are that there are more of them nearby — time to skedaddle!

• Go *to section 14.*

1 1

An examination of the animal trails and types of foliage in the area leads you to believe that you can best escape the Living Land by heading northwest. You could be wrong, though....

• *If you want to head northwest, go to section 21.*

• *If you want to head southeast, go to section 37.*

• *If you want to go through the hills, go to section 36.*

12

You finally emerge from the forest and cross over the border, out of the Living Land. You immediately spot a band of Core Earth resistance fighters from the Twin Cities area who were sent out to look for you after the local command realized that your plane went down. You should be in Springfield in less than a day!

Congratulations! You have successfully completed the adventure.

Turn to section 54.

13

The Edeinos' mammoth blow sends you crashing to the ground. Unfortunately, the Edeinos don't usually take prisoners.

Things look pretty bad for Quin - perhaps if you were playing a regular adventure you could think of some way to save him. For now, the adventure is over. Turn to section 54.

14

Okay, you're out of danger for the moment: time to begin your journey out of the Living Land. To the west is the forest, to the south are the hills. It also occurs to you that it might be useful to know where the Edeinos warrior came from, but searching around for tracks will use up more of your time.

• *If you head west, go to section 39.*

• *If you head south, go to section 36.*

• *If you want to track down the Edeinos' point of origin, go to section 42.*

15

The reality storm begins to flare up overhead! Booming thunder shakes the trees, fierce winds whip across the landscape, and powerful lightning bolts arc groundward.

You have too little protection to weather this storm in the open! A bolt of lightning smashes the ground nearby, and an electric tingle suffuses your body. With a sigh of regret, you sink to the ground, unconscious.

We don't know if Quin will survive this terrible ordeal, but now it's time for you to get back to the rules. First, go to section 54.

16

You hear footsteps approaching your downed plane! Thinking quickly, you duck into the cargo compartment and look out a small window into the clearing outside.

Suddenly a fierce Edeinos warrior, one of the shamanistic lizard men inhabiting the Living Land, steps out of the underbrush and begins stalking around the wreckage. He is quite obviously an enemy (his strange warclub is held at the ready) and looks as though he is about to enter the plane to search. Your only chance is to ambush

him before he spots you and attacks. You spring into battle as the Edeinos approaches.

Go to section 19.

17

You plummet into the gorge and strike rock after a short fall. You're injured, taking a *heavy wound* in the fall. You can spend a Possibility to take no damage. If you are already wounded, remember the wound accumulation rules on page 18.

• *If you now have three or more wounds, the adventure is over for you. Perhaps if you were playing Quin in a real adventure, you'd be able to continue somehow. For now, go to section* 54.

• *If you are now* heavily wounded *or* unwounded, *go to section 7.*

18

You fight the controls as best you can, but the plane is all but dead in your hands: the primitive axioms of the Living Land can't sustain sophisticated machinery for long.

One last heave on the stick, and with a gut-wrenching sensation, the plane skips off a stand of trees and plunges nose-first to the ground!

You pull yourself from the wreckage of the plane, checking for broken bones. You're woozy: you've taken a *wound* (see page 18) in the crash. If you wish, you may spend one Possibility to avoid taking the *wound*. Mark your wound status on your character template now.

Go *to section 46.*

19

DO NOT MAKE A TICK MARK FOR THIS PARAGRAPH. You strike at the warrior. Roll the die to generate a bonus number and add it to your *melee weapons* value of 12 (remember, you roll again on 10s *and* 20s and you can spend a Possibility to get another

roll). You need a total of 13 or more to hit the Edeinos (this means that you hit on a roll of 13 or higher — check to see for yourself).

• *If you miss, go to section 2.*

• *If you hit,* you slam your knife into the Edeinos' thick hide! Add the same bonus to 12 (your damage value for the knife) to get a total. Since you don't know all the damage rules, use the following to calculate damage on the Edeinos:

Total = 10 or less: no damage.
Total = 11-12: one point of shock.
Total = 13: two shock.
Total = 14-15: three shock.
Total = 16-18: five shock.
Total = 19+: 11 shock.

Record shock damage to the Edeinos on your scrap paper. If the total equals or exceeds 11 points, you have defeated him.

• *If the warrior is still standing, go to section 2.*

• *If you defeat the warrior, erase all shock damage and go to section 47.*

20

The Edeinos appear to consider your request, muttering heatedly among themselves. They keep an eye on you, though; escape would be impossible. After a while, the leader speaks:

"You are not our enemy," he says, "but we have no way of knowing if

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you tell the truth or not. Your uniform could have been stolen from a true friend. You could be a renegade, working with the Furrek-Dah. We have no choice but to take you back to our village. Come, do not resist or we will kill you."

For Quin, the adventure has just begun, as he must now escape from the gentle prison of the Ahh-Keht. For you, the adventure has ended. Go to section 54.

21

You continue along the forest path. The trail veers to the west, and suddenly you find a deep gorge blocking your progress. You walk to the edge and kick down a few pebbles to gauge its depth. At least 30 meters! The only way to cross the gorge is to climb a tree on one side and jump over to a limb on the other side. It's either that or wander aimlessly in the forest until the storm takes you.

This is a *jumping* skill check, but you do not have *jumping* skill. Generate a bonus number and add it to your *Dexterity value* of 11 — you do not get to roll again on 20s.

• *If your total is 10 or less, go to section 17.*

• *If your total is 11 or more, go to section 7.*

22

One warrior smiles, or seems to smile — it's hard to tell with Edeinos. At any rate, they appear a bit more friendly; now might be a good time to put your request. Or you could try to press your advantage and really win them over. If you do press, though, you run the risk of saying something foolish and losing what advantage you already have.

• *If you put your request now, go to section 33.*

• *If you press your* charm, *go to section 53.*

23

You summon all of your will and overcome the foreign axioms of the Living Land, creating a stable field of Core Earth axioms in a bubble around yourself. The engine, silent until now, begins to sputter back to life, and your wilting plane is suddenly renewed with energy as you climb back into the clouds.

You fly gracefully ahead of the storm, searching for an opening in the dark and roiling clouds. It doesn't look good, and time is running out.

Go to section 3.

24

You know from experience that it's best to tell someone *why* they should help you even before you ask for their help. Clearing your throat, you step forward and speak:

"Friend Edeinos, I am Captain Sebastian of Springfield in Core Earth

As soon as you say 'Core Earth,' the six warriors are swarming over you, spears thrusting toward you.

Oops.

Quin is in bad shape. If you were playing a real adventure, perhaps a well-played escape *card could save you. For now, the adventure is over. Go to section 54.*

25

You know from experience that it's best to tell someone *why* they should help you even before you ask for their help. Clearing your throat, you step forward and speak:

"Friend Edeinos, I am Captain Sebastian of Springfield in Core Earth." They stare at you stonily. "We fight for the same goals, you and I." Still no response.

This is a *charm* skill check. You do not have the *charm* skill. Roll a bonus and add it to your *Charisma* value of 9, but don't roll again on 20s.

• *If your total is 11 or less, go to section 35.*

• *If your total is 12-15, go to section 22.*

• *If your total is 16 or more, go to section 40.*

26

You stand, gasping, over the fallen body of the defeated Edeinos warrior. The others mutter among themselves, looking at you with the Edeinos equivalent of frightened eyes. One steps forward and says, "We honor our promises ... you are free to go."

Weary from battle, you continue on. After a long journey, the storm brewing at your back, you finally emerge from the forest and cross over the border and out of the Living Land. You immediately spot a band of Core Earth resistance fighters from the Twin Cities area who were sent out to look for you after the local command realized your plane went down. You should be in Springfield in less than a day!

Congratulations! You have successfully completed the adventure.

Turn to section 54.

27

The challenge hangs in the air for several seconds, and the Edeinos look at one another as if trying to decide what to do. Then one (the biggest, burliest one, as far as you can see) steps forward.

"I am Gon-Tin," he says in broken English, "and as challenged I strike first blow. If you defeat me, you pass unharmed. Prepare yourself, man of Earth."

• *Go to section 49.*

28

You examine your surroundings, but find no clues to help you decide which way to go. You'll have to trust to luck — or not go into the forest at all.

• *If you want to head southeast, go to section 37.*

• *If you want to head northwest, go to section 21.*

• *If you want to go through the hills instead, go to section 36.*

29

With a deep breath and a prayer, you continue.

"My people are willing to see the Living Land continue to exist on Earth; we only wish to halt the advances of the evil Baruk Kaah. I hope that one day we may come to share mutual trust and friendship."

Roll a bonus number for your *Charisma* value of 9. Don't roll again on 20s.

• *If your total is 11 or less, go to section 53.*

• *If your total is 12 or more, go to section 30.*

30

Trying to sense the moods of Edeinos is difficult at the best of times, but you feel this might be the right moment to request safe passage: they're looking positively friendly!

After a slight dramatic pause, during which they lean forward eagerly, you put your request:

"And now, warrior-friends, I must hurry away to avoid the brewing storm. Please let me pass unharmed, and perhaps we will meet again one day."

Roll a bonus number for your *persuasion* value of 10.

• *If your total is 7 or less, go to section 20.*

• *If your total is 8 or more, go to section 12.*

31

This is a test of *the find* skill. You do not *have find*. Roll a bonus number for your *Perception* value of 9, but don't roll again on 20s.

• *If your total is 7 or less, go to section 43.*

• *If your total is 8 or higher, go to section 10.*

32

DO NOT MAKE A TICK MARK FOR THIS PARAGRAPH. You strike at the warrior. Roll a bonus number for your *melee weapons* value of 12 (remember, you roll again on 10s *and* 20s and you can spend a Possibility to get another roll). You need a total of 12 or higher to hit the Edeinos.

• *If you miss, go to section 49.*

• *If you hit,* you slam your knife into the Edeinos' thick hide! Add the same bonus number to 12 (your damage value for the knife) to get a total. Since you don't know all the damage rules, use the following to calculate damage on the Edeinos:

Total = 11 or less: no damage.
Total = 12-13: one point of shock.
Total = 14: two shock.
Total = 15-16: three shock.
Total = 17-19: five shock.
Total = 20+: 13 shock.

Record shock damage to the Edeinos on your scrap paper. If the total equals or exceeds 13 points, you have defeated him.

• *If the warrior is still standing, go to section 49.*

• *If you defeat the warrior, erase all your shock damage and go to section 26.*

33

After a slight dramatic pause, during which the Edeinos warriors lean forward curiously, you put your request:

"And now, warrior-friends, I must hurry away to avoid the brewing storm. Please let me pass unharmed,

and perhaps we will meet again one day."

Roll a bonus number for your *persuasion* value of 10.

• *If your total is 8 or less, go to section 20.*

• *If your total is 9 or more, go to section 12.*

34

You spend several minutes examining the trail and the forest nearby, looking for signs of where the warrior came from, but you find no evidence of the lizard man's passage—he seems to have appeared out of thin air. Okay, time to get going.

• *If you want to head into the forest, go to section 39.*

• *If you want to head into the hills, go to section 36.*

35

The Edeinos look at you as though you are from another planet — come to think of it, you are. It might be wise to simply put your request now, before you make things worse with your chatter. Or, you could try one more time to soften them up.

• *If you put your request now, go to section 48.*

• *If you continue trying to be charming,* roll a bonus and add it to your *Charisma* value of 9, but don't roll again on 20s.

• *If your total is 11 or less, go to section 52.*

• *If your total is 12 or more, go to section 33.*

36

You walk down into the series of low hills, trying to keep out of sight as much as possible. The skies overhead are still darkening and you catch sight of a flock of pteradon-like Lakten fleeing the area. In fact, the lack of local wildlife in the region seems quite dis-

turbing, even considering the storm conditions.

Something is definitely wrong and it doesn't take you very long to find out what it is: you emerge from the forest path into a clearing, only to find yourself face-to-face with six Edeinos warriors, each armed with a spear — and each shooting you a menacing stare.

Thinking furiously, you remember that there are two Edeinos tribes in this area; unfortunately, they are quite different.

If these Edeinos are of the Furrek-Dah tribe, then they are fanatic followers of Baruk Kaah and will slay you out of hand. Your only chance is to take advantage of the Furrek tradition of single combat: if you quickly issue a challenge, you'll only have to fight one of them for your freedom. They look big and strong, but it's better than fighting all six.

On the other hand, if these are members of the Ahh-Keht, then they are one of the renegade Edeinos tribes working against Baruk Kaah. Challenging them would be a mistake, but a quiet parley might get you through alive. Just as you come to a decision, you notice a spiral pattern painted on the backs of the warriors' hands.

• *If you want to issue a challenge, go to section 27.*

• *If you want to attempt to persuade them to let you pass, go to section 24.*

37

The forest paths continue on. Trails lead to the east and west.

• *If you want to go east, go to section 6.*

• *If you want to go west, go to section 21.*

38

Judging from what little terrain you recognized as you were descending, you would guess that your landing approach carried you a couple of miles past the border and into the Living Land after all. This can be a dangerous place; you'd best get back to the Core as quickly as possible. The border lies to both the west and the south. Obscuring the passage to the west is a thick forest, while a series of low hills obscures the passage to the south.

Before you begin plotting your strategy, you should also consider one other factor: reality storms like the one that brought down your plane are rarely isolated phenomena; they come in bursts. You can expect the next storm to hit in approximately two hours. Unless you are out of the realm by that time, things will get very dangerous.

Starting with the next paragraph, put a tick mark on your character sheet each time you finish reading a paragraph. Once you have made a total of 12 such marks, go to section 15. Jot down that paragraph number so you don't forget.

Standing outside the plane, you check over your remaining equipment and contemplate your next move. While you're thinking, you hear a faint crunch of footsteps in the woods nearby.

You're sure no one could have seen the crash, but you move quietly into the woods to see what's up. In the distance, obscured by trees, you see a lizard-man inhabitant of the Living Land — an Edeinos warrior! It might be worth sneaking up on this potential enemy, or it might be best to just let him move along.

• *If you want to investigate the warrior, go to section 9.*

• *If you wait for him to pass and then continue your journey, go to section 14.*

39

You stand at the entrance to the thick forest. The trees form a dense green canopy that shoots up overhead. A heavily wooded trail leads to the northwest and to the southeast. You have no idea which way to go.

Roll a bonus number for your *survival* value of 9.

• *If your total is 9 or less, go to section 28.*

• *If your total is 10 or more, go to section 11.*

40

There is a sudden stir of interest among the Edeinos; something you said must have caught their fancy. Is now the best time to ask for safe passage? Or should you warm up to it a little more before coming right out and asking for favors?

If you ask now, they might still say no (they don't look *that* friendly), but time appears to be running out - neither of you can afford to stand out here all day.

• *If you ask for safe passage now, go to section 33.*

• *If you keep trying to be charming, go to section 29.*

41

The warriors seem disturbed by your challenge. All their spears rise up to point at you. They advance *en masse*, crackling with spiritual power.

Just before they overwhelm you, one says "The enemy of one Ahh-Keht is the enemy of all Ahh-Keht. You must die!"

Quin is in quite a fix — perhaps if you were playing this character in a real adventure, you could figure out a way to save him. But for now, it's over. Go to section 54.

42

Searching for signs of the Edeinos' passage will take time, but could be well worth it.

Roll a bonus number for your *tracking* value of 10.

• *If your total is 11 or less, go to section 34.*

• *If your total is 12 or more, go to section 50.*

43

The warrior raises his head, sniffing at the breeze. He looks fearful and

mutters "Hossraf," which you believe is the Edeinos word for "storm."

Before you can contemplate another course of action, the warrior races off to the northeast. You're alone again.

Go *to section 14.*

44

Rather than drain yourself of precious Possibilities, you allow the axioms of the Living Land to flow around you, through you. You can feel the energy rapidly ebbing out of the aircraft, until the engine sputters twice, and dies. Now you'll have to glide the plane down to an emergency landing.

Bringing the plane down under these conditions will be difficult, but not terribly so. Roll a bonus number for your *air vehicles* value of 11.

• *If your total is 9 or less, go to section 18.*

• *If your total is 10 or more, go to section 3.*

45

Fearing the worst over the Living Land, you grit your teeth and head straight into the heart of the storm. As your plane lurches forward, the winds and lightning intensify. You have a bad feeling about this.

The sky soon grows so dark that you can't see more than three feet ahead, and the howling of the wind becomes deafening. Suddenly, your plane jolts and you hear a metallic tearing sound: a lightning bolt caught your tail! You're going down! You'll have to try to dead stick it to the ground.

Bringing the plane down under these conditions will be difficult. Roll a bonus number for your *air vehicles* value of 11.

• *If your total is 11 or less, go to section 8.*

• *If your total is 12 or more, go to section 5.*

46

Judging from what little terrain you recognized as you were descending, you would guess that your landing approach carried you a couple of miles past the border and into the Living Land. This can be a dangerous place; you'd best get back to the Core as quickly as possible. The border lies to both the west and the south. Obscuring the passage to the west is a thick forest, while a series of low hills obscures the passage to the south.

Before you begin plotting your strategy, you should also consider one other factor: reality storms like the one that forced your landing are rarely isolated phenomena; they often come in bursts. You can expect the next storm to hit in approximately two hours. Unless you are out of the realm by that time, things will get very dangerous.

Starting with the next paragraph, put a tick mark on your character sheet each time you finish reading a paragraph. Once you have made a total of 12 such marks, go to section **15.** Jot down that paragraph number so you don't forget.

Now roll a bonus number for your *Perception* value of 9. This is an unskilled use of *find*, so don't roll again on 20s.

• *If your total is 9 or less, go to section 4.*

• *If your total is 10 or more, go to section 16.*

47

The Edeinos warrior lies before you, dead or unconscious. You don't have time to worry about him now.

The body might yield clues about tribe of origin, or other valuable items, but time is of the essence. You can already see signs of the approaching storm.

• *If you want to search the body, go to section 10.*

• *If you want to get going and not waste valuable time, go to section 14.*

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48

The warriors' faces are stonelike. They stare at you blankly, not a glimmer of recognition in their eyes, not a hint of friendliness in their mien. You must have said something wrong....

You have no choice now but to ask for passage and hope your innate abilities as a salesman are enough to carry you through. Clearing your throat, you say, "And now, warriors, I must be moving on — the storm threatens us all. Will you let me pass?"

Roll a bonus number for your *persuasion* value of 10.

- *If your total is 11 or less, go to section 20.*
- *If your total is 12 or more, go to section 12.*

49

DO NOT MAKE A TICK MARK FOR THIS PARAGRAPH. The Edeinos warrior attacks you with his spear. His *melee weapons* value is 13.

Roll a bonus number for the warrior (don't forget, he rolls again on 10s). If the total exceeds 12 (your *melee weapons* value used defensively), you've been hit!

- *If he misses you, go to section 32.*
- *If you are hit,* the spear strikes home! Add the same bonus to 12 (this is the warrior's damage value with his spear). Since you don't know all the rules for assessing damage, use the following:

Total = 10 or less: no damage.
Total = 11-14: one shock point.
Total = 15-17: two shock.
Total = 18+: three shock.

Use your scrap paper to record the shock damage you take. If the total shock damage you've taken so far equals or exceeds your *Toughness* (11), you are knocked out. After each blow, you can spend one Possibility to avoid taking the shock damage from that blow.

- *If you're still up, go to section 32.*
- *If you're knocked unconscious, go to section 13.*

50

You spot a faint set of footprints that indicate without doubt that this Edeinos came from the south. Now it's time to begin your journey out of The Living Land.

- *If you want to head west toward the thick forest, go to section 39.*
- *If you want to go through the rolling hills to the south, go to section 36.*

51

As you cross into the Living Land, your plane begins to wilt and sputter! the Living Land is a primitive zone, and its simple technical axioms will not allow a machine as complex as your aircraft to function.

In order to fly over the Living Land, you must spend a Possibility. If you wish to preserve your Possibilities against times of greater need in the future, you could try a dead-stick landing — not supremely difficult for one with your abilities.

- *If you spend the Possibility, mark it off your character sheet and go to section 23.*
- *If you save your points and try to land, go to section 44.*

52

Suddenly the Edeinos are looking positively hostile, eyeing their spears and your midriff in alternating glances. You must have said something wrong. It's now or never.

"Friends," you say hollowly. "The storm is almost upon us. Let me pass and we shall both benefit."

Roll a bonus number for your *persuasion* value of 10.

- *If your total is 13 or less, go to section 20.*
- *If your total is 14 or more, go to section 12.*

53

You speak eloquently of the friendship between all peoples opposed to Baruk Kaah. The Edeinos appear to listen with interest.

Roll a bonus number for your *Charisma* value of 9. Don't roll again on 20s.

- *If your total is 11 or less, go to section 52.*
- *If your total is 12 or more, go to section 30.*

54

Okay, so now you see how it's done. Whenever you take an important action, like attacking, persuading, etc., you roll the die and check the bonus chart on your character template, adding that number to the value in question. Sometimes, if the action succeeds, you add that same bonus number to a different value to check the effect.

In this adventure, we provided the numbers you needed in order to succeed (the "difficulty number.") The more difficult the task, the higher the number. When you're playing with a gamemaster, she will tell you what your difficulty number is each time you attempt a difficult task (sometimes the gamemaster might not even tell you what you need — she will only let you know if your total is high enough after you roll).

One thing you should keep in mind: when you start playing the game, your character is a real hero, capable of extraordinary feats. However, he is not superhuman, nor immortal. There are some things your character cannot expect to do, and he *can* die. The world of *Torg* is violent and dangerous, so characters must always be on their toes, and never stop thinking.

Good luck!

Gamemaster Section
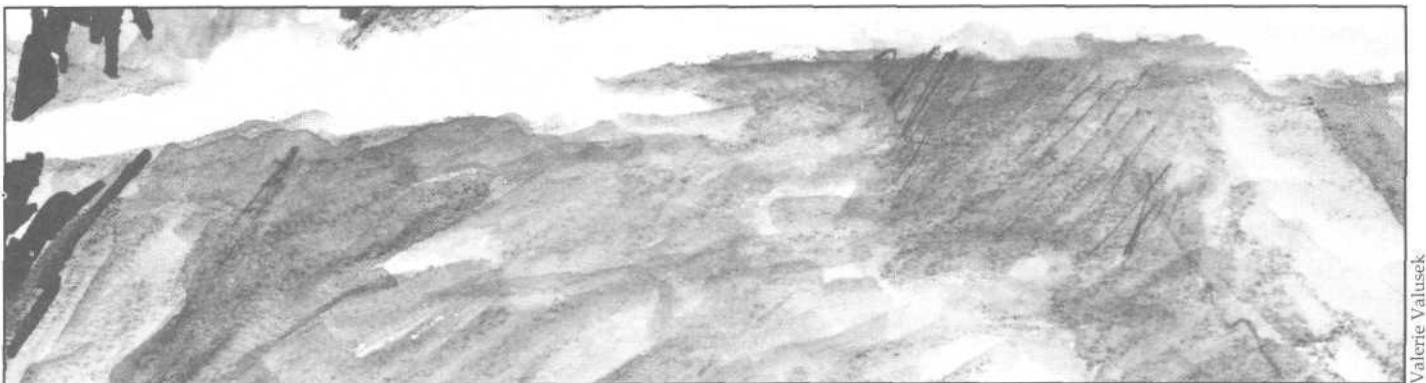
Valerie Valusek

Chapter One

On Being a Gamemaster

I f you're just planning on being a player, you don't need to read any more of this book. As long as you've read the Player Section, you know how to figure skill values, how to roll the die and generate a bonus number, how to generate action and effect totals, how to play drama cards into a pool, and what drama cards can do for you.

And that's all you need to know.

But, who sets the difficulty numbers for the players to beat? Who decides what the villains' abilities are, and how much damage is done when a blow lands or a bullet strikes home? The gamemaster does, and to do those things you will need to read the rest of the Rule Book. If you're planning on being a gamemaster, you might want to read a little of the World Book next, then come back here and start getting familiar with the rules.

Don't try to memorize every word and every modifier the first time through. Just get an idea of the basics — how to read the result tables, how to handle action within a round — and also get an idea of *where* the information is contained. Later, if someone wants to perform a multi-action or cast a spell, you can go back and re-read that section.

Tip Sheet for Gamemasters

1. Learn the game by playing it, rather than by trying to read all the rules, hints and source material at once. Familiarize yourself with the basics, and then give it a try.

2. Talk the rules over with your players so they can get a basic under-standing of the game without reading all of the material. Having someone explain the rules to you is the easiest way to learn the game.

3. Extend the rules when necessary. However detailed, no set of roleplaying rules can cover everything. Use your common sense, make a quick ruling, and get on with the game. Leave yourself room for change on such quick rulings; "Okay, this is how it works tonight. But I may have a different house rule once I've had some time to think about it."

4. Expect to make an occasional mistake. Admit the mistake to the players and correct it. Do an instant replay of the scene if necessary. Then get on with the game.

5. Prepare for the game. At first we recommend you use published adventures such as "Before the Dawn" in the Adventure Book. Use them as models of how to present characters, situations and story to the players.

6. Ham it up. Okay, so maybe you are not the greatest actor/orator in the history of humankind, but don't let that stop you. Every iota of energy, every ounce of melodrama in you can make the game more entertaining — for you as well as the players.

7. Take it slow! You aren't going to become an expert gamemaster over-night. While challenging, learning to be a gamemaster can be a great deal of fun if you don't take it too seriously or try to do too much at once. All our rules, comments, and world back-ground have been written to provide you with an entertaining way to create stories with your friends. Use what you like, toss out the rest. If you want more hints and information, you can find them in the Adventure Book.

Chapter Two

The Game System and How to Bend It
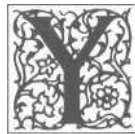
Y ou should read the Player Section before tackling this chapter. This chapter builds on the concepts presented earlier, and contains additional information and tricks for gamemastering *Torg.*

The Flow of Action

When you are gamemastering an adventure, time is a fairly fluid concept. When the player characters are negotiating with a merchant, the amount of time it takes in the game is fairly close the the amount of time that passes in the real world; but when the characters are driving for hours in a car to get to their next destination, you might say "Okay, you're there," and skip over a large portion of down time. In either of these two cases it's a fairly simple matter to keep track of what everyone's doing, and to control the flow of action.

However, when the players have characters in the middle of a thicket of trouble, they tend to let their excitement get the better of them; things can get pretty chaotic at these times. To help mitigate this and give everyone a chance to get in on the fun, we have broken down the flow of action into *rounds.* Each round represents 10 seconds of "real" time. During a round, characters can engage in combat or perform other activities, playing round after round until the encounter has been completed. You can decide that rounds will be longer than 10 seconds each, if the encounter warrants larger chunks of time.

For each round, do the following:

1. Flip the top card of the drama deck (unless declaring "gamemaster fiat") to determine initiative and special effects for the round, as defined in Chapter Four.

2. The side with initiative rolls for actions. When the players generate totals (see below), they tell them to you, and you ...

3. Announce which actions succeed. If an action needs an effect total, tell the player to get the second total. When you announce which actions succeed, you can give dramatic descriptions appropriate to the situation.

4. Check the appropriate "result table" to find the result (see the next page).

Of course, when you are acting as a "player" for the gamemaster characters, you do not have to announce the intermediate stages, just the final result.

You may find that it speeds up play to tell players your characters' action and effect totals, and ask them to handle the math and tell you the result points.

Generating Totals

The only real gamemaster trick to generating totals is in becoming quick with the math, and this gets easier with practice. Adding large skill and damage values to big bonus numbers may slow you down at first, but you will soon find that the addition is no problem.

amemaster Fiat

Of course, the gamemaster can "cheat" whenever he wants. If it makes the story more interesting, it is always a good idea to bend the rules; *gamemaster fiat* is simply a way of allowing the gamemaster to cheat in an open and aboveboard fashion.

You only use gamemaster fiat at the beginning of a round during a dramatic situation, as defined in the Player Section and the Adventure Book. Up to three times in each dramatic conflict, you may inform the players you are invoking fiat.

Immediately take four cards from the top of the drama deck, discard three of them, and place your chosen card on the action stack as the flip for that round. This allows you to better tailor the conflict line to the current situation.

For more such gamemastering tricks, see the Adventure Book.

The Result Tables

Once you have determined a difficulty for an action, and a player has generated a total for that action, you must compare the total and the difficulty to find out how well the character has done. The result tables give you that information.

Subtract the *difficulty* from the *total.* If a character equals or betters the difficulty number of an action (in other words, if the answer is positive), she succeeds; otherwise she fails (the answer was negative). *Result points* are the positive numerical difference between the total and the difficulty number. A difference of 0 is also called an *S* (minimal success).

Example: Sabrina jumps from a tree onto a moving truck, a feat the gamemaster says has a difficulty of 12. Sabrina generates a total of 15; 15 minus 12 gives 3 result points.

Combat results are explained in Player Chapter Two. More detailed explanation is given in Gamemaster Chapter Six; explanations of *charm, persuasion, trick, taunt,* etc., are given in Gamemaster Chapters Five and Six. The results on the storm table are explained in Chapter Nine. All the charts and tables have been gathered into a pullout section in the Adventure Book, for your convenience.

On all result tables, the "+2" result means apply the listed result for every two full result points above 15. For example, 18 result points of damage would be a 4 Wnd KO 5 for a possibility-rated character, while 19 result points would be a 5 Wnd KO 5. There is no change in interaction results for really large rolls; "Enemy +1" is the largest possible result.

General Results

The General Results table (see page 40) is used extensively in the skill section. The *quality of the success* is noted by a word: *minimal, average, good, superior* and *spectacular.* The general table also gives you a feel for the level of success, a tool for describing to the players how well their characters have done. *Minimal* implies that the character just barely succeeded; you might want to describe how narrowly he avoided failure. *Average* is average; no extra description is warranted. *Good* success sometimes merits a more detailed description, particularly if the character faced long odds. A *superior* success deserves special emphasis. For a *spectacular* success, pull out all the stops in your description. Your players will love you for it.

Players will probably appreciate it if you describe the failures as minimally as possible. If the characters really blow an action (having a total which isn't even within 10 of the difficulty), perhaps a bit of colorful explanation is due. Your players expect something bad to happen when their characters perform very poorly, and you might as well oblige them once in a while.

Using the Attribute Scale to its Fullest

The attribute scale in *Torg* is an innovative use of attribute numbering, made necessary by the multiple genres in the game. Most game systems either use a consistent scale for their attributes—in other words, each point of an attribute represents a specific amount of real-world measure — or they have no scale at all. The problem with such systems is that while they work fine in a limited setting (fantasy, horror, etc.) they either fall apart when bigger things (like technological weapons) are introduced, or they require huge numbers to represent the top end of the scale. For example, if a dagger does "one die of damage," how many dice do you roll for the main cannon of the Death Star?

Torg solves this problem by the use of a logarithmic scale. A logarithmic scale is one like the Richter scale, or the Decibel scale, where each point represents a greater proportional amount than the point before. For example, a level four earthquake is far more than twice as powerful than a level two earthquake, because each point on the Richter scale is 10 times as large as the point before. This is because earthquakes can range so greatly in size.

Torg's scale is not "each point is a factor of 10"; instead, *every five* points is a factor of 10. This allows finer resolution at the low end (so all humans don't look exactly alike) but still keeps the top end from being impossible to handle (so an aircraft carrier has a weight of only '41').

In addition, the *Torg* scale is consistent from measure to measure, so that a given value always has the same real-world measure, whether it's expressed as time (in seconds), distance (in meters per round), or weight (in kilograms). The Torg Value chart (see page 43) shows you how to convert from values to measures and vice versa. The Benchmark chart (page 43) gives the values of several different measures, so you can reference them quickly during the crush of a game.

The consistent logarithmic scale is a good tool for "on the fly" gamemaster guesstimation. The scale can be used

INTERACTION RESULTS TABLE

Result Points	Intimidate Test	Taunt Trick	Interrogate	Charm Persuade	Maneuver
S	Unskilled	Unskilled	Enemy	Loyal	Unskilled
1	Unskilled	Unskilled	Enemy	Friendly	Unskilled
2	Unskilled	Unskilled	Enemy	Friendly	Unskilled
3	Unskilled	Unskilled	Hostile	Neutral	Unskilled
4	Unskilled	Unskilled	Hostile	Neutral	Unskilled
5	Stymied	Stymied	Hostile	Neutral	Fatigued
6	Stymied	Stymied	Hostile	Neutral	Fatigued
7	Stymied	Stymied	Neutral	Hostile	Fatigued
8	Stymied	Stymied	Neutral	Hostile	Fatigued
9	Stymied	Stymied	Neutral	Hostile	Fatigued
10	Setback	Setback	Neutral	Hostile	Stymied/ Fatigued
11	Setback	Setback	Neutral	Hostile	Stymied/ Fatigued
12	Setback	Setback	Friendly	Enemy	Stymied/ Fatigued
13	Setback	Setback	Friendly	Enemy	Stymied/ Fatigued
14	Setback	Setback	Friendly	Enemy +1	Stymied/ Fatigued
15	Break	Up/ Setback	Loyal	Enemy +1	Setback/ Fatigued
+2	Player's Call	Player's Call	Loyal	Enemy +1	Player's Call

COMBAT RESULTS TABLE

	Ords	Possibility-rated
S	1	1
1	O1	1
2	K1	O1
3	O2	K1
4	O3	2
5	K3	O2
6	Knockdown K/O 4	Knockdown O 2
7	Knockdown K/O 5	Knockdown K 2
8	Wnd K/O 7	Knockdown K 2
9	Wnd K/O 9	Wnd K 3
10	Wnd K/O 10	Wnd K4
11	2WndK/O11	WndO4
12	2Wnd KO 12	Wnd K 5
13	3Wnd KO 13	2Wnd O 4
14	3Wnd KO 14	2Wnd KO 5
15	4Wnd KO 15	3Wnd KO 5
+2	+1Wnd	+1Wnd

GENERAL AND PUSH RESULTS TABLE

	Success	Speed	Power	Storm
S	Minimal	0	+1(3)	-1
1	Average	+1(4)	+1(2)	-1
2	Average	+1(3)	+1(1)	-2
3	Good	+1(2)	+2(6)	-2
4	Good	+1(1)	+2(3)	-2 Storm x2
5	Good	+2(10)	+2(1)	-3 Storm x2
6	Good	+2(9)	+3(10)	-3 Storm x5
7	Superior	+2(8)	+3(8)	-4 Storm x2
8	Superior	+2(7)	+3(6)	-4 Storm x5
9	Superior	+2(6)	+4(10)	-5 Maelstrom
10	Superior	+2(5)	+4(8)	-6 Maelstrom
11	Superior	+2(4)	+4(6)	-7 Maelstrom
12	Spectac.	+2(3)	+5(10)	-8 Maelstrom
13	Spectac.	+2(2)	+5(8)	Transform (5)
14	Spectac.	+2(1)	+5(6)	Transform (5)
15	Spectac.	+2(0)	+6(10)	Transform (5)
+2			+0(-2)	

F ailing

Failing is an optional category that means there is a chance the action could still succeed, even though things are still bad, or maybe even getting worse. A failing result occurs when the character misses a difficulty number by 1 or 2.

If you think the situation is a completely clear cut yes or no, if you cannot think of way the action could continue, then treat "failing" as a failure. But a failing result can be a great dramatic tool; Indiana Jones in the opening of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* had a failing result when he leaped over the pit in the South American temple, and then had to haul himself up the seemingly endless vine. Failing can be great fun if you play it right; certainly it is more fun than having your character fall to his death.

You can treat a failing result as a "complication" (see page 63 of this book) which increases the difficulty of future actions by 1.

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to approximate game values from a real world measure for just about anything.

Example: The measure of 60 meters has a game value of 9. The measure of 400 seconds has a game value of 13. The measure of 10,000 kilograms has a game value of 20. So, for instance, if a character has a *Toughness* of 11, he probably weighs between 101 and 150 kilograms.

Converting Measures

Suppose you need to know the value of something that weighs 160 *pounds,* or lasts for 25 *minutes.* Do you have to convert in your head from kilos or seconds? Nope. If you aren't comfortable with the metric system, or if you would like to come up with game values for other measurements, use the conversion chart.

To use the Measure Conversion chart (page 42), simply find the value of the measure you have, regardless of what units it's in. Then, add the listed modifier to find the actual game value (which automatically converts the measure into seconds, meters per round, or kilos). Remember, adding a negative number is like subtracting.

Example: A character runs for 25 minutes straight; on the fly, you require a *Strength* roll against the diffi-culty of 25 minutes of continued activity in order for the character to remain standing. What is the value of 25 minutes?

On the Value chart, a measure of 25 has a value of 7, and the "minutes" modifier is +9; 7 plus 9 equals a difficulty of 16.

Example: You need to know if a character can lift a couch which you figure weighs around 160 pounds. On the Value chart, a measure of 160 equals a value of 12. Pounds have a -2 modifier, so the game value of the couch is 10 (12 minus 2).

You can also use the Value and Conversion charts as a sort of mini-calculator to transfer between measures, say to find out how many seconds there are in six days, or how many pounds in 700 kilos.

Example: A car is traveling at 55 mph, and you need to know how far the car will travel in one round of combat. Normally you would have to convert mph to kph, then divide by 60 to get kpm and divide by 6 to get kilometers per round. Using the Value chart, do this:

The measure 55 has a value of 9. This is adjusted by +3 (for miles per hour) for a game value of 12. Meters per round has a conversion of 0, so the value of 12 yields a measure of 250 meters; the car moves 250 meters in one round of combat.

If you want to convert from a game value (or a number already expressed in meters, kilos, or seconds) to a real world measure of a different unit, reverse the sign of the modifier.

Example: A skill roll yields a game value of 31, which is supposed to represent a number of days the character can live in the wilderness. To convert this time value to days, subtract the "days" modifier of 25. 31 minus 25 equals 6. A value of 6 has a measure of 15, so the time is equal to about 15 days.

If you need to know the *Toughness* of an object, a good starting point is its weight. Find the game value of the weight, modifying downward if the object is delicate, upward if it is armored or particularly tough to damage. Humans, for example, are quite variable, so their *Toughness* would be +2 to -2 of their weight value.

Difficulty Numbers

Normally, the difficulty of a task is the opposing attribute of the character or thing acted upon (a monster's *dodge* value is the difficulty to hit it in fire combat; the wall's height value is the difficulty to scale the wall). Sometimes, however, you need a difficulty for a task that has no measurable value. The Difficulty Number scale (page 42) gives you those sorts of numbers. Make your best guess as to the difficulty of the task, and find the corresponding

H ow Can I Handle All These Numbers?

The whole purpose of the chart is to give you something to guess with; pick a number you think is reasonable and go on with the game. Getting the numbers perfect is not the point. If you are off by a point or so, don't worry; being close counts in gamemastering.

MEASURE CONVERSION CHART

Measure is in units of	Value Modifier
Seconds	0
Minutes	+9
Hours	+18
Days	+25
Weeks	+29
Months	+32
Years	+38
Meters per round	0
MPH	+3
KMH	+2
Kilos	0
Pounds	-2
Tons	+15
Meters	0
Feet	-3
Kilometers	+15
Miles	+16

DIFFICULTY NUMBER SCALE

Description	#	Modifier
Very Easy	3	-5
Easy	5	-3
Average	8	0
2:1 Against	10	+2
Difficult	12	+4
10:1	13	+5
Heroic	15	+7
100:1	18	+10
1000:1	22	+14
Never Tell Me the Odds	25	+17

CORE EARTH CHARACTER LIMIT CHART

Limited Activity	Limit Based On	Limit Value	Column
Running	Dexterity	10	Speed
Swimming	Dexterity	6	Speed
Long Jumping	Dexterity	3	Speed
Climbing	Strength	2	Speed
Lifting	Strength	9	Power

number under the "#" column. The numbers are scaled for a possibility-rated character with an average attribute; therefore heroes with greater-than-average values will succeed more often than the odds suggest, which is as it should be.

Difficulty Modifiers

The Difficulty Number scale is very handy for judging tasks that have no attribute to set a difficulty by. But what about cases where there is **both** an attribute *and* unusual circumstances? If Quin Sebastian is shooting a gospog (a cross-cosm creature grown from seeds planted in fields of the dead) under normal circumstances, you would use the gospog's *dodge* score. If the fight is occurring in a textile factory in the Empire of the Nile, with all kinds of whirring machinery as additional obstruction, the difficulty for hitting the gospog (and Quin) should be higher. The Difficulty Number scale can help here, too.

Decide how much more difficult than normal, or how much easier, you think the task is: very easy, twice as hard, maybe just a little bit easier than normal; maybe 10 times as hard as normal. Find your guess on the Difficulty Number scale and locate the result under the "Modifier" column. The result is *added* to the attribute difficulty of the task.

Example: Quin is firing at that pesky gospog in the textile factory. The gamemaster figures that firing through all that machinery makes it difficult, but not quite 10 times as difficult to hit the gospog. The Difficulty Scale gives a modifier value of +4. The gospog's *dodge* is increased by 4 to account for the machinery.

Limited Activities, Speed and Power

Real human beings are only capable of so much. Of course so are heroes, trolls, cyberpriests and pulp villains. The rub comes with heroes who are human, or close to human. Your players want to be heroic; at the same time they want the world to make sense, to feel real. This is a tall order, and it requires a little bit of complication. If you directly translate attribute values into game measures of time, distance or weight, you quickly run into problems with humans who can perform ridiculously powerful feats. For characters from Core Earth, use the Character Limit chart on this page. For characters from other cosms, use this chart unless the appropriate sourcebook contradicts it.

The *limit value* is the largest value which may be directly translated on the attribute chart.

Example: Crowfire has a *Dexterity* of 9; looking for the measure of 9 we find that Crowfire can run 60 meters per round. The Yellow Crab, with a *Dexterity* of 10, can run 100 meters per round. Quin, whose *Dexterity* is 11, cannot exceed the human running limit value of 10, so he too runs 100 meters per round.

TORG VALUE CHART

Val.	Meas.	Val.	Meas.	Val.	Meas.
0	1	35	1E+7	70	1 E+14
1	1.5	36	1.5E+7	71	1.5 E+14
2	2.5	37	2.5 E+7	72	2.5 E+14
3	4	38	4 E+7	73	4 E+14
4	6	39	6 E+7	74	6 E+14
5	10	40	1E+8	75	1 E+15
6	15	41	1.5 E+8	76	1.5 E+15
7	25	42	2.5 E+8	77	2.5 E+15
8	40	43	4 E+8	78	4 E+15
9	60	44	6 E+8	79	6 E+15
10	100	45	1 billion	80	1 E+16
11	150	46	1.5 E+9	81	1.5 E+16
12	250	47	2.5 E+9	82	2.5 E+16
13	400	48	4 E+9	83	4 E+16
14	600	49	6 E+9	84	6 E+16
15	1,000	50	1 E+10	85	1 E+17
16	1,500	51	1.5 E+10	86	1.5 E+17
17	2,500	52	2.5 E+10	87	2.5 E+17
18	4,000	53	4 E+10	88	4 E+17
19	6,000	54	6 E+10	89	6 E+17
20	10,000	55	1 E+11	90	1 E+18
21	15,000	56	1.5 E+11	91	1.5 E+18
22	25,000	57	2.5 E+11	92	2.5 E+18
23	40,000	58	4 E+11	93	4 E+18
24	60,000	59	6 E+11	94	6 E+18
25	100,000	60	1 trillion	95	1 E+19
26	150,000	61	1.5E+12	96	1.5 E+19
27	250,000	62	2.5 E+12	97	2.5 E+19
28	400,000	63	4 E+12	98	4 E+19
29	600,000	64	6 E+12	99	6 E+19
30	1 Million	65	1 E+13	100	1 E+20
31	1.5E+6	66	1.5 E+13		
32	2.5 E+6	67	2.5 E+13		
33	4 E+6	68	4 E+13		
34	6 E+6	69	6 E+13		

Every five points is a tenfold increase. "E+n" is an engineering notation, meaning move the decimal point n places to the right to get the full number. 2.5 E+11 would be 250,000,000,000 written out in full.

When trying to find the value of measures that fall in between the cracks on the Value Chart, we recommend you treat the listed measure as an upper bound for that value. For instance, a value of 10 has a measure of 100, while a value of 11 has a measure of 150. All measures greater than 100 and less than or equal to 150 have a value of 11.

TORG BENCHMARK CHART

Value	Time	Weight	Distance
0	Second	1 kilo	1 meter
2			Tallest human
3		Human baby	
9	Minute	Human female	
10		Human male	Football Field
11		Lion	City block
12		Brown Bear	
15		Small Car	Kilometer
16		Large Car	Mile
17		Elephant	
18	Hour		
20		Empty Truck	
22		APC	
23			Marathon race
24		Loaded Truck	
25	Day	Blue Whale	
27		Boeing 747	
28		C5A Galaxy	
29	Week	Tramp Freighter	
30		Destroyer	Length of Great Britain
32	Month	Six-flat building	Paris to Moscow
33		Fully loaded train	New York to L.A.
34			New York to London
35			London to Tokyo
38	Year		Circumference of Earth
39		Battleship	
41		Aircraft Carrier	
45		Loaded Oil Tanker	

Pushing

It is possible to exceed human limits under special circumstances. To exceed a limit is an action, called a *push,* with a difficulty number of 8. The acting value is the *Dexterity* (for speed pushes) or *Strength* (for power pushes) of the acting character. Consult the column on the Push Results table corresponding to the type of activity (speed or power) you are pushing. The result points earned from the action give a modifier which is added to the character's appropriate attribute.

Example: The Yellow Crab is trying to sprint for his life from a horde of angry, heavily-armed gangsters. Chris declares that the Crab is *pushing* his speed this round. The Crab generates *a Dexterity* total of 12. This earns four result points on the push table (total of 12 minus difficulty of 8 = 4), for a value modifier of +1. The Crab's running value for that turn is 11 *(Dexterity* of 10, +1 value modifier). He sprints 150 meters that round, successfully out-distancing his pursuers.

If the character's attribute already exceeds the limit value, the full attribute is used to generate result points, but any value modifier earned is added to the limit value instead. In other words, attributes in excess of the human limit value are still useful, but cannot allow a character to perform godlike feats.

Example: Quin, right alongside the Crab, rolls a 14 for a bonus number of 1. His *Dexterity* is 11 so his total is 12 (11 plus 1 bonus); he gets four result points and a value modifier of +1. *However,* the modifier is *not* added to Quin's *Dexterity* value of 11, but to 10, since this is the limit value.

When rolling for a push, any bonus number that is less than one is treated as one (this is like taking an active *dodge).*

Using Skills and Pushing

Skills such as *running* or *climbing* add to the character's movement value only so long as the total does not exceed the limit value.

Example: A character with a *Dexterity* of 8 runs (without pushing) 40 meters per round. If that character had two adds in *running* skill, he would run 100 meters per round *(running* value of 10). If that character had seven points of *running* skill, he would still only run 100 meters per round unless he pushed.

Attributes or skill totals that exceed the limit value are useful only for getting more result points on pushes.

Example: Crowfire has a *Dexterity* of 9. When she pushes her run, she adds any modifier earned directly to her *Dexterity.* If she had a three point *running* skill, she would roll for push with a *running* value of 12, but any value modifier earned would be added to 10, the limit value.

Pushing and Fatigue

The number in parentheses following the value modifier on the Push table is the amount of shock damage the character takes from performing the push. The damage is assessed at the end of the round, so a character can accomplish a superhuman feat, and then collapse. This type of damage, known as *fatigue,* is cumulative with shock damage taken in combat.

A player may always elect to take a lesser number of result points from a push in order to avoid fatigue.

Example: *The Crab stared blankly at the four-meter high wall; he was rudely shaken from his reverie as gunfire burst around him.*
Crab's climbing score is 9. Chris generates a *climbing* total of 14, for 6 result points. The result modifier is +2(9); rather than have the character take so much shock, Chris lowers his result points to 4. The value modifier is now +1(1). The Crab increases his climbing limit value from 2 to 3, which has a measure of four meters — enough to clear the wall!

L imits for Other Creatures

Other creatures and machines are limited by their attributes as well. A construction crane with a lifting value of 23 has to strain enormously to lift an object that has a weight value of 26. If the creature description does not give limit values, you may calculate the limit values from the table below. "Avg." means the known average attribute for the creature in question; if this is not known, use human numbers or your best guess. In obvious problem circumstances (a sparrow's *running* ability, for example), use your judgment.

Limited Activity	Limit Value
Running	Avg. Dexterity
Flying	Avg. Dexterity
Swimming	Avg. Dexterity -2
Long Jumping	Avg. Dexterity -5
Climbing	Avg. Strength -6
Lifting	Avg. Strength +1

Add +2 to the limit value of the creature's *primary modes of movement* (the ways it travels most often).

Example: The gamemaster assumes that a dolphin's average *Dexterity* is 10; it therefore swims at a limit value of 10 (about 25 mph), since swimming is its primary mode of movement.

The Crab sprinted wildly and leaped, grabbed a handhold, pulled up hard, then powered himself over the wall with a vault, leaving behind the perplexed gangsters.

Optional Rules: Multiple Actions

Although all rules in a roleplaying game are "optional," the game can be run effectively without the multi-action rules. After you have tried a game or two and gotten comfortable with the flow of action, you may want to introduce the following.

The Multi-Action Charts

The Multi-Action Charts are used when you want to sum the action of many identical (or nearly identical) characters into a single die roll, or when a character is trying to have his roll apply to more than one action.

In order to use either of the Multi-Action Charts, each individual action must be able to succeed independently of the others. You could not, for instance, use the Multi-Action Charts to see if a group of characters could lift a rock — it makes no sense for some of them to be able to lift the rock, and not the others. Either they all lift the rock or they all fail.

Many on One

To resolve many characters' actions with one roll, the characters must all have a skill or attribute value within one point of each other. If the values are too different, you must roll separately for each group with similar values.

For each group of similar characters, find the number of characters acting under "# Char." The corresponding bonus modifier is added to the group's bonus number.

To find how many of the characters succeed, use the "How Many Succeed" column. Find the entry corresponding to the amount by which the total exceeded the difficulty number (includ-

MANY ON ONE EXAMPLE

	Bonus Modifier	How Many Succeed
1		DN
2	4-2	DN+2**
3-4	+3*	DN+4
5-6	4-4	DN+6
7-10	45	DN+8
11-15	46	DN+10

Four shocktroopers are trying to leap a pit which has a difficulty number of 10. They have *jumping* at 9. The gamemaster rolls a 14 for a bonus of one, increased to four because of the multi-action bonus modifier. They generate a total of 13 (9 plus 1 plus 3). They have beaten the difficulty number by three, which is enough for two of them, but not quite enough for all four. Two shocktroopers make it across, while two fall screaming into the pit.

* Four shocktroopers get a +3 modifier.

** Beating the difficulty number by 3 means that two have succeeded.

ing the group bonus modifier), then look under "# Char." to find out how many characters succeeded.

In a situation requiring an effect total, use the bonus modifier of the number of characters who actually succeeded as the effect bonus.

Example: Six shocktroopers are gunning for a character, but only four hit. The damage bonus modifier is only +3.

One on Many

If a character is trying several actions with different skill values and/or different difficulties, he rolls the die once to get a bonus number, and adds that bonus number to each skill separately. He then compares each total to the "modified difficulty" of the appro-

MULTI-ACTION CHARTS

Many On One

# Char.	Bonus Modifier	How Many Succeed
1		DN
2	+2	DN+2
3-4	+3	DN+4
5-6	+4	DN+6
7-10	+5	DN+8
11-15	+6	DN+10

One On Many

# Char.	Toughness Increase	How Many Succeed/ Difficulty Increase
1		DN+2
2	+2	DN+4
3-4	+3	DN+6
5-6	+4	DN+8
7-10	+5	DN+10
11-15	+6	DN+12

DN = difficulty number; DN 4 ? means add the listed amount to the difficulty number.

priate action. He may check in any order he wishes.

The difficulties are modified according to the "DN+" column of the "One on Many" chart. The first action checked is at DN+2, the second at DN+4, the third and fourth at DN+6, and so on.

Example: *Quin grabbed the rope while checking the safety on his Uzi. The two shocktroopers on the far side of the ravine didn't look too friendly; to have any chance at escape, Quin knew he'd have to swing and shoot simultaneously.*

The gamemaster tells Paul to use Quin's *Dexterity* for the swing, *and fire combat* for shooting. Swinging across the ravine has a difficulty of 8. The shocktroopers' *dodge* scores are 9.

Paul rolls a bonus of 0; he decides to check the swing first, as he'd prefer not to be hanging over the chasm (or falling in). The modified difficulty of the swing is DN+2, or 10; his *Dexterity*

of 11 is enough to cross the ravine. The first shot difficulty is DN+4, or 13. *Quin's fire combat* total is 14 and he hits the first shocktrooper. The third action (shooting the second shocktrooper) is DN+6 or 15. Quin misses the third shot.

Quin swung across the ravine, his shots catching one trooper as the other dodged. The soldier of fortune landed on the other side, and prepared to defend himself.

If a character is attacking more than one opponent, each opponent's *Toughness* is automatically increased by the amount listed under "Toughness Increase" for the total number of actions taken, even if the character hits fewer opponents than he attacked. Diverting his attention and efforts lowers the damage of any successful attack.

Example: In the above example, the hit shocktrooper's *Toughness* is increased by three, since Quin was attempting three actions.

Quick Method

If a character uses the same skill to attempt several actions, each of which has a difficulty number within one of all others, you can use a shorthand method to determine number of successes. This is most often used when attacking multiple opponents, each of whom has the same defensive skill. This method may not be used to attack the same opponent multiple times.

Find the amount by which the skill total exceeded the difficulty of a single action, then look under the "# Char." column to find how many total actions succeed.

Example: Having finally finished off the pesky shocktroopers at the ravine, Quin runs across two more

Francis Mao

who have come to investigate all the shooting. Quin decides he had better drop both at once so they cannot raise an alarm. If Quin beats the difficulty number by two he has hit a shocktrooper; if he beats the difficulty number by four he has hit both shocktroopers at once. In either case, their *Toughness* is increased by two.

Unless dramatic circumstances dictate otherwise, always give player characters the top end of the spread when determining number of successes; if you have a choice of giving them three or four successes, let them succeed four times.

Example: Quin stretches his luck by firing at six shocktroopers, who have a *dodge* of 10. Quin gets an action total of 16. He beats the difficulty by six. Quin hit four of the shocktroopers.

Extending the Chart

If situations arise when you need to find the modifier for a number of actions or groups larger than 15, find the value of the measure closest to your number. That value is the bonus modifier and the *Toughness* modifier. The "how many succeed/difficulty increase" modifier is equal to double that value.

Example: One hundred characters would have a bonus modifier of +10 (the value of 100), a *Toughness* modifier of +10, and all would succeed if they exceed the difficulty number by 20.

Summing Efforts for a Single Action

When characters are combining their efforts to accomplish a single task, and when they must either succeed as a group or fail as a group, use the following procedure.

1. A *lead character* is chosen; this is the character whose skill or action score is best suited for the task.

2. All other characters whose appropriate skill or attribute is within five points of the lead character's skill may try to add their effort to the lead character. Each aiding character makes a *Perception* check against the "coordination difficulty" of the task.

3. The value of the number of characters who successfully add their effort (including the lead character) becomes a bonus modifier for the lead character.

Example: Six characters are trying aid a lead character in lifting a rock. Five of them make their coordination checks; the measure 6 (includes the lead character) has a value of 4. The lead character has a bonus modifier of 4.

Coordination Difficulties

Following is a series of examples to help you set the coordination difficulty number for a task. By using these guidelines in conjunction with the difficulty number scale, you should be able to handle most occasions that arise.

• Task can be broken up into parts which can be worked on independently, such as digging a ditch with minimal interaction between characters: 3.

• Task requires basic coordination of activity, such as lifting a rock: 5.

• Task requires coordination and adjustment based on feedback, such as paddling a canoe in a flat lake or repairing a starship in dock: 8.

• Task requires constant adjustment in a non-stable environment, such as repairing a starship during combat, paddling a canoe in rapids, or modifying different parts of a computer program simultaneously: 12.

Summing the Effect of Gamemaster Characters

What if 200 gamemaster characters are coordinating their efforts in a mystic ritual? Do you have to roll 200 *Perception* checks to come up with the correct answer? Well, yes; but if you are willing to live with an approximation, use the following (this assumes that each character has the same skill or unskilled attribute as the one the

lead character is using, at a value which is within five of the lead character's value):

Value of number of characters
+ Average *Perception*
- coordination difficulty
- 2
= bonus modifier for lead character

Example: 200 fledgling wizard gamemaster characters, with an average *Perception* of 9, have been gathered to help a great wizard with a ritual. The difficulty of helping the mage is 9. The value for 201 is 12.

12 (value of 201) +9 (average *Perception*) -9 (coordination difficulty) -2 = 10. The wizard receives a bonus modifier of 10.

The final modifier may never be greater than the value for the number of characters. If an approximation is too large, reduce it to the value of the number of characters.

Avoiding the Tyranny of the Rules

The rules are a framework upon which you and your friends build stories set in the dynamic world of *Torg*. As with most frameworks, the rules work best when they show the least, and when they can bend under stress. If you need to bend the rules to keep a story flowing with a nice dramatic beat, do so. Keeping to the letter of the rules is almost certainly counter-productive.

We wrote the rules so you could play a game in a unique setting, not so we could dictate exactly how you should use that setting. So go have fun.

That's a rule.

Chapter Three

Attributes and Skills

I n Chapter Two of the Player Section, you were briefly introduced to attributes and skills. This chapter contains a detailed description of each individual attribute and skill, including notes that allow you to resolve the use of a specific ability during play.

Attributes and Skills

Attributes are abilities or characteristics common to every living thing in the Infiniverse. Thus, a martial artist from the high-tech realm of Nippon and a bear from the California forests both have a *Strength* and a *Dexterity*, though the bear's *Strength* is probably higher than that of the martial artist, and the martial artist probably has a *Dexterity* that exceeds that of the bear. The attributes are *Dexterity, Strength, Toughness, Perception, Mind, Charisma,* and *Spirit.*

Skills, on the other hand, are special abilities not necessarily common to every living creature. A doctor from high-tech Nippon and a US Army medic from the Core Earth would both possess the *medicine* skill, while a barbarian warrior from the fantasy kingdom of Aysle and a crocodile from the Nile river certainly wouldn't possess this skill. The crocodile and the warrior, however, might each have the *stealth* skill, while the doctor and the medic would not. Most player and gamemaster characters in *Torg* possess several skills.

Attributes and skills are related. Each and every skill in Torg is based on a specific attribute which helps the skilled character use that skill. *Dexterity,* for example, helps a character pick locks *(lockpicking),* perform gymnastics *(acrobatics),* and ride animal mounts *(beast riding),* while *Perception* helps a character track quarry *(tracking),* conduct scholarly research *(scholar),* and analyze forensic clues *(evidence analysis). A* skilled character's base attribute value is added to his skill add to yield a *skill value* for that particular skill. Skill values are the numbers that are most frequently used during play.

Example: Kal-toonk of the Living Land has a *survival* skill add of 3 and a *Mind* value of 11. Since *survival* is based on the *Mind* attribute, Kal adds his *Mind* value to his skill add to yield a *survival* value of 14.

Unskilled Use

Just because a character does not have a particular skill does not mean that she cannot use the abilities associated with that skill. When a character wishes to use abilities associated with a skill she does not possess, she uses her base attribute for that skill.

When rolling a bonus for an unskilled ability, possibility-rated characters do not roll again on a 20, only on a 10. Unskilled Ords never roll again. In addition, some skills are prohibited by their very nature from being used unskilled, as noted on the skill list and in the skill descriptions.

Example: Ingen Hatac-Four wants to sneak up on a camp of Edeinos warriors, but she doesn't have the *stealth* skill. In this case, she uses her *Dexterity* attribute value. If she rolls a 20, she does not get another roll, for her use is unskilled.

Round Skills and Macro Skills

There are two general types of skills. *Round skills* are those that are used from round to round, generating totals each time the skill is employed. Most skills are round skills.

Macro skills are special skills or uses of skills that allow one roll to control a character's fate for a great length of time, sometimes days. Examples include *climbing* when used to climb in non-combat situations, and *survival.* Macro skills are noted in their individual descriptions.

Attribute and Skill Descriptions

Dexterity

Dexterity is a measure of a character's quickness, agility, and reflexes. Martial artists from the high-tech realm of Nippon would have high *Dexterity,* as would most gymnasts and escape artists.

Dexterity Related Skills

Acrobatics

This is the skill used by gymnasts and circus acrobats to perform their flips, rolls, and falls. In game play, *acrobatics* has two specific functions.

Vaulting and springing: a character skilled in *acrobatics* has the ability to use the natural scenery to vault and spring over physical obstacles. The difficulty number of such an action depends upon the obstacle.

Vaulting and springing may be performed unskilled.

Falling: a character skilled in *acrobatics* can reduce the damage that he sustains in a fall. The difficulty number depends upon the distance fallen. Successful use of the skill indicates that any wound sustained in the fall is

reduced by one level (*heavy wound* becomes a *wound; mortal wound* becomes a *heavy wound,* etc).

This facet of *acrobatics* cannot be used unskilled.

Beast Riding

This skill is used to ride horses, camels, and other mounts. When a rider first climbs aboard an animal, he generates a *beast riding* total using the mount's *Mind* value as the difficulty number. If this check succeeds, the rider gains control of the mount and may proceed. If the check fails, the beast runs away, bucks, or throws the rider off (at your discretion). The rider must make a similar roll whenever the mount is spooked by gunfire, bomb blasts, etc. The difficulty of a *beast riding* check on an untrained/undomesticated animal is increased by 8.

Beast riding has two additional functions:

Chases: a mounted character uses his or her *beast riding* value to generate the first total during a chase. See Gamemaster Chapter Six.

Forced march: this version of the skill is a *macro skill. A* mounted rider can add one to a beast's movement value with a successful skill check against the mount's *Mind.* This bonus lasts for a maximum of three hours, and is usable only once per day.

Beast riding and all its functions can be used unskilled.

SKILL LIST	
CHARISMA	**PERCEPTION**
Charm	**Air vehicles**
Persuasion	**Alteration**
Taunt	**magic**
	Divination
DEXTERITY	**magic**
Acrobatics	Evidence
Beast riding	analysis
Dodge	Find
Energy	First aid
weapons	Land vehicles
Fire combat	Language
Flight	Scholar
Heavy	**Space**
weapons	**vehicles**
Lock picking	Tracking
Long jumping	Trick
Maneuver	Water
Melee	vehicles
weapons	
Missile	**MIND**
weapons	**Apportation**
Prestidigitation	**magic**
Running	Artist
Stealth	**Conjuration**
Swimming	**magic**
Unarmed	**Medicine**
combat	**Science**
	Survival
SPIRIT Test	of Will
Faith	Willpower
Focus	
Intimidation	**STRENGTH**
Reality	Climbing
	Lifting

Skills listed in **boldface cannot** be used unskilled.

VAULTING/SPRINGING CHART

Obstacle	Difficulty #
Hopping a Fence	3
Grabbing an overhang and swinging over a pit	8
Vaulting or swinging over a tricky obstacle	12
Bouncing off an awning during a free fall to reach a specific destination	15

FALLING CHART

Distance Fallen	Difficulty #
1 story (15 feet)	3
2 stories (16-30 feet)	8
5 stories (31-100 feet)	12
Over 5 stories	15

Unskilled or Not?

As stated, the rules require you to pay careful attention during play to unskilled use. If a character wants to swing across a ravine on a rope, that is an unskilled use of *acrobatics*. If a character searches a room, that is an unskilled use *of find.*

Certain actions, however, might be interpreted as non-skill related. In other words, you may rule that the use of an attribute is not always rolled unskilled, even if there is a skill that could aid the character in performing a task. For example, you might say that swinging across a ravine is a use of *Dexterity,* but the character may use *acrobatics* instead if he has it. In this case, the roll is not made unskilled — there is simply a skill available that will make the action easier. The circumstances will help you make the decision. When in doubt, call it unskilled if the character does not possess the proper skill.

Skills listed as "cannot be used unskilled" may never be used unskilled, even if using the more liberal interpretation of unskilled use.

Dodge

This skill gives its user the ability to avoid gunshots, laser bolts, and other missile or ranged attacks. *Dodge* skill can be used in one of two ways. Only one of the options may be selected by a dodging character each round.

Passive dodge: during each round of combat, a skilled character may used his *dodge* value for the difficulty number of all shots aimed at him.

Defend: instead of selecting a passive dodge, a skilled character may defend actively. Characters who choose this option use their *dodge* value to generate a total. When rolling for the total, any bonus number rolled which is less than *1* is treated as *1.* The total is the difficulty number for all shots taken at the defending character.

Example: Prince Stuart of Worth is charging a throng of orc archers. The Prince has a *dodge* value of 12. During each combat round he can either:

1. Passively *dodge,* in which case the difficulty number of all bowshots the orcs aim at him is 12.

2. Defend, in which case he generates a *dodge* total, with bonuses less than one being treated as one. This total is always at least 13 and might be considerably higher.

All types of *dodge* can be used unskilled.

Energy Weapons

This skill measures a character's ability to use all types of energy weapons: lasers, blasters, plasma guns, etc. A character generates an *energy weapons* total to hit when attacking with an energy weapon. *Dodge* is the defensive skill used against *energy weapons.*

Energy weapons can be used unskilled.

Fire Combat

This skill measures a character's ability to shoot guns and firearms of all types, including: pistols, rifles, submachineguns, and shotguns. A character generates a *fire combat* total to hit when attacking with a firearm. *Dodge* is the defensive skill used against *fire combat.*

Fire combat can be used unskilled.

Flight

This skill is a measure of a character's ability to move through the air under her own power. A character generates a *flight* total as the first total during a chase (see Gamemaster Chapter Six) in which she is flying. Since Core Earth humans are incapable of flight, they are not allowed to purchase *flight* skill.

Flight can be used unskilled, but only by those characters capable of flight.

Heavy Weapons

This skill measures a character's ability to set up, fire, and maintain heavy weaponry. Heavy weapons include: howitzers, mortars, cannons, mounted machine guns, and missiles. A character generates *a heavy weapons* total to hit when attacking with a heavy weapon in combat.

Heavy weapons cannot be used unskilled..

Lockpicking

This skill gives its user the ability to surreptitiously open locks and safes of all descriptions. The use of the *lockpicking* skill usually requires a set of picks or tools, though a skilled character can automatically build his own set out of hairpins, paper clips, etc. You may decide that certain locks (old safes, electronic keypads, etc.) do not require tools.

You assign each lock a difficulty number. A *lockpicking* total higher than the difficulty number indicates that the user successfully opens or circumvents the lock. Note that this skill is used to open locks of all types and descriptions, be they mechanical, electronic, magical, or anything in between.

LOCKPICKING CHART	
Sample Locks	**Difficulty**
Typical Interior Door	3
Padlock	8
Wall Safe/Deadbolt	12
Bank Vault	15

Lockpicking can be used unskilled as long as the user has access to a set of picks or tools. Unskilled characters cannot build their own tools; they must somehow acquire them.

Long Jumping

This is the ability to leap and jump over pits, chasms, and other obstacles. Characters who wish to jump over an obstacle roll to push speed (see Gamemaster Section Chapter Two), and add the value modifier to the jumping limit value. The result is the distance value jumped.

The *long jumping* skill assumes that the jumper had the time and space to

take a running start. Standing jumps subtract two from the distance value jumped. Being able to take off at less than full speed reduces the distance value by one.

Example: *Quin looked down at the pit — six meters across, and far, far deeper. He hesitated long enough to allow an Edeinos warrior to nick him with a hastily hurled spear. He leaped awkwardly.*

Quin has no *jumping* skill, so he uses his raw *Dexterity*. Paul gets a +1 value modifier but loses one from his jumping value for the awkward start; he jumps at a value of 3 (the limit value) +1-1 =3, the measure of which is only four meters.

Quin stretched out into a rolling leap. His feet sent loose rock tumbling into the depths; then he was falling. A convenient ledge saved his life, knocking the breath from him as the Edeinos clustered at the top of the pit.

Long jumping can be used unskilled.

Maneuver

This skill represents a character's mobility in combat. While its specific use is to tire out opponents, it can also be used to gain tactical advantage and additional cards (see Gamemaster Chapters Four and Six).

Maneuver can be used unskilled.

Melee Weapons

This skill measures a character's ability to use all sorts of melee weapons. Melee weapons include: swords, knives, maces, axes, and hammers; pretty much anything that can be picked up and swung or jabbed at someone. A character generates a *melee weapons* total to hit with a melee weapon in combat. *Melee weapons* also serves as the defensive skill against unarmed or melee attacks, as long the defender is wielding a melee weapon. When defending, *melee weapons* may be used passively, or with a roll for the defend option, in the same way as the *dodge* skill.

Melee weapons can be used unskilled to attack, or defend passively; the **active defense option cannot** be used unskilled.

Missile Weapons

This skill measures a character's ability to use all types of missile weapons, including: bows, throwing knives, throwing axes, and slings. A character generates a *missile weapons* total to hit when attacking with a missile weapon.

Missile weapons can be used unskilled.

Prestidigitation

This is the ability to manipulate small items without attracting attention. Pickpockets are usually highly skilled in this area, as are stage magicians. In play, prestidigitators can lift items off others without being noticed.

Get a *prestidigitation* total with the target's *Perception or find* value as the difficulty number. If the prestidigitator earns a *minimal* or *average* success, she successfully gains hold of the item, but is noticed by the target. If she has a *good* or better success, the item has been successfully stolen without alerting the target. All failed prestidigitation attempts automatically alert the target without acquiring the item.

Prestidigitation can be used unskilled.

Running

This is the skill for all foot movement. A character generates a *running* total during a chase (see Gamemaster Chapter Six) in which he is on foot, or when he is pushing his speed.

The difficulty number of a push is 8 for humans, as explained in Gamemaster Chapter Two. Any value modifiers are added to the character's *running* value or the limit value, whichever is **lower.**

In non-combat situations, a push of *running* is a *macro skill.* Characters can run at their movement limit for only a short amount of time. Reduce the limit value by three after 400 meters of running, and by four after 5000 meters (three miles).

Running can be used unskilled.

Stealth

Characters with *stealth* can sneak about or hide without attracting atten-

Timed Running

You can find out how long a run took by subtracting the modified limit value from the distance value of the run, then adding five. That value, expressed as a measure of time, is about how long the character took to run that distance.

Example: Quin is trying to cover a mile as fast as he can. He has no *running* skill.

He rolls a macro push of the *running* skill, getting a bonus of two to his *Dexterity* of 11, for five result points. The value modifier is "+2 (10)." He will end the run almost completely exhausted.

Quin's limit value is 10, reduced to 7 because he is running a mile, increased by the "+2" up to 9. A mile has a distance value of 16; 16 minus 9 = 7. Add five for a time value of 12. A time value of 12 is about 250 seconds, or around four minutes.

tion. To use *stealth,* the character generates a total against a difficulty number equal to the *Perception* or *find* total of the character whose attention he is trying to avoid. Success means the character remains undetected, failure means he is automatically detected. If you are using the multi-action rules, stealth against more than one person is a multi-action.

Stealth may also be combined with movement, representing attempts to sneak up on someone or sneak past a guard, etc. In this case, the stealthy character must generate a new total each round to avoid detection.

Example: Buck Corben is chased into a room by a group of four guards from the New Empire of the Nile. Buck arrives slightly before the guards and ducks behind a tapestry, hoping to lose them. In this case, Buck must generate a *stealth* total against a difficulty number equal to the guards' *Perception* total (taking into account the multi-action penalties for four targets).

If this roll is successful, the guards don't notice him. If Buck fails, he is immediately detected.

Now suppose that later in the adventure, Buck is escaping from a prison cell and is trying to sneak down the corridor and past the guard watching the hallway. The gamemaster decides that it will take Buck three rounds to move all the way down the hall, so he must make three *stealth* rolls, one per round of movement within the line of sight of the guard. If any of these rolls fail, he is detected in the round in which he fails his roll.

You should assign modifiers to any and all *stealth* rolls in accordance with the current environmental conditions. Here are some examples:

STEALTH CHART	
Condition	Difficulty Modifier
Rain, sleet, etc.	-1
Dawn or dusk,	
fog, trees,	
walls, crowd, etc.	-2
Night	-3
Do/ing guards	-3
Dense concealment	
(jungle, crowd	
in costume)	-5
Very close scrutiny	+1
Open terrain	+2
Broad daylight	+3

Stealth can be used unskilled.

Swimming

This skill is a measure of a character's ability to stay afloat and move in the water. A character generates a *swimming* total during a chase (see Gamemaster Chapter Six) in which she is in water, or when she is trying to cut through the water a little faster (see Gamemaster Chapter Two). You can also use *swimming* as a macro skill and time a swim, as per *running* (use the same value reductions for distance as *running)*.

Swimming can be used unskilled; pushing the *swimming* skill cannot be done unskilled.

Unarmed Combat

This skill represents proficiency in hand-to-hand fighting of all types: boxing, brawling, wrestling, Oriental martial arts, etc. A character's *unarmed combat* total is used to see if he hits whenever the character is fighting without a weapon; his *Strength* serves as the damage value.

Unarmed combat may be used as a passive or active defense against unarmed attackers or against attackers with melee weapons if the *unarmed combat* skill represents an appropriate martial art.

Unarmed combat can be used unskilled to attack or defend passively. It **cannot** be used unskilled as an active defense.

Strength

Strength is a measure of physical strength and power, though *Strength* does not include the ability to take and absorb damage (that ability is covered by *Toughness)*. Weight lifters, wrestlers, and barbarians are examples of characters with high *Strength* values.

Strength Related Skills

Climbing

This skill is used when a character wishes to climb or scale an obstacle, be it rope, ladder, or mountain. A successful skill check indicates that the climber successfully climbed a certain distance. Failure indicates that the character falls at the start of this round of climbing. Characters who miss a *climbing* check can catch themselves and avoid the fall with a successful *Strength* check of difficulty 12.

Damage value for the fall is equal to the character's weight value plus the distance value fallen. No more than 14 (the value of terminal velocity) maybe added to weight value. Roll a bonus

for the damage value and generate a damage total.

Example: A character who weigh 70 kilos (10 value) falls a distance of 7 meters (5 value). The damage value is 15. The gamemaster rolls a 16 (bonus number of 3); the damage total is 18.

The difficulty number for a *climbing* skill check is based upon the difficulty of the climb. The *results* indicate the actual distance climbed.

CLIMBING CHART	
Climb	Difficulty
Ladder	-3
Tree	5
Wall w/handholds, natural rock	
Smooth stone, metal	15
Darkness	+2
Rain	+5
Ice-covered	+5

All characters climb a base distance of two and a half meters per round — this is the measure of the climbing limit value. The limit value can be pushed using the Speed Push Table (page 40).

In non-combat situations, *climbing* can be used as a macro skill. Assume that characters can climb at their limit value for about a minute. Reduce the limit value by one if they are climbing more than 50 meters, and by two if they are climbing more than 200 meters.

If a character "fails" a macro climb, he falls from a point with a height value two less than the top, which is about midway in the climb. If the character catches himself, he is assumed to limp to the top from there. Climbs in which there is a failure (but in which the character catches himself) add one to the time value of the climb.

Example: Quin has no *climbing* skill add, and so must climb at his base *Strength.* Quin falls while climbing the 1500 meter high mountain, a height

Timed Climbs

If a character makes a macro climb, you can find how long the climb took by the following method: subtract the modified limit value from the distance value climbed, then add five to get the time value; the measure of the time value is how long the character took to climb that distance.

Example: The Yellow Crab is climbing a 1500m high mountain (difficulty number of 8). The height value of the mountain is 16. The Crab's limit value is 2, reduced to 0 because the climb is more than 200 meters. Crab gets a total of nine, for a speed value modifier of one (and four shock points). The time value is 16 (mountain height) minus 1 (modified limit value) plus 5 = 20; the Crab took two and a half hours to climb the mountain.

value of 16. He catches himself, at a height value of 14 (600 meters).

Quin takes (16-0+5 = 21) plus 1 for the fall, for a time value of 22. Quin took six hours to climb the mountain, giving the Yellow Crab plenty of time to appreciate the view from the top.

Climbing can be used unskilled.

Lifting

The *lifting* skill is added to a character's *Strength* to increase the amount she can lift, but only to the limit value of nine. A *Lifting* skill value over nine is useful only for pushes. *Lifting* is used in all ways like *running* and *climbing*. See Gamemaster Section Chapter Two.

Lifting can be used unskilled.

Perception

Perception measures two things: how quick a character is mentally, and how easily he notices things. Scientists and professors generally have good *Perception* values.

Perception Related Skills

Air Vehicles

This skill reflects a character's ability to fly, pilot, or repair aircraft of all types, including: propeller planes, jets, helicopters, hot air balloons, hang gliders, and airships. The pilot's *air vehicles* value generates the first total during any chases in which he is piloting an aircraft, while the aircraft's speed generates the second total (see Gamemaster Chapter Six).

Air vehicles cannot be used unskilled.

Alteration Magic

Alteration magic is magic that uses existing matter and energy and changes it into a form more desirable to the caster. A spell that turns a person or object invisible is an example of alteration magic, because it does not create any new matter or energy, it simply "alters" the way in which the person or object is perceived.

The *alteration magic* skill lets you cast alteration magic spells. Its exact use is described in the magic rules, Gamemaster Chapter Ten.

Alteration magic cannot be used unskilled.

Divination Magic

Divination magic is used to know about objects, beings or events. It is the magic of knowledge. Rules for its use are found in Gamemaster Chapter Ten.

Divination magic cannot be used unskilled.

Evidence Analysis

The *evidence analysis* skill measures a character's ability to analyze physical evidence. A detective might be able to look at a room and guess how many people have been in it recently, for example, or she might be able to look at an object and determine something about where the object was made.

The evidence must first be spotted, either through the *find* skill, player characters roleplaying the search, or

by being rather obvious, such as a body in the middle of a room. You must then decide how difficult the information is to analyze.

Familiar objects means objects which are familiar to the character; she has seen the objects before and knows what they are supposed to do. Common use means the objects were put to ordinary use; boots were used for walking, guns used for shooting, etc. Uncommon use means the object was used in an extraordinary way, such as using a gun as a counterweight rather than as a weapon.

ANALYSIS CHART

Physical Evidence	Difficulty
Familiar objects, expected use	8
Familiar objects, uncommon use or unfamiliar objects, common use	10
Uncommon objects, uncommon effect	12
Criminal tried to conceal evidence	+2
Master criminal concealed evidence	+5

If the detective receives *minimal* or *average* success, she can identify all of the objects or physical evidence by generic type: automatic pistol, nylon rope, a poison, blood. If she gets a *good* success, she knows precise information on the origin of the object, substance, or evidence, and specific information on its type: a Colt .45 automatic of rare manufacture; the rope has evidence of microstranding common to Nippon technology; the poison is a hemotoxin derived from venomous reptiles in the Living Land.

If she gets a *superior* success, she knows to what use all of the objects in the room were put. With a *spectacular* success she can accurately reconstruct events from the evidence, fitting in all the evidence to the explanation.

Good players may be able to discover this information through roleplaying and solid induction. You can

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encourage such behavior by feeding them a quality level of information at a time when they are on the right track. In this case, *evidence analysis* can be considered a macro skill.

Evidence analysis can be used unskilled.

Find

This is the ability to find hidden or concealed objects or persons. If the user is trying to find an object, the gamemaster simply sets a difficulty based upon how well the object is hidden (8 - hidden quickly, 12- hidden with some skill, 15 - very well hidden, 22 - only an expert has more than a prayer of finding it). To find the object, the searcher generates a *find* total against this difficulty number.

Characters can use the *find* skill to search for characters who are using the *stealth* skill to hide or sneak. When using *find* this way, any bonuses rolled which are less than one are treated as one (this is an active *find*, similar to an active *dodge)*. The *find* total becomes the difficulty number for the *stealth* attempt, as modified by applicable *stealth* modifiers.

Example: The Gray Ghost (*find* of 12) is looking for the hiding Doctor Mobius (*stealth* of 18). It is daylight, and there is a crowd at the bazaar; *stealth* difficulty modifiers come to +1. The Ghost generates a total of 13, which becomes a 14 with the modifier. The gamemaster's roll for Dr. Mobius gives a *stealth* total of 17, which beats the difficulty number established by the Ghost. Unfortunately for the Ghost, he sees no trace of the elusive doctor.

Find can be used unskilled.

First Aid

This skill measures a character's ability to quickly diagnose and treat traumatic wounds.

Successful first aid stops the bleeding caused by a *mortal wound*, removes all shock damage from the patient, and removes all K- and O- conditions (see Gamemaster Chapter Six for more about wounds).

Each character attempting *first aid* is only allowed one attempt per victim per day. If this attempt fails, he must wait until the next day (though someone else could try to aid the victim today). *First aid* is impossible without some sort of rudimentary medical supplies (makeshift bandages and splints will do). The difficulty number of *the first aid* roll necessary to receive these benefits depends upon how heavily the victim has been wounded.

First aid can be used unskilled.

FIRST AID CHART

Wound Level	Difficulty
Wound, K, O, and/or shock	8
Heavy Wound	12
Mortal	15
Dead	No first aid possible

Land Vehicles

This skill reflects a character's ability to drive, pilot, or repair ground vehicles of all types including: cars, trucks, tractors, tanks, and motorcycles. The driver's *land vehicles* value generates the first total during any chases in which she is piloting a land craft, while the vehicle's speed generates the second total (see Gamemaster Chapter Six).

Land vehicles can be used unskilled.

Language

This skill gives its user the ability to immediately understand a language or dialect that he does not speak and has never heard before. To do so, all he must do is pass a successful skill check. The difficulty number of the skill check depends upon how far removed the language is from the skill user's own.

Minimal success means only a pidgin version of the language can be communicated, *average* success gives the skill user rudimentary understand-

LANGUAGE CHART

Situation	Difficulty
Different dialect of own language	3
Language is derived from common language (e.g. Spanish and French)	8
Completely foreign language (e.g. Chinese)	12
Alien language, language from another Cosm	22

ing of the language at hand, *good* or *superior* results gives the skill user complete understanding of the language, and *spectacular* success allows the user to speak and understand the language with no penalties.

A character may make only one language roll upon encountering a new language, to see whether or not he understands the language. Another roll is not allowed unless the character spends a full month speaking that language with natives, or increases the add for the language skill.

Languages can be used unskilled, but an unskilled check cannot have more than *minimal* success.

Scholar

The *scholar* skill represents a character's academic training or "book-learning" in a specific field of study. Scholars are adept at using research libraries and locating obscure facts.

At the time the *scholar* skill is selected, the skilled character must specify a certain area of expertise. This specialty can only be about as broad as the subjects in which universities typically offer undergraduate degrees (e.g. chemistry, biology, literature, arcane lore, etc). Characters with more than one area of expertise should select the *scholar* skill multiple times.

During play, a scholar can answer any question within her field of expertise with a successful skill check. The difficulty number of the check depends upon the difficulty of the question (Easy 3, Average 8, Difficult 12, Obscure 15, Virtually unknown in the field 25).

Scholar can be used unskilled.

Space Vehicles

This skill reflects a character's ability to fly or pilot spacecraft of all types. The pilot's *space vehicles* value generates the first total during any chase in which he is piloting a spaceship, while the ship's speed generates the second total (see Gamemaster Chapter Six).

Space vehicles **cannot** be used unskilled.

Tracking

This skill gives its user the ability to follow a trail left by another creature or vehicle. To use the skill, the tracker generates a total against a difficulty number of 8 (or the target's *Perception* or *tracking* if she is deliberately trying to conceal a trail). The difficulty number of a *tracking* attempt is always modified by the following factors:

TRACKING CHART

Situation	Modifier
Trail is a day old	+2
Trail is a few days old	+5
Trail is a week old	+8
Tracking during inclement weather	+5
Tracking over a hard surface (e.g. cement)	+10
Tracking through mud or snow	-5
Tracking a vehicle	-5

Minimal success means the tracker loses the trail after a few minutes — no more than 30 — and cannot pick up the trail again. *Average* success means the tracker loses the trail after two or three hours, and cannot pick up the trail again. *Good* success means the tracker loses the trail after two or three hours, but may pick up the trail again. *Superior* tracking can follow a trail for a day, and then may try to pick up the trail again. *Spectacular* tracking can follow the trail for a week before having to try again.

Example: Quin Sebastian is on the trail of a fugitive who escaped from prison a few days ago. Quin's difficulty number is 13 (base of 8 plus 5 for the days-old trail). Quin generates a total of 18, worth a *good* success on his tracking attempt. He can then follow the fugitive's movements for the first two hours after she escaped from prison. At the end of this time, he must make another skill check to see if he can follow the trail.

Tracking can be used unskilled.

Trick

This skill is used as a special combat action. See Gamemaster Chapter Six for more information.

Trick can be used unskilled.

Water Vehicles

This skill reflects a character's ability to steer, pilot, and repair water-borne craft of all types, including: sailboats, motorboats, submarines, and surface ships. The pilot's *water vehicles* value generates the first total during any chases in which she is piloting a water vehicle, while the watercraft's speed generates the second total (see Gamemaster Chapter Six).

Water vehicles can be used unskilled.

Mind

Mind represents the character's force of will and his ability to concentrate. Characters with high *Mind* values can be found in any profession.

Mind Related Skills

Apportation Magic

Apportation magic is the magic of motion, the magic which physically moves an object or being from one place to another. A flying carpet uses *apportation magic,* as do magical haste and slowing processes, levitation, and spells that affect accuracy (fineness of movement). Complete description of *apportation magic* is in Gamemaster Chapter Ten.

Apportation magic cannot be used unskilled.

Artist

This skill gives its user the ability to create a work of art. At the time the skill is purchased, the user must specify an artistic field of expertise (painting, drawing, sculpture, writing, dance, acting, etc). To create a work, the artist makes a skill check against a difficulty number of 8 for simple works, 12 for more complex works, 15

for elaborate works, and 22 for extremely intricate works. Quality of success determines the quality of the work. The amount of time taken to create the work is left to your discretion, though minimums are suggested.

Artist can be used unskilled.

ARTIST CHART	
Success	**Work Quality**
Minimal	Good beginner's effort (no minimum time)
Average	Journeyman effort (minimum one hour)
Good	Professional effort (one day)
Superior	Expert craftsmanship (one week)
Spectacular	Masterpiece (one month)

Conjuration Magic

Conjuration magic achieves its effect through the creation of new matter or materials. A spell that allows a wizard to throw a fireball at an enemy requires *conjuration magic* if the mage has no source of fire, since the wizard must create the fire energy out of thin air to cast the spell (it would require *apportation magic* also, to get it to move). Complete information on how to use *conjuration magic* can be found in Gamemaster Chapter Ten.

Conjuration magic cannot be used unskilled.

Medicine

Medicine skill is used to help a damaged character recover. Its application can represent traditional medical treatment, acupuncture, herbal medicine, or other similar treatment for the sick or injured.

Using *medicine* requires a successful skill check. The difficulty number of this skill check depends upon how badly the patient is wounded.

If the *medicine* skill succeeds, the

MEDICINE CHART	
Wound Level	**Difficulty #**
Wound	
Heavy wound	12
Mortal	15

patient adds the result points of the check to the bonus number rolled during his recovery check (see Player Chapter Two). Only one *medicine* roll may be made per day on a character, regardless of how many characters have the *medicine* skill.

Example: Quin takes a *heavy wound* in a confrontation with a mummy in the New Empire of the Nile. He visits Dr. Throckton in Cairo, who has a *medicine* skill of 11. Throckton rolls a 6 on the first day, giving Quin no benefit. Quin fails his recovery check. The next day Dr. Throckton rolls a 20, for a total of 18; this gives Quin a +6 to the bonus generated in his next recovery roll.

Medicine cannot be used unskilled.

Science

This skill represents an understanding of scientific facts and principles, and the ability to apply them. During play, *science* skill is used to analyze items in order to gain knowledge of their workings, and to build items.

SCIENCE CHART	
Complexity	**Difficulty #**
Simple	
Average	12
Complex	15
Prototype	18
From cosm with lower tech axiom	-5
From cosm with higher tech axiom	+10
Consists of many integrated systems	+5
Consists of hundreds of integrated systems	+10

Minimal success tells the character what the device is supposed to do. *Average* success lets the character operate the device unskilled (unless the device operates the same way as does a device with which the scientist has a skill). *Good* and better successes let the scientist operate the device without the unskilled penalty, though only his raw attribute is used. This applies only if the device provides its own *Dexterity* or *Strength* attribute in some way; otherwise the scientist still must use it unskilled. *Superior* success indicates the character understands the device well enough to repair it, if proper tools and tech levels are available. *Spectacular* success gives the scientist the knowledge necessary to design a similar device if the proper resources are available.

Science skill can also be used to answer individual questions of scientific interest as per the *scholar* skill.

Science cannot be used unskilled

Survival

This skill is most often used as a macro skill that gives the user the ability to survive under wilderness conditions and in hostile environments. Survival includes finding shelter, procuring food and water, and avoiding disease, sunstroke, or other environmental hazards exclusive of creature encounters.

Each general type of wilderness environment has a difficulty number listed on the Terrain Chart. The first day a character spends in the hostile environment, she makes a *survival* skill check. If she succeeds, the result points earned indicate the number of days she can remain in the environment before making another such check.

Failing any of these skill checks increases the character's wound total by one level. Characters who fail a *survival* check must make another *survival* check the day after their failure.

Example: Crowfire is in the mountains for a week. The first day, she

TERRAIN CHART	
Wilderness Type	**Difficulty #**
Woods	3
High Mountains	8
Desert	12
Polar Regions	15

makes a survival skill check against a difficulty number of 8. She receives 3 result points, so she does not need to make a *survival* check for three more days. Three days later, she fails this second roll and takes a wound. The next day she must make another skill check. She receives 4 result points, so she can remain on the mountain for the rest of her stay without taking any more wounds.

Survival can also be used to perform acts such as hunting, finding trails, etc.

Survival can be used unskilled.

Test

Test is short for *Test of Wills;* this skill is used as a special combat action. See Gamemaster Chapter Six for more information.

Test of wills can be used unskilled.

Willpower

This skill helps characters resist the effects of *charm* and *persuasion.* It is considered a passive defense, and can be rolled for actively in the same way as *dodge.*

Willpower can be used unskilled, both passively and actively.

Charisma

Charisma measures the force of a character's personality: how likeable she is, and how attractive. A good salesman might have a high *Charisma,* as would a worldly *bon vivant.*

Charisma Related Skills

Charm

This skill represents the ability to change the attitudes of acquaintances and onlookers. Characters with a high *charm* value can turn enemies into friends and friends into devoted followers. Characters generate a *charm* total against the *willpower* or *Mind* value of the target character. Successful *charm* improves the attitude of the target character toward the charming character. A complete description of how *charm* works can be found in Gamemaster Chapter Five.

Charm can be used unskilled.

Persuasion

Persuasion is the ability to convince or sway an acquaintance or onlooker. A timely *persuasion* roll might allow a character to convince a bystander to lend him some money or equipment, or he might be able to convince a villain to delay the character's execution. A character generates a *persuasion* total against the *willpower* or *Mind* of the target character. A player character may not use *persuasion* on another player character.

The ease of persuading a gamemaster character to lend resources or share information depends upon her attitude toward the character. Complete guidelines on how *persuasion* works can be found in Gamemaster Chapter Five.

Persuasion can be used unskilled.

Taunt

This skill is a special combat action; see Gamemaster Chapter Six.

Taunt can be used unskilled.

Spirit

Spirit represents a character's resolve and resistance to fear, and his store of spiritual energy. Characters with high *Spirit* values appear in just about every profession.

Faith

The *faith* skill provides the power for miracles. The beneficiary of *a* miracle is the one whose *faith* is used to power that miracle. See Gamemaster Chapter Eleven for details.

Faith cannot be used unskilled.

Focus

The focus skill is used by priests and other spiritual figures to perform miracles. See Gamemaster Chapter Eleven for details.

Focus cannot be used unskilled.

Intimidation

Using *intimidation* produces fear and uncertainty in one's enemies. The user generates an *intimidation* total against the target's *intimidation* or *Spirit.* The exact effects of a successful *intimidation* are covered in Gamemaster Chapter Five.

Intimidation can be used unskilled.

Reality

This is a unique ability which carries a character's reality with him into other cosms (see Gamemaster Chapter Eight). Reality responds favorably to those with the *reality* skill, as opposed to Ords, who do not have the skill. Without *reality,* a character cannot store Possibilties. *Reality* is also the skill that a character uses in a "reality storm," an extremely drastic form of conflict. How to fight a storm battle is described in Gamemaster Chapter Nine.

Reality cannot be used unskilled.

Narrowing the Scope of Skills (Optional)

The skills are intended to be very broad, to cut down on the number of skills of which a player, and you, must keep track. As gamemaster, if you decide that you and your players want finer differentiation of skills at the expense of extra bookkeeping, you can narrow the scope of the skills.

For each skill which covers a number of types of equipment, such as *melee weapons,* the character chooses a *primary* and a *secondary item.* The primary item receives the full adds for the skill, the secondary item has one less add; all other items covered by that skill have no adds, but avoid the unskilled use penalty.

Example: The gamemaster in Paul's campaign decides that he wants to narrow the scope of the vehicle skills. Quin Sebastian has *air vehicles,* which covers everything from helicopters to jet fighters to hot air balloons. Paul chooses helicopter piloting as his primary aircraft skill, and jet fighter repair as his secondary choice. Quin has an *air vehicles* value of 11 when flying helicopters, 10 when repairing jet aircraft and 9 when flying or repairing other air vehicles.

If using this optional rule, characters may purchase a skill several times in order to have more than one primary and secondary item or ability.

Skill Specialization (Optional)

Again, this is the sort of rule which adds detail while muddying the bookkeeping, and is entirely optional. It can be used independently of narrowed scope.

Characters from fiction sometimes have a type of weapon with which they are particularly familiar, or of which they are quite fond, such as James Bond and Walther PPKs or Green Arrow and bows. Sometimes characters have a *particular* vehicle or mount, such as the Lone Ranger and Silver, with which they are particularly familiar.

Type Specialization

A character may choose one *type* of equipment (or animal or whatever), and specialize in that equipment. Think of type as "make" or "brand" or "species." The player spends one Possibility to specialize in a type; that character's skill value is one higher when using that type of equipment, though the skill add is not increased for purposes of buying future adds. A character may specialize in only one type of equipment per skill. If you are using the optional narrowed scope rules, you must specialize in your primary skill.

Example: Paul wants Quin to have a type specialization with *air vehicles.* His gamemaster is using narrowed scope as well (as in the above example) so Quin specializes in helicopters, paying one Possibility to increase his skill to 12, though his adds remain at 2.

Trademark Specialization

A character may further choose one *trademark* item, or animal, in which to specialize by spending (an additional) *three* Possibilities. The skill value for that single item is increased by an additional two, though adds are not increased for purposes of buying future adds.

The item cannot be replaced. If it is permanently lost or destroyed, the specialization is lost, and must be bought again for another such item. Only one "trademark" item may be specialized per skill, and if the character has a type specialization as well, the trademark must be of that type.

Example: Paul also wants Quin to have a trademark air vehicle. Since he has a type specialization in helicopters, he must choose a helicopter as his trademark. Paul discusses this with the gamemaster, and *The Blue Meanie,* Quin's stolen police chopper, is born. When piloting the *Meanie,* Quin has a skill value of 14. With other helicopters he pilots at 12.

Quin could also have a trademark pistol, his pet service revolver. Narrowed scope and type specialization are not *required* for trademark specialization.

Chapter Four

Using the Drama Deck

he drama deck is a pack of cards that help the gamemaster and players create an exciting story by introducing dramatic surprise and storytelling elements into an adventure.

Getting Cards into Play

At the beginning of a *Torg* session, shuffle the deck of drama cards and deal four to each player. Leave the deck face down in front of you.

During the course of the game, cards come into play in one of two ways: "randomly" from the drama deck, and "played" from a hand.

Random use occurs at the beginning of each round in which dice are rolled to resolve a conflict. In this case, the *conflict line* and the *dramatic skill resolution box* are the important parts of the card.

When a player takes a card from her hand or pool and "activates" it, it is a *played* use of a card. In this case, the *play results area* is the important part of the card.

Adventure Text

The line above the conflict line contains some pithy saying or dramatic quotation. These are for flavor purposes and have no real affect on play. You can use them to give you ideas about what is happening this round — the villains are hard-pressed ("They're on the run!"), etc.

The Conflict Lines

A movie that keeps us guessing as to what's going to happen next is a movie that engages us. Indiana Jones in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* dispatches six Nazis from a truck without raising a sweat, so we're caught off guard when a determined sergeant tosses him through the windshield. We're on the edge of our seats because we don't know what's going to happen next. Suddenly the battle has turned against the hero.

The drama deck simulates that surprise by determining how the villains and heroes in a conflict are doing each round. Sometimes the villains will have an advantage, sometimes the heroes will. The deck helps you set conflict up like a movie sword fight — first Robin Hood drives the Sheriff of Nottingham across the courtyard, then the sheriff knocks a candle stand down on top of Robin. Up and down, back and forth they go, swords flashing, until one of them makes the last, desperate thrust. But nobody knows who has the advantage that round until a card is flipped over.

This flow is determined by the *conflict lines* at the top of each card. The conflict lines are geared toward combat, but they can set the pace for any situation in which one side is working against another. Such situations include chases, or verbal interaction in a tense situation. There may be times when you, as gamemaster, would rather have the players think and role-play their way out of a situation, in which case you would forgo the cards and/or the dice.

If you are using cards for a conflict, flip the top card from the drama deck

Valerie Valusek

at the beginning of each round, and place it on top of the action stack. The conflict lines on the card affect the round's outcome — conflict lines on any other card in play have no effect. When the encounter that generated the conflict is over, the cards from the action stack are placed in the discard pile.

Conflict lines are divided into two separate categories: *standard* and *dramatic*. The standard is marked with an S and the dramatic with a D. The lines from the *standard* encounter are read when the pace of the story should zip along — for example, when the heroes take out some shocktroopers in order to steal their uniforms. The dramatic lines are read for really big moments - blowing up Death Stars, storming castles and so forth. As gamemaster you decide when an encounter is standard and when it is dramatic. The big finish to an adventure is a dramatic encounter. There may be a dramatic encounter (but no more than one) in each act.

On the standard conflict line, the heroes have all the advantages, and the villains are loaded with penalties. The dramatic conflict lines are heavily weighted in favor of the villains. Because of this, players should be encouraged to spend the adventure gathering cards that give them an advantage in climactic situations.

Conflict Line Advantages

The advantages a side can have from a conflict line *include flurry, inspiration,* and *up.*

Flurry

Flurry gives every character on the affected side two rounds of action before their opponents can respond. Let all characters on the side with the *flurry* act once, then let each one act a second time.

Inspiration

Inspiration removes the effects of shock and KO damage on the affected characters as though they had received successful first aid. In addition, at the moment hero *inspiration* goes into effect, each player may draw one card and add it to her hand.

Inspiration only reduces current damage; any damage taken later in the fight is applied normally. *Inspiration* may be played more than once in a fight.

Up

Up gives each character in the affected faction an additional roll. Add the additional roll to the first roll normally (you may roll again if a 10 or 20 comes up, etc.). A character may also use a Possibility for a third roll, if he wishes. An *up* result may not be countered by a Possibility.

Example: Quin is involved in a firefight with a group of acolytes from the

Cyberpapacy. The action card this round says "H Up."

Paul (Quin's player) rolls a 13; the *up* result allows him another roll — a 4. Quin's die roll is now a 17. Paul spends a Possibility and rolls again, getting a 14. Quin's final die roll is 31.

Up cancels the effects of a *stymie*, detailed below. If the two are ever in effect at the same time (see Chapter Five for how this can happen), neither result applies.

Conflict Line Disadvantages

The negative results on the conflict line are *break, confused, fatigued, setback* and *stymied*.

Break

A *break* result only affects characters on the villain side. During a *break* round, characters on the villain side who have previously taken damage will flee the battle (or concede the conflict) if they fail to harm the opposition by the end of the round. This flight / surrender takes place at the end of the broken villain's round.

Confused

Confused results only affect the heroes. In a *confused* round, no player may activate a card from his pool, although they may gain new cards and play cards into their pools normally (see below).

Fatigued

Fatigued causes each character in the affected faction to take two points of shock damage. We use the word fatigue because it is a common result of conflict, but the shock points can also be from causes such as fear, stress, or the delayed effects of wounds.

Setback

Setback can trigger a specific event which the gamemaster has planned. If the gamemaster has no *setback* event planned, this result prevents the affected faction from taking action this round that would harm an opponent. See below for more details about *setback*.

Stymied

Each member of a faction that is *stymied* loses one chance to roll the die again for an action; as soon as one condition occurs that would allow an additional roll, the *stymie* result is negated for that character, and that additional roll is lost. Cards that add to values or bonus numbers may still be played.

Stymie cancels the effects of an *up*, detailed above. If the two are ever in effect at the same time (see Chapter Five for how this can happen), neither result applies.

Example: Crowfire and Quin are suffering from an "H Stymie" result. Winter rolls a 20, but gets no additional roll. She now elects to spend a Possibility and rolls again as usual. Paul rolls a 12 and wants to get an additional roll; he spends his one allowed Possibility to cancel the *stymie*, then plays a *hero* card for an extra roll.

Using Conflict Lines in the Story

The penalties and bonuses that appear for the villains and heroes each round can be used to inspire you to a more varied description of the conflict's resolution. For example, although the card says "V Flurry," you can, if you wish, describe a specific way the villain is letting loose his physical force. Does he suddenly go mad from watching the heroes destroy his meticulously built machine, and launch himself into combat without regard for his own life? Does he suddenly put on a dazzling display of swordsmanship? Let your imagination run wild.

Remember, if you don't want to add color to the round you don't have to. The game mechanic advantage of the villain flurry (two actions for the villain that round) makes what is happening quite clear.

Setbacks

A setback on the conflict line is a good tool for the prepared gamemaster, a chance to make the life of your player characters even more difficult in a tense situation. We suggest you plan possible setbacks for encounters when you design your adventure, but if you feel comfortable with winging it, go ahead. Setbacks include sudden and unexpected turns of events, disastrous coincidences, and failures of people or items outside the characters' control.

Example: The gamemaster sets up an encounter along a narrow path leading up the side of a mountain. The heroes will be following Dr. Mobius' trail into an ambush set by a group of the High Lord's henchmen. The gamemaster notes that if the *setback* conflict line is drawn, a character from the side receiving the penalty loses his footing and slips off the trail. While the character can grab onto a scrub bush growing out of the side of the mountain, he will hang nearly helpless, thousands of feet above certain doom, out of combat and in desperate need of aid.

The number of possible hero setbacks is quite large. Here are a few general suggestions for how to use them:

• Any gamemaster characters allied with the heroes lose their nerve for some reason until the heroes coax them back.

• The heroes' opposition gets reinforcements.

• Equipment or abilities foreign to the cosm fail for that round.

• The gamemaster characters come up with a new fact/astounding-but-believable lie to confound the players.

• The environment causes problems — a rope begins to fray, steampipes burst, a smashed lantern starts a fire, a bystander wanders into the line of fire, the accidental flicking of a switch begins a bomb's countdown — it could even be something as big as an earthquake, as long as it fits the situation and makes things tough for the heroes.

Example: *Quin waited nervously as the majordomo announced him to the Duke of London. Who would have thought that having tea could be such a harrowing experience? But it would be their first meeting, and if Quin wanted those knights to help him storm the troll stronghold, it was vital he make a good impression.*

Paul decides Quin had better try to *charm* the Duke before attempting to *persuade* him. The gamemaster decides that this is a situation worthy of the drama deck and flips over the first card into the action stack. He announces that it's a standard conflict. The card gives Quin the initiative.

He makes his *charm* roll and is successful enough to make another roll if he so desires. Paul wants to make sure the Duke really likes Quin, so he says he's going to try to *charm* the Duke even further. The gamemaster flips over the next card. A *hero setback* comes up!

The tea was so hot that Quin nearly lost his grip on the cup when he picked it up. In order to avoid spilling the tea all over himself like an uncultured fool, he gritted his teeth and gently put the cup down. Had the Duke deliberately made the tea this hot, as some sort of test? Quin smiled up into the impassive face.

The gamemaster declares that the effort distracts Quin enough that he cannot *charm* the Duke any further.

After you have some experience, you will find dozens of plot complications which can be introduced through a setback card. An effective technique is to set up a setback which could happen in any of several encounters, and give hints to the players that this might happen. If the heroes' underground complex is near a fault line, have tremors ripple through the tunnels now and again — then let the quake rip after a setback card is flipped onto the action stack.

Special Villain Actions

Taunt, test of wills, trick and *intimidate* are possible villain instructions, on the dramatic conflict line only. Use the table below to refresh your memory when one of these results occurs.

While these options have effects which are explained in Chapter Six of this book, they have an additional effect when they appear on the conflict line: if the villains successfully use the appropriate skill when that option appears on the conflict line, the gamemaster takes one card of her choice from the card pool of the affected character. If the villain gets a *superior* success, two cards are taken from the pool; on a *spectacular* success three cards are taken.

The villain does not have to use the listed skill when the opportunity presents itself; she may attack or perform whatever action the gamemaster believes makes the most sense for that villain at that time. Keep in mind that, for instance, a mummy would be unlikely to use *taunt*, shocktroopers rarely *trick*, gospog might try to *intimidate*, but they won't be very good at it, etc.

VILLAIN ACTION CHART	
Villain Instruction	**Attribute**
Taunt	Charisma
Test of Wills	Mind
Trick	Perception
Intimidation	Spirit
Maneuver	Dexterity

Approved Actions

The "Act" line below the conflict line lists which of the possible actions are "approved actions" for the round. Success at an *approved action* gains the player a card from the drama deck; he may then play into his pool normally.

The approved action line is meant to encourage players to use tactics other than hacking away at their opponents; however, it is important that you allow such actions only in appropriate circumstances.

As a rule of thumb, a villain may not be *tested*, *maneuvered* against or *intimidated* if the player character cannot see the villain. *Test* and *intimidation* often involve eye contact, though it can be a physical or verbal contest in specific circumstances. *Maneuver* is meant to reflect quick movements that cause the opponent to react, tiring him out.

Use your judgment, but be aware that just because an act appears on the "approved" line does not mean it is always appropriate to the situation. For more about the effects of *trick*, *test*, and *taunt*, etc., in combat, see Gamemaster Chapter Six.

Dramatic Skill Resolution

The only time two uses from a single card affect the game at the same time is when a card is placed on the action stack during a conflict, and dramatic skill resolution is also in effect. Use both the upper and middle parts of the card in this case.

In most situations, you will want to resolve a skill use in a single roll; most of the skills are set up with that assumption. But there are times when it is desirable for the sake of drama to stretch out the skill resolution, to introduce tension that is not possible in a single roll.

For example, disarming a bomb falls under the province of the *science* skill, and could be done in a single roll. This misses the point, though, of disarming a bomb in a story; if that bomb were an important element in a movie, a considerable amount of screen time could be devoted to defusing it. For this reason, at such moments we prefer to use dramatic skill resolution.

A *dramatic skill resolution* breaks down the use of a single skill into four steps, labeled A through D. As gamemaster you decide, preferably in advance, what each step represents when performing the task. You can assign more than one letter to the same portion of the task. You also need to define what the difficulty of the skill use is. Each step of a dramatic skill resolution has that difficulty.

Example: The Yellow Crab has been pushed outside of a troop transport flying at 7,000 feet, and must climb back in to help his friend Quin. The gamemaster declares that steps A and B both involve climbing back onto the wing while avoiding the propeller, step C is traversing the length of the wing to the jump door, and D is get-

ting back in the plane. This is a dramatic skill check of *acrobatics*. The gamemaster sets the difficulty of each check at 10.

Example: When defusing a bomb, step A is disconnecting motion sensors that would set the bomb off prematurely, B is locating the timing device in the maze of wires, C is locating the explosive primers, and D is cutting the wires between the timer and the primers. This is a dramatic skill check of *science*. The gamemaster sets the difficulty of each check at 12.

In a round, a character may only attempt the steps that are listed on the top card of the action stack. To succeed at a dramatic skill resolution, a character must succeed at steps A,B, C and D in that order. Succeeding at each step requires a skill check.

Example: The Yellow Crab has succeeded in crawling onto the wing in the face of howling winds (steps A and B) and now must traverse the length of the wing (step C). The gamemaster flips a card with "AB" in the skill box. The poor Crab can make no progress this round, unless he makes a "last ditch effort" (see this page).

If the card shows more than one step for which the character is eligible, he may try to do them all at once using the One on Many Multi-Action Chart (see Gamemaster Chapter Two). Ignore the *Toughness* Increase column in this case.

Example: Quin is beginning to defuse the bomb, and the gamemaster declares dramatic skill resolution; he sets the difficulty of each step at 11.

The first card on the action stack lists ABD, and Paul gambles, announcing that he will try steps A and B with one roll. He cannot attempt C or D because C is not on the card (but see "last ditch effort").

The multi-action chart shows that the difficulty increase for one action is +2, and two actions is +4; Quin needs a total of 15 or higher on his *science* roll in order to do both A and B. If he gets a 13 or higher, he accomplishes A but not B.

Bad Things Can Happen

Not only can a dramatic action take time, but things can make a character's life harder along the way. These include *possible setback*, *complication*, and *critical problem*. Each of these effects occurs when listed, if the character fails his skill roll for that round. If he succeeds, he does not gain a step, but there is no penalty.

Possible Setback

Failing when a *possible setback* appears causes the character to lose a step. If he had been on step C, something causes the character to slip back to step B; step C must be repeated.

Complication

A *complication* makes life more difficult. Failing the skill check during a *complication* round adds 1 to the difficulty of all further skill checks for this action.

Example: The Crab is defusing a bomb, and has accomplished steps A and B. The next round, the card says "Complication."

The difficulty of the check is 11, and Crab gets a total of 10! The gamemaster rules that Crab's sweaty fingers could not hold onto his pliers, which have now fallen into the innards of the bomb. The difficulty of further checks (for steps C and D) are increased by 1, to 12, to account for the complication — the loss of the tool.

Critical Problem

Failing the skill check during a *critical problem* round is real trouble; now the character must use another skill to accomplish the task, or attack the problem from a new angle (which would mean starting over from step A). The player is responsible for figuring out the new skill or course of action; if it does not sound convincing, he must try a different tack next round.

Skill Use as an Approved Action

Whenever the character does **not** have the opportunity to gain a skill step, making his skill roll counts as an approved action. If the skill total exceeds the difficulty number, the player may draw a card and play a card to his pool as though he had succeeded at an approved action. This represents the fact that even when temporarily stymied, the heroes of fiction are usually still working toward the final goal.

If a character **succeeds** at getting a skill step, he may of course play a card into his pool, but it is **not** an approved action and he may not draw another. This may seem perverse, but the intent is to keep the tension high—success is its own reward, and failure leads to eventual success in a dramatic skill resolution.

Last Ditch Effort

It is always possible that time will run out before the last step has been accomplished; if a character is on step C when the timer reaches 0, for instance, he needs a way to take a final try at the problem.

During any round of a dramatic skill resolution, the player may declare a *last ditch effort* to resolve the skill use; any unfinished steps are resolved all at once with the usual multi-action penalty. The difficulty number is additionally increased by 4, to account for the desperate circumstances of the last ditch effort. If the last ditch effort fails, and there is still time remaining, treat it as a failure during a *critical problem.*

Example: The Yellow Crab is trapped in a chamber with a bomb which he must defuse. The Crab has *science* at 14, and has successfully completed the first two steps, but he still has to root about in the bomb's interior to locate the primers, and cut the wires. With one round left before detonation, the card flip reveals an AB, neither of which the Crab needs. Time for a last ditch effort.

The difficulty is 12 (the base difficulty for this bomb) +4 (the multi-action penalty for two actions) +4 (the additional penalty for last ditch effort). The crab needs a total of 20 to succeed.

Other Characters

If you deem it appropriate, other characters may aid the lead character during a dramatic skill resolution. To do this, use the coordination rules in Gamemaster Chapter Two, page 47.

Working the Timing Out

Timing dramatic skill resolution can be tricky. If disaster is looming on the horizon (as it almost always is), how much time should your player characters have, in order to have a chance at accomplishing their goal? Use the following as a guideline.

To have a good chance of having the sequence A,B,C, and D appear in order requires 14 cards to be flipped if the character is going do the steps one at a time, or about 10 cards if the character is skilled enough to attempt two when the opportunity presents itself. If your characters have high skill levels (larger than the difficulty number), good cards, and no other pressing business, five flips is fine; otherwise we recommend giving them seven to 10 flips before disaster strikes.

Card Pools

The players' card pools obviously help the players, but they help the gamemaster at least as much. The *Torg* scale is very severe — a five point difference between opponents is usually an easy victory for the character with superior values. Card pools allow the players to trade time for success, and to overcome large differences in attribute values. You can therefore use nastier opponents, against whom your player characters would otherwise have little chance.

The cards also help build a natural flow of action for an encounter. The player characters are often at a disadvantage at the beginning of a dramatic encounter, just battling to survive. But as the encounter wears on, the players have more and better options, until they can finally overwhelm the bad guys. In an encounter where the heroes have the edge anyway, the cards help speed play.

Play Results

Play results are found, upside down, at the bottom of the cards. While the cards are described in brief in Player Chapter Two, they are discussed in more detail below.

Play results have no effect when turned up by the gamemaster onto the action stack. They can only take effect from a character's hand (during non-round interaction) or card pool (during "combat" rounds). A card in a pool does not have to take effect until the player wishes to use it (but see subplots, *alertness,* and *connection* below). Ignore the conflict line and dramatic skill box on cards played into or from a hand or pool.

When a card from a hand or pool is played, it is placed in the discard pile.

Here are more detailed descriptions of the cards:

Action

The *action* card adds a +3 bonus to all actions taken by the character this round, including flurries and haste actions.

Alertness

Alertness is a special card, marked in gamemaster colors, so you will be reminded of its presence. The card assures that a hero searching or examining an area will find or notice something (information, an item, an ambush) as long as it is there to be found,

whether he makes his *find* roll or not. After a player puts the card in his pool, you activate the card whenever the character misses something of importance.

Example: If the Yellow Crab were having an especially bad day when he arrived at the scene of a murder, he might have missed his *find* roll to discover the Sumerian dagger stashed in the garbage can beside the desk.

Chris, frantic to find a lead of some kind, drops the *alertness* card on the table. Because there is something to find in the room, the gamemaster takes the card, puts it in the discard pile and mentions that the Crab spots a glint of gold in the garbage can — a rather peculiar sight.

If there had been nothing to find, the card would have remained out until the Crab missed a *find* roll, at which point the card would be taken and a clue given.

Attribute Value: Adrenalin, Willpower, Presence

There are three types of attribute value cards, each of which increases any one of the appropriate attribute values by 3. *Adrenalin* increases the physical attributes *Dexterity, Strength* or *Toughness, willpower* increases the attributes *Perception* or *Mind,* and *presence* increases *Charisma* or *Spirit.* The player chooses which value to increase with each card. One card may not affect more than one attribute.

The effect of attribute cards lasts an entire round — if the character has a haste or a flurry, the benefit lasts for all actions taken that round. The benefit does not extend to values which are not generated by the character's attribute. For instance the damage value of a gun could not be increased by an *adrenalin* card. The damage value of a bow could be.

Connection

A *connection* is another special gamemaster-tinted card. It lets a player character know people in the area who might offer him help. This ability reflects the fact that characters have a "past" that reaches back beyond the point where the player began using

the character in stories. Thus, if Quin passes through a small town in Austria, he may know someone there who can hide him for a few days even if Austria has never been a setting of the current campaign. It is assumed that he met the person a long time ago, before the Possibility Wars began. It is up to you to decide who the contact (or contacts) is, and how helpful she will be. The players are free, and encouraged, to provide suggestions; you are equally free to override any you consider damaging to the story.

Try to provide the player characters with a connection as soon as makes sense for the story. If the heroes are trapped in a tomb and the *connection* card is played, you may not have the opportunity to introduce a friendly gamemaster character at that time; simply do so as soon as you can.

Coup de Grace

This result increases all effect totals by 3. *Coup de grace* always increases the second total if an action has two totals; it never increases the first total, and has no effect if the first total does not exceed its difficulty number.

Drama

The *drama* card, like a *hero* card, may be spent as a Possibility. This Possibility may be spent in addition to the Possibility a character may normally spend. Villains may negate a *drama* card used for an extra roll by spending a Possibility themselves.

If the adventure is completed and a player still holds a *drama* card, that player receives three Possibilities for his character. Thus the character is rewarded for surviving the adventure while taking the more difficult path of not using the Possibility during play.

Escape

When this card is played, the heroes can avoid an encounter. The card must be the first card played into a player's pool when rounds begin. The card may then be played at any time during the scene.

Example: *Quin steered the boat down the Nile at breakneck speed, Dr. Mobius's thugs in hot pursuit; suddenly there was a raucous sputter, and the motor on his boat conked out!*

Paul had placed the *escape* card as his first pool card, just in case. Now he plays it to avoid being captured by the bad guys. The gamemaster might declare that Quin was able to fix the motor without effort, making it even better than before.

Quin opened the engine casing, glared at the parts, then whacked them with a ball-peen hammer. The motor roared to life, leaving the henchmen behind in a spray of water.

The restriction on having to play the *escape* card first is meant to help you. If you see an *escape* card on the table, then you know that the Storm Knights must be able to get away from this encounter, should they choose to play the card. Thus, you can start to think of a way in which the party can escape. The escape does not have to be easy, or even immediate. The players may get off easily, or they may barely get away — they might even get captured for awhile! But, before anything bad can happen, they do escape.

Glory

Glory cards can only be played in rare circumstances. If a character rolls a 60 or more on an action that has a major impact on a dramatic scene, his player may play this card. The award for all characters in the adventure is increased by 3 Possibilities. Playing a *glory* card also helps the Storm Knights spread tales of their deeds in such a way as to inspire the listener. This makes it easier for the heroes to infuse Ords with possibility energy. See Gamemaster Chapter Nine for details.

Haste

The *haste* card grants the character an additional action. The action is taken immediately after the player plays the card. A player may play a *haste* card out of turn, during another player's turn, or during the villain's turn, as well as during her turn in a round.

Hero

The *hero* card can be played to gain an extra Possibility for any action. The Possibility from the card can be used in addition to Possibilities that a character can normally spend. Villains may negate a *hero* card used for an additional roll, just as they can a regular Possibility.

Idea

Idea lets players get some help when stuck on a puzzle or mystery within an adventure. When the card is played the player poses a specific problem dealing with the adventure and you give an answer. This reflects the fact that the character has deeper knowledge of the world's workings than the player has, and simulates fictional characters who "get the right idea" at the right time.

You might simply give the answer to the problem, or you might give a list of solutions that the characters have to pursue.

Example: Yellow Crab is at the scene of a murder. On the table before him is the murder weapon, an ancient dagger of Sumerian origin. Earlier in the game, at a formal ball, the Yellow Crab met Mr. Hadish No'dab, a gamemaster character who collects ancient Sumerian art. The player controlling the Yellow Crab, however, has forgotten all about Mr. No'dab and is completely stuck as to which direction to go with the clue. In desperation he plays an *idea*.

The gamemaster reminds the Crab's player of the meeting with the art dealer, and suggests that the Cairo Museum of Art (which the player didn't even know existed, but the Crab certainly did) might be a possible lead.

Leadership

A *leadership* card allows the player to play up to two cards from her hand or pool directly into another player's hand or pool, and then to immediately discard and/or refill her hand to four cards (disregarding cards in the pool). You should ask the player to explain

what her character is doing that provides leadership for the other character(s).

Master Plan

This card lets a player pick up any card that has just been discarded, in exchange for the *master plan* card, which is placed on the discard pile. The card may be played any time, but only the top card of the discard pile may be taken, not the top card of the action stack.

Monologue

This card allows a character to stop all hostile action while she makes a dramatic speech (this counts as her action for the round). If the conflict in question is openly violent, the odds of anyone listening to reason are small, but the card will still have the effect of cancelling all other actions for the round. The effect of the card lasts a round or more. There is only one *monologue* card in the deck.

Opponent Fails

This card negates any one successful action taken against the player's character. If a villain shoots at this character and hits, the player can use the card to make the shot miss, or hit a button, or be deflected by some other stroke of luck.

It is important to note that the card in no way safeguards a character from his own failure; that's what all those bonus cards are for.

Example: Dr. Mobius's manservant Guringa pushes Quin into a volcano. Paul may play a an *opponent fails* to avoid having Quin pushed into the volcano. If Quin does fall into the volcano, the card will not help Quin grab the ledge on the way down. Other cards, such as *hero* or *drama,* are necessary for that.

An *opponent fails* card maybe played after a successful action, before the next roll of the game is made.

Second Chance

This lets a character immediately retry an action after he has failed the first time; all consequences of the failure are ignored. You must enforce the "immediately" - the second chance must be taken before another player rolls or any other cards are played into the pool.

Seize Initiative

This card allows the players to either keep the card currently on the action stack for one more round (if it is beneficial to them), or flip another card up for this round (if the one you just flipped is bad for them). Once you flip the next card, *seize initiative* may only be used to flip again, not to go back to the previous card.

Supporter

This card lets a player add 3 to another character's total. This card may be played after the other character rolls the die but before you announce the final result. The supporting character's player should explain how his support can benefit the acting character.

Rally

The *rally* card lets all Storm Knight players replenish their hands in the middle of a conflict. Regardless of how many cards they have on the table, each player may fill his *hand* to four cards.

This can be especially important during a dramatic conflict, when the cards are weighted against the heroes and they've run out of cards giving them an advantage. Unless you know that the players are going to have a comparatively easy time of it, you should resist the temptation to steal this card away with a successful *taunt, test,* etc.

Subplot Cards

The subplot cards are different from the other cards in the drama deck. Once in play they stay in the pool for the rest of the adventure. Despite the game mechanics, they are most important as tools to jump-start your imagination and that of the players. They are marked in gamemaster colors to remind you that they are in play.

Although every adventure has a major story that every character is involved with, it is possible that there will be several smaller story lines involving only specific characters. The large objective is called the adventure's *plot.* The smaller story lines are called *subplots.*

POT example, if the characters have been hired to find and remove a stelae that the Edeinos have planted near Philadelphia, the plot is how they deal with the difficulties encountered along the way. While working their way through the story, the characters may meet someone with whom one of the player characters becomes romantically involved. This romance, a subplot, may hinder or help the task of removing the stelae, but it never overshadows the main plot.

The subplot cards give players a chance to introduce elements that will broaden the role of their characters in the story. By making the subplots into cards that each player has the option to play or not, no player is forced to participate in a subplot that he does not want. The player decides for himself what entanglements he wishes to take for his character.

Before an adventure begins, you should outline to yourself which of the subplots are easily incorporated into the adventure you have created. (The subplots of published adventures will already be outlined). When a player plays a subplot into his pool, he may either claim it or immediately discard it and gain one Possibility.

If a player plays a subplot and wants to keep it, and if you have a subplot prepared for that card (or if, during the course of the adventure you have seen how to work it in to the story) the player's character takes on that subplot. If the subplot simply will not work in that in the adventure, the player is awarded the Possibility and the card must be discarded.

The player must keep in mind that he does not necessarily know how the subplot will affect him or whom it will involve. Thus, when Paul plays a *romance* card after Quin meets a jungle princess of the Nile Empire, it does not mean he will become involved romantically with the princess — the gamemaster might have a romance prepared with one of the princess's slaves.

All that is required is that once you approve a subplot card, you work in elements dealing with that subplot.

A subplot card is left face up in the player's pool for the rest of the adventure, but does not count against his limit of four cards for his hand. Subplot cards may not be traded. A player may only have one subplot per adventure.

A character who has a subplot face up gains an additional Possibility at the end of each act, to reward the player for taking on the exciting, but sometimes detrimental, effects of the subplot. If a player takes on a subplot and then consistently ignores the story elements of that subplot, you should reduce the award his character receives at the end of the adventure.

Types of Subplots

Martyr

The martyr card is the only subplot card with an additional rules mechanic. A character whose player has this card out may, at any time, sacrifice his life and **automatically produce a victorious condition in the face of disaster.** Suppose that the Yellow Crab and Quin arrive just a moment too late to prevent Professor Samson from firing his Disintegration Cannon at New Delhi. Chris has the *martyr* card, and he declares that the Crab races for the cannon's power system and flings himself into it as the cannon charges up its deadly ray. In a storm of sparks the machinery is destroyed and the Crab killed. The city of New Delhi, however, is saved without a single roll having been made.

The *martyr* card hangs a peculiar shadow over the character whose player took the subplot, for everyone knows that the character is so noble in intent that his own life is less important than the defeat of evil.

It is important to remember that a character with the *martyr* card does not *have* to sacrifice himself at a climactic moment. It is simply an option when all else fails. However, the character does have his Possibility award reduced at the end of the adventure if he does not martyr himself.

Mistaken Identity

With this subplot the character is thought to be someone else by one or more gamemaster characters, or else believes another character to be someone she isn't. The former is usually more fun to play. The mistake may be because of physical similarity or misinformation ("It will be the first man who walks through the door and says 'good-morning! Fine day, eh?'") The subplot may be comic (a primitive tribe in the Nile Empire thinking the player character is a god returned from heaven), or frightening (an assassin cult is after the character because they believe he killed their leader).

Nemesis

There is, somewhere in the adventure, someone against whom the character has a grudge, or who has a grudge against the character. The conflict may stretch back to their childhood, or may start when the player character bests the gamemaster character during their first meeting. You should make sure that the nemesis and the player character have a few scenes alone together, including (and most importantly) a final showdown. The showdown does not have to culminate in a huge, knockdown battle, but there should be a satisfying resolution. The nemesis might not settle for less than the hero's death, though the player character might want to merely imprison the villain. The villain might seem to be killed (falling out of a zeppelin or into a snake pit) only to reappear later (see "The Campaign Card" on page 68), but he should be out of the hero's hair for several adventures.

Personal Stake

When the *personal stake* subplot is played, the character becomes emotionally tied to the major plot at hand. The woman his group has been hired to rescue may turn out to be someone he loves, or a long-lost relative. The villain may turn out to be the man who killed the character's family or scarred him for life. The city the Disintegrator Cannon is aimed at might be the character's home town. Whatever it is, it gives the character a bit more oomph when facing challenges encountered during the adventure.

Romance

The player character becomes romantically involved with a gamemaster character. The romance may be one

sided, with the gamemaster character in love with the player character or a love-struck player character scorned by a gamemaster character. They may be in love with each other, but separated by social standing or jealous spouses. Remember that a complicated romance is more dramatic than a romance with no problems, because a perfect romance isn't very interesting to anyone but the two people involved.

There are **two** *romance* cards in the deck. If both are in play it might mean that both player characters are involved with the same gamemaster character (causing some tension), or that there are two romantic interests available.

Suspicion

This subplot casts a pall of guilt over a character. The character might be suspected of a murder in the past, a recent theft, or simply be regarded as somebody worth watching with a careful eye. The suspicion may be well-founded or it might only be the result of rumor. The people who suspect the character might even be other player characters.

True Identity

This subplot is the opposite of *mistaken identity*. The character actually **is** somebody who matters to one or more gamemaster characters, but nobody knows it, or else the player character knows the true identity of someone important. The character with the *true identity* may be completely unaware of his true identity, or may be hiding behind a false identity.

Examples of true identities are the heir to the throne who was spirited away at birth, the son (or daughter) of the villain the heroes are pursuing, the man who was prophesied generations ago to kill the beast in the mountains, and the master villain masquerading with a double identity.

The Campaign Card

In most cases a subplot lasts from when it is played to the end of the adventure. For example, a *nemesis* is established for a player character at

some point in the story, and by the story's end the nemesis is defeated by that character.

The player of a character with a subplot may want to retain the subplot for his character. To do this he, or another player, plays the *campaign* card while the subplot card is active (face up in the player's pool). A player must agree to have his subplot become a campaign element, even if another player lays down the *campaign* card. The gamemaster must also approve the subplot as a campaign.

Thus, if Chris lays down the *campaign* card, and Paul and the gamemaster agree, Quin's affair with the jungle princess's servant continues through adventures to come. She may not be involved in all adventures (he's a busy fellow, trotting all over the globe and such), but when she is involved in an adventure, Quin automatically starts with a *romance* subplot noted on his character template. She may be in trouble, she may be being courted by somebody else, but the gamemaster will have her there, waiting with a subplot. This, of course, gives Quin extra Possibilities at the end of each act. He'll need them.

A *campaign* card is used only in campaign games, which are a string of related adventures using the same heroes. Campaign games are played on a regular basis; if you are not running a campaign, then the *campaign* card has no effect. The *campaign* card, if discarded or disapproved, is worth one Possibility, as any other subplot.

The Circumstances of Subplots

Depending on circumstances, several of the subplots could be quite similar. If the true love of a character is kidnapped by the villain, it might be a *romance* with a twist, or a *personal stake*, or the *nemesis* pulling another stunt. If a hero is thought to have stolen the Queen's jewels, is it *suspicion* or *mistaken identity?*

There are two reasons for leaving a degree of overlap between the subplots. The first is that the subplots are more flexible this way. If there is a theft involved in the adventure and

you want one of the characters to be suspected of the crime, there are two subplots by which this suspicion may be introduced *(suspicion* or *mistaken identity)*. However, the **circumstances** may vary between the two subplots. Is the hero mistaken for Reginald Davenport, international jewel thief, the man whom the police suspect stole the jewels? Or does the detective investigating the case suspect the hero on a hunch? In one case there is an actual, well-known individual who is involved in the subplot, and in the other the hero has to clear his name.

In other words, it makes a great deal of difference if the villain who kidnaps a woman is a *nemesis* or if the woman kidnapped is the hero's *romance.* Not only would an encounter between the hero and the villain be played very differently, but the motivation for the two subplots would differ greatly as well. In one case the hero would want to prevent the fiend from ever performing evil actions again, and in the other he would want to rescue his true love at all costs.

Keeping the Hands Secret

Each player keeps his hand a secret from you and the other players — just as in any card game. This way he has the chance to surprise the group with what he plays; it also means that each player is in full control of his own cards. If a player doesn't want to be the *martyr* he doesn't have to. If he wants to save *drama* cards, they're his to save. Players may reveal their cards whenever they want to — but to speed up game play, encourage them to reveal only when playing cards into their pool.

Replenishing Hands

At the end of a scene all players must pick up all cards from their pools (except subplots, *alertness,* and *connection).* Multiple cards **must** be discarded

if the hand is greater than four cards; one card may be discarded if the hand is at four or fewer cards. Once all discards are made, a player can rebuild her hand back up to four cards.

When the final encounter of the adventure is over, hands are **not** refilled to four cards. This is to prevent drama cards from being drawn at the last minute, giving the player Possibility points which she did not earn. Cards are not saved from adventure to adventure, though they are saved from act to act, even if you quit for the night (you can write their type or ID number on the character template).

Trading Cards

The players may trade cards in their pools between themselves any time during play. You must enforce the one-for-one exchange of cards, or else play balance can be seriously affected. As trading cards is one of the players' tactical advantages in the game, don't inhibit trading as long as the game doesn't slow down. If action is taking place in non-rounds, players may trade between their hands, but once rounds begin trades may only be made between pools.

Combat Between Two Player Characters

Although it's hard to fathom — there's more than enough to do in *Torg* with the Earth being invaded — every once in a while some heroes will see fit to fight each other. Since both sides are heroes, the conflict line advantage or penalty applies to both of them. Characters act in order of *Dexterity* (ties decided by a die roll). They play cards into their pools and use them as they ordinarily would.

When to Use the Deck (and When Not to)

Because the drama deck serves so many functions, it is important to understand when cards come in to play and when they don't. Basically, **the cards come into play when you want them to come into play.**

Using conflict lines and dramatic skill resolution is always at your discretion. They are tools to help you enjoy the flow of the action. In most conflicts (fights, chases, interaction where a hero is trying to get somebody to do something which the subject would rather not do) you will turn over a card. At that point the game time-scale switches to rounds, the conflict lines set the rhythm, and card pools begin.

But let's say the characters have just met a band of ruffians. The players don't know that these gamemaster characters are bad guys, and simply want to buy some food from them. You don't want to tip the players off that something could go wrong (you've decided that the ruffians had a bad day and just want to be left alone, so how the characters behave in the encounter will determine what the ruffians do) so you don't flip a card over when the bargaining session begins. This means you're "roleplaying it out."

Roleplaying it out means that you and the characters simply talk to each other as if you were the characters in a story. You are like actors making up a script on the spot. No dice need be rolled because if you know what the gamemaster characters want, you should be able to judge their reaction to the player characters.

If the characters do something that you think would upset the thugs enough to get them into a fight, flip a card and have the bad guys draw their weapons. Or, if the villains are intrigued by the heroes' offer but want something more substantial, make the bargaining tighter by flipping a card to control the flow. This might confuse the players (they're just trying to buy some food after all), but would put them on edge, making the bargaining all the more interesting.

Remember, it is up to you to decide when to use the conflict lines. When you do, it means that an open conflict has begun (though not necessarily a violent one).

Not Using The Cards

Torg can be played without the cards. We strongly recommend you use them, because we feel they add important elements to the game and the story. If you are a traditional roleplaying gamemaster, you may feel uncomfortable with the cards. If you don't use them, *Torg* plays much like any other roleplaying game. When the cards are not used, initiative is determined by the roll of dice rather than by the conflict lines.

You and one player each roll a die. For a standard encounter the player adds 5 to his die roll; in *a* dramatic combat you add *5* to your roll. The higher roll wins the initiative.

Be warned that without the cards the player characters will be doing far less spectacular deeds, and the teamwork possible with card play is lost.

It is also possible to play using only portions of the cards. You may wish to use conflict lines, at first, only to determine initiative. Later, you can add in the positive and negative results. You may decide not to use player cards until your players become more familiar with the system. You may decide not to use dramatic skill resolution at all. The choice is yours.

Chapter Five

Character Interaction

There are a variety of methods by which player characters and gamemaster characters can interact. The simplest is "roleplaying" -- you and the players simply speak to each other, in character.

The problem is that a character might be far more (or less) charming than the player portraying that character. Or, you might find that while you're a terrific gamemaster, your bargaining skills aren't what they need to be in a medieval setting. Therefore, it's important to have rules about how the *characters* can and can't interact.

Character interaction is very important in *Torg* - probably more important than in any other roleplaying game. There are specific ways each type of interaction can affect people, some of them quite powerful, and it is important that you be familiar with the various tactics players (and you) can use. These include *charm, persuasion, intimidation, trick, test of wills,* and *taunt.* The latter three are discussed in detail in the next chapter; this chapter concerns *charm, persuasion,* and *intimidation.*

Charm

Charm is used to make another character or creature friendlier to the character putting on the charm. Sometimes it works, sometimes it makes things worse. *Charm* is a *Charisma* skill.

The difficulty number for a *charm* attempt is the *willpower* value of the target. If the target does not have *willpower,* use the target's *Mind* instead. The other factors involved are the target's attitude toward the charmer, and the charmers attitude toward the target (which are not necessarily the same). There are five basic attitudes that characters can have toward each other: *enemy, hostile, neutral, friendly* and *loyal.*

An *enemy* is a character who seeks to destroy the other character. The destruction need not be physical and immediate, but each misery and defeat an enemy can inflict on his opponent fulfills a personal goal.

A character with a *hostile* attitude toward another has contempt for or feels threatened by that character. The character may be intensely jealous, or the two characters may belong to rival factions; the hostility may stem from long-held prejudice or recent events. A character who "uses" another, without any real interest in that character, is also considered *hostile.* The difference between *enemy* and *hostile* is that hostile characters will avoid direct confrontation more often than not — enemies usually attack.

A character who is *neutral* has no reason to like or dislike another. People who are *neutral* may seem friendly or standoffish, but they have no emotional investment in the character toward whom they are *neutral.* The flip side is that such characters aren't out to exploit those toward whom they are *neutral.* 'Live and let live' is a good motto for the *neutral* attitude.

Characters who have a *friendly* attitude toward another have reason to believe the other to be worthwhile in some sense — they may share common goals or values, enjoy each other's company, or believe that there is something intrinsically valuable about each other. Friends support each other in small ways—sometimes large ways if needed. *Friendly* characters genuinely care about the feelings and welfare of their friends, and try to enhance those feelings.

Loyal characters are strongly committed to the characters who have earned their loyalty. They go to considerable lengths to guarantee the safety and well-being of the characters to whom they are loyal. Although they

are still motivated to keep themselves alive, some loyalties transcend even self-preservation.

The Interaction Results Table (under Charm/Persuade) on page 40 lists the attitudes, along with the result needed to *charm* a character with that attitude.

Example: Quin is trying to *charm* a princess with a *Mind* of 10. A total of 10 is enough to *charm* her if she is *loyal* to Quin; it takes a total of 11-12 if she is *friendly,* 13-16 if she is *neutral,* and so on.

Conditions for Charm

Charm takes time; it is not a combat skill that can be done in a 10-second round. The more time spent being charming, and the more leisurely the approach, the more chance for success.

A *charm* attempt requires five minutes at the minimum. If a character tries to *charm* another over several scenes, using *charm* only once per scene, each roll for *charm* has its bonus increased by 3. If a player declares a once-per-scene *charm,* she may not attempt to *charm* the same target in that scene.

When a character tries to *charm* another, the characters' attitudes must be determined. Players may choose the attitude they want their character to adopt toward the target, announcing their choice to you. Once they choose an attitude, see that they act in accordance with their choice. For instance, if the player declares that her character *is friendly,* but acts in a truly selfish or manipulative manner, point out that this is *hostile* behavior. If the player amends her action, there is no penalty. If she does not, feel free to treat the player character's attitude as *hostile.*

The base attitude of gamemaster characters is up to you, depending on the story you have created.

The Temporary Effects of Charm

A successful *charm* **temporarily** increases a character's attitude by one level, although his *base attitude* (the original attitude of the character) remains the same. Any subsequent *charm* attempts still use the **base attitude** to determine the level of success needed.

To continue charming a character in a single scene (another *charm* attempt may always be made in a future scene), the charmer must receive a result which is at least one level **higher** than the base attitude of the target. This is a *continuing success.*

Example: The Yellow Crab tries to warm the heart of Sofia Delour, a lounge singer and mob doll in Cairo. Sofia's original attitude toward the Crab is *hostile;* her *willpower* is 10.

With a *Charisma* of 8 and a handy *presence* card, the Crab gets a total of 17, good for a *hostile* result. This temporarily improves Sofia's attitude to *neutral.* However, the *charm* must stop here as the Crab did not get a result of *enemy* or better.

A player may "press the issue" by attempting another *charm* after a failure or non-continuing success, but this is risky. See below.

The Permanent Effect of Charm

A charmed character's base attitude toward the one who charmed him is **improved** at the end of an adventure if the following two conditions are true:

1. The last *charm* left the target with an attitude *of friendly* or better.
2. The base attitude of the character **doing** the charming is equal to or better than the base attitude of the one being charmed.

The second condition exists because people, or other social beings, may put up a good front, but true intentions have a way of leaking through and being perceived. This may not have any effect in the short run -- the smooth, evil mastermind may be able to temporarily *charm* and/or *persuade* our hero, but getting him to change his feelings permanently is difficult indeed. Once free from the smooth-tongued charmer, the hero is most likely going to shake his head and try

to figure out why the heck he ever believed such a slime in the first place.

Example: The Yellow Crab's attitude toward Sofia is *neutral,* while her base attitude is *hostile.* This fulfills condition two. The Yellow Crab charmed Sofia to *neutral,* which is not enough for condition one. Sofia's base attitude does not improve. If the Crab had managed to *charm* Sofia *to friendly,* her **base attitude** would have become *neutral* at the end of the adventure. If she shows up in future adventures, she might be more inclined to help.

Pressing the Issue

When a character fails a *charm,* or gets the minimal level of success necessary, no further *charm* attempts may be made in that scene unless the character *presses the issue.* This means trying to *charm* one more time.

If this extra *charm* roll is successful (at any level) the target's attitude improves by one more step, and no further *charm* attempts may be made in that scene, nor may the issue be pressed further.

The danger is in failure. If a character fails while pressing the issue, all temporary steps are lost, and the target character's base **attitude is lowered** by one step.

Example: The Crab, having charmed a *hostile* Sofia to *neutral* by achieving a *hostile* result, must stop charming. Chris decides to press the issue.

He rolls for one last *charm* attempt, but fails miserably. Sofia's attitude (base and temporary) is now *enemy.*

Persuasion

Persuasion is used to get another character or creature to agree to do a certain thing or accept a certain course of action. The difficulty number for persuading someone is their *willpower* or *Mind* value. Only one *persuasion* attempt may be made on a character about any one issue or suggestion, unless you decide there is a good story-

related reason to allow another attempt.

Example: At a trading camp, an allied human tribesman is enraged at an imagined insult, and decides to mop the floor with Quin Sebastian. Quin doesn't really want to fight the lug, nor does he want to get smashed by him. The gamemaster describes scenes of broken crockery and flying wares, Quin dodging in and out amid the tents while trying to *persuade* the tribesman not to use him for bear bait. She gives Quin three chances at *persuasion,* with a round or two between each attempt, in order to make the scene interesting.

Persuasion takes into account the target's attitude, much as *charm* does. See *charm* above for descriptions of the attitudes. The Interaction Results Table (on page 40) lists the attitudes, along with the result needed to *persuade* a character with that attitude.

Conditions of Persuasion

The attitudes of the characters involved must be determined. If *charm* has been used prior to the *persuasion* attempt, the attitudes are the temporary attitudes which resulted from the *charm.* Otherwise, use the base attitudes.

Persuasion *can* be done in a single combat round.

Persuasion Success

There are three types of success for a *persuasion* attempt: *negotiated agreement, yes,* and *vow.*

A persuader whose result is **equal to the target character's current attitude** gets a *negotiated agreement. Negotiated agreement* is the **best possible result** against characters who are currently *hostile* or *enemy. Negotiated agreement* means the target agrees to the persuader's request only in exchange for something of roughly equal value; the payoff must be immediate unless the reward is great and the

target has genuine reason to believe he will receive the reward. If the proposition requires no real effort on the part of the target character, and there is no likely negative consequence for complying with the request, *negotiated agreement* may be treated as a *yes* result.

A persuader whose result is **one better than the target character's current attitude** gets a *yes* result. A *yes* result is the best possible result on a commercial negotiation, or against characters who are currently *neutral. A yes* result means the target character agrees to the proposition as stated by the persuader, with no strings attached. A *yes* result is only possible if the outcome of the proposition has some value to the target; that is, the target must believe there is some self-interest to be served by going along with the persuader's suggestion — if not right now, then soon. The self-interest can be anything from direct monetary reward, to recognition, to knowledge that he is doing the right thing (as he sees it).

A persuader whose result is **two levels better than the target character's current attitude** gets a *vow* result. A *vow* will only be taken by someone whose current attitude is *friendly* or *loyal.* A character who makes a *vow* will follow through on the suggestion made by the persuader with all possible effort and speed. A *vow* is only possible when the target character agrees with the fundamental aim of the course of action suggested by the persuader. If a *vow* is taken on a course of action suggested by someone with an attitude of *hostile* or *enemy,* the target may reject the vow after considering the source.

Persuasion Modifiers

It is not possible to *persuade* a character to do something that is completely against his nature or ethical principles. One of the prime tricks of evil characters is to misrepresent a situation and the choices so that *persuasion* is possible, i. e. producing false evidence against a hero as part of a *persuasion* attempt to make a target take harmful action against the hero.

Even in situation where *persuasion* is possible, there are modifiers:
• If the situation involves moderate risk, such as the chance of loss of considerable money, prestige, or a real chance of physical danger, the difficulty number is +3.
• If the situation involves high risk, such as the virtual certainty of physical harm to oneself or loved ones, the difficulty is +5.

Haggling

Some situations permit haggling, such as street fairs, car dealers, and medieval markets. Others, such as exclusive shops or huge mass merchandizing chains, where the seller does not have the authority to set the price, do not allow haggling.

Essentially, when the buyer and the seller do not agree on a price, but are willing to negotiate, then haggling can take place. Haggling is a form of *persuasion* in which the aim of each character is to get the other to give a *yes* result to the character's suggested price. However, the "current attitude" of the merchant or buyer has little to do with how he feels about the other — it depends mostly on the price offered as compared with the usual market price for that item.

BASE PRICE / ATTITUDE CHART	
Offer	**Negotiator's Attitude is**
Bargain	Friendly
	Neutral
	Hostile
	Enemy

The offers and asking prices are given in **value points away from the value of the base price;** the +/-1 level include all prices that differ from the base price by equal to or less than a point. *Bargain* indicates that the price asked or offered is actually lower/higher than the average market price. +/-3 is the most an offer can differ from the base price.

Example: The usual market price for a stereo is 250 dollars. This measure has a value of 12. If the offer was 101-250 dollars (value of 11-12), the merchant's attitude would be *neutral.* If the offer was 61-100 dollars, the merchant would be *hostile,* at 41-60 he would be *enemy;* the offer could not be less than 41. If the offer was 251+ dollars, the merchant would be *friendly.*

The buyer's offer determines the seller's attitude, and the seller's suggested price determines the buyer's attitude.

Example: The average price of a biplane in the Nile Empire is 3000 gold royals; Quin offers to buy one for 2500, and the merchant is asking 7500. A measure of 3000 has a value of 18, the value of 2500 is 17, and the value of 7500 is 20.

The offer is one point away from the value of the base price so the merchant's attitude is *neutral.* The asking price is two points away from the value of the base price, so Quin's attitude is *hostile.*

Haggling takes place in alternating rounds, usually using the drama deck to determine initiative and advantages. When it is the buyer's turn, he makes a *persuasion* roll to try to get the merchant to say *yes* to the offer. When it is the merchant's turn, he makes a *persuasion* roll to try to get the buyer to say *yes* to the asking price.

A *vow* or *yes* result means the price is accepted and the deal concluded. *Negotiated agreement* means the other haggler's next offer must be a full value point closer to the persuader's offer if the differences in prices are more than a point, or half the numerical difference if they are within a point.

Failure results in the price holding firm; the haggler must up his offer at his next opportunity in order to roll again. The increase must be a full point in the direction of the other if possible, or else meet the difference halfway. If a haggler fails and then is forced to *negotiate* as well, he must change his next offer by two such steps.

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Example: Quin and the merchant are haggling for the biplane in the previous example. Quin's *persuasion* is 10; the merchant's is 9 (but his *willpower* is 11). The card flip gives the merchant the initiative.

The merchant gets 6 result points, but that's a failure because Quin was *hostile* to the merchant's asking price. Now it's Quin's turn.

Quin's *persuasion* gets 4 result points. Since the merchant was *neutral* to Quin's offer, that's a *negotiated success.*

The merchant's next asking price must be closer to Quin's offer twice, once for the *negotiated success,* and once for the merchant's previous failure. Each decrease must be by a full point if possible. The original asking price was 7500 (value of 20) so the merchant lowers his price to 6000 (value of 19) and then to 4000 (value of 18). Quin is now *neutral* to this offer; the merchant gets 5 result points — *negotiated success.*

Now Quin must up his offer. Since 2500 (value of 17) is is within one point of 4000 (value of 18), Quin must meet the merchant halfway, and offer 3250. The merchant is now *friendly,* Quin gets 4 result points and the bargain is struck.

If a round of haggling goes by where neither party succeeds in their *persuasion* attempt nor improves their offer, the deal is broken off, and no further negotiation is possible.

Please take note: player characters with cards and Possibilities can, if they desire, take Ord merchants to the cleaners. If you plan on introducing a hard-bargaining merchant-prince gamemaster character, make sure he's possibility-rated.

Clearing the Mind

Player characters and other possibility-rated characters are not immune to the effects of *charm* and *persuasion.* They are generally tougher to dazzle and confuse than Ords, and they have one additional advantage: the chance to *clear their minds.*

To do this, the character makes a *Perception* check; the difficulty number is his own *Mind.* If the result points are equal to or greater than the result points of the latest *charm* or *persuasion* attempt against him, the *charm* or *persuasion* is negated. If an *enemy* character made the suggestion, add 3 to the bonus number for clearing the mind.

If a character clears his mind, he is safe from the effects of *charm* and *persuasion* by his opponent for the rest of the act.

Example: After several successful *charms* on her part, the Yellow Crab finds himself smitten *(friendly)* with Sofia Delour, a situation he finds enjoyable until he remembers that she is a mob doll. She suggests that "my penthouse suite has the best view in Cairo ... especially at sunrise." The gamemaster rolls a *persuasion* against the Crab, getting 9 result points, more than enough for a *yes.*

Chris is afraid this might be a trap, and announces that the Crab tries to clear his mind. The Crab's *Perception* is 12 and his *Mind* is 9. After cards and Possibilities are used, the Crab gets a total of 21, for 12 result points. This exceeds the 9 points of the *persuasion,* and the Crab is free to act as he pleases.

Intimidation

Intimidation based on the *Spirit,* and the target is the other character's *Spirit* or *intimidation* skill value. While frequently used in combat (see Chapter Six), *intimidation* may also be used to *awe* or interrogate other characters.

Awe

Awe is used to freeze a character, to prevent any hostile action against the awesome character for as long as the awesome character takes no hostile action. *Awe* may only be attempted once per target character. In effect, it is a combat use of *intimidation* in a non-combat situation. See Chapter Six for details on *intimidation.*

Interrogation

In order to submit to *interrogation,* a character must believe himself to be at a significant disadvantage; characters who have been captured, or are at the mercy of their opponents, are good examples. Some characters are arrogant or self-assured enough to prevent most forms of interrogation from succeeding; major villains and player characters fall into this category. *Interrogation* requires at least three minutes to be successful.

The Interaction ResultsTable (under Charm/Persuade) on page 40 lists the interrogated character's attitude toward **whoever the interrogators are trying to find out about,** along with the result necessary for the character to give information. As you can see, the worse the subject's attitude toward what the interrogators are trying to find out about, the easier it is to pry information from him. A character is always considered *loyal* to himself.

Example: The player characters are interrogating a suspect about the involvement of Kanawa Corporation in a recent assassination attempt. The characters don't yet realize that the suspect is the assassin, who is *friendly* toward Kanawa. His *intimidation* value is 11.

To get a result of *friendly* on the Interrogation table takes 12 result points. The characters would need an *intimidation* total of 23 in order to force information about Kanawa out of the assassin.

If the suspect had no connection to Kanawa, it would only take a total of 18 (7 result points for a *neutral* effect) in order to get him to tell whatever he knows about the corporation.

Chapter Six

Combat and Chases

Combat in *Torg* is the combat of adventure fiction. Bullets and arrows fly, providing danger — but far less frequently do they provide death, at least for player characters. The chance of death, however, is always present in combat, and probably more frequently than in fiction, where the author controls the rolls of the dice.

You should avoid building stories which are only a framework for a gauntlet of combats. If combat is all there is to a story, players will grow bored with all the meaningless mayhem. If combats are too frequent, you will eventually be faced with a choice: to let characters live a short life span, or "cheat" and intervene to keep the player characters alive. If player characters die frequently, there is little chance of players investing energy in development, and ultimately in the game. And if you have to intervene often to keep characters alive, you eliminate the risk associated with combat, making it trivial violence rather than heroic battle. Real heroes must take real risks.

The Combat Round

A combat round represents 10 seconds of game time. There are nine types of actions you can take in combat: *attack, defense, intimidation, maneuver, movement, simple action, taunt, test of wills,* or a *trick.* In general, a character may only roll the die for one type of action in a round. The exceptions to this are listed under the multi-action rules in Gamemaster Chapter Two, and in the explanations of *flurry* and *haste* in Gamemaster Chapter Four.

An *attack* action is an action your character takes to damage a target. An attack action always requires a character to generate a total.

A *defense* action is use of a defensive skill such as *dodge.* A character rolls only when making active use of a defensive skill. All bonus numbers for active use of defensive skills have a minimum of 1.

Intimidation is a combat use of the *intimidation* skill. *Intimidation* can cause an opponent to lose a round, or worse.

Maneuver is aggressive movement designed to tire an opponent or throw her off balance. *Maneuver* is a *Dexterity* skill used against an opponent's *Dexterity* or *maneuver.*

A character generates a total on *movement* when trying to increase his speed; otherwise the character may move up to his movement limit without rolling the die.

A *simple action* is one such as shouting commands, loading a weapon, drawing a weapon, or similar easy task. Simple actions require no roll to perform. For an an action to be simple, it must meet two criteria:

1. The action must not be covered in the rules as any other type of action.

2. You must believe the action has very little chance of failure in this situation, a difficulty of 0 or less. If normal people can succeed at this action 95 percent of the time or more, then it is a simple action.

Taunt is a *Charisma* based skill, targeted against the opponent's *taunt* or *Charisma.* Taunting is an attempt to anger your opponent or otherwise cause her to mentally lose her balance in combat.

Test of wills is a character's attempt to break the will of his opponent. *Test* is a *Mind* skill and is targeted against the opponent's *test* or *Mind.*

Trick is an attempt to gain an advantage by setting up a feint, a trap, or a condition of which an opponent in unaware. *Trick* is a *Perception* skill and is used against an opponent's *trick* or *Perception.*

Initiative

As explained in Gamemaster Chapter Four, initiative is determined by flipping a card from the drama deck onto the action stack. Characters on the side with initiative act in descending order of *Dexterity*, high *Dexterity* to low *Dexterity*. Once all characters on the side with initiative have acted, the characters on the other side act, again in descending order of *Dexterity*. Once all characters who wish to and are capable of acting have acted, the round is over. A new round is started by flipping another card.

The Combat Results Table

The Combat Results Table (on page 40) lists the effect that a blow has on an opponent. The amount by which the damage total exceeds the opponent's *Toughness* is expressed in result points, and a corresponding combat result is read depending on whether the target is an Ord or a possibility-rated character. There are three types of damage and one special result from combat.

Shock damage is expressed in points, which are cumulative. If the total shock damage taken equals or exceeds the character's *Toughness*, the character falls unconscious. Shock damage is very short-lived. Every minute (six rounds) that passes eliminates one shock point from each living character.

The *knockout condition* is expressed as a letter, either a *K* or an *O*. When a character takes a K, he should record that on his template. If a character with a K on his template later takes an O, that's a KO, which knocks the character unconscious. Any Os taken before a K result have no effect, and are not recorded. A *K/O* result means that if the character has no knockout condition already, he takes a K. If he already has a K, he takes an O instead.

An O is short-lived; after a minute it disappears. A K condition lasts for half an hour, representing a more serious jolt to the nervous system. If a character already has a K result, and takes another, the shock damage for that blow only is increased by two. The additional K has no further effect.

Example: Quin Sebastian has already taken a K, and gets hit for a K 3. Quin takes 5 shock points.

Knockdown causes a character to spend his next action getting up, although he is not completely helpless - he may take a defensive or movement action (only).

Wounds are damage which last until healed, and which can prove fatal. There are four wound levels: *wounded, heavily wounded* (corresponds to two *wounds*), *mortally wounded* (corresponds to three *wounds*), and *dead* (four or more *wounds*). Wound levels are cumulative, so a *wound* followed by a *wound* is the same as taking a *heavy wound*, etc. The number of wound levels taken in a blow precedes the abbreviation "Wnd" on the combat result table. A character who reaches *heavy wound* in a round must pass his next action due to the pain (treat as a *knockdown*).

A character who is *mortally wounded* must take a point of shock damage each round until:

1. He receives medical attention or first aid to stop the effects of a *mortal wound*.

2. He takes shock damage in excess of his *Toughness*, in which case he dies.

A mortally wounded character may spend a Possibility to eliminate the point of shock damage each round, thus prolonging his life.

Stun Damage

Some types of attack do "stun" damage rather than regular damage. This includes blows from clubs, rubber bullets, fistfights, and knockout gas.

Stun damage does shock and KO damage just as regular blows; however, stun damage does not wound as frequently or severely.

When checking for damage from a stun-type weapon, ignore a *knockdown* result, treat a *wound* result as a *knockdown*, and any #Wnd result has the number reduced by one.

Example: The Yellow Crab is hit by a stun ray for 14 result points of damage. Normally this would be a 2 Wnd KO 5; because it is stun damage, it is reduced to Wnd KO 5.

Example: Quin is struck by a club for a Wnd K 3. It is treated as a knockdown K 3.

Healing

The rules for healing are covered more thoroughly in Player Section Chapter Two. Keep in mind the following:

1. There are six rounds to a minute, so one shock and all O conditions are removed after six card flips of the action stack.

2. *First aid* is useful for preventing *mortal wounds* from becoming fatal, and removes all shock and O conditions.

3. *Medicine* helps the wounded character heal himself, but cannot automatically heal wounds — only shock, K/O, and the imminent danger of death from a *mortal wound.*

Keeping Track of Damage

The wound levels are noted on the character templates. When a player character is wounded, the player should circle the appropriate wound level. Knockout conditions are noted by the K and O section of the template; again the player should circle the appropriate condition. Shock damage is recorded in the appropriate box.

You should record the wound levels of all characters you control, preferably on the same sheet as the other gamemaster character information.

Ranged Attacks

Ranged attacks are those made with weapons that fire projectiles of some kind (guns, bows) and thrown weapons (knives, spears). Projectile weapon ranges are listed in Gamemaster Chapter Twelve and are expressed as *short, medium* and *long*. As the range of a projectile weapon increases, its effectiveness decreases.

Ranged Attack Modifiers

Point-blank attacks are attacks at less than *short* range. The minimum bonus number for a point-blank attack is 1, as with active use of passive skills.

Short range has no modifiers.

Medium range has a -3 bonus number modifier.

Long range has a -5 bonus number modifier.

Weapons capable of automatic and burst fire are assumed to be firing in bursts. Subtract 3 from the damage total if such a weapon is fired single-shot. If the weapon is being fired at full automatic, add 3 to the bonus number. (A Thompson submachinegun can only fire at full automatic.)

A single-shot weapon may be fired multiple times in one round (using up more ammo, see below); this increases the damage total by 3.

Ammunition

Keeping exact track of every bullet, arrow and burst is a bookkeeping chore we do not recommend. It may be accurate, but we certainly don't think it's fun.

If you and your players are willing to play fast and loose with ammunition rules, let ammunition be a rare problem. If a *setback* card appears during play, inform your most trigger-happy players that they are running short on ammo.

Give the affected player from 5 to 10 combat rounds worth of ammunition, those who have been conserving ammo from 15 to 25 rounds, and start keeping track from that point. Make the shortness of ammunition work as a dramatic event, making each shot a decision.

If you and your player want a more exact measure, a fair approximation is to note on the party sheet how many combat rounds of ammunition each party member has. The equipment lists tell the number of combat rounds of ammunition that are in a single clip. For single-fire weapons the combat rounds of ammunition is the number of bullets carried.

Each combat round the party member uses his weapon, put a tick mark by the ammunition number. If the character is firing at more than one target, put as many ticks as shots taken; if the character fires multiple times at the same target, chalk off three rounds worth of ammo. If firing at full automatic, chalk off seven rounds worth of ammo. If a burst-fire weapon is fired single-shot, put one tick every three rounds.

Doing this accounting gives you a measure of ammunition we feel is accurate enough for a storytelling game.

If you are using ammunition rules, your players will also need to reload weapons. Loading a musket requires two rounds. Loading a revolver or rifle which must be loaded shell by shell, bullet by bullet, requires a round. Clip-loaded weapons require a simple action to reload — they may be loaded and fired in the same round. Drawing an arrow is a simple action, and can be done in conjunction with an attack. Loading a light crossbow takes a round, and loading a heavy crossbow requires two rounds.

Weapon Damage

When a character attacks another unarmed, the damage value is the attacker's *Strength* value. When the attacker uses a melee or missile weapon (strength-powered weapons) the weapons have adds to the damage value in much the same way as skills add to attributes. The *maximum value* for a weapon (as listed in Gamemaster Chapter Twelve) is the maximum damage value possible for the weapon.

Example: If Grod the ogre *(Strength* 17) picks up a short bow, it has 5 adds to damage and a damage maximum of 19. Grod does 19 damage with the short bow (plus bonus number) even though his damage value should be 24, because the puny human weapon cannot transmit all of his *Strength.*

Other races have weapons which are tailored to their race; their maxi-mum damage values are usually within three points of the racial maximum for *Strength* plus the damage adds of the particular weapon.

Example: Grod's Ogre Club give 7 adds and has a damage maximum of 25 (Ogre maximum of 17 plus 7 adds plus 1).

Weapons that provide their own power (most firearms, heavy weapons) are given an innate damage value. They do not add to a character's attributes in any way.

Attack Options

During combat rounds, characters have various options they may exercise when performing an *attack* action. This section is optional, but you will find it useful for judging player requests such as "I aim for the eyes," or "I want to go on all-out attack."

Aiming

A character may spend one round *aiming*. This may only be done with firearms and missile weapons, and requires the attacker to remain motionless and be undisturbed for that round. Next round, his attack value is increased by 3.

Vital Blow

A *vital blow* is an attack aimed at a vital spot (such as "aiming for the eye"). The acting value for the hit is decreased by 8 because of the control needed for the blow, while the damage value is increased by 4 due to the critical nature of the target. If a character is facing an unknown creature, he cannot take a vital blow if he does not know what parts are vital.

A vital blow may also be used to disarm an opponent who is using a hand-held weapon. The opponent's *Strength* score *(melee weapon* score if the defender is using a melee weapon) is used as the difficulty for the second total, rather than *Toughness.* If successful, the defender is disarmed.

All-Out Attack

All-out attack is a furious, deliberate attack for maximum effect which sacrifices defense to increase damage. This may only be done in unarmed combat or melee combat. An all-out attack increases the acting value of the attack by 3, and increases the damage value by 1. In addition, an all-out attack leaves the attacker vulnerable to counterattack; all blows aimed at the character doing the all-out attack have their bonus numbers increased by 3 for both action and effect.

An attacker may combine a vital blow with an all-out attack, resulting in a -5 attack value and a +5 damage value, with a +3 bonus to all attacks made on the character.

Sweep Attack

A *sweep attack* may only be made in unarmed combat, or with a melee weapon. A sweep attack lowers the damage value by 5 in order to boost the attack value by 5, as the attacker is making broad, sweeping attacks to maximize the area covered by an attack.

Opportunity Attack

A character taking an opportunity attack is waiting for a target to present itself later in the round. In effect, the character passes her action when it is her turn. As each target presents itself, she must either decide to attack then or wait for another target. If she waits, any target characters "passed over" may act and attack as they normally would. Opportunity attacks have a -3 bonus modifier for action and effect.

Location Attack

A location attack is an opportunity attack in which a character waits for the first target to present itself at a location, and then attacks it. Her attack is "held over" until the target appears, or until the end of the round. The character must specify a single location, such as a doorway, for a location attack. The location attack occurs as soon as the target presents itself. There is no penalty for a location attack.

Defense Options

A defensive skill may be used either passively or actively. A passive defense uses the defensive skill value as the difficulty number to hit the defending character. An actively defending character generates a total with her defensive skill. Any bonus number which is less than 1 becomes 1. The total is then the difficulty number to hit the character.

The *melee weapons* skill may be used as a defensive skill against melee and unarmed attacks. The *unarmed combat* skill may be used as the defensive skill against unarmed attacks, and melee attacks in the case of certain martial arts.

A character may declare an active defense at the moment of attack, presuming she has not already used her action that round.

Aggressive Defense

A character with either *unarmed* or *melee weapon* skill may use an *aggressive defense.* When using aggressive defense, the character may roll for an active defense, but the defense total is decreased by 2 (the minimum bonus is still 1). The character may also attack, but the attack value is decreased by 4. This is a special case of the mixed multi-action rule in Gamemaster Chapter Two.

Armor

Armor absorbs much of the punishment meant for characters. Armor increases the character's *Toughness* for purposes of resisting damage, up to a maximum value as listed in the equipment section (Gamemaster Chapter Twelve). The amount of increase is called the *armor add.* The maximum value is necessary for realism, to prevent wrapping a battleship in leather to make it tougher, when the leather would be completely ineffective against the attack forms against which a battleship is armored. Armor can also have a strength minimum required to wear it, which is particularly true of armor meant for large non-humans.

Terrain as Cover

Terrain which grants cover will often have an armor add. Use the chart below to judge the value of the terrain a character is in.

COVER VALUE CHART		
Type of Cover	Example	Add/Max.
Soft	Bush, car door	+3/15
Medium	Logs, brick wall	+10/25
Hard	Steel, stone wall	+15/40

Concealment

Concealment makes hitting a target more difficult. Partial concealment — up to half of the body concealed — or a body prone increases the difficulty to hit by 3. Medium concealment, with less than a quarter of the target exposed, increases the difficulty by 5. High concealment, such as an arrow slit, increases the difficulty by 10.

If an attack that would normally hit a target misses due to a cover modifier, you may rule that the attack hits, but the defender receives the armor adds listed above.

Situational Modifiers

Blindside

A blindside attack comes from a direction which is unexpected or which the defender cannot protect well. Hitting a character from behind is a blindside attack. Blindside attacks increase the attack bonus by 3.

Complete Surprise and Normal Surprise

There are two types of surprise: "complete" and "normal." *Complete* surprise is only possible when the target is unaware of the attacker's

ACTION SUMMARY

Tactic	Attribute
Intimidate	Spirit
Taunt	Charisma
Test	Mind
Trick	Perception

presence, and is not expecting any attack at all. Characters who routinely operate in dangerous environments where conflict is expected, such as policemen and soldiers, cannot be caught completely by surprise while on duty.

Complete surprise allows the attackers to play two cards into their card pool prior to combat, or (if the defenders are the player characters), prevents the defenders from adding any cards to their pools for the first two rounds.

Normal surprise occurs when the defenders may be expecting an attack, but do not know the time or exact location of the attack, such as an ambush of a patrol. Normal surprise allows the attackers to play one card into their pool prior to combat, or prevents them from adding a card into their pool for the first round.

Intimidation, Taunt, Test, and Trick

Intimidation, *taunt*, *test*, and *trick are* interactive skills that can be used in combat to slow or stop an opponent. Use the Interactive Results Table on page 40. It lists the number of result points achieved, and the effect of the action.

Taking the Action

Performing one of these actions is like any other: a total is generated and compared to the corresponding value of the target. The target uses the similar skill to defend, or the base attribute if he does not have the skill, as summarized above.

When using any of these tactics, the player should tell you what effect he

would like to have before rolling for the action.

Example: The Crab is fighting an Edeinos warrior. Chris says the Crab is *tricking* the Edeinos by throwing sand in its face — if he succeeds, the opponent should be blinded so the Crab can make his escape.

Example: Crowfire *taunts* an opponent. Winter suggests that if the *taunt* is successful, the opponent rushes forward with a roar, heedless of the steep cliff behind Crowfire. If she can succeed at an *acrobatics* roll, the opponent hurtles off the cliff.

Effects

As shown on the Interactive Results Table, these skills can have the following effects: *unskilled*, *stymied*, *setback*, *break*, *up/setback* and *player's call.* Of course, these effects are suffered only by the target, not his whole faction.

Unskilled

The target character acts as though unskilled in her next round. If the target was already unskilled, there is no additional effect.

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Stymied

As described in Gamemaster Chapter Four, when an opponent is *stymied,* she loses one additional roll to which she would otherwise be entitled. This includes *hero* and *drama* cards (for player characters), Possibilities, and natural additional rolls on 10s and 20s.

If an opponent is suffering from a *stymie* when an *up* result occurs on the conflict line, the two effects cancel. The opponent is neither *up* nor *stymied.*

Setback

Setback is as described in Gamemaster Chapter Four. If you decide the situation warrants it, the setbacks may have different effects for *test* and *trick*. A setback caused by a *trick* may give the opponent's next attacker +5 to his bonus, whereas a setback caused by a *test* might cause the opponent to take no harmful action that round.

Break

When an opponent *breaks,* she will flee if she does not successfully attack that round. This is exactly the same as the *break* result described in Gamemaster Chapter Four.

Up/Setback

Not only is the opponent set back, but the attacker is *up* at his next opportunity as well, as defined in Gamemaster Chapter Four.

Player's Call

When a *player's call* result is earned, whatever effect the player declared before rolling is what happens, perhaps with minor modifications if you think the situation warrants. The opponent is blinded, or topples off the cliff, etc. This result is, obviously, extremely powerful; use your judgment as to what should and shouldn't be allowed, but try to err in the players' favor.

Active Defense

All four of these skills may be used actively as defensive skills, against an attacker's use of the same skill. A character may even defend another character with this active defense; the active defense becomes the difficulty number for the attempt by the enemy. This sort of defensive use assumes that the defending character is using his skill to warn the target character of the enemy's intentions and actions.

Example: Crowfire is using the *taunt* skill defensively for Quin, who is being taunted by a Ravagon. She warns Quin of the creatures treachery, even hurling a *taunt* of her own at the winged enemy. Crowfire's *taunt* total becomes the Ravagon's difficulty number for taunting Quin, rather than Quin's *taunt*. Should the Ravagon still *taunt* successfully, Quin bears the consequences, not Crowfire.

Parenthetical Skill Values

Some gamemaster characters may have *parenthetical skill values.* These are used for defense only, but may be used for passive or active defense. If a character has a non-parenthetical value as well, then he can use that skill as an attack.

Example: A mummy has *taunt(l7).* This is its defensive value. As it has no non-parenthetical value listed, in order to launch a *taunt* attack it must use its base attribute, in this case *Charisma.*

Maneuver

Maneuver is used in a manner similar to the skill above; it is a *Dexterity* skill rolled against the opponent's *maneuver* or *Dexterity. Maneuver* is used to exhaust an opponent, getting him to waste energy, putting him at a severe disadvantage over the length of the fight. The possible results of a *maneuver* are *unskilled, fatigued, stymied!fatigued, setback/fatigued* and *player's call.*

Gamemaster Hints

Using interactive skills in combat can be tricky. There will be. many times when it just doesn't seem right to you to allow a player to *taunt* the mummy or whatever. In these situations, use your judgment. If it doesn't seem right — it probably isn't. Make the player think of something else. Here are some guidelines:

Intimidation requires very little action on the part of the attacker. One can be intimidated by another's mere physical presence. However, to be intimidated implies some degree of intellect on the part of the target — it would be difficult to *intimidate* a giant slug, for instance.

Test of wills should require some active attempt on the attacker's part. *Test* is more nebulous than *intimidate* and so can be used more often, but its use is more restrictive. The attacker must lock eyes with the target, or speak so that he can be understood, etc.

Taunt obviously requires that the target understand the taunt or insult in some way. Even a dog can be *taunted* in the right circumstances, but you cannot insult something that cannot understand you. Also, certain creatures known for icy calm (oracles, zombies and other undead) are probably bad subjects for *taunt*.

Trick is also quite nebulous, but requires activity on the attacker's part. Verbal *tricks* (also known as "cons") require the target's understanding. Physical *tricks,* such as sand in the eyes, can be performed on just about anything.

For more hints about running these skills, see the Adventure Book.

Fatigued is as the conflict line result described in Chapter Four, except that only the target takes the shock damage, not his whole faction. *Fatigue* can be combined with *stymied* and *setback.* All these results are as described above.

Maneuver may be used actively as a defensive skill, against another character's *maneuver* attempt. A character may use a *maneuver* in active defense even if she is not the character targeted by the *maneuver;* she harries the harrier, possibly causing the attacker to fail.

Explosives

Explosive attacks always hit targets within range of the explosion. Explosive attacks have three ranges, as given in the equipment section (Chapter Twelve): short, medium and long. Attacks at short range use their full damage value. For targets at medium range the damage value is reduced by 3. For attacks at long range the damage value is reduced by 5.

Movement

A character can walk 10 meters in a round, and run at the value of his or her movement limit. If a creature has a different movement limit than a human character, and you feel that its walking speed should be something other than 10 meters, subtract five from its movement value to find its walking score.

Example: A giant has a movement value of 14 .14 minus 5 = 9. The giant has a walking value of 9, for a measure of 60 meters per round without even trying.

Characters who are walking in combat suffer no penalty to their action total. Characters moving faster than a walk have the difficulty numbers of any attacks they make increased by 3 while they are moving.

Characters who are running are also harder to hit; add a difficulty modifier for fast-moving targets.

Chases

Chases occur frequently in adventure fiction, and require special rules to reflect the back-and-forth nature of two opponents who are evenly matched in speed. As gamemaster, you need to know two things during a chase: where the combatants are in relation to one another, and where they are in relation to the rest of the world.

Chases require two totals. A character's appropriate skill value is used to generate the first total; the second total comes from the speed value of the character, or the animal or vehicle she is riding/driving.

The first total is generated simultaneously by each opponent in the chase; the character with the higher total may choose to either close with or avoid the opponent.

Example: Quin is being chased by a jeep full of Nile Empire shocktroopers; they are about 40 meters behind him. His driving skill is 10, the shocktrooper's is 9. Paul and the gamemaster roll, and Quin ends up with a higher total than the shocktrooper driver. Paul declares that Quin will avoid; regardless of the distances travelled (even if the shocktroopers' vehicle is faster), the shocktroopers cannot close with Quin this round; his driving skill keeps them at bay.

To find the distance traveled by each opponent (which is independent of who won the first skill comparison), the bonus number is used to obtain a value modifier on the Push Results table (see page 40) for the person's or vehicle's speed value. The bonus number is used directly because the acting value and the difficulty are the same number in this case: the speed value of the vehicle. The amount of distance moved by each opponent is recorded, regardless of who won the skill comparison.

Example: Quin's truck in the previous example has a speed value of 8. His bonus was 4, for a value modifier of +1. The truck travels at a speed of 9,

or 60 meters this round (if the gamemaster is keeping track on a map, he advances the truck 60 meters); the shocktroopers' bonus was 3, for a +1 value modifier. Their jeep has a speed value of 9, plus 1 equals 10; the jeep travels 100 meters this round.

If the slower participant in a chase won the skill check, he is assumed to have evaded, tricked or otherwise outmaneuvered his opponent. Both vehicles travel the full distance generated by their speed, but the relative distance is not changed. In the above example, the shocktroopers' jeep moves 100 meters, but does not get any closer to Quin.

A slow driver can only evade, however, if there is some lateral movement possible: i.e., the chase is taking place in open desert, there are side streets or railroad switches, etc.

If opponent's speeds are the same in a round, the winner of the skill roll can open or close the distance, by an amount equal to the difference between the top end and the bottom end of the particular movement value.

Example: Quin and the shocktroopers are both traveling at speed 9 this round, after applying value modifiers (Quin won the skill roll). Since the value of 9 represents a measure of between 41 and 60 meters per round, Quin can increase the distance between them by about 20 meters this round (60 minus 41).

Vehicle Fatigue

Push Result Table modifiers are accompanied by a fatigue result in parentheses. Since vehicles have a *Toughness,* they can also suffer fatigue. When a vehicle's shock damage equals its *Toughness,* it "falls unconscious" — stalls and refuses to start, loses a wheel, etc.

Chapter Seven

The Possibility Wars and the High Lords

The first six chapters of this section have dealt mainly with the rules of the game - the nuts and bolts. Many of the concepts that follow — magic, miracles, equipment and so on — require some knowledge of the basis of the game, the reality that explains why things work the way they do. While this chapter and the two that follow do contain game rules, they also provide background that will help you better understand the world of *Torg*.

Cosms

A *cosm* is an entire universe which was, at the time of its creation, physically separate from every other cosm (meaning that there is no purely physical way to travel from cosm to cosm). Most cosms are separated in other ways as well. Most cosms have realities which are at least a little different from one another; some are drastically different.

Possibility Energy

Each cosm is imbued with a form of energy that allows the limits of reality to be expanded, or that allows events to be changed in exceptional ways. This energy is called *possibility energy.* Possibility energy is a unique force which can only be tapped through the interaction of living beings and unliving objects according to an arcane set of laws (see Gamemaster Chapter Eight).

Possibility energy may be harnessed directly though the will of the being who possesses the energy, as well as through other strange, more mechanical means; a character who can tap and store possibility energy can perform feats and survive dangers far beyond those possible for normal beings. With knowledge and skill, possibility energy can even be used to alter reality itself. Only a small number of beings are blessed with the ability to store significant amounts of possibility energy and tap what they have stored; far fewer are those who have mastered its secrets.

Stored possibility energy is given the shorthand name of "Possibilities," as the stored energy gives its possessor a great range of possible actions.

Maelstrom Bridges

How it happened is not known, but it was inevitable: an entity in one cosm discovered the existence of other cosms. Whether this being was wizard or technician, scientist or priest, mad or sane, male or female; on these points the legends disagree. They do agree that this being also discovered the concept of the *Maelstrom Bridge:* an extra-dimensional force capable of bridging the gap from one cosm to another.

When the two cosms were linked, another, accidental, discovery was made: the clash of two realities created a violent flux of energy, dubbed a *reality storm.* The bridge was destroyed along with much around it.

Theory and experiment eventually yielded the reason for the storm: as the two realities came into conflict, raw possibility energy was unleashed by the "Everlaws" of the cosmverse (see Gamemaster Chapter Eight); this energy would ultimately explode into

the violence of a reality storm as nature attempted to reconcile the existence of two separate cosms in one place.

The energy released was vast and potent. If there was a way to harness that energy, incredible power could be had.

Possibility Raiders

A way was found. With the use of a Darkness Device (see page 86), the cosm-bridgers soon became Possibility Raiders, invading cosm after cosm to drain worlds of their possibility energy. They grew in power, and when a Raider's lieutenant discovered his own Darkness Device, he would soon try to invade a new cosm and become an independent Raider in turn.

These Possibility Raiders who controlled Darkness Devices became known as *High Lords.* A High Lord, with his Darkness Device helping him to strip the possibility energy from an invaded cosm, could shape the cosm to his liking, tinker with its reality, alter even the contours of the land itself. Others traveled with and served the High Lord for the usual reasons — lust for power, a love of destruction, a desire to inflict pain on others, a desire to live longer than nature intends. A few joined the Possibility Raiders with less villainous motives, but they were either subverted or shunted aside by the more ambitious.

Realms

Prior to an invasion, a High Lord infiltrates agents into the target cosm, crossing the gap between cosms with *dimthreads,* miniature, short-lived versions of the full-fledged Maelstrom Bridge. These agents prepare the area where a High Lord is planning to invade by placing stelae (see below).

When a High Lord invades a cosm, a Maelstrom Bridge tears through time, space, and reality to connect the two cosms. The area bounded by the stelae ultimately becomes the High Lord's realm. The *realm* is that part of the invaded cosm whose laws are changed

by the High Lord. When an entire cosm becomes subjugated to a High Lord, the High Lord essentially owns two cosms.

Stelae

Stelae are arcane artifacts produced by a Darkness Device (some legends say that the first stelae arrived with a Darkness Device, others claim that the device brought with it the methods for constructing the stelae); in each cosm, a stelae manifests itself in a different way, so that in the Living Land they may resemble mummified animal carcasses, whereas in the Nile Empire they resemble stone obelisks. Whatever the physical manifestation, the stelae are used for essentially the same purpose in every cosm.
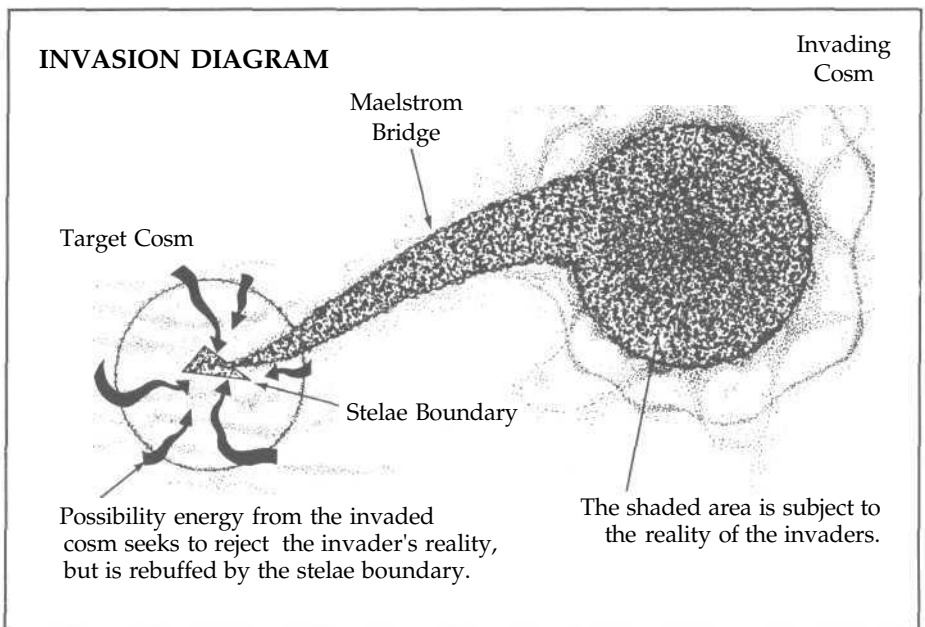
A High Lord uses stelae in three ways. The first use is to seal off a realm from the rest of the invaded cosm, acting as a protective boundary which prevents the full possibility energy of a cosm from reacting to the invading reality. Without this protection, the possibility energy of the invaded cosm would be far greater than that of the realm, which is limited to the amount of energy provided by the "possibility pipeline" of the Maelstrom Bridge connecting the realm to the invading cosm.

The second use of stelae is to absorb the possibility energy that is drained from living beings by the process of the invasion. When living beings inhabit a realm filled with an alien reality, a small amount of possibility energy within them is drained away; the stelae absorb this energy and transmit it through the network of stelae to the Darkness Device, where it is stored for use by the High Lord.

The third use of stelae is as a transmission point for the powers of a Darkness Device (see page 88). These powers can be used to aid a High Lord or other being allied with the Possibility Raiders.

Strong empirical evidence suggests that the maximum range to which stelae can transmit or absorb energy is 300 miles (500 kilometers). High Lords bent on efficient conquest try to extend their holdings by placing the stelae in a triangular pattern; triangles which have sides 300 miles long are the most efficient. Terrain and strategic considerations usually force the High Lords to use a less efficient pattern.

Stelae are difficult to produce, and the process varies with each cosm. The process of stelae creation seems to be such that a High Lord is hard-pressed to manufacture 18 a month, and six is the more usual pace. Prior to an invasion, a High Lord gears up production

INVASION DIAGRAM

Invading Cosm

Maelstrom Bridge

Target Cosm

Stelae Boundary

Possibility energy from the invaded cosm seeks to reject the invader's reality, but is rebuffed by the stelae boundary.

The shaded area is subject to the reality of the invaders.

of stelae until he has about twice what he believes he will need for the initial landing of the Maelstrom Bridge. This buys the Raiders some maneuvering room, and the ability to use the stelae to build defensive positions, such as placing a stelae within a bound area as a "second line of defense" in case Storm Knights find and destroy a boundary stelae.

No single stelae may connect to more than six other stelae. A stelae placed so that it would try to connect to seven or more others would simply not connect. Within that limit, stelae always attempt to connect to all stelae within 300 miles, as long as that connection would not cross other connections.

Planting Stelae

Planting stelae usually involves a complicated ritual or process, depending on whether the realm has spiritual, magical or technological leanings. The process can take from 15 minutes to two hours, depending on the cosm.

Once the stelae is planted, it immediately becomes part of the existing network (subject to the limitations mentioned above), shielding the invading laws from those of the target cosm, and transmitting and absorbing energy.

Conquering Reality

A High Lord's ultimate goal is to subjugate the native reality to his own. The resulting surges of possibility energy caused by the conflict — the same energy that destroyed the first Maelstrom Bridges — are tapped by the stelae and the Darkness Device, providing the High Lord with the power he craves.

In order to capture an area, two conditions must be met: the unliving reality of the High Lord's cosm must be successfully introduced within the stelae boundaries, and living beings who live in that reality, or living beings who are prepared to accept that reality, must be present. For a standard stelae area, it is estimated that 25,000 beings must be from the invading reality, or must be natives ready to accept the new reality.

If the High Lord chooses a direct approach, armies or vast migrations of people from the invading cosm cross into the bounded realm as soon as the stelae are placed. Other High Lords are more devious, sending a greater number of agents to recruit natives prior to or just after the Bridge appears. These agents are often trained in rituals or processes for transforming converts, so they can help support the new reality.

In the course of the Possibility Wars, Storm Knights will attempt to sway populations in order to reduce the number of believers in a realm below the critical 25,000. They will also try to find and destroy bounding stelae. A third tactic is to act as a catalyst for a reality storm which can transform the current reality into something else.

Draining Possibilities

The Everlaw's reaction to the invasion keeps the possibility energy flowing to the High Lords, and living beings

Stelae Placement
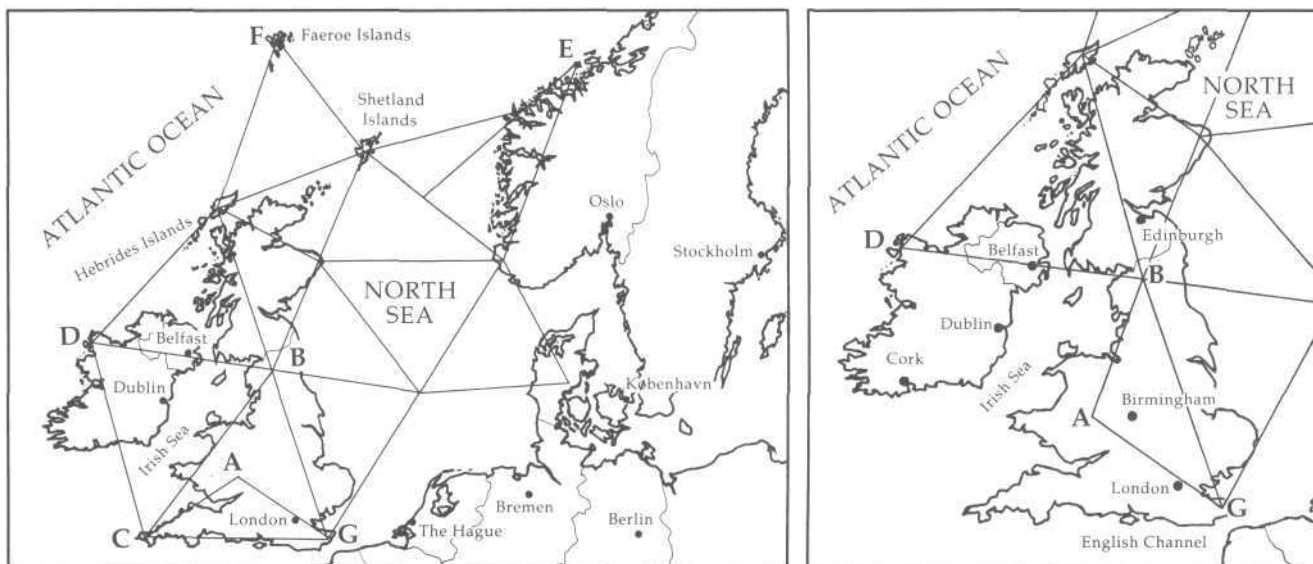
In the above diagram, note that when stelae A is placed, it does not immediately connect to stelae B, since that would cause a seventh connection. It also does not connect to stelae D, since that would cross an existing connection between B and C. E and F do not connect since they are more than 300 miles apart.

Placing a stelae at A makes some sense; if stelae C were destroyed, all connections to C would be broken. A new connection would then form between A and B, and A and G, preserving part of central England for the invaders.

whose reality differs from the High Lord's reality are the catalysts for the reaction. Significant quantities of possibility energy may be drained as long as at least 10 percent of the population in a stelae-bounded area remain untransformed. Below that threshold the cost of extracting the possibility energy is greater than the energy obtained.

Thus, the High Lords must strike a balance between sufficient numbers of believers to confirm the invading reality, and sufficient numbers of disbelievers to provide the energy which is the ultimate goal of the invasion.

Mixed, Dominant and Pure Areas

When one cosm overlays another, such as when a High Lord drops a Maelstrom Bridge into an area bounded by stelae, the realities of the two cosms come into conflict. The Everlaws of One and Two interact, producing three different environments: *mixed, dominant,* and *pure.*

Mixed

A *mixed* reality contains two — and no more than two — realities which are in equal balance. Each reality works equally well, each is equally likely to disintegrate under pressure from the other. Mixed areas are the slowest to transform characters; characters in mixed areas can exist for years with little danger of transforming.

Mixed areas are unstable and naturally violent, filled with reality storms that tend to push the area itself toward one reality or another. Mixed areas will be transformed in this way within three to nine months, with 80 percent of the areas transforming within six months. A mixed area that was only recently tilted toward one reality can be returned to mixed if enough possibility energy from the other reality is added to the area.

Mixed zones often occur when new stelae are placed to bound an area. For a while, until the invading reality is confirmed by the presence of enough followers, the area is mixed between the two realities.

If additional realities intrude (through another invasion or through a suppressed reality gaining in power, etc.) into a mixed area, all but two of the realities are immediately suppressed; which reality is suppressed appears to be entirely a matter of chance.

Dominant

In a *dominant* area two realities coexist, but one reality is far stronger than the other; the dominant reality *suppresses* the other. Tasks which require the use of skills, items or abilities from the suppressed reality are called *suppressed tasks.* Such tasks cause "contradiction checks" as explained in Gamemaster Chapter Eight.

Given time, the suppressed reality will slowly unravel under pressure from the dominant reality: machines break down more quickly, ideas are harder to come by, magic fails more often than before, and the gods go silent. Characters whose reality is suppressed can still function by their own axioms, but life gets pretty tough after awhile.

If a dominant area is transformed through loss of the minimum necessary population of believers, it becomes a mixed reality. If energy is added to the dominant side, the area becomes pure for that side.

A dominant reality is the most stable type; an area where the Living Land is dominant will tend to stay that way, unless somehow jarred to become pure Living Land or mixed Living Land/Core Earth. Dominant areas are "spongy," bending and absorbing shock from the reality conflict. They can withstand the conflict far better than pure or mixed areas can.

Most cosms consist of approximately equal areas of dominant and pure realities. The greater the possibility energy potential of the cosm, the greater the percentage of dominant as opposed to pure areas. Core Earth is a prime example, having a high overall level of possibility energy, and containing far more dominant areas than pure.

While this may seem counterintuitive, it is actually the case that the greater the possibility energy of a cosm, the more able the cosm is to bend and mold to another reality, rather than breaking entirely. In addition, a large amount of possibility energy implies that other realities may exist more freely in the area by tapping that energy themselves.

Pure

A *pure* reality is one in which there is only **one** reality. Those who come from other cosms find themselves completely limited to the reality of the pure area. Ords cannot cause a contradiction there, and possibility-rated characters must build a reality bubble in order to cause a contradiction (see Gamemaster Chapter Eight). Pure areas expend a great deal of their available possibility energy keeping the reality pure. Pure areas therefore fiercely resist incursions from other cosms; however, if a pure area is tilted, for instance by the passage of a reality storm, it tends to flip directly to a dominated reality of the opposite type, or even a pure reality of the opposite type. Pure realities are tough to crack, but disintegrate completely if broken.

Draining Possibility Energy

A pure area drains possibility energy from characters faster than any other type, producing the most short-term benefit; dominant areas drain more slowly, but a dominant area can sustain the reaction for far longer, allowing more energy to be drained over time. As a rule of thumb, pure areas drain three units of possibility energy for every two units which can be extracted from a dominant area, but a dominant area provides energy five times longer than a pure.

Mixed areas are often useless to High Lords, as no energy can be drained from them; they can also be dangerous spawning grounds for opposition Storm Knights. While the High Lords are usually willing to wait for reality storms to tip the balance, they occasionally try to hasten the demise of a particularly troublesome mixed area.

Transformation

Eventually, an Ord in an alien pure or dominant area will be transformed into a close approximation of a "proper" denizen of that area. This transformation completely drains the character of possibility energy, as every iota of energy he possesses is used to survive the transformation. If a transformed character is later forced to transform again, he is destroyed.

Transformed characters must be refilled with possibility energy if they are to survive another transformation, a fact which Storm Knights bent on destroying stelae and liberating areas from alien axioms must factor into their strategy and tactics (see Gamemaster Chapter Nine).

The table below gives the number of people who will transform in a given area after a set period of time. We recommend that if you have gamemaster characters roaming across the realms, keep these percentages in mind, but decide if and when an important gamemaster character transforms based on its impact on the story line. If you really want to roll to determine whether or not she trans-

forms, use the roll numbers given on the table below. If the roll is equal to or greater than the roll number, the character transforms. When rolling, roll again on 10s and 20s as you would for a possibility-rated character.

Once transformed, the character no longer provides energy for the High Lord. However, transformed beings may be recruited as minions. They may also aid the High Lord unwittingly as they move into other areas that the High Lords wishes to conquer, helping fulfill the need for supporters of the High Lord's reality.

The Darkness Device

In every cosm, legends surround the appearance of a Darkness Device; as far as can be told, they are never native to the cosm in which they are found.

The most popular legends hold that an immensely powerful being, often identified only as the Nameless One, sent the devices blindly through the extradimensional cracks of the

cosmverse in which it has been imprisoned for uncountable time. The Nameless One hopes the devices will travel to inhabited cosms, to be found and used by some ambitious beings. Created from a need to destroy, filled with a hunger for destruction, the Darkness Devices look for those who can magnify the destruction within them. If the destruction wrought by the Device and its user is great enough, the Nameless One (so the legends say) will be drawn to the destruction, and be freed from its prison to journey to the new cosm.

The Darkness Device absorbs and stores possibility energy stolen from other sources. Once understood, the Darkness Device can confer great power upon the user, who must be a possibility-rated being. The Darkness Device is reputed to be able to sense intent of or perhaps even read the thoughts of those who would use it. Those whose destructive urges could prove useful to the Device's creator find they have a relatively easy time of figuring out how the device works. Others may never understand the operation of a Darkness Device. A High Lord is a being who has attuned and mastered many of the intricacies of a Darkness Device. Therefore, almost by definition, a High Lord is a being who causes great destruction.

A Darkness Device can only be moved by invoking one of its powers. Unless under the effect of the power, it is immobile. Darkness Devices are also the most indestructible objects ever discovered; no force yet wielded by a mortal has ever harmed a Darkness Device sufficiently to affect its operation. A Darkness Device can easily survive a cataclysm which would annihilate a sun.

Only one being may be attuned to a Darkness Device at one time. When the original user dies, another may take his place. The only other way a connection with a Darkness Device may be cut is if the user is caught in the maelstrom of a reality storm. The severity of the maelstrom, with its constantly shifting swirls of possibility energy, is sufficient to disrupt the connection.

This disruption is only temporary; if the High Lord is not transformed as

TRANSFORMATION TABLE

Time	Pure Area Transform	Roll#	Dominant Area Transform	Roll#
1 second	1 / E7	105	2/E8	130
1 minute	5 / E6	90	9/E7	100
1 hour	3 / E4	60	5/E5	77
1 day	7/1000	40	1/E4	72
1 week	5/100	26	9/1000	38
1 month	20/100	18	4/100	28
3 months	50/100	12	11/100	19
6 months	75/100	6	25/100	17
1 year	93/100	3	37/100	14
18 months	98/100	2	50/100	12
2 years	100/100	—	60/100	9
3 years	100/100	-	75/100	6
4 years	100/100	—	84/100	4
5 years	100/100	_	90/100	3

The "E" notation is shorthand for large numbers. "E7" would be 10,000,000, which is 10 to the seventh power, or a one followed by seven zeroes.

Rick Harris

a result of the maelstrom, the connection is reestablished the instant the High Lord emerges from the maelstrom.

Darkness Device

DEX: 0   PER: 20
STR: 0   MIN: 40
TOU: 200   CHA: 25
                SPI: 40

Possibility Potential
Always

Natural Tools
Powers that vary per cosm

Equipment
None

Skills

Find	*25*
Language	*27*
Trick	*21*
Test	*41*
Charm	*26*
Persuasion	*30*
Taunt	*26*
Faith	*50*
Focus	*41*
Intimidation	*41*
Reality	*50*
Willpower	*41*

Device Skills

The Darkness Device can use its skills in self defense. The device can directly use its skills only on someone within 100 meters of the device; this is one of the reasons Darkness Devices can lie hidden for millennia. Until a living being comes within range, the Darkness Device can do nothing to further its mission except wait.

Device Powers

No two Darkness Devices are identical in the powers they possess; it is probable that Darkness Devices can absorb or even create new powers, in order to initiate an act of destruction that would signal their creator. Every Darkness Device yet discovered is known to have the following abilities:

• To transfer possibility energy to the attuned High Lord, or to another being of the High Lord's choice. The being must voluntarily accept the Possibilities. The rate of transfer varies, usually in the range of two to four Possibilities an hour. A Darkness Device can transfer possibility energy to anyone within 50 kilometers (30 miles) of itself or 10,000 meters (six miles) of any connected stelae.

• To spend extra Possibilities on actions for the High Lord. These Possibilities are spent in the same way as for a possibility-rated character. For example, the Darkness Device is limited to spending one Possibility to remove damage, even though the Possibilities in a single Device run to the thousands. The High Lord may add his own Possibilities to the number spent by the Device, so a High Lord could spend two Possibilities to remove damage. A Darkness Device can spend possibility energy for a High Lord anywhere within 50 kilometers (30 miles) of itself or 10,000 meters (six miles) of a connected stelae.

• A Darkness Device can automatically communicate with any being to whom the High Lord has given possibility energy, as long as the being is within an area bounded by the stelae of the cosm, or is within 100 kilometers (60 miles) of the boundary. The Darkness Device may transfer one of its skills to this character, but no more than one skill may be "lent out" at one time. Such a transfer is instantaneous, but the grant requires that the recipient spend a Possibility. The only skill which may not be transferred is the Darkness Device's *reality* skill. It is not impossible, but the Darkness Device will not part with the skill, for it would then forever lose its other powers, which spring from its ability to mold possibility energy.

• For each stelae laid so as to form a new bounded area of maximum size (an area which the High Lord has never bound, not one which he is merely reclaiming), the Darkness Device will do one of the following:

— Scan the entire area bounded by the stelae, and temporarily mark every possibility-rated character in the realm with a *soulstain*. The stain fades after several days (five percent chance of fading per day), but during this time these characters may be tracked by Ravagons (see below) and their locations known precisely by the attuned High Lord.

— Energize three ritually prepared stelae so they may be used for boundaries. A stelae manufactured by a High Lord has no power until it has been energized by a Darkness Device.

- Reverse the aging process of a character of the High Lord's choice (including himself) for a period of approximately three years (meaning that for the next three years the character will age backward). This ability fluctuates, sometimes granting much more life, sometimes much less, depending on the machinations of the device.

- Transfer the Darkness Device from one point in the cosm to any other point in the cosm, including across a Bridge to the home cosm or invaded realm.

- Bump one axiom level up or down by one point, or make an alteration to a world rule of the cosm (see Gamemaster Chapter Eight). The bump does not take effect immediately; instead, the Darkness Device begins to filter and correct all of the possibility energy it drains in order to produce the new reality. It can take a few weeks to several months for the change to manifest itself, but within a decade a High Lord can create huge changes in the reality he chooses to inhabit. A High Lord can speed up this process if he is willing to burn out some stelae by reversing the flow of energy to "broadcast" the new reality. Usually a High Lord must sacrifice an in-place stelae for each point by which he is bumping the axioms, or for each world rule he is altering.

• For each new cosm invaded and subjugated, the Darkness Device can either increase an attribute of the High Lord's choice by one to seven points, depending on the possibility energy of the cosm, or grant the High Lord three to 15 additional skill adds, again depending on the possibility energy of the cosm. This is the only method by which a High Lord may increase his skills and attributes.

Torg

To become *Torg* is every High Lord's ultimate goal. To become Torg means to fully merge with a Darkness Device, to mesh oneself with one's cosm to the point where one can be aware of and affect anything in the cosm. This awareness is voluntary and selective, saving the sanity of the High Lord, but by this power the High Lord can, for a brief time, wield powers rivaling the greater gods. Being Torg frees a High Lord from the entropy of time, granting real immortality; being Torg gives a High Lord a taste of the infinite, and removes some of the restrictions on use placed on or by the Darkness Device. The powers within a Darkness Device may now be used as follows, as long as the Torg has possibility energy to power them:

• The Torg receives possibility energy directly, at double the normal rate, anywhere in his cosm.

• The Torg may spend two Possibilities to remove damage, anywhere in his cosm.

• The Torg possesses all the skills of the Darkness Device, including its *reality* skill.

• The Torg may scan and soulstain, energize stelae, reverse the aging process, move the Darkness Device, and bump axiom levels without the restriction of capturing new areas. Axiom change is still a slow process.

• The Torg's attributes and skills increase with each cosm conquered.

To become Torg requires tremendous resources and an equal amount of arrogance. To become Torg is a dangerous process, one which might fail as easily as it might succeed.

First, the High Lord must accumulate a phenomenal amount of possibility energy. The cosm of Core Earth contains the necessary Possibilities, being unusually strong in this regard. Unseen, untapped, nearly unreachable, to absorb this energy means tinkering with a Darkness Device, increasing its capacity, and risking its destruction. Absorbing this much energy also risks the stelae which are planted; if too many of them burn out at once, the native cosm will pour in unrestrained across hundreds of miles of

invaded territory, causing a reality storm larger than any ever seen, sufficient to destroy the realm, sufficient to destroy the maelstrom bridge, sufficient perhaps to kill the High Lord.

Second, to become Torg it is necessary to develop a method of sorting Possibilities, of selecting and separating the desirable from the undesirable. Sorting Possibilties is a tricky business, and being possibility-rated is necessary, but not enough. To sort through Possibilities, to see where each might lead and to gather the correct ones, requires creativity, imagination and insight. These are qualities which are often muted in a being who is connected to the needful, destructive hunger of a Darkness Device. Only when all of his Possibilities are sorted, ordered and placed in a specified pattern can a High Lord construct the reality of a mortal being reborn as the Torg.

Finally, an incredible amount of physical energy is required. The energy is fired through the Possibility pattern mentioned above, burning along the latticework of the almost-real and perhaps-true to create an eternal reality. Such energy must be released all at once at several points along the latticework. The energy required is more than a billion times the firepower stored in all the nuclear arsenals of Earth.

The Gaunt Man came to Earth to become Torg; he has plans for all three steps. All his plans are now in motion, a precise clockwork of destruction and death. No one has ever come so close to becoming Torg. See the World Book to see how the Storm Knights might stop the Gaunt Man. See the Adventure Book to understand the consequences of their failure.

The Minions

As powerful as they are, the High Lords are not capable of conquering realities by themselves. They require armies to seize ground and hold the axioms, agents and creatures who can deal with the Storm Knights who arise to oppose them, and competent subordinates who can keep the reality-

crushing process running smoothly.

Each High Lord will have many unique minions drawn from his own cosm, but there are some minions common to all High Lords.

Gospog

The Possibility Raiders quickly found they had a pressing need for expendable troops to push forward their boundaries against determined opposition. The Gaunt Man invented the solution in his cosm of Orrorsh: the *gospog.*

Gospog are the result of dark spiritual power and peculiar technology; they are grown from seeds planted in prepared fields of corpses taken from the invaded cosm. Each field must be planted with the seeds five times. After each planting is harvested, the next planting begins. Each successive planting yields far fewer gospog, but with each successive planting the gospog are far more powerful.

The table below lists the planting, the weeks it takes to grow each planting, when the planting appears from the time the field is started, and the yield of each planting. The yield is also limited by the number of corpses which have been prepared; a High Lord can never get more gospog from a planting than the number of bodies which have been prepared. A common gospog field has 10,000 corpses.

GOSPOG CHART

Plant.	Weeks	Ready by End of Week	Yield
First	1	1	10,000
Second	3	4	1,000
Third	5	9	100
Fourth	7	16	10
Fifth	11	25	1

Gospog of the first planting vary little from cosm to cosm. They grow to resemble the bodies which line the field, being part flesh but largely plant (particularly in the veins and ligaments). Several seeds can take the shape of a single body, or combine

features from several bodies as the plant matures.

Gospog of the first planting all have the same same skills; they are a High Lord's generic soldier, useful in many cosms.

Beginning with the second planting, the gospog vary according to cosm; the second planting in a fantasy cosm will not much resemble the planting in the New Empire of the Nile. See the World Book for examples of gospog.

Beginning with the fourth planting, gospog may vary even within a cosm. How much they vary depends partly on how ordered the High Lord is trying to keep his cosm. See the World Book.

Gospog of the First Planting

DEX:8	PER: 7
STR:8	MIN:7
TOU:8	CHA:7
	SPI:7

Possibility Potential
None

Natural Tools
Armor—defense value 10

Equipment
None

Skills
Energy Weapons	9
Fire Combat	9
Melee Weapons	9
Missile Weapons	9
Unarmed Combat	9
Climbing	9
Find	10
Tracking	8
Willpower	10

Ravagons

Ravagons are an ancient, powerful race from a world long ago drained by the Gaunt Man. They had the potential for fierce opposition, and the Gaunt Man chose to subvert and coax them to his side rather than expend considerable energy to obliterate them. Since that time the Ravagons have served the Gaunt Man, and other High Lords who have maintained cordial relations with this most powerful Possibility Raider. Those High Lords the Gaunt Man chose to help him invade Earth have all received Ravagons to aid in battle and to hunt down Storm Knights wherever they may appear.

Ravagons can acquire other skills, but all Ravagons used by the High

Ravagons

DEX:9	PER: 10
STR:14	MIN:8
TOU:10	CHA:8
	SPI:8

Possibility Potential
Always

Natural Tools
Armor—defense value 13
Talons—damage value 16
Wings—speed value 13

Equipment
None

Skills
Flight	15
Maneuver	15
Stealth	12
Unarmed Combat	11
Find	12
Language	11
Tracking	11
Trick	12
Test	9 (12)
Taunt	9 (12)
Intimidation	11
Reality	10

Lords have at least these skills at this level. Ravagons usually have from five to 10 Possibilities, but important leaders and wily veterans may have considerably more.

Lieutenants

The High Lords differ in approach when it comes to selecting lieutenants. Possibility-rated characters are the most effective, but their ambitions can include becoming a High Lord, which can be unsettling or even dangerous to the current High Lord. The Gaunt Man uses the most possibility-rated lieutenants, while Doctor Mobius (High Lord of the New Empire of the Nile) uses the fewest. The average High Lord has four to eight powerful possibility-rated lieutenants; the Gaunt Man has at least a dozen.

All of the High Lords also find it useful to have powerful Ords as lieutenants. They typically have 15 to 20 Ord lieutenants, who conduct important operations within the realm or cosm, where possession of the *reality* skill is not as important. Doctor Mobius, who appoints "lieutenants" who serve him only indirectly, has over 100 Ord lieutenants.

The attributes and skills of the lieutenants vary too widely to give an average lieutenant. However, lieutenants are usually the best the High Lord could find for whatever task required the lieutenant. The High Lords go through considerable trouble to assure the loyalty of their lieutenants, although the Gaunt Man is so secure in his own power that his lieutenants are not as carefully held in check.

Chapter Eight

Everlaws and Axioms

"May your scales be more resplendent than the moon, Baruk Kaah, Saar of Edeinos, you who know all under the moon. I humbly remind you that while this world is yours to command, there are still divine laws which even you may not break, nor even bend for long."

—the advisor Plassurid, shortly before being eaten

The Everlaws have existed for as long as anyone in any cosm has been recording history; they are believed to be universal truths that hold from cosm to cosm, no matter what the differences between the cosms. The two confirmed Everlaws are the basis of the technique developed by the Possibility Raiders for draining worlds of their possibility energy.

The Everlaw of One

There are thousands upon millions of possible futures for every world which exists. Some possible futures differ from one another only in minutiae, others may have fundamental differences. But only one of those possible futures may become reality, due to the Everlaw of One. The Everlaw of One states that only one possibility from a set of two or more contradictory possibilities can become a reality at one time. In other words, a world in which you are going to die and stay alive at the same time is not allowed. Either you live or you don't.

The Everlaw of One acts to eliminate contradictions, keeping reality "on the straight and narrow." The Everlaw of One strips away possibility energy from the cosm, then uses that energy to put things right by changing one or more of the contradictory elements. If by some chance two possible futures began to coexist, and you one day found yourself simultaneously dead and alive (somewhat difficult to imagine), the Everlaw of One would change one of the conditions; soon you would either be dead or alive. While you might have a definite preference, the Everlaw chooses the outcome which requires the least amount of change, and the least expenditure of energy.

The Everlaw of Two

A cosm spawns an amazing variety of animals, living beings, landforms, plants, minerals and astral bodies. But a fundamental relationship exists between the *living* in a cosm and the *unliving* elements which constitute that cosm. The Everlaw of Two states that the living and the unliving are linked by the rules of their cosm, and this link causes possibility energy to flow between the living and the unliving. The living may use the possibility energy to create and change their world. Possibility energy is only generated when the living and unliving interact through the "axioms" of that world.

The Everlaw of Two is weaker than the Everlaw of One, and can be interrupted by the arcane devices of the High Lords. To do this, the invader overlays a new set of rules on top of the proper unliving axioms, so that the invading axioms take precedence.

The living being is still connected to his unliving axiom, and sends it possibility energy. But when the unliving seeks to return that energy, the flow is interrupted and the energy stolen by the stelae, eventually draining the entity completely.

Axioms and the Rules of Seven Worlds

Each of the cosms (and their associated realms) is a different dimension, a different *reality* if you will, and each cosm works by different rules. But there is an underlying structure in all cosms: each is built on *axioms,* natural laws that define the limits of a cosm and the way the cosm works within those limits. Cosms which have different axioms, even cosms which differ by a small amount in a single axiom, have difficulties coexisting; reality is just different enough between the cosms for the Everlaw of One to treat them as manifestations of a single reality, and it tries to resolve and remove the difference. This explains why devices from one cosm do not always work properly in another.
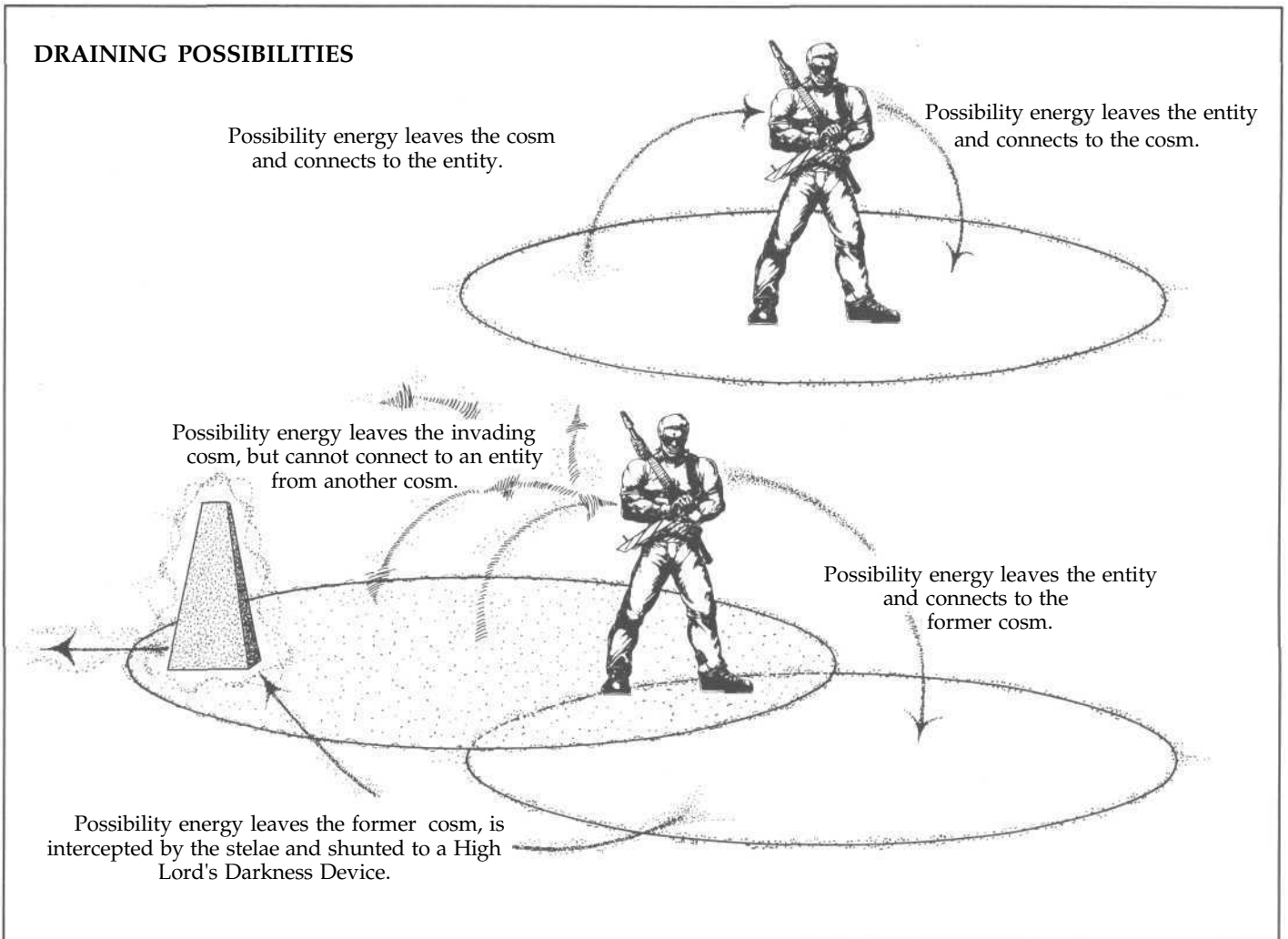
What the Axioms are

Axioms define the limit of what is possible within each cosm. There are four areas governed by axioms: *Magical, Social, Spiritual,* and *Technological.* Each axiom limits the interaction between the living and the unliving portions of a cosm, and measures the extent to which the living can manipulate the unliving in each of the four areas. Tractors are an example of using technology to change a world; the concept of credit is a social tool. The potency of magic and spiritual miracles are similarly limited by their axioms.

A low axiom level may be the result of natural laws or, more commonly, of a weak link between the living and unliving in this aspect of the world. However weak the link, though, the unliving world may still affect the living. For instance, a being from a cosm with a *Tech* axiom of 6 couldn't operate a Luger in his home cosm without creating a contradictory reality, but he would still get hurt falling off a cliff or getting shot by a bullet. The same holds true when a character native to Core Earth confronts magic; he may not be able to use it, but magic works on him.

The axioms are ranked on a numeric scale from 0-33 and are explained on the following pages.

DRAINING POSSIBILITIES

Possibility energy leaves the cosm and connects to the entity.

Possibility energy leaves the entity and connects to the cosm.

Possibility energy leaves the invading cosm, but cannot connect to an entity from another cosm.

Possibility energy leaves the entity and connects to the former cosm.

Possibility energy leaves the former cosm, is intercepted by the stelae and shunted to a High Lord's Darkness Device.

Magic

The *Magic* axiom limits the effectiveness of magic in a world. A world whose magical axiom is not sufficiently developed for a "fireball" prevents a fireball from working in that world. The following is a guideline for axiom levels and their effect in a world.

0 — No magic is possible in this world, including manifestations common on Core Earth, such as "feelings of *deja vu*," flashes of insight (ESP) or sightings of the supernatural.

2 — Magic is extremely difficult and of limited usefulness. Magic is available only through rituals, knowledge of which require a lifetime of study. After all that effort, only minor divination effects are possible and effects are unpredictable.

3 — Years of study are required to master rituals. While the effects are still completely unpredictable, the divination may extend for several days and many miles.

5—Innate, minor apportation abilities are available to most people. Magic can now send and receive thoughts, and perceive visions of the future or past. Magic at this level is undependable and erratic, but the variability is confined to type, i.e. error in divination causes a divination effect, not an apportation effect.

7 — Natural processes may be accelerated or slowed drastically. Alteration magic is available as complicated ritual with erratic effects, divination is slightly more reliable.

8—Magical laws are stable enough to produce (somewhat) predictable effect. Minor alteration is possible as a spell, quite powerful as ritual. Magical processes are developed which have a more-or-less dependable effect. These spells may be taught from one magician to another, although personal interpretation of the spell is still important.

9 — Enough magic exists to sustain entities which require a small amount of magic to live; brownies, pixies, giants, and creatures which are impossible physical amalgams of otherwise possible living beings. In addition, transmutation is possible for certain substances.

10 — Magical processes and spells may be "burned" into objects, creating enchanted items which decay over time. Such devices include lucky charms, magically sharpened weapons, and protective talismans.

Sufficient magical energy now exists to sustain highly magical creatures; non-corporeal creatures, elementals and embodiments of moral virtues may live in a world as entities.

Alteration of a living being to another living entity, or even a plant, is possible. The reversal may be done with some chance of ill effect upon the altered character.

Minor conjuration, where effects are ephemeral, is possible; the objects conjured are simple, and look "wrong" to all but the casual observer.

12 — Conjuration, from "nothing" is now possible. These effects may last days, but will eventually fade. Magical forms of communication are common.

Alteration of living being into inanimate matter is now possible. The reverse is dangerous, and often fails.

13 — Discrete units of spells known as "charges" may be enchanted into items. Magicians can master an on/off process which (usually) lets them activate an item one charge at a time.

Conjuration of permanent substance or object is now possible, and a magic user may cast a spell which lets him make a limited connection with another dimension/realm/plane.

15—A magician can now use magic to bring beings or objects from another dimension to his own world.

Magicians may now program an object with conditions which activate its magical properties. Wards and even golems are possible.

17 — Spells may be "pre-cast" - stored or impressed in magicians for later use. Such spells are transient; a magician can erase a spell and replace it with another rather than permanently burn it into her mind.

18 — Magic is common enough that most beings in the cosm use some magic to at least a limited degree, although training confers huge advantages.

20 —"Wish spells" (spells of a generic nature which interpret the casters desires) are possible. Such "wish parsers" are unreliable.

22 — The magical nature of the cosm is sufficiently developed to begin lowering the difficulty of all alteration magical processes. Magic of all kinds becomes easier, more effective for less cost.

24 — Magic is easier than, and produces superior effects to, technology. Magic is the basis of the economy, and the prime source of labor.

27 — All conjuration magic begins to become easier.

28 — Reliable "wish parsers" possible.

33 — Magical energy can be tapped by all thinking beings, or any creature capable of formulating a desired condition. Minimal training can produce spectacular effects. Understanding of the magical nature of the cosm is intuitive in all people.

Social

The *Social* axioms govern what sort of interactions are possible between beings, how complex a social organization they may have, and what ideas make sense to them.

0 — No social interaction between beings is possible; beings who reproduced by fission or similar methods live lives of complete solitude in the presence of all other beings.

2 — The only social unit is the nuclear family (parents and offspring only); rudimentary rituals for death of a family member develop. Language is invented, but no permanent records.

3 — The extended family is possible. Verbal traditions are strong, ritual knowledge is passed down from generation to generation. Rites for all important stages of life are developed. The concept of personal property is developed. Painting is developed.

5—The tribe (multi-family groups) is possible. Political organization is possible, but of very limited scope. Pictographic writing is developed. Dramatic theater is invented, distinct from religious theater. Poetry is developed.

7 — Village/agricultural organization possible. "Kings" are possible. The concept of land ownership is possible. Unfortunately, so is the concept of owning other intelligent beings. Semi-professional military and militia formed for common defense can exist. A combination sound/pictographic alphabet may be developed. Trade, epic poetry and sports are invented.

Francis Mao

8 — The city/state, a network of villages and smaller cities ruled from one central city, usually with a monarch of some kind, can exist. Taxes are invented, as are arithmetic counting and administrative procedures for collecting taxes. Standing armies for conquest as well as defense. Feudalism possible.

10 — Collection of information is sufficiently centralized for the beginning of scholarship and science; libraries may appear. Abstract or phonetic alphabets possible. Money is invented. Laws are codified. Democracy is possible.

12—Social organization sufficiently robust as to assimilate conquered cultures rather than simply rule them. Societies may trade "cultural ideas" as well as hard goods. Credit and money lending established. Property is rented. Religions may institute a ritual bureaucracy or church, allowing religion to influence far greater numbers of people than before. Postal and news services are possible.

13 — Financial concepts develop rapidly. The idea of a company or royal monopoly, a non-family owned venture sponsored by several partners, is possible. Stock, commodities and financial exchanges possible. The concept of collateral is invented. Long fiction (novels) are possible.

15 — The nation-state is possible; while a city or province may rule a nation, the nation as a whole has some say in forming policy. A federal system of government possible.

17 — The "denaturization and/or miniaturization" of time possible, i.e. the concept of a precise and arbitrary system for measuring time in subunits of a day, even when at odds with local astronomical time.

18—Economics, and the concept of man as an economic being, is invented. Capitalism, socialism and communism possible.

20 — Pluralism, the balancing of many factions within a government and society, is possible. More inhabitants of a nation are enfranchised. Vast bureaucracies may be spawned to handle the increased social complexity.

22 — Supranational organizations with authority over nations possible, a "federal system" for nations.

23—Standard rights of individuals and rights of the group may be accepted. A high degree of individual responsibility and the responsibility of the group is fostered. Methods for conflict resolution are established which are efficient and non-destructive.

26 — A "government for all" which tolerates and enhances a wide range of cultures is possible. The limitations of Arrow's Theorem of a Social Welfare Function may be exceeded, allowing a high degree of social justice.

29 — "Evil" is identified and contained. Social memes developed which are highly resistant to evil, allowing society members moral freedom not possible when evil is a philosophy with equal, or superior, pragmatic weight. Evil acts create a contradictory reality.

33 — A more perfect society than humanity can even envision.

Spiritual

The *Spiritual* axiom defines the level of faith necessary to tap those powers commonly thought of as belonging to "the gods." These "gods" exist even if the spiritual level is very low; the axiom merely controls how easily the beings can communicate with "the gods."

0 — The world is devoid spiritually and faith is not rewarded. There are no concepts of higher beings or afterlife.

2 — Miracles work only for the faithful, who must all have the *focus* and *faith* skills. Even then it takes a lifetime of study and prayer to cause even the most minor of miracles; such miracles are only possible in the presence of the entire community of the faithful.

3 — Spiritual energy is so low that years of rituals/sacrifices/penance may be needed to get the slightest effect. Miracles are rare, but may occur with only a fraction of the community of faithful present.

5—Extended community possible. Each community has at least one leader *with focus,* all other community members must have *faith* to create a miracle. The other community members are called the *laity.*

Invocation of divine power is now possible, but extremely unlikely. Even

if successful, the effect will never be a visible and direct confirmation of divine agency.

7 — Rituals can produce a desired effect, but the rituals are very complicated, often requiring years of study or training since birth. Religious symbols are imbued with spiritual power as a result of divine agency; this power most often manifests itself by making the use of spiritual power easier for the faithful.

9 — Direct intervention of spiritual entities is more common, but these intervention are never at the request of the faithful. The interventions are clear signs of divine agency.

The community of faithful may now create miracles to enhance the abilities of believers.

11 — The community of faithful may imbue an item or place with spiritual power. Items (swords, talismans) may be imbued with spiritual energy that can aid in the creation of miracles later on. The items must be activated by the faith of the person wielding the item.

13 — Invocation with irrefutable evidence of divine agency possible, but still extremely difficult.

17—Locations or items are capable of perpetual miracles which occur regularly, with or without the presence of the community.

19— Religious power courses through the cosm with such regularity that specific training is not needed to create miracles, though those trained in the rituals of the religion can draw on the power of their faith with more reliability.

"Paradise" is now accessible to mortals. Travel to mythic regions is possible.

20 — The laity may create miracles even without *the focus* skill. The power of the community is so strong that a gathering automatically provides a minimal focus for the miracle. The laity must still receive training in all the proper procedures in order to invoke the miracle.

21 — Miracles are plentiful, and the spiritual power is enough to lower the difficulty of all *focus* processes for the faithful.

23 — One mythos becomes dominant. All others need to create a contradictory reality to effect their miracles.

27—All enemy mythos lose power. No believer in an enemy mythos may access an miraculous power.

33 — A pure cosm, a cosm in which all aspects of the mythos are literally true. No other mythos has any access to miraculous powers.

Technological

The *Tech* axioms affect the interaction between living beings and the natural world around them.

0 — No technology is possible.

2 — Fire making is invented. Small stone tools are possible.

3 — Advanced stone tool making possible. Animals may be domesticated and bred. Spears and clubs are state-of-the-art weapons. Armor made from animal products possible. Rafts and small river craft appear.

5 — Agriculture invented, but still practiced largely as a dietary supplement to hunting and gathering. Calendars based on easily visible phenomena may be invented. The wheel or axled rollers first used for transportation. Fishing vessels (four or more beings, muscle powered) appear. Arithmetic may be invented.

7 — Metal is first smelted, alloys of softer metals appears. Potter's wheel appears, plow speeds agriculture. Glass, cloth, wine invented. Seaworthy ships are possible. Swords and daggers state of the art weapons. Bows are possible, but only with enough punch for small game. Oil lamps invented.

8 — Medicine and astronomy as organized sciences are possible. Civil engineering possible; block and tackle, pulley, lever are available machines. Hard metals such as iron are smelted. Bows are powerful enough for use as combat weapons. Metal armor appears. Maps are invented. Avian, reptilian and other "difficult" lifeforms may be domesticated. Simple wind-powered vessels appear.

9 — Timekeeping devices such as sundials and water clocks appear. Wide-scale irrigation systems possible. Place-based numbering systems (such as the decimal system) may be invented. Large buildings appear for first time, may have simple plumbing to provide water and transport waste. Astronomy fully developed. Sea vessels powered by more than one sail possible; first true trans-oceanic vessels possible. Use of hard metals is common for professional tools. Metal currency may become common.

10 — Pharmacy and surgery systematized; healing herbs and simple drugs maybe cataloged and produced. Aqueducts and tunnels may provide water to a city. Dying of fabric is possible. Hard metal common in households. Lathes, paper, candles may be invented. Bridges, dams, aqueducts, tunnels, road technology extensive.

11 — Specialized surgery, such as cataract surgery, possible. Basic anatomy of living beings, with all vital subsystems, understood enough to diagnose and treat many ailments. Gears and screws possible, allowing exploitation of water power. Sugar is refined, milling expands greatly.

13 — Inks refined, making book printing (block printing) possible. Acids, mechanical clocks, magnetic compasses possible. Alcohol denatured for use as a disinfectant. Gunpowder may be invented; cannon are possible. Biology develops categorization of animals by function rather than appearance. Glass mirrors are invented. Corrective spectacles possible, but not terribly effective.

15—Metal plates used for printing; printing press possible. Crude firearms possible; ballistics invented. Steam power possible. Magnetism and electricity connected. Cut-glass process invented. Telescope, microscope possible. Basic mechanics of physics understood. Atomic nature of matter proposed and possibly accepted. Barometers invented; crude weather prediction begins. Probability theory invented.

16 — Muskets invented. Primitive rifling possible. Metallurgical advances allow precision machined parts; efficient steam engines possible if energy source better than wood available. Watches, bifocals possible. Anesthesia introduced into surgery. Velocity of light recognized as finite. Gravitation and tides understood. Plant extracts and essences possible; inoculation invented. Industrial revolution may begin.

17 — Rifling improved greatly. Artillery pieces now very reliable; as explosive shells are refined, they replace rifles as prime killer on the battlefield. First electric batteries possible. Steamboats, telegraph, crude calculating machines appear. Railroads are possible. Cell structure explained. Thermodynamic laws established. Easy to ignite matches invented. Sewing machine invented. Reaping machines possible. Bacteria recognized as transmitters of disease.

19 — Syringes first used for injections. Tungsten steel invented. Internal combustion engines possible. Photosynthesis understood. Antiseptic surgery developed. Single-action revolvers, repeating rifles, hand-cranked machine guns, recoil-operated machine guns are possible. Bicycles, telephones, hydrogen airships, submarines practical.

20 — Radio voice transmission possible. Crude airplanes. Radioactivity understood. Discovery of relativity possible. Automobiles reliable enough to replace animal-drawn transport. Sonar invented. Brain surgery successful. Automatic pistol. Submachine gun. Movies, including "talking pictures."

21 — Late 1930s to 1950s technology. Tanks become an effective tool of war; metal-skinned aircraft with jet propulsion, radar possible. Electron microscope, vaccinations against viral diseases, nuclear power, ICBMs, television, automatic rifles, artificial fabrics, mainframe computers, helicopters, ballpoint pens appear. Antimatter discovered.

22—1960s to late 1970s technology, including:

Orbital spacecraft, lightweight automatic weapons, integrated circuits, crude artificial hearts and other organs, robot probes to other planets, gene synthesis, wire-guided munitions, 400,000 ton oil tanker, primitive space stations, home computers, space shuttle, neutron bomb, "test-tube" babies.

23 —1980s through 1990s technology, including:

Doppler Radar, genetic engineering, international computer networks, laser-guided munitions, compact disks, computer-controlled aircraft, fire-control helmets, permanent space

station, hyperplane capable of Mach 20, limited fusion power.

24 — Hovertanks, clone-organ replacement, "intelligent" self-maintaining houses, holographic television, high-energy laser weapons, fusion commercially attractive, superconducting technology common, manned interplanetary space exploration, supercomputers achieve limited awareness.

26— "Living computers," personal energy weapons, "slow" interstellar travel, self-aware robots, memory chips and cyberware possible, nanotech appendages for enhanced functions, teleportation possible, mind-boosting processes allow psi functions which mimic magic.

30 — Hyperspace technology, or warp technology. Fast interstellar travel.

33 — Time Travel. The sort of technology you see from the most advanced alien races in comic book universes.

Bending the Axioms

The axioms impose boundaries on what is possible within a world, but the boundaries are flexible. The limits can be pushed outward in isolated cases or for short periods of time. This bending most often occurs in places where the inhabitants all have a special affinity for one of the axioms. Unconscious use of the possibility energy within them helps to expand the axiom boundaries.

Example: A large group of scientists work in a laboratory setting, all of them firmly committed to a developing technology. The next development is just over the axiom boundary; the firm belief in the project makes the otherwise-impossible project work.

Tech and *Social* axioms can increase as much as two points, although one-point increases are far more common. These increases last only briefly, often just long enough to develop the critical components on one prototype or the breakthrough concept on one theory. The prototype is often impossible to duplicate, or the theory rejected for years. But the breakthrough occurred.

Spiritual and *Magical* axioms appear to be somewhat more flexible, and have been known to decrease as well as increase due to outside factors. External factors seem to have a far greater effect on *Spiritual* and *Magical* axioms than on *Technological* or *Social.* The arrangement of celestial bodies, the timing of religious festivals, traditional sites of power or natural wonders — all can increase or decrease the *Magical* and *Spiritual* axioms in a small part of a cosm.

Example: The Heights of Eilgeborn in Orrorsh are reputed to have a higher *Magical* axiom than the rest of the world. The Night of Covers, an astronomical event featuring a lunar eclipse which occurs once in five years, also increases the *Magical* axiom in its area of effect. On the rare occasion that the lunar eclipse of The Night of Covers is visible from the Heights, both increases take effect.

Permanently Altering the Axiom Levels

Increasing the axiom levels permanently takes time and a huge amount of possibility energy; it requires large numbers of people, all with similar attitudes, living in an area for a long period of time. A permanent point increase over a 10 year period is phenomenal; increasing a point over five centuries is more likely.

Example: On the island of Haiti, belief in and practice of voodoo has increased the Core Earth *Magical* axiom by a point.

Decreasing the levels requires far less energy but about the same amount of time. The High Lords with their Darkness Devices can radically speed up both the increase and decrease process.

World Rules

The axioms are the limits for a cosm. The *world rules* tell how a cosm works within those limits. A cosm's world rules tell you in what way the cosm works differently from other cosms; the function and the flavor of a cosm is bound up in its world rules.

Example: The New Empire of the Nile has the following world rule as a part of its *Social* axiom: All characters are either good or evil; all character are born with a moral stance. From birth, a character is committed to the path of good or evil.

When Axioms Collide

When a High Lord launches an invasion, the axioms from his cosm pour over the Maelstrom Bridge that connects the two worlds. The invad-

THE AXIOMS OF THE COSMS				
	Magic	Social	Spirit.	Tech.
Core Earth	7	21	9	23
Living Land	0	7	24	7
Aysle	18	18	16	15
Nippon Tech	2	22	8	24
Cyberpapacy	10	18	14	26
Orrorsh	15	20	17	19
New Nile	12	20	17	21

Living Under the Axioms

A character who is living under axioms native to his cosm is living in a world which acts in expected ways. On Core Earth, you rise in the morning to your clock-radio blaring out cheerful morning banter, and pour yourself a bowl of breakfast cereal to fire up the old body. In Aysle, you would bring the wood in and, if your firepot had gone out, ask the reddleman for use of his brownie to start your fire.

When a character lives in a cosm or realm where the axioms are different, the world is strange. Familiar objects may refuse to work, and simple tasks can become confusing to the point of impossibility. The character still has his axioms within him, but the unliving axioms are different. The Everlaw of One is working to confound him, while the Everlaw of Two tries to keep him in touch with his home cosm. Eventually the Everlaw of One is triumphant. The character is disconnected from the Everlaw of Two and the unliving laws of his home cosm. The flow of possibility energy is disrupted; a disconnected character cannot use axioms to make the world work as he would expect it to work. The disconnected must live by axioms of the land in which he lives.

A Core Earth character who is disconnected by living in an England overlaid with the fantasy cosm of Aysle cannot use his toasters, cars, computers, refrigerators — none of it would work, and he would forget how it was *supposed* to work. But he gains an intuitive sense of magic, and an increased sense of the spiritual power in the world. Many disconnected people are relieved to find that reality, even if different, has at least settled down. Others are extremely agitated that reality has changed for them, and try to find ways to grasp what the objects mean. A few adapt to the new reality with glee, preferring it to what had been their lot before.

ing axioms wash over the native axioms, disrupting the link between the living and unliving of the invaded world. The natural order breaks down as new rules take its place. This conflict of realities is the heart of the Possibility Wars.

Reality Storms

The border between conflicting realities can unleash fearsome displays of possibility energy in the form of *reality storms.* Reality storms have violent physical manifestations; winds ranging in velocity from 40 to hundreds of miles an hour are possible. History records incidents in which lightning from reality storms has sheared mountains and leveled entire cities. But the lightning is often peculiarly selective in its targets. Storms in Indiana during the initial invasion were seen to only strike objects which contained aluminum; in the Ruhr valley, churches were the chosen target; in Leeds, smokestacks and newsprint were struck.

The effects of the storms can be even more confusing. Many realities can come into temporary existence during a storm, gravity can become variable, languages of a region can be changed, vehicles can move about on their own, and the sizes and colors of buildings can alter.

Most of the effects fade within two to 24 hours of the storm's passage. In a few rare instances the effects last much longer.

Possibility-rated characters may invoke the Everlaw of One against a possibility-rated character from another cosm to create a reality storm. See Gamemaster Chapter Nine for details.

Hardpoints

An unliving object can have a strong connection with the cosm in which it was created; such a connection can cause it to become a *hardpoint.* The object continues to serve as a source for the unliving laws of a cosm, even when totally surrounded by the rules of a foreign cosm.

Example: In Philadelphia, a strong connection exists between various artifacts and the events which took place in the city. The Liberty Bell, among other artifacts, has become a hardpoint of Core Earth axioms.

The connection is flexible and tough, but it is immobile. If you move an object which was a hardpoint, it loses its properties in a matter of hours, becoming useless within 20 hours, sometimes in as little as 30 minutes. Most hardpoints project an axiom zone; within this zone the axioms of the object apply, not those of the surrounding cosm. The radius of effect depends on the object's mass, and whether or not it has absorbed significant spiritual energy from the inhabitants of the cosm. The maximum radius is given by this formula:

Radius Value = Weight Value/2 (round down) + Spirit Value

Example: A Macintosh II system in the middle of the Living Land invasion becomes a hardpoint. The total weight of all its components is about 25 kilos, a value of 7. The computer has no spiritual value. The radius value is 3, which has a measure of four meters. For an area of four meters around this Macintosh, Core Earth axioms apply.

The axiom zone within a hardpoint's radius is a dominant area, which means the axioms of the hardpoint have the upper hand, but cannot completely squelch the reality of invading cosms.

Halving the radius value (rounding down) yields the value of the pure zone radius.

Example: Halving the Macintosh II's radius value of 3 gives 1 when you round down. The pure zone around the Macintosh is about one and a half meters in radius.

For unknown reasons, some hardpoints have much smaller radii, or none at all. Such objects maintain the axioms only for the object itself.

Living beings cannot become hardpoints.

Talismans

When you uproot a hardpoint, there is a short period of time in which the hardpoint's axioms are mobile. A *talisman* is a mobile hardpoint that has been specially altered, usually by a High Lord. A talisman decays at a slower rate than an uprooted hardpoint, and maybe recharged with the reality of its land. To recharge a talisman requires an area with the axioms of the talisman's home cosm, and possibility energy. The recharge time is half as long as the decay time of the talisman, e.g. if the talisman lasts a month it will require 15 days to recharge.

While the High Lords have the most knowledge about creating talismans, those opposed to the Possibility Raiders have ways of creating talismans as well. Often the talismans are created subconsciously, and so the users have no idea how to recharge them.

Creating a Contradiction

When the living from one cosm mix with the unliving axioms of another cosm, *contradictions* result. A citizen of the United States expects her watch to work. The axioms of the Living Land say it cannot; furthermore, the subdivisions of time a watch represents make no sense to natives of the Living Land. To maintain her world, her reality, is to live a contradiction. This is possible, but exacts a price.

To allow a contradiction, the character must use her possibility energy and the Everlaw of Two. She uses a minute amount of possibility energy to bend reality, subconsciously bend-ing the Everlaw of Two in order to link her living reality with the unliving laws of the foreign land. This temporary link allows the contradiction to exist.

Contradiction Check

Whenever a character uses tools or abilities that are beyond axiom limits of the realm, she creates a contradiction.

In each scene, as soon as the character uses a tool or ability that would create a contradiction, her player must make a *contradiction check.* If using the ability or tool requires a roll to generate a bonus number, the contradiction check is part of the roll. If the tool or ability does not require a roll to use (such as armor), the player must make one roll at the beginning of the scene to see if the contradiction is too much for the reality.

First the gamemaster determines how bad the contradiction is; the worse the contradiction, the greater the chance that the Everlaw of One deals with it. To determine the degree of contradiction, consider the axioms of three things: the character, the land, and the tool (in this context, a *tool* is any thing or ability, any means used to achieve an end).

Zero Case

If the axiom level of the tool is equal to or less than the axiom level of the character *and* the land, then any possible contradiction is so minor that it escapes the Everlaw of One.

Example: The Yellow Crab is driving his Allenton Roadster in Core Earth Italy. The tech level of the car is at the same level as the Crab, and below that of Core Earth. Even though the Crab and the roadster are from "someplace else," they are behaving in accordance to the Core Earth rules. There is no contradiction created.

One-Case

The *one-case* is created when the axiom of the tool is **greater** than **either** the character or the land, **but not both.** If the player rolls a 1 while using the tool, or otherwise making a contradiction check, the Everlaw of One eliminates the contradiction.

Example: An Edeinos warrior picks up a telephone in Core Earth America. The tool works fine under Core Earth axioms, but exceeds the Edeinos' *Tech* axiom. The contradiction is eliminated on a roll of 1.

The roll is independent of the final die roll. Even if there are additional rolls, if the first roll shows a 1, the contradiction is eliminated.

Four-Case

The *four-case* is created when the axiom of the tool exceeds **both** the axiom levels of the land **and** the character using the tool. If the player rolls a 1 through 4 while using the tool, or otherwise making a contradiction check, the Everlaw of One eliminates the contradiction.

Example: An elf from Aysle is using an M-16 in the Living Land. The *Tech* level of the tool exceeds both the *Tech* level of the elf and the land. The contradiction is eliminated on a roll of 1 through 4.

Long Range Contradiction

Even an Ord may tap his minute reserves of possibility energy in a dominant area in order to create a contradiction. Though the Everlaw of Two is very weak in the Ord, as long as the tool is touching him the character, may create contradictions as though he were a possibility-rated character, until he fails his contradiction check.

But if an Ord throws a grenade, or leaves a warding spell, or fires an explosive missile -- anything that requires the tool itself to cause a contradiction after it leaves the Ord's hand - then the item will not work. The grenade or missile will not explode; the spell will never be triggered. Ords cannot extend their contradiction past the confines of their own bodies.

Possibility-rated characters, on the other hand, **can** do so, but only if they can deflect the energy the Everlaw of One raises up to squelch the tool's contradiction. When a possibility-rated character attempts to create a contra-

diction at range, he must first generate a *reality* skill total. Every point the total is under the effect value of the tool is read as stun damage on the Combat Results Table (page 40). Failing this check does not mean the character is disconnected, unless he rolls a 1 (or 1-4 as the case may be) while making the roll.

Example: Quin throws a grenade, effect value 14, in the Living Land. Once the grenade leaves his hand, he is attempting to cause a long-range contradiction (to get the fuse to work). He must generate a *reality* total. If his total was 10, he would take 4 result points of damage — 2 shock — before the grenade explodes.

The character must survive and remain conscious in order for the contradiction to occur. If the character is killed or knocked out by the damage, the tool does not create a contradiction.

Repairing the Link

When a 1 or 1-4 is rolled, the Everlaw of One eliminates the contradiction by breaking the link between character and the Everlaw of Two. Without this link, a character cannot create a contradiction, for possibility energy is necessary to bend the fabric of reality, and the Everlaw of Two is necessary to link the realities together.

Until the link is repaired the character may not collect any Possibilities due him at the end of an act or an adventure. He may still spend those that he has, and play cards as Possibilities.

Until the link is repaired, the character may not roll for or otherwise use any tool (item or ability) whose axiom level exceeds the axioms of the current location. He may, however, exceed his own axiom levels if they are lower than the axioms of the cosm he is in.

Example: An elf in the Living Land rolls a 3 when generating a bonus number for the M-16. His ability to create a contradiction is severed. He may not use the M-16, nor may he use magic or any other tool which exceeds the axiom levels of the Living Land. If he had access to a Living Land miracle, he could use that without creating a contradiction since, in effect, he is no longer a denizen of Aysle.

As his one rolled action for a round, the disconnected character may generate a *reality* skill total in order to repair the link. Repairing the link in a foreign cosm requires the presence of the tool that was being used when the link was broken (it contains fragments of the connection to the Everlaw of Two). A character in her home cosm may repair the link without the tool that was being used when the link was destroyed.

The link may be broken in one realm and repaired in another; often the link is easier to repair in a realm different from the realm in which the character was disconnected.

Below is the chart listing the difficulty numbers for reestablishing the link to the Everlaw of Two while in every realm of the Possibility Raiders and Core Earth.

Example: The Edeinos is trying to reestablish the link that was broken while he was experimenting with the telephone. The difficulty number is 16. If his *reality* total is 16 or more, then the Edeinos has regained his ability to create contradiction. If it is less, he now lives within the axioms of Core Earth. He can now use telephones without contradiction, but he no longer has access to many of the miracles which are the heritage of the Living Land.

Bonus Modifier

A character who attempts to link back up with the Everlaw of Two may receive a bonus modifier if the tool he was using had a lower axiom level than his own level. The bonus modifier for reestablishing the link is:

Character Axiom Level minus *Tool Axiom Level.*

Example: Quin Sebastian is using a Kentucky rifle, which has a tech axiom of only 16. Quin's tech axiom is 23. Quin has a bonus modifier of +7 to repair the link if it shattered while he was using the rifle.

A negative bonus modifier is ignored unless the axiom level of the tool also exceeds the axiom level of the land.

Example: The phone-wielding Edeinos has a tech axiom of 7, the

Character is from*	Core Earth	Living Land	Aysle	NipponTech	Cyberpapacy	Orrorsh	Nile Empire
LINK DIFFICULTY CHART — Character is in:							
Core Earth	0	18	11	8	6	8	6
Living Land	16	0	10	16	12	9	9
Aysle	14	20	0	17	11	6	8
Nippon Tech	5	19	11	0	7	8	7
Cyberpapacy	9	21	12	12	0	9	8
Orrorsh	11	17	8	15	8	0	6
Nile Empire	11	16	10	12	8	5	0

phone a 22. He would have a bonus modifier of -15, except that Core Earth can support telephones. The negative modifier is ignored.

To help remember, if a character fails only on a roll of 1, then he can only have a zero or positive bonus modifier. If a character is a four-case, then he *always* has a negative modifier.

Transformation

"The possibilities of Earth are unlike any riches I have ever known. They shall doubtless be exploited by the Everlaw to rid Earth of our presence with a rapidity of cycle never before seen. The resulting energy shall give us more power faster than any prize we have ever taken."
   —*a portion of the Gaunt Man's message to the other High Lords.*

The Everlaw of One tries to reconcile the Raiders' invading axioms with the living natives and objects in the invaded areas; these invaded areas are cut off from the rest of their cosm by the stelae placed by the High Lords' agents before the invasion begins .Since the living entities and native objects in the small invaded area require less energy to change than the invading axioms (connected to their entire cosm by the Maelstrom Bridge), the Everlaw of One tries to convert the natives to the invading axioms rather than the other way around.

Transformation tries to convert the target into an object or being which does not create a contradiction with the attacker's cosm laws. The transformation process tries to use as much of the target's nature as possible, and tries to conserve things such as mass, attributes and skills.Transformation can take place spontaneously in a suppressed area, or during a reality storm. Only Ords may be transformed by the natural process of living in a suppressed area.

A character who is transformed loses all of his possibility energy. In addition, he now conforms to the new laws of the land, having been successfully altered by the Everlaw of One. He may even be physically altered to match denizens of the realm. He now exists as one of the natives of the realm. If an Ord crosses over into a different realm, he must exist by the rules of both realms. The only way this is possible is to take the lower axiom of each pair. Transformed Ords cannot create any kind of contradictory reality. Possibility-rated characters may still cause contradictions.

Example: Eric Wold wakes up in Stapleford to discover he is no longer human. He remembers being human, he remembers the concepts "television" and "automobile," and can even correctly identify them. He no longer has any idea how to work them, and is no longer capable of working them. If he should somehow become recharged with possibility energy he may be able to once again work devices which were a common part of his life.

If Eric crossed back into Core Earth England, he would be unable to operate a car even there. In addition, any potent magic he learned in Aysle would be useless in Core Earth, for he no longer has the possibility energy necessary to bend the reality of Core Earth any more than that of Aysle.

Transformation is mental as well as physical. A transformed character can gain skills he did not have in his other guise; he may lose a few skills in return.

A character or object may physically transform, but not all transformations have the same result; M-60A1 tanks have transformed into both small towers and Lakten armor in the Living Land. The one constant seems to be that living things transform to living things, or things with living components, while the unliving remains unliving.

There is an additional risk for transformed characters. If the reality should change again, the drained characters are incapable of once again transforming, as transformation requires possibility energy and all theirs has already been drained. Should the Everlaw of One transform them *again* (an unlikely event), the result is fatal and often fiery.

When a character, object, or location is transformed, the effects need not be instantaneous. Physical transformations in particular can take a few minutes, up to several hours in extreme cases.

Transcendence

When faced with a threat from a different reality, some characters experience a "moment of crisis". The different reality, along with a strong moral choice, causes the Everlaw of Two to strengthen and reinforce the link between the character and his own reality. This sends a surge of possibility energy into the character. The character is now possibility-rated and gains the *reality* skill.The Everlaw of Two has created a defender for its reality.

Transformation is a "moment of crisis" for the one involved. The Everlaws are struggling, and the possibility energy of the character is boiling away. Usually the Everlaw of One wins and strips the character of all her possibility energy, forcing her to live only under foreign axioms, dooming her if reality shifts again. But sometimes a character gains the *reality* skill before the Everlaw of One triumphs; she gains such a surge of possibility energy from attaining the skill that she can feed the Everlaw of One the energy it needs, still retaining some possibility energy for herself. She *transcends* the transformation.

Transcending can take place when a character makes a strong choice for good *or for evil.* Over time, the High Lords have meddled with and modified the transcendental process, so that what used to be a 50-50 chance now greatly favors evil; 90 percent, sometimes more, of those who transcend do so according to patterns determined by the High Lords. This is an important way for the Possibility Raiders to gain fresh troops or agents.

Reality Bubbles

Characters who have the *reality* skill are better connected to their worlds, and can tap the possibility energy of their world, albeit indirectly. A possibility-rated character can guarantee

that her reality, the axioms and world rules, work in an alien cosm by building a *reality bubble.* A reality bubble is a thin field which mimics the unliving essence of her home cosm, drawn from the possibility energy of its creators. Within this field the living/unliving link is maintained, and the character may use her axioms, without the risk of contradiction. The field sustains only its creator and her actions. The field has no effect on any other character, regardless of cosm. The reality bubble will affect unliving objects which are being held or operated by bubble's owner; they operate according to the owner's axiom.

Example: Quin creates a reality bubble while in the primitive Living Land. If he picks up an M-16 which he finds in primitive, the rifle will work for him. If he drives a Suzuki Samurai, it drives as it should. He does not check for contradiction while his bubble is up.

A character has the option to create a reality bubble as long as he is linked to the Everlaw of Two. Creating a reality bubble costs a Possibility, which is needed to provide the energy. The reality bubble last for 15 minutes, then fades from lack of energy. A reality bubble can be created in any cosm, in any type of zone, whether pure or dominant.

A character who creates a reality bubble and then uses a tool which exceeds the axioms of his *own* reality (such as Quin trying to use a cybernetic device), must make contradiction checks normally, failing on a 1 through 4 as the tool exceeds both the character and the "land" provided by the reality bubble. Therefore a character usually creates a reality bubble in order to use the tools of his own cosm to their best advantage. A character in a reality bubble must still generate a *reality* total when creating a contradiction at range.

The Invasion and the Axioms

When the Possibility Raiders attack a cosm, their axioms flood the target cosm, filling the land until they reach the boundaries defined by the stelae placed by agents of the High Lord prior to the invasion. At first the surge of possibility energy from the invading cosm has the advantage. In an area in which a maelstrom bridge has descended, about 13 percent of the unliving things are transformed. Very few hardpoints are formed. Of the living, approximately five percent are transformed in the initial surge.

But then the native cosm makes a surge of its own, swinging the pendulum back with its own possibility energy, attempting to reconnect its inhabitants.

This process would continue back and forth, gradually damping until all the possibility energy from each cosm was expended. But the High Lords, with the arcane secrets possessed in their Darkness Devices, suspend the pendulum where it is: with the possibility energy of the native cosm surging into the invading realm. This energy, and the energy which is drawn by the Everlaw of One, is then absorbed through the stelae, and channeled to the High Lord through his Darkness Device. The invading realm eventually drains the native realm of all possibility, with much of its own energy still intact.

The Theorem of Futile Reconnection

Whenever a living being creates contradictions in a cosm which has overlaid his own, he is temporarily reconnected to his unliving axioms. The Everlaw of Two then sends a surge of possibility energy through him, attempting to reconnect other disconnected beings in danger of transforming. This energy is cancelled by a corresponding surge from the Everlaw of One, which wants no further contradictions. As the Everlaw of One cancels out this surge from the being's native cosm, the possibility energy from the invading cosm builds, until it again surges across the realm as in the initial invasion; this time the possibility energy has been slightly dissipated by the first surge, and the surge is weaker. Again the Everlaw of One interferes, and more energy is lost. So it goes until all the possibility energies of the cosms are spent, and a single reality emerges.

This makes the presence of Storm Knights (who routinely reconnect to their overlaid axioms) actually **useful** to the invaders, at least in the short run, as every surge from the Everlaw of One provides them with additional energy.

Chapter Nine

Storm Knights

The Possibility Raiders refer to those who transcend a moment of crisis as *stormers* since most transformations take place during reality storms. Long ago, the Raiders realized that stormers were the greatest threat to their plans for pillaging other realities, because those who made the choice to defend their home cosm — the *Storm Knights* — had the power to defend themselves and others, and even the power to attack the High Lords. With long experience, the High Lords adopted strategies for quickly destroying the few Storm Knights who appeared in an invaded cosm, thus preventing them from joining forces or organizing others to effective action.

Even before the invasion of Earth, they knew that this cosm would be different. Earth's possibility energy was more plentiful than had ever been experienced by the Raiders; the number of Storm Knights generated on Earth would be unprecedented. While still very few in number — perhaps one per 100,000 people on Core Earth would become stormers—it was more resistance than the High Lords were used to. The Raiders, trying to anticipate these additional Storm Knights, increased the number of Ravagons and planned to use their Darkness Devices to monitor the Storm Knights whenever possible.

Once the invasion took place, there were additional complications for the High Lords. They had agreed to despoil Earth together, to plunder her together—but not all rivalry, jealousy and fear are forgotten when pledges are made. Where coordination lapsed or was intentionally undermined, the people of Core Earth regrouped, patched their wounds, and began to resist with renewed ferocity.

There are two unexpected factors which give the people of Core Earth hope. First is the steady **increase** in the number of Storm Knights. The possibility energy of Earth is so strong that new Storm Knights are created even in realms where Storm Knights have long been eradicated — in Aysle, in Orrorsh, in the New Empire of the Nile, as well as on Core Earth. Areas which had previously been perfectly safe for the High Lords and their minions now carry some risk, and attention must be diverted from crushing Core Earth to securing the home realms and cosms.

The second unexpected factor is the strength of the *possibility nexi* of Earth. Due to Earth's affinity for other realities, the struggle has been felt in other cosms, even those not connected to the Earth by the invasion. A few Storm Knights from other cosms are actually finding their way through, even a few who have fought the High Lords before. When they find Storm Knights on Core Earth, they can teach them about the High Lords and the invasion, and in turn learn about other cosms. This increase and spread of knowledge has strengthened the resistance; with the addition of this knowledge — as stormers transcend the storm, as Storm Knights transcend stormers—the Storm Knights on Earth have transcended their own individuality to become something even more powerful: a Storm Knight group that can tap fabulous powers. Like the Storm Knights of other cosms, Earth's Storm Knight groups resist the High Lords. Unlike lone Storm Knights, the groups of Earth might actually win.

Giving Possibility to the People

An area which is bounded by stelae will eventually drain all the native beings of their possibility energy, transforming them to the reality of the invading cosm. Once drained and

transformed, however, these beings are far from useless to the High Lord; rather, they are hostages against the attacks of the Storm Knights.

The Fate of the Transformed

When Storm Knights manage to locate a stelae and pull it up, Core Earth possibility energy pours back in to the formerly bounded area. This energy soon returns the land, and the living, to Earth's axioms. Unfortunately for the transformed, this means eventual death — as soon as the Everlaw of One transforms them back to the reality of Core Earth, their lack of possibility energy means that their very life-force is used to fuel the change. If the Storm Knights reclaim the land without first reclaiming the people, the land will soon be empty.

Glory

To *reclaim the people* the characters need to re-imbue them with a small amount of possibility energy before destroying the stelae. High Lords can do this through a Darkness Device, which the Storm Knights do not have.

But they do have legends.

Stories, myths and legends are ways of framing events from a particular point of view, a point of view with its own beliefs and visions of reality. Certain stories can even serve as a spark for the Everlaw of Two, a slender thread of idea which the Law strengthens to reconnect a person with her former reality. Once reconnected by this tenuous thread, and given a tiny bit of energy by the Storm Knights to initiate the living/unliving link, the person is slowly refilled with possibility energy. The process may take a few days, or a few weeks.

Once a transformed being has been refilled, she may retell the same story to others, eventually reconnecting them and refilling them with possibility energy as well. This process grows and grows as more and more people hear the tale and reconnect. Soon, all will be ready for the new transformation.

What sort of stories contain enough of the mythic and legendary to spark people? Stories of heroes, stories of Storm Knights who are resisting the High Lords — the stories of the player characters themselves.

To spark the people, the story must be about events close to them, to their lives. For the game this means the players must have played a *glory* card (see Gamemaster Chapter Four) during an adventure in the area in which the people are to be sparked. *The glory card marks the magnitude of a deed, and fixes it in time and space.* The deed can then be the focus through which the Everlaw of Two returns to the people.

The players themselves must recount the story. One of them must be appointed storyteller for this telling of the story. The storyteller's character must:

• Spend a single Possibility, which becomes the seed for the energy of the story.

• Make a *persuasion* roll against the audience member with the highest *Mind,* to convince that key person of the truth and importance of the story.

Once all three conditions (*glory* card, Possibility, and *persuasion)* are met, the story begins its work. A story from a single seed can take awhile to work its way through an area, or it can spread like wildfire. Each story-seed the player characters plant increases the chances that the story "takes" and reconnects the people.

If the *persuasion* roll fails, the Storm Knights may no longer use that glorious deed as a seed. They must perform a new deed in this area, and successfully play a new *glory* card, before they may continue the process. In some cases (see below) it is actually desirable to do so anyway.

Does the Story Take?

At any time, of course, the Storm Knights may seek out and remove the stelae. But the less time they wait after the telling of their deeds, the more likely the transformed are to die.

As their characters are pulling up a stelae, have a player roll once for each story seed they have planted in this area (cards and Possibilities may not be spent on this roll, but additional rolls are taken on 10s and 20s). On the Transformation Table (see page 86), find the line which is closest to the amount of time since the first story-seed was planted. If any of the rolls equal or exceed the "transform number" listed under the dominant area column, the story took with the transformed of this area, refilling them with possibility.

Example: *Quin, Crowfire, and the Yellow Crab removed the last bit of dirt from the stelae, which had been buried beneath the crossroads church. They carefully placed the hooks, and began to pull. As Quin whispered "On three," the wind picked up.*

The characters have told their story five times in this area; the first seed was planted two and a half months ago. They have five chances, and the number they need to beat is 19. Winter rolls the die: 2, 9,1,18, 7. No 19. The stories have not yet had time to work. She looks at Paul and Chris.

Crowfire shook her head, moaning at the pain she felt throughout the land. The Yellow Crab started to release his rope, but Quin pulled even harder. "Move it, Crab," he growled. "The Ravagons are sure to notice this. We may not get another chance!"

Three-time Bonus

If the characters have performed three separate *glory* deeds in the bounded area, they have effectively neutralized each of the three bounding stelae. In this case, the roll is made under the pure area column of the Transformation table. In the above example, Winter would have only needed to roll a 12 if their five seeds were based on three different *glory* deeds. Her fourth roll would have succeeded, and the stelae could be removed safely.

Removing Stelae

Removing a stelae is dangerous for a number of reasons. As the stelae is being removed, any boundary of which it is part begins to weaken. The

Maelstrom

A *Maelstrom* result stops the growth of the reality storm. From that point, the storm maintains its current size and intensity; *storm multiplier* and *transform* effects are ignored thereafter. Only the number of Possibilities lost is important.

During a maelstrom, crackling possibility energy surrounds the contestants, and their axioms break down and then rebuild themselves from constituent Possibilities. All order is gone from the battle; a direct transformation is no longer possible. Only by draining an opponent of all his Possibilities may the conflict end.

Once locked in a maelstrom, the attacking character may either inflict the listed damage on his opponent's Possibilities, or revitalize himself by adding that many Possibilities to his own template. On a *transform* result, the character may drain the opponent of five Possibilities, and increase his own total by five.

Example: The Gaunt Man is locked in a maelstrom contest, and gets a 4 *Storm x5* result. The High Lord may reduce his opponent's Possibilities by four, or increase his own store of Possibilities by four.

Opponents with high *reality* values and plenty of Possibilities can be locked in a maelstrom for a long, long time. Don't forget: invoking the Everlaw of One can be very dangerous.

Transform

Transform does exactly that: transforms the target character, instantly stripping him of all his possibility energy (although a transform result leaves his *reality* adds intact). When a character scores a *transform* result, he takes five Possibilities from his opponent and adds them to his own store. If the target character has fewer than five to lose, his opponent takes all that remain.

There is a chance the transformed character will physically transform into a denizen of the cosm which defeated him. Have the loser make an immediate contradiction check (he is

the "tool" to which the cosm objects). If the player (or gamemaster for a gamemaster character) rolls a 1, the character is physically transformed into a being native to the cosm which defeated him.

High Lords and Reality Storms

In the unlikely event that a High Lord becomes involved in a reality storm, he may draw upon his Darkness Device to satisfy any losses incurred in the storm. However, should a maelstrom result, the intense forces within the maelstrom sever the link between the High Lord and his Darkness Device. From then on he is on his own. If the High Lord should happen to be transformed because of the storm, he would have to re-attune himself to the Darkness Device. There is no guarantee that the Device would not instead choose another being more suitable to the reality to which it is most accustomed.

Eternity Shards

The legends speak of Apeiros, a being of immense and unknowable power, creator of cosms, who exists outside each and every cosm. Theologians in some cosms believe Apeiros to be the source of all Possibilities, while others believe Apeiros to merely be the source of the first Possibilities.

In either case, the Everlaw of Three states that a third part is added to each cosm, aside from the unliving and the living: a part created directly by Apeiros. This part is rich with the energy of Possibilities, and works to protect and empower the living and unliving on each world. The legends speak most reverently of these manifestations of Apeiros, some of which are physical and durable, named in legend: Excalibur, Atlantis, the Holy Grail, the Lost Ark of the Covenant, the Heart of Coyote. The legends speak of "an incarnation of Possibilities" when describing these manifestations of Apeiros.

These incarnations of possibility are supposed to exist forever, surviving for all time. For this reason they are sometimes known as *eternity shards.* If they can find one, Storm Knights can tap into the powers of an eternity shard; High Lords can drain them to give further possibility energy to their Darkness Devices.

Many eternity shards carry a "group power," which Storm Knights may learn (see page 107). Eternity shards also have other abilities, which usually mirror the axioms of their native cosm. For instance, an eternity shard of Nippon Tech, known as the Tobukai Algorithms, allows impossibly fast computer processing, information transfer and analysis beyond the limits of physics.

In all cosms, eternity shards have a spiritual quality; even the driest technological item or magical effect has a spiritual aura, the heritage of Apeiros. In addition, all eternity shards contain great amounts of possibility energy. Storm Knights and other possibility-rated characters can tap this energy for their own use. Tapping requires a character to generate a *reality* skill total against the tapping difficulty; tapping difficulty is 15 at a minimum, and can be as high as 40. The quality of the result corresponds to the number of Possibilities which are liberated from the shard; *minimal* gets one, *average* two, *good* releases three, *superior* releases four, and *spectacular* calls five Possibilities from the shard. These Possibilities may be used for any actions which are not prohibited by the design of the shard. They must be used at once, but may be used in excess of the normal rules for limitations on Possibilities, in the same manner as *hero* and *drama* cards.

An eternity shard is rated for how many Possibilties it contains, what the purpose of the shard is (if any), the powers and abilities it has, and what restrictions are placed upon them.

Example: *The Heart of Coyote*
Cosm: Core Earth
Possibilities: Many
Hundreds
Tapping Difficulty: 16
Purpose: To awaken spiritual

power within humankind, to rekindle the divine fires within the heart of humans.

Powers: The Heart of Coyote is an entity of pure Core Earth; beings in contact with the Heart are in a dominant zone of Core Earth.

Group Power: *Shift Possibility* Restrictions: The heart's Possibilities may be used to augment any *Spirit* skill. The heart may be used to augment miracles; the Possibilties of the heart may not be used for other types of skills.

It is very difficult to use eternity shards to perform acts which are contrary to their purpose. The shards are akin to Darkness Devices in that they can sense the intent of the beings using them, and they can block the use of any of their powers for goals contrary to their purpose. It is always possible to drain Possibilities from the shard, but if the Possibilities are being drained by someone whose purposes are counter to the shard's, the tapping difficulty is increased by 20.

Group Powers

Group powers may only be used by a team (at least two) of possibility-rated characters. A group power is activated by the whole group, and allows that group to perform spectacular feats. When enacting a group power, one character is chosen as the lead character; the others are supporting characters who strengthen the lead character's chance for success and augment his result. All checks for group powers are made on the *reality* skill.

Getting Group Powers

A group is eligible for a group power only when they find an eternity shard containing a group power, and they may gain a new group power each time they find such a shard (some eternity shards do not have a group power).

Once they have found the shard, the party buys a group power by donating Possibilities to a pool. Every possibility-rated character in the party must contribute at least one point to the pool. This contribution may take place over the course of several adventures until the "price" of the group power has been paid.

When the power has been paid for, the character (or characters) who contributed the most Possibilities to the pool become the *bearer* (or bearers) of the power. The cost may be "overpaid" in order to have more than one bearer.

Example: Our group of player characters finds a shard for which the group power is *Stelae Sense.* The purchase cost for the power is 10 Possibilities. At the end of an adventure, Quin pays three Possibilities, the Crab two, and Crowfire two. Next adventure, each character spends one; this meets the cost, and Quin is the bearer since he has spent the most Possibilities. The Crab decides to spend an extra Possibility even though the power has been paid for. Now both he and Quin have spent four Possibilities, so both are bearers.

A group must have at least one bearer to use the group power, and the lead character when using the power must be one of those bearers.

If a character later joins the group, he must spend at least one Possibility to become eligible to participate in a group power. If a bearer is willing to "spark" the new character in the power, the new character can become a bearer by spending as many Possibilities as the sparking character originally spent. This also holds true if a regular member of the group decides to become a bearer.

Example: Vancen and Sabrina (played by Doug and Barb) join the group. Each must spend one Possibility in order to share in the group power. Vancen decides to spend three more and become a bearer; at the same time, Crowfire spends one more and also becomes a bearer.

Using Group Powers

To enact a group power each member of the group must spend at least one Possibility. A group power cannot be used alone; at least two characters must successfully combine to use a group power.

When using a group power, one character who is also a bearer is chosen to be the *lead character.* The other characters are called *supporters.* Each supporting character generates a *reality* total against the coordination difficulty of the power. The value of the number of characters who successfully add their efforts (including the lead character) is used as a bonus number modifier for the lead character's skill check.

Example: Four characters successfully coordinate on a group power. The value of the measure 4 is 3. The lead character gets a +3 bonus number modifier.

In addition, the unique synergy involved in using a group power lets a supporter contribute more; each success quality beyond *minimal* on the coordination skill check adds one point to the bonus number rolled by the lead character.

Example: A character is supporting the use of *Create Hardpoint*, which has a coordination difficulty of 8. His *reality* total is an impressive 21, for a *spectacular* result. He adds an additional 4 to the bonus number rolled by the lead character.

To successfully use a group power, at least one supporting character must exceed the coordination difficulty with his *reality* skill total. The lead character then generates a *reality* total, adding in all the appropriate modifiers from her supporters.

Example: The lead character in the *Create Hardpoint* has a *reality* skill value of 12. Four of her five supporters succeed against the coordination difficulty, for a bonus modifier of +4. Because of the character in the example

above, she also receives +4 in support, for a total of +8. She generates a bonus number of 2, which becomes 10 with the support of her group, for a *reality* total of 22.

The Powers

Below are descriptions of all of the group powers which are known to exist on Core Earth; others may become known as the Possibility Wars continue. Each power description includes the following information:

Purchase is the purchase cost in Possibilities for the group power.

Use Cost is how many Possibilities must be spent each time the power is used (minimum of one per member of the group).

Coordination is the coordination difficulty of the power.

Difficulty is the group power's difficulty number. The lead character makes a possibility check against the difficulty number.

Range is the group power's range.

Duration is the duration of the group power's effect. A duration of "performance" means the effect lasts as long as the group power is being used.

Effect is a brief summary of the effect of the group power.

Create Hardpoint

Purchase: 20
Use Cost: 4
Coordination: 8
Difficulty: 8
Range: touch
Duration: variable
Effect: create a hardpoint from an object

This power focuses the possibility energy of the group into an object in order to make that object a hardpoint (see Gamemaster Chapter Seven). The axioms of the hardpoint are those of the lead character.

The lead character's *reality* skill total becomes the value for the maximum weight which can be converted into a hardpoint. An object must be chosen for conversion into a hardpoint before the dice are rolled.

Example: A party of Storm Knights wants to create a hardpoint out of an anchored yacht that weighs 90 tons. The value of 90 tons is 25. The power total will have to be at least 25 in order to convert the yacht into a hardpoint.

The standard duration is one week, a time value of 29. For every point by which the final total exceeds the weight of the object, the time value is increased by one.

Valerie Valusek

Example: The Storm Knights succeed at converting the yacht into a hardpoint, by rolling a *reality* total of 27, which is two more than the yacht's weight value of 25. The time value is increased by two to 31, which is two and a half weeks.

Gate

Purchase: 20
Use Cost: 12
Coordination: 10
Difficulty: 15
Range: reality value
Duration: performance
Effect: creates a gate for travel between two points

The group uses this power to form a teleportation gate between two points in space. The *gate* is two meters by two meters in area, and appears at a spot two meters or less away from the lead character. Each round in which the *gate* is open, the difficulty number must be beaten by the lead character. Each round the *gate* is open, its point of entrance/exit may be moved up to five meters by the lead character.

The *reality* skill value becomes the range value for the power, but the lead character may attempt to extend the range of the *gate* before it is formed. For every three points by which the base difficulty number is increased, the range is increased by two. In other words, the minimum difficulty may be raised in order to raise the maximum range.

Example: HachiMara-Two and her group are trying to create a *gate* from Indonesia to California, a considerable trip of some 16,000 kilometers (distance 37). She has a *reality* value of only 13.

Mara decides to increase the difficulty by 36, thus increasing the range by 24. Now the minimum difficulty is 51. She will need a bonus of 28 to succeed.

The *gate* is only accurate to within five meters, close enough for most transportation. If the *gate* opens in solid ground, the lead character can try to move it five meters in another direction the next round.

There are times, however, when the accuracy of the *gate* must be better than five meters. For every five points by which the difficulty is increased, the accuracy is increased by a value of five.

Example: In an extreme emergency, HachiMara-Two must *gate* to a spot within a tenth of a millimeter of her intended target. This requires an increase in accuracy of a factor of 50,000, or a value of 24. Since accuracy must be increased in groups of five, she must "over-target" and increase accuracy, and thus difficulty, by 25. The difficulty is now 15 plus 25 equals 40.

If the *gate* power is used to travel between cosms which are not physically connected (via a Maelstrom Bridge), the difficulty is increased by 20.

Herald

Purchase: 20
Use Cost: 2
Coordination: 8
Difficulty: 22
Range: na
Duration: one round
Effect: allows characters to send messages to another cosm

Herald sends an ethereal packet of information from one cosm to another. The message is imprinted on some media upon arrival, although the group which sends the message has no control over the media used. The message is attracted to beings who are strong with possibility, landing within 10 kilometers of a possibility-rated character. The herald cannot distinguish between possibility-rated characters who serve a High Lord and those who oppose one.

These "messages in a bottle" are often the only way possibility-rated characters can contact their counterparts on other cosms. If the cosms are physically connected, the difficulty is reduced by five. If the lead character knows a character in another cosm, she may try to send the message to that specific person, which increases the difficulty by 10.

The message may contain about as much information as the lead character can speak and or visualize in a minute and half.

Life Thread

Purchase: 15
Use Cost: 4
Coordination: 12
Difficulty: 8
Range: touch
Duration: one day plus
Effect: keeps mortally wounded characters alive

Life thread sustains mortally wounded characters who cannot be kept alive by any other means. This power may not be used on characters who are not *mortally wounded*. *Life thread* connects the wounded character to the group by a thin invisible conduit through which possibility energy flows to the wounded character. The energy sustains the character, even replacing metabolic energy so that food consumption is greatly reduced (one day of food will last ten days), although liquids still need to be replaced on a normal basis. A character connected by life thread may take no action (except recovery checks) until healed to a wound level less than *mortal.*

If the wounded character receives further damage when connected to a *life thread*, the additional damage levels will not kill him or her so long as the character is receiving the power.

Life thread lasts a number of days equal to the result points of the power check.

Send

Purchase: 20
Use Cost: 8
Coordination: 8
Difficulty: 15
Range: 3 meters
Duration: instantaneous
Effect: sends spirit of dying hero to new cosm

Send is perhaps the power most feared by High Lords. Just when a High Lord has a Storm Knight at the

edge of death, a *send* can fling the soul of the hero to another cosm, a cosm on which another body can be found to house the hero, a cosm in which the Storm Knight can still fight the Possibility Wars.

Send takes only a round to perform, but the soul of the Storm Knight may wander for some time before arriving at her new cosm. The hero must wait until a suitable host is also dying; when the soul of the host departs, the soul of the Storm Knight may enter.

Upon arrival, the hero begins to regain the skills and abilities she formerly possessed. The hero automatically regains the *reality* skill, and her attributes are those of the old body rather than the body of the host. Each week the hero makes a *reality* check against a difficulty of 18, with a bonus number modifier equal to the value of the number of weeks she has been in the new body; a *minimal* success regains no skills. An *average* success regains a skill, a *good* success regains two skills, *superior* success regains three skills, and *spectacular* success regains four skills. All skills return with their full adds.

Example: Tolwyn of Tancred has been *sent* from her home cosm to Core Earth, where she inhabits the body of Wendy Miller. Tolwyn's attributes and *reality* skill are as they once were. At the end of the fifth week she generates a *reality* skill total against a difficulty of 18, with a +3 bonus number modifier. She gets a total of 25, for a *superior* success; three of her skills return at full adds.

Send can sometimes affect the memories of the hero sent. The memories usually return after half the the skills and abilities are regained.

Shift Possibility

Purchase: 20
Use Cost: 2
Coordination: 10
Difficulty: 15
Range: 50 meters
Duration: one round
Effect: allows characters to shift possibility energy to another character who is attempting task

This group power allows participants to shift all of their possibility energy to a character in exchange for the energy that character has generated. One of the participants in the power (other than the lead character who still must be the focus for the power) may attempt another task while gaining the benefits of this power.

In game terms, this means that all of the power participants (including the character performing the other task) roll the dice as though trying to accomplish the task. The task character may choose the best roll as his own, using it to generate his skill total.

Example: The Yellow Crab is trying to repair the surface control circuitry on a *Mitsubishi J5* hyperplane. Quin becomes the lead character for the Shift Possibility power, while the Crab is the task character. Quin and the Crab succeed at the power.

With the power in effect, the Yellow Crab attempts to repair the circuitry. The Crab rolls a 4. Quin rolls a 19. The Crab choose the 19 to repair the circuit.

The power may be kept up by spending the use cost, rather than having to roll for the power each round, as long as the lead character is still able to focus on the power and does not have to take any other action.

Stelae Sense

Purchase:10
Use Cost: 5
Coordination: 8
Difficulty: 20
Range: 10 kms
Duration: instantaneous
Effect: allows characters to narrow down the location of stelae

This power lets characters sense the possibilities which flow through stelae. The accuracy of *Stelae Sense* depends on the quality of the result. The sense provides a vision of a location; the stelae will always be within a certain distance of that location.

STELAE DISTANCE CHART	
Success	**Stelae is within**
Minimal	1000 meters
Average	400 meters
Good	60 meters
Superior	6 meters
Spectacular	1 meter

Chapter Ten

Magic

agic is a powerful, varied force. In some cosms, such as Core Earth, the power has waned, but in others, such as Aysle and Orrorsh, magic is strong. Although the purposes and uses of magic are different in the two realms, magic theory is consistent from cosm to cosm; spells may be obtained in different ways and have different effects, but magic remains magic.

The Structure of Magic

When a powerful mage designs a spell, he is aware that it has many elements. Only two of them are key: the *skill used* and the *arcane knowledge* involved in the spell.

There are four skills basic to magic: *alteration, apportation, conjuration,* and *divination. Alteration* causes a change in an existing object or entity. *Apportation* moves an object, effect, or entity. *Conjuration* creates an object, entity, or condition. *Divination* perceives and interprets information about an object, entity, or condition.

The skills are akin to verbs in sentences. The magic skill used in a spell determines what basic effect the spell will have. To create a spell may require several such "verbs." For example *conjuration* to create an effect and then *apportation* to move it to its target. However, most spells cast by beginning magicians are not created by them, but are cast from a *grimoire* (magical tome of stored spells).

The Grimoire

To cast a spell from a grimoire requires only the skill necessary for the most important component of the effect. Secondary effects may be sub-sumed under the spell at the time of its design, but are not necessary to cast the spell. For example, altering a small sphere into a fireball is the most important element of a fireball spell; moving the fireball is secondary. The magician who designed the spell would have to take into account the problems of moving it *(apportation)* and accuracy *(divination)* as well as the initial *alteration,* but once designed and placed in a grimoire these effects are "built in"; the only skill the caster need furnish is *alteration.*

Arcane Knowledge

The *arcane knowledge* used in a spell determines how the spell effect will manifest itself. If spells were sentences, arcane knowledges would be nouns and modifiers. Arcane knowledge is like a skill, in that you can buy adds in an arcane knowledge, paying the same price in Possibilties as you would for skills; unlike skills, arcane knowledges have no base attribute.

Arcane knowledges also differ from skills when generating a new character on a template. A mage receives a pool of 12 additional skill points, but she may only use these points to buy arcane knowledges and spells (see below). After generating the template, arcane knowledge must be purchased directly by spending Possibilities at the end of an adventure, as any skill add.

Example: Grendolyn's starting adds include 1 in *divination,* 3 in *conjuration,* and 1 in *apportation.* She also buys a total of 7 adds in arcane knowledges of her choice. She takes 4 adds *in folk,* and 1 add each in *fire, metal* and *light.*

Arcane knowledge may not be used "unskilled"; that is, a character may not cast a spell which requires an ar-

cane knowledge which she does not have.

The cosm of Aysle is probably the most magically advanced of those involved in the Possibility Wars. The mages of Aysle have studied the science of magic for generations, and have compiled a list of arcane knowledges. The list is not long, and it is not known if it is complete. Complete or not, a great number of effects may be constructed from these arcane knowledges. The following are the arcane knowledges known on Aysle as well as in Orrorsh and on Core Earth.

The Essences
Death
Life
Time
True Knowledge

The Principles
Darkness
Light
Magic

The Mixed Forces
Inanimate Forces
Living Forces

The Elements
Air
Earth
Fire
Metal
Plant
Water

The Seven Kindred
Aquatic
Avian
Earthly
Elemental
Enchanted
Entity
Folk

Theory Knowledges
Cast Time
Control
Duration
Range
Speed
State

Magicians consider the *Essences* to be at the pinnacle of the natural order. *Essences* are the most difficult of the knowledges to work with, requiring great skill and patience. The *Essences* are immutable, which means they may not be changed to another *Essence* or any other knowledge. Many magicians

believe that *true knowledge* represents divine knowledge, knowledge of the gods uncorrupted by the matter of mere existence. All conditions, all real objects and beings, have a core of *true knowledge* which defines their nature.

The *Principles* are pure forces of a high order. When used in pure form, they conform well to the will of the magician. As soon as they are mixed with any other knowledge, complications arise. Some magical theoreticians believe *darkness, light* and *magic* all to be the result of interplays of *Essences*: *Darkness* is the product of *death* and *time*, *light* is the result of *time* and *true knowledge*, and *magic* is the result of *time* and *life*.

The *Mixed Forces* represent a bridge between the *Essences* and *Principles* and the knowledge below them, as well as combinations of elemental forces. They are difficult to handle, but they have great applications in the hands of a master magician. *Living forces* include *Dexterity, Perception* and the other attributes. *Inanimate forces* include lightning and magnetism.

The *Elements* are often easy to work with, even for a beginning mage. All the *Elements* are considered to have a small spark of life. *Plants* are the sole element which can coexist with each of the other elements, at least in small doses.

The *Seven Kindred* are the living beings of the land. *Aquatics* are all creatures who live primarily in water. *Avians* are the flyers, the masters of the air. *Earthly creatures* are the ground dwellers. The *elementals* are beings who consist almost entirely of one elemental force. *Enchanted creatures* are those who subsist on or interweave magic into their natures. *Entities* are those beings who do not belong to the world of the folk; demons, ghosts, undead, and golem constructs all fall under the *entity* description. *Folk* are intelligent beings whose defining relationship is with others of their kind, rather than with any of the elements or with magic. While elves, edeinos, dwarves and human are each different, they are all *folk* in the sense of magic.

Theory knowledges are used exclusively in the design of spells. See the *Aysle* sourcebook for more about designing spells.

The Principle of Definition

An important rule of magic is *the Principle of Definition*. This states that a character or object may not be subjected to two active spells at the same time, if both spells are based on the same arcane knowledge. An *active spell* is one which still has time left on its duration.

A mage may replace one spell with another, but never may a target be under two spells using the same knowledge at the same time. This restriction extends even to casting an active spell upon a character who is already under an active spell of the same knowledge. For example, a character under the effect of a *strength* spell could not gain *languages* without losing the *strength* spell, for each is derived from the *folk* knowledge. Spell warding (magical protection) is based on this principle.

A spell cast upon a target has a "strength" equal to the magic skill of its caster. When another magician casts a spell upon the target, the old spell generates a total to resist the new spell. The defensive total is generated as if the magician were recasting the spell, but he does not have to be present; his magic ability is assumed to be within the spell. It is the spell rather than the mage who must cast it who suffers any ill effects (such as disconnection). If the mage is possibility-rated, the spell gains a roll-again on a 20. If the target is a possibility-rated character, she may use a Possibility to roll-again to increase the defensive spell total.

The spell with the higher total takes effect, and the other spell is immediately dissipated.

Synonymous Knowledges

The restrictions of the Principle of Definition have perplexed mages from many cosms. The answer was found in Aysle, by using *true knowledge* in elaborate rituals. Using these rituals, the existence of *synonymous knowledges* was discovered.

Synonymous knowledges are arcane knowledges which are nearly identical to the known, existing know-

ledges, but use slightly different definitions of the same word. Using synonymous knowledges, a mage can work around the Principle of Definition. A fire mage with three definitions for fire can have three spells active upon himself (or another character or object) at one time, all of which are using basically the same knowledge. Synonymous knowledges are zealously guarded and quite rare. Should a character gain access to a synonymous knowledge, he must learn it from scratch; despite being so close to another knowledge, a synonymous knowledge is a distinct knowledge — it just happens to work in all the same spells as its synonyms.

Starting Spells

A mage begins the game with 12 additional skill points, usable only for arcane knowledges and spells. Each point not used for arcane knowledge entitles the mage to an additional spell; for example, if a player uses eight of his character's bonus skill points to buy arcane knowledge adds, he may buy four spells as well.

During the course of the game, the mage may obtain new grimoire spells. To do this, he must have access to a grimoire, and spend a Possibility. He gains one new spell for each Possibility spent. Once a grimoire spell is purchased in this way, the mage need not read the grimoire in order to cast the spell.

Mages are assumed to have access to a grimoire before the game begins, and so may purchase additional spells for Possibilities (it's usually a good idea to take one to four additional spells).

Casting Spells

To cast a spell, a character generates a *spell skill total* from the appropriate magic skill, and compares this total to the spell difficulty as listed in the spell description.

Example: Grendolyn, skill 12, casts a *strength* spell, which has a difficulty of 12. She gets a bonus number of 2; her spell skill total is 14; the spell succeeds.

Backlash

The spell skill total is then compared to the "backlash" number listed in the spell description. *Backlash* is the natural resistance of a spell, unleashed when the caster attempts to work magic (some say it is a manifestation of the Everlaw of One, but this has never been proved). Backlash is a damage value which is compared to the **spell skill total;** the amount by which the backlash number exceeds the spell total is read as result points on the Combat Results Table (see page 40). Damage taken from spell backlash is normal damage with mental consequences (see below).

Example: Grendolyn's spell total of 14 is compared to the backlash for the *strength* spell, which is 17; she takes a K1 result from backlash (3 result points).

If the spell is cast from a grimoire, the magician is partially protected from backlash. If the **spell skill total** is less than the caster's *Mind,* the *Mind* value is used instead.

Example: Grendolyn casts another *strength* spell (backlash 17); she rolls a 1 for a total of 0. Because the spell is a grimoire spell, her *Mind* is used as the value when checking backlash. Her *Mind* is a 10, so she suffers Knockdown K2 damage (7 result points).

A spellcaster takes backlash each time he attempts a spell, regardless of whether or not it succeeds. To successfully cast a spell the caster must still be conscious after checking backlash. Some powerful spells have very high backlash values. Casting, or even surviving them, can be difficult.

Mental Damage Effects

When damage is taken from a spell's backlash, it has mental consequences. Even though this type of damage is treated as if it were physical damage, it has additional mental effects and is called *mental damage.*

When a character is KOed by mental damage, the character loses the arcane knowledge used to cast the spell. This does not include falling unconscious from accumulated shock, only from KO conditions. The character must wait 24 hours or undergo a miracle of *refreshment* to restore the knowledge.

If the character suffers one or more wounds from mental damage and his cumulative damage total becomes *heavily wounded* or greater, the character loses both his arcane knowledge and the appropriate magic skill. He cannot restore the knowledge or skill until 24 hours have passed or he has undergone *refreshment.* Additionally, his wound status may not be healed to better than *wounded* until he has restored his skills.

Spell Bonus

If the character is still conscious after backlash from a successful spell, the spell works. Each of the spells described below has a section labeled "Bonus Number to:". The **bonus number** generated while casting the spell is added to the part of the spell listed in the *Bonus Number to,* increasing the effectiveness of some part of the spell.

Example: Grendolyn's roll is a 15, for a bonus number of 2. This is added to the effect value (10) of the spell, for a total effect of 12.

Grimoire Spells Versus Spells "On the Fly"

Grimoires are often impressive volumes (though not all need be books) bound in ivory and precious metals, but the value of a grimoire lies in the spells it contains. Magicians learn spells from grimoires, or from teachers who have created the spells, by spending one week and one Possibility learning the spell. Once learned, it is not necessary to consult the grimoire when casting the spell. A magician may cast a spell from a written grimoire without learning it first, and still receive the benefits of a grimoire spell. The grimoire usually remains

unaltered by such castings. Grimoire spells are the most common spells, especially for beginning mages.

The benefits of casting a spell from a grimoire are:

1. That only the main magic skill and arcane knowledge of a spell are needed to cast it.

2. That effects from backlash are lessened.

A magician may cast spells "on the fly" - - that is, without have committed the spell to or having learned it from a grimoire. Casting such a spell requires the magician to have skills in all the necessary elements of a spell, and is also far more dangerous.

Rules for spell design and casting "on the fly"are contained in the *Aysle Fantasy Sourcebook.*

Focused Spells

Focused spells are spells that are placed into an object so that the spell effect originates from that object rather than from the caster. Focused spells are commonly detection or warding spells which the mage wishes to place in an object, such as a doorway. More details on focused spells can be found in the *Aysle Fantasy Sourcebook.*

Impressed Spells

At magic axiom level 17, "impressed" spells are possible. *Impressed* spells are those that are "partially precast" by the mage, and then held for future use. Spells may be impressed over a far greater length of time than is practical in an adventure situation, then released in a hurry when needed. Spells which are listed as "Cast Impressed" can *only* be cast impressed, and only such spells can be cast impressed.

To impress a spell, the caster rolls to beat the difficulty number and calculates backlash as for a normal spell. If he is successful, the spell is impressed in his memory. The spell may then be released within a combat round at any future time.

When releasing the impressed spell, the caster must roll again to generate a bonus number which is added to the

bonus number to portion of the spell. However, since difficulty and backlash have already been checked, the spell always succeeds, and the mage never takes backlash from releasing an impressed spell.

A mage may hold as many impressed spells as the total of his adds in *conjuration magic* and the *state* knowledge, which are a measure of his knowledge of the impression process. He may impress several different "Cast Impressed" spells, or he may impress the same spell several times, in any combination. Once impressed, a spell remains impressed until it is cast or until the mage dissipates it in order to make room for a different impressed spell.

Illusions

Illusions are magical "cheats," ways of conjuring reality without expending the energy necessary to create the **full** reality. Illusions can run the gamut from fully illusory (merely a sensory impression of the object "conjured") to almost real (there is some reality conjured, but not the whole amount). Illusions "borrow" possibility energy from those around them who believe in the illusion, and thus become more real over time (the amount of possibility energy taken from a believer is minute — no energy is lost by those who believe). This effect is temporary, though — as soon as the belief ceases (either because the believers leave the area or because someone becomes convinced that the object is an illusion), the illusion vanishes as well.

To disbelieve, a character must generate a *Mind* total. The difficulty number for *disbelief* is 8; this is sometimes modified by the spell result as stated in the various spell descriptions, and is always modified (using the multi-action chart) by the number of beings who **do** believe in the illusion.

Example: A warrior attempts to disbelieve an illusory foe, but the warrior's six companions believe in the foe. The warrior's difficulty is increased by 8 to successfully disbelieve what six other people believe in.

Illusory spells which affect a mental state, such as *charm person* which succeeds in charming its target, may not be disbelieved by the target character without prodding from a different character. This is because, by definition, the emotions produced by the spell feel real enough to negate any desire to question them, and an objective viewpoint is needed to allow disbelief.

An illusion's effect value is the amount of reality the illusion contains. The lower the effect value, the more the spell relies on pure illusion, and the less "real" it is. Conversely, an illusion with a high effect value is at least partially real.

Example: An illusory bridge with an effect value of 15 could hold up to 1,000 kilos of weight at a time, although it could appear to be far stronger, or more frail, than that.

The gamble for the caster of an illusion is that successful disbelief in the spell dissolves the effect value of the spell completely—and not just for the disbeliever. Thus, even the caster of the spell is required to make a disbelief roll if he wants to use some portion of the illusion as though it were real. The caster would be safer if many people around him believe in the illusion, as it will now be more difficult for him to disbelieve his own spell!

Example: A mage casts an illusory bridge with an effect value of 15. His army starts across the bridge, thinking that it is real, and it becomes more real as they cross. The mage, however, knowing it is an illusion, must roll for disbelief before crossing himself. The fact that 100 men believe in the bridge increases his difficulty by 20; he's probably safe.

Any physical effects from an illusion (such as damage) are real enough if they affect a character prior to disbelief; the disbeliever regains control of his mental and spiritual self and may act as he wishes, although for a short while his judgment might still be clouded by the illusion.

Example: The warrior observes a force moving over a bridge which he believes to be illusory. With a mighty

roll he succeeds in disbelieving, and the bridge vanishes. Those on the bridge might still believe they are on the bridge for a few seconds or even minutes, and so drown while their legs make walking motions and their eyes see the far shore approaching.

The Primary Rule of Magic

Magic is not physics, or chemistry, or biology. It is a distinct discipline with its own rules. Magic works by extending the will of the spellcaster, interweaving it with nature and coming up with a result. The primary rule of magic is a spell will have no positive effect without being willed by the caster; negative or non-effects are generally a result of insufficient control and will.

Thus magic and technology are at odds at a fundamental level. Technology works with natural laws, while magic intervenes in those laws. Each has its advantages and drawbacks.

Magic can accomplish spectacular feats beyond the possibility of even sophisticated technology, but is limited by the primary rule of magic. To those raised in a technological society, the very workings of magic make no sense. A magically propelled bullet could be deadly within the range of the spell, but once it reached the end of the range, it would fall straight to the ground; out of the range of the will that powered it, the bullet has no velocity, no momentum, no physically measurable force whatsoever. Within the range of the spell, such concepts as friction, angular momentum, and other crucial underpinnings of science have greatly reduced meanings. In a sense all magic is illusory, in that magical effects can create a reality at odds with the local laws of physics. When the magic wears off, physical laws resume.

However, magic is real in that when magic takes effect, the natural can be affected by eldritch forces. A rock split by magic will not miraculously reseal itself when the magic wears off. "Nature concedes the destruction of anything, the construction of nothing" is a magician's maxim.

Magic and natural law can work together. For example, magicians quickly made the messy discovery that wounds could be healed easily through gross use of *alteration magic,* but would reappear when the spell wore off. When more effort and finer control were put into the spell, a solution was found: if you repair human tissue at so fine a level as to facilitate natural healing processes, then when the spell wears off, the healing will have proceeded in accordance with natural laws.

For further scholarly discussion about the nature of magic, see the *Aysle Fantasy Sourcebook.*

The Grimoire Spells

The following spell descriptions are common grimoire spells, found in many cosms. A grimoire spell description has the following parts: *axiom level, magic skill* that generates effect, the *noun* that generates effect, *control, range, speed, duration, casting time* and *backlash.*

The standard grimoire spell looks like this:

Bullet

Axiom Level: 7
Skill: *apportation/metal* 13

Backlash: 15
Difficulty: 11
Effect Value: 15
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 5 (10 meters)
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Cast Time: 3 (four seconds)
Manipulation: control

The *axiom level* lists where the spell falls in the scale presented in Gamemaster Chapter Eight. If the axiom level of the spell is less than or equal to the axiom level of the cosm, it works just fine. Otherwise the caster must check for a contradiction as described in that chapter.

A spell that is impressed in an area with an axiom level lower than 17 requires a contradiction check; when the spell is cast, use the non-parenthetical number as its axiom level. The (17) in the entry is there to remind you of the impression limits.

Skill lists which of the four magic skills is used for the spell: *alteration, apportation, conjuration* or *divination.* The necessary *arcane knowledge* is also listed. The sum of the caster's skill value and knowledge adds must equal or exceed the number listed. The spell may not be cast unless the caster has the appropriate arcane knowledge.

Backlash is how powerful a force surges through the magician as he casts his spell. Backlash is a damage value which is compared to the spell total. The magician must survive the backlash (stay conscious) to successfully cast a spell.

Difficulty of the spell is the difficulty number required for a successful cast. "Successful" means the spell's effect value is used, not necessarily that the spell affects its target.

Effect value is the effect value of the spell, if any.

Bonus Number to lists the part of the spell to which any generated bonus number is added. While usually added to the effect value, the bonus number could be added to duration or range, depending on what the designer of the spell wished. Negative bonus numbers are "added" to the appropriate value.

Range is the greatest distance over which the spell effect may be projected. The range is measured from the caster of the spell unless the spell is focused, in which case it is measured from the focus object. A range of *self* means the spell may only affect the caster. A range of *touch* means the caster must make physical contact with his target for the spell to take effect.

Duration is how long the spell effect lasts.

Cast time is how long it takes the magician to cast the spell. Combat spells which strike an enemy target must have a cast time of 3 or less in order to have a chance to hit their targets in the same round in which they are cast. Combat spells which have a cast time of 4 may be used on a friendly character during the same round as the effect takes place.

Cast times greater than 23 cannot be done in a single stretch. The magi-

cian is assumed to be casting six to eight hours a day for an extended period; this is the maximum cast time which can be done repeatedly with little chance of error. A mage may be able to go 24 hours straight for one spell, but has little chance of going 12 hours a day for a month without making a mistake which would ruin the spell (and possibly himself).

Manipulation lists the additional arcane knowledges or levels of skill that are necessary to manipulate and modify the spell. Should a spell need additional skills or knowledges to cast, the body of the description tells you what else is needed to cast the spell. Spell manipulation is discussed in the *Aysle Fantasy Sourcebook.*

Whenever a spell description lists "limited to a man-sized or smaller target," that means the spell is limited to a specific mass, 100 kilos, which is the size of a large, but not huge, man. Other restrictions maybe inferred from the knowledge that generated the spell. A spell based on *folk* knowledge, for example, could not affect dogs, regardless of their size.

If a spell is listed as having a radius, all targets within that radius are affected by the full value of the spell.

Spell Descriptions

Altered Fireball

Axiom Level: 10
Skill: *alteration/fire* 18

Backlash: 21
Difficulty: 10
Effect Value: 14
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 8 (40 meters)
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: apportation,
control

Altered fireball requires a large flammable ball, traditionally of pitch and coal, weighing about a third of a pound. The magician lights the ball from a source of flame, grabbing a piece before the sphere is completely engulfed. As the spell is cast the rest of the ball leaps toward it target. The magician directs it toward its impact point by mimicking its flight with the piece he retained, slamming the piece into his hand when, in the flight, he wants the ball to expand to its full four meter radius and do damage.

Away Sight

Axiom Level: 7
Skill: *divination/light* 15

Backlash:19
Difficulty: 11
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: range

Range: 13 (400 meters)
Duration: 13 (six minutes)
Cast Time: 15 (15 minutes)
Manipulation: range, speed

Away sight forms a small, slowly revolving series of translucent tubes which catch the reflections of light, and hence the images, of everything in a 10 meter radius. The whirling construct can travel 250 meters per round (60 mph). The images it collects are grainy; a mage viewing distant objects through *away sight* could not tell the detail on a coin, for example, but could certainly tell that the object was a coin. Beyond the basic range of the spell the image becomes increasingly coarse, until at six miles only basic shapes are recognizable.

Casting the spell requires a glass lens, through which the image is focused for the duration of the spell.

Bullet

Axiom Level: 7
Skill: *apportation/metal* 13

Backlash: 16
Difficulty: 10
Effect Value: 15
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 5 (10 meters)
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Cast Time: 3 (four seconds)
Manipulation: control

The spell is set for metal the mass of a small sling bullet, or a coin about the size of a quarter. The magician panto- mimes the whirling of a sling with the hand holding the metal, then releases it aiming at his opponent. The *apportation* total must exceed the *Dexterity* or *dodge* of the target character in order to hit him.

Charm Person

Axiom Level: 11
Skill: *conjuration/living forces* 16

Backlash: 18
Difficulty: 13
Effect Value: 14
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 2 (2.5 meters)
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control, duration,
state

Charm person begins with a smile, and a gesture resembling a greeting. The effect value of the spell is substituted for the caster's *charm* skill. The spell works as the *charm* skill, except that the caster may roll for a *charm* each round rather than every few minutes. *Charm person* is limited to beings who are man-sized or smaller.

Charm person is an illusory spell. After the duration of the spell expires, the effect wears off rather quickly, and is dispelled within an hour for intelligent beings, perhaps a day for simpler creatures. If the spell is disbelieved, the character is no longer charmed, although memories of the feelings do exist.

Cleanse

Axiom Level: 10 (17)
Skill: *alteration/water* 19

Backlash:19
Difficulty: 7
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: duration

Range: touch
Duration: 26 (1.5 days)
Cast Time: 29 (1 week)
Manipulation: control

Cleanse is an impressed and focused spell, with the effect being placed in a liter of specially prepared water. The

water contains a very small amount of herb tea. When a character drinks the water, the water cleanses his body by absorbing any chemical impurities, such as poison or alcohol. The water does not act quickly, as it must travel through the body's own transport mechanisms. When the water passes from the body, it takes the impurities with it.

Conjured Fireball

Axiom Level: 13 (17)
Skill: *conjuration/fire* 20

Backlash: 19
Difficulty: 6
Effect Value: 18
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 5 (10 meters)
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Cast Time: 18 (one hour)
Manipulation: control, speed,
    state

Conjured fireball is an impressed spell, cast in advance of need. The conjuring must be done near an open flame, although the flame may as small as a pair of candles. Once impressed, the spell may be cast within a round, the magician uttering a cast word of his choosing and mimicking the shaping the ball of flame with hand motions. The ball of fire has a burst radius of 10 meters.

Detect Magic

Axiom Level: 5
Skill: *divination /magic* 11

Backlash: 14
Difficulty: 10
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: duration

Range: 7 (25 meters)
Duration: 8 (40 seconds)
Cast Time: 7 (25 seconds)
Manipulation: range, speed

This spell requires the magician to hold a grimoire. The mage opens the grimoire as he incants the spell, then turns slowly in a circle, holding the open grimoire. If magic is in effect within range of the spell in the direction the mage is facing, the pages will flutter softly. The more powerful the magic, the more the pages move — extremely potent magic can cause the book to shake and tumble violently as if caught in a whirlwind.

Disguise Self

Axiom Level: 7
Skill: *conjuration/folk* 13

Backlash: 14
Difficulty: 9
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: duration

Range: self
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control, state

Prior to casting the spell, the magician must have a rendition of the kind of person or being he wishes to look like, and must somehow attach the rendering to his person. The mage casts *disguise self* by "sculpting" the image with his hands as he imagines his new look. The spell weaves an illusion of the being.

Disguise self is not precise enough to copy a specific person. Disguising oneself as a race (such as a human disguising himself as a dwarf) different from one's own increases the difficulty to 15.

Earth Shield

Axiom Level: 8
Skill: *apportation/earth* 12

Backlash: 12
Difficulty: 7
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: duration

Range: touch
Duration: 7 (25 seconds)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control, duration

The mage scoops a small piece of earth from the ground, quickly molds it into a crude image of a shield, then touches the ground where he had scooped out the dirt. An immobile shield of earth rises from the ground, two meters high, one meter wide and a hand span thick. The shield has an armor add of +10, up to a maximum of 25.

Extradimensional Gate

Axiom Level: 15
Skill: *conjuration/*
    true knowledge 22

Backlash: 20
Difficulty: 14
Effect Value: 8
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch
Duration: 18 (one hour)
Cast Time: 23 (10 hours)
Manipulation: control, duration,
    divination

Aysle mages believe that every cosm contains extradimensional pockets that are separate from the cosm but are not quite part of another cosm. These pockets may be traveled to via an *extradimensional gate*. To construct the gate, the mage must draw an image of the gate into the ground. He must then inscribe into the gate images of what he believes the extradimensional pocket looks like. The more correct he is, the easier the spell — general images take the full 10 hours to cast, good renditions of existing places cut the cast time down to six hours, exact representation of an existing spot in the cosm pocket cuts the cast time down to two and a half hours. When the gate opens, the dimension beyond can be seen through a glowing veil, near a location which resembles that drawn by the mage.

The gate remains in the ground. The other side the gate is perpendicular to the ground (or perpendicular to whatever force of gravity there is). Falling into it is disorienting, as you go from the gravity field of the cosm to that of the pocket. The amount of mass that may be moved through the gate is equal to the effect value (starts at 40 kilos per round, so a 100 kilo man would take three rounds to go all the way through). You cannot travel from one cosm to another by use of this spell.

Floater

Axiom Level: 5
Skill: *apportation/air* 17

Backlash: 15
Difficulty: 12
Effect Value: 3
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 7 (25 meters)
Duration: 14 (10 minutes)
Cast Time: 3 (four seconds)
Manipulation: none needed

The caster begins the spell by puffing air under a feather or lightweight disk to get it to rise in the air. The floater can then lift up to 100 kilos; the mage directs the spell up and down. The speed at which the mass moves is the effect value of the spell (or less if the mage desires). A person riding the floater is buffeted from underneath by hard, rolling air currents. While not dangerous, they occasionally snare items not securely bound to the floater.

Fly

Axiom Level: 8
Skill: *apportation/avian* 18

Backlash: 19
Difficulty: 12
Effect Value: 8
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch
Duration: 18 (one hour)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control

Fly requires the feathers, skin, or other covering from the skin of a flying creature. The mage flaps the component as if flying, then gives them to the recipient of the spell. As long as that character is holding onto the component, or safely tucks it somewhere next to his skin, he can fly for the duration of the spell. The spell is on the character, not the component, so passing the component to another character does not allow the other to fly. If the flying character loses the component, he immediately loses the ability to fly. Speed of flight is equal to the effect value.

Fog

Axiom Level: 7
Skill: *alteration/water* 12

Backlash: 15
Difficulty: 8
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: duration

Range: touch
Duration: 11 (2.5 minutes)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control, duration

The fog spell requires a liter of water in a vessel with an opening. As the magician casts the spell, he pours the water over one of his hands, splashing the water into the air. The water billows into a dense fog, completely filling a 25 meter radius. The fog stays centered about the vessel, and will last for the duration of the spell or until the magician's hand is dried.

Gain Language

Axiom Level: 7
Skill: *divination /folk* 14

Backlash: 15
Difficulty: 14
Effect Value: 13
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: self
Duration: 11 (2.5 minutes)
Cast Time: 6 (15 seconds)
Manipulation: duration

The mage must touch the lips (or whatever is making the sound) of the speaker whose language he wishes to gain. At the same time he begins to parrot the speech, to the best of his ability. The effect value of the spell is compared to a difficulty number of 8 on the Power Push table. The resulting value modifier is added to the caster's *language* skill (giving him the skill if unskilled) for the duration of the spell. The shock effects of the push are ignored. *Gain language* only works for casters who are man-sized or smaller.

Haste

Axiom Level: 9
Skill: *alteration/folk* 14

Backlash: 16
Difficulty: 11
Effect Value: 15
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Cast Time: 4 (six seconds)
Manipulation: control

Haste increases the speed of the target character, as well as his *Dexterity* for the duration of the spell. *Haste* does not increase eye-hand coordination, so firearm and energy weapon use does not benefit from the *haste* spell. The effect value of the spell is compared to the target's *Dexterity* on the Power Push Table on page 40(not the Speed Push). The resulting value modifier is added to the target's *Dexterity* and movement limit for the duration of the spell. The shock effects of the push are ignored.

To cast the spell, the target character and the caster move their hands up and down with increasing frenzy, then the magician touches the character with one of his hands.

Increase Charisma

Axiom Level: 9
Skill: *alteration/folk* 14

Backlash: 19
Difficulty: 14
Effect Value: 14
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: self
Duration: 14 (10 minutes)
Cast Time: 6 (15 seconds)
Manipulation: control

The caster needs two images, one smiling, one frowning. He crumples the frowning image, and places the smiling image against his skin. The effect value of the spell is compared to his *Charisma* on the Power Push table. The resulting value modifier is added to his *Charisma* for the duration of the spell. The shock effects of the push are ignored.

Jump

Axiom Level: 6
Skill: *apportation/folk* 14

Backlash: 15
Difficulty. 9
Effect Value: 6
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 3 (four meters)
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control

This spell requires the hind legs from an animal known for jumping, such as a cricket or frog. The magician makes the sound of the animal while making hopping motions with the hand holding the legs, then points at the recipient of the spell.

The effect value of the spell is compared to the target's *jumping* value on the Power Push table. The resulting value modifier is added to the target's *jumping* value and limit for the duration of the spell. The shock effects of the push are ignored.

Lightning

Axiom Level: 10
Skill: *alteration/ inanimate forces* 19

Backlash: 19
Difficulty: 11
Effect Value: 20
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 8 (40 meters)
Duration: 8 (40 seconds)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control, range, speed

Quick, jagged motions by the caster's arms begin the *lightning* spell. If successful, powerful electricity charges up within the caster, doing no harm save that of raising his hair. He may then cast a lightning bolt for each of the next four rounds, with a damage value equal to the effect value. To hit a target he must generate an *alteration* total which exceeds the target's *Dexterity* or *dodge*, but this use does not cause any backlash as the spell has

already been successfully cast. The bonus number used is that of the initial cast, not the targeting rolls.

Mage Dark

Axiom Level: 12
Skill: *conjuration/dark* 15

Backlash: 18
Difficulty: 12
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: duration

Range: 8 (40 meters)
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control

Blowing a bit of soot or ash into the air and pointing at a target starts the *mage dark* spell. Everything within 15 meters of the initial target point is enshrouded in a thick, palpable darkness. *Mage dark* is not completely impervious to light, but ordinary light appears as random sparkles, more common near a light source, but insufficient for illumination and sight. *Mage light* combined with *mage dark* fills the overlapping areas with a suffused glow like an illuminated fog, and vision is barely possible (+10 to the difficulty of all visual *Perception* checks). *Sunstore* creates a condition similar to dusk, and *true light* destroys the *mage dark*.

Mage Light

Axiom Level: 12
Skill: *alteration/light* 15

Backlash: 16
Difficulty: 11
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: duration

Range: touch
Duration: 18 (one hour)
Cast Time: 6 (15 seconds)
Manipulation: control

The mage needs a mirror and at least a faint glimmer of light to cast this spell, catching the reflection of the light in the mirror. The mirror glows with a gentle brightness until everything within 10 meters is illuminated.

Mage light has a strange, "thick" quality to it, and objects illuminated appear coarse and grainy, occasionally with a few random gray or black speckles. Colors are muted. The mirror is a necessary component of the spell, but the spell is not focused into the mirror. Should the magician be separated from his mirror, the spell ends.

Open Lock

Axiom Level: 6
Skill: *apportation/metal* 14

Backlash: 16
Difficulty: 11
Effect Value: 13
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Cast Time: 6 (15 seconds)
Manipulation: control, duration

Touching the lock with one hand, the mage takes a key in the other and mimes the opening of a lock. At the completion of the spell, he takes the key and places it as near the lock mechanism as possible. This time, turning the key opens the lock, as long as the effect value exceeds the difficulty of the lock (see Gamemaster Chapter Three)

Pathfinder

Axiom Level: 7
Skill: *divination/earth* 14

Backlash: 15
Difficulty: 9
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: range

Range: 13 (400 meters)
Duration: 18 (one hour)
Cast Time: 18 (one hour)
Manipulation: control, duration, speed

The mage draws a simple design into the earth, drawing over the image again and again to score it deeper. At the same time he visualizes the place or object he seeks. If the place or object is directly connected to earth or stone and within range, the spell can find it.

When the spell is cast, the design moves through the earth toward the place or object in the most direct manner possible, at the rate of 10 meters per round — the pace of a moderate walk. If the range of the spell is greater than 18, then the spell ends before arriving at its destination.

Possibility Shadows

Axiom Level: 7
Skill: *divination/folk* 16

Backlash: 22
Difficulty: 7
Effect Value: 19
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Cast Time: 9 (one minute)
Manipulation: control

The spell requires that a light source be placed behind the mage and character on whom the spell is to be cast. The magician arranges herself so her shadow overlaps that of her subject, and casts the spell while touching the subject. Once cast, the shadow of the mage fades, and the shadow of the subject begins to act out the chosen near future, with the rest of the world appearing as faint, wavering shadows. The more likely the outcome, the more distinct the shadows.

The mage may choose to examine any one point in the future each time she casts the spell; the point examined may begin at any time from the present through to a maximum of her effect value expressed as time.

Example: Grendolyn generates a bonus number of 3 when casting *possibility shadow,* giving her an effect number of 22. She may examine any one point in the future that starts from a moment after the spell was cast up to a point about six hours into the future.

The caster need not specify an exact time; she may imagine to herself (tell the gamemaster) a condition and "search" for that condition within the allowed timespan. She must determine how far into the future she will try to look before she casts the spell; even if the event she sees takes place before that limit is reached, the effect value

must be equal to the task.

Example: Grendolyn's player tells the gamemaster she wants to see "the time of greatest danger within the next week" for the target character. Even if that time is in the next few hours, Grendolyn must get an effect value of 29 for the spell to work at all.

The accuracy of the reading is determined by comparing the effect value against the maximum distance chosen. In the above example, Grendolyn's effect value is compared to 29 to determine the level of success, even if the event she viewed was only a few hours in the future.

Minimal success gains only confusing images, *average* success allows one useful fact to be gleaned from the reading, *good* success lets the mage pinpoint the exact **time** of the occurrence, and *superior* success lets the mage note details of the **location.** *Spectacular* success lets the mage see the scene as if she were present, except that the shadow world exists only in black and white.

The possible future is enacted in real time; that is, she can see one minute's worth of the future (the duration of the spell).

Ritual of Mind Preparation

Axiom Level: 9
Skill: *alteration/folk* 15

Backlash: 17
Difficulty: 10
Effect Value: 15
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: self
Duration: 18 (one hour)
Cast Time: 18 (one hour)
Manipulation: control, duration

The *ritual of mind preparation* requires the mage to memorize a poem or geometric proof during the first half of the ritual, and then to silently recite the proof or poem, associating a hand gesture with each part of the work. Once the link between thought and movement is complete, the spell is finished. The effect value of the spell is compared to the target's *Mind* on the

Power Push Table (page 40). The resulting value modifier is added to the target's *Mind* for the duration of the spell. The shock effects are ignored.

Ritual of Perception Preparation

Axiom Level: 9
Skill: *alteration/folk* 15

Backlash: 17
Difficulty: 10
Effect Value: 15
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: self
Duration: 18 (one hour)
Cast Time: 18 (one hour)
Manipulation: control, duration

The mage must draw three large concentric circles, the smallest large enough for him to sit in, the others about a handspan farther out. He must make the circles as perfect as he can. Then, sitting in the innermost, he examines each of the circles looking for imperfections. He touches each circle at the site where it is furthest from a true circle.

The effect value of the spell is compared to the target's *Perception* on the Power Push table. The resulting value modifier is added to the target's *Perception* for the duration of the spell. The shock effects of the push are ignored.

Slow

Axiom Level: 9
Skill: *alteration/folk* 19

Backlash: 18
Difficulty: 14
Effect Value: 14
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 7 (25 meters)
Duration: 11 (2.5 minutes)
Cast Time: 3 (four seconds)
Manipulation: control, range, speed

The mage points at his target in slow motion. If the spell total is greater than the target's *Dexterity* or *dodge,* that target is slowed. The effect value

is then compared to the target's *Dexterity* on the Power Push table. The target character's movement value and *Dexterity* are reduced by the value modifier; the shock results of the push are ignored. The spell does not reduce a character's balance, so he is no more clumsy than he was. He is just considerably slower.

Slow is limited to creatures who are man-sized or smaller.

Stealth Walk

Axiom Level: 9
Skill: *alteration/folk* 17

Backlash: 16
Difficulty: 14
Effect Value: 14
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch
Duration: 16 (25 minutes)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control, duration

Stealth walk increases the *stealth* value of a character. The effect value of the spell is compared to the target's *Dexterity* on the Power Push Table. The resulting value modifier is added to the target's *stealth* (giving him the skill if he does not have it) for the duration of the spell. The shock effects of the push are ignored.

To cast the spell, the mage stands three paces from his target and holds his hand out, palm up. As he chants the spell, the recipient quietly takes three steps forward and lightly places a personal possession in the palm of the mage. The mage must hold the item for the duration of the spell; if he lets go the spell is broken.

Stealth walk is limited to beings who are man-sized or smaller.

Stone Tunnel

Axiom Level: 8
Skill: *apportation/earth* 12

Backlash: 16
Difficulty: 9
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch
Duration: 12 (four minutes)

Cast Time: 9 (one minute)
Manipulation: control, duration

The mage begins by taking a chip of the rock he wishes to tunnel through and smashing it to fine pieces. Once he has done that, he may cast the spell by kneading the stone dust into a piece of clay, then smearing the clay onto the wall. The mage pounds his hands on the stone with increasing firmness; at the end of the cast time the stone cracks and breaks. The effect value represents the distance the mage tunnels each round, the tunnel being roughly one meter in diameter. The rubble would have to be cleared behind him, an easy task compared to digging through solid rock.

Strength

Axiom Level: 9
Skill: *alteration/folk* 15

Backlash: 15
Difficulty: 12
Effect Value: 10
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control

The mage places a heavy object in the hands of the recipient, and helps the character lift the object, applying more force as he finishes the spell. The effect value of the spell is compared to the target's *Strength* on the Power Push Table. The resulting value modifier is added to the target's *Strength* for the duration of the spell. The shock effects of the push are ignored.

Sunstore

Axiom Level: 10
Skill: *alteration/light* 20

Backlash: 15
Difficulty: 10
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: duration

Range: 8 (40 meters)
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Cast Time: 3 (four seconds)
Manipulation: control

The mage places a glass sphere in the sunlight so that the sunlight catches on some part of the sphere. The mage quickly utters the spell and the sunlight is trapped in the sphere. The sphere glows brighter and brighter, until at the end of 10 seconds its glow illuminates a 15 meter radius with sunlight. This effect lasts for the duration of the spell.

Sweet Water

Axiom Level: 8
Skill: *alteration/water* 14

Backlash: 17
Difficulty: 11
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: duration

Range: touch
Duration: 6 (15 seconds)
Cast Time: 18 (one hour)
Manipulation: control, duration

Sweet water purifies a liter of water, or a solution which is primarily water, each round of its duration. To cast the spell the magician requires two containers, one of which must be immaculately clean. The magician pours the liquid into the dirtier vessel, and places the clean vessel an arm's length away. He then scrubs clean one of his hands, placing that hand nearer the clean vessel. As the spell is cast, the fluid moves from the dirty to the clean vessel, passing through the magician's hands. His clean hand sparkles and glows, while his less clean hand collects all the impurities in the water.

Tracker

Axiom Level: 7
Skill: *divination/earth* 14

Backlash: 18
Difficulty: 10
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: range

Range: 13 (400 meters)
Duration: 20 (2.5 hours)
Cast Time: 18 (one hour)
Manipulation: control, duration, range, speed

To cast *tracker* the mage must bury something which belonged to the person being tracked, and sit beside the spot while casting the spell. The spell is completed by digging up and "discovering" the buried item. If the place or object is directly connected to earth or stone and within range, the spell can find it. The item tumbles to the earth and begins to move along the ground toward the person in the most direct manner possible at the rate of 10 meters per round — the pace of a moderate walk. If the range of the spell is greater than 20, then the spell stops before arriving at its destination.

True Light

Axiom Level: 17
Skill: *conjuration/*
         true knowledge   28

Backlash: 16
Difficulty: 10
Effect Value: 5
Bonus Number **to:** duration

Range: 5 (10 meters)
Duration: 15 (15 minutes)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control, duration, light

True light conjures a glowing, streaming mass of true light, one of the three *Principles* of nature. The mage casts the spell by imagining that all he believes to be true is coalescing before him, and shaping these beliefs into the light. The light illuminates anything within 10 meters. *True light* drives away darkness, be it physical, mental or spiritual.

In addition, each round the mage may concentrate upon one being within the radius of the light. The mage rolls a die, and adds the bonus number generated to the effect value for a total. Lies and evil intentions will appear as shadows about the creature if the effect total is greater than the *Mind* of the creature (if lying) or the *Spirit* (if harboring evil intentions).

Water Spray

Axiom Level: 8
Skill: *alteration/water* 12

Backlash: 16
Difficulty: 10
Effect Value: 10
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 6 (15 meters)
Duration: 6 (15 seconds)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Manipulation: control

The magician requires a liter of water in a container he can squeeze to produce a spray. As he incants the spell, the mage squirts the spray into his other hand, allowing it to deflect at a shallow angle. When the spell is cast, the volume and power of the spray increases dramatically as it leaves the mage's hand; he directs the spray by changing the position of his hand. The spray lasts for two rounds of combat. The *alteration* total must exceed the *dodge* or *Dexterity* of the target character in order to hit a target with the spray.

Weakness

Axiom Level: 9
Skill: *alteration/folk* 16

Backlash: 19
Difficulty: 13
Effect Value: 8
Bonus Number **to:** effect

Range: 5 (10 meters)
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Cast Time: 3 (four seconds)
Manipulation: duration

The mage points at the target character and lets his arm fall limp as he finishes the spell. The effect value of the spell is compared to the target's *Strength* on the Power Push Table (page 40). The resulting value modifier is subtracted from the target's *Strength* for the duration of the spell. The shock effects of the push are ignored.

Weather Control

Axiom Level: 13
Skill: *alteration/air* 33

Backlash: 25
Difficulty: 12
Effect Value: 0
Bonus Number to: duration

Range: touch
Duration: 25 (one day)
Cast Time: 32 (one month)
Manipulation: duration

Weather control must be cast over a full month. Each sunrise the mage writes the symbols for that morning's weather on the perimeter of a circle with a radius of six meters. During the course of the day, he alters the symbols to match the changes in the day's weather. After a month, he completes the spell.

The mage controls the weather within a six kilometer radius (four miles). He can change the air temperature about six degrees an hour, and increase or decrease the humidity about six percent. The changes are sufficient to cause/stop rain within two hours, and to get a raging storm (or calm one) within four hours. He can manipulate the air pressure so that any severe weather he wishes to avoid will slide past his area.

Spell Design and Manipulation

Designing a spell is an involved process, both within the game and outside of it. In the game, a character may experiment as much as he likes with spells.

Rather than design a spell from scratch, a character may choose to *manipulate* a spell. To manipulate a spell, the character must have all of the knowledges listed under the Manipulation line of the spell; those knowledges were all of the additional knowledges which went into the design of the spell.

Spell design and manipulation are fully explained in the *Aysle Fantasy Sourcebook.*

Chapter Eleven

Miracles of Faith

In every cosm inhabited by sentient beings, there is religion. How much influence religion has on a cosm can vary widely, but in every cosm where spirituality exists, there are stories of miracles. Many of them are true.

Community and Spirituality

Religion and spirituality differ from magic in a fundamental way: magic bends the forces of the universe according to alternate laws of nature; religion creates a spiritual community linked by a divine will separate from each individual's will.

Magic is much like an alternate technology limited only by the practitioner's mentality. A wizard can study in his tower for years, never see a living soul, and be unhindered in his quest for magic. Religion, on the other hand, connects people to their cosm through the community. When people of a belief gather and interact in a service or ritual, the community is reaffirmed. Even hermits begin their lives of faith in the community. When they leave to seek solitude, they are still bound to the community by their faith, linked to others through the divine principles they seek to explore.

Mythos

A *mythos* encompasses the stories, symbols, practices, beliefs and history that people use to connect themselves to the spiritual power of their universe. A mythos is a peoples' interpretation of the way spiritual power works in their cosm; their faith in this mythos can act as a conduit for such power.

However, faith can only carry power for purposes which are consistent with the mythos, and the power must manifest itself in ways which are consistent with the beliefs.

Religions differ dramatically in their interpretation of nature, of humanity's place in nature, and the ethical structure of the universe. Traditional Western Core Earth religions set man apart from nature, usually one notch above the rest of the world. A character believing himself to be separate from nature may use nature as he sees fit; for example, animals maybe killed for any reason which benefits man, as man is a more divine creature than any other.

Many Eastern and American Indian Core Earth religions assign man a place as a piece of nature. In some American Indian mythos, prayers must be spoken to get a deer's permission to kill it, for a deer is as close to the spirits of the world as humanity is.

To have faith and work miracles in a religion is to accept all of the core beliefs of the religion. If a religion says there is only one true god, a faithful follower of that religion can only perform miracles as long as he believes there is only one true god.

Focus

The *focus* skill allows a caster to focus the spiritual energy which infuses both the world itself and the believers who share his faith. Without *focus*, miracles are not possible. *Focus* is a *Spirit* skill, used for the action total of a miracle (see below).

Religious symbols and items can be used to provide focus for a miracle. To act as a focus, the symbol must have spiritual energy invested in it through faith; this can occur over time when an object is a center of worship for a

community of the faithful. Such symbols have a *focus* skill which may be used by anyone possessing the symbol, provided the symbol is of the user's faith.

Faith

Faith is a measure of a character's strength of belief in a mythos, the degree to which a character is connected to the spiritual power of his cosm. *Faith* is necessary to power a miracle.

Faith is a *Spirit* skill. A character's *faith* value is used for the effect total of a miracle (see below). The *faith* total determines, to one degree or another, the power of the miracle.

When a miracle is requested, the **beneficiary** of the miracle is usually the one whose *faith* gives the miracle its spiritual power, **not** the one providing the miracle's *focus.*

Example: A refugee in Philadelphia needs healing. Father Bryce attempts to heal the character through a miracle, using his *focus* skill. *The faith* value for the second total is that of the refugee.

Since the beneficiary of a miracle uses her *faith* to power the miracle, she must **volunteer** in order to accept the effects of the miracle. If she does not, the miracle has no power. A miracle harmful to a character must therefore draw its *faith* from a character other than the target. This can be the *focus* character, if he stands to be the beneficiary of harm coming to the target. If the target has no *faith,* the *focus* character may provide the *faith.*

Faith and Believers

When a miracle is created among believers, their faith intertwines and supports one another; thus, the miracle of a community is far greater than the miracle possible for one individual. The difficulty of participating in the creation of a miracle is called the miracle's *community rating.*

Each character wishing to aid in the miracle generates a *faith* total, and if the total is greater than or equal to the community rating of the miracle, that

character contributes. The **value** of the number of people who successfully contribute (including the focusing character) becomes a bonus modifier to the focusing character's ability.

Example: Four people successfully equal or exceed a miracle's community rating with their *faith* total. The *focus* character gets a bonus modifier equal to the value of five people (four, plus himself); his *focus* total is +4.

When you wish to sum the effect of many characters' *faith* without having to roll each community check individually, use the following formula:

Value of number of characters
+ average *faith*
- community rating of miracle
-2

- bonus modifier for *focus* character

The final modifier may never be greater than the value for the number of characters. If a modifier is too large, reduce it to the value for the number of characters. A zero or negative modifier is ignored; a miracle can never be less effective because of faithful participants.

Example: 60 faithful gamemaster characters (value of 9) with an average *faith* value of 10 are trying to help a Core Earth priest feed the refugees in Philadelphia. The community rating of the *multiply food* miracle is 3. Character value (9) + Average faith (10) - Community rating (3) - 2 = a bonus modifier of +9 for the priest.

To determine the average faith of a community, use the following rule of thumb: a casual believer in a religion

has a *faith* add of 1. A confirmed believer, one who lives his life by most of the tenets of the religion, has *a faith* of 2 to 4. Only the fiercely devout have *faith* adds greater than 4.

Characters of Different Faiths

Characters who have faith in different mythos cannot coordinate on miracles. A character of one faith **may perform** a miracle on a character of a different faith, generating his *focus* total normally. If he succeeds, the target uses his *faith* normally (he must volunteer to do so, of course), but a *spiritual struggle* erupts due to the difference in religions between the *focus* and the *faith.*

Immediately after the miracle effects are enacted, each character generates *a faith* total (this is separate from the *faith* total generated by the target of the miracle) using the other character's *faith* value as the difficulty number. Each result is read on the Combat Results Table (page 40) as stun damage. The damage has "spiritual consequences," defined below.

Example: In a pinch, Father Bryce performs a healing miracle on an Edeinos companion. The miracle succeeds, the Edeinos is healed. Even though the Edeinos **wanted** to be healed, there are still consequences to performing a miracle on a "disbeliever," or accepting a miracle from another faith.

Bryce's faith value is 13. The Edeinos' *faith* value is 14. Bryce gets a total of 13; no effect on the Edeinos. The Edeinos rolls a total of 19. Bryce takes 6 result points of stun damage (O 2). There are also "spiritual consequences."

Evil Enemies

Some mythos have the forces of a cosm divided into good and evil. Worshippers of the faith are aligned with the good. The enemy spirit and persons of the mythos are evil. Christianity has Satan and his demons. Zoroastrian religion has Ahriman.

When enemies of a mythos meet, the *faith* adds (not the *faith* **value,** just

the adds) of the enemy are added to the difficulty of any miracles a character tries to perform on the enemy, including miracles beneficial to the enemy (the enemy has no choice in this matter). If a character allows a beneficial miracle to be performed by an enemy, the two characters make *faith* checks and apply stun/spiritual damage as described above.

Conversion

Converting from one faith to another lowers a *character's faith* adds by one, although the add may be bought again at a later time. Characters must have *faith* skill of at least one to convert. If a character with one *faith* add converts, she is considered to have the *faith* skill, but with no adds. Conversion also gets rid of any spiritual damage effects the character may have taken — with new belief comes comes new hope and connection to the spiritual.

Example: A character with a *Spirit* of 9 and 1 *faith* add converts to a new religion. She still has the *faith* skill at value 9. She may buy a *faith* add for one Possibility.

If a character with no *faith* skills is the subject of a miracle that achieves *spectacular* success, the character **must** convert to the faith of *the focus* character. He gains the skill with one add, for a cost of two Possibilities.

Spiritual Damage Effects

When damage is taken in a spiritual struggle, it has spiritual consequences; even though the damage is treated in all ways as physical, if it has additional spiritual consequences it is referred to as *spiritual damage*.

When a character is KOed by spiritual damage, the character loses his *focus* skill. This does **not** include falling unconscious from accumulated shock, only from KO conditions. The character must undergo a *ritual of purification* (see "Miracles of Core Earth" on page 127) or conversion to get it back.

If a character suffers one or more wounds from spiritual damage and his cumulative damage total becomes *heavily wounded* or greater, that character loses both *his faith and focus* skills, and cannot get them back until he is purified and also undergoes a *ritual of hope*. In addition, his wound status may not be healed past *wounded* until he undergoes the *ritual of hope.*

Example: Father Bryce has taken a K-condition and two shock during a melee in the Living Land. He then heals his Edeinos friend as in the example above. Bryce took 6 result points of damage, an O 2. Bryce takes two more points of shock, and is KOed. When he comes to, he will have lost his *focus* and must undergo purification.

Example: A *wounded* character takes a *wound* from spiritual damage. He is now *heavily wounded* and loses *his faith and focus* skills until he can be purified and engage in a *ritual of hope.* In addition, he can heal the *heavy wound,* but he cannot heal the *wound* until *his faith* is restored.

Basic Types of Spiritual Belief

Below is a very brief guide to the basic kinds of spiritual belief known on Core Earth, as well as the game effects each type of belief has. When a character buys adds in the *faith* skill, she must declare what specific religion she is faithful to (Judaism, Norse myth, Worship of the Other). This can include being "faithful" to atheism. A character **cannot** take adds in different faiths.

Animism

Animism is the belief that all things have a vital life force. Some versions of animism state that all things have a soul or spirit. Animistic mythos rarely have enemies, in the sense of "Faith and Evil Enemies" above, within their mythos.

Atheism

Atheism is a strong belief in the non-existence of divine beings or spiritual power that can affect the everyday existence of humanity. Atheists cannot work any miracles, and are treated as a different faith by all mythos.

If a miracle is performed in the presence of an atheist (whether or not the atheist is the target), the atheist may generate *a faith* total. If the atheist's total is greater than the *focus* total of the miracle, the miracle fails.

An atheist may **choose** whether or not to add his faith adds to the difficulty number of any miracle used on him.

Valerie Valusek

Monotheism

Monotheism is the belief that there is but one god. Traditionally monotheists consider atheists, pantheists, and panentheists as enemies, while considering all other mythos to be of a different faith.

Monotheists almost always have an evil enemy within the mythos. Traditional monotheistic religions include Islam, Christianity and Judaism.

Pantheism and Panentheism

Pantheism is the belief that divine beings and the world are the same thing; the creator is the cosmverse. Panentheism is the belief that all reality is part of the body of a divine being or beings; the cosmverse is a part of the creator. Hinayana Buddhism is an example of a nearly pantheistic religion, as is the Force in *Star Wars.*

Polytheism

The belief that there are many gods, and no one god is vastly greater in power than the others. Polytheistic religions often have enemies within the mythos. Examples of polytheistic religions are the ancient Greek and Norse religions.

Belief and the Spiritual Axiom

The *Spiritual* axiom of a cosm rates the cosm for its spiritual power. A high *Spiritual* also corresponds to the literal truth of at least some sacred documents. There is reason to believe that for every imaginable mythos a cosm exists in which the *Spiritual* axiom is 33; in each of these cosms that single religion's sacred documents and histories are literally true. These are known as the *originating cosm* of that religion.

In cosms with lower spiritual axioms such as Core Earth, the documents of a religion tend to be slightly altered or vary more from the literal history of the religion — but they are still valid beliefs because they are true for the originating cosm of the reli-

gion, and faith in that religion will yield spiritual power in any cosm (at least those with an axiom greater than zero). A worshipper's faith tenuously connects her with the originating cosm, as well as other members of the community who hold the same faith.

Religious Artifacts

In the Infiniverse, there is always the possibility that divine power can realize itself in the form of an artifact. Also, possibility energy can, over a long period of time, be stored through faith; artifacts created by Apeiros or another divine agency (see Gamemaster Chapter Nine) can be shaped by faith to match items from the mythos. Artifacts created by any of these processes are called *religious artifacts,* for regardless of origin they take on all the qualities and aspects of the items of legends.

If a mythos considers an item to be unique, only one may be created - the belief that an artifact is unique guarantees its uniqueness. Such an item does not have to exist at all, but if one exists, then only one exists. If King Arthur's sword Excalibur does exist, then there is only one Excalibur in all the cosm of Core Earth.

Religious artifacts can have both *focus* and *faith* values, and miraculous powers beyond what the mortal faithful can hope to produce themselves.

Miracles and Invocations

To perform a miracle, the character with the *focus* skill generates a *focus* total (including modifiers for the community). If the *focus* is successful, the character providing *faith* for the miracle adds the same bonus number to his *faith* value.

Only one Possibility may be spent to enhance this roll, as usual; however, since there are two participants in the miracle, there are limitations on who may spend the Possibility. The *focus* character may spend the Possibility if and only if the *focus* total did not exceed the difficulty of the miracle be-

fore the additional roll. If it did, the *faith* character must spend the Possibility.

Example: Father Bryce generates a bonus number of 2 for a *focus* total of 14 to perform a miracle with a difficulty number of 13. He succeeds, and cannot spend a Possibility. The recipient spends a Possibility and rolls again, increasing the bonus number to 6.

If a miracle fails, the character may not attempt the miracle for 24 hours, or until he undergoes the *ritual of purification.* In addition, the character providing the *faith* must wait 24 hours or be cleansed in a *ritual of hope* before he can use his faith in any miracle.

If a character is providing *both faith* and *focus,* both restrictions apply.

Modifiers

Miracles are spiritual power realized to fulfill a need of the faithful, often affecting the material world. Miracles are not spells, dry processes which may be learned and then safely put away in a magic jar for use when desired. The conditions facing the faithful who request the miracle greatly affect the outcome of the miracle. The difficulty number of the *faith* check may be increased or decreased by circumstances.

Every mythos teaches the faithful about good and evil, about what behavior is applauded and what is taboo. A miracle that does not conform to the ethical guidelines of a mythos suffers a +15 penalty to the difficulty number of the miracle. For example, if honesty is important to a mythos, a miracle that deceives listeners would be penalized. In addition, the deities favor the use of religious power when it used to defeat the evil of the mythos, making the miracle more effective against enemies.

Miracles are meant to meet an immediate need. A character who is wounded needs healing, a character who is hungry needs food. If the miracle is not needed immediately, the penalty is applied.

If a believer, or community of believers, is in a life-threatening situ-

CONDITION MODIFIER CHART

Conditions	Modifier
Violates or stretches values important to mythos	+15
Miracle defends faithful against another faith	-3
Need for miracle is not immediate	+5
Need for miracle is urgent, life-threatening	-3
Target of miracle not providing faith	+3

ation, and the miracle would help preserve their lives, the miracle has a chance to be more effective than it might in ordinary circumstances.

Prayers and Rituals

There are two basic methods by which miracles are invoked: *prayers* and *rituals.* Prayers are quick requests for miracles, often personal and impromptu, while rituals carefully follow sacred rules. A prayer can be done in as little as 10 seconds (one combat round). A ritual takes at least 30 minutes, often longer. Some miracles may only be attempted as a ritual.

Healing

Faith can have miraculous healing powers, but there is a limit even to *faith. A* character may always be healed by miracle once per day. However, if the miracle does not fully heal the character, the miracle may not be repeated on that character until he is *mortally wounded,* or until the full 24 hours have passed.

Miracles and Multiple Targets

If more than one character or object is to be affected by a miracle, the multiple action rules (see Gamemaster Chapter Two) must be used. If a miracle is beneficial (as seen by the target character), the characters are affected in descending order of *faith* values, high value first. If the miracle is harmful, characters are affected in ascending *faith* value order, highest value being affected last.

Invocations

Invocations are a special type of miracle that ask for the direct intervention of spirits or a god. The base community rating and *focus* difficulty of an invocation is 20 + (33 - *Spiritual* axiom of area).

Example: The invocation community rating and difficulty number in Core Earth is 20 plus 24 (33-9) = 44. In the Living Land it is 20 plus 9 (33-24) = 29.

No *faith* rating is necessary when performing an invocation, as the spirit or deity is providing the spiritual energy necessary for the miracle. If the invoking character fails to beat the difficulty he may spend a Possibility, but if he succeeds he may not. The deity (at your discretion) may spend the Possibility if it deems it necessary.

If the invoking character gets a *minimal* success, the miracle disturbs the world in the least way possible while still meeting the needs of the invoker. If the invoker gets *average* or *good* success the miracle makes a more direct, noticeable impact to achieve its results. These levels of success restore internal resources, as well as providing possible solutions to the problem. On *superior* success, the miracle is achieved in a way which provides new resources which were previously unavailable. *Spectacular* successes show the work of a divine hand which is irrefutable to all but the strongest doubter; therefore *spectacular* success may only be achieved when made in an area with a *Spiritual* axiom of 13 or greater. If the axiom level is lower than 13, any success better than *superior* is treated as *superior.*

Example: A priestess is leading a collection of villagers on a harried flight through the fantasy cosm of Aysle when their path is blocked by the Trieridge mountains. Low on food and sought by numerous enemy patrols, the faithful desperately need a way over the mountain. The priestess invokes Dunad, asking that she and her people be given a way over the mountain. The villagers gather in ritual prayer in support of the priestess.

She rolls very well. If she gets *minimal* success, a scout for the villagers could find a path less arduous than the others they already knew about; perhaps they could make it if they pressed ahead.

If she gets *average* or *good* success, the villagers would find themselves refreshed and invigorated by a breeze coming from the mountain. The scouts would then find a path, and the journey could begin at good speed.

On a *superior* success, they gain the benefits above. In addition, as they began their journey, they would find sure-footed pack animals, apparently abandoned, who are tame enough to carry their gear and who instinctively know their way over the mountain. With the animals and the renewed energy, they cross the mountain with unnatural ease.

On a *spectacular* success the power of Dunad would carve a safe, level passage through the mountain in a storm of unprecedented frenzy. As the villagers passed through, an earthquake would reseal the pass.

Miracles of Core Earth

Core Earth has a comparatively low *Spiritual* axiom, which means spiritual power is difficult to attain and often uncertain. However, a wide variety of miracles exist which can help the pious and the faithful in their struggles with the Possibility Raiders. A Core Earth character who has a *focus* value has access to all of the miracles below.

The *spiritual rating* of the miracle is the minimum level of *Spiritual* axiom necessary to create the miracle. While Core Earth has a *Spiritual* axiom of nine, there are places and times when the axioms may be increased. Miracles
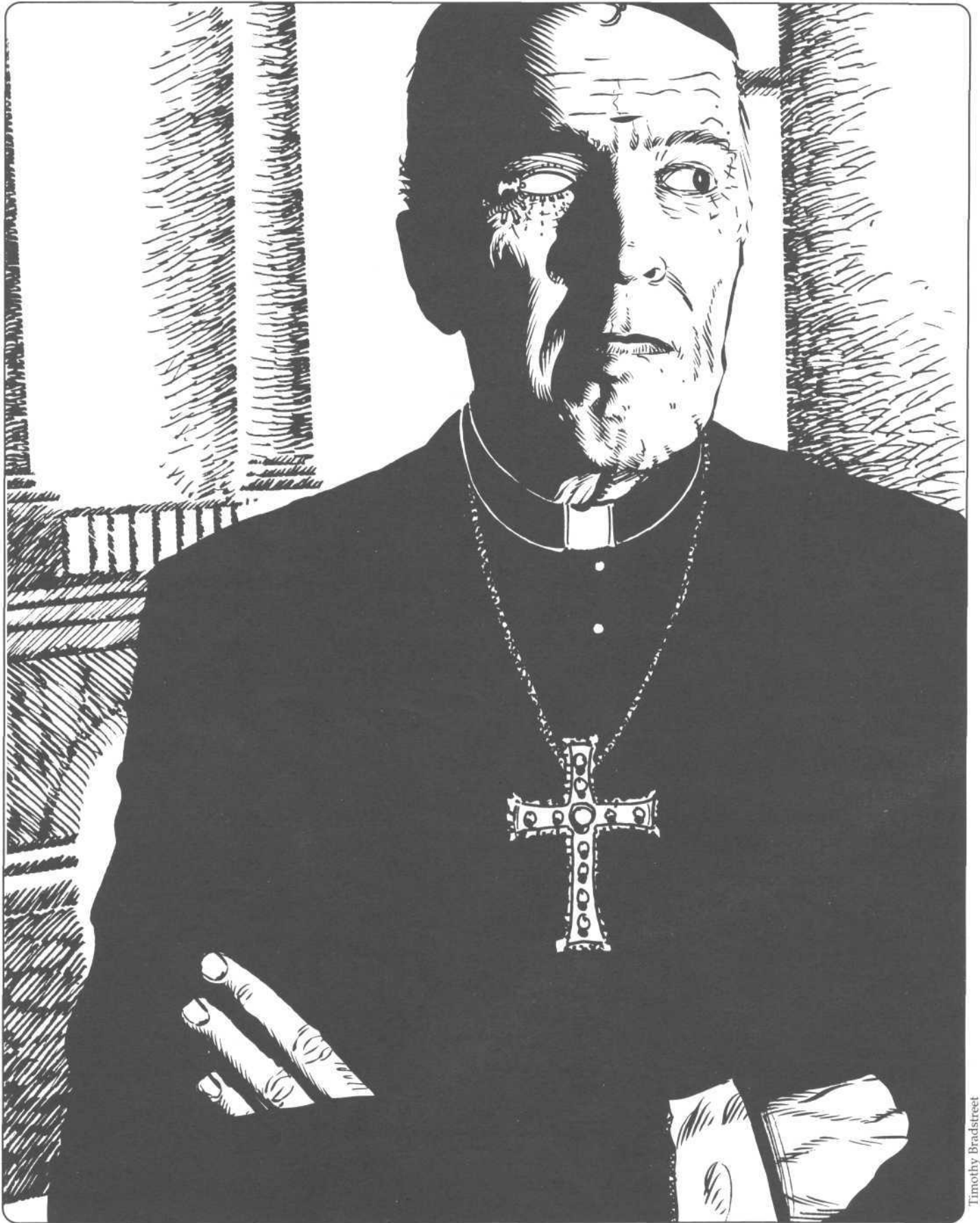
Timothy Bradstreet

rated greater than a nine may only be performed in those places, times, or circumstances. See Chapter Eight for more information on axiom variability.

The *community rating* of a miracle is the difficulty for faithful worshippers to contribute to a miracle as discussed above.

The *difficulty* is the difficulty number for the *focus* check of a miracle. If there is a *faith* check, the difficulty is also the *faith* difficulty.

Range is how far the focusing character may be from the target character or object. A range of "voice" means within hearing distance of the character using the *focus* skill. A range of "*faith* total" means *the faith* total is the value of the range in meters.

Duration is how long the miracle lasts. A duration of "performance" means the miracle lasts as long as the *focus* character actively continues the miracle through prayer, chanting, or ceremony. If the duration is listed as "na," then the effects of the miracle become a part of the real world even after the miracle is over.

Effect summarizes the effect of the miracle.

Bless

Spiritual Rating: 9
Community Rating: 10
Difficulty: 10
Range: touch
Duration: one hour
Effect: adds success levels to all bonuses of one attribute for one character

A *bless* surrounds and infuses the blessed character with spiritual energy. The *bless* enhances the character, adding to all bonus numbers generated while under the *bless*, for all actions controlled by any one attribute (but not to the attribute itself). The blessed character receives one bonus point for each success level attained by the *faith* total of the miracle, i.e. a *good* success is worth plus three to the bonus number. The attribute to be affected must be chosen by the recipient, at the time the blessing is performed. Only one *bless* may affect a character at a time.

Blessing Vow

Spiritual Rating: 9
Community Rating: 6
Difficulty: 8
Range: voice
Duration: until vow is broken
Effect: adds success levels to one attribute for one character

A *blessing vow* may only be performed as a ritual. In this ritual, the blessed agrees to uphold an institution, or virtues important to the mythos, for as long as he shall live. In exchange, the blessed receives an increase in one chosen attribute equal to the number of success levels achieved by the blessing (for example, an *average* success grants a + 2 modifier), for as long as he maintains the vow. A character may only have one *blessing vow* on him at one time.

The *blessing vow* is only given to characters who have proven themselves worthy to spiritual leaders and the community.

Calm

Spiritual Rating: 7
Community Rating: 10
Difficulty: *Mind* of target
Range: *faith* total
Duration: performance
Effect: rids target of violent emotions

Calm eliminates any violent or extreme emotions of the target, replacing them with a tranquil state. During this time the target may be reasoned with, or communicated with by characters other than the characters who created the miracle (who are busy performing the miracle). The *focus* character may provide *the faith* for this miracle.

Common Ground

Spiritual Rating: 7
Community Rating: 12
Difficulty: 12
Range: *faith* total
Duration: performance
Effect: improve relations between targets

Common ground is used to mediate between individuals. In order for the miracle to work, the characters influenced by the miracle must have some common interest. If the characters share no goals, have no desires that are not mutually exclusive, then the miracle fails. Only where mutual gain is possible will the miracle work.

When successful, the miracle provides a temporary boost to relations. Each success level achieved by the *faith* provider improves the characters' attitudes one step each (see Gamemaster Chapter Five), up to a maximum of *friendly*. The *focus* character may provide the *faith* for this miracle.

Communication with Spirits

Each of the three miracles below allows spoken communication with any spirit in range. If no animal, plant, or elemental is visible or otherwise obviously present, the difficulty is increased by 3.

Minimal success means that only a pidgin version of communication is possible with the spirit, *average* success gives the miracle worker rudimentary understanding the spirit's language, *good* or *superior* results give the skill user complete understanding of the spirit's, language, and *spectacular* success allows the user to speak and understand the spirit with no penalties. The *focus* character may provide the *faith* for these miracles.

Communicate with Animal Spirit

Spiritual Rating: 5
Community Rating: 12
Difficulty: 12
Range: voice
Duration: performance
Effect: speak to spirits of animals

The spirits of animals are considered to be more intelligent than the animal which houses them. While seeing things from the perspective of their animal host, the spirits can equal human intelligence.

Communicate with Elemental Spirit

Spiritual Rating: 5
Community Rating: 12
Difficulty: 15
Range: *faith* total
Duration: performance
Effect: speak to elemental spirits

There are five elemental spirits (other than plant elementals, covered below) — earth, air, fire, water and metal. Elementals are temperamental, of an intelligence less than human, but with a cunning greater than that of animals. They see things from a very pure standpoint relating to their own element.

Communicate with Plant Spirit

Spiritual Rating: 5
Community Rating: 12
Difficulty: 12
Range: voice
Duration: performance
Effect: speak with the spirits of plants

Plant spirits are slow — not dumb, just slow. They take their time when speaking ... even plants who have very short lives are slow communicators.

Cure Disease

Spiritual Rating: 10
Community Rating: 8
Difficulty: see below
Range: touch
Duration: na
Effect: stops the ravages of disease

DISEASE DIFFICULTY CHART

Disease	Difficulty
24-hour bug	8
Influenza	10
Pneumonia	12
Cancer	18
AIDS	22
Alzheimer's Disease	25

Cure disease destroys the disease that is ravaging the target character, but does not immediately rid the character of the physical damage caused by the disease. The character must regain her strength over time, or heal with medical, magical or miraculous help.

Enhance Food

Spiritual Rating: 7
Community Rating: 12
Difficulty: 12
Range: 10 meters
Duration: permanent
Effect: increases quality or removes impurities from food

Food blessed by *enhance food* become better tasting, more nutritious, and possibly transforms into another food entirely.

Minimal or *average* success turns spoiled meat, rotted vegetables and the like into fresh food again. *Good* success can cleanse any food of any impurities or poisons. *Superior* success increases the quality of the food to the very best possible. *Spectacular* success actually transforms the food into a different kind of food; changing from a common fruit to an exotic one, from a cheap cut of pork to an expensive cut of beef, water to wine, etc.

Healing

Spiritual Rating: 10
Community Rating: 11
Difficulty: 15
Range: touch
Duration: na
Effect: reduces damage and wounds by number of success levels

If the miracle succeeds at all, the target removes all KO-conditions and shock. In addition, each success level of the miracle reduces the target character's wound level by one. For example, a character with a *heavy wound* who received *average* healing would be completely healed. A character suffering a loss of *faith* due to spiritual damage may not have his wounds fully healed, even via this miracle, until he undergoes the *ritual of hope.*

Ritual of Hope

Spiritual Rating: 5
Community Rating: 5
Difficulty: 12
Range: voice
Duration: na
Effect: restores lost *faith*

The *ritual of hope* must be performed as a ritual; it restores a character's lost *faith,* whether it was lost due to a failed miracle or spiritual damage. Once the character has undergone the ritual, he may use his *faith* and may be fully healed if under that restriction.

Multiply Food

Spiritual Rating: 7
Community Rating: 3
Difficulty: 13
Range: 10 meters
Duration: permanent
Effect: multiplies existing food

This miracle is performed on an amount of existing food equal to a good-sized meal for one normal person. It must be performed as a ritual, during which members of the faithful bring food to *the focus* character. When successful, the miracle increases the amount of food. The amount of food produced is equal to the measure of the value of the difference between the *faith* total and the difficulty of the miracle.

Example: Father Bryce creates the *multiply food* miracle with a *faith* total of 17. The difference is 17 minus 13 = 4. On the Torg Value table, the measure of the value 4 is 6. The food Bryce blessed is now the equivalent of six meals.

Ritual of Purification

Spiritual Rating: 3
Community Rating: 15
Difficulty: 10
Range: voice
Duration: na
Effect: restores lost focus

Purification may only be performed as a ritual. The ceremony heightens awareness of one's religion and removes the impurities of the mundane and the material from the spirit. The target regains the use of his *focus* ability whether lost to spiritual damage or a failed miracle.

Refresh

Spiritual Rating: 7
Community Rating: 8
Difficulty: 12
Range: 10 meters
Duration: na
Effect: heals mental restrictions

The characters who are *refreshed* regain the use of mental skills and knowledges such as *arcane knowledge* or magic if lost due to mental damage. A *minimal* to *good* success restores one such loss, *superior* or better success restores all lost mental abilities.

Soothe

Spiritual Rating: 7
Community Rating: 8
Difficulty: 10
Range: touch
Duration: 24 hours
Effect: acts as first aid

Soothe acts as a miraculous form of *first aid*, removing all shock and KO-conditions, and stopping the bleeding process from a *mortal wound*.

Ward Danger

Spiritual Rating: 9
Community Rating: 6
Difficulty: 13
Range: voice
Duration: performance
Effect: increases difficulty of harming character

Ward danger gathers the spiritual energy of the faithful and attempts to decrease the chance of the community coming to harm. The faithful must be praying for protection from one source of danger; if the worshippers are praying for protection from a tornado, the ward would have no effect against a terrorist who launched a missile at the church.

The difficulty number to harm a character protected by *ward danger* is increased by 3 for each success level of the miracle.

Ward Enemy

Spiritual Rating: 9
Community Rating: 6
Difficulty: 0
Range: self
Duration: performance
Effect: protects from attacks of evil creatures

Ward enemy only works against beings or forces which are enemies of the faithful, as defined by the mythos. For most monotheistic mythos this includes all kinds of supernatural beings, such as vampires in Christianity. The *focus* total is irrelevant for this miracle; *ward enemy* is the only Core Earth miracle that may be performed without a *focus*. If the performer of the miracle does not possess *the focus* skill, he must instead possess an icon or artifact of his religion (for example, any Christian may thwart a vampire by using a cross).

A warded character may not be attacked by physical, magical, or spiritual means. *Test of will,trick,taunt,* and *intimidate* may be used; on a player's call the warded character has succeeded in getting the warding character to lower his *ward danger*. Other effects apply if the warding character must perform an action, including generating another *ward danger*. A horror may not *mark the character for death* or fill the character with *fear* as long as the ward is effective; the Power of Fear is muted when a *ward enemy* is active. The only possible enemy attack is a faith attack; the attacker generates a *faith* total against the *faith* total of the miracle. This counts as the enemy's action that round. If the enemy's total is higher, the ward is breached, and the character suffers the result points in spiritual damage. The warding character must enact the ward again at his next opportunity if he wishes to be protected.

If the miracle's total is higher, the enemy fails to breach the ward. The enemy takes spiritual damage equal to the result points. However, the enemy's attack does cause the ward to waiver. The warding character must expend his next action to generate a ward enemy total, or the ward collapses at the end of his action round.

Chapter Twelve

Equipment

The sections below are organized according to types of equipment. Each table includes information about the item, its *Tech* level, its abilities, and price in Core Earth. Note that many of the items are available only (or most commonly) in other cosms; we are assuming that some few pieces of armor, weapons, etc. have found their way to wherever your characters are based. The prices given are Core Earth base prices in US dollars, as explained in Gamemaster Chapter Five, taking into account import costs and so on. In the price lists, "k" = thousands, "m" - millions, "b" = billions.

Availability

To help you determine the availability of an item (if you're unsure about a particular item), use its cost value number as a difficulty number; use *persuasion* or *scholar (street knowledge)* as the acting value. Success means the item has been found, though *minimal* success might mean finding a poor piece of equipment, or one higher priced than usual. *Superior* or better success could mean a good supply of the item, or a slight discount rate.

Use the difficulty number modifiers to help determine modifiers to the availability factor. For example, in a war zone, weapons might be at +4 difficulty; food in London will definitely be more difficult to find, etc.

Armor

While offensive and defensive technologies have vied for superiority on the battlefield, the defensive superiority is always short lived.

The armor adds listed below presume that the armor covers the torso (front and back), but not the rest of the character's body. If the limbs are also protected, increase the armor add by one; if a helmet of the same or better armor is worn, increase the add by one. A full suit of armor will therefore have two more adds than listed below, unless otherwise noted. The prices given are also only for torso; limb armor costs about 25 percent of the listed price, helmets are five percent of the listed price. If a character purchases only a helmet or limb armor, he is protected at full armor value, but only from blows you judge to strike the protected areas. If torso armor is added, the add is increased as above, and the armor is assumed to be protecting the whole body.

Example: Quin buys a Kevlar helmet; he has five armor adds for his head only. Later, he gets a Kevlar vest; he now has six armor adds for all hits.

Any armor listed with a "fatigue penalty" reduces a character's *dodging* skill value by 1 for a basic suit; limbs and helmet reduce the *dodge* skill value by an additional 1 each. The *fatigue penalty* also increases shock points from two to three when the character suffers a *fatigue* result on the conflict line or from an enemy *maneuver,* regardless of the size of the suit.

Descriptions

Hides and Furs: Hides and furs are the oldest forms of armor available. The hides are cured, but they are not tanned into leather.

Bone and Hide: Bone and hide armor consists of finely shaped bone pieces carefully sewn into the hide. It is very difficult to make, for if the bone layer does not conform in shape to the user, the bone breaks easily in combat. If the armor is not specifically made for the character wearing it, it breaks on a *wound* result or greater, reducing its add to +1.

ARMOR DESCRIPTION CHART				
Armor	Tech	Value/Max.	Fatigue?	Price (Value)
Hides and Furs	3	+1 / 20	no	200 (12)
Bone and Hide	3	+3*/ 20	no	3000 (18)
Leather	5	+2 / 20	no	400 (13)
Bronze	8	+4 / 25	yes*	3500 (18)
Cuir Bouilli	8	+3 / 20	no*	450 (14)
Chain Mail	12	+4 / 25	yes	7500 (20)
Ring Mail	12	+3 / 20	no	6000 (19)
Silk Lining	12	+2*/ 20	no	500 (14)
Plate Mail	13	+5 / 25	yes*	8000 (20)
Bullet Proof Vest	21	+6 / 22	no*	400 (13)
Kevlar Armor	22	+5 / 22	yes	250 (12)
Kevlar/Ceramic	22	+7 / 22	yes	1000 (15)
IriMesh	24	+3 / 20	no	500 (14)
Kyoto Police RKD	24	+7 / 25	no*	100k (25)
Interdermal Plating	25	+6 / 25	no*	50k* (24)
*See special note in text				

Leather: These are like hides, but are tanned to a stiffer, more durable finish.

Bronze: Bronze and other equally soft metal alloys are heavy in comparison to the protection they give. In addition to the normal *dodge* penalty, any character wearing bronze armor on torso and limbs takes four points of shock damage from a *fatigue* result instead of three.

Cuir Bouilli: Cuir bouilli is boiled, treated leather, increasing its toughness but reducing its flexibility. Any character wearing cuir bouilli on torso and limbs has her *Dexterity* reduced by 1.

Chain Mail: The classic middleweight armor, made of linked chains of worked metal.

Ring Mail: The larger mesh of ring mail makes it slightly lighter than chain mail, but therefore less effective.

Silk Lining: Silk lining is an early example of composite armor — armor made from two distinct substances to gain benefits from both materials. Silk lining increases the effectiveness of armor *(Tech* 19 or less) by giving, but not tearing when a weapon penetrates the outer coating. Silk lining is effective against all melee and missile weapons, but is of no use against firearms of *Tech* level 19 or better. Silk lining is

very expensive at the *Tech* levels where it is effective; the price of silk is often literally its weight in gold.

Plate Mail: Early plate mail is heavy and hot; any character wearing plate mail on torso, head and limbs takes four points of shock damage from a *fatigue* result, three if wearing any plate. At *Tech* 15 these defects can be worked out by the best armorers, so *the fatigue* penalty is treated normally for a fully armored knight, and is ignored otherwise.

Bullet Proof Vest: Bullet proof vests first appeared in the form of flak jackets, and with refinements became available for infantry use. Wearing a full suit of bullet proof vest material is impossible; no more than a helmet and vest may be worn for *Tech* 21 bullet proof armor. They are also quite clumsy; a character wearing a vest has his *Dexterity* attribute (and all related skill values) reduced by 1.

Kevlar Armor: Kevlar is a synthetic material that becomes "bullet proof" when better than a dozen layers are carefully laminated together. Kevlar is light enough to line overcoats or other bulky outerwear, but is quite hot.

Kevlar/Ceramic: A composite armor which is quite heavy. The best

available mix is a helmet/torso combination.

IriMesh: IriMesh is the lightweight armor of choice, weighing about twice what comparable street clothes weigh. While the heat pores are only moderately successful at removing excess heat, they do negate any fatigue penalty.

Kyoto Police RKD: A product of the Kanawa manufacturing empire, processed RKD armor became known as Kyoto Police, or simply Kyoto armor, as that's where it had its extremely successful debut. Small biocams were hooked into the armor which augmented the motion of the wearer just enough to overcome the clumsiness of the full suit, while efficient H-cross units disposed of the heat, converting a fraction of it back into useful energy for the biocams.

RKD is dangerous only if used while disconnected. It has a normal *fatigue* penalty in this case, and an additional *Dexterity* penalty (as Cuir Bouilli).

Interdermal Plating: The surgery is painful and dangerous (see *The Cyberpapacy Sourcebook),* but those who require it already face a desperate situation. The armor is almost a living part of the person, being maintained by nanotech machines which draw the necessary raw materials from the host being's bloodstream.

General Gear

The list on the following page is a sampling of gear that Storm Knights may encounter or find useful adventuring from cosm to cosm. The gamemaster can extrapolate other equipment from the *Tech* axiom list given in Chapter Eight.

Vehicles

Modes of transportation vary widely from realm to realm. To journey 500 miles can be less than an hour's work in Core Earth or Nippon Tech, but can require weeks in less technically advanced realms.

GENERAL GEAR CHART

Item	Tech Level	Price
Hemp Rope (100 ')	8	15
Nylon Rope (100 ')	21	25
Climbing Cable	23	50
Torch	5	5
Oil Lamp	7	25
Candles	10	5
Gas Lantern	19	30
Flashlight	20	10
Sundial .	9	5
Mechanical Clock	13	20
Pocket Watch	18	75
Wrist Watch	20	50
Electric Watch	21	10
Down Parka	21	150
Thinsulate	22	100
Glass mirror	10	10
Canoe	3	600
Inflatable Raft	21	150
Iron Spikes	10	5
Piton	19	25
Knapsack	14	10
Backpack	14	100
Hip Packs	23	40
Collapsible Tent	20	100
Sleeping Bag	18	100
Sleeping Mat	9	25
Refrigerator	19	800
Wood Stove	17	1100
Gas Stove	19	500
Microwave Oven	21	250
Telephone	19	25
Field Telephone	20	100
Field Radio	21	500
Walkie Talkie	21	50
Car Phone	23	750
Semaphore	13	100
Telegraph	18	250
Satellite Trans.	22	5000
Meat Jerky (1 wk)	10	20
C-rations	21	15
Freeze-Dried Food	21	30
Dehydrated Food	21	75
Microwaveable Food	22	60

Air Vehicles

Tech 16

Hot Air Balloons: Hot air balloons are at the mercy of whatever winds are available to move them. They can carry cargos of up to 400 kilograms, about half of which is usually ballast. *Tech* 21 and later balloons can carry substantially more cargo, close to 1,000 kilograms. Hot air balloons have an effective ceiling of 15,000 feet. Hot air balloons vary in *Toughness* from 9 to 15, while the gondolas provide soft cover. (Cost = $15,000, value 21).

Tech 19

Gliders: Crude gliders have a glide-to-descent ratio of about four to one, which means they glide four meters for every one meter drop—less a form of flying than a slow method of falling. At *Tech* 20 the glide ratio improves to around eight to one, and lightweight materials at *Tech* 23 make 20 to one possible. *Tech* 22 materials are light enough to make hang-gliders practical. Gliders provide soft cover (hang-gliders provide no cover) and have *Toughness* from 8 (hang-gliders) to 19 (WWII troop landing gliders). (Cost = $12,000, value 21).

Zeppelins: Aerodynamically shaped, Zeppelins are hydrogen-filled balloons over lightweight wood and aluminum frames. The cargo gondola is slung beneath the Zeppelin. *Tech* 19 Zeppelins carry only a small crew, no passengers and a small payload. Zeppelins of *Tech* 20 carry 80 passengers and a crew of 12. They can achieve a top speed of 100 kmh (60 mph). Zeppelins have *Toughness* from 10 to 21. Their gondolas provide soft cover. (Cost = $800k, value 30).

Piston-Powered Airplanes

Early aircraft are slow, and barely able to lift their own weight. These rapidly develop into warplanes, at first capable of inflicting damage only on each other, then becoming lethal ground support elements. Metal skinned aircraft make their appearance at *Tech* 21, a greatly improved fuel efficiency is possible at *Tech* 23. At *Tech* 24, solar-powered piston craft are possible.

In the table below speeds are given in kilometer per hour (kmh) and miles per hour (mph) as well as game value. "Pass." is the total number of passengers, including the pilot.

Sopwith FI Camel: The Camel is extremely tricky to fly, having a tendency to climb when turning left, and a strong tendency to dive when turning right. These peculiarities could become advantages in the hands of a skilled pilot. The camel has an operational ceiling of 22,000 feet. Standard armament is two Vickers machine guns.

Fokker DVII: Highly maneuverable biplane, with an operational ceiling of 20,000 feet. The Fokker can dive and climb faster than the Camel, and can turn with alarming swiftness. The Fokker is armed with two 7.92mm Spandau machine guns.

PISTON AIRCRAFT SPECIFICATION CHART

Craft	Tech	Speed kmh/mph/Value	Pass.	Tough	Price (Value)
Sopwith FI Camel	20	200/120/14	1	13	60k (24)
Fokker DVII	20	200/120/14	1	13	60k (24)
Spitfire VB	21	600/380/16	1	17	200k (27)
Mel09F-2	21	600/380/16	1	16	200k (27)
DC-3	21	320/ 200/ 15	36	19	150k (26)
G-21 Turbo-Goose	22	350/ 220/ 15	12	18	250k (27)

ROTARY AIRCRAFT SPECIFICATION CHART

Craft	Tech	Speed kmh/mph/value	Pass.	Tough	Price (Value)
Avro C.8L Mk II	20	160/100/ 13	1	14	300k (28)
PA-19	21	150/ 907 13	4	14	450k (29)
Bell H-13	21	150/ 90/ 13	2(+2)	14	600k (29)
Bell AH-1G	22	350/ 220/ 15	2	17	1.5m (31)
Aerospatiale Lama	22	150/ 90/ 13	2	15	1 m (30)
Mi-24 Hind A-10	22	370/ 230/ 15	10	21	12 m (36)
AH-64 Apache	23	300/ 180/ 15	2	20	8 m (35)

Spitfire VB: The large elliptical wing is a boon for pilots desperate for a tight turn, and the Spitfire has excellent speed. It is difficult to repair, however, and early models' poor carburetor design can cause a loss of power when going into a steep dive. A Spitfire is armed with four .303 inch Brownings and two 20mm cannons.

Mel09 F-2: The Messerschmitt Mel09 F-2 has a ceiling of 36,000 feet and superior dive characteristics that allow it to strike quickly from above, or to flee battle if necessary. The plane is armed with one Mauser MG 151 (15mm) and two 7.92mm MG17s.

DC-3/Dakota: The 1,500 mile (2,400 kilometer) range of the DC-3 Dakota is quite impressive for *Tech* 21. A military transport version has also been developed, the C-47. Both types of aircraft continue to see use in Core Earth.

G-21 Turbo-Goose: The turbo version can carry nine to 12 people, while the *Tech* 21 full-prop version is limited to six or seven passengers. The G-21 is a flying boat, able to land in water less than six feet deep.

Rotary Wing

"Rotary wing" covers aircraft which get their lift from a spinning airfoil, called a rotor. They include autogyros and helicopters. An autogyro does not power its lift rotor; instead, the forward motion of an autogyro sets the rotor spinning, and the vehicle lifts. In that respect an autogyro is more like a plane than a helicopter, requiring a running start to take off.

Avro C.8L Mk II: The Avro C.8L Mk II is noted for its extremely short take-off distance, which is reduced to a few meters by gearing the engine to the rotor, and then disengaging once airborne. It can take off and land from the roof of a large building. Almost a helicopter, it lacks only a helicopter's ability to hover.

PA-19: The Pitcairn autogyro is a popular commercial model, made even more popular by its supposed exploits at the hand of G-men and other heroes of the day. With external tanks, its range can exceed 300 miles.

Bell H-13: The well-known "MASH" helicopter, used in the Korean War for medical evac. It carries a crew of two, plus two additional "passengers" who can be strapped into the stretchers on the sides of the craft.

Bell AH-1G: Known as the Huey Cobra, this helicopter is amazingly lethal for *Tech* 22. Its crew of two has a turret with two Emerson Electric 7.62mm miniguns with six barrels each, and twin wing pods that can hold a total of eight rockets.

Aerospatiale Lama: The highest-flying 'copter built; it is used extensively in the India/Indonesia area.

Mi-24 Hind A-10: An experimental model developed from the helicopter gunships which saw extensive use in Afghanistan, the A-10 is Core Earth's fastest helicopter. The Soviets are returning to production of the Mi-24A-10s in response to threats posed by the Possibility Wars, and limited quantities are available for export. The Hind can carry eight troops in addition to crew of two, who are armed with a four-barrel machine gun, four rocket pods, and four missiles.

Apache AH-64: The Apache gives up speed in order to gain increased maneuverability, superior armor and armaments. The Apache is armed with a M230A1 Chain Gun 30mm cannon with 1,200 rounds of ammunition, its stub wing armament can be either 16 Hellfire anti-tank rockets, or 76 2.75 inch rockets.

Jet-powered aircraft

F-86: The F-86 is an aircraft on the edge of a *Tech* 21 dream, a fighter with level supersonic performance. It doesn't quite make it, but its maneuverability and stability make it the best dogfighter of its cohorts. The F-86 is armed with six .50 caliber Browning machine guns.

Mirage III: Produced in interceptor, reconnaissance, trainer and ground attack versions, the Mirage III is in

JET-POWERED AIRCRAFT SPECIFICATION CHART

Craft	Tech	Speed kmh/mph/value	Pass.	Tough	Price (Value)
F-86	21	1,100/ 680/ 18	1	21	150k (26)
Mirage III	22	2,400/ 1,500/ 19	1	22	5 m (34)
Learjet L24	22	780/ 480/ 17	8	20	1.5m (31)
Boeing 727-200	22	900/ 570/ 17	189	23	1.5m (31)
Boeing 747	22	950/ 590/ 17	490	24	5 m (34)
F-15	23	2,250/ 1,400/ 19	1	22	17 m (37)
SR-71	23	3,600/ 2,200/ 20	2	22	32 m (38)

F IREARMS

	Tech	Damage Value	Ammo	Range (meters)			Price (Value)
				Short	Med.	Long	
PISTOLS							
WheelockDag	16	13	1	3-5	10	25	1500(16)
J. Murdoch Flintlock	17	14	1	3-5	15	25	1500 (16)
BP1856	18	15	1	3-5	15	40	400(13)
Colt Peacemaker	19	15	6	3-5	15	40	500(14)
.38 Revolver	20	14	6	3-10	25	50	150(11)
9mmBeretta	22	15	9	3-10	25	40	550(14)
.45 Colt Auto	20	16	7	3-10	15	40	450(14)
.357 Desert Eagle	22	16	6	3-10	25	50	400(13)
.44 S&W Magnum	22	17	6	3-10	15	40	400(13)
13mm Chunyokai	24	18	9	3-10	40	50	1000(15)
SUBMACHINE GUNS (auto)							
MAC 10	22	18	10	3-15	25	50	200(12)
Uzi	22	17	11	3-15	40	100	400(13)
Schmeisser MP40	21	17	11	3-15	40	100	400(13)
Thompson 1928	20	20	2*	3-15	25	100	900(15)
SCKyogol44	24	18	15	3-15	40	150	500(14)
RIFLES / MUSKETS							
Brown Bess	6	17	1	3-25	40	150	1200(16)
Kentucky Rifle	16	16	1	3-40	100	250	1200(16)
Sharps 1855	19	18	7	3-40	250	600	800(15)
Lee Enfield MK 1	20	19	10	3-40	600	1.5k	550(14)
MIGarand	21	20	8	3-40	400	600	250(12)
M-16(auto)	22	20	10	3-40	250	400	300(13)
AK-47(auto)	21	21	10	3-40	150	400	1500(16)
SCKyogo Til (auto)	24	21	40	3-40	150	400	2000(17)
SHOTGUNS							
Hammer Shotgun	20	17	2	3-15	25	40	100(10)
Savage 77E	22	18	5	3-15	40	60	200(12)
MACHINE GUNS (auto)							
Vickers	20	23	20	3-100	500	1k	3000(18)
Spandau	20	24	15	3-100	500	1k	3500(18)
Maxim	19	23	25	3-50	500	1k	2500(17)
Bwng .50/.303/MG-17	21	25	11	3-250	1k	2k	1500(16)
MaremontM60	23	23	15	3-100	600	1.5k	3000(18)
Nato 7.62mm (.30 cal)	22	24	15	3-150	600	2k	2000(17)
7.62Minigun	22	27	10	3-250	1k	2k	75k (25)
HEAVY WEAPONS							
15mm cannon	21	25	15	3-400	2.5k	4k	60k (24)
20mm cannon	21	27	8	3-400	2.5k	4k	75k (25)
30mm cannon (auto)	22	30	10	3-400	2.5k	4k	100k (25)

37mm cannon	21	27	25	3-400	2.5k	4k	110k (26)
12-pnd 1857	17	24	1	3-150	600	1.5k	4000(18)
18-pounder	16	24	1	3-150	400	1k	8000(20)
Culverin	15	22	1	3-100	250	600	10k (20)
MonsMeg	15	27	1	25-150	1k	2.5k	25k (22)
88mm (A)	20	27	1	50-600	4k	6k	90k (25)
Long Tom (A)	21	30	1	—	lk-6k	25k	200k (27)
Hellfire(M)	22	29	1	50-2k	15k	—	100k (25)
Tow Missile (M)	22	28	1	100-400	1k	4k	36k + 7k (23/20)
LAW Missile (M)	22	27	1	10-100	250	400	300(13)
Stinger AA (M)	23	27	1	100-lk	2.5k	4k	50k (24)
105mm tank (T)	22	29	1	100-lk	2.5k	4k	500k (29)
125mm tank (T)	22	29 30	1	100-lk	3k	5k	550k (29)
105mm howitzer (A)	22	32	1	400-lk	6k	15k	150k (26)
75mm tank (T)	21	28	1	100-400	600	2.5k	300k (28)
2.75 in rockets	21	29	1	100-400	1k	2.5k	200(12)
Torpedo	22	34	1	—	lk-20k	40k	500k (29)
Grenades (G)	22	19	1	1-6	15	40	10(5)

Burst Radius Notation: (A) = Artillery shell; (T) = Tank shell; (M) = Missile; (G) = Grenade
(auto) = capable of full-auto fire

MELEE WEAPONS

	Tech	Plus to Damage Value	Maximum Damage Value	Price (Value)
Dagger	7	+3	17	50(9)
Short Sword	8	+4	18	150(11)
Rapier	15	+5	19	300(13)
Broadsword	9	+6	20	400(13)
Two-Handed Sword	10	+7	21	750(15)
Baseball Bat/Club	6	+3	18	20(7)
Mace	8	+4	19	100(10
Ball and Chain	10	+6	21	400(13

MISSILE WEAPONS

	Tech	Damage/ Max. Value	Range (meters) Short	Med.	Long	Price (Value)
Throwing Dagger	7	+3/17	3-5	10	15	100(10)
Spear	5	+4/18	3-5	25	40	25(7)
Short Bow	8	+5/19	3-10	40	100	70(10)
Long Bow	12	+6/20	3-10	100	250	300(13)
Composite Bow	13	+7/22	3-10	60	250	400(13)
Modern Compound Bow	22	+7/25	3-10	100	250	150(11)
Lt Crossbow	10	15	3-10	100	200	150(11)
Hvy Crossbow	11	16	3-10	100	300	250(12)
War Boomerang	7	+4/19	3-5	40	100	40(8)

EXPLOSIVE BURST RADIUS (in meters)

	Short	Med.	Long
Grenade	0-3	8	15
Tank Shell (HE)	0-4	10	25
Missile	0-5	15	20
Artillery Round (HE)	0-5	15	40

service in better than a dozen nations of Core Earth. It has an attack radius of 745 miles (1,200 kilometers). Armament includes two fuselage-mounted 30mm cannon and a mixture of bombs, rockets and guided missiles depending on the mission and configuration of the plane.

Learjet L24: When a plane flies paying customers it is called an airliner. A privately owned Learjet is given the loftier sounding title of "executive transport." In addition to the passengers, the L24 has room for about 1,000 pounds (450 kilos) of cargo.

Boeing 727: A design which originally competed for a contract as a military transport, the 727 became the most common jetliner in dozens of fleets. The plane has a range of 2,600 miles (4,200 kilometers).

Boeing 747: The Boeing 747 is a marvel of engineering, and continuous adaptations have kept the plane up to date with new developments in avionics. The 747 has a range of 7,000 miles (11,000 kilometers).

F-15: While fast, the F-15 is not built for speed — it is built for acceleration. The F-15 is capable of climbs, dives, and turns which are more than enough to outmaneuver an opponent. Unfortunately, the fighter is capable of maneuvers that can knock a pilot unconscious from the G-force. Knowing how to push the envelope is the key to victory and survival. The F-15 is armed with a 20mm rotary cannon, and eight air-to-air missiles.

SR-71: The SR-71 started development at *Tech* 22, and its power plant is of that generation. However, its control-surface technology and stealth/ECM gear are strictly state of the art of *Tech* 23. The SR-71 has a service ceiling in excess of 80,000 feet, and literally flies faster than a speeding bullet. The SR-71 is a reconnaissance aircraft.

Self-Powered Land Vehicles

Internal Combustion

Model T: The Model T comes only in one color, black. It requires hand-cranking to start and is not completely sealed against the weather. Durable and relatively inexpensive, it sold more than any other car of its day.

Daimler-Benz: This sedan epitomizes the low, sleek rounded designs of its day. The Daimler-Benz has a suspension system which gives it a coveted ride.

Thunderbird: The Thunderbird encapsulates tastes in the opulent United States of the 1950s: powerful, heavy, and sporting liberal applications of chrome.

Lotus Esprit: The Esprit is responsive — overly responsive in the hands of inexperienced drivers. The mid-body engine is difficult to service, but the design gives the car great maneuverability.

Ford Taurus: The basic design of the Taurus literally spawned a whole fleet of similar cars. Moderately reliable, the primary failing of the Taurus is that it sustains more damage in a collision than similar cars.

Kenilworth Semi-Truck: While all large trucks are designed to sacrifice acceleration for efficient power, the Kenilworth is slower off the mark than most modern semis. In return it can haul more freight than any other truck — nearly 35 tons.

Railroad

1868: Powered by coal-generated steam, this class of locomotive spread throughout the Americas, as far south as Patagonia and as far north as Alaska. A half dozen or so of these vehicles have been refurbished as a result of the Possibility Wars, as they are more easily "repaired" than more modern vehicles.

1907: Coal and steam are the sources of power for these long trains, many with richly appointed passenger cabins. Lower-class tickets are located in the rear, which occasionally receives the ash from the locomotive. A variation of the 1907 is the most common train in Orrorsh and the New Empire of the Nile.

1950: Diesel engines pull these trains, and passengers have given way to increased freight. Superior brake technology takes credit for much of the increase in speed performance; less technically sophisticated trains may be able to get up to speed, but they cannot stop in a reasonable distance.

Bullet Train: Developed in Japan and France, these trains make use of superior aerodynamic knowledge and materials to allow the train to reach speeds that would derail ordinary trains.

Military Vehicles

1938 Halftrack: Halftracks are lightly armored trucks for troop transport. The rear of the vehicle is tracked for better off-road performance, and they are often armed with a .30 caliber machine gun.

Tiger Tank: The state of the art tank for nearly a dozen years, the Tiger Tank has a 75mm cannon which is advanced for its *Tech* level.

Jeep: This all-purpose utility vehicle is not so much rugged as it is easy to patch back into a semblance of working shape. Repairs have been made literally with safety pins and chewing gum.

T-72: The T-72 is a common tank in dozens of nations who had cordial relations with the Soviet Union. The T-72 sports a 125mm smoothbore gun, with a troublesome autoloader which is still a vast improvement over its predecessor.

M113A2: The M113A2 is an armored personnel carrier used extensively by US forces in the Vietnam War. Its experimental aluminum armor is light, but provides inadequate protection against heavy weapons.

Ml Abrams: Currently the most modern tank in US inventories, the Abrams is capable of good highway speed, and carries composite armor. While its 105mm gun is slightly less impressive than the Soviet 125mm, the Abrams can carry over 60 105mm shells, as opposed to 40 120mm shells for the T-72.

Space Vehicles

US Space Shuttle: While the avionics and some of the control surfaces of the newer shuttles are *Tech* level 23, most of the fleet remains level 22. The shuttle can place over 60 tons into low Earth orbit.

LAND VEHICLE SPECIFICATION CHART

Craft	Tech	Speed kmh/mph/ value	Pass.	Tough	Price (Value)
Model-T	20	55/35/11	2	14	3000(18)
1933 Daimler-Benz	21	100 / 60 / 12	4	15	8000 (20)
1955 Thunderbird	21	125 / 80 / 13	2	16	8000 (20)
1977 Lotus Esprit	22	210/ 130/ 14	2	15	35k (23)
1990 Taurus	23	160/100/13	5	14	15k (21)
Semi-Truck	22	140/ 90 / 13	2	23	120k (26)

RAILROAD SPECIFICATION CHART

Craft	Tech	Speed kmh/mph/value	Pass.	Tough	Price (Value)
1868	18	40/25/10	80	28	15m (36)
1907	20	70 / 45 / 122	20 32	25	m (37)
1950	21	110/70/13	160	37	50m (39)
Bullet Train	23	300/180/15	250	33	70 m (40)

MILITARY VEHICLE SPECIFICATION CHART

Craft	Tech	Speed kmh/mph/value	Pass.	Tough	Price (Value)
1938 Halftrack	21	55/ 35/ 11	10	25	100k (25)
Tiger Tank	21	40/25/10	4	29	200k (27)
Jeep	21	80/ 50/ 12	4	15	6000 (19)
T-72	22	55/35/11	3	31	750k (30)
M113A2	22	65/42/12	13	24	100k (25)
MlAbrams	23	70/45/12	4	33	1.4m (31)

SPACE VEHICLE SPECIFICATION CHART

Craft	Tech	Speed kmh/mph/value	Pass.	Tough	Price (Value)
US Space Shuttle	22	28k/ 18k/ 24	6	27	2b(47)
Mitiya Corp Low Orbital	24	28k/ 18k/ 24	20	28	600m (44)

WATER VEHICLES SPECIFICATION CHART

Craft	Tech	Speed kmh/mph/value	Pass.	Tough	Price (Value)
Trireme	8	10/6/7	120	24	6m (34)
Galleon	15	20/ 12/ 9	220	25	15 m (36)
Clipper Ship	17	40/25/10	140	26	20 m (37)
Coal Steamer	18	30/18/10	24	30	20 m (37)
Diesel Steamer	21	40/ 25 / 10	24 31	30	m (38)
Luxury Liner	22	25/15/9	3,200	34	110m (41)

Mitaya Corporation Low Orbital: The Low Orbital filled a need for reliable transportation between Nippon Tech's early Lagrange industrial stations and the Earth. The turnaround time, from landing to takeoff, can be less than 90 minutes.

Water Vehicles

Surface Vessels

Trireme: Named for the three rows of oars which provide most of the ship's power (although a square-sail provides some additional mobility), the trireme is a mobile combat platform as much as a seafaring vessel. Triremes are equipped with reinforced rams, their principal method for destroying enemy ships.

Galleon: Galleons are a compromise between a merchant ship and a warship. They are better merchanters. Galleons are bulky and not too maneuverable, but can haul a good deal of cargo, pack several dozen cannon, and take considerable damage before going under.

Clipper Ship: The clipper ships are the ultimate tall ships. Complicated and sophisticated rigging can, in the hands of skilled crews, be used to draw every ounce of power from the winds. Only moderately armed, the ships

count on escape rather than confrontation.

Coal Steamer: Early steamers retained their sails, in part to take advantage of the wind, in part due to a distrust of the machinery which moved the vessel. As the efficiency of the engines — and people's acceptance of the technology — grew, the sails were abandoned. Coal steamers can sail throughout the year as dictated by the needs of trade rather than the prevailing wind patterns.

Diesel Steamer: Oil-fired engines also went through a transitional tech period; oil-soaked coal was first used, then pure oil-fired engines replaced the coal burners. Oil brings great gains in efficiency; ships can remain at sea for months, rather than three weeks or so for a coal burner.

Luxury Liner: Diesel powers these great behemoths, which require more than three times the space of military vessels carrying a similar number of

people. They are remarkably seaworthy. Many have been pressed into military service as a result of the Possibility Wars, ferrying troops equal to twice the normal passenger limits, plus hundreds of tons of gear.

Submarines

Type 209 class: Designed by West Germany, this diesel-powered submarine is in service throughout the world. Their sensors are more modern *(Tech 22* or *23)* than the rest of the vessel. The 209 is meant for patrols of 50 days or less.

Los Angeles class: The Los Angeles class submarine is a nuclear powered attack submarine, using extremely sophisticated sensing gear *(Tech* 23) to hunt other submarines. While equipped with torpedoes, these submarines hunt with missiles which hit the water only as they near the target.

SUBMARINE SPECIFICATION CHART

Craft	Tech	Speed kmh/mph/value	Pass.	Tough	Price (Value)
Type 209 class	21	40/ 25/ 10	33	28	30 m (38)
Los Angeles class	22	55/ 35/ 11	140	33	2 b (47)

Chapter Thirteen

Creating Templates

Although we give you a number of templates to choose from (located in the World Book), your players may at some point want to build their own. The procedure for creating a new player character template follows. If you want hints about creating gamemaster characters, look in the Adventure Book.

Attributes and Skills

• A character has 66 attribute points to assign; the total of all the character's attributes must be 66. On Core Earth, no attribute may exceed 13. The sourcebooks about each cosm may contain rules giving characters a way around this limit; check the character generation sections in those sourcebooks for details.

• Add skills to the template that you think would be appropriate for that character, and that that character would have access to. A character begins with 16 skill points to assign among all the skills listed. At least one skill must be assigned three points (the tag skill), and no skill may be assigned more than three. Every character must have at least one add in the *reality* skill.

• Every character starts with 10 Possibilities.

• Running, swimming and other limit values are listed in Gamemaster Chapter Two. To determine the character's movement rates, compare his *Dexterity* and *Strength* as modified by the Character Limit chart (page 42) to the Torg Value chart. If the *Dexterity* or *Strength* attribute exceeds the limit, use the limit value instead.

Example: A character template has a *Dexterity* of 11 and a *Strength* of 9.

The character runs 100 meters per round (limit value for *running* is 10) and lifts 60 kilos — though this could go up to 100 kilos if the character chooses *lifting* as a skill.

Magicians

When designing magicians, an additional step is required. If the template has at least one add in any of the magical skills *(apportation, divination, conjuration* or *alteration)* then the character gets 12 additional points with which to buy arcane knowledges and spells. Each spell costs one of these points; arcane knowledges are purchased like skill adds. The character may also spend any or all of his starting Possibilities in order to purchase additional spells (one Possibility per spell).

Background

Next think up a background for the character. Try to think of where she comes from, how she fits into the Possibility Wars. Then think of how others would see her ... how she dresses, how she talks, how she reacts to other types of characters. Come up with a name for the character's "template type," a quick hook as to the type of character she is.

Next, think up connections the character could have which would tie her in to other characters. See the printed templates and Player Chapter One for hints on connections.

Equip the character from the list of equipment in Chapter Twelve. As the character is just starting out during the chaos of the Possibility Wars, assume she begins with enough materiel to have survived this far. She will have weapons, perhaps, and some

general equipment, and not much else. Two rules of thumb to follow when picking equipment: 1) if the character cannot carry it, she probably does not have it, and 2) working hardware is hard to come by on Core Earth since the Possibility Wars have started. The player must always clear any equipment with the gamemaster.

If the player wants possessions which do not appear on the equipment list, she is responsible for providing you with enough information about the item so you can make up your mind. For example, if the item in question is a weapon, the player would have to describe, in game terms, how effective the weapon is, and what sort of ammunition or maintenance is required, how she came across the weapon, etc. A picture would be useful.

If the player wanted a mansion, she would have to draw the floor plans of the mansion, a map of the grounds, delineate the caretakers, and give you enough written description so that the mansion can fit into the campaign.

In short, if a player wants lots of equipment or material possessions, she must pay for it. The payment is not only in game money, but in imagination; she must work the equipment in so that it contributes to the story, and is fun for you and the other players, as well as herself.

Valerie Valusek

TORG™ CHARACTER SHEET

Player Name _____

Character Name	Home Cosm	Magic	Social	Spiritual	Tech

Age	Shock Damage	K O	Possibilities

Height			
Weight	**Wound Level**	Wound Heavy Wound Mortal Dead	

Skill	Add	Attribute	Value
Reality		Spirit	

Equipment	Value	Axiom Level	Range S	M	L
Armor					
Weapons					

Attributes	Approved Actions
Dexterity	Maneuver
Strength	
Toughness	
Perception	Trick
Mind	Test
Charisma	Taunt
Spirit	Intimidate

Movement Rates	Limit Values
Running	
Swimming	
Jumping	
Climbing	
Lifting	

Drama Card Record

Number	Name
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Bonus Chart

Die Roll	1	2	3 4	5 6	7 8	9 10	11 12	13 14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21 25	26 30	31 35	36 40	41 45	46 50	+5
Bonus #	-12	-10	-8	-5	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	+1

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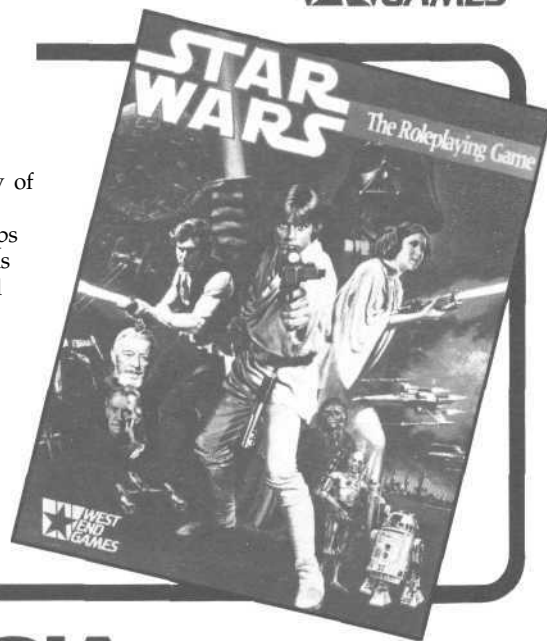
PARANOIA®

Isn't this the game that gives each player six duplicate characters because they croak so fast?

The very one.

And doesn't it encourage players to lie, cheat, steal, and backstab each other?

Correct. *Paranoia* is a lighthearted game about terror, soulless bureaucracies, mad scientists, weird mutants, and insane robots. *Paranoia* is fun. The Computer says so. Do you want to play?

Sounds kinda dumb to me... Say, why are you looking at me that way?

The Computer says not wanting to play *Paranoia* is treason and grounds for immediate termination. Any last words, traitorous scum?

Gulp. Uh... Sure I want to play! Paranoia is fun! The Computer is my friend. Oh boy! Let's go terminate some traitors!

Excellent! You're learning, citizen. Stay alert! Trust no one! Keep your laser handy!

Paranoia Book: 136-page book plus 6 foldouts complete with everything needed to play. **Boxed Paranoia:** Includes the book, a 16-page booklet with additional treasonous material, and a 20-sided die.

GHOSTBUSTERS™ *international*

A free-floating vapor in your micro-wave? An Ancient Horror from Yucatan in possession of your local phone company? Neighborhood children menaced by the Faceless Evil of Detroit?
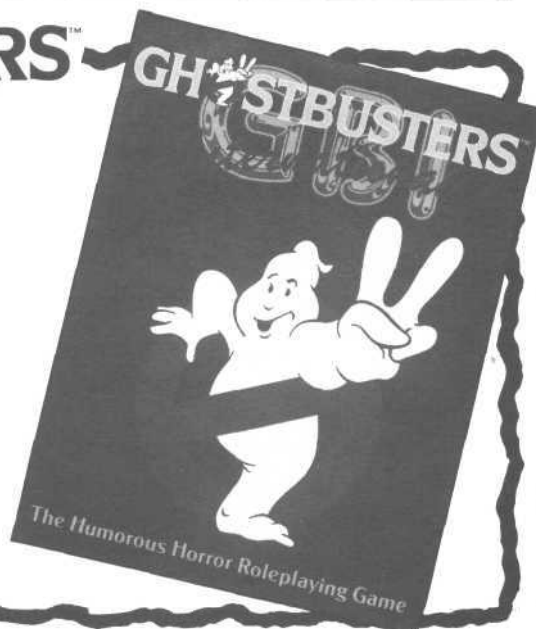
No Problem! Call Ghostbusters International - We Treat Your Ghost to a Proton-Pack Roast!

Ghostbusters International, a frightfully cheerful roleplaying game, features simple, easy-to-learn rules — perfect for novice roleplayers and for an evening's entertainment. The basic game box contains everything you need to play, including oodles of information on the sordid science of Ghostbusting, scads of adventure ideas, a *Ghostbusters International* franchise contract, EPA permit and, of course, the infamous Ghost die.

Bring all the characters from the hit movie to life. Play Ray, Egon or Peter Venkman — or create your own character — and join the battle to save mankind and rake in big bucks!

Ghostbusters: Wisdom, Science, and Unlicensed Nuclear Accelerators in the Service of Humanity.

"The storm has a name . . ."™

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