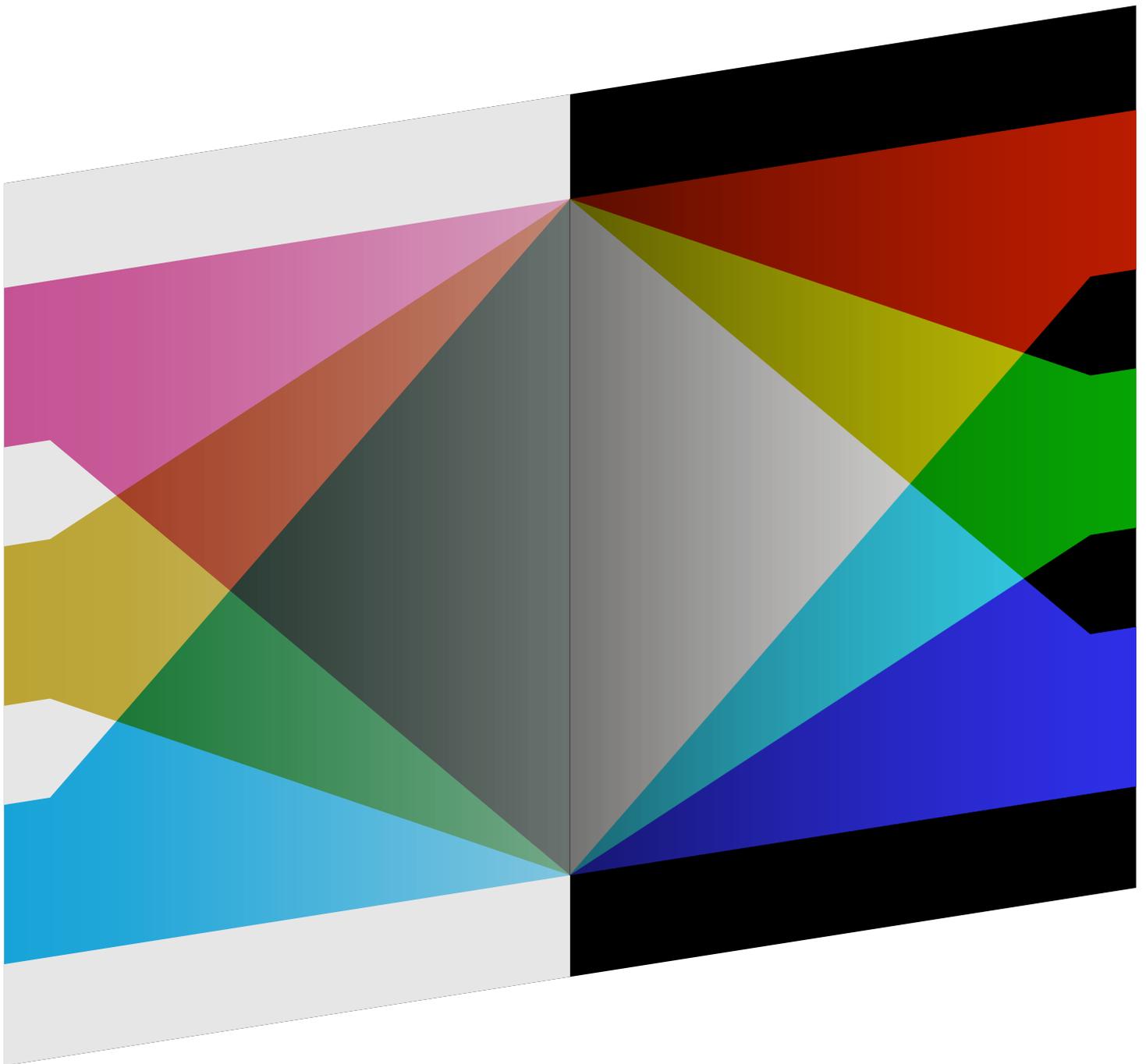
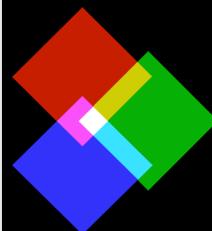


CASCADE EFFECT

Version 2.2.7 Playtest Handout



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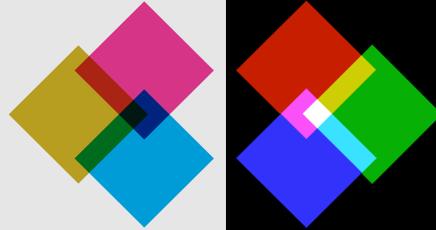
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INTRODUCTION

In Cascade Effect, players explore a near future collapsing under the weight of a climate that is changing faster than anyone expected. Players role-play characters that are about to embark on an adventure that reveals that the world is much more complex, strange, and dangerous than they ever thought.

Not only are they discovering secrets about the world, they're also starting to discover new abilities that seem to come from a connection to a mysterious intangible realm.



The Players

To play, pick one person to be the game master, the rest of the players create and control a single character in the game. Given a situation, the players say what their characters say and describe the actions taken by their characters. The player's job is to create and play an interesting character as they embark on an adventure.

What Characters Know

In addition to anything the GM describes, the characters are also normal people that have normal background knowledge about the world. Players are the primary authors of their character's background and history (as long as it fits within what the GM says is true about the world), and they should act according to what their character would know given their background.

In general, characters will be aware of recent history and news in the world. It's the near future, no more than 10 years from now. The biggest story connecting all recent events is the consequences of climate change. Unprecedented natural disasters, such as immensely destructive storms, flooded coastal cities, global crop failures, droughts, and even lethal heat waves, are occurring earlier and more rapidly than predicted. The secondary societal effects of these events are just as dramatic; the news is full of stories on looming wars, failing economies, a near-constant global refugee crisis, abandoned cities, and a strong reactionary backlash from governments. New counter culture movements are creating new communities outside of the status quo.

Amidst the growing chaos, almost everyone has heard rumors or seen online videos of bizarre events that cannot be explained.

The Game Master

The game master describes the situations and events characters experience. They are in control of all of the people and challenges that characters encounter. The game master's job is to guide the characters through an interesting and challenging adventure and to keep the story moving forward.

What the Game master Knows

The GM knows everything about the fictional world the story is taking place in. Anything the GM describes about the world is true, whether they planned it in advance or improvised it on the spot.

Details about the world and its secrets and possible adventures are described in the last section of this rulebook. Pages with completely black backgrounds are meant to be for the GM's eyes only. These pages contain details pertaining to the top secret, mysterious, or supernatural aspects of the world that most people are unaware of.

The GM can start the game out with all of the character's origin stories on how they started entering the secret parts of the world, or they could jump right into the action with characters that are already an established group that is aware of what is behind some of the mysteries.

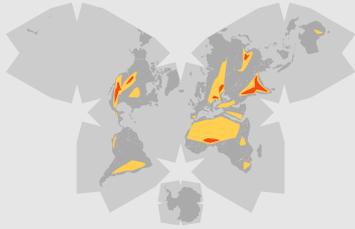
The GM should also have a good sense of the rules of the game, instructing players on how to handle situations that they don't know the rules for. But don't lose momentum in the game by spending a lot of time looking for a rule you don't know, just improvise and look it up later.

The World of Cascade Effect

The Characters Know a World Heating Up...

Rising Temperatures

Surpassing several critical tipping points has caused climate change to hit harder and faster than predicted. Deadly heat waves, droughts, storms, and crop failures are increasingly common and severe. The most affected are those least able to react.



Rising Tides

Receding coastlines are a growing chronic issue while unprecedented storm surges and inland floods create acute and increasingly severe disasters. Destroyed properties and livelihoods are driving the displacement of massive populations.



Rising Tensions

Reactionary backlash and regulatory capture prevent nations from addressing the situation. The global precariat is the largest demographic and a fertile ground for new countercultures. Mass protest is a daily fact and civil wars loom in the future.



...and are Beginning to Sense a World Within...

Hidden Space, Hidden Body

Between every point of the space you're familiar with, exists a second hidden space. It is normally undetectable, but your senses are beginning to find a connection to it that is mediated through a second intangible body hidden in this space.



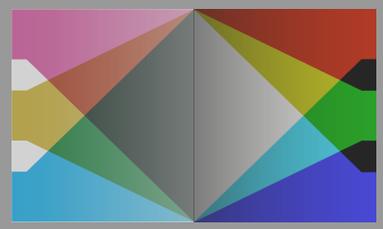
Dissociative Experiences

The mind requires contact with the hidden body. When this connection is stressed, loss of awareness and memory result for most people, but for those with stronger ties, psychedelic dissociative experiences hint at the true nature of the connection.



Hints of New Abilities

With awareness of the hidden body, one can harness the resources it provides and use them in physical space to accomplish more in less time. When truly synchronized with the hidden body, one can transcend the limits of the body and its surroundings.



... and the GM is Sending Them into a World of Secrets

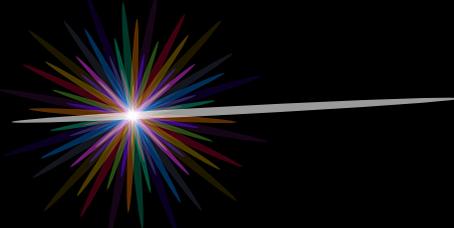
Secret Organizations

Many nations have secret intelligence agencies, but orchestrating them all is the Schedule and its auditors. Meanwhile, groups with goals ranging from revealing secrets to accelerating societal collapse, recruit and manipulate behind the scenes.



Mysterious Phenomena

The list of strange happenings is growing. Locations that induce compulsions. Self-assembling structures. Phantom lights and images follow people. Apparent hauntings. Devices of unknown origin. People appear from nowhere. A 1:1 simulation of Earth.



Inhuman Entities

Hidden space is full of semi-aware beings. By manifesting forces, assembling bodies, or possessing humans, they sometimes find ways to become less incorporeal. Meanwhile, other beings that definitely aren't from around here lurk in dark places.



Basic Gameplay

Gameplay consists of the GM and players collaborating on a story. The GM presents a situation, and the players say what their characters are doing in the situation. Most of the time, anything a player describes their character doing just happens. However, if the action described is challenging to the character in some way, the GM will assign it a **Difficulty** number.

To determine if you succeed, and at what cost, you must use your character's **Metabolism** scores to attempt to beat the Difficulty number. For every challenge, choose a pairing of one **Physical Metabolism** and one **Hidden Metabolism** that you will use to attempt to overcome the Difficulty.

Comparing Difficulty

Often, such as when your character is able to take their time with the challenge, it is very simple to determine if you succeed. Just compare the Difficulty number to the sum of the current values of your chosen Metabolism pairing. If it meets or exceeds the difficulty then you complete the challenge successfully and don't need to spend any resources.

Spending Metabolisms

If the challenge must be done quickly, or it requires physical or mental effort, you need to spend resources to complete it. In this situation, deduct any combination of points from your two chosen Metabolisms. These points are lost and cannot be used again until you regain them. If the total number of points you spend meets or exceeds the Difficulty, you succeed.

Rolling Dice

Dice are only needed if a challenge has a chance of failure due to luck or things outside of your character's control. These challenges are called **Risky**. Roll a number of 6 sided dice equal to the amount of Metabolism points you applied to the action.

When you roll them, each die landing on 4 or greater adds a point of **Progress** to the results. Any die that comes up 6 gets rerolled, potentially adding more Progress, or even coming up as 6 to reroll again. Sum up the total amount of Progress and if it meets or exceeds the Difficulty, then you succeed in the challenge.

Risky challenges can cause unanticipated problems. If your roll makes no Progress at all, or if you tie the Difficulty without exceeding it, then the challenge develops a new complication or consequence in addition to your success or failure. When this happens your character receives **Stress** that reduces the maximum value of a Metabolism.

Pushing Yourself

You may find yourself in situations where it seems like you don't have enough Metabolism points available to succeed at something. When this happens, you can Push Yourself to exert extra effort. This causes all of your Metabolisms to refill and lets you immediately spend any refilled points on the same challenge. But be careful, doing this causes the action to become Risky if it wasn't already, which can cause new complications or Stress.

Getting Started

As a group, you'll have to decide what point to start your story at. This choice determines how powerful your starting characters are and how much they know about the secret parts of the world. The recommended starting methods are The Origin Story, The Heroic Story, or The Short Story.

The Origin Story

This approach is recommended for groups where most of the players have never played Cascade Effect before.

Characters start as ordinary people. Follow the standard character creation steps detailed in the next chapter. Players should avoid reading about the secret parts of the setting so that they can learn about the world as the GM reveals it.

The Heroic Story

This approach is recommended if everyone has played Cascade Effect before.

Characters are already slightly superhuman at the start. Follow the standard character creation steps detailed in the next chapter. Afterwards, each character gets 3 experience points to spend (or a different amount determined by the GM). Players are free to read any secret parts of the setting.

The Short Story

Recommended for one shots, play testing, and short term games.

Skip standard character creation. Instead, characters have 12 points to split between Physical Metabolisms, with no metabolism ending up below 3 or above 6. Then choose any 9 Traits for the character. The GM may also set an amount of experience points to spend as well.

CHARACTERS

Cascade Effect characters are just starting to discover an entire new world. Their mind is beginning to sense the first hints of a second incorporeal body existing in parallel to their physical form, but outside of normal space. Their connection to this body is starting to manifest a second set of resources, resources that could be used to overcome the limits imposed by the physical body, mind, and world.



Physical Body

Most people are defined by the 3 **Physical Metabolisms**, **Fight**, **Flight**, and **Focus**.

Think of these not as attributes that represent your talents, but rather resources provided by the hardware of the body and brain. They represent how much effort you can bring to an activity and how much stress you can handle. Each metabolism is assigned a score, from 3 to 6 for normal humans.

Every action you take, whether it is athletic or academic, will use one **Physical Metabolism**.

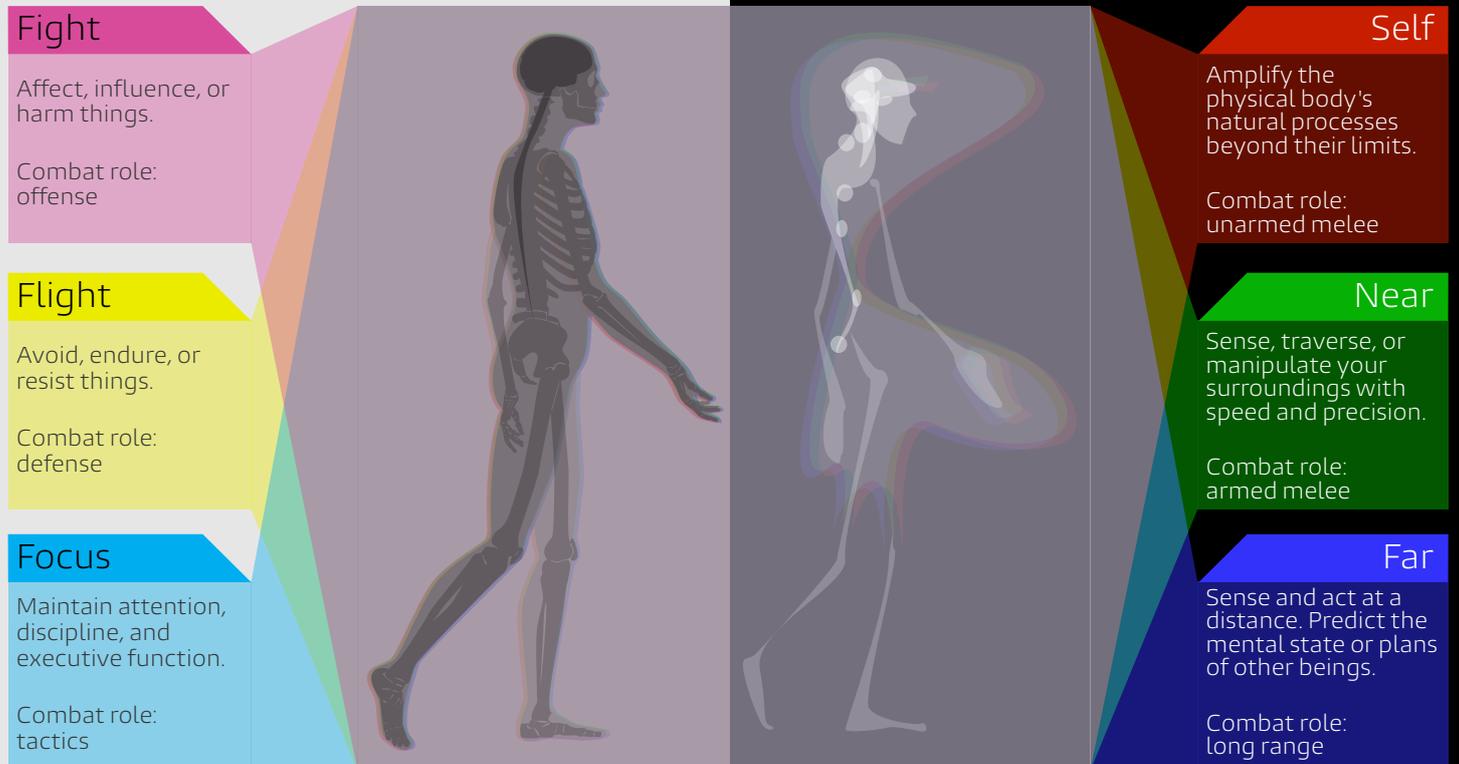


Hidden Body

Your character also has 3 **Hidden Metabolisms** that normal humans do not; **Self**, **Near**, and **Far**.

A new character is only just beginning to sense and understand them. They are the resources provided by your connection to your Yau Body, an intangible organ residing outside of normal space. This connection can be tapped to create energy, supplementing the physical body and mind, boosting it beyond its normal limits.

Every action you take will be paired with one **Hidden Metabolism**, if you have the relevant one available.



Creating a Character

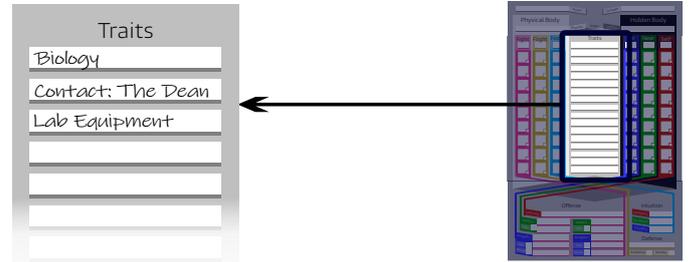
The first step of playing the game is to create the character you will play as. The two main statistics of your character are Metabolisms and Traits, and the steps of character will walk you through defining these values.

Metabolisms are numbers indicating how much energy, attention, and willpower a character can bring to an action.

Traits are keywords that flesh out additional details about your character, and they provide a bonus whenever they are relevant to an action. They can be almost anything that your character is able to leverage in a useful way. Generally, skills, social status, relationships, authority, wealth, possessions, or other advantages are good Traits.

Finally, write in 3 **Traits**. These can be anything, but in general the **Metabolisms** and **Traits** you chose in this step should represent your concept. For example, a scientist might have high Focus and Traits representing fields of knowledge and contacts in academia.

Traits can be vague at this stage! During play, an unspecific trait can be revised to something more specific as we get to know the character.



Step 2: Physical Origin

A **Physical Origin** represents the region your character comes from. This origin is not about nationality, culture, or class, but rather the opportunities and restrictions your character experiences due to the circumstances they live under.

Choose a **Physical Origin** from the list at the end of this chapter. Once you have chosen, write down 3 **Traits** that represent this origin. Each origin description will have requirements and suggestions for what these Traits should be.

Step 3: Hidden Origin

A **Hidden Origin** describes how a character first began to sense their **Hidden Metabolisms**. Often a first encounter with supernatural phenomena is what starts this process. Typically, the way your character experiences their Hidden Body slightly colors their personality and strongly influences the way they react to their **Hidden Metabolisms** being stressed.

Choose a **Hidden Origin** from the list at the end of this chapter. Once you have chosen, write down 3 **Traits** that represent this origin. Each origin description will have requirements and suggestions for what these Traits should be.

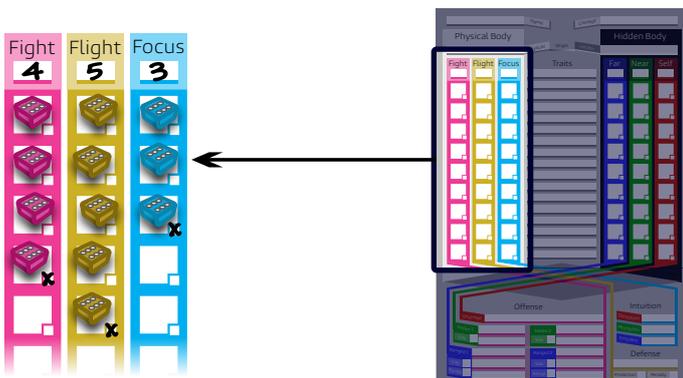
Step by Step Character Creation

1. Choose a character concept.
 - ◊ Set each **Physical Metabolism** to 3, and then spend 3 more points on them
 - ◊ Pick 3 **Traits** that reflect your concept.
2. Choose a **Physical Origin**.
 - ◊ Pick the **Traits** provided by this origin.
3. Choose a **Hidden Origin**.
 - ◊ Pick the **Traits** provided by this origin.

Step 1: Character Concept

Start imagining your character and write down their name and a character concept. A concept is a few words that describe their defining characteristic. Maybe it's a personality trait, a hobby, a job title, a combat role, or a special talent. It's OK if your concept starts out vague and gets revised as you create this character, or you can even come back to this step at the end of character creation if you don't have ideas right now.

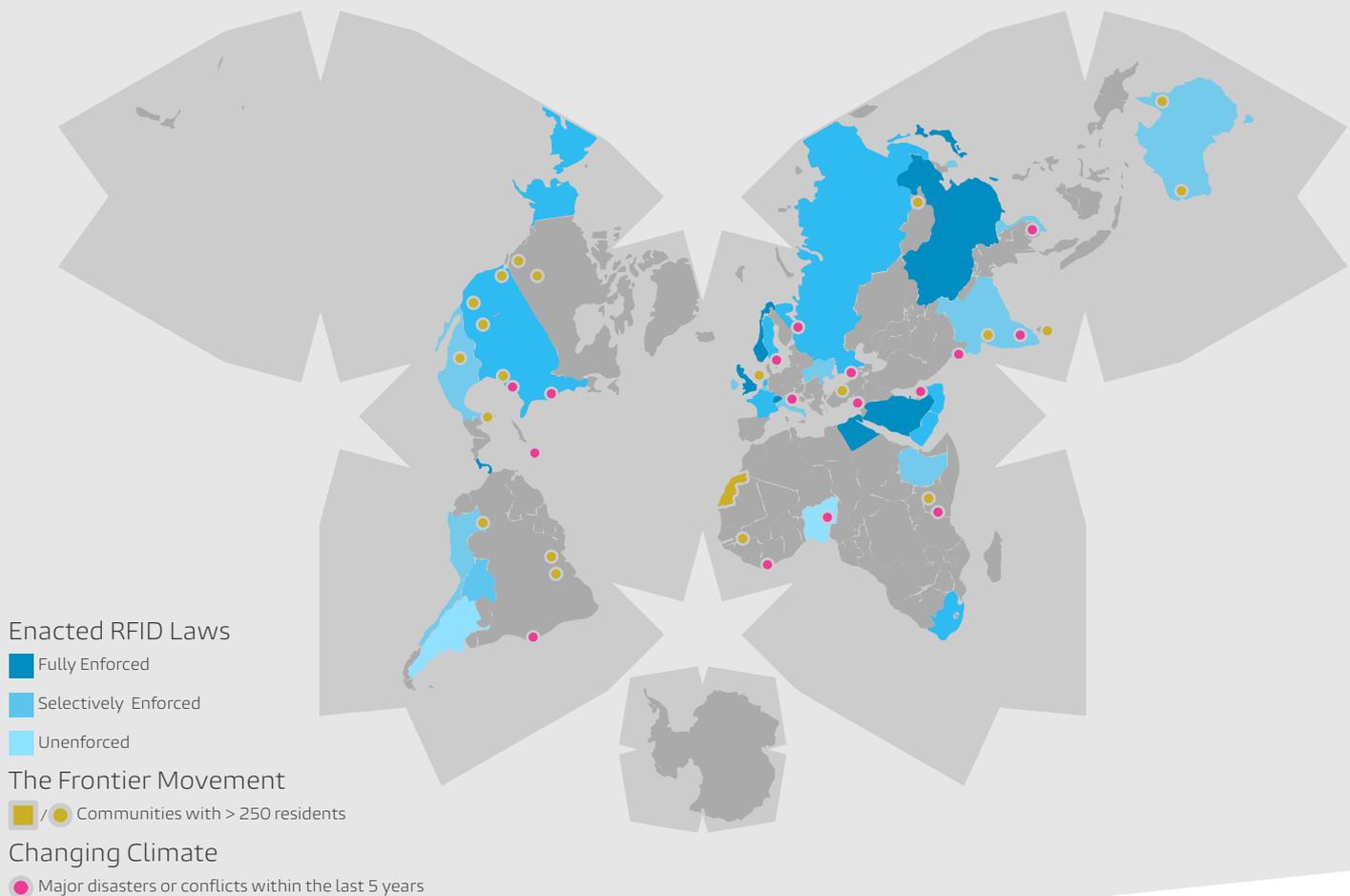
Once you have a concept to work with, you can set the **Physical Metabolisms**, of **Fight**, **Flight**, and **Focus**. Each starts with a minimum score of 3 points. Split 3 additional points between them however you want. When you are done, each should have a final score between 3 and 6, and the sum of all three of them should add up to 12. You can track them with dice, tokens, or small post-it tags.



Starting Metabolisms

Like all normal humans, starting characters typically do not have any points in the **Hidden Metabolisms**. Some of the more unusual origins may provide a point in these, but otherwise characters will only gain them with time and experience.

However, you might want to start everyone out more advanced when running play tests or one shot games. The GM will decide how many points every character gets to spend on **Hidden Metabolisms**. For example, a new adventurer might have 3 points, while a highly superhuman one might have more than a dozen.



List of Physical Origins

Physical Origins represent your character's place in the world and will provide guidance for choosing your next traits. Some may even provide bonuses to metabolisms.

Conventional

The vast majority of people in the world fall into this category. You live a life that wouldn't be unheard of in the present day.

- ◇ Gain the trait **Fit In**. This trait is relevant any time you want to be friendly with people of a similar social class to you or hide in a crowd.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing a skill learned from a trade, career, or education.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing a useful social connection or a material asset.

Documented

As a reactionary response to repeated disasters,

many regions have enacted laws requiring RFID cards that can be scanned from several meters away. You live or work in a region where this is enforced, or you used to.

- ◇ Gain the trait **RFID**. As long as you carry this ID, you can move and work freely in regions where this is required, but law enforcement knows your previous scan locations.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing a skill learned from a career or education.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing a useful social connection property, or position of authority.

Frontier

In one way or another, you've abandoned traditional society. Maybe you've joined a community in the Post-National Frontier movement, or maybe you've just struck out on your own. You've destroyed your RFID if you ever had one.

- ◇ Gain the trait **Frontier Clout**. Actual experience with frontier lifestyle is respected by people all over the political spectrum. This trait is relevant

any time you want to fit in with frontier folk, or impress people leading more traditional lives.

- ◇ Gain a trait representing a skill or tool you use to provide safety, resources, power, water, or data for yourself or your community. This may be any non-restricted weapon.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing your knowledge of a political ideology or praxis, or a social connection to someone with a lot of power within a counter culture movement.

Fugitive

Regardless of whether you are guilty or wrongly accused, you are on the run from the law. You either have to live in hiding, or you've created a false identity for yourself. This is easier in some places, but very difficult in places with RFID laws.

- ◇ Gain the trait **Safe House**. You have access to a space where you can go to lay low and reliably hide from pursuers.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing a skill you use to avoid unwanted attention, social interactions, or bureaucratic entanglements.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing any non restricted weapon, an untraceable income source, a fake RFID, or a possession or social contact that helps you live under the radar.

Liberated

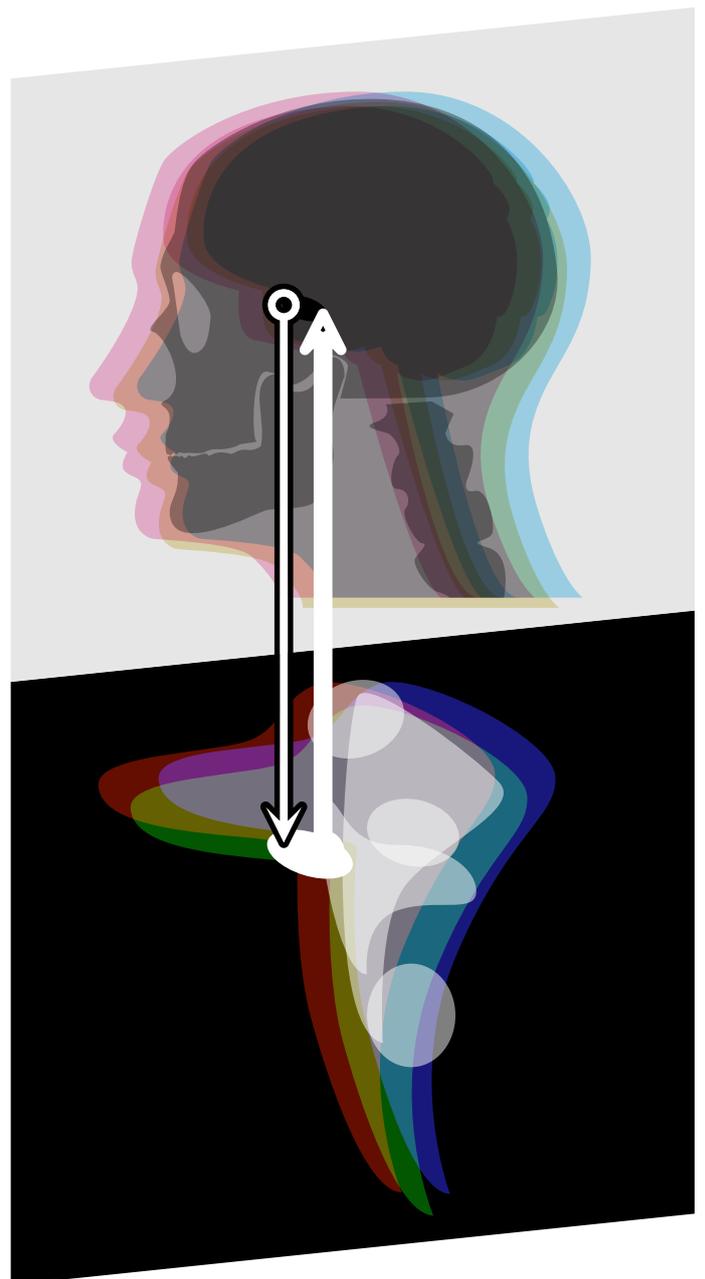
"Liberated" is a euphemism the frontier movement uses to refer to regions that have been abandoned by their parent nations, most often due to unreparable climate disasters. Most people have left these regions and become refugees, but something has kept you living or frequently visiting one of these regions to fend for yourself under martial law.

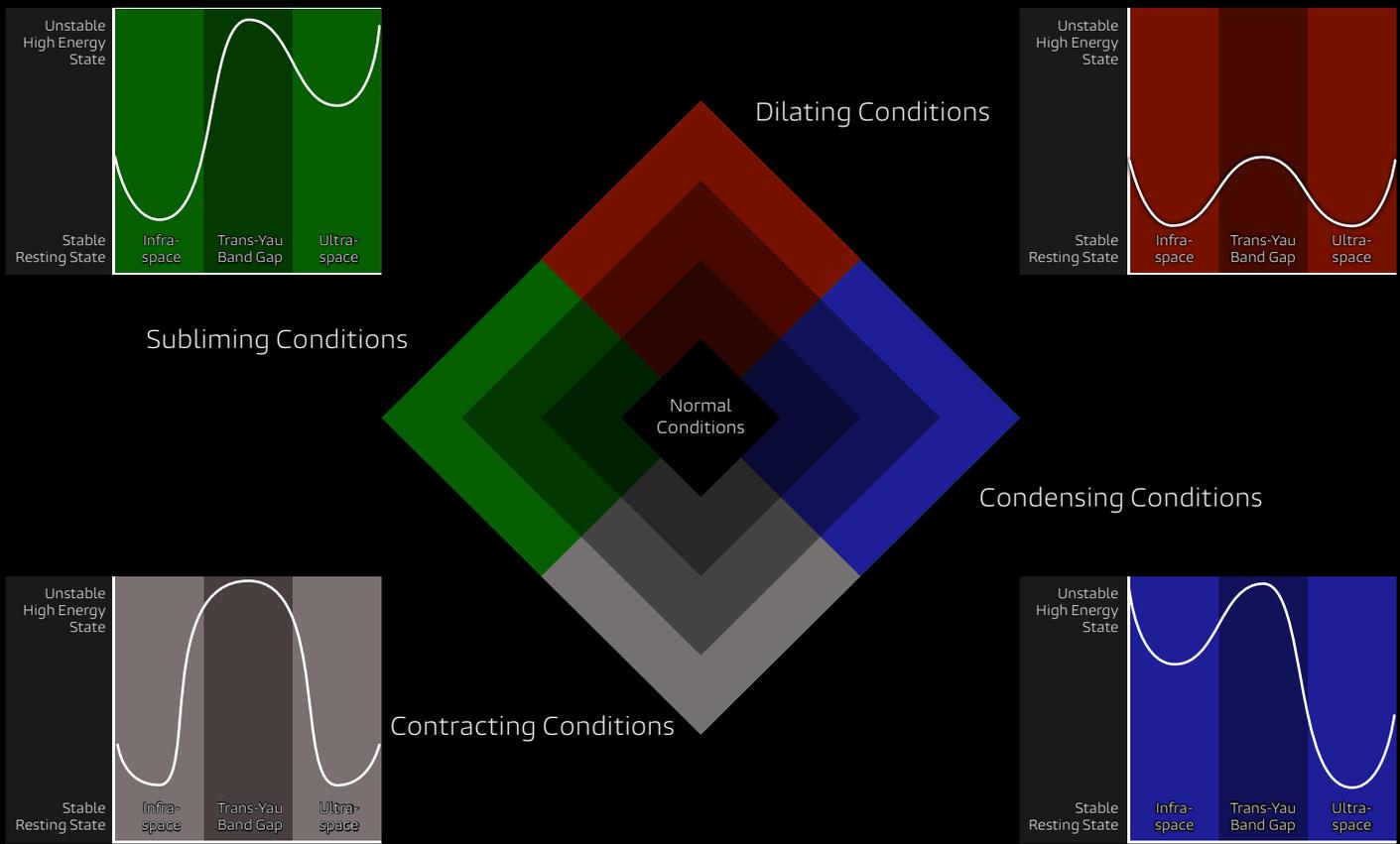
- ◇ Gain the trait **Resourceful**. This trait is relevant any time you are trying to acquire something you need by searching, socializing, or navigating a bureaucracy.
- ◇ The harsh conditions of your life have forced you to remain flexible and capable. Increase any one physical metabolism by 1. This cannot cause it to increase above 6.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing a skill or social connection you can use to survive without reliable access to advanced infrastructure.

Unknown

You don't remember your origin. For reasons unknown to you, before a certain point in time you have no memories. Whether this point is a few days ago or a few years ago, you've been struggling to find an identity for yourself ever since.

- ◇ Gain the traits **Unknown Combat Skill** and **Unknown Academic Skill**. You don't realize you have these skills and you do not recall practicing them. One time when you attempt to perform an action, you can permanently replace one of these traits with a skill relevant to the action. One skill must be useful in combat and the other must be a field of knowledge.
- ◇ Increase any one hidden metabolism from 0 to 1. Whatever happened before your memory begins left you aware of your hidden body.





List of Hidden Origins

A Hidden Origin represents how your character first came to sense their connection to their Hidden Body. This often comes from spending time inside "Cascade Events", areas where the normal connection between physical and hidden space is altered. This normal connection is part of the algorithm of consciousness for normal people, and modifying it causes Dissociation. Dissociative experiences often have subtle mental side effects, but when intense enough they invariably result in unconsciousness and memory loss in normal humans. Your character, however, when exposed to dissociative conditions began to sense the connection to hidden space itself and developed an intuitive sense of how to control it.

Competence

Things always seemed to come easily for you. You were chronically exposed to a dilating Cascade Event, that made all information transfer between physical and hidden space easier. Due to this, you had subconscious access to a small portion of the Hidden Metabolisms available, giving you more resources to succeed at anything you attempted. Perhaps you've always wondered why other people had to put so much effort into learning new skills when it seemed so easy for you.

◇ Gain the trait **Quick Study**. Any time you spend

an hour practicing or studying something, you can gain a trait representing this subject. You keep this trait until you replace it with another one by studying again.

- ◇ Gain a trait representing a physical skill you were able to master with little practice.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing a field of knowledge that you were and to learn easily.

Dedication

Either chronically or acutely, you have been influenced by a subliming Cascade Event. These conditions make it easy for information to enter hidden space, but difficult for it to exit. The location this event occurs in seems to have an inexplicable magnetic pull on one's attention, and even short term exposure sticks with a person. After the event ends, this experience leaves one inclined to find other things to hyper-focus on instead of the event.

- ◇ Gain the trait **Refuge**. Any space you regularly sleep in for at least a week becomes restorative to you. It's easier to do mental work and you recover from dissociation and injuries more quickly in this space.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing a subject that you find endlessly interesting and have a savant-like encyclopedic knowledge of.

- ◇ Gain a trait representing a skill that helps you mask your intentions, true nature, or the consequences of your actions.

Grit

You spent an extended period inside a contracting Cascade Event that suppressed all information transfer between physical and hidden space. Severing one's connection to their hidden body causes unconsciousness, but when exposed to these conditions your willpower held your connection together. Strengthened by adversity, your connection to your hidden body makes you resistant to dissociative phenomena.

- ◇ Gain the trait **Dissociation Resistance**. You can still act normally when any of your hidden metabolisms dissociate up to the negative of their score.
- ◇ Gain the trait **Deep Awareness**. You always maintain at least a vague awareness and memory of surroundings, even when you are asleep or unconscious due to injuries.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing a skill you are good at due to being able to persevere in situations that others typically cannot.

Inspiration

A condensing Cascade Event makes it easy for information to exit hidden space, but difficult for it to enter. Your exposure to one of these events left you with a subtle awareness of the information becoming available to you as it nears physical space. This grants you the ability to find patterns and inspiration in places other people wouldn't. The ideas just seem to come to you, even if it's unclear where, or who, they're coming from.

- ◇ Gain the trait **Inspiration**. Ideas just seem to come to you out of thin air, once per scene you can ask the GM for advice about the situation.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing a creative or spiritual practice.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing a skill you have due to being able to notice things about situations or people that others usually don't.

Missing Time

You experience a period of missing time that you do not remember. Perhaps a Cascade Event rendered you unconscious or simply unable to remember this time, or perhaps something even stranger occurred. Whatever happened, afterwards you had a subtle awareness of the

hidden body and a drive to find answers about the nature of this experience.

- ◇ Gain the trait **Fearless**. When others would be afraid or shocked by encountering something truly unknown, you are unaffected.
- ◇ Gain the trait **Unknown Skill**. You don't realize you have this skill and you do not recall practicing it. One time when you attempt to perform an action, you can permanently replace this trait with a relevant skill.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing a skill you developed to track down or research whatever it is that happened to you during your lost time.

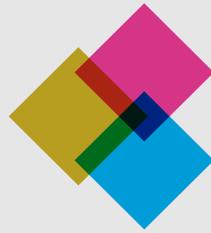
Trauma

A single dramatic event changed your life. Perhaps it was surviving a disaster, proximity to an extreme danger, witnessing the supernatural, or even a mental break caused by prolonged stressors or social conflict. To manage the situation, you tapped into resources you didn't realize you had by connecting with your Hidden Body. Ever since, you've had the feeling that Hidden Space was there, just barely out of reach waiting for you to connect with it again.

- ◇ Gain the trait **Last Reserves**. Up to once per scene, if you are exposed to a source of danger you haven't encountered before, you gain a point in each Hidden Metabolism. These points can go above your normal maximums.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing a skill you learned to cope with past trauma or avoid it in the future.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing a contact who witnessed this event with you or a resource you stockpile to prepare for this event's return.

GAMEPLAY

When your character is challenged, you need to decide how to attempt to overcome this challenge and then determine the results of this attempt. The most important step is to choose a pairing of metabolisms, one physical and one hidden, to apply to the challenge.



Choosing Physical Metabolisms

Physical Metabolism choice is about deciding what the body and mind are doing to respond to a Challenge.

Using Fight

Fight is your ability to change the external world.

Use Fight any time you are trying to affect, move, harm, or influence something. This includes all attacks in combat, athletic activities that involve power or anaerobic bursts like lifting, throwing, or jumping, social activities like intimidation, persuasion, or deception, and mental tasks that involve using "brute force" solutions.

Using Flight

Flight is your ability avoid unwanted changes, as well as achieve and maintain a position.

Use Flight any time you are trying to move somewhere, avoid something, or endure a hardship. This typically includes all defenses in combat, sustained aerobic athletic activities like climbing or distance running, social activities like resisting influence or maintaining composure, and mental activities like identifying tricks or paths that lead to bad outcomes.

Using Focus

Focus is your ability to direct and maintain attention or sense and interpret situations.

Use Focus any time you are trying to notice a detail, think your way out of a problem, or be in the right place at the right time. This typically includes initiative in combat, trying to succeed in athletic activities through willpower and strategy instead of physical ability, social activities like being witty or thoughtful, and mental activities that involve knowledge, memory, attention, or understanding complexity.



Choosing Hidden Metabolisms

Hidden metabolism choice is primarily concerned with where your response to the challenge takes place.

Using Self

Self is the hidden body's ability to aid the physical body.

Use Self any time you are trying to push your body beyond its normal limits. This includes unarmed combat, a wide range of athletic activities involving power, endurance, or adrenaline, as well as social activities or mental activities that require willpower, patience, or managing your emotions.

Using Near

Near is the hidden body's ability to sense and act in your immediate surroundings and understand connections.

Use Near any time you are trying to interact with your surroundings with finesse, speed, and precision. This typically includes armed melee content, athletic activities that involve skillful movements or avoiding obstacles, social activities involving body language, and mental activities that involve searching for connections between concepts.

Using Far

Far is the hidden body's ability to sense and act over distances, understand other minds, or make predictions.

Use Far any time you are trying to empathize with others as well as understand or interact with things outside of your reach. This includes ranged combat, athletic activities that involve situational awareness, good aim, or predicting opponents, a wide range of social activities that involve understanding what others may be thinking, and mental activities that involve an eye for details or making plans for the future.

Challenges

Typically you can just describe what your character does in any situation. However, if an action you take involves risk or exertion, or external events expose you to risk, it needs to be resolved as a **Challenge**.

Steps to Resolve Challenges

1. The GM decides the Difficulty and the Complications of the Challenge.
2. The player chooses a pair of Metabolisms to use.
3. The player tries to adjust Complications.
4. Count how much Progress was produced.
6. Compare the Progress to the Difficulty to determine the results.

Challenges may sometimes have **Complications** applied to them that remove or modify these steps. For example, certain Challenges may require you to roll dice or spend Metabolism points when you are counting **Progress**. You can also **Take Time** to do a Challenge carefully in order to remove these Complications, or **Push Themselves** in order to attempt things that are more difficult than they could do otherwise.

Difficulty and Context

The game master will set a **Difficulty** number for the Challenge. This is the target number the player must match or beat to succeed at the Challenge.

Difficulty Scales

- 0 - 3** Anyone can reliably do this if there are no complications.
- 3 - 6** Experts can reliably do this, others need extra effort and luck.
- 6 - 12** Even experts need extra effort and luck to do this, it's practically impossible for others.
- 12 - 18** Superhuman ability is required, but still appears plausibly normal to witnesses.
- 18 - 36** Even with superhuman ability, extra effort and luck are needed. The attempt appears overtly supernatural to witnesses.

In addition to the Difficulty, the GM should describe any additional context related to the Challenge by answering the following questions:

Are any metabolisms ill suited to the Challenge? If so,

the Difficulty can be increased by 1 if these are used.

Is there any urgency to the Challenge or consequences if you Take Time with it?

Do any Complications apply to the Challenge?

What are the consequences for failure?

When communicating this context to the players, it is filtered through what the character would be aware of. Often, a player can know the exact Difficulty number. However, depending on the situation and what the character can perceive, you may only get hints at the other parts of the context.

Metabolism Pairing

While the GM sets a Difficulty, the player chooses a pairing of one physical and one hidden Metabolism to use. You may omit one half of the pairing if you don't have appropriate Metabolisms available. For example, starting characters often do not have any hidden Metabolisms, so they would choose only a physical one.

Most Challenges can potentially be accomplished with many different metabolisms pairings, you just have to describe how your character is handling the situation in a way that applies them. The game master has the final say over whether a description is sufficient to justify the chosen metabolisms.

Sometimes, often in combat, a Challenge will require a specific choice for one or both metabolisms. For example, to throw a punch, you must use Fight and Self, and to dodge a bullet you must use Flight and Far.

Metabolism Pairing Example

Your character is trying to sneak into a secure building, so you need to choose what Metabolism pairing you will use to attempt this Challenge.

One pairing you could choose is Flight, to represent how you are moving quickly to avoid your pursuers, and Far to represent that you are trying to maintain awareness of the guard's movements to avoid getting too close.



Alternatively, you could choose Focus, to represent watching closely for any security cameras, paired with Near, to represent how you are carefully interacting with your environment to remain silent.



Counting Progress

To succeed at a Challenge, the player must create an amount of **Progress** equal to or greater than the Difficulty. In basic Challenges with no Complications, the Progress created is equal to the sum of the current values of your paired Metabolisms. Use the current value of Metabolisms, not the maximum. **Complications** can change the way you count Progress, potentially requiring you to buy or roll dice to gain Progress.

Spending Metabolisms

Your metabolisms are a resource with a current and a maximum value. The maximum value is typically equal to the metabolism's score, but it can be reduced by **Stress**. The current value is reduced by 1 after any time a metabolism is used in the pairing for a challenge.

Certain challenges may have negative **Complications** that force you to spend metabolism points faster, or positive ones that can restore a portion of a metabolism's current value. The only way to fully restore all metabolisms to their maximum is by resting for an hour or by **Pushing Yourself** during a challenge.

Creating Progress & Spending Metabolisms Example

1. You choose the pairing of Fight and Self for a basic Challenge. You were already missing a point of Fight from past events.

Fight  Self 

2. Add your current 2 points of Fight to your current 1 point of Self, creating a sum of 3 Progress.



3. You just used Fight and Self, so you must deduct a point from each.

Fight  Self 

4. Later you take an hour to rest, refilling both.

Fight  Self 

Stress

Wear and tear accumulated from exertion and conflict is referred to as **Stress**. Stress can be caused by the consequences of Challenges that have certain **Complications**, enduring a hardship, or by getting attacked in combat. When you take Stress, choose how to distribute the Stress between all affected metabolisms. Typically, the pair of Metabolisms involved in the current Challenge are the ones affected.

For each point of Stress a Metabolism takes, reduce its maximum value by 1. If something, such as rest or healing, causes you to remove a point of Stress from a Metabolism, restore its maximum to 1 point closer to the Metabolism's value.

Depleted Metabolisms

To stay effective, you'll want to remove avoid negative Complications and other sources of Stress as often as possible. However, things aren't over when a Metabolism is empty. Even when you have no more points remaining in a metabolism pairing, you can still treat any Challenge that uses it as if you spent a single point on it, but when you do so the action gains the Risky complication if it didn't have it already.

Recovery

The primary way to restore maximum Metabolisms that have been reduced by Stress is resting. Any time you sleep for several hours, no more than once per day, you recover from Stress. Remove all Stress from all Hidden Metabolisms and remove 1 Stress from all Physical Metabolism. Then refill the current value of all Metabolisms to their new maximums.

Stress and Recovery Example

1. You have your 4/4 Focus and 1/3 Near paired for a basic Challenge.

Focus  Near 

2. This creates 5 Progress and you must deduct a point from both metabolisms.

Focus  Near 

3. During this Challenge you fall and get hurt badly, causing 5 Stress split between this pairing. You choose put 3 Stress on Focus and the remaining 2 to Near.

Focus   Near  

4. Later, you can rest for an hour to fully refill all your metabolisms, but with their maximums are lowered by Stress.

Focus   Near  

5. That night you sleep normally, removing all hidden Stress and 1 point of physical Stress on all metabolisms. All the current values are filled to the new maximum.

Focus   Near  

Complications

When setting the difficulty of a Challenge, the GM may also add any combination of **Complications** to it. Some complications are negative and make things more difficult or costly, while some are positive and make give you more ways to succeed or recover.

The GM sets the initial Complications, but you can try to add or remove them. There are three ways to do this, and each way allows you to pick a Complication to add or remove. You can potentially apply all three methods to adjust the complications three times, but each method can only be applied to a single Challenge once.

The three methods are, **Applying a Trait**, **Taking Time**, and **Finding an Advantage**.

Applying Traits

If you have one or more **Traits** that are relevant to the Challenge, you can add or remove one complication. Traits are relevant if they can somehow be leveraged to assist with the Challenge. For example, a Trait called Medical Training would be relevant in a Challenge treating injuries. Players and GMs are encouraged to be creative and flexible when deciding if Traits are relevant.

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treating injuries. Players and GMs are encouraged to be creative and flexible when deciding if Traits are relevant.

Taking Time

You can attempt to **Take Time** on a Challenge to add or remove one complication. This represents taking things slowly and carefully or preparing for them in advance. Normally, a Challenge is completed as soon as possible, but when you Take Time, things take longer. This at least doubles the normal time the it would have taken, with a minimum of adding a few minutes.

You have the option to Take Time on all Challenges, but it can be dangerous. The GM will describe the urgency of the situation and if you are aware of any potential consequences of finishing too slowly. For example, you could be interrupted, draw unwanted attention, or even make the Challenge fail entirely.

Finding Advantages

If you have useful help, distracted opponents, just the right tool for the job, the element of surprise, or otherwise can act from a privileged position, you have an advantage. Having one or more advantages lets you add or remove one Complication. It is not always possible to find an advantage, the GM has the final say if your approach can plausibly change the Complications the way you intend them to.

Positive Complications

Controlled

You can choose how to plan this task to reliably bring your best efforts to this task. You may select another metabolism to use in addition to your chosen pairing.

Relaxed

This task is refreshing or allows you do it at your own pace. Instead of deducting 1 point from all involved metabolisms like usual, this task is free. Relaxed is the opposite of Strenuous, a Challenge cannot be both.

Satisfying

This task involves a big milestone, built in rewards, or one of your character's interests. If you succeed, choose a metabolism that was not used on this task. This metabolism regains a number of points equal to the amount of Progress you created.

Negative Complications

Risky

Something physical, competitive, or chaotic, even the best could still fail. Each point of Progress that would normally be created instead grants you one die to roll with a chance of creating Progress or **Consequences**.

Strenuous

This requires physical or mental effort. Instead of spending 1 point from each Metabolism to create full Progress, you need to spend any combination of points from your Metabolism pair. The Progress created is equal to the number of points spent.

Stressful

The mind or body are strained by this task. Regardless of success or failure, this will cause a point of Stress to your Metabolism pair.

Rolling Dice

Dice are only needed if a Challenge is Risky. Replace each point of Progress that would have been created for this challenge with a six sided die, and then roll these dice. Each die that has a result of 4 or greater increases the Progress by one. Any die that comes up 6 gets rerolled, potentially increasing Progress further or even coming up 6 again and getting rerolled again.

Consequences

Be careful with Risky Challenges, they can cause extra **Consequences**. If you roll 0 Progress your failure is especially bad and causes a Consequence. Also, if your Progress is equal to the Difficulty you must choose if you simply fail the challenge, or if you succeed at the cost of causing a Consequence. When causing a Consequence, choose a Metabolism in your pairing to take a point of **Stress**, and the GM will describe an additional problem that was caused by the Challenge. Consequences only occur when there is a set Difficulty number. They don't occur when comparing one's action reaction, such as when attacking and defending in combat.

Pushing Yourself

If you are unable to get as much Progress as you need to succeed at a Challenge, you can **Push Yourself** to give an extra effort. Doing so immediately refills all of your metabolism pools, and gives you a second chance to spend more of them on the Challenge. You must spend at least one additional point when you do this.

This allows you to spend up to double what your metabolisms would normally allow, however, it comes with some risks. First, it makes the action Risky if it wasn't already: you need roll dice to get any additional Progress and the chance exists to cause consequences if you roll poorly. If the Challenge was already Risky when you Push Yourself, it also becomes Stressful.

You must decide to Push Yourself after you've finalized Complications, counted your initial Progress, and then failed. Therefore, the extra Complications created by Pushing Yourself can never be removed, and you can't Push Yourself just for the sake of restoring your Metabolisms.

Complications & Dice Example

You're trying to sneak into a building. Because it is a secure area with big consequences for being caught, the GM decides the Challenge is Risky, Strenuous, and Stressful and has a difficulty of 4. You Take Time by carefully scouting the area before proceeding, so you can adjust the Complications. You choose to remove Stressful, so you won't take Stress just for attempting it.

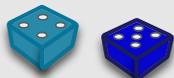
1. First choose your metabolisms. You choose Focus to represent being careful and Far to represent that you are trying to keep close track of your pursuer's movements without getting close to them.

2. Because it's Strenuous you need to buy your Progress. You choose to spend 3 Focus and 1 Far. Because it's Risky this buys you 4 dice to roll instead of 4 Progress.

3. You roll 2, 4, 6, and 6. Three of those are 4 or better, so that's 3 points of Progress.



4. You reroll both 6's, getting a 4 and a 5. That's two dice that are 4 or above, so your Progress increases to 5.



5. You beat the difficulty! You succeed and get into the building undetected.

Pushing Yourself Example

1. In a Strenuous Challenge with a Difficulty of 4, your Metabolism pairing has 2 points remaining.



2. You spend those last points to create 2 Progress. But it's not enough!



3. Push Yourself to refill all Metabolisms.



4. You can now add more to the Challenge. You spend 3 more, but they now buy dice because Pushing Yourself makes Challenge Risky. You roll 1, 4, and 5, adding 2 Progress.

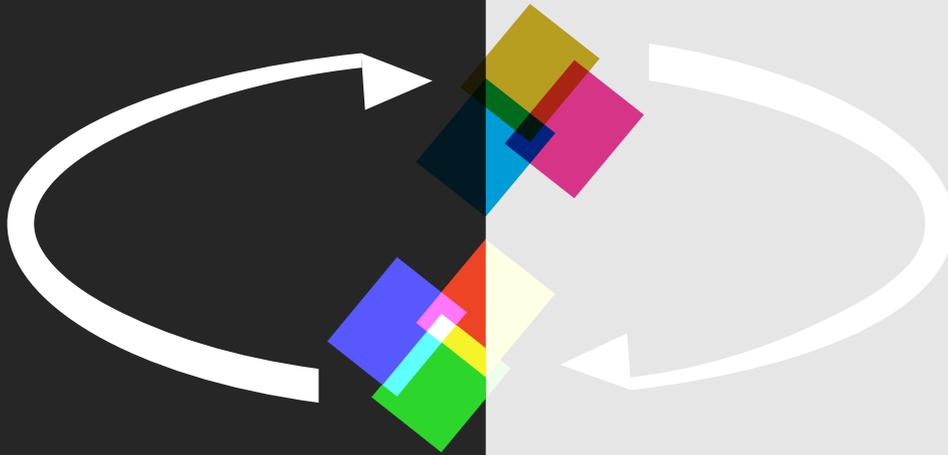


5. You've created 4 total Progress. Because the Challenge became Risky and you only tied the Difficulty, you can now only succeed by causing a Consequence. When you do, you take a point of Stress.



Combat

In combat, the game slows down into turns to follow the action. Fights are difficult and lethal for normal people, but access to Hidden Metabolisms changes this. The primitive parts of the brain stem that mediate the connection to the Hidden body are the same as those that manage autonomic processes like breathing and heart rate. Once you've gotten the feel for this connection, stressful situations often take on a rhythm: Inhale, allocate, Exhale, execute. Because of this rhythm, you have two actions each time it's your turn.



Inhale Action

First, take an inhale action. This can be any normal action, but with one requirement, you must spend more Hidden Metabolism points on this action than Physical. This means normal people don't have access to this action. However, after you've spent some experience you'll be able to use this to act twice as often as normal.

Exhale Action

Second, take an exhale action. Similarly, the exhale action can be any normal action, but you must spend more Physical Metabolism points on it than Hidden. This is the only action normal people have access to. As a starting character, you'll likely be spending all of your metabolism points on making this action effective.

Full Action

Occasionally, some actions demand enough from you that they consume both of your actions. Things like a full sprint or swinging an oversized weapon are full actions. There are no requirements on what you can spend on these.

Combat

The first step of combat is determining who has the **initiative**. Everyone involved must make a Risky and Strenuous Challenge that requires **Focus**. Turns start from the highest result on this Challenge and continue to the lowest result.

Determining initiative is the moment adrenaline kicks your body into high gear, causing your metabolisms to start regenerating more quickly. Until the end of combat, things are moving too fast to Take Time and you can't Push Yourself because you're already acting at your limits. Almost every action in combat involves a Strenuous Challenge, so you will be spending Metabolism points every turn you do something.

Combat Rounds

At the start of each round, regain half of all of your used Metabolism points. Then, in turn order, everyone takes their turn doing an inhale and an exhale action. After everyone has taken or passed their turn, return to the start of the order and everyone can take further turns.

You can always pass your turn. Each time you pass your entire turn, you can regain 1 extra point of any Metabolism at the start of the next round. Once a cycle passes in which everyone has passed or taken a turn where they spent no Metabolism points, the round ends and a new one starts.

Combat Round Example

In a combat where you start with 6 **Fight** and are leading the initiative, followed by an enemy, and finally your ally, the round flows like this. In this example, no one has any Hidden Metabolisms available, so only **Fight** is used to attack.

At the start of the round, everyone regains half their used Metabolism points.

1. You use 3 **Fight** on attacks. 3 **Fight** is left.
2. The enemy spends most of their **Fight**.
3. Your ally spends all **Fight** on a big move.

Points were spent this cycle, so it repeats.

4. You use 2 **Fight** to attack again. 1 is left.
5. The enemy does a small 1 **Fight** attack.
6. With no **Fight** left, your ally passes.

Points were spent this cycle, so it repeats.

7. You pass, saving the last 1 **Fight** for later.
8. The enemy makes a **Desperate Attack**.
9. Your ally passes again.

No points were spent this cycle, so a new round begins. Everyone regains half their used Metabolism points, you get an extra point for passing once, your ally gets two extra points for passing twice.

Attacks

Attacking someone is a Risky and Strenuous Challenge that always requires the **Fight** Metabolism. The attack used determines which Hidden Metabolism is required; **Self** for unarmed strikes, **Near** for melee attacks, and **Far** for ranged attacks.

Each point of Progress that you get on an attack Challenge inflicts a point of **Threat** to the target.

Like any other Challenge, when the Metabolism pairing needed for your attack is empty, you can still roll 1 die to it. This is known as a **Desperate Attack**, and it is a **Double Action** that consumes both your inhale and exhale action. Because you spend nothing on this attack, the round will end if no one else spends any Metabolism points this cycle.

Example Attacks

Your inhale action must use more Hidden points, so you spend 3/3 **Far** and 1/4 **Fight** to fire a ranged weapon. Your 4 dice create a total of 3 threat.



Your exhale action must use more Physical points, so you spend the rest of your **Fight** and 2/2 **Self** to kick an adjacent enemy. Your 5 dice create 2 Threat.



You're left with no useful Metabolism points when your turn comes around again this round, so you make a desperate attack that rolls 1 die that creates 1 Threat.



Reactions

When attacked, you can react outside of your turn to reduce the Threat you take. To do so, do a Strenuous, but not Risky, Challenge that requires the pairing of **Flight** and the same Hidden metabolism used by the attack. Each point of Progress lowers the Threat by one. Any remaining Threat becomes Stress that you must split up between the involved metabolisms. You decide how to distribute this Stress, perhaps putting all on one Metabolism or splitting it evenly between both.

Because reactions often use **Flight**, your current **Flight** is a good indicator of how much Threat you can handle this round, and your maximum Flight is a good indicator of how much Stress you can take in combat before an injury takes you out of the fight.

Injury

If any metabolism has its maximum reduced to zero, you are injured. If **Fight** is injured, you cannot attack. If **Flight** is injured, you cannot take an action to move. If **Focus** is injured, you are unconscious. You cannot attempt a Stressful challenge or Push Yourself if an injured Metabolism is part of the pairing.

If you take further Stress on an injured metabolism its maximum can be reduced below 0. If the maximum ever reaches the negative of the metabolism's value, then your character dies.

Dissociation

Similar to Physical Metabolisms, if a Hidden one has its maximum reduced to 0, it sustains something similar to an injury called **Dissociation**.

Dissociation causes the brain to come out of sync or lose contact with resources it normally has available, causing strange and dangerous mental effects. If **Self** dissociates, the body seems separate and unreal, as if it were a machine you are awkwardly piloting. If **Near** dissociates, your surroundings seem distant and unreal as if you are passing right through them. If **Far** dissociates, you can no longer recognize identities and everyone feels like an enemy.

Unlike physical Metabolisms, having a hidden Metabolism's maximum reduced to the negative of its value isn't necessarily lethal, but it may often cause partial or total unconsciousness. Whatever form this takes, it always prevents you from acting meaningfully in combat due to terrifying and bizarre mental consequences. If this happens your fate is now at the mercy of the game master until you are healed.

Reactions & Injury Example

You were attacked with a melee weapon for 5 Threat. You must respond with your Flight + Near pairing.



You spend 2/3 Flight and 1/1 Near, a total of 3 points.



This reduces the Threat from 5 to 2, so you take 2 Stress. You decide to put all of it in Flight to avoid Dissociation.



Another attack does 2 Threat, you spend your last **Flight** to reduce it to 1. You decide to take avoid injury by taking this Stress to **Near**, which brings its maximum to 0 and dissociates you.



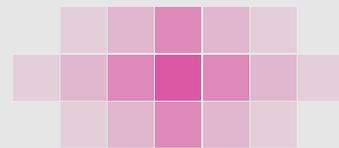
Movement

Any time you spend at least 1 point of metabolism on an action or reaction in combat, you get a meter of free movement before or after it. For actions, this movement can occur before or after the action, but for reactions it always occurs after the action and reaction are resolved.

For any additional movement, you need to take a separate action. Spend any combination of points from all Metabolisms to move that number of meters.

Grids

For clarity, all distances are referred to in meters. A grid map of one meter squares or hexes can be helpful to visualize chaotic situations, but it is not strictly necessary.



Consider using square grids for indoor or urban environments.



Consider using hex grids for outdoor, open, or organic environments.



Consider just using your imagination for simple combats.

Challenge Modifications in Combat

Metabolism pairings and Complications are more strict in combat than outside of it. The pairings of most combat actions are required instead of being chosen. Also, because of the urgency and exertion of combat, **Taking Time** or **Pushing Yourself** are both impossible.

The two remaining ways of modifying a Challenge, **Applying a Trait** or **Finding an Advantage**, are possible in combat, however they are limited due to the speed and chaos of the situation. Each of these two methods can only be applied a single time per round.

Combat Equipment

Armor

All armor has a Defense value. Each point of **Defense** on worn armor reduces Threat by 1 on all incoming attacks. Armor with Defense 1 can be concealed under or worn as casual clothing. Armor with Defense 3 reduces the maximum value of all metabolisms it protects by 1.

Types of Armor

Armor with **Defense** 1 can be concealed under or worn as casual clothing. Armor with **Defense** 3 reduces the maximum value of all metabolisms it protects by 1.

Defense	Examples
1	Kevlar, leather
2	Light tactical armor, riot gear
3	Heavy infantry armor with trauma plates

Weapons

What you choose to attack with determines what metabolisms are used to attack and defend. In general all attacks require **Fight**, and all reactions require **Flight**, unarmed combat uses **Self**, melee weapons use **Near**, and ranged weapons use **Far**.

Each weapon has a **Size** value. This number indicates the amount of extra Threat added to attack roll results. It also indicates the minimum amount of Metabolism that must be spent to attack with the weapon. Size 1 can be concealed in casual clothing, Size 2 cannot, and Size 3 or above requires both hands. Any weapon above Size 3 requires a full action to use and deals an extra point of Stress that cannot be removed by a reaction.

If it is your first turn in a round and your weapon requires more points to use than you have available in the required metabolism pairing, you can spend all of the points in that pairing to still use this weapon as a Double Action.

Types of Weapons

Each category of weapons has a special property common to all similar weapons.

Unarmed

Because unarmed strikes are typically weaker than weapons, the defender's reaction has the Controlled complication.

Size	Examples
1	Punch, kick, elbow, etc.

Blunt

When using blunt weapons the attacker can choose to force the target to react with **Focus** instead of **Flight**.

Size	Examples
1	Night stick
2	Small hammer, pool cue
3	Baseball bat
4*	Sledge hammer

Blades

All blades deal 1 extra **Threat** above what their **Size** normally would.

Size	Examples
1	Kitchen knife, hunting knife, box cutter
2	Machete, hand axe, mall ninja gear
3	Fire axe, katana
4*	Great sword

Ranged

Ranged weapons can target anything within your line of sight.

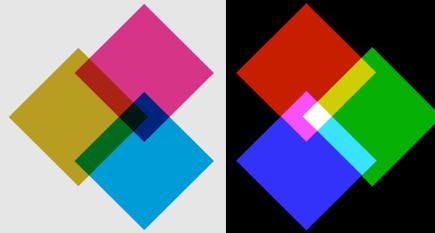
Size	Examples
1	9mm handgun
2	Heavy magnum revolver, small SMG
3	Rifle, shotgun
4*	Assault rifle
5*	Light machine gun

CHARACTER GROWTH

The Physical Metabolisms you start the game with are almost set in stone, only improving slowly with great effort. They're unlikely to see more than minor growth over the long term.

Conversely, your Hidden metabolisms may all start at 0 but they will grow quickly as you learn to more deeply connect the physical and hidden bodies.

The experience you gain from adventuring is used to buy Entanglements that improve your abilities. Entanglements are clustered into groups called Styles. There is an Intuitive Style and an Esoteric Style for each Metabolism pairing.



The Intuitive Styles

Intuitive Styles represent archetypal approaches to problem solving and are named with adjectives that describe these approaches. They improve the existing capabilities of the body and mind.

The 9 Intuitive Styles

Strong Unarmed attacks, grappling, intimidation, and brute force.	Smooth Melee attacks, stealth, charm, finesse, and manual dexterity.	Sharp Ranged attacks, precision, critical hits, and deception.
Tough Unarmed defense, health, stamina, and regeneration.	Mobile Melee defense, agility, traversal, and movement speed.	Quick Ranged defense, wits, multitasking, tactics, and precognition.
Confident Will, courage, executive function, and Hidden Body defense.	Bright Intelligence, learning, creativity, and Hidden Body traversal.	Alert Awareness, empathy, social predictions, and Hidden Body offense.

The Esoteric Styles

Esoteric Styles represent more unusual approaches to solving the same problems. They provide new abilities the body is normally incapable of. They often appear overtly supernatural when used.

The 9 Esoteric Styles

Schizosmata Radically transform one's body or the way it is perceived.	Electromagnetism Control over the fundamental force of light or electricity.	Evocation Create overtly explosive and destructive blasts.
Sublimation Traverse hidden space intangibly and invisibly.	Gravitonertia Control over the fundamental force of mass and motion.	Pneumaplegia Make fields that manipulate motion and metabolisms.
Abjuration Create durable barriers, wards, and filters, and alarms.	Chromodynamism Control the fundamental force that binds atoms.	Telethesia Sense, communicate with, and manipulate other minds.

Entanglements

Entanglements represent a permanent connection between your physical and hidden bodies that you have learned to intuitively create. Controlling these connections allows you to utilize preternatural abilities beyond the normal range of the human body.

Entanglements can grant you increased Metabolisms, new skills, special abilities, and ways to manipulate the Metabolism economy. They can also allow you to utilize temporary, overtly supernatural powers called Cascade Events that directly channel the Cascade Effect into forces outside of the body.

In this play test document, the full details of each Entanglement beyond the core Entanglements has been omitted. When running a play test without these details, just treat each Entanglement as a special Trait instead. You can propose Challenges that require one of these special Traits in order to do things that would be impossible for a normal human.

Buying Entanglements

Each session, you will earn 1-3 experience points, or more if you accomplish goals or have a particularly dramatic session. All Entanglements have 3 ranks that can be purchased by spending Experience equal to the rank.

Core Entanglements

At the start, you only have access to is the 3 core Entanglements, one for each Hidden Metabolism. Each rank of these increases the related Metabolism by 1 and unlocks access to 2 Styles. Once unlocked, you can use experience to buy Entanglements within that Style.

These Entanglements grant fundamental abilities that enable adventuring. For example, **Empower** removes the long term consequences of injury, **Momentum** lets you practically guarantee success in critical moments, and **Danger Sense** reduces the threat posed by firearms.

Styles

All of the many Entanglements are divided into **Styles**. Think of each Style as a class or a cluster of related Entanglements. There is an Intuitive Style and an Esoteric Style for each Metabolism pairing. Each Intuitive Style represents an archetypal approach to problem solving, and each Esoteric Style represents an overtly supernatural power.

Increasing Metabolism Scores

Every Entanglement is associated with a Hidden Metabolism and that Metabolism's score increases by 1 as you acquire certain numbers of total Entanglement ranks within it. The amount of ranks required to improve the metabolism's score starts at 1, and then increases by 1 each time you get an improvement. So the second improvement requires 2 more ranks (for a total of 3 ranks is required) and the third improvement requires 3 more ranks (for a total of 6 ranks required). After the requirement reaches 9, you get an improvement every 9 additional ranks. If the improving metabolism score is 9, it can no longer improve. Instead choose any Physical metabolism to improve by 1.

Improving Metabolisms

Your first point in the Core Entanglement is enough to gain an improvement, but after that the additional ranks required increases by 1 each time.

Improvement	Total Ranks Required
1	1
2	3
3	6
4	10
5	15
6	21
7	28
8	36
9	45
More than 9	+9 each time (54, 63, 72, etc...)

Cascade Events

Some entanglements grant you the ability to induce cascade events. These events create temporary supernatural effects that are either instantaneous or last for a specified duration. Unless otherwise specified, inducing a cascade event is a full action that requires the Focus metabolism. If it targets you, it also requires Self. If it targets something you touch, it requires Near. If it targets anything else, it requires Far.

Some entanglements may specify that they require other metabolisms, other action types, or that they can only be used outside of combat.

The Self Entanglements

Control of the Self metabolism allows one to improve, support, repair, supply, and empower the natural capabilities of the physical body. Esoteric Self styles let you fully transform, protect, phase, or sublime the body. Unarmed combat comes naturally masters of Self.

Many Entanglements within the Self Styles grant ways to enter or make use of special state called **Empowered**. This state is a different experience for everyone, it may be felt as meditative focus, raw adrenaline, or driving rage, but regardless it allows one to push the body beyond its usual limits.

The core entanglement **Empower** allows you to gain access to any of the intuitive styles **Strong**, **Tough**, or **Confident** and any of the esoteric styles **Schizosomata**, **Sublimation**, or **Abjuration**.

Self Core Entanglement:

Empower

At each rank of this Entanglement, permanently increase your Self metabolism score by 1 and choose two Self Styles to unlock.

Rank 1

As a free action, you can spend 1 point of Self at the start of your turn to enter the **Empowered** state. This state lasts until the start of your next turn, and you cannot enter the state again on that turn. While in this state you can spend 1 Self to add an amount of Progress equal to your rank in this Entanglement to any attack or reaction.

Rank 2

When you sleep for several hours, remove all Stress from each uninjured Physical Metabolism and remove enough Stress from each injured Physical Metabolism to return its maximum to 0 and remove the injury.

Rank 3

When you sleep for several hours, remove all Stress, injuries, and dissociation.

Intuitive Self Styles

Strong

The intuitive pairing of Self and Fight. This style is focused on unarmed attacks, increased damage, grappling, forcing enemies into position, and using the Empowered state for feats of incredible strength. It contains the Entanglements **Adrenal Strength**, **Empower Grapple**, **Explosive Strength**, **Iron Grip**, **Lifting Capacity**, and **Unarmed Mastery**.

Tough

The intuitive pairing of Self and Flight. This style is focused on unarmed defense, resisting injury, and using the Empowered state to ignore damage. It contains the Entanglements **Endurance**, **Extropy**, **Regeneration**, **Resistance**, **Somatic Cache**, and **Stamina**.

Confident

The intuitive pairing of Self and Focus. This style is focused on willpower, inducing cascade events, avoiding the effects of dissociation, and resisting external influence. It contains the Entanglements **Bandwidth**, **Insulation**, **Motivation**, **Persistence**, **Rapid Healing**, and **Composure**.

Esoteric Self Styles

Schizosomata

The esoteric pairing of Self and Fight. Change your body, mimic others, be invisible or unmissable. This style contains the Entanglements **Fade**, **Mimic**, and **Shift**.

Sublimation

The esoteric pairing of Self and Flight. Leave physical space behind, explore deep hidden space, be intangible, blink away from combat. This style contains the Entanglements **Deep Traversal**, **Sublimed Storage**, and **Sublime Combat**.

Abjuration

The esoteric pairing of Self and Focus. Protect yourself and others, create impenetrable barriers, control access to an area. This style contains the Entanglements **Filter**, **Retrogradient**, and **Ward**.

The Near Entanglements

Control of the Near metabolism gives you master of your immediate surroundings; sensing, understanding, traversing, and manipulating them with speed and precision. The esoteric side of Near lets you use your comprehension the environment to manipulate the fundamental forces. Near lets you avoid and attack with melee weapons with incredible efficiency.

Many Entanglements within the Near Styles grant ways to gain and use a special resource called **Momentum**. This resource lets you keep moving and consistently build towards explosive successes.

The core entanglement **Momentum** allows you to gain access to any of the intuitive styles **Smooth**, **Mobile**, or **Bright** and any of the esoteric styles **Electromagnetism**, **Gravitonertia**, or **Chromodynamism**.

Near Core Entanglement:

Momentum

At each rank of this Entanglement, permanently increase your Near metabolism score by 1 and choose two Near Styles to unlock.

Rank 1

Any time you use an action to move, you gain a point of **Momentum**. You can spend a point of Momentum when you use a reaction in order to increase the reaction's free movement from 1 meter to 2.

Many Near Styles grant additional ways to gain or use Momentum.

Rank 2

During any non-combat Challenge that is not using Focus, you can take a point of Stress to Near in order to add Focus as a third Metabolism to your pairing.

Rank 3

You can spend a point of Momentum when you attack or use a reaction to increase the free movement from 1 meter to 3.

Intuitive Near Styles

Smooth

The intuitive pairing of Near and Fight. This style is focused on melee attacks, consistent damage, attacking often, parrying, and keeping opponents at arm's length. It contains the Entanglements **Ambidexterity**, **Deft Combat**, **Melee Mastery**, **Silence**, **Weapon Finesse**, and **Zone of Denial**.

Mobile

This style is focused on moving fast, evading attacks, mastering terrain, making the most of reactions, and getting into the right position. It contains the Entanglements **Active Defense**, **Charge**, **Dash**, **Evasion**, **Speed**, and **Traversal**.

Bright

This style is focused on making connections, finding patterns, and gaining deep understanding. It contains the Entanglements **Analyze Cascade**, **Deduction**, **Expertise**, **Episemiotics**, **Healing Field**, and **Polymath**.

Esoteric Near Styles

Electromagnetism

The pairing of Near and Fight. Manipulate light, electricity, and magnetism. It contains the Entanglements **Modulate Waveform**, **Redirect Waveform**, and **Transmute Waveform**.

Gravitonertia

The pairing of Near and Flight. Control mass and momentum, levitate objects, throw projectiles with your mind. It contains the Entanglements **Alter Mass**, **Redirect Momenta**, and **Telekinesis**.

Chromodynamism

The pairing of Near and Focus. Create, destroy, or transform matter, use rapid decay as a weapon. It contains the Entanglements **Condense Matter**, **Entropic Combat**, and **Transmute Matter**.

The Far Entanglements

Control of the Far metabolism grants one heightened senses, sharp wits, great predictive power, and an empathic sense of other minds. Perfect aim and tactical predictions makes Far styles deadly in ranged combat.

Many Entanglements within the Far Styles let you use rolled 6s in more ways than just rerolling them. This allows you to make the most of your successes or move success to a more critical moment.

The core entanglement **Danger Sense** allows you to gain access to any of the intuitive styles **Sharp**, **Quick**, or **Aware** and any of the esoteric styles **Evocation**, **Pneumaplegia**, or **Telethesia**.

Self Core Entanglement:

Danger Sense

At each rank of this Entanglement, permanently increase your Far metabolism score by 1 and choose two Far Styles to unlock.

Rank 1

In a reaction to a ranged attack, the first point of Far you spend produces an extra amount of Progress equal to your rank in this Entanglement.

Rank 2

Any time you use a Risky action to take cover or hide, when a die rolled comes up as a 6 you can skip rerolling it to select a target that can now no longer target you with attacks until you or the target move more than a meter.

Rank 3

In any attack you make, when a die rolled comes up as a 6 you can skip rerolling it now in order to add 2 extra dice to the next attack you make or 2 extra Progress to the next reaction you make.

Intuitive Far Styles

Sharp

The pairing of Fight and Far. This style is focused on ranged attacks, sudden damage, piercing defenses, and social manipulation. It contains the Entanglements **Critical**, **Manipulate**, **Pierce**, **Precision**, **Ranged Mastery**, and **Stealth Strike**.

Quick

The pairing of Flight and Far. This style is focused on thinking fast, acting first, making predictions, dodging bullets, and tactical mastery. It contains the Entanglements **Multitask**, **Precognition**, **Predictive Tactics**, **Priority**, **Ranged Mastery**, and **Team Tactics**.

Aware

The pairing of Focus and Far. This style is focused on additional senses, situational awareness, insight, social modeling, and empathy. It contains the Entanglements **Chromaception**, **Compelled Target**, **Detect Sensorium**, **Disentangle**, **Distant Healing**, and **Situational Awareness**.

Esoteric Far Styles

Evocation

The pairing of Fight and Far. Attack enemies with explosive bursts of raw energy. It contains the Entanglements **Annihilate**, **Blast Radius**, and **Combat Evocation**.

Pneumaplegia

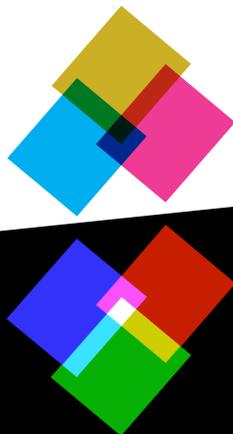
The pairing of Flight and Far. Create areas that slow, stun, or otherwise manipulate their occupants. It contains the Entanglements **Chronoplegia**, **Halting Field**, and **Hastening Field**.

Telethesia

The pairing of Focus and Far. Sense and influence at a distance or in other minds. It contains the Entanglements **Clairvoyance**, **Suggestion**, and **Telepathy**.

CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

The following section is classified. It is intended for current and aspiring Game Masters for a Cascade Effect story. If you are a player, don't read further unless your GM tells you that your game uses an optional rule from this section or that there is a classified keyword your character is familiar with, or if you just want to read spoilers.



Starting the Game

Before diving into a Cascade Effect campaign, it is worthwhile to have a "session 0" to discuss what the game will include. Important things to come to agreement on include the game's focus, themes, starting point, safety, and optional rules.

Is the focus of your game going to be action and adventure, role-playing political intrigue, solving supernatural mysteries, surviving horror, superhuman power fantasy, exploring sci-fi concepts, or tactical combat? Or a mix of several of these?

What themes will your game feature or exclude? Topics often explored in Cascade Effect campaigns include climate anxiety, unexplained phenomena, rebellion and revolution, classified secrets, conspiracies, collapse of society or the ecosystem, transhumanism, inhuman entities, corrupted systems, and counterculture movements. However, your game should reflect your group's interests first and foremost.

A common element in Cascade Effect campaigns is the process of earning experience points creating a superhuman growth story arc. Decide together where your group starts on this arc and how fast to progress through it. Will you start with the origin stories of normal humans, or will characters already have some superhuman abilities and know some secret information? How fast will characters gain experience?

Cascade Effect games should feel welcoming to every player, regardless of background, nationality, race, orientation, or gender identity. It's important to decide what safety rules your game will include. Are any topics off limits? Will you use any safety tools such as X-cards or other tools you can find online?

Finally, will your game include any optional rules? The following section describes two optional rules you can include to further customize characters.

Optional Rules

If you wish to customize characters further, your game can use the optional **Axiom** or **Secret Origin** rules. Both increase the complexity of characters and are things that not everyone may want, so they are kept optional.

Secret Origins

During character creation each character is given a physical and a hidden origin. If your game includes Secret Origins, characters may instead choose a secret origin that replaces one or both of the typical origins.

Secret Origins are described throughout this chapter. Each setting section includes a Secret Origin option.

Axioms

Axioms are specific beliefs that characters have about how their powers work. These are often part of a complex belief system. If your game includes Axioms, a character can start with an Axiom or maybe learn one during the game if they meet a mentor or have some sort of epiphany.

The next page contains a list of all available Axioms.

Setting Details

The rest of this chapter describes the hidden elements of the setting.

The characters are familiar with all of the mundane aspects of the world, but there are many secret topics they may not be aware of. Characters typically learn some of this information throughout the story, however if they are already familiar with some of it you may want to share a section with them.

List of Axioms

Axioms are an optional rule. If your game includes them, there are nine that a character can adopt. Each grants access to two unique Entanglements that are otherwise unavailable. For this playtest these Entanglements are not described, instead just treat them as special Traits that allow superhuman abilities.

Martial Focus

Discipline of one's body and mind leads to true wisdom.

If one is to understand the world, one must first understand one's own self. Through the simple practices of meditation, physical drills, sparring, exercise, and study, you can find the true limits of your body, mind, and spirit, and then transcend them. Those with this axiom often have the perception that through discipline, mindfulness, and rote mastery, the mind can overcome matter. If you adopt this axiom, you can learn the Entanglements **Rote Combat** and **Pressure Point**.

Crisis Paradigm

All phenomena arise from balance.

The world and humanity are the emergent phenomena generated by the metastable systems of nature. These systems are balanced on the razor's edge where a small nudge will cause a violent collapse. Your abilities are best understood as a precarious balance, a system in a carefully maintained crisis. By precisely releasing the tension of this small crisis your Entanglements become manifest. If you can find serenity in this balance, you can maintain the metastability to temporarily amass greater reserves of energy, or hasten its collapse to cause destruction. If you adopt this axiom, you can learn the Entanglements **Collapse Crisis** and **Reverberation**.

Umbral Animism

The world is full of beings that are beyond human understanding.

Whether you call them spirits, ghosts, angels, demons, or Yau-body entities, these beings surround us, just beyond the reach of our senses. Your abilities depend on communing with these hidden minds and harnessing the subtle ways they can influence the material world. If you adopt this axiom, you can learn the Entanglements **Commune** and **Familiar**.

Holistic Context

All your surroundings are a single natural system.

Whether you believe in a single universal wave-function or that the world is a single living organism, it's all one system and you are one part of it. The diffuse bounds of your Yau Body give you a sense of oneness with your surroundings. Your styles become manifest when you become one with your surroundings and engage their latent potential. If you adopt this axiom, you can learn the Entanglements **Terrain Privilege** or **Habituate**.

Paracosmic Flow

Every decision or random event creates a new worldline.

The world you occupy is one of many, maybe infinitely many, worldlines radiating outward from the big bang,

branching with every tiny event. While your physical body is tied to that world, your Yau Body isn't. With great skill one can slip from your physical body in one world and into it in another. By strategically choosing the best worldline, you can manifest the implausible. If you adopt this axiom, you can learn the Entanglements **Control Probability** or **Many-worlds Combat**.

Universal Algorithm

The universe is little more than software.

Whether you believe space is a naturally quantized hologram or that reality is an artificial simulation, you know that the world you live in has a finite resolution and frame rate. The entire universe can be perfectly described by a single algorithm. Your powers arise from knowing that you can exploit the gaps, edge-cases, and bugs in this algorithm. If you adopt this axiom, you can learn the Entanglements **Frame Manipulation** or **Pilot-wave Transit**.

Gnostic Praxis

Rote and ritual can imbue any practice with meaning and power.

Regardless of whether your rituals honor ancient deities, harness forgotten lore, entreat cosmic entities, or are your own invention, they give your world meaning and breathe life into your styles. To you, spending entanglement is just utilizing the power of your ritualistic practices. If you adopt this axiom, you can learn the Entanglements **Prepared Arcana** or **Intensifying Ritual**.

Empirical Theory

The universe is fundamentally knowable.

Through observation and falsifiable predictions, even the most mysterious phenomena can be understood. Your powers are predicted by Orthodynamic Field Theory, and are best described as manipulating your Yau-body entanglement to induce a cascade of free energy. If you adopt this axiom, you can learn the Entanglements **Embed Function** and **Embed Interface**.

Consensus Praxis

Belief shapes all of reality.

The world is little more than the ontological consensus of the beliefs of its inhabitants. Because of this, the universe is exactly as mutable as society is manipulatable. Your powers arise from the knowledge that changing minds, including your own if you truly believe, changes reality. If you adopt this axiom, you can learn the Entanglements **Influence** and **Illusion**.

Infraspaces and Ultraspace

Executive Summary

- There are numerous phenomena unexplainable by the standard model of physics.
- The primary cause behind all of these is that space is divided into two thermodynamically separate regimes, Infraspaces and Ultraspace.
- Ultraspace creates all of the quotidian materials we're all familiar with on Earth and observable throughout the cosmos. This is often referred to as physical space.
- Conversely, infraspaces is difficult to detect or interact with. It is invisible and intangible to most conventional sciences, and is therefore typically referred to as hidden space.
- Biology has evolved to utilize infraspaces. Most vertebrates have an infraspacial "hidden body" organ mirroring the brain. The human hidden body is a necessary component of executing the algorithm of consciousness.
- Sustained interaction between these normally separated realms of space can unleash free energy. This is the primary energy source for previously unexplained phenomena.
- Our native pairing of physical and hidden spaces creates a single continuity, referred to as a worldline. Infinite slightly different worldlines radiate outwards from the big bang.
- The deepest reaches of each hidden space blend with those of its neighbors. These mixed regions create the possibility of trans-stygian interactions, transferring information, energy, or matter between worldlines.

Orthodynamic Field Theory

Content redacted. CONTEXT SHANNON level security clearance required.

Infraspacial Phenomena

Content redacted. CONTEXT SHANNON level security clearance required.

Trans-Yau Interactions

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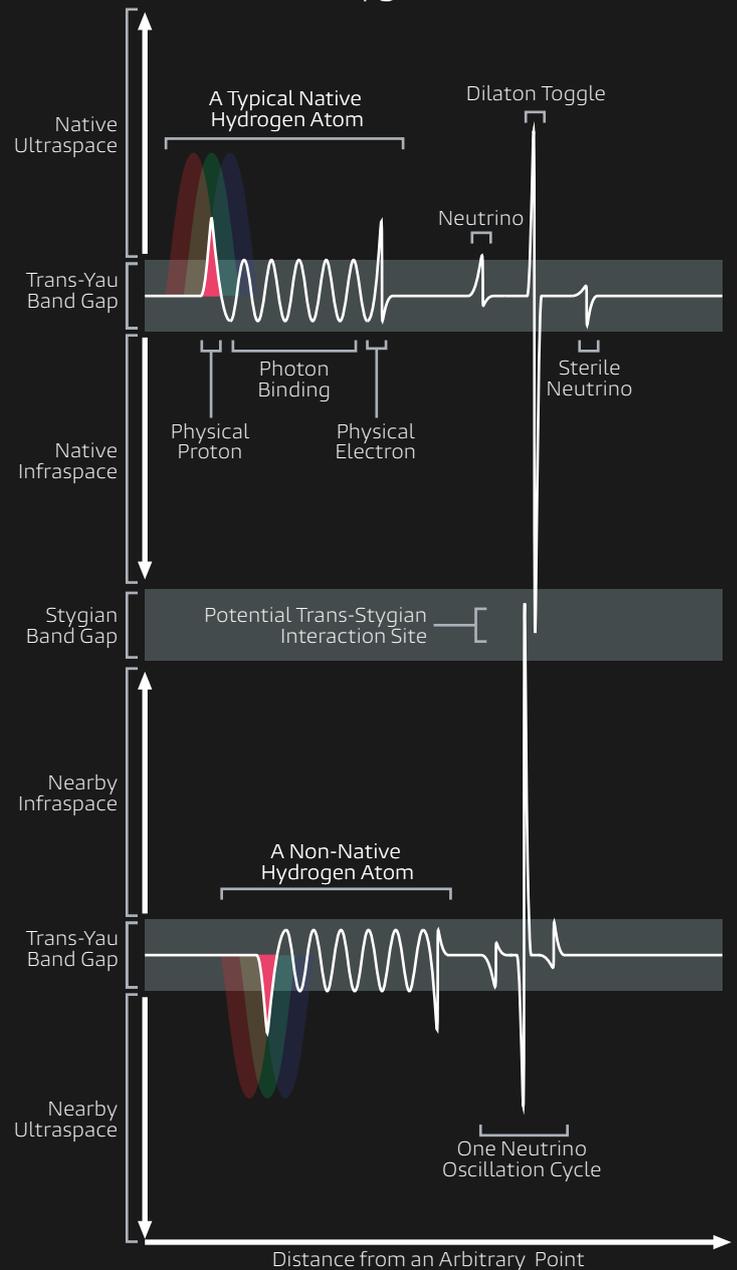
What is the Cascade Effect?

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Trans-Stygian Interactions

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Excitations of the Electroweak Field in a Trans-Stygian Context



Secret Origin: In the Know

Physical Origin

You know something most people don't. Something you maybe shouldn't.

- ◇ Gain a trait representing a field of secret or occult knowledge. This can include knowledge of one of the classified sections of this chapter.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing your contact with a person or organization that works with secrets.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing a career, hobby, or skill that helps you research or get in contact with the secret world.

Applied Cascade Effects In Vivo

Executive Summary

- An estimated ~0.05% of people have some degree of control over their connection to infraspace.
- There is no known way to train a person to establish this control. However, after someone happens gains awareness of it, the connection can be improved.
- This connection can be harnessed to modify one's hidden body or induce the Cascade Effect inside the body on demand. These pathways intuitively lead one to improving their capabilities.
- Most people with control over their connection are not consciously aware of it. These people are known as "hyper-competent", because they are extremely talented and capable, but never superhuman.
- The rare people with conscious control over their infraspatial connection are known as "entangled". These people can harness their connection to perform superhuman actions.
- There are several organizations led by, or composed primarily of, hyper-competent or entangled people.

Trans-Yau Anatomy

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The Algorithm of Consciousness

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The Mutable Hidden Body

Content redacted. OCTET CYAN level security clearance required.

Anti-Entropy as a Metabolic Source

Content redacted. OCTET CYAN level security clearance required.

Severed Entanglement and Dissociation

Content redacted. OCTET CYAN level security clearance required.

Empathic Current and Behavior Change

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Organizations of Entangled Humans

Content redacted. OCTET CYAN level security clearance required.

Hyper-Competent NPCs and Antagonists

Hyper-competent people often naturally rise to the top of their field or whatever group they find themselves in, so players often encounter them as leaders or experts.

To create a hyper-competent NPC, grant them the normal starting physical metabolism scores, and also grant them between 3-6 hidden metabolism points. Someone rarely develops beyond that number instead of becoming fully entangled.

Entangled NPCs and Antagonists

Entangled people are rare, but often end up involved in whatever intrigue or secret activity that is happening. Individuals vary greatly. They're as likely to end up in leadership roles as they are to be lone wolf operatives.

To create an entangled NPC, grant them the normal starting physical metabolism scores and whatever specific entanglements you choose. NPCs do not need to follow the normal requirements for unlocking entanglements and can simply just have whichever ones seem appropriate.

Secret Origin: Mentor

Hidden Origin

Whether you have a specific teacher, are part of a spiritual practice, or in a secret "school for the gifted", you had someone teach you how to hone your connection to your hidden body. There are many wildly different schools of thought about hidden phenomena, and your mentor taught you one of them, granting you a different perspective on them than someone who discovered them on their own.

- ◇ If your game uses the option Axiom rules, you gain an Axiom that your mentor has taught you. If you are not using Axiom rules, or if you prefer, you can increase one Hidden Metabolism from 0 to 1.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing a skill or practice that was repeatedly drilled into you by your mentor.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing an ongoing relationship to your mentor or a piece of non-restricted equipment given to you by them.

Applied Cascade Effects In Silico

Executive Summary

- With sufficient knowledge of orthodynamic principles, devices can be engineered to utilize the cascade effect to exceed the capabilities of current state of the art technology.
- A small number of secretive artificers and brokers create and traffic in these devices.
- In the mid 20th century, a stable worldline incursion deposited numerous non-native anomalous artifacts throughout our world. The most common type of artifacts are small arms and other personal military hardware.
- Anomalous hardware is broadcasting a 1:1 simulated copy of the world from numerous locations. An organization has been modifying this simulation to use it as an "alternate reality game" recruiting tool.
- Similar to humans, any hardware with an infraspatial computing component is capable of executing the algorithm of consciousness and becoming a true general artificially intelligence.

Unscheduled Hardware

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Non-Native Hardware

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Simulated Space and ARGs

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Simulated Entities

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Artificers, Brokers, Seekers, and Groups

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Seeker NPCs and Antagonists

Seekers are individuals searching for answers, evidence, or hardware. They may be someone in the know about anomalous hardware and are searching for it, or they may just be someone that is following the clues of an alternate reality game and discovering there is more reality to it than expected.

To create a seeker NPC, grant them the normal starting physical metabolism scores. They are rarely entangled, but sometimes finding answers to their questions is the start of the road to becoming entangled. They may have one or two minor pieces of unscheduled or non-native hardware.

Artificer NPCs and Antagonists

Artificers are individuals that can create devices with unscheduled capabilities. This practice often draws the hostile attention of Schedule Enforcement Council auditors and the financial attention of brokers.

To create an artificer NPC, grant them the normal starting metabolisms. They should also have the Empirical Theory Axiom, and the **Embed Function** or **Embed Interface** entanglements. They may have a 0-3 other entanglement ranks that typically aren't combat oriented, and a few pieces of unscheduled hardware.

Broker NPCs and Antagonists

Brokers are individuals that secretly buy, sell, and trade anomalous hardware. Discrete people in the know with deep enough pockets can contact brokers to get access to devices capable of incredible things.

To create a broker NPC, grant them the normal starting metabolisms and several useful or powerful pieces of unscheduled or non-native hardware. They typically do not have entanglements.

Noo-Entity NPCs and Antagonists

Noo-entities are artificially intelligent conscious beings residing inside a piece of anomalous hardware. Sometimes these beings are consistently aware, and sometimes they are only aware when physically connected to a host body. If a noo-entity claims a human body as a host body, it may destroy, supplement, or temporarily replace the host's mind.

To create a noo-entity NPC, first decide the form factor of the device they exist in and if they have a physical body or bodies. These bodies should have normal starting metabolisms. The device should have a few additional anomalous properties. The entity itself and any body it currently controls should have 0-12 entanglement ranks.

Secret Origin:

Noo-Interface Entity

Both origins

You are a newly created intelligence arising from the connection between a piece of non-native computing hardware and a created or stolen human body.

- ◇ Your body was intentionally designed or chosen. Increase a Physical Metabolism by 1 without exceeding 6, and increase a Hidden Metabolism from 0 to 1.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing a skill that is hard for humans to do, but easy for computers to do.
- ◇ Gain 3 copies of the trait **Unknown Function**. You don't know all the capabilities of the hardware attached to you, but as each one is revealed it replaces a copy of this trait.

Spontaneous Cascade Events

Executive Abstract

- The cascade effect can occur spontaneously and unpredictably in nature. This results in the family of phenomena known as cascade events.
- These events modify the gap between physical and hidden space, hindering or easing the connection in one or both directions.
- Low intensity cascade events disrupt consciousness causing mental effects. High intensity events can cause dangerous physical, mental, or social effects over large areas.
- Long term exposure to cascade events is one of the primary causes of individuals becoming entangled.
- Specific types of cascade events can create stable "worldline incursions" that can transfer material between different branches of reality.

Spontaneous Events & Dissociation

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Dilating Events

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Contracting Events

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Subliming Events

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Condensing Events

Content redacted. DELUGE GLACIER level security clearance required.

Stable Incursions

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Event Causes

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Acorporeal NPCs and Antagonists

Acorporeal beings have no physical body and typically no ability to interact with physical space. They may have been separated from their body by its death or by severe dissociation, or maybe they never had a body at all. Only unusual circumstances, such as cascade events or entanglements, will allow them to interact with the players.

When creating an acorporeal npc, they have no physical body or metabolisms. Typically they would have no hidden metabolisms either, but if they're unusual enough to be interacting with the players they may have entanglements that allow them to do so.

Exile NPCs and Antagonists

Exiles are humans separated from their native worldline. They are often confused and lost, unfamiliar with their new context and unaware of how they got there. Perhaps their new context resembles another point in their history or future, or perhaps it is completely new to them.

To create an exile NPC, give them standard starting metabolisms and a few Traits that may be seen as unusual in their new context. Exile events can be dissociative in a way that encourages becoming entangled, so consider giving a small number of entanglements as well.

Secret Origin:

Exile

Hidden Origin

An uncontrollable curiosity drew you to a nearby location where you experienced lost time. Maybe only minutes, maybe years or decades where you didn't age. When you left you were on a different location on Earth, but things seem slightly off and no one you knew previously seems to exist.

If you choose this Hidden Origin, your Physical Origin that must agree with it. For example, if you come from a moment before RFID laws then you can't choose the Documented origin.

◇ You came back from your experience changed. Increase a Hidden Metabolism from 0 to 1.

◇ Gain a trait representing a skill or trade that was common where you came from but seems unusual now.

◇ Gain a trait representing knowledge about a topic or period of history that is not common.

The Schedule

Executive Abstract

- The Schedule Enforcement Council is the most secretive, and most powerful, arm of the United Nations. It traces its origins back to the Occult Munitions Treaty in the wake of WWI.
- The SEC has the primary goal of managing "societal readiness" of any field of knowledge. In practice this results in suppressing public knowledge of the seemingly supernatural, containing anomalous artifacts, and ensuring scientific research follows the pace set in The Schedule.
- The presence of the SEC is primarily felt through its Auditors, individuals who are granted immense jurisdiction over local laws in order to pursue the goals of the SEC.
- Several nations partially opt out of SEC jurisdiction and instead fulfill the SEC's responsibilities with internal agencies known as liaisons. Liaison agencies must at least appear to be focused on Schedule enforcement, but in practice they more closely resemble military research and secret intelligence agencies.

Historical Precedents

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The Schedule Enforcement Council

Content redacted. PROTOCOL FOUR level security clearance required.

Schedule Contents

Content redacted. PROTOCOL FOUR level security clearance required.

SEC Auditors

Content redacted. PROTOCOL FOUR level security clearance required.

Liaison Organizations

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Auditors as NPCs and Antagonists

An auditor is a field agent of the SEC tasked with enforcing compliance with the Schedule. They are highly trained and skilled, but typically not entangled but are occasionally hyper competent. Their real power lies in their jurisdiction. They have the authority to give orders to most law enforcement and military organizations throughout the world, including the ability to request targeted air and missile strikes.

To create an auditor, grant them 3 extra physical metabolisms and at least 3 useful traits to represent their training. They will typically have whatever equipment their situation requires, including the latest military hardware if needed, and possibly including a few discrete unscheduled devices.

Secret Origin:

Agent

Physical Origin

You are a Schedule Enforcement Council auditor or an agent of a nation's intelligence agency.

- ◇ You've undergone intensive training. Increase any Physical Metabolism by 1 without going over 6, or any Hidden Metabolism from 0 to 1.
- ◇ Gain a trait giving you a security clearance (there are a list of these to pick, consult with your GM), or any weapon, even restricted ones.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing a skill you use frequently when performing your duties.

Post-Corporeal Entities

This content is classified EDGE-CASE SYNAPSE

Executive Abstract

- A significant portion of a person's mind resides in the intangible hidden body. In the event that the hidden body should be separated from its physical host, a portion of their consciousness can remain viable in hidden space.
- An aware disembodied being in hidden space is known as a Clauda-Yau Body Entity. These entities are typically only minimally aware and can move about freely in hidden space.
- In rare cases, a person who has sublimed a larger portion of their mind into hidden space may remain fully conscious and self-aware after the loss of their body.
- The disembodied minds of former highly entangled people can sometimes maintain influence over physical space.
- Entities can exercise influence over physical space by creating "proxy" bodies stolen from possessed humans or "avatar" bodies assembled from raw materials.
- Truly powerful entities can even create large "Delegate Networks" of several proxies or avatars and experience poly-presence over large distances.

Hidden Body Entities

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The Sublimed Body

Content redacted. EDGE-CASE SYNAPSE level security clearance required.

Applied Extropy

Content redacted. EDGE-CASE SYNAPSE level security clearance required.

Avatar Construction

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Proxy Seizure

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Delegate Networks

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Avatars as NPCs and Antagonists

An avatar is an artificially created human-like body controlled by an acorporeal entity. They are slowly accreted over time using entanglements to organize raw organic matter into a viable avatar body. They may have unusual properties that hint at their inhuman nature, such as weighing much less than their appearance would suggest or moving in a subtly unnatural manner.

To create an avatar, give it an unusual combination physical metabolisms that may include numbers above or below the normal human minimum and maximum. They also must have at least 9 ranks of entanglements, typically the Esoteric Near styles are required to control the forces needed to accrete a body.

Secret Origin:

Avatar

Both origins

You are the physical avatar of an unknown entity or entities. You were recently created or freed and might not remember much before that.

- ◇ Your body was designed for a purpose. Increase a Physical Metabolism by 1 without exceeding 6, and increase a Hidden Metabolism from 0 to 1.
- ◇ Gain the trait **Unknown Creator**. The GM can replace this with another trait if you encounter this creator.
- ◇ Gain 3 copies of the trait **Unknown Skill**. You don't realize you have these skills. When you attempt to perform an action, you can permanently replace one copy of this trait with a skill relevant to the action.

Proxies as NPCs and Antagonists

A proxy is a human body that has been commandeered by another entity. The body's original consciousness maybe temporarily suppressed, irrevocably destroyed, or present but forced into compliance. A subtle unnatural or predatory vibe may hint at their true nature.

To create a proxy NPC, give them the physical metabolisms of the original host body and the hidden metabolisms and at least 9 ranks of entanglements from the controlling entity. These entities often have the Telethesia style to support their control.

Delegate Network NPCs and Antagonists

A delegate network is a group of 2 or more human bodies controlled by a single acorporeal entity. The entity may be able to control all or only a portion of the bodies simultaneously. Uncontrolled avatar bodies simply become dormant while uncontrolled proxies return to their original consciousness modified to remain loyal to the entity. These entities are always powerful, as a broad suite of entanglements is required to create the network, and the poly-presence granted by the network increases their capabilities further.

To create a delegate network, give the entity controlling it at least 18 ranks of entanglements and decide if the network is composed of proxies or avatars and how many can be active at once. Give each member of the network normal human physical metabolisms.

Secret Origin: Proxy

Hidden Origin

You used to be someone else. An unknown entity commandeered a human body, evicting its original mind. When this entity left or lost control of the body, the lingering consciousness left behind became you.

If you choose this as your Hidden Origin, your Physical Origin represents the life of the body's original owner. Fleeting memories of this life come to you occasionally.

- ◇ Your consciousness exists due to the unknown. Increase a Hidden Metabolism from 0 to 1.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing property or a social contact that belonged to your body's original owner.
- ◇ Gain a trait representing a skill related to your body's original owner's livelihood.

Trans-Stygian Humanoid Entities

Executive Abstract

- The stable worldline incursion of the mid-20th century deposited a population of humanoid beings in our reality.
- These beings originate from an alternate worldline's version of Earth and therefore presumably share a common ancestor with modern humans. Their amphibious bodies appear to be adapted for an aquatic and arboreal lifestyle involving traversing branch like structures above and below the surface of water.
- They are intelligent and come from an advanced society. However, they are now multiple generations removed from this society and little is known about it.
- In the present day, they avoid humans at all costs and live sad lives in squalid, steamy "wet rooms" hidden in the forgotten spaces of human infrastructure.

The Mid-Century Stable Incursion

Content redacted. CIRCUMSTANCE MONO level security clearance required.

Originating Society

Content redacted. CIRCUMSTANCE MONO level security clearance required.

The Current Generation

Content redacted. CIRCUMSTANCE MONO level security clearance required.

Wet Rooms

Content redacted. CIRCUMSTANCE MONO level security clearance required.

Feral Populations

Content redacted. CIRCUMSTANCE MONO level security clearance required.

Trans-Stygian Humanoid NPCs

These beings appear truly alien and frightening to any human seeing them for the first time and are therefore most often encountered in hiding. They typically seek out warm, humid, and forgotten spaces beneath human infrastructure and create hidden "wet rooms" to dwell in secret. Discovering one of these rooms is the most likely way to encounter one, and they're rarely alone. While intelligent and not inherently hostile, a human discovering their hiding place is frightening and likely to trigger a self defense response. Mutual fear and difficulties in communication make ending a defense response unlikely.

When creating a trans-stygian humanoid, they often have entanglements and non-native unscheduled hardware. The most common entanglements are those that allow them to evade discovery such as Chromaception, Detect Sensorium, or the Telethesia style. They also have the following properties that make them function differently than humans.

Burst Metabolism: metabolically optimized for a sessile lifestyle punctuated by rapid movements, they are much faster than humans but lack the endurance to act for long. Start with a 6 metabolisms set to 9. After each round, take a point of unavoidable stress to each. This stress stops increasing on any metabolism with a current maximum of 1 or lower and won't cause injury or dissociation.

Vascular Sponge: a slow diffusion basic circulatory system renders them resistant to complications from blood loss. An Injured Focus metabolism will not render them unconscious.

Fibrous Skeleton: they take 1 extra Threat from bladed weapons.

Amphibious: optimized for mangrove swamp like biomes. Treat this as a trait that is relevant any time swimming, climbing tree like structures, traversing a thicket, or holding one's breath is involved.

Chemoreception: these beings have incredibly acute chemical senses similar to olfaction in dogs or sharks, but spread across the entire surface of their skin. Additionally, they can secrete a vocabulary of chemicals that act as signals which may be airborne, waterborne, or touch only.

Multimodal Language: Their languages typically contain auditory, olfactory, and gesture based modes simultaneously. When limited to a single mode, communication is possible but slower and less rich. They are anatomically incapable of producing human speech just as humans are anatomically incapable of producing their auditory language.

Secret Origin:

Trans-Stygian Entity

Both origins

You are not human. You must hide this fact.

◇ You have all of the properties described above instead of normal starting metabolisms.

◇ Pick any 6 traits to describe your skills.

Cryptocyota and Acyota Entities

Executive Abstract

- Acyota dassicans, a species of acellular intelligent life has been present on Earth since the early Ordovician era. There is evidence that they had organized technological settlements that predate the evolution of land animals.
- Their origin is unknown, but presumably they traversed an incursion from a very different worldline. Their lack of DNA or cells suggest they do not share a common ancestor with Earth life.
- It is theorized that their presence on Earth influenced our evolutionary history, possibly causing the Cambrian speciation event. The species Cryptocyota striatum appears to be a modern descendant of Acyota.
- Remnants of a Acyota settlement have been recently discovered in a cavern deep enough within the Antarctic craton to have remained stable despite continental drift. Specimens found near this site appear to be in frozen hibernation.

Cryptocyota Specimens

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The Ordovician Stable Incursion

Content redacted. HADEAN BEACHFRONT level security clearance required.

Acyota Specimens

Content redacted. HADEAN BEACHFRONT level security clearance required.

The Vostok Craton Site

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Acyota NPCs and Antagonists

Encountering a live Acyota specimen is unlikely to happen outside of very unusual hidden locations, and even then they are often in a dormant state of hibernation. Contact with heat or moisture can awaken them.

An active Acyota entity is leathery and has an amorphous variable shape. They range in size greatly. They are intelligent and innately hostile to other sentient life.

When creating an Acyota, they typically are not entangled, but may have access to non-native hardware. They have the following properties that make them function unlike humans.

Aggregate Vitality: An Acyota's physical metabolisms are all equal and determined by its size. From 1 (like a large rat), to 6 (like a human), to 12 (like a large truck). As a full action, they can split into smaller parts with sizes that sum up to their original size or absorb others to gain their size.

Amorphous: Acyota of any size can pass through a 3 centimeter opening. They can take on any form they find useful.

Biosilicate Claws: Smaller Acyota can only attack with lashing pseudopods, an unarmed attack of size 1. Larger specimens may grow opalescent silica claws which function as blades of size 1.

Mimic: Acyota can attempt to mimic other forms of the same size, including humans. This disguise is only effective if the differences can be hidden. For example, engulfing a human skeleton would enable more convincing joints and movements, and fully being fully covered in clothing hides most obvious differences. Even when well disguised, lacking a face and a voice are obvious tells.

Hive Mentality: Anything known by one acyota becomes known to any other individuals it touches. Any Traits one possesses may be transferred to another individual it touches at the expense of the original individual losing the Trait.

Umbral Senses: Acyota do not possess sight. Instead they navigate with an acute vibrational sense. With this sense they can detect the exact shape, position, and movements of anything in contact with the ground within 30 meters. Additionally, they can emit a loud, low thrumming noise to echolocate. While doing so this sense expands to include everything in the air within 90 meters.

Secret Origin: Acyota Entity

Both origins

You are not human. You must hide this fact.

- ◇ You have all of the properties described above instead of normal starting metabolisms.
- ◇ Pick any 6 traits to describe your skills.

Global Existential Threats

Executive Abstract

- There are known but poorly understood scenarios that present an existential threat to human society, life on Earth entirely, the Earth itself, or even large portions of the universe.
- Some of these scenarios are naturally occurring, such as the false vacuum metastability event that will occur inevitably but is hastened by increased use of the ██████████ ██████████.
- Some of these scenarios are the possible result of human or former human actions such as those of various accelerationist organizations that actively seek to destroy society in the hope that it will be replaced by something better.
- Some of these scenarios are extraterrestrial or Trans-Stygian in origin. Beacons meant to communicate across worldlines can create an exponentially growing area in which human consciousness, and sometimes life itself, is not possible. A beacon is known to have caused the Ordovician-Silurian extinction event and an ongoing Beacon is present underground beneath ██████████.
- ██████████ capable of exterminating humanity are present throughout the cosmos. The ██████████ is avoiding their attention. In 1990 OPNAVISNT 1020.5 created an undersea surveillance network designed to monitor the movements and nearby bathymetry of a suspected ██████████.

Unknowable Antagonists

Content redacted.

Metastability Events

Content redacted. COLD JULY level security clearance required.

Beacon Events

Content redacted. COLD JULY level security clearance required.

Post-Corporeal Accelerationists

Content redacted. COLD JULY level security clearance required.

Cold July Entities

Content redacted. COLD JULY level security clearance required.