GURPS

Fourth Edition

GIRL GENIUS

SOURCEBOOK

AND ROLEPLAYING GAME

By Jason Andrew, JN Childs, Kaja Foglio, Phil Foglio, Victor Foglio, Jason ("PK") Levine, and Jimmy Reckitt

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

A GASLAMP FANTASY — WITH ADVENTURE, ROMANCE, AND MAD SCIENCE!

The ***Girl Genius Sourcebook and Roleplaying Game*** brings the world of Phil and Kaja Foglio's *Girl Genius* comics and graphic novels to your gaming table. Its lavishly illustrated contents include:

❁ A detailed description of the setting and its history that draws upon all available sources . . . compiled with input from the creators themselves, meaning these pages reveal some secrets and truths for the first time!

❁ A complete roleplaying game covering character creation, equipment, combat, and dramatic situations and tasks – including *inventing,* of course! To play, just add paper, pencils, and six-sided dice.

❁ Biographies and character sheets for all the major characters and many minor ones, plus notes on supporting cast.

❁ Game stats for a wide range of clanks, constructs, and other creatures unique to *Girl Genius.*

❁ Tons of helpful advice on establishing mood, accurately emulating the comics, and running and playing the game.
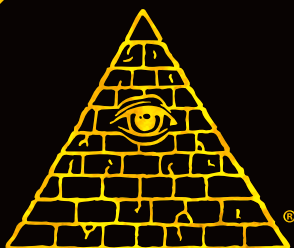
The ***Girl Genius Sourcebook and Roleplaying Game*** is ***Powered by GURPS*** *but does not require* ***GURPS***. *It is a complete, standalone game.*

By **Jason Andrew, JN Childs, Kaja Foglio, Phil Foglio, Victor Foglio, Jason ("PK") Levine,** and **Jimmy Reckitt**
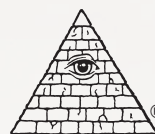
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ABOUT GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of *GURPS* players. We can be reached by email: **info@sjgames.com**. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Resources include:

New supplements and adventures. GURPS continues to grow – see what's new at **gurps.sjgames.com**.

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Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Errata pages for *GURPS* releases are available at **sjgames.com/errata/gurps**.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition.* Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

INTRODUCTION

Adventure! Romance! Mad Science!

Imagine a version of the Victorian era in which the wildest dreams of early science-fiction writers are a reality. A talent known as the Spark inspires great, if not always sane, minds to reshape the world via technology. Noble houses jockey for influence and power while common folk keep their head down to avoid the crazed inventors and their crazed inventions.

Mad Science creates hybrid warriors built from animals, plants, and clockwork. Human troops wield lightning cannons and sonic guns that can blast sound and level countrysides. Airships the size of cities darken the sky.

In this world, a scion of the legendary Heterodyne family – Sparks, rulers, and madmen – is making herself known. The forces that sought to use her as a pawn are finding out that she's a player. She has friends and allies, and she's not yet done learning the full extent of her powers.

That Spark is Agatha Heterodyne, and this is the "Gaslamp Fantasy" world of *Girl Genius*.

About the Comic

Girl Genius was created by Phil and Kaja Foglio; the first print issue was released in 2001. It went online in 2005, and since then has been updated with full-color pages three times a week, like (dare we say it?) clockwork. The comic has won five WCCA awards, including 2008 Outstanding Comic, and been nominated twice for an Eisner Award; in 2009, 2010, and 2011, it won the Hugo Award for Best Graphic Story. It was one of the first webcomics chosen for permanent archive by the Library of Congress. It has also spawned a card game – *Girl Genius: The Works* – as well as a *Girl Genius Munchkin* expansion for *Munchkin Steampunk.*

The story so far can be found at **www.girlgeniusonline.com.**

About This Book

The **Girl Genius Sourcebook and Roleplaying Game** is a guide to the world of Agatha Heterodyne. Players and GMs can follow Agatha on her adventure of self-discovery and mad invention while she claims her Spark heritage. They can also strike out on adventures of their own . . . pursuing the secrets of Europa and beyond, creating new faces in the ongoing conflict, or digging into the mysteries of a world where magic and science often seem the same.

Gaslamp Fantasy

When the *Girl Genius* stories were just starting out, Kaja coined the term "Gaslamp Fantasy" to describe the universe she and Phil were creating – one where impossible invention meets with fantastical style in a medley of alternate history and gothic "mad science" inspired by Mary Shelley and H. Rider Haggard. It blurs the lines between mythic and magical creations and steampunk-inspired elements like clockwork cyborgs.

This book is a standalone resource for the *Girl Genius* setting and contains the tools necessary to play in that world – including all the required characters, creatures, and rules.

Spoiler Alert

Warning! This supplement contains information about plots, history, and concepts behind the universe of *Girl Genius*. It includes materials from the entire series. If you don't want any spoilers, catch up on your reading before continuing.

About the Creators

This book has been a long time coming, and a lot of people were involved in making it happen . . .

Kaja Foglio

Kaja has illustrated numerous cards for **Magic: The Gathering,** as well as several book covers and magazine interiors. In 1993, she and Phil started writing *Girl Genius,* and began publishing the story in 2001. She regards this as the worst "get rich quick" scheme *ever.*

Phil Foglio

Phil won a couple of Hugo Awards for Best Fan Artist in 1978 and 1979, and is still waiting for the wealth and power he was told this would provide. He began working in comics and the gaming industry at the exact same time, when "What's New With Phil & Dixie" began running in *Dragon* Magazine in 1980. Since then, he has worked for numerous comic-book companies, a few of which are still in business. Some titles he's known for include

MythAdventures, Buck Godot – Zap Gun For Hire, Stanley and His Monster, Angel and the Ape, and *XXXenophile.*

In 1993, he began writing *Girl Genius* with Kaja, and began publishing it in 2001. To his surprise, they won three Hugo Awards in the newly created category of Best Graphic Story.

He has done a lot of work for Steve Jackson Games.

Jason Andrew

Jason Andrew is a writer, editor, and game designer. He lives in Seattle, Washington, with his wife, Lisa; his Pug, Otter; and his American Bulldog, Stella. He writes in several genres and styles, including contemporary fiction, historical fiction, young adult, science fiction, fantasy, and horror. In 2011, his story "Moonlight in Scarlet" received an honorable mention in Ellen Datlow's List for Best Horror of the Year.

Jason is a rabid gamer, having written for several roleplaying games, including **Call of Cthulhu** and **Shadowrun.** He serves as Line Developer for **Mind's Eye Theatre,** for By Night Studios, producing a number of **MET** products including **MET: Vampire: The Masquerade, MET: Werewolf: The Apocalypse,** and the upcoming **MET: Changeling: The Dreaming.** He also serves as Developer for Mighty Narwhal, shepherding in their first new game, the **Morra Cinematic Universal Game System.**

JN Childs

JN Childs is a horror and roleplaying game writer, experimenting with their life and horror fiction. They live in Southern Ohio with their family, eight cats, two parakeets, four rats, and one idiot doge. They write stories of Old Gods, anguished spirits, and terribly unfortunate people.

They have an M.Ed. in Instructional Design, and focus on creating memorable learning experiences using roleplaying, board, and card games. Currently, their work can be found in *Under the Stairs, Apotheosis: Stories of Human Survival After the Rise of the Elder Gods, Immersion Secrets,* and the Mind's Eye Theater framework for **Werewolf: The Apocalypse.** They are also working on **Mind's Eye Theatre: Changeling: The Dreaming** and the **Morra Cinematic Universal Game System.**

Steve Jackson

Steve has been making games since the late 1970s and is not slowing down. He was the original creator of the **GURPS** system. He gleefully admits to being a *Girl Genius* fanboy, and is so, so glad that this book has come to the end of its first adventure and made its way into your hands.

Steve is a citizen of the Internet, or a Texan, depending on who's asking.

Jason "PK" Levine

PK Levine loves roleplaying (especially **GURPS**) and comics (especially *Girl Genius*), and is honored to have contributed to this work. In his spare time, he plays board games, cuddles his wife, and runs the fan site **mygurps. com.**

Jimmy Reckitt

Jimmy Reckitt is a writer and developer who integrates his favorite themes from mythology and archetypal psychology into his approach to game design. He works as a developer for By Night Studios, on projects for **Vampire: The Masquerade, Werewolf: The Apocalypse,** and **Changeling: The Dreaming.**

With a unique eye for conflict as a part of storytelling, he has created memorable experiences as part of large-scale LARP events, including the **Blood and Betrayal** and **Rage and Retribution** featured games. He lives in Chicago, where he is finishing his MBA at the University of Chicago.

Victor Foglio

Victor Foglio is one of the children of Kaja and Phil Foglio, and has literally grown up with *Girl Genius*. Therefore, he has a unique take on various aspects of the series, and is not shy about sharing them.

YOU THERE! THE TIME TRAVELER WITH THE TOP HAT AND GOGGLES FROM 1876. NO DOUBT YOU ARE ASKING "WHAT IS A ROLL PLAYING GAME, SIR, AND HOW FAR WILL I HAVE TO ROLL?"

Role Playing Games ("RPGs" in modern parlance – sometimes called "Table Top" or "Pencil and Paper" RPGs by those who have no respect for the King's English) are quite different from Whist, or even the heathen Back Gammon brought back from foreign climes.

They were first invented in one of The Future's lost Golden Ages which spanned the nineteen hundred and seventies. Role Playing Games are classified by scholars as "collaborative improvised theater": A group of sober and educated people congregate in a special performance space, and assume the roles of various characters. The Impresario in charge, known colloquially in the American colonies as a "Game Master" (GM), creates a scenario and allows the Player Characters (PCs) to choose their course of action. The Game Master then describes the consequences of these actions, and helps to move the story along. Among other things, the GM plays all the Non-Player Characters (NPCs), giving them dialogue and personalities. A GM is not unlike the director of a stage drama, except they play characters – often *many* characters – and they don't have the right to *tell* anyone else what to do, although they do reserve the right to make rules decisions and steer events to keep the story interesting.

Those who have studied the history of theatre will immediately recognize these games' direct linear progression from the medieval Italian theatrical form known as *commedia dell'arte*. The primary difference appears to be that these shows are performed solely for the actors themselves. We suspect that the imbibing of alcohol is involved.

Further distinguishing it from its predecessor is its beloved system of accounting. While the Game Master has a great deal of leeway when it comes to spinning the immersive narratives, there are set rules and pre-established graphs and charts to determine whether the Player Characters succeed or fail at certain actions. Usually these determinations are made by tossing misshapen dice. Thus we can see that there is obviously an element of gambling inherent in the rules, which no doubt explains its hold upon some of its adherents.

Unlike more codified games, there is a constant element of serendipity. Since the Game Master is free to make decisions and improvise on the fly, the players can diverge from the main story or try unexpected tricks – but because there are rules and systems, things are fair and the players' successes have the taste of real victory. You can fight monsters if you want, or you can talk, invent, trade, or sneak around . . . and it's just as important as fighting.

As an experience that constantly offers surprises, you will find Role Playing Games an excellent test of a person's mettle, and, as in life, those who can keep a cool head and respond to crises like proper Ladies and Gentlemen will rise to the top.

1. The World Through Tinted Goggles

Girl Genius is a world of infinite possibility and creativity, where anything and everything answers to the call of a Spark's genius. Nothing is beyond their will to create, and this often leads to great leaps for society and equally great, although unintended, consequences. To create, to inspire, to terrorize, or to destroy – it's all in the players' hands.

The key difference between our own world and that of *Girl Genius* is the *Spark* – the capacity for Mad Science. It's a rare and poorly understood collection of personality traits and abilities. It has so far proven impossible to quantify, despite the best efforts of those who study it, such as Baron Klaus Wulfenbach (p. 36), but most people feel they know the Spark when they see it. It often runs (sometimes explosively) through family lines, so others expect the Spark to exist in those who have ancestors with the trait.

"Spark" is also a term for Mad Scientist; people say that someone *is* a Spark if they *have* the Spark. That and "the Gifted" are *polite* terms. When the person in question is safely out of earshot, many people instead call them Madboys and Madgirls, the Cursed, the Damned, the Possessed, "that loony up in the castle," and worse. After all, even the saintliest Spark might still accidentally blow up (or worse, *transform*) the neighbors . . . and most are far from saints.

Keep reading for much more information on this topic (and see also Chapter 7).

History

The Spark is the reason for every difference between the histories of *Girl Genius* and our world. Nowhere is this more prevalent than in Europa, where the rise of House Heterodyne, the Fifty Families, and Baron Klaus Wulfenbach altered the political – and to a notable degree, physical – landscape of the continent. As such, the history of *Girl Genius* is inextricably tied to that of Europa.

Gaming Glossary

Girl Genius is a roleplaying game (RPG). Roleplaying games have their own language which may not be common knowledge for new players. A few important terms:

adventure: The basic "unit" of play in a roleplaying game, representing a single mission or plot. It might require several sessions of play, or just one.

campaign: A continuing series of adventures. A campaign will usually have a continuing cast of player characters, and the same GM (or team of GMs).

character: Any being – person, animal, clank, etc. – played by the GM or a player.

d: A six-sided die. For example, "3d" means the player should roll three six-sided dice and add them up.

encounter: One "scene" of an adventure, usually a meeting between the PCs and one or more NPCs.

Game Master (GM): The referee, who chooses the adventure, talks the players through it, judges the results, and gives out bonus points.

munchkin: An excessively aggressive player, more concerned with personally "winning" than with playing well with others. Don't be that guy.

nonplayer character (NPC): Any character played by the GM.

party: A group of PCs taking part in the same adventure.

player character (PC): A character created and played by one of the players.

race: The species to which you belong. Most characters are human, but nonhumans (such as Jägerkin, other constructs, and even sapient clanks) are often encountered.

roleplaying game (RPG): A game in which players take on the personalities of imaginary individuals, or *characters,* in a fictional or historical setting, and try to act as those characters would.

session: A real-life meeting (face-to-face or online) between the GM and players in order to play the game.

statistics: The numerical values that describe a character, piece of equipment, etc. Often called "stats."

trait: A character "building block" that affects game play and has a character-point value. Examples are attributes, secondary characteristics, advantages, disadvantages, quirks, and skills.

Words

A few very important people, and some terms that have a special meaning in *Girl Genius*:

Agatha Heterodyne: Our heroine, heir of a noble house, and a talented Spark.

Airship: A lighter-than-air craft. A common way to get around Europa, due to the hazards of ground travel. See p. 160.

Baron: There are many barons in Europa, but "the Baron" is Klaus Wulfenbach, who could as easily call himself Emperor, considering the strength of his forces and the area he controls. A Spark, ruthless and practical, respected by most of his people but not well-loved. His son Gil is one of Agatha's love interests. See p. 36.

clank: A self-directed, and possibly self-willed, mechanical creation; what most stories might call a "robot." Large, crewed fighting machines are also sometimes called clanks.

construct: A biological creation, which might be as straightforward as a reanimated person or as Mad as a giant half-toad, half-Venus flytrap.

Europa: The continent which on our world is called Europe. There's a whole world out there, but our action takes place in Europa. See p. 18.

Fifty Families: The ruling houses of Europa, now unenthusiastically subject to the Baron. See p. 35.

Geisters: Short for *Geisterdamen*, "ghost women." A mysterious, powerful race, seemingly all-female, whiter than albino. Servants of the Other. See p. 68.

Jäger: Short for *Jägermonster;* as a group, sometimes *Jägerkin*. Formerly a human, modified into a construct warrior-minion of the Heterodynes. See p. 66.

Madboy/Madgirl: Derogatory terms for Sparks, best used out of their hearing.

Muse: One of nine extremely capable humanoid clanks created by the Spark Van Rijn as a gift to the first Storm King. Generally believed to be lost, but several have appeared in the story.

Other: The mysterious foe responsible for the last great war in Europa. Certainly a Spark. Quite possibly Agatha Heterodyne's mother, Lucrezia (p. 48). Not to be confused with "Othar" (p. 44), who is a Sparky nuisance.

revenant: A person enslaved to the will of the Other by means of a slaver wasp (p. 176).

Spark: A person with the talent for Mad Science. See below.

Storm King: A noble title; by some accounts, the rightful ruler of all Europa. There is at present no Storm King. See p. 10.

Early Sparks

There have always been Sparks, and the most powerful of them shaped history. These great thinkers – Imhotep, Dædalus, Hypatia of Alexandra, Archimedes, da Vinci, and more – built fabulous mechanical devices, meddled with Things Man (and Woman!) Was Not Meant To Know, and awed commoners and kings with feats that seemed nothing short of magical. Some early Sparks even found their way into legend, portrayed as gods or wizards by storytellers. A few ended up as kings, queens, pharaohs, emperors, or empresses, while others just worked for the powerful. Yet others invented in secret, hiding their talent from those who would abuse it.

At the time, literacy was not widespread, even among those with the Spark; the ability to build something amazing didn't require knowledge of how to read or write. Even those who attempted to codify their methods usually did so via crazed ramblings that were impossible to decipher . . . if not actively harmful to the sanity of the reader. Therefore, the knowledge possessed by early Sparks usually died with them.

The Rise of Science!

As alchemy matured into science, and literacy became more common, a body of knowledge from Sparks gradually emerged. For the first time, new Sparks could draw upon the experience and "wisdom" of their predecessors, greatly magnifying their potential. Schools actively sought out Sparks, thus accelerating the education of neophyte Sparks even faster.

In the beginning, many Sparks were content to labor in relative obscurity for their lords. For them, the quest for knowledge was the thing that interested them.

But with security came ambition. Some Sparks used their talents to seize power from existing rulers. It was a perfect storm of "might makes right" and "knowledge is power."

As often as not, the situation fell apart the moment the original Spark died. But in those families where the talent was inherited, the descendants were occasionally able to retain their temporal power. These families gave rise to what became known as the Great Houses, and new empires coalesced around them.

This was the beginning of a conflict that continues to this day. Traditional royalty, who were used to ruling because they were "better," began to lose ground to the awakening Spark meritocracy. They only survived because they had, through experience, a superior grasp of the principles of governance, economics, and diplomacy . . . disciplines that Mad Scientists rarely consider important. On the other hand, even the best diplomatic corps tends to be useless when faced with an unstoppable army of badger-bees. In self-defense, the non-Spark rulers began to work together against the Sparky Great Houses. This was the origin of the Fifty Families (p. 23), who are often plotting behind the scenes.

The Long War

As a rule, Sparks find each other interesting and hard to stay away from, but they quickly fall to squabbling. Each sees the world through a unique lens and generally considers their own opinions and paradigms to be the only accurate ones. Sparks are driven by strong passions and don't deal well with opposing viewpoints. Between two academics, this could result in anything from project sabotage to fistfights, but between two heads of state who are Sparks, more often than not it results in war. And not the standard line-everybody-up-and-let's-throw-rocks-at-each-other war. We are talking about wars waged with *Mad Science.*

As the Industrial Revolution entered the scene, things got worse and worse. War gave rise to all kinds of madness . . . anything and everything from outsized animals to clockwork violins that made trees explode. What made war between Sparks so terrifying was that *there were no rules.* Any one of them could do something absolutely ridiculous one minute, and completely horrifying the next.

At first it was nearly impossible to keep track of which rival houses were fighting at any given time. Eventually, however, everyone was fighting everyone else, and Europa was plunged into all-out war. Mechanical monstrosities laid waste to towns as biological constructs destroyed crops. What wasn't burned was blighted by the byproducts of the conflict. The fighting seemed to some like the end of the world. Populations fled the destruction, often welcomed by rival nation-states looking for more factory workers and soldiers. Much of the area known as the Wastelands was the result of these flights. The disturbances ranged across Europa; some continue to this day.

The Heterodyne Menace

At some point early in the Dark Ages, a ruthless tribal warlord known as the Ht'rok-din rode out of the East and took over an easily defended valley nestled high in the Transylvanian Alps. This would later house Mechanicsburg (p. 18). From this modest beginning came the greatest, most feared dynasty that Europa ever saw.

The family soon became known far and wide as *the Heterodynes.* They rose to infamy as crazed Sparks with an insatiable thirst for conquest and plunder. Typically, the Heterodynes' armies would sweep into an area, conquer whoever was foolish enough to attempt to stand against them, pillage them of wealth and livestock, and then simply move on to somewhere else. Unlike other conquerors, the Heterodynes never bothered to *administer* the lands they overran. For them, the fighting and subsequent carnage was the whole point. When an area had been despoiled, their armies would leave, and the locals might have no contact with their supposed overlords until several decades later – when they'd be invaded all over again.

This unusual modus operandi had a very important result. Conventionally, a ruthless barbarian conqueror sweeps in, takes control of a more civilized society, and then discovers that it enjoys wallowing in the pleasures of the flesh. After a few generations, the new rulers have gone soft, and they are, in turn, overrun by a new wave of hungry barbarians.

But the Heterodynes never allowed themselves to settle in. They were never satisfied to imitate the peoples they conquered. They always moved on. They never went soft.

Thus, for close to a thousand years, the Heterodynes remained the Dark Lords of the East and the Scourge of Europa.

Important Heterodynes, in historical order, include (but are by no means limited to):

● Knife, son of Ht'rok-din, who built the first Castle Heterodyne (p. 20).

● Vlad "The Blasphemous" Heterodyne, who created the Jägers (p. 66).

● Egregious Heterodyne, who "created" the River Dyne (p. 18) and in the process destroyed the first Castle.

● Faustus Heterodyne, who learned to tap the energies of the Dyne, gave Castle Heterodyne its self-awareness, and built Mechanicsburg.

● Bludtharst Heterodyne, who fought Andronicus Valois, the Storm King (p. 10), until the latter planned to marry his sister.

● Euphrosynia Heterodyne, sister of Bludtharst, who was engaged to Andronicus Valois, the Storm King, and whose disappearance destroyed the Shining Coalition.

● Saturnus Heterodyne, who committed an assortment of atrocities, while also siring two sons who broke with family tradition by being Good Guys:

● Bill and Barry Heterodyne, who helped shape modern Europa; see *The Heterodyne Boys* (p. 11).

● Agatha Heterodyne, daughter of Bill. She is our heroine.

The Storm King

Around 200 years ago, Andronicus Valois was an excellent ruler of a prosperous region in what we would call Southeastern France. When his lands were attacked by the Heterodynes, he actually managed to hold them off, which was almost unheard of. Impressed, several neighboring rulers joined him in an alliance. This was the beginning of the Shining Coalition of the West, and Valois was hailed as the *Storm King*.

The Storm King became a popular hero. He collected Sparks and artificers from all over Europa and used them to create not only weapons, but also things that had day-to-day benefits for the citizens of his growing empire.

The most famous of these Sparks was the enigmatic Van Rijn, who created the Muses (p. 65) as a gift for "the greatest king of all time." Collaborating with Albia, the God-Queen of Britain, he forged two powerful weapons for the King: Archimedes' Lever (an impossibly sharp, electrified sword) and the Platonic Solid (an energy-projecting mace). Both were later lost to history.

The war against the Heterodynes was succeeding, and the Shining Coalition had managed to bottle the Heterodynes in a relatively small area centered on the Valley of the Heterodynes. During this protracted siege, the Storm King fell in love with Bludtharst's sister, Euphrosynia Heterodyne.

He made their marriage one of the conditions of the peace accord that was eventually hammered out. Unfortunately, not long after the marriage occurred, Euphrosynia disappeared mysteriously, and Andronicus vowed to seek her forever. (In the opera *The Storm King* by Portentius Reichenbach, she is stolen away by the mad sorcerer Ogglespoon, who is almost certainly a literary construct.)

While the Heterodynes remained contained and never again ranged as far from their home, Valois' single-minded questing, eventual disappearance, and presumed death destroyed the Shining Coalition.

This story inspired many great works of art, including the aforementioned opera, which has become famous

The Storm King Conspiracy

Under the direction of Lucifer Mongfish (p. 36) and the leadership of Prince Aaronev Wilhelm Sturmvoraus (father to Aaronev Tarvek Sturmvoraus, p. 38), the Knights of Jove now focused on a grand plot to unify and control Europa by reestablishing the Empire of the Storm King. With the proper candidate at the helm, it seemed like the plan's success was a foregone conclusion.

But a major obstacle appeared some 18 years ago, when an up-until-then unremarkable Spark named Klaus Wulfenbach returned from parts unknown and began building an empire of his own. The Wulfenbach Empire was doing a lot of the things that the Knights of Jove had planned: reducing conflict, encouraging trade, bringing stability and improved communications . . . but the movers and shakers of the High Council were not the ones in charge.

The plan was adjusted. There would still be a Storm King, to be sure, but his power would come not from conquest, which was unlikely to succeed, but by the acclamation of "the people." The new plan was to win the hearts of the general populace by producing a heretofore unknown Heterodyne "princess" (easy enough to do, now that the family was considered extinct) and then reveal an acceptable Storm King heir. The two would meet, fall in love, and marry – thus fulfilling the popular and widespread prophecy.

They would rule Mechanicsburg so well that other territories (ruled by members of the High Council) would petition to join them, and in less than a decade, a new Empire of the Storm King would peacefully come into existence.

It was expected that Klaus, who had never made any secret of the fact that he had never wanted to run an empire, would see that law and stability would continue, and eventually surrender power to the new order.

The heir groomed by the Council was Tarvek Sturmvoraus – direct descendant of the original Storm King, Andronicus Valois, and first in line to the throne.

His cousin, Martellus von Blitzengaard (p. 52), also a direct descendant, was one of several other heirs standing by in case something happened to Tarvek (a reasonable assumption, considering the usual family politics). Interestingly, Martellus is the last surviving member of these possible replacements.

The Council's Heterodyne "princess," Zola (p. 45), has no actual blood connecting her to the role, but is a consummate actress and a trained Smoke Knight (p. 43). She is a member of the Mongfish family and Lucrezia's niece.

Of course, once Agatha's existence was revealed, the carefully laid plans turned into a chaotic rush, with factions within the Knights of Jove at odds about how to proceed.

When the Baron invaded Sturmhalten, Tarvek was captured. In the minds of many of the Council, he became a liability. A major faction turned to Martellus, hailing him as the new Storm King. However, many still favored Tarvek. Later, a few outliers even began to think that Gilgamesh Wulfenbach (p. 36) could fit the role once his father was safely dead. Only a very select few know that Gil is, in fact, also a direct descendant of Valois, but descending from the twin sister of the ancestress of the Sturmvoraus/Blitzengaard line.

To most of the conspirators, Zola remained the preferred Heterodyne girl, as she had been properly groomed for the job. Now that Agatha is becoming more and more known to the world at large, some are beginning to think that controlling the *actual* Heterodyne might be the best possible option – though they all underestimate the difficulty of that particular task.

across Europa. The opera is best known for the prophecy aria, sung by the Spirit of Europa: "Peace will only be found when the Storm King and the Heterodyne princess are wed."

For many, Andronicus Valois was the first and the last True King of Europa, and before the similarly messianic cult awaiting the return of the Heterodyne Boys began to flourish, many people held out hope that Andronicus, or a descendant, would one day return and bring peace to the land.

The Knights of Jove

The Knights of Jove were the Storm King's honor guard. They continued to serve his descendants after he vanished, waiting for both the proper man and the right time to reestablish the Storm King's throne.

However, it was never the "right time," or if it was, there was never a "proper" candidate. Thanks to the vicissitudes of genetics, whenever a Man of Action was needed, the available heir was never quite up to the task; there was, according to one source, "a long line of sots, imbeciles, and – God forbid – females." Not to mention at least one reported werewolf.

Thus, the Knights of Jove gradually stagnated into little more than a "brandy and cigars" club with fading dreams of glory.

At least this is what most people believe. There was an inner cabal, "The Most High Council of Nobles, Enlightened Keepers of the Sacred Flame of Loyalty, and Lords of the Western Gates" (generally referred to as simply "the High Council" or "the Council" by those in the know).

They monitored Valois' descendants, to be sure, but approximately 70 years ago, they were given a new purpose by the Mongfish family, who asked a simple question: "If

a proper heir doesn't appear *naturally,* then why can't we *engineer* it so that one does?"

And so they did – see *The Storm King Conspiracy* (p. 10).

The Heterodyne Boys

One of the worst Heterodynes in modern memory was Saturnus Heterodyne, creator of, among other atrocities, the Beast – a sapient, capricious train that roamed the countryside freely, consuming whatever it felt suitable as "fuel." Saturnus was known for his mad extravagances; for instance, during a particularly cold year, he set fire to Mechanicsburg's old town hall and kept it burning for five months. He married the Lady Teodora Vodenichrova, who was the daughter of a conquered house and none too pleased about the idea. This turned out to be a blessing for the world. Teodora was a kind and noble woman, who insisted upon raising her two sons, Bill and Barry, away from the "bad" influences of their father and Castle Heterodyne. In the end, she died in the act of poisoning her husband, ridding the world of the last of the evil Heterodynes. She was later canonized by every reigning Pope.

The Heterodyne Boys, as Bill and Barry came to be known, grew to be true heroes. They were both powerful Sparks, and chose to use their talents for good, vowing to end the Long War and repair the damage done.

Accompanied by their best friend Klaus Wulfenbach (p. 36), their construct assistants Punch and Judy (p. 34), and an ever-changing cast of colorful adventurers, they traveled the world, negotiating peace, stopping monsters, and dismantling doomsday devices. They did so much to make up for their family's terrible history that the name "Heterodyne" became associated more with the heroic brothers than their wicked ancestors.

After years of foiling the plans of their longtime nemesis, Doctor Lucifer Mongfish, Bill managed to convert the old Spark's daughter Lucrezia to the side of Good, and later married her. About the same time, Klaus Wulfenbach disappeared. There were rumors that he had loved Lucrezia, and had left Europa and his friends out of bitterness. The truth is that Lucrezia, as the villain's beautiful daughter, had often found herself mixed up in the Heterodyne Boys' adventures, and had long-running, on-again-off-again romantic relationships with both Bill and Klaus. When she decided to marry Bill, Lucrezia knew that Klaus would never believe that she had suddenly turned "good," and would warn his friend against her. She drugged Klaus and sent him far away to get him out of the picture.

Bill and Lucrezia had a son, Klaus Barry Heterodyne, who died tragically young in an explosion at Castle Heterodyne (see *The Other*, below). At some point during or immediately after this attack, Lucrezia – then pregnant with Agatha – disappeared, presumed kidnapped by the Other. Bill went nearly mad with grief, but he and Barry set out to find her.

The Other

The explosive attack against Castle Heterodyne and the kidnapping of Lucrezia appeared to be the first salvo of a new war against Sparks. But no one knew who was attacking, where they came from, what their motivations were, or even what exactly he (she? it?) *was*.

This new foe showed no interest in holding onto conquered land, resources, or subjects, but only in the total extermination of other Sparks. They followed none of the unwritten rules by which the Great Houses fought. There was no negotiation, no exchange of hostile missives, no rants, no taunts . . . in fact, no communication at all, just sudden and devastating attacks. Within just a few years, over 30 of the major Spark houses were destroyed, with never a clue as to the assailant's identity. Eventually the enemy was simply referred to as the Other.

The common people were also affected. The Other bred biomechanical constructs called slaver wasps (p. 175), with the capacity to infect humans, turning them into "revenants": mindless slaves to the Other's forces. As far as the world was concerned, a person who was attacked by a slaver wasp had a small but significant chance of dying outright, but a higher chance of becoming a revenant. Most of the people attacked by wasps showed no lasting effects, but the terror of the revenants created widespread panic.

It was only many, many years later, after Agatha escaped Sturmhalten, that Baron Wulfenbach discovered that these "survivors" were as infected as any other revenants. They had become "sleeper agents" who appeared to live perfectly normal lives, but when given an order by the Other – or in some cases one of the Other's agents – they would unhesitatingly obey.

While various Sparks have created methods for detecting a slaver wasp infection (see the wasp eater, p. 176), no cure has yet been discovered.

The Other enslaved hundreds of thousands of people, laid entire countries to waste, and destroyed the landscape. To make things worse, without any other information, many of the Great Houses began to turn on each other. All of them gradually became suspicious of Bill and Barry – who admittedly, were acting very strangely. For three years the Heterodyne Boys roamed the continent, assisting other Sparks and refusing to press the advantage when their strongholds had been devastated. Even stranger (to other Sparks), they refused to go back to Mechanicsburg, the most legendarily unconquerable fortress town in Europa.

Still, to the common people, the Heterodyne Boys were heroes who unselfishly offered assistance and saved lives. Then one day, people noticed that the attacks . . . had stopped. Packs of revenants still roamed the countryside, but they were now confused, without purpose, and were easily picked off. Everyone assumed that the Heterodyne Boys had fought the Other and won. Europa looked forward to hearing the details over a rousing, continent-spanning celebration.

But Bill and Barry never reappeared. They never returned to Mechanicsburg. They never sent word about what they had done. People waited for months, years . . . but the brothers were never heard from again. Stories and rumors ran wild. Some claimed they were dead, but most people believed the Heterodyne Boys had been victorious, and that someday they would return.

One Nation Under Wulfenbach

I came back to a world in ruins. Death, destruction, chaos – the endless fighting – it was like the Heterodyne Boys had never existed. Things were worse than ever. So, I stopped it. And I did it my way this time. No more negotiating. No more promises. No more second chances.

– Klaus Wulfenbach

With the common threat gone, and the heroes no longer there to inspire (or punish) them, the remaining Houses turned their weapons back upon one another. Their methods were far more brutal than before. Leaders were more willing to let their creations ravage the countryside in the name of a battlefield victory. Sparks found new uses for the twisted creations of the Other. People feared and resented the Great Houses more than ever before, and took it out on those who showed the smallest hint of being a Spark. Children were sometimes even killed for exhibiting the Spark – or indeed *any* unusual behavior – and often the murderers were from their own families. The world moved backward toward a new dark age.

Onto this scene stepped Baron Klaus Wulfenbach. No one knew where he had been or what he had been doing during the Other's attacks. The Wulfenbach lands were originally just a small area in Transylvania. Its only significant role in history came centuries before, when Castle Wulfenbach had been fortified by the Storm King – establishing it as one of four castles that contained the forces of the Heterodynes.*

Klaus returned to find his castle and the surrounding town razed by the Other. His earlier idealism was wiped away, and his new strategy was simple. He drew a circle on the map, and declared everything inside it his. Within it, nothing much was to change. Those in power would stay in power, as long as there were no hostilities whatsoever. Any breach of what came to be known as the "Baron's Peace" or the "Pax Transylvania" was put down swiftly and effectively, and the aggressors were removed from power. At first, few Sparks took the Baron seriously, and many challenged the peace, some just out of spite. But every year, the circle grew, and it wasn't long before a large section of Europa was under the Baron's control.

As his power grew, the Baron rebuilt his castle, but this time, it was a gigantic airship (p. 160). This enabled him to administer and defend his lands from a mobile base.

Conquered military units were given the option of working for the Baron, and many chose to do so, giving him a wildly varied force mix. The Baron's realm was restive, but most of his soldiers were enthusiastically loyal; the Baron was a good leader, treated his people well, and won his wars.

As his empire continued to grow, he continuously expanded the size and offensive capabilities of Castle Wulfenbach, until, close to 16 years later, the massive airship was one of the Mad Wonders of the World, and the Empire of the Pax Transylvania (below) stretched across a large part of the continent.

One of the Baron's first acts upon his return to Europa was the peaceful annexation of Mechanicsburg (p. 18). He then convinced the Heterodynes' Jägermonsters (p. 66) to work for him in the absence of their true masters.

The Pax Transylvania continued to grow, although less quickly than in earlier years. The Baron was not eager to add more administrative duties to his already exhausting workload, and most rulers with lands bordering Wulfenbach territories had learned from their colleagues' mistakes. Every so often, though, somebody would become overconfident and revive an old feud, or even attack someone or something belonging to the Baron, and the mapmakers would redraw the borders yet again.

In the meantime, Castle Wulfenbach added a veritable flotilla of airships, many owned by the client Great Houses and other power-mongers trying to stay close to the political action and the Baron's ear. The Baron took on young Sparks from member states, ensuring that they were trained in the principles of good governance by the best teachers in Europa. Their value as potential hostages was no doubt incidental.

The Pax Transylvania

Quickly realizing that dealing with nobles and Sparks was like dealing with candy-addled toddlers, the Baron set up a simple policy which can be summed up as "Don't make me come over there." Under the Pax Transylvania, nobles could continue to rule their lands as they saw fit, as long as they followed the Baron's conditions:

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* The other three are Sturmhalten in Balan's Gap, which held the East; the Refuge of Storms in the North, held by the von Blitzengaard family; and the Doom Citadel of the von Drakken family, which held the South. The original Castle Wulfenbach held the West. Both the original Castle Wulfenbach and the Citadel of von Drakken were destroyed by the Other.

Keep the Peace: While client states were allowed to keep a reasonable military force, any attack against a fellow nation protected by the Pax was strictly forbidden. Obviously, this also applied to any violence against the Baron's forces.

All Examples of the Other's Technology Are to Be Turned Over to the Baron: The inventions of the Other were strictly forbidden to anyone but the Empire itself. It is not unknown for someone to stumble across an old slaver wasp (p. 175) hive, even today; after all, the entirety of Europa was once covered with them. The Baron demands that any device of the Other be immediately turned over to his team of specialist Sparks, as they are the only ones who can safely examine and neutralize them. Of course, there are numerous rumors that the Baron is finding ways to adapt and use the inventions to his own means . . . and that's assuming one doesn't buy into the belief he may already be the Other in the first place.

Pay Your Taxes: Rather obvious, this.

Permit the Transportation of Goods and Passengers Through Your Territory: They can be taxed and tithed. You can even refuse to let them stay. But excessive confiscation and/or kidnapping is treated as piracy.

Rulers who can follow these simple rules are left in place. Those who cannot are mercilessly replaced; their lands are annexed to the Baron's realm.

The client states of the Pax Transylvania enjoy relative peace and protection from threats both within and outside of Europa Wulfenbach. In addition, the Baron takes responsibility for the roads between states, fighting fires, long-distance communication, coinage, and other public utilities. Most appreciate this stability, even though the savvy observer understands that the "service" corps are ready to weaponize their gear at a moment's notice, which lets Wulfenbach keep military forces close by without drawing attention.

MODERN LIFE

The empire of Baron Wulfenbach is surrounded by and incorporates a patchwork of tiny countries, kingdoms, duchies, city-states, principalities, client states, and other, similar holdings. Safely ensconced behind thick walls and usually protected by a variety of Spark-made defenses, these are islands of industry and commerce within vast swaths of wilderness.

Some of the larger areas, while technically within the Empire, are considered "the Wastelands" (p. 25) – places of low population density where monsters left over from Spark battles still wander. Most of the western nations are not monolithic entities with centralized governments. The entire continent is a political crazy-quilt.

If one were to overlay a map of Europa with a map of Europe from our world, one would notice that while the nation lines are different, many towns and cities are in the same locations. People build settlements in logical places: the confluence of rivers, on good harbors, and next to obvious trade routes. Many Roman roads are in the same locations as well; the Romans had excellent engineers and surveyors. (Thus, this is one of the few fantasy games where you can get a good and – sort of – accurate map through Michelin. If you squint and use your imagination, at least.)

Much of the business of the Empire is conducted by airship. Ground travel can be dangerous. This further isolates smaller towns, leading to them being occasionally abandoned or destroyed. Some survive, but can easily become breeding grounds for peculiar ideas, cults, and creatures.

Under the Pax Transylvania, Baron Wulfenbach has tried to reverse this trend. Road building and maintenance became the most common punishment for a variety of crimes. Villages overrun by monsters are being resettled. Ground travel receives quiet encouragement by frequent additions of Empire soldiers and Jägers to caravans and merchant trains, as well as a great deal of Empire support to the Corbettite order of monks (p. 158), who serve the Lord by building and maintaining railroads.

TOWN AND COUNTRY

Europa's great cities are its centers of fashion, art, and high culture, while their universities generate new ideas and radical philosophies. Here, the publishing industry has its base; its output entertains and informs even the rural areas of Europa. These major centers are also where the highest levels of technology are in common use. Important scientific developments can happen anywhere there is a Spark, but if an innovation is to spread, it must be taken from the laboratory and put out into the world. Thus, cities and universities tend to attract talented people eager to make their mark. Sparks who make themselves sufficiently interesting can be treated as minor celebrities, and are rarely in danger of losing their lives to an angry mob – at least as long as they behave themselves and don't annoy too many people.

Smaller towns on trade routes or in territories governed by more enlightened rulers enjoy a higher level of sophistication as well. Even if they aren't setting the trends, the locals are often reasonably well-educated and aware of what is going on in the world. They're likely to be tolerant of, or even interested in, new ideas and people. Some of these areas are famous for a particular industry, such as textiles, glassblowing, or mechanical animals. Those regions with industrial centers usually have a rich, reasonably-educated elite, and a respectable middle class. Here, Sparks and adventurers may be viewed with suspicion but are usually still tolerated, as a properly channeled Spark can bestow many benefits. Sparks who do not contribute significantly to the community need to be strong enough to protect themselves, or at least to have powerful friends.

Rural areas vary widely depending upon local conditions and the residents' experiences during the war. Lands within well-run states are prosperous and comfortable, with a generally good-hearted class of farmers and artisans in residence. Most are behind the times as far as fashion, information, and cutting-edge technology are concerned, but some may sport state-of-the-art inventions if the local ruler is a generous Spark or employs one. Sparks are often mistrusted in these areas, but the populace is unlikely to take matters into their own hands as long as they feel they can rely on their ruler's protection.

Remote areas in the Wastelands are another story. These territories are less tolerant of the strange – they've seen far too much of it. In some parts, Sparks are hunted and killed out of hand. The people in these less-populated regions aren't any more stupid than most of humanity, and they're usually resourceful and knowledgeable in their own ways; still, a provincial outlook is the norm, as they must look out for their own safety. Their knowledge of the outside world can be garbled, and strange stories circulate. Some local ideas of what a Spark looks and acts like are so outrageously off-base that a careful Spark has a decent chance of avoiding trouble. In a few places, Sparks can be mistaken for magicians, or even saints . . . but it isn't unknown for an incautious or inexperienced Spark to end up burned as a witch. Some especially isolated locales are extremely hostile – especially in areas hit hard by the infighting of the Long War – and many of these are dangerous to *any* stranger who wanders through.

Languages

Every region has its languages and local dialects. This can make things confusing, especially when people are arguing over whose clank just stomped all over the vegetable garden and who's going to pay for it. Thus, several "common tongues" are used among different groups of people.

The administrative language of the Empire is Romanian. Airship crews, sailors, and merchant enterprises tend to use English, the language of trade. Educated university folk often use Latin and Greek. German is the language of science and is used by most of the nobility throughout Europa Wulfenbach. French is the language of diplomacy, Arabic is popular for mathematics, and Russian has all the best jokes. Everyone else uses local dialects. Agatha's first language is Romanian, but she's fluent in all of the above.

If a person is an educated citizen of Europa Wulfenbach, they probably know quite a few more languages than their native tongue. If they aren't great with languages, then in addition to their local patois, Romanian, English, and/or German are enough to get by in most circles.

Weird Languages

Some languages are essentially unknown to the world at large. *Skiff* is the native tongue of Skifander (p. 27) and *Geisterspeak* is the term the people of Europa use for the weird language of the Geisterdamen (p. 68). Starting with either language requires a good reason and GM permission.

One of the more commonly known "weird" languages is the mechanical whirs, clicks, and beeps made by clanks. While most Sparks inherently understand and can speak with their own creations, to understand communications between clanks they must purchase the language *Whizbang*.

Money

Baron Wulfenbach minted Imperial Dollars and encouraged their use throughout Europa. Since staying on the Baron's good side is important, this game happily accepts his wisdom and provides all prices in Imperial Dollars ($). Long live the Baron!

Of course, old habits die hard; most small states within the Empire still maintain their own currency.

Sturmhalten, for example, uses the Castlemark ($1), which is interchangeable with Wulfenbach currency to avoid trade problems, but distinct out of principle.

Beetleburg, although it officially uses the Imperial standard, also retains its old currency of Zlotys, Scarabs, and Groats, as well as a wide variety of currencies from its neighbors. Since it's a university town, it's common to see many types of coin represented on its streets.

The truth is that the remnants of easily a half a hundred old currency systems are hanging on within the Empire. The GM is encouraged to use any one, or several, to add color (but not extra accounting). The Empire has a very well-informed currency exchange system.

Education

An in-depth, formal education is still considered a luxury, but that's changing. As the Baron's peace continues, being educated is coming into fashion. Among city and town dwellers, illiteracy in any but the lowest social orders is unusual. In the rural areas, where children are more likely to be needed for work in the fields, literacy levels are lower, as the lack of education isn't much of a handicap in day-to-day life. Even in remote areas, the children of upper classes tend to be educated to one degree or another.

In the past, education was obtained through private means; free schools were unheard of. In recent years, however, several influential writers and philosophers have taken up the cause of universal education, and it has become fashionable for rulers to establish basic schools for their subjects' children. The Baron encourages this with financial support and by giving political favors to towns with well-functioning schools. Not all rulers are so enlightened, and many are eccentric. Thus, the average person's education is still very much at the mercy of individual rulers and their whims.

Despite these leaps in education, university attendance is mostly limited to talented children of the middle and upper classes. Deserving members of the lower classes can be admitted, but are less likely to even think to ask. Sparks at all levels of society, if they are lucky, can find their way to a university. There, they expand their knowledge and meet other people who can help them with their goals – no matter how bizarre.

Religion

Organized religion used to be a lot more central to everyday life than it is now. These days, depending on where you are, it can even fade into total irrelevance. There's a theory that the Heterodynes are responsible for its decline. They have engaged in every crime, blasphemy, and abomination under the sun and have not only remained unpunished by God, but appear to be doing annoyingly well, while their enemies frequently wind up moldering in unmarked graves. After a few centuries of this, people begin to question the efficacy of their faith.

Europa hosts any number of local, often pagan religions. The centralized creeds we know today have their influence, but there are differences. At the time of our story, for instance, Catholicism is being overseen (mostly harmoniously, excepting the snide comments), by seven different Popes.*

Cities, especially large cosmopolitan ones like Paris, usually have many churches, including a grand cathedral or two. These serve a low-key religious population that peacefully exists side-by-side with the worldly one, which takes little notice of such things except on holidays.

As a more secular worldview arose, some traditions stubbornly remained in place. Mechanicsburg holds festivals dedicated to ancient deities, harvests, and fertility rites. These events may come as a surprise, welcome or unwelcome, to insufficiently briefed visitors.

Sparks and Religion

Sparks often have a shaky relationship with religion. Their tendencies toward megalomania frequently leave little room for the worship of anything other than themselves. This can discourage faith among those in the Spark's orbit. A Spark's magnetic personality, along with their ability to command the attention and servitude of those around them, can lead to cults of personality.

Sparks who admit religion and faith (or, at least, the trappings thereof) into their sphere of influence don't often let things like "original intent" slow them down. For example, while the Heterodynes seldom held conventional religious beliefs, their traditional lands actually do have a scattering of churches, and an impressive cathedral stands near the heart of Mechanicsburg itself.

Timekeeping

Time is measured in different ways in different areas. Klaus Wulfenbach imposed a standard for the Empire – Imperial Standard Time – but this didn't happen without resistance.

Many towns have fantastic, Spark-built clocks as centerpieces. Townspeople usually prefer to set their watches by these weird, buggy old devices regardless of how "off" from the new standard they are. Some of these use a completely different system of marking time, such as the clock tower in Mechanicsburg, which, among its other features, rings when it is dawn.

Imperial Standard Time is the system used across the continent by the Corbettite railways. If you plan on using them, it is important that at least one chronometer in the party be set to it, as the Corbettite trains run on a very tight schedule, and they wait for no man.

* For those who care about such things, they are (in no particular order) the Pope of Belfast, the Pope of Avignon, the Ottoman Pope, the Pope of the Mountains, the Pope of the Tsars, the Gypsy Pope (who, we must make clear, has no connection to the people known as the Romany), and the mysterious, Sicilian *Papa de Tutti Papi*.

2. Nice Places to Be From

The world of *Girl Genius* is shaped by the actions and inventions of Sparks. Europa was devastated by the Long War . . . but Sparks have warred for thousands of years, and in the world of the Spark, there have been even more terrible conflicts, now remembered by only a few.

Europa Wulfenbach

After the disappearance of the Other, Klaus Wulfenbach returned from exile to find his barony destroyed and the kingdoms around him in shambles. The death or exile of many of Europa's leaders and the destruction of large swaths of their territory left a vacuum which many power-hungry nobles scrambled to fill. Large and small wars bloomed everywhere.

This disappointed Wulfenbach. For years he had traveled with the Heterodyne Boys, and had helped them try to make the world a better place through the use of reason, intellect, and the occasional bit of applied violence. And yet, he had been gone for only a few years, and things were now worse than they'd been before the Heterodynes had first appeared. Klaus had gone along with the Heterodyne Boys' methods because it was an interesting intellectual exercise, and there was no denying that they got results. But these results had apparently been temporary at best. Klaus was a different person now. He had returned from his exile with a personal reason to make Europa a better place, and proceeded to do so – whether Europa liked it or not.

People had always known that Klaus was a Spark – and a strong one. But everyone saw now that he had never had sufficient reason to demonstrate just how strong he was.

He rebuilt his castle. Not as a retooled land fortress, but as an airship, Castle Wulfenbach, which meant that he could defend his lands personally. He declared what later became known as the *Pax Transylvania* as the new law of the land.

In essence, Klaus drew a circle, and declared that the area inside was under his protection, and that any aggression would be answered in kind.

No one really took this seriously, and he was attacked. To everyone's surprise, not only did he handily repulse the invaders, but he swooped in, captured the enemy leaders, and annexed their lands onto his own. This happened several times before people realized that something serious was going on, and that a new power was rising.

One of the reasons people underestimated Klaus was that there was never any "follow-up." He would defeat a country's ruler, take over the country, flow right up to its borders . . . and then stop. Even when the next country over was even weaker than the country he had just overrun. They could not wrap their heads around the simple truth that Klaus never wanted an empire. He just wanted to be left alone.

This restraint was always perceived as weakness. Obviously this latest conquest had taxed Klaus to the breaking point, and one final, deft attack would collapse his overextended empire-in-the-making and reward the attackers with everything he had conquered so far. *Obviously.*

Because of these "obvious" calculations, the Empire continued to expand for the next 16 years. Even today, there are geniuses who cannot believe that they simply shouldn't attack it.

But not all of the Empire's relationships were antagonistic. Relatively early on, there were smaller and weaker governments that realized that those allied with the Empire were doing incredibly well. Where the Baron strode, peace reigned, and Europa was desperate for peace. More and more governments – even those run by the Fifty Families, who knew good governance when they saw it – petitioned to become part of the Empire. Independent states like Sturmhalten allowed the Empire to engulf them as long as it didn't interfere with their internal politics, and "areas of interest," such as Mechanicsburg, more often than not surrendered without a shot.

This slow-but-steady confiscation of lands began to be known as the Wulfenbach Empire.

At its height, the Empire was bound on the west by the Marne and Rhône Rivers. Its northern border was formed by the North and the Baltic Seas, while its southern borders were the Alps and the Adriatic Sea. On the east it began up in the Gulf of Danzig, and wound its way east and south by way of assorted rivers and other geographical features until it encountered the Dnestr River, which it followed down to the Black Sea.

Old Castle Wulfenbach

Built sometime in the early 12th century, deep within the Carpathian Mountains, Old Castle Wulfenbach was the epitome of old-world aristocracy molded by Spark invention. The biggest single change was when it was modified to become part of the Heterodyne Containment Ring, 200 years ago.

The castle was destroyed during the war with the Other. The ruins of both the castle and its surrounding town have been left mostly untouched by the Baron, and are rumored to be haunted.

Mechanicsburg

The town of Mechanicsburg is located in Romania's Transylvanian Alps, within the Valley of the Heterodynes. Girt by impassable mountains, it has an area of a bit more than 50 square kilometers. Due to its geography, it is very easy to defend – and was so even *before* it was held by a Spark warlord and his army of monsters. In the thousand years that the Heterodynes have held the valley, no invader has ever managed to penetrate its defenses.

At the beginning of the 11th century, the warlord Genghis Ht'rok-din invaded the area. Aside from its defenses, the only feature of merit was a holy spring dedicated to a local battle goddess, maintained by an order of priestesses. The water had peculiar properties – and was poisonous. Ht'rok-din drank from the spring of the Dyne *and did not die.* Instead he thrived, and began the Heterodyne line.

His son, Knife, built the first Castle Heterodyne, replacing his father's crude fort with something much more solid.

Initially, the valley's population was small, mostly consisting of the Heterodynes' raiders and the serfs who grew their crops. This began to change when Egregious Heterodyne turned the gently flowing sacred spring into a raging river (incidentally destroying the first castle). This was the birth of the River Dyne, which at first was not much use. Plants and animals that survived exposure to the water often developed strange mutations. Much of Mechanicsburg's unique flora and fauna date from this time.

It was Faustus Heterodyne who cleaned the waters and expanded the town of Mechanicsburg, populating it with talented artisans (and occasional captives) from every corner of Europa, as well as Asia and Northern Africa. Thus, while there are many things you can call Mechanicsburg, the first and foremost must be *cosmopolitan.*

From then on, Mechanicsburg grew as a town of minions ready to support the Heterodynes' every need – whether those needs were doing the laundry or conquering a neighboring barony.

Minions Without a Master

After the disappearance of Bill and Barry Heterodyne, no Heterodyne heir existed. The people of Mechanicsburg – who for close to 50 generations had lived to serve the Master – found themselves rudderless. They had lived off the spoils and ill-gotten gains of the Heterodyne family for as long as anyone had known. What could they do?

Although the family was gone, the Heterodyne Boys were remembered as heroes, and everyone wanted to see the town they came from. The townspeople easily channeled their need to serve the ruling family – and their natural predatory spirit – into tourism. Thus, even in the absence of a Heterodyne heir, the town managed to honor their masters, convinced that one day they would return.

When Baron Klaus Wulfenbach established his empire and discovered the Heterodynes were gone, he decided Castle Heterodyne and Mechanicsburg were far too dangerous to leave to their own devices. He annexed the town and appointed a ruling town council. Little did he know . . .

The Governing Body

The hereditary seneschals of Mechanicsburg were the loyal and talented von Mekkhan family, who had served for hundreds of years. Loath to trust an outsider, they convinced the Baron that the von Mekkhan family, like their masters, was extinct.

Carson von Mekkhan and his grandson Vanamonde adopted the surname of Heliotrope and acted as a shadow government, secretly "advising" the town council on the running of Mechanicsburg. While Wulfenbach had some idea the council may have been subverted, he also knew to leave well enough alone. The Heliotrope family held a permanent spot on the council, holding the hereditary title "Ringer of the Doom Bell."

The Great Hospital

When the Heterodyne brothers stepped up to rule Mechanicsburg, they realized that they were saddled with a vast legacy of evil. They immediately began to get rid of, or at least repurpose, the most unsavory of the town's institutions.

Their greatest success was the Great Hospital. Built on top of what used to be known as the Flesh Yards, the people and things that worked there were thoroughly reeducated.

The facility was run by a Spark appointed by the Baron himself, Dr. Sun Jen-djieh. Back in their adventuring days, Sun and the Baron were occasional traveling companions, and remained good friends. Within the hospital's walls, Sun supervised doctors, nurses, and researchers, all while running his own experiments. The Great Hospital was regarded as one of the few places in Europa that considered the Spark an unalloyed benefit to humanity.

Every amenity for health care was available there, and people came from all over Europa to receive treatment. The Great Hospital was a major factor in Europa's change of opinion about the Heterodyne family.

The Great Hospital was destroyed during the Siege of Mechanicsburg, in an attempt to kill the Baron, who was a patient at the time. The ruins lie within the area of stopped time surrounding Mechanicsburg. Some of the hospital staff were able to escape the grounds before the time stop, but as far as anyone knows, Doctor Sun is still inside.

The Doom Bell

Located on a tower outside of Castle Heterodyne, the Doom Bell was rung to celebrate births, deaths, and transitions in power within the Heterodyne family. It was last rung to announce the birth of Barry Heterodyne, the second child of Saturnus Heterodyne. Once Bill became the Heterodyne, he ordered that the bell no longer be rung.

This is because the Doom Bell is a powerful sonic weapon. Hearing it incapacitates nearly everyone who has never heard it before, and often causes extreme distress even in those who have. It has the lasting effect of stripping the hearer of any illusion that they might not die. Surprisingly, the natives of Mechanicsburg, who on average hear the bell several times during their lifetime, possess a great *joie de vivre*, possibly because they know to make the best of whatever life they have left.

Until Agatha repaired Castle Heterodyne and was acknowledged as the legitimate ruler of the town, the Doom Bell had not rung in decades. In fact, the striking hammer had been hidden (hanging in Mamma Gkika's Jägermonster bar, as a matter of fact) in order to discourage the occasional treasure-hunter who stubbornly clung to the legend that ringing the bell would throw open the doors of the Heterodynes' vast treasury.

The Red Cathedral

The Red Cathedral was built because of a wager. Prince Vadim Sturmvoraus made a bet with Iscariot, the "Good" Heterodyne (he was not a good person, but he was a Good Heterodyne, which is not the same thing at *all*), that he could not build a cathedral in Mechanicsburg in 15 years. It only took 10 years for Iscariot to prove the Prince wrong. The Prince admitted he had lost the bet, and paid the agreed stakes by eating his own hat.

It isn't just a cathedral, but a secondary power source and defense mechanism against Castle Heterodyne – just in case. Creations are occasionally known to turn on their masters, after all.

The Red Cathedral operates on separate systems from the Castle. Once a Heterodyne heir has been recognized, there are mechanisms in the Red Cathedral that allow the heir to override control over many systems in the rest of the town.

Its catacombs are extensive, and haunted by any number of strange creatures and people. Also in the catacombs is a long-forgotten "Queen's Mirror" (p. 156). At one time, these artifacts – which are thousands of years old – acted as communication devices and transport portals for the God-Queens of old, who were spread out across the ancient world. (Albia of England, p. 24), is a surviving God-Queen.) Why one is located in Mechanicsburg is a mystery. Although all of the remaining gates are believed to be nonfunctional, this one seems to be at least somewhat useable.

Some of the Red Cathedral's residents also believe that the new Heterodyne must perform certain rituals within to hold back eldritch horrors. No one has any way of proving whether this is actually *necessary* – but better safe than sorry.

Mamma Gkika's

A beer hall. A burlesque club. A brothel. An ostentatious tourist trap. That's what it said in the guidebooks. Prior to the fall of the Heterodynes, it was a bar that served Jägers. After the Empire absorbed Mechanicsburg, Mamma Gkika made sure the place kept its reputation of being a raucous dive that specifically catered to the tastes of adventure-seeking tourists who wanted a real "Jäger" experience. The barmaids dressed in cartoonish Jäger style, with fake pointy teeth, ears, and various other frightening (but cute!) costume additions.

In reality the bar was a front for more-clandestine activities, with the bawdiness up top distracting outsiders from the establishment's real purpose, which took place several stories down.

According to their agreement with Baron Wulfenbach, the Jägers themselves were barred from Mechanicsburg until the return of the Heterodynes. They quietly chose to interpret this ban to mean "street-level Mechanicsburg," and made free use of the extensive network of tunnels beneath the town to reach the sub-sub-sub-basement of Mamma Gkika's.

The Jägers refused to let anyone but a Heterodyne work on them, so when they became too wounded, they headed for Mamma's, and she did what she could. Under her care, they remained safe, comfortable, and stable. She saw to it that these Jägers lived to fight another day, waiting for a Heterodyne to claim their birthright and fix them up for good. While they waited, the Jägers amused themselves with the usual evening bar fights and, on Thursdays, poetry slam night.

At over two meters, with pointed ears, claws, and an ever-ready sharp-toothed grin, Mamma Gkika looks like one of her own barmaids . . . or possibly several of her own barmaids rolled into one. Tourists assume that she, too, is in costume, but Mamma is in fact a genuine Jäger general.

Castle Heterodyne and Why It Hates You

The self-aware mechanical fortress that is Castle Heterodyne is the vicious heart and maniacal soul of Mechanicsburg. At its height, the Castle could manipulate its very walls and floors, move rooms around, and keep track of every inhabitant. Fiercely loyal to the family, it casually dealt death to anyone it deemed going against the Heterodynes' best interests.

After the Other's devastating attack, the Castle was heavily damaged, its mind was fractured, and it was subsequently abandoned. It continued to fall into disrepair. It was used by Baron Wulfenbach as a prison for many years, with the prisoners expected to contribute to its repairs as part of their sentence.

Agatha and her friends managed to repair some of the damage to the Castle, clearing its mind. They also repaired its power source and reenergized its batteries, allowing the Castle to self-repair and once again extend its influence out into the town itself. Because of this, the Castle was instrumental in the city's defense during the Siege of Mechanicsburg.

History

Castle Heterodyne has been leveled more than once as a result of its residents' experiments. The version erected in the 1200s is the shape that people are familiar with today. But it was still just a fortress.

It was Faustus Heterodyne who was responsible for its greatest change. He created an artificial intelligence for the Castle, giving it a personality similar to his own, and granted it the ability to manipulate its very substance. To power this wonder, he learned how to extract the unknown energy found in the River Dyne, and used it to energize the Castle's mysterious mechanisms.

And mysterious they remain. No one really knows how Castle Heterodyne works. Within its walls, it can rearrange rooms, traps, and various other implements of mayhem at will. Now that it has been repaired, it can once again do the same an unspecified distance into town.

After the Heterodyne Boys vanished, and the Castle was abandoned, a professor from Transylvania Polygnostic University (p. 23) led a team into the building with the hope of studying its workings. The Castle took great offense at their poking around its interior without permission, and trapped them within its walls. It declared that if they were going to be so nosy, they could just stay in the Castle and help with repairs forever.

When Baron Wulfenbach took over Mechanicsburg, he negotiated with the Castle for the release of the professor and his remaining team, promising instead to send in supplies and work crews to meet the building's demands. These work crews were made up of troublesome Sparks and criminals. While the Baron didn't tell them to their faces that he didn't care if they came out alive, everyone knew that the chances were slim for anyone who walked into Castle Heterodyne. The prisoners kept the Castle maintained well enough that it didn't collapse, and the Castle repaid them by killing them creatively. The unfairness of this transaction has been noted.

Aside from the Castle's basic, cheerfully homicidal attitude, the main source of its post-attack madness was the fact that its personality had been severely fragmented. The damage splintered things into at least 12 different independent "minds," none of which operated very lucidly. Various parts of the Castle were unable to speak to each other; thus, venturing anywhere within the building that was not already explored and marked as "safe" was assumed to be a death sentence.

After Agatha's repairs, the Castle's personality is once again whole, but the place is no less dangerous to uninvited guests. It is littered with traps. Inventions such as the Happy Fun Ball of Death – a giant ball of spikes that wanders the halls and rolls over intruders – make navigating the Castle a dangerous hobby. In addition, a number of autonomous clanks defend the Castle, including giant mechanical squid, the Fun-Sized Mobile Agony and Death Dispensers (p. 172), the Torchmen (p. 176), and God alone knows what else.

Defenses are not limited to what Sparks created, as other *things* have also moved in. Ghostmaker mice, blood bats, and odd spiders are common. It is safe to say that within the Castle is a whole ecosystem: some flora and fauna that were mutated by the Heterodynes, some that are collateral damage from their experiments, and some of older and weirder origins.

Mapping the Castle

Befitting the Heterodyne style of villainous excess, the Castle contains an incredible multitude of rooms. There are surgical labs and machine shops dotted all over, as setting up a new lab or shop is almost as fun as using it. One also finds small mundane rooms scattered about seemingly at random: staff kitchens, servants' quarters, armories, private bedrooms, large dormitories, lavatories, and so on.

There are also more important, unique rooms. Expect to find places such as the infamous Seraglio of Satyricus Heterodyne, the Conservatory, and the Psychological Torture Chamber. There is a palatial Master Bedroom, unusual in that it is a room where the Castle cannot "see." Even the old Heterodynes liked their privacy occasionally.

When "finding" new rooms, remember that the Heterodynes liked to think big. Go nuts – they did.

The Master Library, for example, is a magnificent collection of the written word, nine stories tall, packed with looted treasures collected over the family's history. It was one of the primary goals of the team that originally entered Castle Heterodyne, and the place where Agatha reactivated the Castle's mind. Consider it the ultimate information source . . . what you need is probably there, if you can only find it.

Lost Secrets

Hidden deep within the Castle's foundations are at least two special secrets. The first is the Great Movement Chamber, where the Castle's power system is housed. It is here that the waters of the River Dyne rise from the earth and pass through the series of water wheels and complex machinery that extracts their mysterious energy and transmits it to the Castle. Faustus Heterodyne first learned to harvest the power from its waters in a mysterious process known as "Spinning." So great is this energy that Castle Heterodyne is completely powered by the river alone, although this is a closely guarded secret. If not for the River Dyne, the Heterodynes, Castle Heterodyne, the Jägers, and Mechanicsburg itself would not exist. The Jägerdraught concocted by Vlad "The Blasphemous" Heterodyne, used to create Jägers (p. 66), uses unfiltered water from the Dyne as one of its main ingredients.

Even deeper still, beneath the Great Movement Chamber, hidden from the perception of Castle Heterodyne itself, is the secret laboratory of Lucrezia Mongfish Heterodyne. This was where she studied and perfected the techniques of mind transfer, and where she created technology that would become part of the Other's campaign against Europa. No one knows what other things she might have created down there, hidden away from the eyes of the Heterodynes and the rest of the world.

STURMHALTEN

Sturmhalten is a mountain fortress town situated on Balan's Gap, one of the few natural passes in the Carpathian Mountains. The town sprang up around the castle which Adronicus Valois, the original Storm King, built to solidify his empire and help contain the Heterodynes.

Sturmhalten is ruled by the Sturmvoraus family. Tarvek Sturmvoraus, son of the late Prince, is expected to assume the role of ruling Prince once things calm down a bit. His father, Aaronev Wilhelm Sturmvoraus, was secretly one of Lucrezia's loyal minions. He protected the Geisterdamen, and was responsible for the security of the Other's mind-summoning technology.

The city has long extracted a toll on all travelers who pass through. When ground transportation began to be supplanted by airships, the town finances sagged, until the ruling family took action to expand the local industries into airship repair. Their now-extensive docks are well regarded throughout Eastern Europa.

The Deepdown

Numerous towns in Europa have extensive systems of catacombs, sewers, and many-layered cellars, which are often connected. It isn't even unusual for nearby towns to be linked by these tunnel networks. Sturmhalten's Deepdown is an impressive example that connects to the vast system of caves that riddles the area.

Sturmhalten/Balan's Gap used to be a much larger town than it is now. Historically it served as the headquarters of the Storm King's Shining Coalition when that alliance was actively fighting the Heterodynes. Though much of the underused city was razed and rebuilt as Sturmhalten's famous airship facilities several decades ago, a great deal of the original subterranean infrastructure remains as the upper layers of the Deepdown, now completely out of proportion to the needs of the current town.

Which isn't to say that it's *unused*. It's infested with giant rodents (p. 173), abandoned experiments, and other crawlies that prefer living in the damp and the dark. The Deepdown was long a haven to the Geisterdamen (p. 68), and is expansive enough that it was used for the transport of hive engines. As a result, almost all of the citizens of Sturmhalten are revenants: slaves of the Other. Both the occupants and the monsters are part of the reason Sturmhalten was overrun from within when the Other took control of Agatha Heterodyne's mind.

The Smoke Knights

The Smoke Knights are highly trained bodyguards, spies, and assassins. They're usually collateral relatives of the Sturmvoraus and von Blitzengaard family, but talented non-family members are also recruited. Those born into the line start their education as soon as they can walk. Smoke Knights are taught unarmed combat and ranged and melee weapons skills, as well as basic alchemy, poison use, and first aid. They're also excellent climbers and infiltrators, and masters of misdirection and sleight of hand. Thanks to their infiltration skills, they can hold their own among the snootiest of aristocrats or the worst of gutter criminals.

There are a number of covert fighting and spying organizations within the Empire, but among those who keep track of such things, the Smoke Knights are considered the best.

For suggested Smoke Knight skills and stats, see *Spy* (p. 63).

Refuge of Storms

The Refuge of Storms is a massive mountain fortress under the control of the von Blitzengaard family. It was constructed 200 years ago by the Storm King to be the northern part of the defensive ring that contained the Heterodynes. Unlike Sturmhalten, it is not attached to a town, and ground use of the pass it guards has been almost entirely supplanted by airship travel. Its few inhabitants tend to be von Blitzengaard family members, with occasional visits from historians or students of architecture.

Because of this, it has long been a preferred location for the plotting that seems to consume a great deal of the extended von Blitzengaard/Sturmvoraus family's time. They are aided in this by vast subterranean facilities that contain laboratories, airship docks, and workshops.

Beetleburg

Beetleburg is located on the east side of the Carpathian Mountains. It is, for the most part, a town of academics whose lives center around Transylvania Polygnostic University. The town welcomes learners of all backgrounds, priding itself on being a center of intellectual superiority in Europa Wulfenbach. Most non-academics in Beetleburg provide direct support or resources to the university.

Transylvania Polygnostic University

Transylvania Polygnostic University (TPU) was founded by the original Tyrant of Beetleburg. It is among the oldest and most elite of universities, and is the center of life in Beetleburg.

As the crème de la crème of higher-learning intuitions, it hosts a number of world-renowned academics, providing them with the tools to perform cutting-edge research into everything from color theory to world domination. It was where Agatha Clay/Heterodyne worked as a research assistant, until Baron Klaus Wulfenbach invaded the school. (The most recent Tyrant, Tarsus Beetle, was secretly keeping technology of the Other.)

Dr. Beetle was the third generation of his family to hold Beetleburg and the University. At this time his heir has yet to return from an expedition and be informed that they are now expected to take up the family business.

Mr. Tock

One of the more popular attractions of Transylvania Polygnostic University is Mr. Tock. Created by Dr. Beetle, the giant clank acts not only as a clock tower for the university's daily routine, but also as a technologically anachronistic – and slow – gate guard. In addition, "he" can command the Watch: a group of smaller, similar-looking clanks who patrol Beetleburg.

Tarsus Beetle utilized Mr. Tock to attack Baron Wulfenbach when the Baron invaded Beetleburg. The technological gap between Mr. Tock and Wulfenbach's armies proved to be the clank's downfall, and he was put out of action by one of the Baron's airships.

When last seen, Mr. Tock was being repaired by Gilgamesh Wulfenbach.

The New Castle Wulfenbach

After returning from exile and discovering his home gone, Baron Klaus Wulfenbach began constructing an airship to replace it. He added to it as the Empire grew. Today it is almost a kilometer long, with enough armament to stop an army or wipe a town off of the map.

The Castle, as both a transport and a city, is used to ensure that Wulfenbach's iron grip over Europa never wavers. It may move slowly, but it carries any number of soldiers, weapons, and other machines. It also houses the Empire's bureaucracy, which can wreak almost as much havoc as the military forces. Everything is designed to project the Big Message: "Don't Make Me Come Over There."

Wulfenbach Forces

Wulfenbach's large and varied military is spread widely throughout the Empire. Over the years, Klaus has confiscated a lot of outré Spark-generated military gear. Much of this has been repurposed for peaceful use, and is used for communications, mining, firefighting, infrastructure construction, and so on. But make no mistake: Klaus can revert these devices to their military purpose instantly if needed.

Aside from the flotilla of airships that surround and support Castle Wulfenbach, there are several fleets of military and support dirigibles that constantly ply the skies of Europa. Some of these are specialized, such as the Heliolux Air Fleet. These ships are the backbone of the military's communication system, but with very little effort, their mirrors can be retuned, creating intense rays of light capable of setting targets afire.

Whenever Klaus conquers an enemy, he invites their troops to join the forces of the Empire. Since many of these soldiers are simple conscripts rather than fanatical loyalists, they're often happy to join the winning side – and get paid for it!

Thus, there are many different clanks and mechanized divisions. Players are encouraged to make up their own. Don't worry about them being "dumb." This is a world run by Mad Science. Trust us, the Baron has seen worse, and led them to victory.

There are also elite troops. Some have been specially trained, such as the Vespiary Squad, who breed and train the wasp eaters (p. 176) to locate and identify revenants and slaver wasps. Others are individuals affected in some way by Mad Science, such as the Black Squad, who can vanish and reappear elsewhere almost instantaneously.

Many of these were acquired as a unit, such as the Radioheads, the Stealth Fighters, the Lackya, and the Jägermonsters.

The Fifty Families

The Fifty Families are the members of the ruling houses of Europa that are united by the proudly upheld but fading idea of "royalty." Some willingly came under the control of Baron Wulfenbach's empire; others were forced to swear allegiance to him.

The lineages of the Fifty Families now contain both Sparks and non-Sparks. While they have many differences in political leanings, education level, and opinions on the perfect cup of coffee, all resent the Baron and all are afraid of him. There was always the dream that a new Storm King would rise and bring an end to the "tyranny" of the Pax Transylvania. As a result, every one of the Fifty Families seems to have some small part in the Storm King conspiracy (p. 10).

Many of the students at the Castle originated with the Fifty Families. See *Guests of Castle Wulfenbach* (below).

Western Europe

Western Europa is a splintered mess of independent city-states, kingdoms, and all the other forms of small governments only possible in a world of madmen and despots. Some have rulers as well known as any king or queen. These states usually cooperate on issues that affect them all, such as the Other, but frequently remind each other they are under no obligation to agree with or follow the edicts of Baron Wulfenbach, each other, or anyone else.

Paris

Paris is known as the City of Lightning. Originally it was the capital of France, but after the collapse of the Shining Coalition, it became an independent entity ruled by Simon Voltaire, the Master of Paris, a Spark who lived for over 200 years. During his reign, it opened its gates to artists, intellectuals, and Sparks. Its rich history, fine universities, and reputation as a center of creativity drew people from all walks of life, especially those seeking something other than the rule of Baron Wulfenbach or the horrors of the Long War. It was considered one of the safest places in Europa. Baron Wulfenbach, ferociously protective of his only son, sent Gil to Paris to attend its schools under an assumed name.

Among the attractions of the city are the Awful Tower, the Louvre, and the Notre Dame de Paris – architectural feats that speak to a deep sense of style and history.

The Master was one of Van Rijn's (See *The Storm King's Muses*, p.65) apprentices. He was able to "join" with his city, and could mentally control its infrastructure and defenses, very much as the Heterodynes were said to have been able to control Castle Heterodyne. When he was assassinated in a plot by the Queen of the Dawn (see Zola Anya Talinka Venia Zeblikya Malfeazium, p. 45), his daughter, Colette Voltaire, broke through as a Spark, tapped into the city's controlling systems, and became the new Master of Paris.

Because of the undetectable minions of the Other that came to light during Agatha's adventures, Colette ordered the city to be closed to outsiders until further notice.

Trelawney Thorpe — Spark of the Realm!

Very human, yet a legend, Trelawney Thorpe is another tool Queen Albia uses to spread the message of the superiority of the United Kingdom. What is fact and what is fiction about Thorpe is the subject of a huge amount of debate, and people avidly read sensational pulp fiction detailing her thrilling adventures: Has she really met the Iron Sheik? Did she really venture deep into the undersea Caves of Death to retrieve the Pearl of the Dragon Witch? Was that really a giant puffer fish she used to win the All-Around-Paris-and-Back Dirigible Race, or just an extremely fancy balloon – and did three dashing pirate captains and a duke really duel to the death for the honor of taking her to the ball afterward?

Whether or not anything written about her is true, people *know* Trelawney Thorpe. She inspires a sense of national pride in the citizens of England – for she is one of their own. She's the adventurer they all want to be, and her books fill their bookshelves while her posters are plastered on their walls. Queen Albia could not ask for a better ambassador – or spy.

In the Trelawney Thorpe novels, the heroine is always accompanied by her trusty sidekick, adventurous sailor Jolly Jack Tarr. Whether Jack is a real person, or merely an invented literary stand-in for the reader and a source of convenient exposition, is hotly debated by fans. While Jack has not appeared within the canonical *Girl Genius* stories, British military officers – who really should know better – happily accept Gilgamesh Wulfenbach at face value when he jokingly introduces himself as Jack Tarr.

England

To the west of the Wulfenbach Empire lies England, a stable and prosperous nation untouched by the ravages of the Other. This is mostly due to the protection of the God-Queen, Albia of England. Albia is easily 5,000 years old, and terribly powerful.

Several hundred years ago, there was a very poorly-thought out rebellion against Her Undying Majesty. Many of the details have been lost, but the rebels used a terrible weapon, and as a result, the British Isles are slowly sinking. Ireland and southern Great Britain are now a collection of smaller islands and undersea holdings, while large portions of Wales, the north of England, and Scotland still stand above the waterline . . . for now.

This could have lead to civilization-ending despair . . . but this is England. Albia and her people joined with their neighbors and are actively working to reverse the sinking (this is known as the Great Work), making amazing strides in technologies that allow them to survive underwater – survive, and even thrive.

England has established a mighty trading empire that circumnavigates the globe, and they are always searching for anything that might help the Great Work. Queen Albia has spent centuries cultivating England's reputation as a land welcoming to Sparks and their inventions.

The Merchant Companies

While Queen Albia personally remains within the borders of England, her influence spans the Known World through her emissaries. The merchant companies are among these agents; they seek out new trade alliances and supply lines for Albia's empire. They are also a convenient tool for moving spies or agents into or out of foreign regions.

The companies use a variety of vessels, on both land and sea. Submarines and powered steamships are especially useful in the partially submerged British Isles, even if they are subject to maritime hazards. Airships are also popular, as they move quickly and can evade many of the dangers of the land and sea.

The Queen

Albia herself claims she has at least 5,000 years behind her. Her memories date back to a time before the English Channel existed. She is one of the only known Sparks who has "broken through" *twice*. She will take offense if her powers are termed "magic," insisting that everything she does is firmly based in fantastically advanced science. Nevertheless, the things Albia does look like magic to everyone else, and the limit to her powers is unknown.

Albia hasn't aged, still appearing as young as she did millennia ago. She is capable of changing her form at whim, appearing as everything from a flame-haired barbarian queen to a near-twin to Agatha. She often appears as a giant, sometimes up to ten meters tall, but can change her size to that of a normal human. The only things that generally remain constant are her halo of stars, her mismatched earrings, and some sort of symbol representing her ties to the British crown.

The Henge

Albia built this secret fortress after her second breakthrough. Its very existence is unknown to most, and its location might be her deepest secret. This is where she stores her most precious artifacts. It also holds the Queen's Well, where she keeps all the memories her human mind cannot possibly store.

The Glass City

The Glass City is a nickname for Londinium, the capital city of England and the seat of power for Queen Albia. Except for a few areas, the city has completely sunk into the ocean and is inaccessible to outsiders.

Londinium is a series of glass structures, similar to the famous Crystal Palace, which protect the city from the ocean above. Continental visitors arriving by boat or airship usually enter via one of the White Spires – huge mooring stations that tower above the waves. The spires act as vertical gateways to the city below. There are also several underwater wharf districts with submarine docks.

Britain has any number of groups and societies of interest. One of the more intriguing is Her Majesty the Queen's Right Puissant Society of Sages, Adepts, and Prometheans. This group has its own complex of undersea domes near the city, where a number of Sparks keep their laboratories. The separate accommodations serve several purposes. They provide a private space for the most talented of Sparks to perform their work, while also keeping that work and its associated disasters limited to one area of Londinium.

Other attractions include the Royal Collection of Inconvenient Oddities, which houses devices and archaeological finds that don't easily fit into, or actually contradict, accepted scientific orthodoxy. These can cause no small amount of trouble when they escape the museum. However, even the bipedal crocodile constructs and ancient devices pale when placed next to one of the Queen's Mirrors (p. 156), another name for the mysterious prehistoric Gates.

Another point of interest is the Hall of Privateers. Many of Britain's citizens sowed their youthful oats by traveling the world as one of Her Majesty's privateers. These halls are found all over the world, and serve as a place where a privateer – current or ex – can find a bunk, a hot meal, and a listing of British ships looking for crew.

The *Londinium Moon* is a newspaper that provides (rather sensationalist) news about the city and its happenings.

Nonhuman Inhabitants

In addition to humans, other creatures can claim British citizenry. One fine example is the species of sapient octopuses often seen around town. Because they have few material needs, the jobs they fill tend to be low-level, low-key efforts held for their own, unfathomable purposes. They require special mechanical apparatus in order to function out of water, and are considered full citizens.

The *Great Cetaceans* are mysterious creatures of unimaginable size. They normally live at great depths, and rarely have contact with humanity. Many years ago, Dr. Dimitri Vapnoople (see Krosp I, Emperor of All Cats, p. 40) manipulated the Great Cetaceans into waging war upon the underwater realms. This has long since been resolved, and there are friendly diplomatic relations between the species.

The Wastelands

The Wastelands sprawl in vast patches between the cities of Europa. They are places where the devastation of the Long War, as well as the more recent carnage caused by the Other, left scars. Here you'll encounter the worst residues of Mad Science: autonomous death machines, monsters, bandits, and dangers of all sorts. These zones are as perilous as they sound. For those from more settled areas, they're places to get through or go around as quickly as possible – it's no wonder most people prefer air travel.

But people *do* live there. Perhaps they've always lived there. Perhaps they were refugees from someplace even worse. Perhaps they're secret servants of the great frog god Bzort, and it's easier to gather unsuspecting sacrifices away from the city. Perhaps they're just idiots.

Isolation, poverty, and paranoia, along with a lack of education, causes many Wastelanders to be extremely xenophobic. They're especially terrified of Sparks. Many villages have a burn-on-sight policy when dealing with Sparks.

The Baron has made sustained efforts to improve the conditions in the Wastelands. He has built roads, established new trade routes, and attempted to repopulate devastated villages. The size, danger, and sheer everyday weirdness of the land itself and the things that live there hampers progress, however.

Master Payne's Circus of Adventure

Master Payne's Circus of Adventure is a traveling Heterodyne show. They're a theater acting out the pulp stories of the Heterodyne Boys. There are other acts, such as gunslinging, song and dance, fortune-telling, and similar carnival fare.

The Circus has a secret: It's a front for a group of minor Sparks. People in the Wastelands fear Sparks, but when an actor playing a comedy "Spark" stands on stage and activates a lightning cannon that shoots a torrent of flowers straight into his face, they'll laugh, and that's a big improvement over burning him at the stake. The Circus provides its members with security and safety, helping them to hide in plain sight and make a decent living while traveling through the Wastelands.

As dangerous as the Wastelands are, they tend to be safer than the cities for Sparks who value their freedom. In settled areas, minor Sparks are often forcibly "recruited" by whatever ambitious noble or more powerful Spark happens to be in charge. Even Baron Wulfenbach likes to collect them.*

Master Payne leads the Circus along with his wife, the Countess Marie, who is both a real countess and a Spark with a talent for chemistry. Their second-in-command is Abner de la Scalla, a congenial and loyal man who has a romantic relationship with Pix, the overprotective star of the Heterodyne show.

Other members include Balthazar and his parents Trish and Gunter Belloptrix. Trish can create transforming devices, such as her crutch that is also a gun, while Gunter is a smith who keeps the caravan in order. Rivet and Otto are also mechanics who can invent specialized tools that are otherwise unavailable in Europa. A Spark with a love of cuisine and special pies, Chef Taki makes sure the crew is well fed and mostly not poisoned by his creations. There are many others.

Until his death, Lars (see *Circus Folk,* p. 55) played Bill Heterodyne and scouted out dangerous situations. The Circus also hosted Zeetha for a time. She served as protection for the troop as she searched to find her lost home of Skifander. Even Agatha joined the cast for a while.

After they aided Agatha against Baron Wulfenbach, the Circus relocated to England, by invitation of the Crown. During the fight with the Baron, Agatha dropped a giant circus wagon on Klaus, and the troupe decided it was best to head somewhere outside of the Baron's influence. England has done well by the group, providing them with opportunities for stage shows, vampire hunting, and education without agents of the Wulfenbach Empire looking over their shoulders.

The Rest of the World

As the *Girl Genius* story has stayed within Europa, all we have of the rest of the world are tantalizing fragments. These can be expanded upon or ignored as you wish. Let your imagination run wild! All of this is a jumping-off point.

Across the world are locations that haven't been explored by Europans. Some of these places, once bustling cities or pilgrimage sites, are lost to the modern age. Others are on the verge of becoming the next big thing. Yet others are new worlds and corners of the universe that have never seen a living human being. It's important to remember that all peoples around the world have their own Sparks, which have influenced *their* histories.

The Americas

The Americas are a frustrating conundrum for Sparks. Up until 30 years ago, they were distant but one could get there. All that changed overnight. You cannot go there, and no one ever comes *from* there. There are conflicting rumors as to the reason: a supposed Great Wall of Fire, monsters from the deeps, magnetic anomalies that confound navigation equipment, suspiciously well-aimed meteorites. You can't go there. Don't even try.

However, you *could* get there at one point. When Europa first made contact with the Americas, the intrepid explorers found them already full of a dizzying variety of technologically savvy peoples. The reason for this was the presence of a brilliant Toltec chemist, a Spark who managed to cure the debilitating plagues that, for a time, threatened to wipe out the great Native American civilizations. Thus, the visitors from Europa were forced to handle introductions with slightly more diplomacy than their counterparts in our world.

Nevertheless, as previously mentioned, the Americas have become mysteriously inaccessible, so all that lovely diplomacy and research got cut short. Not much is known about the people there unless one talks to very specific scholars, or hunts up the right books.

Asia

Asia is, of course, massive, and contains a lot of different peoples and cultures. Here are some brief notes.

China

China is huge, due to being an easily unified land. The people in charge aren't fond of things that have the potential to topple their empire, so Sparks are watched very closely or conscripted into government service.

* For a number of years, the Circus secretly possessed two of the nine Muses of Van Rijn (see *The Storm King's Muses*, p. 65) – Tinka and Moxana. However, in the past few years, Tinka was stolen from the Circus by Aaronev Wilhelm Sturmvoraus, Prince of Sturmhalten. This left Moxana in a state of grief and slow mental decay caused by the loss of her sister.

China is fixated on stability. Their great works involve medicine, mathematics, recordkeeping, and all the practicalities that make life actually livable. Europa has kept itself on very good terms with China for as long as anyone can remember, and the exchange of goods and ideas between the two regions has always been limited, but fruitful. As such, China continues to be very, very wealthy.

One of the odder facets of China's ruling system is the fact that occasionally it has multiple Emperors at once. Every once in a while, one of the imperial Spark lineages will decide that they really want to be the true Emperor, and China will have a small, clean, controlled war. Then everything will go back to normal, albeit with *slightly* different policies in place.

Japan

Japan's first encounters with the other people of the world mostly involved said people trying to conquer them. Japan eventually got sick of this and closed itself off from the world. Nobody knows how; all they know is that if you get too close to Japan, the weather itself will turn against you. Crashing waves, typhoons that sweep in out of nowhere, giant bluefin tuna, implausibly large lizards . . . really, whatever natural contrivance can occur, will. However, unlike America, it's not *quite* impossible. People do occasionally leave the country, so there are a handful of rumors and wild stories about what goes on there. Still, that story about Dr. Takahashi and her hammers-from-nowhere device has got to be fiction. We hope.

North

If you go far enough north of Europa, things start to get really cold. Eventually, you'll have entered the domain of the Polar Ice Lords.

The Polar Ice Lords are jerks. There's not much else to say on the matter. The part of the world they rule is a grim place with nothing to do in the coldest months but think. In most situations, this produces profound philosophy. The Ice Lords, however, spend their time thinking of nasty experiments and unspeakable torments for their own subjects. Most famously, they tax fire. That ought to tell you all you need to know about them.

Africa

Thousands of years ago, there was a Spark-fueled war between Rome and Carthage. As a result, much of the northern coastal region of Africa was ecologically damaged. It is recovering, but life remains difficult.

Equatorial and Southern Africa contain the largest number of surviving God-Queens. As a result, most of the African continent is divided into a handful of large empires. Attitudes and cultures vary between these empires. Some places of note in Africa include New Egypt, Southern and Eastern Ethiopia, the United Bantu regions, the Dendi empire, the Isle of Queens (Madagascar, as you may know it), and the plainly named Big City, located at the tip of southernmost Africa, which claims to be one of the oldest cities in the world.

Europa's contact with the empires of sub-Saharan Africa stretches back into the depths of antiquity, but was limited for many centuries by dangerous trade routes across the desert. Improved cultural ties were forged some 300 years ago, when a windship full of royally appointed African explorers discovered Nice. They had a lovely time.

Lost Cities

You might think that something the size of a city could not be lost. You would be in error. A city can be "lost" because it's gone, because it doesn't *want* to be found, or because there is no way it *can* be found. The world of *Girl Genius* is littered with them. Here are but two.

Skifander

Skifander's location is unknown, even, it seems, to its inhabitants. We know practically nothing of its history.

It is a warrior matriarchy, and at one time was ruled by a God-Queen, Luheia, who was known to Albia. Luheia was killed thousands of years ago, defending her people from the "Grey Witch." The current ruler is Queen Zantabraxus, mother of Zeetha (p. 41).

After Zeetha arrived in Europa, she traveled for three years without finding anyone who had even heard of Skifander. She began to think she was crazy, and had made it up. This changed when Agatha revealed that Barry Heterodyne had heard of it, but she didn't know anything else.

One of the few people who knows the city exists is Baron Wulfenbach. Not only has he heard of it, but he can speak its language, and thinks that someone from Skifander will come to try to kill his son, Gilgamesh. Why, we do not know.

Lucrezia Mongfish is also familiar with Skifander, speaks its language, and is proficient in its characteristic sword-fighting style.

The Geisterdamen also recognize Zeetha's fighting style, and can even identify it as coming from Skifander. However, all the Geisterdamen are either in hiding, disinclined to talk, or only capable of speaking *Geisterspeak*. It's as though the authors were being malevolently unhelpful in this regard.

The Citadel of Silver Light

This name is practically all we know about the land of the Geisterdamen. They appear to be all women, and physiological clues suggest that they live underground, or in a land with minimal light. Their language is completely unrelated to any Indo-European language.

3. Cast

This chapter outlines the most important characters from *Girl Genius*. They can stay on the periphery of a campaign, moving and shaking the world while the players go on their own adventures, or they can be a part of a PC's life – an old friend, a colleague, or a bitter rival. Players can also put themselves directly in the shoes of these characters, taking on the mantle of the heroine of the *Girl Genius* story or one of her friends or enemies.

In a comic or novel, words are enough to describe each character: "She's strong, charismatic, and has a knack for inventing, but she's a chronic liar." In a roleplaying game, because we use rules and roll dice, most of those things need to be quantified: "She has Strength 12, Charisma 3, Spark 5, and Compulsive Behavior (Lying) that she can control on a 9 or less."

READING CHARACTER WRITE-UPS

Each write-up is presented in the following order. See Chapter 5 for details.

Attributes: Everyone has these – Strength (ST), Dexterity (DX), Intelligence (IQ), and Health (HT). A value of 10 is average, so anything higher costs character points, while anything lower refunds them.

Secondary Characteristics: Everyone has these, too. Damage and Basic Lift (BL) are used for combat and lifting rules. For Hit Points (HP), Will, Perception (Per), and Fatigue Points (FP), 10 is average, just as with attributes. For Basic Speed and Basic Move, 5 is average.

Advantages: Helpful talents and abilities that most people don't have. The more it costs, the more useful it is.

Disadvantages: Character flaws and life problems, worth *negative* points. Some have a self-control number in parentheses; e.g., "Overconfidence (12)." This reflects how easily the person can control themselves and override the disadvantage. The lower that value, the less self-control they have.

Skills: Knowing how to do certain things. The higher the level, the more likely it is to succeed. Broadly, 12-14 is professional competence, 15-19 is serious expertise, and 20+ is true mastery.

Details can be found in Chapter 5, but once you understand the different types of traits (see *Reading Character Write-Ups*, p. 28), most are easy to figure out from their names alone. It isn't necessary to cross-reference every single trait. At this point, it's more important to see and understand how a character is built.

Every trait has a number in brackets next to it, like [10] or [-5]. This is its *value in character points*. The more character points a trait costs, the more potent and useful it is, at least in theory. Anything with a negative value is a burden on the person, like a low attribute or a disadvantage. The sum of all of a character's individual trait costs is the character's *point total* – a rough estimate of their "power level." Don't confuse this with "combat potency"; it's entirely possible for a 100-point soldier to wipe the floor with a 250-point aristocrat because the latter's points are tied up in social traits.

Finally, unless otherwise noted, all of these characters begin with the English or German language (GM discretion) at Native level. See *Language* (p. 73).

AGATHA HETERODYNE

Agatha is the daughter of Bill Heterodyne (see The Heterodyne Boys, p. 11) and Lucrezia Mongfish (p. 48). She was born after the Other's first attack on Castle Heterodyne, an event which marked the death of her older brother and Lucrezia's disappearance. Lucrezia put Agatha under the protection of the Geisterdamen (p. 68), a mysterious race that worships Lucrezia as a god. But the infant was rescued by her uncle Barry Heterodyne (see The Heterodyne Boys, p. 11). He raised her until the age of seven, always moving to stay hidden – from what, he never said.

Agatha began to "break through" as a Spark at the age of five, which was unprecedentedly early. One year later, Barry moved them to Beetleburg (p. 23) and joined the household of Adam and Lilith Clay (p. 34), who were actually Bill and Barry's old construct companions, Punch and Judy. After a year or so, Barry left on a mysterious errand . . . and never returned.

The Clays raised her as "Agatha Clay," relying on a special locket designed by Barry to suppress her emerging Spark (see *Agatha Clay,* opposite, for more).

At the beginning of her story, an 18-year-old Agatha witnessed some sort of time portal, and it changed her life completely. Dazzled and bewildered by the phenomenon,

Agatha had her locket stolen by Omar von Zinzer, the wastrel brother of Moloch von Zinzer (p. 56).

Within hours, her mind began to unfurl. She sleep-invented a clank which drew the Baron's attention. Klaus had met Agatha before, and had assumed that she was mentally deficient (due to the effects of the locket). Thus, he believed that von Zinzer – who was with Agatha when he found them – was the Spark who had built the clank, and that Agatha was merely his assistant. The Empire was always looking for new Sparks, and so the Baron press-ganged von Zinzer, bringing Agatha along.

They were taken to Castle Wulfenbach (p. 23). Once there, she formally met Gilgamesh Wulfenbach (p. 36), Von Pinn (p. 43), Krosp (p. 40), Othar Tryggvassen (p. 44), and several students, including Sleipnir O'Hara (p. 53) and Theopholous DuMedd (p. 53).

Gilgamesh quickly recognized Agatha as the actual Spark of Beetleburg (and, to his surprise, a potential love interest). Baron Wulfenbach only caught on when Adam and Lilith showed up to rescue her. The Baron recognized them and deduced her true parentage. The Clays made it clear that they did not trust the Baron. This was surprising, since they had been friends and traveling companions many years ago. To keep Agatha out of his hands, they sacrificed themselves, and told her: "Get to Castle Heterodyne – it will help you."

With the assistance of some of the students, she was able to flee with Krosp and Othar. She soon shoved Othar off the airship for reasons that would be obvious to anyone who has spent time with him.

She landed in the Wastelands (p. 25), and joined Master Payne (p. 54) and his Circus of Adventure (p. 26). This group helped her fake her death so Baron Wulfenbach would stop looking for her.

She met Zeetha (p. 41), who was also traveling with the Circus. Zeetha befriended Agatha and began training

AGATHA CLAY   71 points

This represents Agatha at the beginning of her story, with her uncle's locket firmly in place and no knowledge of her actual heritage.

As a child, Agatha was raised by her uncle Barry. They moved around quite a bit. Agatha began to "break through" at the age of five, and Barry constructed her locket to stall her breakthrough. When she was six, Barry brought her to Beetleburg, and for the next year they lived with Adam and Lilith Clay, a pair of constructs.

When Agatha was seven, Barry left on a trip and never returned. The Clays informally adopted her, and she helped at the family's machine shop, Clay Mechanical. Despite her mental confusion, she was accepted to Transylvania Polygnostic University (TPU) (p. 23), because the Tyrant of Beetleburg – Dr. Tarsus Beetle – was a confidant of her uncle, and knew who she really was.

Agatha studied under a range of different teachers, including Dr. Silas Merlot and Dr. Hugo Glassvitch. Agatha loved the classes but was frustrated. She couldn't think clearly, and nothing she built ever actually worked.

One day while out walking, she encountered a bizarre electrical phenomenon. While fleeing, her locket was stolen by Omar and Moloch von Zinzer, a pair of itinerant soldiers. Later that day, Baron Wulfenbach and his son Gilgamesh arrived for a surprise inspection of Merlot's project. When Dr. Merlot realized he and Glassvitch had wasted three months on a project the Baron *intended* to fail, solely as a "test" for Gil, he revealed that Dr. Beetle was hiding a hive engine (p. 175)! Beetle then attacked with a small grenade.
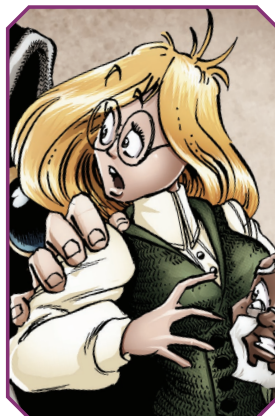
This led to a quick battle in which Gil accidentally killed Dr. Beetle in self-defense. Dr. Merlot, the newly appointed master of the University, expelled Agatha.

Distraught, Agatha went home. When they discovered that Beetle was dead and that the Baron had taken the town, Adam and Lilith told Agatha that they were leaving Beetleburg, and that they were going out now to try to find her locket. An increasingly muzzy-headed Agatha packed and then went to sleep.

Agatha woke up surrounded by tools and parts, confronted by one of the locket's thieves, Moloch, and a mysterious, newly-built clank. Then the two of them were captured by the Baron, and spirited away to Castle Wulfenbach. This was the start of her adventures . . .

Before she knew her heritage, Agatha Clay was a rather muddle-headed student trying to find her purpose in the world. She wasn't especially good at anything, and very few understood why Dr. Beetle took her under his wing in the first place – and, even more oddly, protected her when she repeatedly failed. Before she broke through, Agatha was a bit scared and frustrated by her lack of skills. She desperately wanted to be something more. On a personal level, she relied heavily on the love and security provided by her adoptive parents, Adam and Lilith, who taught her many useful skills.

The traits below represent Agatha when she's first introduced in the *Girl Genius* comic.

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 10 [0]; **IQ** 11 [20]; **HT** 10 [0].
Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 11 [0]; Per 11 [0]; FP 10 [0]; Basic Speed 5.00 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].

Advantages: Appearance (Striking) [4]; Higher Purpose [5]; Spark 0 [3].
Disadvantages: Sleepwalker (12) [-5].
Skills: Machinist (A) IQ+2 [8]-13; Mathematics (Applied) (H) IQ [4]-11; Physics (H) IQ+2 [12]-13; Research (A) IQ+4 [16]-15; Smith (Iron) (A) IQ+1 [4]-12.

her to fight. She made some unexpected allies when she rescued three Jägermonsters (p. 50) from hanging.

Master Payne also confided to Agatha that one of their circus clanks was actually Moxana, one of the fabled Muses (p. 65). Her "sister," Tinka, had been commandeered by House Sturmvoraus of Sturmhalten some time ago.

Unfortunately, the Circus had to go through Sturmhalten again. This time, Prince Wilhelm Aaronev Sturmvoraus demanded a performance of the risqué *Socket Wench of Prague.* Agatha played the villainous Lucrezia Mongfish (her mother). During the play, the Prince realized that Agatha's voice was nearly identical to Lucrezia's, and he began to suspect that she was actually Lucrezia's daughter, whom his organization had been seeking for over 15 years.

Prince Aaronev invited Agatha to dinner, where she met his children, Wilhelm Tarvek Sturmvoraus (p. 38) and Anevka Sturmvoraus. Anevka, whose body had been grievously injured several years before, interacted with the world via a Muse-like body designed by Tarvek. Tarvek was fascinated by the Storm King's Muses, and had extensively studied Tinka, the Muse stolen from the Circus.

Agatha, drugged at dinner, admitted her true identity, and was whisked away to the lab, where the prince strapped her into a Summoning Engine designed to replace her mind with a copy of Lucrezia's. A series of double- and triple-crosses ensued, which resulted in Prince Aaronev's death, Lucrezia's "installation" into Agatha's brain, and the revelation that Lucrezia Mongfish was actually the mysterious "Other" who had devastated Europa.

At first, it looked like Agatha's mind was gone, but whenever Lucrezia allowed herself to become too fatigued, Agatha was able to fight the possession and regain control. During these brief episodes, Tarvek swore he was doing all he could to stay alive and help Agatha. He assisted her as she built a device meant to warn the world of Lucrezia's return. However, Tarvek was still trapped in a castle with

Lucrezia and her fanatically loyal priestesses, and so had little choice but to go along with Lucrezia's master plan.

When the Baron – now aware of House Sturmvoraus' true loyalties – invaded Sturmhalten, Lucrezia and her priestesses prepared to leave. The Summoning Engine was packed up and taken away through the underground labyrinths beneath the town, the Deepdown, but not before a second copy of Lucrezia's mind was installed in the clank body of what had once been Princess Anevka. This "Princess" was to pretend to be loyal to the Empire. She would stay behind to greet the Baron, with a story of how Tarvek was an evil traitor who had escaped at the last minute. Meanwhile, the Lucrezia who had usurped Agatha's body would escape, taking Tarvek with her, along the same underground route that the Geisterdamen had taken.

When the Baron's main force arrived, one of Agatha's small clanks was able to trigger Agatha's warning device. A gigantic projection of Agatha, towering high above Sturmhalten Castle, announced to the world that she was Agatha Heterodyne, that the Other had returned, and (thanks to tinkering and re-editing on Tarvek's part) that the Baron was the Other. The recording also broadcast the Spark music that Agatha had been using to focus her mind, allowing Agatha to push Lucrezia away and regain control. Tarvek, who had not expected the projection device to actually go off, took advantage of the chaos and attempted to escape with Agatha.

Instead, they ran into one of Lucrezia's priestesses, who tried to kill them both, and then into an ambush set by Klaus himself. In the fight, the projection device was destroyed and the music stopped, bringing Lucrezia back.

The Baron confronted "Agatha," but Lucrezia-in-Agatha managed to infect him with a Spark wasp (p. 175). She then unwittingly donned Agatha's old locket, which Klaus had found in Moloch's possession, recognized as the work of Barry Heterodyne, and repaired. He had also improved it slightly, and the locket instantly suppressed Lucrezia, putting Agatha in control once again.

The Baron, horrified to find that he was actually falling under the control of his old love, made one last heroic effort, and moved to kill her. Lars, one of the circus performers, sacrificed himself to save Agatha. The Baron gave the order to kill her and all her companions. Devastated at the death of her friend, Agatha called out an order to attack. She had secretly been transforming the circus wagons into giant clanks, which now began to ravage the Baron's forces. Klaus was severely wounded in the fight.

Agatha and her friends were still trapped, but one of the circus Sparks used a potent hallucinogenic gas as a distraction, and a voice cried out, announcing to the world that the Heterodyne Boys had returned! These phantasms acknowledged Agatha as a genuine Heterodyne, and, to the cheers of even the Baron's troops, whisked her away to safety aboard a stolen airship.

Agatha realized at this point that Lucrezia was still in her mind, trying to take control, and that the only thing keeping Lucrezia in check was the mechanism in the locket.

Agatha convinced Ardsley Wooster (p. 46) to send Master Payne and his crew on to England, while she
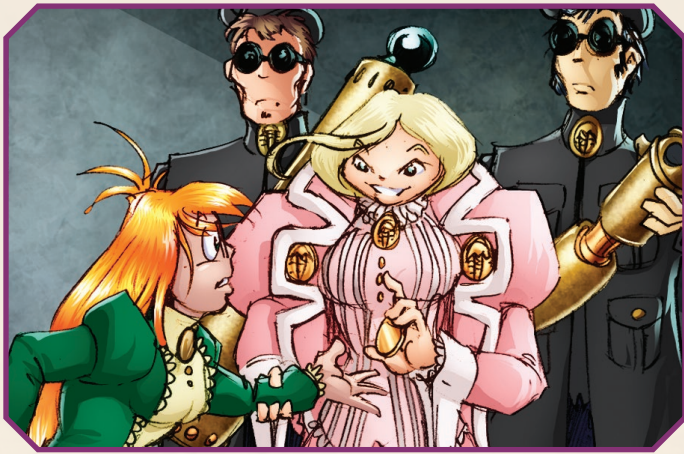
continued on to Mechanicsburg (p. 18) with Krosp, Zeetha, and Wooster, as well as the three Jägers.

Once she arrived in town, any plan she may have had to take command of the now broken and deranged Castle Heterodyne (p. 18) was delayed by the very public and very flashy arrival of another "Lady Heterodyne" (see *Zola Anya Talinka Venia Zeblikya Malfeazium*, p. 45), who apparently had the same plan!

Agatha then met Carson von Mekkhan (p. 54), and his grandson, Vanamonde von Mekkhan, who were the Heterodyne family's seneschals. They had no patience with her claim that she was actually a Heterodyne, but believed that she could help them protect the town from whatever organization was managing Zola; see *The Storm King Conspiracy* (p. 10).

Agatha survived an assassination attempt by a rogue Jäger, Captain Vole (p. 55), and the von Mekkhans sent her into the Castle, disguised as a prisoner of the Empire on repair duty.

In the Castle, Agatha was reunited with Moloch von Zinzer, who quickly fell in as her minion, despite his loudly stated and often-repeated resolve not to do so. She also encountered one of her old professors, Dr. Silas Merlot, who still bore a grudge against her for the events in Beetleburg. Then the false Heterodyne, Zola, ordered the rest of the prisoners to chase and kill Agatha, offering freedom and a handsome reward when she took the town.

Agatha and von Zinzer fled toward the heart of the Castle, where the other prisoners were afraid to go. The Castle taunted them as they ran, until she proved her heritage via a blood test in the Chapel of Bones. The Castle, delighted but still capricious, began to help her. This help was actually felt outside the Castle, when anti-aircraft defenses built into the town streetlamps (the Torchmen) were activated, and Zola's airship, the Wulfenbach air fleet, and Castle Wulfenbach itself, were driven from Mechanicsburg's skies.

Gilgamesh (along with Zeetha, Krosp, Sleipnir, and Theo), Tarvek, and his cousin, the Smoke Knight Violetta Mondarev (p. 43), slipped into the Castle to help Agatha. Agatha saved Tarvek and Violetta from the Castle's mobile security systems (p. 23), and they discovered that Tarvek was very ill. He had been badly injured in the fight at Sturmhalten, and was probably poisoned several times while in the Great Hospital at Mechanicsburg. He had also

fallen into several unsavory things while hiding inside Castle Heterodyne.

Agatha set off to find Gil, who had much better medical training than she did. He was with Zola, whom he knew from his student days in Paris. As part of a long-running plan by the Knights of Jove, some of the prisoners were building a device that would actually kill the artificial entity known as Castle Heterodyne.

Agatha arrived at the scene, securing the loyalty of Zola's crew, surviving one last assassination attempt from Dr. Merlot, and defeating the terrible construct Von Pinn – all in the span of a few minutes.

Upon reaching Tarvek, Gil diagnosed him with Hogfarb's Resplendent Immolation (p. 156), an infection no doubt orchestrated by one of the other Storm King plotters. To cure him, Gil and Agatha created a modified *Si Vales Valeo* procedure, which allowed them to "synchronize" their immune systems with Tarvek's. This was an insanely dangerous idea, and the Castle decided that it would *not* allow it. Its damaged personality fragmented further, and it became dangerous enough that Agatha was forced to activate Zola's device, hopeful that she could revive the Castle once the chaos was over.

During the *Si Vales Valeo* procedure, Agatha's locket was removed (the idea being that this procedure is mind-bogglingly painful, and if anybody deserved a little pain, it's Lucrezia). Lucrezia's ranting attracted the attention of an antique, dilapidated "angel" clank. Tarvek recognized the clank as Otilia, the lost Muse of Protection, but it insisted that it was Castle Heterodyne. Whatever it was, it wanted Lucrezia dead, and suddenly everyone was battling the Muse as well as Lucrezia, who had gotten loose. When the fight was over, it turned out that the Muse was indeed being powered by a fragment of Castle Heterodyne.

Not surprisingly, due to the dubious nature of the *Si Vales Valeo* procedure, things went wrong, and Tarvek, Gil, and Agatha were all dying, due to a lack of *mechanica vitae* (an imprecise term that refers to biological energy).

At the Castle fragment's direction, Agatha was given unfiltered water from the River Dyne (which tends to kill people) and a jolt of electricity. This resulted in her briefly ascending to a state very much like godhood. She healed and repaired all three of them before collapsing from the strain.

When Agatha and the others revived, they found that the Muse Otilia had been imprisoned deep below, in Lucrezia's secret lab. They descended via a shaft and found the construct Von Pinn, dying. Agatha sent everyone but Gil, Tarvek, and Violetta back to one of the upper labs, where they repaired a steam cat clank body, with the hope of transferring Von Pinn's consciousness into it. Von Pinn was revealed to be the actual Otilia, Muse of Protection; her mind had been transferred by Lucrezia into a construct body of (mostly) flesh. Her original clank body was used to house the fragment of Castle Heterodyne that Lucrezia had been attempting to enslave.

With most of the party elsewhere, Zola took the opportunity to attack. She removed Agatha's locket and allowed Lucrezia to take over. She then revealed that she was Lucrezia's niece, the daughter of her sister, Demonica.

Zola then tricked Lucrezia into putting a copy of her mind into Zola's brain, where it became trapped, allowing Zola to access Lucrezia's secrets. After Zola fled, Von Pinn forced Lucrezia to relinquish control of Agatha's body.

Agatha, Gil, and Tarvek gave their fellow Sparks instructions on how to fix Von Pinn. They then took the fragment of Castle Heterodyne and, with Violetta, set out to find the main library and resurrect the still-defunct Castle.

While searching, Agatha, Gil, Violetta, and Tarvek were overcome by a *Nepenthes dulcis* plant* in the conservatory. There, they were attacked once again by Zola – who *really* wanted Agatha dead.

When Zeetha and Higgs (p. 42) joined the fight, Zola drugged herself, greatly enhancing her speed. She was able to give Zeetha a seemingly mortal wound, and drove a sword through Mr. Higgs. To everyone's surprise, this did not kill him.

It did, however, give Tarvek time to drag Agatha out of the fray, with covering fire provided by Violetta. They knew that they couldn't beat Zola in her current state, but a repaired Castle Heterodyne could.

Agatha and Tarvek found the library at the very heart of the Castle, and uploaded the last fragment of the Castle's original personality from the clank body of the Muse Otilia.

In the subsequent confusion, Zola escaped, gravely wounded. Higgs took Zeetha to the Jägers for medical attention. And Agatha, Tarvek, Violetta, and Gil worked with the Castle (and the remaining prisoners) to finish the needed repairs.

While repairing the final break, they were ambushed by Professor Hristo Tiktoffen (*Zola's Crew,* p. 46), who told them that Baron Wulfenbach was dead . . . killed in an attack on the Great Hospital. Agatha managed to break Tiktoffen's secret weapon – a device meant to command the Castle. Once the device was destroyed, the Castle crushed him.

Gilgamesh realized that in order to save Mechanicsburg, Agatha, and his friends, he had to leave the Castle and take command of the Empire. He left the Castle, taking with him Captain Vole and Otilia (formerly Von Pinn), with her new tiger clank body.

As Agatha finished the final repairs, Othar Tryggvassen secretly entered the Castle, sent by the Baron to retrieve Gil. Through a series of mistakes, he instead wound up taking Tarvek back to Castle Wulfenbach.

At last the Castle was repaired, but things were still dire. Mechanicsburg was under attack from all sides, and the Castle was almost out of power. It couldn't repel the invaders in town on its own. However, it *could* let the world know that Agatha was the new, legitimate Heterodyne. For the first time in decades, the Doom Bell (p. 19) rang. Agatha was officially declared the Heterodyne of Mechanicsburg.

The Doom Bell incapacitated many of her foes, but the survivors redoubled their invasion efforts. However, it also allowed the town's monsters (including the Jägers) to officially re-enter Mechanicsburg, which began to turn the tide.

Aboard Castle Wulfenbach, Gil was recognized as the new Baron. Upon entering the War Room, he found Tarvek coordinating the Empire's forces in defense of Mechanicsburg. Tarvek told Gil that something felt "off," and that he suspected they had fallen into a trap.

This proved to be true, when Klaus, who was not dead after all, returned to Castle Wulfenbach. Tarvek realized that he must be under Lucrezia's control, and the false death story was spread in order to lure Gilgamesh out from the safety of Castle Heterodyne. He gave Gil a formula for a draught to prevent slaver wasp infection, just before Gil sent him, Othar, and Captain Vole back to Mechanicsburg.

Gil managed to concoct Tarvek's formula and dosed Bangladesh DuPree with it before she knocked him out, dosed him in return, and dragged him back to his father.

Back in command, the Baron resumed his attack upon the town – but the attack seemed weak. This was when the "true" Knights of Jove, led by Martellus von Blitzengaard (p. 52), appeared to offer the new Heterodyne their assistance.

These were the enemies the Baron had been waiting for. The illusion of chaos on the battlefield cleared, revealing that the Empire's forces had quietly surrounded the town.

As the final battle began, Agatha realized that she had to recharge the Castle. Franz, the newly awakened Dragon of Mechanicsburg, flew her to the roof, where she repaired the Castle's lightning accumulators. Gilgamesh arrived, strangely hostile, and determined to capture her. Agatha rightly guessed that he was being mind-controlled, and had Franz fly him out of town.

The Castle was now revitalized and at full power for the first time in almost two decades. It cleared the streets, sent flying clanks against the air fleets, and erected a massive thorn hedge around the town. It very generously left a single gap to allow the enemy forces to retreat, which they gratefully did.

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* A very large carnivorous plant whose pollen lures in victims by producing feelings of euphoria and giddiness. *Of course* this is the kind of thing the old Heterodynes would keep as a specimen and pet.

CAST

The Jägers pursued them, determined to hound them all the way out of the Valley of the Heterodynes. Agatha had won.

She was then escorted through a cheering crowd to the Red Cathedral, where she was officially recognized as the new Lady of Mechanicsburg.

While Agatha was still in the Red Cathedral, Baron Wulfenbach launched his final gambit. He personally landed a small ship in the center of town, carrying a single enigmatic device.

In the tumult of the Baron's landing, Martellus von Blitzengaard grabbed Agatha and dragged her through a Queen's Mirror (p. 156) beneath the Cathedral. He used a poisoned dagger on Tarvek. While trying to stop Martellus, Krosp and Violetta also went through the Mirror – right as the Baron's device went off.

Instantly, instead of Mechanicsburg, Agatha and the others were in the Refuge of Storms (p. 22), a fortress over 100 kilometers away. They had come through a Mirror like the one in Mechanicsburg, which blew up as they passed through. Violetta and Krosp were cut off by masonry that collapsed in the blast. Martellus took Agatha to a secret lab, where Agatha passed out, exhausted.

Agatha awoke to discover that Martellus had altered her body chemistry so she would literally die without regular contact with him. Angry, she knocked Martellus out and explored the lab. Realizing that she couldn't reverse the effect quickly, she adapted a wasp eater (p. 176) to function as well as Martellus himself, and left to search for her friends.

Agatha found Krosp and Violetta, who told her that the trip through the Gate was supposed to be instantaneous. Instead, it took two and a half years.

The Empire was in chaos. Mechanicsburg was sealed away under a bubble of stopped time, and the Storm King conspiracy was in tatters.

Agatha and her friends escaped the Refuge of Storms by constructing a flying sled, which stayed airborne long enough to get them away and into the countryside. Martellus and his sparkhounds chased them into Wulfenbach territory. Gil's border-defense clanks tried to take them prisoner; Martellus joined the fight, and was knocked out for his trouble. His sister, Xerxsephnia von Blitzengaard, rode in to help Agatha, but barely had time to give her a cryptic warning about Gil before Agatha was swept away by a group of Jägers.

The Jägers took Agatha and Krosp back to their hidden base, where Agatha's friends, family, and a number of Mechanicsburg natives were holed up. Among these were the Jägermonster Dimo (now an acting general!), Punch and Judy (and their biological, infant daughter), Ardsley Wooster, Oggie, Maxim, and Zeetha.

Alerted to Agatha's presence, Gilgamesh arrived – looking extremely unwell. With the Baron trapped in the Mechanicsburg time bubble, Gil had been forced to run the Empire. He had been running in full-blown Spark mode ever since. In addition, he was under a mind-control overlay placed on him by his father . . . another factor which had taken its toll on his health and sanity. He found Martellus, and they fought. Gil was knocked out, and Martellus escaped.

Heterodyning

Heterodyning is a trait that appears to be unique to the Heterodyne family. Ostensibly, a person who is heterodyning produces a distinctive, melodious trill while they are in "the madness place," which allows them to focus entirely upon inventing. Supposedly this sound, using the heterodyne effect, cancels out the ambient noises that surround them. They experience a blissful silence that makes concentrating far easier, as it removes all aural distractions.

After watching the fight through a distance viewer, Agatha left Gil a message warning him not to underestimate Martellus, telling him about Tarvek's fate, and explaining that she couldn't go near him until they were able to fix whatever it was that his father had done to him.

Agatha determined that she needed to find a way to reverse the time-stop on Mechanicsburg. Her best bet was to go to Paris. Once there, she met the 200-year-old Master of Paris, Simon Voltaire (see *Paris*, p. 24), and his daughter, Colette Voltaire (see *Paris*, p. 24). The Master informed her that he did not like Heterodynes in his city, and that she had just three days to locate the information she needed.

She was put under the supervision of Professor Drusus Beausoleil, a Spark who was able to shift his mind between hundreds of identical clank bodies. She also met student adventurers Jimenez Hoffman and his brother Aldin Hoffman, as well as Larana Chroma, the princess of a subterranean civilization. They took her to the Immortal Library, an organization dedicated to the militant dissemination of knowledge.

While there, Agatha located the hidden laboratory which held the corpse of Van Rijn (See *The Storm King's Muses*, p. 65), the fabled spark artificer to the original Storm King. She also accidentally freed the Muse of Time, an apparent iteration of Lucrezia. This led her to the catacombs where the original Storm King had been held in stasis for hundreds of years by a device known as Prende's Lantern, which can freeze time.

After Prende's Lantern was removed, the Storm King broke out. This, along with a visit from Zola in her identity as the Queen of the Dawn (see *Zola Anya Talinka Venia Zeblikya Malfeazium*, p. 45), culminated in a disastrous costume ball, where Simon Voltaire was killed, his daughter Colette "broke through" and took his place as the Master of Paris, and the gates of the city were closed to dangerous individuals, including Agatha.

Agatha decided to seek Prende's Lantern, in hopes that it could not only help her understand what happened to Mechanicsburg, but also potentially break the time stop. She followed rumor of the lantern to England, where she obtained an audience with the larger-than-life Queen Albia (p. 24), who invited her to stay in England under royal protection while she researched the problem of how to free Mechanicsburg.

*. . . and the tale continues. To stay au courant, you can read the ongoing story at: **www.girlgeniusonline.com**.*

Agatha Heterodyne

352 points

Agatha Heterodyne, having assumed the role of Lady Heterodyne of Mechanicsburg, has come into her own. She's bold and confident, although a bit naive when it comes to interpersonal relationships. While she doesn't think she knows more *about* things than everyone else, she has no doubt that she knows what's *right*. She's a brilliant polymath. Also, unlike the "old" Heterodynes, she's a genuinely caring and compassionate person.

Here is Agatha Heterodyne as of the time she entered England.

ST 11 [10]; **DX** 11 [20]; **IQ** 14 [80]; **HT** 11 [10].
Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 14 [6]; Will 14 [0]; Per 14 [0]; FP 11 [0]; Basic Speed 5.50 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].

Advantages: Appearance (Very Impressive) [16]; Artificer 3 [30]; Intuitive Mathematician [5]; Language: Arabic (Native) [6]; Language: English (Native) [6]; Language: French (Native) [6]; Language: German (Native) [6]; Language: Greek (Native) [6]; Language: Latin (Native) [6]; Language: Romanian (Native) [0]; Language: Russian (Native) [6]; Machine Empathy [15]; Reputation +2 (Almost everyone; 10 or less) [5]; Spark 4 [43]; Voice* [10].

Disadvantages: Overconfidence (12) [-5]; Possessed (12) (Lucrezia)† [-20]; Stubbornness [-5].

Skills: Alchemy (VH) IQ+1 [12]-15; Armory (Missile Weapons) (A) IQ+2 [1]-16‡; Beam Weapons (E) DX+1 [2]-12; Biology (H) IQ+2 [12]-16; Brawling (E) DX+1 [2]-12; Chemistry (H) IQ+1 [8]-15; Engineer (Mechanical) (H) IQ+4 [8]-18‡; Engineer (Small Arms) (H) IQ+3 [4]-17‡; Guns (E) DX+1 [2]-12; Machinist (A) IQ+2 [1]-16‡; Mathematics (Applied) (H) IQ [4]-14; Mechanic (A) IQ+2 [1]-16‡; Physics (H) IQ+1 [8]-15; Research (A) IQ+4 [16]-18; Smith (Iron) (A) IQ+2 [1]-16‡; Weird Science (VH) IQ [8]-14.

* Acts as written on most people. Those bound to obey Agatha or Lucrezia – such as revenants, Geisterdamen, or Von Pinn – are forced to follow her commands when she specifically uses "The Voice."

† When Lucrezia is in control of Agatha, use Agatha's physical traits and Lucrezia's mental traits. Lucrezia can be completely suppressed by Agatha's locket.

‡ Includes +3 for Artificer.

ADAM AND LILITH CLAY

129 points

Before Barry mysteriously disappeared, he left Agatha with two of his most trusted friends: Adam and Lilith Clay. These were, in reality, Punch and Judy, a famous pair of constructs the Heterodyne Boys had built in their youth. Even though they had traveled and adventured extensively with the younger Klaus Wulfenbach, they now deeply distrusted him, and when they heard that he had taken over Beetleburg, they were determined to flee before he discovered them.

After Agatha was taken by the Baron, the Clays came to Castle Wulfenbach to rescue her. However, they ran into Klaus and were recognized. While getting Agatha to safety, they were ripped to shreds by the fierce construct Von Pinn. Gilgamesh later took on the responsibility of repairing them, and in the process, improved them quite a bit. The most striking (and unexpected) improvement was the ability to have biological children, and they have since had a daughter.

The stats below represent both Adam and Lilith Clay. For more information, see *Reanimated Constructs* (p. 68).

ST 14 [20]; **DX** 11 [0]; **IQ** 10 [0]; **HT** 12 [0].
Damage 1d/2d; BL 39 lbs.; HP 19 [0]; Will 10 [0]; Per 10 [0]; FP 12 [0]; Basic Speed 5.75 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].

Advantages: Artificer 2 [20]; Damage Resistance 2 [10]; Extended Lifespan 3 [6]; Reanimated Construct [70].

Disadvantages: Sense of Duty (Agatha Heterodyne) [-2].

Skills:* Armory (Body Armor) (A) IQ [2]-12; Carpentry (E) IQ+2 [1]-12; Machinist (A) IQ+1 [1]-11; Smith (Iron) (A) IQ+1 [1]-11.

* All include +2 for Artificer.
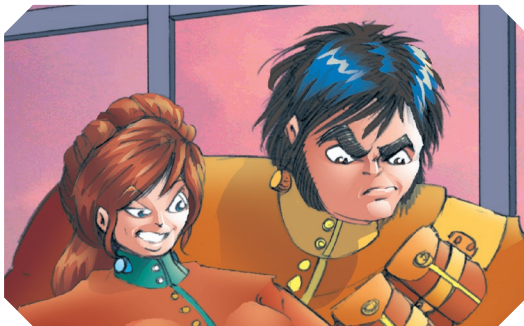
Baron Klaus Wulfenbach

Klaus' parents were minor nobles and gifted Sparks. He grew up with two brothers, and they all worked with their parents. One day, there was a terrible lab accident, leaving only fragments of the boys. A few months later, Klaus returned to life as an only child, a composite of the three brothers. As a result, Klaus has the mental capacity of three Sparks. This explains much regarding his abilities and his progressive views on the treatment of constructs, as well as his willingness to circumvent the taboos usually associated with Sparks resurrecting themselves. While his mind is usually unified, he can run parallel tracks when needed. The reason the Baron is not *completely* controlled by Lucrezia is that *parts* of his brain remain free.

As a young adult, Klaus journeyed with his friends, the Heterodyne Boys (p. 11). While he never quite shared their youthful idealism, he respected it deeply and thought it might actually solve the problems that had fueled the Long War.

However, things became tense when Lucrezia Mongfish (p. 48) joined their heroic party. A romantic triangle developed between her, Klaus, and Bill Heterodyne. This triangle collapsed when Bill proposed, Lucrezia accepted, and she drugged Klaus and shipped him off to Skifander (p. 27).

There, he took the self-effacing name of Chump, earned a reputation as a mighty warrior, and married the queen, Zantabraxus. He then sired twins: Gilgamesh (p. 36) and Zeetha (p. 41). For reasons that are still unclear, Klaus fled with Gil shortly thereafter, leaving Zeetha behind.

Wulfenbach made his way back to Europa. There, he found the wreckage of the war with the Other. His own lands were in shambles, the Heterodyne Boys had vanished, and things were worse than ever. He responded . . . directly (see *One Nation Under Wulfenbach*, p. 13). The Empire he established expanded for 16 years.

Then, in Beetleburg, Klaus collected what he thought was a new Spark, Moloch von Zinzer, and his mentally deficient "girlfriend," Agatha Clay.

After a hive engine was set off by a sleeper agent aboard Castle Wulfenbach, Punch and Judy showed up to save Agatha. It was only then that Klaus realized his mistake. Agatha was the daughter of Bill Heterodyne and Lucrezia Mongfish.

Folklore had long rhapsodized that the return of the Heterodyne Boys – or their heirs – would begin a new age of prosperity and peace. Klaus knew that the reappearance of an actual Heterodyne would act like a boulder dropped into a pond. It would throw the politics of the Empire into chaos. He tried to restrain Agatha, but she escaped through the sacrifice of her adoptive parents, Adam and Lilith, with help from Othar Tryggvassen (p. 44).

Klaus sent Gil and the ruthless Bangladesh DuPree (p. 47) to recover Agatha, but they returned with only a charred corpse. Initially discouraged, Klaus reanimated the body, with the idea of having control over a puppet Heterodyne, and only then learned that the body wasn't Agatha's after all.

In the meantime, Klaus also discovered that not all revenants (p. 176) were shambling zombies. *Most* were simply sleeper agents who acted perfectly normal until activated by the Other. Many were already on Castle Wulfenbach.

His investigation revealed that Sturmhalten (p. 21) was *completely* infected. He moved in to quarantine the town, spotted Master Payne's Circus (p. 26), and confronted Agatha there.

By this point, however, Agatha had been taken over by Lucrezia, and she was able to infect him with a Spark wasp (p. 175). This was when he realized that Lucrezia was also the Other. He ordered Agatha and her friends destroyed, but they managed to prevail by dropping a giant chicken-house clank on him, nearly killing him while they escaped.

Klaus was rescued by Airman Axel Higgs (p. 42), at great personal risk, and taken to the Great Hospital at Mechanicsburg. There, Gil defended him from a number of assassination attempts and at least one invasion. Klaus warned Gil that Agatha was the Other, but Gil didn't believe this, and set off to find Agatha himself. Klaus also believed Zeetha had been sent to assassinate Gil, but refused to explain why.

While recuperating in the hospital, the Baron Wulfenbach was, of course, a terrible patient, and even tried at one point to head out in a battlesuit (p. 171) to lead his troops. Eventually, Dr. Sun locked him into a high-pressure healing engine just to make sure he stayed in bed.

At some point after awakening, the wasp-infected Klaus came under the subtle control of the Lucrezia housed in Anevka's body (see *Lucrezia Mongfish*, p. 48). He managed to sneak a metaphorical warning out to Gil (and Tarvek) through a local storyteller.

During the siege of Mechanicsburg, the Great Hospital collapsed and Klaus was declared dead. However, he later appeared on Castle Wulfenbach and accused Gil of being infected by a slaver wasp back in Paris. He ordered his forces to resume the assault on Mechanicsburg, though he waffled uncharacteristically over tactics. Privately, Klaus struck a deal with Gil: He'd keep Agatha alive if Gil allowed Klaus to "cure" him. The "curative" process was actually implanting a copy of the Baron's consciousness within Gil. This was not Lucrezia's process; Klaus has collected a lot of mind-control techniques from Sparks he's defeated over the years. Gil, however, is under no illusions; when a new Spark wasp has been grown, it will be used on him.

Agatha was more resourceful than Klaus or Lucrezia had expected, however. She repaired and reenergized the Castle, and the Empire's forces – along with all of the other attackers – were summarily swept out of Mechanicsburg.

With the battle lost, Lucrezia told Klaus to "do something." Thanks to his partial immunity to the Other, Klaus was able to come up with a plan that followed the *letter* of Lucrezia's dictate, but would ultimately thwart its *spirit*.

He retrieved a "black-level" item from his vault and headed into the middle of town. Upon activation, the device surrounded Mechanicsburg and everyone in it with a town-sized bubble of frozen time. Klaus himself was trapped as well – and he's still there, holding the device at the very center of the phenomenon. This left Lucrezia back on Castle Wulfenbach, surrounded by people who saw her only as "That clank that thinks it's the Princess Anevka." She was not pleased.

A copy of Klaus was still functioning inside Gil's mind, but it was just a personality overlay. It did not have all of the Baron's knowledge and abilities, it didn't have the capacity to *change,* and, most important, it didn't have the wasp-borne compulsion to obey Lucrezia.

Baron Klaus Wulfenbach 524 points

Baron Klaus Wulfenbach has one of the strongest Sparks known. His fixation is on the Spark *itself*. No one knows more about the process behind it, what it's capable of, and what it means for the world as a whole.

As a reanimated construct (p. 65), he's incredibly strong and durable. While not without mercy, he can be ruthless, particularly when it comes to dealing with rogue Sparks – his "brain-coring" procedure can selectively destroy the Sparky bits of their brain, although the resultant personality tends to be seriously damaged. He's working on that.

ST 15 [30]; **DX** 12 [20]; **IQ** 15 [100]; **HT** 13 [10].
Damage 1d+1/2d+1; BL 45 lbs.; HP 27 [14]; Will 15 [0]; Per 15 [0]; FP 13 [0]; Basic Speed 6.25 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0].

Advantages: Damage Resistance 3 [15]; Extended Lifespan 3 [6]; Intuitive Mathematician [5]; Mathematical Ability 3 [30]; Photographic Memory [10]; Reanimated Construct [70]; Spark 5 [53]; Status 8 [40].

Disadvantages: Bully (12) [-10]; Callous [-5]; Enemies (Everywhere; 9 or less) [-40].
Skills: Armory (Body Armor) (A) IQ+2 [8]-17; Biology (H) IQ+5 [24]-20; Brainwashing (H) IQ+3 [16]-18; Chemistry (H) IQ+4 [20]-19; Engineer (Psychotronics) (H) IQ+3 [4]-18*; Guns (E) DX+4 [12]-16; Interrogation (A) IQ+4 [16]-19; Leadership (A) IQ+4 [16]-19; Observation (A) Per+3 [12]-18; Physics (H) IQ+3 [4]-18*; Physiology (H) IQ+5 [24]-20; Psychology (H) IQ+1 [8]-16; Research (A) IQ+1 [4]-16; Strategy (H) IQ+1 [8]-16.

* Includes +3 for Mathematical Ability.

Gilgamesh "Gil" Wulfenbach

Gil was born in Skifander (p. 27) to Klaus "Chump" Wulfenbach and the warrior-queen Zantabraxus. He knew nothing of his parentage as he grew up on Castle Wulfenbach as "Gilgamesh Holzfäller." Despite demonstrating his Spark at the remarkably young age of eight, by creating the crustacean-like construct named Zoing, his father covered it up and presented him as a random Spark for as long as possible. This led to him being at the bottom of the students' social pecking order at the Castle.

Klaus is insanely protective of his son, and has done a lot to ensure that he will survive. There's the training in fighting and weapons, of course, but Klaus has gone much farther than that. Over the years he has studied Sparks, Klaus has encountered hundreds of procedures designed to make a person faster, stronger, tougher, and more intelligent. He has combed through these and used the best of them upon his son – often without Gil's knowledge. It would take an awful lot to kill Gilgamesh Wulfenbach, and he is only beginning to realize some of what his father did to him.

Tales of Old

Bill and Barry Heterodyne – with help from Klaus Wulfenbach (p. 35) and a rotating cast of Sparks, adventurers, and other odd persons – managed to reverse the Heterodyne family's wicked reputation within a single generation. In a series of wild and widely shared adventures, they became legends (see *The Heterodyne Boys,* p. 11).

They weren't the only ones out there adventuring, though! They had numerous allies, and sometimes antagonists, to help them along the way. The names of some of these are almost as famous as those of the Heterodynes.

Dr. Lucifer Mongfish: A Mad Scientist in the classic "pulp villain" mold. The Mongfish family had been Mad Scientists of the old school for generations, and one of the historical Heterodyne family's few allies. Ironically, Dr. Mongfish was one of the Heterodyne Boys' greatest antagonists. After his daughter Lucrezia (p. 48) married Bill Heterodyne, he publicly more-or-less "reformed." He later died in a freak airship accident. He was survived by his three beautiful daughters, Serpentina, Demonica, and Lucrezia.

The Iron Sheik: An Arabic Spark who's still alive today. In Europa, he's famed for his creation of the mechanical camel and his subsequent immortalization in the Heterodyne play *The Heterodyne Boys and the Race to the West Pole.* His son, Z, is a student aboard Castle Wulfenbach (p. 23).

Thundering Engine Woman: A powerful Spark from the Americas (p. 26) who warned of the powerful forces in play there. She was an adept gunslinger who impressed the nobility of Europa – so much so that numerous circus firearms acts take her name. No one is sure where she is now.

While growing up, Tarvek Sturmvoraus (p. 38) was one of his few friends, until Klaus convinced Gil that Tarvek was trying to undermine their family via spying, at which point Gil helped send Tarvek back to Sturmhalten. Later, still incognito, Gil went off to Paris to study and ran into Tarvek again. He also met Zola (p. 45) there.

Upon Gil's return, Klaus publicly acknowledged him as his son and began grooming him for the eventual command of the empire – mainly through a never-ending barrage of real-world "tests." Klaus brought Gil to Beetleburg (p. 23) for one such test, which culminated in the death of Dr. Beetle (p. 52) and the "recruitment" of Moloch von Zinzer (p. 56) and Agatha.

Gil realized that Agatha was actually a powerful Spark and kindred spirit, and almost immediately proposed to her. He was surprised by – in chronological order – her laughter at his question, Othar sweeping in to "save" her, and Punch knocking him out from behind.

When he later found what he thought was Agatha's corpse, he paid homage to her by undoing the damage that Von Pinn (p. 43) had done to her "parents," Punch and Judy, and reviving them.

When Gil learned that Agatha was alive and in Sturmhalten, he was chagrined to realize that he couldn't leave Adam and Lilith, who were at a medically sensitive stage in their healing process. Instead, he revealed that he'd always known his manservant, Wooster (p. 46), was an agent of England, and intimidated him into flying out to help protect Agatha. After his father was gravely injured in the Sturmhalten fight, Gil headed to Mechanicsburg to defend him from assassins and the Knights of Jove (p. 11). He installed several devices upon the city walls, allowing him to destroy the Knights' war clanks and airships with a series of lightning blasts. Klaus was never prouder! Afterwards, the Jägers snuck him into Mamma Gkika's (p. 20) for healing (see *Battle-Draught*, p. 155). It was there he unknowingly met his twin sister Zeetha (p. 41), who told him all about Agatha and Lucrezia.

Realizing that his father was out to destroy Castle Heterodyne (p. 20) and would never believe Agatha wasn't really the Other, Gil evaded capture by Captain Vole (p. 55) and formed a party of old and new friends. Zeetha was with Krosp and happened to drag along Higgs (p. 42), as well as Theo and Sleipnir (p. 53), who were in town to rendezvous with Agatha. They drew a crowd by staging a fight and made a big show of entering the Castle, reasoning that the Baron wouldn't blow it up once he learned Gil was inside.

Inside, they encountered Zola, who still thought Gil was just some random nobody with a penchant for adventure. Gil convinced her that he was a pirate and pumped her for information. After Zola revealed her secret plan to kill the Castle, Agatha showed up to blow Gil's cover . . . and Agatha's old teacher, Dr. Merlot, showed up to blow a hole in Gil.

When Agatha enlisted him to help cure Tarvek, the two men's antagonistic history came to light. Despite the fact that the two still bore childhood grudges, Gil quickly got Tarvek diagnosed and stabilized. In order to cure him, Gil and Agatha put together a three-person variant of the *Si Vales Valeo* procedure. This eventually worked, with the unexpected side effect that Gil, Tarvek, and Agatha now *know* each other better than any three people ever have.

Gil remained with Agatha, helping to repair the Castle, until he received news of the Great Hospital's collapse and his father's supposed death. He left to take command of the Empire, accompanied by Captain Vole, Theo, and Sleipnir, atop a small army of tiger clanks, led by Otilia, the Muse of Protection (p. 65).

Reluctantly, Gil assumed command of the Wulfenbach Empire, and began giving orders, only to learn Tarvek had arrived earlier and was already assisting with battlefield strategy (like many irritating things, it was Othar's fault).

When they learned that Klaus was still quite alive and back on Castle Wulfenbach, Tarvek realized that they had fallen into a trap. They fled to Gil's secret lab, bringing along DuPree and Vole, and possibly sparking a romance between the two.

In the lab, Tarvek gave Gil his notes with the secret to making a wasp vaccine (p. 156). When Othar came crashing in, Gil used the opportunity to toss Tarvek, Othar, and Vole out in an experimental aircraft, staying behind on purpose. He then created the wasp vaccine and inoculated DuPree – who was furious, and knocked him out in the subsequent fight. Unbeknownst to Gil, after she knocked him out, DuPree poured the rest of the formula down his throat, reasoning that if it was in fact proof against wasps, he should have it, and if it was poison, he deserved it.

When Gil came to, the Baron (completely in thrall to Lucrezia) declared Gil a revenant, claiming that he had been infected back in Paris. He locked Gil up and struck a deal with him: He would not kill Agatha if Gil would accept his father's personality imprint on his mind and force Agatha to return with him to Castle Wulfenbach. It didn't work.

When the Baron activated the time-stop device in Mechanicsburg, Gil was left trying to hold the Empire together. This proved almost impossible, with Storm King conspiracies everywhere, every Spark seizing their chance to grab local power, Gil himself obsessed with freeing Mechanicsburg, and Europa sliding towards chaos.

After Agatha, Violetta, and Krosp passed through the Mirror, they encountered Wulfenbach sentinel clanks, which informed Gil that Agatha was alive and out of Mechanicsburg. Upon arriving at the scene, he found Agatha long gone. He battled Martellus to a draw, and was knocked out. Later, Agatha sent a clank to tell him that she was alive and well, that Martellus was trouble, that Tarvek was still trapped within Mechanicsburg (and poisoned to boot), and that she could not come near him while he was so obviously under the mental control of his father.

Gil returned to Mechanicsburg and pulled Tarvek, Vanamonde von Mekkhan, and Othar Tryggvassen out of the time field. When Tarvek was later kidnapped, Gil followed the perpetrators, and the two wound up in England.

Queen Albia would not let Gil see Agatha, but she allowed both him and Tarvek to stay in the country. There, Gil has been repeatedly distracted by the dashing Trelawney Thorpe (p. 24) with exciting adventures involving, among other things, the Queen's Mirrors (p. 156) and raging escaped crocodile constructs. With thrilling adventures keeping the two of them busy, rumors are flying they're in the middle of a romance. This would not displease Albia.

Gilgamesh "Gil" Wulfenbach 397 points

Gil is basically a sensible and merciful man, which is why it drives him mad that people keep interpreting those qualities as weaknesses. He sometimes has to show how scary he *can* be, just to get anything done. He wants to find a way to balance running the Wulfenbach Empire and courting Agatha, despite knowing how impossible a task that may be.

However, the Gil of 2.5 years later is haggard and haunted by stress. His pursuit of the truth behind Mechanicsburg and Agatha borders on monomaniacal. How much of this is him and how much is his father's personality imprint is up for debate.

ST 12 [20]; **DX** 13 [60]; **IQ** 14 [80]; **HT** 11 [10].
Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 29 lbs.; HP 15 [9]; Will 14 [0]; Per 14 [0]; FP 11 [0]; Basic Speed 6.00 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0].

Advantages: Artificer 3 [30]; Hard to Kill 5 [10]; Machine Empathy [15]; Spark 4 [43]; Status 8 [40].
Disadvantages: Enemies (Everywhere; 6 or less) [-20]; Obsession (12) (Agatha) [-10]; Stubbornness [-5].

Quirks: Deeply annoyed when he is not taken seriously [-1]; Hates his Magnificent Hat but is unwillingly proud of this Jäger gift, and will keep it safe [-1].
Skills: Armory (Missile Weapons) (A) IQ+2 [1]-16*; Beam Weapons (E) DX+1 [2]-14; Bioengineering (H) IQ+1 [8]-15; Biology (H) IQ [4]-14; Brawling (E) DX+1 [2]-14; Carousing (E) HT+2 [4]-13; Chemistry (H) IQ+4 [20]-18; Engineer (Electrical and Electronics) (H) IQ+4 [8]-18*; Engineer (Mechanical) (H) IQ+4 [8]-18*; Engineer (Small Arms) (H) IQ+4 [8]-18*; Knife (E) DX+1 [2]-14; Machinist (A) IQ+2 [1]-16*; Mathematics (Theoretical) (H) IQ [4]-14; Mechanic (A) IQ+2 [1]-16*; Physics (H) IQ+2 [12]-16; Rapier (A) DX+2 [8]-15; Research (A) IQ+4 [16]-18; Weird Science (VH) IQ [8]-14.

* Includes +3 for Artificer.

Gil's Magnificent Hat

At Mamma Gkika's, the Jägers gave Gil a hat as a sign of their respect, hats being extremely important to Jägers (p. 66). It has spikes, wings, and a flaming torch on top, with a boldly embroidered statement proclaiming him "GILGEMESH WULFENBACH – SCHMOTT GUY!" While Gil is wearing this, everyone has +4 on rolls to recognize him and all Jägers react at +2. Gil absolutely hates it.

PRINCE TARVEK STURMVORAUS

Tarvek, heir to House Sturmvoraus, grew up as a student and nominal hostage on Castle Wulfenbach (p. 23), until a misadventure with Gil got him sent home to Sturmhalten (p. 21). He studied both there and abroad, particularly in Paris, where he reunited with Gil and met the daughter of the Master of Paris. His family was a pillar of the Knights of Jove, and Tarvek became an integral part of the family conspiracies and plotting – see *The Storm King Conspiracy* (p. 10) – while trying to seem as harmless as possible to the rest of his family.

He knew about the plan to install a family-controlled Heterodyne girl, but didn't know who the girl was. He was appalled when he discovered that it was Zola (p. 45). Ever since meeting Agatha, Tarvek has had his own plans for reclaiming the Lightning Crown of the Storm King, and they don't match those of his family at all.

Tarvek spent much of his life studying Van Rijn and his Muses (p. 65), while also finding the time to train as a Smoke Knight (p. 22).

Tarvek's father, Prince Aaronev, was particularly loyal to Lucrezia Mongfish (p. 48). After they arrived in Europa, Aaronev allowed her Geisterdamen and hive engines to secretly move into the caverns beneath the town. He also helped her build her Summoning Engine, which could imprint her personality on another person's mind.

After Lucrezia disappeared, Aaronev and the Geisterdamen tried putting many girls into the Summoning Engine, always with fatal (or at least vegetative) results. Tarvek's sister Anevka survived the process, but her body slowly began to fail. In response, Tarvek confiscated the Muse Tinka from Master Payne (p. 54) and reverse-engineered her body to build a new form for Anevka. While Anevka thought she was controlling the clank from her weakened human body, in truth the clank gradually assumed her personality while Anevka's real body just died.

Unlike his father, Tarvek is not loyal to Lucrezia. When Aaronev kidnapped Agatha to put her into the Summoning Engine, Tarvek tried vainly to talk him out of it. When this failed, his clank/sister murdered Aaronev. The siblings planned to replicate Agatha's "command voice" to take control of the Geisterdamen.

While trying to escape, Agatha learned her mother was the Other, right before having Lucrezia "called" into her head by the Geisterdamen. Tarvek immediately appeared to fall in with Lucrezia and used this opportunity to learn about her technology. When Agatha's mind reemerged and retook control, he helped her as well, crafting a beacon to warn the world about Lucrezia. He then sabotaged it to mislead people into believing that the Baron was the Other.

When Anevka revealed that she and Tarvek planned to betray Lucrezia, and then tried to double-cross Tarvek for good measure, Tarvek shut *her* down and installed another copy of Lucrezia in her body.

Lucrezia and Tarvek's plotting was cut short when Baron Wulfenbach invaded Sturmhalten to quarantine it. Agatha's sabotaged beacon gave the wrong message, but it also brought Agatha back, and this caused Tarvek to be stabbed by Lady Vrin (p. 56). Lucrezia then also returned to Agatha's body and shot Tarvek for good measure.

Wulfenbach troops brought the wounded Tarvek to the Great Hospital of Mechanicsburg (p. 18), where his cousin Violetta dosed him with a bottle of Moveit #6 (p. 156) to break him out. Seeing Zola's airship led him to quickly reassess the situation, and he went to Castle Heterodyne (p. 20) where Agatha helped them escape some security clanks (p. 63). When the Moveit wore off, Tarvek's injuries nearly finished him and he was clearly sick as well. Agatha

wasn't sure what was wrong with him, so she brought Gil to him. Gil diagnosed the illness and they eventually cured him (p. 156)

Tarvek stayed at Agatha's side, helping to repair the Castle, until just after Gil left when he heard about his father's supposed death. He was then kidnapped by Othar (p. 44), who mistook him for Gil. Othar "returned" Tarvek to Castle Wulfenbach.

While being dragged through the command center on the way to the brig, Tarvek spotted major tactical errors and convinced the officers to revise their plans. He effectively took control of the Wulfenbach forces, and genuinely helped. When Gil returned, he sent Tarvek back to help Agatha.

On the ground again, Tarvek met with the Jägergenerals, sharing what he knew about the Other. It was cut short by Wulfenbach forces shooting their *own* Vespiary Squad (p. 176) airship out of the sky. After the generals took out the hostile forces, Tarvek led a rescue team to slay the slaver wasps that got loose and to ensure the survival of the best weapons against the Other and her revenants – the wasp eaters, aided by one of their trainers, Ruxala. He was nearly slain by a wasp queen, but Agatha, in a giant battlesuit, saved him at the last minute.

Tarvek worked with Agatha and Mechanicsburg's forces to continue repelling invaders and clear the town, but it was during the victory celebrations that his own family did him in.

When Martellus (p. 52) grabbed Agatha in the Cathedral, Tarvek gave chase. Martellus planted a poisoned dagger in Tarvek's stomach. Fortunately, the Baron's time freeze took effect before the poison finished the job, but it also left Tarvek frozen in time for a few years.

Gil was finally able to tunnel under the city, extract Tarvek from the time bubble, and remove the poison from his system. Before Tarvek was even able to recover properly, he was "kidnapped" by his family and dragged to Paris. In the chaos involving the reemergence of a time-frozen Storm King, he managed to abscond with the Muse Prende and get kidnapped by a different family member – his cousin Xerxsephnia von Blitzengaard – who sent him to England in hopes that he would draw Agatha's attention away from Seffie's crush, Gil Wulfenbach. After a few setbacks, he finally began to help Agatha with her research.

Prince Tarvek Sturmvoraus   374 points

Tarvek thinks of himself as a manipulator, strategist, and mastermind, capable of thinking several moves ahead. That's a fair assessment, as evidenced by his willingness to act like a fool for decades around his family, including his bodyguard, Violetta.

Until he was forced to confront his own feelings for Agatha, his plotting sometimes verged on the sociopathic – but he's getting better. Since he's so used to spinning webs of conspiracy, it's often hard for him to simply be honest and earnest.

Tarvek *is* a very talented Spark, with a specific talent for understanding and creating anthropoid clanks. He is an expert on the Storm King's Muses, and their enigmatic creator, Van Rijn.

He is a direct descendant of Andronicus Valois, the original Storm King, and is considered by many to be the true heir to the Lightning Crown.

Tarvek received Smoke Knight training as a youth – something most don't know, and even Violetta forgets sometime.

Tarvek is a romantic, in the grand sense of the word, and manages to retain this even with his above-average grasp of realpolitik.

He is also an inspired fashion designer, and dreams of clothing Agatha in any number of sumptuous and daring outfits.

ST 11 [10]; **DX** 11 [20]; **IQ** 14 [80]; **HT** 11 [10].
Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 14 [9]; Will 14 [0]; Per 14 [0]; FP 11 [0]; Basic Speed 5.50 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].

Advantages: Artificer 4 [40]; Photographic Memory [10]; Spark 4 [43].
Disadvantages: Enemies (Family; Group of 3-5 people; 9 or less) [-10]; Stubbornness [-5].
Quirks: Aware of feminine fashion, wants to see Agatha (at least) dress up in his designs . . . that is, he plays with dolls [-1].
Skills: Acrobatics (H) DX [4]-11; Acting (A) IQ [2]-14; Biology (H) IQ+4 [20]-18; Body Language (A) Per-1 [1]-13; Brawling (E) DX+1 [2]-12; Chemistry (H) IQ+3 [16]-17; Current Affairs (E) IQ [1]-14; Detect Lies (H) Per+1 [8]-15; Diplomacy (H) IQ+1 [8]-15; Disguise (A) IQ [2]-14; Engineer (Electrical and Electronics) (H) IQ+4 [4]-18*; Engineer (Mechanical) (H) IQ+4 [4]-18*; Escape (H) DX [4]-11; Fast-Talk (A) IQ+3 [12]-17; Garrote (E) DX [1]-11; Guns (E) DX+2 [4]-13; Knife (E) DX+2 [4]-13; Mechanic (A) IQ+5 [4]-19*; Persuade (H) Will [4]-14; Physics (H) IQ [4]-14; Poisons (H) IQ [4]-14; Research (A) IQ+4 [16]-18; Savoir-Faire (High Society) (E) IQ+2 [4]-16; Sleight of Hand (H) DX+3 [16]-14; Tactics (H) IQ [4]-14; Thrown Weapon (Knife) (E) DX+2 [4]-13; Traps (A) IQ [2]-14; Urban Survival (A) Per-1 [1]-13; Weird Science (VH) IQ [8]-14.

* Includes +4 for Artificer.

Krosp I, Emperor of All Cats

Before being "brain-cored" by Baron Wulfenbach and becoming known as "Dr. Dim," Dr. Dimitri Vapnoople was a brilliant Spark biologist and monster-builder. His final creation was a genetically enhanced Moldovian Puff cat, with opposable thumbs, upright posture, and genius intelligence (for a cat, anyway), known as Krosp I.

Krosp was explicitly engineered so that every cat recognized him as their emperor . . . the downside being that most cats just don't care. Unknown to Krosp, however, he was also bred to be emperor to the Swartzwalders – bear constructs, also created by Dr. Vapnoople – a much more useful position with a small amount of real authority.

Deemed a failure, Krosp was scheduled to be terminated. Instead, he escaped and hid aboard Castle Wulfenbach (p. 23). Agatha encountered and befriended him there, thinking he was just a weird cat.

After seeing how kindly she treated "Dr. Dim," Krosp spoke to her, accepting her (joking) offer of fealty, and later helping her escape. Since then, he has stayed at her side, or with Zeetha (p. 41) on the few occasions when Agatha has needed to travel solo. He joined her in her trip through the Mirror. At the fortress of the Corbettite monks, Krosp was reunited with the Swartzwalders. He then left Agatha for a time in order to rescue his creator, Dr. Vapnoople.

He rejoined the group in England, where he and the Swartzwalders requested asylum for Dr. Vapnoople and got a surprising response.

Krosp I, Emperor of All Cats   227 points

Krosp is still a cat at heart. He can see in the dark, snacks on mice, plays with string, and, in all cases where Agatha is not involved, is likely to take a construct's or animal's side in a conflict involving humans. He has picked up a wide range of talents through observing others and practicing, from piloting airships to stealing things. While he is willing to go naked to impersonate a normal cat, he usually wears a fancy red uniform jacket, which he acquired from Master's Payne's Circus (p. 26). He can travel on all fours, but he finds this uncomfortable and vastly prefers to walk upright.

He admires Prince Tarvek for his sociopathic clarity of thought, which occasionally worries the young man quite a bit.

ST 5 [0]; **DX** 13 [0]; **IQ** 12 [40]; **HT** 10 [0].
Damage 1d-4/1d-3; BL 5 lbs.; HP 10 [10]; Will 12 [0]; Per 12 [0]; FP 10 [0]; Basic Speed 7.75 [0]; Basic Move 7 [0].

Advantages: Catfall [10]; Night Vision 5 [5]; Sharp Claws [5]; Sharp Teeth [1]; Small Intelligent Animal Construct [50]; Speak with Animals [25]; Wild Talent 1 [20].
Disadvantages: Gluttony (12) [-5]; Odious Personal Habit (Cat) [-10].
Skills: Acrobatics (H) DX+1 [8]-14; Acting (A) IQ+2 [8]-14; Animal Handling (A) IQ+2 [8]-14; Brawling (E) DX+2 [4]-15; Carousing (E) HT+2 [4]-12; Diplomacy (H) IQ+1 [8]-13; Fast-Talk (A) IQ+2 [8]-14; Filch (A) DX+2 [8]-15; Jumping (E) DX+2 [4]-15; Pickpocket (H) DX+1 [8]-14; Piloting (A) DX+2 [8]-15.

Princess Zeetha of Skifander

Zeetha was born in the "Warrior Queen's Hidden Jewel" (*Skifander*, p. 27) to Zantabraxus – a queen and proud warrior – and Chump, a foreign barbarian hero who later fled the country with Zeetha's newborn twin brother, Gilgamesh.

After their city was discovered by a scientific expedition from "Outside," her mother sent her off on their airship to see what the rest of the world was getting up to, and to find her father. But Zeetha fell ill while she was on the ship, and was unable to observe much of her trip. As it approached Europa, the ship was attacked by pirates, who worked for (but were not currently being led by) Bangladesh DuPree (p. 47). They killed everyone but the exotic, and very salable, Zeetha, who was too sick to fight them. Once they reached their fortress and she regained her health, she made up for lost time by wiping them out completely. Unfortunately, that left no one alive who knew where she had been "collected," and no one she subsequently met had ever heard of Skifander. Zeetha began to think that perhaps she had made it up while feverish.

Zeetha joined Master Payne's Circus of Adventure (p. 26) a year and a half before meeting Agatha (p. 28), the first person she met who had even heard of Skifander. Zeetha quickly made Agatha her friend and *Zumil* – a term that means she is Agatha's martial arts teacher. When Agatha was abducted in Sturmhalten, Zeetha, Krosp, and three Jägers (p. 50) led a rescue party. As a result, they learned the city's "Deepdown" (p. 22) tunnels were full of Geisterdamen (p. 68) and hive engines (p. 175).

After escaping Sturmhalten, Zeetha accompanied Agatha to Mechanicsburg (p. 18), where Zeetha and Krosp agreed to keep an eye on Gil. One side benefit to this was meeting Higgs (p. 42), who was very impressed with the Skifandran. Zeetha and Higgs had a lot of time to get to know each other, since Gil took Higgs, a Wulfenbach airman, into Castle Heterodyne with him as an assistant. During their adventure in the Castle, Zola, on Moveit #11 (p. 156), ran Zeetha through with her own sword, nearly killing her. Fortunately, Higgs got her out of the Castle and to Mamma Gkika's (p. 20) as quickly as possible.

Once the Baron and the other forces attacking Mechanicsburg were routed, Zeetha and Higgs ended up leaving town on a date, which put her outside of the Baron's temporal shenanigans when they hit Mechanicsburg.

She was in the group waiting for Agatha when she exited the Mirror (p. 156). She accompanies her friend on her adventures, and continues to train her, while still keeping an ear open for news of home.

Princess Zeetha of Skifander   303 points

Zeetha is an exuberant and boisterous young woman who expresses herself through physicality, whether through a friendly hug or a punch to the gut. She's usually upbeat, except when she thinks or talks about Skifander; she truly misses her home. She's incredibly deadly with her swords, and she knows it – to the point of being cocky. She takes weapons and their usage very seriously, and is rigorous when it comes to training Agatha.

She has a very relaxed view of sex and sexuality, and is always encouraging Agatha to get some "experience." She is currently in a very serious relationship with Axel Higgs.

ST 13 [30]; **DX** 13 [60]; **IQ** 10 [0]; **HT** 12 [20].
Damage 1d+1/2d+1; BL 34 lbs.; HP 16 [6]; Will 10 [0]; Per 10 [0]; FP 12 [0]; Basic Speed 6.25 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0].

Advantages: Ambidexterity [5]; Arm ST 2 (Two arms) [10]; Catfall [10]; Extra Attack 1 [25]; Hard to Kill 5 [10]; Weapon Master (Swords) [35].
Disadvantages: Berserk (12) [-10]; Easy to Read [-10]; Impulsiveness (12) [-10].
Quirks: Always alert for any clues to the location of Skifander [-1]; Very fond of shiny, pointy, edgy things [-1].
Skills: Acrobatics (H) DX+4 [20]-17; Brawling (E) DX+5 [16]-18; Camouflage (E) IQ+2 [4]-12; Carousing (E) HT+2 [4]-14; First Aid (E) IQ+2 [4]-12; Jumping (E) DX+5 [16]-18; Naturalist (H) IQ+4 [20]-14; Riding (A) DX+1 [4]-14; Running (A) HT+1 [4]-13; Shortsword (A) DX+6 [24]-19; Survival (A) Per+2 [8]-12.

Airman Third Class "The Unstoppable" Axel Higgs

Airman Third Class Axel Higgs was a boatswain ("bosun") aboard the airship *Rozen Maiden* as it carried Baron Klaus Wulfenbach to safety after the battle at Sturmhalten. When the ship was hit by cannon fire and the rest of the crew was eaten by monsters, Higgs dragged the Baron and DuPree (p. 47) into a launch and escaped, all while being repeatedly attacked by a delirious DuPree. When the launch crashed into a pond, Higgs had his arm broken by an angry goose. That was the least of his concerns, as he was also being shot at by nearby troops. They apologized once they realized who he was and who was in his care, and arranged for transport to Mechanicsburg (p. 18).

Having earned some downtime after his rescue of the Baron, Higgs ended up at Mamma Gkika's (p. 20), where he got into a lovely bar fight next to Zeetha. He also bumped into Gil, who pulled rank to press Higgs into their expedition into the Castle (p. 20). Higgs protected Agatha and Gil from a dangerous clank – which he took down with one hit. Most assumed it was perfectly normal, as it was an old clank that had seen lots of wear and was probably full of sprocket weevils.

His first genuinely challenging fight came after Zola drank some Moveit #11 (p. 156). She stabbed Zeetha nearly to death with her own swords and inflicted a *lot* of damage on Higgs. With Gil's permission, Higgs left the castle and took Zeetha to Mamma Gkika's for healing. After that, he fought to defend Mechanicsburg along with Zeetha, and the two realized that they were attracted to each other. They were out of the city when the Baron's time bomb went off.

Over the next two and a half years, Higgs remained Gil's right hand man, a position that left him little time for interludes with Zeetha until they both reached England around the same time.

Most people assume Higgs was just a particularly lucky and resilient crewman. However, he keeps much of his past hidden, and there is a lot of it to hide. Higgs is not only a Jäger, but part of the very first batch; he is the "missing" seventh Jägergeneral (p. 67).

Those who survive the Jägerdraught (p. 66) begin to mutate. Fangs, a tail, scales, horns if one is lucky – these are to be expected, but even after hundreds of years, Higgs' appearance hasn't changed at all. He has the strength and resilience of Jägerhood, but none of the physical marks. He considers this horribly disappointing, not to mention embarrassing, like a human adult who perpetually looks like a small child. When it comes down to it, the other Jägermonsters respect him and his rank as a general, but will often treat him like a goofy kid brother unless things are very serious.

Because of his looks and unusual advantages, Higgs has become the Heterodyne family's spymaster. Over the centuries, in this capacity, Higgs has joined the ranks of hundreds of different armies. Joining the Baron's armed forces was just another job. This position unexpectedly transitioned to working for Gil directly, and it worked just as well for his purposes, as – theoretically at least – it put him close to Agatha.

Normally, of course, he would have made himself known to the Heterodyne immediately. Unfortunately, Agatha was carrying the mind of Lucrezia, and the Jägers hate Lucrezia. They knew that secrecy is their best defense against her, and Higgs has so far kept quiet.

Airman Third Class "The Unstoppable" Axel Higgs, *Jägergeneral*   515 points

Higgs is a stoic individual despite his Jäger nature. This is probably a result of his long, long life, during which he has seen many friends come and go. He rarely shows much emotion or draws any attention to himself. The one exception is Zeetha; the only time he has displayed worry or anger in the story is when she was badly injured.

Higgs is a Jäger. Stronger. Tougher. However, he still *looks* perfectly human. From a game perspective, this means he doesn't have the disadvantages given in the Jäger template (p. 67). He also has average intelligence; he maintained his wits during the conversion. He still retains all of the advantages (except for Claws – a pity, that)!

ST 16 [60]; **DX** 14 [80]; **IQ** 10 [0]; **HT** 13 [30].
Damage 1d+2/3d; BL 51 lbs.; HP 26 [20]; Will 10 [0]; Per 10 [0]; FP 16 [9]; Basic Speed 6.75 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0].

Advantages: Acute Hearing 3 [6]; Arm ST 2 (Two arms) [10]; Damage Resistance 3 [15]; Dark Vision [25]; Discriminatory Smell [15]; Extended Lifespan 5 [10]; Extra Attack 1 [25]; Hard to Kill 5 [10]; Rank 8 (Jägergeneral) [40]; Rapid Healing [5].

Disadvantages: Berserk (12) [-10]; Duty (Heterodynes; 9 or less) [-5]; Secret [-5].

Skills: Acrobatics (H) DX+1 [8]-15; Acting (A) IQ+2 [8]-12; Body Control (VH) HT+1 [12]-14; Brawling (E) DX+6 [20]-20; Climbing (A) DX+2 [8]-16; Crewman (E) IQ+4 [12]-14; Current Affairs (E) IQ+1 [2]-11; Detect Lies (H) Per [4]-10; Disguise (A) IQ+2 [8]-12; Escape (H) DX+1 [8]-15; First Aid (E) IQ+2 [4]-12; Garrote (E) DX [1]-14; Guns (E) DX+4 [12]-18; Jumping (E) DX+2 [4]-16; Knife (E) DX+5 [16]-19; Naturalist (H) IQ+2 [12]-12; Observation (A) Per+2 [8]-12; Piloting (A) DX+2 [8]-16; Running (A) HT+1 [4]-14; Stealth (A) DX+2 [8]-16; Survival (A) Per+2 [8]-12.

VIOLETTA MONDAREV

As a Smoke Knight (below), Violetta was originally assigned as a bodyguard to her cousin, Tarvek. Ostensibly, she was so bad at it that she was reassigned to Mechanicsburg as secretary to its Burgermeister.

In truth, she is quite well-trained – but Tarvek was the one who wrote up her evaluation reports, and he systematically downplayed her abilities so that the rest of the family would underestimate her and leave her out of their scheming.

Tarvek was the one who arranged for Violetta's transfer, out of fear she would be killed in the crossfire of his family's conspiracies. She was in Mechanicsburg when Tarvek arrived at the Great Hospital, and freed him by dosing him with a bottle of Moveit #6. She fled the hospital with him in tow, only to end up in Castle Heterodyne (p. 20).

When Tarvek became gravely ill, he released Violetta from his service and into Agatha's.

Once Agatha, Gil, and Tarvek were healthy again, Violetta stayed with Agatha and Tarvek as they worked to repair Castle Heterodyne, while also helping them survive Zola's attacks and machinations. In Agatha and Zola's last fight, Violetta realized that Zola had used Auntie Mehitabel's Natural Causes (p. 155), but had the antidote handy. She continues to use her training and sneakiness to keep others safe, and was with Agatha when the Doom Bell (p. 19) rang.

When the Wulfenbach forces were routed and Agatha was declared the Heterodyne, Martellus (p. 52) kidnapped Agatha and poisoned Tarvek. Violetta went through the Mirror Gate with them. Violetta and Krosp scouted out the Refuge of Storms, and used that knowledge to help Agatha find a garage in which she could build clanks to help her escape.

Smoke Knights

The Smoke Knights are a secret organization of covert operatives associated with the Sturmhalten ruling families. Think "techno-ninja": They wear dark pajamas, have sneaky gear like grapnel guns (p. 156), and are masters of poisons and other chemicals. There are numerous similar groups in Europa, but amongst those in the know, the Smoke Knights are acknowledged as the best. They can do things right in front of a person's face without them even realizing it. For advice on building Smoke Knight characters, see *Spy* (p. 63).

Since then, Violetta has remained by Agatha's side, no matter where the Spark goes. She came to England with her and was taken prisoner to be used as a sacrifice while summoning Awful Things, but has since been rescued and rejoined the party.

Violetta Mondarev, Smoke Knight   216 points

Violetta is her own harshest critic, convinced she hasn't advanced in the Smoke Knights due to her own incompetence – she still doesn't know that was Tarvek, keeping her out of the line of fire. She claims to hate Tarvek, but obviously cares about his well-being, unless she's the one hitting him. Violetta is also clearly a good influence on Tarvek, grounding him and giving him perspective, while he helps her be more confident and decisive.

Somehow, Violetta has found herself having feelings for Moloch von Zinzer, whom she met inside Castle Heterodyne. She desperately tries to stifle these, however, as she is now Agatha's loyal servant, and von Zinzer has repeatedly declared that he wants nothing to do with Sparks, or Mechanicsburg, and intends to leave at the first possible chance.

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 12 [40]; **IQ** 11 [20]; **HT** 11 [10].
Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 14 [8]; Will 11 [0]; Per 11 [0]; FP 10 [0]; Basic Speed 7.00 [25]; Basic Move 7 [0].

Advantages: Cultural Adaptability [10]; Legal Immunity [15].
Disadvantages: Duty (Tarvek and Agatha; 9 or less) [-5]; Enemies (Family; Built on 150%; 9 or less) [-20].
Skills: Acrobatics (H) DX+2 [12]-14; Acting (A) IQ+2 [8]-13; Body Language (A) Per [2]-11; Detect Lies (H) Per [4]-11; Diplomacy (H) IQ [4]-11; Disguise (A) IQ+2 [8]-13; Escape (H) DX+1 [8]-13; Garrote (E) DX+1 [2]-13; Guns (E) DX+2 [4]-14; Knife (E) DX+4 [12]-16; Persuade (H) Will [4]-11; Poisons (H) IQ+1 [8]-12; Savoir-Faire (High Society) (E) IQ [1]-11; Sleight of Hand (H) DX+3 [16]-15; Stealth (A) DX+1 [4]-13; Thrown Weapon (Knife) (E) DX+2 [4]-14; Traps (A) IQ+2 [8]-13; Urban Survival (A) Per+1 [4]-12.

OTILIA/VON PINN

Otilia, the Muse (p. 65) of Protection, was created for the Storm King by the great Spark Van Rijn. Later, Van Rijn gave her the task of "keeping the Heterodyne girl safe," by which he meant "safe for those around her." The Storm King, meanwhile, gave her the task of protecting his bride. Otilia was a prisoner in Castle Heterodyne (p. 20) for close to two centuries.

When Lucrezia (p. 48) married into the family and moved into Castle Heterodyne, she discovered Otilia chained deep in the cellars, and used her as a test subject in her work on mind-transference technology. She moved the Muse's mind into a powerful, humanoid construct body ("Von Pinn") and tasked her with the role of nanny for the Heterodyne children, a role that fell easily to the Muse of Protection.

Lucrezia then attempted to transfer the Castle's consciousness into the vacant Muse body. This was like trying to pour an ocean into a teacup.

Otilia was found in the wreckage of the Castle after the first attack of the Other. When she learned that the Heterodyne baby was dead, she went insane and became a terrible danger to all around her. She was restrained until the Baron took over Mechanicsburg. He rehabilitated her and pressed her into service as a caretaker for the young students aboard Castle Wulfenbach (p. 23).

After she realized that Agatha was a lost Heterodyne, Von Pinn resumed her old job of protecting the girl, but Agatha chose that moment to escape. It didn't help Von Pinn's case that her method of reassuring her charge was to scream "Mine!" at her with bared teeth.

Von Pinn later caught up with Agatha and her friends at Castle Heterodyne. She made it clear that it was her job to keep Agatha safe and everyone else safe *from Agatha*. Agatha took issue with this and maneuvered Von Pinn into sacrificing her body in order to save Agatha.

Later, Agatha and her friends repaired and improved a security clank (p. 63) and downloaded Von Pinn's mind into it. Taking the name of Otilia once again, she was freed from the need to follow Lucrezia's commands, but still bound by her programming to protect Agatha, the "Heterodyne girl."

Fortunately, she recognized Tarvek as the new Storm King, and he formally released her from that command – although she became concerned about his welfare instead. It is assumed she was trapped in the time bubble with the rest of Mechanicsburg.

Otilia/Von Pinn   328 points

These statistics represent Otilia as a Muse construct, before her transfer into a clank body. As a Castle-powered security clank, she's restricted to Castle Heterodyne's area of control, which ranges from the Castle itself to all of Mechanicsburg. For her statistics in that form, use Von Pinn's *mental* traits with the security clank's *physical* traits – or just add +5 to ST, +2 to DX, and +2 to HT.

ST 17 [50]; **DX** 12 [20]; **IQ** 10 [0]; **HT** 14 [30].
Damage 2d-1/3d+2; BL 58 lbs.; HP 28 [12]; Will 13 [15]; Per 10 [0]; FP 16 [6]; Basic Speed 6.50 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0].

Advantages: Arm ST 3 (Two arms) [15]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Construct [60]; Damage Resistance 3 [15]; Sharp Teeth [1].
Disadvantages: Bad Temper (12) [-10]; Berserk (12) [-10]; Bloodlust (12) [-10]; Duty (Tarvek and Agatha; 9 or less) [-5].
Skills: Acrobatics (H) DX+3 [16]-15; Brawling (E) DX+8 [28]-20; Breaking Blow (H) IQ+7 [32]-17; Intimidation (A) Will+7 [28]-20; Whip (A) DX+5 [20]-17.

OTHAR TRYGGVASSEN, GENTLEMAN ADVENTURER!

Othar Tryggvassen grew up in Norway, with his sister Sanaa, in the frequently Spark-plagued town of Grimstad. Not much is known about his early life. Some rumors say that this is because he's traveled through time more than once – which could explain his addled brain and loose grasp on the concept of being helpful. These rumors also state he altered his own past and is working both with and against other copies of himself, but that's clearly just a rumor. Right?

Othar is further rumored to have personally constructed the Great Wall of Norway, and may have been linked to the destruction of Oslo. No one can prove anything, and Othar hasn't admitted to it. Regardless of the cause, it was Oslo that made Othar realize the truth: All Sparks Must Die. Having ascertained that it was impossible to control a closed environment, Othar set out to kill every wicked and evil Spark he could find.

The Baron's agents do their best to nudge Othar toward other tyrants and Sparks the Baron shouldn't legitimately touch, which has helped Othar make his own reputation as a True Hero of the People. However, Othar is a free agent, and will kill any Spark he deems to be evil – which is most of them. Naturally, this plays hob with the delicate game of politics necessary to maintain the peace on a Spark-riddled continent. After one too many extemporaneous murders, the Baron had Othar brought in to be brain-cored (p. 155).

Agatha helped Othar escape, and he helped Agatha do the same. He planned to make her his "spunky girl sidekick" until he learned that she was a Spark – and thus, sadly, had to die. Shortly thereafter, they parted ways midair when she shoved him off her escape vehicle.

He survived, as usual, and was next seen in the nearby town of Zumzum, where he helped get three Jägers (p. 50) off the street and onto the gallows via a game of hangman. When Agatha saved the Jägers, Othar saw the potential in Agatha to become a True Hero of the People and decided to spare her, for now.

Later, in Mechanicsburg (p. 18), Baron Wulfenbach's forces recaptured Othar and tasked him with extracting Gil from Castle Heterodyne (p. 20). Othar ran into his sister Sanaa, a prisoner in the Castle. She helped him "rescue" Tarvek instead of Gil, by mistake. When Gil finally made it back to Castle Wulfenbach (p. 23), he returned Othar to Mechanicsburg with Tarvek and Captain Vole (p. 55). There, Othar tried to recruit Tarvek and Violetta as sidekicks while helping Agatha recharge the Castle and liberate Mechanicsburg. He was caught in the Baron's time bomb, but the world wasn't lucky enough to have him remain there. Gil used him as one of the first successful tests of the extraction process, and after giving a rousing speech, Othar went off to find further adventures.

Othar Tryggvassen, Gentleman Adventurer! 301 points

Othar is friendly and confident. However, he's also utterly insane and unpredictable, making him a dangerous companion. He thinks he's at the center of every story. As well, he refuses to admit any of his plans have gone astray in any way, and still has a passion for murdering Sparks when he sees them – despite being one himself.

He has a particular drive to eliminate the Other, as he claims to have personally seen a future where Lucrezia won, with the result that most of humanity was eliminated. The details of this are hazy, but it does keep him focused on the larger task.

His ability to stay alive, no matter what, is reflected in his Serendipity (p. 91), which gives him, for instance, the one piece of gear that will let him survive a situation.

Othar projects a cheerful cluelessness that drives his foes to distraction. However, the Baron has begun to suspect that Othar is simply treating everything as if it were a game. He once had a glimpse of Othar deciding that it was time to take things seriously, and it *terrified* him.

ST 15 [50]; **DX** 12 [40]; **IQ** 14 [80]; **HT** 13 [30].
Damage 1d+1/2d+1; BL 45 lbs.; HP 15 [0]; Will 14 [0]; Per 14 [0]; FP 18 [15]; Basic Speed 6.25 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0].

Advantages: Artificer 1 [10]; Charisma 2 [10]; Hard to Kill 5 [10]; Serendipity 1 [15]; Spark 1 [13].
Disadvantages: Charitable (12) [-15]; Code of Honor (Gentleman's) [-10]; Delusion (I'm a Hero!) [-10]; Enemy (Klaus Wulfenbach; 9 or less) [-20]; Stubbornness [-5].
Skills: Biology (H) IQ+1 [8]-15; Brawling (E) DX+3 [8]-15; Chemistry (H) IQ [4]-14; Engineer (Civil) (H) IQ+2 [8]-16*; Engineer (Materials) (H) IQ+2 [8]-16*; Engineer (Mechanical) (H) IQ+2 [8]-16*; Engineer (Temporal) (H) IQ+4 [16]-18*; Physics (H) IQ [4]-14; Research (A) IQ+4 [16]-18; Weird Science (VH) IQ [8]-14.

* Includes +1 for Artificer.

Zola Anya Talinka Venia Zeblikya Malfeazium

Zola was born to Demonica Malfeazium, sister of Lucrezia (p. 48) – making her Lucrezia's niece, and Agatha and Theo's (p. 53) cousin. She met Gil while she was working as an entertainer at a Parisian nightclub: the Island of the Monkey Girls. There, she had a deep and abiding passion for being a damsel in distress, with nefarious Sparks falling in love with her or just kidnapping her as a part of some evil plan, practically on a weekly basis. Gil rescued her many times in his adventures as a student, and Zola always had quite a crush on him.

After she rather suddenly left Paris, Zola was groomed by the Knights of Jove (p. 11) to play the part of the lost Heterodyne heir in the Storm King conspiracy (p. 10). They spent years training her, but rushed the plan forward when Agatha revealed herself as the Heterodyne in Sturmhalten (p. 21).

Duke Josef Strinbeck and Baron Krassimir Oublenmach brought Zola to Mechanicsburg (p. 18) in a pink airship, where she made a grand entrance, culminating with a march into Castle Heterodyne itself. Inside, she rendezvoused with Professor Hristo Tiktoffen, head of the Castle repair team.

Shortly afterward, while hunting Agatha, she was thrilled to run into her old friend Gil and his party. Gil "admitted" he was a pirate and she revealed to him that since there was no way to tame the Castle in time, her organization had built a device – Fra Pelagatti's Lion (p. 156) – which, when activated, would destroy its artificial intelligence.

When Agatha took control of the situation, most of Zola's remaining crew (p. 46) immediately switched sides. Agatha's exposure of Gil's actual identity genuinely shocked Zola, who then meekly followed along and stumbled into random trouble. However, when Gil locked up Zola and Tiktoffen, they both used it as a chance to escape and go their separate ways.

Zola sneaked down into Lucrezia's laboratory and waited until only Agatha, Gil, Tarvek, and Violetta were present, to ambush them with a sleeping gas. She freed Lucrezia, knowing that she would try to put a version of herself into Zola's mind so Zola could be controlled – but it was a trap. Thanks to modifications made by the renegade Geisterdame, Loremistress Milvistle (p. 68), Zola was able to keep this "calling" imprisoned within her mind so that she could extract information from it freely. Her attempt to kill Agatha was foiled by Tarvek, so Zola escaped.

Zola later attacked Agatha, Gil, Tarvek, and Violetta while they were distracted by a monstrous carnivorous plant. When Zeetha and Higgs joined the fight, Zola took some Moveit #11 (p. 156) to become nigh-unstoppable. She nearly killed Zeetha and badly injured Higgs while Agatha and Tarvek got away. Violetta dosed her with even more Moveit #11, making Zola jittery and erratic, after which she fled.

Zola eventually caught up with Agatha and Tarvek, just as Agatha reactivated the Castle. In order to keep the Castle from killing her, she took Agatha hostage. Thanks to a misunderstanding on Gil's part, she ended up escaping using the Flight Raiment of King Darius the Incandescent (p. 155), though she wasn't able to do so with her hostage.

Half dead from her injuries and in drug withdrawal, Zola ended up in the Great Hospital (p. 19), where she encountered Lucrezia in Anevka's body. Posing as yet another version of Lucrezia – which was easy to do since she had a version trapped in her mind – she brought Anevka's Lucrezia up to speed, including letting her know that Klaus had been wasped.

When the Great Hospital was destroyed, Zola and the Anevka/Lucrezia clank worked together to rescue the Baron from the collapse. They parted ways amid the rubble, and Zola disappeared into the Europan underground. She found the newly leaderless Geisterdamen, and quickly convinced them that she was their Holy Lady, Lucrezia. The leaders of the Knights of Jove had mostly died in the Siege of Mechanicsburg. Tarvek's grandmother, the Dowager Princess of Sturmhalten, was left as head of the family, and she had always hated Lucrezia.

Fortunately for Zola, Lucrezia had plenty of other servants. Zola was not a Spark herself – but as Lucrezia, she had, among her loyal followers, Sparks who could create small, portable variants of Lucrezia's slaver engines. They spent the two years between the Mechanicsburg time stop and Agatha's return quietly spreading these improved slaver wasps across the Empire, priming the populace for their next move.

Eventually, Zola resurfaced as the "Queen of the Dawn," a charismatic diva whose voice miraculously commanded the love and loyalty of all who heard it. As of her most recent adventure, the Dowager Princess has Zola as a "visitor" – that is, a prisoner.

Zola Anya Talinka Venia Zeblikya Malfeazium   264 points

Zola is the ultimate wildcard. Her talent for being underestimated dwarfs even Tarvek's, and she's adept at every means of getting someone on her side – from pity to threats to seduction. She was chosen by the Knights of Jove for her flexibility, which means that at any given time, even if she's doing something as part of someone else's plan, assume that at least 50% of it is serving her own interests.

She has extensive Smoke Knight training, as well as the knowledge and contacts of the Mongfish family. She is fluent in *Geisterspeak,* and can command the loyalty of the Geisterdamen.

She is a consummate actress and a very talented singer and entertainer. She has access to the knowledge of the Other trapped within her head – but as she isn't a Spark or even a scientist, she doesn't really understand how to use the more esoteric things she finds there. Besides, at this point, Lucrezia's mind is quite alien, and Lucrezia herself is extremely practiced at deception.

As Queen of the Dawn, Zola is loved and respected throughout a large part of Europa, with the ability to use the Other's voice command on anyone who has been infected by the slaver wasps.

ST 10 [10]; **DX** 12 [40]; **IQ** 12 [40]; **HT** 11 [10].
Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 12 [4]; Will 12 [0]; Per 14 [10]; FP 11 [0]; Basic Speed 5.75 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].

Advantages: Alternate Identity [5]; Appearance (Very Impressive) [16]; Language: Geisterspeak (Native) [6]; Modular Abilities (1 slot; 5 points) [20]; Patron (One person who varies; Built on 150%; 9 or less) [10].
Disadvantages: Delusion (I'm the most important part of any story!) [-5]; Overconfidence (12) [-5]; Reprogrammable [-10]; Trickster (12) [-15].
Skills: Acting (A) IQ+5 [20]-17; Captivate (H) Will [4]-12; Carousing (E) HT+4 [12]-15; Dancing (A) DX+3 [12]-15; Disguise (A) IQ+5 [20]-17; Fast-Talk (A) IQ+5 [20]-17; Guns (E) DX+1 [2]-13; Intimidation (A) Will [2]-12; Knife (E) DX+3 [8]-15; Performance (A) IQ+1 [4]-13; Persuade (H) Will [4]-12; Public Speaking (A) IQ+3 [12]-15; Sex Appeal (A) HT+1 [4]-12; Singing (E) HT+2 [4]-13.

ARDSLEY WOOSTER

Ardsley Wooster is one of England's best spies. He was assigned to Paris (p. 24), where he met one Gilgamesh Holzfäller, a Spark who seemed to have a penchant for adventure. The two became friends. When Gil was summoned back home to Castle Wulfenbach, Ardsley realized that this would be an excellent opportunity to embed himself within the Baron's base. He asked his friend if he could get a job as Gil's personal manservant. Gil agreed.

It was not until they returned to Castle Wulfenbach that Ardsley found out that he had managed to attach himself to the Baron's heretofore unknown son and heir – Gilgamesh *Wulfenbach* – who had been sent to Paris to get an education. As far as British Intelligence was concerned, this was a major coup.

What Wooster never realized was that Gil had quickly figured out who he really was, and kept him near in order to control the information he got. However, despite the web of lies between them, the two remained genuine friends.

ZOLA'S CREW

In addition to some nameless mooks, Zola was working with several scientists who were prisoners within Castle Heterodyne. All of them shifted allegiance to Agatha when she showed up – although in Tiktoffen's case, it was only temporary, as he was always working for himself. After all, if Agatha were to fix the Castle, all of its prisoners would be free to go!

Professor Hristo Tiktoffen: Zola's "inside man" in Castle Heterodyne. He just also happened to be Wulfenbach's "inside man," England's "inside man," . . . and so on.

Professor Diaz: Head Spark of the "Castle-killing" group, overseeing the completion of the device that would end the Castle's reign of terror. Zola killed him with a marshmallow gun.

Professor Caractacus Mezzasalma: Half man, half spider clank, and all electromechanical engineer. Listening to him reminisce, you'd think he'd taught half the Sparks in Europa. He probably has. He's a very good teacher.

Dr. Getwin Mittelmind: A mad *social* scientist. Has been killed and resurrected by Fräulein Snaug several times.

Fräulein Hexalena Snaug: Mittelmind's best minion. Develops a fierce crush on Moloch von Zinzer. Is a psychopath who dreams of torturing the things she loves.

When Gil discovered that Agatha was still alive, and a prisoner in Sturmhalten, he was forced to reveal his knowledge of the true situation to Wooster so the spy would take him seriously. Gil sent Wooster off to save Agatha, and threatened to "melt what is left of your miserable island to slag, and boil the seas around you for the next thousand years" if he failed.

Wooster landed his flyer next to Master Payne's (p. 26) wagons, and convinced them he was there to help Agatha so they would reveal her location. Once he found her (it was actually Lucrezia in Agatha's body), he offered her sanctuary in England. When fighting broke out between the Baron's forces and Agatha's clanks, Wooster fought alongside Agatha and the Circus, and then extended the offer of sanctuary to Master Payne and his people.

Wooster helped Agatha get to Mechanicsburg (p. 18) and ensured she made it into Castle Heterodyne in one piece before sneaking away to do some more spying. He discovered the Baron's forces were preparing to level the Castle, and handed the information to the Jägergenerals (p. 67) to try to keep Agatha alive. This also helped to "destabilize Britain's greatest rival." Unfortunately, no one could have foreseen just how ripe Europa was for chaos once the Storm King conspiracies began unraveling.

He remained on the scene after Mechanicsburg was frozen, as despite everything, he was considered to be one of the few people who might be able to guess what Gilgamesh was going to do. Ardsley vehemently disputes this, as he believes that no one actually knows what Gil is really thinking, or capable of. But he is a servant of the crown, and so he stays.

Once Agatha reappeared, he helped protect her, and guided her to England.

Ardsley Wooster   258 points

Wooster is a quick thinker, decisive and fast to adapt to change. He is exceptionally capable of fulfilling the functions of a gentleman's valet, and when he has the time, an island of calm efficiency spreads wherever he works. He plays the role of the posh Brit well, but isn't afraid to get his hands dirty – metaphorically or literally. He has compassion and tries to do the right thing, though he won't take any action detrimental to England. He is an exceptionally well-trained secret agent, proficient in the numerous disciplines this requires. He is a dangerous fighter, and has extensive knowledge of weapons and explosives.

Ardsley is very fond of fellow agent Trelawney Thorpe. The two have a history, but the demands of the job have kept them apart.

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 12 [40]; **IQ** 12 [40]; **HT** 11 [10].
Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 14 [8]; Will 12 [0]; Per 12 [0]; FP 11 [0]; Basic Speed 5.75 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].

Advantages: Alternate Identity [5]; Cultural Adaptability [10]; Legal Immunity [15].
Disadvantages: Duty (England; 9 or less) [-5].

Skills: Acting (A) IQ+2 [8]-14; Body Language (A) Per [2]-12; Brawling (E) DX+3 [8]-15; Current Affairs (E) IQ+2 [4]-14; Detect Lies (H) Per+2 [12]-14; Diplomacy (H) IQ+2 [12]-14; Disguise (A) IQ+2 [8]-14; Escape (H) DX+2 [12]-14; Explosives (A) IQ+2 [8]-14; Fast-Talk (A) IQ+5 [20]-17; Garrote (E) DX [1]-12; Guns (E) DX+3 [8]-15; Knife (E) DX+3 [8]-15; Linguistics (H) IQ [4]-12; Observation (A) Per+2 [8]-14; Savoir-Faire (High Society) (E) IQ+4 [12]-16.

Bangladesh "Bang" DuPree

Bangladesh DuPree was the pirate queen of one of the fiercest fleets operating between England and Europa. She returned to her fortress one day to find it in flames, utterly ruined, with all of her crew dead. Little did she know that they had attacked a scientific expedition returning from Skifander, taken Zeetha prisoner, and subsequently paid the price.

She tried to learn who was responsible, but could find no answers. To her astonishment, she was approached by none other than Baron Wulfenbach, who hired her on the theory that it would be better to have an insanely dangerous person working for him rather than against him. As part of the deal, he agreed to use his intelligence services to track down the person(s) who killed her crew. They found nothing – but in the meantime, both Bang and the Baron were surprised to discover just how well their arrangement suited both of them.

The Baron sent her to Paris with Gil to keep him safe. While there, she took particular pleasure in tormenting Prince "How Dare You!" (Tarvek Sturmvoraus, p. 38) and dropping hints to everyone that would listen that she and Gil were part of a dastardly pirate crew.

DuPree was on Castle Wulfenbach when Agatha arrived. As Agatha escaped, one of the students, Zulenna, stayed behind to hold off Von Pinn, trusting the construct would not hurt one of her charges. However, DuPree had no such compunctions and casually murdered the student, sending Von Pinn into a rage.

DuPree and Gil tried to track down Agatha, but she had already faked her death and managed to fool them.

When the Baron confronted Agatha and her friends at Sturmhalten, DuPree fought alongside him. Both were taken aboard the *Rozen Maiden* when they were gravely injured. In fact, DuPree was so delirious that she attacked their rescuer, Axel Higgs, multiple times.

In the Great Hospital of Mechanicsburg (p. 19), Gil put DuPree in charge of protecting his father – a role that gave *her* the ability to tell *him* what to do – and she fully embraced his order until the Baron demanded she go away. The hospital collapsed shortly after she left, prompting DuPree to run back and search the rubble for the Baron's body, but her efforts were in vain. This devastated her, as the Baron was one of the few people that Bangladesh actually liked and respected.

Gil forced Bang to drink the anti-Wasp concoction invented by Tarvek, shortly before his father reappeared and then got frozen in time in Mechanicsburg. As Gil assumed command of the Wulfenbach empire, she continued to work for him.

After Gil admitted that Klaus had imprinted a copy of himself over Gil's brain, she was less happy about the arrangement. Bang has an instinctive loathing of mind control, and is deeply troubled that the Baron used it, even if he was himself being controlled by the Other.

DuPree went with Gil and Tarvek to England. She even asked Tarvek to help free Gil from Klaus' control. Before they arrived in England, Bangladesh, who would rather not talk with the authorities about the numerous acts of piracy she's perpetrated against Her Majesty's fleets, surreptitiously joined the admiring crew of the *Mopey Tortoise*, the airship that brought them to England.

Meanwhile, a former pirate overheard Zeetha recounting the tale of how she arrived in Europa, with the resultant carnage, and realized that this was the person who had destroyed Bangladesh's fortress. Bang has a longstanding offer that anyone who identifies the perpetrators will earn "The Devil's Prize" if they are correct – or painful death if they waste her time.

Once she learned that Zeetha was the culprit, Bang resigned from Gil's service. She's now on the hunt for the Skifandran princess.

Bangladesh "Bang" DuPree   368 points

Bangladesh DuPree is a psychotic, amoral, sadistic killing machine. Klaus uses her for necessary actions that are too violent or distasteful for him to handle personally, and this suits her just fine. The only people she's shown genuine emotion for are Klaus, who she truly respects and cares for; Gil, of whom she's a bit protective; and Captain Vole (p. 55), who she finds absolutely dreamy, handsome, and delightfully murderous.

That said, it's distressingly easy to like Bang. She is cheerful and outspoken, confident and capable of great humor. She is an excellent dinner and drinking companion, flirty and easily approachable, and when you get her talking – which is easy to do – knowledgeable about a great many esoteric things.

She is a superb captain and runs a tight ship. She is proficient in dueling and knows her weapons. And she's an exceptional tracker and navigator.

She goes out of her way to address anything that she sees as unfair or unjust, but she's also capable of turning on a dime and performing horrific acts of cruelty and violence. She always has at least a dozen weapons hidden about her person, and is sickeningly proficient at torture and interrogation. No one really knows what will set Bangladesh off, and so everyone around her moves carefully and very politely. She is aware of this and finds it hilarious.

Bangladesh has a brother, Deathwish DuPree, of whom she is terribly ashamed. She will not discuss him under any circumstances. Don't bring him up.

ST 13 [30]; **DX** 14 [80]; **IQ** 11 [20]; **HT** 13 [30].
Damage 1d/2d-1; BL 34 lbs.; HP 18 [10]; Will 11 [0]; Per 11 [0]; FP 13 [0]; Basic Speed 7.00 [5]; Basic Move 7 [0].

Advantages: Combat Reflexes [15]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Legal Immunity [15].
Disadvantages: Berserk (12) [-10]; Bloodlust (12) [-10]; Callous [-5].
Skills: Area Knowledge (Europa Wulfenbach) (E) IQ+4 [12]-15; Brawling (E) DX+3 [8]-17; Carousing (E) HT [1]-13; Crewman (E) IQ+5 [16]-16; Fast-Draw (E) DX+5 [16]-19; First Aid (E) IQ [1]-11; Guns (E) DX+3 [8]-17; Interrogation (A) IQ+2 [8]-13; Intimidation (A) Will+2 [8]-13; Knife (E) DX+6 [20]-20; Martial Arts (H) DX+2 [12]-16; Navigation (A) IQ+3 [12]-14; Piloting (A) DX+3 [12]-17; Rapier (A) DX+2 [8]-16; Shiphandling (H) IQ+5 [24]-16; Tracking (A) Per+3 [12]-14.

Lucrezia Mongfish

*Despite this chapter otherwise being full of spoilers, we're keeping some secrets about Lucrezia. You don't want **everything** in the story in advance, do you?*

Lucifer Mongfish was a bona fide "supervillain" Mad Scientist if there ever was one. Like all good supervillains, he had a beautiful daughter. Actually, he had three: Demonica, Serpentina, and Lucrezia.

The Mongfish family had long engaged in skullduggery, but they preferred to be the invisible hand behind the throne. To his great annoyance, however, Lucifer became known to the Heterodyne Boys, and found himself and his plots frequently dragged into the light and thwarted.

The Mongfish family had taken control of the moribund Knights of Jove and "got the order whipped back into shape." Lucrezia expertly used sex, blackmail, murder, deft power politics, and more sex to bring the ruling cabal of the conspiracy under her sway.

Lucrezia was familiar with prophecies and such from an early age. On a family vacation, the Mongfish clan discovered a lost race of warrior women, the Geisterdamen. Surprisingly, as soon as they saw Lucrezia, they declared that their goddess had returned to them, and swore that they were ever her servants. The other two girls were jealous, of course, but Lucrezia blithely accepted the worship of the Geisterdamen as her due, and visited their Citadel of Silver Light as often as she could. Lucrezia loved it when people worshiped her.

As her father clashed with the Heterodyne Boys, however, an ostensibly villainous Lucrezia found herself increasingly attracted to Bill Heterodyne, as well as to his friend, Klaus Wulfenbach. A romantic triangle ensued. Klaus and Lucrezia were better suited to each other temperamentally, but Bill and his brother always *won*, a phenomenon that intrigued Lucrezia – to the point where ultimately, Bill won again, and she agreed to marry him.

However, she realized that she was still attracted to Klaus. She knew he would be hard to resist, even after she was Bill's wife. Also, Klaus knew her for what she was, and would never have let his friend marry Lucrezia without a detailed warning . . . so Lucrezia drugged him and shipped him off to Skifander, expecting to never see him again.

The newlyweds lived in Castle Heterodyne, where Lucrezia gave birth to Klaus Barry Heterodyne.

Lucrezia could play the Good Little Wife for only so long, but all serious plotting was foiled by the ever-watchful eye of Castle Heterodyne. She discovered a secret room deep underground, hidden even from the Castle, and there installed a secret laboratory. From there, she plotted to bend the Castle to her will (see *Lost Secrets*, p. 21). She perfected the art of mind transference from mechanical systems to biological ones and vice versa – which resulted in giving the Muse Otilia a new body as Von Pinn and a role as the baby's nursemaid. At some point, she also captured a part of Castle Heterodyne's mind within the newly vacant body of the Otilia Muse.

Then, one night when Lucrezia was pregnant with her second child and the Heterodyne Boys were off adventuring, a powerful explosion rocked Castle Heterodyne. It damaged many of the systems that helped run the town of Mechanicsburg, and killed over 60 of the staff and servants, including the seneschal of the time, Carson von Mekkhan, Jr. Lucrezia's young son, the Heterodyne heir, also died in the attack – and when the dust settled, Lucrezia was nowhere to be found.

This was long believed to be the first of the Other's strikes on the Sparks of Europa, but now that it has been revealed that Lucrezia *was* the Other, the attack is again a mystery.

Not long afterward, Lucrezia arrived at the Citadel of Silver Light, wild-eyed and desperate. She told her priestesses, the Geisterdamen, that "the gods were at war." Lucrezia waged her war relentlessly, continuing her career as the mysterious "Other" for the next several years.

During this time, Agatha was born in the Citadel, and the Geisterdamen were charged to protect the child. They failed in their charge. When the Heterodyne brothers finally tracked down the source of the Other's attacks, Lucrezia defended the Citadel ferociously. During the battle, Lucrezia was thrown through the Mirror Gate in the Citadel's inner sanctum. The Citadel itself was badly damaged, and Barry Heterodyne returned to Europa, taking Agatha with him.

Lucrezia, thrown through the Mirror, found herself trapped thousands of years in the past, in a strange land. With only malfunctioning, damaged, or outright broken Mirrors to work with – none of which she understood – she bounced through time and space, trying to return to her proper era and place. She kept herself alive through her knowledge of mind transference, eventually winding up in a completely mechanical body. Finally, after many, many lifetimes of adventures, she was able to return to her Citadel, where she remains.

After Lucrezia's disappearance, the Geisterdamen rebuilt their temple and prayed for her return. Finally she did, in her aspect as the terrible Goddess of Death, Fury, and Steel – a form she had not worn in the lifetimes of all but her oldest priestesses. She punished the survivors, and sent a large force of them to Europa, the "Shadow World." The Geisters were charged with finding Agatha and placing her within a Summoning Engine, implanting a copy of Lucrezia's mind within the child and thus returning Lucrezia to a body of flesh.

But once in Europa, a Geister known as Loremistress Milvistle led a rebellion against Lady Vrin (p. 56), the chief priestess. The Mirror Gate was destroyed, stranding the Geisterdamen in Europa without any way to communicate with the Citadel or their goddess.

The Geisterdamen finally succeeded in their mission when Vrin used the Summoning Engine to install a copy (or "calling") of Lucrezia in Agatha's body. Mother and daughter fought for control constantly, with Lucrezia regaining consciousness long enough to help Tarvek install another "calling" in his sister Anevka's clank body. She was later able to infect Klaus with a special slaver wasp (p. 175) that could control previously immune Sparks – but lost control completely when she mistook Agatha's Spark-suppressing locket as a sentimental gift from Klaus, and put it on.

As of the end of Act One, there are three known "callings" of Lucrezia in Europa. One is inside Agatha and kept (mostly) suppressed by her locket. One is in the clank Anevka, and this "calling" has complete control. There is also one within Zola, trapped and under her control, allowing Zola to steal some of Lucrezia's knowledge and secrets. But this isn't as easy as it should be; Zola finds Lucrezia's mind terrifyingly alien, and thus it manages to occasionally hide and distort information.

There is also, of course, the original Lucrezia, back in the Citadel. The "callings" in Europa have no contact with her, and only know what she knew at the moment of their calling. Theoretically, a "calling" could transfer a copy of itself to another host – as was done to Zola with the equipment in Lucrezia's old lab.

As far as the game is concerned, though, it's quite possible that there are *more* copies of Lucrezia out there, plotting and planning.

Lucrezia Mongfish

458 points

As much as her father, Lucifer Mongfish, was the archetypal "pulp villain," Lucrezia embodies the classical "femme fatale." She's brilliant, confident, utterly ruthless, pathologically devious, and enjoys using her sexuality as a tool for exploiting emotions. She is breathtakingly self-centered – everything is all about her, all the time – and she enjoys nothing more than the worship of those around her.

Baron Klaus Wulfenbach described Lucrezia to his son, Gil, as "ruthless, manipulative, and a consummate actress," which is fair. Her motives, long-term goals, and behind-the-scenes actions are still a total secret, as is what role *she* felt she played in Bill and Klaus' lives.

Lucrezia's write-up intentionally omits *physical* statistics – use those of whomever she's inhabiting. She has an inherent ability to duplicate her mind in other people, as long as she has access to one of her Summoning Engines. This is a large (500 lbs.; DR 0, HP 32) device which "calls" . . . and several seconds later, a copy of Lucrezia's mind is downloaded from wherever it is that her primary body is. Thus, the point value below is based solely on Lucrezia's *mental* traits.

To use a Summoning Engine, the victim must be fully restrained. First the victim rolls against HT. Failure by 0-4 lobotomizes the subject, dropping their IQ to 3; worse failure kills them. If the victim survives, roll a Quick Contest of the operator's Engineer (Psychotronics) skill against the subject's Will-5. If the victim wins or ties, they beat the machine and are immune to further attempts. Otherwise, they acquire Possessed (p. 100), with a self-control number based on how badly they lost the Contest:

By 1-2: 15.	*By 5-6:* 9.
By 3-4: 12.	*By 7-9:* 6.

By 10+: No self-control possible –
Lucrezia is permanently in control!

Use the same rules whenever a "possession" – implanting one person's mind into another – takes place.

IQ 16 [120].
Will 16 [0]; **Per** 16 [0].

Advantages: Artificer 4 [40]; Lightning Calculator [2]; Possession* [100]; Spark 5 [53]; Voice† [10].
Disadvantages: Overconfidence (12) [-5]; Stubbornness [-5].
Skills: Acting (A) IQ+5 [20]-21; Biology (H) IQ+2 [12]-18; Captivate (H) Will [4]-16; Chemistry (H) IQ+1 [8]-17; Engineer (Mechanical) (H) IQ+4 [4]-20‡; Engineer (Parachronic) (H) IQ+4 [4]-20‡; Engineer (Psychotronics) (H) IQ+5 [8]-21‡; Fast-Talk (A) IQ+5 [12]-21§; Mathematics (Applied) (H) IQ [4]-16; Mathematics (Theoretical) (H) IQ [4]-16; Mechanic (A) IQ+3 [1]-19‡; Persuade (H) Will [4]-16; Physics (H) IQ+3 [16]-19; Public Speaking (A) IQ+3 [4]-19§; Research (A) IQ+4 [16]-20; Sex Appeal (A) HT+2 [2]§; Weird Science (VH) IQ+3 [20]-19.

THOSE THREE JÄGERS

When Baron Wulfenbach invited the Jägers into his service, most accepted wholeheartedly. However, the Jägergenerals secretly asked for a small number of volunteers to remain "wild" so they could continue to search for the Heterodynes, their true masters. Being cut off from Jäger society was harsh, but some volunteers did come forward, including Dimo, Maxim, and Oggie. For many years, they roamed the countryside trying to avoid boredom (translation: causing trouble) and occasionally reported back to the generals via Jenka (p. 52).

Agatha first met the trio when Master Payne (p. 54) brought her to the town of Zumzum. Othar (p. 44) tricked the three Jägers into the gallows with a game of hangman, since "Jägers love to play games, but they're fuzzy on the rules." As Jenka was attacking the town to rescue them, Agatha cut them down after making them swear to help. They realized she smelled like a Heterodyne, and sneaked aboard the circus wagons to protect her while Jenka left to report the situation and get orders.

When Agatha entered Mechanicsburg, the three Jägers couldn't officially join her, as part of the agreement between the Baron and the Jägers had been that no Jägers could enter the town until a Heterodyne came back into residence. (Fortunately, the hidden tunnels beneath Mechanicsburg aren't considered part of the town, so they were able to get Gil to Mamma Gkika's for healing after he stopped the Knights of Jove from storming the gates.)

After the Doom Bell (p. 19) rang, the Jägers were free to openly enter and protect the town. They helped to repel its attackers, and many of the ground troops followed the retreating Wulfenbach forces. Thus, when Klaus entered Mechanicsburg, they were just outside of the range of his time freeze. The Jägergenerals had stayed behind, as had several of the more disciplined adjuncts. This meant that the Jägers were leaderless. Reluctantly, Dimo stepped up

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* When Lucrezia is in control of Agatha, use Agatha's physical traits and Lucrezia's mental traits. Lucrezia can be completely suppressed by Agatha's locket.

† Acts as written on most people. Those bound to obey Lucrezia – such as Geisterdamen or Von Pinn – are forced to follow her commands when she specifically uses "The Voice."

‡ Includes +4 for Artificer.

§ Includes +2 for Voice.

to fill the role of general, if only because after hanging out with Ognian and Maxim, he had gotten used to being "the smart one." Not knowing what else to do, they hung around the time-stopped town, protecting stray Mechanicsburg natives who were not at home when it was frozen. They've avoided Gilgamesh because they don't trust him, owing to his actions during the battle for the town (he was being mentally controlled by Klaus).

As a result, the three were nearby when Agatha and her friends returned, saving her from both Martellus von Blitzengaard and Gilgamesh's forces.

Dimo, Ognian, Maxim, and (to a lesser extent) Jenka, have followed Agatha as she traveled to Paris and England. They are part of her personal retinue, always ensuring that someone has her back.

Dimo   281 points

Dimo is the one with green skin, no pupils, and wispy black hair. He started as the unofficial leader of the three and eventually earned a "field" promotion to Jägergeneral. He's smart for a monster, and has an amazing sense of smell even by Jäger standards. His pride can be his undoing, however, as he doesn't like to admit when he has been hurt – "rhinohiding," as he calls it – or failed to accomplish something. He lost his left arm in the tunnels of Sturmhalten, but eventually had it replaced with a prosthetic created by Adam Clay, which is good given that he prefers attacking unarmed or with throwing knives.

ST 13 [0]; **DX** 12 [0]; **IQ** 10 [20]; **HT** 13 [0].
Damage 1d/2d-1; BL 34 lbs.; HP 19 [2]; Will 10 [0]; Per 10 [0]; FP 13 [0]; Basic Speed 6.25 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0].

Advantages: Acute Taste and Smell 4 [8]; Jäger [132]; Rank 8 (Jägergeneral) [40].
Disadvantages: Duty (Agatha; 9 or less) [-5]; One Arm* [-8]; Stubbornness [-5].
Skills: Area Knowledge (Europa) (E) IQ+5 [16]-15; Brawling (E) DX+5 [16]-17; Climbing (A) DX [2]-12; First Aid (E) IQ [1]-10; Observation (A) Per+2 [8]-12; Soldier (A) IQ+2 [8]-12; Survival (A) Per [2]-10; Tactics (H) IQ+2 [12]-12; Thrown Weapon (Knife) (E) DX+4 [12]-16; Tracking (A) Per+5 [20]-15.

Maxim   276 points

Maxim is the one with purple skin, smaller fangs, and (arguably) a "pretty boy" countenance. A former cavalryman, he loves horses. He's an expert swordsman, preferring the rapier, and keeps his right forearm armored so he can parry with it if he's disarmed. He's quieter and more reserved than the others, and prone to get lost in thought.

ST 13 [0]; **DX** 12 [0]; **IQ** 9 [0]; **HT** 13 [0].
Damage 1d/2d-1; BL 34 lbs.; HP 18 [0]; Will 9 [0]; Per 9 [0]; FP 13 [0]; Basic Speed 6.25 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0].

Advantages: Acute Hearing 4 [8]; Appearance (Impressive)* [16]; Jäger [132].
Disadvantages: Shyness (Mild) [-5].
Skills: Area Knowledge (Europa) (E) IQ+5 [16]-14; Brawling (E) DX+5 [16]-17; Climbing (A) DX [2]-12; First Aid (E) IQ [1]-9; Observation (A) Per+2 [8]-11; Rapier (A) DX+6 [24]-18; Riding (A) DX+1 [4]-13; Shield (E) DX+5 [16]-17; Soldier (A) IQ+2 [8]-11; Survival (A) Per [2]-9; Tactics (H) IQ+1 [8]-10; Tracking (A) Per+5 [20]-14.

* Includes the cost of buying off Appearance (Repulsive) from the Jäger template.

"Oggie" (Ognian)   267 points

Oggie is the Jäger with peachy skin, one curved horn on the left side of his head, and feet ending in two claws. He's the most carefree of the three friends, always down for a good fight, party, or romance. He's the only one of the trio to have any known descendants, having run into his great-great-grandson – some hack storyteller – in Sturmhalten. While he acts superficial, Oggie is the one who most often displays a profound knowledge of the human heart. This always catches people by surprise.

Oggie wields an unusual weapon – a triple-bladed poleaxe – that he can use as an axe, staff, pike, or even vaulting pole. He lacks Artistry and Engineer skills, but the GM should be generous with letting him use his Versatile advantage with *other* skills, to account for his creativity.

ST 13 [0]; **DX** 12 [0]; **IQ** 9 [0]; **HT** 13 [0].
Damage 1d/2d-1; BL 34 lbs.; HP 18 [0]; Will 9 [0]; Per 9 [0]; FP 13 [0]; Basic Speed 6.25 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0].

Advantages: Acute Touch 4 [8]; Charisma 2 [10]; Jäger [132]; Versatile [5].
Disadvantages: Compulsive Behavior (12) (Carousing) [-5].
Skills: Area Knowledge (Europa) (E) IQ+5 [16]-14; Brawling (E) DX+5 [16]-17; Carousing (E) HT+2 [4]-15; Climbing (A) DX [2]-12; First Aid (E) IQ [1]-9; Polearm (A) DX+6 [24]-18; Soldier (A) IQ+2 [8]-11; Staff (A) DX+6 [24]-18; Survival (A) Per [2]-9; Tracking (A) Per+5 [20]-14.

Other Characters

Not everyone can have a starring role, but these folks are (or were) quite important to the story in their own way. To save space, their game statistics are condensed, showing only their most important traits – those most likely to matter should that person appear – without point values. In some cases, a parenthesis noting an occupational template (see Chapter 4) follows the character's name; you can use this to create a full write-up. If no template is specified, fill in the blanks using whatever traits best suit your adventure's needs.

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* Mitigated by the replacement arm, which reduces the disadvantage's usual point value, -20 points, by 60%. Still a disadvantage, because the arm can be stolen or lost.

Dr. Tarsus Beetle (Professor)

Dr. Beetle was the Tyrant of Beetleburg (p. 23), as well as the master of Transylvania Polygnostic University (p. 23). He was a teacher and mentor to the Heterodyne Boys, Klaus, and even Lucrezia, and remained close friends with Barry Heterodyne. When Barry returned in secret with Agatha, Dr. Beetle was one of the few people he trusted with the truth; he asked Beetle to keep Agatha safe, and warned the professor not to trust Klaus. As such, Beetle mentored Agatha (see *Agatha Clay,* p. 29) and amassed a stockpile of weaponry, including a hive engine (p. 175), to fight the Baron if necessary – all while appearing to be a humble, servile administrator. When the Baron discovered this, Dr. Beetle threw a bomb at either Gil or Agatha, but Gil swatted it back and killed Beetle.

After the professor's death, Dr. Silas Merlot took over Transylvania Polygnostic University. When he decrypted Dr. Beetle's notes and realized the truth about Agatha's family, he went a bit mad and burned down a sizable chunk of Transylvania Polygnostic University, with the cryptography team inside. Merlot was imprisoned in Castle Heterodyne (p. 20) as a result of his crimes.

ST 7; **DX** 8; **IQ** 14; **HT** 10.
Damage 1d-3/1d-2; BL 9.8 lbs.; HP 10; Will 14; Per 14; FP 10.
Basic Speed 4.50; Basic Move 4; Dodge 7; Parry 7.
SM 0; 5'6", 200 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Artificer 1; Oblivious; Overconfidence (12); Spark 3.
Skills: Administration-16; Engineer (Mechanical)-16; Hidden Lore (Heterodynes)-16; Research-17; Teaching-18.

Martellus von Blitzengaard (Noble)

The Storm King conspiracy (p. 10) groomed at least two potential "Storm Kings": Tarvek Sturmvoraus and his big, handsome cousin, Martellus von Blitzengaard – who Tarvek thought was just a popinjay, nicknaming him Tweedle. When their agent inside Mechanicsburg, the Abbess of the Red Cathedral (p. 19), signaled him that Tarvek was dead, Martellus arrived in style, leading a squadron of white-and-gold clanks. They were obliterated by the Baron's Dreen (p. 68). After some courtly formalities, Martellus set off to attack the Wulfenbach forces.

When the battle ended, Martellus accompanied Agatha to the Red Cathedral for her formal swearing-in. Once everyone was distracted by the Baron's final assault on the town, the despised "Tweedle" revealed himself to be a real player – and a ruthless one, at that. He kidnapped Agatha and dragged her into the undercroft of the Cathedral through a secret door. Her friends gave chase, but Martellus poisoned Tarvek with a thrown knife and dove into the Mirror Gate (p. 156) with Agatha, Violetta, and Krosp (who had his claws lodged in Martellus' buttocks) just as the Baron's time bomb went off. This caused the journey to the Refuge of Storms (p. 22) to take 2.5 years instead of no time at all.

Jenka

400 points

Jenka is the liaison between the wild Jägers and the generals. She rides a huge trained bear named Füst, wears a broad-brimmed purple hat, and keeps her lower face covered most of the time. This is because she is ashamed of her teeth. Her "luffly fangs" were forcibly removed by the original Storm King; as a result, she has false human teeth for when she needs to pass as human. Her skin is gray when at rest – but she, like Mamma Gkika, can shift its color with effort. Her hair is platinum. In the field, she wears a breastplate and carries both a broadsword and a pistol. Unknown to most, her training includes disguise and undercover work, and when she appeared in Paris she looked very attractive and not at all monstrous.

ST 13 [0]; **DX** 12 [0]; **IQ** 11 [40]; **HT** 13 [0].
Damage 1d/2d-1; BL 34 lbs.; HP 19 [2]; Will 11 [0]; Per 11 [0]; FP 13 [0]; Basic Speed 6.25 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0].

Advantages: Acute Vision 4 [8]; Appearance (Impressive)* [16]; Jäger [132]; Rank 4 (Jäger Captain) [20].
Disadvantages: Duty (Jägergenerals; 9 or less) [-5]; Weak Bite [-2].
Skills: Acting (A) IQ+3 [12]-14; Animal Handling (A) IQ+5 [20]-16; Area Knowledge (Europa) (E) IQ+5 [16]-16; Brawling (E) DX+5 [16]-17; Broadsword (A) DX+6 [24]-18; Climbing (A) DX [2]-12; Disguise (A) IQ+3 [12]-14; First Aid (E) IQ [1]-11; Guns (E) DX+6 [20]-18; Riding (Bear) (A) DX+5 [20]-17; Soldier (A) IQ+2 [8]-13; Survival (A) Per [2]-11; Tactics (H) IQ+3 [16]-14; Tracking (A) Per+5 [20]-16.

Füst

Füst isn't just a huge European brown bear – he's a bear that has undergone a process similar to the one that produces "human" Jägers. This explains why he's so large, intelligent, and tough. There have been other Jägerized animals in the past (there's a theory that the Monster Horse Beastie encountered by Payne's Circus was a feral Jäger horse). What this means is that you could conceivably encounter one. Lucky you!

ST 25; **DX** 13; **IQ** 5; **HT** 13.
Will 12; **Per** 11; **Speed** 6.50; **Dodge** 9; **Move** 9.
SM +2; 2,000 lbs.

Traits: Bad Temper (9); Bloodlust (12); Damage Resistance 5; Dark Vision; Discriminatory Smell; Extended Lifespan 5; Fangs; Hard to Kill 3; No Fine Manipulators; Sharp Claws.
Skills: Brawling-15.

* Includes the cost of buying off Appearance (Repulsive) from the Jäger template.

Since years had passed, Martellus was no longer in control of the Refuge of Storms. He cut down several Smoke Knights in order to reclaim control of the fortress. When one of the Knights poisoned his hand, a drugged Agatha unconsciously helped him make a prosthetic replacement. "In return," Martellus altered her body chemistry so she would literally die without regular contact with him. He then set out into the Refuge to find out who was in charge, eventually learning that it was his sister, Xerxsephnia ("Seffie"). This stopped the hostilities. Seffie explained that the Knights of Jove and the Wulfenbach Empire were both destabilized and now working together, much to Martellus' horror.

When Agatha and friends escaped, Martellus and Seffie hunted them down with their sparkhounds – though Seffie broke off on her own so she could distance herself and appear friendly. Once they entered Wulfenbach territory, Martellus ended up in a clank fight and was injured, and Seffie swept in to save Agatha. Before she could do more than warn Agatha about Gil's current mental state, a pack of Jägers closed in and took Agatha away.

Gil stopped Violetta and Martellus, which led to a fight that also involved the sparkhounds, Airman Higgs, and DuPree. Martellus and his hounds lost, mostly due to Gil's weird and terrifying "nanny" clank Bohrlaikha, but the flying Knights of Jove clanks rescued Martellus before Gil could capture him. He then followed Agatha to Paris, where he got to face the ancient Storm King and strike down the rampaging relic during the masquerade ball being held in his honor.

ST 13; **DX** 11; **IQ** 12; **HT** 13.
Damage 1d/2d-1; BL 34 lbs.; HP 13; Will 12; Per 12; FP 13.
Basic Speed 6.00; Basic Move 6; Dodge 9; Parry 10; Block 10.
SM 0; 6'3", 195 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Appearance (Very Impressive); Legal Immunity; Spark 3; Status 6; Wealth (Very Wealthy).
Skills: Bioengineering-16; Biology-14; Brawling-14; Carousing-15; Chemistry-14; Knife-16; Shield-14; Thrown Weapon (Knife)-16; Weird Science-15.

Boris Dolokhov

Boris Vasily Konstantin Andrei Myshkin Dolokhov was a palace librarian for a Russian duke until – for reasons that can only be explained as "he was in a Sparky mood" – the duke granted him two extra, grafted-on arms, along with enhanced strength and agility, in an effort to create the ultimate juggler. Boris was not pleased. Fortunately for him, his duke violated the Pax Transylvania (p. 13), and while Klaus was taking all of the duke's things, he realized what a perfect imperial administrator Boris would make. Boris quickly became the Baron's right-hand (and left-hand, and *other* right-hand . . . never mind) man, empowered to carry out most actions when the Baron was unavailable. He took the lead on negotiations with the Jägergenerals regarding what was known about Agatha and the Other. After Klaus was hit with a Spark wasp (p. 175), Boris was one of the few who suspected something was wrong, and set out to gather the information needed to help the Baron.

ST 15; **DX** 15; **IQ** 12; **HT** 13.
Damage 1d+2/3d-1; BL 45 lbs.; HP 20; Will 12; Per 12; FP 13.
Basic Speed 7.00; Basic Move 7; Dodge 10; Parry 11.
SM 0; 6', 185 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Arm DX 2; Arm ST 2; Construct; Eidetic Memory; Extra Arms 2.
Skills: Administration-18; Brawling-17; Broadsword-17; Observation-18; Research-20; Writing-18.

Theopholous DuMedd and Sleipnir O'Hara

After Theo's parents died fighting airship pirates – his mother was Serpentina Mongfish, sister of Lucrezia – the Baron took him aboard Castle Wulfenbach (p. 23). Theo's Spark was strong, but a bit unfocused. Thankfully, he was also gifted with an abundance of empathy. He stuck up for Gil at a time when everyone thought Gil was a Sparkless nobody, and always kept the other students aboard entertained with stories and games. When he learned who Agatha really was, he was overjoyed to find a living relative, and helped her escape from Castle Wulfenbach.

Sleipnir was brought aboard Castle Wulfenbach for political reasons, her father being the Wulfenbach ambassador to England. She is not a Spark, but gets along well with most of the students there, thanks to her bright and upbeat personality. When she and Agatha were assigned as roommates, they hit it off immediately. When Agatha needed to escape, Sleipnir, respectfully, stood up to the Baron to buy her time to get away.

Once the Baron's attention moved away from the students, Theo and Sleipnir escaped as well – to elope! They ran into Othar and brought him up to speed on things, and then holed up in Mechanicsburg (p. 18) to plan an expedition to India so they could find Theo's father's hidden laboratory . . . and to see if Agatha would resurface.

When she did, the couple took an active interest in what was happening, and spotted Gil. After hearing him speak honestly about his concern for Agatha, Theo and Sleipnir rescued him from Captain Vole (p. 55) and then accompanied him into Castle Heterodyne (p. 20). There, they helped him save the lives of Agatha and Tarvek. Theo also got to meet another "living" relative in the form of his Aunt Lucrezia, who immediately threatened to kill him.

The couple helped Agatha significantly, particularly when it came to restoring Von Pinn to a new clank body. They left Castle Heterodyne to help defend Mechanicsburg, and were caught in the time bomb.

Theopholous DuMedd
ST 11; **DX** 11; **IQ** 14; **HT** 11.
Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 15; Will 14; Per 14; FP 11.
Basic Speed 5.50; Basic Move 5; Dodge 8; Parry 8.
SM 0; 5'11", 160 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Artificer 1; Spark 2.
Skills: Captivate-16; Engineer (Mechanical)-18; Public Speaking-18; Research-18; Sway Emotions-16; Weird Science-18.

Sleipnir O'Hara
ST 13; **DX** 11; **IQ** 13; **HT** 13.
Damage 1d/2d-1; BL 34 lbs.; HP 15; Will 13; Per 13; FP 13.
Basic Speed 6.00; Basic Move 6; Dodge 9; Parry 8.
SM 0; 5'8", 150 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Artificer 2.
Quirks: Not a Spark herself, but a very deep fan of "Sparkiness."
Skills: Brawling-17; Engineer (Clockwork)-18; Fast-Talk-15; Mechanic-19.

Dr. Sun Jen-djieh (Professor; Doctor)

As a young man, Dr. Sun had to leave China when he incurred the emperor's wrath. After encountering the Heterodyne Boys and Klaus, he adventured with them on and off, passing on his mastery of medical skills and martial arts. As a Spark, he was focused on ways to harm and heal the body, but never in anything other than a merciful way – Sun was never a sadist. The Baron trusted him to train Gil and also run the Great Hospital in Mechanicsburg (p. 19).

Sun was at the Great Hospital when Klaus was brought in, nearly dead, after the battle at Sturmhalten. The two men battled over how much activity Klaus should engage in, until Sun finally had to place the Baron in a high-pressure healing chamber to recover. Not long after, the hospital was destroyed in the war around Mechanicsburg, after which the Baron froze the city in time. Sun survived the destruction, but is currently trapped by the time freeze.

ST 10; **DX** 12; **IQ** 15; **HT** 12.
Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 20; Will 16; Per 16; FP 12.
Basic Speed 7.00; Basic Move 7; Dodge 10; Parry 13.
SM 0; 5'9", 140 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Arm DX 2; Healer 4; Healing; Spark 5.
Skills: Biology-22; Diagnosis-22; Martial Arts-20; Pharmacy-20; Physician-22; Staff-20; Surgery-21.

Carson von Mekkhan (Bureaucrat)

The von Mekkhan family served as seneschals to the Heterodynes for many generations. They acted as liaisons between the mad Heterodynes and their equally insane Castle (p. 20) – and also the fairly sane but enthusiastic people and lands of Mechanicsburg (p. 18), ensuring that the town continued to run smoothly.

Carson was the seneschal under the Heterodyne Boys until he retired and his son stepped into the role. However, when the Other attacked the Castle and town, Carson Jr. was killed Shortly afterward, the Baron absorbed Mechanicsburg into his empire and appointed a town council. Instead of correcting the Baron's misunderstanding, Carson began running the town in secret, with the remaining family going under cover by adopting the name Heliotrope. Carson was put onto the council by way of his family's supposed ancestral job: "Ringer of the Doom Bell."

When Carson retired for the second time, he passed his position to his grandson, Vanamonde von Mekkhan, who now "offices" in the town's main coffeehouse, The Sausage Factory, where he can hear every rumor.

When Agatha officially took command of Mechanicsburg, Carson and Vanamonde formally accepted and welcomed her, with the revitalized Castle Heterodyne recognizing Vanamonde in his official position as her seneschal.

As a liaison with Castle Heterodyne, Carson has holes drilled into his skull which allow him to interface with it directly at various access points. The Castle can speak both with him and through him. It is an incredibly unpleasant experience, even if it comes with quite a rush, and Carson won't do it unless absolutely necessary. Vanamonde has begun to realize that this procedure is now expected of him, and he's desperately hoping that Agatha comes up with something less invasive.

ST 8; **DX** 11; **IQ** 12; **HT** 11.
Damage 1d-3/1d-2; BL 13 lbs.; HP 11; Will 12; Per 12; FP 11.
Basic Speed 5.50; Basic Move 5; Dodge 8; Parry 8.
SM 0; 5'4", 125 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (Heterodynes; Burger-meister); Social Chameleon; Wealth (Wealthy).
Skills: Accounting-13; Administration-16; Area Knowledge (Mechanicsburg)-16; Current Affairs-16; Economics-13; Finance-13.

Master Hieronymus Payne (Entertainer)

Master Hieronymus Payne created Master Payne's Circus of Adventure (p. 26) as a way to safely hide minor Sparks from the prejudices they face. He is himself a minor Spark – but even without his Sparky devices, he's an incredibly good stage magician, crafting masterful illusions to aid him in his role as ringmaster and spokesman. He's married to the Countess Marie, also a Spark. Marie specializes in chemistry, and her potions and elixirs have remarkable effects.

When Payne first encountered Agatha and Krosp, he was reluctant to take them in because he feared the Baron's scrutiny. He relented when Agatha destroyed a rogue clank that threatened to kill everyone.

As Agatha and everyone else was escaping from Sturmhalten (p. 21) after defeating the Baron, Master Payne stole a Wulfenbach airship to rescue the rescuers, and delivered Agatha to Mechanicsburg. Then he prudently accepted Wooster's offer to relocate to England.

ST 10; **DX** 11; **IQ** 13; **HT** 11.
Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 11; Will 13; Per 13; FP 11.
Basic Speed 5.50; Basic Move 5; Dodge 8; Parry 8.
SM 0; 5'7", 225 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Spark 2; Voice.
Skills: Alchemy-18; Captivate-20; Chemistry-14; Public Speaking-20; Sleight of Hand-18; Weird Science-15.

Lord Rudolf Selnikov (Noble)

Tarvek's uncle on his mother's side. When Lucrezia Mongfish revitalized the Knights of Jove (p. 11), Lord Selnikov was at the forefront of their new plans. He successfully oversaw the revenant infection of Balan's Gap – and when one of his counterparts botched a similar job at another location, he scrubbed any evidence that could connect the incident to the Knights.

When Tarvek and Anevka first met Agatha and copied her vocal dynamics, Anevka and Selnikov "imprinted" the Balan's Gap townsfolk with Anevka's new voice, which they used to stage a fake assault on Sturmhalten as part of the Storm King conspiracy (p. 10). Unfortunately for them, both Agatha and Lucrezia foiled their plans rather spectacularly.

Selnikov retreated and regrouped. By the time Agatha made her presence known in Mechanicsburg (p. 18), he was in position nearby. As a Commander of the Knights of Jove, he openly led a war-clank invasion against Mechanicsburg, only to be taken down singlehandedly by Gilgamesh Wulfenbach. At Gil's instruction, Captain Vole (p. 55) retrieved Selnikov's head for Dr. Sun to reanimate and interrogate.

As a head-in-a-jar, Selnikov seemed glad to get away from his wife Margarella – who would later have her own fatal misadventures after stealing from Martellus von Blitzengaard.

ST 10; **DX** 10; **IQ** 10; **HT** 10.
Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 12; Will 10; Per 10; FP 10.
Basic Speed 5.00; Basic Move 5; Dodge 8; Parry 8.
SM 0; 5'10", 225 lbs.

Skills: Administration-12; Carousing-18; Connoisseur-13; Diplomacy-11; Leadership-12.

Note: The above statistics are *prior* to Selnikov becoming a reanimated head. In that form, ST, DX, Damage, BL, Basic Move, Dodge, and Parry are 0; SM is -5; and add No Manipulators and Reanimated.

Captain Vole

Once upon a time, Vole was a normal Jäger. However, he decided that the Heterodynes were weak, the Jägers were weak for serving them . . . basically, everyone was weak but *him*. He renounced his Jägertroth (p. 67) and joined the Baron's forces on his own, where he was stationed in Mechanicsburg specifically to keep him separated from the other Jägers. When Gil sent him to retrieve Agatha, Vole recognized her as a genuine Heterodyne and immediately tried to kill her. He then began working *against* Gil specifically because Gil was trying to help Agatha.

When Vole received news that the Baron was lost in the collapse of the Great Hospital, he partnered with the prisoner Hristo Tiktoffen in order to kill Gil.

CIRCUS FOLK

There isn't room to list everyone in Master Payne's group, but each of these folks has at least a brief moment in the spotlight. If you wish to introduce one of them into an adventure, use the entertainer template (p. 59) and choose skills appropriate to the character. For those noted as Sparks, also add Spark 1.

Abner: Master Payne's right-hand man. Actor who's in love with Pix.

Ædith: Self-proclaimed vampire hunter with Spark talent to match. She has a knife-throwing act.

André: Music master and sonic-focused Spark.

Embi: A short African explorer and performer who's traveling to see the world. He claims to be over 130 years old.

Lars: Actor and advance man. He fell in love with Agatha and was part of the rescue party to get her out of Sturmhalten. He was killed by Klaus while protecting her, and earned Maxim's respect as a result. He was buried wearing Maxim's hat.

Madam Olga: Fortuneteller and con artist. She was killed by a giant crab clank and her body was used to fake Agatha's death.

Pix: Actress and grifter. She often plays the lead in the Heterodyne Show and eventually admits she loves Abner.

Professor Moonsock: Spark animal trainer who created the small-but-fearsome (and also poisonous!) sky wyrms.

Rivet and Ollie: Mechanics. Sparks with a talent for tool creation. Rivet, in particular, has an amazing tool collection.

Taki: Chef. A Spark working on a unified theory of pies. His calming pie works! It really works!!

Trish and Guntar: She's a makeup artist and Spark with a talent for weapons. He plays Punch and acts "big and slow and stupid." Their son, Balthazar, gets lost sometimes.

Yeti: Big, strong fellow from a distant land. He's a Spark with a talent for gravity manipulation, which he accomplishes without visible equipment.

For Moxana and Tinka, see *The Storm King's Muses* (p. 65).

With the Empire leaderless, Vole hoped to throw Europa into beautiful chaos. While he had the upper hand at first, Gil was able to beat down Vole singlehandedly, earning the Jäger's respect and fear. Gil decided to keep Captain Vole around just so he'd have someone to keep him on his toes. This keeps Vole in the vicinity of Bangladesh "Bang" DuPree, who finds him just dreamy.

Vole underwent physical and mental changes as a result of the Mechanicsburg "time freeze," and is now more like a Jägergeneral – physically and in attitude – than a regular Jäger.

ST 14; **DX** 11; **IQ** 9; **HT** 13.
Damage 1d/2d; BL 39 lbs.; HP 19; Will 9; Per 9; FP 13.
Basic Speed 6.00; Basic Move 6; Dodge 9; Parry 11; Block 10.
SM 0; 5'11, 225 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Appearance (Repulsive); Bloodlust (12); Damage Resistance 3; Dark Vision; Discriminatory Smell; Extended Lifespan 5; Obsession (Hats/Killing Heterodynes); Sharp Claws; Status -2.
Skills: Brawling-17; Broadsword-17; Shield-15.

Lady Vrin

Lady Vrin is a high priest-ess of the Geisterdamen. As usual for her kind, she's tall, pale, and slender. While all Geisterdamen look identi-cal, Vrin is identified by her chains of station and her short hair – cut to represent her shame at a past failing. She's a willing servant of the Other, though like all Geisters, she's a revenant.

Back in the Citadel of Silver Light, Vrin and the other Geisterdamen were tasked with protecting the Holy Child (the newborn Agatha) from the Heterodyne Boys, who were coming to rescue her. The Geisterdamen failed. Since they were exiled to Europa, they have spent the time fervently trying to locate the lost child so their mistress may walk Europa again.

Vrin is a religious fanatic who knows that Lucrezia is her goddess made manifest. She helped Aaronev Sturmvoraus recreate a Summoning Engine (p. 156), while also seeking out a suitable candidate to host Lucrezia's personality. She was instrumental in Agatha's capture and the installation of Lucrezia into Agatha's mind.

When Sturmhalten was overrun, Vrin was captured. Lucrezia encountered her and – rather than let her fall into Klaus' hands – ordered her to die. Whether or not she did is unknown at this time.

ST 12; **DX** 16; **IQ** 11; **HT** 11.
Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 29 lbs.; HP 17; Will 11; Per 11; FP 11.
Basic Speed 6.75; Basic Move 6; Dodge 9; Parry 11.
SM 0; 6'2", 125 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Geisterdame (p. 68); Rank 5 (High Priestess).
Skills: Brawling-16; Naturalist-16; Polearm-17; Riding (Spider)-19.

Moloch von Zinzer

To escape a farmer's life, von Zinzer became a soldier and a mechanic for Duke D'Omas. When the Baron defeated D'Omas' forces, and DuPree blew up the walking gunboat Moloch was on, he and his brother Omar were left vagrant. They made their way to Beetleburg (p. 23), where Omar robbed Agatha of her locket.

The locket's ability to suppress the Spark did strange things to Omar's nervous system, eventually killing him. When Moloch realized this, he confronted Agatha, who – free from the locket – had just sleep-built a clank. The Baron arrived, thinking that Moloch, not Agatha, was the Spark. (Klaus had encountered Agatha at Transylvania Polygnostic University, while her mental problems were still manifest.) He took them both into custody.

Aboard Castle Wulfenbach (p. 23), Moloch pretended to be a Spark, but after Agatha escaped, the truth was out and the Baron sentenced him to Castle Heterodyne as punishment. He worked in the kitchen and developed a crush on Sanaa Wilhelm, who was secretly Othar Tryggvassen's sister.

When von Zinzer and Agatha were reunited, he naturally fell into place as her minion, despite loudly protesting that he was no such thing. He accompanied her deep into Castle Heterodyne. He eventually split off on his own side quest to restore the Castle's main power source. In the meantime, he managed to draw romantic interest from Violetta, Fräulein Snaug, and eventually even Sanaa.

After the Doom Bell rang, Moloch armed himself with a detailed map courtesy of the Castle, and mobilized the now ex-prisoners into fixing the town's old defenses. Once the others realized that he was Lady Heterodyne's chief minion, they quickly fell in line, and soon had some of the defenses working.

Falling into Agatha's orbit changed Moloch's life. Previously always unsure about what he was doing, he has a strong new sense of self-confidence and clear-headedness. He has quickly gained a reputation as a person who is "grounded" – that is, one of the rare individuals who can be in close proximity to Sparks when they are at their worst without suffering damage.

Despite this unaccustomed respect, he's still determined to leave Mechanicsburg as soon as possible.

ST 10; **DX** 10; **IQ** 12; **HT** 12.
Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 12; Will 12; Per 12; FP 12.
Basic Speed 5.50; Basic Move 5; Dodge 8; Parry 8.
SM 0; 5'11", 165 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Appearance (Impressive); Higher Purpose (Serving Agatha); Intuition; Wild Talent 1.
Skills: Crewman-15; Engineer (Mechanical)-16; Mechanic-16; Research-16; Soldier-16.

4. Templates

This chapter provides standard "templates" for residents of Europa as seen in *Girl Genius*.

Occupational templates (pp. 58-63) give attribute levels, advantages, disadvantages, and skills for people in particular jobs or social positions. They're intended to serve as a basis for player characters rather than for ordinary members of those professions, but the Game Master can repurpose them to suit any role needed.

Nonhuman templates (pp. 63-68) give attribute modifiers, advantages, disadvantages, and so on that are standard for average members of nonhuman races found in the Girl Genius universe (like clanks and constructs). Such a template is the baseline for all members of a race – just as "10 in each basic attribute, with no advantages or disadvantages" describes the human baseline. Individuals can differ from this, as noted in their specific character sheets, but that makes them unusual members of their species.

For a *brief* guide to understanding the basic parts of templates, *Reading Character Write-Ups* (p. 28) will do. For detailed descriptions of specific traits, see Chapter 5.

Character Names

As a dramatic convention, names in *Girl Genius* often say a lot about the person involved. Bill and Barry Heterodyne, for instance, are nice guys. Lucifer Mongfish is *not*. And so on.

This isn't an ironclad rule; there's nothing sinister about the name "Bangladesh DuPree," but Bang is a sadistic murderess. "Moloch von Zinzer" sounds pretty nasty, but has turned out to be a loyal minion of Agatha. Both are examples of the other convention of naming: Names *sound* cool. They tend to be multisyllabic and multicultural.

Keep this in mind as you create characters. Science, literature, mythology, and pure gibberish can all inspire you. Family ties may dictate surnames – or not; you can always be cousins. First names are up to you, your imagination, and possibly the thesaurus.

Power Level

The starting power level of a *Girl Genius* game is based on the type of story the GM and players want to tell. Below are some examples. Most standard templates assume the characters are competent in their fields, resulting in a character-point total that implies a power level. This can go up or down at the GM's discretion. For example, Zola Malfeazium is considered a competent member of the acting profession, and has *at least* 50-75 points to spend on creating a character (though in practice she's more capable), while Klaus Wulfenbach is almost a living god and starts with more than 500 points at character creation.

Feeble (under 25 points): Youngsters, mindless thralls, *very* minor clanks, etc. Any of the small children on Castle Wulfenbach would fall into this category.

Average (25-50 points): Ordinary folks. Any of the unnamed merchants, traders, or other characters in Beetleburg or Mechanicsburg would be at this power level.

Competent (50-75 points): Soldiers, adventurers, career specialists, or educated professionals – people who have trained for or dedicated themselves to a special purpose. A named character without special abilities, such as Carson von Mekkhan, would most likely *start* here.

Exceptional (75-100 points): Military officers, seasoned travelers, career experts, or highly educated professionals – distinguished individuals with sought-after skills. A named character with special abilities, such as Agatha Clay, might *start* at this power level.

Heroic (100-200 points): Truly outstanding individuals, likely leaders in their chosen fields. Any Spark who has yet to discover their abilities or has recently broken through would *start* at this power level.

Larger-than-Life (200-300 points): Powerful, influential people capable of fighting established regimes or uniting disparate factions. Tarvek Sturmvoraus is an example of a character who probably *started* at this power level.

Legendary (300 or more points): Truly epic figures, destined to shape the balance of power for the next generation and become the stuff of legends. Baron Klaus Wulfenbach exemplifies this power level.

Human or Not?

After determining the game's starting character points, the next step is to decide whether to permit players to use nonhuman templates for their characters – many nonhuman races cost a lot of points and require higher power levels. Prohibiting them isn't all that limiting; humans in *Girl Genius* can be merchants, artisans, soldiers, and even members of elite organizations like the Smoke Knights (p. 43). They can also be Sparks, although *non*-Sparks have more freedom to move among society, as many common people fear known Sparks!

Nonhuman characters include everything from genetically modified human constructs to robotic clanks. They're a little different, or more than human, such as the genetically modified Lackya (p. 67) or the constructs Punch and Judy (p. 34). They sometimes lack the social freedom – or the character points! – to pursue certain professions.

OCCUPATIONAL TEMPLATES

A player never *has* to use these templates, but when seeking a specific occupation, it can save time to start from one. During character creation, the player can customize the template to the character and the story by choosing from the listed options – or even by substituting an advantage, disadvantage, or skill for another of equal value from Chapter 5 (subject to GM approval). Some other notes:

Languages: All characters begin with English or German (GM's discretion) at Native level. See *Language* (p. 73).

Variable Costs: An advantage or disadvantage with a point cost of "[Varies]" has no simple, fixed cost. Find the trait in Chapter 5 and choose anything that falls within your budget.

Disadvantages: Disadvantages marked with * (e.g., "Bad Temper [-10*]") are assumed to have a self-control number of 12. See *Self-Control* (p. 94).

Skills: For any skill marked with †, choose an applicable specialty; this can be from the list included with that skill in *Skills* (pp. 103-129) or be a custom specialty approved by the GM. Some templates offer additional points to spend on skills; the player can spend these on improving or adding skills on the template, or on new skills from Chapter 5 (as long as the GM agrees they suit the character).

Lenses: Lenses are common variations on standard templates. Each specifies a name, a point cost, and the traits that it adds, removes, or otherwise alters. To create that kind of character, pay the template cost *plus* the lens cost, and make the noted changes to the template.

Artisan   75 points

Artisans include weavers, seamstresses, woodworkers, potters, leatherworkers, and so on. They're the people who turn raw goods into everything from fine clothing to a new saddle. They're also able to repair items – a helpful skill after a strenuous adventure.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [20]; IQ 11 [20]; HT 10 [0].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 11 [0]; Per 11 [0]; FP 10 [0]; Basic Speed 5.25 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].
Advantages: A total of 25 points spent on suitable Talents [Varies] or Versatile [5].
Disadvantages: A total of -15 points chosen from Chummy [-5] *or* Gregarious [-10], Easy to Read [-10], Honesty [-10*], Incurious [-5*], Pacifism (Reluctant Killer) [-5], or Workaholic [-5].
Skills: Merchant (A) IQ+1 [4]-12. ● *One* of Sewing (E) DX+5 [16]-16; Carpentry (E) IQ+5 [16]-16; Cartography or Heraldry, both (A) IQ+4 [16]-15; Artistry† (H) IQ+3 [16]-14; or Alchemy (VH) IQ+2 [16]-13. ● Another 5 points spent on skills from Chapter 5.

Blacksmith   75 points

In Europa, a good blacksmith is worth more than their weight in iron. When their Spark companions overcomplicate everything, it's helpful to have someone to remind them that sometimes the solution is simple – a hammer and anvil can solve a plethora of problems that a giant clank can't. Blacksmiths are the go-to resource for useful tools, standard weapons, and custom parts.

Attributes: ST 12 [20]; DX 11 [20]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 10 [0].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 29 lbs.; HP 12 [0]; Will 10 [0]; Per 10 [0]; FP 10 [0]; Basic Speed 5.25 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].
Advantages: Artificer 2 [20] *and* Versatile [5].
Disadvantages: A total of -15 points chosen from Easy to Read [-10], Honesty [-10*], Sense of Duty (Village *or* Adventuring companions) [-5], Stubbornness [-5], or Workaholic [-5].
Skills: Machinist (A) IQ+2 [2]-12‡; Merchant (A) IQ+1 [4]-11; Riding† (A) DX [2]-11; *and* Smith (Iron) (A) IQ+3 [4]-13‡. ● *Three* specialties from Armory† and other Smith†, all (A) IQ+2 [2]-12‡. ● Another 7 points spent on skills from Chapter 5.

‡ Includes +2 for Artificer.

Lens: Mechanic   +19 points
Add Machine Empathy [15]. ● Add Mechanic (A) IQ+2 [2]-12, and *either* Electrician (A) IQ+2 [2]-12 *or* Engineer† (H) IQ+1 [2]-11 (all include +2 for Artificer).

Bureaucrat   100 points

Civilizations need bureaucrats. They help make laws, plan infrastructure, and grease the wheels that keep cities and kingdoms up and running. They're often found with their nose in politics, making sure *their* interests are maintained as well as those of their masters. They have a knack for understanding processes and making sure things run smoothly.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 13 [60]; HT 10 [0].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 13 [0]; Per 13 [0]; FP 10 [0]; Basic Speed 5.00 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].
Advantages: Business Acumen 1 [10]. ● Another 25 points spent on Allies (Officials) [Varies], Business Acumen 2-3 [10/level], Contacts (Law enforcement) [Varies], Eidetic Memory [5], Lightning Calculator [2], Patron (Powerful individual, like a head of state) [Varies], Social Chameleon [5], Status 1-2 [5/level], or Wealth (Comfortable) [10].
Disadvantages: Duty (9 or less) [-5]. ● A total of -20 points chosen from reduced ST or HT [-10/level], reduced DX [-20/level], Enemies (Underworld) [Varies], Greed [-15*], Honesty [-10*], or No Sense of Humor [-10].
Skills: Accounting (H) IQ [2]-13‡; Administration (A) IQ+3 [8]-16‡; Area Knowledge (City or Kingdom) (E) IQ [1]-13; Current Affairs (E) IQ+3 [8]-16; Economics (H) IQ [2]-13‡; *and* Finance (H) IQ [2]-13‡. ● Another 7 points spent on skills from Chapter 5.

‡ Includes +1 for Business Acumen.

Lens: Townie   -50 points

Reduce IQ to 10 (lowers Will and Per to 10, and all IQ-based skills by 3) [-60]. ● Replace *all* advantages [-35] with Allies (Group of 6-10 neighborhood friends; Built on 50%; 9 or less) [12] *and* 10 points in a useful Talent [10]. ● Remove all disadvantages [25]. ● Remove Accounting, Administration, Economics, and Finance skills [-14]. ● Add a further 12 points spent on skills from Chapter 5.

Diplomat   100 points

Peace in Europa is hard-earned. It takes a lot of work to bring together disparate factions and find a middle ground. This work increases exponentially when negotiations involve Sparks and their egos! Diplomats are skilled at navigating the rough waters of political differences and making deals that bring about peace.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 13 [60]; HT 10 [0].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 13 [0]; Per 13 [0]; FP 10 [0]; Basic Speed 5.00 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].
Advantages: Legal Immunity [5]. ● Another 25 points spent on Cultural Adaptability [10 or 20], Empathy [15], Language Talent [10], Languages [Varies], Patron (Powerful individual, like a head of state) [Varies], Smooth Operator 1 [15], Status 1-2 [5/level], Voice [10], or Wealth (Comfortable) [10].
Disadvantages: Duty (9 or less) [-5]. ● A total of -20 points chosen from reduced ST or HT [-10/level], reduced DX [-20/level], Enemies (Slighted politicians) [Varies], or Sense of Duty (Nation) [-10].
Skills: Administration (A) IQ [2]-13; Area Knowledge (Area of assignment) (E) IQ [1]-13; Body Language (A) Per+1 [4]-14; Current Affairs (E) IQ+2 [4]-15; Detect Lies (H) Per [4]-13; Diplomacy (H) IQ+1 [8]-14; Leadership (A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Linguistics (H) IQ-1 [2]-12; Mental Strength (E) Will [1]-13; *and* Savoir-Faire (High Society) (E) IQ [1]-13. ● Another 7 points spent on skills from Chapter 5, often including Public Speaking and Enthrallment skills.

Entertainer   100 points

Whether in the dance halls of Paris or the traveling Heterodyne shows of the Wastelands, entertainers are the soul of any community. In the *Girl Genius* universe, the reputation of a great artiste can earn them a spot alongside a favorite Spark or adventurer, their names and deeds filling the pages of pulp adventure books. From the opera singers of *The Storm King* to a fire-breathing "dragon" in a Heterodyne show, the masses adore entertainers.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 11 [20]; HT 10 [0].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 11 [0]; Per 11 [0]; FP 10 [0]; Basic Speed 5.00 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].
Advantages: A total of 30 points spent on increased ST [10/level], increased DX or IQ [20/level], Appearance (Striking, Impressive, *or* Very Impressive) [4, 8, or 16], Charisma 1-2 [5/level], Musical Ability 1-4 [5/level], Patron (Aristocratic patron of the arts) [Varies], Reputation [Varies], or Voice [10].
Disadvantages: A total of -10 points chosen from Chummy [-5], Compulsive Behavior (Carousing) [-5*], Jealousy [-10], Status -1 [-5], Wealth (Struggling) [-10], or almost anything else!
Skills: Area Knowledge† (E) IQ+1 [2]-12; Carousing (E) HT+4 [12]-14; *and* Makeup (E) IQ+2 [4]-13. ● *Two* of Dancing, Erotic Art, Fire Eating, or Stage Combat, all (A) DX+3 [12]-13; Acrobatics, Aquabatics, or Sleight of Hand, all (H) DX+2 [12]-12; Combat Art† (E, A, or H) DX+4, +3, or +2 [12]-14, 13, or 12; Acting, Animal Handling, Fortune-Telling, Group Performance, Performance, or Public Speaking, all (A) IQ+3 [12]-14; Artistry (Illusion *or* Scene Design), Hypnotism, Musical Composition, or Musical Instrument†, all (H) IQ+2 [12]-13; Musical Influence (VH) IQ+1 [12]-12; or Singing (E) HT+4 [12]-14. ● *Two* of Captivate, Persuade, Suggest, or Sway Emotions, all (H) Will [4]-11. ● Another 10 points spent on skills from Chapter 5.

Farmer   75 points

The farmers of Europa typically have deep roots and ties to the lands they've harvested for years, and an innate understanding of life-cycles, plants, and animals. They're far enough away from the bright lights to have seen a few things that most people would brush off as fiction.

Attributes: ST 11 [10]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 12 [20].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 11 [0]; Will 10 [0]; Per 10 [0]; FP 12 [0]; Basic Speed 5.50 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].
Advantages: Green Thumb 2 [10]. ● Another 15 points spent on increased ST or HT [10/level], Animal Empathy [5], Animal Friend 1-3 [5/level], Common Sense [10], Fit [5], or Green Thumb 3-4 [5/level].
Disadvantages: Dependents (Family; Built on 75%; Loved One; 9 or less) [-4].
Skills: Animal Handling (A) IQ+2 [8]-12; Area Knowledge (Village) (E) IQ+1 [2]-11; Farming (A) IQ+2 [2]-12‡; *and* Professional Skill† (A) DX+1 or IQ+1 [4]-11. ● Another 8 points spent on skills from Chapter 5.

‡ Includes +2 for Green Thumb.

Hearth Witch   100 points

A hearth witch in Europa has a multitude of skills. In a world where physicians are rare and hospitals are scarce, they offer valuable medical services, making poultices and medications, mending bones, and acting as midwives. They also work "spells" for those who want to catch the eye of their beloved or curse the crops of their enemy. Sparks might have a hold on the minds of the people, but hearth witches understand their *hearts* and provide them with the care they need. Needless to say, the more successful hearth witches are often Sparks who know how to keep their talent quiet.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 12 [40]; HT 10 [0].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 12 [0]; Per 12 [0]; FP 10 [0]; Basic Speed 5.00 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].
Advantages: Green Thumb 2 [10] *and* Healing [30].
Disadvantages: Weirdness Magnet [-15]. ● A total of -20 points chosen from reduced ST [-10/level], reduced DX [-20/level], Delusions [-5, -10, or -15], Lunacy [-10], Trademark [-5, -10, or -15], or other eccentricities.
*Skills:* Area Knowledge (Village) (E) IQ+1 [2]-13; Cooking (A) IQ [2]-12; Esoteric Medicine (H) Per+3 [16]-15; Fortune-Telling (A) IQ [2]-12; Gardening (E) IQ+2 [1]-14‡; Herb Lore (VH) IQ+1 [4]-13‡; Pharmacy (H) IQ+1 [8]-13; *and* Poisons (H) IQ+1 [8]-13. ● Another 12 points spent on skills from Chapter 5.

‡ Includes +2 for Green Thumb.

Law Enforcement   100 points

After the Long War, many towns and cities were once again able to demand that their rulers protect them. In some cases, that resulted in an army of clanks – but many gun-shy citizens demanded people they could relate to and trust. Law enforcement in Europa is made up of those who have chosen (or were created) to defend the peace and the people where they live.
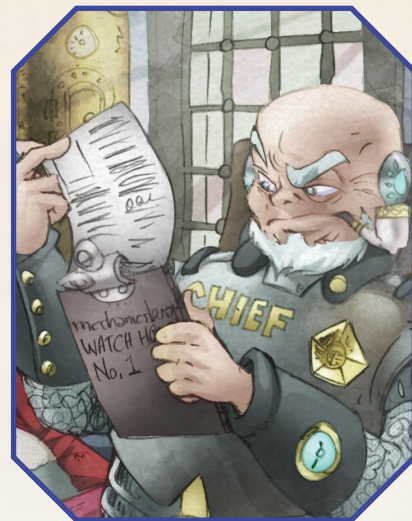
Attributes: ST 11 [10]; DX 11 [20]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 12 [20].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 11 [0]; Will 10 [0]; Per 10 [0]; FP 12 [0]; Basic Speed 5.75 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].
Advantages: Combat Reflexes [15] *and* Legal Enforcement Powers [5].
Disadvantages: Duty (12 or less) [-10].
Skills: Area Knowledge (Community) (E) IQ+1 [2]-11; Brawling (E) DX+1 [2]-12; First Aid (E) IQ [1]-10; Guns (E) DX+1 [2]-12; Observation (A) Per+2 [8]-12; Parry Missile Weapons (H) DX [4]-11; Shield (E) DX+1 [2]-12; Survival (A) Per [2]-10; *and* Tracking (A) Per+2 [8]-12. ● Another 4 points spent on Melee Weapon skills. ● A further 5 spent on skills from Chapter 5.

Lens: Detective   +32 points

Increase IQ to 11 (raises Will and Per to 11, and all IQ- and Per-based skills by 1) [20]. ● Replace Combat Reflexes [15] with Intuition [15]. ● Add Criminology (H) IQ+1 [8]-12 *and* Detect Lies (H) Per [4]-11.

QUESTORS

One of the most storied of the Empire's law-enforcement branches are the *Questors*. These tend to be extraordinary people – often constructs – granted extraordinary powers. (Assume that they're worth more than the 100-point law-enforcement template and have Legal Enforcement Powers [15].)

As a rule, Questors travel through the Empire incognito, reporting on conditions on the ground when the official inspectors aren't around. When they choose to reveal themselves to the local authorities, they expect to be obeyed instantly and without question. Needless to say, Questors lead exciting lives, and whenever an errant ruler or bullying sheriff thinks about hassling the stranger who's wandered into town, the *smart* one thinks twice.

Naturally, this makes Questors the folk heroes of hundreds of popular stories and tavern songs. Some people find this reputation tempting, but the only thing worse than *interfering* with a real Questor is getting caught *impersonating* one.

Merchant   75 points

Merchants are the lifeblood of the Europan economy. People meet them every day, and they may become important in the game as a means of distribution for enterprising businesspeople and Sparks. But it isn't an easy life – especially for those who eschew airship transportation.

In friendly lands, merchants show off – the better to attract customers! In dangerous territory, they usually try not to look worth the bother of attacking, Getting goods from town to town is an adventure in itself, and a single bandit or monster attack can mean ending up in the red. While airships are the safest form of transportation, even they can fall victim to air pirates, sky kraken, and freak windstorms that unerringly transport them to strange lands and lost civilizations.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 11 [20]; HT 10 [0].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 11 [0]; Per 11 [0]; FP 10 [0]; Basic Speed 5.00 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].
Advantages: Business Acumen 2 [20]. ● Another 20 points spent on Business Acumen 3-4 [10/level], Claim to Hospitality (Merchants) [5], Languages [Varies], Lightning Calculator [2], Merchant Rank 1-4 [5/level], or Wealth (Comfortable *or* Wealthy) [10 or 20].
Disadvantages: A total of -15 points chosen from Chummy [-5] *or* Gregarious [-10], Compulsive Behavior (Carousing, Gambling, Spending, etc.) [-5*], Enemies (Competitors) [Varies], Greed [-15*], or Workaholic [-5].
Skills: Area Knowledge (Barony/County) (E) IQ+3 [8]-14; Fast-Talk (A) IQ [2]-11; Finance (H) IQ [1]-11‡; Merchant (A) IQ+3 [4]-14‡; *and* Scrounging (E) Per+3 [8]-14. ● Another 7 points spent on skills from Chapter 5, especially transport skills (Piloting, Teamster, etc.) and those listed for Business Acumen (p. 92).

‡ Includes +2 for Business Acumen.

Military   100 points

After the war with the Other, most military personnel were left with nobody to fight. Many joined the armies of Baron Wulfenbach or city militias; others became mercenaries, fighting the battles they were paid to; and some found their way to quiet, retired lives, but wait for the day when the Other (or some other great evil) rises again.

Attributes: ST 12 [20]; DX 11 [20]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 12 [20].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 29 lbs.; HP 12 [0]; Will 10 [0]; Per 10 [0]; FP 12 [0]; Basic Speed 5.75 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].
Advantages: Combat Reflexes [15]. ● Another 10 points spent on increased ST or HT [10/level], Fearlessness [2/level], Fit [5], Hard to Kill [2/level], High Pain Threshold [10], Military Rank‡ [5/level], or Rapid Healing [5].
Disadvantages: A total of -30 points chosen from Bad Temper [-10*], Bloodlust [-10*], Callous [-5], Chummy [-5], Code of Honor (Pirate's) [-5], Duty (9, 12, *or* 15 or less)‡ [-5, -10, or -15], Intolerance (Former enemy nation) [-5], Overconfidence [-5*], or Sense of Duty (Nation) [-10].
Skills: Area Knowledge (Immediate Area) (E) IQ [1]-10; First Aid (E) IQ [1]-10; Savoir-Faire (Military) (E) IQ [1]-10; Soldier (A) IQ+2 [8]-12; *and* Survival (A) Per [2]-10. ● *Three* of Brawling, Crossbow, Garrote, Gunner, Guns, Shield, or Thrown Weapon†, all (E) DX+3 [8]-14; Bolas, Bow, Boxing, Climbing, Cloak, Piloting, Powered Armor, or Riding†, all (A) DX+2 [8]-13; Parry Missile Weapon (H) DX+1 [8]-12; Crewman (E) IQ+3 [8]-13; Artillery†, Forward Observer, or Leadership, all (A) IQ+2 [8]-12; Naturalist, Shiphandling, or Tactics, all (H) IQ+1 [8]-11; Observation or Tracking, both (A) Per+2 [8]-12; or 8 points spent on Melee Weapon skills. ● Another 8 points spent on skills from Chapter 5 *or* more advantages above.

‡ Active soldiers *must* have Duty and *may* have Rank.

Lens: Warrior   +0 points

Don't choose Rank or Duty. ● Remove Soldier skill and put those 8 points into other skill options – typically higher personal combat skills!

Minion   75 points

For every Spark, there's at least one minion willing to make sure the master has everything they need to be successful. After all, Sparks might be known for their creativity, but they aren't great at all the details of life. A good minion knows how to provide for the Spark they serve, and anticipates any trouble their master may face down the road.

It isn't uncommon for minions to have been altered by their masters at some point – whether for convenience, to test a hypothesis, or out of sheer boredom.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 11 [20]; HT 10 [0].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 11 [0]; Per 11 [0]; FP 10 [0]; Basic Speed 5.00 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].
Advantages: Higher Purpose (Serving Master) [5] *and* Intuition [15].
Disadvantages: Sense of Duty (Master) [-2]. ● A total of -15 points chosen from Chummy [-5] *or* Gregarious [-10], Duty (9, 12, *or* 15 or less) [-5, -10, or -15], Obsession (12) (Same as master's) [-5* or -10*], or Workaholic [-5].
Skills: Administration (A) IQ+1 [4]-12; Area Knowledge (Master's Haven) (E) IQ+1 [2]-12; Cooking (A) IQ+1 [4]-12; Finance (H) IQ+1 [8]-12; Observation (A) Per+1 [4]-12; Research (A) IQ+1 [4]-12; *and* Savoir-Faire (Servant) (E) IQ+1 [2]-12. ● Another 24 points spent on skills from Chapter 5 that are appropriate to the Spark the minion serves.

Noble   75 points

The nobility is still very much a part of Europan life. The Fifty Families may answer to Baron Klaus Wulfenbach now, but they still handle the day-to-day issues within their lands as long as they follow the Baron's rules. A noble can have a wide variety of skills, but many of them focus on making sure they can run their fiefdoms with minimal interference from others. Not all nobles are Sparks, but many are, and the rest have at least one on the payroll.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 11 [20]; HT 10 [0].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 11 [0]; Per 11 [0]; FP 10 [0]; Basic Speed 5.00 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].
Advantages: Legal Immunity [10]. ● Another 30 points spent on some combination of Status 1-6 [5/level] and Wealth (Comfortable, Wealthy, *or* Very Wealthy) [10, 20, or 30].
Disadvantages: Duty (12 or less)‡ [-10]. ● A total of -25 points chosen from reduced ST [-10/level], Bully [-10*], Code of Honor (Gentleman's) [-10], Enemies (Other nobles) [Varies], Greed [-15*], Intolerance (Lower classes) [-5], Jealousy [-10], Laziness [-10], Megalomania [-10], or Sense of Duty (Fiefdom *or* Nation) [-10].
Skills: Administration (A) IQ+1 [4]-12; Area Knowledge (Small Nation) (E) IQ+2 [4]-13; Carousing (E) HT+2 [4]-12; Connoisseur (A) IQ+1 [4]-12; Current Affairs (E) IQ+2 [4]-13; Diplomacy (H) IQ [4]-11; Games (E) IQ+1 [2]-12; Gesture (E) IQ+1 [2]-12; Leadership (A) IQ+1 [4]-12; *and* Savoir-Faire (High Society) (E) IQ+2 [4]-13. ● Another 14 points spent on skills from Chapter 5.

‡ The myriad obligations of running a realm.

Professor   100 points

Once upon a time, a formal education was one of life's great luxuries; only the very wealthy could afford to send their children to school. Everybody else was forced to live without skills such as reading, writing, and math unless they were driven enough to find a willing teacher. When Baron Wulfenbach seized power, he made supporting educational systems and universities a priority. Consequently, professors are considered part of the elite, afforded respect they previously didn't enjoy outside of academia, and the ability to take their research to the next level.

While not all professors are Sparks, it's a rare Spark who doesn't accumulate a few degrees while studying.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 14 [80]; HT 10 [0].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 14 [0]; Per 14 [0]; FP 10 [0]; Basic Speed 5.00 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].
Advantages: Eidetic Memory 1 [5] *and* Tenure [5].
Disadvantages: Oblivious [-5]. ● A total of -30 points chosen from reduced ST or HT [-10/level], reduced DX [-20/level], Absent-Mindedness [-15], Bad Sight [-10 or -25], Clueless [-10], Curious [-5*], Hard of Hearing [-10], or Pacifism (Reluctant Killer) [-5].

Skills: Administration (A) IQ+1 [4]-15; Research (A) IQ+1 [4]-15; Speed-Reading (A) IQ+1 [4]-15; *and* Teaching (A) IQ+1 [4]-15. ● *One of* Hidden Lore† (A) IQ+5 [20]-19; or Academics†, Engineer†, or Sciences†, all (H) IQ+4 [20]-18. ● Another 9 points spent on skills from Chapter 5 (often more of the previous!) or on Languages [Varies].

Lens: Doctor   +30 points

Remove Eidetic Memory and Tenure [-10]. ● Add Healer 2 [20] *and* Healing [30]. ● Replace 20-point academic skill with Diagnosis (H) IQ+1 [2]-15, Pharmacy (H) IQ+1 [2]-15, Physician (H) IQ+1 [2]-15, *and* Surgery (VH) IQ+1 [4]-15 (all include +2 for Healer).

Spark   150 points

*You can turn **any** occupational template into a Spark by adding the Spark advantage (p. 91). Use this template for Sparks devoted to Mad Science and little else.*
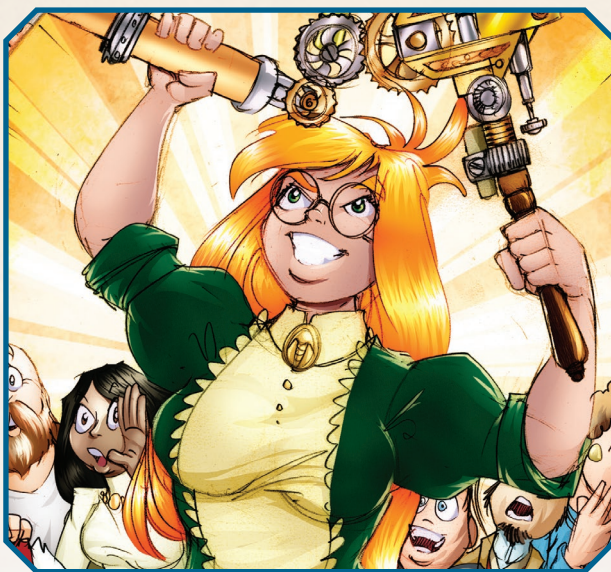
Mad, bad, and dangerous to know – Lady Lamb was speaking of Lord Byron, but she might as well have been describing Sparks. A Spark is an archetypical Mad Scientist, seeking to conquer the mysteries of life, death, and everything in between.

A Spark focuses their brain so acutely that it can alter the laws of physics as we know them. The downside is a set of potentially hostile personality traits; arrogance; hyper-focus to the point of ignoring anything that looks like a safety protocol; and impatience with those whose thoughts don't run at the speed or in the direction of their own. Despite this, Sparks can inspire intense loyalty and obedient fear in lesser mortals, gathering a coterie of minions to serve their needs.

There are competent, even brilliant engineers and researchers who aren't Sparks, but they'll never make the intuitive leaps necessary to truly warp the laws of nature and arrive at such creations as Dr. Jekyll's formula, Dr. Frankenstein's monster, strong AI implemented in clockwork, or the absolutely perfect cup of coffee.

Attributes: ST 11 [10]; DX 11 [20]; IQ 14 [80]; HT 10 [0].

Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 11 [0]; Will 14 [0]; Per 14 [0]; FP 10 [0]; Basic Speed 5.25 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].

Advantages: Artificer 2 [20] *and* Spark 1‡ [13]. ● Another 20 points spent on Artificer 3-4 [10/level], Eidetic Memory [5] *or* Photographic Memory [10], Lightning Calculator [2] *or* Intuitive Mathematician [5], Machine Empathy [15], Spark 2-3‡ [10/level], Versatile [5], other Talents [Varies], or any other advantage the GM is willing to approve!

Disadvantages: A total of -30 points chosen from Absent-Mindedness [-15], Bloodlust [-10*], Cowardice [-10*], Curious [-5*], Enemies [Varies], Greed [-15*], Megalomania [-10], Oblivious [-5], Obsession [-5* or -10*], Overconfidence [-5*], Phobias [-5*, -10*, or -15*], Stubbornness [-5], Workaholic [-5], or any other disadvantage the GM is prepared to tolerate!

Skills: Engineer† (H) IQ+2 [4]-16§ *and* Mathematics (H) IQ [4]-14. ● *One* of Armory†, Electrician, Machinist, Mechanic, or Smith†, all (A) IQ+2 [2]-16§. ● *One* of Beam Weapons or Guns, both (E) DX+1 [2]-12; or 2 points spent on Melee Weapon skills. ● Another 5 points spent on skills from Chapter 5.

‡ Spark 1-3 *includes* Gadgeteer at no additional cost (and Spark 4+ includes Quick Gadgeteer). For more information, see *Gadgeteer* (p. 87) and *Inventing Without a Net* (p. 152).

§ Includes +2 for Artificer.

Spy   100 points

Everyone has a secret. In Europa, those secrets can be perilous. Every leader in Europa deploys spies to ensure that their neighbors aren't up to something unsavory or dangerous. These expert infiltrators "visit" other countries, courts, and military forces, reporting back everything they see.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [20]; IQ 11 [20]; HT 11 [10].

Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 11 [0]; Per 11 [0]; FP 11 [0]; Basic Speed 5.50 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].

Advantages: Alternate Identity [5]. ● Another 35 points spent on increased DX or IQ [20/level], Acute Senses [2/level], Contacts [Varies], Cultural Adaptability [10 or 20], Danger Sense [15], Eidetic Memory [5], Language Talent [10], Languages [Varies], Legal Immunity [5, 10, or 15], or Night Vision 1-9 [1/level].

Disadvantages: Duty (9 or less) [-5]. ● A total of -20 points chosen from Enemies (Foreign agents, agencies, or governments) [Varies], Secret [-5, -10, or -20], Sense of Duty (Nation) [-10], or increasing Duty to 12 or less [5] *or* 15 or less [10].

Skills: Acting (A) IQ+2 [8]-13; Body Language (A) Per [2]-11; Detect Lies (H) Per [4]-11; Diplomacy (H) IQ [4]-11; Observation (A) Per+1 [4]-12; Persuade (H) Will [4]-11; *and* Savoir-Faire† (E) IQ [1]-11. ● Another 8 points spent on skills from Chapter 5.

Lens: Smoke Knight   +85 points

Improve DX to 12 and IQ to 12 (raises Basic Speed to 5.75, Will to 12, and Per to 12) [40]. ● Replace *all* skills with Acrobatics (H) DX [4]-12, Acting (A) IQ+1 [4]-13, Body Language (A) Per [2]-12, Detect Lies (H) Per [4]-12, Diplomacy (H) IQ [4]-12, Disguise (A) IQ+1 [4]-13, Escape (H) DX [4]-12, Garrote (E) DX+1 [2]-13, Knife (E) DX+3 [8]-15, Observation (A) Per [2]-12, Persuade (H) Will [4]-12, Poisons (H) IQ [4]-12, Savoir-Faire† (E) IQ [1]-12, Sleight of Hand (H) DX+2 [12]-14, Stealth (A) DX+3 [12]-15, and another 9 points spent on skills from Chapter 5.

Nonhuman Templates

The *Girl Genius* universe and the inherent nature of Sparks blur the lines of what it means to be human. Those Sparks' inventions – clanks with consciousness (like Castle Heterodyne), constructs (like Punch and Judy), and so on – raise even more questions. And talking cats, Lackya, and reanimated dead add to the confusion!

When creating a character with a nonhuman template, you may take an occupational template as well. Combine the traits; e.g., the Jäger template (p. 66) gives ST+3, DX+2, IQ-1, and HT+3, while the military template (p. 100) specifies ST 12, DX 11, IQ 10, and HT 12 [20], so a Jäger soldier has ST 15, DX 13, IQ 9, and HT 15. You have to *pay* for both, too – being a Jäger costs 132 points, while the military template costs 100 points, so you'd need 232 points for this. Where traits don't add up nicely, get as close as you can, while if two traits actually conflict, keep the racial one and discard the occupational one; in either case, pay points only for the traits you end up with.

Some nonhuman templates include skills. These are *usual* for that kind of nonhuman, but the points can be spent on any skill the GM agrees suit the character.

Clanks

A *clank* is an independent mechanical automaton. In our world, clanks would be known as "robots" – but that word wasn't introduced into English until 1920, in the play *Rossum's Universal Robots*, by Czech writer Karel Čapek. *Girl Genius* is set in a more poetic and manic alternate Earth, after the Industrial Revolution but before the dawn of the 20th century. There, these creations are "clanks" because of the sounds they make while walking.

Not many clanks possess human-level intelligence – Castle Heterodyne is one of the few – but they take on a wide variety of forms, functions, and complexities. When not using them as assistants, Sparks often deploy their clanks like tanks: huge, intimidating machines of war that can stomp ordinary soldiers flat. They also walk dogs. A Spark with the right knowhow can create a clank that does almost *anything*.

Constructs and Clanks

Constructs are inventions with living parts, and can range from a human who has been melded with a machine to a bear elevated to human intelligence. *Clanks*, on the other hand, are mechanical creations; while they can be imbued with human-like intelligence, they do not possess life or biological material in a basic sense. Constructs and clanks can be combined in some cases, but this is usually done only by the most talented (or insane!) Sparks, and is very rare.

Clank   55 points

Clanks vary as much as or even more than humans, but the traits below are common to all. The template cost is for a basic clank – the GM can change this based on the skill and goals of the clank's creator.

Attribute Modifiers: ST+2 [20]; HT+2 [20].
Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: HP+5 [10].
Advantages: Digital Mind [5]; Doesn't Breathe [20]; Doesn't Eat or Drink [10]; Doesn't Sleep [20].
Disadvantages: Hive Mentality [-40]; Maintenance (One person; Daily) [-10].

Humanoid Clank   100 points

Many of the clanks in Europa are humanoid. They're useful as laboratory assistants, soldiers, and servants, and they most closely resemble what a Spark understands: their own form. The traits below describe such a clank; advantages and disadvantages can be exchanged with traits of equal value, at the GM's discretion.

Attribute Modifiers: DX+1 [20].
Advantages: Absolute Timing [2]; Arm DX 1 (Two arms) [16]; Arm ST 1 (Two arms) [5]; Clank [55]; Damage Resistance 1 [5]; Indomitable [15].
Disadvantages: Disturbing Voice [-10]; Oblivious [-5]; Unhealing (Total) [-30].
Skills: Chose a role (crewman, lab assistant, soldier, servant, etc.) and spend a total of 27 points on skills from Chapter 5 that the GM agrees suit that function.

The Wulfenbach Clank   126 points

The Wulfenbach Clank is the model Baron Klaus Wulfenbach employs as ground forces. Standard-issue armament is a clank gun and a giant longsword. No two troopers look exactly alike physically, but all stand three meters tall, have three eyes, and wear a classic, tall shako with a tufted plume adorning the front.

This style of clank represents a substantial advancement over the clanks used in the rest of Europa, and is considered one of the reasons why the Baron can maintain the Pax Transylvania. Use the following traits to create one. At the GM's discretion, advantages and skills can be exchanged with traits of equal value.

Attribute Modifiers: ST+1 [10]; DX+1 [20]; IQ-1 [-20].
Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: Will+1 [5]; Per+1 [5].
Advantages: Arm ST 2 (Two arms) [10]; Clank [55]; Damage Resistance 5 [25].
Skills: Guns (E) DX+3 [8]; Broadsword (A) DX+2 [8].

Castle Heterodyne   994 points

Castle Heterodyne is one of the world's most infamous clanks. In its present form – created by Agatha's ancestor Faustus Heterodyne – it's a self-aware, self-repairing mechanical fortress that has stood for over six centuries. Faustus is responsible for its personality, which he based almost completely upon his own. It has only grown more warped over time.

When the Heterodyne Boys vanished and Klaus took over Mechanicsburg, the Castle was an insane mess, killing anyone foolish enough to enter. As there were secrets inside to which the Baron wanted access, he used it as a prison for any Spark foolish enough to annoy him.

Agatha Heterodyne restored the Castle when she claimed her heritage. It's still considered insane, but it answers to Agatha now, and she keeps it on a short leash.

If a weapon, creature, or other clank is located within Castle Heterodyne but not specifically addressed in the rules, it defaults to these traits. The GM should adjust Hit Points and Damage Resistance to befit its size and composition.

ST 14 [20]; **DX** 12 [40]; **IQ** 12 [40]; **HT** 14 [20].
Damage 1d/2d; BL 39 lbs.; HP 305 [572]; Will 14 [10]; Per 12 [0]; FP 14 [0]; Basic Speed 6.50 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0].

Advantages: Absolute Timing [2]; Acute Hearing 5 [10]; Clank [55]; Damage Resistance 15 [75]; Indomitable [15]; Infravision [10]; Modular Abilities (3 slots; 5 points each) [60].
Disadvantages: Disturbing Voice [-10]; Maintenance (3-5 people; Daily)* [-20]; Manic-Depressive [-20]; Oblivious [-5].
Skills: Engineer (Explosives) (H) IQ+10 [44]-22; Innate Attack (E) DX+10 [36]-22; Traps (A) IQ+10 [40]-22.

* Worth -30 points, but the clank template *already* has Maintenance (One person; Daily) [-10], so the point value represents the difference.

The Mini-Castle

When Agatha was in Paris, she discovered an errant sliver of the Castle's personality. She was able to house it within a specially constructed dingbot, which now travels with her. It appears to have an affinity for other mechanisms, and can be used to persuade them as well as dispatched on errands. Like the original Castle, it is intensely loyal to Agatha and the Heterodyne family, and revels in any opportunity to work evil against her enemies.

CONSTRUCTS

Construct is a catchall term for a living (or formerly living) creation of a Spark. Since constructs can be nearly indistinguishable from ordinary humans, and are often created from parts from formerly living people, they may cause fear.

Reanimated constructs pose a special problem for the nobility: They throw lines of succession into disarray, confusing ideas of who inherits what, and when. The Fifty Families have firm rules against reanimation, and their laws of succession prevent a noble who has died and been revived from continuing to hold their lands and title.

Despite this, Baron Klaus Wulfenbach is a construct and rules over most of Europa. His status as a construct is not widely known – but there are rumors. Probably no one alive knows for sure, although Dr. Sun has most likely guessed.

Constructs are created in any number of ways. Some are clones; others are the formerly living brought back through a variety of methods. Some have parts added, subtracted, or modified; others are plants, animals, or completely new forms of life created by Spark genius.

Constructs vary as much as any other living beings, if not more, but do have some common traits. Below is a basic template. The GM can change this as needed – for instance, to reflect the creator's level of skill.

Construct   60 points

Constructs are living creations of Sparks. They're usually tougher and stronger than humans.

Attribute Modifiers: ST+2 [20]; DX+1 [20]; HT+1 [10].
Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: HP+5 [10].

Intelligent Animals

From the talking cat, Krosp, to the bear king, König, Sparks have been experimenting with animals for as long as they've been inventing. Some of their creations can walk and talk just like humans. These constructs are a mixture of human intelligence with animal instincts, still answering the call of their more primal urges while also trying to manage their reading lists.

THE STORM KING'S MUSES

The Storm King's Muses were a set of nine clanks created over 200 years ago by the mysterious Spark, Van Rijn, whose skill in creating humanoid clanks has yet to be duplicated.

The Muses were designed to help inspire and advise the Storm King, and were a celebrated treasure of the kingdom for many years. Their names were Otilia, Artimo, Orotine, Contasia, Mawu, Moxana, Tinka, Liza, and Prende. All were self-aware and intelligent, able to operate and make decisions on their own.

The Muses were lost after the fall of the Storm King. Most hid in order to avoid destruction by overcurious Sparks who would tear them apart in order to understand even a small part of Van Rijn's genius. Otilia, however, was given the task of guarding Euphrosynia Heterodyne, and subsequently held prisoner in Castle Heterodyne for almost two centuries. She was eventually discovered by Lucrezia, and used as a subject in mechanical-to-organic mind-transference experiments.

In the timeline of *Girl Genius*, some of the Muses have resurfaced. Both Tinka, Muse of Movement, and Moxana, Muse of Mystery, were part of Master Payne's Circus of Adventure (p. 26) for years, before Tinka was stolen by Tarvek in order to help save his sister, Anevka. She was damaged by Tarvek's father, and Tarvek had been trying to repair her before the attack on Sturmhalten.

Prende, whose specialty is geometry, was found protecting the original Storm King, Andronicus Valois, in a hidden vault under Paris.

Each Muse has her own specialty. While they all use the clank template, their individual traits vary. The character sheet below is for Tinka, but can be altered in order to reflect a particular Muse's expertise. All of the Muses range from 335 to 375 character points.

Tinka, Muse of Movement   349 points

Tinka inspired the Storm King with the beauty of movement. After his disappearance, she passed through many adventures, eventually winding up in the Wastelands, where she became a part of Master Payne's Circus of Adventure. At that point, Van Rijn's work was the stuff of legends and fairytales, and fake Muses were common in sideshows and theaters across Europa. Thus, it was simple for Tinka to pretend to be just another facsimile. After years with the Circus, Tinka was taken to Sturmhalten by Tarvek Sturmvoraus, a descendant of the Storm King. Tarvek was fascinated by the Muses, and was able to study Tinka while seeking to build a clank body for his dying sister. Tinka was later beheaded by the Geisterdamen (p. 68), but since many of her circuits remain intact, it may be possible to rebuild her.

ST 12 [0]; **DX** 13 [60]; **IQ** 13 [60]; **HT** 12 [0].
Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 29 lbs.; HP 20 [6]; Will 13 [0]; Per 13 [0]; FP 12 [0]; Basic Speed 8.25 [40]; Basic Move 8 [0].

Advantages: Absolute Timing [2]; Clank [55]; Enhanced Move 1 (Ground) [20]; No Hive Mentality* [40]; Walk on Air [20].
Disadvantages: Unhealing (Total) [-30].
Skills: Acrobatics (H) DX+7 [32]-20; Dancing (A) DX+7 [28]-20; Musical Instrument (H) IQ+3 [16]-16.

* Treat the absence of the standard clank disadvantage as an advantage.

A Spark can alter *any* animal. The results don't use the usual construct template. The starting animal's size affects attribute modifiers and secondary characteristic modifiers, but most *other* traits of an intelligent animal default to those of a human (that is, it can talk, walk upright, has hands, and doesn't necessarily have special animal traits). The animal's environment and what it has been elevated to do determine its skills.

Below are templates for small, medium, large, and very large animals. These are just examples! To see how far individuals can vary, look at Krosp (p. 40).

Small Intelligent Animal Construct   50 points

For instance, a cat or a rabbit.

Attribute Modifiers: ST-5 [-50]; DX+3 [60].
Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: Basic Speed+2.00 [40].

Medium Intelligent Animal Construct   20 points

For example, a pig.

Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: Basic Speed+1.00 [20].

Large Intelligent Animal Construct   70 points

A bear, for instance.

Attribute Modifiers: ST+5 [50]; HT+1 [10].
Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: HP+5 [10].

Very Large Intelligent Animal Construct   120 points

Such as a whale (this would be a *small* one).

Attribute Modifiers: ST+10 [100]; DX-1 [-20]; HT+2 [20].
Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: HP+10 [20].

Jägermonsters

The Jägermonsters (also known as Jägers and Jägerkin) are constructs originally created by the Heterodynes to serve as monstrous raiders and troops, back when the Heterodynes pillaged and terrorized Europa. People today regard the Heterodyne name with fondness, because of the efforts of the Heterodyne Boys, but the Jägers are still feared and hated, and – at least in the Wastelands – killed, when the locals think they can get away with it.

After the disappearance of the Heterodyne brothers, the vast majority of the Jägerkin entered the service of Baron Klaus Wulfenbach. The Jägers were not displeased, as the man had style and a penchant for burning down the countryside.

However, a handful of Jägers volunteered to leave the group and dedicate themselves to searching the world for a Heterodyne heir. They honestly didn't think there was one to be found, but this way, the Jägers as a whole could know that they had not entirely deserted their masters.

The Jägers are fiercely dedicated to the Heterodynes, to the point that they know the scent of one, and refuse to let anyone but a Heterodyne work on them if they're injured.

Jägerkin are created by an alchemical process that isn't fully understood. We do know that it involves the consumption of a potion: the Jägerdraught. The reason why we don't see young Jägers in *Girl Genius* is that no one has made new Jägers for over 40 years. The Heterodyne Boys never made any, and Agatha hasn't yet had the opportunity, so any Jäger you encounter will be at least 50, all the way up to 700 years old.

New Jägers look like roughed-up humans, but a side effect of the Jägerdraught is that over time, they begin to mutate, gaining claws, teeth, horns, and so on. The longer they live, the more extreme the changes. This is why some of the oldest Jägers, the Jägergenerals, look as weird as they do.

The Heterodynes of old offered the chance to become a Jäger to only their most fierce, murderous, and (to them) entertaining followers. This is why most Jägers are male: They were chosen from the pack of thugs and outlaws that rode with the Heterodyne on his raids. That said, there are a few females in the mix, like Mamma Gkika and Jenka. The Jägerdraught was never given to the "unworthy," and every Jäger underwent the transformation freely, of their own volition.

Taking the Jägerdraught is a gamble. Seven out of 10 who drink it die horribly. The surviving three have a terrible time of it initially, but when it's over, they are Jägers.

Jägers have a sense of smell that a bloodhound would marvel at. They can track their target from a great distance and can even ascertain their prey's condition, including whether or not the creature is wounded. They're also particularly attracted to the scent of a Heterodyne. Jägerkin who haven't encountered a Heterodyne in decades can only determine that the person smells "nice." Those who had the honor of serving closely under the Heterodynes know the scent well, and can identify members of the family with ease.

Jägerkin are strong, and known to live for hundreds of years if not killed in battle. They're unmatched warriors, infamous across Europa for being the best and most brutal soldiers. As it's rumored that only the strongest survive the process of becoming a Jäger, their increased resilience and battle-hardened personas aren't entirely unexpected.

Jägertroth und Nize Hats

*Any plan vere you lose you **hat** iz a **bad plan**.*

– Jäger saying

Jägerkin society is a mishmash of whatever they find most entertaining at the time. For example, their accents reflect the language as it used to be spoken in old Mechanicsburg, and they see no reason they should change with the times.

They have their own set of rules, known as the Jägertroth. It is directly tied to their service to the Heterodynes. Jägers are expected to obey Heterodynes and keep their secrets. The only unforgivable act under the code is attempting to kill a Heterodyne, no matter the reason.

The troth helps tie them together as a group. They're also bound together simply because being a Jäger is a unique experience. Combine that with the fact that these guys have known each other for hundreds of years, and it becomes pretty obvious that an outsider just can't understand what it means to be a Jäger.

No matter when and where one Jäger meets another, they are allies and brothers-in-arms.

One of the few ways that Jägers recognize rank is by their hats. These are usually trophies taken in combat. Thus, the awesomeness of a hat is determined not just by the hat itself, but by the status of its previous owner. Jägers take an inordinate amount of pride in their headwear, and can spend years trying to find the perfect enemy wearing the perfect hat.

Jägers also use hats to show respect to others, giving gaudy and flamboyant hats to those who have suitably impressed them. On the other hand, to have a hat taken from them is considered one of the greatest insults a Jäger can suffer.

Jägerkin have a deep love of carnage and mayhem. They were created from soldiers, reavers, and warriors, and weren't chosen for their brains or sensitivity. Violent solutions are their favorite, and they have no problem skipping immediately to those if they think the situation calls for it.

They also get bored in circumstances where they're expected to be polite. As they have a very loose hold (to put it generously) on the social mores, expectations, and politics of any group, they almost always stand out as troublemakers. Few people understand that they have their own set of rules.

Above all is desire to serve the Heterodynes. But this is not a blind need to obey. The Jägers serve the family out of love, loyalty, and the belief that the Masters have earned this. The closest they ever came to rebelling was when Bill Heterodyne married Lucrezia, because she treated them like pets.

To create a Jäger, start from the nonhuman template below. For examples, see *Those Three Jägers* (p. 50) and Jenka (p. 52).

Jäger   132 points

Attribute Modifiers: ST+3 [30]; DX+2 [40]; IQ-1 [-20]; HT+3 [30].
Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: HP+5 [10].
Advantages: Damage Resistance 3 [15]; Dark Vision [25]; Discriminatory Smell [15]; Extended Lifespan 5 [10]; Sharp Claws [5].
Disadvantages: Appearance (Repulsive) [-8]; Bloodlust (12) [-10]; Obsession (12) (Hats/Heterodynes) [-10].

The Generals

The Jägergenerals are the leaders of the Jägers. They're a group of seven (eight, with Dimo's promotion) extremely old monsters who have matured out of their *need* to shed blood, and instead now do it only when they *want* to. This gives them the ability to think before they act – a godlike ability to lesser Jägers.

This title isn't earned through deeds, unless staying alive for longer than a few hundred years counts as a deed. Jägergenerals become so out of their extreme age and transformation into more "reasonable" versions of their younger selves.

Each Jägergeneral has a field of expertise: General Zog is the premier military strategist. General Khrizhan best remembers what it's like to be human. General Goomblast is a historian, specializing in the history of the Jägerkin. General Higgs is the Heterodynes' spymaster. General Gkika knows the most about Jäger physiology, and is a keeper of Jäger medical knowledge. General Koppelslav and General Zadipok have yet to reveal their specialties. General Dimo will doubtless be the one called on for information and analysis of Outside matters.

Lackya

The Lackya, like the Jägerkin, were created to serve a master. They were invented by the Gilded Duke, a Spark who was crushed by Baron Wulfenbach. The Lackya chose to become part of the Baron's retinue.

The Jägers say the Duke created the Lackya by combining human and squirrel DNA. They base this assumption on the Lackya's twitchy, easily agitated, and fussy manner, along with their light gray/silvery hair that resembles squirrel fur. However, they also hiss, have color-changing cat eyes, and can punch a hole in the wall, so it's anyone's guess what *else* the Duke built into his creations.

Almost all Lackya we have seen are slim, Caucasian men who must answer to someone in order to function. They have an intense rivalry with the Jägerkin, as they're obsessed with politeness, impeccable manners, and proper decorum, while the Jägers are . . . not. Since Lackya wear a uniform of fuchsia coat with gold trim, double-buttoned white waistcoat, and black slacks, most people refer to them as the "The Footmen," and this was, indeed, their original purpose.

To create a Lackya, begin with this nonhuman template.

Lackya   120 points
Attribute Modifiers: ST+1 [10]; DX+2 [40]; HT+1 [10].
Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: HP+5 [10]; Per+1 [5]; Basic Speed+1.00 [20].
Advantages: Damage Resistance 3 [15]; Dark Vision [25]; Nictitating Membrane 5 [5].
Disadvantages: No Sense of Humor [-10]; Obsession (12) (Politeness) [-10].

Reanimated Constructs

Quality work from a Spark makes it impossible to tell the difference between untouched humanity, resurrected life, and artificial creations. Some Sparks are able to take the leftover bits and pieces of the deceased and turn them into something greater than they once were.

For example, once there were three Wulfenbach brothers, but all were killed in a laboratory accident. Their parents combined the remains into a single entity: Klaus Wulfenbach – a reanimated construct who would one day rule a good portion of Europa.

Likewise, Agatha's foster parents, Punch and Judy, are early works of the Heterodyne Boys, imperfectly created from whatever parts these famous Sparks could find and then electrified back to life. Gil has since improved them.

To create a reanimated construct, use the nonhuman template below . . . though some traits can change based on the resurrection process!

Reanimated Construct   70 points
Attribute Modifiers: ST+2 [20]; DX+1 [20]; HT+2 [20].
Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: HP+5 [10].
Disadvantages: Reanimated [0].

GEISTERDAMEN

The Geisterdamen are all female, tall, slender, and ghostly pale. No one has ever seen or even heard of a male of the species.

The Geisters live in a lost city, the Citadel of Silver Light. It was discovered by the Mongfish family while on vacation; its location is still a mystery to the rest of the world. Upon seeing the young Lucrezia Mongfish, the Geisters all declared her their goddess returned. Lucrezia, a trueborn narcissist, thought this was perfectly natural.

All of the Geisterdamen are superb warriors, and have been known to give the Jägers a good fight. They were dispatched to Europa around 15 years ago, charged with finding Agatha.

The Geisterdamen are devoted servants of Lucrezia, and are perfectly aware that she is the Other. Governments such as the Wulfenbach Empire know of them, and know they are fierce fighters, but the Geisters aren't known to have done anything that warrants dealing with them as a group. This is a misconception born of ignorance.

Geisters are feared throughout the Wastelands, where they have a reputation for stealing children. In fact, they steal girls who might have the Spark, in hopes of finding the one they're looking for. Although they're mostly seen in the Wastelands, they secretly operate throughout Europa. It is now known that female Sparks are statistically underrepresented in Agatha's generation because the Geisterdamen, working with Lucrezia's fanatics in the Order of the Knights of Jove, have stolen and killed an unfortunate number of them.

The Geisterdamen are a very close-knit group. For some reason, many are terrified of the moon. Most often, they're seen in the distance, riding their giant spider mounts (p. 173) through the Wastelands.

To create a Geisterdame, start with the following nonhuman template.

Geisterdame 150 points
Attribute Modifiers: ST+2 [20]; DX+6 [120].
Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: HP+5 [10].

DREEN

The Dreen are apparently from another dimension. Three of them were brought to this world several hundred years ago when the time experiments of Robur Heterodyne went wrong. This is notable as one of the few times that a Heterodyne felt that he had *foolishly* meddled with things man was not meant to know.

Robur contacted the Corbettite Monks, who, in addition to building railroads, are known to confiscate and safely store dangerous Spark technology. They took the Dreen away, and the Heterodyne swore never to pillage the Corbettites' lands – one of the few promises Robur actually kept.

Dreen – two of them – were next seen in the employ of Klaus Wulfenbach. The nature of their contract remains unknown, but they did assist when Castle Wulfenbach was almost overrun by slaver wasps, and they appeared during the Siege of Mechanicsburg.

The third had apparently waited patiently in the Corbettite crypts under the Fortress Depot of Saint Szpac until the release of the Beast, an insane locomotive created by Saturnus Heterodyne. At that time, it delivered an oracular message to Gilgamesh Wulfenbach. Its subsequent location is unknown.

The motives, powers, and even names of the Dreen are a mystery yet to be revealed.

Dreen   280 points
Attribute Modifiers: ST+10 [100]; DX+7 [140].
Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: HP+20 [40].

5. Character Traits

Visualize your character and who you would like them to be: Are they fast? Strong? Intelligent? Can they sing? Balance on a tightrope? All of these things and many more are qualities you can achieve through purchasing character traits!

Before you create your character, the GM assigns a number of character points (see *Starting Points*), which you use to buy abilities. If you want to be better at something, spend points on that capability. If you picture your alter-ego struggling with something, limit them in that area. Bear in mind that no single person can be the best at *everything*. Part of the challenge – and the fun! – of working within a character-point budget is knowing that you cannot do everything alone, and that you must work with others in your group to make progress.

If you don't have a complete mental picture of your character when you start, that's fine. Feel free to choose traits that appeal to you, and then craft an identity around them. If you *do* have a solid conception of who you want to play, that's fine, too! But be aware that the number of points the GM assigns may limit what your character is actually capable of, forcing you to dial back your vision or decide that you'll develop some aspects during play; see *Character Improvement* (p. 130). Remember, few tales begin with the protagonists *already* at their best – a good story arc often involves a continuous struggle for self-improvement as the heroes work to overcome their obstacles.

Character Points

"Character points" are a limited resource assigned at character creation. They're used to purchase attributes and other traits.

Traits that *improve* your character *cost* character points. You may also choose to *reduce* your character's capabilities to *receive* additional character points. For example, if you start with 150 points, buy 100 points of advantages, and take -10 points of disadvantages, you have 150 - 100 + 10 = 60 character points left to spend.

Starting Points

The GM determines how many starting points each player receives. This depends on the focus of the chronicle. Stories featuring younger characters, still wet behind the ears, involve fewer character points; those focusing on higher-powered heroes entail more.

When deciding on starting points, the GM should bear in mind that more isn't always better! Beginning a campaign with fewer points allows for much more formative game play, giving the players time to become more familiar with their characters' abilities and allowing the heroes to grow as their adventure progresses.

See *Power Level* (p. 57) for a guide to starting character points, keeping in mind that characters will progress if they survive! A copiable blank Character Sheet is on p. 192.

Basic Attributes

Your character has four "basic attributes" – Strength (ST), Dexterity (DX), Intelligence (IQ), and Health (HT) – which represent their most fundamental capabilities. These also directly influence their secondary characteristics (p. 72): additional scores which further define them.

Your character begins with a score of 10 in each basic attribute. This represents average human ability. If you want capabilities above the human average, spend character points to raise the associated score. If you wish to portray someone who's below average or struggling in that area, you can lower the attribute and receive additional character points. Raising Strength or Health costs 10 points per level, while lowering either gives back 10 points per level; improving Dexterity (DX) or Intelligence (IQ) costs 20 points per level, while reducing either gives back 20 points per level. While a higher score is always better, a lower score can let you afford to be better somewhere else. Remember, the best story arcs involve character struggle, so don't be afraid to lower your attributes.

Most characters have attributes within the 8-12 range, which represents the norm for humanoids. The minimum is 1. The human maximum is 20; higher values are possible, but require the GM's special permission. Scores above 20 are typically the province of spectacular and unique creatures, unsuitable for casual or everyday appearances.

When choosing attribute levels, keep these ranges in mind:

6 or less – *Crippling.* An attribute this bad severely constrains your lifestyle.

7 – *Poor.* Your limitations are immediately obvious to anyone who meets you. This is the lowest score you can have and still pass for "able-bodied."

8-9 – *Below average.* Such scores are limiting, but within the human norm. The GM may forbid attributes below 8 to active adventurers.

10 – *Average.* Most humans get by just fine with a score of 10!

11-12 – *Above average.* These scores are superior, but within the human norm.

13-14 – *Exceptional.* Such an attribute is immediately apparent – as bulging muscles, feline grace, witty dialog, or glowing health – to those who meet you.

15 or more – *Amazing.* An attribute this high draws constant comment and probably defines your character to a significant degree.

Strength (ST) ±10 points/level

Strength measures your body's ability to apply force. The greater your ST, the better able you are to deal and withstand physical damage. Strength is also useful for lifting, throwing, and carrying. Depending on what's happening in the adventure, a character's ST can be of enormous consequence. Any warrior or hand-to-hand fighter wants a high ST.

Damage

Your ST determines how much damage you do in unarmed combat or with a melee weapon. Two types of damage derive from ST:

Thrusting damage (abbreviated "thrust" or "thr") is your basic damage with a punch, kick, or bite, or an attack with a thrusting weapon such as a spear or a rapier.

Swinging damage (abbreviated "swing" or "sw") is your basic damage with a swung weapon, such as an axe, club, or sword – anything that acts as a lever to multiply your strength.

Consult the following table for your basic damage. This is given in "dice+adds" format; see *Rolling the Dice* (p. 131).

Damage Table

ST	Thrust	Swing
1	1d-6	1d-5
2	1d-6	1d-5
3	1d-5	1d-4
4	1d-5	1d-4
5	1d-4	1d-3
6	1d-4	1d-3
7	1d-3	1d-2
8	1d-3	1d-2
9	1d-2	1d-1
10	1d-2	1d
11	1d-1	1d+1
12	1d-1	1d+2
13	1d	2d-1
14	1d	2d
15	1d+1	2d+1
16	1d+1	2d+2
17	1d+2	3d-1
18	1d+2	3d
19	2d-1	3d+1
20	2d-1	3d+2

For creatures with scores above 20, every *eight* levels of ST add 1d to thrust and every *four* levels add 1d to swing; e.g., a ST 25 clank does +1d thrust and +2d swing relative to a ST 17 person, or 2d+2/5d-1.

High ST doesn't necessarily mean your character is a muscle-bound hulk (though this is perfectly all right!). It might instead reflect a wiry build, years of physical training, or – in the case of clanks – advanced pressurized systems and materials. Large animals and clanks often have elevated ST scores, surpassing 20 for particularly massive examples. Players who want characters of this size should discuss the matter with the GM first.

Your ST affects your Basic Lift and encumbrance levels (p. 71), and the damage you do unarmed or with melee weapons (*Damage,* above).

Basic Lift

Basic Lift (BL) is the maximum weight you can lift over your head with one hand in one second. It equals (ST×ST)/5 lbs. If BL is 10 lbs. or more, round to the nearest whole number; e.g., 16.2 lbs. becomes 16 lbs. The average human has ST 10 and a BL of 20 lbs.

Encumbrance and Move

"Encumbrance" is a measure of the total weight you are carrying, relative to your ST. Its effects are divided into five "encumbrance levels." All but the lowest of these levels reduce your Move and give a penalty to Dodge, as follows:

No Encumbrance (0): Weight up to Basic Lift. Move = Basic Move. Full Dodge.
Light Encumbrance (1): Weight up to 2×BL. Move = Basic Move × 0.8. Dodge -1.
Medium Encumbrance (2): Weight up to 3×BL. Move = Basic Move × 0.6. Dodge -2.
Heavy Encumbrance (3): Weight up to 6×BL. Move = Basic Move × 0.4. Dodge -3.
Extra-Heavy Encumbrance (4): Weight up to 10×BL. Move = Basic Move × 0.2. Dodge -4.

Drop all fractions. Encumbrance can never reduce Move or Dodge below 1.

Note that these levels are numbered from 0 to 4. When a rule tells you to add or subtract your encumbrance level from a dice roll, this is the number to use. For instance, encumbrance gives a penalty to Climbing, Stealth, and Swimming skills.

Dexterity (DX)   ±20 points/level

Dexterity encompasses agility, coordination, and fine motor skills. It defines your ability to perform athletically, operate vehicles, and strike opponents in combat. It also feeds into your Basic Speed (p. 72), which helps determine your Basic Move (p. 72).

BASIC LIFT AND ENCUMBRANCE TABLE

This table summarizes Basic Lift and encumbrance levels for ST 1-20.

ST	BL (lbs.)	None (0)	Light (1)	Medium (2)	Heavy (3)	Extra-Heavy (4)
1	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.6	1.2	2
2	0.8	0.8	1.6	2.4	4.8	8
3	1.8	1.8	3.6	5.4	10.8	18
4	3.2	3.2	6.4	9.6	19.2	32
5	5	5	10	15	30	50
6	7.2	7.2	14.4	21.6	43.2	72
7	9.8	9.8	19.6	29.4	58.8	98
8	13	13	26	39	78	130
9	16	16	32	48	96	160
10	20	20	40	60	120	200
11	24	24	48	72	144	240
12	29	29	58	87	174	290
13	34	34	68	102	204	340
14	39	39	78	117	234	390
15	45	45	90	135	270	450
16	51	51	102	153	306	510
17	58	58	116	174	348	580
18	65	65	130	195	390	650
19	72	72	144	216	432	720
20	80	80	160	240	480	800

Intelligence (IQ) ±20 points/level

Intelligence covers anything that requires brainpower and doesn't use the body. This includes what's considered "classical intelligence" (ordinary IQ tests), social acumen, memory, creativity, reasoning, mental fortitude, and your capacity to invent. High IQ is *immensely* desirable for Sparks, as it's the driving force behind their abilities! IQ also determines the secondary characteristics of Will (below) and Perception (below).

Health (HT) ±10 points/level

Health allows you to persevere in the face of exhaustion, resist exposure to poison and disease, and survive physical damage. A high HT score is useful for anyone who expects to see combat. HT determines Fatigue Points (below), and helps determine Basic Speed (below) and thus Basic Move (below).

Secondary Characteristics

As well as four basic attributes, your character has several "secondary characteristics." These are determined from your attributes, and raised and lowered as your attributes change.

Optionally – as it adds complexity – the GM may allow players to improve secondary characteristics directly from the starting values figured from attributes. Several NPCs in Chapter 2 and nonhuman templates in Chapter 3 do this. See below for the point cost per level for this.

Hit Points (HP): Your ability to withstand physical injury. HP equal ST; e.g., ST 12 gives HP 12. *2 points/level.*

Will: Your resistance to threats to the mind or psyche – brainwashing, fear, hypnotism, interrogation, seduction, torture, etc. – and to supernatural attacks. (Your HT governs resistance to *physical* hazards.) Will equals IQ. *5 points/level.*

Perception (Per): Your ability to gain sensory information. The GM makes a "Sense roll" against your Per to determine whether you notice something, keeping the actual result secret. Per equals IQ. *5 points/level.*

Fatigue Points (FP): Your body's energy and stamina. FP equal HT; e.g., HT 12 gives FP 12. *3 points/level.*

Basic Speed: Measures your reflexes and physical quickness. Helps determine your movement speed, your ability to dodge, and how quickly you can act during combat. To calculate Basic Speed, add HT and DX together, and then divide the total by 4. *Do not round off –* a 5.25 is better than a 5! *5 points per +0.25.*

Dodge: Your Dodge defense (*Dodging*, p. 144) equals Basic Speed + 3, dropping all fractions. For instance, if your Basic Speed is 5.25, your Dodge is 8. You must roll under your Dodge on 3d to duck or sidestep an attack. To raise Dodge directly, buy Enhanced Dodge (p. 86).

Basic Move: Measures your movement speed in yards per second. This is how far you can run on your turn – though if you choose to "sprint" (running straight forward), you can move slightly faster. Basic Move equals Basic Speed, dropping all fractions; e.g., Basic Speed 5.25 gives Basic Move 5. An average person has Basic Move 5; therefore, they can run about 5 yards per second if unencumbered. *5 points/level.*

Image and Looks

As you create your character, you can choose whatever "look" fits your concept. If you desire, you can define how this affects others using the following set of traits. Those that *cost* character points are considered Advantages (p. 82); those that *grant* character points fall under the rules for Disadvantages (p. 93).

Appearance Variable

Appearance rates how simply being seen by others affects their reactions to you; see *Reaction Rolls* (p. 133). High or low Appearance doesn't denote a specific set of features, but rather a tendency for people to judge you favorably or unfavorably based on how you look.

Characters are considered "Average" by default, which has no effect on reaction rolls. Those with higher or lower levels of Appearance have bonuses or penalties to reactions. These modifiers also apply to rolls against Sex Appeal (p. 125).

Very Repulsive: Your appearance sours most interactions. Your company is likely shunned; few would wish to be seen with you. This gives -4 on reaction rolls. *-16 points.*

Repulsive: Your appearance repels others. Most seek to avoid your presence, but you are not a pariah. This gives -2 on reaction rolls. *-8 points.*

Unappealing: You look vaguely unattractive, but it's nothing anyone can put a finger on. This gives -1 on reaction rolls. *-4 points.*

Average: The default level. Most people have Average appearance. *0 points.*

Striking: Your appearance is appealing to others, generally eliciting a positive reaction. This gives +1 on reaction rolls. *4 points.*

Impressive: Many find you not just appealing, but captivating. People are likely to listen to or help you. This gives +2 on reaction rolls. *8 points.*

Very Impressive: Your appearance alone gives you the power to capture hearts and sway minds. This gives +4 on reaction rolls. *16 points.*

Charisma   5 points/level

Charisma is a measure of your social acumen and knack for personal interaction. You may take up to three levels, each level granting you +1 on all reaction rolls (p. 133) made by sapient (IQ 6+) beings you're able to interact with; +1 to Influence rolls (p. 138); and +1 to Fortune-Telling, Leadership, Panhandling, and Public Speaking skills. This requires your subject to be able to perceive and understand you, as well as speak your language. The GM may rule that Charisma doesn't affect non-sapient clanks or certain constructs.

Disturbing Voice   -10 points

Your voice is naturally unpleasant or obviously artificial. You might be a clank, or use an aid to mitigate the loss of your natural voice. Your voice might be raspy, hollow, or squeaky – or perhaps you stutter, or speak monotonously and without inflection. You receive -2 on reaction rolls where conversation is required, and -2 to Diplomacy, Fast-Talk, Performance, Public Speaking, Sex Appeal, and Singing.

This trait is mutually exclusive with Voice (below).

Fashion Sense   5 points

Your look is always one step ahead of the crowd. You have the ability to create a fashion statement out of the cheapest and most nondescript materials. This gives +1 to reaction rolls in social situations when you have a chance to prepare your attire in advance. You can also give *someone else* +1 to reactions when you put together the outfit.

Odious Personal Habits   -5, -10, or -15 points

Poor behavior can sour others' reactions, even offsetting an otherwise charming or dignified manner. By default, all characters are assumed to meet accepted standards for grooming and manners, but you may choose to take an Odious Personal Habit (OPH). Each -1 to reactions your OPH causes is worth -5 character points. Decide on this behavior when you create your character and determine the point value with the GM.

Examples: Bad mealtime mannerisms – such as poor table manners, belching, and picking your teeth – would give -1 to reactions and -5 points. Constant scratching might be worth -2 to reactions and -10 points. The repulsive possibilities of -3 to reactions are left to the demented imaginations of Jäger characters – or Jäger *players*.

Voice   10 points

Whether through natural ability or practice, some people have truly moving voices. You may be a singer or established public speaker, or simply have an accent or manner of speaking that others find enjoyable. This gives you +2 with Diplomacy, Fast-Talk, Performance, Politics, Public Speaking, Sex Appeal, and Singing. You also get +2 on reaction rolls made by those who can hear your voice.

This trait is mutually exclusive with Disturbing Voice (above).

LANGUAGE AND INFLUENCE

Depending on your place in society and what you've learned, you can enjoy a number of benefits, from a life of privilege to bureaucratic or legal power.

LANGUAGE

Girl Genius assumes that most characters can read and write their "native" language. This ability costs no points, but you should note your native language on your character sheet; e.g., "English (Native) [0]." Even in our world, Europeans are often bi- or even tri-lingual. Educated people and adventurers can start with several languages. See p. 15.

Comprehension Levels

The point cost to learn an additional language depends on your "comprehension level": a measure of how well you function in that language overall. There are four comprehension levels:

None: You don't know the language at all. *0 points.*

Broken: You know just enough to get by in daily life, but you're at -3 when using skills that depend on language. *1 point for spoken, 1 point for written.*

Accented: You can communicate clearly. You're at only -1 when using skills that depend on language. *2 points for spoken, 2 points for written.*

Native: You can use the language as well as an educated native. You start with one language at this level for free. *3 points for spoken, 3 points for written.*

Literacy

Written comprehension level determines your degree of literacy in that language. You get Native-level written comprehension in your native language for free. Being less literate in your native language is a disadvantage: -1 point for Accented, -2 points for Broken, or -3 points for None.

Illiteracy: A written comprehension level of None means that you cannot read the language at all.

Semi-Literacy: A written comprehension level of Broken means you must read slowly. Roll vs. IQ just to get the basic meaning!

Literacy: A written comprehension of Accented or Native means you can read and write at full speed (Accented still gives -1 to use skills like Research, Speed-Reading, and Writing).

WEALTH

Perhaps the most direct indication of someone's social class is their access to wealth. Even in the absence of formal title, money gives influence. And those who *do* officially hold power are often viewed as weak if they lack the assets to complement it.

Wealth   Variable

An individual's wealth is measured in levels. These are nonlinear in the resources they represent – people who differ by even a level or two enjoy significantly different lifestyles! A wealth level of "Average" costs no points. Higher levels are advantages, and *cost* character points; lower ones are considered disadvantages, and *give* character points.

Dead Broke: You have no job, no source of income, no money, and no property other than the clothes you are wearing. Either you are unable to work or there are no jobs to be found. *-25 points.*

Poor: Your starting wealth is only 1/5 of the average for your society. Some jobs are not available to you, and no job you find pays very well. *-15 points.*

Struggling: Your starting wealth is only 1/2 of the average for your society. Any job is open to you, but you don't earn much. *-10 points.*

Average: The default wealth level, as explained above. *0 points.*

Comfortable: You work for a living, but your lifestyle is better than most. Your starting wealth is twice the average. *10 points.*

Wealthy: Your starting wealth is five times average; you live very well indeed. *20 points.*

Very Wealthy: Your starting wealth is 20 times the average. *30 points.*

Filthy Rich: Your starting wealth is 100 times average. You can buy almost anything you want without considering the cost. *50 points.*

REPUTATION   ±5 points/level

Reputation is the narrative that society hears about who you are and what you've done. It's possible to be so well known that your reputation becomes an advantage or a disadvantage. This affects reaction rolls (p. 133) made by NPCs.

The details of your reputation are entirely up to you! You can be known for bravery, ferocity, eating green snakes, or whatever you want. However, you *must* give specifics.

Specify the reaction modifier you get *from people who recognize you* (below). This determines the base cost of the Reputation trait. A bonus is an advantage worth 5 points per +1 to reactions (up to +4); a penalty is a disadvantage worth -5 points per -1 to reactions (down to -4).

People Affected

The size of the group of people in the campaign who might have heard of you modifies the base cost of ±5 points/level.

Almost everyone in Europa. If you *might* have been heard of *anywhere,* choose this category. *×1.*

Almost everyone in Europa except for one large class (e.g., everyone except those who don't speak English). Trelawney Thorpe might fall into this category. *×2/3.*

Large class of people (everyone of a particular faith, all soldiers, all tradesmen, or similar). For instance, everyone in the developed parts of Europa has heard of the Corbettite monks – but to those in the Wastelands, trains aren't even a rumor. *×1/2.*

Small class of people (e.g., all Jägers or everybody aboard Castle Wulfenbach). *×1/3.*

This assumes the default **Girl Genius** campaign, which ranges through Europa. If the GM restricts the game to a smaller area, adjust accordingly. For instance, if the action will never leave Castle Wulfenbach, change "almost everyone in Europa" to "almost everyone in the Castle."

Frequency of Recognition

If you have a Reputation, either your name or your face is enough to trigger a "reputation roll" when you meet someone of the class your Reputation affects. Roll 3d once for each person or small group. For a large group, the GM may choose to roll more than once. The frequency with which you're recognized further modifies Reputation cost:

All the time: *×1.*
Sometimes (roll of 10 or less): *×1/2*
Occasionally (roll of 7 or less): *×1/3.*

Drop all fractions after modifying for both people affected and frequency of recognition.

Importance

Importance encapsulates your formally recognized place in society, distinct from your personal reputation. If you're a judge, professor, or member of the Fifty Families, your station carries some degree of *official* power.

Status   ±5 points/level

Status is a measure of social standing. In Europa, Status levels range from -2 (serf or street person) to 8 (Baron Wulfenbach), with the average person being Status 0 (freeman or ordinary citizen). If you don't specifically buy Status, you have Status 0. Status costs 5 points per level; e.g., Status 5 costs 25 points, while Status -2 is -10 points.

Status greater than 0 means you're a member of your culture's upper classes. As a result, others *in that culture only* defer to you, giving you a bonus on reaction rolls. This bonus equals the difference between your Status level and that of the other person. Any purchase of Status greater than 3 requires GM approval; there are very few opportunities in this world for people to rise to truly great prominence.

Status less than 0 means you're a serf, a slave, or simply very poor. If you have such negative Status, apply the difference between your Status and the NPC's as a reaction penalty, but no worse than -4.

Rank   5 points/level

Specific sectors of society – e.g., the civil service, the military, major trade guilds, and certain powerful Spark organizations – often have internal ranking systems, distinct from Status. If such an organization has significant social influence, or access to useful resources, its members must pay points for their rank within it.

Rank comes in levels. Each Rank has authority over those of lower Rank, regardless of personal ability. In most cases, there are six to eight levels of Rank. The GM should determine the highest Rank available to starting characters – usually Rank 3-5.

There are generally several systems of Rank in a given society. You can hold more than one kind of Rank unless the GM rules that holding one sort of Rank precludes holding another. Rank also coexists with Status, and high Rank grants additional Status at no extra cost: +1 to Status at Rank 2-4, +2 to Status at Rank 5-7; and +3 to Status at Rank 8 or higher. This represents society's respect for senior members of important social institutions. If you hold multiple types of Rank, you may claim a Status bonus for each.

Some forms of Rank can award you privileges, such as Clerical Investment (p. 84), but these frequently come with disadvantages, such as Duty (p. 96). The GM is the final arbiter of what your Rank provides you with and requires you to do.

Special Rules for Rank

Two situations might arise in play for those with Rank:

Temporary Rank: Those of higher Rank can temporarily increase your Rank for a predetermined amount of time – until the end of a mission, battle, etc. This process is called *brevetting* in the case of Military Rank. To keep temporary Rank, you must meet all of the usual requirements and pay the appropriate point cost.

Courtesy Rank: Those who have formerly held Rank may retain that Rank as a "Courtesy Rank" for only 1 point per level. Those who currently hold a title that carries little real authority may also take Courtesy Rank. Courtesy Rank is for social situations only; it gives you a fancier title.

Friends and Foes

In many ways, who you *are* is based on who you *know*. Having people you can rely on for help is an advantage that costs character points. This is especially true when those friends have official titles or are "in the know"; access to such individuals can provide benefits out of reach of your formal social position.

You can also have relationships with individuals who complicate your existence, perhaps seeking to interfere with your agenda, or popping back into your life from time to time to settle old grudges. These are disadvantages that grant you points – possibly a lot of points, if you're on the bad side of people in power!

Associated NPCs

NPCs with specific relationships to your character are called "Associated NPCs." They have personalities, goals, and character sheets – just like all NPCs. In each case, the GM will work with you to establish who this person is, what motivates them, and their attitude toward you. From there, the GM will create a character sheet that describes their capabilities and motivations.

Associated NPCs are under the GM's control. You're free to write their *past* actions into your background story, but the GM determines their actions in play. The GM owns and maintains their character sheets, and decides what they say and do.

Frequency of Appearance

Whether you pay points for a useful relationship with someone or collect points for a troublesome one, it is unlikely that the NPC will be a constant presence. After all, Baron Wulfenbach may hate you, but he's too busy to harass you about it all the time.

Each friend or foe has a *frequency of appearance,* and will figure into an adventure only if the GM rolls less than or equal to that number on 3d at the start of the adventure. How the NPC interacts with you if the roll succeeds depends on the nature of the relationship.

Frequency of appearance multiplies an Associated NPC's point cost after determining power level, group size, and all similar parameters:

Constantly (no roll required): The NPC is always present. Unless the GM makes an exception, this level is reserved for NPCS – usually Allies – that are implanted, worn like clothing, or otherwise attached. If Agatha's constantly-worn locket were a sapient clank – which it is *not!* – it might qualify. ×4.

Almost all the time (roll of 15 or less): ×3.
Quite often (roll of 12 or less): ×2.
Fairly often (roll of 9 or less): ×1.
Quite rarely (roll of 6 or less): ×1/2 (round up).

ALLIES   Variable

Many fictional heroes have partners – loyal comrades, faithful sidekicks, or obedient minions – who accompany them on adventures. These are known as "Allies."

The other PCs in your adventuring party are, in a sense, "allies." But they can be unreliable allies indeed. Often they are chance acquaintances, first met at a tavern in Beetleburg only hours ago. They have their own hidden goals, ethics, and motives, which might not coincide with your own.

An NPC Ally, on the other hand, is wholly reliable. Perhaps you fought side-by-side in the Long War, studied under the same professor, or grew up in the same city. The two of you trust each other implicitly. You travel together, fight back-to-back, share rations in hard times, and take turns rescuing one another from whatever castle you've been kidnapped to *this* time.

Your Ally is usually agreeable to your suggestions, but is not your puppet. They will disagree with you from time to time. An Ally might try to dissuade you from a plan; they may even refuse to cooperate. An Ally could go so far as to cause problems for you: picking fights, landing in jail, stealing a clank . . . of course, the Ally will also try to bail *you* out when *you* make mistakes.

The GM won't award you bonus points (p. 130) for any game session in which you betray, attack, or unnecessarily endanger your Ally. Blatant, prolonged, or severe betrayal breaks the trust between you and your Ally, and they'll leave you permanently. If you drive your Ally off in this way, the points you spent on them are *gone,* reducing your point value. Leading your Ally into danger is all right, as long as *you* face the same danger and are a responsible leader.

The point cost for an Ally depends on their power and frequency of appearance. Only PCs who take NPCs as Allies pay points for the privilege. Two PCs can be mutual "allies" for free, as can two NPCs – and NPCs *never* pay points for PCs as Allies. An Ally is specifically a skilled NPC associate for one PC.

Ally's Power

Consult the following table to determine how many points you must spend on your Ally. "Point Total" is the Ally's point total expressed as a percentage of the PC's starting points. "Cost" is the price of the Ally advantage. If the Ally's point total falls between two percentages, use the *higher.*

Point Total	Cost
25%	1 point
50%	2 points
75%	3 points
100%	5 points
150%	10 points

Allies built on more than 150% of the PC's starting point aren't allowed; treat such NPCs as Patrons (p. 81). *Exception:* The progression above extends indefinitely for *non-sentient* (IQ 0) Allies; each +50% of the PC's starting points costs a further +5 points.

Allies built on no more than 100% of the PC's starting points may be Dependents (p. 78) *at the same time.* Add the cost of Ally and Dependent together, and treat the combination as a single trait: an advantage if the total point cost is positive, a disadvantage if it is negative.

Ally Groups

You may purchase as many Allies as you can afford. Each Ally is normally a separate advantage, but you can treat a group of *related* Allies as a single trait to save space on your character sheet.

For a group of *individuals* – with their own unique abilities and character sheets – add the costs of the individual Allies to find the cost of the group, adjust the total cost for the frequency of appearance, and then apply any special modifiers.

For a group of more than five *identical* and *interchangeable* Allies that share a single character sheet – for instance, an army of low-grade thugs or a swarm of drone clanks – find the point cost to have one member of the group as an Ally, and then multiply the cost as follows to find the cost of the group:

Size of Group	Multiplier
6-10	×6
11-20	×8
21-50	×10
51-100	×12

Add ×6 to the multiplier per tenfold increase (e.g., 100,000 Allies would be ×30). The GM may require an Unusual Background (p. 93) if you wish to have hordes of Allies, or even prohibit groups larger than a certain size – although an army or other large group might be allowed as a *Patron* (p. 81). Frequency of appearance multipliers and special modifiers (if any) apply to the final cost of the entire group.

Frequency of Appearance

Choose a frequency of appearance (p. 78). If your Ally appears at the start of your adventure, they accompany you for the adventure's duration.

Allies in Play

The GM will adjust your Ally's abilities in order to keep their point total a fixed percentage of your own as you earn points. This will keep their value as an advantage constant. The GM decides how the Ally evolves, although they might ask you for your input.

If your Ally dies through no fault of yours, the GM won't penalize you. You can put the points spent on the deceased Ally toward a new one. The new relationship should normally develop gradually, but the GM might decide to allow an NPC to become an Ally on the spot if you've done something that would win them over, such as saving their life. This is especially appropriate in cultures where debts of honor are taken seriously, such as Skifander.

There's no penalty for amicably parting ways with your Ally. You can use the points spent on them to buy a new Ally met during play. At the GM's discretion, these points might instead buy a social advantage like Claim to Hospitality, Contacts, Favor, Patron, Reputation, or Wealth, if your erstwhile Ally could believably offer that as a "parting gift."

Ally Modifiers

After working out *all* of the above details, you may further apply one or more of these "modifiers" to your Ally. Each adjusts advantage cost by a percentage; round *up*. If you select more than one modifier, add the percentages together and adjust cost by the total; e.g., Special Abilities, +50% and Sympathy, -25% add up to +25%, increasing the final cost of the Ally advantage by 25%.

Minion: Your Ally continues to serve you regardless of how badly you treat them. This might be due to programming, fear, awe, or lack of self-awareness. Examples include clanks, constructs, or other humans caught in the Sparkish charm. You are free from the obligation to treat your Ally well. Mistreatment might result in an inconvenient breakdown (mental or physical), but the Ally won't leave. *+0% if the Minion has IQ 0 or Hive Mentality (p. 97), as the benefits of total loyalty are offset by a need for close supervision; +50% otherwise.*

Special Abilities: Your Ally wields power out of proportion to their point value. Perhaps they have extensive political clout; maybe they're a powerful Spark. Don't apply this modifier simply because your Ally has exotic abilities – if their powers are very uncommon, you've *already* paid extra, as your Ally requires an Unusual Background (p. 93), which raises their point total and thus their value as an Ally. *+50%.*

Sympathy: If you're stunned, knocked out, possessed by Lucrezia, etc., your Ally is similarly affected. The reverse is also true, so you should take special care of your Ally! *-25% if the death of one party reduces the other to 0 HP; -50% if the death of one party automatically **kills** the other. If your wounds affect your Ally, but your Ally's wounds don't affect you, reduce these values to -5% and -10%.*

Unwilling: You obtained your Ally through coercion – no matter what the method. You don't have to treat them as well as you would a normal Ally. However, they *hate* you and are likely to act accordingly, reducing their reliability. If you endanger your Ally or order them to do something unpleasant, they may rebel (GM's option), especially if the consequences of doing so would be less severe than those of doing your bidding. An Ally who rebels is *gone,* along with the points you spent on them. *-50%.*

CONTACTS   Variable

You have an associate who provides you with useful information, or who does *small* (pick any two of "quick," "nonhazardous," or "inexpensive") favors for you. The point value of such a "Contact" is based on the skill they use to assist you, the frequency with which they provide information or favors, and their reliability as a person.

Contact's Effective Skill

First, decide on the type of Contact you have: anything from a derelict in the right gutter to the head of a small nation, depending on your background. What's important is that they have access to information, know you, and tend to react favorably. Of course, offering cash or favors is never a bad idea; the GM sets the Contact's "price."

Next, choose the useful skill your Contact provides. This *must* match the Contact's background; e.g., Finance for a banker or Surgery for a doctor. The GM rolls against this skill when you request aid from your Contact, so select a skill that can provide you with the results you expect. If you want someone who can make clank guns, take a Contact with Armory – not Finance!

After that, select an *effective* skill level. This reflects the Contact's own connections, other skills, Status, material resources, etc. It needn't be their *actual* skill level (the GM sets this, if it matters). For instance, the president of a local university might have academic skills of 12-14, but their effective skill might be 18 because of their position at the school – they can call upon any number of professors! This skill level determines the Contact's base cost:

Effective Skill	Base Cost
12	1 point
15	2 points
18	3 points
21	4 points

Frequency of Appearance

Select a frequency of appearance (p. 76) and apply its multiplier to the Contact's base cost. When you wish to reach the Contact, the GM rolls against their frequency of appearance. On a failure, the Contact is busy or cannot be located that day. On a 17 or 18, the Contact cannot be reached for the entire *adventure*. On a success, the GM rolls against the Contact's effective skill once per piece of information or minor favor you request.

No Contact may be reached more than once per day, even if several PCs share the same Contact. If you have many questions or favors to ask, have the list ready when you first reach your Contact. The Contact rolls at full effective skill for the first request. Each subsequent question or favor is at a cumulative -2. Don't overuse your Contacts!

A Contact cannot supply information outside their area of knowledge or favors beyond their station. The GM should never allow a Contact to give information that short-circuits an important part of the adventure.

You must explain how you normally get in touch with your Contact. Regardless of frequency of appearance, you cannot reach your Contact if those channels are closed.

Why Contacts?

Contacts don't participate in adventures but can cost more than Allies (p. 76) who do, and also more than just buying the skills they provide. So what's the benefit? First, Contacts are assumed to be capable of favors that are beyond the abilities of the PCs and their Allies – they're *connected*. Second, Contacts look after themselves (unlike Allies, they needn't be equipped, transported, or protected) and investigate, research, repair, experiment, etc. on their own time. This lets them act in parallel with the heroes, but behind the scenes, sometimes surprising the opposition. It's the GM's job to make Contacts pay off like this!

Reliability

Contacts aren't guaranteed to be truthful! Reliability multiplies the Contact's point cost as follows:

Completely Reliable: Even on a critical failure on their effective skill roll, the Contact's worst response is "I don't know." On an ordinary failure, they can find information in 1d days. ×3.

Usually Reliable: On a critical failure, the Contact lies. On any other failure, they don't know now, " . . . but check back in (1d) days." Roll again at that time; a failure means they can't find out at all. ×2.

Somewhat Reliable: On a failure, the Contact doesn't know and can't find out. On a critical failure, they lie – and on a natural 18, they let enemies or authorities (as appropriate) know who's asking questions. ×1.

Unreliable: Reduce effective skill by 2. On any failure, they lie; on a critical failure, they notify the enemy. ×1/2 (round up; minimum final cost is 1 point).

Money Talks

Bribery, whether cash or favors, motivates a Contact and increases their reliability level. Once reliability reaches "usually reliable," further levels of increase go to the effective skill – bribery cannot make anyone completely reliable!

A cash bribe should be $25 for +1, $125 for +2, $500 for +3, or $2,500 for +4. Multiply by 1/5 if the Contact's wealth level is Dead Broke or Poor, 1/2 if Struggling, 2 if Comfortable, 5 if Wealthy, 20 if Very Wealthy, or 100 if Filthy Rich. Favors should be of equivalent worth and always be something you actually play out in game.

The bribe must also be appropriate for the Contact. A diplomat would be insulted by a cash bribe, but might welcome an introduction into the right social circle. A criminal might ask for cash, but settle for favors that could get you into trouble. A detective or wealthy noble might simply want you to "owe them one" for later, which could set off a whole new adventure somewhere down the road.

Contacts in Play

You may add new Contacts in play if you can come up with a good in-game justification. The GM might even turn an existing NPC into a Contact for one or more PCs, possibly in lieu of bonus points for the adventure in which the PCs developed the NPC as a Contact. For instance, an adventure in which the party helped solve the theft of an important clank might reward a Spark with a knowledgeable, reliable minion.

DEPENDENTS   Variable

A "Dependent" is an NPC for whom you are responsible; e.g., your child, spouse, or sibling. You *must* take care of your Dependents. Furthermore, your foes can strike at you through them. For example, if you have both an Enemy (opposite) and a Dependent, and a *Frequency of Appearance* roll indicates that both appear, the GM can build an entire adventure around this!

If your Dependent ends up kidnapped or otherwise in danger during play, you *must* go to the rescue as soon as possible. If you don't go their aid immediately, the GM can deny you bonus points (p. 130) for "acting out of character." Furthermore, you never earn any character points for an adventure in which your Dependent is killed or badly hurt.

Three factors determine a Dependent's disadvantage value: their *competence*, their *importance* to you, and their *frequency of appearance*.

Dependent's Competence

Specify the number of points your Dependent is "built" on. The more competent your Dependent, the *fewer* points they're worth as a disadvantage. On the table below, "Point Total" is the Dependent's point total as a fraction of the PC's, except for the last line, which is absolute. "Cost" is the number of character points the disadvantage is worth.

Point Total	Cost
No more than 100%	-1 point
No more than 75%	-2 points
No more than 50%	-5 points
No more than 25%	-10 points
0 or fewer points	-15 points

The same person can be both a Dependent and Ally (p. 76)! Add the cost of Ally and Dependent together, and treat the combination as a single trait: an advantage if the total point cost is positive, a disadvantage if the point cost is negative. You must use the same point total for them in both cases, but frequency of appearance can differ. Roll separately for their appearance as a Dependent and as an Ally. If they appear as a Dependent, they show up in a way that causes you trouble. If they appear as an Ally, they manage to be helpful and take care of themselves. If they appear as both, they're helpful *and* troublesome at the same time; for instance, they use their skills to assist you, but also wander off, get singled out by the enemy, or otherwise cause problems equal to the assistance they offer.

Importance

The more important your Dependent is to you, the more you multiply their intrinsic "nuisance value" and worth in points.

Employer or acquaintance: You feel a responsibility toward this person, but you may weigh risks to them in a rational fashion. *×1/2.*

Friend: You must always try to protect this person. You may only risk harm to them if something is very important (such as the safety of many other people) is at stake. *×1.*

Loved One: The Dependent is a relative, lover, or "best friend forever." You may not put *anything* before their safety. *×2.*

Frequency of Appearance

Choose a frequency of appearance (p. 76). This should fit the story behind the Dependent. If the Dependent is your infant child, for example, it would be odd for them to appear "quite rarely"!

Multiple Dependents

You cannot earn points for more than two Dependents. However, if you have a *group* of Dependents – e.g., a gaggle of orphaned children – you may count the entire group as your two Dependents. Work out the value of an average group member as a Dependent, and then claim twice this point value.

Dependents in Play

As you earn points, the GM will scale your Dependent's abilities proportionally to keep their point total a fixed percentage of your own. Thus, their value as a disadvantage won't change. Children grow up, adults earn money, and everyone learns new skills. Dependents who spend a lot of time around you might become adventurers in their own right. You're free to suggest reasonable improvements for your Dependents, but the GM's word is final.

If your Dependent is killed, or so seriously injured that the GM decides they are effectively out of the campaign, you *must* make up the points you got for them. You have three options: buy off the amount by spending bonus points, take a new disadvantage, or get a new Dependent. New Dependents are rarely appropriate, but a mental disadvantage brought on by the loss is a good solution.

ENEMIES   Variable

An "Enemy" is an NPC, group of NPCs, or organization that actively works against you, personally, on your adventures. Some Enemies want to kill you. Others have . . . more *subtle* goals.

Determine the nature of your Enemy when you create your character, and explain to the GM why the Enemy is after you. The GM is free to fill in the additional details as they see fit.

Three factors determine an Enemy's disadvantage value: *power, intent,* and *frequency of appearance.*

Enemy's Power

The more powerful the Enemy, the more points it's worth as a disadvantage. The GM sets this value. Note that when your Enemy is an organization, the point value is based on the number of individuals who are after *you* – not on the total size of the group!

One person, less powerful than the PC (built on 50% of the PC's starting points). *-5 points.*

One person, equal in power to the PC (built on about 100% of the PC's starting points), or small group of less-powerful people (3 to 5 people). *Examples:* a Mad Scientist, or the four brothers of the man you killed in a duel. *-10 points.*

One person, more powerful than the PC (built on at least 150% of the PC's starting points), or a medium-sized group of less-powerful people (6 to 20 people). *Examples:* a single construct, or a big city's law enforcers (who number in the hundreds but aren't all after you at once). *-20 points.*

A large group of less-powerful people (21 to 1,000 people), or a medium-sized group that includes some formidable or superhuman individuals. *Examples:* Queen Albia's merchant companies, or a group of adventurers with a few talented Sparks. *-30 points.*

An entire government, a whole clan of powerful Sparks, or another utterly formidable group. *Example:* Baron Wulfenbach's empire. *-40 points.*

Special Cases

There are two special cases that may apply to some Enemies. These adjust the costs above *before* multiplying for intent and frequency of appearance.

Evil Twin

Your Enemy looks and sounds like you, and perhaps even uses your name, but acts completely opposite. Often, others think you suffer from mental illness and react negatively (-3 to reactions). You might never meet your Evil Twin, but you do hear about them – usually when you're taking the blame for something you didn't do. Normally, an Evil Twin has exactly the same skills and abilities as you, but their mental disadvantages are opposite or skewed. This makes them an even match. If they're more capable than you, they're worth extra points, because they're better equipped to make you look insane, and you're less able to predict and thwart their actions.

Evil Twin is more skilled than you *or* possesses abilities that you do not (GM decides): *-5 points.*

Evil Twin is more skilled than you *and* possesses abilities that you do not (GM decides): *-10 points.*
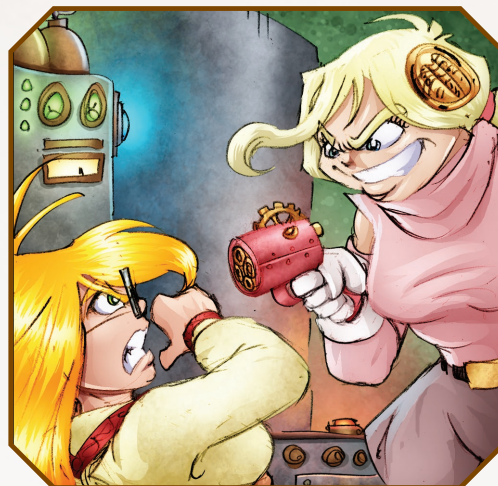
Unknown Enemy

You know you have an Enemy but have no idea who it is. Tell the GM your Enemy's power level. They'll create the Enemy in secret and give you *no details whatsoever!* The advantage of surprise increases your Enemy's effective power level, and hence its disadvantage value. *-5 points.*

Intent

The more unpleasant the Enemy's intentions toward you, the more you multiply its worth in points.

Watcher: Your Enemy stalks you or spies on you. This is annoying, and makes it hard to keep secrets, but is rarely more than a minor inconvenience. *Examples:* an aggressive journalist dogging a Spark, or a detective shadowing a suspected criminal. *×1/4.*

Rival: Your Enemy wishes to upstage or inconvenience you, or plays cruel practical jokes on you (this is typical of most Evil Twins), but stops short of anything that would do lasting harm. *Examples:* a bureaucrat's bitter political adversary, or a Spark competing to complete the same invention first. *×1/2.*

Hunter: The Enemy intends to arrest, bankrupt, injure, or otherwise harm you in some lasting way – or simply wants to kill you. *Example:* Baron Wulfenbach gunning for a troublesome Spark. *×1.*

Frequency of Appearance

Choose a frequency of appearance (p. 76). Roll at the beginning of each adventure, or at the start of each *session* of a continuing adventure.

Limits on Enemies

You may not take more than two Enemies, or claim more than -60 points in Enemies.

Enemies in Play

If the dice indicate that an Enemy should show up, the GM must decide how and where the Enemy becomes involved. If any Enemy is very powerful, or a number of different Enemies show up at the same time, this may influence the whole adventure.

If you take an extremely powerful Enemy, you're likely to be jailed or killed before long. So it goes. You can get 60 points by taking Enemy (Baron Wulfenbach; Hunter; 15 or less), but your every adventure will consist of the Baron, personally, gunning for you – even with the extra 60 points, your career will be short.

If you start with a weak Enemy, or play cleverly, you might manage to eliminate your foe or permanently change their attitude toward you. If you get rid of an Enemy, you have three choices:

- Pay enough character points to buy off the Enemy.
- Replace Enemy with another disadvantage. For instance, perhaps during the final battle you were kicked in the head, leaving you partially deaf, or crushed under a chicken coop, leaving you with an irrational fear of chickens. The new disadvantage should have the same point cost as your former Enemy – or less, if you want to buy off *part* of the Enemy disadvantage. If you cannot think of a good substitute disadvantage, the GM will be more than happy to supply one!
- Take a new Enemy of equal value. You might have killed a power-mad Spark, but what about their partner?

PATRONS   Variable

A "Patron" is an NPC – or even an entire *organization* – that serves as your advisor, employer, mentor, or protector. An employer must be exceptional to qualify as a Patron, though; a Patron is much more than an ordinary boss!

Patron's Power

A Patron's base point cost depends on its power. Use the categories below as a guide, but note that some Patrons won't fit neatly into any of them. The GM's word is final.

A powerful individual (usually built on or at least 150% of the PC's starting points) or a fairly powerful organization (assets of at least 1,000 times starting wealth for the world). *10 points.*

An extremely powerful individual (built on at least twice the PC's starting points) or a powerful organization (assets of at least 10,000 times starting wealth). *Examples:* an extremely wealthy noble or a city militia. *15 points.*

An ultra-powerful individual (built on as many points as the GM wants!) or a very powerful organization (assets of at least 100,000 times starting wealth). *Examples*: a powerful Spark or a big city. *20 points.*

An extremely powerful organization (assets of at least one million times starting wealth). *Examples:* Colette Voltaire or a very small nation. *25 points.*

A national government or giant multinational organization (net worth basically incalculable), or a truly godlike Spark who appears personally to intervene on your behalf. *Examples:* Baron Wulfenbach or Queen Albia. *30 points.*

Frequency of Appearance

Choose a frequency of appearance (p. 76). If the GM determines that your Patron appears at the start of an adventure, they *may* design the adventure to include an assignment or aid from the Patron. They can also choose to leave out your Patron, if its appearance would make no sense or disrupt the adventure.

However, if the GM determined that your Patron *could* have appeared and you try to contact your Patron during the adventure (for help, advice, etc.), then the contact is likely to be successful and you may receive aid – within reason. If you're locked in a dungeon without any means of communication, you won't be contacting anybody! You don't know whether your Patron is "available" on a given adventure until you attempt to request aid. As a rule,

you should be able to reach your Patron only once per adventure.

Remember that a powerful Patron could be helpful without actually intervening! A young Spark who's *known* to know Gil Wulfenbach may carry some extra weight in a tough spot.

Party Patrons

Often, several PCs – perhaps the entire party – share a Patron (they are all agents of the same noble, know the same Spark, etc.). No matter how many characters share a Patron, the cost is *not* shared; each character must pay full price for the Patron. On the other hand, the GM will make an appearance roll for each character at the start of the adventure, and if the Patron appears for *any* of them, it is usually available for *all* of them. The GM should scale the quality and quantity of the aid provided in proportion to the number of successful appearance rolls.
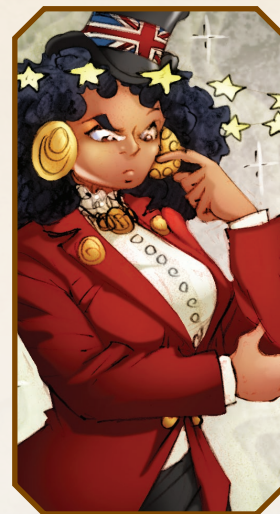
Drawbacks of Patrons

If your Patron is a noble, powerful official, military force, etc., you may owe it a Duty (p. 96). Some Patrons may require a stringent code of behavior in return for their aid; see *Self-Imposed Mental Disadvantages* (p. 94). A Patron might also have powerful foes that are now *your* foes; this can give you an Enemy (p. 79). Such factors can cut the effective cost of a Patron significantly, turning it from a benefit to a considerable liability!

Employers and Patrons

Not every employer is a Patron. If you can depend on your employer to get you out of trouble – at least sometimes – it might really be a Patron. Otherwise, it's just a job. For example, a city militia might be a Patron if it takes care of its own. Baron Wulfenbach's army, though powerful, isn't a likely Patron – at least for an ordinary soldier.

Patron Modifiers

These modifiers work the same way as *Ally Modifiers* (p. 77).

Equipment: Your Patron supplies useful equipment that you would otherwise have to buy and that you're free to use as you see fit. This modifier applies only if the gear is *yours* once given. A soldier with a military Patron wouldn't pay extra for their weapons, since they can't take along that hardware when they go off duty. An adventurer in the employ of a generous noble who hands out useful "gifts" *would* pay extra. *+50% if the equipment is worth no more than the campaign's average starting wealth, or +100% if it's worth more than that.*

Highly Accessible: You can attempt to contact your Patron at any time – even when you're locked in a dungeon, lost in the desert, etc. This is most appropriate if your Patron has unusually good methods of communication, or if *you* have some special Spark-made communications device. +50%.

Minimal Intervention: Your Patron is less useful than its power level suggests. On a successful appearance roll, the GM makes a reaction roll for your Patron to determine whether it actually provides aid (see *Requests for Aid*, p. 133). On a "Neutral" or better reaction, you receive the aid your Patron *thinks* you need – which may or may not be what you actually *want*. -50%.

Secret: Your Patron works behind the scenes. You don't know who it is and you cannot request aid directly. You might be able to call for help in such a way that the Patron gets the message (GM's decision), but there's no guarantee that the Patron will take action. The only evidence of this kind of Patron is minor incidents and "lucky breaks." This can take the form of information, equipment, and direct aid . . . but only when it suits the Patron, and always in an untraceable way. A Patron like this often regards its aid as an investment on which it expects some return; therefore, it might not have your best interests at heart. Only the GM knows these details. *You* know nothing other than that you have a Patron. -50%.

Special Abilities: Your Patron wields power out of proportion to its wealth or point value. *+50% if your Patron has extensive social or political power (e.g., a Pope); +100% if your Patron possesses technologically advanced equipment, grants you special powers, or has an unusual reach in time or space.*

Unwilling: You obtained your Patron through coercion. It provides aid only because there's no other choice, and it *definitely* doesn't have your best interests at heart! You'll eventually make one request too many (GM's judgment – perhaps if an appearance roll comes up 18) and lose the Patron: Remove the Patron from your character sheet and lower your point value accordingly. Since a Patron is by definition more powerful than you are, taking an Unwilling Patron is risky. If the Patron can find a way to break your "hold," it will, and may well become an Enemy! -50%.

Advantages

"Advantages" are positive qualities that set your character apart from someone else who otherwise has the same abilities. Unlike attributes, a character either has an advantage or they don't. None are assigned to everyone.

There's one exception: The advantages on a nonhuman template (p. 63) are common to nearly every member of the species. If you want your nonhuman character to lack such a trait, treat its absence as a disadvantage (p. 93); e.g., Jägers (p. 66) have Discriminatory Smell [15], so if *your* Jäger is chronically stuffy, take No Discriminatory Smell [-15]. Likewise, lacking a racial *disadvantage* is an advantage; for a Jäger without Bloodlust [-10], buy No Bloodlust [10].

Each advantage notes a cost in character points. This is fixed for some advantages. Others are bought in "levels," at a cost per level; e.g., Acute Senses cost 2 points/level, so for Acute Vision 6, pay 12 points. Advantages with "Variable" cost are more complicated; read the advantage description for details.

The GM has final say over *any* advantage purchase – *especially* changes to nonhuman templates – based on their judgment of what fits the campaign and a specific character's background.

Absolute Timing   2 or 5 points

You have an accurate mental clock. This ability comes in two levels:

Absolute Timing: You always know what time it is, with a precision equal to the best personal timepieces available in Europa. You can measure elapsed time with equal accuracy. Neither changes of time zone nor sleep interfere with this ability, and you can wake up at a predetermined time if you choose. Being knocked unconscious, hypnotized, etc. *may* prevent this advantage from working, and time travel *will* confuse you until you find out what the "new" time is. *2 points.*

Chronolocation: As above, but time travel doesn't interfere – you *always* know what time it is. Things like calendar reform can still confuse you, though! When you travel in time, the GM might tell you, "You have gone back exactly 92,656 days," and let your character figure out if that involves a leap year. *5 points.*

Acute Senses   2 points/level

You have superior senses. Each Acute Sense is a separate advantage that gives +1 per level to all Sense rolls (p. 138) you make – or the GM makes for you – using *that one sense*. Available types are:

● *Acute Hearing:* Gives a bonus to hear something or to notice a sound.
● *Acute Taste and Smell:* Gives a bonus to notice a taste or smell.
● *Acute Touch:* Gives a bonus to detect something by touch.

• *Acute Vision:* Gives a bonus to spot things visually and whenever you do a visual search.

With the GM's permission, you may also buy Acute Senses for specialized senses that go beyond the usual human ones above.

You cannot usually buy acute senses in play, though the GM may let you raise your Perception. *Exception:* If you lose a sense, the GM might let you spend earned points on other Acute Senses to compensate; e.g., if you're blinded, you might acquire Acute Hearing.

Alternate Identity   5 points/identity

You have multiple *established* identities (no mere lies and disguises) that "check out" against official records. Depending on how you obtained a false identity, collaborators or people who've been duped into believing it may vouch for you as well. All of your alter-egos come with identity documents good enough to pass close inspection, allowing you to hold land, title, and so on in their name – though social advantages possessed by *any* identity must be paid for normally.

This advantage is usually limited to "connected" criminals or spies. Ask the GM before taking it!

Ambidexterity   5 points

You can fight or otherwise act equally well with either hand, never suffering the -4 to DX for using the "off" hand (see p. 142). This does *not* give you extra actions in combat; it just grants more freedom to take your usual actions using either hand.

Animal Empathy   5 points

You're unusually talented at reading the motivations of animals. When you meet an animal or animal construct, the GM rolls against your IQ and tells you what you "feel." This reveals the beast's emotional state – friendly, frightened, hostile, hungry, etc. – and whether it's under some outside control. You may also use your Influence skills (p. 138) on animals just as you would on sapient beings, which often ensures a positive reaction.

Arm DX   12 or 16 points per +1 DX

Some of your arms have extra DX relative to the DX of your body. This DX applies only to things done with those arms and hands. It does *not* affect Basic Speed! If a task requires two or more hands, and they don't have the same DX, use the *lowest* DX. Combat skills rely on bodily DX, and don't benefit from this DX at all.
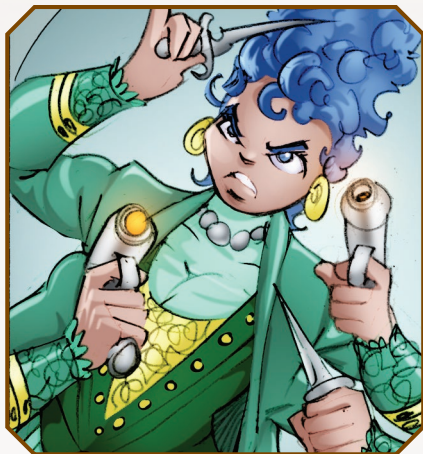
Arm DX costs 12 points per +1 DX for one arm, or 16 +1 DX for two arms. To raise the DX of three or more arms, improve overall DX.

Arm ST   3, 5, or 8 points per +1 ST

Some of your arms have extra ST relative to the ST of your body. This ST applies only to the efforts to lift, throw, or attack with those arms or hands. It does *not* affect HP or overall Basic Lift! If the task requires multiple hands and they don't have the same ST, use the *average* ST.

Arm ST costs 3 points per +1 ST for one arm, 5 points for +1 ST for two, or 8 points per +1 ST for three. To raise the ST of four or more arms, improve overall ST.

Catfall   10 points

You subtract five yards from a fall automatically (treat this as an automatic Acrobatics success – don't check again for it). In addition, a successful DX roll *halves* damage from any fall (see *Falling*, p. 150). To enjoy these benefits, your limbs must be unbound and your body free to twist as you fall.

Claim to Hospitality   1 to 10 points

You belong to a social group that encourages its members to assist one another. When you're away from home, you may call on other members of this group for food, shelter, and basic aid.

The point cost depends on the extent and wealth of the group. A single friend with a house in another city is worth 1 point; a small family, 2 points; a society of merchants along an important trade route, 5 points; and a vast alliance of wealthy figures, such as "every merchant in the world," 10 points. In the appropriate situation, members of the group should be easy to find (14 or less on 3d after 1d-1 hours of searching), but the chance of meeting one at random is small (6 or less to meet one in a small crowd in an appropriate place).

Claim to Hospitality mainly saves the cost and trouble of finding lodging while "on the road" (though if you're wealthy, you might be expected to give gifts to your hosts), but there are side benefits. Members of the group are friendly to each other (+3 to reactions), and may provide advice, introductions, and *small* loans if asked. The level of assistance might occasionally approach that of Contacts (p. 77). If you expect anything more, however, purchase Allies (p. 76) or Patrons (p. 81).

This advantage cuts both ways. If you take it, you can be asked, when at home (at the GM's whim), to provide NPCs with exactly the same sort of hospitality you claim while away. This may become an adventure hook! If you refuse such aid, you'll eventually get a bad name and lose this advantage.

Claws   Variable

You have claws. This advantage modifies all your hands and feet; there's no discount for claws on only some of your extremities. There are several variations:

Blunt Claws: Very short claws, like those of a dog. Add +1 *per die* to the damage you inflict with a punch or kick; e.g., 2d-3 becomes 2d-1. *3 points.*

Hooves: Hard hooves, like those of a horse. Add +1 *per die* to the damage you inflict with a kick, and give your feet (only) +1 DR. *3 points.*

Sharp Claws: Short claws, like those of a cat. Change the damage you inflict with a punch or a kick from crushing to cutting. *5 points.*

Talons: Longer claws – up to 12" long. Change the damage you inflict with a punch or a kick from crushing to your choice of cutting or impaling (choose before rolling to hit). *8 points.*

Long Talons: Huge claws, like sword blades extending from your body! Treat these as Talons, but damage is +1 *per die.* *11 points.*

Nonhumans might have any form of this advantage – ask the GM first! It's normally unavailable to humans.

Clerical Investment   5 points

You're an ordained priest of a recognized religion. You enjoy a number of privileges that a layman lacks, notably the authority to preside over weddings, funerals, and similar ceremonies. This gives you +1 to reactions from those of your religion and those who respect your faith, and entitles you to use a title – Father, Sister, Rabbi, etc. This does *not* guarantee that you're a good person . . . the priests of evil cults have this trait, too!

Clerical Investment is purely social in nature. It does *not* confer miraculous powers. It *includes* Religious Rank 0 (see *Rank,* p. 75). To have more influence within your church, buy up your Rank.

Clinging   20 points

You can walk or crawl on walls and ceilings. You can stop at any point and stick to the surface without fear of falling. Neither feat requires a roll against Climbing skill, provided the surface is one you can cling to (GM's decision). Move while clinging is half your Basic Move.

If you're falling and try to grab a surface to break your fall, the GM must first decide whether there's anything in reach. If there is, make a DX roll to touch the surface, and then make a ST roll at -1 per 5 yards already fallen. Success stops your fall. Otherwise, you continue to fall – but you may subtract 5 yards from the height of the fall thanks to the slowing effect of the failed Clinging attempt. Gravity variations (say, caused by a Gravity Engine, p. 156) affect these distances; e.g., in 0.5G, the ST roll is at -1 per *10* yards.

This advantage is unavailable to ordinary humans.

Combat Reflexes   15 points

You have extraordinary reactions, and are rarely surprised for more than a moment. You get +1 to all active defense rolls (see *Defending,* p. 143) and +2 to Fright Checks (p. 39). You never "freeze" in a surprise situation, and get +6 on all IQ rolls to wake up, or to recover from surprise or mental stun (p. 147).

Common Sense   10 points

Any time you start to do something the GM feels is *stupid,* they'll roll against your IQ. Success means they must warn you: "Hadn't you better think about that?" This advantage lets an impulsive *player* take the part of a thoughtful character.

Constriction Attack   15 points

Your musculature is optimized for crushing your opponents – whether by "hugging" like a bear or constricting like a python. To use this ability, you must first successfully grapple your intended victim. On your next turn, and each successive turn, roll a Quick Contest: your ST vs. your victim's ST or HT, whichever is *higher.* If you win, your victim takes damage equal to your margin of victory; otherwise, they take no damage.

This trait is normally available only to nonhumans.

Cultural Adaptability   10 or 20 points

Everybody is familiar with the social peculiarities of their *native* culture. In *foreign* cultures, though, the GM may assess penalties to Influence skills (p. 73), to other social skills (including Carousing, Gesture, Leadership, Merchant, Politics, Public Speaking, and Teaching), and to artistic skills like Dancing and Singing. These can range from -1 to -5, depending on the "culture gap"; -3 is typical.

You are familiar with a broad spectrum of cultures. When dealing with them, you never suffer from such penalties. Point cost depends on scope:

Cultural Adaptability: You're familiar with all cultures of your race. *10 points.*

Xeno-Adaptability: You're familiar with all cultures in the *Girl Genius* game world! *20 points.*

Cybernetics   Variable

Buy cybernetic implants as equivalent advantages; e.g., Damage Resistance for built-in armor, or Night Vision, Infravision, or even Dark Vision for sinister glowing eyes that can see in the dark. The GM may permit you to acquire advantages that aren't natural for your race in this way – but a visible implant will cause most people to treat you as a construct!
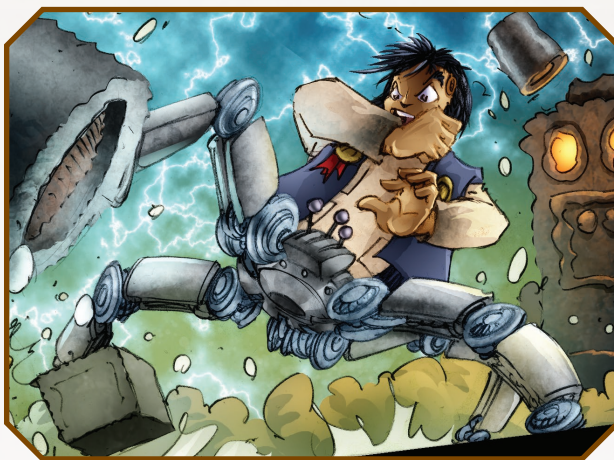
Damage Resistance 5 points/level

Your body itself has a Damage Resistance score (p. 145). Subtract this DR from the damage done by an attack *after* the DR of any artificial armor – which must be worn over natural armor – but *before* multiplying the injury for damage type. Natural DR doesn't protect your eyes, nor does it help against disease, poison, or purely mental attacks.

Normal humans cannot purchase DR! Creatures with natural armor can buy DR 1-5. Thick skin or a pelt would be DR 1; pig hide, armadillo shell, a *heavy* pelt, or scales, DR 2; rhinoceros hide or a pangolin's armor plates, DR 3; alligator scales or elephant hide, DR 4; and a giant tortoise would have DR 5. Clanks, constructs, and monsters can have whatever DR the GM is willing to approve.

Danger Sense 15 points

You can't depend on it, but sometimes you get this prickly feeling right at the back of your neck, and you know something's wrong. In any situation involving an ambush, impending disaster, or similar hazard, the GM will roll once against your Perception – secretly. Success gives you enough of a warning that you can take action. A roll of 3 or 4 means you get a little detail as to the nature of the danger.

Daredevil 15 points

Fortune seems to smile on you when you take risks! Any time you take an unnecessary risk (in the GM's opinion), you get +1 to all skill rolls. Furthermore, you may reroll any critical failure that occurs during such high-risk behavior.

Dark Vision 25 points

You can see in absolute darkness using some means other than light, radar, or sonar. You suffer no skill penalties for darkness, no matter its origin.

This trait is usually available only to nonhumans.

Digital Mind 5 points

You're a sentient "program," an artificial intelligence, or possibly even an "upload" of a living mind, inhabiting some kind of a machine body – most likely a clank. You're *completely immune* to any mental effect that affects only living minds. However, you're subject to other problems, such as a Spark breaking into your systems or rewiring your personality.

Discriminatory Senses 15 points

You have a superhuman ability to distinguish between sounds (Discriminatory Hearing), smells (Discriminatory Smell), or tastes (Discriminatory Taste) – pick one. You can *always* identify the noises, scents, or flavors of specific people, places, or things. You may memorize such a thing by focusing on it for one minute and making a successful IQ roll. Failure means you must wait one full day before trying again.

You also get +4 (in addition to any Acute Sense bonus) to Sense rolls for your chosen sense, and +4 to Shadowing or Tracking skill when trailing your target using that sense.

Doesn't Breathe 20 points

You don't breathe or require oxygen. Choking and strangulation attempts cannot harm or silence you, and you're immune to inhaled toxins.

Humans cannot have this trait.

Doesn't Eat or Drink 10 points

You don't require food, water, or fuel. Your body is powered in some other manner: solar power, ambient energy, etc.

This trait is unavailable to humans.

Doesn't Sleep 20 points

You don't have to sleep at all. You can ignore all ill effects from missed nights of rest.

Humans cannot have this advantage.

Eidetic Memory 5 or 10 points

You have an exceptionally good memory. Anyone may attempt an IQ roll to recall the general sense of past events – the better the roll, the truer the memory – but the details are sketchy. With this talent, you automatically succeed at these "memory rolls," and you often recall *precise* details. This trait comes in two levels:

Eidetic Memory: You automatically remember the general sense of everything you concentrate on, and can recall specific details by making an IQ roll. It's possible to "learn" this advantage in play. *5 points.*

Photographic Memory: As above, but you automatically recall specific details, too. Any time you, the *player,* forget a detail that your *character* has seen or heard, the GM or other players must remind you – truthfully! *10 points.*

This trait affects recall, not comprehension, and so does not benefit skills. However, it gives a bonus whenever the GM requires an IQ roll for learning: +5 for Eidetic Memory, +10 for Photographic Memory.

Empathy 15 points

You have a "feeling" for people (*not* animals, plants, or machines). When you first meet someone – or are reunited after an absence – you may ask the GM to roll against your IQ. They'll tell you what you "feel" about that person. On a failure, they'll *lie!*

Empathy is excellent for spotting imposters and for determining the true loyalties of NPCs. It can even determine whether someone has a "calling" or personality override in their mind: Ask the GM to roll a secret Quick Contest of your IQ vs. the *highest* of that person's IQ, Acting skill, or Persuade skill. If you win, the GM will reveal the truth. Empathy cannot detect those infected by a slaver wasp or Spark wasp (p. 175) – only a wasp eater (p. 176) can do that.

This advantage also grants +3 to your Detect Lies and Fortune-Telling skills.

Enhanced Defenses   Variable

You're unusually adept at evading attacks! This may be due to careful observation of your foe, a special device, or anything else that fits your background. There are three versions:

Enhanced Block: You have +1 to your Block score with either Cloak or Shield skill – choose which. *5 points.*
Enhanced Dodge: You have +1 to your Dodge score. *15 points.*
Enhanced Parry: You have +1 to your Parry score. You may take this advantage for bare hands (5 points), for any one Melee Weapon skill (5 points), or for *all* parries (10 points). *5 or 10 points.*

Enhanced Move   20 points/level

You can really move! Each level of Enhanced Move *doubles* your top speed in one environment: Air, Ground, or Water. You can also take a half-level of Enhanced Move, either alone or with any whole number of levels; this costs 10 points and multiplies Move by 1.5.

Your multiplied Move is your *top speed.* Record it in parentheses after your Enhanced Move trait; e.g., a character with Basic Move 5 and Enhanced Move 1.5 would have a top speed of $5 \times 2 \times 1.5 = 15$ yards/second. Write this as "Enhanced Move 1.5 (Ground Speed 15)."

Enhanced Move doesn't affect Basic Speed, Basic Move, or Dodge. Its benefits apply only when moving along a relatively straight, smooth course. It has *some* defensive value, however: Enemies with ranged attacks must take your speed into account when attacking you.

While nonhumans might have any form of this advantage, it's unavailable to humans.

Extended Lifespan   2 points/level

An average life cycle is defined as maturity at age 18, with aging effects (p. 149) starting at age 50, and accelerating at ages 70 and 90. Each level of Extended Lifespan doubles all these values.

Normal humans cannot have this trait. It is not unusual for Sparks to give themselves this advantage, though they usually fall victim to misadventure anyway.

Extra Arms   10 points/arm

Any limb with which you can manipulate objects is an *arm,* regardless of where it grows or what it looks like. An arm can also strike a blow that inflicts thrust-1 crushing damage based on ST. The human norm is two arms, for 0 points. Nonhumans get two arms for free as well, but may buy *extra* arms.

You can use extra arms freely for multiple *noncombat* tasks. For instance, with four arms, you could perform four one-handed tasks. You can also use all of your arms in concert for a *single* combat maneuver where extra arms would be helpful; e.g., to grapple. And if you have at least three arms, you can use a shield normally with one arm and still wield a two-handed weapon, just as a normal human fighter can use a shield and one-handed weapon at the same time. No matter how many arms you have, though, you don't automatically get additional attacks or actions in combat; that requires Extra Attack (below).

Extra arms give a huge advantage in close combat! You cannot punch with more than one arm at a time unless you have Extra Attack, but you can *grapple* using all your arms at once. Each arm over and above the generic set of two gives +2 to attempts to grapple or break free from a grapple.

Extra Attack   25 points/attack

You can attack more than once whenever you take an *Attack, All-Out Attack,* or *Move and Attack* maneuver on your turn in combat. Each Extra Attack gives you one additional attack. You may not have more attacks than you have limbs (arms, legs, etc.), natural weapons (built-in cannon, teeth, etc.), and powers with which to attack. The GM's word on what constitutes an "attack" is final.

A normal human can purchase *one* Extra Attack. This lets them attack with both hands at once, and represents unusually good coordination. Nonhumans have no such limitation.

Extra Attack *doesn't* eliminate the -4 to hit when using the "off" hand. For that, buy Ambidexterity (p. 83).

Extra Legs   Variable

If you can walk on a limb, but cannot use it to manipulate objects, it is a *leg.* A normal leg can kick for thrust/crushing damage at your usual reach (one yard for a human). The human norm is two legs, for 0 points. It costs points to have more than two legs:

Three or four legs: If you lose a leg, you can continue to move at half Move (round down). Loss of a second leg causes you to fall. *5 points.*

Five or six legs: Each leg lost reduces Move by 20% until only three legs are left. At that point, your Move is 40% of normal. Loss of another leg causes you to fall. *10 points.*

Seven or more legs: Each leg lost reduces move by 10% until only three legs are left. At that point, your Move is 40% of normal. Loss of another leg causes you to fall. *15 points.*

Favor   Variable

You saved somebody's life, kept silent at the right time, or otherwise did someone a good turn. Now they owe you one.

A Favor is a one-shot Ally (p. 76), Contact (p. 77), or Patron (p. 81). Work out the point cost of the parent advantage and then divide it by 5 (round up) to get the cost of the Favor. The catch is that the NPC(s) will help you out once and *only* once.

When you wish to collect on your Favor, the GM rolls against the frequency of appearance of the underlying advantage. Failure means you couldn't reach your friend in time, or they couldn't comply, but you still have your Favor coming. You may try again on a later adventure.

On a success, you get what you want (subject to the limits of the advantage). This discharges the obligation: Remove the Favor from your character sheet and reduce your point total appropriately. On a roll of a 3 or 4, however, your friend still feels indebted to you and you retain the Favor . . . at least until next time.

You may buy a Favor in play, if the GM agrees. The GM can also include a Favor as a reward for a successful adventure.

Fearlessness   2 points/level

You're difficult to frighten or intimidate! Add your level of Fearlessness to your Will whenever you make a Fright Check (p. 139) or resist the Intimidation skill (p. 117). As well, subtract your Fearlessness level from all Intimidation rolls made against you.

Fit   5 or 15 points

You have better cardiovascular health than your HT alone would indicate. This comes in two levels:

Fit: You get +1 to all HT rolls. This does *not* improve your HT attribute or HT-based skills! You also recover FP at twice the normal rate. *5 points.*

Very Fit: As above, but the bonus to HT rolls is +2. In addition, you *lose* FP at only half the normal rate. *15 points.*

In both cases, this advantage applies only to FP lost to lifting, running, swimming, and other ordinary physical exertion – never to FP spent to use advantages or skills.

Flexibility   5 or 15 points

Your body is unusually flexible. This advantage comes in two levels:

Flexibility: You get +3 to the Climbing, Erotic Art, and Escape skills, and on attempts to break free in close combat. You may also ignore up to -3 in penalties for working in close quarters (including many Explosives and Mechanic rolls). *5 points.*

Double-Jointed: As above, but more so! You get +5 to Climbing, Erotic Art, and Escape, and on attempts to break free, and may ignore up to -5 in penalties for close quarters. *15 points.*

Flight   40 points

You can fly! This is full-fledged, self-powered flight. It works at any altitude where there's significant atmosphere – though at high altitudes, you'll need a way to survive in very thin air (e.g., Doesn't Breathe). You cannot *leave* the atmosphere for the vacuum of space.

Your air Move is Basic Speed × 2 (drop all fractions). To go faster, take Enhanced Move (Air). You can also "fly" at half-speed underwater. Flight includes the ability to hover at Move 0 as well.

Flight doesn't confer the ability to do complex acrobatics and tight turns; for that, buy Aerobatics skill (p. 106). The Flight skill improves endurance.

This advantage is unavailable to ordinary humans.

Gadgeteer   10 or 25 points

You're a natural inventor. You can modify existing equipment and – given sufficient time and money – invent entirely new gadgets *quickly*, as described in *Inventing Without a Net* (p. 152). This advantage comes in two levels:

Gadgeteer: You work faster than any realistic inventor, but your work still takes days or months, and requires a good deal of money and expensive equipment. *10 points.*

Quick Gadgeteer: You can throw together wondrous gadgets in minutes or hours, and can get by with scrounged-together spare parts that cost a few percent of what a realistic inventor would have to spend. *25 points.*

Sparks and Gadgeteers

All characters with Spark 1-3 receive the basic Gadgeteer advantage at no point cost. To upgrade it to Quick Gadgeteer, they need only pay the difference (15 points). Those with Spark 4+ receive Quick Gadgeteer at no point cost.

The GM decides whether *non*-Sparks can even have this advantage! See *"Mundane" Inventors* (p. 156).

Gizmos   5 points/level

You always seem to have just the piece of gear you need. Once per game session per level of this advantage, you may pull out one small item of equipment that you *could* have been carrying. This "Gizmo" remains undefined until you reveal it. It doesn't even "enter play" until you take it out; thus, it cannot be damaged, stolen, lost, or found in a search.

A Gizmo must be small enough to fit into an ordinary coat pocket, and must meet one of these three criteria:

● An item you own but didn't specifically state you were carrying; e.g., if you own a small ray gun and get ambushed while traveling through the Wastelands, you could pull it out even if you were just searched by the thieves and they found nothing.

● An item that you *probably* own and that fits your character concept, but that's minor enough to leave unspecified; e.g., a wrench if you're a Spark.

● An inexpensive item that's widely available to *anyone;* e.g., if you need to light a fuse, you could pull out a box of matches – and they would work even if you just walked in from a downpour.

Gadgeteers and Gizmos

Those with the Gadgeteer advantage (p. 87) have more latitude. In addition to the usual items available, a Gadgeteer may specify that their Gizmo is one of their inventions (which must still be small). Or instead of pulling an *existing* gadget "out of their pocket," a Gadgeteer can use their Gizmo to let them *build* what they need on the spot. They must still possess or find appropriate materials, and know any required skills. The GM rolls secretly against the relevant skill, at -2 or worse. Failure means the device doesn't work but still uses up the Gizmo for the game session. Critical failure means it backfires spectacularly (see *Gadget Bugs and Side-Effects Tables*, p. 154).

Hard to Kill   2 points/level

You're incredibly difficult to kill. Each level of Hard to Kill gives +1 to HT rolls made for survival at -HP or below, and on any HT roll where failure means instant death (due to heart failure, poison, etc.). If this bonus makes the difference between success and failure, you collapse, apparently dead (or disabled), but come to in the usual amount of time – see *Recovering from Unconsciousness* (p. 148).

Healing   30 points

You have the ability to heal others. You must be in physical contact with the subject. To activate your power, concentrate for one second and make an IQ roll. Roll at -2 if the subject is unconscious.

You can use Healing in two ways:

Heal Injuries: On a success, you can heal any number of HP. This costs you 1 FP per HP healed (round up). Failure costs 1d FP, but you can try again; critical failure *also* causes the recipient 1d of injury. By rolling at -6, you can repair a crippled but whole limb if you *completely* heal the

HP lost to the crippling injury. For instance, to heal a hand crippled by 4 points of injury, make an IQ-6 roll and spend 2 FP. Each healer gets only one attempt per crippled limb. Healing cannot restore *lost* limbs or resurrect the dead.

Cure Disease: This requires an IQ roll at a modifier determined by the GM – from +1 for the common cold to -15 for Hogfarb's Resplendent Immolation (p. 156). The FP cost equals twice the penalty, minimum 1 FP. For instance, it costs 6 FP to cure a disease that calls for an IQ-3 roll.

If used more than once per day on a given subject, apply a cumulative -3 per *successful* healing of the same type (injury or disease) on that person. This penalty accumulates until a *full* day has passed since the most recent healing.

High Pain Threshold   10 points

You're as susceptible to injury as anyone else, but you don't *feel* it as much. You *never* suffer a shock penalty (p. 147) when you're injured. In addition, you get +3 on all HT rolls to avoid knockdown and stunning (p. 147). Lastly, if you're tortured physically, you get +3 to resist – and the GM may let you roll at Will+3 to ignore pain in other situations.

Higher Purpose   5 points

You're driven to exceed your normal limits in one particular pursuit. You must state this exactly as if it were a Code of Honor disadvantage (p. 96): "Defend all children," "Slay all Sparks," etc. The Higher Purpose must be *specific*, entail genuine risk and inconvenience, and not be related to something you would already do in the course of your adventure. All Higher Purposes are subject to GM approval.

If, in the GM's judgment, you're unfaltering in pursuit of your Higher Purpose, you get +1 to all dice rolls that pertain *directly* to the pursuit of that cause. If you deviate from your Higher Purpose, you lose this bonus, and the GM is free to penalize you for bad roleplaying just as if you had ignored a Code of Honor.

Indomitable   15 points

You're impossible to influence through ordinary words or actions. Those who wish to use Influence skills (p. 73) on you must have whichever of Empathy, Animal Empathy, Machine Empathy, or Plant Empathy applies to beings of your kind. Everyone else – however convincing – fails automatically.

Infravision   0 or 10 points

You can see into the infrared, allowing you to detect varying degrees of heat. This lets you fight at no penalty even in absolute darkness, *if* your target emits heat (all living beings and most machines do!). It also gives you +2 on all Vision rolls to spot such targets, since their heat stands out from the background. You can follow a heat trail when tracking: Add +3 to Tracking rolls if the trail is no more than an hour old.

Infravision does *not* let you distinguish colors, and lets you judge only the general size and shape of heat-emitting objects, including living beings. Roll at -4 to distinguish between objects of similar size and shape. The GM may also require a Vision-4 roll to read reflected heat. Sudden flashes of heat can blind you – just as a flash of light can blind ordinary vision.

Cost depends on your capabilities:

You can only see using Infravision, and are subject to its limitations at all times: *0 points.*

You can switch freely between normal vision and Infravision: *10 points.*

Normally, *neither* version is available to humans.

Intuition   15 points

You usually guess right. Faced with a number of clear alternatives and no logical way to choose between them, you can ask the GM to let you use your Intuition. The GM will make a secret IQ roll for you, at +1 per "good" choice and -1 per "bad" choice. Success means the GM will steer you toward a good choice; on a critical success, this is the *best* choice. Failure gives you no information – but on a critical failure, the GM will guide you toward a *bad* choice. Only one roll per question is allowed.

The GM should never allow Intuition to short-circuit an adventure – for instance, by letting the intuitive investigator walk into a room, point a finger at the guilty party, and close the case. At the most, Intuition would point the detective in the direction of a good clue.

Language Talent   10 points

You have a knack for languages. When you learn a language at a comprehension level above None, you automatically function at one level higher. This lets you buy Accented comprehension for the price of Broken, or Native for the price of Accented.

Legal Enforcement Powers
5, 10, or 15 points

You're a law enforcer, with the accompanying powers and restrictions. The point cost depends on the kinds of laws you enforce, the size of your jurisdiction, how answerable you are for your actions, and the degree of respect you must show for the civil rights of others:

● You have local jurisdiction, the authority to arrest suspected criminals, the power to request official permission for a search and to carry out the search if that's granted, and *possibly* the right to carry a concealed weapon. *Example:* a local police officer for Beetleburg. *5 points.*

● As above, but you also have jurisdiction over a larger area of Europa, *or* aren't obligated to respect the civil rights of others, *or* are free to engage in covert investigations, *or* may kill with relative impunity. *Example:* a spy for Queen Albia's Merchant Companies. *10 points.*

● You have three or more of the above powers. *Example:* an agent of the Pax Transylvania. *15 points.*

Legal Enforcement Powers might also require a Duty (p. 96).

Legal Immunity   5, 10, or 15 points

You're exempt from some or all of your society's laws. Should you break the law, ordinary law enforcers lack the power to charge you. Only one particular authority – usually your own church, social class, or ruler – can judge or punish you.

The point cost depends on how sweeping the immunity is (GM's judgment):

● You aren't subject to ordinary laws, but the rules that govern your behavior are just as strict. *Examples:* a diplomat or priest. *5 points.*

● As above, but the laws that apply to you are *less* strict than those that apply to most people. *Example:* a genuine noble. *10 points.*

● You can do nearly anything you want provided you don't injure the nation, church, or other power that granted you Legal Immunity in the first place. *Example:* "Bang" DuPree. *15 points.*

Lightning Calculator   2 or 5 points

You have a phenomenal ability to do math in your head, instantly. This talent comes in two levels:

Lightning Calculator: You, the *player,* may use a calculator at any time, to figure out anything you want – even if your *character* is fleeing for their life! For simple math problems, the GM may just say that your character knows the answer. *2 points.*

Intuitive Mathematician: As above, but more so. You can do any level of engineering design in your head and perform even the most convoluted Sparkish reckonings without complicated devices. Indeed, you *never* need any kind of contrivance to do calculations – your mind is superior to all such gadgetry! *5 points.*

Luck   Variable

You were born lucky! Luck comes in three levels:

Luck: You may reroll a single bad dice roll twice and take the best of the three rolls! You must declare that you're using your Luck immediately after you roll the dice. If the GM is rolling for you in secret, you may announce that you're using your Luck ahead of time, and the GM will roll three times and give you the best result. Once you use Luck, you must wait one full hour of *real-world* time before you can use it again. *15 points.*

Extraordinary Luck: As above, but usable every 30 minutes. *30 points.*

Ridiculous Luck: As above, but usable every *10* minutes! *60 points.*

You cannot share or transfer your Luck. It applies only to *your* success, damage, or reaction rolls, *or* on outside events that affect you or your whole party, *or* when you're being attacked (in which case you may make your attacker roll three times and take the *worst* result!).

Machine Empathy   15 points

You have a natural feel for machines, machine constructs, and clanks. If a machine is having problems, you roll at +2 to figure out and correct the problems if the machine is unfamiliar, or at +4 if it's familiar. You also get +2 to reaction and Influence rolls when dealing with *sentient* machines.

Modular Abilities   5 points/slot + 3 × points in slot

You have a pool of character points that you can reallocate through rapid study. You may rearrange these points to add a skill or *learnable* advantage (the GM decides what's learnable) temporarily – or to improve such a trait, if you already have it. This takes one second per character point shifted to the new ability. Any abilities to which the moved points were *previously* assigned are lost.

This advantage comes in "slots." A slot can hold *one* skill or advantage at a time. Each slot costs a basic 5 points, plus 3 points per point in the pool for that slot.

Nictitating Membrane   1 point/level

You have transparent lenses over your eyes that you can open and close like eyelids. This lets you see normally underwater, and protects your eyes from irritants. Each level of Nictitating Membrane provides your eyes (only) with DR 1 and grants +1 to all HT rolls concerned with eye damage.

This advantage is unavailable to ordinary humans.

Night Vision   1 point/level

Your eyes adapt rapidly to darkness. Each level of this ability (maximum nine levels) allows you to ignore -1 in combat or vision penalties due to darkness, provided that there is at least *some* light.

Perfect Balance   15 points

Under normal conditions, you can always keep your footing – no matter how narrow the walking surface (tightrope, ledge, tree limb, etc.) – without having to make a dice roll. If the surface is wet, slippery, or unstable, you get +6 on all rolls to keep your feet. In combat, you get +4 to DX and DX-based skill rolls to keep your feet or avoid being knocked down. Finally, you get +1 to Acrobatics, Climbing, and Piloting skills.

Plant Empathy   5 points

You have an unusual rapport with growing things. On encountering a plant or plant construct, the GM will roll against your IQ. Success means they'll give you a general sense of the plant's health and some idea of its origin, including whether it's natural or Spark-made – and if the latter, clues to what kind of Spark created it. Furthermore, this advantage functions as Empathy (p. 85) with respect to sentient plants, and allows you to use Influence skills (p. 73) on such entities, which usually ensures a positive reaction.

Possession   100 points

You can transfer your consciousness between bodies. You can also store it in devices such as clanks or constructs. In theory, you could live forever, moving from dying bodies to healthy ones, spending time in devices when necessary.

To perform a possession, you must use a Summoning Engine or similar Spark device; for game mechanics, see Lucrezia Mongfish's character sheet (p. 50). If this works, you gain your new host's ST, DX, and HT; secondary characteristics calculated from those scores; and *physical* advantages and disadvantages. You keep your own IQ, Perception, and Will, and all your *mental* traits, including skills (though DX- and HT-based skills now use your host's attributes). Whose social traits you end up with depends on your society's rules. The GM's word is final regarding what's physical, mental, and social.

If you occupy a sentient host, you have sufficient access to their memories in the first few hours of the takeover to learn their name and daily routine. To recall a specific fact from their memories, roll vs. IQ-1. You cannot acquire their skills.

If you occupy a host for a long time, or hop between multiple bodies, the GM is free to adjust your point total to reflect the most expensive body you regularly occupy. Somebody else successfully using a Summoning Engine or similar device on *you* can forcefully remove you from a body.

Rapid Healing   5 or 15 points

Your wounds heal quickly. This trait comes in two levels:

Rapid Healing: Whenever you roll to recover lost HP or to see if you can get over a crippling injury, you get +5 to your effective HT. *5 points.*

Very Rapid Healing: As above, but when you roll to recover lost HP, a successful HT roll means you heal *two* HP, not one. *15 points.*

Resistant   Variable

You're naturally resistant to disease or poison, as follows:

Resistant to Disease (+3): +3 on all HT rolls to resist disease. *3 points.*

Resistant to Disease (+8): +8 on all HT rolls to resist disease. *5 points.*

Resistant to Poison (+3): +3 on all HT rolls to resist poison. *5 points.*

Resistant to Poison (+8): +8 on all HT rolls to resist poison. *7 points.*

Serendipity   15 points/level

You have the knack of being in the right place at the right time. Each level of this trait entitles you to one fortuitous but *plausible* coincidence per game session. Details are up to the GM; e.g., the GM might declare that one of the guards you need to talk your way past just happens to be your cousin.

From time to time, the GM may rule that a single *implausible* coincidence counts as some or all of your lucky breaks for a given game session; e.g., you're kicked off an airship and land safely on another one.

You're free to *suggest* serendipitous occurrences, but the GM gets the final say. If the GM is unable to work your Serendipity into the current game session, you'll get the lucky breaks you missed next game session.

Social Chameleon   5 points

You have the knack of knowing exactly what to say – and when to say it – around your social "betters." You're exempt from reaction penalties due to differences in Rank or Status. In situations where there would be no such penalty, you get +1 on reactions from those who demand respect.

Spark   3 points for Spark 0, +10 points/level

You have the Spark! This gives you a knack for the inventive wizardry that defines the *Girl Genius* setting. It's measured in levels that offer progressively greater degrees of power. Below are the basics; for *much* more on applications of the Spark, see Chapter 7.

Spark 0   3 points

This level denotes untapped potential. On touching any gadget or piece of machinery, you may make a Sense roll (p. 138). Success lets you ask the GM a *single* question about the device's function. The greater your success, the more detailed the GM's answer will be.

In addition, you can create or modify devices that *begin* to push the boundaries of understood science in unpredictable ways. The GM may decide that a creation of yours is capable of doing something extraordinary, but will likely keep its specific nature from you.

At this level, your talents are undeveloped and you have yet to "break through." You are likely unaware of your potential, and your gifts may manifest in mysterious or subtle ways. The GM is free to limit this advantage to special, predetermined scenarios, or to have its benefits behave irregularly.

Spark 1+   10 points/level

After purchasing Spark 0, you may buy higher levels. The GM decides how many levels are available. A suggested maximum is Spark 5.

Each level past 0 grants you +1 on rolls dealing with conceiving or inventing devices. You also receive +1 per level to Influence rolls (p. 138) made against non-Sparks. When dealing with lesser Sparks, reduce this bonus to the *difference* between your Spark and theirs; there's no effect on greater Sparks.

In addition, at Spark 1-3, you get Gadgeteer (p. 87) at no point cost. To upgrade this to Quick Gadgeteer, pay the difference in cost (15 points). With Spark 4+, you receive Quick Gadgeteer at no point cost.

By now you've fully embraced your talents! When creating or modifying devices, you can push the boundaries of established science to accomplish fantastic things, like flying machines, ray guns, and impossible works of art. You *still* require suitable skills; the GM may rule that a desired outcome requires a minimum skill level or a peculiar combination of skills.

Speak with Animals   25 points

You can converse with animals. The quality of information you receive depends on the beast's IQ and the GM's decision on what the animal has to say. Insects and other tiny creatures might only be able to convey emotions such as hunger and fear, while a chimp or cat might be able to engage in a reasonable discussion. It takes one minute to ask one question and get the answer – *if* the animal decides to speak at all. The GM may require a reaction roll.

Spines   1 or 3 points

You have sharp spines, like those of a porcupine, located on strategic parts of your body. This is defensive weaponry, intended to discourage attackers; you cannot use your Spines actively. However, you get a DX-4 roll to hit *each* foe in close combat (reach C) with you, as a free action once per turn, on your turn. Roll at +2 against opponents who attacked you from behind. Those who grapple you are hit immediately and *automatically*.

Short Spines: One or two inches long. Do 1d-2 impaling damage. Reach C. *1 point.*
Long Spines: One or two *feet* long. Do 1d impaling damage. Reach C. *3 points.*

This advantage is usually reserved for nonhumans.

Talent   Variable

You have a natural aptitude for a set of related skills. "Talents" come in levels, and give +1 per level with all affected skills – even for default use – and +1 per level on all reaction rolls made by those in a position to notice your Talent (GM's judgment).

You may never have more than four levels of a given Talent. However, overlapping Talents *can* give skill bonuses (only) in excess of +4.

A Talent's cost depends on the size of the group of skills it affects. Skills that have multiple specialties count as just *one* skill for this purpose, regardless of how many (or few) specialties the Talent benefits.

Small (6 or fewer related skills): *5 points/level.*
Medium (7 to 12 related skills): *10 points/level.*
Large (13 or more related skills): *15 points/level.*

Standard Talents

The following Talents are considered "standard" in the *Girl Genius* universe:

Animal Friend: Animal Handling, Riding, Teamster, and Veterinary. *5 points/level.*
Artificer: Armory, Carpentry, Electrician, Engineer, Machinist, Masonry, Mechanic, and Smith. *10 points/level.*
Business Acumen: Accounting, Administration, Economics, Finance, Gambling, Merchant, and Propaganda. *10 points/level.*
Green Thumb: Biology, Farming, Gardening, Herb Lore, and Naturalist. *5 points/level.*
Healer: Diagnosis, Esoteric Medicine, First Aid, Pharmacy, Physician, Physiology, Psychology, Surgery, and Veterinary. *10 points/level.*
Mathematical Ability: Accounting, Astronomy, Cryptography, Engineer, Finance, Mathematics, and Physics. *10 points/level.*
Musical Ability: Group Performance, Musical Composition, Musical Influence, Musical Instrument, and Singing. *5 points/level.*
Outdoorsman: Camouflage, Naturalist, Navigation, Survival, and Tracking. *5 points/level.*
Smooth Operator: Acting, Carousing, Detect Lies, Diplomacy, Fast-Talk, Intimidation, Leadership, Panhandling, Politics, Public Speaking, Savoir-Faire, Sex Appeal, and Streetwise. *15 points/level.*

Custom Talents

At the GM's option, you may propose your own Talent with a custom skill list. There are countless possibilities, but the GM need only permit Talents that "make sense." The GM is free to create new Talents – sensible or not – as needed!

Teeth   0, 1, or 2 points

Anyone with a mouth has *blunt* teeth that can bite for thrust-1 crushing damage. This costs 0 points, and is typical of most herbivores – including humans. Some nonhumans have a more damaging bite:

Sharp Teeth: Like those of most carnivores. Inflict thrust-1 *cutting* damage. *1 point.*

Sharp Beak: Like that of a bird of prey. Inflicts thrust-1 *large piercing* damage. *1 point.*

Fangs: Like those a Jäger might have. Inflict thrust-1 *impaling* damage. *2 points.*

Telescopic Vision
5 points/level

You can "zoom in" with your eyes as if using binoculars. Each level lets you ignore -1 in range penalties, or -2 in range penalties if you take an Aim maneuver to zoom in on a particular target. This ability doesn't stack with technological aids.

While unavailable to humans, this advantage is *very* likely for clanks with bulging lenses for eyes.

Tenure   5 points

You have a job from which you cannot normally be fired. You can only lose your job (and this trait) as a result of extraordinary misbehavior: assault, gross immorality, failing to notify Baron Wulfenbach of Other technology, etc. Otherwise, your employment and salary are guaranteed for life. This is most common among university professors, but might also apply to others; e.g., priests, bureaucrats, or members of the Fifty Families.

Unusual Background   Variable

This is a catchall trait the GM can use to adjust the point total of any character with special abilities that aren't widely available. "Special abilities" might mean nonhuman advantages for a human, traits that feel wildly unrealistic even in a world full of Sparks and clanks, supernatural gifts, or anything else the GM wants to keep rare; *GURPS,* the parent game of *Girl Genius,* offers numerous candidates (including exotic fighting arts, magic spells, and powers). Players are free to suggest Unusual Backgrounds, but the GM decides whether a proposed Unusual Background is acceptable, how much it costs, and what its benefits are.

Not every unusual character concept merits an Unusual Background. The GM should charge points only when the character enjoys a tangible benefit.

Versatile   5 points

You're extremely imaginative. You get +1 on any task that requires creativity or invention, including most rolls against the Artistry skill, all Engineer rolls for new inventions, and all skill rolls made to use the Gadgeteer advantage.

Walk on Air   20 points

Air, smoke, and other gases are like solid ground beneath your feet, allowing you to walk up and down "invisible stairs" at your ground Move. If you get knocked down or slip, you fall! You may attempt one DX roll per second of falling. Success means you stop in thin air, unharmed; otherwise you hit the ground for normal falling damage (see *Falling,* p. 150).

This ability isn't available to ordinary humans.

Weapon Master   Variable

You have a high degree of training – or unnerving talent – with a particular class of muscle-powered weapons (but never guns of any sort). When using a suitable weapon, add +1 *per die* to basic thrust or swing damage if you know the skill at DX+1; add +2 *per die* if you know that skill at DX+2 or better. You also halve the penalty for a Rapid Strike/Shot (p. 143) from -6 to -3.

You're familiar – if not proficient – with every weapon in that class. This gives you an improved default: DX/Easy weapon skills default to DX-1, DX/Average ones to DX-2, and DX/Hard ones to DX-3.

Available classes are:

All muscle-powered weapons. *45 points.*

A large class of weapons; e.g., all bladed weapons. *40 points.*

A medium class of weapons; e.g., all swords. *35 points.*

A small class of weapons; e.g., all fencing weapons. *30 points.*

Two weapons normally used together; e.g., broadsword and shield. *25 points.*

One specific weapon. *20 points.*

In all cases, if a weapon can be thrown, this advantage's benefits also apply when throwing that weapon.

Wild Talent   20 points/level

You can simply *do* things without knowing how. Once per game session per level of this advantage, you may attempt to roll against *any* skill, using your score in the appropriate attribute: IQ for IQ-based skills, DX for DX-based skills, etc. You incur no default penalties, but situational and equipment modifiers apply normally, as do any modifiers for advantages or disadvantages.

Wild Talent *does* apply to skills that usually have no default, provided that you meet any advantage requirement. Wild Talent has *no* effect on skills you already know.

DISADVANTAGES

A "disadvantage" is a problem or obstacle that persists in the long term. For example, your character may have a moral failing, a strict set of values that limits their actions, or a physical or mental limitation.

Whereas advantages *cost* you character points, disadvantages *grant* points. Unless the GM rules otherwise, you aren't obliged to take disadvantages. But you may *choose* to do so, either to flesh out your character concept (flaws make characters more interesting) or simply because you want additional character points (although disadvantages chosen for this reason should still suit your character concept!).

Absent-Mindedness -15 points

You have trouble focusing on anything not of immediate interest. You have -5 on all IQ and IQ-based skill rolls, save those for the task you're currently concentrating on. If no engaging task or topic presents itself, your attention drifts to more interesting matters in five minutes, and you ignore your immediate surroundings until something catches your attention and brings you back. Once adrift in your own thoughts, you must roll against Per-5 in order to *notice* any event short of personal physical injury.

You may attempt to rivet your attention on a boring topic through sheer strength of will. To do so, make a Will-5 roll once every five minutes. "Boring topics" include small talk, repetitive manual tasks, and guard duty.

Absent-minded individuals also tend to forget trivial tasks (like paying the bills) and items (like tools and money). Whenever it becomes important that you have performed such a task or brought such an item, the GM should call for a roll against IQ-2. On a failure, this detail slipped your attention.

Bad Sight -10 or -25 points

You have poor vision, giving -6 to Vision rolls and -2 to hit in combat. This is worth -10 points where it is correctable (eyeglasses compensate completely while worn, but are *still* a disadvantage, as they can be broken, stolen, etc.), or -25 points where it isn't.

RESTRICTIONS ON DISADVANTAGES

To avoid dysfunctional, over-powered, or under-powered characters, the GM should consider limiting how many disadvantage points PCs can have. For this purpose, *anything with a negative point cost* counts – including low attributes, negative Status, and below-average Wealth. A suggested guideline is 50% of the campaign's starting points; e.g., -75 points in a 150-point game. The GM might enforce a different limit or *no* limit.

Some additional considerations:

Negated Disadvantages: Nobody can claim points for a disadvantage that one of their advantages negates or mitigates. They also cannot have a disadvantage which another *disadvantage* negates. For example, you cannot have both Acute Vision and Bad Sight, or both Curious and Incurious.

Villain Disadvantages: Some disadvantages – Sadism, for instance – aren't at all suitable for "heroes." The GM is free to forbid these to PCs. But as such traits are often found in fiendish *villains,* they're included in the interest of effective NPC creation.

SELF-CONTROL

Some mental disadvantages are surmountable with conscious effort. Such a disadvantage is denoted by an asterisk (*) after its title. Whenever your character experiences events that could trigger such a problem, you may opt to attempt a *self-control roll:* Roll 3d against a "self-control number" of 12. A roll of 12 or less means your character manages to suppress and temporarily ignore their disadvantage. A 13 or higher means they suffer its full effects.

You never *have* to try a self-control roll. You're free to skip it and accept the disadvantage's effects. This is especially appropriate when you feel your character *would* lose control during a particular moment in roleplaying.

Some NPCs and rules in **Girl Genius** refer to self-control numbers other than 12. If nobody minds the math, players can pick these for suitable disadvantages: 6 or less multiplies disadvantage point value by 2; 9 or less, by 1.5; and 15 or less, by 0.5. Drop fractions.

Record each disadvantage's self-control number in parentheses; e.g., "Bad Temper (9)" or "Berserk (12)."

SELF-IMPOSED MENTAL DISADVANTAGES

Code of Honor (p. 96), Honesty (p. 97), Intolerance (p. 97), Sense of Duty (p. 101), Trademark (p. 101), and Vow (p. 102) are not psychiatric problems, but beliefs or codes of conduct. Such "self-imposed mental disadvantages" share two distinguishing features:

● They can be "bought off" with earned points at *any* time.

● They cannot be caused by drugs, brain surgery, or similar "quick and dirty" behavior alteration.

Bad Smell -10 points

You exude an appalling odor – choose something foul! This causes -2 to reactions from most people and animals. You can mask the smell with perfumes, but the overpowering amount needed results in the same reaction penalty.

Bad Temper⋆ -10 points

You aren't in full control of your emotions. Make a self-control roll in any stressful situation. If you fail, you lose your temper and must insult, attack, or otherwise act against the cause of the stress.

Berserk⋆ -10 points

You tend to rampage out of control when you or a loved one is harmed, making frenzied attacks against whoever or whatever you see as the cause of the trouble. If you also have Bad Temper (above), *any* stress may trigger Berserk.

Make a self-control roll any time you suffer injury over 1/4 your HP in the space of one second, or whenever you witness equivalent harm to a loved one. If you fail, you go berserk. You go berserk *automatically* if you fail a self-control roll for Bad Temper! Once you're berserk, the following rules apply:
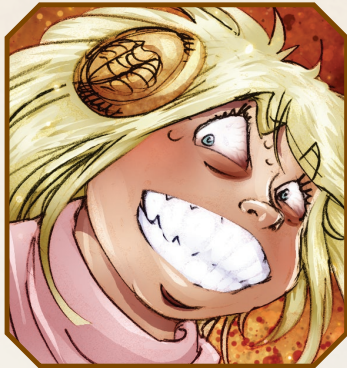
● If armed with a melee weapon, you must make an All-Out Attack each turn a foe is in reach. If no foe is in reach, you must take a Move maneuver to get as close as possible to a foe – and if you can Move and Attack, you will.

● If the enemy is more than 20 yards away, you may attack with a ranged weapon, if you have one, but you may not take the Aim maneuver. If using a gun, you blaze away at your maximum rate of fire until it's empty. You cannot reload unless your weapon lets you do so in no more than one turn. Once your gun is empty, you must either draw another gun or charge into the melee combat.

● You're immune to stun and shock, and your injuries cause no penalty to your Move score. You make all rolls to stay conscious or alive at +4 to HT. If you don't fail any rolls, you remain alive and madly attacking until you reach -5×HP. Then you fall – dead!

● When you down a foe, you may opt to attempt another self-control roll to see if you snap out of the berserk state. If you fail or don't roll, you remain berserk and attack the next foe. Treat any friend who tries to restrain you as a foe! You get to roll each time you down an enemy, and you get one extra roll when no more foes remain. If you're still berserk, you start to attack your friends . . .

Once you snap out of the berserk state, all your wounds immediately affect you. Roll at normal HT to see whether you remain conscious and alive.

Bloodlust⋆ -10 points

You want to see your foes *dead*. In battle, you must go for killing blows, and put in an extra shot to make sure of a downed foe. You must make a self-control roll whenever you need to accept a surrender, evade a sentry, take a prisoner, etc. If you fail, you attempt to kill your foe instead – even if that means breaking the law, compromising stealth, wasting ammo, or violating orders. Out of combat, you never forget that a foe is a foe.

Bully⋆ -10 points

You like to push people around whenever you can get away with it. Depending on your personality and position, this might take the form of physical attacks, intellectual harassment, or social "cutting." Make a self-control roll to avoid gross bullying when you know you shouldn't – but to roleplay your character properly, you should bully anyone you can. Since nobody likes a bully, others react to you at -2.

Callous -5 points

You're merciless, if not cruel. You can decipher others' emotions, but you do so only to manipulate them – you don't *care* about their feelings or pain. This gives you -3 on all Teaching rolls, on Psychology rolls made to help others, and on any skill roll to interact with those who've suffered the consequences of your callousness in the past (GM's decision). As well, past victims, and anyone with Empathy, will react to you at -1. But ruthlessness has its perks: You get +1 to Interrogation and Intimidation rolls when you use threats or torture.

Charitable⋆ -15 points

You are acutely aware of others' emotions and feel compelled to help those around you – even legitimate enemies. Make a self-control roll in any situation in which you could render aid or are specifically asked for help, but should resist the urge. If you fail, you *must* offer assistance, even if that means violating orders or walking into a trap.

Chummy -5 or -10 points

You work well with others and seek out company. This trait comes in two levels:

Chummy: You react to others at +2 most of the time. When alone, you are unhappy and distracted, and suffer -1 to IQ-based skills. *-5 points.*
Gregarious: You usually react to others at +4. You are *miserable* when alone, and use IQ-based skills at -2, or -1 if in a group of four or less. *-10 points.*

Clueless -10 points

You totally miss the point of any wit aimed at you, and are oblivious to attempts to seduce you (+4 to resist Sex Appeal). The meanings of colloquial expressions escape you. Sophisticated manners are also beyond you, giving -4 to Savoir-Faire skill. You have many minor habits that annoy others, and most people react to you at -2.

Unlike No Sense of Humor (p. 99), you can make jokes – albeit unfunny ones – and you can appreciate slapstick and written humor. However, you rarely get verbal humor, *especially* if you're the target (roll vs. IQ-4 to realize you're the butt of the joke). You normally realize when someone is trying to take advantage of you, though, except in social situations. You're no more susceptible to Fast-Talk than normal, save when someone is trying to convince you that someone else is interested in you.

Code of Honor -5 to -15 points

You take pride in a set of principles that you follow at all times. The specifics can vary, but they always involve "honorable" behavior. You'll do nearly anything – perhaps even risk death – to avoid the label "dishonorable" (whatever that means to you).

The point value of a particular Code of Honor depends on how much trouble it's liable to get you into and how arbitrary and irrational its requirements are. An informal Code that applies only among your peers is worth -5 points. A formal Code that applies only among peers, or an informal one that applies all the time, is worth -10 points. A formal Code that applies all the time, or that means retiring the character from play if broken, is worth -15 points. The GM has the final say! Some examples:

Code of Honor (Pirate's): Always avenge an insult, regardless of the danger; your buddy's foe is your own; never attack a fellow crewman or buddy except in a fair, open duel. Anything else goes. This also suits brigands, soldiers, etc. *-5 points.*

Code of Honor (Gentleman's): Never break your word. Never ignore an insult to yourself, a lady, or your flag; insults may be wiped out only by an apology or a duel (not necessarily to the death!). Never take advantage of an opponent in any way; weapons and circumstances must be equal (except in open war). This applies only between gentlemen. A discourtesy from anyone of Status 0 or less calls for a whipping, not a duel! *-10 points.*

Compulsive Behavior⋆ -5 to -15 points

You have a vice that takes a toll on your time, money, and/or repute. You must make a self-control roll to avoid partaking when given an opportunity to do so. You must also roll to willingly enter any situation where you *cannot* indulge for more than a day. Point value depends on the trouble this causes:

Something like compulsive carousing, gambling, or spending normally just costs you money when you indulge. The GM decides *how much* money – conmen and grifters tend to see you coming! *-5 points.*

If your habit has turned you into an *actual* ne'er-do-well – or you live where anyone with your vice is judged to be such – you *also* suffer -1 to reactions (occasionally worse, from the self-righteous). *-10 points.*

Compulsive criminality (assault, theft, etc.) or lying rarely costs you money when you indulge, but *will* eventually lead to fines, prison, vengeance, or other retribution (GM's decision). Your victims and anyone who learns of your misdeeds react to you at -3. *-15 points.*

Cowardice⋆ -10 points

You're extremely careful about your physical well-being. Make a self-control roll any time you're called on to risk physical danger. Roll at -5 if you must risk *death*. Failure means you must refuse to endanger yourself unless threatened with *greater* danger! You also suffer -2 to Fright Checks.

Curious⋆ -5 points

You're naturally very inquisitive. This isn't the curiosity that affects *all* PCs ("What's in that cave? Where did the flying saucer come from?"), but the *real* thing ("What happens if I push *this* button?").

Make a self-control roll when presented with an interesting item or situation. If you fail, you examine it even if you *know* it could be dangerous. Good roleplayers won't try to make this roll very often . . .

Delusions -5 to -15 points

You believe something that simply is not true. This may cause others to consider you insane – and they may be right! If you suffer from a Delusion, you *must* roleplay your belief at all times. The Delusion's point value depends on its nature:

A *Minor Delusion* affects your behavior but doesn't keep you from functioning more-or-less normally. Anyone around you soon notices it and reacts at -1. *Example:* Zola's belief that she's the central heroine of every story. *-5 points.*

A *Major Delusion strongly* affects your behavior, but it doesn't keep you from living a fairly normal life. Others react to you at -2. *Example:* Othar's conviction that all of his actions are selflessly heroic. *-10 points.*

A *Severe Delusion* affects your behavior so much that it *might* keep you from functioning in the everyday world. Others react to you at -3, but they're more likely to fear or pity you than to attack. A Delusion this severe could keep you from meaningfully participating in the campaign, so clear it with the GM first. *-15 points.*

Duty Variable

If your occupation and social situation saddle you with a significant personal obligation toward others, and occasionally require you to obey hazardous orders, you have a "Duty." Duty often accompanies Rank (p. 75) or a Patron (p. 81).

A particularly arduous job *might* qualify as a Duty, but most ordinary jobs would not. A wholly self-imposed feeling of responsibility isn't a Duty, either, though it can still be a Sense of Duty (p. 101). Finally, you cannot claim points for a Duty toward Dependents (p. 78); the points that disadvantage grants *already* reflect your obligations in this regard.

If you have a Duty, the GM rolls 3d at the beginning of each adventure to see if it comes into play. Being called to duty could delay your plans – or be the *reason* for the adventure! Alternatively, your master might give you a secret agenda to pursue, or have their associates harass you to remind you of your responsibilities.

Your Duty's point value depends on the frequency with which it comes into play:

Almost all the time (roll of 15 or less): *-15 points*.
Quite often (roll of 12 or less): *-10 points*.
Fairly often (roll of 9 or less): *-5 points*.
Quite rarely (roll of six or less): *-2 points*.

Easy to Read   -10 points

Your body language betrays your true intentions. You have no moral problem with lying and may even possess Fast-Talk at a high level, but your face or stance gives the game away.

Easy to Read gives *others* +4 on all Empathy, Body Language, and Psychology rolls to discern your intentions or the truth of your words. They also get +4 to their IQ, Detect Lies, and Gambling rolls in any Quick Contest with your Acting, Fast-Talk, or Gambling skill when you try to lie or bluff.

This is a mental disadvantage despite its physical manifestations. With enough practice, you can "buy it off."

Gluttony⋆   -5 points

You're overly fond of good food and drink. Given the chance, you must always burden yourself with extra provisions. You should never willingly miss a meal. Make a self-control roll when presented with a tempting morsel or good wine that, for some reason, you should resist. If you fail, you partake – regardless of the consequences.

Greed⋆   -15 points

You lust for wealth. Make a self-control roll any time riches are offered – as fair payment for work, gains from adventure, spoils of crime, or just bait. If you fail, you do whatever it takes to get the payoff. Small sums don't tempt you much if you're rich, but if you're *poor,* your self-control roll is at -5 or worse if a rich prize is in the offing.

Hard of Hearing   -10 points

You aren't deaf, but you have some hearing loss. You have -4 on Hearing rolls, and on any skill roll where it's important that you understand someone. If *you* are the one talking, this disadvantage doesn't affect you.

Hive Mentality   -40 points

You have no initiative, and become confused and ineffectual without a master to give you orders. You must make an IQ roll at -8 before you can take any action that isn't either obeying a direct order, part of an established routine, or direct service to the "hive." As well, you *automatically* fail any Will roll to assert yourself or to resist the social influence of your master or hive, except in circumstances where the GM rules that success might be possible, in which case you roll at -6.

This doesn't necessarily imply low IQ or Will. You might be intelligent enough to carry out complex orders at an impressive level of skill. It's just that you have difficulty doing anything oriented toward *your* needs rather than those of your master or group.

Honesty⋆   -10 points

You *must* obey the law, and do your best to get others to do so as well. In an area with little or no law, you don't "go wild" – you act as though the laws of your home were in force. You also assume that others are honest unless you *know* otherwise.

This is a disadvantage, because it often limits your options! Make a self-control roll when faced with the "need" to break unreasonable laws; if you fail, you *must* obey the law, whatever the consequences. If you manage to resist your urges and break the law, make a second self-control roll afterward. Failure means you must turn yourself in to the authorities!

You're allowed to *lie,* if it does not involve breaking the law. Truthfulness (p. 102) is a separate disadvantage.

Impulsiveness⋆   -10 points

You hate talk and debate. You prefer action! When you're alone, you act first and think later. In a group, when your friends want to stop and discuss something, you should put in your two cents' worth quickly – if at all – and then do *something*. Roleplay it! Make a self-control roll whenever it would be wise to wait and ponder. If you fail, you *must* act.

Incurious⋆   -5 points

You hardly ever notice things unrelated to the business at hand. Make a self-control roll when confronted with something strange. Failure means you ignore it. You react at -1 to new things.

Intolerance   Variable

You dislike and distrust some (or all) people who are different from you. You may be prejudiced on the basis of class, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sex, or species. You react at -3 toward the subjects of your Intolerance, who respond by reacting to *you* at -1 to -5 (GM's decision). Point value depends on the *scope* of your Intolerance:

Intolerance of *anyone* not of your own class, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or species (pick one): *-10 points*.
Intolerance of *one specific* class, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sex, or species: *-5 points for a commonly encountered victim, down to -1 point (a nasty quirk) for a rare victim.*

Racial and religious Intolerance seem absent from the world of *Girl Genius* as we've seen it – but Intolerance toward constructs, clanks, and those of lower Status definitely exists.

Jealousy   -10 points

You react poorly toward those who seem smarter, more attractive, or better off than you! You resist any plan proposed by a "rival," and *hate* it if someone else is in the limelight. If an NPC is jealous, the GM applies a -2 to -4 reaction penalty toward the victim(s) of their jealousy.

Laziness   -10 points

You're violently averse to labor. Your chances of getting a raise or promotion in *any* job are halved. If you're self-employed, halve your monthly pay. You must avoid work – especially hard work – at all costs.

Lecherousness ★   -15 points

You have an unusually strong desire for romance. Make a self-control roll whenever in more than the briefest contact with an appealing member of whatever group you find attractive – at -5 if this person's Appearance is Impressive, or -10 if Very Impressive. If you fail, you must make a "pass," using whatever wiles and skills you can bring to bear, and must then suffer the consequences of your actions.

Lunacy   -10 points

The moon has a dramatic and inconvenient effect on your personality. During the full moon, you're extremely volatile (-2 to all Will and self-control rolls), while on the nights of the new moon, you're very passive (you suffer from the Laziness disadvantage, above). While the moon is waxing, you are focused; while it is waning, you are apathetic.

Maintenance   Variable

You require skilled attention at regular intervals to avoid HT loss. Decide on the care you need and the skill(s) used to provide it, both of which must suit who or what you are; e.g., repairs with Mechanic skill for a clank, or medical treatment with Physician skill for a chronically ill person. You *can* split maintenance across multiple skills.

Those who maintain you require access to appropriate facilities and tools. While these resources aren't appreciably consumed, maintenance is time-intensive: Each installment requires one hour. Base point value depends on the number of people needed to perform it:

Number of People	Point Value
1	-10
2	-20
3-5	-30
6-10	-40
11-20	-50
21-50	-60
51-100	-70

Add another -10 points per *full* doubling of people required; e.g., a clank city that requires a population of 10,000 to maintain it has a base -130-point disadvantage. Extra man-hours of maintenance may substitute for extra people, if the GM approves.

The frequency with which you require maintenance modifies this base cost:

Maintenance Interval	Multiplier
Monthly	1/5
Biweekly	1/3
Weekly	1/2
Every other day	3/4
Daily	1
Twice daily	2
Three to five times daily	3
Constant	5

If you miss a maintenance period, your HT drops by 1 and you must make a HT roll. Failure results in some additional incapacity of the GM's choosing. Critical failure means a potentially fatal outcome.

To restore lost HT and capabilities requires suitable intervention and skill rolls. If you require an unusual form of maintenance, this might call for exotic measures!

Manic-Depressive   -20 points

Your moods fluctuate more than those of most people. You bounce back and forth between bubbling enthusiasm and morose withdrawal. At the beginning of each game session, roll 1d: 1-3 means you are in your manic phase; 4-6 indicates depression.

Every five hours of game time thereafter, roll 3d. On 10 or less, your mood swings. Over the next hour, you shift from your current phase to the opposite one. You remain in the new phase for at least five hours, after which you must again roll 3d. Stressful situations, as determined by the GM, can also cause mood swings.

In the manic phase, you suffer the effects of Overconfidence (p. 100) and Workaholic (p. 103). You're friendly, outgoing, and excited about whatever you're doing. In the depressive phase, you must make a self-control roll to do anything but mope. Your effective self-control number for these effects is your Will.

Megalomania   -10 points

You believe that you are superhuman, were chosen for some great task, or are destined to conquer. Choose a grand goal – most often conquest or the completion of some fantastic task. You must let *nothing* stand between you and this goal.

You may attract followers, but nobody else enjoys hearing you talk about your brilliance and great plans. Naive individuals, and minions looking for a new master, react to you at +2; others react at -2.

Mundane Background   -10 points

You have a complete lack of experience with the weird. When you enter play, you're limited to *mundane* abilities and equipment. You cannot have Spark 1+, traits that imply Sparkish innovation (cybernetics, Possession advantage, Weird Science skill, etc.), traits with implausible effects or benefits (such as the Healing, Modular Abilities, Speak with Animals, and Wild Talent advantages, and Alchemy, Blind Fighting, Body Control, Breaking Blow, Enthrallment, Esoteric Medicine, Herb Lore, Mental Strength, Musical Influence, and Power Blow skills), most Unusual Backgrounds, or even the Hidden Lore or Occultism skill. When in doubt, the GM decides what's "weird" and what's "mundane."

You *can* have Spark 0, but you have no idea of this, save for the odd dream now and then. To "break through" or purchase any trait listed above, you must buy off Mundane Background first.

No Depth Perception   -15 points

You have two eyes, but you lack effective binocular vision and cannot visually judge distances – perhaps due to a vision disorder or an injury. The game effects are identical to One Eye (p. 100); you may not take both disadvantages.

No Fine Manipulators   -30 or -50 points

You lack hands and possibly limbs. Point value depends on the extent of your limitation:

No Fine Manipulators: You have no body part more agile than paws or hooves. You cannot use your limbs to make repairs, pick locks, tie knots, wield weapons, or even grasp firmly. You can select this trait if you have *nothing* approaching the human hand in terms of overall versatility. If you have a beak, tongue, prehensile tail, etc. that's as good as hands, you do not have No Fine Manipulators! *-30 points.*

No Manipulators: You have *no* limbs. The only way for you to manipulate objects is to push them around with your body or head. You can still move, and are capable of rolling, wriggling, bouncing, etc., at your Basic Move, unless you buy it down to 0. *-50 points.*

No Sense of Humor   -10 points

You never get any jokes; you think everyone is earnestly serious at all times. Likewise, you never joke, and you *are* earnestly serious at all times. Others react at -2 to you in any situation where the disadvantage becomes evident.

Noisy   -2 points/level

You make a *lot* of noise! Perhaps you're a clank with many moving parts, or a construct with a rasping ventilator – or maybe you're just inept at stealth.

You make noise constantly – even when standing still – unless you're comatose (for animate beings) or powered down (for machines). Each level gives +2 to Sense rolls to hear you or -2 to your Stealth rolls, as the situation warrants. In situations where respectful silence is expected, each level might also give -1 to reactions. You cannot take more than five levels of Noisy without the GM's permission.

Oblivious   -5 points

You understand others' emotions, but not their *motivations*. This makes you awkward in situations involving social manipulation. You have -1 to *use* or *resist* Influence skills: Diplomacy, Fast-Talk, Intimidation, Savoir-Faire, Sex Appeal, and Streetwise.

Obsession⋆   -5 or -10 points

Your entire life revolves around an overpowering fixation – on a goal, a project, or even a person – that motivates all your actions. Make a self-control roll whenever it would be wise to set this aside. Failure means you continue to pursue your Obsession, regardless of the consequences.

A short-term goal (e.g., assassinating someone or inventing something) is worth -5 points. A long-term goal (e.g., removing Baron Wulfenbach) or lifetime preoccupation (e.g., with Agatha or the entire Heterodyne family) is worth -10 points.

One Arm/Hand   -20 points

You have only one arm or hand. You cannot use two-handed weapons, wield two weapons (or a weapon and a shield) at once, or perform any task that *requires* two arms or hands. You get -4 on tasks that are *possible* with one arm but usually executed with two (e.g., climbing). You have no penalty on tasks that require just one arm. In all cases, the GM's ruling is final.

If you originally had two arms or hands, assume that you lost the "off" one. If you replace it with a prosthetic or construct body part, reduce the cost of this disadvantage to -8 points.

If you're a being that only ever had one arm to begin with, your "arm" can be *any* appendage capable of fine manipulation.

One Eye   -15 points

You have only one eye. Either you're missing an eye – which you can replace with a glass eye or cover with a patch – or you only ever had a single eye. You suffer -1 to DX in combat and on any task that requires hand-eye coordination, and -3 on ranged attacks and rolls to operate any vehicle faster than a horse and buggy.
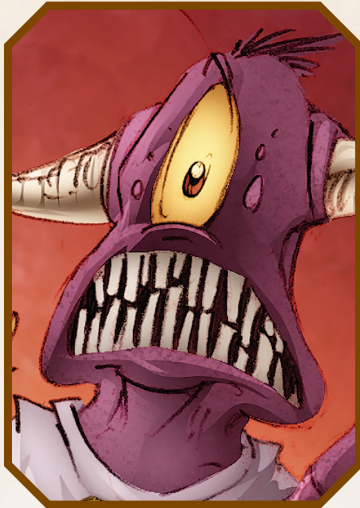
Overconfidence⋆   -5 points

You believe that you're far more powerful, intelligent, or competent than you really are. You may be proud and boastful, or just quietly determined, but you must roleplay this trait.

You must make a self-control roll any time the GM feels you show an unreasonable degree of caution. If you fail, you *must* go ahead as though you were able to handle the situation! Caution is not an option.

You receive +2 on all reaction rolls from naive individuals (who believe you're as good as you say you are) and from minions, but -2 on reactions from experienced NPCs.

Pacifism   -5 or -10 points

You're opposed to violence. This can take two forms:

Reluctant Killer: You have -4 to hit a *person* (not a monster, machine, etc.) with a *deadly* attack – or -2 if you can't see their face. If you kill someone, roll 3d; you're morose and useless for that many days. *-5 points.*

Cannot Harm Innocents: You may fight – you may even *start* fights – but you can only use *deadly* force on a foe who's attempting to do you serious harm. *-10 points.*

Phobias⋆   -5 to -15 points

A "Phobia" is an unreasonable, unreasoning, morbid fear of a specific item, creature, or circumstance. Make a self-control roll when exposed to the object of your fear. Failure means you cringe, flee, panic, or otherwise react in a manner that precludes sensible action. Success lets you master your fear temporarily, but it persists: You're at -2 to all IQ, DX, and skill rolls while the cause of your fear is present, and you must roll again every 10 minutes to see if the fear overcomes you.

The mere *threat* of the feared object requires a self-control roll at +4. If your enemies actually inflict the object on you, you must make an unmodified self-control roll.

The more common the object of your fear, the greater the point value of the Phobia. Some classic examples:

Blood (Hemophobia). *-10 points.*
Darkness (Scotophobia). *-15 points.*
Enclosed Spaces (Claustrophobia). *-15 points.*
Heights (Acrophobia). *-10 points.*
Monsters (Teratophobia). Very inconvenient indeed in the world of *Girl Genius! -15 points.*
Number 13 (Triskaidekaphobia). Roll at -5 if Friday the 13th is involved! *-5 points.*
Open Spaces (Agoraphobia). *-10 points.*
Spiders (Arachnophobia). *-5 points.*

Possessed⋆   -20 points

Somebody else's personality shares your brain. Make a self-control roll whenever they attempt to "take over." Success means you stay in control and your possessor cannot try again for 24 hours.

Failure means your possessor takes over your body as per the Possession advantage (p. 90); they use their mental traits and your physical ones. They retain control until they decide to relinquish it, at which point you regain control until the next time. At the GM's option, a *serious* distraction for your possessor can give you a self-control roll to reassert control – and if you succeed, they must wait 24 hours to retry.

Reanimated   0 points

Being reanimated is a hook on which to hang an interesting character story, not a true disadvantage in itself – but it often *leads* to disadvantages! A bad reanimation could cause mental problems. A reanimated individual might have a negative Reputation as spooky and malign (or a positive one as holy and enlightened, if they act appropriately). And the Fifty Families disapprove of reanimation, so for their kin, being reanimated means a bad Reputation if known, a dangerous Secret otherwise.

Reprogrammable   -10 points

You can be programmed to obey a master. If you have Hive Mentality (p. 97), you must obey slavishly and remain strictly within the letter of your master's commands. If you lack Hive Mentality, you can interpret the orders creatively, as long as you remain within either their letter or their spirit (your choice). If you're non-sentient (IQ 0), you have no interest in doing anything *but* following your programming!

Sadism★   -15 points

You delight in cruelty – mental, physical, or both. Make a self-control roll whenever you have an opportunity to indulge in your desires and know you shouldn't. If you fail, you cannot restrain yourself. Those who become aware of your problem react at -3 unless they're from a culture that holds life and freedom in little esteem.

Secret   -5 to -30 points

A Secret is an aspect of your life or your past that you must keep hidden. Revelation would result in lasting negative consequences. The point value depends on the severity of those consequences:

Serious Embarrassment: If this information gets around, you can forget about ever getting promoted, getting elected, or marrying well. Alternatively, revelation of your Secret might simply attract unwelcome public attention. *-5 points.*

Utter Rejection: If your Secret is revealed, it changes your whole life. Perhaps you would lose something or someone you love, or face lifelong harassment. *-10 points.*

Imprisonment or Exile: If the authorities uncover your Secret, you'll have to flee, or be imprisoned for a long time. *-20 points.*

Possible Death: Your Secret is so terrible that were it revealed, you would be on the run from death (execution, lynching, assassination, or similar). *-30 points.*

Frequency of Appearance

In general, a Secret appears in a particular game session if the GM rolls 6 or less on 3d before the adventure begins. However, as for all other disadvantages of this type, the GM needn't feel constrained by the appearance roll. If they think the Secret should come into play, it does!

When a Secret appears in play, it isn't automatically exposed. The GM will give you a chance to prevent your Secret from being revealed. This might require you to cave into blackmail or extortion, steal incriminating information, or even silence the person who knows the Secret. Regardless of the solution, it's only temporary – the Secret appears again and again until you buy it off with earned character points or it's finally revealed.

Effects of Revelation

If a Secret is made public, there's an immediate negative effect ranging from serious embarrassment to possible death, depending on the severity of the Secret. There's also a lasting effect: You suddenly acquire new, permanent disadvantages – or lose advantages – worth points equal to twice what the Secret was worth! These disadvantages replace the Secret on your character sheet and reduce your point total accordingly. The GM chooses the new disadvantages and lost advantages, which should always be appropriate to the Secret.

Sense of Duty   Variable

You feel a strong sense of commitment toward a particular class of people. You'll never betray them, abandon them when they're in trouble, or let them suffer or go hungry if you can help. The point value of your Sense of Duty depends on the size of the group you feel compelled to aid:

Individual (a parent, your comrade-in-arms, etc.): *-2 points.*

Small Group (e.g., your close friends, adventuring companions, or squad): *-5 points.*

Large Group (e.g., a nation or religion, or *everyone* you know personally): *-10 points.*

Entire Race (all humanity, all Jägerkin, etc.): *-15 points.*

Every Living Being: -20 points.

Shyness   -5, -10, or -20 points

You're uncomfortable around strangers. This disadvantage comes in three levels; you can buy off one level at a time.

Mild: You're uneasy with strangers – especially assertive or attractive ones. You have -1 on any skill roll that requires you to deal directly with people (GM's discretion). *-5 points.*

Severe: You're *very* uncomfortable around strangers, and tend to be quiet even among friends. You have -2 on skill rolls that require you to deal with people. *-10 points.*

Crippling: You avoid strangers whenever possible. You're at -4 on skill rolls that require you to deal with people. *-20 points.*

Sleepwalker★   -5 points

You walk in your sleep. This is merely annoying or embarrassing under most circumstances, but it can be very dangerous to sleepwalk in unknown places or hostile territory.

If sleepwalking would matter during an adventure, the GM will make a self-control roll for you whenever you go to sleep. Failure means you sleepwalk sometime during the night. You wake up after walking for 1d minutes, or if someone awakens you. The GM will make DX rolls to see if you trip going down stairs or crossing rough ground – if this happens, you awaken suddenly and are mentally stunned (p. 147).

If you're Possessed (opposite), your self-control roll for that disadvantage is at -3 while sleepwalking!

Stubbornness   -5 points

You always want your own way. Make yourself generally hard to get along with! If you don't want to do something, your friends have to make a lot of Fast-Talk rolls to get you to go along with their plans. Others react to you at -1.

Trademark   -5 to -15 points

You have a special symbol – something you leave at the scene of action, as a way of "signing your work."

Simple: Your Trademark takes very little time to leave and cannot be used to trace your identity, but you absolutely *must* leave it. You cannot leave the scene until you do, even if your enemies are breaking down the door. *-5 points.*

Complex: As above, but leaving your Trademark measurably increases your chances of being caught – initial carving, notes, traceable clues, etc. Leaving such a Trademark takes a minimum of 30 seconds. Anyone searching the scene receives +2 to skill rolls to trace or identify you. *-10 points.*

Elaborate: Your trademark is so elaborate – dousing thugs with a certain perfume, or painting the crime scene pink – that it virtually ensures your eventual capture. The GM may give investigators clues *without* requiring skill rolls from them! *-15 points.*

You may have only one Trademark. If your Trademark involves multiple actions, that gives you a higher level of Trademark – *not* multiple ones.

Finally, note that a Trademark is separate from the actions it embellishes. It isn't *what* you do, but the particular, distinguishable *way* in which you do it.

Trickster★   -15 points

You crave the excitement of outwitting *dangerous* foes. This isn't ordinary practical joking. Playing simple tricks on innocent or harmless folk is no fun at all – it has to be perilous! There may be no need for this at all (in fact, there probably isn't), but you crave the thrill of a battle of wits and dexterity.

Make a self-control roll at the start of each game session. If you fail, you must try to trick a dangerous subject – a skilled warrior, a dangerous monster, a whole *group* of competent opponents, etc. If you resist, you get a cumulative -1 per session on your self-control roll until you finally fail!

Truthfulness★   -5 points

You hate to tell a lie – or you're just very bad at it. Make a self-control roll whenever you must keep silent about an uncomfortable truth (lying by omission). Roll at -5 if you actually have to *tell* a falsehood! If you fail, you blurt out the truth, or stumble so much that your lie is obvious. You have a permanent -5 to Fast-Talk skill, and your Acting skill is at -5 when your purpose is to deceive.

Unhealing   -20 or -30 points

You cannot heal *naturally.* You get no daily HT roll to recover lost HP, and you cannot recuperate from crippling injuries on your own. Neither First Aid nor Physician skill can restore missing HP. Technologies that accelerate natural healing (including herbs, drugs, etc.) are useless. This trait comes in two levels:

Partial: You can heal naturally if a rare condition is met (e.g., when you're immersed in blood or bathed in lava). *-20 points.*

Total: You can *never* heal naturally. *-30 points.*

Depending on your nature, you might be able to regain lost HP and the use of crippled limbs *unnaturally* through surgery, repairs (if you're a machine), or exotic means (alchemy, Spark gadgetry, etc.).

Unluckiness   -10 points

You have rotten luck. Things go wrong for you – and usually at the worst possible time. Once per game session, the GM will arbitrarily make something go wrong for you. You miss a vital dice roll, or the enemy (against all odds) shows up at the worst possible time. If the plot of the adventure calls for something bad to happen to someone, it's *you.* The GM may *not* kill you outright with "bad luck," but anything less than that is fine.

Vow   -5 to -15 points

You've sworn an oath to do (or *not* to do) something. Whatever the oath, you take it seriously; if you didn't, it wouldn't be a disadvantage. This trait is especially appropriate for knights, religious folk, and fanatics.

A Vow's point value is directly related to the inconvenience it causes you. The GM is the final judge. Some examples:

Minor Vow: Silence during daylight hours; vegetarianism; chastity (yes, for game purposes, this is *minor*). *-5 points.*

Major Vow: Use no edged weapons; keep silence at all times; never sleep indoors; own no more than your horse can carry. *-10 points.*

Great Vow: Never refuse any request for aid; always fight with the wrong hand; hunt a given foe until you destroy him; challenge every Spark you meet to combat. *-15 points.*

Weak Bite   -2 points

Your jaw isn't structured to make full use of your strength while biting. Calculate biting damage normally, then apply an extra -2 *per die*. This trait is common for large herbivores (e.g., horses), uncommon for small herbivores and omnivores, and very rare for carnivores.

Weirdness Magnet   -15 points

Strange and bizarre things happen to you with alarming frequency. You're the one random monsters stop and chat with. Artifacts with disturbing properties find their way to you. Dimensional gates sealed for centuries crack open just so that you can be bathed in the energies released . . . or perhaps the entities on the other side invite you to tea.

Nothing lethal happens to you, at least not immediately, and occasionally some weirdness is beneficial. But most of the time it's terribly, terribly inconvenient. People who understand what a Weirdness Magnet is (and that you are one) react to you at -2. The exceptions are thrill-seekers, unhinged cultists and conspiracy theorists, and Sparks who study the weird – such people might even follow you around!

Workaholic   -5 points

You tend to drive yourself past your limits, and find it hard to relax and turn away from your work. You always work at least half again as long as a normal working day. This often results in missed sleep (p. 149). Most people regard you with respect at first (+1 to reactions), but you eventually suffer -1 or -2 to reactions – especially from friends and loved ones who rarely get to spend time with you.

QUIRKS

A "quirk" is a minor personality trait that distinguishes you from others. It has a negative point value because it's an obligation – it must be roleplayed – but it isn't *necessarily* a disadvantage. For instance, Greed is a disadvantage; but if you insist on being paid in gold, that's a quirk.

You may take up to five quirks at -1 point each; if you do, that's five more points to spend on your character. You can buy them off later if you wish, but consider avoiding that. Your quirks are a big part of what makes your character "real."

Quirks are a contract between player and GM: "I agree to roleplay these character foibles. In return, you agree to give me a few extra points to spend." However, you *must* roleplay your quirks. If you take the quirk "Dislikes heights," but blithely climb trees and cliffs whenever you need to, the GM will penalize you for bad roleplaying. So don't choose a quirk you aren't willing to roleplay!

A personality trait must meet one of two criteria to be a quirk:

● It requires a specific action, behavior, or choice on your part from time to time. This needn't take hours, or even be especially inconvenient, but it must be something you can act out in play. It *cannot* be totally passive.

● It gives you a *small* penalty very occasionally or to a narrow set of actions. Negotiate the game effects with the GM. You may take almost any mental disadvantage at quirk level, in which case the rules for that disadvantage become guidelines, although the effects will be much less severe.

For example, "Always wears black" isn't a quirk. It is completely passive and doesn't penalize your actions – *many* people wear black because it coordinates with everything and hides stains, and it doesn't even stand out. "Always wears purple clothes with green shoes" *could* be a quirk, because it's garish and gives the GM the fun of occasionally having an NPC treat you like a nut!

Some more examples:

Dislikes: You might dislike almost anything. While this could be a trivial Intolerance or Phobia, that isn't required. You suffer no negative game effects, but you *must* roleplay it!

Habits: Fidgets, expressions, never sitting with your back to the door . . . such things can give away your identity or cause other minor hassles.

Likes: The opposite of dislikes! You might like gadgets, kittens, shiny knives . . . What matters is that it's something common enough to come into play occasionally.

Nosy: A lesser version of Curious. You're always sticking your nose into others' business, which may earn a small reaction penalty once in a while.

SKILLS

A "skill" is a trait representing time spent in a particular area of study. For example, your character's abilities at engineering, swordsmanship, negotiation, and stealth are all covered by various skills. While skills are typically related to a person's background or profession, almost everyone has a few others – if only from hobbies or special interests. As your character progresses, you may add new skills and improve existing ones.

Each skill has a "skill level" – the higher, the better. For example, "Brawling-16" means your character has a skill level of 16 when it comes to rough-and-ready fisticuffs. To do something pertaining to your skill, you (or the GM) roll 3d against that skill, which will often be modified (increased or decreased). If you roll a number *less than or equal to* your modified score for that skill, you succeed! However, a roll of 17 or 18 is an automatic failure.

Controlling Attribute

Each skill is based on a basic attribute – or, more rarely, on Will or Perception. Your skill level is calculated directly from this "controlling attribute": the higher your attribute score, the more effective you are with *every* skill based on it! If your character concept calls for *many* skills based on a given attribute, consider starting with a high level in that attribute, as that's most cost-effective in the long run.

DX-based skills rely on coordination, reflexes, and steady hands.

IQ-based skills require knowledge, creativity, and reasoning ability.

HT-based skills are governed by physical fitness.

Will-based skills hinge on mental focus and clarity of thought.

Per-based skills involve spotting subtle differences.

Difficulty Level

Some fields demand more study and practice than others. **Girl Genius** uses four "difficulty levels" to rate the effort required to learn and improve a skill. The more difficult the skill, the more points you must spend to buy it at a given skill level.

Easy (E) skills are things that *anyone* could do reasonably well after a short learning period.

Average (A) skills include most combat skills, mundane job skills, and the practical social and survival skills that ordinary people use daily.

Hard (H) skills require intensive formal study or training.

Very Hard (VH) skills are extraordinarily intricate, counterintuitive, and/or "secret knowledge."

BUYING SKILLS

In order to learn or improve a skill, you must spend character points. When you spend points on a skill, you're getting training to bring that skill up to a useful level. Skills are easy to learn at first – a little training goes a long way! But added improvement costs more.

The point cost of a skill depends on two things: its difficulty and the final skill level you wish to attain. Use the *Skill Cost Table (*below) to calculate a skill's point cost.

The first column shows the skill level you are trying to attain, *relative to the skill's controlling attribute* – DX for DX-based skills, IQ for IQ-based skills, and so forth. For instance, if your DX were 12, a level of "Attribute-1" would be DX-1, or 11; "Attribute+0" would be DX, or 12; and "Attribute+1" would be DX+1, or 13.

The next four columns show the character point costs to learn skills of different difficulties – *Easy, Average, Hard,* and *Very Hard* – at the desired skill level. Harder skills cost more points to learn! A dash indicates that you can't buy that level, *not* that such a level is free.

SKILL DEFAULTS: USING SKILLS YOU DON'T KNOW

Most skills have a "default level": the level at which you use the skill if you have *no* training. A skill has a default level if it's something that everybody can do . . . a little bit. Typically, a skill defaults to its controlling attribute at -4 if Easy, -5 if Average, or -6 if Hard.

Some skills have *no* default level. These are skills you cannot use *at all* without training!

SKILL COST TABLE

Your Final Skill Level	Difficulty of Skill			
	Easy	Average	Hard	Very Hard
Attribute-3	–	–	–	1
Attribute-2	–	–	1	2
Attribute-1	–	1	2	4
Attribute+0	1	2	4	8
Attribute+1	2	4	8	12
Attribute+2	4	8	12	16
Attribute+3	8	12	16	20
Attribute+4	12	16	20	24
Attribute+5	16	20	24	28
Extra +1	+4	+4	+4	+4

Using Skills with Other Attributes

The GM will sometimes find it useful (or more logical!) to base a skill roll on an attribute other than the skill's controlling one. Some skill descriptions specifically call for this. Classic examples are DX-based rolls to do fine work with IQ-based technical skills, and IQ-based rolls to perform minor maintenance with DX-based weapon and vehicle skills. For such a roll, simply apply the skill's level *relative to the controlling attribute* to the *desired* attribute; e.g., a soldier with DX 11, IQ 10, and Shortsword-13 has DX+2 in Shortsword, so for an IQ-based Shortsword roll, the soldier would roll against IQ+2, or 12, instead.

The Rule of 20

If a skill defaults to a basic attribute that's higher than 20, treat that attribute as 20 when figuring default skill. Extraordinary characters get *good* defaults, but not *super* ones.

Who Gets a Default?

Only individuals from a background where a skill is known may attempt a default roll against that skill. For instance, the default for Riding skill assumes you're from a place where riding horses (or other animals) is a common form of transportation, and where most people would have *some* idea of how to do it. A university student from a town where steam-powered clanks provided transportation would have little idea of how to handle a horse.

Skill List

The skill list is sorted alphabetically by skill name. Each entry gives the following information:

Name: The skill's name. A dagger (†) next to this indicates that it's a *group* of related skills, called "specialties." When you learn such a skill, you *must* pick a specialty – though you can buy multiple specialties separately. For instance, Armory requires you to choose a specialty, like Armory (Body Armor) or Armory (Melee Weapons); having both of those means buying two skills.

Type: The skill's controlling attribute and difficulty level; e.g., "IQ/A." **E** stands for Easy, **A** for Average, **H** for Hard, **VH** for Very Hard.

Default: The attributes (or other skills!) to which the skill defaults if you haven't studied it. "None" means *no* default – you *cannot* attempt to use the skill if you don't know it.

Prerequisites: Other traits you must possess before you can spend points on the skill.

Description: An explanation of what the skill is for and how it works in play.

Academics†   IQ/H
Default: IQ-6.

This group of skills encompasses "arts," "humanities," or "social sciences" normally learned at a university. You *must* select a specialty. Record your choice as, for instance, "Anthropology," not "Academics (Anthropology)."

Optionally, you may *further* specialize, for +3 on rolls in one narrow area at the cost of -1 in all others. For example, learning Anthropology (Biological) rather than general Anthropology gives +3 in *that* area but -1 with, say, Anthropology (Linguistic). Players can propose such sub-specialties, but the GM has the final say.

Academics skills include:

Anthropology: The study of evolution and culture. An anthropologist is knowledgeable in the ways of primitive (and not-so-primitive) societies. A successful Anthropology roll might explain, or even predict, unusual rituals and folk customs.

Archaeology: The study of ancient civilizations. An archaeologist is at home with excavations, old potsherds, inscriptions, etc. A successful Archaeology roll lets you answer questions about ancient history, or identify artifacts and dead languages. It might even reveal information relating to the occult.

Architecture: The ability to design buildings, and to deduce the design of buildings from their function (and vice versa). A successful Architecture roll lets you learn things about a strange building, find a secret room or door, etc.

Criminology: The study of crime and the criminal mind. A successful Criminology roll lets you find and interpret clues, guess how criminals might behave, and so on. This skill doesn't default to Streetwise, but the GM might allow a Streetwise roll *instead* in certain situations.

Economics: The study of the *theory* of money, markets, and financial systems. A successful Economics roll lets you predict the economic impact of events in the game world: the assassination of a political figure, the demolition of a factory, the introduction of a new invention, etc.

Geography: The study of the world's physical, political, and economic divisions, and how they interact. It proves information on everything from the lay of the land in Europa to the shifting borders, alliances, and resources of countries.

History: The study of the *recorded* past. A successful History roll lets you answer questions about history, and might (at the GM's option) allow you to remember a useful parallel: "Ah, yes. Hannibal faced a situation like this once, and here's what he did . . ."

Law: Knowledge of law codes and jurisprudence. A successful Law roll lets you remember, deduce, or figure out the answer to a question about the law. Few legal questions have clear-cut answers, however – even an expert hedges their advice! In some cases, a Quick Contest of Law between defense and prosecution determines the outcome of a trial.

Linguistics: The study of the principles upon which languages are based. A successful Linguistics roll lets you identify a language from a bit of speech or writing. You can also make a skill roll once per month, when learning a language without a teacher, to learn at full speed.

Literature: The study of the great writings. A student of literature would be knowledgeable in the realms of old poetry, dusty tomes, criticism, etc. This can be useful for finding clues to hidden treasure, sunken lands, Ancient Secrets, and the like.

Philosophy: The study of a system or systems of principles to live by. You may opt to further specialize in one system. You don't necessarily *believe in* the ideals you study!

Psychology: The skill of *applied* psychology, which may be learned by academic study or lengthy observation of human nature. Roll against skill to predict the general behavior of an individual or small group in a particular situation – especially a *stressful* situation.

Sociology: The study of societies and social relationships. A successful Sociology roll lets you judge how well a large group of people will work together; deduce the social pressures contributing to a crime wave, revolution, war, etc.; or predict the most probable outcome of dissimilar societies coming into contact.

Theology: The study of a religion or religions: gods, cosmology, doctrines, scriptures, etc. Unless you opt to further specialize in one system, your focus is the similarities and differences between religions ("comparative theology"). You don't necessarily *believe in* the faith(s) you study.

Accounting   IQ/H

Defaults: IQ-6, Finance-4, Mathematics-5, or Merchant-5.

This is the ability to keep books of account, to examine the condition of a business, etc. A successful Accounting roll (requires at least two hours of study, and possibly *months* to audit a large organization) can tell you whether financial records are correct, and possibly reveal evidence of forgery, tampering, and similar criminal activity.

Acrobatics   DX/H

Default: DX-6.

This is the ability to perform gymnastic stunts, roll, take falls, etc. This can be handy on an adventure, as tightrope walking, human pyramids, and trapeze swinging all have useful applications. If you're performing stunts on a moving vehicle or mount, roll against the *lower* of Acrobatics and the appropriate Riding or vehicle operation skill. You may substitute an Acrobatics roll for a DX roll in any attempt to jump, roll, avoid falling down, etc. Finally, a successful Acrobatics roll reduces the effective distance of any fall by five yards (see *Falling,* p. 150).

Two special versions of Acrobatics are also available:

Aerobatics: The ability to execute tight turns, loops, power dives, etc. in flight. You must be able to fly to learn this skill – although *how* you fly (wings, jet pack, etc.) is irrelevant. Natural fliers might find flight to be as effortless as humans find walking, but they must still learn Aerobatics in order to engage in complex acrobatics.

Aquabatics: The ability to engage in underwater acrobatics. *Prerequisite:* Swimming.

Acting   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5, Performance-2, or Public Speaking-5.

This is the ability to counterfeit moods, emotions, and voices, and to lie convincingly over a period of time. A successful Acting roll lets you pretend to feel something that you do not. The GM may also require an Acting roll whenever you try to fool someone, play dead in combat, etc. You can use Acting to impersonate someone, but to do so, you must first successfully disguise yourself (see *Disguise,* p. 112) – unless your victim(s) cannot see you!

Acting is *not* the same as Fast-Talk (the art of the "quick con") or Performance (the skill of *stage* acting).

Administration   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5 or Merchant-3.

This is the skill of running a large organization. It is often a prerequisite for high Rank (p. 75). A successful Administration roll gives you +2 to reactions when dealing with a bureaucrat, and lets you predict the best way to go about dealing with a bureaucracy.

Alchemy   IQ/VH

Defaults: None.

This is the study of "magical" transformations and transmutations. An alchemist can identify concoctions with extraordinary effects ("elixirs"), such as love potions and healing unguents, and prepare them from suitable ingredients. This is a mechanical process, using the properties inherent in certain things.

Animal Handling   IQ/A

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to train and work with animals. To train an animal, make an Animal Handling roll once per day of training. Failure means the animal learned nothing; a badly failed roll means you're *attacked*.

When working with a trained animal, roll against skill for each task you set the animal. Roll at -5 if the animal isn't familiar with you, -5 if the circumstances are stressful to the animal, and -3 or more if the task is a complex one. To put on an *entertaining* circus act, snake-charming show, etc., you must make a separate Performance roll!

This skill can sometimes be used to quiet a wild, dangerous, or untrained animal. Roll at -5 if the creature is wild or very frightened, or at -10 if it's a man-eater or man-killer.

Finally, this skill gives an advantage in combat against animals. If you have Animal Handling at level 15, an animal's attack and defense rolls are at -1 against you, because you can predict its behavior. At skill 20, the animal's rolls are at -2.

All of the rolls above assume you're familiar with the type of animal you're dealing with. If you aren't, the GM may assess a penalty. This can be as severe as -6 for an especially unfamiliar beast.

Area Knowledge†   IQ/E

Defaults: IQ-4 (if you live or have lived in the area) or Geography-3.

This skill represents familiarity with the people, places, and politics of a given region. You usually have Area Knowledge only for the area you consider your "home base," whether that's a single farm or a continent. If information about other areas is available, the GM may allow you to learn additional Area Knowledge skills.

The GM should not require Area Knowledge rolls for ordinary situations; e.g., to find the blacksmith, tavern, or your own home. But they could require a roll to locate a smith to shoe your horse at 3 a.m., or to find the best ambush spot along a stretch of road. "Secret" or obscure information might give a penalty, require Hidden Lore (p. 116), or simply be unavailable – GM's decision.

The information Area Knowledge covers often overlaps such skills as Current Affairs, Geography, Naturalist, and Streetwise. The difference is that Area Knowledge works for a single area: You know the habits of *this* tiger or gang boss, but have no special insight into tigers or gangs in general.

You can learn Area Knowledge for any sort of area. The larger the territory, the less "personal" and more general your knowledge becomes. Almost everyone has Area Knowledge of *some* type. The "canonical" area classes are:

Neighborhood: For an urban area: the residents and buildings of a few city blocks. For a rural area: the inhabitants, trails, streams, hiding places, ambush sites, flora, and fauna of a few hundred acres.

Village or Town: All important citizens and businesses, and most unimportant ones; all public buildings and most houses.

City: All important businesses, streets, citizens, leaders, etc.

Barony, County, Duchy, or Small Nation: General nature of settlements and towns, political allegiances, leaders, and most citizens of Status 5+.

Large Nation: Location of major cities and important sites; awareness of major customs, ethnic groups, and languages (but not necessarily expertise); names of folk of Status 6+; and a general understanding of the economic and political situation.

Armory†   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5 or Engineer (same)-4.

This is the ability to build, modify, and repair a specific class of weapons or armor. It does not include skill at design; for that, see *Engineer,* p. 112. A successful roll lets you find a problem, if it isn't obvious; a second roll lets you repair it. Time required is up to the GM. You *must* specialize in one of the following fields:

Battlesuits: All kinds of powered armor, along with any built-in weaponry.

Body Armor: Any kind of unpowered personal armor (but not shields). Also defaults to Smith (Copper)-3, Smith (Iron)-3, and Machinist-3.

Heavy Weapons: All weapons used with the Artillery and Gunner skills.

Melee Weapons: Any weapon used with a Melee Weapon or Thrown Weapon skill, as well as all kinds of shields. Also defaults to Smith (Copper)-3, Smith (Iron)-3, and Machinist-3.

Missile Weapons: Man-portable, pre-gunpowder projectile weapons of all kinds – bows, crossbows, slings, etc.

Small Arms: All weapons used with the Beam Weapons and Guns skills. Also defaults to Machinist-5.

Vehicular Armor: All kinds of armored vehicle hulls.

Artillery†   IQ/A

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to use a heavy weapon, such as a trebuchet or howitzer, for *indirect* fire – that is, to put fire onto a target area via a high ballistic arc or similar path. For *direct* fire, use Gunner skill (p. 116). Roll against Artillery skill to bombard the target. You *must* specialize:

Beams: Any kind of heavy energy weapon used against targets you cannot see (e.g., bounced off a mirror).

Bombs: All kinds of unpowered, free-falling munitions.

Cannon: Any kind of heavy projectile weapon – bombard, howitzer, naval gun, etc.

Catapult: Any kind of indirect-fire mechanical siege engine, such as a trebuchet.

Guided Missile: Any kind of seeking or remotely piloted missile.

Torpedoes: Any kind of powered underwater projectile.

Artistry† IQ/H

Default: IQ-6.

This is the ability to create works of art. A successful roll might let you produce a recognizable likeness of a person or an object, or a piece beautiful enough to sell (the GM shouldn't allow a default roll for this use!). Time required is up to the GM.

You *must* specialize in an art form. Below are some common specialties. Players may propose others, but the GM has the final say.

Body Art: Tattooing, piercing, and scarification. Both this skill and Painting suffice for henna or temporary tattoos. Cosmetic *surgery* requires Surgery skill (p. 128).

Calligraphy: Beautiful and decorative handwriting. You need not be literate!

Drawing: All forms of charcoal, ink, pastel, and pencil work.

Illumination: Decorating written text with miniature paintings and pictures.

Illusion: Creating believable or evocative illusions.

Jeweler: Working with precious metals, making jewelry, decorating weapons, etc. A successful skill roll can assess the value of a precious bauble.

Leatherworking: Working with leather to make or repair belts, saddles, armor, etc.

Painting: All forms of painting, whether on paper, canvas, or a wall – and whether with tempera, oil-based paint, or something more exotic.

Photography: Using a camera competently, as well as using a darkroom to produce recognizable and attractive photos.

Pottery: Working with various sorts of ceramics – especially clay.

Scene Design: Designing sets for the stage.

Sculpting: Creating three-dimensional art from ivory, stone, metal, etc.

Woodworking: All forms of fine woodwork, including cabinet-making and decorative carving.

Many Artistry skills are used to earn a living rather than to create fine art, and some people regard them as "craft" skills, not "art" skills. It's up to *you* whether you focus on beauty, realism, or functionality.

Beam Weapons DX/E

Default: DX-4.

This is the ability to use beam small arms, such as death-ray pistols and rifles.

Bicycling DX/E

Default: DX-4.

This is the ability to ride a bicycle long distances, at high speeds, in rallies, etc. Roll at +4 if all you want to do is struggle along without falling off. An IQ-based Bicycling roll allows you to make simple repairs, assuming tools and parts are available.

Blind Fighting Per/VH

Defaults: None.
Prerequisites: Acute Sense 5+ or Weapon Master.

You've learned how to fight blindfolded or in absolute darkness, using senses other than vision – mainly hearing, but also touch and even smell – to pinpoint exactly where your opponents are. A successful roll allows one melee attack or active defense without any penalties for lighting (even total darkness), blindness (temporary or permanent), or an invisible foe. However, attacks made in total darkness, while blind, or against invisible enemies have an extra -2 to target specific hit locations.

An opponent who knows you possess this ability can foil it by winning a Quick Contest of Stealth-4 vs. your Blind Fighting each turn. If they win, you cannot detect them.

Blowpipe DX/H

Default: DX-6.

This is the ability to use a blowpipe. You can use this weapon to shoot small, usually poisoned, darts. You can also use it to blow powders at targets within one yard; treat this as a melee attack at +2 to hit, not as a ranged attack. It wouldn't be surprising to find a Smoke Knight with this skill!

Body Control HT/VH

Defaults: None.

This ability lets you affect involuntary bodily functions such as heart rate, blood flow, and digestion. One use of this skill is to enter a deathlike trance, during which only those who can win a Quick Contest of Diagnosis vs. your Body Control skill even realize that you're alive. This requires (30 - skill) seconds of concentration, minimum one second.

You can also use this skill to flush poisons from your body. To do so, you must first roll against Poisons (or Alchemy, Pharmacy, etc., as appropriate) to identify the poison. You cannot attempt this roll until you know you've been poisoned. In most cases, you only discover this when the first symptoms show! A successful Body Control roll – adjusted by any modifier to the HT roll to resist the poison – flushes the poison in 1d hours, after which it has no further effect.

Body Language   Per/A

Defaults: Detect Lies-4 or Psychology-4.

This is the ability to interpret a person's facial expressions and body posture in order to gauge their feelings. You can use it like the Empathy advantage (p. 85) or Detect Lies skill (p. 111) – but only on a subject you can *see,* and subject to Vision modifiers. You can also use it to get a rough idea of what an ally is doing or about to do in a situation where they cannot communicate with you directly (for instance, when using Stealth). You can observe only one subject at a time.

Body Sense   DX/H

Defaults: DX-6 or Acrobatics-3.

This is the ability to adjust quickly after teleportation or similar "instant movement." A successful roll lets you act normally on your next turn. Failure means disorientation: You may take no action other than defense for one turn. Critical failure means you *fall down,* physically stunned!

Bolas   DX/A

Defaults: None.

This is the ability to throw the *bolas:* a length of cord with two or more weights attached. Its primary uses are to stop herd animals and to hunt small game, but it can also entangle opponents in combat.

Bow   DX/A

Default: DX-5.

This is the ability to use the longbow, short bow, and all similar bows to shoot projectiles (usually arrows).

Boxing   DX/A

Defaults: None.

This is the skill of trained punching. Roll against Boxing instead of DX to hit with a punch. Boxing does *not* improve kicking ability – use Brawling (p. 109) or Martial Arts (p. 118) for that.

Boxing improves damage. If you know Boxing at DX+1 level, add +1 *per die* to basic thrust damage when you calculate punching damage. Add +2 per die if you know Boxing at DX+2 or better! Work out damage ahead of time and record it on your character sheet.

Brainwashing   IQ/H

Defaults: None.

Some malevolent Sparks use various forms of personality alteration and mind control to acquire minions or agents (Baron Klaus Wulfenbach could certainly be considered a brainwasher, among other things!). The exact techniques involved – some combination of drugs, hypnotism, sensory deprivation, sleep deprivation, social pressure, subliminal messages, surgery, and bizarre Spark technology – are unimportant. If the GM decides that the procedures being used actually work, treat brainwashing as a Regular Contest (*not* a Quick Contest) between Brainwashing skill and the victim's Will. Roll once per day. Obviously, the brainwasher has a tremendous advantage: even if the victim wins *this* time, it is only a matter of time before they slip.

Results depend on how effective the GM deems the brainwasher's methods to be. A successful attempt might produce insanity, personality changes, or suggestions that can be triggered by future events. In game terms, the victim can acquire almost any quirk or *mental* disadvantage.

Brawling   DX/E

Defaults: None.

This is the skill of "unscientific" unarmed combat. Roll against Brawling instead of DX to hit with a punch, or Brawling-2 instead of DX-2 to hit with a kick. Brawling can also replace DX when attacking with teeth, claws, horns, or other "natural weapons."

Brawling improves damage. If you know Brawling at DX+2 level or better, add +1 *per die* to basic thrust damage when you calculate damage with Brawling attacks – punches, kicks, claws, bites, etc. Work out damage ahead of time and record it on your character sheet.

Brawling includes the ability to use the blackjack or sap. An attack with such a fist load is considered a punch at +1 to damage.

Breaking Blow   IQ/H

Defaults: None.

This skill allows you to find your target's weakest spot when making a *barehanded* attack. Each attack requires a separate Breaking Blow roll. Roll against skill *after* you hit. Breaking Blow costs 1 FP per attempt, whether or not you hit.

Success divides the DR of an inanimate object or any *artificial* armor or force field – but *not* a creature's natural DR – by 5 for that one attack. Failure grants your attack no special benefits. On a critical failure, you do the damage to your own hand or foot!

Modifiers: -10 if used *instantly,* dropping to -5 after 1 turn of concentration, -4 after 2 turns, -3 after 4 turns, -2 after 8 turns, -1 after 16 turns, and no penalty after 32 turns. -1 if your target is wood, -3 if brick or stone, or -5 if metal.

Breath Control   HT/H

Defaults: None.

This is the ability to breathe at maximum efficiency. On a successful skill roll, you can increase the time you can hold your breath for any reason (e.g., underwater) by 50%, or regain one FP in only two minutes.

Camouflage   IQ/E

Defaults: IQ-4 or Survival-2.

This is the ability to use natural materials, special fabrics and paints, etc. to hide yourself, your position, or your equipment. To see through your camouflage, an observer must win a Quick Contest of Vision or Observation skill (p. 121) vs. your Camouflage skill.

Depending on the circumstances, successful camouflage might hide its subject entirely or merely blur its outlines to make it harder to hit (-1 to attacker's skill). Camouflage doesn't improve your Stealth roll, but if you fail at Stealth while camouflaged, those who *heard* you must still see through your camouflage to *see* you.

Carousing   HT/E

Default: HT-4.

This is the skill of socializing, partying, etc. A successful Carousing roll, under the right circumstances, gives you +2 on a request for aid or information, or just on a general reaction. Failure means you made a fool of yourself in some way: -2 on any reaction roll made by those you caroused with. If you do your carousing in the wrong places, a failed roll can have other dangers!

Carpentry   IQ/E

Default: IQ-4.

This is the ability to build things out of wood. A successful roll lets you do one hour's worth of competent carpentry. Failure means the work was bad.

Cartography   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5, Geography-2, Mathematics-2, or Navigation-4.

This is the ability to create maps and charts. Roll against skill to map any location as you move through it.

Climbing   DX/A

Default: DX-5.

This is the ability to climb mountains, rock walls, trees, the sides of buildings, etc. See *Climbing* (p. 135) for details.

Cloak   DX/A

Defaults: DX-5, Net-4, or Shield-4.

This is the skill of using a cloak or cape for defense. It covers use of both the waist-length "light cloak" (any cloak, cape, or coat weighing less than 5 lbs.) and the full-length "heavy cloak" (any cloak weighing 5 lbs. or more). A cloak works much like a shield, providing a Defense Bonus (+1 if light, +2 if heavy) and giving a Block defense equal to (skill/2) + 3, rounded down.

To use a garment this way, you must take it off and hold it in your hand. This requires a number of Ready maneuvers equal to its Defense Bonus. However, either hand will do – there's no "off" hand when using a cloak.

Combat Art†   DX/Varies

Defaults: Special.

Combat skills can be learned in nonlethal forms aimed at exhibition and competition. Such "Combat Art" skills emphasize graceful movements and perfect stances. Since they give a default to full-fledged, lethal combat skills (below), they're a logical choice for pacifists who want *some* combat ability.

Combat Art skills are DX-based, with the same difficulty level and defaults as the corresponding combat skill. The two skills default either way at -3. For instance, Staff Art is a DX/A skill that defaults to DX-5, just like Staff skill (p. 119), and someone with Staff Art at 15 would have Staff at 12 by default (and vice versa).

Connoisseur   IQ/A

Default: IQ-5.

This skill represents an *educated* understanding of art and luxury items. It's vital to art dealers, critics, master thieves, and anyone who wishes to appear cultured. A successful roll lets you predict what critics will think of a piece of art, assess how much it should fetch on the market (+1 to Merchant skill when trading it), or impress the culturally literate (may give +1 to Savoir-Faire or reaction rolls, at the GM's option).

Cooking   IQ/A

Default: IQ-5.

This is the skill of being a chef – you don't need it to heat water and open boxes, or to cook rat-on-a-stick over your campfire. A successful skill roll lets you prepare a pleasing meal.

Crewman   IQ/E

Default: IQ-4.

This is the ability to serve as crew aboard a large vehicle. It includes familiarity with "shipboard life," knowledge of safety measures, and training in damage control (how to fight fires, patch the hull, and so forth). Make a skill roll for basic map or chart reading, practical meteorology, or to recall laws and regulations pertaining to your vehicle.

This skill also lets you steer the vessel. It's easier than vehicle operation skills (like Piloting) because it *only* includes knowledge of how to steer. Make a DX-based skill roll whenever you take the helm – but your effective skill cannot exceed your captain's Shiphandling skill (p. 126).

The *average* Crewman skill of an entire crew is a measure of overall crew quality. The GM rolls against this whenever the vehicle arrives or departs, in unfavorable conditions, or in battle. Failure and critical failure results depend on the circumstances.

All of the rolls above assume you're familiar with the vehicle! If you aren't, the GM may assess a penalty, from -1 (e.g., an airship slightly different from yours) to -6 (e.g., a seagoing vessel when you're used to airships).

Crossbow   DX/E

Default: DX-4.

This is the ability to use *all* types of crossbows, however exotic they get.

Cryptography   IQ/H

Defaults: IQ-6 or Mathematics-5.

This is the ability to create and defeat encryption systems, codes, and ciphers. It is of use in wartime, espionage, and even business dealings. Treat an attempt to break a code as a Quick Contest of Cryptography skill between the code-breaker and code-maker. The code-breaker must *win* to break the code. Repeated attempts are possible, but each attempt takes a day. The code-maker rolls just once, when they first create the code.

Current Affairs   IQ/E

Defaults: IQ-4 or Research-4.

This is the ability to assimilate *quickly* whatever qualifies as "news" in your world, and to recall it as needed. On a successful Current Affairs roll, the GM will inform you of any news in the region that pertains to the current adventure (possibly including clues, on a good roll), or give you a small bonus (say, +1 to a skill roll where knowing recent developments would be helpful).

Dancing   DX/A

Default: DX-5.

This is the ability to perform dances appropriate to your culture, and to learn new ones quickly. The GM may rule that specific dances – especially *exotic* ones, like blade dancing, bull dancing, fire dancing, and snake dancing – are separate DX/Average skills that default to Dancing-5.

Detect Lies   Per/H

Defaults: Perception-6, Body Language-4, or Psychology-4.

This is the ability to tell when someone is lying to you. It isn't the same as Interrogation (p. 117); Detect Lies works in a casual or social situation. When you ask to use this skill, the GM rolls a Quick Contest of your Detect Lies skill vs. your subject's IQ (or Fast-Talk or Acting skill). If you *win,* the GM tells you whether the subject is lying. If you lose, the GM may lie to you about whether you were lied to . . . or just say, "You can't tell."

Diagnosis   IQ/H

Defaults: IQ-6, First Aid-8, Physician-4, or Veterinary-5.

This is the ability to tell what's wrong with a sick or injured person, or what killed a dead person. A successful roll gives some information about the patient's problem. It might not determine the *exact* problem (if the GM feels the cause is totally beyond your experience, for instance), but it always gives hints and rules out impossibilities. No Diagnosis roll is required for *obvious* things, like open wounds and missing limbs!

Diplomacy   IQ/H

Defaults: IQ-6 or Politics-6.

This is the skill of negotiating, compromising, and getting along with others. You may substitute a Diplomacy roll for any reaction roll in a noncombat situation, as described in *Influence Rolls* (p. 138). Unlike other Influence skills, Diplomacy never gives a worse result than if you had tried an ordinary reaction roll – failure with Fast-Talk or Sex Appeal alienates the subject, but Diplomacy is usually safe. A successful roll also allows you to predict the possible outcome of a course of action when negotiating, or to choose the best approach to take.

If you know Diplomacy at level 20 or better, you get +2 on all reaction rolls!

Disguise   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5 or Makeup-3.

This is the art of altering your appearance using clothing, makeup, and prosthetics. You don't need this skill to don a quick disguise – e.g., to put on a lab coat when you enter a laboratory – but such disguises fool only the inattentive! A *good* disguise requires a Disguise roll and 30 minutes to an hour of preparation. Roll a Quick Contest of Disguise skill vs. the Perception of *each person* your disguise must fool. Individuals with Criminology or Observation may substitute those skills for Perception when rolling to penetrate a disguise.

Driving   DX/A

Defaults: DX-5 or IQ-5.

This is the ability to drive a *motorized* ground vehicle (to "drive" a team of animals, use Teamster, p. 129). Make an IQ-based Driving roll for basic map reading, to diagnose simple malfunctions, or to recall rules of the road.

Electrician   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5 or Engineer (Electrical and Electronics)-3.

This is the skill of building, maintaining, and repairing electrical and electronic systems. Make a skill roll to diagnose an electrical or electronic fault, wire a building or vehicle, etc. Adventuring uses include damage control in combat (e.g., to restore power to a damaged vehicle system) and cutting the power to Mad Science devices.

Engineer†   IQ/H

Defaults: Special.

This is the ability to design and build technological devices and systems. A successful roll lets you design a new system, diagnose a glitch, identify the purpose of a strange device, or improvise a gadget to solve a problem. Time required per attempt is up to the GM.

Engineers are *designers* and *inventors* – they aren't necessarily skilled at the routine operation or maintenance of the things they design! For instance, Engineer (Small Arms) lets you design a new gun, but you'll need Armory to maintain it and Guns to shoot it.

You *must* specialize. Below are some possible fields; the GM may allow others. Most Sparks have *at least* one of these skills – and the GM may rule that only Sparks can learn exotic specialties such as Parachronic, Psychotronics, and Temporal, or can use ordinary ones like Mechanical to build things like clanks.

Artillery: Designing artillery, from trebuchets to guided missiles. *Default:* Armory (Heavy Weapons)-6.
Civil: Planning highways, aqueducts, buildings, etc. *Default:* Architecture-6.
Clockwork: Designing wind-up gadgetry – from watches to clanks. *Default:* Mechanic-6.
Combat: Building or *removing* fortifications, trenches, etc. *Default:* Explosives-6.

Electrical and Electronics: Designing electrical systems (e.g., power cells and transmission lines) and electronic systems. *Default:* Electrician-6.
Explosives: Creating things that go boom, including incendiary bombs and fireworks. *Defaults:* Chemistry-6 or Explosives-6.
Materials: Concocting new structural materials. *Defaults:* Chemistry-6 or Metallurgy-6.
Mechanical: Designing *powered* machinery – including robotics. *Default:* Mechanic-6.
Mining: Designing underground structures. *Defaults:* Explosives-6 or Geology-6.
Parachronic: Designing apparatus for crossing dimensions or timelines. *Default:* Electrician-6.
Psychotronics: Designing "psionic" technology, such as telepathic shields and amplifiers. *Default:* Electrician-6.
Small Arms: Designing personal firearms, such as guns and portable rocket launchers. *Default:* Armory (Small Arms)-6.
Temporal: Designing time machines. *Default:* Electrician-6.
Vehicle Type: Designing a broad class of vehicle; e.g., Engineer (Clank Carriages) or Engineer (Airships). *Default:* Mechanic-6.

Enthrallment   Will/H

Defaults: None.

Storytelling and stories often influence others. The GM may choose to represent this ability using the four Enthrallment skills described below. Each has a time requirement, FP cost, and duration, and requires *two* skill rolls to use.

At the outset of the tale or lie, roll vs. Public Speaking skill (which *can* be at default!) – if you can't grab your audience's attention early on, you won't have much chance of controlling them by the end. On a success, proceed to the Enthrallment skill roll; critical success gives +1 on that roll. On a failure, you may still attempt the Enthrallment roll, but at a penalty equal to your margin of failure. Critical failure means your Enthrallment attempt fails automatically.
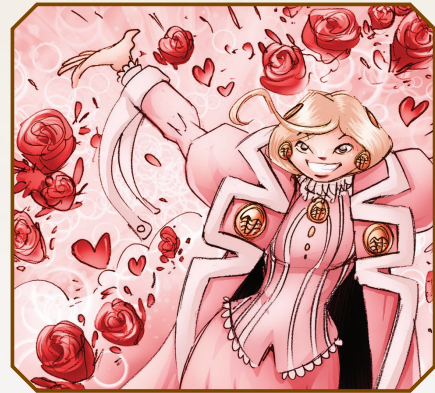
After the time required to enthrall has passed, roll a Quick Contest: your Enthrallment skill vs. the Will of each audience member. If you *win,* you affect that person – see the individual skill description for effects. If you lose or tie, there's no effect. However, if you *critically* fail, your audience instantly turns hostile!

If the *player* actually tells a good tale, the GM should reward them with +1 to +3 to both rolls.

Audience Size: An "audience" can be one listener or a hundred – as many as can hear you speak. However, the number of audience members you can enthrall at one sitting is your Enthrallment skill level *relative to Will* (treating 0 or less as 1), *squared*. At Will-2 to Will+1, you can affect one person; at Will+2, four people; at Will+3, nine; and so on.

Captivate   Will/H

Defaults: None.

This skill allows you to tell a story so skillfully that those listening lose their will and do whatever you want them to do. In effect, they believe themselves to be *in the tale*, and are vulnerable to manipulation by you, the teller of the tale. If you win the Quick Contest, the audience becomes intensely loyal to you. They follow *any* direct order you give. In the absence of a direct order, they act in your best interest, *as they understand it*. If you tell someone to do something very hazardous, or that goes against their usual code of behavior (GM's decision), they get a Will-5 roll to break the captivation. Otherwise, they're your loyal supporter for all intents and purposes.

Time: 30 minutes of uninterrupted storytelling.
Fatigue Cost: 8 FP, successful or not.
Duration: Captivation lasts until the subject becomes unconscious or falls asleep, *you* become unconscious or fall asleep, you attack the subject, or the subject loses half their HP to injury.

Persuade   Will/H

Defaults: None.

This ability allows you to bring an audience over to your point of view, granting you a bonus to your reaction rolls with them. You may use it whenever a reaction roll is called for. If you win the Quick Contest, add your margin of victory to any reaction roll those in the audience make regarding you – for any reason – to a maximum of +3 (+4 on a critical success). If you critically fail, the best possible reaction is "Poor."

Time: 1 minute.
Fatigue Cost: 2 FP, successful or not.
Duration: Until you do something to change the audience's opinion!

Suggest   Will/H

Defaults: None.

This ability lets you give your audience a single, simple suggestion. A suggestion should have no complex grammatical clauses – just a subject, verb, object, and at most two modifiers. "Kill the Baron!" is acceptable; "Kill the Baron if he doesn't accede to our demands!" is not. A given subject gets +5 to resist if your suggestion goes against their personal safety, and +3 if it goes against their beliefs, convictions, or knowledge. If you win the Quick Contest, the audience members try to act on the suggestion to the best of their abilities – each assuming that the idea was their own.

Time: 20 minutes of uninterrupted storytelling.
Fatigue Cost: 6 FP, successful or not.
Duration: 10 minutes – or longer, if you continue to talk to the audience and can make a successful Suggest roll every 10 minutes! Once the suggestion lapses, audience members wonder why they acted the way they did only if the suggestion was something they would never have done normally.

Sway Emotions   Will/H

Defaults: None.

This ability allows you to instill the audience with any one emotion: anger, boredom, depression, disgust, fear, greed, hate, jealousy, joy, love, lust, patriotism, peace, sadness, unrest, etc. If you win the Quick Contest, your audience experiences the chosen emotion. The GM decides how they act as a result!

Time: 10 minutes of uninterrupted storytelling.
Fatigue Cost: 4 FP, successful or not.
Duration: One hour.

Erotic Art   DX/A

Defaults: DX-5 or Acrobatics-5.

This represents knowledge of advanced sexual technique. IQ-, HT-, and even ST-based rolls are common. Precise game effects are left to the discretion of the GM, who should respect the players' comfort level.
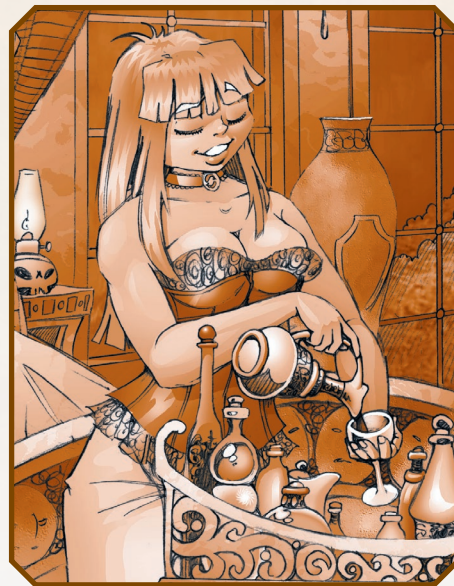
Escape   DX/H

Default: DX-6.

This is the ability to slip out of ropes, handcuffs, and similar restraints. The first escape attempt takes one minute; each subsequent attempt takes 10 minutes. The GM may apply a penalty for particularly secure bonds. You suffer only *half* this penalty if you dislocate the restrained limb (usually an arm). This requires (20 - skill) minutes of concentration, minimum one minute, and a Will roll. However, if you fail your Escape roll by 3 or more when dislocating a limb, the limb suffers 1d of injury – and critical failure means you automatically take enough injury to cripple the limb!

Esoteric Medicine   Per/H

Default: Perception-6.

This is the skill of treating illness and injury with techniques grounded in esoteric theory rather than analytical science. It's usually associated with a magical or spiritual tradition. The particulars vary by tradition, but might include acupuncture, massage, alchemical or herbal preparations, or such exercises as breath control and meditation.

The effectiveness of Esoteric Medicine relative to Physician (p. 122) is up to the GM. It might be more effective, equivalent but different, or less effective; in the world of *Girl Genius*, it's often perceived as "quack" medicine regardless of *actual* effectiveness. But it should always be at least as good as First Aid (p. 114) – the attentions of a trained healer of *any* kind are preferable to nothing!

Explosives   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5 or Engineer (Combat, Explosives, or Mining)-3.

This is the skill of using explosives to blow things up. It isn't needed to light a fuse or throw a grenade – but an Explosives roll *would* be required, for instance, to build a time bomb or properly demolish a structure.

Farming   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5, Biology-5, or Gardening-3.

This is the skill of growing things. It's usually used to earn a living, but you can also use it to answer theoretical questions about or solve problems related to agriculture.

Fast-Draw   DX/E

Defaults: None.

This skill lets you *quickly* draw a weapon from its holster, sheath, or hiding place. A successful roll means you ready the weapon instantly. This doesn't count as a combat maneuver – you can use the weapon to attack on the same turn. Failure means you ready your weapon normally but may do nothing else on your turn. Critical failure means you *drop* the weapon!

Fast-Talk   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5 or Acting-5.

This is the skill of talking others into doing things against their better judgment. It isn't taught (intentionally, that is) in school; you study it by working as a salesperson, confidence man, lawyer, etc.

In any situation that calls for a reaction roll, you may make an Influence roll (p. 138) against Fast-Talk instead. If you have Fast-Talk at level 20 or better, you get +2 on all reaction rolls where you're allowed to talk!

Fast-Talk differs from Acting (p. 106). In general, Fast-Talk is used to get someone to make a snap decision in your favor, while Acting is used for long-term dissimulation. However, there are situations in which the GM could allow a roll on either skill.

Filch   DX/A

Defaults: DX-5, Pickpocket-4, or Sleight of Hand-4.

This skill lets you steal objects that are sitting in plain sight . . . without being spotted. Roll against skill to shoplift, snatch documents off a desk, etc. If someone is *actively* watching the item you wish to snatch, you must win a Quick Contest of Filch vs. their Vision roll (or Observation skill, p. 121) to perform the theft unnoticed.

Finance   IQ/H

Defaults: Accounting-4, Economics-3, or Merchant-6.

This is the skill of managing money. It's a *practical* application of Economics (p. 105), much as Engineer skill is a practical application of Physics. A successful roll lets you broker a financial deal, raise capital, balance budgets, etc.

Fire Eating   DX/A

Defaults: None.

This is the performance skill of extinguishing flames in your mouth without burning yourself. Make a skill roll for each item you wish to extinguish. Success lets you put out the flames. Failure inflicts 1d-3 of injury (minimum 1) on your mouth. This skill also includes fire *breathing:* igniting a stream of fuel blown from the mouth. At the GM's option, you may use this as an attack (1d-3 burning damage).

First Aid   IQ/E

Defaults: IQ-4, Esoteric Medicine, Physician, or Veterinary-4.

This is the ability to treat medical emergencies in the field. Roll against skill to bandage a wound, treat shock, give artificial respiration, save someone from choking, etc. Unusual problems must be identified using Diagnosis skill first.

First Aid defaults to Esoteric Medicine and Physician at *full skill.* If you have either of those skills, you don't need this one!

Flight   HT/A

Default: HT-5.

This skill represents training for endurance flying. You must be able to fly to learn it. When traveling long distances, a successful Flight roll increases the distance traveled by 20%; roll daily. If a group of fliers is traveling together, all must succeed in order to get the increased distance.

Forgery   IQ/H

Default: IQ-6.

This is the ability to create falsified documents (identity cards, passports, etc.). The time required to create a forgery ranges from days to weeks (GM decides). When you use a forged document, make your Forgery roll *each time* it's inspected – unless you roll a critical success on your first attempt. Failure means someone spots the forgery.

Fortune-Telling   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5, Fast-Talk-3, or Occultism-3.

This is the art of interviewing someone in order to learn more about their lifestyle and personality, and then using this information to make an "educated guess" about their future that you can pass off as supernatural divination. Suitable props – star charts, tea leaves, etc. – can enhance the illusion. Knowledge of traditional occult or religious beliefs (especially your subject's!) can also lend an air of legitimacy.

With the GM's permission, you can use Fortune-Telling in place of Fast-Talk (by making predictions that guide the subject toward a particular course of action), or Interrogation or Psychology (by asking the subject leading questions under the pretense of telling their fortune). This is possible only if the subject believes you're a genuine fortune-teller *and* you take the time to do a full "reading" for them.

Fortune-Telling is *not* a paranormal talent and *cannot* tell the future. You might wish to learn it if you have actual divinatory abilities, though, as it enables you to present your predictions in a culturally acceptable way.

Forward Observer   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5 or Artillery (any)-5.

This is the skill of being a "spotter" for artillery. It includes locating and marking targets, matching ordnance to target for best effect, and calling in corrections to any fire you personally observe. Failure means the ordnance misses the target; critical failures result in severe "collateral damage" or "friendly fire" incidents. The very worst critical failures (GM's decision) drop the ordnance on *your* position!

Gambling   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5 or Mathematics-5.

This is skill at playing games of *chance.* A successful Gambling roll can (among other things) tell you if a game is rigged, identify a fellow gambler in a group of strangers, or "estimate the odds" in *any* tricky situation.

When you gamble against the house, make a skill roll (the GM might secretly modify this if the odds are poor!). When you gamble against someone else, roll a Regular Contest of Gambling (p. 133) until one of you wins. Sleight of Hand (p. 126) is helpful if you want to cheat! To *spot* a cheater, roll a Quick Contest: your Gambling or Vision roll, whichever is *higher,* vs. your opponent's Sleight of Hand skill (for card or dice tricks) or IQ (for other kinds of cheating).

Games   IQ/E

Default: IQ-4.

This is the ability to play games of *skill* appropriate to your culture, and to learn new ones quickly. It includes knowledge of rules, etiquette, and tournament regulations. As people often stake vast sums on games, it might be possible to earn a living as a professional gamer. Games may also be played to settle disputes.

Gardening   IQ/E

Defaults: IQ-4 or Farming-3.

This is the ability to care for plants on a small scale. (For large-scale crops, use Farming, p. 114.) A skill roll lets you grow food, medicinal herbs, attractive flowers and trees, etc.

Garrote   DX/E

Default: DX-4.

This is the ability to strangle a victim with a rope or a wire. You cannot use a garrote to parry.

Gesture   IQ/E

Default: IQ-4.

This is the ability to communicate through improvised hand signals. A successful skill roll lets you convey one *simple* idea to another person, or understand one simple idea they're attempting to get across to you. Gesture isn't suited to complex communication, however.

Group Performance   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5.

This is the ability to arrange a performance and direct a group of performers in its execution – in rehearsal, in a studio, or before a live audience. A successful roll means the performance is pleasing.

Gunner DX/E

Default: DX-4.

This is the ability to use a heavy weapon, usually mounted on a tripod or vehicle, to make a *direct-fire* attack – that is, to aim and fire at a target to which you have a line of sight. For *indirect* fire, use Artillery skill (p. 107). Roll against Gunner skill to hit the target. Make an IQ-based skill roll to take immediate action (e.g., clear a stoppage), should your weapon fail.

Guns DX/E

Default: DX-4.

This is the ability to use a handheld chemical-propellant projectile weapon. Roll against Guns skill to hit your target. Make an IQ-based skill roll to take immediate action (e.g., eject a dud round), should your weapon fail.

Heraldry IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5 or Savoir-Faire (High Society)-3.

This is the skill of recognizing and designing coats of arms, crests, flags, tartans, and other emblems. A successful roll lets you recognize a noble from their jewelry, clothing, banner, or shield; create attractive and proper arms (without conflicting with existing designs); and so on.

Herb Lore IQ/VH

Defaults: None.

This is the ability to manufacture herbal brews that have remarkable effects – healing balms, love potions, etc. Unlike Alchemy (p. 106), Herb Lore does *not* include the ability to analyze concoctions. On the other hand, someone with this skill can locate ingredients for free in the wild by making a few Naturalist rolls, while an alchemist requires rare and expensive materials to do their work.

Hidden Lore† IQ/A

Defaults: None.

This skill represents knowledge that's lost, deliberately hidden, or simply neglected. Whatever the reason, the general public is unaware of it – it's available only to those who study it specifically. Each category of lore requires its own Hidden Lore skill.

To enter play with Hidden Lore skills, you must account for this knowledge in your character story. The GM might even require you to purchase an Unusual Background (p. 93). Of course, the GM is also free to *forbid* Hidden Lore to starting characters . . . or to PCs in general!

To acquire Hidden Lore in play, you must find a reliable source of relevant information. The GM may choose to tie skill increases in Hidden Lore to specific acts – such as reading moldy tomes – instead of allowing you to spend points freely.

Remember that most Hidden Lore is secret because somebody powerful wants it kept that way. Thus, discussing or revealing your knowledge can be extremely hazardous.

Holdout IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5 or Sleight of Hand-3.

This is the skill of concealing items on your person or on other people (usually with their cooperation). An item's size and shape govern its concealability. Some examples:

+4: BB-sized jewel, postage stamp.
+3: Pea-sized jewel.
+2: One lockpick, huge jewel, small coin, document.
+1: Set of lockpicks, large coin.
 0: Shuriken.
-1: Dagger, tiniest handgun.
-2: Large knife, average handgun, hand grenade.
-3: Shortsword, large handgun.
-4: Broadsword, bulkiest handgun, short rifle.
-5: Bastard sword, average rifle.
-6: Crossbow, long rifle.

Things that move or make noise confer an additional -1 or worse. Clothing modifies effective skill as well: A nun in full habit might have up to +5; a showgirl in a skimpy costume, more like -5. Of course, the showgirl might escape search entirely (unless the guards were bored) because "She obviously couldn't hide anything in *that* outfit!" Full nudity gives -7.

To *spot* a concealed item, roll a Quick Contest: Search (p. 125) vs. Holdout. Search skill defaults to Perception-5 if you haven't studied it.

Hypnotism IQ/H

Defaults: None.

This is the skill of inducing a suggestible state in another person through verbal or mechanical means. It requires five seconds and a successful skill roll to use. If you fail on a *cooperative* subject, you may try again. The second attempt takes five *minutes,* and the roll is at -5. If this attempt fails, you may not try to hypnotize the subject again that day.

A successful Hypnotism attempt puts the subject to sleep. This counts as an anesthetic for the purpose of Surgery. At the GM's option, further Hypnotism rolls might help the subject remember something they had forgotten, while Psychology rolls might help them get over mental problems. In all cases, a hypnotic trance lasts 1d hours unless you end it sooner.

A hypnotized individual is extremely suggestible. Roll a Quick Contest of Hypnotism vs. the victim's Will for each suggestion. The subject resists suggestions that threaten their life or their loved ones, or that go strongly against their character, at +5.

You may also give "posthypnotic suggestions," instructing the subject to do something in response to a trigger after the hypnosis ends. The subject's resistance roll for such suggestions takes place when they encounter the trigger. They resist at +1 to Will per week since they were hypnotized.

You *cannot* use Hypnotism as an attack. You *can* use it on an unaware or unwilling subject out of combat, but they resist at Will+5. If they resist the initial attempt, they're considered uncooperative, and you may not make a second attempt that day. A subject who's unfamiliar with Hypnotism might not know what you attempted, but they will suspect *something* – possibly witchcraft!

Innate Attack   DX/E

Default: DX-4.

This is the trained ability to use a "built-in" *ranged* attack: death rays shot from your eyes, guns integral to your body, lightning bolts hurled from your hands, flaming breath, venomous spit, etc. Learn it to improve your odds of hitting with an attack that originates from *you* rather than from a weapon you pick up and wield. Roll against skill to hit (not merely to *activate* your attack). No roll is needed to hit restraints covering the body part that emits the attack.

Interrogation   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5, Intimidation-3, or Psychology-4.

This is the ability to question a prisoner. Roll a Quick Contest of Interrogation vs. the prisoner's Will for each question; this requires five minutes per question. If you win, you get a truthful answer. If you tie or lose, the victim remains silent or lies. If you lose by more than five points, they tell you a *good, believable* lie! The GM roleplays the prisoner (or, if *you* are the prisoner, the GM roleplays the interrogator) and makes all dice rolls in secret.

Intimidation   Will/A

Defaults: Will-5 or Acting-3.

This is the skill of hostile persuasion. The essence of Intimidation is to convince the subject that you are able and willing, perhaps even eager, to do something awful to them. You can substitute an Intimidation attempt for any reaction roll; see *Influence Rolls* (p. 138).

The results of a successful Intimidation attempt depend on the target. An honest citizen probably cooperates, sullenly or with false cheer. A low-life might lick your boots (even becoming genuinely loyal). A really tough sort might react well without being frightened: "You're my kind of scum!" The GM decides, and roleplays it. If you rolled a critical success – or if the subject critically failed their Will roll – your victim must make a Fright Check in addition to the other results of the Influence roll!

Group Intimidation: You may attempt to intimidate up to 25 people at once, at -1 to skill per five people (or fraction thereof) in the group. Multiple intimidators can attempt to intimidate proportionally larger groups; for instance, three thugs could try to intimidate up to 75 people. Base the skill penalty on the size of the target group divided by the number of intimidators (round up). Resolve the outcome with a single Quick Contest: the *highest* effective Intimidation skill from among the intimidators vs. the *highest* modified Will in the target group.

Specious Intimidation: You can attempt a Quick Contest of Fast-Talk vs. the subject's IQ *before* your Intimidation attempt in order to appear to be intimidating when you can't back it up. If you win, you have +3 on the subsequent Intimidation attempt, which can go a long way toward offsetting the high Will and Fearlessness of martial-arts masters, world leaders, etc. If you tie or lose, however, your Intimidation attempt fails *automatically,* and you suffer a "Very Bad" reaction instead of just a "Bad" one!

Jumping   DX/E

Defaults: None.

This skill represents trained jumping ability. When you attempt a difficult jump, roll against the *higher* of Jumping or DX. In addition, you may use half your Jumping skill (round down) instead of Move when calculating jumping distance; e.g., Jumping-14 would let you jump as if you had Move 7.

Knot-Tying   DX/E

Defaults: DX-4, Climbing-4, or Crewman-4.

This is the ability to tie a wide variety of knots quickly and efficiently. A successful skill roll lets you make a noose, tie someone up, etc. If you bind someone using this skill, they must win a Quick Contest of Escape vs. your Knot-Tying skill to free themselves.

Lasso   DX/A

Defaults: None.

This is the skill of throwing the *lariat:* a long rope or thong with a sliding noose at one end. Its usual purpose is to snare animals, but it can also entangle opponents in combat.

Leadership   IQ/A

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to coordinate a group. Make a Leadership roll to lead NPCs into a dangerous or stressful situation. (PCs can decide for themselves if they want to follow you!)

You may attempt a Leadership roll in combat if you spend your turn doing *nothing* but giving orders and encouragement. Success gives everyone on your side who can hear you (*including* PCs) +1 on all combat-related Fright Checks and on self-control rolls for disadvantages that would reduce combat efficiency (such as Bloodlust, if you wish to take prisoners). Critical success gives +2. The bonus lasts until your next turn, at which time you may roll again. A group can have only one leader, however! If multiple people attempt Leadership rolls, *no one* gets a bonus.

Lockpicking   IQ/A

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to open locks without the key or combination. Each attempt requires one minute. If you make the roll and open the lock, each point by which you succeeded shaves five seconds off the required time. (Safecracking and similar challenges can take more time, at the GM's discretion.) If the lock has a trap or alarm attached, make a *separate* Traps roll (p. 130) to circumvent that.

Machinist   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5 or Mechanic-5.

This is the skill of making and modifying mechanical parts and tools. A successful skill roll lets you build parts from raw materials, manufacture tools for use with another skill (such as Armory or Lockpicking), or modify any simple mechanical device not explicitly covered by another skill. The GM may require an inventor to make one or more Machinist rolls before attempting an Engineer roll to assemble a gadget.

Makeup   IQ/E

Defaults: IQ-4 or Disguise-2.

This is the skill of using theatrical makeup to enhance a performer's appearance. It isn't just the ability to make someone look "pretty" – you can make yourself or others look older, younger, or of a different ethnicity or race.

Martial Arts   DX/H

Defaults: None.

This skill represents advanced training at unarmed striking. Roll against Martial Arts instead of DX to hit with a punch (at no -4 for the "off" hand), or Martial Arts-2 instead of DX-2 to hit with a kick. You cannot use Martial Arts to attack with claws, teeth, etc., or with a blackjack – use Brawling (p.109) for that.

Martial Arts improves damage. If you know Martial Arts at DX level, add +1 *per die* to basic thrust damage when you calculate damage with Martial Arts punches and kicks. Add +2 per die if you know Martial Arts at DX+1 or better! Work out damage ahead of time and record it on your character sheet.

Martial Arts lets you parry two *different* attacks per turn, one with each hand. Your Parry score is (skill/2) + 3, rounded down. This parry is *not* at the usual -3 for parrying a swung weapon barehanded, reducing the likelihood of injury when you defend against an armed foe.

To use Martial Arts, any hand with which you wish to strike or parry must be empty (but you're free to wear heavy gauntlets, brass knuckles, etc. to increase damage). Because Martial Arts relies heavily on footwork, all Martial Arts attacks and parries take a penalty equal to your encumbrance level.

Masonry   IQ/E

Default: IQ-4.

This is the ability to build things out of brick or stone.

Mechanic   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5, Engineer (Clockwork, Mechanical, or Vehicle Type)-4, or Machinist-5.

This is the ability to diagnose and fix ordinary mechanical problems. A successful skill roll lets you find or repair one problem.

Melee Weapon   DX/Varies

Defaults: Special.

This is not one skill, but an entire *collection* of skills – one per class of closely related melee weapons. All Melee Weapon skills are based on DX, and default to DX-4 if Easy, DX-5 if Average, or DX-6 if Hard. See specific skill descriptions for other defaults.

Make a Melee Weapon roll to hit an opponent in combat. You may also use these skills to parry. Your Parry defense is (skill/2) + 3, rounded down.

Melee weapons fall into broad categories on the basis of overall balance and function. When a rule refers to one of these categories, it applies to *all* weapons in that category and *all* Melee Weapon skills used to wield them. For instance, "fencing weapons" means "all weapons used with any of Main-Gauche, Rapier, Saber, or Smallsword skill."

Fencing Weapons

Fencing weapons are light, one-handed weapons, usually hilted blades, optimized for parrying. All but those used with Main-Gauche get +2 to Parry; Main-Gauche eliminates common penalties instead. You must be relatively mobile to capitalize on their speed and maneuverability: all attacks and parries take a penalty equal to your encumbrance level (e.g., Heavy encumbrance gives -3 to hit or to parry). As well, fencing weapons cannot parry flail weapons *at all!*

All skills in this category default to one another at -3. They also default to sword skills as noted.

Main-Gauche (DX/Average): Any weapon normally wielded with Knife (below) – if you have this skill, you don't need that one. With Main-Gauche, however, you may ignore the penalty for using the "off" hand on defense (*attacks* are still at -4) *and* the -1 for parrying with a knife. *Default:* Knife-4.

Rapier (DX/Average): Any long (over 1 yard), light thrusting sword. *Default:* Broadsword-4.

Saber (DX/Average): Any light cut-and-thrust sword. *Cavalry* sabers are quite heavy, and use Broadsword (below) instead. *Defaults:* Broadsword-4 or Shortsword-4.

Smallsword (DX/Average): Any short (up to 1 yard), light thrusting sword or one-handed short staff. *Default:* Shortsword-4.

Flails

A *flail* is any flexible, unbalanced weapon with its mass concentrated in the head. Such a weapon cannot parry if you've already attacked with it on your turn. Because flails tend to wrap around the target's shield or weapon, attempts to *block* them are at -2 and attempts to *parry* them are at -4. Fencing weapons and knives cannot parry them at all! An unarmed fighter *can* parry a flail, but at -4 in addition to any penalty for parrying unarmed.

The two skills in this category default to one another at -3.

Flail (DX/Hard): Any one-handed flail, such as a morningstar. *Default:* Axe/Mace-4.

Two-Handed Flail (DX/Hard): Any two-handed flail. *Defaults:* Two-Handed Axe/Mace-4 or Weighted Chain-4.

Impact Weapons

An *impact* weapon is any rigid, unbalanced weapon with most of its mass concentrated in the head. Most such weapons cannot parry if you've already attacked with them on your turn.

The two skills in this category default to one another at -3.

Axe/Mace (DX/Average): Any short or medium-length, one-handed impact weapon, such as an axe, mace, or pick. *Default:* Flail-4.

Two-Handed Axe/Mace (DX/Average): Any long, two-handed impact weapon, such as a great axe, maul, or warhammer. *Defaults:* Polearm-4 or Two-Handed Flail-4.

Pole Weapons

Pole weapons are long (usually wooden) shafts, often adorned with striking heads. All require two hands.

Polearm (DX/Average): Any *very* long (at least 2 yards), unbalanced pole weapon with a heavy striking head, including the glaive, halberd, poleaxe, and countless others. Polearms become *unready* after an attack, but not after a parry. *Defaults:* Spear-4, Staff-4, or Two-Handed Axe/Mace-4.

Spear (DX/Average): Any long, balanced pole weapon with a thrusting point, including javelins, spears, pikes, and fixed bayonets. *Defaults:* Polearm-4 or Staff-2.

Staff (DX/Average): Any long, balanced pole *without* a striking head. This skill makes good use of the staff's extensive parrying surface when defending, giving +2 to your Parry score. *Defaults:* Polearm-4 or Spear-2.

Swords

A *sword* is a rigid, hilted blade with a thrusting point, cutting edge, or both. All swords are balanced, and can attack and parry without becoming unready.

Broadsword (DX/Average): Any *balanced*, 2- to 4-foot blade wielded in one hand – broadsword, backsword, cavalry saber, etc. This skill also covers any stick or club of similar size and balance to these blades, as well as bastard swords and longswords used one-handed. *Defaults:* Rapier-4, Saber-4, Shortsword-2, or Two-Handed Sword-4.

Knife (DX/Easy): Any rigid, hilted blade less than one foot long, from a pocketknife to a bowie knife. A knife has a very small parrying surface, giving you -1 to your Parry score. *Defaults:* Main-Gauche-3 or Shortsword-3.

Shortsword (DX/Average): Any *balanced*, one-handed weapon 1-2 feet in length – including the shortsword and any club of comparable size and balance (e.g., a police baton). *Defaults:* Broadsword-2, Knife-4, Saber-4, or Smallsword-4.

Two-Handed Sword (DX/Average): Any *balanced*, two-handed blade over 4 feet in length, such as the greatsword. This skill also covers quarterstaffs wielded like swords, as well as bastard swords and longswords used two-handed. *Default:* Broadsword-4.

Whips

A *whip* is a flexible weapon made from a length of chain, leather, rope, etc. A whip can be up to seven yards long – but note that a whip two yards or more in length cannot strike at one yard or closer, and is slow to ready after an attack. A whip tends to wind around its target, making it an excellent disarming and entangling weapon. However, a whip's lack of rigidity makes it a poor parrying weapon.

The two skills in this category default to one another at -3.

Weighted Chain (DX/Hard): A chain, or more rarely a rope, weighted at one end and wielded in two hands. *Default:* Two-Handed Flail-4.

Whip (DX/Average): Any ordinary whip.

Other Weapons

Some melee weapons – particularly Spark inventions – defy easy classification. The GM may introduce new skills for these, especially if they come with special rules. Such a skill needs a *name*, a *difficulty* (most often Average, but Hard for anything that would be difficult to control), and *defaults* (DX defaults depend on skill difficulty as usual; skills for somewhat similar weapons should default either way at from -2 to -4).

Mental Strength   Will/E

Defaults: None.

You can actively focus your mind to resist mental attacks. This skill replaces Will when you resist the Hypnotism skill, the Possession advantage, and anything similar. Mental Strength does *not* replace most normal Will rolls.

Merchant   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5 or Finance-6.

This is the skill of buying, selling, and trading retail and wholesale goods. It involves bargaining, salesmanship, and an understanding of trade practices. It covers all types of merchandise.

Make a skill roll to judge the value of any piece of common goods, find out where any commodity is bought and sold, find the local fair market value of any commodity, etc. When two merchants haggle, the GM may settle it with a Quick Contest. The winner adds or subtracts 10% of fair value, depending on whether they were trying to sell or buy.

If you have this skill at *any* level, you get +1 on reaction rolls when buying or selling. If you have this skill at level 20 or better, you get +2.

Metallurgy   IQ/H

Defaults: Artistry (Jeweler)-8, Chemistry-5, or Smith (any)-8.

This is the study of metals and their properties. A successful roll lets you identify metals or alloys, or solve a problem concerning metals, their use, mining, or refining.

Mount   DX/A

Default: DX-5.

This is the trained ability to serve as a mount for a rider. If your Mount skill exceeds your rider's Riding level, they may use the average of the two skills (round *up*) whenever they must make a Riding roll. If you have *any* points in this skill, your rider gets a minimum +1 to skill. To throw an unwelcome rider, win a Quick Contest of Mount vs. their Riding skill.

Musical Composition   IQ/H

Default: Musical Instrument-2.

This is the ability to compose a piece of music. A successful skill roll means the piece is a pleasant listening experience.

To compose for an ensemble or band *without* a conductor, you must have a skill level of IQ with at least one instrument in the composition, and a skill level of IQ-2 with the rest. Roll at -1 per "instrument group" after the first used in the piece; e.g., a jazz composition for a saxophone section, drums, and bass would require a roll at -2.

To compose for an orchestra or band *with* a conductor requires Group Performance skill (p. 115) at IQ level. Roll at -1 per general *class* of instruments after the first used in the piece. Classes include brass, percussion, strings, and woodwinds. Treat choir, harp, organ, or piano as its own class.

This skill includes the ability to read, write, and transcribe music.

Musical Influence   IQ/VH

Defaults: None.

This (not entirely realistic!) skill allows you to influence others' emotions by playing a musical instrument or singing. A Spark may well create an instrument that enables – or gives a bonus to – this skill.

To attempt Musical Influence, you must first get your audience to sit and listen to your performance. You must also make a successful Musical Instrument or Singing roll. You may then roll against your Musical Influence skill. Success allows you to adjust the reaction roll of your audience – to you or to anyone present – up *or* down by an amount equal to your margin of success, to a maximum of +3 (+4 for critical success).

If you have only a few seconds, or if the audience isn't paying full attention to your performance, you may adjust reaction rolls by ±1 at most, regardless of your margin of success.

Listeners who do not wish to be influenced may resist with Will. It's up to the GM whether this skill works on animals as well as sapient beings.

Musical Instrument†   IQ/H

Defaults: Special.

This is the ability to play a musical instrument. With a successful skill roll, you give a competent performance. You *must* specialize in a particular instrument. Defaults between specialties range from -3 for similar instruments to "no default" for utterly unrelated ones, such as Musical Instrument (Drums) and Musical Instrument (Harp); there's no general IQ default. All specialties include the ability to read music.

On a world-building note: An earlier Heterodyne decreed that every child in Mechanicsburg had to learn to play a musical instrument. This was punishment for a brief rebellion, but it has resulted in a town where everyone can play music to one degree or another.

Naturalist   IQ/H

Defaults: IQ-6 or Biology-3.

This skill represents *practical* (as opposed to scientific) knowledge of nature in its many forms. For instance, it includes just enough Biology to tell dangerous plants and animals from benign ones; just enough Geology to locate a cave to shelter in; and just enough Meteorology to know when to take shelter. Roll vs. skill to do any of these things.

Navigation   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5, Astronomy-4, Cartography-4, Crew-man-5, Geography-4, or Mathematics-4.

This is the ability to find your position by observing landmarks, stars, ocean currents, etc., and by using maps and instrumentation. A successful roll tells you where you are or lets you plot a course.

Net   DX/H

Default: Cloak-5.

This is the ability to use a net as a thrown or melee weapon.

Observation   Per/A

Defaults: Perception-5 or Shadowing-5.

This is the talent of observing dangerous or "interesting" situations without letting others know you're watching. Use this skill to monitor a location, a group of people, or your immediate surroundings for concealed or tactically significant details. This isn't the same as gathering clues or making a hands-on search (use Forensics and Search, respectively) – you always use Observation from a distance.

A successful skill roll lets you gather information that isn't specifically hidden. For instance, you could learn the schedule of sentries, estimate the size of a crowd, or gauge the strength of troops moving in the open.

To spot deliberately hidden details – e.g., someone trying to sneak up on you, an armed man hiding in a crowd, or a concealed soldier – you must win a Quick Contest of Observation skill vs. the Stealth, Shadowing, or Camouflage skill (as appropriate) of the other party. The GM will roll the Contest in secret, and should *not* say, "You don't see the soldier concealed in the bushes."

If your attempt fails, you get no details on an obvious item, or fail to spot a hidden one. On a critical failure, someone spots *you* and reacts poorly to the attention . . .

Occultism   IQ/A

Default: IQ-5.

This is the study of the supernatural. An occultist is an expert on ancient rituals, hauntings, mysticism, primitive magical beliefs, psychic phenomena, etc. There's no requirement to *believe* in any of this!

Occultism also covers lore about paranormal powers (real or reputed) and their users. A good roll might provide insights into phenomena that *aren't* related to what's known about such things. However, if weird powers really exist and work, Occultism provides no details on how talented individuals might invoke them.

Panhandling   IQ/E

Defaults: IQ-4, Fast-Talk-2, or Public Speaking-3.

This is the art of effective begging: who to approach, how to approach them, and how to avoid legal entanglements. Roll once per hour of begging.

Success nets you $2.00 times your margin of success. On a critical success, you get some sort of unexpected bonus – perhaps someone buys you dinner or gives you a useful or saleable item (e.g., a raincoat or a new pair of shoes). Failure means you receive nothing. On a critical failure, you are assaulted or have a run-in with the law.

Parry Missile Weapons   DX/H

Defaults: None.

This skill lets you parry thrown or missile weapons (arrows, darts, etc., not bullets!) with a ready melee weapon. If you are wearing wristbands or gloves with DR 2+, or have at least this much natural DR, you can also parry with your hands. Your Parry score is (skill/2) + 3, rounded down – but based on Parry Missile Weapons skill, *not* your Melee Weapon or unarmed combat skill.

Performance   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5, Acting-2, or Public Speaking-2.

This is the ability to act on the stage. It's different from Acting in that you're trying to impress and entertain people – not *deceive* them. If you studied this skill formally, it includes the knowledge expected of a professional actor (stage directions, actor-agent-producer relations, etc.).

Pharmacy IQ/H

Defaults: IQ-6, Chemistry-5, Herb Lore-5, or Physician-5.

This is the skill of preparing medicines to treat illness. (To work with *noxious* drugs, use Poisons skill, below.)

Physician IQ/H

Defaults: IQ-7, First Aid-11, or Veterinary-5.

This is the ability to aid the sick and the injured, prescribe drugs and care, etc. Make a skill roll to hasten natural recovery from injury, and whenever the GM requires a roll to test general medical competence or knowledge. A physician knows a great deal about drugs; they can identify most drugs fairly easily (at -5 without laboratory facilities, but at +3 if they take the risk of smelling/tasting the substance), but they cannot *formulate* them unless they also learn Pharmacy.

Pickpocket DX/H

Defaults: DX-6, Filch-5, or Sleight of Hand-4.

This is the ability to steal a purse, knife, etc., from someone's person – or to "plant" something on them. If your victim is aware someone may try to pick their pocket, or if they're generally wary, you must win a Quick Contest of Pickpocket vs. the *higher* of their Perception or Streetwise skill. To outwit a third party who's watching you and the victim, you must win a Quick Contest of Pickpocket vs. the watcher's Observation skill.

Piloting DX/A

Default: IQ-6.

This is the ability to operate an aircraft. The default is IQ-based because it takes intelligence to figure out the controls in an emergency, but when you *learn* this skill, always base it on DX.

Roll against Piloting for takeoffs and landings, and in any hazardous situation. Failure by 1 indicates a rough job; failure by more indicates damage to the vehicle.

A critical failure is a crash! If you have skill 15+, a critical failure requires an immediate second roll. Only if the second roll is a failure does a mishap occur; otherwise it was a "near thing," averted by experience. Air combat requires frequent Piloting rolls as well.

Make an IQ-based Piloting roll for basic map reading, practical meteorology, or to diagnose simple malfunctions.

All of these rolls assume you're familiar with the aircraft! If you aren't, the GM may apply a penalty, from -1 (e.g., an airship that differs from your usual one) to -5 (e.g., a winged flying machine when you're used to airships).

Poisons IQ/H

Defaults: IQ-6, Chemistry-5, Pharmacy-3, or Physician-3.

This skill represents practical knowledge of poisons. A successful skill roll lets you (among other things) recognize a poison-bearing plant in the wild; extract the poison in a useful form; recognize a poison by its taste in food or drink; identify a poison by observing its effects (+3 if *you* are poisoned); know a proper antidote; or recognize or prepare the antidote from its sources. Each of these feats requires a separate roll.

Politics IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5 or Diplomacy-5.

This is the ability to get into office and get along with other politicians. It has nothing to do with administration! You normally learn Politics in office or by working for someone in office. A successful skill roll gives you +2 on reactions from fellow politicians. The GM may opt to handle an election as a Quick Contest of Politics.

Power Blow Will/H

Defaults: None.

This is the ability to draw on your inner strength to deliver a devastating blow in melee combat. Roll once per attack. Power Blow costs 1 FP per attempt, successful or not.

If successful, double your ST for damage purposes for the *next attack only.* This attack takes all normal modifiers, and must occur immediately after the Power Blow roll. If you know Power Blow at better than skill 20, you can *triple* your ST by accepting an extra -10 to the skill roll.

You can also use this skill in noncombat situations. For instance, you could use Power Blow to double or triple your ST momentarily in order to move a heavy object. Such feats cost 1 FP and require a skill roll, as described above.

Modifiers: -10 if used *instantly,* dropping to -5 after 1 turn of concentration, -4 after 2 turns, -3 after 4 turns, -2 after 8 turns, -1 after 16 turns, and no penalty after 32 turns.

Powered Armor   DX/A

Default: DX-5.

This is training in the use of mechanized personal armor, or "battlesuits." Such armor has motors that enhance ST or Move, and often incorporates weapons, gadgets, and life-support equipment. As a result, you don't merely *wear* it – you *operate* it.

Roll against skill to get into or out of your battlesuit *quickly.* Success halves the time required. To activate a specific subsystem of a suit, or to gauge whether a suit is in good repair, make an IQ-based skill roll.

When rolling against DX or a DX-based skill while suited up, use the *lower* of your Powered Armor skill and your actual DX or skill. For example, with DX 14, Powered Armor-13, and Stealth-15, you function at only DX 13 and Stealth-13 while wearing a battlesuit. Particularly ungainly suits might give -1 or more to DX and skills on top of this, regardless of skill level, while unusually sleek ones might not limit DX and skills *at all!*

For examples of typical powered armor, see p. 171.

Professional Skill†   DX/A or IQ/A

Defaults: Special.

Many realistic skills are more useful for making a living than for adventuring. Few of these appear in this list – but you can still learn them if you want! If your "adventuring" skills aren't useful for earning money, such a skill can help you earn a steady income. Each is a separate "Professional Skill." To qualify for most jobs, you'll need the relevant Professional Skill at 12+ (unless you're *supposed* to be incompetent!).

Most professions encompass a body of knowledge. The associated Professional Skills are IQ/Average and default to IQ-5, because the smarter you are, the better you can recall and employ the techniques used at your job. Examples include barber, brewer, brickmaker, cooper, distiller, dyer, florist, glassblower, journalist, masseur, miller, prostitute, tanner, and vintner.

A few professions – like butcher and clothmaker – focus more on precision than on recall. These Professional Skills are DX/Average and default to DX-5.

A given Professional Skill might also default to other skills; e.g., "Journalist" would logically default to Writing-3.

As well, some Professional Skills may require other skills as prerequisites. Both matters are left to the GM's discretion.

You're free to create your own Professional Skills, subject to GM approval. They should be unique and well defined, *not* just a compilation of existing skills. For example:

Bartender   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5 or Carousing-3.

This is the skill of maintaining a commercial bar and interacting with customers in a professional yet friendly way. A successful skill roll lets you mix drinks, recall local laws regarding alcohol, gauge the intoxication level of a customer, or calm an unruly drunk before the bouncer needs to get involved. At higher levels, this skill takes on an element of showmanship, allowing you to present drinks in unique and attractive ways, and to mix them with showy tricks and flourishes.

Propaganda   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5, Merchant-5, or Psychology-4.

This is the skill of indirect persuasion through the media. It's used for psychological warfare by intelligence and military organizations . . . and for advertising and marketing in the business world!

Propaganda works on *groups,* not individuals. The GM should set the effective Will of the target group based on its size, composition, and resistance to the desired outcome, and then use *Influence Rolls* (p. 138) to determine the results. Success might inform the target audience or even alter its perceptions. Propaganda attempts nearly always require more time and exposure than ordinary Influence rolls; however, *how much* time is up to the GM.

Public Speaking   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5, Acting-5, Performance-2, or Politics-5.

This is general talent with the spoken word. It includes skill with debate, oratory, and rhetoric, as well as ability with less formal activities such as "punning" and storytelling. A successful skill roll lets you (for instance) give a good political speech, entertain a group around a campfire, incite or calm a riot, or put on a successful "court jester" act.

Research   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5 or Writing-3.
Prerequisite: Literacy in at least one language.

This is the ability to do library and file research. Roll against skill to find a useful piece of data in an appropriate place of research . . . *if* the information is there to be found.

At the GM's option, when researching material connected with a "book-learned" skill – all Academics (p. 105) and Sciences (p. 124) qualify – you may roll against that skill at -2 instead, if that's better than your Research skill or default. This is *not* a general default level.

Riding† DX/A

Defaults: DX-5 or Animal Handling-3.

This is the ability to ride a particular kind of mount. Make a skill roll when you first try to mount a riding animal, and again each time something happens to frighten or challenge the creature (e.g., a jump).

You *must* specialize by riding beast. Defaults between specialties vary from 0 to -10. For instance, if you have Riding (Horse), Riding (Mule) is essentially the same skill (no default penalty), Riding (Camel) would default at -3, Riding (Dolphin) at -6, and Riding (Dragon) at a whopping -10!

Running HT/A

Default: HT-5.

This skill represents training in both sprints and long-distance running. Roll against the *higher* of Running or HT to avoid fatigue or injury due to running. When racing someone of equal Move on foot, roll a Quick Contest of Running skill to determine the winner.

You must have legs and be capable of land movement to learn this skill.

Savoir-Faire† IQ/E

Defaults: IQ-4 and others.

This is the skill of appropriate behavior in a subculture that has an established code of conduct; e.g., the upper classes or almost any uniformed service. A successful skill roll when dealing with that social group lets you interact without embarrassing yourself, detect pretenders to high standing, and so on. You may also substitute an Influence roll (p. 138) against Savoir-Faire for any reaction roll required in a social situation involving that subculture. Roll once per encounter.

You *must* specialize. Common specialties include:

Criminal: Proper conduct within a formal criminal organization. This includes such things as codes of silence and showing proper deference to the criminal hierarchy. These protocols often ape those of high society . . . but the penalties for misconduct are far more severe! *Default:* Streetwise-3.

High Society: The manners of those of "good" birth and breeding. Status determines relative standing. Roll against skill whenever you must impersonate someone more than three Status levels away from your own; if your Status is negative and you're trying to pass yourself off as someone of Status 1+, or vice versa, this roll is at -2. This is the most common specialty; to save space, you may list it as simply "Savoir-Faire." *Default:* Savoir-Faire (Servant)-2.

Martial Arts: How to greet masters, wear weapons, and issue challenges at a formal academy of the martial arts – whether that means unarmed combat, fencing, or something else. Roll against skill to show respect (failure may bring violent retribution!), or to judge a competition or duel. *Recognized* combat or Combat Art skill determines relative standing.

Military: The customs, traditions, and regulations of military service. This includes knowledge of the *unwritten* rules: what's acceptable even if not regulation, and what's forbidden although there's nothing in writing against it. Military Rank determines relative standing.

Police: As Savoir-Faire (Military), but for civilian police service. This skill covers the *social* protocols for police officers; use Law for the *legal* protocols. Police Rank determines relative standing.

Servant: Knowledge of how to serve the upper class. Certain procedures are always done *just so* (the salad fork goes outside the dinner fork, the Duke is announced before the Earl, etc.), and certain attitudes are unacceptable in a servant. *Default:* Savoir-Faire (High Society)-2.

Sciences† IQ/H

Default: IQ-6.

This group of skills deals with the natural – and in the case of Sparks, *unnatural* – world, either directly (as with Biology and Geology) or through applications (as with Bioengineering and Forensics). You *must* take a specialty. Record your choice as, for example, "Biology," not "Sciences (Biology)."

Optionally, you may *further* specialize, for +3 on rolls in one focused area at the expense of -1 in all others. For instance, learning Biology (Marine) instead of general Biology gives +3 in *that* area but -1 with, say, Biology (Ecology). Players are free to propose sub-specialties, but the GM's word is final.

Sciences skills include:

Astronomy: The study of stars and other extraterrestrial objects. An astronomer could answer questions about the Sun, the planets of the solar system, etc.

Bioengineering: The ability to engineer living organisms with specific characteristics, or to create biotechnological products. Covers cloning, genetic engineering, reanimation, tissue engineering, and so on.

Biology: The scientific study of the structure, behavior, and habitats of living organisms.

Chemistry: The study of matter. A chemist can identify elements and simple compounds (but not necessarily drugs, magical substances, etc.). Given proper equipment, they could conduct complex analyses and syntheses.

Forensics: The ability to apply scientific principles to criminal investigation; e.g., computing bullet paths, or carrying out the microscopic or chemical analysis of clues.

Geology: The science dealing with the structure of the planet – its crust, mantle, and core. A geologist knows about minerals, oil, ores, etc.; about earthquakes and volcanoes; and about fossils. In the field, they can attempt to find water by using an "eye for country" (see *Survival*, p. 128).

Mathematics: The scientific study of quantities and magnitudes, and their relationships and attributes, through the use of numbers and symbols. The most common sub-specialties are Applied and Theoretical.

Meteorology: The study of the weather, and the ability to predict it. Includes familiarity with technological aids such as barometers, but you can still function without your instruments. When you want to predict the weather, the GM rolls against your skill in secret. On a success, they tell the truth; failure means they answer randomly. A successful roll also lets you deduce what sort of *general* climate to expect when you visit a new area.

Paleontology: The science of fossil study. Make a skill roll to recognize a fossil and estimate its age, or to deduce an organism's habitat, structure, etc., from fossil evidence.

Physics: The science dealing with the properties and interactions of matter and energy. Beyond the basics (such as the behavior of moving bodies), a physicist's knowledge includes the current understanding of electricity, gravity, heat, light, magnetism, radiation, and sound.

Physiology: The study of the human body and its function. A physiologist knows how bones, muscles, and organs work, and where they're located.

Scrounging   Per/E

Default: Perception-4.

This is the ability to find, salvage, or improvise useful items that others can't locate. Each attempt takes an hour. You don't necessarily steal your booty; you just locate it – somehow – and then acquire it by any means necessary. If you find something that's "nailed down," you must decide how to try to get it (which might require a roll on another skill).

Scuba   IQ/A

Default: IQ-5.
Prerequisite: Swimming.

This is the ability to use self-contained underwater breathing apparatus (scuba). Roll when you first enter the water, and again every 30 minutes thereafter, to avoid inhaling water (treat as drowning; see *Swimming*, p. 128). If you know this skill above default level, a successful roll also lets you spot problems with the equipment before you put it on.

Search   Per/A

Defaults: Perception-5 or Criminology-5.

This is the ability to search people, baggage, and vehicles for items that aren't in plain sight. The GM rolls once – *in secret* – per item of interest. For *deliberately* concealed items, this is a Quick Contest of your Search skill vs. the Holdout or Smuggling skill used to hide the item. If you fail, the GM simply says, "You find nothing." (It defeats the purpose to say, "You don't find the knife under their jacket.")

If multiple people are searching, roll separately for each searcher.

Modifiers: +1 for a simple "pat-down" (takes one minute), +3 for a "skin search" of a person's hair and clothing (takes three minutes), or +5 for an invasive "body search" (takes five minutes).

The GM should avoid unnecessary rolls. For instance, no human can get a rifle through a body search. Likewise, a knife or jewel simply cannot be found on a normally dressed person without a skin search. In general, if the net bonus to the concealer's Holdout roll is +3 or more, a skin search is *required.* If their Holdout is at -2 or worse for size, a skin search automatically finds the hidden item.

Sewing   DX/E

Default: DX-4.

This is the ability to work with fabric. With suitable tools, a successful skill roll lets you repair damaged clothing (or any other item made of cloth), modify garments (useful when you must wear another person's clothing, perhaps to impersonate them), or create new clothing or costumes from suitable materials. Make an IQ-based roll to *design* clothing, at +1 if you have Fashion Sense (p. 73).

Sex Appeal   HT/A

Default: HT-3.

This is the ability to impress those who are attracted to members of your sex. It has as much to do with attitude as it does with looks. If you aren't willing to "vamp" someone to get what you want, you won't have this skill – or *want* it.

You may substitute an Influence roll (p. 138) against Sex Appeal for any reaction roll made by someone who is attracted to members of your sex. Usually, you may make only one attempt per "target," although the GM might allow another attempt after a few weeks.

Shadowing   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5, Observation-5, or Stealth-4 (on foot only).

This is the ability to follow another person through a crowd without being noticed. (In the wilderness, use Tracking and Stealth.) Roll a Quick Contest every 10 minutes: your Shadowing vs. the subject's Vision. If you lose, you lost the subject; if you lose by more than 5, you were seen.

Once the subject is aware you're shadowing them, roll a Quick Contest every five minutes: your Shadowing vs. their Shadowing or Stealth. If they win, they elude you. If they lose by more than 5, they *think* they eluded you. If you critically fail, you lose them *and* follow the wrong person.

Following someone in a vehicle is harder than shadowing on foot. Use the same rules, but you roll at -2 and may not use your Stealth default.

Shield   DX/E

Default: DX-4.

This is the ability to use a shield, both to block and to attack. Your active defense with any kind of shield – your Block score – is (skill/2) + 3, rounded down.

Shiphandling   IQ/H

Defaults: IQ-6 or Crewman-5.

This is the ability to act as the *master* of a large vessel. It involves directing the crew in the tasks necessary to control the vehicle's speed and direction. It also covers such duties as keeping the captain's log and inspecting the crew. Someone with Shiphandling skill (at better than default!) should stand watch at all times when the vessel is underway. Roll vs. skill when encountering hazards or maneuvering for battle.

Failure when encountering hazards indicates the vessel is damaged. This might mean anything from scratched paint to crippling damage that requires extensive repairs.

Failure in battle means the vessel didn't go exactly where intended. Details depend on the vessel and the GM's judgment, but might include weapons being "masked" (unable to engage the enemy), a failed boarding attempt, or drifting out of formation with your fleet (which could deny you the benefits of fire support, tactical communications, etc.).

Critical failure under *any* circumstances means an appropriate disaster. Depending on the situation, this could mean losing essential systems (mast, propellers, rudder, etc.), colliding with another vessel, or even crashing or running aground – or simply giving an order that your crew disregards. Whether they then save your ship for you, or mutiny and flee, is up to the GM.

Aboard an unfamiliar vessel, the GM will penalize your Shiphandling rolls by -1 (same type of vehicle, but not *yours*) to -6 (completely different vehicle type; e.g., an airship rather than a watercraft). This penalty is always at least -2 if the *crew* is unfamiliar!

Singing   HT/E

Default: HT-4.

This is the ability to sing in a pleasing fashion. A successful roll means the audience liked your song.

Sleight of Hand   DX/H

Default: Filch-5.

This is the ability to "palm" small objects, do coin and card tricks, etc. Make a skill roll to perform one piece of simple "stage magic." Failure means you blew the trick.

When you use this skill to steal, you must *win* a Quick Contest of Sleight of Hand vs. the Vision roll or Observation skill of potential witnesses to perform the theft unnoticed.

You can also use this skill to cheat at cards, dice, etc. A successful Sleight of Hand roll gives from +1 to +5 on your Gambling roll. Any failure causes you to be denounced as a cheater! In both cases, the exact results are up to the GM.

Sling   DX/H

Default: DX-6.

This is the ability to use the sling or staff sling.
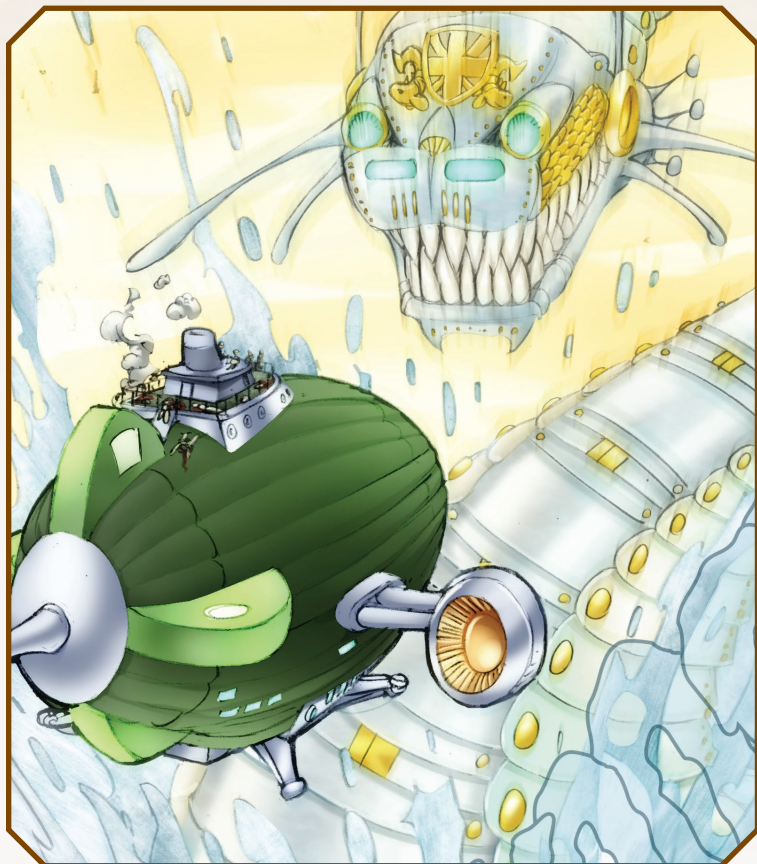
Smith† IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5 and others.

This is the ability to work non-precious metals by hand. You *must* specialize:

Copper: Copper and its alloys, including brass and bronze. Traditionally, such a smith was called a "brown-smith." *Defaults:* Artistry (Jeweler)-4 or Smith (other)-4.

Iron: The skill of being a blacksmith. Also covers steel. *Default:* Smith (other)-4.

Lead and Tin: Any of the softer, "white" metals, including alloys such as pewter. The traditional name for such a smith was "whitesmith." *Defaults:* Artistry (Jeweler)-4 or Smith (other)-4.

This skill is IQ-based, but ST is important, and some tools have a "Minimum ST," just like weapons.

Smuggling IQ/A

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to conceal items in baggage and vehicles. You can also use it to hide an object in a room or a building. Roll against skill to hide an item from casual inspection. In an active search, the searchers must win a Quick Contest of Search vs. your Smuggling skill to find the item.

Soldier IQ/A

Default: IQ-5.

This skill represents a combination of basic military training – the lessons taught at "boot camp" – and actual combat experience. The GM may require a roll whenever circumstances would test your battlefield discipline (knowing when to shoot, use concealment, take cover, etc.) or skill at practical field survival (e.g., keeping your feet dry and eating when you get the chance). Roll daily during prolonged military action. Failure means an inconvenience – perhaps a minor piece of equipment fails. Critical failure indicates a disaster: "friendly fire" incident, trench foot, etc.

Soldier includes basic lessons in many fields covered by other skills. For instance, a soldier knows how to clean a rifle without learning Armory, to dig a foxhole without learning Engineer (Combat), and so forth. In a situation where someone with a more specialized skill would roll at +4 or better, the GM may permit a Soldier roll instead. You don't receive the bonus that someone with the full-fledged skill would get, but you *do* suffer any situational penalties.

Soldier can only substitute for skill rolls to do things that would be a believable part of basic training. This means *routine* use of *standard* equipment by *ordinary* troops – not research, improvisation, or design, nor the operation of new or secret technologies! Soldier cannot replace weapon skills, either; you must buy those separately.

Spear Thrower DX/A

Defaults: DX-5 or Thrown Weapon (Spear)-4.

This is the ability to use the spear thrower: a long, flat stick with a notch or a loop at one end. It increases the force with which you can hurl a javelin or similar weapon. It takes one turn to position the spear in the thrower after both are in hand and ready.

Speed-Reading IQ/A

Defaults: None.

This is the ability to read *very* quickly. If you opt to use this skill, lengthy Research attempts and similar feats take half as long – or 1/3 as long, when skimming merely to learn the *gist* of a text. In combat, a reading task that requires only a second (that is, a Concentrate maneuver) becomes a free action.

Afterward, the GM will make a secret Speed-Reading roll to determine whether you *retain* what you read. On a failure, the GM provides vague details or none at all. Critical failure means you recall badly flawed information that you believe to be true – the GM lies! Rereading the material *slowly* remedies these problems automatically.

Stage Combat DX/A

Defaults: Combat Art-2, an actual combat skill-3, or Performance-3.

This skill allows you to perform a choreographed fight safely, yet in an entertaining manner. Critical failure indicates an injury: 1d-2 damage to a random location.

Stealth DX/A

Defaults: DX-5 or IQ-5.

This is the ability to move silently and to hide anywhere but in a totally bare room. A successful skill roll means nobody hears or spots you. If someone is *specifically* on the alert for intruders, the GM will roll a Quick Contest between your Stealth and the sentinel's Perception or Observation skill; you must *win* to go undetected.

All Stealth rolls take a penalty equal to your encumbrance level.

Strategy IQ/H

Defaults: IQ-6 or Tactics-6.

This is the ability to plan military actions and to predict the actions of the enemy. A successful Strategy roll lets you deduce, in advance, enemy military plans unless another person with this skill leads them. In that case, the GM rolls a Quick Contest of Strategy. The amount of information gained depends on how well you roll (but *not* on the quality of the foe's plans). If you fail an uncontested roll or lose a Quick Contest, the GM gives you *false* information.

Streetwise   IQ/A

Default: IQ-5.

This is the skill of getting along in rough company. A successful Streetwise roll might let you learn (among other things) where any sort of illegal "action" is; which local cops or bureaucrats can be bought, and for how much; and how to contact the local underworld. While you might also be able to get this information by asking a Contact (p. 77), this skill is a measure of your ability to make *new* underworld connections as needed.

You may substitute an Influence roll (p. 138) against Streetwise for any reaction roll made in an underworld or "bad neighborhood" situation.

Surgery   IQ/VH

Defaults: First Aid-12, Physician-5, Physiology-8, or Veterinary-5.

This is skill at using *invasive* medical techniques to treat sickness or injury. Roll once per operation. Success means the operation proceeded without complications. On a failure, the patient suffered injury – 2d for a simple amputation, 3d for other procedures. Surgery rolls can also facilitate recovery from wounds.

It's common but not required to specialize. This gives +3 with one specific type of surgery – brain surgery, cosmetic surgery, heart surgery, etc. – but -1 with all others. List this as, for instance, "Surgery (Cosmetic)." Such specialties are subject to GM approval.

Survival   Per/A

Defaults: Perception-5 or Naturalist-3.

This is the ability to "live off the land," find safe food and water, avoid hazards, build shelter, etc. You may look after up to 10 other people. To live safely in a wilderness situation, you must make a successful Survival roll once per day. Failure inflicts 2d-4 injury on you and anyone in your care; roll separately for each victim.

This skill also gives an "eye for country." A successful roll shows you the best direction of travel to find flowing water, a mountain pass, or whatever other terrain feature you desire – assuming that it exists.

Finally, you can use this skill to *trap* wild animals. (A city-bred thief could use Traps skill, but they're used to different game . . . so the roll would be at -5.) Make one roll per trap. It takes about 30 minutes to improvise a trap from ordinary materials, or 10 minutes to set and hide a ready-made trap. Pit traps for large game take several hours to dig.

Survival often requires skill rolls based on scores other than Perception. The GM might ask for a ST-based roll to dig a pit trap or erect a log shelter, a DX-based roll to start a fire using primitive techniques (flint sparking, bow and palette, etc.), or even a HT-based roll to avoid nutritional deficiencies from an improvised diet.

Swimming   HT/E

Default: HT-4.

This is the skill of swimming (whether on purpose or to keep afloat in emergencies) and lifesaving. Roll against the *higher* of Swimming or HT to avoid fatigue while swimming or injury due to aquatic misfortunes. For further details, see *Swimming* (p. 137).

Tactics   IQ/H

Defaults: IQ-6 or Strategy-6.

This is the ability to outguess and outmaneuver the enemy in small-unit or personal combat. When commanding a small unit, roll against Tactics to place your troops correctly for an ambush, know where to post sentries, etc. At the GM's option, a successful roll might even provide clues as to *immediate* enemy plans. To outmaneuver enemy units, you must win a Quick Contest of Tactics with their leader. All of this applies only when you lead a group small enough that you can give each warrior orders *personally* – or through at most one subordinate. Thus, communications technologies can greatly enhance your command abilities!

In personal combat, you may make a Tactics roll before the fight begins if you had *any* time to prepare. Success means you start the fight in an advantageous position – e.g., behind cover or on higher ground – as determined by the GM. The better the roll, the greater your advantage. If you fail, or don't attempt a Tactics roll, you're in a random location (or one of the GM's choosing) when combat begins. Fighters without Tactics skill *always* start combat this way.

Even in an ambush or similar "surprise" situation, the GM uses the *better* of your Tactics skill and your Perception to see if you spotted the danger in time.

Teaching   IQ/A

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to instruct others. It's require to qualify for a teaching position; e.g., professor. This requires level 12+.

The GM may let you roll against Teaching to instruct others in any skill you know. Success lets them spend one bonus character point to acquire the skill. It doesn't *grant* any points – it just makes learning possible.

Teamster†   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5, Animal Handling-4, or Riding (same)-2.

This is the skill of driving a team of animals pulling a wagon, chariot, etc. It includes the ability to harness and care for the beasts, and judge them for quality before purchase. If the animals are ornery or badly trained (GM's judgment), you must make a successful Animal Handling roll before you can attempt a Teamster roll.

For normal travel, make a Teamster roll once per day. When moving at a gallop (80% or more of the animals' full Move) or when executing complex maneuvers with a chariot in combat, roll *every 10 seconds*.

Failure usually means nothing worse than lost time or a wider turn than intended. A critical failure – or *any* failure at a gallop – spills the wagon or chariot. Treat this as a five-yard fall for each passenger and animal involved. As well, roll 2d for each beast; on a 12, a leg is broken! You must make Animal Handling rolls to calm the beasts. Time required to reload the cargo depends on the load, terrain, and weather.

You *must* specialize by animal type; the most common specialty is Teamster (Horses), which also covers mules. Teamster specialties default to one another at -3.

STARTING WEALTH AND EQUIPMENT

Once you've chosen attributes, advantages, disadvantages, quirks, and skills that add up to the point budget set by the GM, your character is *nearly* complete. However, you must also decide what material resources you have.

You start with a *cash* budget equal to 1,000 Imperial Dollars ($), modified by your personal wealth level (p. 74). The equipment lists in Chapter 7 give costs, weights, and other information for many important items, and the GM will rule on anything else you request. Subtract the price of each article you buy from your starting wealth to determine how much money you have left. You *don't* have to spend it all – consider saving some for expenses and opportunities that arise in play!

Throwing   DX/A

Default: DX-3.

This is the ability to throw any small, relatively smooth object that fits in the palm of one hand. Examples include balls, grenades, and rocks. (Boomerangs, javelins, knives, etc. require their own specialized skills; see *Thrown Weapon*, below.) Roll against skill to hit. Furthermore, if you know Throwing at DX+1 level, add +1 to ST when figuring throwing distance (but *not* damage). Add +2 to ST for Throwing at DX+2 or better.

If you don't have this skill, roll against your default to hit a specific target, but against *full* DX to lob an object into a general area.

Thrown Weapon†   DX/E

Defaults: DX-4 and others.

This is the ability to hurl any one type of thrown weapon. You *must* specialize:

Axe/Mace: Any axe, hatchet, or mace balanced for throwing (but *not* an unbalanced battleaxe or maul!).
Dart: Any sort of small, finned dart. You may use this skill in place of Games when playing darts. *Default:* Throwing-2.
Harpoon: Any sort of *tethered* spear. *Default:* Thrown Weapon (Spear)-2.
Knife: Any sort of knife.
Shuriken: Any sort of hiltless blade, notably shuriken ("ninja stars"). *Default:* Throwing-2.
Spear: Any sort of spear, javelin, etc. *Defaults:* Spear Thrower-4 or Thrown Weapon (Harpoon)-2.
Stick: Any balanced and shaped throwing stick, such as a boomerang. This type of throwing stick does not return to the user.

Tracking   Per/A

Defaults: Perception-5 or Naturalist-5.

This is the ability to follow a man or an animal by its tracks. Make a Tracking roll to pick up the trail, then roll periodically to avoid losing it. The frequency and difficulty of these rolls depend on the terrain:

Jungle, Plains, or Woodlands: Roll every 30 minutes.
Arctic, Desert, Island/Beach, or Mountain: Roll at -2 every 15 minutes.
Swampland: Roll at -4 every 5 minutes.
Urban: Roll at -6 every minute!

You may also use this skill to *cover* your tracks. This doubles your travel time! A successful roll hides your tracks well enough that only someone else with this skill can see them. If another tracker follows you, the Tracking rolls above become Quick Contests of Tracking. If your rival loses any of the Contests, they lose your trail.

To *stalk* prey (human or animal) you've successfully tracked, use the Stealth skill (p. 127).

Traps   IQ/A

Defaults: IQ-5 or Lockpicking-3. Also defaults to DX-5 when *disarming* or *resetting* a trap, but not when detecting or building one.

This is the skill of building and nullifying traps. A successful Traps roll will (among other things) disarm a trap once you've found it, reset it after you pass, or build a new trap (given suitable materials). Time required is as for Lockpicking (p. 118). To *detect* a trap, make a Perception-based skill roll.

For the purposes of Traps skill, detection devices are "traps." Thus, this skill covers everything from covered pits to elaborate security systems!

Urban Survival   Per/A

Default: Perception-5.

This talent covers the *physical* part of staying alive in a city environment, whether it's overpopulated or empty. (The *social* problems of city survival are covered by Streetwise, p. 128.) A successful skill roll lets you find clean rainwater; figure out how to get into or out of a sewer system; quickly locate building entrances, exits, stairwells, etc.; recognize and avoid physically dangerous areas, such as crumbling buildings; make and read city maps; navigate back to familiar city areas from unfamiliar ones; discover a warm place to sleep outside in cold weather; or use your "feel" for how cities are laid out to locate common types of buildings or businesses without asking anyone.

Veterinary   IQ/H

Defaults: Animal Handling-6, Physician-5, or Surgery-5.

This is the ability to care for a sick or wounded animal. Unfamiliar species may give up to -6 to skill at the discretion of the GM, who should take into account the character's background: A village vet would be familiar with cats, dogs, cattle, horses, and other pets and farm animals; a *circus* vet, with elephants, lions, tigers, etc.

Weird Science   IQ/VH

Defaults: None.

This skill lets you formulate astonishing new crackpot scientific theories that are far ahead of their time . . . or at least utterly different from the prevailing thinking in Europa. You may opt to roll against it whenever you work on a new invention (see *Inventing Without a Net*, p. 152) or investigate an *existing* item of weird technology.

Success gives a *Spark* an extra +1 on an invention attempt. (For non-Spark inventors, if the GM permits them, Weird Science represents "borrowing" ideas from Sparks; the bonus equals margin of success, to a maximum of +5, but the invention *will* have bugs and side effects!) When investigating weird technology, success gives +2 to any skill roll made for this purpose – and the GM might even allow a default skill roll to *operate* the device.

Critical success grants these bonuses *and* some incredible insight into a totally different problem! Critical failures are always spectacular, although not necessarily fatal or even dangerous.

Writing   IQ/A

Default: IQ-5.

This is the ability to write in a clear or entertaining manner. A successful roll means the work is readable and accurate.

This is mostly useful to earn a living, but can sometimes help on adventures . . . or after them. The report of a spy, soldier, or detective is far more useful if it's well written!

CHARACTER IMPROVEMENT

At the end of each game session, the GM may award "bonus character points" for good play. These are the same kind of points you used to create your character.

Bonus points let you develop and improve your character. Record them as "unspent" on your character sheet. Save up for as long as you like, and then spend them the same way as during character creation:

Attributes: Improving a basic attribute costs character points equal to the point-cost difference between the new score and the old one. Doing so automatically improves secondary characteristics and skills that depend on the attribute!

Advantages: Most advantages are inborn and cannot be bought later on. Exceptions include Combat Reflexes and languages, which can be learned, and social advantages like Contacts and Status, which can be earned. To add an advantage, pay its character point cost (the *difference* in cost, when improving an existing advantage).

Disadvantages: You can get rid of a beginning disadvantage by "buying it off" with a number of positive points equal to its negative point cost (e.g., 10 points to buy off a -10-point disadvantage), as long as you and GM can agree on a logical explanation for this.

Skills: You can increase an *existing* skill by paying the point-cost difference between the new skill level and your current one. You can add a *new* skill by buying it normally, if the GM agrees that makes sense (you found a teacher, had a learning experience, etc.).

6. How to Do Everything

At heart, a roleplaying game is just an extended conversation: The GM describes challenges and scenarios, and the players describe how their characters deal with them. The rules in this chapter help the group make the jump from *action* to *outcome*. Does our hero successfully defuse the bomb? Is the villain still standing after taking an Ætheric Beam to the chest? Roll the dice and find out!

Sometimes there's no question as to whether someone succeeds or fails. Don't roll against DX to jog down the street unless that's dramatic and dangerous for some reason (e.g., the street has turned to ankle-deep honey and bears are after you). Similarly, unless you have super-strength, the GM doesn't need to bother calculating damage if you try to punch through a stone wall; "You take 1 HP of injury to your hand and regret this decision" is a perfectly reasonable response. Save these rules for times when the outcome is *uncertain* and there's enough at stake to make the answer *interesting*.

Rolling the Dice

Girl Genius uses six-sided dice ("d") only. Dice rolled together are added up; e.g., "2d" means "roll two six-sided dice and add them together," while "3d" means "roll three dice and add them."

Combat damage and several other things use the "dice+adds" system. For instance, "4d+2" is shorthand for "roll four dice and add 2 to the total." Likewise, "3d-3" means "roll three dice and subtract 3 from the total."

There are three main kinds of rolls in this game: *success rolls* (below), *reaction rolls* (p. 133), and *damage rolls* (p. 145).

Success Rolls

A *success roll* is a dice roll made to "test" one of your skills or abilities. Sometimes you roll; sometimes the GM rolls for you. For instance, you might test, or roll against, your Strength to stop a heavy door from closing.

When to Roll

Bother with success rolls only when a character's health, wealth, friends, reputation, or equipment are at risk – which always includes chases, combat (even if the target is stationary and at point-blank range!), espionage, thievery, and similar "adventuring" activities – or when a PC stands to gain allies, information, new abilities, riches, or social standing. Don't roll for trivial tasks like crossing the street or finding the pub. Nothing is less fun than bogging down the game in endless, uninteresting dice rolls!

Who Rolls

In general, each player rolls for their own character's actions, while the GM rolls for NPCs. However, there are two sets of circumstances under which the GM should roll for a PC and not let the player see the results:

1. When the *character* wouldn't know for sure whether they succeeded.
2. When the *player* shouldn't know what's going on.

Settling Rules Questions

In any question of rules, the GM's word is *law*. The GM decides which optional rules to use, and settles any specific questions that arise. A good GM discusses important questions with the players before deciding – and a good player accepts the GM's decisions.

The GM should know the rules, but the rules can't cover everything. Here are a few ways to handle situations where the rules fall short:

Success rolls (p. 131). Use a success roll when a question arises about someone's ability to do some particular thing.

Random rolls. A random roll (like "on a 1 on 1d" or "on 10 or less on 3d") is often best for a question like "Are the keys in the clank?" or "Does one of the soldiers have a horse the same color as mine?" The GM decides what the chances are, then rolls the dice.

Arbitrary fiat. You don't have to use the dice at all. If there's only one "right" answer to fit the plot of the adventure – then that's the answer. "Luckily for you, the grenade bounced down the stairwell. Nobody was hurt. But now the guards are alerted!"

What to Roll

Whenever a character attempts to perform an action (e.g., use a skill), roll three dice (3d) to determine the outcome. The task in question *succeeds* if the total rolled on the dice is *less than or equal to* the number that governs the action – most often a skill or an attribute. Otherwise, it *fails*. For example, if you're rolling against Strength and have ST 12, a roll of 12 or less succeeds. Thus, the higher the stat you're rolling against, the easier it is to make the roll.

Especially high or low rolls have special rules; see *Critical Success and Failure* (p. 132).

Modifiers and Effective Skill

The rules often specify *modifiers* for certain success rolls. These bonuses and penalties affect *the number you are rolling against* – your "target number" – and not the total rolled on the dice. Bonuses always improve your odds, while penalties always reduce them.

For instance, if you're using the Lockpicking skill in the dark, the GM might tell you to roll at -5 for the attempt. If your Lockpicking skill is 9, you roll against 9 minus 5, or 4, in the dark.

A specific scenario might provide modifiers to allow for the relative ease or difficulty of a particular situation. For instance, the GM might state that a lock is +10 to open due to the fact that it is primitive and clumsy. If your Lockpicking skill were 9, you would roll against 9 + 10, or 19. Since the highest roll possible on 3d is 18, it would seem that success is assured. Not quite – see *Critical Success and Failure* (below).

Modifiers are cumulative unless stated otherwise. For instance, if you tried to open that primitive lock in the dark, *both* modifiers would apply, and you would roll against 9 - 5 + 10, or 14.

Your *base skill* is your actual level in a skill, as recorded on your character sheet. Your *effective skill* for a particular task is your base skill plus or minus any modifiers for that task. In the Lockpicking examples above, base skill is 9 in all cases, while effective skill is 4, 19, or 14.

You may not attempt a success roll if your effective skill is less than 3. The only exception is for an active defense (p. 144.)

Margin of Success or Failure

Once you know your effective skill, roll 3d to determine the outcome. If the total rolled on the dice is less than or equal to your effective skill, you succeed, and the difference between your effective skill and your dice roll is your *margin of success*.

Example: If you have effective skill 18 and roll a 12, you succeed; your margin of success is 6.

If you roll *higher* than your effective skill, you fail, and the difference between the dice roll and your effective skill is your *margin of failure*.

Example: If you have effective skill 9 and roll a 12, you fail; your margin of failure is 3.

Many rules use margin of success or failure to calculate results that matter in play, so it's helpful to let the GM know how well or poorly you did: "I beat it by 4!"

Critical Success and Failure

A *critical success* is an especially good result.

● A roll of 3 or 4 is *always* a critical success (even if your effective skill is 3 or 4).
● A roll of 5 is a critical success *if your effective skill is 15+.*
● A roll of 6 is a critical success *if your effective skill is 16+.*

When you roll a critical success, the GM determines what happens. It's always something good! The lower the roll, the better the "bonus."

A *critical failure* is an especially bad result.

● A roll of 18 is *always* a critical failure (even if your effective skill is 18+).
● A roll of 17 is a critical failure *if your effective skill is 15 or less;* otherwise, it's an ordinary failure (even if your effective skill is 17+).
● Any roll of 10 or more greater than your *effective* skill is a critical failure: 16+ on a skill of 6, 15+ on a skill of 5, and so on.

The GM decides what happens when you roll a critical failure, too. It's inevitably something bad – the higher the roll, the worse the result.

Repeated Attempts

Sometimes you'll get only one chance to do something (defuse a bomb, jump a crevasse, remove an inflamed appendix, calm an angry Jäger). Other times you can try over and over again until you succeed (pick a lock, catch a fish, analyze a poison); the biggest cost is time. Still other times you won't know whether you succeeded or failed until it's too late to try again (buy a used vehicle, field-repair a weapon). Finally, there are times when you are injured by failure but can afford to fail a few times (climb a wall, impress a street gang).

The GM must use common sense to distinguish among these cases, according to the exact situation in which the adventurers find themselves.

Contests

Sometimes a situation arises in which two characters must compare attributes, skills, or other traits to settle a competition. The one with the highest score doesn't *always* win . . . but that's the way to bet. A *Contest* is a quick way to handle such a competitive situation without playing it out in detail: Each competitor attempts a success roll against the ability being tested – with all applicable modifiers – and then compares their result to their opponent's. There are two different ways to make this comparison.

Quick Contest

A *Quick Contest* is a competition that's over in very little time – often in one second, perhaps even *instantly*. Examples include two enemies lunging for a gun, or two knife throwers seeing who gets closer to the bull's-eye.

Each competitor attempts their success roll. If one succeeds and the other fails, the winner is obvious. If both succeed, the winner is the one with the largest margin of success; if both fail, the winner is the one with the smallest margin of failure. A tie means nobody won (in the examples above, both fighters grabbed the weapon at once, or the knives hit the same distance from the bull's-eye).

Margin of Victory: In a Quick Contest, it's often important to know the *margin of victory,* which is just the amount by which the winner beat the loser. For example, if you succeed by 4 and your foe fails by 3, your margin of victory is 7. If you succeed by 2 but your foe succeeds by 4, their margin of victory is 2. And if you fail by 1 while your foe fails by 4, your margin of victory is 3.

Regular Contest

A *Regular Contest* is a slow competition with give and take – for instance, arm wrestling.

Each character attempts their success roll. If one succeeds and the other fails, the winner is obvious. If both succeed or both fail, the competitors' relative positions are unchanged and they roll again. Eventually, one character succeeds when the other fails. At this point, the one who made their roll is the winner.

The length of *game time* each attempt takes depends on the activity, and is up to the GM. In a combat situation, each attempt takes one second . . . but in a library-research contest, with the fate of the world hanging on who finds a certain obscure reference first, each attempt could represent *days* of work.

Extreme Scores: If both participants' scores are 6 or lower, or both are 14 or higher, a Regular Contest can take forever! In such a case, figure out the modifier needed to bring the *lower* score to 10, and apply it to both participants. For example, if a ST 16 and a ST 19 warrior are arm-wrestling, they roll at -6 (effectively ST 10 vs. ST 13).

Reaction Rolls

The GM may decide in advance the behavior of important NPCs toward the PCs. But when this is undetermined, the GM makes a *reaction roll* and then plays the NPC according to the result. This roll should be kept secret from the players, who don't know whether that friendly looking farmer is giving them good advice or sending them into a trap!

A reaction roll is *not* a success roll. There's no "target number" to roll against. Instead, the GM simply rolls 3d, applies any reaction modifiers, and consults the *Reaction Table* (p. 135).

Reaction rolls are great when they add a note of unpredictability to the game – this is more fun for the GM, too! However, *never substitute random dice rolls for reason and logic.*

When the heroes actively use social skills to try to get a good reaction from an NPC, use *Influence Rolls* (p. 138) *instead* of these rules.

Common Reaction Modifiers

Personal appearance and behavior. This is especially true for the PC who does the talking! Several advantages (such as Charisma) give a bonus, while many disadvantages give a penalty.

Biases. Most people don't like Jägers, many are prejudiced against *all* constructs, and so on. These are usually penalties, and take the form of a quirk or Intolerance disadvantage on the NPC's part.

Appropriate behavior by the players! Here's a chance to reward good roleplaying. A good approach should be worth +1 or more! A wholly inappropriate approach that antagonizes the NPCs should give the party -1 or -2 on the reaction roll. Don't tell the players that they blew it – just roleplay the offended character, and let them figure it out.

Requests for Aid

Roll when the PCs ask for help (which isn't possible with NPCs who attack at once!). Examples include an interview with a bureaucrat, an attempt to get a newspaper editor or police captain to listen to your story about a mad Spark's plot, or just a cry for help when you need it.

Special Modifiers for Requests for Aid

+1 if the request is very simple.

-1 to -3 (or worse) if the request is very complex or unreasonable.

-1 if the request would inconvenience the NPC or cost them money.

-2 or more if the request would endanger the NPC's job or social position.

-1 or more if the request would physically endanger the NPC. This depends on the degree of risk and the NPC's bravery.

Loyalty and Loyalty Checks

The dependability of an NPC with ties to the PCs is determined by a "loyalty rating." Set this by making a reaction roll when the PCs first encounter the NPC. The rating equals the modified roll.

A "loyalty check" is a roll *made by the GM* – usually in secret – to see how an NPC behaves in a given situation. The GM determines exactly when a check is necessary, but check loyalty whenever the NPC is in mortal danger, the PCs put the NPC's safety in doubt, or the PCs violate the NPC's trust or act against the NPC's morals.

To make a loyalty check, the GM rolls 3d against the NPC's loyalty rating. The GM is free to modify loyalty for special circumstances, such as a huge bribe from a foe. On a roll *equal to or less than* the NPC's modified loyalty, the NPC acts loyally. Otherwise, they serve their own interests. They might not betray the PCs, but they definitely let the PCs down. If the PCs forgive the NPC – with or without punishment – the NPC's base loyalty rating increases by 1.

Changes in Loyalty

Several factors can change loyalty, temporarily or permanently:

Higher Pay: +1 loyalty per 10% by which the NPC's pay exceeds the norm for their job or the task expected of them. This bonus persists for a month after the extra pay ceases.

Great Danger: Whenever a *noncombatant* NPC is exposed to a combat situation, check loyalty. Failure gives -1 to loyalty for a week. Repetitions might have a permanent effect.

Rescue: If the PCs risk their lives or the mission to rescue the NPC, make a reaction roll at +3 or more, depending on the nature of the rescue. A "Good" or better reaction means the NPC is grateful. Their loyalty becomes the result of the roll or their original loyalty, whichever is *higher*. If one of the PCs was injured or killed during the rescue, the GM should consider adding a permanent loyalty bonus *on top* of this!

Employers' Competence: Loyalty of an NPC of long association might change by one point at the end of an adventure, based on the party's performance. A botched mission reduces loyalty; great success increases it. This modifier is permanent.

Length of Service: After each year of interacting with the PCs, make a loyalty check for the NPC. Success gives a permanent +1 to loyalty.

Requests for Information

Roll when PCs ask NPCs for directions or advice; e.g., "Have you seen this man?" If the PCs are *interrogating* an NPC, they must use the Interrogation skill.

Remember that no NPC can tell more than they know. Sometimes an NPC will tell the truth *as they know it* . . . but be mistaken. Others pretend to know more than they do, in order to earn money or impress the PCs. If there's a question as to whether a given NPC (or PC, for that matter) knows some specific fact, roll against their IQ or an appropriate skill.

Special Modifiers for Information Requests

-1 for a complex question; -2 for a *very* complex question.

-3 if the NPC thinks it's none of the PCs' business!

-3 or more if the answer would endanger the NPC.

+1 to +4 if the PCs offer a bribe. To be effective, the bribe must be appropriate in size; use the *Money Talks* rule for Contacts (p. 77), reading the bonus as a reaction modifier. It must also be *discreet.* Not everyone will take a cash payoff. You don't offer a journalist money – they would be insulted – but buy them a good dinner and they'll appreciate it.

+2 to +4 if the NPC is a librarian, historian, professor, scribe, etc. Most such people are naturally disposed to help any seeker of knowledge.

Loyalty

When the PCs hire someone, the GM should determine the hireling's loyalty. This determines only the NPC's *attitude* – not their competence. If the NPC is important, the GM should predetermine both their skills and general attitude. Otherwise, a random roll is fine.

When the PCs take service with an employer, the GM should also determine, randomly or otherwise, how the employer feels about them.

Loyalty reactions are known to the GM, but not to the players (unless they successfully use the Empathy advantage). The GM should record each NPC's loyalty secretly, and let it guide them in determining that NPC's later behavior, unless that loyalty changes.

Special Modifiers for Loyalty

+1 per 10% the PCs offer above the going pay rate.

-1 per 10% the PCs offer below the going pay rate.

+2 or more if the PCs are serving a cause the NPC believes in, or a leader to whom the NPC is very loyal.

+ or - as appropriate for the PCs' reputation in the area, if any.

Reaction Table

Roll 3d and apply any reaction modifiers.

0 or less – *Disastrous.* The NPC hates the PCs and acts in their worst interest. Anything is possible: assault, betrayal, public ridicule, ignoring a life-or-death plea . . .

1-3 – *Very Bad.* The NPC dislikes the PCs and acts against them if it's convenient to do so: attacking, offering grossly unfair terms in a transaction, and so on.

4-6 – *Bad.* The NPC cares nothing for the PCs and acts against them (as above) *if* there's profit in doing so.

7-9 – *Poor.* The NPC is unimpressed by the PCs and makes threats, demands a bribe before offering aid, or something similar.

10-12 – *Neutral.* The NPC is totally uninterested and ignores the PCs as much as possible – but transactions go smoothly and routinely as long as protocol is observed.

13-15 – *Good.* The NPC likes the PCs and is helpful within normal, everyday limits. Reasonable requests are granted.

16-18 – *Very Good.* The NPC thinks highly of the PCs and is quite helpful and friendly, freely offering aid and favorable terms in most things.

19 or more – *Excellent.* The NPC is extremely impressed by the PCs and acts in their best interests at all times, within the limits of personal ability – perhaps even risking life, wealth, or reputation.

CHARACTERS IN ACTION

Adventuring encompasses a vast range of challenges, both physical and mental! Whenever the GM isn't certain whether the heroes can automatically accomplish a task, use these guidelines.

PHYSICAL FEATS

Below are rules for common physical tasks. For anything not listed here, use *DX* rolls for matters of precision, *HT* rolls for feats of endurance, a multiple or fraction of *Basic Lift* for weight moved or work done, and a multiple or fraction of *Basic Move* for movement speed.

Climbing

Roll against Climbing skill (p. 110) or its default of DX-5 to climb anything more difficult than a ladder. Subtract your encumbrance level (p. 71) from skill and apply a difficulty modifier, from +5 for climbing a tree with lots of branches to -5 for ascending a sheer stone wall without handholds. Climbers move at from 2 to 20 feet per *minute,* with easier climbs generally going faster. Exact modifiers and speed are up to the GM.

Roll at the start of the climb and again every five minutes. Failure means you fall (p. 150). If you secured yourself with a rope, you'll fall only to the end of the rope – unless you *critically* failed.

Hiking

Sometimes it's necessary to know how much ground a party can cover on a long-term trek. To figure hiking speed *in miles per hour,* start with the *slowest* hiker's Move (after encumbrance) and multiply it by the appropriate fraction below to adjust for terrain. This takes into account brief breaks.

Very Bad Terrain (×1/10): Loose snow or sand, jungle, dense forest, tall mountains, swamp.
Bad Terrain (×1/4): Heavy forest, slippery ice, steep hills, broken ground.
Average Terrain (×1/2): Light forest, gentle hills, most plains.
Good Terrain (×2/3): Packed dirt, well-trodden grasslands, hiking paths.
Perfect Terrain (×1): Paved roads.

Adverse weather worsens terrain quality by one step (Very Bad drops to ×1/20).

Each hour of hiking costs 1 FP, plus further FP equal to your encumbrance level.

Jumping

When you want to jump over something, the GM should usually say, "Great, you jumped over it," and get on with play. In combat, jumping over a minor obstacle costs one extra yard of movement but succeeds automatically. Only *significant* obstacles need the following rules.

With a running start – at least two seconds of sprinting – your broad jump in *yards* or high jump in *feet* equals the better of your Move or *half* your Jumping skill (round down). Always factor in encumbrance! Halve distance without a running start and halve it in combat; if both apply, quarter it.

If there's *any* doubt about the landing, the GM may require a roll against DX or Jumping skill.

Lifting and Moving Things

Basic Lift (BL) governs the maximum weight you can manage; see p. 71. The GM may let multiple people add their BL (*not* their ST) whenever it seems reasonable for them to work together. To exceed these limits, see *Extra Effort* (p. 144) and *Hysterical Strength* (below).

One-Handed Lift: BL (one second), 2×BL (two seconds).
Two-Handed Lift: 2×BL (one second), 4×BL (two seconds), 8×BL (four seconds).
Shove and Knock Over: 12×BL (one second). *Double* this with a running start.
Carry on Back: 15×BL. Yes, you *can* carry more than you can lift, but every *second* that your encumbrance exceeds Extra-Heavy (10×BL) costs 1 FP!

Shift Slightly: 50×BL, if you can brace from a good position.
Pulling a Load: Treat the load and any conveyance as encumbrance, but divide the effective weight by 2 for a sledge, 10 for a two-wheeled cart, or 20 for a four-wheeled wagon. *Halve* it (further) if the surface is smooth and level.

Riding

There's no need to roll against Riding skill (p. 124) for standard travel; roll only when attempting a jump, tight turn, or similarly difficult maneuver. Failure means the animal balks and is spooked (below). On a critical failure, it has an injurious accident.

In combat, your mount takes its own maneuvers (usually Move, but a war-trained animal can attack), leaving you free to act on your own. Your attacks use the *lower* of your weapon skill or Riding skill. If your mount is hit, you must succeed at a Riding roll – at a penalty equal to the shock penalty the animal suffered – or it spooks.

If your mount *spooks,* you must take a Ready maneuver to make a Riding roll each turn. A critical success or three ordinary successes in a row calms your mount; three failures in a row or a critical failure means it bucks you. A long alternation of successes and failures means you spend your time fighting your mount instead of the enemy!

Treat long-distance riding as *Hiking* (p. 135), using the *mount's* Move after adjusting for encumbrance (which is usually you and your gear).

HYSTERICAL STRENGTH

During times of emotional crisis, *Girl Genius* heroes and villains often find themselves able to accomplish feats of great strength: lifting huge generators, knocking down doors, and so on. When a player feels that their character has hit an emotional breaking point – or the GM feels that an NPC has – they may declare that they're becoming hysterical.

This requires a Will roll, with the following modifiers:

Appropriateness: A GM-determined penalty based on how dramatic and emotional the moment is – anywhere from no penalty if the world ends or your soul-mate dies if you don't act now, down to -10 if things are stress-free and nothing is at stake. *You cannot "take back" going hysterical if you dislike the GM's modifier; you **must** still roll!*

Disadvantages: A disadvantage that *directly* relates to the dramatic situation gives +1 per -5 points of value. Only the *single largest* applicable disadvantage gives a bonus, unless the GM generously rules otherwise.

Spark: Add *half* Spark level, rounded down.
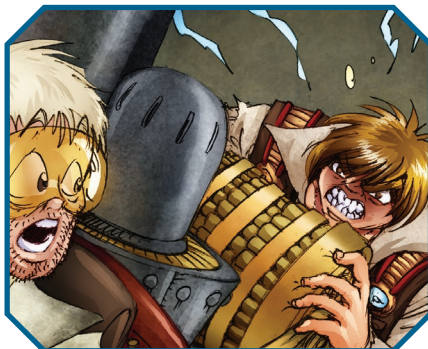
Results

Critical Failure: Your brain overloads completely. You pass out for 2d×5 minutes.

Failure: You rant and rave but in the end accomplish nothing. Lose FP equal to 1d + margin of failure.

Success: Your ST is *doubled* for one action, *tripled* if your margin of success was 5-9, or *quadrupled* for a margin of 10+. This usually lasts for only a second, but the GM may let you, say, hold a heavy weight for a few seconds. Afterward, you're mentally and physically drained, often not even realizing just what you accomplished. You immediately lose FP equal to 1d+1 times the *same* multiplier your ST had; e.g., (1d+1)×3 FP if your ST was tripled! (No, you can't choose to use less extra ST to reduce this loss.)

Critical Success: Your ST is quadrupled, as above, but you lose only (1d+1)×2 FP.

As Basic Lift (BL) is based on the *square* of Strength, doubling ST gives 4× BL, tripling ST gives 9× BL, and quadrupling ST gives 16× BL.

Regardless of the outcome, you can attempt hysterical strength only once per game session.

Running

Your top *sprinting* speed is 20% better than your Move (minimum +1 Move). In combat, you can claim this bonus starting on the *second* turn you move forward at full Move. This is difficult to maintain for long distances, however. For every 15 seconds of sprinting, roll vs. the *higher* of HT or Running skill; failure costs 1 FP.

Paced running averages exactly *half* of your sprinting speed, but is also much less exhausting; roll every minute instead of every 15 seconds.

Swimming

Roll against Swimming skill (p. 128) any time you enter water over your head, and again every five minutes. Subtract *twice* your encumbrance level. You get +3 if you entered the water intentionally. If you fail, lose 1 FP and roll again in five seconds; repeat until you succeed, run out of FP (p. 148), or are rescued.

For land dwellers in the water, Move becomes how many yards you can travel every *five* seconds (instead of one). Most people don't go above half of that. For every minute of top-speed swimming, roll against the *higher* of HT or Swimming skill; failure costs 1 FP.

Swimming skill can be used to rescue a drowning person. Roll at -5, plus or minus the difference in ST between you and the person you're rescuing.

Throwing

To throw *weapons,* use suitable weapon skills and the statistics on the weapon tables (pp. 164-169). However, you can throw random objects that weigh up to 2×BL one-handed, or anything you can lift two-handed. In combat, this is a ranged attack using DX or Throwing skill; basic DX has an *extra* -3 to hit a specific target rather than a general area.

Distance thrown in yards and damage on impact are as follows:

Weight	Distance	Damage
Up to BL/8	2.5×ST yards	thrust-2
Up to BL/4	1.5×ST yards	thrust-1
Up to BL/2	ST yards	thrust
Up to BL	ST/2 yards	thrust+1
Up to 2×BL	ST/3 yards	thrust
Up to 4×BL	ST/5 yards	thrust
Up to 8×BL	ST/10 yards	thrust-1

For *distance,* add +1 to ST for Throwing at DX+1, or +2 to ST for Throwing at DX+2. Drop all fractions.

Damage is crushing unless the GM rules it's cutting or impaling due to object shape.

Vehicle Operation

Sample Vehicles (p. 158) defines many statistics for vehicles. For typical adventurers, Acceleration and Top Speed are the most important of these. Acceleration is how quickly the vehicle can increase its Move every second, while Top Speed is its maximum Move; these are given in *yards per second.* For example, a flying machine with Acceleration 5 and Top Speed 80 would have Move 5 after one second, Move 10 after two seconds, and so on, until it hit its maximum Move 80 (80 yards/second) after 16 seconds.

Ground vehicles can safely *decelerate* by Move 5 (e.g., from Move 20 to 15) in one second. The safe limit for air and water vehicles is (5 + Handling), minimum 1. Any vehicle can brake twice as quickly, but that requires a control roll (below).

For long-distance travel, a vehicle's cruising speed in *miles per hour* is 1.5 × Top Speed. It can go faster, up to 2 × Top Speed mph, but this requires a control roll every hour. For ground vehicles only, terrain modifies Top Speed; use the standard multipliers under *Hiking* (p. 135) for wheeled vehicles, or those one step more favorable (e.g., Bad terrain gives ×1/2) for those that use tracks, legs, etc.

Control Rolls

When encountering a hazard or pushing a vehicle's limits, the operator must make a "control roll": a success roll against the appropriate vehicle operation skill (e.g., Driving or Piloting), modified by the vehicle's Handling. In an ongoing situation like a storm, the GM sets the frequency of such rolls – anywhere from every few hours for long-distance travel to every few *seconds* in combat!

If the operator fails by *no more than the vehicle's Stability Rating,* a minor problem occurs: a car skids off the road, a ship loses a few hours of travel, etc. Worse failure means a major problem, usually a crash! For typical crash damage, look up the vehicle's Move (in yards/second) on the *Falling* table (p. 150). To convert speed in miles per hour to Move, halve it. For example, if your steam carriage crashes at 30 mph, that's Move 15, which inflicts 3d+2 crushing damage. Restraints provide DR 5 in a crash; air bags or the equivalent, DR 10.

Vehicles in Combat

As the operator, you can use a *mounted* weapon with Gunner skill – or, if in powered armor, make a melee attack at the *lower* of your combat skill and Powered Armor skill – at no special penalty for attacking while driving. Passengers can use mounted weapons with unpenalized Gunner.

Using a *handheld* weapon imposes -2 to both your attack roll *and* operation skill this turn. That penalty affects only the operator, but anyone – including the operator – using a handheld (not mounted) weapon has an *additional* -1 to -4, depending on how rough the ride is (GM's call). It's possible to Aim (p. 140) a handheld ranged weapon, but the total Aim bonus cannot exceed the vehicle's Stability Rating.

Anyone attacking a vehicle takes its Size Modifier as a modifier to hit. They may also make a called shot (p. 140) to the "vitals" (engine); vehicles don't usually have "skulls." The GM adjudicates the penalties and effects of targeting other bits. It's also possible to attack the operator or passengers directly; when doing so, the vehicle's Size Modifier doesn't apply and the vehicle usually provides the targets with cover (-2 to -6 to hit) and/or additional DR.

When your vehicle or its passengers are attacked, you may make a *vehicular dodge* to avoid being hit. Roll against (vehicle operation skill)/2 + Handling. Combat Reflexes (p. 84) gives +1. If your vehicle suffers a major "wound" (p. 147), you must make a control roll.

Crewed Vehicles

If your vehicle is large or complex enough to *require* a crew of five or more, use the *lower* of your vehicle operation or Shiphandling skill for *all* purposes. With Piloting-18 and Shiphandling-9, you're great with personal aircraft but will likely crash a huge airship!

MENTAL FEATS

Not every challenge can be overcome with speed and muscle! Sometimes, the *mind* is the most powerful tool.

Sense Rolls

"Sense rolls" include Vision rolls, Hearing rolls, and Taste/Smell rolls. To notice something using a given sense, roll against your Perception (Per) score. Suitable Acute Senses (p. 82) and Discriminatory Senses (p. 15) give bonuses.

Comprehension Rolls: A successful Sense roll means you noticed something. That's often sufficient, but in some cases, the GM may require a second roll to *understand* what you've sensed; e.g., to realize that the "owl hoot" you heard is really a Smoke Knight, or that the faint scent you noticed is the flower of a man-eating plant. This roll is against IQ for details anybody could figure out, or against an appropriate skill if the significance would be lost on anyone but an expert.

Danger Sense: If you have Danger Sense (p. 85) and fail a Sense roll or comprehension roll to notice something *dangerous*, the GM will secretly make a Perception roll for you. Success means you sense the danger anyhow!

Vision

Make a Vision roll whenever it's important that you *see* something. When you try to spot something that is deliberately hidden, the GM may treat this roll as a Quick Contest against a concealment skill (Camouflage, Holdout, etc.), and may allow – or *require* – a skill such as Observation or Search to replace Perception for the roll.

Hearing

Make a Hearing roll whenever it's important that you hear a sound. The GM will often require a separate IQ roll to make out speech – especially in a foreign language. When you try to hear someone who's attempting to move silently, the GM may treat this roll as a Quick Contest against their Stealth skill. If you're *actively* listening, the GM may allow you to substitute Observation skill for Perception.

Taste/Smell

Taste and smell are two manifestations of the same sense. Make a Taste roll to notice a flavor, or a Smell roll to notice a scent.

Influence Rolls

An "Influence roll" is a *deliberate* attempt to get a positive reaction from an NPC. A PC with an appropriate "Influence skill" can always elect to substitute an Influence roll for a regular reaction roll in suitable circumstances (GM's decision). See *Reaction Rolls* (p. 133) for more on NPC reactions.

Decide which skill you're using: Diplomacy, Fast-Talk, Intimidation, Savoir-Faire, Sex Appeal, or Streetwise. Choose wisely – the GM may assess from -1 to -10 to skill for an *inappropriate* choice! The GM might permit other skills to work as Influence skills in special situations (e.g., Chemistry skill, when dealing with a catalyst-loving Spark). Then roll a Quick Contest: your Influence skill vs. the subject's Will.

If you *win*, you get a "Good" reaction from the NPC – "Very Good," if you used Sex Appeal. On any other outcome, the NPC resents your clumsy attempt at manipulation. This earns a "Bad" reaction – "Very Bad," if you attempted Intimidation. *Exception:* If you used Diplomacy, the GM also makes a regular reaction roll and uses the *better* of the two reactions. Thus, Diplomacy is relatively safe . . .

Fright Checks

A "Fright Check" is a Will roll made to resist *fear*. However, the GM can adapt these rules to awe, confusion, and similar stimuli.

Fright Checks occur as often or as rarely as the GM likes. But generally, "ordinary" frightening things don't require Fright Checks. Fright Checks are for events so unusual and terrifying that they might shock someone into a daze or faint.

The GM may apply bonuses and penalties to Fright Checks to reflect the nature of the frightening circumstances. Some advantages or disadvantages also give modifiers; e.g., Combat Reflexes grants +2.

A failed Fright Check results in the victim being mentally stunned (p. 147) for *seconds* equal to 2d + margin of failure before they get a roll to recover. Critical failure means they faint for *minutes* equal to 1d + margin of failure and cannot be revived sooner! Hope the thing that scared you isn't hungry . . .

COMBAT

The GM decides when to start using the combat rules. This is generally when fighting seems likely and combatants begin maneuvering for tactical advantage. The GM may also use these rules to resolve "action" situations such as chases and tournaments.

COMBAT TURN SEQUENCE

Combat takes place *second by second*. Each character involved gets one opportunity to act per second; this is their "turn," a one-second period that stretches from when they choose a maneuver (below) until their *next* opportunity to select a maneuver. Their turn overlaps the turns of other characters.

The "turn sequence" is the order in which characters take their turns. It's set at the start of the fight and doesn't change during combat. The combatant with the highest Basic Speed goes first and takes their turn, then the one with the next-highest Basic Speed, and so on, in descending order by Basic Speed. (Ties go to the fighter with the highest DX; if *that* doesn't break the tie, roll randomly at the start of combat.) After *everyone* has taken their turn, one second has passed and another second begins.

The GM shouldn't feel constrained by the one-second time scale. This is just a way of breaking a battle into manageable chunks! Feel free to drop out of combat time whenever dramatically appropriate, and to resume combat time when noncombat action gives way to more fighting.

MANEUVERS

A "maneuver" is an action that you can take on your turn. Each turn, you must choose *one* maneuver from the list below. Your choice determines *what you can do* on your turn, and sets your options for movement and active defense (p. 144).

GAME TIME

"Game time" is the time that passes *in the game world*, as determined by the GM.

Time During Adventures

Combat is played out in "slow" time. One turn in combat equals one second. It might take minutes of real-world time to resolve that turn, especially if the players are inexperienced or the battle is a large one. But combat is usually a life-or-death situation – you need to give players time to think.

Conversations, planning, attempts to solve riddles, and similar situations are played in "real" time. If the *players* spend 10 minutes discussing how to best approach an NPC merchant, their *characters* spent 10 minutes talking outside the shop.
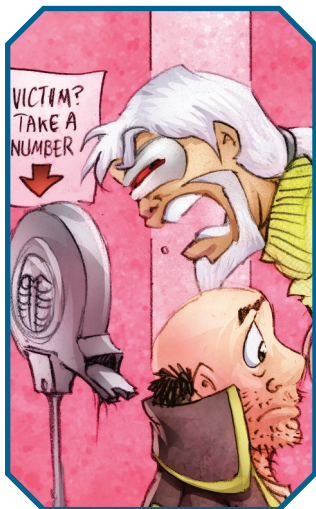
Routine travel and long tasks are handled in "fast" time. For instance, when the party is walking along a trail, the GM can simply compress the time between encounters. Skip to the next *interesting* or *important* event – tell the players when they meet someone, when they come into a town, when night falls, and so on.

Time Between Game Sessions

When an adventure takes several game sessions to play out, *no game time at all* needs to pass between sessions! Just "pause" the game. For instance, if the party confronts a rampaging *Tyrannosaurus* right before the session ends, that *Tyrannosaurus* gets no closer in the real-world break before you can play again.

Time Between Adventures

In a continuing campaign, also keep track of time between *adventures*. This can always be the same amount of time, or the GM and the players can agree on a "logical" time to pass between the end of one adventure and the beginning of the next. It's a good idea to let a month or two go by, to allow time for healing, earning money at "ordinary" jobs, and so on.

VICTIM? TAKE A NUMBER

Most maneuvers let you take a "step" in addition to acting. This means you can move about a yard forward or backward, either before or after you act. Maneuvers that specify other movement or *no* movement override this general rule.

For the purpose of active defenses, your maneuver is considered to be in effect until you select another maneuver, on your next turn. For instance, if you chose All-Out Defense (which gives a defensive advantage), its benefits would apply if you were attacked after you took your turn, and would persist until it was your turn again and you took a different maneuver.

If you're attacked before you've had a chance to choose a maneuver – usually at the start of combat – you're considered to be taking a Do Nothing maneuver (p. 141).

Long Actions: Some actions – like picking a lock or defusing a bomb – take multiple turns in combat. The GM decides how many. Treat this as a series of Concentrate maneuvers if it requires the person's full attention, or as successive Ready maneuvers if not.

Aim

Aim a ranged weapon (or a device such as a camera or a telescope) at a specific target you can see. If your next maneuver is Attack or All-Out Attack with the *same* weapon against the *same* target, add the weapon's Accuracy (Acc) to your skill.

Aiming for more than one second gives an additional bonus: +1 for two seconds of Aim, or +2 for three or more seconds.

If you defend (p. 143) while aiming, you must make a Will roll or lose the bonus!

All-Out Attack

Use a ready weapon (or unarmed combat) to attack a foe with wild abandon. You may move up to *half your Move* (minimum one yard) and receive the benefits below, but *you lose all active defenses until your next turn!*

If using a ranged weapon, you make a single attack at +1 to hit.

If making a melee attack, choose *one* of these options:

Determined: Make a single attack at +4 to hit.
Double: Make two attacks against the same foe, *if you have two ready weapons or one weapon that doesn't have to be readied after use. Attacks with a second weapon held in the "off" hand are at the usual -4 unless you have Ambidexterity (p. 83). You *can* combine All-Out Attack (Double) with a Rapid Strike (p. 143), in which case you make *three* attacks: one at no penalty, then two with the Rapid Strike penalty.
Strong: Make a single attack that does +2 damage – or +1 damage *per die,* if that would be better.

All-Out Defense

Protect yourself at all costs! You must specify *one* of these options:

Double Defense: Until your next turn, if your initial active defense against an attack fails, you may attempt a second, *different* defense. Both defenses must be legal against the attack; All-Out Defense doesn't let you parry a flamethrower! This normally means using two of Dodge, Parry, or Block – but if your parry with one hand fails, a parry using the other hand *does* count as a "different defense."

Increased Defense: Add +2 to *one* active defense of your choice: Dodge, Parry, or Block. This bonus persists until your next turn.

Attack

Using a ready weapon (or unarmed combat), make one careful, measured attack against a foe.

Change Posture

Switch between any two "postures" on the *Posture Table* (below). Except for the special cases below, this takes a single Change Posture maneuver. You may not otherwise move – not even a step.

Crouching or rising from a crouch is a *free action* (p. 140), and does *not* require a Change Posture maneuver.

If you're lying down, you cannot stand up *directly.* You must first take a Change Posture maneuver to rise to crawling, kneeling, or sitting. A *second* Change Posture maneuver lets you stand from any of these postures. (Going from standing to lying down takes only one maneuver, though – or none at all, if the change was involuntary!)

You may switch between kneeling and standing as the "step" of another maneuver that allows a step. This is *instead* of using Change Posture.

POSTURE TABLE

Attack: The modifier when making a *melee* (not ranged) attack from this posture.
Defense: The modifier to all active defense rolls.
Target: The modifier for someone else to hit you with a *ranged* (not melee) attack.
Movement: The effect on your Move.

Posture	Attack	Defense	Target	Movement
Standing	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal; may sprint
Crouching	-2	Normal	-2	2/3
Kneeling	-2	-2	-2	1/3
Crawling	-4	-3	-2	1/3
Sitting	-2	-2	-2	None
Lying Down	-4	-3	-2	1 yard/second

Concentrate

Focus on one primarily *mental* task. Examples include making a Sense roll to spot a hidden sniper, rolling against Leadership to give orders, and using most other IQ-, Will-, or Per-based skills. Some activities require you to Concentrate for multiple seconds. If you're forced to use an active defense, knocked down, injured, or otherwise distracted before finishing, you must make a Will-3 roll. Failure means you lose your concentration and must start over.

Do Nothing

There's rarely a good reason to *choose* this maneuver! Instead, this is the assumption for anyone who hasn't yet taken a turn in this combat, as well as for anyone who's *stunned* or (per the GM's ruling) *surprised*.

You may not move – not even a step. If you're stunned or surprised, your active defenses are at -4; if not, you may defend without penalty.

If you're stunned, you may attempt a HT roll to recover from physical stun or an IQ roll to recover from mental stun. If you're surprised, roll against IQ (at +6 for Combat Reflexes). Success means you recover at the *end* of your turn – that is, you Do Nothing *this* turn, but may act normally *next* turn.

Move

Move a number of yards up to your effective Move score (adjusted for encumbrance, posture, etc.). Most other maneuvers let you take a step. Choose Move if *all* you want to do is cover some ground.

Move and Attack

Move as described for the Move maneuver – but during or after your movement, make a single, poorly aimed attack (unarmed or with a ready weapon). After doing so, you may dodge and block, but you *cannot parry* until your next turn.

If making a *ranged* attack, you lose any Aim bonus and attack at -2 to hit *or* your weapon's Bulk rating, whichever is *worse*.

If making a *melee* attack, you're at -4 to hit *and* your effective skill cannot exceed 9.

Ready

Use this maneuver to pick up or draw any item (e.g., pull a sword from its scabbard), or to prepare an item for use (e.g., reload a firearm). In some cases, you may need a Ready maneuver to regain control of an unwieldy weapon (like a polearm) after a swing.

You can use a Ready maneuver to perform *physical* actions other than fighting: opening or closing a door, picking a lock, digging, lifting, etc.

ATTACKING

An "attack" is an attempt to hit someone or something. You may try this if you execute an Attack, All-Out Attack, or Move and Attack maneuver. You can attack with a weapon only if it's ready.

The GM always has the option of ruling – for any reason having to do with the situation – that some fighters cannot attack certain opponents. For instance, eight attackers could not hit one human-sized foe at the same time. (Even three or four attackers at once would be unlikely, unless their victim had no allies!)

There are two basic types of attacks: *melee attacks* (p. 142) and *ranged attacks* (p. 142). Your target must be within *reach* if you're making a melee attack, or within *range* if you're making a ranged attack. Resolving either type of attack takes up to three dice rolls:

1. *Attack roll.* A roll against your effective combat skill. Success means you *may* hit.

2. *Defense roll* (p. 143). After a successful attack roll, an aware opponent may try to avoid or intercept the attack. Success means your foe isn't hit.

3. *Damage roll* (p. 145). If your enemy fails that defense roll – or doesn't try one – your blow strikes home. Roll for damage.
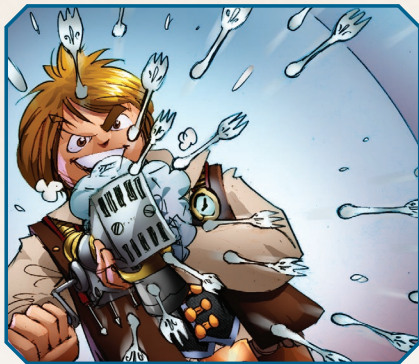
Attack Roll

Your "attack roll" is a regular success roll (p. 131). Figure your effective skill – base skill plus or minus any appropriate modifiers – with the weapon you're using.

If you roll *less than or equal to* your effective skill, your attack hits unless your foe successfully defends (p. 144). If they fail to defend – or cannot defend – you hit!

If you roll *greater than* your effective skill, you miss. Remember that a 17 or 18 always fails (often critically).

Critical successes and critical failures (p. 132) on attack rolls are also referred to as "critical hits" and "critical misses." On a critical hit, your opponent *cannot defend;* skip right to inflicting damage. And if your attack roll was a natural "3," don't even roll that – your attack does *maximum damage!* On a critical miss, something bad happens: you drop your weapon (or break a shoddy one), trip and fall, hurt yourself . . . whatever the GM feels would be dramatic.

Melee Attacks

A "melee attack" involves attacking a specific foe within reach of your *ready* melee weapon (including a natural weapon, such as a kick, bite, or punch).

A one-handed weapon is ready if it's being held in your hand. A two-handed weapon is ready if you're gripping it with *both* hands. Some unwieldy weapons (e.g., huge axes) become unready after each attack, unless you're extremely strong (p. 70). To ready such a weapon after attacking – or to draw a new weapon from a sheath, scabbard, or sling – you must take a Ready maneuver (p. 141).

A natural weapon is *always* ready unless the body part in question is occupied or restrained; e.g., you can't punch or grapple with a hand that's holding a weapon.

You can use some weapons in more than one way; e.g., you can swing or thrust with a shortsword. Such weapons have multiple lines on the weapon tables. When you attack with a weapon like this, decide how you're using it *before* making your attack roll.

Ranged Attacks

A "ranged attack" is any attack with a *ready* weapon used at a distance. Such attacks fall into two classes:

"Thrown weapons" are weapons physically hurled at the target: rocks, hand grenades, etc. You can also throw certain melee weapons, such as knives and spears.

"Missile weapons" are weapons that shoot projectiles or beams. Examples include bows, guns, and death rays. Such weapons require ammunition of some sort: arrows, cartridges, Mad Science power cells, whatever. Without ammunition, they're considered unready.

In all cases, the target must be within your weapon's *range.* Most ranged attacks list two range values, both in yards: Half Damage (1/2D) and Maximum (Max). Your target must be no farther away than Max range; 1/2D range affects only damage.

All ranged weapons also have an Accuracy (Acc) statistic. This is the bonus you get if you Aim immediately before you attack.

General Attack Modifiers

Apply to *all* attack rolls. Cumulative.

Attacker's Situation
Bad footing: -2 or worse (GM's option)
Grappled: -4
Major distraction (e.g., all clothes on fire): -3 or worse (GM's option)
Minor distraction (e.g., part of clothes on fire): -2
Off-hand attack w. one-handed weapon: -4 (no penalty w. Ambidexterity)
Shock: -HP of injury received last turn (max. -4)
ST below that required for weapon: -1 per point of deficit

Target's Situation
Size: target's Size Modifier (p. 143)
Surprise attack (target unaware of attacker *and* attack): +4

GRAPPLING

Grappling is an *empty-handed* melee attack made using DX. Your foe may try any active defense. Instead of doing damage, success means your victim is at -4 DX (giving -1 Dodge, and -2 Block and Parry) while you hold on, and cannot move away until they break free or you let go.

Trying to break free is an action that takes up the foe's turn. They must *win* a Quick Contest of ST against you. You're at +5 if grappling with both hands.

You can let go at any time as a free action. You can even do so when it isn't your turn – say, to free a hand in order to parry!

If you're still grappling your opponent on a subsequent turn, you can attempt a takedown. Roll a Quick Contest, with each fighter using the *higher* of ST or DX. If you *win,* the foe is now lying down. Otherwise, there's no effect – unless you lose by 3+, in which case *you* fall down!

Visibility (cannot exceed -10)
Blind, target completely invisible, or in total darkness: -10
Cannot see foe: -6, or -4 if you know their location to within one yard
Partial darkness, fog, smoke, etc.: -1 to -9 (GM's option)

Melee Attack Modifiers

Apply only to *melee* attacks. Cumulative.

Attacker's Maneuver
All-Out Attack (Determined): +4
Move and Attack: -4, and skill limited to 9

Attacker's Situation
Attacker's posture: "Attack" modifiers on *Posture Table* (p. 140)

Ranged Attack Modifiers

Apply only to *ranged* attacks. Cumulative.

Attacker's Maneuver
All-Out Attack: +1
Move and Attack: -2 or weapon's Bulk penalty, whichever is *worse,* and no Aim possible

Attacker's Situation
Aim: +Accuracy of weapon after one turn, another +1 after two turns or +2 after three turns

Target's Situation
Target has concealment/cover (half exposed, in bushes, etc.): -2 to -6 (GM's option)
Target's posture: "Target" modifiers on *Posture Table* (p. 140)
Target's speed/range: see *Size and Speed/Range Table* (opposite)

Size and Speed/Range Table

The main use for this table is ranged combat, but the GM can also use it for Sense rolls and other success rolls that size, speed, or range might believably affect.

This table uses the same progression for size as it does for the sum of speed and range, but the modifiers for size have the *opposite sign* from those for speed/range: large size gives a bonus, while large speed and range give a penalty. Thus, if a target is twice as big but also twice as far away and twice as fast, the net modifier to hit stays the same.

Target's Size Modifier: The larger the target, the easier it is to hit. The modifier to hit someone or something due to its size is its "Size Modifier" (SM). Humans have SM 0. Targets larger than man-sized give a bonus to hit; smaller ones, a penalty. To find SM, look up the subject's longest dimension (e.g., height, for humans) in the "Linear Measurement" column, and then read across to the "Size" column. If size falls between two values, base SM on the *higher* size. (*Exception:* If an object is much smaller in *two* of three dimensions, like rope, use the *smallest* dimension instead.)

Target's Speed and Range: Speed and range affect only ranged combat. Add the target's speed in yards/seconds to its range in yards. Find the total in the "Linear Measurement" column. Read across to the "Speed/Range" column to find the speed/range modifier. If the total falls between two values, use the *higher;* e.g., treat 8 yards as 10 yards. For fighters on foot, assume speed is 0 and use range alone. For vehicles, speed in yards/second is half speed in mph.

Examples: A man 8 yards away is attacked at -4. A swift rider 40 yards away, traveling at 14 yards/second (28 mph), has a speed/range of 40 + 14 = 54 yards, giving -9 to hit.

Linear Measurement	Speed/Range	Size
1 inch	0	-11
1 foot	0	-5
1 yard	0	-2
2 yards	0	0
3 yards	-1	+1
5 yards	-2	+2
7 yards	-3	+3
10 yards	-4	+4
15 yards	-5	+5
20 yards	-6	+6
30 yards	-7	+7
50 yards	-8	+8
70 yards	-9	+9
100 yards	-10	+10

Every additional ×10 to linear measurement gives -6 to speed/range or +6 to size.

DEFENDING

If you make your attack roll, you have not (yet) actually struck your foe, unless you rolled a critical hit. Your attack is *good enough* to hit – *if they fail to defend.*

There are three "active defenses" that a fighter can use to evade or ward off an attack: Dodge (p. 144), Parry (p. 144), and Block (p. 144). Calculate these active defense scores in advance and record them on your character sheet.

An active defense is a deliberate attempt to avoid a particular attack. It's possible only if the defender is aware of the possibility of the attack *and* is free to react . . . by moving out of the way of the attack (a dodge), deflecting the attack with a weapon or empty hand (a parry), or interposing a shield (a block).

If a foe makes a successful attack roll against you, you may choose *one* active defense and attempt a "defense roll" against it.

Exceptions: If you chose the All-Out Defense (Double Defense) maneuver, you may attempt a *second* defense against a particular attack if your first defense fails. If you took the Move and Attack maneuver, you cannot parry. And if you picked the All-Out Attack maneuver, you cannot attempt *any* active defense! You also receive no active defense if you're unaware of the attack, or if you're unconscious, immobilized, or otherwise unable to react.

Defense Roll

The defender makes a success roll (p. 131) against the chosen active defense score, plus any modifiers (opposite).

Having a cloak or shield is *necessary* for blocking, but grants another benefit: You may add its Defense Bonus (DB) to *any* active defense roll – Dodge, Block, or Parry – against an attack that came from in front of you or from your shield side.

Feverish Defense (*Extra Effort,* p. 144) – which gives +2 to any active defense roll at the cost of 1 FP – is one of the most common uses of FP in combat. Don't forget about it!

The attacker's margin of success *doesn't* affect this roll – this isn't a Contest! – but remember that if the attack was a critical hit, no active defense is possible in the first place.

A roll *less than or equal to* the modified defense score means the attack is dodged, blocked, or parried. Otherwise, the defense was ineffective and the attack struck home – roll for damage.

FANCY FIGHTIN'

Fighters can *choose* to accept penalties in order to pull off certain stunts. All of these are available for both melee and ranged attacks.

Called Strike/Shot: -2 to hit an *arm* or *leg,* which has no special effect unless you inflict a major wound (p. 147), in which case the limb is crippled and useless until healed; -3 to hit the *vitals,* which raises the wounding modifier (p. 146) to ×3; -7 to hit the *skull,* which raises the wounding modifier to ×4!

Deceptive Attack: Lead the target, striking where they *will* be. Every -2 you take to your attack roll gives them -1 to their defense roll.

Rapid Strike/Shot: Attack twice! Each attack is at -6 to hit; -3 if you spend FP on a Flurry of Blows (*Extra Effort,* p. 144) *or* have Weapon Master; or -1 for both.

Extra Effort

One of the most common uses for Fatigue Points (*Fatigue*, p. 148) is pushing yourself a bit harder to accomplish more. These rules allow that. They're meant for *important* characters – heroes and villains – not rank-and-file mooks!

Out of combat, the GM decides what tasks can benefit from extra effort. Before making the success roll for such a task, the hero may spend from 1 to 5 FP and then roll against HT (for physical tasks) or Will (for mental ones) at any penalty from -1 to -10. On a success, the effect is improved by (FP spent) × (size of penalty taken) × 5%, whatever that means for the situation. For example, if a soldier about to pull a cart spent 4 FP and successfully rolled against HT-5, their effective BL would be raised by 4 × 5 × 5%, or 100%. If that had been a Spark inventing something (and rolling against Will), the 100% boost might mean they worked twice as fast, finishing in half the time.

In combat, characters may spend FP on specific benefits. This is often a good idea, as FP are far easier to recover than HP – and spending the former can help avoid losing the latter! Unless otherwise specified, each of these feats costs 1 FP.

Feverish Defense: +2 to a *single* active defense roll.

Flurry of Blows: Halve the penalty for a Rapid Strike/ Shot (p. 143). Costs 1 FP *per attack.*

Heroic Charge: Travel your *full* Move before attacking (basically, a Move and Attack without any downsides).

Mighty Blows: +2 damage, or +1 *per die* if better, with a *single* attack. It must be strength-based (e.g., not a firearm). You must decide *before* rolling damage.

Multi-Task: Do a simple *noncombat* task (dousing lights, starting clank, etc.) as a free action instead of having to take a Concentrate or Ready maneuver.

Near Thing: Ignore a failed DX roll to stay standing or a failed HT roll to avoid knockdown or unconsciousness.

Rapid Reload: Reload instantly and without error – even between shots.

Second Wind: Each FP spent *heals* 1 HP, but only in a fight!

Active defense rolls are the *only* success rolls you can attempt even if your effective skill is less than 3, in which case a roll of 3 or 4 is *always* successful. A roll of 17 or 18 always fails.

Dodging

A "dodge" is an active attempt to move out of the path of an attack. This is often the best defense when you're not skilled with your weapon and you have no shield, or when you're attacked multiple times.

Dodge is normally the *only* active defense you can take against firearms. This doesn't mean you can actually dodge bullets and death rays! A dodge against such an attack represents an attempt to avoid being where you think your opponent will shoot, by weaving or ducking at the right moment.

You may dodge *any* attack except one that you didn't know about! You get only one Dodge roll against a given attack. While you're limited to just one active defense against each attack – unless you use All-Out Defense (Double Defense) – there's no limit to the number of *different* attacks you may attempt to dodge during your turn.

Your Dodge active defense is Basic Speed + 3, dropping all fractions, less a penalty equal to your encumbrance level (p. 71).

Parrying

A "parry" is an attempt to deflect a blow using a *ready* weapon or an *empty* hand. You may attempt to parry only one attack per turn *per ready weapon or empty hand.*

Your Parry active defense is 3 + *half* your skill, dropping all fractions. Here, "skill" is weapon skill for the melee weapon you're using to parry, or DX, Brawling, or Martial Arts when parrying barehanded. For instance, Broadsword-13 would give a Parry of 9 with a broadsword. A few weapons (e.g., fencing weapons and the quarterstaff) have a bonus to parry; others (e.g., knives and whips), a penalty.

You *can* parry thrown weapons, but at -1 for most thrown weapons – or -2 for *small* ones such as knives, shuriken, and other weapons that weigh 1 lb. or less.

A parry won't stop anything except melee attacks or thrown weapons. *Exception:* If a foe attacks you with a missile weapon *and* is within reach of your melee weapon, you may parry. You're parrying their weapon, not the projectile! For example, if an attacker fired a pistol at you from only one yard away, you could attempt to parry barehanded. Success would mean you slapped their arm or gun aside, causing them to fire wide of your body.

If you successfully parry an *unarmed* attack (bite, punch, kick, grapple, etc.) with a weapon, you may injure your attacker. Immediately roll against your skill with the weapon you used to parry, at -4 if your attacker used Martial Arts. Success means your parry struck the attacker's limb squarely. They get no defense roll against this! Roll damage normally.

Unarmed Parries

When you parry unarmed using DX, Brawling, or Martial Arts, there's no penalty to parry an *unarmed* or *thrusting weapon* attack, but you're at -3 to parry *swung weapon* attacks unless using Martial Arts. Beings that lack hands – like most animals – cannot parry and must dodge.

Blocking

A "block" is an attempt to interpose a shield, cloak, or similar large object between yourself and an attack. To do so, whatever you're blocking with must be *ready*. (If you're strong enough to grab and lift someone, you *can* block with their body!)

Your Block active defense is 3 + *half* your Cloak or Shield skill (or DX, if using a body), dropping all fractions. For instance, Shield-11 would give a Block of 8.

You can block any melee attack, thrown weapon, projected liquid, or muscle-powered missile weapon. You *cannot* block bullets or beams . . . these come too fast to be stopped this way.

You may attempt to block only *one* attack per turn.

Defense Modifiers

All modifiers are cumulative.

Defender's Equipment

Parrying w. bolas, thonged club, or Weighted Chain or Whip weapon: -2 to Parry

Parrying w. most Knife weapons: -1 to Parry (*no* penalty w. Main-Gauche)

Parrying w. Rapier, Saber, Smallsword, or Staff weapon: +2 to Parry

Ready cloak or shield: +DB vs. *front* or *shield-side* attack

Unarmed parry vs. swung weapon: -3 to Parry (*no* penalty w. Martial Arts)

Defender's Maneuver

All-Out Attack: no defense possible!

All-Out Defense (Increased Defense): +2 to *one* of Dodge, Block, or Parry

Move and Attack: dodge or block only; you cannot parry

Defender's Situation

Bad footing: -1 or worse (GM's option)

Can't see attacker: -4, and a block or parry requires a Hearing-2 roll

Defender's posture: "Defense" modifiers on *Posture Table* (p. 140)

Distraction (e.g., clothes on fire): -1 or worse (GM's option)

Encumbered: penalty equal to encumbrance level to Dodge, or to Martial Arts or any fencing Parry

Grappled: -2 to Block/Parry, -1 to Dodge

Off-hand parry: -2 to Parry (*no* penalty w. Ambidexterity or Main-Gauche)

Stunned: -4

Nature of Attack

Attack from behind: no defense possible!

Critical hit: no defense possible!

Flail: -4 to Parry/-2 to Block; fencing weapons and knives *can't* parry

Thrown weapon: -1 to Parry, or -2 to Parry if 1 lb. or less

Damage and Injury

If your attack roll succeeds *and* your target's defense roll (if any) fails, you hit! If your attack is one that does damage, you must now make a "damage roll." This tells you how much *basic damage* you deal to your target. Your weapon (and, for muscle-powered weapons, your ST) determines the number of dice you roll.

If your target has any Damage Resistance (DR) – from armor, tough skin, etc. – subtract this from your damage roll. If your damage roll is less than or equal to your target's DR, your attack failed to penetrate – it bounced off or was absorbed. If your damage roll *exceeds* your target's DR, the excess is the *penetrating damage*. If your foe has no DR, the entire damage roll is penetrating damage.

Once you know your attack's penetrating damage, apply its wounding modifier (p. 146), if any. This gives the *injury* the foe suffers, which is subtracted from their Hit Points.

Damage Roll

You usually make your own damage rolls, and the GM rolls for NPCs. Damage rolls are expressed as a number of dice, sometimes with a modifier; e.g., "6d-1" or "1d+2." A negative modifier can't reduce damage below 0 if the attack does *crushing* damage, or below 1 if it does *any other type* of damage.

The result of the damage roll (*after* any modifiers, as explained above) is the hit's *basic damage*.

If a ranged weapon has two range statistics, the first is its Half Damage (1/2D) range, in yards. If the target is at or beyond 1/2D range, *divide basic damage by 2,* rounding down.

Damage Resistance and Penetration

Damage Resistance (DR) rates the degree of protection that tough skin, body armor, a clank's metallic structure, etc., affords against damage. Objects and vehicles have their own DR values that protect against damage *they* suffer – and if you take cover behind or inside them, their DR also protects *you.*

Subtract DR from basic damage. The result is the "penetrating damage" that punched through or deformed the armor enough to cause significant injury. For instance, if you're hit by an attack that inflicts 6 points of basic damage and you're wearing armor with DR 4, you take 2 points of penetrating damage.

In general, DR from multiple sources is additive; e.g., if you have a natural DR of 2 and put on that armor with DR 4, your total DR is 6. Exceptions are always noted.

Wounding Modifiers and Injury

If any damage penetrates DR, multiply it by the attack's "wounding modifier," if it has one. Only damage types shown on the *Wounding Modifiers Table* (below) need bother with this step. Other damage types have no wounding modifier; e.g., if 4 points of crushing damage penetrate DR, the target suffers 4 HP of injury.

At this point, it's wise to consider getting a Second Wind! See *Extra Effort* (p. 144) for details. If you do so the *moment* you lose HP, it's as if you never lost those HP; this can save you from having to roll for knockdown, unconsciousness, etc.

Reduce the victim's current HP total by the injury sustained. For the effects of injury, and how to recover from it, see *Injury, Illness, and Fatigue* (p. 146).

Non-Damaging Attacks

Exotic attacks that note "affliction (aff)" or "special (spec.)" in lieu of damage don't do normal damage. *Affliction* attacks inflict unpleasant but usually temporary effects like stunning or nausea, and generally allow the victim a HT roll to resist; e.g., "HT-5 aff" means the target may roll vs. HT at -5 to resist. *Special* attacks are everything else! For either, see the notes on the attack for the exact effects.

INJURY, ILLNESS, AND FATIGUE

The life of an adventurer isn't all song and glory. You get tired. You get your clothes dirty. You might actually get *hurt* – or even worse, *killed!*

Fortunately, all these problems can be cured. Even death. Read on . . .

INJURIES

Wounds and ailments cause "injury": a (usually) temporary loss of Hit Points (p. 72). Thus, your HP score measures your ability to sustain injury. If any injury reduces you to 0 or fewer HP, you soon fall unconscious. You can even go to *negative* HP . . . but if you go too far, you risk death. For the average person, the difference between full HP and negative HP is one or two sword blows or bullets.

WOUNDING MODIFIERS TABLE

If an attack's damage type appears on the table below, it's especially good or bad at ripping flesh. For example, an impaling weapon is no better than a crushing one at penetrating armor – but if it *does* get through, it hurts more!

Many attacks that are great at hurting living beings are terrible at damaging machines or destroying obstacles. Use the "Unliving" column for clanks, vehicles, undead, etc. Use the "Homogeneous" column for anything *completely* solid, with *no* internal mechanisms or variation, like a wall, tree, or giant blob.

Damage Type	Living	Unliving	Homogeneous
Cutting (cut)	×1.5	×1.5	×1.5
Impaling (imp)	×2	×1	×1/2
Small Piercing (pi-)	×1/2	×1/5	×1/10
Piercing (pi)	×1	×1/3	×1/5
Large Piercing (pi+)	×1.5	×1/2	×1/3
Huge Piercing (pi++)	×2	×1	×1/2

Drop all fractions after multiplying – but if *any* damage penetrated DR, minimum injury is 1 HP.

When making a Called Strike/Shot (p. 143), that wounding modifier *replaces* this one – they don't "stack." An impaling attack to the vitals does ×3 injury, not ×6!

Lost Hit Points

Repeated wounding eventually causes *anyone* or *anything* to weaken and collapse, even if no single injury is very great. See below for the effects of being at low or negative HP. All effects are cumulative, both with previous effects and with other issues, like low FP (p. 149).

Less than 1/3 your HP left – You are reeling from your wounds. Halve your Move and Dodge (round *up*).

0 HP or less – In addition to the above effects, you are in immediate danger of collapse. Make a HT roll at the start of your next turn, at -1 per *full* multiple of HP below zero. Failure means you fall unconscious – see *Recovering from Unconsciousness* (p. 148) – or stop working if you're a clank. Success means you can act normally, but must roll again *every turn* to continue functioning. (*Exception:* If you choose Do Nothing on your turn *and* do not attempt any defense rolls, you can remain conscious without rolling.)

-1×HP – In addition to the above effects, make an *immediate* HT roll or die. (If you fail by only 1 or 2, you're dying, but not dead – see *Mortal Wounds*, p. 147.) If you succeed, you can still talk, fight, etc., as above (until you fail a HT roll and collapse). Roll again each time you suffer injury equal to a further multiple of your HP, whether as a result of one wound or many. For instance, if you have 11 HP, you must roll to avoid death at -11 HP. If you survive, you must roll again at -22 HP, -33 HP, and so on . . .

-5×HP – You die immediately. You have lost a total of *6 times your HP!* Nobody can survive that much injury.

-10×HP – Total bodily destruction, if this makes sense given the source of the damage – 200 points of arrow wounds leave a messy but recognizable corpse; 200 points of fire injury leaves nothing but an unrecognizable lump of charcoal. The difference can be important if someone is planning on harvesting or reanimating your corpse!

Shock

Whenever you suffer injury, reduce your DX and IQ by the number of HP you lost – to a maximum penalty of -4, regardless of your injuries – *on your next turn only.* This effect, called "shock," is temporary; your attributes return to normal on the turn after that.

Shock affects DX- and IQ-based skills, but *not* active defenses or other defensive reactions.

Major Wounds

A "major wound" is any *single* injury of *greater than* 1/2 your HP (e.g., a 6-HP injury if you have HP 10). Any major wound requires a HT roll to avoid knockdown and stunning (below).

Knockdown and Stunning

Whenever you suffer a major wound, you must make an immediate HT roll to avoid knockdown and stunning. On a success, you suffer no penalty beyond ordinary shock.

On a failure, you're stunned; see *Do Nothing* (p. 141). You also fall prone (if you weren't already), and if you were holding anything, you drop it. This effect is called "knockdown."

On a failure by 5 or more, or any critical failure, you fall unconscious! See *Recovering from Unconsciousness* (p. 148).

If stunned, you may roll against HT at the end of each turn of stun. Success lets you recover from stun; you can act normally on subsequent turns. Failure means you remain stunned; your next maneuver must *also* be Do Nothing, but you get another roll at the end of that turn . . . and so on, until you eventually recover.

Mental Stun: Psychological shocks like waking up suddenly or failing a Fright Check can *mentally* stun someone. Use the rules above, but roll against IQ, not HT, to recover.

Mortal Wounds

If you fail a HT roll to avoid death by 1 or 2, you don't drop dead, but suffer a "mortal wound." This is a wound so severe that your internal injuries *might* kill you.

If you're mortally wounded, you're instantly incapacitated. You may or may not be conscious (GM's decision). If you suffer further injury and must make another HT roll to avoid death, *any* failure kills you.

While mortally wounded, you must make a HT roll every half-hour to avoid death. On any failure, you die. On a success, you linger for another half-hour – then roll again. On a critical success, you pull through miraculously: you're no longer mortally wounded (but you're still incapacitated). You can also recover from a mortal wound with a successful HT roll whenever treatment restores any number of HP – even if you're still in the negatives.

If you recover from a mortal wound, make a HT roll. Failure costs you a level of HT *permanently.* On a critical failure, the GM may also apply an appropriate disadvantage (e.g., reduced appearance due to scarring).

Death

If your character is killed, you may still wish to keep track of further injury. Some Spark might have a way to bring you back from the dead if your body isn't *too* badly damaged!

Instant Death

Decapitation, a cut throat, etc. can kill anyone, regardless of HT and HP. If a *helpless* or *unconscious* person is attacked in an obviously lethal way, they're dead. Don't bother to roll for damage, calculate remaining HP, etc. Just assume that they drop to -5×HP.

This doesn't apply to a merely *unaware* victim! If you sneak up behind a sentry with a knife, you can't automatically kill them. Game it out: Since it's a surprise attack and they won't be hitting back, make an All-Out Attack. Your attack roll will almost certainly succeed. Your victim gets no active defense. You'll probably inflict enough injury to incapacitate or kill them. But it isn't *automatic*.

Dying Actions

When a PC or important NPC is killed in any but the most sudden and thorough fashion, the GM should allow a single "dying action." If this is a final blow at the enemy, it should take no more than a turn. If it's a deathbed speech, the GM can stretch time a little for dramatic purposes! This has nothing to do with realism, but it's fun.

RECOVERY

The injury rules may seem harsh, but don't despair . . . you can get better!

Recovering from Unconsciousness

Failure by 5 or more on a knockdown roll, a failed HT roll to stay conscious at 0 HP or less, and many other things can leave you unconscious. It's up to the GM to decide whether you're *truly* unconscious or just totally incapacitated by pain and injury – but either way, you can't *do* anything. You recover as follows:

- If you have 1 or more HP remaining, you awaken automatically in 15 minutes.
- At 0 HP or worse, but above -1×HP, make a HT roll to awaken every hour. Once you succeed, you can act normally – but since you're below 1/3 of your HP, you're at half Move and Dodge.

- At -1×HP or below, you're in bad shape. You get a *single* HT roll to awaken after 12 hours. If you succeed, you regain consciousness and can act as described above. But if you fail, you won't regain consciousness without medical treatment or miraculous healing – whenever you regain HP by these means, you get another HT roll to wake up. Until you receive help, you must roll vs. HT every 12 hours; if you fail, you *die.*

Natural Healing

Rest lets you recover lost HP, unless the damage is of a type that specifically doesn't heal naturally (often true of *Disease,* opposite). At the end of each day of rest and decent food, make a HT roll. Success means you recover 1 HP. The GM may apply a penalty if conditions are bad, or a bonus if conditions are very good. If under the care of a doctor, they may make a daily Physician roll; success heals you *another* 1 HP.

Note that Second Wind (*Extra Effort,* p. 144) is available only in *combat.* There's no rule against spending all your remaining FP once the last enemy falls – but once the fight ends, you must heal any remaining injuries normally.

First Aid

The two main uses for First Aid skill (p. 114) are *bandaging* and *treating shock:*

Bandaging: Simply bandaging wounds takes one minute. Then roll vs. First Aid. Success restores 1 HP.

Treating Shock: After bandaging, the aid-giver may take a further 10 minutes to apply a more elaborate dressing and treat the victim for shock, by keeping them warm, comfortable, calm, and still. A successful First Aid roll heals *another* 1d-1 HP. Critical success restores 5 HP; critical failure *costs* the subject 2 HP.

FATIGUE

Running or swimming long distances, using extra effort or certain special abilities, and many other things can cause "fatigue": a temporary loss of Fatigue Points (FP). Your FP score starts out equal to your HT. Just as injury represents physical trauma and comes off of HP, fatigue represents lost energy and reduces FP. When you lose FP, keep track of it on your character sheet.
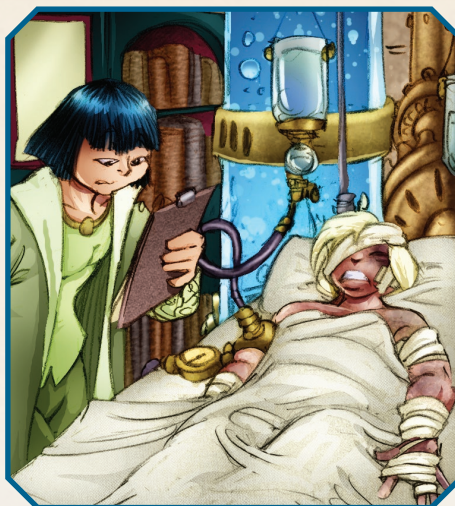
Lost Fatigue Points

The chart below summarizes the effects of being at low or negative FP. All effects are cumulative, both with previous effects and with other complications (like low HP).

Less than 1/3 your FP left – You are very tired. Halve your Move, Dodge, and ST (round *up*). This does *not* affect ST-based quantities, such as HP and damage.

0 FP or less – You are on the verge of collapse. If you suffer further fatigue, each 1 FP you lose also causes 1 HP of injury. To do anything besides talk or rest, you must make a Will roll; in combat, roll before each maneuver other than Do Nothing. On a success, you can act normally; if you are drowning, you can continue to struggle, but you suffer the usual 1 HP per 1 FP lost. On a failure, you collapse, incapacitated, and can do *nothing* until you recover to positive FP.

-1×FP – You fall unconscious. While unconscious, you recover lost FP at the same rate as for normal rest. You awaken when you reach positive FP. Your FP can *never* fall below this level. After this stage, any FP cost comes off your HP instead!

Recovering from Fatigue

You regain 1 FP per 10 minutes of resting quietly. Reading, talking, and thinking are all right; walking around, inventing things, or anything more strenuous is *not*. Certain drugs, alchemy, etc. can also restore missing FP.

Long-Term Fatigue

Some things drain the body in ways that a few minutes of rest can't undo. These cost you normal FP *and* an equal number of *Long-Term Fatigue Points* (LFP).

Dehydration: Going a day without anything to drink costs 3 FP and 3 LFP.

Starvation: Skipping a meal costs 1 FP and 1 LFP.

Missed Sleep: Sleeping for less than eight hours costs 1 FP and 1 LFP. *Double* this if you slept for less than four hours, or *triple* it if you stayed up all night.

Extreme Temperatures: Punishing degrees of heat or cold may require a HT roll every hour (or even more frequently – GM's call) to avoid losing 1 FP and 1 LFP.

Exotic Effects: Weird inventions or environments might cost you FP and LFP.

Everybody's LFP score starts at 0; thus, you drop into the negatives as you lose LFP, with no minimum. Keep track of LFP on your character sheet, above your FP box. Your current LFP penalty reduces the maximum size of your ordinary FP pool. For example, if you have FP 12 but LFP -3, you cannot rise above 9 FP until you recover some of those Long-Term Fatigue Points!

Recovering LFP

At the end of each day in which you eat three full meals (food and drink) *and* get a full night of sleep, recover 4 LFP. If you spend the whole day doing *nothing* but resting and eating, double this to 8 LFP.

OTHER HAZARDS

Besides the ordinary combat risks of swords, guns, and explosions, adventurers face other hazards.

Disease

Maladies and strange diseases may affect adventurers in far-off lands . . . or even at home. The search for a cure – whether for the Princess' wasting disease, a Spark-created plague, or one of the Other's bioweapons – is a wonderful plot device!

The important things to know about a given disease are:

Resistance Roll: The HT roll to avoid the disease, including any modifier (usually between 0 and -6). On a success, the victim doesn't contract the disease. On a failure, they do, but they get further rolls – once per "cycle" – to throw off the disease.

Delay: The incubation period – the time between initial exposure to the disease and the appearance of the first symptoms in those who fail to resist. This is 24 hours for a "generic" disease, but can vary considerably for real-life diseases.

Effect: What the disease does, in game terms. This is often toxic damage or fatigue – anywhere from 1 to 1d points. If so, DR doesn't protect, and HP or FP lost to the disease cannot be recovered until the disease is cured or has run its full course! However, it's possible for a disease to have other strange effects; e.g., the victim loses a level of IQ for every 5 points by which the HT roll fails. Injury, fatigue, attribute losses, etc. are usually accompanied by symptoms: fever, sneezing, coughing, spots, rash, and so on.

Cycles: Most diseases affect the victim at regular intervals until they succeed at a HT roll (with the same modifier as the initial HT roll) *or* a maximum number of cycles passes. The "default" interval between HT rolls is one day. The number of cycles varies with the disease's deadliness; for instance, a potentially fatal wasting disease might inflict only 1 HP per cycle but endure for 20-30 cycles.

AGING

Gradual decline as you age is a natural thing. For *Girl Genius*, this is often mitigated by new developments in science, being reanimated, or other methods. However, those without such luck start making "aging rolls" at the age of 50.

Aging rolls are a series of four HT rolls – one for each of your four basic attributes, in the following order: ST, DX, IQ, HT. You cannot use any advantages on these rolls. If you fail an aging roll for an attribute, reduce that attribute by one level and reduce your point value accordingly.

You must make these rolls once per year of character life starting at age 50, and once every six months beginning at age 70.

Once the disease's symptoms become apparent, identification requires a roll against Diagnosis (p. 111). This cannot identify a totally new illness, but a good roll might give enough information to allow treatment. Appropriate remedies – herbs, drugs, etc. – can provide a bonus to the cyclic HT rolls to shake off certain diseases.

Drinking

Usually, it isn't important to keep track of how much alcohol your character takes on – but when the heroes pile into Mamma Gkika's to challenge tourists to a drinking contest, you'll be glad you have these rules!

At the end of any hour during which you consume more than ST/4 drinks ("a drink" is a mug of beer, glass of wine, or shot of liquor), roll against the *higher* of HT or Carousing, at -1 per drink over that limit. Failure drops you one level on the chart below; critical failure drops you two levels.

Sober: Where's the fun in that?

Tipsy: -1 to DX and IQ, -2 to self-control rolls (except for Cowardice), and reduce Shyness by one level.

Drunk: Double the effects of Tipsy. Also roll against HT+4; failure means you start to experience minor hallucinations (pink elephants!).

Passing Out: Roll against HT. Success means you vomit; you may choose whether your character remains conscious. Failure means you pass out; see *Recovering from Unconsciousness* (p. 148).

Possible Coma: Roll against HT. Success means you vomit and *then* pass out. Failure means you fall into a coma; treat this as a mortal wound (p. 147). How did you let things get this bad?

If you got tipsy or worse, roll against HT in the morning (or 1d hours later, if you stayed up), at -2 if you got drunk or -4 if you passed out. Failure means a hangover (-2 to all DX, IQ, skill, and self-control rolls) for a number of hours equal to your margin of failure.

Electricity

The effects of electrical shock vary *greatly*, from momentary stunning to instant death, so these are just general guidelines. Specific weapons or situations (*especially* those involving Sparks . . .) may produce other effects.

All electrical damage is either *nonlethal* or *lethal*. Against either, uninsulated metallic armor provides only DR 1 – and if the wearer is grounded, that actually attracts electrical attacks, giving them +2 to hit.

Nonlethal Damage: High-voltage, low-power shocks are unlikely to kill, but can stun. To avoid this, roll against HT when zapped, with a modifier from +2 for an accidental short-circuit to -5 for a powerful shock weapon (which may *paralyze* rather than merely stun). *Nonmetallic* armor gives a bonus equal to its DR. An instantaneous jolt stuns for one second, after which time the victim may roll vs. HT once per second to recover. A continuous shock stuns for as long as the victim is in contact with the source and for (20 - HT) seconds afterward (minimum one second), after which the victim may roll every second to recover.

Lethal Damage: High-power shocks inflict *burning* damage: only 1d-3 to 3d in most cases, but 6d on up for lightning bolts, massive Mad Science contraptions, etc. A victim who suffers *any* injury must roll vs. HT at -1 per 2 HP of injury suffered. Failure means they fall unconscious for as long as the current is applied, and for (20 - HT) minutes afterward (minimum of one minute). They'll be at -2 DX for *another* (20 - HT) minutes when they recover. Failure by 5+, or any critical failure, results in a heart attack; treat as a mortal wound (p. 147). Lethal damage is also likely to disable or destroy electrical equipment.

Falling

As the saying goes, "It isn't the fall that kills you. It's the landing." But the greater the height of the fall, the more that landing hurts. See the table below for damage. For intermediate distances, use the *higher* line.

Distance	Damage
1 yard	1d
2 yards	1d+1
3 yards	1d+2
4 yards	2d-1
5 yards	2d
10 yards	3d
15 yards	3d+2
20 yards	4d
25 yards	4d+2
30 yards	5d
35 yards	5d+2
40 yards	6d-1
45 yards	6d
50 yards	6d+2
60 yards	7d
70 yards	7d+2
80 yards	8d+1
100+ yards	9d+1

You may roll against Acrobatics (p. 106) to break a fall. Success subtracts five yards from the distance. Ignore this for falls onto spikes – there's no "safe" way to get stabbed!

The table assumes the victim has fewer than 20 HP. A bigger victim makes a bigger splash! Multiply basic falling damage by 2 at HP 20-29, 3 at HP 30-39, 4 at HP 40-49, and so on. Tripping a massive clank off of a building is a good combat tactic!

Falling damage is normally *crushing*. Spikes make it *large piercing* or even *impaling* (for why this matters, see the *Wounding Modifiers Table*, p. 146). Landing on something soft halves *crushing* damage. Falling into water means no damage, but immediately roll as per *Swimming* (p. 137).

Damage Resistance applies to falling damage, but whiplash makes minimum injury 1 HP per full 5 points of basic damage.

Flame

If you spend *part* of a turn in a fire (e.g., running through the flames), you take 1d-3 burning damage. If you spend *all* of a turn in a fire of ordinary intensity – or if you're *on fire* – you take 1d-1 damage per second. Very intense fires inflict more damage; e.g., molten metal or a furnace would inflict 3d per second!

A *single* damage roll that inflicts at least 3 points of basic burning damage ignites *part* of your clothing. This does 1d-4 burning damage per second and is distracting (-2 to DX, unless the damage simply cannot harm you). To put out the fire, you must beat it with your hands. This requires a DX roll, and each attempt takes a Ready maneuver.

A *single* damage roll that inflicts 10 or more points of basic burning damage ignites *all* of your clothes. This does 1d-1 burning damage per second and is *very* distracting (-3 to DX, except when rolling to put out the fire). To put out the fire, you must roll on the ground. This requires a DX roll, and each attempt takes *three* Ready maneuvers. Jumping into water takes only one second, and automatically extinguishes the fire.

In all cases, remember to apply shock penalties (p. 147) to DX if the flame inflicts injury!

Finally, even if the flames themselves cannot penetrate your DR, continued exposure to a fire can result in intense heat that can rapidly fatigue you. See *Long-Term Fatigue* (p. 149).

Lack of Air

If you aren't exerting yourself, you can hold your breath for HT×5 seconds. Mild exertion, such as walking or treading water, drops this to HT×2 seconds; combat or similar heavy exertion reduces it to just HT/2 seconds. This assumes you were surprised; e.g., grabbed by the throat or suddenly surrounded by gas. If you have a second to take a breath first, *double* these times; with

several seconds to hyperventilate beforehand, *triple* them. A successful Breath Control (p. 110) roll *further* multiplies all times by 1.5.

Once you run out of breath, you lose 1 FP per second. At 0 FP or worse, make a Will roll every second – even if taking a Do Nothing maneuver – or fall unconscious. Regardless of your FP or HP, you die after four minutes without air. If you get clean air before this happens, you recover FP at the normal rate; if you're unconscious, you awaken once you have 1 FP. For more on losing and regaining FP, see *Fatigue* (p. 148).

Poison

Poison can show up on weapons, as a trap, in food or drink offered by a treacherous foe, and anywhere else you didn't expect it. The important things to know about a given poison are:

Delay: Most poisons require a few seconds to several hours to take effect. This is nearly *always* true for digestive agents. Spark-created poisons might work comparatively quickly, though!

Resistance: Some poisons give the victim a HT roll to resist. Roll after the delay, if any, has passed. There's often a modifier: Mild poison might call for a HT+2 roll, while poison that's almost impossible to resist might require a HT-8 roll; HT to HT-4 is typical. If you're in a poisonous *environment* (like a gas cloud) and make your initial HT roll, you must roll again once per second until the poison affects you or you leave the area; if the poison has a delay, roll after each delay period instead. Damage Resistance never affects HT rolls against poison.

Effects: The most common effect of poison is toxic damage or fatigue. Mild poisons might inflict only 1 HP or FP; more severe poisons might inflict 1d or more. Damage Resistance has no effect on this damage. These HP and FP losses heal normally – but if the poison is cyclic, no healing is possible until after the final cycle!

Cycles: A few poisons stay in the system and continue to cause damage until you succeed at the HT roll to resist. See *Disease* (p. 149) for rules, but the interval between cycles is usually much shorter than one day.

7. The Spark and Technology

The Spark is one of those things that you know when you see it. You *are* a Spark if you *have* the Spark. We would call Sparks "mad scientists."

For those who possess it, the Spark is a gift (and a curse!) that lets them think around the tricky corners of reality and find ways to break the rules of nature and science. For mundane humans who don't understand it, the Spark seems like magic. After all, Sparks are capable of creating something out of nothing, bringing forth life from the unliving, and bending physics to suit their needs.

Due to bias and fear regarding their talents, not to mention the machinations of other Sparks, the number of Sparks in Europa remains small. Perhaps one person in a thousand has the Spark, and not all survive "breaking through" into their powers.

Each Spark has their own specialties and styles, and these styles tend to run within family lines. Sparks come in all degrees of "Sparkiness," and depending on their strength and inclination, can be found doing anything from creating giant robotic clanks to baking pies that produce amazing effects when eaten.

Breaking Through

Until they "break through," Sparks are like any other human. Even if the Spark runs in their family, they have no guarantee it passed on to *them.* The first breakthrough can happen at any point from early adolescence on.

A Spark is especially dangerous – to themselves and to others – while in the process of breaking through. Not only do they have no experience with controlling the strange and frightening sensations that can overwhelm them while their brains are rewiring themselves, but they're also at "ground zero" with any new inventions this feral creativity allows them to build. They can easily find themselves on the wrong side of their creations. When a new Spark survives breaking through, it's often thanks to the protection of a stronger mentor who can shield them from both themselves and anything they create.

A breakthrough is also dangerous to everyone in the neighborhood! The first inventions of Sparks – even "good" people – are often recklessly destructive.

Sparks and Society

Sparks inspire both awe and terror. Many are would-be tyrants – the greatest villains of history have been Sparks. This reputation, not unreasonably, haunts *everyone* with the Spark. But some people follow the adventures of Sparks with starry eyes, dreaming of accompanying these mad geniuses as they travel from one end of the world to the other. The majority of the population hovers between the two feelings, knowing how dangerous a Spark can be, but still envying their abilities.

Therefore, there's no set reaction bonus or penalty attached to being a Spark. Instead, when mundane people meet an unfamiliar Spark, *double* the net reaction modifier of the circumstance. A friendly Spark will be especially liked; an unfriendly Spark will seem especially threatening.

Note to the GM: This is only a *guideline.* If a Spark with a Reputation is recognized, use the Reputation bonus or penalty. If a place is especially friendly to Sparks (e.g., Paris or London), take that into account. Conversely, there are places in the Wastelands where a known Spark isn't suffered to live!

Swaying Minions

Sparks attract minions who are eager to please them, acting as willing assistants to mad masters. These lackeys secure supplies, keep the clanks in repair, and serve as intermediaries between the Spark and the mundane world.

Some minions are also Sparks, but to a much lesser degree than the masters they serve. When greater Sparks interact with lesser ones, they receive +1 to reactions per level of difference between their Spark levels. This doesn't automatically work in reverse – powerful Sparks aren't *necessarily* contemptuous of those with smaller talents. Of course, some are!

Inventing Without a Net

The greatest gift of any Spark is the ability to create bizarre and (sometimes . . .) wonderful new contraptions. While ordinary people are capable of innovation, Sparks can test the limits of possibility in new and exciting ways. This section describes the invention process.

Before starting an invention, the player must describe to the GM what they want to create and how they think it will work. This needs no actual grounding in reality – it just has to *sound* like it could work. This will help the GM determine the skills, equipment, cost, and time required for the task, as well as its difficulty. If the player's description is *especially* clear or clever, the GM should give +1 or +2 to all rolls related to the invention.

Required Skills

The inventor must have the appropriate skill for what they're inventing. For a clank, this might be Engineer (Mechanical). For a pie, this might be Cooking. Some inventions may require *several* skills. The player should cite all the skills their character has that seem appropriate, but the GM has the final say on which ones apply.

Complexity

The GM assigns the invention's "Complexity" based on the description the player provided (so players shouldn't phone their inventions in!). Methods of doing so include looking at the skill level(s) the invention requires, estimating the cost of the materials it calls for, and comparing it to similar inventions (their capabilities, *not* their price tags, which are for finished products rather than materials). The *Complexity Table* (below) illustrates all of these possibilities.

The GM should further consider whether the device breaks the limits of science in a Gaslamp Fantasy world. This *is* reasonable for a Spark with suitable skills and resources, but the GM may increase Complexity for such things.

Complexity Table

Complexity	Required Skill Level	Cost	Examples
1. Simple	14 or less	Up to $100	Advanced projectiles, horseless carriages, simple gadgets, simple construct augmentation, nonlethal clanks, simple tonics.
2. Average	15-17	Up to $1,000	Explosives, ray guns, flying machines, combat clanks, complex tonics.
3. Complex	18-20	Up to $10,000	Battlesuits, elite clanks, the Silverodeon, elaborate constructs.
4. Amazing	21-24	Up to $100,000	Jägermonsters, large-scale destructive devices, giant clanks.
5. Wondrous	25+	Over $100,000	Castle Wulfenbach, Castle Heterodyne, Hive Engines, Summoning Engines.

Concept

After determining required skills and Complexity, the GM rolls to determine whether the Spark is able to realize the concept. This requires no special equipment – it's just the Spark organizing their thoughts and jotting down a blueprint. The roll is always against one of the required skills (GM's choice).

Most Sparks invent items that have a numerical Complexity less than or equal to their Spark level. However, they *can* create higher-Complexity innovations, at -4 per level by which invention Complexity exceeds their Spark. For instance, an inventor with Spark 2 rolls at -12 to conceptualize a Complexity 5 ("Wondrous") device.

Some traits give bonuses to this roll – notably the Versatile advantage (p. 93) and Weird Science skill (p. 130).

The inventor may roll once per day. Success lets them start building the invention. Failure means they make no breakthrough, but can try again the next day. On a critical failure, though, the Spark comes up with a "flawed" theory that *looks* good but that will never work in practice – they *can* advance to the next step, but the resulting creation is certain to have significant, even crippling, bugs or side effects.

If the Spark already has a blueprint or other document for what they seek to create – or the key component from an earlier implementation of such a device – they can skip this stage altogether. Yes, Sparks *can* learn from (and steal plans from) one another!

Creation Cost

After drafting plans, it's on to creation! To build an invention, the Spark needs access to parts. The GM may use the guidelines on the *Complexity Table* – or, for huge or high-powered inventions, set a higher cost by fiat (perhaps even using *finished* item cost).

The Spark can offset some or all of this cost by scavenging parts from other devices. Failed creations retain only 50% of their parts value for salvage purposes.

Creation

A success – or critical failure – on the concept roll gives the inventor a blueprint for building a device. The next step is to construct the thing, which requires a roll against an appropriate skill (or *skills*) chosen by the GM.

The player must decide at this stage whether to ask the GM to roll on the *Gadget Bugs Table* (p. 154) or *Side-Effects Table* (p. 155). The player can have the GM roll up to three times. Each roll gives +2 to the construction roll. This is especially useful for offsetting the penalty for devices with Complexity higher than Spark level!

The GM makes the construction roll and any rolls for bugs or side effects in secret. Bugs and side effects apply only if the construction roll succeeds or critically fails (if it fails, *nothing* gets built!); the GM notes them but doesn't reveal them until they arise in play.

Modifiers: Any modifiers applied to the concept roll (-4 per level by which invention Complexity exceeds Spark, +1 for Versatile, +1 for a successful Weird Science roll); +1 per assistant with skill 20+ in one of the skills required for the invention (maximum +4); +2 per roll on the *Gadget Bugs Table* or *Side-Effects Table* (maximum +6); -1 to -10 (GM's discretion) if the Spark must make do with less than the needed tools or parts.

Success means the Spark proves their theory and creates the invention (though with any bugs or side effects the GM rolled). On a failure they don't, but can try again if they have the time and money. Critical failure builds a device that doesn't work as expected, has an *extra* fault from the *Gadget Bugs Table* or *Side-Effects Table,* and *blows up* in 1d days!

Time Required

Each construction roll requires 1d-2 days (minimum one day) if the invention is Simple, 1d+2 days if Average, 2d days if Complex, 3d weeks if Amazing, or 4d months if Wondrous; for those with Spark 4+, see *Quick Gadgeteering* (opposite). Physically *huge* devices can take longer, at the GM's discretion. Divide the time required by the number of skilled (skill 16+) people working on the project.

Purposeful Repurposing

Modifying gadgets takes significantly less time than creating new ones! If an inventor has access to a *functional* device of construction, design, and purpose similar to what they intend to build, *halve* the time and cost needed for their redesign. If the starting gadget seems more advanced than usual for *Girl Genius,* the GM may add bugs or side effects to the repurposed device.

A gadget that *isn't* functional can still be salvaged, creating parts worth up to 50% of its value to use for future inventions.

Gadget Bugs and Side-Effects Tables

When an inventor critically fails a concept or construction roll, they receive a flaw from either the *Gadget Bugs Table* (below) or the *Side-Effects Table* (opposite). The player can also *ask* the GM to roll on these tables up to three times, with each roll giving +2 to their construction roll – like a true Mad Scientist, they're cutting corners to ensure that their creation comes to fruition! Finally, the GM may arbitrarily assess flaws to gadgets that push the limits even for *Girl Genius.* In all cases, for each flaw, the GM chooses a table (or flips a coin), rolls on it *in secret,* and records the results.

Gadget Bugs Table

3 – Roll 3d per use or hour of constant use. On a 6 or less, the gadget attracts the unwelcome attention of Baron Klaus Wulfenbach, another noble, aliens, unnatural fauna, or eldritch creatures (GM's choice).

4 – The gadget is *huge!* If it would normally be handheld, it's so large that it needs a vehicle to move it around; if it would normally be vehicle-borne, it must be mounted in a *really big* vehicle (like a battleship) or a building (like a castle); and so on.

5 – Each use or hour of constant use consumes $50 worth of resources: exotic chemicals, rare ore, etc.

6 – The device has 1d+1 side effects. See the *Side-Effects Table* (opposite).

7 – Anyone carrying the gadget is so inconvenienced by its awkward shape and balance that they have -2 to DX. Vehicles or vehicular gadgets give -2 to vehicle control rolls.

8 – The gadget has 1d-2 (minimum one) side effects.

9 – A powered device requires a *big* power supply – for instance, a giant clank's power plant. If it would normally require this much power, it needs to be tied into a power source like the River Dyne, and interferes with anything else using that source when in use. If the device is unpowered, treat as **10.**

10 – The gadget is twice as large, twice as heavy, and uses twice as much power as it should. If it's a weapon, halve its damage, range, and Accuracy instead.

11 – The gadget gets too hot to handle after being used, and must cool down for 10 minutes before it can be used again. If used before it cools off, it burns out in a shower of sparks, inflicting 1d burning damage on the user.

12 – Each use or each hour of constant use consumes $10 worth of resources.

13 – The gadget is unreliable, and fails on any operation skill roll of 14 or more.

14 – The gadget requires minor repairs after every use, and doesn't work until repaired.

15 – The device recoils like a heavy projectile weapon, even if it isn't a gun. The user must make a DX roll for every use or be knocked down.

16 – The gadget is *very* unreliable, and fails on any operation skill roll of 10 or more.

17 – The device is overly complicated. If it's a weapon, it takes *five* seconds to ready as buttons are pushed, dials are set, etc. Other gadgets require two *hours* of painstaking preparation before each use.

18 – On a critical failure using the device, it self-destructs . . . spectacularly. The user must make a DX roll at -2 or suffer 2d injury (ignore DR) as a result. The gadget is *gone* – it cannot be repaired or scavenged for parts.

Side Effects Table

Roll 3d.

3 – Each use causes a small, cumulative change in the user's body (mind). Roll against HT+4 (IQ+4) once per use. Failure means the user acquires -1 point toward a physical (mental) disadvantage of the GM's choice.

4 – Each use inflicts 1d injury on the user (ignore DR).

5 – Each use causes 1 point of injury to the operator (ignore DR).

6 – The gadget transforms someone within 10 yards into *something else* (animal, plant, weird construct, etc. – GM's choice) for 10 seconds.

7 – The device makes an incredibly annoying, high-pitched noise when used. This gives everyone within 20 yards a headache for 10 minutes (-2 to DX, IQ, and self-control rolls), and the user gets a migraine (-4 to these rolls) for 20 minutes. Earplugs don't help; deafness does.

8 – The gadget disrupts *other* Spark gadgetry while in operation: Devices within 100 yards have -1 to all rolls related to their operation. Those within 10 yards have -3.

9 – The device produces noxious fumes in a four-yard radius while in use. Anyone in the area must make a HT+3 roll every second. Failure means they're *nauseated* (-2 to all attribute and skill rolls, -1 to all active defenses) for five minutes.

10 – The gadget produces a loud hum while in operation: +3 to Hearing rolls to notice it.

11 – Impressive-but-harmless special effects – beams of light, showers of sparks, etc. – accompany use of the device. The source is obvious to any observer. Anyone in the area gets a Vision roll at +5 to notice something is going on.

12 – The gadget emits dense clouds of steam or smoke over a four-yard radius while in operation. Visibility from outside the cloud looking in is impossible; visibility within the cloud is limited to a single yard.

13 – Each use of the gadget attracts a swarm of vermin of the GM's choice. The swarm disperses 10 minutes after the device is shut off. Slaver and Spark wasps *do not* count as vermin!

14 – Using the gadget renders the operator unconscious for 1d minutes.

15 – Each use of the device mysteriously attracts the attention of clanks. Any clank within one mile becomes aware of the gadget, and may seek to investigate it.

16 – The device inflicts 1 point of injury (ignore DR) per use on everyone within 10 yards, including the user.

17 – The device is dangerous to use indoors. Each use causes 1d injury (ignore DR) to the structure around it.

18 – Roll for a *different* side effect each time the device is used. If this result comes up again, roll for *two* side effects, and so on!

Analysis

Gadgets may have functions – or bugs – that are very different from their apparent purpose. In addition, clever and obsessive Sparks sometimes conceal certain aspects of their inventions.

A Spark gets a Sense roll on touching a gadget. Success lets the player ask the GM a question about the device's *general* function. A good roll reveals whether the device has hidden functions, but not what those are.

Learning an object's exact, complete capabilities calls for a *deep examination*. This requires at least an hour (30 minutes with Quick Gadgeteer, included in Spark 4+) and the opportunity to partially disassemble the device. Roll against a suitable skill – usually one of the skills needed to invent such a thing, as determined by the GM. Success reveals the device's function(s). The analyst may then repeat the process to discover the gadget's bugs, if any.

Better Than Science!

The Spark allows for limitless possibilities! In addition to standard weapons, armor, and vehicles, Sparks can create any number of fantastic and useful contraptions. They can also create some downright *awful* things. To list just a few examples we've seen in *Girl Genius*:

Auntie Mehitabel's Natural Causes: A slow poison that's difficult to detect. Drains 1 FP an hour (and then HP, once FP run out) until the victim receives the antidote.

Battle-Draught: A tonic that rapidly heals wounds. Upon consumption, restores 1 HP per minute until the drinker is healed. If it doesn't kill them, that is.

Brain-Coring: A "technique" invented by Baron Klaus Wulfenbach. Actually a lobotomy that deactivates a Spark's abilities and sometimes destroys their intellect altogether. Gives the victim -10 to IQ.

Calming Pie: A confection that, if thrown into the face of an excited person, will calm them. Presumably, it would also have a tranquilizing effect if merely eaten.

D-Gas: A gas that incapacitates its target by putting them to sleep. Also works on constructs.

Fashion Clank: An intelligent clank with Fashion Sense (p. 73), capable of fashion critique and analysis.

Flight Raiment of King Darius the Incandescent: A suit that allows the user to fly at their Basic Move.

Quick Gadgeteering

Those with Quick Gadgeteer – included in Spark 4+ – need very little time or money to throw together inventions. They scrounge with uncanny skill, reducing parts costs for their creations to just 1% of normal. The time they need to create inventions is measured in mere minutes: 1d-2 minutes (minimum one minute) if the invention is Simple, 1d+2 minutes if Average, 2d minutes if Complex, 3d minutes if Amazing, or 4d minutes if Wondrous. Huge inventions might *still* take longer (GM's decision); even the mightiest Spark can't scrounge together a clank castle in minutes.

"Mundane" Inventors

In a world defined by the amazing inventions of people like Agatha Heterodyne and Baron Wulfenbach, it's easy to assume that the small-town cobbler who invents a better shoe isn't a Spark at all, but merely a mundane inventor.

This is incorrect.

There's no such thing as a "mundane" inventor. You can be a Spark but have only a wisp of ability. Perhaps you can't build gigantic, flying fortresses, but the boots you create never need to be re-soled. Many of the performers in Master Payne's Circus of Adventure are minor Sparks, talented enough to create something interesting but not powerful enough to protect themselves.

Like any talented person, a Spark cannot make bricks without clay. If you take a weak Spark, educate her at Transylvania Polygnostic University, and then assign her to a team of supportive, intelligent people, she'll produce more complex devices than a high-level genius who was raised on a pig farm in the middle of the Wastelands. (Oh, we're not saying that Pig Boy won't create something wonderful and possibly quite terrifying, but it's likely to be more along the lines of a pig that spins a cocoon and four months later hatches into 120 lbs. of sausage. He would then be burned at the stake by his horrified neighbors.)

Simply put, there are strong Sparks and there are weak Sparks, but if you *act* like a Spark, then by definition you *are* a Spark.

Note to the GM: If you really *want* "mundane" inventors, permit Gadgeteer (p. 87) to non-Sparks. This enables inventing at -4 per missing Spark level. Still, consider forbidding *Quick* Gadgeteer; the benefits in *Quick Gadgeteering* (p. 155) are unequivocally Sparky. (Letting low-level Sparks upgrade to Quick Gadgeteer is fine.)

Fra Pelagatti's Lion: An apparatus that emits a pulse which interferes with complex devices (like Castle Heterodyne). Upon use, any such object in the area shuts down for five minutes.

Grapnel Gun: A small, pistol-like device with a claw and retractable line, allowing its user to climb walls. Use the rules for Clinging (p. 84).

Gravity Engine: A device that displaces gravity around it, affecting mass and occasionally light. Can change gravity within a range of 0G to 5G (1G is standard gravity).

Hive Engine: The host of a number of wasps, including slaver wasps. Used to create revenants.

Hogfarb's Resplendent Immolation: A disease that causes its victims to change colors rapidly. Unless cured, they either melt or explode into flames after 3d hours.

Jägerdraught: The mysterious drink of the Heterodynes that turns ordinary humans into Jägermonsters.

Jolly Fun Oxidation Enhancer: A handheld device capable of causing the rapid onset of rust.

Moveit #6: A potion that increases speed and stamina for a short time.

Moveit #11: An even *stronger* potion. Too much of it can kill.

Queen's Mirror (also *Mirror Gate* or just *Gate*): A device that allows people to travel great distances – a teleportation portal. The user can transport between any two Gates instantaneously. Can also be used to communicate. Gates are ancient devices (easily 6,000 years old); no one knows who built them, but the God-Queens of old used them extensively. The system has been broken for over 4,000 years, and even the remaining God-Queens cannot repair them. That said, occasionally one flickers on, and there are stories of people being transported across the world, or speaking to others thousands of kilometers away. (Apparently *somebody* has an idea of how they work, as Martellus' people constructed a device that was able to connect to the one hidden in the basement of the Red Cathedral in Mechanicsburg, but don't count on Queen's Gates working – at all.)

Silverodeon: A calliope that was restored by Agatha Heterodyne to act as a battle-control engine for Master Payne's Circus of Adventure.

Spark Roast: Coffee modified through Spark ingenuity to be overwhelmingly perfect in taste and body.

Summoning Engine: A device capable of calling and downloading Lucrezia Mongfish's consciousness into other individuals; also known as a "beacon engine."

Time Freeze Generator: A device that can stop time. Owned by Baron Klaus Wulfenbach, and used on the town of Mechanicsburg.

Wasp Vaccine: A vaccine created by Tarvek. Prevents possession by a slaver wasp.

Technology

Girl Genius is set in an alternate version of the Industrial Revolution. We know what technology could and could not do during that period in *our* world – but those limitations are of little consequence in the fictional world of Sparks! Their gifts allow them to transcend the mundane constraints of science to build fantastic and wondrous inventions. This section covers some of the transformational effects of that work on war, commerce, and everyday life.

A World Not Quite Transformed

The landscape of Europa is defined by Sparks and their footprint. While an ordinary person can go their entire life without meeting a *Spark* firsthand, *Spark handiwork* is everywhere: In the cities, quadrupedal wagons walk the streets, clanks handle many police duties, and any number of amazing devices pump the water and handle the waste. However, while such signs of Sparks are common, most ordinary people are left to rely on conventional technology.

There are a number of reasons for this. For one, Sparks don't really think in terms of mass production. They have more in common with artists. They're always trying to create something new and exciting, and they aren't really interested in producing 10,000 copies of the cool thing they created 10 years ago. Also like artists, they tend to be terrible when it comes to money.

Even more frustrating, the plans and notes of Sparks are difficult for non-Sparks to understand – and indeed, can cause mental breakdowns. Such records *can* be understood by other Sparks, who can then implement and utilize the concepts within. This is why the Baron, and assorted governments and manufacturers, try to collect as many minor Sparks as they can.

The cities of Paris and Vienna could be said to have a high level of technology – notably infrastructure improvements and public-safety inventions – but the methods and inventions behind those things are *different*, and indeed unique. Again, the creation of Spark devices is to a great degree an art as much as a science.

Power Sources

Europa is huge and diverse, with settlements ranging from great underwater cities to rural villages of a few dozen souls in the Wastelands. *Girl Genius* has industrial or even the beginnings of post-industrial technology in all major areas, but the GM may lower that for regions hostile to Spark technology, or raise it for advanced lost civilizations.

Based on that, some areas will have gas lighting and heating, with streets made safer through illumination. They may also have access to clockwork and steam power, while civic clanks assist with some of the daily tasks. Energy might ultimately originate from wind, coal, water, or other, Spark-created resources and fuels. In most areas, a Spark can find *some* source of power, whether that means rerouting a water system or building a giant lightning rod. For example, the River Dyne powers much of Mechanicsburg.

Communications

Compared to advances in transportation and weaponry, communications in Europa are unexceptional. Most correspondence is written, conducted through mail delivered by messenger or mail clank.

Telegraph and radio are rare, although the tools exist to make them a reality. At present, only the Baron's empire has the infrastructure and resources needed to make even limited usage practical.

An Alternate Industrial Revolution

Girl Genius includes many real-world technologies: continental railways, ocean liners, submarines, aircraft, automatic weapons, tanks, combat aircraft, steam turbines, internal combustion, alternating current, and hydroelectricity.

However *Girl Genius* is a Gaslamp Fantasy. There are also technologies available that don't exist in the real world; for instance, buoyant gases that are safer and more efficient than hydrogen, and gigantic automatons powered by staggeringly complex clockwork that can be assembled in hours (if not minutes).

What we're trying to say here is that if you can imagine it (and talk fast), it can conceivably exist in the *Girl Genius* universe!

One of the units controlled by Baron Wulfenbach is the Heliolux Air Fleet. The Heliolux airships communicate via sunlight reflected off giant mirrors. The ships use something similar to Morse code to transmit their messages, and each ship has three large mirrors mounted on top to maintain multiple channels. They're used primarily during military campaigns.

Like a lot of the Baron's forces, the Air Fleet seems . . . counterintuitive. Heliograph communication can be slow, and requires direct observation. However, like many of the Baron's inherited forces, the Air Fleet was originally built for war. With very little effort, their communication mirrors can be retuned, becoming light-amplification weapons that can melt castles into slag.

Voice Command (and Fooling It!)

Voice-recognition technology is important enough in *Girl Genius* to merit discussion on its own. It's prevalent throughout Europa, where clanks of even the simplest designs can understand and respond to conversational voice commands. Some are mute, and can only obey; others reply in whirs and beeps; and the most advanced models can converse.

If the device isn't autonomous and following its own agenda, authorization for voice commands is typically limited to the clank's creator and any parties they designate with command authority. Clanks verify authorization through both auditory and video processing. They can be deceived, however!

Deceiving a clank requires successfully impersonating the device's owner. To attempt this, you must study the person you want to impersonate for *at least* 30 minutes. Then for each voice command, roll against Acting, at -3 for the difficulty of mimicking a specific person. Success means the clank obeys *that* command. You can keep issuing commands until you fail a roll, at which point the jig is up – such deception is unlikely to last for long.

Prudent inventors use passwords, or commands worded in code, to protect their creations from being co-opted.

TRANSPORTATION

Perhaps the most transformed aspect of daily life is transportation. Spark technology introduces a variety of options for the traveler unconcerned by the occasional derailment, explosion, or high-altitude crash.

Commoners

Over short distances, the lower classes walk, or ride a velocipede. Longer journeys might involve horses, horse-drawn wagons or coaches, or *mechanical* wagons or coaches. Mechanical wagons are typically wheeled or quadrupedal, though some bipedal models exist, such as Agatha's Baba Yaga.

For longer trips, anyone can catch a ride aboard the Corbettite Railway. This system of trains and rail depots is operated by the Corbettite Monks (below), a religious order who offer passage for little or no fee. Their network is fairly widespread, and any town of more than 150 people is likely to have a stop (unless it's in the Wastelands and overrun by monsters).

THE CORBETTITES

The Corbettite Monks are a monastic order based in Belfast, Ireland. Many Sparks – especially those with minor abilities – have no great ambition to rule the world, and no desire to be "collected" by the Empire or anybody else who thinks they would be useful. They often end up joining The Corbettites, where they're allowed to create useful devices that aren't *supposed* to be weapons. Another big lure is the freedom to construct enormous, Spark-imagined locomotives and run them all over Europa.

The Corbettites are also called in whenever particularly dangerous artifacts are discovered. These they collect and store in the famous Corbettite Underground Crypts, located under their monasteries. Occasionally, due to the forces of history, these fortresses are abandoned, overrun, repurposed, or destroyed, and the knowledge of the crypt beneath is lost and forgotten. However they – and the things they hold – are still there.

The Corbettites had a long history of political neutrality, and thus were supported by the Wulfenbach Empire, who used them to transport goods and people, and sponsored the extension of the rail system and the construction of terminals. Recently, however, the Pope of Belfast declared that they were actively supporting the Storm King aspirations of Martellus von Blitzengaard. It's too soon to say how this will change the order's relationship with the Empire.

Travelers of Means

Those with broader resources can access more elaborate forms of transportation. For short trips, the wealthy elite might ride customized coaches with clank drivers and footmen. These vehicles are sometimes even pulled by clank versions of fantastic creatures!

For longer trips, travelers and merchants of means have access to airships: powered dirigibles kept aloft by lighter-than-air gases. Airship travel is convenient and not unsafe. Regular airship routes run between major destinations, and charters can go anywhere. Wealthy nobles also have access to private rail cars, as well as ocean travel via yachts or passenger liners – and, for those from England, submarines.

The Brave and the Bold

Beyond the merely costly lies the truly exotic. Heavier-than-air flyers are a rare and mistrusted novelty, though they do exist.

Sparks can devise wholly new and eccentric means of transportation: intelligent unicycles, ornithopters, mole machines, "swimming" subs, modified animals, magnetic bikes, self-powered variable-length stilts, and more. Show a powerful Spark a flying carpet and they'll tell you four ways to achieve that effect, better . . . with *Science!*

Sample Vehicles

The tables in this section give statistics for common vehicle types, and note the skills required to operate them. The key below explains the notation used. To help GMs write up player creations, it includes many options beyond those the sample vehicles require.

ST/HP: The vehicle's Strength and Hit Points. These are equal for a *powered* vehicle; the vehicle's mass determines both how powerful its engine must be (ST) and how hard it is to destroy (HP). For *unpowered* vehicles, this score is marked with a †, and represents HP only; ST is 0. Treat vehicles as "Unliving" when they lose HP; see the *Wounding Modifiers Table* (p. 146).

Hnd/SR: The first number is Handling; the second is Stability Rating. To learn what these stats do in play, see *Vehicle Operation* (p. 137).

HT: The vehicle's Health, a measure of reliability and ruggedness.

Move: The first number is Acceleration and the second is Top Speed, in yards/second (*double* this to get mph); see *Vehicle Operation* (p. 137) for

details. For ground vehicles, a * indicates a road-bound vehicle, one subject to the *full* effect of terrain multipliers; a ‡ indicates one that must follow rails.

LWt.: Loaded weight, in tons (1 ton = 2,000 lbs), with a *maximum* payload and full load of fuel. Actual weight is often lower.

Load: The weight, in tons, of occupants and cargo the vehicle can carry, *including* the operator. To find cargo capacity, subtract the weight of the occupants (for simplicity, assume 0.1 ton/person, including gear). To find "curb weight" (with fuel but no other payload), subtract Load from LWt.

SM: The vehicle's Size Modifier (p. 143).

Occ.: The number of occupants the vehicle can carry in reasonable comfort, given as "crew + passengers"; e.g., 2+6 means two crew and six passengers. "A" indicates a vehicle built for long term occupation, with room to sleep, cook, etc.

DR: The vehicle's DR. This varies by location for some vehicles.

Range: The travel distance, in miles, before the vehicle runs out of fuel. For unpowered or exotic vehicles, "–" means that only provisions (food and water) limit range. "F" means that the FP of draft animals, rowers, pedalers, etc., *and* provisions, limit range.

Cost: The vehicle's cost, in Imperial Dollars. "K" means thousands; "M" means millions.

Locations: The vehicle's hit locations, besides its body. If the vehicle has multiple instances of a location, a quantity precedes the abbreviation; e.g., "8A" for a giant mechanical octopus with eight arms, or "14D" for 14 draft animals.

Code	Location
A	arm
C	caterpillar tracks
D	draft animals
E	exposed rider*
G	large glass windows
g	small glass windows
H	helicopter rotors
L	leg
M	mast and rigging
O	open cabin*
R	runners or skids
r	retractable
S	large superstructure or gondola
s	small superstructure
T	main turret
t	secondary turret
W	wheel
Wi	*pair* of wings
X	exposed weapons mount*

* Vehicle DR doesn't protect anything in these locations.

Notes: Any special capabilities or problems the vehicle has, or complex systems that need explaining. This would also be where the GM notes any bugs or side effects the vehicle received at creation (or added at the GM's discretion).

Land Vehicles

Vehicle	ST/HP	Hnd/SR	HT	Move	LWt.	Load	SM	Occ.	DR	Range	Cost	Locations	Notes
Teamster													
Chariot	22†	0/2	11	4/9*	0.29	0.2	+1	1+1	1	F	$330	2DE2W	[1]
Coach	53†	-2/3	12	4/9*	2.4	1.2	+3	1+9	2	F	$4.4K	4DO4W	[1]
Wagon	35†	-3/4	12	4/8*	0.84	0.5	+2	1	2	F	$680	2DE4W	[1]
Bicycling													
Velocipede	15†	0/2	11	5/7*	0.13	0.1	0	1	3	F	$65	E2W	[2]
Driving													
Clank Wagon, Bipedal	52	+1/2	11	2/20	1.6	0.5	+4	1+3	3	300	$11K	O2L	
Clank Wagon, Quadrupedal	57	0/3	11	2/20	2	0.5	+4	1+3	3	300	$7.1K	O4L	
Clank Wagon, Wheeled	57	-1/4	12	2/22*	2	0.5	+4	1+3	3	300	$5.3K	O4W	
Locomotive	152	-2/5	11	1/35‡	28	0.2	+5	1+1	8	700	$45K	8W	
Motorcar	42	-1/3	9	2/22*	0.85	0.25	+2	1+1	4	200	$3.6K	O4W	

[1] Drawn by draft animals or clanks.
[2] Powered by rider.

Air Vehicles

Vehicle	ST/HP	Hnd/SR	HT	Move	LWt.	Load	SM	Occ.	DR	Range	Cost	Locations	Notes
Piloting													
Airship	121	-4/3	10	1/38	18	4	+10	10A	1	2,300	$300K	S	
Flying Machine	44	+2/3	10	2/37	0.9	0.2	+3	1+1	3	85	$55K	O2WWi	[1]
Hoverclank	38	+2/3	11	2/20	0.8	0.35	+3	1+2	4	50	$4.5K	O	

[1] Cannot hover.

Water Vehicles

Vehicle	ST/HP	Hnd/SR	HT	Move	LWt.	Load	SM	Occ.	DR	Range	Cost	Locations	Notes
Shiphandling													
Freighter	750	-3/6	11	0.01/6	14,000	9,000	+10	41+29A	30	7,200	$1.5M	g2S	
Ocean Liner	998	-3/6	11	0.01/6	8,000	220	+11	100+ 1,000A	30	5,000	$2.4M	GS	
Sailboat	42†	0/2	12	1/3	2.4	1.8	+4	3+3	2	–	$5K	M	
Submarine	335	-2/3	10	0.1/7	316	22	+8	15	40	740	$500K	S	
Warship	1275	-3/6	11	0.05/10	17,700	1,500	+11	672A	740/290	8,100	$10M	S2T	[1]

[1] Use *higher* DR for most areas, *lower* DR for decks.

AIRSHIPS

Airship technology is essential to Baron Wulfenbach's domination of Europa. Airships are widely available, and therefore used for transporting people, hauling freight, sightseeing, and more. There are some caveats, however.

Those who travel by airship must first cover the cost – airship travel typically costs four to five times as much as rail travel (which can cost as little as $1-2, when it isn't free). As well, the technology is more prone to problems than (for instance) the Corbettite railroad.

In our world, most airships are kept aloft by helium, which replaced explosive hydrogen. In the world of *Girl Genius,* they rely upon Spark-generated gases that have no place in nature.

Airships are also difficult to maneuver in combat. A ship moves on its pilot's turn, and must take its *entire movement* in a straight line. Vehicular dodges use Piloting/2 + Handling, but since Handling is *negative* (-3 or -4), ground defenses such as the Torchmen (p. 176) are very effective.

Thus, most large combat airships are transports for troops and materiel, not battleships or bombers. They land outside the target's defensive perimeter, unload, and withdraw. But the transports are tempting targets for enemy aircraft, and require protection that can keep up with them . . . so airship battles *do* happen.

Airship Terminology

Some definitions, to prevent arguments with players who think they know what they're talking about:

blimp: A powered and steerable vehicle that uses a single large gasbag whose shape is maintained solely by the pressure of its internal gases. Its cockpit and engines usually hang beneath this.

dirigible: *Any* lighter-than-air craft. Blimps, semi-rigid airships, rigid airships, and Zeppelins are all dirigibles.

rigid airship: An airship with a framework and an internal skeleton. This framework is what maintains the vehicle's shape. Within the skeleton are gas cells, as well as crew and passenger compartments.

semi-rigid airship: Similar to a blimp, in that it maintains its shape from internal gas pressure, but with a *partial* rigid frame (usually the keel), which helps support loads and provides structural integrity during maneuvers.

Zeppelin: A rigid airship built by *Luftschiffbau Zeppelin GmbH* (Zeppelin Airship Construction Company) of Germany, which was founded by Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin.

All types are used in *Girl Genius,* though the term "Zeppelin" is unknown.

The Dangers of Reanimation

Those brought back from the "other side" are usually changed by their experience. Many lose portions of their memory, including the immediate memory of how they died – and sometimes, of large portions of their life. The reanimated may also suffer from other conditions, from anxiety, through a personality shift, to a total psychotic breakdown. Some get locked into bodies they can no longer control, watching with horror as their flesh betrays them.

The final dice roll for reanimation (see Reanimators, p. 162) determines exactly what happens:

Success by 4+: A perfect revival!

Success by 0-3: Almost perfect. Subject cannot remember the last three days of their life.

Failure by 1: Subject cannot remember the last month, and acquires a -5-point mental disadvantage chosen by the GM.*†

Failure by 2: Subject cannot remember the last month, and acquires a -10-point mental disadvantage chosen by the GM.*†

Failure by 3-4: Subject cannot remember the last month, and loses 20 points of skills chosen by the GM.*

Failure by 5-6: Subject loses *all* memories and all but the most basic skills. They can still speak their native language but will have little to talk about. A former Spark now has Spark 0, though they might break through again if they survive long enough. At the GM's option, failure this severe removes a *PC* from play.*

Failure by 7+: Patient dies on the table. Reanimation cannot be retried – that person is dead *for good.**

* Ignore these effects on a *critical* failure. Instead, the monster that was the patient opens its eyes and *seems* normal . . . until the chance comes to attack! Once killed, treat as "Failure by 7+."

† Select disadvantages that are either magnifications of issues the person had in life or center on how they died. Death is traumatic! Some suggestions: Absent-Mindedness, Bad Temper, Berserk, Callous, Delusions, Disturbing Voice, Manic-Depressive, No Sense of Humor, One Eye, Phobias, or Weirdness Magnet. Where *mind transfer* is involved, the subject may also have Possessed, as they struggle for control with the owner of the body they both inhabit. This list is just a start; there are many ways to reflect the impact of death on someone who's newly returned.

Those who remain relatively stable usually keep their brush with death under wraps, as reanimation has *social* ramifications as well as physical and mental ones. The reanimated are often mistrusted. All of Europa's ruling houses agree that death disqualifies a person from inheriting or continuing to hold a noble title. Although some of this might be superstition, much of it is selfishness – socially acceptable reanimation would raise such prickly questions as "What about our inheritance?" A noble who has been restored to life and kept it under wraps in order to retain power has the Secret disadvantage (p. 101).

Medicine

There are Sparks who have a natural talent for working with the human body. Some, like Dr. Sun (p. 54), use that gift not to create monsters, but for medicine. Sun's domain is the Great Hospital at Mechanicsburg, which provides laboratories and tools to similarly inclined Sparks. With the equipment the hospital has available, it can be salvation for even the direst of cases.

Mundane physicians aren't quite the innovators that these Sparks are, but they're responsible for ensuring their communities' health – and for bandaging the bumped heads and mending the broken limbs that Sparks and Jägers leave behind. Even those without formal education from a university, such as "hearth witches" (local herbalists and midwives), support the system to ensure that their patients stay on the right side of the ground, and often do more good than their better-educated "peers." They've treated *entire generations* of families, while many villagers are justifiably afraid of Spark tools and methods.

Experimental Surgery

While raising the dead may be the most extreme version of experimental surgery, it isn't the only way Sparks drastically alter the form or function of the human body. After all, sometimes people *need* more than two arms or some new, bioengineered organs – and how can a Spark say no to someone in need?

Experimental surgery includes all surgical procedures that take humans (and animals!) beyond their ordinary forms and skills. Examples include adding extra limbs and organs, brain surgery, and installing mechanical systems within a living body. The only limitation to the type and technique of surgery attempted is the Spark's imagination – although their skill level limits how *well* the modifications go.

The Great Hospital at Mechanicsburg is responsible for a great deal of benign experimental surgery, but most human-experimenting Sparks aren't as concerned with the welfare of the patient, let alone humanity as a whole. They're more interested in gaining knowledge that requires dissecting the brain of an unwilling participant, or combining DNA from at least five different species. They worry about *results* – not the means to those ends.
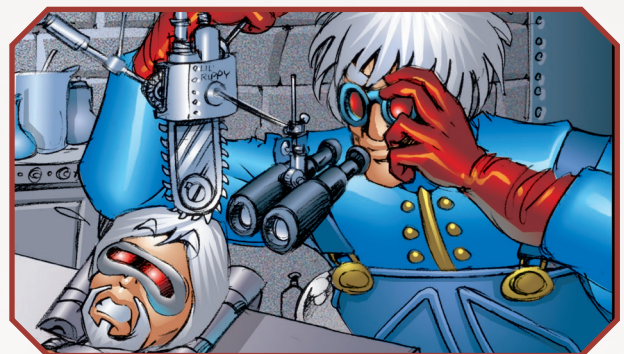
For example, Klaus Wulfenbach poked around inside more than one brain in order to learn how Sparks work. Dr. Dimitri Vapnoople was only one of many victims. Once a talented Spark capable of creating complex, intelligent animal constructs, Vapnoople was reduced to being a janitor after his run-in with the Baron's "brain-coring" technique. (The other side of the coin, of course, is that pre-modification Vapnoople was a murderous fiend, while post-surgery "Dr. Dim" is a nice chap. That isn't *why* Klaus did it, though it's why he did it to *him*.)

To perform experimental surgery, the surgeon must have the Surgery skill. Such work is extremely difficult: -5 to skill rolls if the surgeon has either Physician or Physiology, or -10 without one of those skills.

Success lets the surgeon grant the patient one advantage determined by the GM. This raises the lucky recipient's point total; they needn't pay the applicable point cost. Failure confers a disadvantage instead, also chosen by the GM. This *lowers* the victim's point total – it doesn't give back points. Critical failure causes the surgery to go wrong on an epic level, killing the patient. In some cases, death is preceded by an unnatural rampage.

Reanimators

For Sparks, death is just another problem to solve. Some are capable of physically or electronically transferring minds to new bodies, if only to pets for temporary storage; even clanks can activate with the memories and thoughts of a once-living person. Other Sparks can raise someone from the dead – or failing that, assemble constructs from even the smallest leftover bits of someone who was once a person. All told, Sparks have the "bringing back" part of the process under control when animating the dead, and have no problem making big, dramatic vows about overcoming Death.

Yet in truth, what happens when a person dies is poorly understood by even the brightest of minds. People who are brought back usually aren't *quite* the people who left in the first place.

In *Girl Genius,* performing a reanimation requires a Spark's equipment and skills. The exact tools and methods are left to the GM, inspired by how the subject died. For example, if the body is relatively intact, a Spark-made tonic might do the trick . . . but a corpse crisped to charcoal is likely to call for a clone-growing tank or full-mind transfer. The GM also decides how long reanimation takes – growing a whole body takes much longer than transferring a mind to a new one!

Once the Spark has gathered the tools, they must roll against Physiology at -9. To interpret the results, see *The Dangers of Reanimation* (p. 161).

WEAPONRY

In the world of *Girl Genius,* anything can be turned into a weapon, given enough time, coffee machine parts (and coffee!), and ingenuity. The tables in this section describe many examples, from the simple to the extremely complicated. These include melee weapons, muscle-powered ranged weapons, firearms, and a few things unique to *Girl Genius.*

Reading the Tables

The key below explains the table entries. It also includes several options that none of those weapons require, to help GMs writing up *new* weapons.

Weapon

The general class of weapon; e.g., "shortsword." Unless noted otherwise, each entry represents a wide range of individual types.

Damage

For *muscle-powered* melee and ranged weapons, such as swords and bows, damage is ST-based and expressed as a modifier to the wielder's basic thrusting (thr) or swinging (sw) damage, as given on the *Damage Table* (p. 70). For example, a spear does "thr+2," so if you have ST 11, which gives you a basic thrusting damage of 1d-1, you inflict 1d+1 damage with a spear. Swung weapons act as a lever, and do more damage.

Damage Type: An abbreviation indicating the *type* of injury or the effect the attack causes:

Abbreviation	Damage Type
aff	affliction – see weapon's notes
burn	burning
cr	crushing
cut	cutting
fat	fatigue
imp	impaling
pi-	small piercing
pi	piercing
pi+	large piercing
pi++	huge piercing
spec.	special – see weapon's notes
tox	toxic

A victim loses HP equal to the damage that penetrates their DR. Halve this for small piercing attacks; increase it by 50% for cutting and large piercing attacks; and double it for impaling and huge piercing attacks. Subtract fatigue damage from FP instead of HP. Afflictions cause an effect other than injury (e.g., stunning or nausea) on a failed HT roll; see below.

Explosions: An "ex" after crushing or burning damage indicates the attack produces an explosion. This may injure those nearby: Divide damage by *three times* distance in yards from the center of the blast and round *down*. Most explosive weapons also scatter fragments that inflict *cutting* damage on anyone who takes damage from the explosion. Fragmentation damage appears in brackets; e.g., a grenade that does "3d cr ex [1d]" does 3d crushing damage adjusted for distance and rounded down, and anyone damaged suffers a separate 1d cutting attack.

Afflictions: Some special weapons cause no damage. Instead, anyone hit must attempt a HT roll to avoid an "affliction" such as stunning or unconsciousness. For these, give a HT roll instead of damage, and specify the effects of failure in the notes; e.g., for a ray gun that requires a HT-3 roll to avoid being stunned, list "HT-3 aff." Add the victim's DR to HT for such rolls; for instance, DR 2 armor gives +2 to the HT roll against that ray gun.

Reach

Melee weapons only. This is the distance in yards at which you can strike with the weapon. For example, reach "2" means the weapon can only strike a foe two yards away – not a closer or more distant one.

"C" indicates you can use the weapon in close combat, which means any situation where you're close enough for grappling (GM's decision).

Some weapons have a continuum of reaches; e.g., a spear with reach "1, 2" can strike targets either one *or* two yards away. An asterisk (*) next to such a reach means the weapon is awkward enough that it requires a Ready maneuver to change reach (e.g., between 1 and 2). Otherwise, you can strike at foes that are at any distance within the weapon's reach.

Parry

Melee weapons only. A number, such as "+2" or "-1," indicates the bonus or penalty to your Parry defense when using that weapon. For most weapons, this is "0," meaning "no modifier."

"U" means the weapon is *unbalanced:* You cannot use it to parry if you have already used it to attack this turn (or vice versa).

"No" means the weapon *cannot parry at all.*

Acc (Accuracy)

Ranged weapons only. Add Acc to your skill if you took an Aim maneuver on the turn prior to your attack.

Range

Ranged weapons only. If the weapon has only one range number, this is the *Maximum Range* (Max) in yards at which it can attack a target. If two numbers appear, separated by a slash, the first is *Half-Damage Range* (1/2D) and the second is Max. Damaging attacks on targets at or beyond 1/2D inflict half damage; those that require a HT roll to resist are resisted at +3.

Muscle-powered weapons usually list 1/2D and Max as multiples of the wielder's ST, not as fixed ranges. For example, "×10/×15" means 1/2D is 10×ST and Max is 15×ST, so someone with ST 10 would have 1/2D 100 and Max 150. For bows, crossbows, and mechanical artillery, use the *weapon's* ST in these formulas.

Rarely, a weapon may require a *minimum* range, closer than which it cannot attack a target – usually because it fires in a high arc or must travel at least that far to arm itself (a safety measure that would be unusual for a Spark-designed weapon, but anything can happen!). Put this in the weapon's notes.

Shots

Ranged weapons only. The number of shots the weapon can fire before you must reload or recharge it. "T" means the weapon is *thrown*. To "reload," pick it up or ready a new weapon.

The parenthetical number following Shots indicates the number of one-second Ready maneuvers needed to reload completely (e.g., by changing magazines) – or, for a thrown weapon, the time needed to ready another weapon. An "i" next to this means you must load shots individually; the time listed is *per shot* rather than for all shots.

A crossbow takes the indicated time to ready (four turns) only if its ST is no greater than yours. *Double* this if the bow's ST is 1 or 2 greater. If the ST is 3 or 4 greater, you need a "goat's foot" device to cock it; this takes 20 turns, and requires you to stand. If its ST is 5 or more above yours, you cannot reload it at all.

Cost

The price of a new weapon, in Imperial Dollars. For swords and knives, this includes a sheath or a scabbard. For firearms, this includes the minimal necessary cleaning kit.

Weight

The weapon's weight, in pounds; "neg." means negligible. For missile weapons with Shots 1, this is *unloaded* weight, and the weight of *one shot* (e.g., an arrow) appears after a slash; for those with shots 2+, this is *loaded* weight, and the weight of *one full reload* appears after the slash.

ST (Strength)

The minimum Strength needed to use the weapon properly. If you use a weapon that requires more ST than you have, you suffer -1 to weapon skill per level of ST you lack.

For a melee or thrown weapon, your effective ST for damage purposes cannot exceed *triple* the weapon's minimum ST. For instance, a large knife has minimum ST 6, so its "maximum ST" is 18; if your ST were 19+, you would compute your damage as if you had ST 18.

Natural weapons (punches, kicks, bites, etc.) have neither minimum nor maximum ST.

"†" means the weapon requires two hands. If you have at least 1.5 times the listed ST (round *up*), you can use a weapon like this in one hand, but it becomes *unready* after you attack with it. If you have at least *twice* the listed ST, you can wield it one-handed with no readiness penalty. But if it requires one hand to hold it and another to operate a moving part, like a bow, it *always* requires two hands, regardless of ST.

"‡" means the weapon requires two hands *and* becomes unready after you attack with it, unless you have at least 1.5 times the listed ST (round *up*). To use it in one hand without it becoming unready, you need at least *three times* the listed ST.

"M" means the weapon is usually mounted in a vehicle or gun carriage, or on a tripod. *Ignore* the listed ST and Bulk when firing a weapon from its mount; the ST requirement applies only when firing the weapon *without* its mount. Removing the weapon from its mount (or reattaching it) takes *at least* three one-second Ready maneuvers.

Bows, Crossbows, and ST: Bows and crossbows have their *own* ST value, which you must specify when you buy such a weapon. The minimum ST in the table is the lowest possible value. Use the weapon's ST instead of your ST to determine range and damage. You can always use a weapon that's *weaker* than you. You can use a stronger *crossbow* at no skill penalty, but it will take longer to cock. You cannot use a stronger bow.

Bulk

Ranged weapons only. A measure of the weapon's size and handiness. Bulk modifies your weapon skill when you take a Move and Attack maneuver. It also serves as a penalty to Holdout skill when you attempt to conceal the weapon.

Notes

The numbers listed here refer to applicable footnotes (if any) at the end of the table.

Melee Weapons Table

If the main way to use a weapon is by swinging or thrusting it at an enemy without letting go, it's a melee weapon! Melee weapons are grouped under the skills required to use them, with defaults in parentheses. If there's more than one way to use a weapon, each method gets its own line. If multiple skills let you use a weapon, the weapon appears under each skill.

If a weapon has a minimum ST (rather than "–"), a lighter version is available: -2 to damage and minimum ST, and -30% to cost and weight.

Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
Axe/Mace (DX-5, Flail-4, or Two-Handed Axe/Mace-3)							
Axe	sw+2 cut	1	0U	$50	4	11	
Hatchet	sw cut	1	0	$40	2	8	[1]
Knobbed Club	sw+1 cr	1	0	$20	2	8	
Mace	sw+3 cr	1	0U	$50	5	12	[1]
Pick	sw+1 imp	1	0U	$70	3	10	[2]
Round Mace	sw+2 cr	1	0U	$35	5	12	[1]
Sickle	sw cut	1	0	$40	2	8	
or	sw imp	1	0U	–	–	8	[2]
Throwing Axe	sw+2 cut	1	0U	$60	4	11	[1]
Boxing, Brawling, Martial Arts, or DX							
Brass Knuckles	thr cr	C	0	$10	0.25	–	[3]
Cestus	thr cr	C	0	$50	1	–	[3, 4]
Punch	thr-1 cr	C	0	–	–	–	[3]
Brawling-2, Martial Arts-2, or DX-2							
Kick	thr cr	C, 1	No	–	–	–	[3]
Brawling or DX							
Bite	thr-1 cr	C	No	–	–	–	[3]
Blackjack	thr cr	C	0	$20	1	7	[3]
Brawling, Martial Arts, or DX							
Combat Fan	thr cr	C	0	$40	1	7	[3]
or	thr-2 cut	C	0	–	–	6	-2 to hit.
Broadsword (DX-5, Rapier-4, Saber-4, Shortsword-2, or Two-handed Sword-4)							
Backsword	sw+1 cut	1	0	$550	3	10	[4]
or	thr+1 imp	1	0	–	–	10	
Bastard Sword	sw+1 cut	1, 2	0U	$750	5	11	
or	thr+2 imp	2	0U	–	–	11	
Broadsword	sw+1 cut	1	0	$600	3	10	
or	thr+2 imp	1	0	–	–	10	
Cavalry Saber	sw+1 cut	1	0	$500	3	10	
or	thr+1 imp	1	0	–	–	10	
Club	sw+1 cr	1	0	$10	3	10	
or	thr+1 cr	1	0	–	–	10	
Edged Rapier	sw cut	1, 2	0	$1,000	3	10	
or	thr+1 imp	1, 2	0	–	–	10	
Large Falchion	sw+2 cut	1	0U	$625	4.5	11	
or	thr-1 imp	1	0U	–	–	11	
Longsword	sw+1 cut	1	0	$700	4	10	
or	thr+2 imp	1, 2	0	–	–	10	

Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
Flail (DX-6, Axe/Mace-4, or Two-Handed Flail-3)							
Bolas	sw+1 cr	1	-2U	$20	2	7	[1, 5]
Morningstar	sw+3 cr	1	0U	$80	6	12	[5]
Thonged Club	sw-1 cr	1	-2U	$5	0.5	5	[5]
Garrote (DX-4)							
Garrote	spec.	C	No	$10	neg.	–	[6]
Knife (DX-4, Main-Gauche-3, or Shortsword-3)							
Dagger	thr-1 imp	C	-1	$20	0.25	5	[1]
Large Knife	sw-2 cut	C, 1	-1	$40	1	6	
or	thr imp	C	-1	–	–	6	[1]
Main-Gauche	sw-3 cut	C, 1	0	$50	1.25	6	[4]
or	thr imp	C	0	–	–	6	
Polearm (DX-5, Spear-4, Staff-4, or Two-Handed Axe/Mace-4)							
Glaive	sw+3 cut	2, 3*	0U	$100	8	11‡	
or	thr+3 imp	1-3*	0U	–	–	11†	
Halberd	sw+5 cut	2, 3*	0U	$150	12	13‡	
or	sw+4 imp	2, 3*	0U	–	–	13‡	[2]
or	thr+3 imp	1-3*	0U	–	–	12†	
Horse-Cutter	sw+5 cut	2, 3*	0U	$150	12	13‡	
or	thr+3 imp	1-3*	0U	–	–	12†	
Poleaxe	sw+4 cut	2, 3*	0U	$120	10	12‡	
or	sw+4 cr	2, 3*	0U	–	–	12‡	
Rapier (DX-5, Broadsword-4, Main-Gauche-3, Saber-3, or Smallsword-3)							
Edged Rapier	sw cut	1, 2	+2	$1,000	3	10	
or	thr+1 imp	1, 2	+2	–	–	10	
Rapier	thr+1 imp	1, 2	+2	$500	2.75	9	
Saber (DX-5, Broadsword-4, Main-Gauche-3, Rapier-3, Shortsword-4, or Smallsword-3)							
Saber	sw-1 cut	1	+2	$700	2	8	
or	thr+1 imp	1	+2	–	–	8	
Shield (DX-4)							
Shield Bash	thr cr	1	No	var.	var.	–	
Shield Bash w. Spike	thr+1 cr	1	No	+$20	+5	–	
Shortsword (DX-5, Broadsword-2, Knife-4, Saber-4, or Smallsword-4)							
Baton	sw cr	1	0	$20	1	6	
or	thr cr	1	0	–	–	6	
Cutlass	sw cut	1	0	$500	2	8	[4]
or	thr+1 imp	1	0	–	–	8	
Falchion	sw+1 cut	1	0	$400	3	10	
or	thr-2 imp	1	0	–	–	10	
Shortsword	sw cut	1	0	$400	2	8	
or	thr+1 imp	1	0	–	–	8	
Smallsword (DX-5, Main-Gauche-3, Rapier-3, Saber-3, or Shortsword-4)							
Short Staff	sw cr	1	+2	$20	1	6	
or	thr cr	1	+2	–	–	6	
Smallsword	thr+1 imp	1	+2	$400	1.5	5	
Spear (DX-5, Polearm-4, or Staff-2)							
Javelin	thr+1 imp	1	0	$30	2	6	[1]
Long Spear	thr+2 imp	2, 3*	0U	$60	5	11	
two hands	thr+3 imp	2, 3*	0	–	–	10†	

Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
Pike	thr+3 imp	4, 5*	0U	$80	13	12†	
Short Spear	thr+1 imp	1	0	$30	2	6	
or	thr cut	1	0	–	–	6	
Spear	thr+2 imp	1*	0	$40	4	10	[1]
two hands	thr+3 imp	1, 2*	0	–	–	9†	

Staff (DX-5, Polearm-4, or Spear-2)

Quarterstaff	sw+2 cr	1, 2	+2	$10	4	7†	
or	thr+2 cr	1, 2	+2	–	–	7†	

Two-Handed Axe/Mace (DX-5, Axe/Mace-3, Polearm-4, or Two-Handed Flail-4)

Great Axe	sw+4 cut	1, 2*	0U	$100	8	12‡	
Long Axe	sw+3 cut	1, 2*	0U	$75	6	11‡	
Mace	sw+4 cr	1	0U	$50	5	11†	[1]
Maul	sw+5 cr	1, 2*	0U	$80	12	13‡	
Scythe	sw+3 cut	1	0U	$15	5	11‡	
or	sw+1 imp	1	0U	–	–	11‡	[2]
Warhammer	sw+4 imp	1, 2*	0U	$100	7	12‡	[2]

Two-Handed Flail (DX-6, Flail-3, Two-Handed Axe/Mace-4, or Weighted Chain-4)

Flail	sw+4 cr	1, 2*	0U	$100	8	13†	[5]

Two-Handed Sword (DX-5 or Broadsword-4)

Bastard Sword	sw+2 cut	1, 2	0	$750	5	10†	
or	thr+3 imp	2	0	–	–	10†	
Greatsword	sw+3 cut	1, 2	0	$900	7	12†	
or	thr+3 imp	2	0	–	–	12†	
Longsword	sw+1 cut	1	0	$700	4	9†	
or	thr+3 imp	1, 2	0	–	–	9†	
Quarterstaff	sw+2 cr	1, 2	0	$10	4	9†	
or	thr+1 cr	2	0	–	–	9†	

Weighted Chain (DX-6, Two-Handed Flail-4, or Whip-3)

Chain Whip	sw+(1-4) cr	1-4*	-2U	$50/yd.	3/yd.	var.†	[5, 7]

Whip (DX-5 or Weighted Chain-3)

Whip	sw-5 cr	1-7*	-2U	$20/yd.	0.5/yd.	var.	[7]

Notes

[1] Can be thrown. See the *Muscle-Powered Ranged Weapon Table* (opposite).

[2] Swung impaling weapons may get stuck! At the start of your turn following an attack that *injures* your target, you must either relinquish your weapon and leave it in your foe (a free action) or attempt a ST roll to free it (a Ready maneuver). Success frees your weapon; if it's one that must be readied after an attack ("‡" next to its ST statistic), you can ready it *next* turn. Failure means it's *stuck;* you can't use or ready it, and you'll have to let go if you wish to move, but you may try another ST roll next turn.

[3] Attack receives damage bonuses for whichever of Boxing, Brawling, or Martial Arts is used to deliver it.

[4] Gives the hand (only) DR 4. The cestus is a glove worn in lieu of another glove; its DR is *instead* of armor DR. For other weapons, this DR represents a metal hilt, and *adds* to armor DR; the hilt also counts as brass knuckles when punching.

[5] Attempts to *parry* flails and weighted chains are at -4; fencing weapons and knives can't parry them at all! Attempts to *block* such weapons are at -2. Halve both penalties for the bolas and thonged club.

[6] A wire for strangling. Useful only *from behind, by surprise.* Roll against Garrote skill to hit. Success means your victim counts as grappled (p. 142). To break free, they must *win* a Quick Contest of ST-5 against your Garrote skill. Until they do, you may roll a Quick Contest on each subsequent turn: your ST+3 vs. the *higher* of their ST or HT. Victory inflicts injury equal to *twice* your margin of victory.

[7] Specify maximum reach when bought; cost and weight are *per yard.* Chain whips can be up to 4 yards long, and do swing damage, +1 per yard of length; ST is 8, +1 per yard. Whips can be up to 7 yards long; ST is 3, +1 per yard. Either can attack an enemy's weapon at -5; failure to defend means they're *disarmed* rather than injured!

Muscle-Powered Ranged Weapons Table

If it's human-powered and hurled or launched, it's a muscle-powered ranged weapon! This category encompasses both thrown axes, spears, etc., and low-tech missile weapons such as bows and slings. Weapons are listed under the skills required to use them, with defaults in parentheses. Some thrown weapons also appear on the *Melee Weapons Table* (p. 164); use the statistics below when they're thrown.

Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	Shots	Cost	ST	Bulk	Notes
Blowpipe (DX-6)									
Blowpipe	1d-3 pi-	1	×4	1/0.05	1(2)	$30	2	-6	[1, 2]
Bolas (No default)									
Bolas	thr-1 cr	0	×3	2	T (1)	$20	7	-2	[3]
Bow (DX-5)									
Longbow	thr+2 imp	3	×15/×20	3/0.1	1(2)	$200	11†	-8	[2]
Regular Bow	thr+1 imp	2	×15/×20	2/0.1	1(2)	$100	10†	-7	[2]
Short Bow	thr imp	1	×10/×15	1.5/0.1	1(2)	$50	7†	-6	[2]
Cloak (DX-5, Net-4, or Shield-4)									
Heavy Cloak	spec.	1	2	5	T (1)	$50	8	-6	[4]
Light Cloak	spec.	1	2	2	T (1)	$20	5	-4	[4]
Crossbow (DX-4)									
Crossbow	thr+4 imp	4	×20/×25	6/0.06	1(4)	$150	7†	-6	[2]
Lasso (No default)									
Lariat	spec.	0	10	3	T (2)	$40	7†	-2	[5]
Net (Cloak-5)									
Large Net	spec.	1	spec.	20	T (1)	$40	11	-6	[4]
Melee Net	spec.	1	spec.	5	T (1)	$20	8	-4	[4]
Sling (DX-6)									
Dart Sling	sw imp	1	×6/×10	0.5/0.25	1(2)	$20	6	-4	[1, 2]
Heavy Sling	sw+2 cr	1	×3/×6	1/1	1(2)	$20	8†	-5	[2]
Sling	sw pi	0	×6/×10	0.5/0.05	1(2)	$20	6	-4	[1, 2, 6]
Staff Sling	sw+1 pi	1	×10/×15	2/0.05	1(2)	$20	7†	-6	[2, 6]
Spear Thrower (DX-5 or Thrown Weapon (Spear)-4)									
Atlatl	–	–	–	1	1(1)	$20	–	–	[1]
w. Dart	sw-1 imp	1	×3/×4	1	–	$20	5	-3	
w. Javelin	sw+1 imp	3	×2/×3	2	–	$30	6	-4	
Thrown Weapon (Axe/Mace) (DX-4)									
Hatchet	sw cut	1	×1.5/×2.5	2	T (1)	$40	8	-2	
Mace	sw+3 cr	1	×0.5/×1	5	T (1)	$50	12	-4	
Round Mace	sw+2 cr	1	×0.5/×1	5	T (1)	$35	12	-4	
Throwing Axe	sw+2 cut	2	×1/×1.5	4	T (1)	$60	11	-3	
Thrown Weapon (Dart) (DX-4 or Throwing-2)									
Throwing Dart	thr imp	1	×2.5/×3.5	1	T (1)	$20	6	-2	
Thrown Weapon (Harpoon) (DX-4 or Thrown Weapon (Spear)-2)									
Harpoon	thr+5 imp	2	×1/×1.5	6	T (1)	$60	11	-6	
Thrown Weapon (Knife) (DX-4)									
Dagger	thr-1 imp	0	×0.5/×1	0.25	T (1)	$20	5	-1	
Large Knife	thr imp	0	×0.8/×1.5	1	T (1)	$40	6	-2	

Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	Shots	Cost	ST	Bulk	Notes
Thrown Weapon (Shuriken) (DX-4 or Throwing-2)									
Shuriken	thr-1 cut	1	×0.5/×1	0.1	T (1)	$3	5	0	
Thrown Weapon (Spear) (DX-4, Spear Thrower-4, or Thrown Weapon (Harpoon)-2)									
Javelin	thr+1 imp	3	×1.5/×2.5	2	T (1)	$30	6	-4	
Spear	thr+3 imp	2	×1/×1.5	4	T (1)	$40	9	-6	
Thrown Weapon (Stick) (DX-4)									
Boomerang	sw cr	2	×6/×10	1	T(1)	$20	6	-2	
Throwing Stick	sw-1 cr	1	×4/×8	1	T(1)	$10	6	-2	

Notes

[1] Requires *two* hands to ready, but *one* hand to attack.

[2] A dart for a blowpipe, a lead pellet for a sling, or a shaped rock for a heavy sling is $0.10. An arrow or bolt for a bow or crossbow is $2. A dart for a sling is $1. A shaped sling stone is $0.06. *Unshaped* rocks and stones for slings and heavy slings are free but less accurate: -1 to hit.

[3] On a hit, a bolas does damage *and* entangles the target. For a called shot to the arm, roll a Quick Contest of Bolas skill vs. your target's ST; victory means they drop anything in that hand. A called shot to the legs causes your victim to fall down; to escape (necessary to stand and move!) requires a free hand and *three* Ready maneuvers.

[4] The only legal defense against a cloak or net is a *dodge*. Failure means the target is enveloped, and cannot move or attack until freed. For a cloak, escape requires nothing but a Ready maneuver; for a net, it requires a free hand and *three* Ready maneuvers. A net has no 1/2D range; Max range is (ST/2 + Skill/5) for a large net or (ST + Skill/5) for a melee net, rounded *down*.

[5] The only permitted defense against a lariat is a *dodge*. Failure snares the victim. On *their* turn, they may remain in place but otherwise act normally, take an Attack maneuver to cut themselves free if they have a blade, or take a Ready maneuver to roll a Quick Contest of ST with you. If they *win* such a Contest, they pull the lariat from your grasp; otherwise they remain snared. If they don't cut or pull free, then on later turns you may continue to immobilize them (a Ready maneuver) or release them (a free action). A lariat *can* make a called shot to the arms; if so, then in addition to being immobilized, the target can't use their arms (not even to cut themselves free).

[6] Can fire stones or lead bullets. Lead bullets give +1 damage and *double* range.

Firearms Table

A "firearm" is any missile weapon that *doesn't* rely on muscle power. For simplicity, *whatever* it fires, its ammo costs $20 per pound; e.g., $1.20/shot for the blunderbuss or $3.40 for the huge bullets of a clank gun.

Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	Shots	ST	Bulk	Cost	Notes
Beam Weapons (DX-4)									
Lightning Gun/Stick	1d burn	2	45/810	11.2/0.06	1(40)	7†	-6	$675	[1]
Sonic Gun	spec.	2	45/810	11.2/0.06	1(40)	7†	-6	$500	[2]
Guns (DX-4)									
Blunderbuss	1d pi	2	45/810	11.2/0.06	1(40)	10†	-6	$165	[3]
Breech-loading Carbine	2d pi+	3	55/570	9.3/0.04	1(10)	9†	-5	$270	
Clank Gun	2d+1 pi++	1	55/550	6.9/0.17	1(30)	10†	-5	$240	
Clank Gun, Double-Barreled	2d+1 pi++	1	55/550	10.8/0.34	2(30i)	11†	-6	$370	
Heavy Pistol	2d pi+	1	55/540	3.1/0.06	1(20)	10	-4	$145	
Jäger Rifle	3d+1 pi+	3	65/650	11/0.06	1(60)	10†	-6	$300	
Jäger Rifle, Double-Barreled	3d+1 pi+	3	65/650	20/0.12	2(60i)	11†	-7	$500	
Pistol	2d-1 pi+	1	45/490	3/0.04	1(20)	9	-4	$140	
Pocket Pistol	1d pi	1	25/300	0.7/0.008	1(20)	6	-1	$190	

Notes

[1] Fires lightning! Treat metallic armor, including most clank DR, as DR 1. Against *clanks:* Damage becomes 1d+2 burn, and the clank must roll vs. HT at -1 per 2 HP of injury. Failure disables the clank (treat as unconsciousness) for seconds equal to margin of failure.

[2] Fires sound! Everyone within 20 yards of the target must roll vs. HT-3 to avoid (20 - HT) seconds of deafness.

[3] Fires multiple pellets. Hits with one pellet, plus extras equal to margin of success, to a maximum of seven (on success by 6+). *Each pellet* does 1d pi, applied separately to DR.

Hand Grenades Table

Lighting a grenade's fuse takes one Ready maneuver. Once lit, the grenade goes off in 3-5 seconds, depending on fuse length. Adjusting this requires four Ready maneuvers *before* lighting the fuse.

Grenades have Accuracy 0, Maximum Range ST×2, Bulk -2. Use Throwing skill to hit. On a roll of 14+, the fuse goes out or *falls* out – but critical failure means the grenade goes off in the thrower's hand!

Weapon	Damage	Weight	Cost	Notes
Throwing (DX-3)				
Grenade	3d cr ex [1d]	2.2	$45	
Smoke Grenade	spec.	2.2	$45	[1]

Notes

[1] Fills a five-yard radius with smoke that limits visibility to one yard for one minute (less in wind).

Heavy Weapons Table

These weapons aren't carried by (normal!) people. They're usually found on vehicles and fortresses.

Below, damage given as "*n*d×*m*" means "roll *n* dice as usual and multiply the result by *m*." Ammunition cost *per full reload* appears after the slash in the "Cost" column.

Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	Shots	ST	Bulk	Cost	Notes
Gunner (DX-4)									
Cannon, 12-pounder	6d×4 pi++	2	310/2,400	3,750/18	1(60)	55M†	-15	$20,000/$360	
Cannon, 24-pounder	6d×5 pi++	2	370/2,700	6,900/36	1(70)	64M†	-16	$38,000/$720	
Harpoon Gun	5d×2 imp	3	30/120	75/40	1(20)	26M†	-8	$2,000/$100	[1]
Mechanical Machine Gun	4d+1 pi+	4	470/3,000	200/8	40(5)	26M†	-10	$16,000/$70	[2]
Ship's Gun, 4-pounder	6d×3 pi++	2	270/2,300	1,000/7.5	1(60)	40M†	-12	$5,600/$150	
Ship's Gun, 9-pounder	6d×4 pi++	2	310/2,400	2,900/16.5	1(60)	50M†	-14	$15,600/$330	
Ship's Gun, 18-pounder	7d×4 pi++	2	340/2,600	5,000/28	1(70)	60M†	-15	$26,000/$560	
Ship's Gun, 42-pounder	6d×5 pi++	2	380/2,800	7,300/60	1(90)	75M†	-16	$40,000/$1,200	
Swivel-Gun	6d+1 pi++	1	90/900	140/2.5	1(20)	27M†	-8	$760/$50	

Notes

[1] Ammunition cost is for the 5-lb. shell that launches the reusable 35-lb. harpoon. Spare harpoons cost $350 apiece.

[2] This "Gatling gun" can fire up to 15 shots per attack, but most gunners crank more slowly. Hits with one bullet, plus extras equal to *half* margin of success, rounded *down* (e.g., four bullets total on success by 7); the gunner can spread hits over multiple targets in front of the gun. Damage is *per bullet;* apply each hit separately to DR. A skill roll of 15+ means a stoppage; each attempt to clear this requires three Ready maneuvers and a successful Armory (Heavy Weapons) or IQ-based Gunner roll.

Defenses

Defenses in the world of *Girl Genius* range from medieval-style armor to battlesuits and force fields that are beyond the reach of common armies.

Low-Tech Armor Table

This table presents statistics for common armor types in *Girl Genius*. Each variety of armor gets two rows: The top row gives DR, followed by cost (in Imperial Dollars). The bottom one provides weight (in lbs.). Interpret the columns as follows:

Armor: The type of armor.
DR: The armor's Damage Resistance. Subtract this from the damage of blows striking an armored location.

Skull: A helmet that protects against called shots (p. 143) to the skull *only*.
Body: A jacket, back-and-breast, corselet, etc. that protects against non-called shots *and* called shots to the vitals.
Arms: Armor that protects against called shots to the arms *only*. Anything with DR 3 or more gives +1 damage with punches, just like brass knuckles.
Legs: Armor that protects against called shots to the legs *only*. Anything with DR 2 or more gives +1 damage with kicks.
Suit: A full suit that includes everything above and protects *all* body parts.
Notes: Numbers that refer to applicable footnotes (if any) at the end of the table.
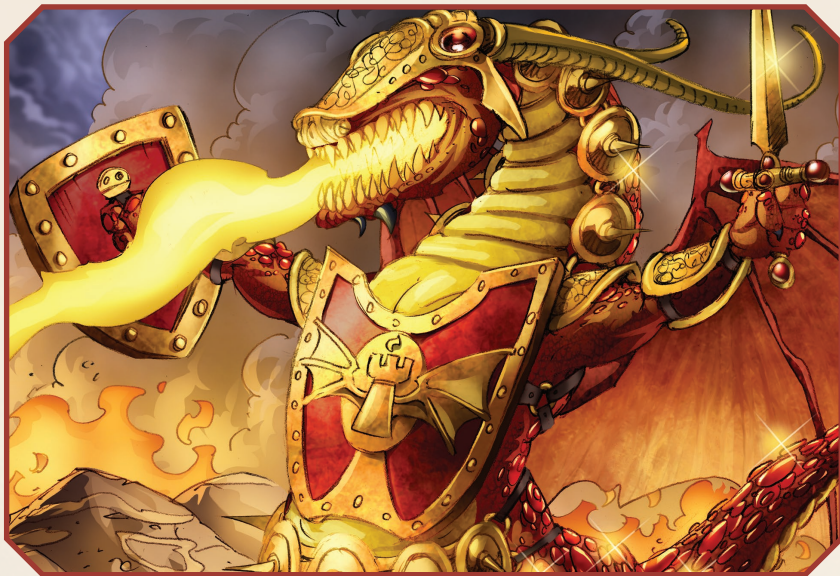
It's simplest to buy a suit, but you *can* have different armor on the skull, body, arms, and legs. You can even armor just the *front* of your body and vitals (a breastplate), *one* arm, or *one* leg; in all such cases, use *half* the cost and weight listed for that location, rounding cost up to a full $ but not rounding weight. Doing any of these things means called shots to a location use that location's DR.

> ### Goggles?
> Goggles count as Nictitating Membrane 1 (p. 90) and look cool. They can be worn alone or with armor. They add $20 and negligible weight.

Armor	DR	Skull	Body	Arms	Legs	Suit	Notes
Light Cloth, Light Leather, Furs	1	$13	$53	$30	$54	$150	[1]
weight		1.5	6.3	3.6	6.6	18	
Heavy Cloth, Heavy Leather	2	$38	$158	$90	$164	$450	[1]
weight		3	12.6	7.2	13.2	36	
Mail	3	$225	$945	$540	$990	$2,700	[2, 3]
weight		3.8	15.8	9	16.4	45	
Heavy Mail	4	$300	$1,260	$720	$1,320	$3,600	[3]
weight		4.5	18.9	10.8	19.8	54	
Brigandine	5	$450	$1,890	$1,080	$1,980	$5,400	[1, 3]
weight		5	21	12	22	60	
Plate	6	$625	$2,625	$1,500	$2,750	$7,500	[3]
weight		5	21	12	22	60	
Heavy Plate	7	$750	$3,150	$1,800	$3,300	$9,000	[3]
weight		6	25.2	14.4	26.4	72	

Notes

[1] Concealable *as* heavy clothing (some combination of cap or hood, jacket or coat, gloves, trousers, and shoes or boots). Brigandine is obviously studded but not obviously *armor*.
[2] Mail (not *heavy* mail) is concealable *under* clothing.
[3] Considered *metal* for the purposes of things like lightning guns.

Powered Armor Table

Beyond the best mundane armor is *powered* armor, which only Sparks can create. In *Girl Genius*, such "battlesuits" are seen only in warfare and similarly intense situations, and are considered *weapons*. Operating them requires the Powered Armor skill (p. 123).

All of the examples below work for one hour before requiring refueling. Any of them can serve as the basis for player- or GM-created suits, which need the same information:

Armor: The type of battlesuit.

DR: The armor's Damage Resistance, which protects the *entire* body. Subtract this from the damage of all attacks on the wearer, even if the suit isn't operational.

Move: How fast the armor enables the wearer to run, expressed as Acceleration and Top Speed, as for vehicles (p. 159). While the suit works, this *replaces* the wearer's Move – but if the suit runs out of fuel or malfunctions, use the wearer's Basic Move and count the armor as encumbrance!

ST: Replaces the wearer's ST while the suit works.

Adv.: The number of points of advantages the armor's systems can emulate. The GM decides what's possible; good examples are Arm DX, Arm ST, Doesn't Breathe, Flight, Infravision, and Telescopic Vision. These function only while the suit works.

Cost: The armor's price, in Imperial Dollars, *if it's even for sale* (GM's decision). Sparks build their own – often for *far* cheaper.

Weight: The armor's weight, in pounds. Doesn't count as encumbrance while the suit works – but *does* if it stops working!

Armor	DR	Move	ST	Adv.	Cost	Weight
Light Armor Suit	20	5/40	20	25	$225,000	125
Medium Armor Suit	29	5/30	25	35	$300,000	250
Heavy Armor Suit	37	5/20	31	45	$375,000	500
War Suit	50	5/15	40	55	$500,000	1,000

Shields and Cloaks Table

This table provides the following statistics:

DB: The Defense Bonus the shield or cloak adds to *all* active defenses against attacks from the front or shield (cloak) side – even if you lack the proper skill! Also the number of Ready maneuvers needed to ready it or put it away; e.g., two turns for a heavy cloak or medium shield. All shields and cloaks occupy one hand while in use.

Cost: The shield or cloak's price, in Imperial Dollars.

Weight: The shield or cloak's weight, in pounds.

Shield	DB	Cost	Weight	Notes
Cloak (DX-5, Net-4, or Shield-4)				
Light Cloak	1	$20	2	[1]
Heavy Cloak	2	$50	5	[1]
Shield (DX-4)				
Small Shield	1	$40	8	[2]
Medium Shield	2	$60	15	[2]
Large Shield	3	$90	25	[2]

Notes

[1] Blocking a burning attack works *once* – then the cloak is destroyed! Cloaks can also be used to envelop foes; see the *Muscle-Powered Ranged Weapons Table* (p. 167).

[2] Shields can also be used to bash foes; see the *Melee Weapons Table* (p. 164). For a spike that gives +1 to damage, add $20 and 5 lbs.

Unnatural Fauna

For every bear, bird, or fish in Europa that seems absolutely normal, there's a creature created in a laboratory – one that was gene-spliced with a maple tree at the last second, that had a warm, squirrely body but now has a mechanical one, that was living a simple life in a sewer prior to becoming a giant ball of acidic death. Sparks aren't capable of appreciating "good enough." Even Nature, regarded by most as a perfect force living in balance with all of its creatures, is subject to the whims and fancy of mad genius, and Sparks consider improving upon the natural order to be their sovereign responsibility.

"Unnatural fauna" encompasses several categories of creatures: Humans who've been genetically or physically altered with animal DNA or parts . . . or vice versa. Constructs that combine flesh and machine. Strange entities mutated or altered in form by residual materials from Spark projects, as surely as if they were in a Spark's clutches. And the reanimated or "undead."

Dingbots

Agatha's signature creations are the small, mechanical entities known as "dingbots." She has used them as everything from minor assistants to hosts for much larger consciousnesses, such as that of Castle Heterodyne.

Dingbots are clanks approximately the size and shape of an old-style alarm clock. They typically have one eye, and may appear with any number of limbs. In most cases, they provide useful services to the Heterodyne Heir – but occasionally, those "useful services" include blowing themselves up or otherwise interfering in her greater master plan in the name of help.

Mini-Sparks

While the talent of creating multifaceted clanks runs in the Heterodyne line, Agatha's dingbots are unique in their abilities. They're able to act independently of Agatha's will, allowing them to solve problems before they reach Agatha and her entourage.

Even more spectacularly, dingbots can *self-replicate*. Each successive generation of dingbots is a cruder copy of the previous one, eventually degenerating until they're no longer effective. There has never been a fourth-generation dingbot capable of anything more sophisticated than rolling into a wall and then falling over. This prevents them from replicating endlessly, creating what overly concerned scientists have called a "brass goo" scenario.

Dingbot

A tiny clank with a lot of attitude.

ST 6; **DX** 16; **IQ** 10; **HT** 12.
Will 10; **Per** 10; **Speed:** 7.00; **Dodge** 10; **Move** 7.
SM -6; 1 lb.

Traits: Damage Resistance 2; Digital Mind; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Modular Abilities (varies).
Skills: Engineer (Mechanical)-18.

Fun-Sized Mobile Agony and Death Dispensers

Built by an unidentified Heterodyne, the Fun-Sized Mobile Agony and Death Dispensers ("tiger clanks," "steam cats," "devil dogs") are a testament to the Heterodyne love of clanks, murder, and murderous clanks.

The original tiger clanks were created as a mobile internal defense system for Castle Heterodyne – one that could act both independently and in conjunction with the Castle's consciousness. When Castle Heterodyne fell into ruin, these clanks lost their connection to it. This turned their constant patrolling into more of a prolonged murder spree, as they lacked sapience but had no shortage of hunting instinct. They attacked and dismembered anyone they could get their metal claws into. When the Castle was converted to a prison by Baron Klaus Wulfenbach, the prisoners made sure to memorize the clanks' patrol routes and locations. Those who didn't found themselves unwilling participants in Wulfenbach's favorite prevention against recidivism: death.

It was only when the Castle was brought back under central control that the tiger clanks followed suit, becoming a pack under the orders of the Castle and Otilia.

As the name suggests, tiger clanks are feline in appearance – complete with whiskers. They're large, metallic tigers in bronze or gold, with huge paws and long, sharp claws. Their eyes and mouths glow, allowing them to hunt at night or in total darkness. Fun-Sized Mobile Agony and Death Dispensers also have a scorpion-like tail they use to deal blows (2d+6 impaling).

Tiger Clank

Maybe a cat. Maybe a clank. *Definitely* trying to kill you.

ST 25; **DX** 13; **IQ** 5; **HT** 14.
Will 11; **Per** 12; **Speed** 7.00; **Dodge** 11; **Move** 10.
SM +2; 1,000 lbs.

Traits: Bloodlust (9); Combat Reflexes; Damage Resistance 4; Digital Mind; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Fangs; Infravision; Short Spines; Talons.
Skills: Brawling-17.

GIANT RATS

Any city with Sparks will have monster-infested sewers, but Sturmhalten has the *best* ones. Also known as the Deepdown, the sewers play host to overgrown amphibians, grotesque aberrations of sea life, and other mutated vermin.

Perhaps the most notorious of these creatures – if only because they boil out of the sewers on a regular basis – are Giant Glowing Rats. These subterranean creatures spend most of their time chewing away at the infrastructure beneath the city, but occasionally love a nighttime romp. As the rats eat nearly anything, citizens of Sturmhalten often make visitors sign waivers explicitly stating that they understand the dangers of Nighttime Rat Attacks.

Giant Rat

Extremely nonspecific waste-disposal unit that eats everything – including humans.
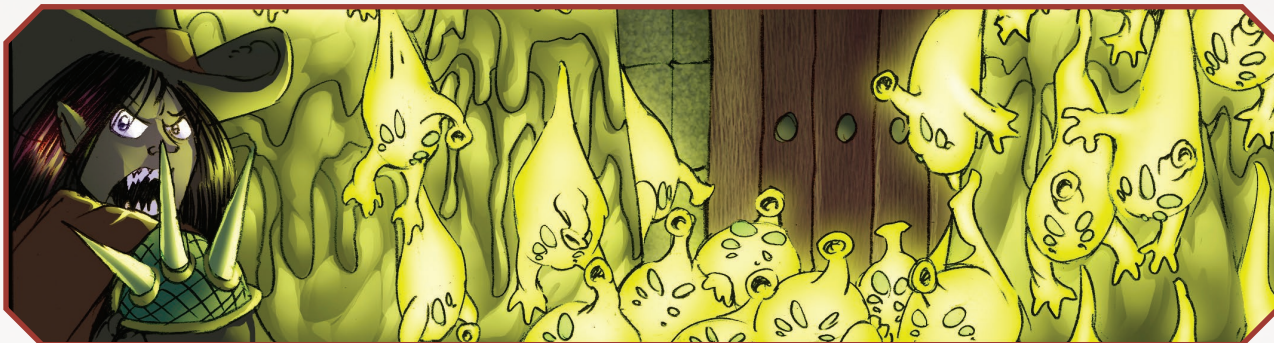
ST 16; **DX** 13; **IQ** 5; **HT** 13.
Will 10; **Per** 14; **Speed** 6.50; **Dodge** 9; **Move:** 10.
SM +1; 200 lbs.

Traits: Bad Smell; Fangs; Gluttony (9); Night Vision 5; Resistant to Disease (+8).
Skills: Brawling-15; Tracking-15.

GIANT SPIDERS

The giant spider, also known as the Ghost Spider, is a creature brought to Europa by the Geisterdamen civilization. As it has only six legs, it isn't a spider in the truest sense – but few non-Geisterdamen have been up-close and personal enough to point this out.

Whatever their appendage count, Ghost Spiders are huge, pearly white arachnoid creatures, their abdomens covered with soft, fluffy fur, their legs long, smooth, and spindly. The Geisterdamen use them as riding animals and beasts of burden. Some are trained to carry specific riders or answer certain commands, suggesting they're at least as intelligent as horses.

The spiders are capable of producing a deadly venom . . . as well as an ingredient that makes a tasty cheese.

Giant Spider

Geisterdamen mount.

ST 15; **DX** 13; **IQ** 4; **HT** 13.
Will 10; **Per** 10; **Speed** 6.50; **Dodge** 9; **Move** 10.
SM +2; 500 lbs.

Traits: Appearance (Repulsive); Dark Vision; Extra Legs (Six Legs); Fangs†; Leg ST 7*; Venom.
Skills: Brawling-15; Mount-15.

* Adds to ST *only* to determine how much the spider can carry (ST 22 gives Basic Lift 97 lbs.).
† Anyone injured by the spider's fangs suffers 4d toxic damage, or 2d with a successful HT roll.

GREEN GLOWY THINGS

The Deepdown of Sturmhalten is home to monsters that even other sewer dwellers avoid. At one point, the Geisters believed they were the most terrifying things in its depths – but even *they* give a wide berth to the Green Glowy Things.

Green Glowy Things are amorphous, glowing blobs composed of some sort of (hopefully) biological matter. They have an extendable tentacle/whip with a barbed end, which delivers a poison that dissolves flesh and other organic materials. They typically live in vats in an abandoned laboratory beneath the city, but with the recent upheaval in ownership, it's possible that other parties could have obtained specimens.

Green Glowy Thing

No one even knows how to *start* describing these things . . . "terrifying" works.

ST 15; **DX** 15; **IQ** 5; **HT** 15.
Will 10; **Per** 10; **Speed** 7.50; **Dodge** 11**; Move** 7.
SM 0; ? lbs.

Traits: Appearance (Very Repulsive); Combat Reflexes; Constriction Attack; Damage Resistance 10; Dark Vision; Gluttony (9); Poison*.
Skills: Brawling-17; Breaking Blow-18.

* Affects anyone *injured* by the tentacle (1d+3 piercing). Someone stung on a limb may be saved by immediate high amputation; a sting on the head or body means quick death, even for Jägers (who average HT 13 and HP 18!). To give PCs a fighting chance, make a HT-4 roll immediately and on the next four turns (five rolls total for everyone – success does *not* stop the progress). The poison does 2d toxic damage per failure or 1d per success.

Hoomhoffers

Also known as "hooms," hoomhoffers are large, arachnid creatures. They're typically encountered as heavy cavalry serving Baron Klaus Wulfenbach.

Hoomhoffers were likely created in an enlargement experiment: A Spark interested in studying dust-mite anatomy ended up with giant bugs, and added air pumps to allow their creations to breathe while maintaining their giant size. The mites' exoskeletons thickened, providing them with armor heavy enough to withstand most attacks. Despite the weight of their new bodies, hoomhoffers gained the ability to fly, making them giant, armored attack mites.

The Baron heard about these new creations and embraced them as his own. He engineered a rigging system to allow a rider to control a hoomhoffer, and then put the arachnids into service as shock troops and ground transport. Huge and unspeakably ugly, hoomhoffers are a terror weapon just standing still.

Hoomhoffer

A giant dust mite.

ST 25; **DX** 8; **IQ** 1; **HT** 13.
Will 10; **Per** 10; **Speed** 5.25; **Dodge** 8; **Move** 8.
SM +3; 2,000 lbs.

Traits: Appearance (Very Repulsive); Arm ST 4; Damage Resistance 10; Extra Legs (Eight Legs); Flight (Air Move 10).
Skills: Brawling-12; Mount-13.

Lapinemoths

Lapinemoths are white, bipedal rabbits that stand nearly 10 feet tall. Their sharp teeth and claws are well suited to rending human flesh. They've most often turned up as henchthings of Ferretina, the Weasel Queen – a one-shot villain who terrorized an entire town and Othar (p. 44) – but her sudden departure left them without a master, aimless in their pursuit of mayhem.

Lapinemoth

Model murderous minion, seeking someone to serve.

ST 14; **DX** 14; **IQ** 8; **HT** 13.
Will 8; **Per** 12; **Speed** 7.00; **Dodge** 10; **Move** 7.
SM 0; 200 lbs.

Traits: Acute Hearing 4; Callous; Fangs; Sharp Claws.
Skills: Brawling-16.

Mimmoths

If rats the size of woolly mammoths exist, it stands to reason that woolly mammoths the size of rats must also inhabit the world of *Girl Genius*. Some speculate they were created as an alternative food item, as they seem to multiply quickly in a safe environment. In the household ecology, they act like rats, mice, moles, and other small rodents, many of which they have displaced.

Mimmoths have a penchant for getting into food stores, electronics, and various other places where they can make a mess.

Quick-baked and covered with chocolate, they're a snack food.

Mimmoth

Just like a mouse or a rat, but with tusks.

ST 3; **DX** 13; **IQ** 3; **HT** 11.
Will 10; **Per** 10; **Speed** 6.00; **Dodge** 9; **Move** 8.
SM -6; 2 lbs.

Traits: Bad Sight; Blunt Claws.
Skills: Climbing-15; Stealth-13; Survival-12.

Radioheads

Radioheads are both constructs *and* clanks. A male Radiohead's body is that of an overly muscled, incredibly tall man, bare from the waist up. Instead of a head, however, he has a glass bubble. Within this can be seen the inner workings of various machines.

Each Radiohead is accompanied by a woman who appears normal, except for a similar, smaller bubble on top of her head.

The Radioheads are an acquisition Baron Klaus Wulfenbach made while building his Europa. He usually passes the orders to the female, who acts as the puppeteer to her male counterpart. The Radioheads handle physical tasks and brute-force defense around Castle Wulfenbach. It's said that the partners are linked, and destroying one means the almost certain death of the other.

Male Radiohead

A mixture of construct and clank, controlled via the radio in his head.

ST 16; **DX** 13; **IQ** 6; **HT** 14.
Will 10; **Per** 10; **Speed** 6.75; **Dodge** 9; **Move** 8.
SM +1; 250 lbs.

Traits: Arm ST 2; Digital Mind; Hive Mentality; Incurious (12).
Skills: Brawling-16; Crewman-12; Survival-12.

Female Radiohead

A mixture of construct and clank; the controller for male Radioheads.

ST 10; **DX** 14; **IQ** 11; **HT** 11.
Will 11; **Per** 11; **Speed** 6.25; **Dodge** 9; **Move** 8.
SM 0; 150 lbs.

Traits: Duty (Baron Wulfenbach; 15 or less).
Skills: Psychology-15; Survival-12.

Slaver Wasps

Nothing is more feared in Europa than the tools, weapons, and minions of the Other. Most countries have an agreement that they won't tolerate anything associated with this entity – and some leaders, such as Baron Wulfenbach, have added entire countries to their holdings in the process of enforcing this. No one takes the workings of the Other lightly.

Slaver wasps are one reason why.

These small, insect-like creatures are capable of turning humans into "revenants". . . slaves to the Other. When the slaver wasps first attacked, it was thought that the victim either died, became a revenant, or survived unscathed. It was only recently that the Baron realized that there was a quiescent form of revenant. These victims might be unaware of their servitude – but once they hear the Other's orders, they're incapable of disobeying, making them perfect sleeper agents within the strongholds of Europa's leaders. Out of 100 people attacked by slaver wasps, 10 will die outright, 15 will become obvious, old-style "shamblers," perhaps one will miraculously remain free, and the rest will become "sleepers."

Initially, Sparks and certain constructs (such as Jägers) were immune to the effects of the wasps, owing to differences in brain chemistry. But then one of Lucrezia's admirers – one Gottmurg Snarlantz – developed a variant that could affect Sparks as well, leaving them vulnerable to the Other's will. This new type, known as a "Spark wasp," was tested successfully on Baron Wulfenbach. To the best of anyone's knowledge, there was only the one prototype.

Hive Engines

The slaver wasps' life cycle is complicated. A "hive engine" is a large, mechanical gestation pod. When activated, it awakens a creature known as a "hive queen." This is a large, sessile, worm-like being that appears to be part cyborg.

Within the same space as the hive queen are a number of eggs. These hatch almost instantly into wasp warriors (below). The warriors protect the queen and herd victims toward her.

Shortly after the queen awakens, she begins to belch up swarms of actual slaver wasps. These small fliers seek out people and dart into their mouths, infecting them.

A traditional hive engine is the size of a real-world garbage truck – but a *Spark* wasp engine is only about as big as a softball. Recently, agents of the Wulfenbach Empire have retrieved a new, portable type of engine, slightly larger than a basketball, with wasps the size of mosquitoes.

Wasp Warriors

These monsters are roughly equivalent to armored human soldiers. They walk on four spindly legs while using the other two, and their stinger, to attack (treat as Long Talons, p. 84) and to parry (at 12).

ST 13; **DX** 12; **IQ** 8; **HT** 12.
Will 10; **Per** 10; **Speed** 6.00; **Dodge** 10; **Move** 6.
SM 0; 100 lbs.

Traits: Combat Reflexes; Damage Resistance 4; Extra Legs (Four Legs); Hive Mentality; Long Talons.
Skills: Brawling-16.

Infection Wasps

The tiny creatures that actually "infect" people fly at Move 10, have Dodge 14 against attempts to swat them, and are squished by any serious attack (made at -8 to hit for size). Against anyone not *completely* enclosed in protection like a battlesuit, they'll try to dart into the mouth at skill 15. The only legal defense is a dodge.

Roll 3d for anyone successfully attacked: 3 means no effect; 4-12 enables Possession (p. 90) by the Other, creating a sleeper; 13-14 leads to becoming a shambler; and 15-18 means death. Being a Spark or Jäger (or other construct, at the GM's discretion) grants immunity to this roll. No *other* personal traits matter!

Revenants

All revenants have the Hive Mentality disadvantage. Once activated, they're bound to serve the Other, regardless of previous affiliations or loyalties. This applies to both "mindless" shamblers and fully aware sleepers. Some try to fight their compulsion – and fail. Sometimes they're unwitting accomplices to acts they can't remember. In this way, entire cities have fallen to the Other.

Wasp Eaters

The only way to detect a sleeper-type revenant is to use a wasp eater. Wasp eaters are small, weasel-like animals with six or eight legs. They have mechanisms implanted in their necks, which reflect the fact that they're grown in artificial wombs. Wasp eaters screech loudly in the presence of someone who has been infected with a slaver wasp (or Spark wasp). They were created and trained by a special branch of the Wulfenbach Empire's Science Branch: the Vespiary Squad.

The Vespiary Squad

The Vespiary Squad is a division of warrior-scientists who've been specially trained to fight slaver wasp infestations. They wear a simple coverall with a tool-and-weapon belt, along with a distinctive green cloak and the skull of a wasp warrior on their head. They use a modified version of the Wulfenbach sigil that has insect wings replacing the traditional feathered wings.

After the Baron was taken over by the Other, he declared Vespiary Squad members traitors, to be shot on sight. Tarvek managed to warn them soon enough that many were able to flee to Mechanicsburg, where they were granted asylum. Before the town was time-stopped, several groups of Vespiary Squad members fled incognito along with the rest of the retreating Wulfenbach forces, with the plan of starting wasp eater breeding programs in locations unknown to the Baron.

When Agatha reappeared two and a half years after Mechanicsburg was frozen, she was surprised and disturbed to learn that no one knows what happened to any of these teams, and that it appears that all of the existing wasp eaters – except for the one traveling with her – are sealed within the town.

TORCHMEN

Flying, flaming, self-guided missiles, the Torchmen are winged humanoid clanks. Most of the time, they perch decoratively upon the lampposts of Mechanicsburg. Many people never realize that they're anything else.

However, when there's an attack from the sky, they activate. They draw long steel swords forth from the light poles, tap into the natural gas lines that run the lamps, and ignite both themselves and their swords before launching themselves into the air.

The Torchmen are coordinated by Castle Heterodyne. Traditionally, enemies know to keep two leagues away from the town.

Torchman

Flying clank that defends Castle Heterodyne and Mechanicsburg.

ST 18; **DX** 14; **IQ** 10; **HT** 12.
Will 10; **Per** 10; **Speed** 6.50; **Dodge** 9; **Move** 6.
SM 0; 200 lbs.

Traits: Damage Resistance 5; Digital Mind; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Flight (Air Move 10); Hive Mentality; Indomitable.
Skills: Brawling-18; Broadsword-18.

8. Onward to Adventure!

The mood of *Girl Genius* can shift quickly from slapstick humor to blood-chilling terror. The ever-changing tone presents a unique challenge for players and GMs – one you can distill into the perfect brew for your table. This chapter provides guidance and ideas for GMs designing *Girl Genius* campaigns.

Logistical Considerations

The first step to a successful campaign is to gather your group – five or six players plus the GM works well – and ensure that everybody can agree to the basic logistics and upkeep required.

Duration

How long do you want your campaign to last? Will it be a single-session "one shot," a miniseries (a few sessions or a couple of adventures), or a long-term chronicle that might run indefinitely?

Time and Place

Where will sessions be held? You might alternate locations so no one person has the burden of always hosting – unless someone *wants* to, of course! It's usually a good idea to set a specific time (typically weekly or biweekly), so players can get it onto their calendars and not miss a session.

Character Power Level

The type of narrative you wish to build will dictate the PCs' power level. For more on this, see *Power Level* (p. 57).

Sherlocking the Table: The Secret of Learning What Players Want

As a GM, when you ask players point-blank what they want, you'll often get vague platitudes about having fun, experiencing the adventure, or enjoying time with their friends. There's really only one surefire way to ensure that your players have the maximum amount of fun at your table: Players respond best when their characters fit the narrative needs of the scenario and overall story, and everyone has something to do.

How do you achieve this result organically? Use the Sherlock method. Ask your players to pitch ideas for the upcoming campaign, and then deduce what sorts of scenarios they might want . . . even if they don't realize it.

For instance, one player archetype is the eternal warrior, seeking the thrill of battle. Their desires are easy to meet, but other players might present a more complex challenge. A Lackya detective seeking to uncover the nature of the Storm King conspiracy might be less interested in fighting than in seeking out clues while poring over forgotten tomes of lore and history, perhaps even matching wits with elements of the cabal itself. The challenge for the GM is to design scenarios where the player of the detective *and* the warrior feel their characters are vital to the story and have their moments in the sun.

If you do this correctly, you can deduce exactly what scenarios would bring the players the most time in the spotlight and engage them in the experience, ensuring that each of them plays a pivotal role in the story as it develops.

Homework

You may well recruit some players who aren't yet familiar with *Girl Genius*. All the better! But this gives you a decision to make: Do you suggest that they read the comic, or do you let them play a character of limited experiences, so player and character can learn about the world together?

Ingredients List: Recipe for Your Campaign

Successful campaigns don't happen in a vacuum. They require forethought and detailed planning to ensure maximum fun. One way to plan things with your players before the first session is to create a list of ingredients for your campaign; e.g., a dollop of intrigue and spycraft, a batch of interesting NPCs to meet, and a touch of eldritch horror concerning the mysteries of the Spark. This will help the players understand what they'll experience in the campaign, enabling them to create characters that succeed and thrive.

As GM, you have a variety of possible ingredients. Review each of these with your players to discover your campaign's sweet spot. Then compose your recipe so the players understand what's coming . . . and warn you in advance about anything they might find uncomfortable. This is a great way to engage everyone before you even start!

Mood

Mood is the campaign's general feel and flavor. Over the years, *Girl Genius* has explored the narrative map, mixing and matching swashbuckling adventure with political intrigue, suspense, tragedy, angst, and even horror. And humorous elements are everywhere, including some (Sight gags! Callbacks! Building signs!) that may be difficult to replicate in the roleplaying medium. Which of these elements will you choose to emphasize?

Realism

The level of realism should fit the mood. A swashbuckling campaign is suited to a "cinematic" style where characters can leap boldly into action, swords and ray guns at the ready. A campaign designed to showcase themes of suspense and tragedy requires a realism level where gravity is a harsh mistress, weapons are *dangerous,* and life is too precious to risk for any but the highest of causes.

Sparkiness

One of the themes of *Girl Genius* is the nature of the Spark and what it means to be considered a "mad" scientist, forever pushing the boundaries of the possible. This is the narrative backbone for our protagonist girl genius, Agatha. She's seeking her origins and trying to answer questions about herself, her history, and ultimately her destiny and free will.

The players may want to delve into the psychological mysteries of the Spark and the effect that it has on its possessors. On the other hand, they might be happiest when the Spark remains an unexplored enigma – simply a background explanation for *all these wonderful toys.*

Themes and Tropes

Now that we've settled what the campaign is *like . . .* what's it *about?* There are, by actual count, 17 times as many tropes in the world as there are GMs. You have no shortage to choose from! The campaign ideas below outline a few of these, but you can mash any two or three of them together to support exactly the kinds of stories you want to tell.

Have Clank, Will Travel: Wanderers and Explorers

The fantasy genre abounds with roaming adventurers seeking to explore the wide world – perhaps to make their mark, maybe just to make their fortune. Europa is peppered with interesting destinations, factions, hidden dangers, and intrigues. This fits naturally with serialized adventures, and is well suited to a campaign seeking to hit a wide range of moods and scenarios.

One week, the heroes might encounter an absurd town obsessed with chicken clanks; the next week, they travel through a deserted valley and meet the sole half-mad survivor of a town horribly destroyed by the Other. This is a chance to explore every interesting place in Chapter 2, while also allowing the GM to explore their own spark of creativity.

Townies: Locals Rule!

Europa's cities are marvels of the world. Between them are hundreds of small towns, vulnerable to banditry and invasion by the menace of the week. An amazing campaign could take place in a single town along a trade route: a crossroads for travelers and merchants. See Chapter 2 and select an empty spot in Europa between two or three interesting places – so all those visitors will have someplace to be *from.*

In a campaign like this, the PCs are the local defenders, most of whom have day jobs. If anyone in town has the Spark, it's at a low level and possibly known only to trusted friends. The wandering heroes, if any, are NPCs – and there are plenty of wandering *baddies,* too.

Transylvania Polygnostic University

A great starter campaign for players unfamiliar with *Girl Genius* is one set at TPU (p. 23). This allows your players to take on the roles of students exploring their Spark and learning to interact with other new adults – Sparky and otherwise. If you have a mix of new and experienced players, the veterans might play grad students.

Joining the Circus: An Actor's Life for Me

You live in a mobile town, surrounded by unusual people. This *might* be Master Payne's Circus, out in the Wastelands before Agatha came on the scene, but it could instead be a more mundane traveling show. Not every circus is composed exclusively of Sparks in disguise. (As far as we know.)

You know all the other performers – and make no mistake, in a small show, *everybody* is a performer from time to time – but new faces constantly come on the scene. There's plenty of opportunity for intrigue and political machinations. Even better, you get to explore the bright lights of Europa's cities, not to mention small towns. Plus, everyone loves monkeys, clowns, and weird clanks!

Castle Wulfenbach: You Must Be This Tall to Ride

Castle Wulfenbach is the narrative heart of Europa, where the leviathans of *Girl Genius* battle. Such a place isn't for the faint of heart, nor the inexperienced. The colossal airship blots out the sun like an eclipse; it's the Mount Olympus of the comic's mythology. Klaus and Gilgamesh Wulfenbach rule in the skies above, where the Baron fosters dozens of children from noble houses.
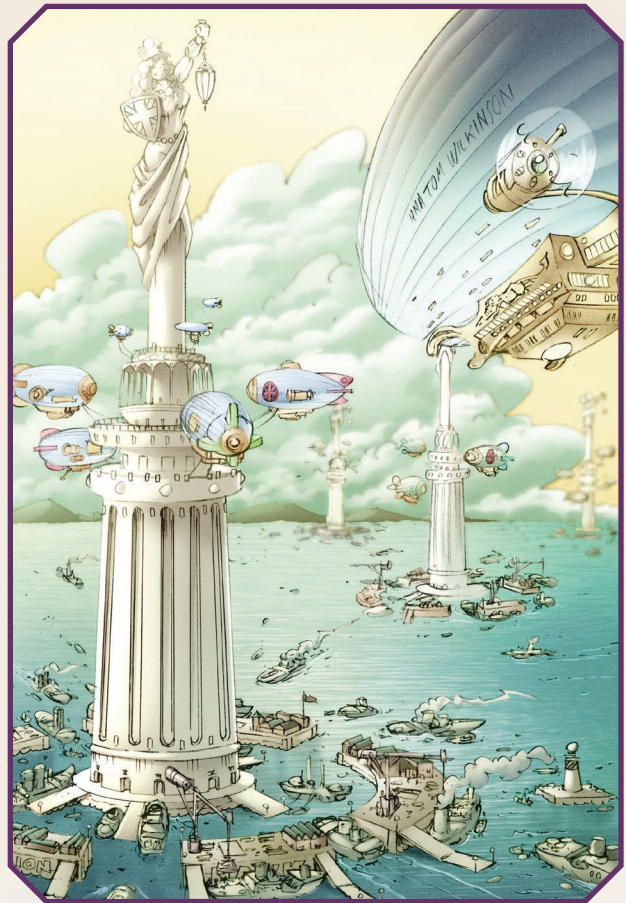
You can set your campaign here if your players are more experienced or want a high level of adventure and political intrigue.

Duty Calls: Service and Maybe a Smile

Perhaps all the PCs serve the same organization. This eliminates the need for extensive backstory, as they've been thrown together to accomplish an objective of some kind. This sort of campaign thrives on specific missions, achievable short-term goals, and a clear chain of command. Examples of a Duty Calls chronicle are an "away team" aboard an airship (maybe even Castle Wulfenbach!), a special scout unit for a militia, or a cell of spies or thieves given one impossible mission after another.

Two-Fisted Adventure: Punching the Bad Guys

There's something soothing about wearing the metaphorical white hat and duking it out with the bad guys. This sort of campaign requires less intrigue and ambiguity: Some folks are good, others are bad, and it's easy to tell the difference by their deeds and the color of their hats. Provide the heroes with kind, empathetic NPCs with hearts of gold to protect, as well as dastardly villains to punch, and the players will be beside themselves and ready to risk it all for the good citizens of Europa. (If they need a hand, send them Othar Tryggvassen, Gentleman Adventurer!)

The Truth Is Sometimes Way Out There

A cabal of historians and busybodies seeks to learn the hidden secrets of Europa. They want to know how and why Baron Wulfenbach seized power, and what really happened to his best friends, Bill and Barry Heterodyne. They explore old libraries, hire spies (such as the PCs!), and more or less do whatever they must to learn the Truth with a capital T. But who are these historians, really – and are they just in it out of academic curiosity? If the historians themselves forget that Knowledge is Power, someone else will remember.

A Game of Kings and Queens: Power and Dominance

Some characters just want to rule the world! Baron Wulfenbach might be a construct, but he won't survive forever. Leaders are forged in conflict and conquest, and only the strongest and smartest can outwit Sparks. You can't conquer the world on a whim, though. It takes decades of planning, scheming, building alliances, and establishing powerbases, striking only when your plans finally come together.

Storm King Conspiracy

Some believe the end of the Wulfenbach Empire is near: If Europa is ever to achieve greatness, the Baron *must* be overthrown! A key element of this is the Storm King conspiracy, a secret group trying to restore the hereditary claim to the throne of the Storm King – the last "legitimate" sovereign of Europa before the Long War. With recent riots and a potent wave of nostalgia, they hope to inspire the people to rebel and demand a restored Storm King.

The PCs must choose sides between the Baron or the conspiracy, weaving through complex lies and alliances while outmaneuvering their political enemies. Both sides are wealthy and well supplied with Sparks, and it promises to be just as bad as the Long War.

Meet the Heterodynes

Explore Mechanicsburg, with its resident Sparks, minions, and clanks. Witness the legacy of the Heterodynes. Perhaps even travel back in time to meet the Heterodyne Boys before the events in *Girl Genius!*

The PCs might be part of Agatha's support group in Mechanicsburg . . . maybe even a part she doesn't know about. They could be part of the town guard, perhaps part of the network of agents through which Carson and Vanamonde run the city. They might even be *literally* underground, working for Mamma Gkika. Mechanicsburg is a city with a lot of history, and in the heart of the Heterodynes' power lie many of Agatha's best friends . . . and possibly some of her worst enemies. She needs help – and that could be *you*.

Familial Destiny: How Far Can an Apple Roll from the Tree?

Does family dictate destiny? Must we repeat the same tragic mistakes? Are the PCs involved in a star-crossed love affair forbidden by warring factions, or are they just part of the war? This campaign requires players to connect their characters to houses with missing heirs, hereditary curses, contested inheritances, crazy uncles, blood feuds, and all the other terribly inconvenient nonsense that comes from being part of a family.

Index

IT IS A WORLD RULED BY *MAD SCIENCE!* (ALBEIT, POORLY.)

WHEN WE LAST SAW OUR INTREPID HEROES, AGATHA AND HER FRIENDS SMASHED THE KRAKEN-SUMMONING ENGINE OF THE MAD DUKE GRIMRALDI, THUS THWARTING HIS NEFARIOUS PLOT TO USURP THE MOST MERRY COUNCIL OF THE HIGH LORDS OF MISRULE!

AFTER A WEEK OF DANCING, REVELS AND HILARITY, THE FABLED LOST CITY OF VENICE HAS ONCE AGAIN SUNK BENEATH THE WAVES! WE RE-JOIN OUR ADVENTURERS AS THEY WEND THEIR WAY HOME TO MECHANICSBURG FOR A WELL-DESERVED REST—

BUT WAIT! IT NOW SEEMS THEY HAVE RECEIVED A MESSAGE CONTAINING AN URGENT INVITATION TO VISIT THE ISOLATED CASTLE LABORATORY OF ONE PROFESSOR SMODGE! WHAT COULD BE THE PURPOSE OF THIS *MYSTERIOUS MISSIVE?*

AGATHA HETERODYNE
GIRL GENIUS!

KROSP I
EMPEROR OF ALL CATS!

ZEETHA
LOST PRINCESS OF THE LOST CITY OF SKIFANDER!

OTHAR TRYGGVASSEN
GENTLEMAN ADVENTURER!
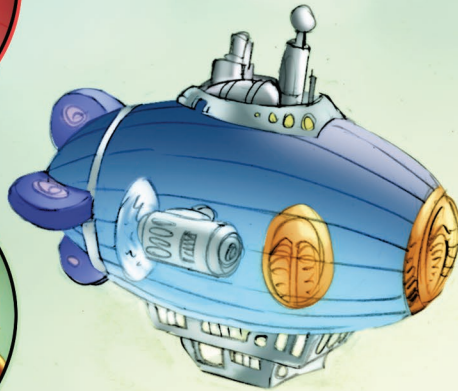
THERE IT IS! THE MOUNTAIN FORTRESS OF PROFESSOR METROLICUS SMODGE!

IMPRESSIVE... AND WHAT IS *HIS* SPECIALTY?

WELL, LAST *I* HEARD, HE WAS DEVELOPING SOME KIND OF *MUSHROOM-HEDGEHOG HYBRID.*

MUSHROOMS AND...HOW WOULD *THOSE* PRODUCE A LIGHT SHOW LIKE *THAT?*

NO IDEA, BUT I *CAN'T WAIT* TO *FIND OUT!*

MAYHEM EX MACHINA!
• STORY BY PHIL & KAJA FOGLIO •
• DRAWINGS BY PHIL FOGLIO •
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GIRL GENIUS
SOURCEBOOK
AND ROLEPLAYING GAME

CHARACTER SHEET

Name _____ Player _____ Point Total ___

Ht ____ Wt ____ Size Modifier ____ Age ___ Unspent Pts ____

Appearance _____ Race _____

ST	[ ]	HP	[ ]
DX	[ ]	Will	[ ]
IQ	[ ]	Per	[ ]
HT	[ ]	FP	[ ]

LANGUAGES
Spoken Written

_____	[ ]
_____	[ ]
_____	[ ]
_____	[ ]
_____	[ ]

REACTION MODIFIERS
Appearance _____
Status_____
Reputation _____
_____
_____

BASIC LIFT (ST × ST)/5 _____ DAMAGE Thr _____ Sw_____

BASIC SPEED _____ [ ] BASIC MOVE _____ [ ]

DR	PARRY	BLOCK

ENCUMBRANCE / MOVE / DODGE

ENCUMBRANCE		MOVE	DODGE	
None (0)	= BL ____	BM × 1 ____	Dodge	____
Light (1)	= 2 × BL ____	BM × 0.8 ____	Dodge -1	____
Medium (2)	= 3 × BL ____	BM × 0.6 ____	Dodge -2	____
Heavy (3)	= 6 × BL ____	BM × 0.4 ____	Dodge -3	____
X-Heavy (4)	= 10 × BL ____	BM × 0.2 ____	Dodge -4	____

SKILLS

Name	Level	Points	Name	Level	Points

ADVANTAGES

Name	Points

DISADVANTAGES AND QUIRKS

Name	Points

ARMOR & POSSESSIONS

Item	Location	Cost	Weight

CHARACTER NOTES

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Notes	Cost	Weight

RANGED WEAPONS

Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Shots	ST	Bulk	Notes	Cost	Weight

Totals: $ ___ Lbs. ___