

ORPHEUS

Beta Rules

Before worrying about numbers, you should have a good idea of your character's concept. In game terms, these are covered by your Motivations.

Motivations: Motivations are aspects of your character's personality that orients them generally toward humanity or toward an estrangement from humanity and the risk of becoming something more monstrous and sublime. Players start the game with 3 Motivations, at least 1 Affirming and at least 1 Estranging. Examples below:

Humanity Affirming Motivations:

Loyalty to friends, The greater good, The thrill of discovery, Justice

Humanity Estranging Motivations:

Vengefulness, Fascination with dark magick, Amassing personal power, Selfishness, Reckless curiosity

Invoking Motivations: When a situation arises in play that seems particularly relevant to one of your character's motivations, you may (with GM approval) Invoke that motivation on a single check. On this check, the dice faces count as 0, 1, and 2 successes rather than -1, 0, and +1 (See “Main Dice Mechanic section for further details). For example, a character with the “Altruism” motivation could Invoke Altruism when risking their life to save a helpless person from danger. A motivation can be Invoked once per session.

Track the number of times each motivation has been invoked. When a single motivation has been invoked at least 5 times, you may choose to designate that motivation your character's Core Value.

Core Value: Your Core Value functions as a motivation, but with differing effects. When you invoke your Core Value, the faces of your dice count as 1, 2, and 3 rather than -1, 0, and 1. You may replace your Core Value with a different motivation that's been Invoked at least 5 times, demoting your Core Value to a normal motivation, when deemed narratively appropriate by both you and the GM. You may invoke your Core Value once per session, and this does not count as your one per session invocation of a normal motivation.

GM Exploit: The GM may choose to exploit your motivations (particularly the estranging ones) when acting in accordance with that motivation would cause trouble for your character. If you follow that motivation into trouble (rather than avoiding it in a story-appropriate way), regain 2 Strain of each type (see “Strain” section later).

If the GM exploits your Core Value, you must pay 2 Humanity and 2 Spiritual Strain to act against it (See “Strain” and “Humanity” sections later).

Backgrounds:

Each player must choose what walk of life their character came from, and how that led them to ORPHEUS. A character will start out with a suite of Skills based on the path they've traveled to ORPHEUS's door. (See Skills section later)

Each background also confers a Combat Skill Bonus, which gives +1 to your Rank in that skill, AFTER

you purchase skills (see Skills section later).

Choose one Background

Background:	Skills:
Scientist	Rank 1 (Trained): Contacts (Academia) Rank 2 (Capable): Investigation, Craft (Lab Use) Rank 3 (Adept): Knowledge (Choose Science type) Combat Skill Bonus: Discipline
Occult Scholar	Rank 1 (Trained): Knowledge (Eldritch)*, Discipline Rank 2 (Capable): Investigation, Contacts (Occult Dealers) Rank 3 (Adept): Knowledge (Occult)
Logistics Operator	Rank 1 (Trained): Analog Security Rank 2 (Capable): Digital Security, Craft (Forgery) Rank 3 (Adept): Knowledge (Tradecraft) Combat Skill Bonus: Stealth
Criminal	Rank 1 (Trained): Deception Rank 2 (Capable): Contacts (Underworld or Gangs), Security, Rank 3 (Adept): Intimidation Combat Skill Bonus: Stealth
Turned Cultist	Rank 1 (Trained): Knowledge: Eldritch* Rank 2 (Capable): Knowledge (Occult), Empathy Rank 3 (Adept): Deception Combat Skill Bonus: Stability
Combat Veteran	Rank 1 (Trained): Might Rank 2 (Capable): Intimidation, Endurance Rank 3 (Adept): Athletics Combat Skill Bonus: Attack
Medical Professional	Rank 1 (Trained): Investigation Rank 2 (Capable): Knowledge (Medicine), Craft (Lab Use) Rank 3 (Adept): Craft (Choose Psychiatry or Medicine) Combat Skill Bonus: First Aid
Intelligence Asset:	Rank 1 (Trained): Knowledge (Underworld) Rank 2 (Capable): Deception, Analog Security Rank 3 (Adept): Empathy Combat Skill Bonus: Stealth
Cyber Security	Rank 1 (Trained): Contacts (Deep Web) Rank 2 (Capable): Investigation, Knowledge (Computer Science) Rank 3 (Adept): Craft (Computer Hacking) Combat Skill Bonus: Discipline

Civilian: Sometimes, a character makes their way to ORPHEUS by chance, destiny, or machination rather than by career path. With GM approval, choose the following:

- *1 Rank 1 Skill
- *2 Rank 2 Non-Combat Skills
- *1 Rank 3 Non-Combat Skill.
- *1 Combat Skill Bonus.

Attributes:

Characters begin the game with 15 Attribute Points (AP). They are used to buy ranks in Attributes. There are 6 Attributes, 2 for Mind (Perception and Cognition), 2 for Body (Dexterity and Vitality), and 2 for Spirit (Charisma and Willpower). The human maximum for an Attribute is 5, and the minimum is 0.

Attributes are bought straight. For example, a 5 in Vitality costs 5 AP, and a 1 in Perception costs 1 AP.

Characters also begin with 30 Skill Ranks. Skills are detailed in their own section later.

General Description of Attributes:

(Mind)

Perception: Used in Awareness checks, sometimes Initiative, and for any task that requires observation.

Cognition: Determines Focus Track, used in Knowledge Skill checks, Clarity Bonus

(Body)

Dexterity: Used in Dodge and Initiative checks, Athletics, Attacks

Vitality: Determines Wound Track, used in Melee attack, provides Toughness Bonus, used in checks requiring hardiness of body such as those combating poison, disease, exhaustion.

(Spirit)

Charisma: Used in social Skill checks, sometimes Initiative.

Willpower: Determines Sanity Track, Used in Stability Checks. Grants Force of Will Bonus.

Derived Attributes:

Melee Attack: $\frac{1}{2}(\text{Dex} + \text{Vit})$

Ranged Attack: $\frac{1}{2}(\text{Dex} + \text{Per})$

Speed: $\frac{1}{2}(\text{Dex} + \text{Vit})$

Clarity: +1 at 3 Cog, +2 at 5 Cog

Adds to Initiative.

Toughness: +1 at 3 Vit, +2 at 5 Vit

+1d3 to Melee Damage per point.

Force of Will: +1 at 3 Will, +2 at 5 Will

Initiative: Rolled with an effective Attribute that is the sum of 2 of the following: Per, Dex, Will, plus your Clarity. Characters may choose which two Attributes to add together to determine their Initiative Attribute. When you have wound penalties, your Initiative checks are only ever affected by the least severe wound penalty you have. In other words, you are only penalized on initiative if you are facing penalties in to Mental, Physical, AND Spiritual checks. (See Wounds Section below.)

You may not use Strain to boost Initiative rolls, but the Rank III-V features of the Discipline skill (Re-roll, +1 in lieu, +2 in lieu, see Skills section) may be used to augment Initiative rolls.

NOTE: All rolls that call for the average of two of your Attributes are rounded down when necessary.

Main Dice Mechanic:

Attribute and Skill checks are rolled with 3d6, where the dice faces are as follows:

- 1-2: -1 to your score
- 3-4: +0 to your score
- 5-6: +1 to your score

The Attribute most relevant to the check (GM discretion where debatable) is added to your score as well. Thus, punching someone is 3d6 + your Melee Attack Attribute, while the same guy trying to dodge your punch is 3d6 + his Dexterity.

In the event of a tie between two opposing players, they must roll off to determine the winner (0 degrees of success). In a tie between the player and a non-player character or force, they player automatically loses unless they spend 1 strain of the appropriate type, in which case the player automatically wins at 0 degrees of success.

Luck Checks:

Sometimes, a check is needed but no Attribute or Skill realistically matters, or a player asks about a situation and the GM has nothing definitively planned (ie: Is the alley wide enough for my car? Is there a key under the mat? Did I remember to bring [thing player may realistically have forgotten]?) These situations call for a straight-up luck roll. Roll 3d6:

- 3 The result is an obscene catastrophe, worse than you could have imagined.
- 2 The result is very, very bad for you
- 1 The result is a bit worse than you'd like
- +0 Nothing good happens, nothing bad happens.
- +1 You get a slightly favorable result
- +2 You get a very favorable result
- +3 You are fantastically lucky, and things work out as well as they possibly could.

Difficulty Values:

Generally speaking, if there is a challenge that is not an opposed check (so, picking a lock or solving a cipher rather than punching someone), The target Difficulty Value (DV) is set by the GM. Examples of each Difficulty Value and guidelines for what is appropriate are below:

DV 1-3: Negligible to minor tasks.

DV 4-6: Tasks requiring some amount of training, luck, or force to achieve.

DV 7-8: Difficult tasks that require either very good luck or significant training.
(Picking a simple lock, driving fast on an icy road without incident)

DV 9-10: Very difficult tasks, that only expert or stupendously lucky folk could overcome.
(Example: noticing tiny changes in the positions of objects in a room, intense parkour)

- DV 11-12: Masterful performances that will be the talk of the town for years.
(Olympic Gold performance, Literally hear a pin drop in a mostly quiet room)
- DV 13-14: Nearly legendary tasks, seldom achieved outside of stories.
(Shoot a handful of thrown change out of the air, Design a miracle drug)
- DV 15-16: Superhuman success. Redefines the skill or discipline for a generation.
(Dodge bullets after they're fired, Bend an I-beam with your hands)
- DV 17-19: The stuff of myth, only achieved by the greatest legendary heroes and gods.
(Perform a musical piece you've only seen played on mute, once. Handstand-run on an icy, swaying rope)
- DV 20+: A strike that cracks the stars, A song that makes the gods weep, or the crafting of an item over which the powers that govern the world would make war. In other words, indescribable.

Damage:

Your character has 3 Damage Tracks, representing their Mental/Sensory, Physical, and Emotional/Spiritual well being. When you take Damage of Mental, Physical, or Spiritual type, it is applied to this track, and you incur the penalties of being Wounded, Heavily Wounded, or Critically Wounded (see below).

Focus represents your character's wits, sharpness of senses, and ability to concentrate. Damaged by Mental type Damage, caused by sensory overload, concussion, some drugs, or any other factor that would damage your faculties.

Health represents the integrity of your character's body. Damaged by Physical type Damage caused by weapons, environmental damage, poisons, disease, etc.

Sanity represents the integrity of your character's emotions and sanity. Damaged by Spiritual type Damage caused by fear, horrible sights, social pressure, some magick, some diseases, etc.

When an attack hits you, you take a number of damage equal to the Degrees of Success (DoS) of the attacker's check over your defensive check, plus any weapon bonuses. For example, If Bob punches Mike and rolls a 4 on his Melee Attack roll, while Mike gets a 2 on his Dodge, that's 2 DoS, and thus 2 points of Damage. If Bob stabbed Mike with a knife with a +2/2 damage bonus, it'd be 6 points of damage instead (see Weapons section for details on damage bonuses).

Damage Tracks:

The totals for Focus/Health/Sanity are determined by the character's Cognition/Vitality/Willpower. Every character begins with 2 points of Focus/Health/Sanity at the "Wounded" level, 2 at "Heavily Wounded", and 1 at "Critically Wounded," and more added based on Attributes as shown below:

Cognition/Vitality/Willpower Rank:	Focus/Health/Sanity
0	2 Wounded, 2 Seriously Wounded, 1 Critically Wounded
1	3 Wounded, 2 Seriously Wounded, 1 Critically Wounded
2	3 Wounded, 3 Seriously Wounded, 1 Critically Wounded
3	3 Wounded, 3 Seriously Wounded, 2 Critically Wounded

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4 Wounded, 3 Seriously Wounded, 2 Critically Wounded
4 Wounded, 4 Seriously Wounded, 2 Critically Wounded

Wound Penalties:

When you are damaged the wounds are applied “from the outside in,” applying first to “Wounded,” then to “Seriously Wounded,” and finally to “Critically Wounded.” When all your wounds are expended at a given level, you take a wound penalty as shown below:

Wounded:

-1 to Checks for Mental/Physical/Spiritual Attributes (by damage type.) You may pay 1 Strain of the appropriate type to ignore this penalty for 1 round.

Seriously Wounded:

-2 to Checks for Mental/Physical/Spiritual Attributes (by damage type). You may pay 1 Strain of the appropriate type to reduce this penalty by 1 for 1 round.

Critically Wounded:

-3 to Checks for Mental/Physical/Spiritual Attributes (by damage type). You may pay up to 2 Strain of the appropriate type to reduce this penalty by up to 2 for 1 round.

Daze:

When you take 5 or more Mental Damage in one attack (before Strain-based reduction), roll Luck. At 10, 15, and 20 Damage, take a -1/-2/-3 to the Luck check, respectively.

0+: No effect

-1: Daze. Lose Clarity bonus to Initiative this and next Round.

-2: Heavy Daze. Lose Clarity bonus to Initiative this and next Round, and lose all Skills until end of next Round.

-3: Crippling Daze. Lose half your Initiative this and next Round, and lose all Skills until end of next Round.

Bleeding:

When you take 5 or more Physical Damage in one attack (before Strain-based reduction), roll Luck. At 10, 15, and 20 Damage, take a -1/-2/-3 to the Luck check, respectively.

0+: No effect

-1: Bleeding. Take 1 Physical Damage per minute until stabilized by First Aid.

-2: Heavy Bleeding. Take 1 Physical Damage per round until stabilized by First Aid

-3: Arterial Bleeding. Take 1d3 Physical Damage per round until stabilized by First Aid.

NOTE: Damage caused by bleeding cannot be bought off with Strain.

Temporary Insanity:

When you take 5 or more Spiritual Damage in one attack (before Strain-based reduction), roll Luck. At 10, 15, and 20 Damage, take a -1/-2/-3 to the Luck check, respectively.

0+: No effect

-1: Fight, Flight, or Freeze until end of this Round.

-2: GM-determined insanity until end of next Round

-3: GM-determined insanity for next 1d3+1 Rounds

NOTE: When you fail a check against Daze, Bleeding, or Temporary Insanity while already suffering from the same condition, a failure on the check worsens the rank of the condition by (Degrees of Failure). For example, if you are suffering Heavy Bleeding, and fail a further check against bleeding by 1, you immediately are Arterially Bleeding.

Examples of Insanity:

When your character either suffers long-term insanity from Sanity damage, or temporary insanity due to a particularly nasty Horror check, the exact effects are at GM discretion, but the main thing to consider is that the type of insanity chosen by the GM ought to reflect the circumstances that brought about the insanity, at least in an oblique or twisted way. See example insanity types and variations below:

Panic: Your character goes into total fight-or-flight mode for duration or until exhausted.

- *Phobia: You are irrationally, cripplingly scared of the object of the phobia.

- *Terror: You are terrified of everyone and everything, fleeing in a blind panic.

- *Berserk: You attack everything in sight, starting with the nearest living thing.

- *Rage: You care only for destroying the object of your rage, whether it's a rational target or no.

Faint: Your character loses some or all consciousness/agency for duration.

- *Full Faint: You are completely unconscious.

- *Catatonia: You can walk slowly and follow simple instructions, but have no agency.

- *Frozen in Fear: You are overcome by fear to the point of losing all independent action.

- *Hysterical Outburst: Physical movements, screams, crying, laughing, etc. to the point of complete distraction from other action.

- *Echopraxia/Echolalia: You can only mimic the actions or words of those around you.

Hysteria: Your character is so overwhelmed with the horror or some other emotion that they can only act to compulsively satiate the feeling for duration.

- *Hysterical Outburst: Physical movements, screams, crying, laughing, etc. to the point of complete distraction from other action.

- *Echopraxia/Echolalia: You can only mimic the actions or words of those around you.

- *Compulsive Self Harm: You cut/scratch/bite yourself furiously unless restrained.

- *Eating Compulsion: You compulsively eat something nearby, no matter how unwise.

- *Sexual Compulsion: You develop instantaneous sexual fixation on something nearby, and must act on it immediately.

Psychotic Break: Your character loses some or all touch with reality for duration.

- *Hallucinations: You sense things that aren't there

- *Delusions: You believe or "know" things that aren't true, often paranoid in nature

- *Amnesia: Partial or full loss of memory.

- *Psychosomatic Delusion: You lose a sense or use of a limb.

Long-Term Insanity: While any of the above insanities can become long-term, the following insanities only develop as long-term effects of extreme Sanity damage (See "Consequences of Extreme Damage" section).

- *Obsession/Compulsion: You become gripped by obsession or the need for ritual behaviors.

- *Sexual Fixation: Not as compulsive as the short-term version, but difficult to resist.

- *Obsessive Attachment: You can barely function without an object/person to which you've ascribed magickal, totemic significance (i.e. a security blanket or teddy bear)

*Uncontrollable Tic(s): Can be Tourette's-like, speech-only, or movement-only.

Consequences of Extreme Damage:

Up Checks:

Damage you take beyond the wounds you have may cause you to go unconscious. Check Cognition, Vitality, or Willpower (as appropriate) against Damage taken beyond track. If you fail, you fall unconscious for (Degrees of Failure) Rounds. Up Checks are not affected by Wound Penalties.

Death Checks:

At the end of a Scene in which you took at least 5 points of Damage beyond your track, you fall unconscious and must make a Death Check, checking Cognition, Vitality, or Willpower (as appropriate) against Damage taken in excess of Track. Death Checks are not affected by Wound Penalties. Note that First Aid and Medicine can be used to aid a character at the end of a scene before they make their Death Check, provided they receive immediate aid. A failed Death Check has the following repercussions based on Degrees of Failure:

1 Degree of Failure:

Unconscious for 2d3 x 10 Minutes.

A permanent -1 penalty to the following:

Mental: All checks with a given sense (GM discretion). May be healed by magick or surgery.
Physical: All checks with Dexterity/Vitality (GM discretion). May be healed by magick or surgery.
Spiritual: All checks with Charisma or Willpower (GM discretion, representing being Jaded/distanced/bitter/crazy; take a long-term insanity.) May be healed by long-term therapy.

2 Degrees of Failure:

Unconscious for 2d3 Hours

A permanent -2 penalty to the following:

Mental: All checks with a given sense (GM discretion). May be healed by magick or surgery.
Physical: All checks with Dexterity/Vitality (GM discretion). May be healed by magick or surgery.
Spiritual: All checks with Charisma or Willpower (GM discretion, representing being Jaded/distanced/bitter/crazy; take a long-term insanity.) May be healed by long-term therapy.

3 Degrees of Failure:

Unconscious for 2d3 x 5 Hours.

A permanent -3 penalty to the following:

Mental: All checks with a given sense (GM discretion). May be healed by magick or surgery.
Physical: All checks with Dexterity/Vitality (GM discretion). May be healed by magick or surgery.
Spiritual: All checks with Charisma or Willpower (GM discretion, representing being Jaded/distanced/bitter/crazy; take a long-term insanity.) May be healed by long-term therapy.

4 Degrees of Failure:

Unconscious for 2d3 Days.

Mental: Permanent Sense loss (blindness, deafness, etc. as appropriate by GM discretion)
Physical: Permanent limb loss, paralysis, etc. (GM discretion). Roll a 1d3. On a 1-2, go unconscious for 2d3 additional days.

Spiritual: Permanent madness, behavioral disorders, etc. (GM discretion).

5 Degrees of Failure:
Death.

NOTE: All permanent penalties caused by Extreme Damage (of any type) are at their best when given robust flavor text and narrative explanation by the group and GM.

Borrowed Time:

If a character fails a check that would result in death, the GM may declare that the character's immediate death would be narratively unfulfilling, and that the character is now living on Borrowed Time. A character on Borrowed Time does not gain XP. The GM then declares when the character's time is up, and they must die in a dramatically appropriate fashion during the scene their time runs out.

Optional Rule: Blaze of Glory

In more action-focused, thriller-style games or pulp horror, the GM may allow the Blaze of Glory Rule. During the round in which a character on Borrowed Time is going to die, they may gain the effects of spending 3 Memento Mori (See Memento Mori section later) without incurring any penalties.

Strain:

Strain is a limited resource you spend for various bonuses, and also to reduce damage you'd otherwise be taking. You have 3 separate pools of Strain; Mental, Physical, and Spiritual, and Strain must be spent on actions of its associated type. (For example, you must pay Physical Strain to boost attacks, dodges, etc. while you must pay Mental Strain to boost Awareness checks and Ranged attacks, or Spiritual to boost a Stability Check.) Your starting pool is based on your Attributes, as detailed below:

Mental Strain:	+1 per Perception, +3 per Cognition.
Physical Strain:	+1 per Dexterity, +3 per Vitality.
Spiritual Strain:	+1 per Charisma, +3 per Willpower.

You can spend strain to get +1 on a check. You may also spend 1 strain to reduce damage by 1 + Your Clarity(Mental), Toughness (Physical), or Force of Will (Spiritual) bonus.

You may only spend for +1 to a check once per check, while you can reduce damage as much as you wish, given you have the strain to spend.

NOTE: Keeping track of Strain: Strain can easily be tracked on paper, but the author prefers the use of poker chips. I use stacks of 3 colors to signify Mental, Physical, and Spiritual strain, keeping them in “available” and “spent” piles.

Skills:

Characters start the game with 15 Skill Ranks for Combat Skills and 15 Skill Ranks for Non-Combat Skills (In addition to Skills gained through Backgrounds). Skills rank 1 to 5, and grant bonuses to how Strain can be spent on Checks with that skill, shown below:

Trained (Rank I):	You may spend up to 2 Strain to boost rolls. (Thus, +2)
Capable (Rank II):	You may spend up to 3 Strain to boost rolls. (Thus, +3)
Adept (Rank III):	1 Strain to reduce the Initiative cost of an action by 1 (minimum 1 cost).

Master (Rank IV):	Outside of combat, you may re-roll 1 check per scene with this skill. 1 Strain to ignore negative dice rolled on checks with this skill until next round. Outside of Combat, you may take a +1 in lieu of rolling dice with this skill once per scene.
Genius (Rank V):	Once per scene, gain 3 temporary strain that must be spent on this skill. Outside of Combat, you may take a +2 in lieu of rolling dice with this skill once per scene.

When you build your character, you must not have more Combat skills at a given rank than you have at the rank below it. In other words, to have a skill at rank 5 (Genius), you must also have a 4, a 3, a 2, and a 1. To have 2 Genius Ranks, you need 2 Master, 2 Adept, 2 Capable, and 2 Trained, etc.

The 15 Ranks for Combat skills thus work out to a “column” consisting of 1 skill of each rank, among other configurations. This is meant to model how people don't just learn a couple of optimized skills to the exclusion of all else, and tend to pick up lots of other bits of knowledge as they go. The combat skill bonus granted by your background is applied after this arrangement and does not violate this rule even if your “column” is no longer true.

Skill List:

Following is a list of the most common skills, though specific campaigns an settings may necessitate the inclusion of other skills. Skill Checks are merely Attribute Checks with the added options for Strain spending detailed in the Strain section. The Attribute used with a Skill Check is determined by the GM, but the most commonly used Attributes are listed with the descriptions of each skill.

Though Combat Skills are obviously relevant to combat, there are Non-Combat Skills that can, in some cases, be useful in a fight. Combat Skills are denoted as such due to their extremely common usefulness in combat situations.

Combat Skills:

Attack*:	Attack with given weapon type (Melee or Ranged)
Awareness+:	Noticing things, opposes stealth (Per)
Dodge:	Evade attacks (Dex)
Discipline:	Defense against mental attacks, Presence, Intimidation. Suppression, Improves Initiative. (Cog)
First Aid+:	Stabilize injured allies, reduce wound penalties, aid in allies' death checks. (Dex)
Stability:	Defense against Spiritual attacks and seeing awful things (Will)
Stealth:	Sneaking and hiding, opposes Awareness (Dex)
Magic:	Gathering and control of magical forces, spellcasting (Cog, Cha, or Will, GM's discretion due to nature/source)

Non-Combat Skills:

Athletics:	Climbing, jumping, balancing, swimming, etc. (Dex or Vit)
Contacts**+:	Gathering information and finding helpful people in different social circles (Cha)
Craft**+:	Any craft from pharmacist to mechanic to novelist (Dex, Cog, Cha)
Deception:	Lying, feints in combat, fast-talk, social engineering (Cha)
Drive**:	Per vehicle or mount type (Dex or Cha)
Empathy:	Deception, sense emotions of others (Cha, Per)
Endurance:	Feats of long-term exertion, defense against poison/disease (Vit)
Intimidation:	Interrogation, provoking attacks, cowing enemies (Cha or Vit)

Investigation+:	Organized searches, finding things (Per or Cog)
Knowledge**+:	Functional knowledge of given area of study (Cog)
Might+:	Lifting, breaking, throwing... (Vit)
Performance**+:	As craft, but for performative disciplines (Cha)
Presence:	Making friends, influencing people. (Cha)
Security+:	Casing, Break-ins, DisableSecurity Systems, Lockpicking. (Dex/Per/Cog)
Cybersecurity:	Digital intrusion, hacking, electronic surveillance, etc.
Sleight of Hand:	Pick-pocketing, concealing objects on yours or someone else's person. (Dex)
Languages***:	Study and eventual fluency with non-native languages (Cog).

* The Attack skill is bought for each weapon type. Related types of weapon attacks are made at -2 Skill Ranks (ie if you have a Rank 4 attack skill with Pistols, you may use sub machine guns as though you had their attack skill at Rank 2. Same goes for Melee weapons and other melee or unarmed attacks, etc, and always defers to GM discretion in terms of how related different weapons are.

** This skill must be bought for each discipline or type

+ This Skill allows Collaborative Checks (see below) when deemed appropriate by the GM.

** At Rank 1 of Languages, you have broken conversational command of one foreign tongue. At Rank 2, you become comfortably conversational in the first language, and may gain broken conversational command of a second foreign language. This process continues, with the languages you've known longest raising to higher fluency and new languages being learned (if desired). Rank 3 is fluency. Rank 4 is fluency with no detectable foreignness. Rank 5 is fluency on the level of a native linguist or poet.

NOTE: When multiple characters are using Stealth, a failed Stealth check prompts an immediate re-roll of the opposing Awareness checks at +1. This process repeats for each character discovered this way. The bonus is cumulative, but cannot go above +3.

Examples of Knowledge Skills:

There are enough knowledge skills that a list of commonly-relevant examples might be useful. This isn't even close to exhaustive; any discipline could be purchased as a Knowledge Skill.

Knowledge Skill Type:	Use:
Psychology:	Determine nature/origin of a madman's insanity
Forensics:	Analyze a crime scene for physical evidence
Underworld:	Know who to talk to or shake down to solve a gangland crime
Occult:	Decipher magickal sigils or determine the nature of past ritual

Vigilance:

Characters may not, in the moment, use Mental Strain to boost Awareness checks, somehow prompted to “look harder” by the GM requiring a check. Instead, a player chooses the level of vigilance and caution being shown by their character. Between scenes, a player may spend up to the number of Mental Strain allowed by their Rank in the Awareness Skill to boost all Awareness checks until the end of the next Scene.

Careful Study:

Unlike more active skills such as Athletics or Attack, a character cannot use Mental Strain to boost Knowledge Skill rolls in the moment. Instead, the Strain-based boost to Knowledge checks is gained through Careful Study. A character may Invest a number of Mental Strain in a Knowledge Skill, gaining +1 to checks with this Skill per strain Invested (max 3) until the end of the Adventure, at which point the Strain again becomes available for recovery.

A character may invest 1 point of Mental Strain through Careful Study during a short downtime (GM discretion for access to research materials).

A character may invest up to (3+Cognition) points of Mental Strain through Careful Study between adventures (Again, provided access to necessary materials). Note that the 3 maximum for a single Knowledge Skill applies, but a character may boost multiple knowledge skills at once in this way.

Occult vs. Eldritch Knowledge:

Knowledge: Occult covers rituals, cults, and their underlying psychology. This could be used to identify what occult group's methodology was used in a murder, identifying a ritual by what materials were stolen from a crime scene, to predict a cult's next move based on their philosophy, etc. In essence, this is knowledge dealing with human beings' relationship to the unnatural.

Knowledge: Eldritch, on the other hand, is direct knowledge of the nature of magick and the terrifying, mind-shattering truths of reality. A character may use this knowledge “in the field,” to understand the basics of how an eldritch phenomenon works. Additionally, they may research the Eldritch phenomena they survive after the fact (This can be done during a short downtime per GM discretion, but as with all Knowledge Skills, Careful Study beyond 1 point of Investment must be done between adventures).

On a successful Knowledge: Eldritch check to research a phenomenon, a character gains Sanity Damage Reduction against Sanity damage caused by Horror checks resulting from the studied phenomenon and associated phenomena equal to (Degrees of Success), which lasts until the end of the adventure. On 5+ Degrees of Success, the GM gives the player a flash of unspeakable insight, costing the Player 5 Humanity but granting a significant hint as to how to approach further encounters with the researched phenomenon (GM discretion, naturally). Additionally, the player gains a pool of 5 Temporary Strain for use on checks directly opposing the researched phenomenon or entities under its influence, lasting until the end of the Adventure.

For each Rank of Knowledge: Eldritch a character gains, they must Invest (5x Rank) Humanity, which cannot be recovered unless the knowledge is somehow forgotten through hypnosis, brain trauma, or magick. Thus:

- Rank 1: Invest 5 Humanity.
- Rank 2: Invest 10 total Humanity.
- Rank 3: Invest 15 total Humanity.
- Rank 4: Invest 20 total Humanity.
- Rank 5: Invest 25 total Humanity.

Additionally, to use Careful Study with Knowledge: Eldritch, a character must spend 5 Humanity per Mental Strain Invested.

Hybrid Checks:

Sometimes, a situation will arise in the fiction that seems more or less a cross between two or more skills. For example, and understanding of which ethenogenic plants might be relevant to a given cult's shamanic rituals could be called a Hybrid Check between an Occult Knowledge skill and a skill in Botany, Biochemistry, or another such scientific discipline. Hybrid checks are rolled with the lower of the two skills' ranks. GMs are encouraged to use Hybrid Checks instead of lengthy series of checks if they wish to keep up the pace of play.

Collaborative Checks:

Players may aid one another in making collaborative checks, if justified in the fiction. One player must

designate himself the lead player, with others assisting him. The lead player makes the Check in question, and the supporting players make the same check, with their result as compared to that of the lead player conferring the following effects:

Lead Player's Result -4 (or less):	-1 to Overall Check.
Lead Player's Result -3:	+0 to Overall Check.
Lead Player's Result -2:	+1 to Overall Check.
Lead Player's Result -1:	+2 to Overall Check.
Lead Player's Result +0:	+3 to Overall Check

Tactics:

Tactics cover many, many things. A situational bonus to combat based on flanking, surprise, intimidation, etc. would be a disadvantage to the defender, or an advantage to the attacker, depending on what makes the most narrative sense (GM discretion). Just as easily, a distracting bit of footwork, a trick of body language to make your conversational opponent uneasy, or a careful observation of a guard's patrol path could be modeled through Tactics. This system covers a huge range of situations, and tends to make combats, both physical and otherwise, more cinematic and heterogeneous.

You can use Tactics in or out of Combat. It is rolled as a normal Check with the appropriate Attribute (see below), and a Skill, if relevant. The player must determine what effect they wish to achieve, and calculate the Difficulty Value based on the table below. If the DV is not met, the player has 2 options:

- 1: On your next action, spend Initiative equal to the degrees of failure to use the Tactics.* (Not applicable to Tactics with "Opposed" difficulty)
- 2: Forfeit 1 Initiative (rather than the 3 normally required by Tactics) and cancel the Tactics.*

NOTE: Tactics that are martial in nature (Throwing or wrestling people, etc) always cost the full 3 Initiative.

*See Initiative Section later.

Many Tactics elements can be bought multiple times for one Tactics action, adding their difficulty cost multiple times. Each Tactics element is listed with the maximum number of stacks it can have in one Tactics action.

Tactics Element:	Difficulty Cost:	Maximum Stacks:
+1/-1 Modifier to small set of actions	+2	3
Enemy loses 1 Initiative	+2	4
+1 targets for above	+3	2
+1 Contact/Duration for above*	+2	N/A
Disarm**	+2 Opposed***	1
Knockdown**	+2 Opposed	1
Subdue**	+3 Opposed	1
Neutralize**	+4 Opposed	1

*Tactics last 1 Round in combat, or for 1 Contact (one roll of the dice) out of combat. Each additional contact adds another roll of the dice to the duration of the Tactic.

**A disarmed enemy can regain use of the disarmed weapon at the cost of 3 Initiative if the weapon is retrievable and the disarming party did not choose to keep hold of it.

A knocked-down enemy cannot move or use full defense until they spend 3 Initiative to get up. This action prompts opportunity if applicable. As long as the enemy is down, they are at -2 to defense against melee attacks.

A subdued enemy can take no action (except actions deemed by the GM not to require significant physical movement) until succeeding a GM-determined opposed combat check against you at the cost of 2 Initiative, and while you subdue an enemy (until you voluntarily forfeit the subdual or are bested in the aforementioned check), you are at -3 to defend yourself (save against the subdued enemy's attempt to escape).

Neutralizing an enemy is identical to subduing an enemy, but has no penalty to your defense. The check that the neutralized enemy must succeed is determined by the GM based on the fiction and may be against you or a GM-determined DV.

***Opposed Difficulty denotes that your target will make an appropriate Skill check as determined by the GM, adding the total result to your Tactics check's difficulty.

NOTE: All Tactics must be justified in the fiction and approved by the GM. This includes the limits of what can be covered by a "small set of actions." Generally, an all-purpose combat bonus should not be gained with a single Tactics roll.

Tactics are boosted by your Clarity and Force of Will Bonuses as follows:

Clarity: +1, +2 to Tactics checks at +1, +2 Clarity, respectively.

Force of Will: +1 to Tactics checks at +1 Force of Will

Tactics Attributes:

Tactics are almost always rolled with either Cognition or Perception. Cognition covers any situation in which conceiving of an idea or understanding the situation would allow your character to take a tactical advantage. Perception covers situations where there is an extant weakness or advantage, and one has but to notice it in order to be able to take advantage of it, without any specialized knowledge or strategic thinking.

GMs may rule that another Attribute is appropriate, on occasion, but it is not recommended that Tactics rolls be allowed by using the same Attribute that modifies the Check that the Tactics affects. (A character's Dexterity is already making her more adept at dodging, for example, and a deeper understanding of *how* to dodge in the given situation is what Tactics would cover, rather than "double-dipping" and having her Dexterity somehow benefit them twice in the execution of the same task.)

Situational Modifiers:

Depending on the situation, the GM may impose a bonus or penalty of up to +/-3 on certain actions. Some examples of different degrees of Situational Modifiers below:

- +3: Intimidation checks with a friendly Apache attack helicopter hovering over your shoulder
- +2: Presence checks after doing something awesome
- +1: Social checks in an environment favorable to something about your character
- 1: Speed checks in rough terrain
- 2: Ranged combat in partial darkness, Speed checks in very rough terrain
- 3: Ranged combat in total darkness

Special Modifier: Opportunity

Opportunity: If you fail to Flee from someone or perform a non-combat action in combat, you are at -2 to defend yourself until the start of your next action.

Special Modifier: Advantage

If you Parry an attack successfully and make a Tactics check that is primarily martial in nature (Grapple, knockdown, etc., GM discretion) against the opponent you parried on your next action and before they take an additional action, you gain +2 to the Tactics check.

Special Modifier: Attacking a Melee

If you miss an attack aimed for someone who is in melee with another entity, roll Luck. On a non-negative result, nothing happens. On a negative result, the other entity in the melee must defend against the attack at its original attack result. If the melee has more than two participants, determine randomly.

Special Modifier (Surprise):

Surprise: If you Surprise an enemy, you take your first action outside of Initiative order. Initiative is not rolled until after you take your first action. Surprised foes are at -3 to defend themselves.

Special Modifier (Moving Target):

Ranged attacks are at -2 to hit if the target is in the midst of executing a move or charge action. If a target is moving with a movement or charge action that cost 2 or fewer Initiative, the penalty is instead -3.

Special Modifier (Rush):

Rush: Taking multiple strenuous actions in a row without any other entity in the combat acting counts as Rushing (Movement, Attacks, Martial Tactics, or abilities/actions the GM deems sufficiently similar to these count as strenuous actions). While under the Rush penalty, you are at -3 to any further Rushed actions. The penalty clears after you spend an entire Round without Rushing. You may also cancel the penalty by spending 6 Physical Strain to catch your breath.

Modifier Limit:

In ORPHEUS, there are caps on the magnitude of modifiers affecting characters. Unless specified otherwise by the GM, it is intended that a roll can only be at a maximum of :

- * +/-3 for Tactics and/or collaboration.
- * +3 for Strain use.
- * +/-3 for Situational Modifiers.
- * +/-3 for Abilities (or more, but only if a >3 bonus/penalty comes from a single ability)
- * -3 for Wound penalties.

Initiative:

When combat begins, everyone rolls Initiative. Initiative is rolled with an effective Attribute equal to the total of two out of your Dexterity, Awareness, and Willpower, plus your Clarity bonus. You may not use Strain to boost Initiative rolls, but the Rank III-V features of the Discipline skill (Re-roll, +1 in lieu, +2 in lieu) may be used to augment Initiative rolls.

Taking actions during combat costs points of initiative. The person whose turn to act it is, is always determined by who has the highest Initiative total. When there is a tie for current Initiative total,

Players go first, choosing which order to act, and are followed by NPCs.

In practice, the GM will basically go to the highest Initiative player, have them act, then see who has the next highest, counting down through Initiative until everyone has spent all their Initiative. If someone takes an action that costs more Initiative than their current total, the deficit is paid as a penalty to the next round's Initiative roll (No limit on penalty number).

List of Common Actions:

- Aim:** 1 Initiative. Gain +1 to your next attack, provided your attack immediately follows your aim action. You may take this action up to 3 times before attacking. Moving target penalties are reduced by 1 for each Initiative spent aiming. If you take damage while Aiming, you must check Stability or Discipline against damage taken to avoid losing the benefits of the Aim action.
- Reload:** 1-4 Initiative (Based on complexity 1 = Loading 1 shotgun shell. 4 = reloading an RPG, GM Discretion)
- Attack:** 2 Initiative.
- Draw:** 1 Initiative. You may instead draw a weapon at 0 Initiative cost if you attack immediately at -1 to hit.
- Move:** 8 – (Speed Check w/ Athletics Skill) Initiative, minimum 2. Go anywhere in your Area, or take this Action 2 times to reach another Area. This Initiative is paid 1-at-a-time, allowing you to cancel your movement, and others to react to it. If you don't complete the movement, reasonable GM discretion as to where in your Area you end up.
- Charge:** 8 – (Speed Check) Initiative, minimum 2. Combines a movement and attack, but the attack is at -1 to hit. Initiative is spent 1-at-a-time, as with Move actions, but the attack only occurs if the movement is completed. If you don't complete the movement, reasonable GM discretion as to where in your Area you end up.
- Minor Move:** 2 Initiative. Move a very short distance (through a door you were touching, one long stride, etc.) This Initiative is not spent 1-at-a-time and does not prompt opportunity. However, this movement never functionally removes you from melee with an enemy.
- Minor Action:** 1 Initiative. Open a door, take something from your pocket, or some other very minor action per GM discretion. Minor actions may be taken during movement without spending Initiative.
- Use Skill:** 3 Initiative unless specified otherwise.
- Tactics:** 3 Initiative if successful (See Tactics section).
- Talk:** 1 Initiative. Try to speak to someone in combat. Short, sentence-or-so (GM discretion) utterances cost 1 Initiative, and continuing to speak takes more.
- First Aid:** 4 Initiative. Successes on this check can be spent in the following ways:

- 2 Successes: *Give an ally who has taken damage in excess of one of their damage tracks +1 to Up Checks and Death Checks this Scene.
*Stabilize Bleeding.
- 4 Successes: *Reduce ally's temporary wound penalty of one type by 1.
*Stabilize Serious Bleeding.
- 6 Successes: *Wake an unconscious ally.
*Give an ally who has taken damage in excess of one of their damage tracks +2 to Up Checks and Death Checks this Scene.
*Stabilize Arterial Bleeding.
- 10 Successes: *Reduce ally's temporary wound penalty of one type by 2.
*Give an ally who has taken damage in excess of one of their damage tracks +3 to Up Checks and Death Checks this Scene.

NOTE: If you fail to meet the DV for a First Aid check in combat, you may continue treatment by spending a number of Initiative equal to double your degrees of failure. At the end of this period, the first aid is successful. First Aid Initiative is spent 1-at-a-time as with Movement. First aid may be used on yourself, but with a -2 penalty.

- Full Defense: 1 Initiative, may be spent out of turn. +1 to avoid an attack. (Counts as tactics for modifier type.)
- Parry: 2 Initiative, may be spent out of turn. Roll an Attack check with a melee weapon (or Dodge with Dexterity) to block or parry an incoming melee attack. If successful, attacker loses 2 Initiative. If the blocked attack was unarmed, attacker takes your attack's damage instead.
- Flee: 3 Initiative, may be spent out of turn as an enemy closes to melee with you. Check Athletics with Speed against enemy's Athletics with Speed. If successful, they still reach your area, but are not in melee with you and must move again to close with you.
- Delay: Spend Initiative on a 2-for-1 basis to gain Interrupt Initiative (II). You may spend II to take actions out-of-turn, interrupting other entities' turns as desired and as is narratively appropriate. If multiple characters have II, their interrupt actions are resolved in order of their base Initiative Attribute, and with further ties resolved by random die roll.

Movement:

ORPHEUS doesn't use a combat grid. Movement is handled cinematically. Generally, combat is broken up into "Areas," which are inexact chunks of space roughly describing how far things are from one another. General descriptions below:

You are in the same Area with people you are in melee with, and things you could sprint to in a few seconds.

You are 1 Area away from something a healthy adult might be able to throw a rock to.

You are 2 Areas away from something that you couldn't reach with anything but arrows or bullets.

You are 3 Areas away from things that are really, really far away and would take significant effort to close or interact with, without artillery, sniper rifles, or the like.

Speed Checks are rolled with the average of your Dex and Vit along with the Athletics Skill. Barring special powers or magick, you cannot move more than 2 Areas in one round.

The GM will make a map of the Areas relative to one another in multi-area combats. No need for miniatures or grids, just be sure everyone knows where things are.

Weapons:

Weapons function as bonus successes to your damage. The difference, however, is that the damage caused by weapons is broken into a +X/Y format, where X is normal damage and Y is Hardened damage. Hardened damage cannot be bought down with Strain, but is prevented by the Hardened portion of Armor (Armor's damage reduction value is listed in X/Y format just as weapon damage).

+2/2 Damage:	.22 Bullet, small knife
+4 Damage:	Billy club
+6 Damage:	Telescoping Baton,
+4/2 Damage:	9mm bullet, combat knife
+8 Damage:	Baseball bat
+4/4 Damage:	.45 bullet, machete, fire ax
+6/4 Damage:	.556 bullet, sword, shotgun, Small Improvised Explosive
+10 Damage:	Enormous blunt object (fully stacked barbell, motorcycle, etc.)
+6/6 Damage:	50 Cal Sniper round, Greatsword, Large IED, Military Grenades

Note that blunt weapons (+X rather than +X/Y Damage) cause Daze rather than Bleeding. Additionally, they also cause Bleeding if 5 or more Damage is successfully dealt to victim's Wounds.

Encumbrance:

Larger, heavier weapons carry a penalty to Dexterity based rolls (not attacks) and checks to conceal the weapon on your person. Particularly small weapons actually give a bonus to concealing them on your person due to their size. Examples below, though specific weapons may have a penalty or bonus to concealment or encumbrance based on their dimensions and construction:

+4 total Damage:	+1 Concealment bonus
+6 total Damage:	N/A
+8 total Damage:	1 Encumbrance (Melee)
+10 total Damage:	2 Encumbrance (Melee), 1 Encumbrance (Ranged)
+12 total Damage:	3 Encumbrance (Melee), 2 Encumbrance (Ranged)

At 3 Vitality, you ignore 1 point of the Dexterity penalty (though not the concealment penalty). At 5 Vitality, you may ignore a 2nd point of the Dexterity penalty at the cost of 1 Physical Strain per Round. Wielding a 2 handed weapon in 1 Hand increases encumbrance by 1.

Special Weapon Rules:

Rate of Fire (Firearms):

If a gun has Rate of Fire greater than 1, you may fire shots up to its Rate of Fire in one attack. Each 2 DoS above what is required to hit the target adds another damage roll, considered equal to the damage bonus of the weapon (so no damage from successes). Example: +2/2 weapon, RoF 2, Hit by 2 DoS; Deal 4/2 damage on the first bullet, 2/2 on second bullet. You must declare how many shots you intend to take before rolling the attack.

When using a >1 RoF weapon, you may switch targets between shots by forfeiting 2 from your attack value and applying the attack to the new target's defense.

Dual Wielding:

Dual-wielding can be useful in delivering a flurry of attacks with one-handed melee weapons. Dual-wielding handguns has no benefit aside from looking cool and allowing you to fire twice as many bullets before reloading.

You may use two one-handed melee weapons at once in the same action for +1 Initiative Cost. The penalty on these attacks is based on your skill rank with the weapon type:

Rank 1-2:	-2 penalty
Rank 3:	-1 penalty
Rank 4:	No penalty
Rank 5:	No penalty, +1 to hit with 2 nd attack

Called Shots:

Take a -2 penalty to attack a specific area. With GM discretion, this can bypass some or all of a target's armor. If you aim, the called shot penalty is reduced by 1.

Called shots to vital areas (head in humanoid creatures, etc) Cause +0/+2 damage and prompt Up Checks against current wounds taken, rather than wounds taken past the wound track. Death Checks are still prompted only after going 5 wounds past the wound track. Additionally, checks against Daze, Bleeding, or Temporary Insanity caused by called shots to vital areas are rolled at -2.

Example Firearms List:

Semi-Auto 9mm:	+4/2 damage, RoF 3, Concealment +1, Capacity: 17, Reload 2
SMG 9mm:	+4/2 damage, RoF 6, Capacity: 32, Reload 2
Semi-Auto .45	+4/4 damage, RoF 2, Concealment +1, Capacity: 13, Reload 2
.45 SMG	+4/4 damage, RoF 4, Capacity: 25, Reload 2
Shotgun	+6/4 damage, (+4 damage in same area) Encumbrance 1, Concealment -1, Capacity: 8, Reload 1 per Shell
Semi-Auto Shotgun	+6/4 damage, (+4 damage in same area) RoF 2, Encumbrance 1, Concealment -1, Capacity 8, Reload 1 per shell
Auto Shotgun	+6/4 damage, (+4 damage in same area) RoF 4, Encumbrance 2, Concealment -2, Capacity: 10, Reload 3
Semi-Auto Rifle	+6/4 damage, RoF 2, Encumbrance 1, Concealment -1, Capacity: 30 Reload 2. Called Shot penalty reduced by 1.
Fully Automatic Rifle	+6/4 damage, RoF 4, Encumbrance 1, Concealment -1, Capacity: 30 Called Shot penalty reduced by 1 if you Aim.
Heavy Sniper Rifle	+6/6 damage, RoF 1, Encumbrance 2, Concealment -2, Capacity: 10 No called shot penalty if you aim, -2 to hit if you don't aim.

NOTE: You can always chamber an extra round, effectively increasing the capacity of a firearm by 1.

Explosives:

Thrown explosives roll their attack with Ranged Attack/Athletics against target's Speed/Athletics.

Set explosives check Cognition/Craft: Demolitions against target's Perception/Awareness. If successful, the explosive counts as having Surprise. The target then checks Speed/Athletics against the explosive's original check value.

When a character successfully evades an explosive with Speed/Athletics, they must roll luck. On a negative result, they still take $\frac{1}{2}$ the normal damage.

Concussion (IED):	+8/6 damage to all in area
Concussion (Military):	+8/8 Damage to all in area, +4/2 damage to all in adjacent areas (Military quality)
Shrapnel (IED):	+8/6 damage to all in area, +2/2 additional damage to unarmored targets.
Shrapnel (Military):	+8/8 Damage to all in area, +4/2 damage to all in adjacent areas, +4/2 additional damage to unarmored targets.
Flashbang:	+6/6 Mental damage to all in area. Victims roll against Daze at -1. Up checks prompted by this damage are rolled at +3.

Armor:

Armor functions as a straight damage reduction on all damage you take. Armor's damage reduction value is listed in X/Y format, with X reducing normal damage and Y reducing Hardened damage. If you have more Hardened damage reduction than you take Hardened damage, the leftover Hardened damage reduction prevents normal damage instead (if any). Example Armor levels are shown for perspective, along with the penalty to Dexterity based checks (Encumbrance) that represents the weight and bulkiness of the armor.

2/0 Armor:	Biker Leather
2/2 Armor	Light Kevlar
	Concealment -1
4/3 Armor:	Kevlar with Ballistic Plates
	Encumbrance: 1, Effective Toughness +1, Concealment -1
6/4 Armor:	Military Gear
	Encumbrance: 2, Effective Toughness +1 Concealment -2
8/5 Armor:	Advanced Military Armor with Ballistic Plates, Explosives Ordnance Disposal Armor
	Encumbrance: 3, Effective Toughness +2, Concealment -3

At 3 Vitality, you ignore 1 point of the Dexterity penalty (though not the concealment penalty). At 5 Vitality, you may ignore a 2nd point of the Dexterity penalty at the cost of 1 Physical Strain per Round.

Memento Mori:

ORPHEUS is meant to convey an atmosphere of dread and terror. To help this along, the GM has access to Memento Mori (MM). The number of MM the GM has in reserve is equal to the number of players, times two. A player may not hold more than 2 Memento Mori at one time.

At any time, the GM may give a player a MM to inflict any of the following effects:

- 1: Player gets a -1 instead of a 3d6 roll for this check.
- 2: Player cannot use Strain for this check, or use Strain to reduce damage from this attack (consequent damage cannot reduce Focus, Health, or Sanity below -1.)
- 3: When a Luck check is called for, treat it as a -2 result in lieu of a roll.
- 4: A player character is harmlessly removed from the scene (i.e. a kidnapping, knocked unconscious, etc.) This option should be used only in service of the narrative.
- 5: A stupendously unlucky event such as a gun jam, hidden pit trap, or any other such misfortune the GM sees fit to use to advance the story.

NOTE: The player may use Skill bonuses after Memento Mori are given, but cannot use Strain if Memento Mori are given using method 2 above. If Memento Mori are given using a method that affects a check (giving -1, preventing strain), they may not use the Memento Mori to affect that check.

Once a MM has been given to a player, they hold onto it until they decide to use it. They may spend a MM (Putting it back into the GM's reserve) for the following effects:

- 1: Take a +3 in lieu of a non-luck 3d6 roll.
- 2: +3 to a Tactics roll.
- 3: Gain 4 Initiative
- 4: When a Luck check is called for, treat it as a +2 result in lieu of a roll.
- 5: Ignore all Wound Penalties for the remainder of the Scene.
- 6: Reduce damage taken on an attack or Horror check by $\frac{1}{2}$ (Can be used twice if player holds 2 MM for zero damage). The damage is adjusted before determining the roll for Daze, Bleeding, or Temporary Insanity.

Courting Death:

At any time, once per Round, a player may declare that they are Courting Death. This obligates the GM to give them a MM immediately, but the penalty can be chosen and applied at any time during the Scene (or on the next Scene with lethal danger by GM discretion), on any check the GM chooses. Courting death restores 1 Humanity. Players may only Court Death in combat, or in non-combat scenes that could become deadly at any moment. A player may always ask the GM if Courting Death is on the table for a given Scene.

Humanity:

Use of supernatural or extra-human powers takes a toll on one's humanity and sense of self. Players must track the number of Rank 1 and Rank 2 Abilities they use, and at the end of the scene, make Humanity Loss rolls as follows.

*For each use of a Rank 1 Ability, roll 3 dice. For each negative die, lose 1 Humanity.

*For each use of a Rank 2 Ability, roll 3 dice. For each non-positive die, lose 1 Humanity

If you have 2 Archetypes, you must designate one as the Primary and one as the Secondary Archetype. Track your Humanity total on the Primary Archetype, and apply the effects of both that level of Humanity loss, and a level of Humanity loss one category less severe for your Secondary Archetype. In other words, if you have 51 Humanity remaining, you suffer the 75-51 Humanity effect for your Primary Archetype and the 100-76 Humanity effect for your Secondary Archetype.

You may not take abilities from archetypes totaling more than 2 Humanity Loss mechanics. In other

words, 2 archetypes, or 2 archetypes plus Soldier (which has no Humanity Loss mechanic, see Spec Ops section). This restriction does not apply to Archetypes that are forced upon you, for example, being infected by a Wendigo and then eating human flesh will make you a Wendigo, even if you were already a Psychic Cyborg.

When you reach 0 Humanity, your character succumbs to the darkest facets of their inhuman nature, becoming an NPC (at least temporarily. GM's are encouraged to consider side-quests to restore humanity to a lost PC if narratively satisfying.)

When a PC is lost in this way, the "Borrowed Time" rule should be used if helpful.

Horror Checks:

Humanity and Sanity Loss:

Characters in ORPHEUS risk the loss of Sanity due to their participation in horrifying circumstances. The table below outlines some example strata of awfulness along with the Sanity loss that accompany them and checks necessary to avoid it.

Sanity damage caused by witnessing (or doing) horrific things can only be mitigated partially by a successful check. The notation "X vs Y/Z" is used, noting the DV of the check, the Sanity (SN) Damage dealt on failure, and the Sanity Damage dealt on success, respectively. Note that Sanity Damage caused by Horror checks can be reduced by spending Spiritual Strain, Force of Will bonuses apply.

Event:

Discover a dismembered corpse (or evidence of)
Seeing a minor impossible event (ie a drop of water falling up)
Seeing a monster
Finding your close friend's mutilated corpse
Seeing your close friend horribly murdered
Being tortured
Seeing a major impossible event (ie a street folding in on itself and vanishing)
Seeing the face of a god

Stability Check:

1 vs 2/1 SN
2 vs 4/2 SN
3 vs 6/3 SN
4 vs 8/4 SN
5 vs 10/5 SN
6 vs 12/6 SN
7 vs 14/7 SN
8 vs 16/8 SN

When the horror is something that a Player Character themselves did or consciously caused, they also stand to lose Humanity. See table below.

Event (Player Caused):

Killing someone who was obviously a threat but has not yet attacked	No check. Lose 1 Humanity.
Dooming someone unthreatening by action or inaction.	2 vs 4/2 SN/H
Killing someone who may have been a threat preemptively	3 vs 6/3 SN/ H
Killing an innocent, or unthreatening, person	4 vs 8/4 SN/ H
Torturing someone in a prolonged or horrific way	6 vs 12/6 SN/ H
Voluntarily communing with a malefic, unnatural entity	8 vs 16/8 SN/ H

Suppressing Horror:

Characters trained in the Discipline Skill can attempt to suppress the effects of a Horror check, relying on their training and laser-focused mindset to clamp down their reaction to the Horror, dealing with it once the crisis is over.

To Suppress a Horror check, roll Discipline with Cognition instead of Stability with Willpower.

*If you succeed, succeed the Horror check, but you must deal with the repercussions later. (This means you take the success-determined number of Sanity damage, but you may use Mental or Spiritual Strain to reduce the damage.)

*If you fail, you fail the Horror check and take Focus Damage equal to ½ the Sanity Damage you take as a result of failing.

The GM decides when it is appropriate to deal with the repercussions of Suppressing horror. Generally, this is when the immediate threat is passed (for Horror checks resulting from an active threat) or when you reach a lull in activity (if the Horror was encountered in less elevated circumstances.) When this occurs, you must roll 1 die for each 2 Sanity you stood to lose from the Horror check. Lose 1 Humanity for each negative result.

Repeated Exposure:

When making multiple checks against the same (or sufficiently similar, GM discretion) source of Horror in the same Adventure, you automatically succeed (suffering the Sanity loss determined by success), but must pay 1 Humanity (This cost replaces the Humanity cost of Horror checks the player character causes).

Acclimation to Horror:

As a character becomes accustomed to a given type horrible thing (ORPHEUS agents see a lot of stuff), their minds attempt to adapt to better survive. Each character gains Acclimations through advancement with GM discretion for relevance to the fiction. (See Advancement section)

Acclimation:

Description:

Ruthless

You are able to shut off your empathy enough to do violence to others in order to get the job done. You may pay 2 Humanity to reduce the Sanity Damage by 5 on a Horror check that the GM agrees would be numbed by being inured to the inflicting of harm, particularly on those who pose a threat to you.

Callous

You are able to shut off your empathy enough to ignore the suffering of others. You may pay 2 Humanity to reduce the Sanity Damage by 5 on a Horror check that the GM agrees would be numbed by being used to seeing suffering and misery and not feeling obliged to help.

Strong Stomach

You've been through enough disgusting sights (and smells, and textures...) to be largely stoic about further grossness. You may pay 2 Humanity to reduce the Sanity Damage by 5 on a Horror check that the GM agrees would be numbed by having long since become jaded about blood, guts, filth, disease, and other awfulness.

Fatalistic:

You've seen enough of the universe's uncaring, unguided spiral into entropy to understand that nothing is really important. You're going to die someday, just like everything else. How and why doesn't matter, because time itself may not have meaning and you certainly have no value. You may pay 2 Humanity to reduce the Sanity Damage by 5 on a Horror check that the GM agrees would be numbed by not being afraid of dying.

Acclimation may be applied only before rolling the Horror check. Acclimation-based reduction affects the total damage vis-a-vis determining if there is a check for Temporary Insanity and any associated penalties.

Some horror is cosmic or eldritch in nature, arising from a violation of reality itself. Player characters never get used to this unnatural horror, and cannot become acclimated to it.

Embracing Your Darkest Self:

Characters in ORPHEUS can embrace their inhuman side to insulate themselves from the full effects of the horrors they witness. A player may pay 10 Humanity to reduce the Sanity damage incurred by a horror check by 5. This reduction applies before checking for Temporary Insanity. Thus, reducing the total Sanity damage below 5 would cause there to be no Temporary Insanity roll.

Embrace Your Darkest Self may be used before or after rolling the Horror check.

Action Reports:

Action Reports occur at the end of each session. During Action Reports, Accolades and Motivations are discussed.

Accolades:

During play, when a player gives an exceptional or particularly satisfying bit of roleplaying, another player may give her an Accolade. Each player may only give one Accolade per Action Report, and no player may receive more than one Accolade per Action Report.

When a player receives an Accolade, they Refresh 1 Strain of each type.

The GM may also give one GM Accolade per Action Report, which restores 5 Humanity. It is recommended that the GM award this Accolade in a way that rewards improvement more than sheer excellence.

Motivations and Humanity/Strain:

During an Action report at the end of a Session in which a player either plays to a Humanity Affirming Motivation or resists a Humanity Estranging Motivation (with reasonable roleplaying by GM's judgment), they roll 3 dice per Motivation and regain 1 Humanity per positive result.

For each Motivation the player played in a Humanity-Estranging way (against their Affirming Motivation or played to their Estranging Motivation, again by GM discretion), they roll 3d6 per motivation and regain 1 Strain of any type per positive result.

Strain Refresh:

Once you have spent Strain, it is unavailable to use until it is Refreshed. Strain is Refreshed at the end of a session, according to the following criteria:

Session Base Refresh:	1 Strain of each type
Session concluded an arc:	Refresh all Strain

In addition to Session-end refresh, if the following conditions are met, you may refresh some strain of a

given type mid-session:

8 Hours of Rest:	Refresh 2 Physical and 1 Mental Strain.
24 Hours without extreme stress:	Refresh 2 Spiritual and 1 Mental Strain.

Downtime and Recovery:

Between Adventures, you choose how your character spends their time, subject to the availability of medical facilities and access to ORPHEUS training. Choose one of the following options, if the GM agrees that it is available to you.

Intensive Medical Care:

You spend the entire downtime in a well-equipped medical facility, receiving surgery, physical therapy, psychiatric care, and any other treatments you need.

Heal a number of physical Wounds equal to your Toughness+1, mental Wounds equal to your Clarity+1, and spiritual Wounds equal to your Force of Will+1, starting with Critical Wounds, then Severe Wounds, then Light Wounds. For each full week spent under this care, Heal Wounds for each type of damage equal to your applicable bonus (as above) and roll 1 die, healing an additional wound per non-negative result.

Remove up to -2 of permanent injury-based penalties. This can reduce a -3 penalty to a -1, and can be spread over two different penalties if you wish.

Intensive Self Care:

You spend the entire downtime nurturing your personal relationships, meditating, practicing a religion, creating art, or otherwise engaging in emotionally-healthy practices.

Regain 10 Humanity, plus 10 more for each full week of downtime spent in this way.

Intensive ORPHEUS Training:

You engage in brutal, all-encompassing training exercises under ORPHEUS (or other if GM approved) direction.

Gain a pool of 5 Temporary Strain, which lasts for the next Adventure. This Strain may only be spent in combat. For each full week of training, gain an additional 5 Temporary Strain to this pool. You may not gain more than (Character Level x 2) additional Temporary Strain (beyond the initial 5) in this way.

Balanced Training/Self Care:

You train under ORPHEUS direction, but also make some time to maintain your personal bonds and/or do what calms and fulfills you.

Regain 5 Humanity, plus 5 more for each full week spent in this downtime.

Gain a pool of 5 Temporary Strain for each full week of downtime. You may not gain more than (5 + Character Level x 2) additional Temporary Strain this way.

Balanced Medical Care/ Self Care:

You receive medical services at a well-equipped facility, but are conscious and non-medicated enough to engage in a level of self care.

Heal a number of physical Wounds equal to your Toughness, mental Wounds equal to your Clarity, and spiritual Wounds equal to your Force of Will starting with Critical Wounds, then Severe Wounds, then Light Wounds. For each full week spent under this care, roll 1 die, healing an additional wound of each type per non-negative result.

Remove up to -1 of permanent injury-based penalties.

Regain 5 Humanity, plus 5 more for each full week spent in this downtime.

Sub-optimal Conditions:

If you have no access to medical facilities, ORPHEUS training facilities, or are in some way cut off from the hobbies, relationships, and other factors that connect you to your humanity, you may not have the full benefit of a normal downtime. If you choose to use your downtime for something to which you have limited access (GM discretion), you gain the benefit of it's "Balanced" downtime version, but you must spend the entire downtime doing so.

Advancement:

Player Characters gain Experience Points (XP) over the course of play, according to the parameters below. Every 5 XP, characters gain a level.

Normal Session:	+1 XP
Narrative Turning Point:	+2 XP
Arc-End:	+3 XP

Levels go in cycles of 4, with the following rewards:

CSP: Combat Skill Points. You may advance a Combat Skill by spending CSP equal to the next rank (i.e. taking a Skill from Rank 4 to Rank 5 costs 5 CSP).

NCSP: Non-Combat Skill Points. You may advance a Non-Combat Skill by spending CSP equal to the next rank (i.e. taking a Skill from Rank 4 to Rank 5 costs 5 CSP).

Attribute Points: 1 Attribute Point raises a Primary Attribute of your choice by 1, up to the normal maximum of 5.

Ability Rank: Raise the Rank of an ability you have by 1, or gain a new ability at Rank 1.*

Ability Mastery: Improve an ability you have by gaining one of its two listed masteries.

Ability Overload: Gain a supercharged version of an ability you have, gaining the listed overload feature.

Horror Acclimation: You become hardened against the psychological effects of a certain type of horror, taking one of the listed Acclimations from the Horror Checks section.

Motivation Limit: The maximum number of concurrent motivations your character may have increases by 1. All motivations must be deemed narratively appropriate by the GM.

Level 1:	+1 CSP, +1 NCSP, +1 Ability Rank
Level 2:	+1 CSP, +1 NCSP, +1 Ability Rank, +2 Maximum Strain (must be of 2 types)
Level 3:	+1 CSP, +1 NCSP, +1 Ability Rank, +1 Ability Mastery
Level 4:	+2 CSP, +1 NCSP, +1 Attribute Point
Level 5:	+1 CSP, +1 NCSP, +1 Ability Rank, +1 Ability Overload, +1 Horror Acclimation, +1 Motivation Limit
Level 6:	+1 CSP, +1 NCSP, +1 Ability Rank, +2 Maximum Strain (must be of 2 types)
Level 7:	+1 CSP, +1 NCSP, +1 Ability Rank, +1 Ability Mastery
Level 8:	+2 CSP, +1 NCSP, +1 Attribute Point
Level 9:	+1 CSP, +1 NCSP, +1 Ability Rank
Level 10:	+1 CSP, +1 NCSP, +1 Ability Rank, +1 Ability Overload, +2 Maximum Strain (must be of 2 types), +1 Horror Acclimation, +1 Motivation Limit, +1 Ability Synthesis
Level 11:	+1 CSP, +1 NCSP, +1 Ability Rank, +1 Ability Mastery
Level 12:	+2 CSP, +1 NCSP, +1 Attribute Point
Level 13:	+1 CSP, +1 NCSP, +1 Ability Rank
Level 14:	+1 CSP, +1 NCSP, +1 Ability Rank, +2 Maximum Strain (must be of 2 types)
Level 15:	+1 CSP, +1 NCSP, +1 Ability Rank, +1 Ability Mastery, +1 Ability Overload, +1 Horror Acclimation, +1 Motivation Limit
Level 16:	+2 CSP, +1 NCSP, +1 Attribute Point
Level 17:	+1 CSP, +1 NCSP, +1 Ability Rank
Level 18:	+1 CSP, +1 NCSP, +1 Ability Rank, +2 Maximum Strain (must be of 2 types)
Level 19:	+1 CSP, +1 NCSP, +1 Ability Rank, +1 Ability Mastery
Level 20:	+2 CSP, +1 NCSP, +1 Attribute Point, +1 Ability Overload, +1 Horror Acclimation, +1 Motivation Limit, +1 Ability Synthesis

*See Archetypes Section

Normally, a character can only gain 20 levels, representing the maximum of human potential. However, in more heroic campaigns, feel free to allow a higher level cap. Also, You could allow a higher cap on Attributes if you wanted to evoke mythic heroics. It's not really what The ORPHEUS Protocol is designed for, but it ought to work.