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# 00 - Introduction

*Dreamwake is a high-octane action game of adventure and exploration set in a world that has gone batshit crazy.*

*You and your friends will play as a team of highly trained individuals armed with incredible powers and skills, facing hard missions, investigating nightmarish mysteries and overcoming impossible obstacles.*

The world of Dreamwake is a strange and bizarre one.

It is our world, in a not too distant future, scarred beyond recognition by an unexplainable global event that turned solid reality into something fluid, wild and malicious.

This book will offer you a **Setting Seed**, the essential introduction to the world of Dreamwake. Then the complete **Core Rules** of the game will be explained in detail.

Finally, you will be presented with the specific game elements (items, powers, etc) that are unique to the world of Dreamwake, its **Crunchy Bits**.

As an **appendix** you will be instructed on how to effortlessly adapt the *Core Rules* to different settings of your own choosing.

## What You Should Expect

This is **not** a one-page game you just pick-up and play to kill an hour or two.

If everybody knows the game and uses pre-gen characters, then you **can** speed-play to fit a quick mission into a 2-3 hour slot; otherwise expect to spend about 60-90 minutes to explain the basics of the game, make your own character and set-up a mission... after that a very short mission usually ends in more or less two or three hours, while Players get familiar with how to frame scenes, how to roll dice, etc.

Everybody should be kind of an “*expert player*” after the first session.

That said, Dreamwake is a game you play to **solve missions** and **explore** a bizarre world.

You can seamlessly play with a total of 2 participants up to a maximum of 5; each participant is a Player with her own personal Player Character (PC).

After an initial one-time SetUp Phase the game is played without any preparation.

Players will pit their characters against challenges presented by the game mechanics in a way that rewards creative thinking and roleplaying, rather than sheer number-crunching, although a minimum of rules-savviness is expected.

# What You Need to Play

From the downloadable *Game Aid* file print:

- one copy of the Character Sheet for each Player
- a full Opposition Deck (or get a normal deck of poker cards)
- a Framing card, a Lead card and an Opposition Clock card
- **Dreamwake Only** ... a Friction Clock card and a full Dreamwake World Deck

Also you must get:

- a bunch of six-sided dice: six white (6d6), six black (6d6), six blue (6d6)
- pencils & erasers & white sheets to take notes ... possibly some post-its

## A Note on Examples

I'm going to use a specific cast of Players and Characters throughout the examples offered in this book.

**Roberto**, plays a male White Tower named **Malcom**.

**Andrea**, plays a male Incarna named **Demetrios**.

**Sara**, plays a female Kenon named **Agape**.

**Claudia**, plays a female Razer named **Stoya**.

**Ilenia**, plays a female Schlaf-Lös named **Brigit**.

Their sheets can be found at the end of this book and used as ready to play pre-generated characters.

## How to learn this game FAST

From my experience if you just read the book and then play and then keep playing you are going to waste a lot of your time in order to eventually get it right.

Instead the **best** way to learn how to play this (*and others!*) game is to read the book and then play and then go to a forum or some other form of web community and post the **Actual Play** of your session.

To do it simply write what you liked, as a **Player**, about the session: what was awesome, what went wrong, what gave you doubts, what caught your attention **at the table**? ...was Marco always distracted, or was Daniela bursting with ideas, or was some moment awkward?

Tell your experience --> hear the answers --> understand what went wrong, what mistakes you made ... and you **will** get it right in just one session or two.

# The Book... in one page

This book presents the rules of Dreamwake in the order you will need to use them. First you get a super-brief introduction to the setting, to let you know what we are talking about. Here you will also discover how to play in a deep and rich setting without the need to study a boring "sourcebook".

Then it explains how to regulate the dialogue among Players; this is the heart and core of the whole game, read it carefully.

Now that you know what you're gonna talk about, and how to talk about it, you are ready to **SetUp** the game in order to prime your first session and to create your own characters. What every element of your character means and does is explained there.

The game can now begin.

First you play a strictly regulated scene where the characters get the **Intel** on the mission. Then the true **Action** can start, playing scene after scene, starting right where the *Intel* left you. Here the rules will explain what a **Scene** is and what you can do within it. Most importantly, you get to learn how to meet and overcome **Obstacles**, and how this is *the only way* to actually get to the end of your mission.

To help you get your bearings while you read up to that point in the book, I'll offer here a little summary of how and why you roll dice:

- when you face an Obstacle you roll dice to know how the events unfold
- both your character sheet and the current fiction will determine how many dice you are gonna roll; what your PC does and how you describe her actions are both very important factors
- dice can be good (Expert), bad (Danger) or average (Action)
- you want to roll as high as possible with each die
- you read every single die as a HIT or a FAIL
- enough HITS mean you overcome the Obstacle, scoring +1 point toward the end the Mission
- rolling dice also gives you various points; some help you act in the game and develop your character (Influence), some make the game smack you in the face (Opposition)

Finally the book explains how to **FollowUp** on a completed mission.

The end chapters cover specific rules (**Crunchy Bits**) needed to play in the Dreamwake setting.

After that, an **Appendix** will tell you how to create your own alternative settings with great ease, or even how to improvise them on the fly.

And then there are the aforementioned pre-generated character sheets, of course.

# 01 - Setting Seed

*Dreamwake* is a game set in a bizarre and terrible world where reality has turned against humanity; to play in this suggestive setting you don't need to study a lengthy treaty about history and geography and a thousand worldly details.

Instead you will be offered three play-aids: a Setting Seed, some Crunchy Bits and a World Deck.

Together these elements are called a *Setting in a Box (SiaB)* and, thanks to the structure of this game, allow you to easily summon the feeling of this unique setting even if you know nothing about it.

The **Setting Seed** is a very brief introduction to the most fundamental concepts that make this setting unique.

It is meant as a starting point, a hook to grab your interest and kickstart your imagination leaving you with more questions than answers.

The first time you play *Dreamwake*, read it to the other Players.

The **Crunchy Bits** are a collection of ready-to-play materials that take the *Core Rules* and use them to specifically summon the unique feeling hinted at by the *Seed*: bite-sized snippets of rules about playable PC factions, about their strange powers, about the perils of traveling in "*the world outside*", about powerful artefacts and forgotten horrors and a lot of other things. These are both tools to play the game and bits of information that build on the foundation laid by the *Seed*.

Finally, the **World Deck** is a special deck of cards that you will use to explore the setting with your fellow Players.

Each card represents one strongly thematic element of the setting: a place of power, an important character, a nightmarish creature, etc.

One side will give useful informations, while the other side will sport an evocative illustration. You can read them all, as a sort of super condensed sourcebook.

You can browse them or randomly pick a card whenever you need *Dreamwake*-themed ideas.

Most of all, you can use them as inspiration and guidance to spark your own imagination, crafting your own places, people and creatures.

So, without further ado ... the *Dreamwake*!

## > Dreamwake

Once upon a time, humanity was at its technological and evolutionary peak ... then it all went to hell.

We know there was war, we know there was treachery, we know something desperate was attempted; everything else we don't know.

Now the world has gone mad; something made reality crumble, turning everything into a deranged dream.

We call it Deliria, or the **World Outside**.

In Deliria both mind and matter get twisted and mutated, breaking all laws of reality to become part of something sinister that belongs in a child's nightmare.

Humanity has managed to survive this horror by barricading itself behind the walls of sprawling urban complexes.

Deliria doesn't have power here, as huge machines called Pillars constantly emanate a white radiation that permeates everything and keeps the nightmares at bay ... barely.

We call these hideouts Bastions, or the **World Inside**.

Life is hard and cheap and the only thing keeping the population away from the abyss is the **Jemnost**, the noble elite that rules each bastion with an iron grip, but at the same time provides the only effective protection against the horrors of Deliria.

Five factions vie for control and supremacy over what is left of humankind.

Five factions grudgingly cooperate and live side by side despite their individual differences, ambitions and vendettas; for one thing is clear to all: coexistence is the only way to survive.

You are an elite member of a mixed squad of Jemnost operatives, acting on behalf of *The Council* of your bastion to enforce order and security.

**Abominations** lurk in the shadows of the World Outside and sometimes invade civilized territory, bringing death and chaos.

**Heretics** hide among common people, feeding Deliria their hopes and dreams, oblivious to the corruption they spread upon themselves and those around them.

**Crime** is maybe a more mundane enemy, but the exploding overpopulation, the extreme scarcity of any raw material and the consuming stress of a population that is basically prisoner in its own cities means you will constantly need to face murder cases, kidnappings, illegal contraband, gang violence, and so on.

**Travel** between bastions, venturing in the depths of Deliria, is a lethal and disturbing endeavour; the navigation and protection offered by your team is the only hope to ever reach any destination, to gather raw materials, to maintain a minimum of communication and commerce with the rest of the civilized world... or to spy, infiltrate and sabotage other bastions before they do the same to yours.

# 02 - Core Rules

## > Ritual Communication

This game is all about a group of people telling stuff to one another around a table, producing a shared Fiction.

**How** they do it is what turns a chat into a game.

## Perspective is Everything

*Dreamwake* is strictly played from the **Point of View** of the Player Characters (PCs).

The only things that can be described are those a PC is perceiving **right here and now**.

You can say what **your own** PC does and thinks.

You can also say what any PC perceives (by sight, smell, touch, etc).

By this token, you may end up describing what Non-Player-Characters (NPCs) say and do and how they look ... but always limited to what a PC can **perceive**.

This also means that all the fiction in the game is subjective to what the PCs perceived **so far**; people can lie, things may not be as they seem ... the game will surprise you with plot twists, sudden revelations and unforeseen turns of events.

Expect the unexpected.

You can say that **your** PC feels scared, you can **not** say that another character is feeling scared.

You can say that the man across the street **looks** worried and sad, but you can not say that he **is** worried, nor you can say what he is worried about ... unless a PC **does something** to discover how that man actually feels: talk to him, read his mind, stalk him for a while.

And even if a PC somehow gets an answer like “*Yes, indeed I am worried about my job*” it could still be a lie, or just part of a bigger unspoken problem.

It is what the PCs uncovered **so far** ... it is all In-Fiction stuff, what a guy told your character, or what your character thought she saw or heard or understood ... it is **not** a mechanically established “*absolute truth*” of the game.

# The Rituals of Speaking

Most of the game consists in a free flowing conversation.

You say what your PC does and thinks, the other Players do the same for their own PCs, and additionally you all contribute in various ways (explained later) to the shaping of the common fiction, when it is needed or when you feel like doing it.

This free flowing conversation is built upon a few rules that allow all Players to communicate in an effective way, establishing what is OK and what is NOT for their own game.

These rules are expressed in the form of **Ritual Words**.

Don't be afraid to use them whenever it seems fit; they are a tool designed to avoid fruitless discussions that may drag the game into endless bickering.

If a few (*very few*) words can't solve a problem, cut to the chase and use Ritual Words.

The exact moment you find yourself wondering **IF** it's time to use a Ritual Word it means **IT IS**.

## Getting Along

Rules can never be absolutely perfect, especially when human beings are involved.

*Ritual Words* are a tool, among others, designed to help you and your friends get along and have a fun game experience ... but external problems may still arise.

Maybe someone doesn't like to play this game.

Maybe someone doesn't feel like playing at all, today.

Maybe someone is hell bent on "*testing the game limits*" (aka: sabotage) for any reason.

Be it as it may, the only possible solution here is to **stop the game** and honestly **talk with your friends**: what do you want to do? what do they want to do? is there a way to find common ground?

People are different and not everybody is comfortable saying "no" to his game-hungry friends, so try being the sensible one and help your friends speak their mind and have their say, they deserve to have fun as much as you do.

So, let's see these Ritual Words one by one...

## - Pause

Sometimes the game conversation can get a bit confusing and the resulting fiction unclear. Sometimes it may look like stepping on others (verbally) is the best way to have things go your way.

This is not fun, so at any moment you can raise your hands and say "**Pause!**" to mechanically stop the game on its tracks.

Now everyone has time to ask questions and clarifications, offer ideas to the table and generally clear the air.

The fiction established just before the Pause **has to** be renegotiated to account for any misunderstanding and incomprehension.

As a rule of thumb if you think the Pause should end just ask "*can we move on?*" and if everyone agrees the game can resume.

Arguing is **strictly forbidden** during a Pause; if it happens, use the other Ritual Words to cut the crap and properly handle the conflict among Players.

**Roberto** - ...so Malcom, my Tower, points the gun at the heretic and shoots him in the leg, yelling "*You won't run away this time!*"

**Sara** - Wait, **Pause!** Wasn't the heretic behind a sort of stone altar? And didn't we say that it was important not to make too much noise? A gunshot is damn noisy, are you sure of this move?

**Roberto** - Damn, the altar, I forgot about it! Let's say I shoot him in the arm or shoulder, like in the movies ... and I know it's noisy and dangerous, but I want this bastard scared and bleeding.  
Can we move on?

**Sara** - You'll get us all killed ... yes, let's move on and see what kind of crap hits us.

## - Veto

Every piece of fiction that you describe is subject to the approval of the whole table.

This is always true, even during an Out-Game moment such as character creation; when you build your PC and tell the other Players her name and looks and other details; such fictional elements are already subject to this rule.

If you like what is being said, all is fine.

If you sort of don't like what is being said, by all means mention it and offer some alternatives... but if in the end you don't really care much about it, let it go.

If you dislike something that has just been described, if it feels inappropriate or for some reason it rubs you the wrong way... say so to the table! Say "**Veto!**"

The offensive narration is instantly nullified, there is no discussion or vote about it.

On the other hand you **have to** briefly explain the motivation of your disapproval, to help the other Players come up with something more acceptable to everyone.

The **very important** bit here is that Veto is not meant to prevent a Player from adding something to the fiction or to disallow his PC's actions, you can only Veto how such things **look** in the fiction.

**Andrea** - Demetrios, my **Incarna**, knows weird shit about computers, so I have him sit in the holo-phone boot to try and remotely hack the ship security systems with... I don't know... how was it called? ...a *DoS* attack!

**Sara** - Wait, I'm going to **Veto** this; I know what a *DoS* actually is and to me it makes no sense to use it from a small computer (the phone boot) against a high level system (the ship).

**Andrea** - Ok, then let's say he uses a... a "fractal cyber virus" called *Deus Ex Machina*, a very dirty trick we eggheads from the *Ordo Novae Carnis* have up our sleeves.

**Sara** - Awesome, that's more like it!

**Just so you know ...** *DoS* means Denial-of-Service and is a hacking technique that uses Computer-A to "jam" Computer-B by overwhelming it with too many inputs; needless to say Computer-A has to be pretty powerful or part of a large network of less powerful machines. In pop culture the term is often misused as a sort of generic hacker attack thingie.

Sara happened to know that, making Andrea's idea sound inappropriate, thus prompting her **Veto**.

## - Disagreement

This is a powerful Ritual Word meant to be used whenever two or more Players can't reach a satisfying agreement about something through a **very brief** discussion.

Same example as before, Andrea wants his PC to remotely hack a security system from a holo-phone boot...

**Andrea** - Ok, then let's say he uses a... [*insert Dreamwake techno-babble*]

**Sara** - Nope, I'm going to **Veto** this too; I just don't think you are in a position to do such a thing from a simple phone boot.

**Andrea** - Well, I beg to differ, I think I can do it.

**Sara** - Then we **Disagree**... I bid 1pt that says it is not doable.

While *Veto* is a tool to establish how the fiction **looks**, *Disagreement* is used to solve any **functional** dispute among Players:

Can this action be performed by my PC?

What PC gets to act first?

What Player gets the Lead card?

You are claiming points for an idea we had; shouldn't I claim those points instead?

One Player stops the discussion by clearly declaring "**Disagreement!**" and then bids **one** Influence point (see *About Influence* later in the *Character Creation* chapter) to make his opinion prevail.

In clockwise order the other Players can:

- *Pass* ... leaving definitively the matter for others to decide

- *Bid* ... offering an opinion of their own, rising the last bid by +1

When everybody passes, the winner is established and **all Players** who made a bid **have to pay** the amount of their last bid.

The bidding has started, Roberto has immediately passed while Sara and Andrea outbid each other by +1...

**Sara** - I think your PC can't do that thing in this situation ... I bid 5 points.

**Andrea** - I think my PC can do it ... I bid 6 points.

**Sara** - Enough, I give up, have it your way.

Andrea wins the argument and pays 6 points, but Sara too pays the 5 points she bid so far.

If the identity of the first bidder is also debated a simple die roll will decide it.

Disagreement **can't** be used to ignore or change the rules of the game, nor can it be used twice in a row about the same issue.

## > SetUp Phase

The first Phase of the game requires you and your fellow Players to prepare the basic elements needed to play: **Setting** and **Characters**.

Gather your fellow Players, get the required game-materials, then if there's anyone unfamiliar with the world of *Dreamwake* read aloud its *Setting Seed*.

Assuming someone has already read this book in all its parts, let such person to give a public and quick read-through of all the *Crunchy Bits*; just **skim** them, read the name of the various Bits explaining each with just a few words.

This will give all players a better idea of how the game setting works, and help them make choices to create their characters.

Now you will need to create a Player Character each.

The next few chapters will explain both the procedures for character generation, and showcase each of the elements that make up a PC.

It is important to do both *Setting Seed* and *Character Creation* together and in public, at the table, as it will help everyone get on the same page.

**Chat about the whole thing**, ask questions about this bizarre world, take an interest in the characters of your fellow Players, offer ideas and suggestions for them, take notes.

Remember that all Ritual Words are already in effect, use them if necessary.

For now this is all you need to prime the game ... go on to create your team of characters and then initiate the Intel Phase.

At the end of this rulebook you will find extra options allowing you to play in different settings, be them new official *SiaB*, your own homebrew *SiaBs*, or even original and improvised worlds created on the fly with your friends.

# Character Creation

## - Identity

Start by choosing a **Faction** as your “concept” and then give your PC a fitting **name** and describe her looks and appearance to the other Players; be sure to write down one striking element about her **body**, her **face** and her **clothing**.

Go to the **Crunchy Bits** chapter now to know more about the special options unique to your *Jemnost Faction*; but to help you choose, here is a quick summary:

**Great Board** (as a member you are called a **Tower**, or a **Knight**, or a **Bishop**)  
A corporation of highly trained individuals in various fields.

**Spiti tou Kenos** (as a member you are called a **Kenon**)  
A militaristic body of acrobatic warriors and philosophers of the Void.

**Sem'ya Razum** (as a member you are called a **Razer**)  
A tribal clan structure gathering people that share the gift of telepathy.

**Haus der Spiralen** (as a member you are called a **Schlaf-Lös**)  
A support group for persons that have been touched by Deliria.

**Legio Novae Carnis** (as a member you are called a **Incarna**)  
A part of the Ordo, a sub-faction of scientists meddling with the fusion of man and machine.

**Legio Divi Cruoris** (as a member you are called a **Stilla**)  
A part of the Ordo, a sub-faction of scientists striving to perfect the human biology.

**Legio Aeterni Scribere** (as a member you are called a **Magister**)  
A part of the Ordo, a sub-faction of scientists attempting to grasp how Deliria works.

## - SKILL Points

Look at the five Groups of skills on your sheet, pick three that you like the most and mark them. For every chosen Group, pick one Focus out of the three available and mark it. For every chosen Focus, devise one cool Specialty of your liking and mark its first dot. (see the **TOOLS** chapter for more details)

## - PERK Points

You have five points available.

Spend one to pick a Perk from the list available to your faction (see the **Crunchy Bits** chapter) then come up with a Perk of a more personal nature (see the **PERKS** chapter for more details). The other three points can be kept for later or spent right away.

## - TOOL Points

You have five points available.

Spend one to come up with one item you think could be helpful or important to your PC.

Spend one to come up with one person your PC knows and could be helpful to him.

The other three points can be spent at any moment to buy new Tools or to improve the ones you already have.

(see the **TOOLS** chapter for more details)

## - Kickstart

Your PC starts the game with three empty Hurt Boxes and three available Mementoes; she also has five Influence points in her reserve; they'll only be available **after** CharGen ends.

## Further Development

At any moment after the game starts you can improve your PC through the expenditure of Influence points:

+1 Hurt Box	= 30 Influence (up to a total of 6)
+1 Perk	= 20 Influence
+1 Skill	= 10 Influence
+1 Tool	= 05 Influence

There are no hard limits to this procedure: if it makes sense in the fiction, you can do it.

It is common for PCs to reveal new truths about themselves and their past, to use abilities they had not showed up until now, and to find useful items along the way.

As usual, the **Ritual Words** are there to help you and your friends coordinate your game.

## About Influence

Influence points are the fuel that makes the whole game work.

They are a sum of experience, money, karma, luck ... all rolled into one pool of points.

You spend them to improve your character, to activate cool mechanical effects and to have a say about what goes on at the table.

But more importantly, you are free to **give them away** from your own personal pool.

Any amount, to any Player, for whatever reason.

A Player has a clever idea, makes you laugh, awes you? **Reward him** with Influence points!

Good character interpretation, a vivid description, a show of good will to play the game?

**Reward** such behaviours with Influence points!

Someone needs just that one more point? Then why not giving it to him?

If a Player acts in a way that you **don't like** (begs, whines, is distracted or distracting) stop the game and tell them so; talk about it, understand what the issue might be.

If a Player acts in a way that you **do like** ... praise him, and maybe award him Influence.

## Example Character Creation

I start by looking over the list of *Jemnost Factions* and opt to make a *Schlaf-Lös* from the *Haus der Spiralen*... I note it as my **Concept**.

I then imagine my character to be male, with a tall & thin **body**, a nervous look on his **face**, and **dressed** with just some kind of futuristic blue-jeans ... no shirt or shoes.

His **name** is something german-ish sounding, like *Albrecht*.

Looking at the **Skill** tree on the character sheet I chose to mark the Communication, Exploration and Warfare Groups.

Then I mark the Persuasion, Survival and Close Foci, respectively.

Finally I create a Specialty for each one, coming up with Eerie Presence, Find Food and Claws.

Next are **Perks**; from the *Crunchy Bits* chapter about the *Haus der Spiralen* I learn that Albrecht must have the Cultural Hegemony negative perk because he is not part of the Ordo.

Then I have to pick one Faction-specific perk, and my choice is between:

<b>Schlaf-Lös</b>	which makes me an insomniac person touched by Deliria, thus able to summon an inner Tier ... a veritable member of the Haus.
<b>Social Stigma</b>	which represents the scorn everyone treats me with because I am, or am associated with, Deliria-tainted people.
<b>Gestalt</b>	which describes how I am adept in the advanced control of my inner Tier. (not of much use if I don't have a Tier in the first place)

I make the obvious choice and pick the Schlaf-Lös perk.

Then I have to come up with a personal Perk of my own... like Disturbingly Charming.

Now I have three more Perks I can buy; I get the Social Stigma for free (it's a negative perk!) because I like the idea, then I buy Gestalt as I want to do advanced stuff with my Tier, and finally I write down a Fuck Everyone! perk to represent my authoritative and independent attitude (it's positive because, we agree, it helps me make my point prevail in confrontations). I am left with one more Perk to buy, but don't have any ideas right now, so I keep it for later.

**Tools**... my Faction has access to the Tier and Fetish ones.

I spend my first point to buy the basic *Tier* tool, and decide that my *Herkunft* is "**insects**".

Then I have to make a person-Tool, and I create my friend Jarod, a smart guy who knows stuff about the streets of our bastion.

My three remaining points go to make my *Tier* have Locust Wings and Sharp Claws, and to also buy me a Vector-Motorcycle (because I deserve something **that** cool).

**This is it, my Albrecht character is ready to play!**

# SKILLS

All the mission-relevant things that your PC might know how to do are called Skills and neatly listed here and on your Character Sheet.

Your PC is a resourceful and well trained person; she can do a lot of things, she can do all the things suggested by the skill-list and she can do all the things that go over and beyond the skill-list ... if it makes sense in the fiction, your PC can do it.

Skills are there to tell everybody what your PC is **especially** good at, so much that she gets to roll extra dice when she does such things.

Skills are arranged in a tiered structure made up of five general **Groups**.

Every Group contains three narrower **Foci**.

Each Focus in turn grant access to one very specific **Specialty**.

Every Group and every Focus only has 1 rank, so you either have them or you don't, while each Specialty is ranked from 1 to 3.

Group -->	Focus -->	Specialty
+1	+1	+1 to +3

Agape, Sara's character, is a formidable **Kenon** warrior so, among other things, she spends one point in the **Warfare** group.

This allows her to develop any linked focus, and she chooses to invest one point in the **Close Combat** one.

Now she can devise a Specialty of her own liking, and decides to spend one point to come up with something cool ... **Killing Hands** ... and then she spends a second point there (rising Killing Hands at rank 2) as she wants Agape to be exceedingly badass with her martial arts.

## Communication

- Deception (disguise, half truths, acting)
- Etiquette (diplomacy, negotiation, blending-in)
- Persuasion (charm, intimidation, seduction, interrogation)

## Exploration

- Athletics (stealth, climbing, swimming, acrobatics)
- Driving (cars, bikes, ships, copters, tailing)
- Survival (hiding, tracking, sheltering, orientation, navigation)

## Knowledge

- Academics (literature, history, philosophy)
- Science (math, physics, chemistry, biology)
- Subculture (streetwise, art, fashion, bureaucracy)

## Tech

- - Biotech (first-aid, pathology, surgery, cybertech)
- - Hardtech (electronics, mechanics, engineering, rigging)
- - Software (data search, hacking, programming)

## Warfare

- - Close Combat (edged weapons, blunt weapons, natural weapons, brawl, martial arts)
- - Ranged Combat (guns, rifles, bows, throwing weapons)
- - Tactics (gorilla, swarm, environment-specific, threat assessment)

## Un-Learning

In time you may want to change a Specialty you have previously developed.

To do it:

- delete the old one
- cash in the appropriate amount of Influence points (10-20-30)
- immediately buy a new Perk named "**Expert of**" your old Specialty
- now you can buy a new Specialty

If you don't have enough Influence available at the moment, you won't be allowed to spend any Influence at all until you can pay off your debt.

### What Is Special

While Groups and Foci are pretty much a pre-cooked list to choose from, Specialties allow you to be creative.

This gives you much latitude, but always remember: BE SPECIFIC!

A Specialty is always a **narrower** application of a Focus, one way of doing things among many other possibilities.

Being vague and abstract completely defeats the purpose and should immediately arise a Veto or even a Disagreement from the rest of the Players.

This is not a game-balance issue; if you are creative you can find countless ways to employ a Specialty ... and if you don't have brilliant ideas, ask your fellow Players for suggestions!

What this is about is **identity** and consistency and fun.

Make your character unique, not generic!

Make it recognizable, not anonymous!

Feed the fiction with juicy details that you and the other Players will use!

And when in doubt about a Specialty, simply ask and describe.

*Roberto* - So what does this "**Killing Hands**" thing do, the name is cool but what does it mean?

Sara - Well, I'll have you know it is a lethal combat technique that uses the fingers to press sensible nervous and vital points in the victim's body ... I can deliver pain, hurt and even death!

Now the Players know what the Specialty is about and can play on it.

... what if an opponent is heavily armored, how will Agape use her finger-attacks?

... what if Agape injures her fingers?

... can she use her deadly fingers to somehow parry/counter a melee weapon?

... what if her opponent has a non-human biology?

... are fingers her only tool, are there other secret techniques yet to be discovered?

# Inner Strength

Sometimes we need an extra push, a grain of inner strength to help us clench our teeth and face the challenges in front of us.

In ***Dreamwake*** this is expressed through *Mementoes* and *Clarity*.

## Mementoes

A *Memento* is a renewable resource that can be spent to achieve extraordinary feats.

Once per Scene during the *Action Phase* you can pay a price in Influence and memories in order to “charge” an available Memento slot.

Spend 5 Influence and then call a **Pause** to say the ritual phrase “***I remember that time when...***” and then tell the other Players a very brief memory from your PC’s past life.

It can not be just any memory either, it has to follow one of two possible paths:

It can be a **positive** memory about how *even in the face of hardship* your PC showed love for someone, or about how someone made your PC feel loved.

Here “love” can stand for passion but also family, friendship or even acceptance.

Describe a concrete gesture, not just empty words, and explain why it felt important to your PC.

It can be a **negative** memory about an emotional wound your PC suffered, be it a burning humiliation, a betrayal, a moment of despair, or the loss of someone precious.

Explain why it felt hurting to your PC, but *do not* tell the story of how your PC eventually got revenge or retribution (this will feed another mechanic of this game).

After the memory has been told you charge the Memento by putting a plus “+” or minus “-” sign into an empty slot.

Memories are not allowed to be all bad or all good, you are always bound to **alternate** between positive and negative ones.

You can spend one or more charged Mementos whenever you want during the Action phase to obtain one of the following effects:

- 1) Enhance** : **once per Scene**, turn all your Danger dice into Action dice *before* any dice-merging.
  
- 2) Re-Roll** : **once per Scene**, but *after* rolling a dice pool, ignore all non-HIT dice and re-roll them.
  
- 3) Push It** : automatically achieve one *Goal* bypassing its procedures and costs, **once per Scene** for each Goal.

Roberto's character, a **Tower** named Malcom, is facing a very grim moment. Separated from the other members of his team he is being hunted down, in a labyrinth of dark back streets, by a terrible Abomination ... a creature born from an Heretic that went too far and got warped by Deliria.

Roberto has to roll dice, but after all elements are factored in he sees how his dice pool is almost completely composed of Danger dice ... very bad!  
So he chooses to spend one available Memento to make them all turn into Action dice. This is his first Memento so he is free to choose between a positive or negative memory, and he sets for a bad one.

**Roberto** - Guys wait, **Pause!** *I remember that time when...* Malcom was still a child and was playing with one of his friends.

At some point a strange little creature showed up out of nowhere.

My friends were curious and wanted to play with it, but I got scared; my friends mocked me and called me a coward, so I started crying and run away.

I felt so humiliated and weak!

Now Roberto marks his Memento with a minus sign and gets what he paid for ... Malcom is gonna run like the wind.

Next time Roberto uses a Memento, his memory will have to be a positive one.

## What's in a Memory

The point of telling other Players a memory from your character's past is manifold.

It helps your PC look and feel as a deeper, more complex character.

It enriches the overall fiction, as your character is one of its protagonists.

It helps you discover new things about your PC, who she was and how she changed through time and experience.

Also, thanks to the specific rules concerning how a memory is told and what has to be its content, it helps shape your PC into an actual human being, with weaknesses and strengths, with fond memories of things that she cares about, and hurting memories of things that left a scar on her.

Such memories don't need to directly justify the mechanical bonus you are getting.

You don't need to say "*I remember my gun training, so now it helps me shoot better*".

If here is a link to the current situation, all the better, but it is not mandatory.

Also remember that you are not alone in this.

If you lack the inspiration to come up with a cool memory, ask the other Players for ideas!

It will solve your creative problem and have everyone else be more involved and interested in your character.

## Clarity

Moments of “clarity” happen when, in the heat of action, your character gets a somewhat better grasp on herself.

In game terms you can call a **Pause** and tell the other Players how your PC feels about the current situation and his own actions.

The other Players can, and are encouraged to, ask you any kind of questions about your PC's feelings and thoughts on the current situation, and you are expected to answer truthfully.

This is an Out-Fiction Player-to-Player conversation, but it will give your PC *Clarity*.

Clarity can then be **spent** to add **+1 Expert** die to any of your rolls, at any moment **before merging**. (see *The Challenge* chapter for more info)

You can store up to three points of Clarity, then spend them one by one or all at once.

You can call for Clarity only once per Scene.

Sara's character, Agape, is chasing a melange dealer down an alley.

She calls a **Pause** and says: *“this mess is all Demetrios fault! damn him and his stupid addiction!”*

Now both Roberto and Andrea get to ask Sara questions about this.

**Andrea** - if Agape is so upset with Demetrios, why is she helping him?

**Sara** - I think, even though he is a junky and a moron, she feels loyal to her comrade.

**Roberto** - drug addiction is an issue for Agape? I mean, morally?

**Sara** - not really, if you can still be a functional person.

**Roberto** - so the problem is not what you do, but how you do it and how it reflects on performance?

**Sara** - more or less, yes.

**Roberto** - ok, no further questions.

**Andrea** - me neither.

This way Sara earns +1 Expert die as a token of her character's Clarity.

# TAGs

Dreamwake rules are firmly rooted in the fiction shared at the table.

In the game your character can or can't do stuff depending on what you and the other Players specifically describe: actions, circumstances, details, etc.

Through this whole process Ritual Words allow everyone to have a say in a functional way.

Usually this is all you need.

But sometimes you also need to roll dice ... and fiction matters.

How? Through **TAGs**.

If your PC is known to be "*big and strong*" she will be allowed to do things that a small or weak character can't.

Thus, pure fiction is enough to make the game work.

But sometimes you may want a finer level of detail, and a more tactical approach; to this end **any** fictional element can be TAGged as **mechanically relevant**, meaning that from now on it will affect the dice you roll, whenever appropriate.

A TAG is, per se, always a **neutral** element.

You can TAG something that you perceive as inherently positive or negative, but in the end it will always affect your dice in a way that is determined case by case ... being "*big and strong*" is a boon when you need to lift a crate or intimidate someone or hold your liquor, but it is a hindrance if you need to slip in a tight space, and is irrelevant if you want to bake a cake.

Exactly how TAGs and dice work will be explained in a later chapter; for now you only need to know that if, in a situation when you need to roll dice, if a TAG is considered positive it will give you +1 **Expert** die (it is a die of good quality), if the TAG is considered negative it will give you +1 **Danger** die (it is a die of bad quality), and if the TAG is considered neutral or irrelevant it will give you nothing at all.

To this regard a TAG that ends up being judged as both positive and negative will count as neutral, and be ignored.

The game system recognizes three broad categories of TAGs, each one with peculiar characteristics explained in its own chapter: **Perks**, **Tools** and **Details**.

## Why Negative?

First of all, negative TAGs can be fun to roleplay and can be exactly what you need to feel that your PC is truly as you picture it in your mind.

Secondly, they basically translate into **free dice**.

Bad dice, sure, dangerous ones... but each offers a 33% chance of getting a Critical HIT, for free!

## Perks

Perks are used to TAG qualities that are inherent to your character, be they of physical, mental or psychological nature, or even abstract things such as social status, training, experience, etc. When you TAG something as a Perk you have to decide if it is a positive or negative element of your PC (when in doubt always assume it is positive).

For Perks, a **positive TAG** costs 20 Influence points, while a **negative TAG** costs nothing.

The former has an obvious use as it represent a strong point of your PC that more often than not will help it, but it has a steep cost.

The latter can be a peculiar quirk or a flat out weakness of your PC that more often than not will get in her way, but has no cost; basically you are rewarded with additional (but unreliable) dice for the trouble of making your PC a bit less perfect ... which usually also means a bit more human and interesting.

Perks don't have "**levels**" as they are meant to be descriptive elements.

You are explicitly forbidden from TAGing something like "*I am Strong I - II - III - IV*" etc.

What you can do, if you really need to represent increments, is to TAG descriptive elements with a **similar function**; this way when one is relevant it is very likely that the other(s) will be relevant too, and you'll benefit from all their dice.

A good example could be *Big Muscles* and then *Strong Arms*.

A bad example, to be avoided, is something like *Martial Arts Novice* and then *Martial Arts Expert* and then *Martial Arts Master*... as you are basically doing the 1 2 3 thing with words instead of numbers.

**Dreamwake** offers (in the Crunchy Bits chapter) a list of unique Perks used to represent the distinctive elements of Jemnost characters.

This is by no means a limitation to what you can TAG as a Perk; it is just a bunch of pre-cooked stuff meant to help you better represent the Dreamwake setting in your game sessions.

Roberto is creating his character, named Malcom.

From the Dreamwake Crunchy Bits chapter he picks the one Perk that will define his PC as a "**Tower**" from the *Great Board* faction; this is obviously positive, and paid for.

He then writes down "**Loner**" as a second Perk... what is it? what does it mean?

Chatting over the table it turns out that Malcom feels OK being alone, is also socially awkward ... this is judged as mostly negative, so the Perk is free.

Roberto also writes "**Scarred by Deliria**" ... when asked he explains how Malcom has a sort of *festering wound* on his back; it is not biologically infectious but it reacts to Deliria and its vile creatures by spreading and hurting; it is very cool and very negative, so it is free.

## Tools

Tools are used to TAG instruments that are external to your PC.

It can mean items such as weapons, vehicles and clothes.

It can mean people like allies, contacts or even enemies.

It can mean buildings, groups of people ... anything that your PC may “use” to her advantage.

Tools can have TAGs of their own, used to describe their unique characteristics and make them better Tools ... just like Perks are used to make your PC more defined and versatile.

For Tools, a **positive TAG** costs 5 Influence points, while a **negative TAG** costs nothing.

This makes Tools a lot cheaper than Perks, but with good reason.

They can sometimes be unavailable (too far, caught up in problems of their own, lost, damaged, stolen, killed, run out of ammo).

But most of all, Tools are **less effective** than Perks as each TAG only grants +1 Action die instead of +1 Expert die (meaning a die of basic quality, not bad but not good either).

When you TAG an element of the fiction in this way, the **first TAG** must always be *the item itself* : assume it's a somewhat run-of-the-mill, basic version of such item/person.

Then, with additional TAGs, you can “build” your Tool with extra qualities, implements and features.

Even if the fiction tells you that such item has incredible special characteristics, special powers, special options ... to access them you first have to buy them as TAGs.

Maybe you first have to learn how it all works, maybe it first needs some repair or activation ... the details are up to you.

During the game it was established that the Kenon warriors can have access to a traditional battle-garment known as *Philosopher Vest*: a tight full-body suit, black, made of an extremely tear-resistant nanofiber cloth which also muffles any sound made by the wearer's movements.

Sara's character, Agape, is gifted with one of those for some reason; now in the fiction she has it, so she can use it to its fullest.  
Period.

But when it comes to rolling dice it won't give her any dice-y advantage, so she decides to TAG her Vest as a Tool.

The first TAG has to be **Philosopher Vest**.

This is enough to grant her +1Action die whenever the Vest might be useful.

She then spends additional points to add more TAGs to her Tool, getting extra Action dice if the right circumstances are met.

So she TAGs the fact that her *Philosopher Vest* is **tear-resistant** and has special

**sound-absorbing padding** in strategical points and also that it is a **symbol of status** among the Kenon.

### Tools and Ownership

You can pay Influence to TAG elements of the fiction as somehow relevant to the more dice-y aspects of the game, and for simplicity's sake you'll probably write them down on your sheet ... but they are not "yours".

This is true for items, that can be lost, destroyed, or maybe lent or gifted to other characters. This is even more true for Non Player Characters (**NPCs**) which, as you will learn, are sort of a *shared property*.

You can design them and be the main source of info about them, you can even use TAGs to better define their relationship to you, so that the other Players have an agreed-upon base of information on how to play them ... but you can't just use NPCs as if they were objects. They will always be free to act of their own accord, to betray or help you, to have their own problems and needs, to expect something from you in return for their actions.

### Consumable Items

By default your Tools and any other item in the game are considered as having "just enough" of whatever it takes to perform their normal functions. Vehicles have fuel, weapons have ammunitions, etc.

There are **Opposition** effects that will deplete your resources, but other than that you should not worry about such things.

This is not true for items that are meant to be **scarce** or in limited supply.

A gun has basically infinite bullets, but you only have a few of those armor piercing ones.

Your car has functionally infinite fuel, but only a few nox-bursts.

And your stash of PurpleDream weed runs always out too fast.

To represent such fundamental scarcity the table can agree to TAG a fictional item as **Consumable**, a special negative TAG meaning that each and every use of this item **costs** you 2 Influence points.

This is true both in and outside of a Challenge.

In the fiction you have "*a bunch of*" something that you don't go squandering around because "*it is valuable*" ... the item itself may be virtually endless, but your Influence is very much limited and too precious to go to waste.

Also notice how I talk about "*fictional items*" instead of "*Tools*".

If in the fiction you find some grenades, you are not forced to TAG them as a Tool; using them (thus **consuming** them) will give you no extra dice, but you will still get their full fictional effect (hitting lots of things all at once with explosive violence).

## Details

If Perks are traits of your character and Tools are instruments she can use, Details are everything else.

Literally any element present in the fiction can be TAGged to be mechanically relevant.

As already explained, **all TAGs are neutral** until the circumstances turn it into a boon or hindrance to your PC's actions.

One of the fun elements of Dreamwake is to find clever ways to exploit the Details surrounding your character, turning a problem into a solution, an obstacle into an opportunity.

When you TAG something as a Detail you must, just as you do for Perks and Tools, make a judgment call to decide if it is, right here and now, positive or negative for your character.

For Details, a **positive or neutral TAG** costs 2 Influence points, while a **negative TAG** earns you +1 Influence.

Details are even cheaper than Tools, but are basically "lost" as soon as the element they TAG becomes obsolete in the fiction.

For such reasons they have the full effect of a TAG: +1 Danger if negative, +1 Expert if positive.

You are also encouraged (with a +1 Influence reward) to produce negative Details, as they make the fiction more interesting and challenging.

And anyway they still give you extra dice, which is always good (even if their quality is bad).

Andrea's character, Demetrios, is hunting down a suspect heretic in a sprawl of backstreets and alleyways.

Normally it would not be such a difficult endeavour, but this time some Details are making things tougher ... the weather is bad, **it is raining**, and this area is incredibly **crowded** of beggars and homeless people.

As soon as Demetrios leaves this area, maybe sneaking into a building, both Details will become obsolete.

It is still raining, and there is still a crowd ... but on the streets, not inside!

Of course such Details are still on the table, so if Demetrios finally catches up with the heretic on the roof of the building the "*it is raining*" Detail will be relevant once again ... if in a positive or negative way, it all depends on what exactly the characters will do in this one situation.

# Hurt & the End of all things

The Hurt track shows your PC's ability to participate in the current mission before pain, grief and any other kind of ailment crushes it.

You start the game with three available boxes, and you can later buy up to a total of six.

Every time you suffer Hurt, check one box and write a short description of what it actually means in the fiction (a gunshot wound, lots of bruises from a bad fall, searing humiliation, etc). Each checked box adds **+1 Danger** to all your rolls.

When the Hurt Track gets filled up your PC meets the **Game Over** condition.

It is up to you to decide if the PC is dead or lost or retired or whatever makes sense ... either way your PC is permanently off the game.

As an alternative you can opt to **Grit Your Teeth**.

You're a mess, possibly more a hindrance than a resource for your team... but hey, the alternative would be to **give up** the mission (failing its objective) in order to fast forward to the *FollowUp Phase* and properly heal up.

So you choose for your PC to still be in the game, but with problematic limitations:

- fictionally she will be exhausted, wounded, grieved or otherwise incapacitated
- you can not initiate a Challenge by interacting with a Passive Obstacle
- if an Active Obstacle engages you, and there is no other PC present to help you, you lose
- you can only make *Supplemental* rolls during a Challenge
- if you suffer one more Hurt effect your PC is definitely **dead** (or any suitable alternative)

## Hurt as a Resource

At any time during a Challenge you can self-inflict one Hurt to your PC in order to instantly score **+5 HITS** on a single roll; you are not limited to your own rolls.

The only requirement is to describe how your PC injures herself in order to obtain such a result.

At any time during the Action Phase you can self-inflict one Hurt to your PC in order to instantly nullify a Hard Opposition effect.

The only requirement is to describe how your PC injures herself in order to obtain such a result.

At any time during a Challenge you can choose to somehow retire/kill your own PC.

In exchange for that sacrifice you get to instantly overcome one Obstacle, scoring **1vp**.

This can be done even if your PC has no more Hurt Boxes left, and the only requirement is to describe how your PC sacrifices herself in order to obtain such a result.

## > Intel Phase

After the SetUp Phase is over the game enters in its Intel Phase.

You are going to build together the basic frame for a Mission your PCs are going to tackle.

This happens both Out Fiction, with the Players brainstorming and writing down notes, and In Fiction, with the PCs being briefed on a job/quest/mission by someone.

To do this, you shall follow the next steps to the letter, in this exact order.

### Step 0 - Extra Info

Your PCs are going to obtain **very basic and scarce info** about thir Mission.

This is intentional, as you must NOT pre-narrate the story behind your future mission; most things you will have to discover through active play.

To get any additional info during the Intel phase follow this procedure:

- clearly identify which Player is asking the question
- let him ask the question (*be brief, be specific!*)
- now everybody else can offer one possible answer (*be brief, be specific!*)
- the Player who asked the question must choose one of the options presented
- the Player whose answer was chosen **earns** +1 Influence point

If no one offers a possible answer, then that information is not available to the PCs.

If a Player wants to just add his own informations he can: state clearly what info you want to add (*be brief, be specific!*) and if nobody objects you can **pay** 1 Influence point.

**Sara** - wait, how old is this girl we have to kidnap?  
**Andrea** - don't know ... are you officially asking?  
**Sara** - yes.  
**Andrea** - mmm ... I see her as very young, about 12 years old.  
**Roberto** - nah, for me this girl is a young woman, I would say at least 25-ish.  
**Ilenia** - whatever.  
**Sara** - I like the child thing. Our target is a 12 years old girl.  
**Andrea** - and I get one juicy Influence point!

### Two Player Game

Nothing changes, but for clarity's sake I'll spell it out...

You either **ask** the other Player and stick to his answer (awarding him +1 Influence) or you **say** what you like and pay 1 Influence to have it.

## Step 1 - *Incipit*

What you do during the Intel Phase is describe a fictional scene involving your PCs.

You do it by **freely chatting** around the table, exchanging ideas, with the mediation of the *Ritual Words*.

You already know that they are getting some sort of mission from someone.

You already know that they are going to accept it.

Everything else you have to define through the use of this rules.

First of all you have to frame this scene by answering to some questions:

<b>Where</b> The PCs are in ...	a Jemnost office / a dark alley / a cave under the bastion / a seedy pub / an armored van
<b>How</b> The mission details are being delivered by...	chatting face to face with a live person / speaking on the phone / reading a message
<b>Who</b> The mission details are being provided by...	a well known associate / an anonymous contact / a friend / one of the PCs
<b>What</b> The nature of the mission is...	a job assignment / a personal agenda / an official business / an off-the-books thing

By answering the above questions our friendly Players figure out that their characters (**where**) are located in a high-luxury restaurant of their bastion (**how**) amiably chatting with a woman.

(**who**) They never met her before, and no one seems to know who she is; the only thing she says about herself is that (**what**) she is a representative for some very important people who need a job done efficiently, quietly and without too many questions asked.

## Step 2 - Primary Objective

What is, in very simple and broad terms, the **apparent** goal of the mission?

As a way of example your PCs may need to do one of these things...

- uncover and resolve the causes of a urban riot
- find and stop a serial killer
- steal classified intel from a rival bastion
- protect a convoy travelling through Deliria

Keep it **brief**, keep it **short**, and if you end up with a chain of tasks, simply use the LAST part as the Primary Objective; everything else is either implied or not important or best suited to be a *Condition* (see later)..

Your PCs need to **identify and then find and then apprehend and then bring back** to justice a violent criminal.

All this should actually become: Your PCs need to bring back to justice a violent criminal.

**Most of all, do NOT tell the “story of the mission” at this stage!**

The PCs only get the bare minimum information to start their mission; any answers they might seek about the mission’s backstory or other useful intel on the current task has to be purchased as **Extra Info** or obtained through active play in the **Action** Phase.

I will show you a **wrong Primary Objective**:

Find a little girl and then bring her back home, alive and uncorrupted by Deliria. She is the daughter of a powerful Queen of this bastion, kidnapped by an heretic who actually was a pawn in a scheme waived by the Council of a rival bastion.

What problems are there?

- 1 - you created a chain of tasks; a correct PO would be simply “*bring her back home*”.
- 2 - by the same token some things should be either implied (find her) or expressed as a Condition (she has to be alive, she has to be uncorrupted).
- 3 - everything else is NOT meant to be part of your PO, avoid pre-narration **at any cost**.

By asking for *Extra Info* you may end up with a similar result, but the gameplay is completely different: Influence is earned and spent, everybody gets involved in the creative process, and the risk of blank-page-panic is minimized.

- do we know where the girl is? No, you have to find her.
- who is the girl? She is the daughter of a powerful Queen of this bastion.
- who took her? why? etc etc etc

### Step 3 - Conditions

Players have the option to add some *Conditions* to their Primary Objective.

Every Condition establishes a binding detail about HOW the Primary Objective has to be carried out, where failing to fulfill any one such requirement means to **fail the whole mission**, regardless of the Primary Objective being reached.

Each Condition grants +1d6 Influence points to all Players if they complete the Mission with success.

Your group ends up with a mission to bring back home a little girl, apparently kidnapped by an evil heretic.

You then decide to add some conditions: she has to be **alive**, she has to be **uncorrupted** by Deliria, and the local authorities must be **left in the dark** about this whole matter.

Why?

Maybe you wanted things to be more difficult and interesting, maybe it just made more sense to you this way, or maybe you wanted a juicy +3d6 Influence at the end of the mission.

It doesn't really matter, as long as you are all OK about it.

Conditions are not secondary independent objectives.

Nor are they to be formulated as useful/logical steps needed to reach the main goal.

They are, quite literally, limits to your character's freedom of action ... meant to complicate their lives introducing "rules" that would otherwise be optional.

**"Don't Cause Civilian Deaths"** could be an important moral issue for some PCs, or a fundamentally irrelevant detail for others (and even a stupid no-fun idea for some).

But if you make it into a Condition it will become of paramount importance for everybody, as the whole mission (and reward!) will depend on it.

## Step 4 - Length & Difficulty

To accomplish a mission the Players have to accrue a certain amount of *Victory Points (vp)* through the actions of their PCs.

The **Length** level indicates how long and articulated a mission will be:

Quickie	03vp	one-shot friendly
Standard	06vp	one to three sessions
Long Haul	12vp	up to ten sessions
Campaign	24vp	the adventure of your life

On the other hand, the **Difficulty** level measures the overall hardship of the mission.

Let's just say that in order to get *Victory Points* you must overcome *Obstacles*, and to do that you must score a certain number of successful results by rolling some dice.

The Difficulty rating tells you how many successes (**Hits**) you need to roll all at once to overcome a single *Obstacle*:

<b>Level</b>	<b>Rating</b>	
1 Easy	4	a lone PC can overcome it with a bit of effort
2 Medium	8	not so hard for a team of PCs
3 Hard	12	a true challenge even for a team
4 Extreme	16	a very difficult and dangerous bite to swallow

## Step 5 - Opposition Deck

Now the Intel Phase is complete, you just need to perform a last preparation step.

You should have ready at hand a full *Opposition Deck* made up with 4 copies of each of the 7 types of Opposition Effect.

You can print it from the **Game Aids** file, or you can use a normal poker deck using the cards numbered Ace through Seven to represent the corresponding **Hard Opposition** effect.

**Take 1 card** for each type of Hard Opposition effect, then either select or randomly pick 3 more cards; this is your starting Opposition Deck.

For more info see the "*Soft & Hard Opposition*" chapter.

## > Action Phase

When you are satisfied with the mission as built during the Intel Phase, the game progresses into the **Action Phase**.

Just as the SetUp and Intel Phases, the Action Phase is a free dialogue between all the Players.

In this Phase you will play the actual mission, one scene at a time.

In each scene you and your fellow Players will describe the world around your PCs, have them take action to overcome obstacles and achieve goals, and have fun rolling a lot of dice to see how it all goes.

## Scenes

A Scene is a mechanically defined unit of gameplay that starts and ends in a very specific way. As a rule, all Scenes have to be **additive** in their content, meaning that you can't play a flashback-scene or otherwise go backward in the described timeline.

At the start of every session the first Player with an idea to start a scene **Takes the Lead**, which is a special card that grants several benefits; after a scene ends, the next Player in clockwise order frames a new scene.

A scene **starts** when a Player frames it and **ends** immediately after a Challenge is resolved or the Location/Cast substantially change.

To frame a scene you must follow these exact steps:

- step 1 - roll any **Nemesis** dice, if present (*explained later*)
- step 2 - describe where the scene takes place (**Location**)
- step 3 - describe when it happens in relation to the previous scene (**Time**)
- step 4 - describe what PCs are present *in addition to* your own PC (**Cast**)
- step 5 - describe if there are any NPCs and what they are broadly doing (**Extras**)

### **I Want to be There Too!**

If your PC is not part of a scene you can introduce her by spending **3 Influence** points, if it makes any sense in the Fiction.

Do NOT explain how the PCs got to their current position in the scene.

There is no play-space between two Scenes.

If someone feels the need to fill in such blanks, the details have to be established In Fiction by some PC: have some character comment or ask questions about how they got there ... **play**,

don't pre-narrate!

If you're unsatisfied by the framing (maybe because it skipped too far ahead in logical, temporal or geographical terms) you should speak up your mind and suggest ideas and modifications; just remember that you shouldn't argue about it, use **Ritual Words** instead.

### Framing, Pre-Narration & GodMode

A good framing should be as schematic as possible, to the point of becoming a clear list of the needed elements: Nemesis Roll, Location, Time, Cast and Extras.

This way everybody is on the same page and the game can start right away.

If you don't do it exactly in this way it becomes possible to unwillingly "**cheat**".

How?

When you spend your (and everybody else's) time to describe an elaborate setup explanation for what will become, after you storytell a whole pre-scene, your actual Scene ... well ... you are doing the Scene Framing **wrong**.

Usually this happens because you have a strong personal idea about how the Scene *should* be, and to obtain it you need to impose certain specific circumstances.

Or, just as well, before a messy and uncertain scene could start you first want to obtain something you deem *important* and you want to prevent anyone else from interfering.

Well, **you can't!**

Why?

Because that "*something important before a scene*" really **is a Scene** in and of itself.

What you are doing is not a reasonable setup to link Scene-A with Scene-B.

What you are doing is **stealing** a scene using a sort of GodMode.

You are **telling** the other Players what happens in a very compact way, making any kind of intervention and contribution from the other Players quite difficult and uncomfortable.

*"Dude let me talk, this is just my setup to GET to the Scene"*

This way everything goes as you say, no problems, no surprises, no die rolls, no interference from other Players ... no game.

It doesn't take much to end up doing such a thing.

More often than not it doesn't even take any ill will or conscious desire ... you didn't wanted to cheat, you were sincerely (and naively) just filling a conceptual blank in the story, linking Scene-A with Scene-B.

That is why Scene Framing has such a clear and tight structure; **use it**.

### Want to Cheat? Here is how...

Usually after the framing is done there is a moment of silence when everybody is picturing the scene and deciding what their PC do... **take the initiative!** ...if what you say survives Pause, Veto and Disagreement, you have got it your way in shaping the current scene.

The PCs are in a bar and their arch-enemy just walked in...

...describe how your enemy sits at a table and addresses you "So let's talk!"  
...describe how bullets start flying and your PC jumps into cover.

## Being the Leader

When you frame the first Scene of a game session you also get the **Lead** card; the only other way to obtain it is to take it “by force” using Disagreement.

Ownership of the Lead has two benefits:

- you can bid for Disagreement with 1 point discount on your final expense
- you can add your PC to a scene whenever you want, if it makes sense at all (your PC is always “*right on time*” or “*fortuitously passing by*”) at no Influence cost.
- you can pick the order in which PCs act during a Challenge

## Playing the Game

What can you do exactly in a scene? What is this “game conversation” actually about?

Well, there are three things you can do:

- play your Character
- flesh out the Scene
- challenge Obstacles

The first and most obvious way to participate in a scene is to **play your Character**.

Tell the other Players what your PC says and does, how she looks and behaves, what she thinks and feels.

When in doubt, **ask questions** to the other Players!

**Sara** - Agape enters her cell in the Kenon academy, where she lives with a few other members of her same Bathos.  
**Andrea** - Demetrios follows her closely, watching around like a child stepping in a church, almost fearful of making too much noise, and says “Are you **sure** I can be here?”

The second way to participate is to **flesh out the Scene** by adding, at any time, details about the world surrounding the PCs, up to the limits of their immediate perception.

Answer to the questions other Players might have and then **ask more questions!**

*...following...*

**Andrea** - Demetrios feels out of place and looks worriedly around. Is anyone here at the moment beside him and Agape?  
**Roberto** - Nope, you seem to be alone for now. But I also have a question: are female and male cells separated or mixed?  
**Andrea** - They are separated, the Kenon Academy is a bit like a College.  
**Sara** - Veto, the House of Keno is all about body and willpower and being a super soldier, I like to think of them as completely gender-blind.  
**Andrea** - ok, sounds cool.

Play the NPC characters that might be present: what do they say and do, how do they look and behave ... but **not** what they think and feel; remember that you're limited to what a PC can perceive!

Specifically, **NPCs** are freely handled by the whole table.

Everyone can "play" an NPC at any moment; there is no exclusive property (not even for Tool-NPCs).

Cooperate, suggest, comment ... don't ever argue; use the **Ritual Words** instead.

The only limitation you have while playing an NPC is this one: when your PC directly interacts with an NPC, all the other Players will make her move and talk, but not you.

This is to prevent you from answering your own questions.

**Sara** - Agape walks up to the mysterious man in the street and, ignoring the rain, stares at him as to express a fairly aggressive "WHAT do you want?!" but without words.

**Andrea** - the man is dressed with a dirty and ragged cloak, concealing everything underneath it...

**Roberto** - ...except for the face, that you can clearly see. It is the old face of an old man. It is not ugly, but it looks kind of weathered and... and...

**Ilenia** - ...and tired, you can clearly read his eyes as old and wise and tired, like they have seen too much. And he stares back at Agape, unflinching, not an easy feat ... and then he looks to Malcom and Demetrios too, and making a disgusted face says "I won't speak in the presence of a machine" ... the last word is almost spat out as if it was an insult.

**Andrea** - Demetrios steps forward "How DARE you address me like that?! Who are you!? Answer me!" and the old guy says...

**Roberto** - Wait. Demetrios is talking to him now, so you can't answer.

**Andrea** - Oh, right ... so Demetrios asks the question, what does the geezer say?

## Narration Rules

This has all been already explained, but I want to recap it all in one place, so it becomes as clear as possible.

When you **flesh out the scene** you describe stuff that is present in the fiction around the PCs. Any element present in the fiction is rich of details that no one ever mentions because they are sort of implied.

Saying that "a *thug*" enters the scene is enough to summon a mental image without the need to go into a deeper description, right?

But if you actually interact with such element the details start to become important: is the thug armed? is it ugly? does it look aggressive, or dumb, or drunk? is it male or female, tall or short? Your job as a Player is to **ask a bucket load of questions!**

Most of the time you and your fellow Players will simply answer questions and produce fiction in a **natural and spontaneous** way.

Again, always remember to stick to **the boundaries of PC perception**: what a PC can directly see, hear, smell, taste and touch, right here and now.

To know something more, your PC will have to take action.

You can't say "*the street thug has a hidden gun*" and then wonder **if** some PC will spot it or not.

No one perceives it? Then you can't describe it.

Instead you can say "*your PC **notices** that the thug has a gun hidden under his jacket*" or maybe "*the thug draws out a hidden gun!*".

Now that the basics are clear, let's introduce a few new techniques you can use to **flesh out the scene**.

## - Quoth the Die

Sometimes you may feel that “*just describing*” doesn’t sit right with you.

Let’s say your PC is running away from an enraged Abomination and, stumbling down a dark backstreet, she looks for an escape route...

Is there a fire-escape ladder? A breakable window? A sewer entrance? ...or not?

Usually you would answer your own question, simply describing what the backstreet looks.

Or you would look at the other Players for answers.

A third option is to let a die “speak”.

To do it you have to call a **Pause** and tell the other Players you want to settle the matter by asking a question to the dice.

First, formulate a Yes/No question and make it as specific as possible, explaining clearly what you mean.

Again, the only possible answers are bound to what a PC can perceive right here and now, so come up with congruous questions!

Then grab 1d6 and roll it: odds mean **No**, evens mean **Yes**.

After the answer is known feel free to add further details to wave it into the current fiction, or to ask more Yes/No questions to produce, bit by bit, a satisfying description.

**Quoth the Die** trumps normal narration, as it happens inside a Pause and, by virtue of that, what has just been described can be edited in light of the new answers offered by the die.

**Roberto** - Malcom is running away from an enraged Abomination and, bolting into the nearest back street, frantically looks for an escape route... does he finds one?

**Sara** - Don't know, does he?

**Roberto** - Pause, I'll ask the die ... is there a safe escape route here?

**Andrea** - Wait, the question is too generic, and by the way your PC can't know beforehand if a route will lead him to a safe escape or a lethal trap.

**Roberto** - You are right, what I meant is: do I see an obvious way to leave the Abomination behind? I don't know, maybe a fire-escape ladder, a breakable window, a sewer entrance? That's what I mean by “*escape route*”.

**Andrea** - perfect, roll the die!

**Roberto** - damn, I got a “No”.

**Ilenia** - then there *is* a window at street level, but it's closed shut by iron bars... and you hear the heavy breathing of the Abomination getting closer behind you, what do you do?

## - Shake

Another way to contribute in **fleshing out the scene** is to move things up ... to “shake” them. You can do this simply by interjecting in the flow of the game discussion with a clear “**Shake!**” statement.

You earn +1 Influence point and then roll 1d6 on the *Soft Opposition* table (explained in a later chapter), freely choosing a main target if the need arises.

This will make something problematic happen in a generic way; work with the other Players to properly detail it and wave the event into the current fiction.

## - Set an Obstacle

What an Obstacle is, and how you can challenge and overcome it, will be explained at length in the following chapter.

For now you just need to know that you can TAG elements of the fiction as Obstacles.

This is very important, as it is **the only way** for the mission to actually progress toward its successful conclusion.

### The Awkward Silence

Sometimes all the Players fall silent and look at each other expectantly... but no one speaks. They don't know how to start things out or what to do next or who should say what or something along those lines.

This is **good**.

It offers an opportunity to take a good look at the current situation, regroup, and get a better focus on the game.

The first thing to do is to **look at your Character!**

Where is she now? What was she doing? What does she wants/needs to do next?

If you look at your own PC and say what she does and thinks, all becomes much clearer.

The second thing you should do is to **frame a quiet scene** where the PCs can meet and talk and actually say “*What the hell is going on? What do we do now?*”.

This helps Players to set things straight, clarify obscure points, remember past details and put together all the pieces of the puzzle... and drops new ideas on the table!

Brainstorming in this fashion is very fun and immersive because while your PC is thinking hard and brainstorming to make sense of things, **you** (the Player) are doing the same!

Try to get the big picture... make sense of apparently random details... ask questions about nebulous events.

In the end this is all **pure speculations and conjectures**; it will give the PCs a direction, but then again maybe their assumptions were correct, and maybe they were wrong... go do something to find out!

# Obstacles

When your PC acts in the fiction she always succeeds.

You say she tries to do something ... and the only possible answer is “*It succeeded, what do you do now?*”.

This way the fiction will go on, producing a story full of action and adventure, but the Mission won't get resolved ... you need Victory Points for that.

The only way to accrue VPs is to overcome **Obstacles**.

When a PC interacts with an Obstacle she no longer has automatic success; you have to roll dice in order to discover what happens and how things go and, if you manage to succeed, then you earn +1VP.

## What can be an Obstacle

A fictional element TAGged as an Obstacle will somehow resist to the intentions of an acting PC: a door won't open, an NPC won't cooperate, a wall won't be as easy to climb as it seemed, a monster wants to swallow her whole...

But you can't TAG just anything in the fiction as being an Obstacle.

To be an Obstacle, an element of the fiction must follow these three criteria:

1) The element must be **something**, meaning it can not be **everything**

A particularly thick and hostile patch of jungle is a good Obstacle.  
“*The hostile jungle*” as a whole is not. *(but it can be a good Detail)*

2) The element must be **something**, meaning it must not be a metaphorical or insubstantial concept.

One person being uncooperative is a good Obstacle.  
The general uncooperativeness of the population is not. *(but it can be a good Detail)*

3) The element must be somehow **resisting** the actions of the PCs in a **congruous** way.  
This point needs a bit more explaining...

All the TAGs you have seen until now are purely descriptive: you TAG a fictional element to make it mechanically relevant, but the element was already there, you are just highlighting it. The Obstacle TAG instead is both descriptive **and prescriptive**.

You can TAG an element because **it is** obviously capable of resisting whatever the PCs do, or you can TAG an element in order to have it **become** capable of resisting whatever the PCs do.

**Sara** - Agape leaves the gory scene of the crime and goes to talk to the little girl.

**Roberto** - She looks very shaken, her eyes lost somewhere very far.

> *Option 1 - No Obstacle*

**Sara** - Ok, I use all my training to focus on her behavior: small movements, muscle glitches, reflex reactions, everything ... and start questioning her very carefully...

**Andrea** - At first your words seem to fall on deaf ears, but as you read her you pick up every small reaction and adjust your approach to stimulate her towards opening up ... eventually she starts crying and answering.

> *Option 2 - Obvious Obstacle*

**Sara** - Ok, I use all my training to focus on her behavior... small movements, muscle glitches, reflex reactions, everything ... and start questioning her very carefully...

**Andrea** - I say "*Obstacle!*" ... as you start reading her you can see she is obviously in a traumatic state of shock, you can't easily do it ... you'll have to put quite some effort to get answers out of her.

*[a Challenge starts, dice get rolled, the game progresses]*

> *Option 3 - Not Obvious Obstacle*

The situation is the same, but now **Stoya** (a telepath from the Sem'ya Razum played by your friend Claudia) steps forward to solve the situation.

**Claudia** - While Malcom tries to comfort the little girl I plant my eyes on her and focus on her mind; shock or no shock, I can simply see into her brain: what happened to her? what do I see?

**Andrea** - I say "*Obstacle!*" ... as you start probing her mind you feel something is wrong.

**Claudia** - What? She can't be a trained Kenon, she can't resist my scan!

**Andrea** - And yet something is wrong ... I don't know what ... guys?

**Roberto** - Stoya finds unexpected germs of thought in the girl's mind, extraneous stuff...

**Sara** - Yeah, there is like a block, a wall, a maze...

**Ilenia** - Yes, and right now you wouldn't be able to say for sure if it feels more like some kind of human tampering, or more like something that stinks of Deliria.

**Claudia** - Damn!

*[a Challenge starts, dice get rolled, the game progresses]*

### The Meaning of an Obstacle

In other games when it comes to rolling dice you often do it to reinforce the idea of how cool/strong/amazing is your character: yesterday facing a street-punk was a problem, today it is a challenge, tomorrow it'll be a piece of cake.

Not in Dreamwake.

When you TAG an Obstacle you are saying "*I want to be challenged, I want to face unexpected odds, I want to really shake things up*".

That is what is always going to happen facing an Obstacle: things **will** spin out of your control, unexpected events and problems **will** arise, bad shit **will** rain down.

If you don't think something should give you such a headache then **don't** TAG it as an Obstacle.!

## How to TAG an Obstacle

When you TAG something as an Obstacle you must actually **write it down** somewhere (a blank sheet or a post-it are ideal) where everyone can easily see it.

Now you all must work together to TAG and write down three Details representing “**strengths**” of the Obstacle against the PCs:

- they must describe features of the Obstacle itself, not circumstantial elements.

*the enemy knows how to take advantage of the forest terrain ... is OK.*  
*we are in a claustrophobically cramped forest ... is NOT.*

- they must be congruous with the situation.

Being "*artfully engraved*" is not a strength for a door that has to hold off a breaking attempt, just as being "*very good at swimming*" is not a strength during a firefight on top of a skyscraper.

- they **do not** earn you any Influence points ... these three basic Details are for free.

A group of street thugs gets tagged as an Obstacle.

So you write down "*Street Thugs*" on a post-it and start chatting about their possible strengths.

The PCs may perhaps **see** that the thugs have superior numbers, are well armed, or obviously exploit the local terrain very well, etc.

The PCs may perhaps **hear** the thugs say something giving off how they are ferocious, or determined, or united, etc.

The fact that it is heavily raining (for example) can be a perfect Detail, but it is an environmental element, not something "*of the thugs*", so it's not a valid choice as one of the three base Details for this Obstacle.

After you write down the Obstacle itself and its three base Details, leave some space free... you will need it to note down some other values, and to add more Details relevant to the Obstacle or the situation (these work as usual, so you earn Influence normally).

## When to TAG an Obstacle

You can TAG something as an Obstacle at any moment.

You can do it anytime **before** a PC actually interacts with the fictional element.

You see some guards in front of the building, and they are an Obstacle!

You can do it anytime **while** a PC is interacting with the fictional element.

You are speaking with the guards but they seem adamant to the fact that you are not allowed into the building, Obstacle!

You can do it immediately **after** a PC has interacted with the fictional element.

You manage to get past the guards at the entrance and are just starting to walk away when you hear one of them exclaim "Hey you! Wait a minute...".  
Obstacle!

## Investigation & Obstacles

I'll spell it out clearly: you can **not** set an Obstacle to stop a PC from **finding/noticing** it.

To be an Obstacle something has to be present in the fiction, and to be present in the fiction something has to be perceived by a PC; finding it becomes a moot point.

You can turn something into an Obstacle if a PC tries to **get further info** out of it (through analysis, interrogation, interpretation, etc).

Just remember that any info you get is completely **subjective**.

It represents what a PC has discovered in the fiction, thus it may or may not be accurate.

When you try to investigate about something talk to the other Players, brainstorm, concoct theories, **ask questions** ... and then use the PCs to **DO** something about it, to confirm or disprove your speculations.

Let's get back to the "*gory scene of a crime*" mentioned in a previous example. While Agape and Stoya try to extract informations from the little traumatized girl, Demetrios and Malcom "*work the scene*".

This is what you **can not** do:

There is a bloody shoe impression near a window ... Obstacle! ... if you win, you find it.

This is what you **should** do:

The room is obviously thrashed and full of blood and gore, the bodies lay scattered all over the place ... this whole crime scene is an Obstacle!... let's see if analyzing it we can find something to make sense of this mess.

## > The Challenge

When a PC interacts with an Obstacle **to obtain something**, her Player needs to roll dice to discover what the outcome is; this procedure is called **Challenge**.

A door is locked and TAGged as an Obstacle.  
You have your PC examine it **because** no one described it well and you want better details.  
Your PC doesn't want anything with the door, she is just being curious... basically you are still deciding if you can/want to interact with the Obstacle or not.

A door is locked and TAGged as an Obstacle.  
You have your PC examine it **because** you want your PC to get useful info to get past it.  
This is a Challenge as your PC is interacting with the Obstacle in order to overcome it.

A door is locked and TAGged as an Obstacle.  
You have your PC ignore it and look for an alternate passage.  
This is **not** a Challenge ... yes, your PC is trying to overcome the Obstacle, but she is **not** interacting with it in any way.

More than anywhere else, in a Challenge it is of paramount importance to ask again and again "what is your Character doing, **exactly**?".

You are **not** required to painstakingly describe every detail of every action, nor to take a thespian approach and dramatically act every gesture and word in a first person stance. The important thing is to describe in your own words WHAT and HOW your character is doing.

"I attack the guard" is definitely **not enough** and the other Players should prompt for more details, asking direct questions.

"I throw a punch at the guard's face" is exactly what the system needs.

"I shift my weight from one foot to the other, twist my torso and put all my strength into the shoulder movement, aiming to the guard's chin right where I see an old scar" is surely a viable description, but it is also exceedingly detailed for the purposes of the game; do it only if you enjoy such a storytelling exercise.

"I hit on the barmaid" = bad

"I hit on the barmaid dishing out some funny and witty lines" = good

"I approach the barmaid with a confident smile and say [insert the whole imaginary conversation]" = good, but overkill, use at your own discretion.

When you face a Challenge you have to determine, depending on the fictional situation, how many dice to roll and of what type they have to be; then you roll such dice pool, read the results and apply them, with a final wrap-up to elaborate how the mechanical effects wave into the fictional reality of the game.

This is one **Turn** of a Challenge.

If the result of the dice roll is not enough to overcome the Obstacle then the Challenge goes on with a new turn.

New turns continue to be played out until the Obstacle is overcome or the involved PCs somehow stop interacting with the Obstacle (get defeated, opt to retreat, find an alternate solution, etc).

**Before** you roll any dice you always have to clearly state the purpose of your roll choosing between Victory or Support.

When you roll for **Victory** you compare your roll with the Obstacle difficulty and, if you beat it, the Obstacle has been overcome.

When you roll for **Support** you create a pool of successes to help future Victory rolls.

It would appear that the stupid locked door is the only way out from a dangerous situation. And it is TAGged as an Obstacle.

**Roberto** - I think Malcom could try to pick the lock, but we have no time! That *thing* is almost upon us, what do we do?!

**Sara** - I say Agape voids her mind and gives a quick but attentive look at the door, assessing any sign of decay, rust, or a weak spots of any sort.

**Roberto** - Yeah, go bust it down girl!

**Sara** - mmm ... no, look at my awful dice pool, I think I'll be better off by rolling for Support, then you guys may have a better chance at smashing it.

**Andrea** - Sounds like a plan.

[Sara grabs her dice and rolls]

# The Use of Dice

In **Dreamwake** you only use six sided dice (d6), but they are distinct into three different types. A die scoring a success is called a HIT, while a non-HIT result is called FAIL.

Each rolled die can also produce a “critical” effect by either producing Influence or Opposition points.

How a die scores a HIT and produces points varies depending on its type:

- **Action Dice** are white: they score a HIT with a roll of 4+.

Each die scoring a 1 produces one point of Opposition, while every 6 produces one point of Influence.

- **Danger Dice** are black: they score a HIT with a roll of 5+.

Any HIT produces one point of Influence, while any FAIL produces one point of Opposition.

- **Expert Dice** are blue: they score a HIT with a roll of 3+.

Any HIT produces one point of Influence, while FAIL produces one point of Opposition.

## Base Dice Selection

Your PC has done something to an Obstacle and now you have to roll dice for it.

First you have to compose your dice pool.

To do it you have to **look at the fiction**, because (as a Character) what you do and how you do it changes everything.

Based on such considerations you will select a Skill, and maybe some Tools and Perks.

Select which Skill you are using and add the appropriate amount of Action dice to your pool.

The choice is yours, but the process is public and should involve all the Players at the table.

For every Player that judges your choice not fitting to the circumstance at hand, you have to **add** one Danger die to the pool

Now you do the same (adding included) for all the Perks and Tools your PC is using and that you think apply to this specific situation, both in an advantageous or detrimental way.

To this end you can (*and should!*) edit and expand what you described in order to represent (thus include) as many Perks and Tools and Details as you like.

If for some reason your pool turns out with zero dice, you still get to roll one single Expert Die as your base pool ... *and good luck to you, brave soul!*

### To Veto or Not To Veto

If someone describes fiction that doesn't feel right, call a Veto, don't think twice about it. But dice selection is different.

The fiction may be perfect for you but the selected mechanical elements feel strange ...

A PC throws a punch at an NPC ... selecting a “medical” Skill and the “drunkard” Perk.

Such a thing could make perfect sense to the Player of that PC ... maybe his character knows anatomy, thus knowing where to strike ... maybe being a drunkard means (among other things) that his character has been in many bar fights and has experience in such a field even if he's not a professional brawler.

Yes, ok, it makes sense, but still it feels like thin reasoning to you.

So you either strongly Disagree and prevent the Player from selecting such elements.

Or you say “*Ok but meh*” ... he gets to roll what he wants but it's more problematic than expected, because you get to add Danger to her pool..

## Details as Dice

Now that you've gathered your base dice pool all should have a look at all the **Details** relevant to this Challenge and evaluate them in light of the specific fictional circumstances, judging them as either positive, negative or neutral for your PC's actions.

Notice how Details are meant to always be added to the pool, not elided against each other.

If two elements appear opposed they **don't** cancel each other out, you instead add them **both**.

All positive elements add +1Expert die.

All negative elements add +1Danger die.

Elements that should be both positive and negative are neutral or irrelevant, ignore them.

## Merging & Rolling Your Dice

You can only ever roll a maximum pool of **up to six dice for each type**: 6 Action and 6 Danger and 6 Expert, for a grand total of 18 dice.

But while gathering your dice you could end up with more than the allowed amount; in this case you have to **merge** the excess dice, even reducing the basic pool if necessary, until your dice total for each type is within the allowance.

The ratio works on a **3:1** basis, where three dice of one type become one die of a better type: three Danger become one Action; three Action become one Expert; three Expert become one automatic Expert HIT.

9 Danger --> 6 Danger +1 Action.

8 Danger --> 5 Danger +1 Action

7 Danger --> 4 Danger +1 Action

If you have a pool of 10 Danger and 7 Action and 3 Expert...

10 Danger --> 4 Danger +2 Action

7+2 Action --> 6 Action +1 Expert

3+1 Expert --> 4 Expert

...you will end up rolling 4 Danger and 6 Action and 4 Expert

# Reading the Outcome

So you gathered dice, arranged them into a legal 6/6/6 pool and rolled them, producing a number of scores that express how your PC's actions shape the fiction.

You have to follow this exact order in reading the results...

## 1) Influence

You note down any Influence points you might have earned and add them to your current pool.

## 2) Opposition

Take note of any Opposition points you might have accrued and use them to advance the common **Opposition Clock**; every time the Clock makes a full round and touches again the "zero" position, it triggers a **Hard Opposition** effect; draw it now and resolve it.

## 3a) Outcome for VICTORY

When the total number of HITS is **equal to or greater than** the Obstacle Difficulty you have a **Success**: the Obstacle has been overcome and the team accrues +1 Victory point.

When you score at least one HIT but the total is **less than** the Difficulty you have a **Failure**: the Obstacle has not been overcome and you have to roll on the **Soft Opposition** chart, unless **Hard Opposition** has already occurred in this turn.

When the roll scores **no HITS at all** you have a **Fumble**: the Obstacle has not been overcome and you immediately activate one **Hard Opposition** effect in addition to the normal accruing of Opposition points (which may in turn trigger one or more HO effects).

## 3b) Outcome for SUPPORT

In this case:

- if you roll zero HITS you suffer a normal **Fumble**, activating the *Hard Opposition*.
- if you roll more FAILS than HITS and no *Hard Opposition* has yet occurred, roll on the *Soft Opposition* chart.
- for every 3 HITS scored add +1 Action HIT to any one Victory roll attempted during this Challenge (use one or more dice to keep track of this).
- any spare HITS become Action dice that must be used by whoever rolls next

To be clear, 3 HITS become +1 Action HIT ... an automatic HIT, not an extra die to be rolled. And they **can** be spent **all at once** by anyone attempting a Victory roll. Once used up, they're gone.

The extra Action dice produced by spare HITS **must** be **all** spent by the next Player

attempting any kind of roll ... you can't decide who benefits from them.  
This is intentional.

#### 4) Narration

Once all the mechanical effects of the roll are sorted out you have to describe how they actually come to pass into the fiction.

**First** you must always describe what the Obstacle is doing, **then** (and only then) you describe everything else: your PC's actions, their immediate effects, and any other elements you need to wave into the current fiction.

##### The Action Has Failed?

The dice roll does **not** represents the specific success/failure of your PC's actions, just the degree of their influence over the situation.

A specific action may succeed but not produce the expected outcome...

I hit the target but his armor absorbs the damage, to no relevant effect.

...or it may fail but generate a positive consequence.

I miss the target, but it gets scared and runs away.

How your PC's actions actually play out is pretty much in your hands as long as what you describe doesn't incur in Veto or Disagreement, and you take into account the effects of Soft & Hard Opposition.

If you want you can also use your general degree of Success/Failure/Fumble as a guideline (1 HIT = meh / 5 HITS = wow) ... but it's not mandatory, nor particularly encouraged.

Also note that your PC's actions **do not** have to be the direct cause of an Opposition effect, but this will be better explained in the appropriate chapter.

The complete flow of a Challenge turn goes like this:

- describe your PC's action
- gather your dice pool (Skills + Tools + Perks + Details)
- adjust your dice pool (if needed, swap dice and/or reduce excess dice 3:1)
- roll the dice
- tally Influence points
- tally Opposition points and, if needed, draw Hard Opposition effects
- tally HITS and, if needed, draw Hard Opposition effects or roll on the Soft Opposition chart
- describe how the effects of the test translate into the fiction

## Other Challenge Considerations

### - Multiple Obstacles

You may end up in a Challenge where more than one Obstacle is present in the scene.

In each turn you can only roll for Victory **against one** Obstacle, or roll for Support.

When you do, consider all other Obstacles as some kind of complex Detail.

**First**, evaluate which ones are relevant to your PC's actions and add +1 Danger for each relevant Obstacle beside the one you are directly acting against.

**Second**, factor in all their specific Details.

Malcom is lock-picking a door (Obstacle #1) when a group of guards appears and spots him (Obstacle #2) making his options very scarce very fast.

In the fiction Malcom may appear to both fire some cover shots at the guards while still hammering at the lock ... but mechanically Roberto will have to choose between rolling for Victory against the door, or rolling for Victory against the guards.

Of roll for support, which doesn't require any such choice.

### - Active & Passive Obstacles

Depending on the current fiction you may evaluate an Obstacle as being Active or Passive.

A **Passive Obstacle** does nothing except standing in the way of your PC's actions: a wall, a door, a guard that doesn't consider you (yet) as an intruder.

You can simply walk away from it, or ignore it, with no ill consequences.

An **Active Obstacle** is instead something that CAN act against you and, by definition since it is an Obstacle, WILL act against you however possible.

Avoiding it through running, hiding, bluffing or any other kind of action is considered a valid interaction, thus requiring a test.

Ignoring it is an option, but not a particularly bright one, as the Obstacle is not ignoring you, causing your PC to suffer whatever fictional consequence may seem appropriate **at the end of the Turn**.

Malcom is lock-picking a door (Obstacle #1) and some guards show up (Obstacle #2).

In this specific case the door is clearly **Passive**, hence Roberto can just stop messing with it and then resume if/when the guard problem is solved.

On the other hand the guards are clearly **Active**; ignoring them may prompt the other Players to limit Roberto's descriptions with Veto or Disagreement ... and seems only

reasonable that Malcom will (for example) be apprehended by the guards, preventing him from further participating in the Challenge.

### **Fiction & Consequences**

Notice how the fiction is limited by the rules, just as the rules are limited by the fiction.

Your PC can not “die” unless she suffers mechanically enough Hurt, and even then her fate is in your hands.

So when an overwhelming force tries to “kill” your PC and for some reason you let the fiction run its course, it means that your PC may be horribly wounded and left for dead, but still breathing.

Another example can be represented by things like Tools.

Fictional events may say that one of your items is lost, depleted, broken or otherwise inaccessible.

But the Tool is still written on your sheet, so you can find a way to retrieve, reload, repair or otherwise regain access to it.

Then rules have more solidity than fiction?

Not at all!

Your PC can't act as if nothing happened after she has been described (just fiction) as severely wounded.

Why?

Because it would look bad to other Players, prompting the use of **Ritual Words**.

## **- Multiple Characters in a Challenge**

Every PC that is present in a scene where a Challenge is taking place is automatically considered to be involved in the Challenge and will have his Turn.

By default the first Player to act is always the Leader and then the game follows in clockwise order in what is called a **Round**.

Players can agree on a different order of action to better suit their intents but, if need arises, the Leader picks the order for everyone else.

If the Challenge ends before the current Round is completed, the remaining Players can choose to perform a “**Supplemental Roll**”.

Fictional events get rewinded and edited a little bit, to allow their PCs to act, but their rolls will not count as either Victory nor Support; they are just “void” rolls to score Influence and (hopefully) as little Opposition as possible.

Opposition effects play out normally, though, and a complete Fumble is still resolved as usual.

## - Inactive Players

In order to perform a roll in a Challenge your PC has to somehow interact (in a direct or indirect way) with one or more Obstacles.

So it may happen that in a given Turn your PC's actions happen to be both perfectly reasonable but also Obstacle-irrelevant: you can describe them but you do not roll.

In any such case, **at the end of the Round**, all inactive Players roll a Soft Opposition effect.

Location: the claustrophobic streets of an island adrift in the Sea of Mist.

Agape, Malcom and Stoya are keeping at bay a gang of "*talismugglers*" while Demetrios hacks a gate open.

Both the gang and the gate are TAGged as Obstacles.

Demetrios is interacting with the gate, so Andrea rolls.

Agape is in a brawl with the gang members, so Sara rolls.

Malcom is beside Demetrios, shooting whoever gets near the Incarna, so Roberto rolls.

Stoya was fighting beside Agape, but then has an idea... this Turn she retreats in a relatively safe spot near Demetrios and Malcom, and expands her *glatz* searching find the mind of someone living in the nearby buildings ... this way she will be able to scan it and extract info about the sprawl of alleys they are into ... maybe finding an alternate path, avoiding this damn gate that won't open.

Stoya is doing something that will be incredibly useful, but right now in this Turn she is not **interacting** with the gang nor with the gate.

This means that Claudia doesn't get to roll for her action, and at the end of the Round she'll roll a Soft Opposition effect instead.

The same rule applies also when, for whatever reason in or out fiction, you are unable to make your PC act in a Obstacle-relevant way.

## - PvP Conflict

When your PC wants to directly interfere with another PC's actions and simple Player-to-Player discussion is unable to solve the issue in a **very brief** time, then Conflict rules are used.

- 1) all Players involved describe what their PCs **attempt** to do and also clarify what this is supposed to accomplish **here and now** (you can't obtain anything permanent or long lasting).
- 2) they all gather the respective dice pools, evaluating all relevant Details as if in a Challenge.
- 3) they all roll and tally up their respective HITS: **no** Opposition or Influence points are produced, and the Player with most HITS gets to describe the whole outcome, using each Player's HIT totals as a rough guideline; ties are handled through Disagreement.

# Opposition

All the bad things that may happen to your PC are enforced by the **Opposition** mechanic.

*Soft Opposition* happens on a Failed roll and as a price for some Goals.

*Hard Opposition* happens on a Fumbled roll or when 10 Opposition points are accrued on the Opposition Clock.

## - Soft Opposition

When a *Soft Opposition* effect needs to happen you roll 1d6 and consult the chart below, waving the effect into the current fiction:

- 1) **The situation gets sticky** = your circumstances worsen, someone or something becomes more hostile, or appears just now and is already hostile; either way it ACTS against you.
- 2) **Your weakness shows** = one of your negative TAGs (be it a Perks, a Tool or a Detail) causes a BIG PROBLEM for some reason; if you don't have any, roll again.
- 3) **Shit hits the fan** = collateral damage happens... something important gets broken or lost, someone important (NPC) gets apprehended or seriously wounded or dangerously separated from the PCs... or you deplete all your reservoirs of a fictional "resource" you might need right now or in the near future (ammo, food, drugs, etc).
- 4) **Something wicked this way comes** = you see or hear or otherwise perceive something BAD that is happening somewhere near, or you similarly perceive something BAD that is just about to happen/arrive at your current location, or someone tells you about something BAD that is happening somewhere else (but is still relevant to the current situation).
- 5) **Cut Out** = something happens to separate your PC from the others, kicking her out of the current Scene.
- 6) **The Ball Drops** = same as "*The situation gets sticky*" but the thing acting against you ALSO gets the upper hand; someone trying to block you pins you on the ground, someone trying to hurt you lands a solid blow, someone trying to run from you gets out of sight ... if you were interrogating someone he may do or say something to stop your inquiry, if you were doing something to an object it may "react" in a problematic way (starting an alarm, making a loud noise, breaking down/jamming, etc).

## - Hard Opposition

*Hard Opposition* is managed through the use of a deck of cards containing a combination of seven different effects.

When the Players as a group accrue 10 or more Opposition Points on the Opposition Clock, erase 10 points and draw a card, then wave the effect into the current fiction:

01 - **Hurt** threatens the game presence of your PC.

Add it to the deck for violent and stressful survival missions.

- *Rule*: inflict 1 Hurt to your PC

- *Fiction*: the Obstacle acts against your PC inflicting substantial trauma (physical or otherwise); if that's not an option feel free to come up with the most interesting way to explain such harm.

02 - **Loss** deprives your PCs of support and tools.

Add it to the deck for challenging survival missions.

- *Rule*: Roll 1d6 and apply the appropriate condition:

**1-2 = *Unprepared***, one of the Tools you were using this Turn is now lost or broken or depleted; if that's not possible select another Tool in the scene based on the current fiction

**3-4 = *Maimed***, your PC suffers an incapacitating injury; describe how it limits your PC, then inflict 1 Hurt to her

**5-6 = *Isolated***, your PC exits the current scene and can't re-enter it; she can't be framed in scenes with other PCs, nor can they enter into her new scenes (Leader included)

- *Fiction*: the Obstacle acts against your PC causing the appropriate condition; if that's not an option, then feel free to come up with the most interesting way to explain such circumstance.

03 - **Mess** aggravates the situation the PCs are into.

Add it to the deck for delicate missions where errors have severe consequences.

- *Rule*: add +1 to the Difficulty **rating** of the whole mission

- *Fiction*: something goes wrong stirring the situation way south; new enemies show up, alarms go off, complications and problems arise.

04 - **Twist** turns the tables on what the PC know.

Add it to the deck for insidious and convoluted missions.

- *Rule*: you can edit the Primary Objective and or the Conditions of the current Mission.

- *Fiction*: the Obstacle acts revealing, willingly or inadvertently, some new truth about the current situation and possibly the whole mission.

05 - **Pitfall** makes a problem insurmountable by a direct approach.

Add it to the deck for very difficult elite missions.

- *Rule*: one of the Obstacles present is "*blocked*" and the current Scene ends.

Future interaction with a blocked Obstacle won't initiate a Challenge; instead every involved PC rolls for Soft Opposition, then the Scene ends.

- *Fiction*: the Obstacle does or reveals something that makes it impossible to beat in the current situation, closing the scene on a dramatic cliffhanger.

06 - **Nemesis** reveals a recurring menace.

Add it to the deck for scary and chase-like missions.

- *Rule*: TAG an Active Obstacle (present or new) as a Nemesis; from now on it can be mechanically overcome but not fictionally eliminated.

Then at the start of every scene roll 1d6; on a "1" the Nemesis will appear before the end of the Scene (Framing Player call) actively engaging the PCs.

New effects do **not** TAG other Obstacles, but **only** add +1d6 to the roll.

- *Fiction*: a Nemesis can be a tough-as-nails adversary, or a pernicious nuisance that somehow can't be eradicated, or a very common/numerous/swarming variety of enemy that periodically makes its menacing appearance.

07 - **MixUp** modifies the Opposition Deck composition.

Add it to the deck for those missions where the PCs don't really know what to expect.

- *Rule*: add +1 card to the Deck randomly selected by rolling 1d6 on this list; also the new card is immediately resolved.

- *Fiction*: as per the normal Hard Opposition effect.

## - Not All Is About You

An important concept to correctly and easily wave Opposition effects into play is this: not everything happens as a direct consequence of your PC's actions.

You, a Player sitting at a table, roll dice and some Opposition effect happens ... it does not mean that your PC has screwed up his actions, nor that she has to be the cause of the effect. It must not strictly be "**your Character's fault**" if a Nemesis appears, or if a guard just happens to pass by, or if a shocking truth is revealed.

Don't strain yourself thinking "*how the hell is this one action of my PC going to justify this one Opposition effect?*".

Look at the whole situation and then go for the simplest, most obvious explanation.

The team is analyzing the scene of a dreadful murder ... dice get rolled ... and among other things Claudia produces enough Opposition points to trigger a Hard Opposition effect: she draws a **Mess**.

In Fiction her character, Stoya, has done nothing wrong and is actually getting good results when, by talking to some security officer, it turns out that the *Pawns* from the local police force did something stupid and contaminated the scene, destroying some evidence. What a mess! ...and the Mission Difficulty rises by +1.

## - Irrelevant Obstacles

As explained earlier, when a PC somehow ignores an Obstacle, the fiction runs its course imposing some kind of fictional consequence and eventually ending the Challenge for it.

The same happens to Obstacles that can, due to some Opposition effect or to some clever PC action or to simple fictional circumstances, become "irrelevant".

This means that the Challenge closes and the fiction goes on; but for mechanical purposes the Obstacle has not been properly overcome, so no VPs are earned.

The team has trouble opening a door (obstacle) until they decide to ram it down with a vehicle... dice are rolled but the result is not enough to overcome the Obstacle.

On the other hand the Players agree that **for the fiction to make sense** the door must have been destroyed by the impact, along with a fair portion of the surrounding wall.

This means that the door is now irrelevant and the team can enter the building, but **no VPs** have been earned.

Demetrios has to climb down a hole (obstacle) in the ground.

Rolling against it, Andrea triggers a Hard Opposition effect, drawing a **Hurt**.

He describes how Demetrios slips and badly falls down, suffering a serious injury.

But he is now at the bottom of the hole ... the Obstacle has become irrelevant to him, so he shakes off the debris and starts limping away from the hole; no VPs have been earned.

## > Respite

Having some respite during the *Action Phase* is a way to remove some *Hard Opposition* effects and to refresh some spent resources.

If the fiction allows for it, you can try to have *Respite* at any moment during the Action Phase, even during a Challenge, but in this case it counts as your action for the current Turn.

Step 1 - declare that you are trying to get respite and select one effect from the Respite table.

Step 2 - follow the instructions presented in the table.

Step 3 - describe what your PC actually does in the fiction to achieve that effect.

**MDL** : Mission Difficulty Level (Easy 1, Medium 2, Hard 3, Extreme 4)  
**SOpp** : Soft Opposition  
**HOpp** : Hard Opposition

Effect:	How To:
- lower an Obstacle Difficulty rating by -2	pay MDL Influence and roll for SOpp
- reset the number of Nemesis dice to 1d6	pay MDL Influence and roll for SOpp
- nullify a Loss	pay MDL Influence and roll for SOpp
- nullify all Mess effects	play 2+MDL scenes (even non consecutive) in which at least one PC does something to accomplish this goal
- unblock one Pitfall	play 2+MDL scenes (even non consecutive) in which at least one PC does something to accomplish this goal
- refresh all your Mementoes	play a scene where your PC somehow takes a breath and asks another PC about her past; if she answers and you reply in kind, you can both refresh all your Mementoes. When the talk is mostly over, something unexpected happens: roll for SOpp. You can't pay for this Respite with a Memento.

### **Play a Scene...**

When you need to play a certain amount of scenes (from 3 to 6) in order to clean up some Messes or to unblock a Pitfall, my advice is to take this opportunity to have some **quick and colourful** scenes.

Do the classic movie-scenes where the PCs meet and plan what to do next, then split up and each does something useful to set up the plan.

This way you'll burn through the necessary scenes quickly and effortlessly, give everyone a spotlight, explore some minor but very interesting details about each character's personal behaviour.

Alternatively find a way to do something useful for your Respite goal even in other "normal" scenes; and it may also happen that you simply play a Scene normally and afterwards you realize it could be useful to activate a Respite... in both cases tell it to the other Players and if they agree, that Scene counts.

## > FollowUp Phase

After the last Victory Point has been earned and the current Scene has been closed, the Action Phase officially ends and the FollowUp phase starts.

Understand that Victory Points don't represent the exact amount of the Mission; they are a measure of how long an *interesting story arc* lasts.

It can mean the end of the mission, implying that any thing left unresolved is not really interesting/important and can be dealt with in a somewhat expedient way.

Or it can mean that a chapter of a longer story has ended, and you will keep playing to see what happens next... in a new chapter.

The FollowUp phase is here to sort out exactly this.

First of all, agree about having a Normal FollowUp or a Continuous FollowUp.

In a **Normal FollowUp** the Players wrap up the fiction of the Mission by collectively narrating how the Primary Objective was achieved.

The PCs are assumed to go safely home and get the expected compensation.

Erase all Hurt, refresh all Mementoes, lose all Clarity, nullify all Hard Opposition effects

Each Player describes one brief Scene for his PC, portraying a moment of non-mission life with some **named** NPC.

Ritual Words are in effect as usual, but no TAGs can be placed on the fiction, meaning there can be no Obstacles, hence no Challenges.

Then the FollowUp ends and you are ready for a new Intel Phase.

### Why Stop?

The style of fiction this game supports does not require the full narration of a complete story; you play the important/interesting parts of a dangerous mission, everything else is obviously of little consequence and can just be described in a few words.

Let's say your Primary Objective is to save a little girl from a vicious heretic.

Supposedly you have to find the heretic, find the girl, and do whatever necessary to bring her back home alive and well, if at all possible.

So far the team has only spent time investigating the whereabouts of the kidnapper, but just doing so allowed you to accrue all the VPs needed to end the Mission.

The game ends.

You **played** what turned out to be the only important part, the rest is **obviously** going to go smooth, it's not interesting/important to play out in detail ... tell the story of how your team saved the girl, and cash in the reward.

In a **Continuous FollowUp** the Players decide that the Mission is not yet over. There is no wrap up, the PCs do not get back home, the compensation is yet to come. Consider your situation using as a reference the last Action Phase scene you played; describe a single moment of rest for each PC, limited by the current circumstances. Erase all Hurt, refresh all Mementoes, lose all Clarity, nullify all Hard Opposition effects

Your FollowUp has ended and now the next Intel Phase **must** represent the logical continuation of the previous situation:

- maybe this Mission is not yet complete, so your new one will be its natural continuation
- maybe this Mission has gone south, so your new one will be a way to repair the damage
- maybe this Mission was all a ruse, so your new one will be a search for who framed you

### **Why Continue?**

Sometimes you may find the fiction produced in the Action Phase quite compelling and full of possibilities, worthy of being continued and developed.

Wrapping it up sooner than expected may not be satisfying ... that is why you have the option to do otherwise.

Same example, you investigate the whereabouts of the kidnapper and just doing so allows you to accrue all the VPs needed to end the Mission ... but you want to keep playing, exploring the rest of the story.

So you wrap up the current events as instructed by the rules, and use the tools at your disposal in the Intel Phase to set up the perfect sequel to your first Mission.

# 03 - Dreamwake Crunchy Bits

The rules as explained up to this point express “*how the game works*” in general terms.

The **Crunchy Bits** are specific elements unique to the Dreamwake setting: powers, equipments, special phenomena, etc.

These bits of “crunch” have a twofold purpose.

**1** - To be staples of the Dreamwake setting, shaping it into a recognizable and unique world. The principle at the core of the “**setting in a box**” model is precisely that, by using the rules of the game, you will end up experiencing something very Dreamwake-like even if you never read voluminous books about how the Dreamwake world is supposed to be.

**2** - To offer a practical example of what can be accomplished with the game rules, so that you can easily expand them during play, or even hack them to shape your own original worlds.

The following Bits are arranged so that you will first learn how the bizarre world of Dreamwake works in a broad sense, and then you’ll be presented with info about the specific factions of the Jemnost.

# > The Gears of a Crazy Machine

What follows is a list of bits that explain how the strange world of Dreamwake works, both inside the irradiated safety of bastions and outside, in the mad wilderness of Deliria.

## Low Tech

For unknown reasons anything electronic just **does not work** in Deliria or in Deliria tainted areas, and any kind of mid-long range signal simply does not carry.

This is the main reason why, even within bastions, truly sci-fi technology is very uncommon. The other reason is that the Ordo keeps it all for itself... in a very aggressive way.

You can describe pretty advanced infrastructures and public services (that is why bastions *need* the Ordo) although most are faulty and, in dire need of repairs and are generally.

All other tech should be at more or less modern day level.

**Only the Ordo** has access to truly sci-fi technology, and even then each Legio is limited to its own field of specialization.

## Crap Items

Due to the terminally dangerous and weird nature of the *World Outside* all bastions suffer from a widespread and chronic lack of ... everything.

Advanced scientific knowledge allows survival by turning almost anything into (re)usable raw materials and energy sources, but the end products are ragged and unreliable at best.

Unless specifically stated otherwise, **all** Tools representing physical **items** have the *Crap Quality* negative TAG.

Cheap materials, poor fabrication, or maybe excellent materials and craft worn down by endless wear and tear... tell the other Players what's wrong with your items.

## Reality Friction

Inside a bastion, whenever someone tampers with the fabric of reality it causes "friction". Then, when you find yourself into the open seas of Deliria, **you** are the infection and this causes Deliria to notice you and react accordingly.

**Friction** is an independent **Opposition Clock** that produces SOpp instead of HOpp.

Such Opposition effects must be described: in a bastion, as some kind of weird unnatural phenomenon or, in Deliria, as a sort of rising hostility of the environment.

When you cause Friction roll **1d6** and accrue half its score (round up) in Friction Points.

## Germ of Thought

Deliria is not just a name for a savage environment; it is something living, with a malevolent will of its own ... and it is **infectious**.

People believing in things that aren't real are opening their mind to *germs of thought* that will eventually twist the reality surrounding them, either unconsciously or willingly.

This is why **religion** is forbidden and illegal in the *World Inside*.

Infected people that have become aware of their condition and use it for their own aims are called **Heretics**; when inevitably all sanity and humanity are lost they become **Abominations**, monsters, ravenous emanation of Deliria.

Any infected NPC should be TAGged as either Infected or Heretic or Abomination, accordingly to her current status.

These TAGs allow them to do increasingly more impossible and disturbing things, depending on their level of mojo.

A PC can acquire, whenever appropriate, the negative perk "**Infected**" or buy the positive perk "**Heretic**"; being an Aberration is not allowed, as it equals to the mental death of your character.

Whenever you add such perks to a pool, or your PC somehow draws on their power, you accrue Friction; always consider Friction as being a form of Germs of Thought.

## Relic Items

Sometimes people bring back strange and unsafe stuff from the *World Outside*.

Sometimes a badly shielded area of a bastion gets so corrupted that even inanimate objects start to warp.

Either way, it can happen to come across artifacts or materials made of Deliria-tainted matter. Such things are highly illegal as their very nature makes them dangerous and unpredictable.

Relic Items are meant to be evocative and disturbing elements of the Dreamwake setting, not cheap by the dozen "magic items"; so when you introduce one in the game keep this principle in mind and follow these steps as closely as you can:

**1** - This is an "infected" object, so tell everybody what is **wrong** about it.

**2** - Tell which part of it is made from a strange material unknown to man.

Draw inspiration from the Sea of Deliria it comes from, or from one weird quality you want it to have.

Mistborn Wood, Deep Dust Glass, Thunder Cloth, Bleeding Iron...

**3** - If you want the item to be a Tool...

> the baseline TAG is the same as usual (aka: the item itself)

> it does not have the *Crap Quality* TAG

> it must have the negative TAG "**Relic**", marking it as an item infected by Deliria

**4** - You can add **one** TAG to represent some kind of unnatural property of the item. Nothing flashy or blatantly magical (no fireballs, thank you)... try instead to come up with something sinister or odd ... this is the physical matter of which nightmares are made of!

a razor that inflicts vicious cuts but leaves no marks on the skin  
a jewel that whispers disturbing and amoral (but effective!) seduction hints to its wearer  
a metal pin that turns pain into pleasure so intense it gives serious addiction

**5** - Know that every time you make use (in any way) of a Relic item you accrue Friction.

Malcom has found a strange blade, a sort of **curved knife** (baseline TAG). Its design looks alien and a bit **disturbing**, all made of spires and tentacles, but its quality was astonishingly good (Relic TAG).

Toying with the blade to see how sharp it is, Malcom cut himself a little on a finger ... and finds himself gasping for air, almost suffocating as if his lungs were filled with a cold water, his tongue tasting salt.

Roberto adds the **kiss of the abyss** TAG, explaining that getting cut by the knife makes you feel like drowning in ice cold ocean water.

From now on, every time Malcom uses this disquieting item in any way he will accrue Friction.

## Travelling Through Chaos

The whole world is split in two: the *World Outside* and the *World Inside*.

This is not a figure of speech: you either are inside of a bastion, or you are outside, where everything and everywhere is always Deliria.

The main area in Deliria is the **open sea**, an a-geographical territory whose look depends on a peculiar "theme".

No form of electric or electronic machinery or telecommunication signal works here; also no flying vehicle has ever reached its destination, ever.

Within the open sea a traveller can come across many strange places, such as remnant realities, ephemeral places and maelstroms.

In the **World Deck** you'll find four sample themes: the **Sea of Mist**, the **Sea of Dust**, the **Sea of Shades** and the **Sea of Sparks**.

No journey across Deliria can ever be implied, you must **always play** them out.

Travel works as a series of abstract “steps” toward a final destination, represented by anywhere or anyone you may want to reach.

Your first step is **always** to exit your bastion and step into the open waters the Sea surrounding it; from there you have to take one step reach any relevant destination, such as:

- a bastion within your current sea
- a remnant within your current sea
- the open waters of a different sea

**At the beginning** of any scene set in Deliria you accrue Friction.

**At the end** of any such scene roll one die:

- a “6” means you can reach your next step in the following Scene
- a “5” means you reached a random destination, just not the one you wanted
- any other result means you are still lost, with a “1” also producing +1 Opposition

Traveling through Deliria you get access to two new **Respite** options:

> anyone can spend one or more Clarity to add +1 to the travel roll, this also produces one SOpp effect for each +1 applied to the roll..

> the Framing player can have her PC play a scene where, **alone**, she confronts one of her deepest fears, suffering 1 Hurt as a result of it.

No Obstacles can be TAGged in this scene.

This way the journey ends and the final destination is reached in the very next scene, no more steps allowed.

## > Jemnost Factions

The *Jemnost* is the elite group that rules and protects what is left of the civilized world. They do so because they have access to forbidden knowledge and incredible powers. All this is represented through the use of Perks and Tools.

What follows represents only the most essential elements needed to portray a Jemnost character; you are encouraged to come up with new ideas and details, shaping up both your character and the world around her as you play.

For example the whole training of a Kenon character is represented by a single Perk. You can expand on this, coming up with new Perks to portray specific techniques (like Agape's *Killing Hands* from a previous example), new facets of social status (like having a good/bad reputation among peers) or even full fledged promotions to a higher rank (like becoming a Deka).  
If it goes past Veto and Disagreement, you can do it.

At character creation all PCs (except those from the Ordo) **must** pick the *Cultural Hegemony* negative Perk.

Being negative it is free, and does not count against char-gen limits.

### **Cultural Hegemony** [ Perk ]

Formal training and education in any kind of advanced technology and science is, by all means, an esoteric and very rare knowledge, even for members of the Jemnost.

Individuals may have a practical understanding of how to operate and maintain, at a very basic level, a few specific items ... but that is all.

The sole depositaries of true scientific knowledge are members of the Ordo, which can buy this Perk as a positive one, representing their advantage whenever they confront common folk.

# The Great Board

## Position [ *Perk* ]

This perk represents your training and operative standing within the organization, expressed as an official codification of position and color.

You usually have access to the help from a small retinue of *Pawns* (novices) and to equipment the general population would not even dream about, but it is still the standard “crap quality” stuff available in any bastion.

Choose your specialized position on the Great Board from the list below:

**White Towers** could be described as elite enforcers of the law, highly trained policeman, investigators and forensic specialists (although the actual lab-work is performed by cenobites from the Ordo).

**Black Towers** are more akin to soldiers and tacticians, trained in various combat techniques and the use of military equipment and strategies.

**White Knights** are skillful pilots (although the actual mechanical maintenance is performed by cenobites from the Ordo) and well versed bastion dwellers, knowing a lot of places and people and the smartest route to get from one to the other.

**Black Knights** have devoted themselves to the study of how to best navigate and explore the Seas of Deliria, testing such knowledge first hand while leading the convoys that venture into the *World Outside*.

**White Bishops** are, in a very broad sense, diplomats and communication experts. They know how to handle people, how to adapt their behaviour to fit most situations, and how to lie effectively ... not an easy feat to accomplish in a world full of telepaths.

**Black Bishops** could easily be called “spies”.

They don't convince, they seduce and manipulate; they don't behave, they blend in and infiltrate; they don't lie, they con and deceive.

**Kings** and **Queens** of either colour are far above your rank, leading the political aspects of the Great Board, moving its pieces as they see fit.

## Pawns [ *Tool* ]

As a member of the Great Board you have access to a small retinue of Pawns to help you in your job; they are novices with incomplete training ... which is still a lot better than any common civilian could ever manage.

Each Pawn is a single Tool, and a person under your direct responsibility.

# Spiti tou Kenos

## Kenon [Perk]

You are a philosopher warrior from the House of the Void.

Your vathos (depth) within the Spiti is that of an **Ena**, a single unit, an individual responsible for his own actions; above you is a military-like structure made of distinguished **Deka** (head to a ten souls retinue), of respected **Hekato** (leader of a hundred souls division), and of powerful **Xilia** (military chiefs of all Kenon in a given bastion) or wise **Miria** (philosophical leaders of all the Keno community, encompassing many bastions).

Your conditioning in the ways of the Void is complete; the “*Kenon*” perk alone grants you all the benefits from the three fundamental arts of the Void:

**Keno Soma** is an acrobatic fighting style that allows you to dodge in no space or parry using anything at hand; you are limber and agile, trained to flex and twist and then snap as a loaded spring.

The *void body* conditioning is based on the concept of “automatic-combat”: acting and reacting on pure instinct and pre-calculated positioning, with almost no thought process involved, granting you snake-fast reflexes and the ability to fight well even if surrounded and outnumbered; and, as a valuable side effect, your attacks can’t be “read” by Razers or other telepathic opponents.

**Keno Lapse** is the *void perception* conditioning gifting you with a special kind of attention, allowing you to notice and remember even the slightest of details, and then process them as elements of a wider pattern, giving you a clearer vision of most situations.

This, added to a very condensed form of advanced field ballistics, allows you to calculate at a glance the most probable projectile trajectories in a given situation: in a word, you can dodge bullets and perform impossibly complicated trick-shots.

**Keno Theles** is the most secret and important of all Kenos conditionings, the *void will* that allows you to hide your superficial thoughts behind a screen of innocuous fake thoughts, although a direct deep scan will pierce such illusion with ease.

Such training also teaches how to keep your emotions in check, only letting your body express what your rational mind wants it to reveal.

You can spend your Clarity or 3 Influence to achieve one of these effects:

- perfectly recall one memory from your recent past
- know if a person is lying by analyzing her micro-expressions and body language
- know if something you are experiencing is real or is some kind of external suggestion
- forcefully resist to a mental deep scan; but you’ll have to roll for Soft Opposition

# Sem'ya Razum

## Razer [ Perk ]

Born with the gift of telepathy you have at some point been identified and marked with a tribal psycho-reactive tattoo on your forehead and then introduced into the Razum *family* to be properly trained in order to become part of its community.

You are part of a clan, a group of like-minded and compatible people, which in turn is part of the tribe from your bastion.

You are a **Svet** (a light), a solo-operative; you answer to a **Zanosh** (a splinter), an elevated member in your clan; above there is the **Zerkal** (a mirror), your actual clan's leader; at the highest rank seats the local **Glaza** (an eye), one of the people guiding the whole tribe.

Your training encompasses three main disciplines, all provided by the one "Razer" perk:

**Glaz Voevat** is both a martial art and a fast mind-reading technique; basically you read your opponent's superficial thoughts to predict and counteract his every move. You need to see your opponents and be in their immediate proximity to read their thoughts in such a fashion.

This is meant as a 1-vs-1 ability, but if you strain yourself and spend your Clarity or 3 Influence you can face small crowds almost like a Kenon would.

**Glaz Razuma** is the "advanced telepathy" that allows you to *see* and *hear* with your mind at medium range, knowing the approximate position of other living minds, listening to their superficial chattering regardless of physical obstacles. By focusing on a single target you can deep scan it, forcefully extracting information. Alternatively if you spread your focus you can become a mental nexus, linking a small number of willing targets, establishing telepathic multi-directional communication at even long range.

Your mental perception extends in a sphere around you and is always active, just like your normal sight or hearing; you usually don't pay much attention to details (like hearing random distant chatter you have no reason to be interested in) but you can easily focus on something and truly "listen" if the need arises.

Performing a deep scan is always a struggle: spend your Clarity or 3 Influence.

A mental network lasts until either you or the subject drop it willingly or lose consciousness; its range is more or less 1 km and the maximum number of nodes is "a *small group*".

**Glaz Mechtaja** allows you to oppose active resistance to any form of mental intrusion. Another use of this skill is to project mental stimuli, tricking the nervous system of a single target into "feeling" a crude but intense physical sensation (pain, pleasure, hot, cold, etc) and, with considerable effort, even exerting a limited control over its body.

The intensity of your stimuli can freely vary from a light nuisance to a crippling condition, lasting for as long as you dedicate your undivided focus to it (not counting mental nexus links).

Spend your Clarity or 3 Influence to control a target body in a string-puppet fashion. Your control is rough at best, imposed through sheer nerve-stimulation.

### **Psycho-Reactive Tattoo [ Tool ]**

As soon as you manifested a telepathic talent you got branded with a tattoo that glows every time you use serious mental techniques.

It was intended as a seclusion mark, to let everybody know you were able to peek in their thoughts ... in time it has turned into a symbol of power, the legacy of a tribe both feared and respected.

All Razers have a basic tattoo that reacts every time they use the Voevat or Mechtaja skills or perform a deep scan.

Some expand it by adding more grooves and lines, expressing things like social status, tribal rank, allegiance to a certain group or person or idea, past experiences ... or simply to make it more artistic, even changing its active pigment, thus the color of its glow.

Some even learn how to use it as a focus for their concentration or as a distracting element for their opponent's attention..

# Haus der Spiralen

## Schlaf-Lös [ *Perk* ]

You are chronically insomniac, you are touched by Deliria and yet you retain your humanity ... it is a gift, and a burden.

People like you are shunned and feared, but you are also powerful and a needed resource in the fight against the World Outside.

The Haus is overall a very loose and informal organization, with local communities known as Spiralen; in this social circle a distinguished person that spends personal effort to help the well being of her Spirale is a **Spule** (coil), an elected leader would be called a **Herz** (heart) and someone with enough personal trust and influence is an **Ader** (vein), a sort of diplomat whose responsibility is to link and manage relationships between the various Herzen of his bastion and those of foreign Spiralen.

There is a beast within you ... a **Tier**.

You have access to the appropriate Tool, explained in this chapter.

## Social Stigma [ *Perk* ]

This negative Perk represents the inherent fear and loathing most people feel towards the Schlaf-Löss, as they are seen as unstable and dangerous people, or even outright monsters. This Perk is mandatory, at character creation.

## Tier [ *Tool* ]

You can manifest your inner demons in the form of savage and unnatural body alterations, turning yourself into something monstrous and feral that can barely be kept under control. Such beast "sleeps" within you until awakened by your need, a process as lengthy or as quick as you want it to be; the real problem is putting it back in the cage.

### 1 - Herkunft

The first TAG has to be your *Herkunft* (origin); this is a sort of baseline theme that will inform how your Tier looks and behaves; just a couple of words to inspire you.

The Herkunft alone has the shape of a human body; bizarre, strange and distorted but fundamentally a human body.

Ilenia plays an Schlaf-Lös character called Brigit.

Her Herkunft is "*black ice*" ... she explains how, when the tier roars free, her body gets covered by some sort of dark crystal: translucent, full of jagged edges, and *cold*.

### 2 - Further Alterations

Each subsequent TAG will add a new physical trait to your bestial form.

In time Brigit's tier evolves to sport paper-thin **wings** that look like finely engraved obsidian.  
Then her crystal skin thickens and sharpens, turning her limbs into **jagged blades**.  
And she also grows long **talons** on both her hands and feet.

### 3 - Awakening

Awakening the tier is always an all or nothing deal, a complete transformation; you can't summon only part of it.

Pulling the beast to the surface earns you **+1 Exhaustion** (explained later) at the moment of transformation, and then another +1 at the Framing of every new scene in which your PC is present and her tier is awake.

**Putting the tier back to sleep** requires you to spend your Clarity or 3 Influence points or another +1 Exhaustion.

### 4 - Exhaustion

When you roll dice, after any merging, you must turn one Action or Expert die into a Danger die for each point of Exhaustion you have.

This new pool is not merged further, even if you end up with more than six Danger dice in it. You can ignore some points of Exhaustion with the help of **Fetish** Tools, and you have the option to lose all your current Exhaustion by using up a Memento.

It also resets to zero after a *FollowUp* phase.

### 5 - Crashing

Whenever a Schlaf-Lös loses consciousness in any way she "crashes".

When Exhaustion rises **above 6** you are so sleep-deprived that you risk to drop asleep.

The moment you accrue your 7th point, roll a die for every Exhaustion point above the 6th. Repeat the same roll after the Framing of every scene in which your PC is present.

Rolling at least a "1" means that, in a moment of your choice during the current scene, your PC falls into a coma-like sleep while her body gets possessed by the beast within, rampaging against everything and everyone around it, warping reality and summoning chaos and horrors from Deliria.

Treat such nightmare as a new Active Obstacle that does not grant any VPs.

Quelling, restraining or otherwise bring to submission the Tier (thus overcoming the Obstacle) is the only way to stop the madness; if and when it happens, the Schlaf-Lös suffers one Harm, her Exhaustion drops to zero.

### 6 - The Sleepless Mind

You have the unique ability to somehow interact with ambient reality fluxes by spending your Clarity to turn any amount of Exhaustion into Friction, or vice versa.

The exchange works always with a 1:2 ratio: if you free your PC from 1 Exhaustion the ambient Friction rises by 2, and likewise if you absorb 1 Friction your Exhaustion increases by 2.

## **Gestalt** [ *Perk* ]

You can have this Perk only if you also have both the **Schlaf-Lös** perk and the **Tier** tool; it represents advanced mastery of your inner power and new ways to tap into Delirias's gift. The Gestalt perk alone allows you to use:

**Manifestation** is a way to summon a single TAG from your Tier for a very short time, then turn it off for free; you can do this as many times as you want.

You only get +1 Exhaustion the first time you awaken your Tier in the current scene.

Brigit is falling from a building!

But, at the very last moment, she manifests her obsidian wings, landing safely; a few moments later her wings dissipate in a gust of black snow.

**Growth** gives your tier the ability to augment its physical mass, reaching up to a short range or becoming big enough to influence a small group of targets; any awakening cost is raised by +1 Exhaustion.

Brigit can sprout wings, allowing her (one person) to fly.

By feeding extra exhaustion to her tier she could sprout several pairs of wings, or maybe grow so big she basically becomes a flying mount ... either way she can now bring up in the air two or more people.

She could also stretch her obsidian-hard, razor-sharp wings to slash opponents with a formidable reach advantage... or even throw deadly crystal feathers at short range.

**Deconstruction** means you can express your tier through the alteration of surrounding reality.

Your tier must be fully awake, then you can reshape reality in a fashion appropriate to your herkunft, only affecting background scenery and inanimate, free-standing objects in a medium radius around you.

All effects cease when your tier goes back to sleep.

The cost is your Clarity or 3 Influence, plus +2 Exhaustion and +1 Opposition.

Brigit is in a tight spot: wounded, alone and surrounded by enemies... so she lets out a scream, and the nightmare begins.

Her body turns into a winged form made of obsidian and black ice, the sky darkens, and a cold wind chills everybody to the bone.

Here and there spikes of frost erupt from the ground, thrusting against Brigit's opponents. Black snow starts to fall.

## **Fetish** [ *Tool* ]

For some bizarre reason Schlaf-Lös can find a measure of solace from their constant state of exhaustion in the form of sensorial deprivation and physical constraining.

Fetishes are items used for this specific purpose.

They can be anything, ranging from simple chains and shackles, to more refined instruments

such as full-body latex suits, jawbreaker ball gags, padlocked blindfolds, etc.

Fetishes give the Schlaf-Lös a truly alien and diverse look.

Funny thing is, in recent years such look has spread to become a sort of fashion, and it is not too uncommon to see people wear the occasional **fake** fetish (see-through blindfolds, rigged manacles that can be easily opened, etc) just for show.

A fetish is a Tool.

Its TAGs are usually all negative, as they all represent how effective the item is in limiting your character's ability to perceive or act, but nothing stops you from investing Influence to also TAG positive traits of some sort.

Maybe your straight jacket is made of tear-resistant materials, doubling as a sort of armor, or maybe it is crafted beautifully so that it can work as a strange elegant dress.

For every negative TAG expressing perception/action constriction you get to ignore 1 point of Exhaustion.

You still accrue it normally, and it normally piles up; you simply ignore its presence.

The moment you take off your restrains this effect no longer applies.

Brigit is wearing a *shibari bondage* (a complex ropework tying her arms behind her back and to her neck, strangling her throat while also gagging her mouth) for a total of 4 negative TAGs.

She has accrued 7 points of Exhaustion but she's not yet crashing because, thanks to her Fetish, her score counts as just 3 points of Exhaustion.

The moment she breaks free from her constrains she'll jump straight up to 7 Exhaustion, worsening her dice pools and exposing her to the risk of crashing.

## Ordo

It could be said that the Ordo is a faction with one soul and many bodies.

This is because it is divided into independent and very diverse sub-groups, which all abide to one shared set of laws and social hierarchy: you are a **Legionarius**, an operative with standing and a voice in the everyday life of the Ordo; above you are the **Praetorii**, leading a whole chapter of Legionarii both in field action and research; finally an elite of few rise to be a **Senatorii**, people sitting at the internal council of their bastion.

Select one of the following perks to represent which Legion you are a member of.

### **Cenobites** [ *Tool* ]

As a member of the Ordo you have access to a small retinue of Cenobites to help in your job.

They are novices from your Legion with incomplete training ... which is still a lot better than any common civilian could ever manage.

Each Cenobite is a single Tool, and a person under your direct responsibility.

## - - - Legio Novae Carnis

### **Incarna** [ *Perk* ]

You are an adept in the forgotten art of cyber-technology.

You know how to build and maintain machines and electronics and how to crudely (but effectively) rig them into a human body.

You know how to make do with the scarce re-re-recycled materials and equipment available to your bastion, giving you exclusive access to highly restricted Tools only your faction knows how to produce and operate.

### **Magnae Machinae** [ *Tool* ]

The “Great Machines” are a kind of Tool representing advanced technology that can work even in the *World Outside* because it is either a purely mechanical clockwork or is part of the Incarna’s own body, which somehow counters the EMP-like effects of Deliria.

Each item is uniquely handcrafted by its Incarna user and the selling, loaning or giving away of such artifacts is regarded as the highest of crimes by this Legio; at your death your equipment (body included) will be recycled into new raw materials for other Incarnas to use.

The smuggling of such tech is persecuted with extreme prejudice and lethal force.

*Magnae Machinae* Tools don’t have the **Crap Quality** TAG, but they must have at least one negative TAG expressing their being crude, cumbersome, obviously mechanical implants. Their implanted nature also means that they can work fine even in the World Outside.

#### **Overdrive**

Any *Magnae Machinae* Tool can be pushed beyond its standard limits thanks to the expertise of its Incarna.

By spending her Clarity or 3 Influence one *Magnae Machinae* Tool can perform at a much higher gear: fictionally this means short bursts of faster, stronger, tougher or otherwise better performance, while mechanically it turns this Tool relevant dice from Action to Expert (before merging).

The side effect is that, at the end of the current Scene, the item is wrought, turning all its dice from Action to Danger due to fatigue, exhaustion of resources, and excessive tear and wear. This is a **permanent** condition that can be lifted with a special *Respite* option: play a scene where your PC somehow has the time and the means to tend to her gear, repairing, restocking and re-calibrating it; soon after it finishes, something happens: roll for SOpp.

Some examples of *Magnae Machinae* are...

The **Aestus** is a sort of gun/projector that emits a directional burst of high intensity microwaves: this does virtually nothing to inorganic matter, but can easily destroy living tissues by boiling them from the inside ignoring most physical armor.

Its source of energy is the bioelectricity harvested from the Incarna’s body through a synthetic

umbilical cord jacked right into her spinal column.

The basic **Aestus** TAG describes a handgun-like item: very short range, single shot, one target area of effect.

The **Gigas** is a category of mechanical chassis that are worn as a sort of armor.

Being mostly clockwork, these suits are heavy, cumbersome and noisy.

The basic **Gigas** TAG describes a basic frame with no optionals that could roughly be compared to an extra large suit of plate armor with lots of mechanical junctures and coils and springs that produces a lot of whirring and clicking noises.

It's not exactly "light armor" but it sure has a lot of structural vulnerabilities.

Additional TAGs can describe anything from extra plating to a bigger frame, from additional servo-motors granting superior mechanical strength to a re-engineered stealth chassis, from mounted weapons to the fitting of a spinal tap to directly link the Incarna to the Gigas allowing for smoother maneuvering.

An **Artificium** is a prosthetic limb or internal organ.

Artificii can look in a variety of ways depending on the Incarna style and taste, but they always appear obvious and usually unconcealable; even internal elements will always have some external feature or giveaway.

The basic **Artificium** TAG describes the body part that has been substituted, and offers above-average (but still human-like) resistance, functionality and performance.

Additional TAGs can describe additional features and options, such as mounted (and retractable?) weaponry and gear, expanded perceptions, enhanced characteristics or even fully functional extra limbs.

An **Epitheca** is a living being rigged with a special kind of Artificium allowing an Incarna to remotely control it, even sharing its physical perceptions.

It has little to no free will, unable to independently reason and act past the more basic instincts, its standard behaviour dictated by neural programming.

Each Tool is a single "drone".

The basic **Epitheca** TAG describes a good specimen of natural animal (no monsters from Deliria) of small or medium size (anything bigger than a rat and smaller than a human) fitted with the receiving end of the basic remote control rig and behavioural programming.

Additional TAGs can be used to get an unconventional vessel, like a human being or a larger/smaller natural animal (never a true abomination from Deliria).

Or to highlight its natural characteristics, or to fix it with technological implementations (basically giving it Artificii), or with more complex and specialized programming, etc.

An uncommon but viable option is to have it TAGged as a **purely mechanical** drone. This allows it to be designed as the Incarna wishes, and to mount much more complex equipment and features ... but it won't be able to function at all in Deliria and could be very vulnerable to some Friction effects.

## - - - Legio Divi Cruoris

### Stilla [ Perk ]

You master the secrets of biotechnology.

You know how to synthesize complex drugs and chemical compounds, how to research and manipulate most biological elements, and how to apply them to the human physiology.

Machines are limited tools compared to the potential offered by a constantly perfectible human body; genetic evolution is the only true form of progress, and you are a living testament to this principle.

Your body has been modified through the use of DNA tailored mutagenic cocktails that turned your blood black and made your veins very visible under the skin.

They dramatically increased your muscle tone and tendon resistance, the density of your bodily tissues (meat, skin, bone) and highwired your nervous system, amping up your reflexes and physical speed.

You are at the peak of human performance, but you can push yourself way beyond such limit, even if only for a very limited amount of time.

Spend your Clarity or 3 Influence to fuel your body, gaining +3 Expert dice for one Scene. You can do this multiple times.

Beware, as using common items at such unnatural levels of strength and speed may easily damage or even break them.

### Substantias [ Tool ]

A Substantia is a specialty drug designed to work with the peculiar biology of a Stilla.

Most bastions offer a wide range of drugs, but none can offer the effects of a pure Substantia.

As a Stilla you are taught how to manufacture your own.

Substantias are always considered “**consumable items**” as explained in the Tools chapter.

Normal humans can use them, but with grievous side-effects:

- at the end of a scene when you used a Substantia roll 1d6 for each dose; on a “1” you are addicted to that substance (take an appropriate Negative Perk)
- if you roll “1” but are already addicted immediately spend your Clarity or 3 Influence or suffer 1 Hurt

A few examples are:

- **Substantia Noctis** ... grants cat-like night vision for about 6h
- **Substantia Lacerta** ... grants high-rate cellular regeneration for about 6h (can heal fictional injury but not actual Hurt boxes)
- **Substantia Ferox** ... grants a brief surge of strength and speed, paired with pain suppression and powerful adrenaline stimulants for a couple of hours (get a temporary “Ferox” positive perk)

## - - - Legio Aeternum Scribere

### Magister [ Perk ]

This Legio is the only one holding the secrets of Pillar construction and maintenance. They understand things about how Deliria works that no one else even suspects, and use such knowledge to “reverse engineer” how reality works.

At its core we are talking about very tricky applications of pure mathematical theory and freakishly advanced quantum physics ... but the way such knowledge is expressed differs widely from Magister to Magister, usually appearing very “esoteric”.

#### Esoteric Shenanigans

Some Magisters inspire themselves to ancient philosophers with a metaphysical idea of what “reality” is (Plato, Socrates, Aristoteles, Pythagora).

Others use old religions (anything from occidental Catholicism to oriental Mikkyo) as a thematic metaphor.

This happens both because it makes their knowledge a lot more obscure and harder for others to understand and steal, and also because it actually **helps** the human mind to properly focus in the way needed for their techniques to work.

According to **De Rerum Interdicere** Deliria is a corruption of normal reality.

Focusing her will through a **sigil** a Magister can purge reality from such twisting influence.

This is a sort of “exorcism” that allows you to purify and ward items and places from tainted beings and their influence and powers, or to directly counter their abilities and manifestations, to the point where you can damage them by denying the reality of their existence.

This is usually true for Heretics, Abominations, Ephemerides and even free Germs of Thought, but can be very effective against Schlaf-Lös too.

**De Rerum Ligare** is a separate branch of research exploring the possibility of “interdicting” normal reality... it works, but in a slightly different way.

A Magister focusing her will through **sigils** can not deny the existence of something real, but can **bind** it enough to effectively stop it from fulfilling its intended purpose.

A limb will become limp, a mechanism will stop as if jammed, a door won't open or close, a mirror won't reflect, etc.

Every time a Magister uses any **Rerum** technique it instantly produces **Friction**.

Even if the purpose is to purify reality, the truth is that your PC is somehow imposing her own will over what is, by all means, the current reality ... this causes Friction.

All **Rerum** effects depend on the use of appropriate sigils and have a very limited area of effect and duration: you can only affect items that are not too big (a personal vehicle is ok, a building is not) or a clearly limited area more or less the size of a small room.

Any effect lasts for as long as your PC keeps her focus on it; she can still do other actions,

but usually the effect stops as soon as the scene ends.  
Most importantly, a Magister can only ever focus on one sigil at a time.

Remember to describe your effects according to the situation.  
Normally you try to do something, and it simply works.  
In a Challenge you may be more or less effective, and HOpp / SOpp effects could modify or nullify your efforts.

### **Sigillanda** [ *Tool* ]

To use their knowledge in a practical way, Magisters have to inscribe symbols on some kind of item or surface; then such item has to physically touch the intended target, or somehow delimit a clearly defined small area by drawing a circle or somehow creating a continuous perimeter. Such things full of symbols are called **sigils**.

You can produce, on the fly, cheap one-use sigils by using both a personal reserve of appropriate materials (paper, ink, etc) or scrounging whatever is available in your surroundings (be creative).  
Such sigils are very simple and can only channel a single **Rerum** effect.  
Handle them as *Consumable Items*.

You can also craft more complex sigils, given enough time and materials.  
Simply TAG the physical item you want to inscribe as a Tool (representing the normal, basic, sigil-less item) and then use additional TAGs to represent its sigils.  
Each sigil can handle a single, very specific **Rerum** effect, but the end result counts as one big complex sigil, not as a lot of single ones, thus allowing to get multiple effects from a single focus.

A glove can be embroidered with **Interdicere** runes to “deny unnatural fire”.  
A key can be engraved to be a **Ligare** sigil to “not close”.  
A scrap of cloth can be inscribed with various symbols to “deny Deliria” and “not cut”, “not bash”, “not pierce” and then put in contact with a clear perimeter to make a sort of sanctuary area.

Notice how such items have no inherent power, they are just normal objects with esoteric-looking decorations ... a focus for the mind of a trained Magister ... bizarre ornaments for anyone else.

# Appendix I - Color Hacks

The *Setting In A Box* structure is meant for those occasions when you have a deep and complex setting that you want to translate into game terms, and you want to allow your friends to play adventures into that one specific setting.

That is the aim of having a specific Seed, and lists of setting-tailored Perks and Tools, and a World Deck full of places and things and people and stuff.

Following this model you can produce your own *SiaB* for your original settings, or to emulate the settings seen in movies, books or other games.

But if all you want is to play in a “generic” setting (that will become unique and personal through play) you don’t need any of that.

You can, instead, play a **Color Hack**.

It means you are going to use the normal rules of this game, but dress them with different names and images ... a different colour, fitting to the setting of your choice.

You can do this in a very simple way:

- 1) gather your friends.
- 2) ignore the Dreamwake-specific Setting Seed, Crunchy Bits and World Deck.
- 3) during the SetUp phase of the game use the alternative *Pitch* procedure...

## 1 - World Pitch

Talk about what kind of setting you want your adventures to take place in.

Try to find some movie or book that everybody knows and use it as base reference, then add your personal touch; something straight and easy to convey like “*the first Alien movie, but with psi-powers*” or maybe “*Tolkien-like fantasy, but with robots*”.

Chat with your friends to find common ground that makes everybody happy, maybe clarify a few things you deem important, but do not go into detail.

This pitch should last only a **few minutes**: be brief, be simple, the rest will sort itself out on its own while you play.

## 2 - Style Pitch

Now, spend a few words about the **style** of the game you want... gritty and realistic, or something over-the-top and Hollywood-like? ...is the tone of the game to be serious or outlandish, epic or comical?

### 3 - Team Pitch

Your PCs are going to be a solid team doing “missions” in this fictional world of yours ... why?

Are they **as a group** the good guys or the bad guys?

Are they high level professionals or some kind of amateurs?

Are they guns for hire, government agents or a band of travelling heroes?

Why are they even sticking together to begin with?

### 4 - Character Generation

This step of the SetUp phase works as normal, but instead of selecting a Jemnost faction, each Player will have to come up with a cool **concept** for his PC, something you can summarize in one or three words; something like... a techno ninja, a fire mage, a smooth talker, a dashing adventurer, a student of unthinkable things, a farmer’s son, etc.

### 5 - Everything Else

The rest of the game works as usual.

Follow the procedures to play the Intel, Action and FollowUp phases and you will spontaneously flesh out the details of your game world, bit by bit; write down the most interesting and unique elements you create, and presto!, you get your own personal **World Deck**.

Be sure to use **flavourful names** for everything.

Most of the difference between a modern setting and a cyberpunk setting lays in the fact that you shoot people with a “*Sigerson KK7 Resolutor*” in place of a plain “*hunting rifle*”.

Come up with colorful names for the stuff (items, places, people, powers, etc) in your personal game world!

In a modern setting don’t use a gun... use a Beretta.

In a fantasy setting make it into a Flintlock.

In a space opera setting turn it into a Blaster.

And if you have one or more Players that know a lot about the reference setting/genre of your choice, use them as a sort of **Human Wikipedia** to provide you with colorful options for your ideas.

Me - Let’s play a cyberpunk game!

Marta - Alright, but I know almost nothing about cyberpunk.

Me - No problem.

Marta - I want some kind of not obvious, ultra-tech, agile armor, is there such a thing?

Me - Well, in a novel I once read about *OrthoSkin*, a polymeric treatment that turns your

skin into kevlar-like body protection.

Marta - Cool! That's exactly what I was looking for!

# Example I - Cyberwake

## World & Style

My group wants to play something “cyberpunk-ish” but some of them don’t even know what that means and all movies and possible source materials seem to be foreign to them.

So those who know something about the “cyberpunk” genre come up with a simple and straight pitch:

*It is a not so distant future, where technology is very advanced and evil corporations run the world as they see fit.*

*Cybertechnology melts flesh and chrome, virtual realities are a common everyday thing, and life sucks ... A LOT.*

Everybody seems happy about it, so we move forward to Style issues, and we all agree to play this pretty much gritty, cynical and dark; maybe full of action, but nothing too outlandish.

## Team Pitch

Chatting about possible team concepts we come up with some ideas, like being a squad of Corp Agents, or a crew of Street Gangers, or a group of PROfessional Criminals.

Missions may range from military-style operations, to spy-like infiltrations, gross wet-work, industrial espionage, internal affair investigations, heists, robberies, kidnappings, etc.

We agree on the “criminals for hire” concept.

## Char Gen

Our PCs are going to be humans with a troubled past that chose a life of illegal mercenary risks ... what could our concepts be for a *Cyberwave* game?

Chatting about it, we come up with some ideas, ending up with a team comprised of:

- a Computer Expert
- a Cyber Warrior
- a Bored Rich Guy
- an Ex-Military Gun Nut

## Crunchy Bits

Nothing else is needed to make a *Cyberwave* game work properly.

Players with knowledge or ideas about how the setting should look like will offer their input to the table whenever necessary, so that a “a *very addictive drug*” will be renamed to a more evocative “*Neural Pleasure Chip*” ... and when the Computer Expert feels lost in the mid of a gunfight someone will suggest “*why don’t you see if their guns are SMART and then hack*

them?”

More specific uses of the rules can also be agreed upon as the game progresses, and they are actually needed.

Some pieces of cyberware can easily be handled as the Perks and Tools used by the Ordo. Then you can add your own twists depending on what is important for **your** game: in Dreamwake no one cares much if an Ordo agent appears as overtly cybernetic; how will people react to such an “obviously synthetic” character in the dark alleys of Granada in the year 2020?

Is there social stigma relative to the display of such a syntetic body?

Is standard cyberware “natural looking” or must this be bought as a separate TAG?

Is such an option widely available or the prerogative of the rich class?

And when you want to improve a Tool the best way is to use colorful technobubble to come up with cool TAGs.

Actually, you can define the special

A hacker may make her computer awesome by fitting it with an “overclocked keyboard” or some “fractal memory” or loading it up with specific softwares.

Melee weapons can benefit from the “High Frequency Oscillation” technology, have an “Enhanced Power Supply” or be designed with a “Mono-Molecular-Like” structure. You can also use chains of TAGs to better represent a fictional item and its supposed properties.

Edged weapons made from “Damascus Fusion Iron” are TAGged as better vs hard targets but worst vs soft ones.  
On the other hand a blade with a “Jagged Edge” can be TAGged as gory vs soft targets but inadequate vs hard ones.

And items made from “Adamantium Alloy” are very expensive because they all are diamond hard but also heat resistant and feather light and in the end very valuable ... meaning that any Tool made from such a material will at least require 5 TAGs to be purchased by a PC. (the 4 described above, plus 1 for the basic item itself)

Ranged weapons can be very diverse too: from “Microwave” weapons (brutal vs meat targets and able to ignore normal armor, but poor vs non-living tissues) to “Gauss” guns (able to shoot projectiles at crazy speeds but terribly imprecise due to inhuman recoil).

Electrocuting “Shock-Rounds”, “Armor Piercing” rounds, “Explosive” rounds, etc.

Armor technology may offer standard “Ablative” armor (hard and heavy) or “Mesh” armor (soft and light) or “Reflective” coating (good vs energy weapons but crap against physical ones) ... and of course their implanted variants like “SubDermal Plating” and high-tech options like “Thermo Optical Camouflage” etc.

And you should not forget about things like remotely controlled Drones, or cyber-piloted Vehicles, and all other kinds of sci-fi equipment that may come to your mind.

# Example II - Fantasywake

## World & Style

Same as before, the group comes up with a simple and straight pitch:

*The part of the world where we are looks like a medieval europe, full of kings and knights. Magic is powerful and widespread, but not easily accessible to the commonfolk; monsters roam the countryside, non-human races are known and not too uncommon.*

In regards to Style we agree to play this one a lot over the top, we are damn heroes in a world full of damn magic so we are going to do damn cool stuff.

## Team Pitch

Ye olde group of roaming tomb scavengers does not appeal to us, so after some brainstorming we opt to be the chieftains of a small mercenary guild of our own.

Not just thugs for hire... something more refined and high level.

## Char Gen

Our team ends up looking like this:

- a Star Elf Assassin
- a Goblin Mechanomancer
- a Dashing Human Swashbuckler
- an Orc Halebrewer

## Crunchy Bits

Change the name of some Skills to have them better fit your fantasy colour.

**Magic Items** can be designed after both *Relic* items, *Sigillanda* items or even high-tech items that use magic in place of science.

Non-human races are easily represented with single Perks, similar to those describing Jemnost factions.

Other than that, a good question to ask would be “how does magic works”?

Depending on how the fictional reality of your world is supposed to work, different rules could be used to represent magic and its trappings.

Draw some broad lines as a foundation and then just use Veto and Disagreement to ensure everything is to your liking.

Arcane Spellcraft could be represented by a Perk giving you access to the use of Spells, which

in turn are handled as Tools.

The basic TAG will have to represent a single and very specific effect that can then be expanded and empowered with additional TAGs.

Energy Bolt is quite a classic spell, and a simple initial TAG.  
You can then have it be Flaming, Infallible, Skull-Shaped, etc... just like any other Tool.

You may have spells be always available and, whenever an Opposition effect makes you loose one, you can get them back with simple rest and meditation.

Or you may opt to have spells be the product of constant study, thus requiring a Spellbook in order to recuperate them if they are lost/spent/forgotten due to Opposition.

And such object could be a Tool too, maybe aiding in research thanks to its contents, or be physically sturdy and even magically warded, protecting it (and your spells!) from harm ... it could even help you cast spells if you actually use it during an enchantment.

A Familiar creature is also a perfect Tool.

Advanced Metamagic Techniques can be represented by Perks; thus you could be an Expert Pyromancer or maybe be able to Cast Silently (assuming normal casting requires words of power to be spoken).

Innate Sorcery could be best described as a Perk allowing your character to whip up improvised magical effects handled as Consumable Items.

The effects should be very narrow and only momentary (or last as long as the sorcerer concentrates on them), with additional "uses" spent to either summon more effects or add complexity to a single one, just like normal Spells would.

As a Sorcerer (Perk) you can summon up a magical suggestion to fascinate, or throwing a magical bolt, at the cost of 2 Influence.  
Or a flaming bolt, or a fascination working on anyone near you, for 4 Influence.

Additional Perks may represent the ability to employ a specific skill Focus with a magical description of some sort, effectively allowing you to work a very narrow selection of magical effects without cost.

Just remember that the USE and SCOPE of your skills does not change!  
Whenever in doubt ask yourself: if I had no magical help, but had the right equipment and skill level, could I still do it? And if yes, would it still fall under this one skill?

Let's consider a magically enhanced Tactics skill.

If you are fighting in the dark you can have your enemies glow with a red halo, helping everyone spot them, maybe also turning any darkness-related TAGs into neutral or even positive Details.

If you are peacefully reading a book in your home, and it gets dark, you can't summon a glowing light to help you read.

If you need to lay down some traps you can summon illusions to help you conceal them,

or commune with the surrounding land to help you place them in advantageous spots. Instead you can't use magic to straight out summon traps, as it would be an action pertaining some skill from the Tech Group!

Divine Magic may simply work as Arcane Magic does, just swap Spells for Miracles, the Spellbook for a Prayerbook, the Familiar for a Holy Symbol or a Celestial Counsellor, and the Sorcery effects for Sanctity blessings.

Ditto if you feel the need to have some sort of Primeval NatureCraft kind of magic.

Other than that you can always devise single Perks to represent any kind of other magically powered characteristic of your character.

Being able to Talk to Animals, or Move With no Trace are perfect examples, just as much as an innate power allowing you to Summon Darkness or inflict a searing Touch of Pain.

## **Absolute Power**

Avoid it.

Unless the whole group clearly agrees during the Style Pitch that you want to play with an insanely high level of magic and power, avoid it.

Any one thing that just allows you to come up with whatever you want to solve a situation basically nullifying any challenge can quickly become boring to you, and frustrating to others.

The example magical systems offered here all impose clear and stringent restrictions to what you can describe, depending on the situation and the Perk/Tool used. Especially the Sorcery-inspired stuff, which is more creative and open-ended.

This is not a game balance issue ... you still roll dice to see if/how effective your action is, you still get rattled by SOpp and HOpp effects, you still fail at earning VPs if you fictionally bypass an Obstacle, you still can substantially contribute with your own limited devices when a teammate summons cosmic retribution over a whole enemy army.

But it can easily take out the bite from things, for you that wield such godly power, and give a hard time to your fellow Players in figuring out how their more limited characters could ever contribute.

Some people may have no problem doing small time stuff while you move mountains. Others may lose interest in dispatching single foes while you erase whole armies.

# Appendix II - Pre-Gen Characters

What follows is meant as a practical example, a guidelines and as a pool of ready-to-play characters to be modified or used in order to accelerate the SetUp phase of the game.

---

Name : Malcom

Concept: White Tower on the Great Board

Body : short and sturdy

Face : a bit square, but with kind eyes

Clothes : a black jumpsuit with white Tower symbols and grades

## ► Communication

- ▷ Deception \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽△
- Etiquette Blending-In \_\_\_\_\_ ▲▽△
- ▷ Persuasion \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽△

## ► Exploration

- ▷ Athletics \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽△
- ▷ Driving \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽△
- Survival Follow a Trail \_\_\_\_\_ ▲▽△

## ► Knowledge

- ▷ Academics \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽△
- ▷ Science \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽△
- Subculture Streetwise \_\_\_\_\_ ▲▽△

## ▷ Technology

- ▷ Bio Tech \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽△
- ▷ Hard Tech \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽△
- ▷ Software \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽△

## ▷ Warfare

- ▷ Close \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽△
- ▷ Ranged \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽△
- ▷ Tactics \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽△

## PERKS

Cultural Hegemony [- -]  
Position (White Tower) [+]

People Person [+]  
Acute Observer [+]  
I know people that knows people [+]  
Poker Face [+]

I owe some favors to the wrong people [- -]  
Deliria-tainted people are scum! [- -]

## TOOLS

Yennefer [+] (Pawn) my smart [+]  
field secretary.

My official Badge & Insignia [+].

A big scary [+] low-tech revolver [+]  
gun.

It's of crap quality [-] and loud [-] as  
hell, but gets the job done.

Name : Demetrios

Concept: Incarna from Legio Novae Carnis

Body : pale and frail, riddled with obvious tubes and metal parts

Face : an arrogant smile

Clothes : a chrome-rimmed senatorial "toga"

### ► Communication

- ▷ Deception \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ
- ▷ Etiquette \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ
- Persuasion   \_Intimidation   ▲▽Δ

### ▷ Exploration

- ▷ Athletics \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ
- ▷ Driving \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ
- ▷ Survival \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ

### ▷ Knowledge

- ▷ Academics \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ
- ▷ Science \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ
- ▷ Subculture \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ

### ► Technology

- Bio Tech   \_Surgery   ▲▽Δ
- ▷ Hard Tech \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ
- ▷ Software \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ

### ► Warfare

- ▷ Close \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ
- ▷ Ranged \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ
- Tactics   \_Pack Tactics   ▲▽Δ

### PERKS

- Incarna [ + ]
- Cold as Ice [ + ]
- Cyborg Combat Expert [ + ]
- Animal Handler [ + ]
- I don't feel pain as others do [ + ]
- Gross bio-mechanical look [ - ]
- Arrogant [ - ]

### TOOLS

Caesar [ + ] (Cenobite) my resourceful young aid and pupil.

My body is fitted with various Artificii such as synth-muscles [ + ] and cyber-claws [ + ].

Zeus [ + ] is my rigged black panther, a fearsome epitheca with lethal claws [ + ] (a bit like my own).

Name : Agape  
 Concept: Kenon from the Spiti tou Keno  
 Body : sinew and athletic  
 Face : childishly mischievous  
 Clothes : tight fitting full-body synth-leather suit

▷ **Communication**

▷ Deception \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ  
 ▷ Etiquette \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ  
 ▷ Persuasion \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ

▶ **Exploration**

▶ Athletics Contorsionist \_\_\_\_\_ ▲▽Δ  
 ▷ Driving \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ  
 ▷ Survival \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ

▶ **Knowledge**

▶ Academics Phylosophy \_\_\_\_\_ ▲▽Δ  
 ▷ Science \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ  
 ▷ Subculture \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ

▷ **Technology**

▷ Bio Tech \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ  
 ▷ Hard Tech \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ  
 ▷ Software \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ

▶ **Warfare**

▶ Close Unarmed \_\_\_\_\_ ▲▽Δ  
 ▷ Ranged \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ  
 ▷ Tactics \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ

**PERKS**

Cultural Hegemony [- ]  
 Kenon [+ ]

Killing Hands Techniques [+ ]  
 I know the human soul [+ ]  
 Gorgeous [+ ]  
 Pain is an Illusion [+ ]

Daredevil [- ]

**TOOLS**

Ritual Kenon battle-suit [+ ] with extra polymeric coating [+ ] for better slashing protection and foam padding [+ ] for sound absorption. A bit weak against blunt force [- ] impacts, and quite old and weathered [-].

John [+ ], a dear friend with interesting (aka: illegal) "sport" connections.

Sebastian [+ ], an old Black Knight and vicious drinking buddy.



Name : Brigit  
 Concept: Schlaf-Lös in the Haus der Spiralen  
 Body : full of piercings  
 Face : quite average, with deep eye bags  
 Clothes : comfy and too large working/travel clothes

▷ **Communication**

- ▷ Deception \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ
- ▷ Etiquette \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ
- ▷ Persuasion \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ

▶ **Exploration**

- ▷ Athletics \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ
- ▷ Driving \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ
- ▶ Survival Hiding \_\_\_\_\_ ▲▽Δ

▶ **Knowledge**

- ▷ Academics \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ
- ▶ Science Cryo-expert \_\_\_\_\_ ▲▽Δ
- ▷ Subculture \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ

▷ **Technology**

- ▷ Bio Tech \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ
- ▷ Hard Tech \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ
- ▷ Software \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ

▶ **Warfare**

- ▷ Close \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ
- ▶ Ranged Thrown Stuff \_\_\_\_\_ ▲▽Δ
- ▷ Tactics \_\_\_\_\_ Δ▽Δ

**PERKS**

- Cultural Hegemony [-]
- Social Stigma [-]
- Schlaf-Lös [+]
- Gestalt [+]

I have true friends that accept and love me [+]  
 I've seen worse [+]  
 Optimist [+]

Scarred by Deliria [-]

**TOOLS**

A set of ring-piercings [-] going down my spine and elbows and wrists and hands, that I can "tie" with a lace, effectively restraining me as a pain-inducing [-] straightjacket would (Fetish)

My Herkunft [+] is "black ice". I gets covered by a spiky [+] hard crust [+] of dark ice.

A set of throwing knives [+]. Crappy [-] but reliable.

Geordy [+], White Bishop on the Great Board and my sweet sweet lover.