

The Aether **REPUBLICA**



POWERED BY
FATE



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WORD OF THANKS

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FATE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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ARTIST STATEMENT

Several forms of media inspired the design of *The Æther Republica*'s characters, architecture and bestiaries. *The Æther Republica*'s overall aesthetic is steampunk, so naturally other medias' steampunk settings, such as *Arcane*'s Piltover and *Genshin Impact*'s Fontaine, played an influence in how technology would be incorporated into our setting in a meaningful way.

Old Spanish buildings and churches influenced our direction with the city's architecture, whereas old formal Spanish, Filipino and Austronesian-Indigenous clothing influenced the varied designs of our characters. Tying into our steampunk genre, some characters include more genre-heavy design elements: leather wear and mechanical gadgets.

Our bestiaries are primarily inspired by Filipino folklore, taking descriptive prose elements over direct designs and re-interpreting them alongside contemporary monster designs that connect with mutation or the space between human-inhuman. Monster designs from *Bloodborne*, *Chainsaw Man*, *Resident Evil* and even *Devil May Cry 5* were influential.

Artwork and other design elements (logo, background, items, weapons, etc.) were inspired by *The Elder Scrolls Arena*, and graphic artists such as Shepard Fairey, Randy Laybourne and Andre Saraiva. We carried across how these artists use the contrast between thick, black lines and bright colours to better convey messages to their audiences. Using these aesthetics and aims, we want the game book to be visually accessible and inviting to readers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HIGH CONCEPT.....	6
PLAYABLE CHARACTERS.....	8
TIMELINE.....	14
REPUBLICA MAPS.....	16
NOTABLE LOCATIONS.....	30
SOCIAL CLASSES.....	38
THE SCHOOLS OF UNIVERSIDAD DE ABANSÉ	40
FACTIONS.....	46
NON-PLAYABLE CHARACTERS	48
BESTIARY.....	53
ITEMS.....	58
HOW TO PLAY.....	64
CHARACTER SHEETS.....	76
GAME MASTER SECTION.....	83
ADVENTURE FUNNEL: TESTING LOYALTIES.....	86
APPENDIX	98

HIGH CONCEPT

In the 18th century, our world was changed with the discovery of 'Æther,' a mineral that defied previous scientific knowledge. 'Æther' fuels airships, powers human augmentations and manipulates physics.

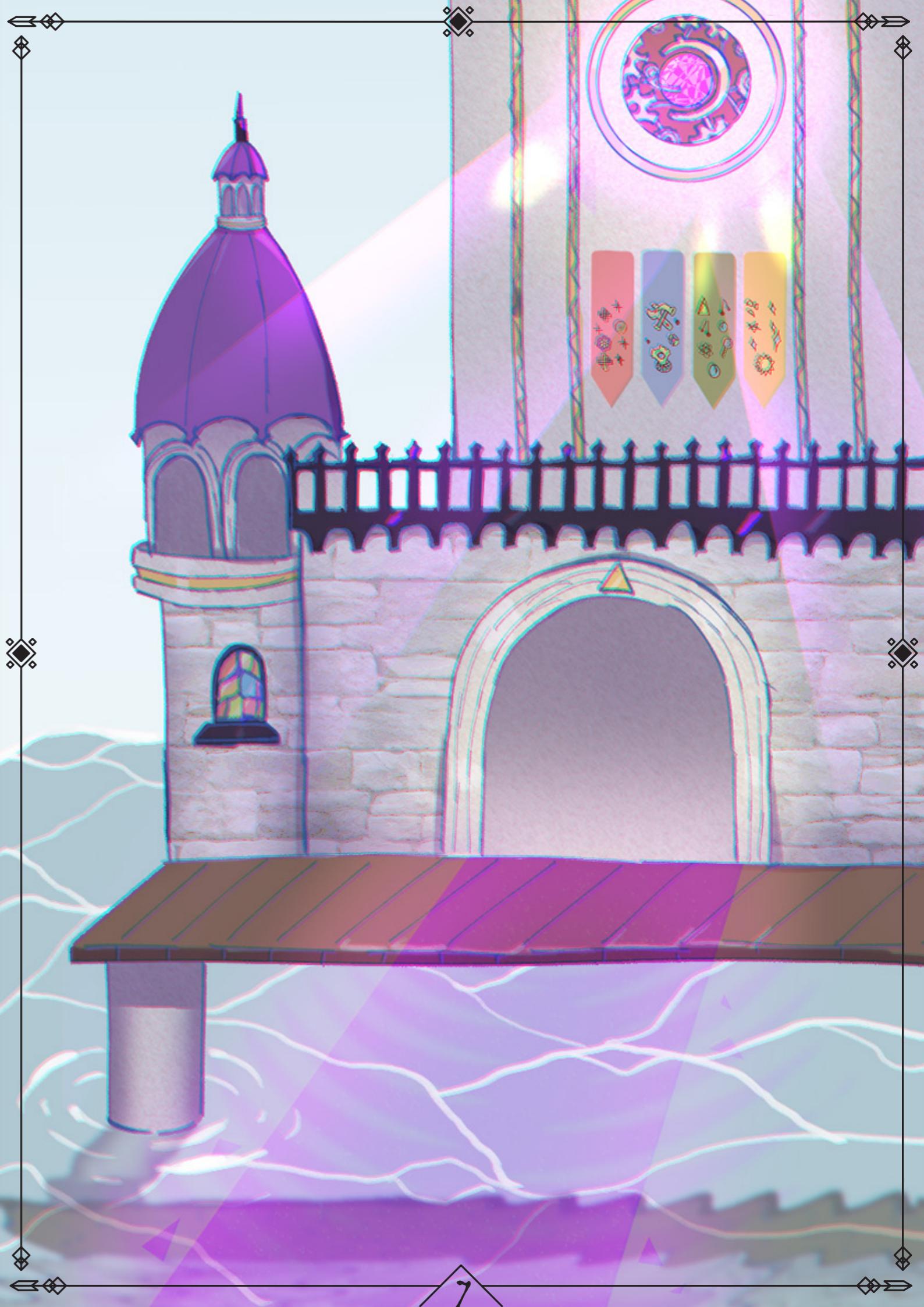
Now at the turn of the century, the Spanish Empire's research colony in the Philippines has fully seceded, becoming its own nation-state. 'Abansé City' continues its industrial expanse across the archipelago, rallying prospectors, privateers and scientific minds to join them. The Philippine's indigenous peoples watch for monsters on two fronts, those from 'Abansé City' and those from the deep earth where the 'Æther' crystals sing...

The human body is limited in strengths. Players will confront the dangers of the industrial and natural worlds, encouraging them to think wisely on open combat. To explore the city, expand settlements or uncover the islands' mysteries, augmentations and 'Æther' will ease the journey but come with a toll on body and mind. The technological boom has thrown the world into a retro-futurism. Enlightenment aesthetics and fashions meet the colonial frontier with steampunk gadgetry.

Though boasted as a symbol of progress by its academic ruling class, 'Abansé City' is still built on the bones of colonialism and exploitation. Non-academics and the indigenous population are exposed to the industrial aftereffects of progress - with Æther's own supernatural additions.

DISCLAIMER:

Though set in an alternate version of world history focusing on the Philippines, *The Æther Republica* is still full of the same complex issues of its time period and setting. Colonialism, racism, environmentalism - rather than stray away from these issues, and more, any who step into *The Æther Republica* should know to approach these topics with respect and care. While this setting offers the opportunity for players to step into roles unfamiliar to them, it may at times also bring their characters at odds with one another, from factional loyalties to personal philosophies. In the spirit of roleplay, this game manual begins with pre-made characters that may be played or introduced as NPCs. Further in are instructions to make original characters, but our hope is that through the stories of these introductory characters, players will gain better insight into the different peoples of *The Æther Republica* and the varying relationships they have with their world.





PLAYABLE CHARACTERS

MARIA CLARA

*Maria helps the man onto the makeshift bed, then kneels and begins to take off his legs. 'Let me know if there's any feedback, any at all,' she says. His face creases into a smile, like her father's. He mumbles *a gracias*. It sounds strained. Seeing the legs, it is easy to imagine why: joints are rusting, panels dented, wiring loose, the ozone smell of Æther leaking from the cores. First the left.*

Each haphazard nerve plug needs to be removed from around the joint but tips shouldn't be exposed for long. She's been told static feels like a stab wound. One hand supporting the leg augment, with the other Maria gathers the plugs in a soaked cloth, pressing it into the man's hand. She watches for winces, but he's leant his head back, eyes shut. Then, with her smallest wrench, she carefully twists the femur joint, where mechanism ends and person begins. This connection is even more delicate; the metal comes away discoloured and sticky, like a mix of grease and bile. Maria repeats the process with the right augment. She carries them to her make-do workbench. 'How long have they been bad?' She hears a chuckle. 'They have always been bad.'

'Then how long have they been worse? These are older models but I've never seen them in this condition, and fitted for...' She'd seen the scars on his thighs, thick and knotted.

'I was told to think of them as severance pay,' goes the man. 'That I am lucky to still live and luckier to still walk.'

Maria opens a leg and rewires what she can. There's no saving the augments once the Æther begins to leak; unchecked, it plays with the metals' magnetism, density. She's only been in the Testing Grounds two days, and all she's heard rings true. The people here accept what they are given, else they get nothing. Accidents with explosives, machinery, experimental augments are commonplace, but it still makes her sick to think her School allowed this to happen.

'But I accepted the job,' the man says, like he's heard her thoughts. 'I accepted what could happen and my legs were crushed, but I was cut free. I was lucky the field-scholar knew what to do.'

Maria puts down her tools. 'He attached scrap to you to save paperwork. E&A clerks don't care about written-off legs, but a worksite death needs clocking.' When she brings the legs back to her patient, Maria looks him firmly in the eye. 'Your luck is their excuse. Don't give them an excuse.' The man looks to the far window, like he doesn't know what to say.

When he hands Maria the pesos for her work, she leaves them in his palm. 'No, take those to the mechanics on the eastside, and with this.'

A small bright blue ribbon, like a piece of hope.

'Tell them I sent you,' Maria says. 'Just remember, no excuses.'

A young mestizo and a travelling repairwoman who always tries to keep an upbeat attitude and a smile on her face. She only ever wears the practical clothes of her trade, save for a clean blue tie in her hair.

She lived with her father in the Laguna Bay region but learned her trade from studying with the School of Engineering and Æthernautics in Abansé City. There, she developed her talent for fixing vehicles and mechanical body augments, and met Crisóstomo Ibarra, an activist against the Church's repression of the Filipinos of their island, Luzon. Coming from beyond the city's boundaries and with a strong sense of justice herself, it wasn't long before Maria and Crisóstomo were lovers. They still argued over how Filipinos should stand up to the Church but together joined the group that would later become known as Para el Pueblo (For the People). While Para el Pueblo's methods were mostly for a peaceful resistance, direct opposition against the Church, and the Spanish Empire working through them, always leads to disaster. Though not destroyed outright, Para el Pueblo were still brought to heel. Crisóstomo was executed but Maria was spared.

To add insult to injury, it was a Spanish friar among the judges who had made the decision to keep her alive – on the condition that she take his hand in marriage. Maria narrowly escaped him and ended her studies with the School of Engineering and Æthernautics. Fleeing back home, she turned to her ageing father and community – these were the people who needed both peace and revolution. Maria kept her ties with Para el Pueblo but still maintains a safe distance from their grander schemes. Helping those in need, this is the way Maria keeps her and Crisóstomo's dream alive.



PISH WALKER

'What seems to be the problem?' He likes to lead with this, steady hand on the brim of his hat, held down over his face. This is mysterious, enigmatic even. The townsman places a frothy mug between them. 'Señor Walker,' the townsman says. 'We are near halfway through the growing season and my crop is yet to fully sprout. Surely, there must be something you can do?' Pish swaps the hand on his hat brim to pull the mug close and under. He takes a long sip. He smacks his lips. After the third, this beer tastes all the better. 'Hmmm, yes. I see.'

The townsman stammers on, telling the mysterious and probably handsome Pish Walker of his many farming trials and tribulations. Pish holds up a hand midway through.

'And what of your soil's pH levels, countryman? What of sodium nitrate?'

For a moment, silence.

'I'm sorry, what are those, Señor?'

Another moment of silence.

'I am unsure myself, when I think on it longer,' says Pish. Before the townsman can speak again, Pish continues. 'But rest assured, my thanks for the drink. Tomorrow I shall attend to your—'

'You said there'd be gold!' A fist slams on the tavern table between Pish and the townsman. A woman in prospecting attire flanked by several others.

Pish clears his throat.

Another moment later, the woman slams a new mug to the table, froth flying across the wood and onto Pish's hat. Sheepishly, he lifts its wide brim.

Days later, long hard days without sight or smell of proper drink, Pish and prospectors arrive on the riverbank he'd marked. They'd complained the water was too deep to pan, but here is where they slowed just enough after the headwaters not far yonder. With staff in hand, Æther shard in the other, the river groans and bucks, splitting in two where the riverbed rises to a newborn island. Yellow glistens on its shores and the great Pish Walker knows his work is done once more.

An unassuming mestizo man always seen in the same faded, loose robe and wide-brimmed straw hat. Most often found in taverns and pubs, he's slowly become a local legend among the commoners of Laguna Bay, always ready and able to semi-accurately chart weather and flooding for a drink at a time. Actually, he's never been seen without a drink. For a shot, pint, or even a keg, 'Señor Pish Walker' will take on any geographical duty.

The going rumour is that he studied under the School of Cosmologics in Abansé City. How else would he know so much about the Æther's influence on the weather or earthquakes? It's said he once even diverted floodwaters using powers only a Cosmologics scholar would know, cracking the earth open and guiding waters past a farmstead, the air humming around him, thick with Æther's ozone smell. The problem is, this Pish Walker claims not to know if he's ever even visited the Cosmologics' campus. The liar!

But Pish waves all suspicions away. Only rumours that speak of his powers and charm, thank you very much. Being called a liar would lead to work drying up, and the drinks with it. In these uncertain times, it takes more than goodwill to keep a vagrant life afloat. While being associated with Para el Pueblo doesn't pay well, if it gets a drink at the local tavern, it's enough for Pish.



NALI CAPILI

Datu the Knife takes a bullet to the head, hits the ground. This leaves two: his brother Lawin, and Nali. The rest of the Siege Crew are either like Datu or elsewhere. It is bad to think this, but Nali wishes it was Datu pinned behind this rock with her on their asses, not Lawin. Lawin scouts, slips past guard posts, gathers intel. He isn't for head-on fights. Anyone but Lawin. 'What's our move, boss?' He's keeping his head though. Nali grinds her teeth. 'Another rifleman behind my right. That makes three.'

Lawin swallows. 'If I create a distraction—'

'You'll go with Datu.' She sees Lawin wince. 'But we have time on our side.'

Shadows are already pooling, blotting out blood. They have less than an hour before twilight, maybe. Pinned or not, darkness is always a friend. And Lawin is right. 'Do you know why the Spanish bring guns?' Nali asks.

This is her favourite saying; he should know the answer.

'Because cowards kill from afar?'

Nali bares her teeth. 'And we show cowards they are right to fear.' She pulls out the pistol she'd taken off a fat mining slaver and thrusts it into Lawin's hands. 'Aim for the ridge, high.'

Datu's body is a pace or so from their cover. Lawin is quick but his shot is barely enough time for Nali to swing round to reach. More gunpowder cracks. The ground spits up dirt, pitted. Lawin makes a choking sound. Holding Datu by the scruff of his shirt, Nali turns back. Lawin has dropped the pistol, gripping his neck. Blood wells from the side, drips between fingers.

'We were both right about... distraction,' he says. 'Now what?'

'Remember the time,' Nali grins. 'We made those stupid sky-pirates shoot scarecrows after dark?'

Lawin manages a nod. He breathes slow and eyes his dead brother. Lawin's breaths grow longer and slower with every drip of daylight. Nali only has one chance. In one fluid motion, she stands, twists and hoists Datu up by the back of his neck. She charges forward, nearly stumbling over body after body but never falling. By the time the invader riflemen stop firing to see her scarecrow for what it is, Nali's bangkung sword is drawn and it is too late for them.



They say ever since she was found as a baby in the northern wilds of New Castille, Nali Capili has been a fighter. Well-built and significantly taller than most indio, it's a wonder if life sculpted her this way or if she was born with a warrior's fate.

As an orphaned indio, the rebel militia Los Hijos del País (The Sons of the Country) raised her as their own, taught her the ways of guerilla warfare, and set her on the path against any who would harm Luzon and her free peoples. But to Nali Capili, fighting is not just a duty, but a passion, and staying in the northern pine forests to ambush airskiffs was never enough. No, the fight had to be taken south, to the Spanish invaders who claimed Laguna Bay for their 'Abansé City' and their so-called 'Æther.' To Nali, this is the worst of the invaders' transgressions: to take something they do not understand and bend it to their will like they do so many other things.

True warriors of Luzon will never touch 'Æther' or use any twisted thing the Spanish academics create from it, and Nali enforced this among her circle of guerilla fighters. They were the infamous Siege Crew, and she was their captain. The Siege Crew made their name from perfecting Los Hijos del País tactics against new invader settlements or mines: take out armed guards and let it be known; scare the enemy into their shelter; cut off communications and supplies till their defences were no more. But for short-tempered Nali, these tactics became too easy, too safe. It was only a matter of time before she'd jump on any challenge, no matter the danger. What broke the infamous Siege Crew has become storied across Luzon.

ISAAC SANTISTEBAN

Para el Pueblo had heard him out, good, but the proof was in the papers. He dons his khaki robe and cap, places the brandy from the old man's study in his bag. Whispers aren't good enough, they need a dossier from the School of Natural Order itself. Getting in would mean gaining a consultant's writ. Isaac feels something shift in his chest, like he'd been holding in a phantom breath. When he passes the mirror in the foyer, he doesn't flinch.

In the doorway of their terraced home, he kisses Mother on the cheek. This isn't meant to be a goodbye. 'Promise me you won't ever let him throw a glass at the maid again,' Isaac says. The old man is still sleeping off last night's tirade.

'My, so you're at the age to think you can demand everything of me too.' She sounds tired, she always sounds tired. 'Don't echo your father,' Mother smiles.

He knows she's teasing but Isaac thinks of the mirror.

Down the cobbled streets, he thinks of the mirror.

Through the campus gates, he thinks of the mirror.

When someone looks into a mirror, they know what to expect. To hide in plain view is to turn those expectations back on the beholder. This is a favourite philosophy of the School of Physics – they love anything that justifies their methodology – but Isaac had already learned this at his father's side long before higher education or attempted indoctrinations. The finishing touch to Isaac's forged consultor papers is a Physics clerk's seal, the handpress locked in a secure desk, lock and keys wrought against Æther tampering. This means the mirror approach.

After his lecture, Isaac accompanies his professor back to his office. The brandy is in a crystal bottle, Spanish-made, an extravagant gift for an old mestizo clerk relegated to rudimentary studies. Surely, this deserves some additional sanctity, Isaac suggests to his professor, so he unlocks his desk drawer. But surely, we have enough time to toast? Isaac suggests before the drawer is closed.

The professor turns his back for but a moment.

Isaac closes his eyes, concentrates on his Æthered ring, and imagines the handpress in his pocket, between his fingers. Isaac holds this idea tight and when he opens his eyes, he won't look in the drawer – this would break his theorem.

But to the professor, the handpress is only in the drawer.

When Isaac leaves the office, he puts his hand in his pocket, the handpress between his fingers. It is most certainly not in the drawer. It could not be in two places at once.

Despite his fair skin, peninsulares attire and formal airs, Isaac Santisteban is a mestizo, something his father will never let him forget. Though even with their strained relationship, growing up with a wealthy peninsular official for a father has afforded Isaac privileges most would dream of, including studying at the prestigious School of Physics.

But with time in the most politicking circles of Abansé City, Isaac quickly found the truth: he is the only reason his father married his mother, a mestizo woman of no renown. A one-night affair became a pregnancy scandal that forced his father to marry, or else lose his job and standing with the Church. Two decades past and now the man drunkenly rants behind closed doors about how God punished him with a 'half-breed son.' Out in high and academic society, however, Isaac has always been made to look the perfect peninsular scion, to be seen but never heard. Ironically, though he knows his father thinks nothing of Isaac, ensuring his tuition with the School of Physics for only family prestige has worked to Isaac's natural strengths. With their control of Æther, one can make sure they are never heard nor seen. One can't be berated if they can't be seen or touched.

Isaac used his Æther studies to sneak out at night, spending more time with other young mestizo men. Like him, they'd grown resentful of the Church and Spain. But, one night on the streets, they found a lost peninsular boy. Isaac's friends began to harass the boy, pushing him around, pushing their blame on him. In that moment, Isaac put aside his resentment for peninsulares. He could never sink to how his father treated him. Using his School of Physics studies, he spirited the boy out of harm's way.



CARMEN DE LA ROSA

The new lecturer is a Spanish cat, of this Carmen is certain. This Dr de Sevilla strides the campus corridors at night, stopping at any sound; Carmen was lucky to escape. She never wants to be caught again, cornered, claw to her throat.

'Good peninsular ladies should always greet their betters,' the doctor had said, eyes and smile wide.

Carmen had curtsied despite the armful of books, mumbled a good evening.

'Now, why can I find you here and not in the hall this morning?' went the doctor. 'And the library is far past closed.'

Carmen had made her excuse: she was behind on Genealogical Restructuring, had to shirk Introduction to Cryptobiologics that day for the library. She'd lost track of time, fallen asleep. She was lucky this satisfied Dr de Sevilla's idea of her, this time. Carmen doesn't want to test this again; the doctor wears a bright golden crucifix but feels even less godly than the other academics and their occult experiments. Pages of a Cryptobiologics textbook are like illustrations of Dante's Inferno. But the books are still friends, keep her safe.

Carmen knows where to hide them outside the library. They are a good failsafe. With this done, she slips from the campus grounds and goes east down cobbled streets, without her university robes, beyond the city limits. Luzon: its pastured hills and untamed forests, here she spends the day. The textbooks' words inked clearly in her mind, Carmen clutches her Æthered rosaries and follows them to the letter. She watches a flock of ducks take flight. A sparrowhawk wheels not far. For its size, it would not normally strike.

Carmen brings her rosared hand across her chest and breathes deep.

The sparrowhawk tussles in the air, keening in distress. Then it stops, and it turns, and blurs towards the ducks in flight, striking and spearing a bird to the grasses below.

Carmen finds them. The sparrowhawk stands alert, the duck struggling in its grip. This time, the duck isn't dead; Carmen is making good progress.



A peninsular woman of noble birth. After her parents lost a contest over family succession, it was dictated that Carmen would enter service with the Church on behalf of the de la Rosa family – a pretense to disown her paternal line. However, as she grew older, she displayed a natural gift for academia, especially the natural sciences. The Church had need for servants of God learned in His creations. Rather than send her to a convent, she was airshipped to the Philippines. Here she was to study in Abansé City under the School of Natural Order. Though these provincial academics take some alarming liberties with the works of God, they are still beholden to Him and His Church. And pious, young Carmen should remember whom she is beholden too as well.

But what did Carmen think of this? Quite frankly, not much. All her life had been behind gates and walls, the better always lined with shelves and books. Reading on the many variations and subcategories of creation came from a want to know of the outside. Like life in Spain or even in the campus hallways, how people treat one another is a mystery, but a boorish one at that. In contrast, the natural world is so complex and yet so simple.

But what really sets Luzon apart from Spain: freedom. The School of Natural Order are zealous that Carmen keeps to her studies, but when she can recall their texts verbatim, what's the need to attend classes and lectures so regularly? In contrast to many on Luzon, for the first time in her life, Carmen de la Rosa has the chance to know freedom.

TIMELINE

'Pre-history' (??? - 900AD)

- Across the archipelago, indigenous peoples discover a crystalline mineral with supernatural properties. Referred to by many names, most commonly as '*mang-awiit*' in Tagalog, the mineral and its powers are treated with guarded reverence.

Precolonial Period (900 - 1564AD)

- 1521: Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan claims the islands for the Spanish Empire but Magellan is killed in the Battle of Mactan (April 27) by Lapulapu, leader of Mactan Island, for forcibly converting his people.
- 1543: Spaniard Ruy López de Villalobos leads an attempt to colonise what he dubs 'the Philippine Island', after the Spanish crown prince and later king, Philip II. This name is expanded to 'the Philippines' to refer to the whole archipelago.

Spanish Colonial Period (1565 - 1700AD)

- 1565: 'The Philippines' begins to be conquered by the Spanish Empire
- 1571: On June 24, the city of Manila is founded on the largest island, Luzon, by Spanish conquistador Miguel López de Legazpi.
- 1685: Europe's Enlightenment Period, an elite cultural movement reconsidering the relationship between religion, the arts and science, is in full effect.
- 1692: A crystalline mineral with supernatural properties, dubbed 'Æther' by European academics, is discovered in the Americas. With 'Æther,' the European powers begin their Industrial Revolution.
- 1699: Spanish statesman, philosopher and academic, Professor Juan de Jovellanos, arrives in Manila and works to establish an independent school there to study 'Æther.' Writing his 'Tesis para Independencia' (Thesis for Independence), he argues: "Only under the true rule of wisdom and learned men can we then walk further towards the truth of God's world, only then can we advance."

University Period (1701 - 1793AD)

- 1701: Manila secedes from the Spanish Empire under Juan de Jovellanos' direction, renamed to 'Abansé City.'
- 1708: Large quantities of Æther are discovered on Luzon, leading to a rush of financing to the academics of the newly dubbed Universidad de Abansé and further industrialising the city.
- 1792: The School of Natural Order assists the Catholic Church in blockading Abansé City. After a year-long struggle for power, the Church takes control of the city.

Church Administration Period (1793AD - ongoing)

Publication of *Noli Me Tangere* - (1887)

- 1887: Jose Rizal, a writer and polymath Mestizo, wrote the novel *Noli Me Tangere* which includes subtle events regarding the Spanish Government's abuse of power towards Filipinos. His novel angered many Spanish elites and educated Filipinos as the novel is critical of Spanish friars and the church.

Jose Rizal's Exile (1892)

- 1892: Jose Rizal formed La Liga Filipina, a secret organisation that advocated social reforms through legal means. However, due to Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere*, the Spanish Government saw him and the organisation as a threat and forced the organisation to disband.
- July 1892: Rizal is moved to Dapitan following his arrest. There he built a school, a hospital, a water supply system, and he taught horticulture and farming to the people.
- Back in Manila, people's faith in the Spanish Government began to wane. As a response to Rizal's departure, his friends formed another society, but instead of fighting for social reforms, it fought for the country's independence.

Jose Rizal's Execution (1896)

- Rizal returned to Manila and joined the society, offering their aid as a doctor. He was arrested during his traverse en route Cuba via Spain. He was imprisoned in Barcelona on October 6 and was sent to execution on the same day in Manila. He was fully free. No Spaniard's hands were on him. He had plenty of opportunities to escape.
- Rizal was shot in his execution.
- **Formation of rebellious groups Para el Pueblo and Los Hijos de País**

REPUBLICA MAPS

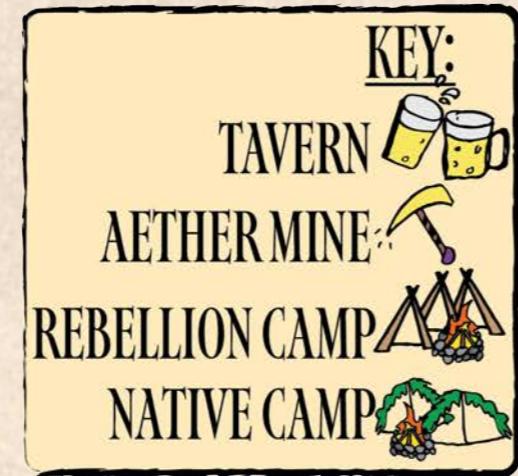


THE PHILIPPINES: LUZON

The story of *The Æther Republica* is set on the largest of the islands of the Philippines, the northern island of Luzon. Set in an alternate timeline where Æther has changed the earth, the majority of Luzon's regions are shaped differently. *The Æther Republica*'s Luzon is composed of six regions: New Castille, Ilocos, Pancasia, Testing Ground, Laguna Bay and Salvación. Each region has different unique features that players and game master (GM) can explore, running into different stories along the way.

The setting of *The Æther Republica* mentions several Indigenous groups of the Philippines. While the majority of *The Æther Republica*'s additional lore is fictional, the story pays tribute to actual historical events as a sign of respect for the Indigenous peoples' hardships and efforts. If a GM wishes to more accurately portray these peoples in a campaign, we encourage you to research further and be mindful of avoiding discriminatory portrayals.

NEW CASTILLE:



NEW CASTILLE

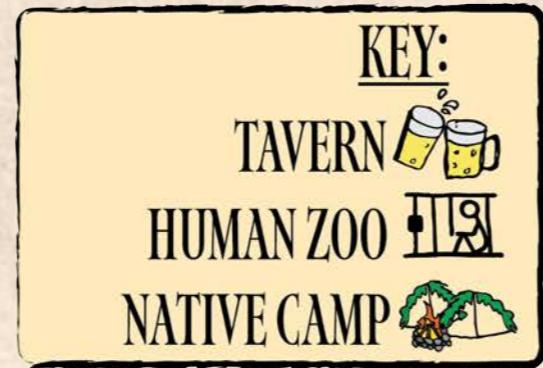
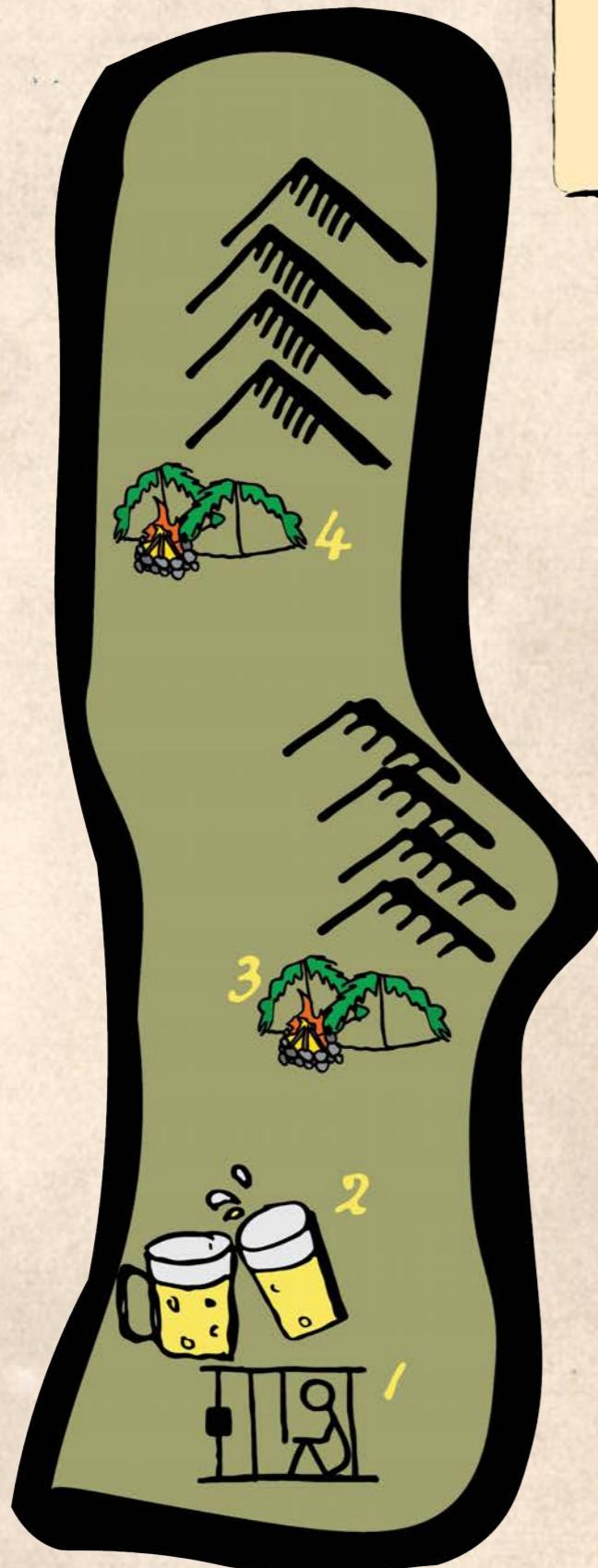
New Castille is Luzon's largest region, mostly covered by varying dense forests, from tropical rainforests to subtropical pine forests, known as 'cloud forests' for their thick mists. However, terrain isn't the only danger. In New Castille, the further north you go, the more likely you are to encounter Æther beasts. But, because only a few, semi-sane, colonists would venture here, it's the perfect place to build a hideout.

The main resistance camps of Para el Pueblo and Los Hijos del País are located here, Los Hijos del País' camps the most northern. Choosing this specific location isn't only just to get as far away as possible from the Spanish Government, but it's also because they believe the more danger there is, the more opportunities to get stronger. Such is the radical view of a radical group. The camp of Para el Pueblo is located on the south-west of the region, between the colonised regions of the Spanish Government and the home of the Indigenous people, Ilocos. Para el Pueblo believes that their people need resources, so they often covertly visit Abansé City. They also lend their aid in defence of the Ilocos people.

There are two taverns in New Castille, the one above Para el Pueblo is specifically used as a neutral ground between the two rebellious groups. In this tavern, Para el Pueblo's and Los Hijos del País' VIPs meet and settle debates peacefully, or at least try to. The two groups try to get out of each other's way when it comes to missions, but when missions are sabotaged because of the other group, this is their place of discussion. Some may believe Para el Pueblo's people are too compliant, or that Los Hijos del País are full of aggressive brutes, but truthfully, they do try their best to settle things quietly. While either group cannot see each other eye-to-eye, their goal is the same, and that is enough to earn respect.

Besides the rebellious camps, New Castille has the most underground mines. It also has gigantic mountains with tall pine trees and temperatures that go as low as 9 degrees Celsius. But these mountains are the home of typhoons and landslides. This place is named after the Tagalog word for typhoons, *Bagyo*. Amongst the waters in New Castille, swims a giant Æther-infested sea snake, the Bakunawa.

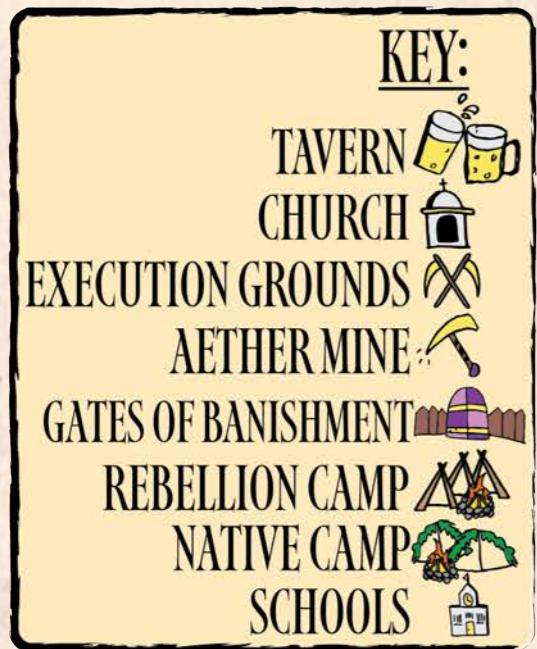
ILOCOS:



ILOCOS

Ilocos is located in the north-east of Luzon and is home of a unified front of several native peoples, including the Ilocanos in the north, Tinguians, Isnag, Kankanaey and Igorots all across, Pangasinenses in the south and Zambals in the southwestern most areas. Since the region is so close to Pancasia and New Castille, which the Spanish Government already broadly controls, Ilocos is on the verge of their settlement being invaded. The Spanish Government either easily swayed the Ilocanos or failed to persuade them which resulted in enacting violence against the local people. Some Ilocano tribes harbour deep resentment against the Spanish Government, and this resentment manifested into insurrections across several provinces.

Ilocanos weren't the only people violently revolting against the Spaniards. The Pangasinenses, who are so close to the border of Pancasia, constantly fight for their freedom and it is constantly lost. Their battles been like a tug-of-war, both sides constantly losing and regaining territory. The Pangasinenses' insurrections include the Malong liberation which Andres Malong led and Palaris liberation which Juan de la Cruz Palaris led. Pangasinenses referred to Malong, a native chief of the town called Binalatongan as *Hari ng Pangasinan* (King of Pangasinan) as he liberated the town from Spanish rule. Palaris led a rebellion together with the Pangasinenses and concluded that they've gained freedom from the Spanish Government, however, Palaris was captured and freedom was lost yet again. In southern Ilocos, many native people have been captured and were thrown in human zoos. This fuelled the rage of the remaining native inhabitants.



LAGUNA BAY:

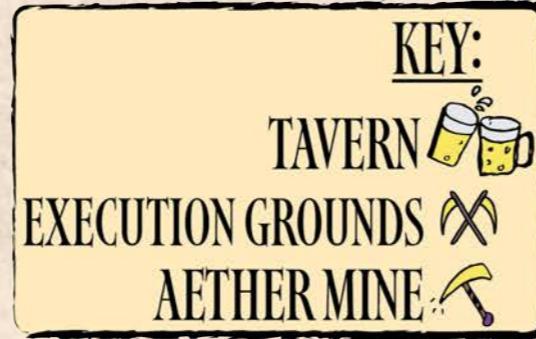
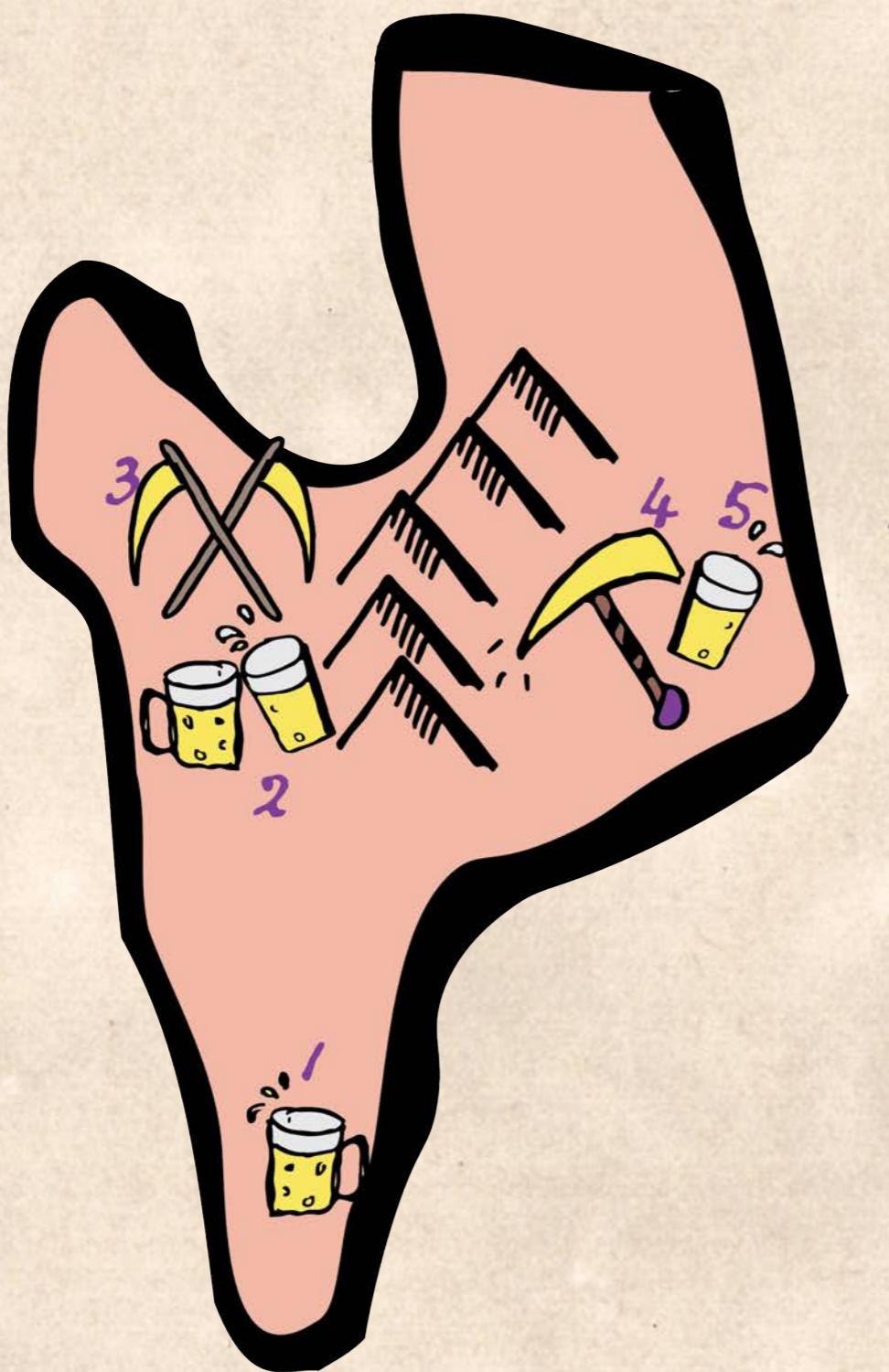
LAGUNA BAY

The Laguna Bay region is the home of Abansé City and the Schools of the Universedad de Abansé that fuel the Æther Republica. Their campuses overlook the water, while the churches and their administration halls preside across the whole city. Many peninsulares of high social status reside between these locations, indulging in parties, fancy transportation and all the freedoms that a comfortable life in the provinces can afford. The Schools are at the bleeding edge of technological development, where imperfect cuts of Æther ore are processed into smooth, perfect spheres.

In front of the churches are execution grounds. They are held here so that all citizens of Abansé City, peninsulares, mestizos and indios alike, can watch the people who have wronged the Church and the Spanish Government be executed, including rebels from the resistance groups. This execution ground is much more prominent than any other: this is not only to ridicule the resistance groups but also to instil fear in any who continue to defy the Government.

The resistance camps of Para el Pueblo and Los Hijos del País are located to the southern-west of Laguna Bay. Next to their camps are the Gates of Banishment. The Gates of Banishment is no place for sight-seeing. Only a couple of people go to this place, mostly Spanish military or Church militia. The Gates of Banishment leads to Salvación, where Æther radiation is so severe it is near uninhabitable. The rebel groups desire to liberate these exiled people, thus they set their camps near the Gates of Banishment. Only a few have snuck through its security, but even then, that's not the worst problem to face. The true horrors lie past the Gates, to the land of Salvación.

PANCASIA:

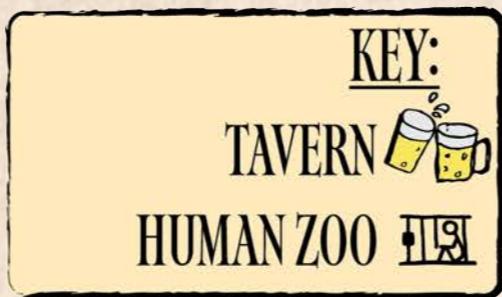


PANCASIA

Pancasia is located north of the Testing Grounds and south of Ilocos. The majority of the Austronesian peoples here are the Pampangans and Tagalog settlers. The Spanish Government utilises this entire region as a military front, where guards and privates are trained to wield both normal and Æther-infused weaponry. Because the region is near Ilocos, the majority of the Spanish Government's militia prepare here for combat against the native people in Ilocos to continue colonising their land.

Like all other regions, Pancasia has an underground mine, execution grounds and taverns but its security across all is significantly higher, especially around the mine. With how well they are paid, it is well known how often their guards go to the taverns, drinking till sunrise. The execution grounds are rarely used, as rebels and sympathisers are regularly transported to the public executions in Abansé City. The execution grounds in Pancasia are more often for trespassers, particularly those intending to steal military equipment. Between the military settlements, particularly the region's centre, is a tropical forest across particularly rocky hills.

TESTING GROUND:

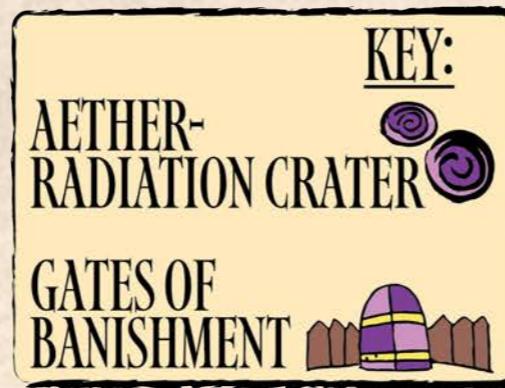
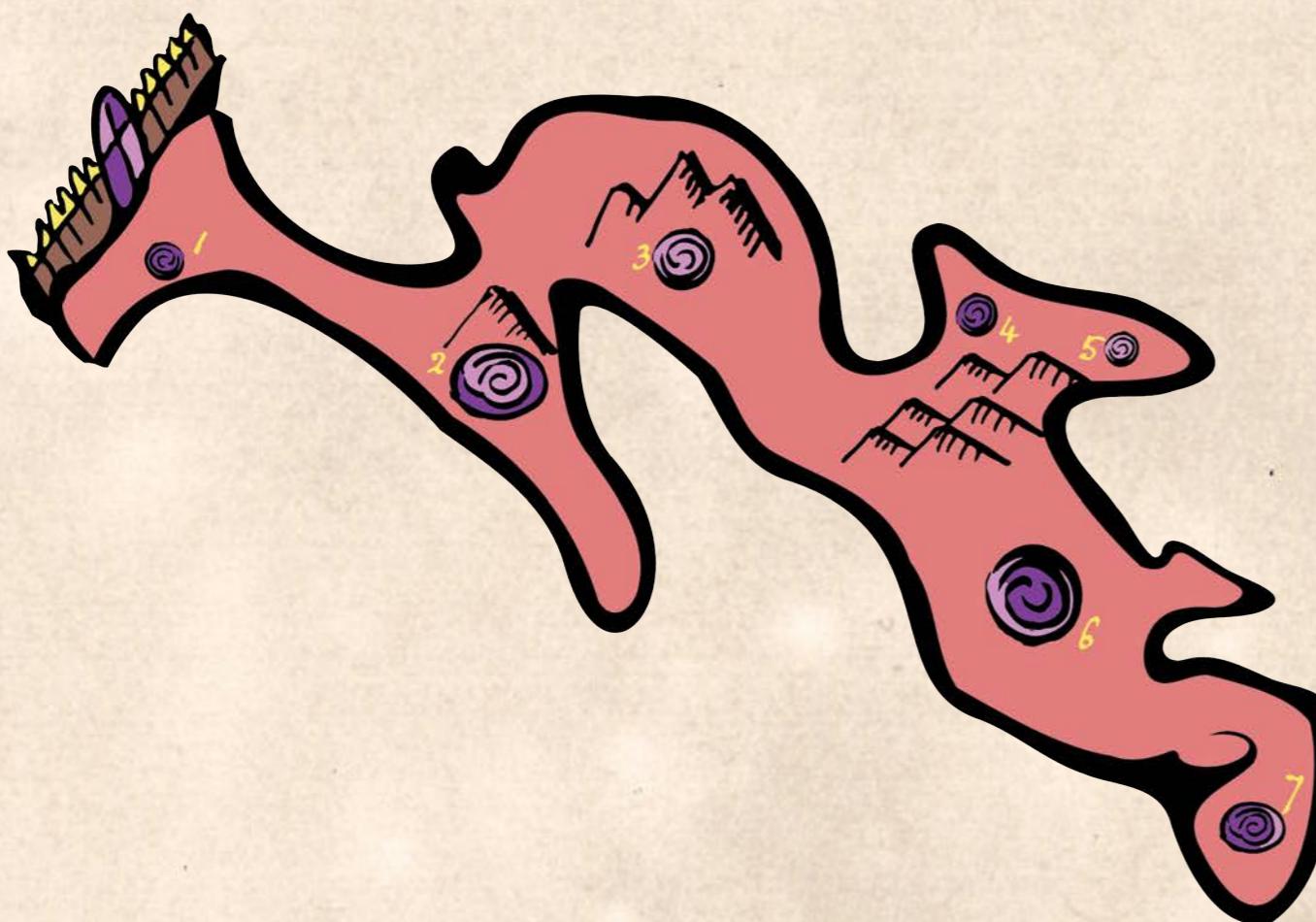


TESTING GROUND

The Testing Grounds is located north of Laguna Bay. As the name suggests, this region is used as a testing ground for the Schools' various experiments, sometimes even including indios subjects, rebels or those forcefully taken from their homes. Either way, School academics either turn a blind eye to the selection of test subjects or are blissfully ignorant of it. Some say that the selection of test subjects is just a rumour that rebels spread to villainise the Schools; however, if students are to discover the files that contain details of the subjects such as their region of origin, the time of their capture, time of transport to the School, and their remaining relatives that could potentially be the next test subjects, then students would realise that the rumours are not so baseless. Other experiments involve the many Æther-infested beasts that roam across the Philippines, such as the Manananggal, Mambabarang and Bungisngis. The beasts are kept in captivity for further experimentation until they break or are no longer of use. If they cannot be destroyed, they are released in Salvación. Members of the rebellious groups, particularly members of Los Hijos del País, sometimes let beasts free so that they can attack members of the Spanish Government or students of the Schools.

Aside from subject-based experimentation, students often work directly with Æther, examining its properties and wielding its potential. Students in the School of Engineering and Æthernautics conduct Æther modification and prosthetic testing. Students in the School of Natural Order conduct experiments with Æther-influenced flora and fauna. Students in the School of Elevated Cosmology test Æther to control the weather whereas Students in the School of Physics test Æther to wield telekinesis and manipulate time.

SALVACIÓN:



SALVACIÓN

Originally referred to as Camarine, this area of the Philippines has been renamed as Salvación; as stated by the Spanish Government; "it is a land where exiles must seek salvation." They believe this is the perfect place for wrongdoers to seek salvation, to repent for their sins, and be reborn. However, once entered, there is no going back. The Gates of Banishment prevent exiles from escaping, and instead they must face the horrors that dwell in Salvación. Salvación has extreme levels of Æther radiation, as the Spanish Government, Abansé City and the Æther Republica dispose all their Æther by-products and waste here. This region is nigh uninhabitable, barren of natural wildlife due to the accumulation of Æther waste over the past decades. What is left is purple-tinted degraded islands, deep Æther craters, purplish grey smokes that fumes across the air, and a sky devoid of colour.

Aside from exiles, the only living beings in these lands are the Schools' miscreations and failed experiments. Æther-infested beasts become more horrendous yet powerful due to such strong Æther radiation. They mindlessly journey through the islands, seeking out their next feast. These islands are a literal representation of Hell, its name an irony, the Spanish word for "salvation."

NOTABLE LOCATIONS



UNIVERSIDAD DE ABANSÉ

The Universedad de Abansé is located in Abansé City, next to the waters of Laguna Bay. This is where students of the four Schools attend: the School of Engineering and Æthernautics, the School of Elevated Cosmology, the School of Natural Order and the School of Physics. Like the City of Abansé, the university is composed of tall iconic white and gold marble. The building is reminiscent of a church, as the windows are composed of stained glass with each colour representing the Schools of the university. At the front of the school are four hanging flags, each representing the Schools' logos. At the top is a giant Æther sphere surrounded by golden cogwheels, where it emits a bright purple glow at a distance, signifying sailors all around that they are near the university's perimeters. To arrive at the school, one must board a boat or an airship, then be transported to the transparent pathway made out of Æther, and then finally, arrive at the prestigious gates.

CITY OF ABANSÉ

The prosperous City of Abansé is where the Spanish Government and people of high social class reside. The people who gather here are seen with formal Spanish wear, with some Mestizos adopting Filipino formal wear. The establishments include high end jewellers and clothing outfitters, forges, taverns, restaurants, inns and more. Establishments that come from prestigious families bear the iconic white and gold marble materials, in contrast to establishments made out of combinations of stone, concrete and wood, catering for the common folk. These establishments stick out like an eye-sore, almost as if they are not meant to be in the luxurious Abansé City.

Majority of Abansé City's architecture and transportation is powered with Æther: streetlights, indoor lights, boats, airships and the giant magnificent clocktower with a hanging pendulum located at the city's centre. Since the city utilises Æther extensively, the School of Engineering and Æthernautics created a sewer system that transports Æther waste to Salvación, ensuring that the waste would not be exposed to any of its residents.

THE CONGRESS

The Congress is where the members of the Spanish Government and Church officials attend in Abansé City. Here they discuss law, politics, businesses, improvements and advancements, and even on disposal methods of the roaring rebellion. The Congress is heavily guarded since the members are often targets of assassination from rebellious groups, specifically Los Hijos del País. When members of the Spanish Government depart, they are escorted with several armed guards until all of them arrive at their respective homes.

EXECUTION GROUNDS

Execution grounds are where those the Spanish Government has deemed wrongdoers are executed. Those who face execution often have their hands tied behind their backs using rope and have guards supervising them in case they escape. Wrongdoers only face one method of execution: a shot to the head. Execution grounds are located all across the Philippines but the most notable one is the one in Laguna Bay.

UNDERGROUND MINES

A mine is located at every major Æther deposit. Convicts work endless days in the mine under the supervision of the guards and Warden, collecting Æther ore, for Abansé City's promise to greatly reduce their sentence. Unfortunately for the deceived convicts, they will die before they see a day of freedom. As a result, the maze-like mines are plagued with equal parts corpses and cryptids, men and women who had lost their minds to the Æther. To the government this arrangement is like killing two birds with one stone; they get their Æther, and the criminals take care of themselves.

FORGES

A forge is where blacksmiths acquire unrefined Æther ores and are refined to become perfectly smooth spheres. Forges are often located inside or near an underground mine, but sometimes they exist as their own separate establishment. Other than refining Æther ore, blacksmiths also forge body modifications, prosthetics and weapons, as well as repair them. Depending on who owns the forge and where it's located, the forge either appears as a wooden old shack, or a cobblestone house or, if located in Abansé City, a prestigious establishment.

ÆTHER RADIATION CRATERS

Æther radiation craters are a result of Æther waste degrading the earth. The colonists dispose of the majority of the waste in the islands of Salvación. Due to the accumulation of Æther waste over the years, the waste has eaten up the earth, causing large craters to appear. While the islands of Salvación are a place that most humans would not dare to enter, falling inside an Æther crater screams immediate death. They are too deep, making it difficult to climb and escape, and it emits high Æther radiation which eats up any breathing creatures in a matter of minutes.

TAVERNS

Taverns are run by the bartender and are a hotspot for socialising. Locals gather at the bar, and travellers use the rooms upstairs to rest for a night or two before moving on. The many taverns established across the Philippines also double as information centres. People leave bounties and requests for help on the bulletin board out the front, and on the inside, characters tell all sorts of tales and rumours of local legends and conspiracies. While most of it is fantastical, there is always an element of truth behind every story.



GATES OF BANISHMENT



The Gates of Banishment are located between the entrance of Salvación and Laguna Bay. They are large steel-layered gates with spikes at the top, an appearance that suits its name. If wrongdoers are exiled to Salvación, they are faced by these overbearingly huge gates. While wrongdoers fear the Hell called Salvación, the Gates of Banishment is like a giant gavel that confirms their conviction, creating not just fear within the wrongdoers, but also despair.

CHURCH



A place of worship, an ornate and beautiful gothic building. People visit the churches to offer praise and clear their consciences. However, in this alternate history the Æther has become a major element in religion. For many people this otherworldly discovery has become the explanation for countless biblical miracles. As such, many turned to Æther worship, believing it to be God's divine will.



HUMAN ZOOS

The human zoos have been created by the Spanish Government to fuel the rebels' rage, capturing their people and confining them in humiliation. While prisoners are usually held behind bars, human zoos use transparent Äther powered barriers, not only to ensure the captured do not escape, but also to give the prisoners the illusion of freedom. Instead of feeding the prisoners, the Government instead created natural terrain with trees and bodies of water inside the confinement. The prisoners hunt for fish and create fires for heat and cooking through burning and cutting wood. This facade of a natural environment perfectly creates the imagery of "humans in their primal state and natural habitat" for the purposes of so-called entertainment and education for the people of high-social class.

NATIVE CAMPS



Dwelling place of most native people. The native camps epitomise the modest lifestyle that many of the rebels are so desperate to protect. The homes are built from wooden logs, hardened mud, and thatch roofs.

While technically primitive in comparison to Abansé City, the native camps have a close knit community built on trust, where each individual is cared for which is something Abansé City, in all its glory, could only dream of.

REBELLION CAMPS

Similar to a native camp, but; much more temporary. Places of residence are built like tents, to be quickly set up and deconstructed.



SOCIAL CLASS

PENINSULARES

Peninsulares are Spanish-born Spaniards and are considered the highest social class in the ranking. They have Caucasian features which could include more pointed noses, refined jawlines, pale skin and eye colours that Filipinos would consider foreign, such as blue, green or hazel. Peninsulares are often well educated and grand. They wear formal Spanish clothes of high-quality clothing. However, not all Peninsulares deem those below the social ranking as less. There are some who are simply indifferent and ignorant to the rebellious groups, as they think they have other important business to attend to. Some Peninsulares deem Filipinos to simply be exotic or unintelligent, and they believe that logic justifies the mistreatment they receive, but there are some who cannot stand for the injustices that Filipinos face. The Insulares, pureblood Spaniards born in the Philippines, are sometimes considered less just because they weren't born in the motherland.

MESTIZOS

Mestizos are people of mixed Filipinos-Spanish heritage and are considered the middle social class in the ranking. They have a mixture of Caucasian and Austronesian features but most commonly have brown or black eye colours. Mestizos are a broad social class; some can trace their lineage back to prestigious Spanish families and are able to be treated similar to Peninsulares, but only to a certain point. Many Peninsulares still see them as less. There are some Mestizos who are born without a family, are adopted into a Filipino family, or have a Filipino family but have the absence of a Peninsulares parent. Only a few fortunate Mestizos are adopted into a family of prestigious background, but most are often discarded. Those from prestigious families wear either Spanish formal wear or Filipino formal clothes such as *barong tagalog* for males and *baro't saya* for females. Mestizos who aren't from these prestigious families either wear loose clothing or clothes that Austronesian people adopt in their cultures. Many Mestizos from prestigious families adopt the Peninsulares perspective against the rebellious groups, viewing those below them as lesser, and exotic feral brutes. But these Mestizos always fear that they could become targets from both the Government and the rebellious groups. Their loyalties are constantly wavering, but the Peninsulares bring luxuries to them, acting as a leash to keep them from joining the other side. Many Mestizos who aren't from prestigious families resent the wealthier in their class, finding it disgraceful that people who are supposedly from the same background are siding with the enemy. Those who feel empathetic towards the prestigious Mestizos know what really occurs behind the scene. They're aware of the leash that the Spanish Government holds so tight around the prestigious Mestizos, who are pulled and manipulated like puppets. They're the ones who want to fight so fiercely for the country's independence, so that violence and manipulation can stop.

INDIOS

Indios are the native Filipinos and are considered the lowest social class in the ranking. Indios have Austronesian features which may include flat noses, dark skin, slim jaws, and brown or black eyes colours. They wear loose clothing and cultural clothes. They have very little clothing wrapped on their bodies, so they often show lots of skin. Indios are extremely attuned to agriculture, and are often working during hot climates with crops. While Peninsulares view Indios as ignorant and unintelligent, that couldn't be further from the truth. Since they have been living the longest in the Philippines, Indios know how to utilise Æther without disrespecting the substance. They are extremely knowledgeable in how to handle Æther. Because of this, Indios do not create Æther waste.

Indios are often the subject of violence and confinement. They are thrown into underground mines to mine Æther ore alongside groups of Mestizos, and into human zoos as "humans at their primal stage" entertainment for the high-social class. Indios' territories are constantly under attack from the Spanish troops as the Spanish Government wants to colonise their land. With the help of Æther and rebellious groups, Indios are able to fight off Spanish troops, but they are barely hanging on. The Spanish Government's ever expanding Æther technology is a growing threat to the Indios, and their defence is constantly wavering.

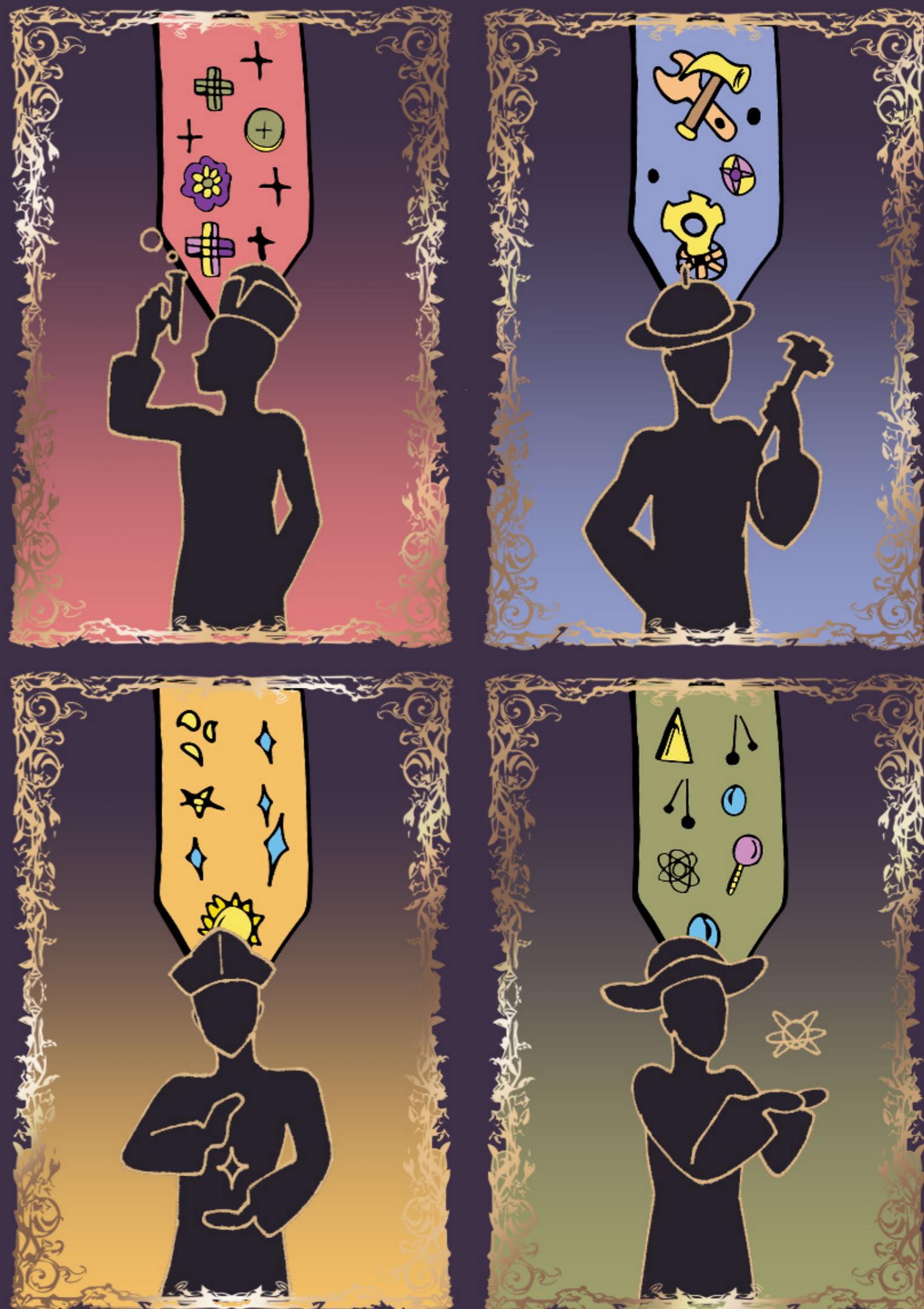
FOREIGNERS

Foreigners are not part of the social class hierarchy and are merely visitors from other countries. Foreigners are either ignorant and indifferent to the crisis happening or are sided with either the Spanish Government or the rebellious groups. They are spectators that are either indulging in the luxury that the Spanish Government offers or actively yet secretly helping rebellious groups. Despite their spectator status, there are some that would like to understand the several cultures and ethnic groups, not because they view Filipinos as exotic and that fuels their curiosity, rather they have a genuine desire to understand the struggles and the hopeful and ambitious ideals of the Filipinos.

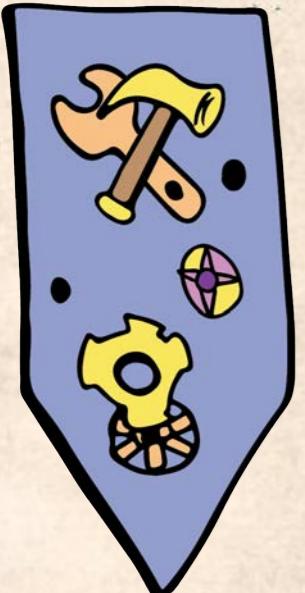
THE SCHOOLS OF UNIVERSIDAD DE ABANSÉ

Known as the University of Santo Tomas prior to the colony's first secession from the Spanish Empire, Abansé City and the island of Luzon would not be in their current states without the university and, at the university's head, the four 'Higher' Schools dedicated to the study and use of Æther. Reformed by Professor de Jovellanos as part of the Academic Revolution, for a time it was these four organisations that controlled Abansé City and continued the colonisation of Luzon. However, as the city and its industries grew, continued infighting within and between left the Schools weakened to more and more outside influence.

This of course led to the coup of 1792. Backed by the Catholic Church, the School of Natural Order (formerly Biologics) was able to stage an armed coup against the other Higher Schools and their ruling heads, blockading Laguna Bay before taking control of the city. Now Abansé City is under sanction by the Church, in truth a proxy for the Spanish Empire to regain control of their colony and continue extracting resources from the Philippines. The School of Natural Order's favour with the Church has waned, and now the four Schools vie for influence among any who would still support them, from wealthy peninsulares and knowledgeable foreigners to even influential mestizos and resourceful indios. Once celebrated as revolutionaries, the Schools are now caricatures of their former selves and, in desperation, their doors are finally open to all – for the right fees, of course.



ENGINEERING AND ÆTHERNAUTICS



To many on the island and more broadly across the globe, the School of Engineering and Æternautics is known as less an academic institution and more a company on the bleeding edge of technological production. Perhaps this stems from being the last of the Æther-focused Schools to be re-established by Professor de Jovellanos, but even their multitude of field-scholars, clerks, contractors and subcontractors care little of academic accolades. The School's core faculty holds strong to the notion that, to proletariat masses, knowledge is not what fuels society forward – it is what can be done by consuming the fruits it bears. The School of Physics may have discovered Æther's fundamental properties, but it is the School of Engineering and Æternautics who know best how to use those fruits.

From the bending of physics' laws: Æther alloyed metals can be attuned to alter their mass, conduction, malleability and other properties, leading to grander industrial and architectural feats. From how Æther responds to conscious

control: prosthetic limbs and body enhancements that push the human body's working capacities. From Æther's uncanny capabilities as an energetic catalyst: stronger fuels for engines and weapons. A select, eccentric few even claim to be able to control fire, passing flames from bare hand to hand without trace of injury, directing it through frequencies and motions as a maestro would an orchestra.

But the most influential aspect of the School of Engineering and Æternautics is the latter of its title. Though the world's first true airship was not built in Abansé City, in Abansé City they were perfected. The city's southern district is dominated by the skydock, a feat of Enlightenment engineering and the doorstep to Luzon and the Philippines. Begrudgingly, the Church's city administration accepts that this is the School's full domain, valuing taxation over full control. It is commonly said that the School of Engineering and Æternautics' greatest accomplishment is being a well-oiled machine itself, keeping coffers full and Abansé City's economy thriving. New arrivals to the city should already know to look for work yards headed by stern mestizos in steely-blue skullcaps and dressed-down robes.

Academic pursuits: architecture, aeronautics, smithing, mechanical engineering

Applied uses of Æther: pyromancy, controlling magnetism and mass of materials, creation and use of mechanical body modifications

ELEVATED COSMOLOGICS



When asked to explain what 'Cosmologics' is, many of their scholar's will adjust their clothes, clear their throat and throw their arms wide open: 'Everything!' they will declare. During the Schools' reformation, Cosmologics was conceived as an elevated amalgamation of earth sciences and astronomy, with the lofty aims to reconsider Earth's place in an extended theoretical and multi-planar cosmos. Mankind discovered that the Earth is not a flat plane but a globe, then that it is the Earth that revolves around the Sun. So, of course it holds water that studying Æther's interaction with the Earth will soon uncover the next new lens with which to view our continued existence. In the decades since the School's reformation, the work to discover this lens is arduous but ongoing.

On the path to this theorised goal, the School of Cosmologics has made some small, mundane strides. However, the complete control of water and its full cycle, manipulation of tectonic movements, the accurate charting of the Earth's many systems via Æther's flow – these are insignificant in the face of

the universe's inevitable heat-death and/or dimensional collapse. Rain falls and seasons change without a person's hand – why should the citizenry care so much about scaling one insignificant rock when it sits at the foot of an unsurpassable mountain? This analogy's irony is lost on an indoctrinated academic of the School of Cosmologics.

To be fully enrolled is to accept contradictions, to not see the trees for the forest (another irony). One haughty contradiction within the School of Cosmologics: they declare that they are the sole remaining academic purists among the Schools but will still trip over their gold-embroidered robes to garner any amount of favour from any nobility.

Academic pursuits: geography, astronomy, meteorology, oceanography

Applied uses of Æther: geomancy, divination using natural elements, controlling the weather and other natural elements

NATURAL ORDER



Formerly known as the School of Biologics, what started as the study of the natural world's wonders and gifts within Æther, to bottle those and advance the condition of man himself, became a faculty wide obsession to find the origins of life and God's true machinations therein. After their experiments were condemned by the other Schools, it was only a matter of time before the School of Biologics reached out to the Church.

While other Schools keep a healthy balance between scripture and science, the School of Natural Order is easily the most perverted from its original causes and values. Post-coup, the School doggedly pursues any method of 'study,' indoctrinating academics with backgrounds in medicine and natural sciences to the School's ideology. Many pious peninsulares scholars will quickly find themselves either surrounded by a new and dangerous dogmatism or be part of a movement elevating mankind to their righteous place in God's divine plan. If man is to keep order in His garden, they must truly be the shepherd and the

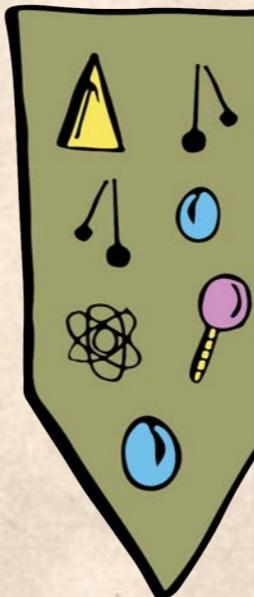
winnowing, and wield the strongest crook and scythe – so say the School of Natural Order.

This thinking has torn the Church's support. Now, only factions within the clergy truly support the School's goals, others simply working alongside these academics for their industrial studies, such as new crop husbandry and medicinal development, or their showman abilities to control flora and fauna. The peoples of Luzon are also rightly cautious of the School of Natural Order. The majority of civilian deaths in the Testing Grounds are a result of their 'experiments' wreaking havoc. Some failed attempts to 'bring out the potential in God's creations' have even been surrendered to the wilds of Salvacion, seemingly indestructible by any human methods. To many on Luzon, the cleric-esque cardinal-red biretta hats and robes of the School of Natural Order are a sign of unholy things to come.

Academic pursuits: medicine, zoology, biology, botany

Applied uses of Æther: enhancing human physiology, controlling Æther-influenced flora and fauna, creation and control of homunculi and chimaera

PHYSICS



As the School of Physics was the first to discover the burgeoning extent of Æther's paracausal properties, they are arguably the first among equals within the Schools. Led by Professor de Jovellanos himself, the School of Physics came to be after forcibly assimilating the former School of Chemistry into its ranks during the Academic Revolution – an act some might have described as a pre-emptive consolidation of power on de Jovellanos's behalf. Regardless, this union created the font from which all other Æther studies flowed.

Equally, following Professor de Jovellanos's patronage of social studies in reforming Abansé City, the School of Physics commingled with many non-Æther focused 'lower' Schools, of Law, Civics and Economics, to name a select few. As the Church took control of the city's governance, many of these partners defected to the ranks of the School of Physics. Those who would have been successors to Abansé City's previous administration now line this School's upper echelons. Now, it is common that representing academics from the School of

Physics act as lone consultants with other Schools while they study in the field. To their full purpose, the School of Physics will not always be forthright. As with all the Schools currently, studies beget influence.

The students and faculty of the School of Physics are considered strange even by university standards and are an unnerving presence to non-academic citizens. Some report Physics students to have an unnatural effect on their sight, hard to focus on or pick out from their surroundings, even seemingly appearing and disappearing in the blink of an eye. Others claim to have seen Physics students harness the very namesake of their school. What the citizenry do know: never expect a straight answer from anyone dressed in the plain khaki green robes and brimmed cap of the School of Physics.

Academic pursuits: mathematics, chemistry, physics, sociology, civics

Applied uses of Æther: causality, time manipulation, telekinesis, manipulation of mind and matter

FACTIONS

PARA EL PUEBLO (“FOR THE PEOPLE”)

Para el Pueblo was established after the execution of Jose Rizal, a noble Mestizo and founder of La Liga Filipina. La Liga Filipina was a secret society that desired political reforms, such as equality between Filipinos and Spaniards, and defence against a justice system weaponised against the people. However, the Spanish Government saw La Liga Filipina as dangerous and Jose Rizal was arrested and moved to Dapitan. After Rizal's departure and the many arrests, executions and banishments that followed, many Filipinos began to doubt the Spanish Government. Yet alongside fears grew hope and ambition. Many believed that if they couldn't gain equality from the Spanish

Government, then the only choice was to fight for the country's freedom. Para el Pueblo was established for this reason. However, unlike other rebel groups, their methods are more peaceful. As the Spanish Government and Church militia are violent, Para el Pueblo believes that they lose the moment if they stoop to their level. Para el Pueblo's methods consist of peaceful rallies and guerilla tactics. Their missions include freeing confined Filipinos in underground mines, human zoos and in the islands of Salvacion, transporting goods and donating them to poor Filipinos, stealing Æther inventions from the schools to prevent further violence and defending Filipinos' lands against the Government's attempts to colonise even further. The Spanish Government referred to Para el Pueblo's people as “blue ties”, since they have a blue tie wrapped somewhere on their body. Their name means ‘For the People’ and so it is to keep the people safe that they fight.



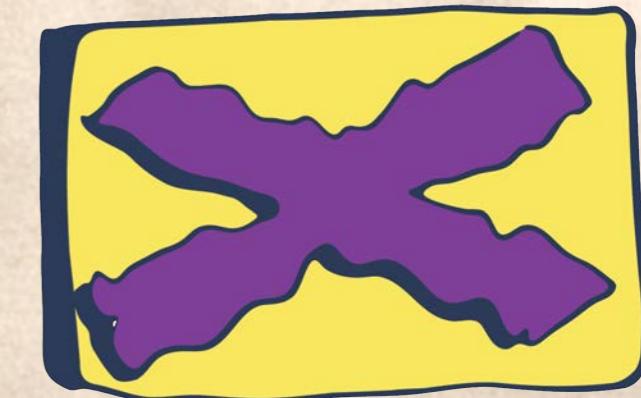
LOS HIJOS DEL PAÍS (“SONS OF THE COUNTRY”)

When La Liga Filipina became inactive following Rizal's departure, the members either joined Para el Pueblo or the newly established Los Hijos del País. Unlike Para el Pueblo, members of Los Hijos del País believe you must fight fire with fire, that the only way for the country to be truly free is through an armed revolution. Their means of achieving freedom is through violence. Their operations include assassinating people of high-social status or notable members of the Government's defence force and are often extremely dangerous, with several of their previous leaders already exiled to Salvacion. Los Hijos del País steal Æther equipment not to defend settlements but to fight the Government's defences, so freeing any Filipinos in confinement is only ever a bonus objective. The Spanish Government refers to Los Hijos del País' members as “red heads” for the red ties they often wrap around their heads. Unlike Para el Pueblo, who hide their blue ties, Los Hijos del País boldly show off their red ties as a sign of strength and courage. They believe they don't need to cower in the face of true evil. Los Hijos del País take whatever risks they need to obtain freedom and when a strong obstacle challenges them, they face it head on as a means to become stronger. They are proud to call themselves “sons of the country” and would do anything to fight for its freedom.



SPANISH GOVERNMENT

Currently overseen by the Church in the Philippines, the Spanish Government governs everything, from international trade and settlement expansion, to the Schools' Æther experimentation on native Filipinos and Æther technology development. Several members of the Spanish Government are Peninsulares, with very little to no Mestizos. Any mestizo members must be able to trace themselves from a prestigious lineage of Peninsulares. Many members of the Spanish Government do not see the rebellious groups as an existential threat, rather just a nuisance. Instead, they focus their time on expanding the colony and lining their own pockets with pesos and Æther. Those who see the rebellious groups as a threat either experienced a life-threatening situation, where they managed to escape the rebels' assassination attempt, or they had their businesses sabotaged, such as the loss of their underground mines or human zoos. Either way, the Spanish Government doesn't see any serious threat of revolution.



NON-PLAYABLE CHARACTERS

MAJOR NPC'S

RENE IBARRA: LEADER OF PARA EL PUEBLO

Aether (+1) **Perceptive (+3)** **Clever (+2)** **Charm (+2)** **Forceful (+0)** **Quick (+2)** **Stealth (+1)**

Rene is the leading member of the Para el Pueblo. She is compassionate yet stern, she hopes for one day the Spanish and Filipino people may one day come together without hate or violence. However, she realises that for that to happen, she must save her people who are stuck in horrible situations, whether they be slaves or trapped in human zoos. She wears her blue band around her neck in a way that matches her blue and white outfit with Aether paint lining the bottom of her dress making it seem sparkly. She tends to spend her time at their home base tending to the wounded and keeping track of supplies, taking breaks to study different camps that her people are trapped in, trying to figure out ways to free her people with the least amount of casualties possible.

Aspects:

- Compassionate leader
- Quick to trust
- Healer
- Indio

Stunts:

- Because I am a compassionate leader I get a +2 when I cleverly overcome an obstacle while helping my allies
- Because I am a healer once per session I can use a piece of raw Aether ore to diminish one Aether stress from a person
- Because I am Indio, I get a +2 when I am perceptive in creating an advantage while in conversation with another Indio.

GM Note: NPCs have a Stress track of three boxes and 1 fate point.

NATALIO CASTILLO: LEADER OF LOS HIJOS DEL PAÍS

Aether (+1) **Perceptive (+2)** **Clever (+2)** **Charm (+2)** **Forceful (+3)** **Quick (+1)** **Stealth (+0)**

Natalio is the leading member of the Los Hijos de País. He is stubborn and cold, he despises the Peninsulares who looked down on him and treated his people with disrespect. He wears his red band around his right wrist as a sign of power. He occasionally joins his people when they go on dangerous missions if he is needed or if he wants to gain more intel about the enemy, but most of the time, he stays inside his war room, where he strategizes with his enormous board depicting maps of targets to assassinate, Aether trade routes to sabotage, and other devious plans.

Aspects:

- Leader of the masses
- Stubborn
- Tactician
- Mestizo

Stunts:

- Because I am a Leader of the masses I get a +2 whenever I Flashily create an advantage while commanding others to my aid.
- Because I am a tactician I get a +2 whenever I cleverly overcome an obstacle while making plans.
- Because I am a Mestizo, I get a +2 when I cleverly create an advantage while having a conversation with another Mestizo.

CLERK DAVID MENDEZ

Aether (+2) **Perceptive (+2)** **Clever (+3)** **Charm (+1)** **Forceful (+0)** **Quick (+1)** **Stealth (+2)**

Clerk David Mendez is a seasoned and faithful administrator with the School of Engineering and a firm believer in God. When he is not working at the School of Engineering, he is seen as zealously serving God inside churches.

Aspects:

- Administrator of the School of Engineering
- Pacifist
- Mestizo

Stunts:

- Because I am the Administrator of the School of Engineering once per session I can use a piece of Aether ore to modify one weapon or item
- Because I am the administrator of the School of Engineering I get a +2 when I cleverly create an advantage while using an Aether infused item.
- Because I am a Mestizo, I get a +2 when I cleverly create an advantage while having a conversation with another Mestizo.

GABRIELA DE SEVILLA

Aether (+2) **Perceptive (+2)** **Clever (+3)** **Charm (+1)** **Forceful (+1)** **Quick (+0)** **Stealth (+2)**

A relatively young scholar who recently arrived on Luzon to further her studies in Crypto-biology with the School of Natural Order. Spanish born but well-travelled enough, she's found non-Europeans are just as fascinating as anything else that crawls or walks in yet untamed places. Truly though, conversation is to any man as the scalpel is in dissection of any specimen. One simply must press sharply and draw a clear, straight line to get what they want, and what Dr Gabriela de Sevilla wants she will always ask for civilly before she takes otherwise.

Aspects:

- Crypto-biologist with the School of Natural Order
- Cannot tolerate someone who speaks nonsense
- Peninsulare

Stunts:

- Once per session I may look at an enemy and use my biological knowledge to identify one strength and one weakness of that enemy, including its Æther level.
- I get a +2 whenever you cleverly create an advantage using plants and or animals
- Because I am a Peninsulare, I get a +2 when I charm for advantage while in conversation with another Peninsulare.

COMRADE BAYANI CAPULONG

Æther (+0) **Perceptive (+2)** **Clever (+1)** **Charm (+1)** **Forceful (+2)** **Quick (+2)** **Stealth (+3)**

Once a simple woodsman from a village far to the north, when School-sanctioned mining bled poisons into their local rivers and water sources, Capulong's former way of life was uprooted. He moved with his family from settlement to settlement, colonist disasters following them all the way. After his parents passed, he saw no point in tying himself to place but instead to a newer, bigger family. When the revolution comes into bloom, Los Hijos del País will make sure peninsulares will never again bring ruin to Luzon.

Aspects:

- Former Woodsman
- Lone Operative
- Cautious of Æther
- Los Hijos del País
- Indio

Stunts:

- Because I am a member of Los Hijos del País, I get a +2 when I stealthily create an advantage while setting traps.
- Because I am Indio, I get a +2 when I am perceptive in creating an advantage while in conversation with another Indio.
- Because I am a Lone Operative, I can add a +2 to attack rolls when doing so stealthily.

MINOR NPC'S

Minor NPCs are less significant than major NPCs, since they do not serve any major purpose in the game world but are characters that the players are going to interact with nonetheless. Players will likely interact with them only once or twice so there is no need for elaborate backstories and character development.

Another way of handling nameless NPCs is to make them an obstacle. To do so, give a difficulty for whatever threat the NPC poses then handle the interaction in one roll.

BARTENDERS

Bartenders are generally always behind the bar when players enter a tavern. They are typically quite friendly. They spend countless hours behind the bar, pouring drinks, and chatting with strangers. They have plenty of practice bestowing wisdom to others.

GM Tip: Bartenders hear a lot of rumours. Getting the bartender to share a vague or cryptic rumour that relates to your adventure is a good opportunity to immerse your players in the game world.

BLACKSMITH

Smiths and forges are scattered across Abansé City. The owner of a forge, a blacksmith, can offer their services to players. Players can either buy weapons, armour, and prosthetics from blacksmith. They can also pay for repairs or get their unrefined Æther clumps refined and polished.

Items for sale	Price
Kris [weapon: sword]	200 pesos
Bangkung [weapon: sword]	200 pesos
Sibat [weapon: spear]	100 pesos
Shield	50 pesos

Services for sale	Price
Repair a damaged weapon	50 pesos
Refine Æther clump	300 pesos

GUARD

Guards work in underground mines, schools, human zoos. They are bashful and often times rude as they believe their status in the Government gives them an edge over others. Choosing to do easy jobs which tend to involve simply supervising over areas, they often tend to be intoxicated with alcohol. They tend to stick together in packs, tormenting the local population. Most guards have a level of incompetence to them, as when people need them in the time of need, they are nowhere to be found.

LOS HIJOS DEL PAÍS REBEL

A typical foot soldier aligned with the radical side of the rebellion. They harbour resentment and frustration towards the Spanish Government. Oftentimes they can be found either preparing for raids or resting because of sustained injuries from either Æther exposure or physical damage.

PARA EL PUEBLO REBEL

A typical foot soldier aligned with the peaceful side of the rebellion. They tend to be more calm and reserved. They are often seen helping others through either tending to their wounds or giving them food and drinks.

NATIVE CAMP INHABITANT

A person trying to live their life normally during this crisis. They typically accept anyone into their camp, so long as they agree to respect the people around them and Æther. They tend to use Æther as a natural remedy for speeding up the healing process; however, the dose is in such small amounts that the patient, unless already infected with Æther sickness, typically does not feel any negative effects.

SOLDIER

Soldiers are completely different to guards. While guards are often rude and abusive of their power, soldiers show respect and consideration towards others. Some can even be reasoned with and some show mercy towards rebels, allowing them to escape should the chance present itself.

PRIVATE

A highly trained combatant and Æther specialist. They are heavily Æther modified and are incredibly dangerous. The Spanish Government hire Privates as an onsite security team to supervise individuals who are exposed to too much Æther radiation and have high possibilities of turning into an Æther beast. Privates are also hired for other classified reasons, specifically in dangerous missions.

TRIBE LEADER

Tribe Leaders are the backbone of every native camp. They're responsible for leading rituals, helping heal the wounded, sending out their troops and most importantly for players, cleansing Æther off their bodies.

PRIEST

Priests are the spokespeople of God. They're responsible for hosting masses, offering bread and wine to churchgoers and also cleansing Æther off players. Majority of priests are Spaniards. Filipinos are not allowed to partake in any church roles.

BESTIARY

This section outlines the many beasts and horrors that inhabit the dark corners and far reaches of "The Æther Republica".

Monsters behave similar to playable characters and NPCs. They have aspects, approaches, stunts, and track shifts of damage using stress. However, monsters are typically single minded monsters typically do not have any negative aspects, only have a few approaches, and their stunts may go up to +3 instead of +2.

Monsters and NPCs may behave like players and have a player sheet, this is however primarily reserved for the really important characters and mobs that may or may not return as recurring enemies. However, for other mobs they may have an aspect or two but they are primarily fannon codder to be easily swept aside so they have their stats in the form of two lists:

- What is the NPC good at, they get a +2 to these rolls
- What is the NPC bad at, they get a -2 to these rolls

Other aspects can be added to represent what they are good at and bad at. These types of NPCs only have a track of Stress boxes, not consequences. When they take enough stress and are still taking damage, they are taken out of the scene.

Bestiaries have a Stress track, good aspects that they can invoke to gain better rolls, and bad aspects that players can invoke to their advantage. Bestiaries cannot use consequences to shift damage, instead, they can only take Stress to shift damage. Additionally, beasts only have 1 fate point. To gain more fate points, players must invoke their aspects against the beast and use a fate point, in which this used fate point will go to the beast's fate point count. The same scenario also occurs, where if the beast invokes or compels an aspect using a fate point, that used fate point goes to the players.

Each bestiary is different and it is up to the GM to learn each one to properly utilise them in combat. For example, the Manananggal is a fearsome beast to face since it specialises in aerial combat, and it can also take up to three shifts of damage. However, the Mananggal must leave their bottom torso on the ground. This presents an opportunity for players to conquer the Manananggal without having to fight it in the air, however the GM must clearly create this opportunity to provide a flexible fighting experience.

Each bestiary has **variations** based on their Æther Level. This allows *The Æther Republica* to have several beasts with varying difficulties. When thinking of which opponent the players must face, the GM must pick which Æther Level the beast should be in, with Level 1 being the lowest and Level 3 being the highest. Each Æther Level allows the beast to have different Stunts. If a beast is on a higher Level, they would also be able to use Stunts from the previous Level. Some higher Levels of beasts allow them to inflict Æther damage instead of normal damage, making them extremely dangerous. Unique and challenging beasts allow players to problem solve and come up with creative options to overcome them.

MANANANGGAL



Perceptive (+0) Clever (+1) Charm (+1) Forceful (+2) Quick (+3) Stealth (+2)

Gameplay:

The Manananggal's best defense is playing offensively. It is vital for the GM to state where the Manananggal's lower torso is so that players are given a chance to conquer this creature without having to fight it whilst midair.

Aspects: Upper Torso

High concept: Winged Human Eater
Trouble: Reckless

Aspects: Bottom Torso

Helpless

Stress: Upper Torso



Stress: Lower Torso

None

Variations:

Æther Level 1: The Mananggal has the ability to attack twice their turn.

Æther Level 2: The Manananggal's attacks inflict 1 shift of Æther damage.

Æther Level 3: The Manananggal's lower torso can run around however it cannot attack.

BUNGISNGIS

Bungisngis are depraved creatures which take pleasure in the fear and suffering of others. It stands at twice the height of an adult human. With one large eye, pale green skin, and twin tusks protruding from its perpetual grin, this creature invokes fear in anyone it crosses paths with. The Bungisngis prefers to hunt at night, compensating for its slow, cumbersome stride which makes hunting difficult in the daylight.



Perceptive (+1) Clever (+2) Charm (+0) Forceful (+1) Quick (+3) Stealth (+2)

Gameplay:

The Bungisngis specialises in attacking during the night and in scenarios where they face multiple opponents. Its strength comes from attacking multiple enemies whenever they're close to each other. For players, ranged attacks are recommended to use.

Aspects:

Night Hunter
Its large size makes it cumbersome

Stress:



Variations:

Æther Level 1: The Bungisngis' attacks cause 1 shift of Æther stress alongside normal damage.

Æther Level 2: The Bungisngis can attack 2 players during their turn if those players are within 5ft of each other.

Æther Level 3: The Bungisngis can attack 3 players during their turn if those players are within 5ft of each other.

MAMBABARANG

A Mambabarang is similar to a sorcerer, using forbidden techniques to serve their fiendish will. They control insects, forcing them to devour the Mambabarang's victims from the inside out. A Mambabarang may also send their insects to invade a person's body, leaving a nasty infection that is resistant to contemporary medicine.



Perceptive (+0) Clever (+1) Charm (+1) Forceful (+2) Quick (+3) Stealth (+2)

Gameplay:

The Mambabarang is a quiet yet deadly opponent. Players should try to rid of the Mambabarang first using ranged attacks. Rid of the bugs first to make the Mambabarang vulnerable.

Aspects:

Cowardly but cunning
Helpless by itself

Stress:

Variations:

Æther Level 1: The Mambabarang summons two groups of bugs.

Æther Level 2: The Mambabarang summons an additional group of bugs (3 groups). The bugs also deal 1 shift of Æther damage on hit.

Æther Level 3: The Mambabarang can summon an additional group of bugs (4 groups). Additionally, each group of bugs can take a shift of 2 damage as Stress instead of the usual 1.

BAKUNAWA

Prolonged exposure to the Æther transformed this once average sea snake into a monolithic beast; mutating its body into a hideous monster. Although, the Æther changed more than the physical. Its mind now twisted, the Bakunawa is left to roam the west coast of New Castille, jealousy protecting the Æther to the North from any unfortunate souls who cross its path.



Perceptive (+2) Clever (+3) Charm (+2) Forceful (+0) Quick (+1) Stealth (+2)

Gameplay:

The Bakunawa is a large beast. It specialises in roaming underneath waters and grappling clueless enemies. The GM must play the Bakunawa using surprise attacks, as it is weak by itself, but strong when enemies are not aware of its location.

Aspects:

Ambusher
Weak at attacking groups

Stress:

Variations:

Æther Level 1: The Bakunawa can wrap itself around an opponent, restricting their movement. During this time, the player may only attempt to free themselves on their turn.

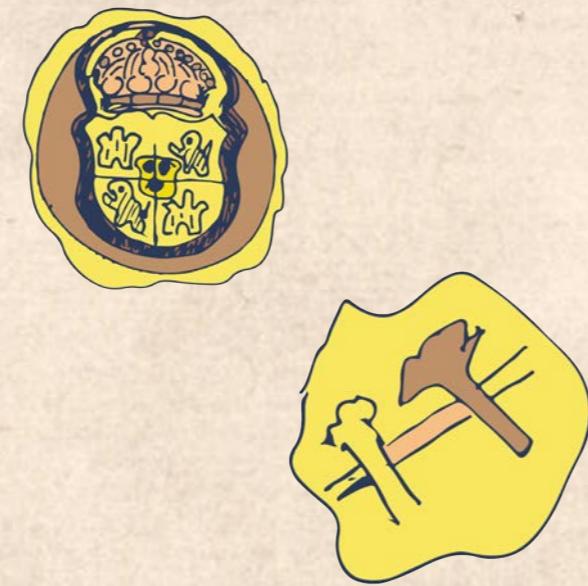
Æther Level 2: The Bakunawa causes 1 shift of damage every turn to the player in its grasp.

Æther Level 3: The Bakunawa causes 1 shift of Æther stress every turn to the player in its grasp instead of 1 shift of damage.

ITEMS

PESO

Pesos is the currency of not just the Philippines, but also several Spanish Colonies. The word translates to "weight". The Philippine peso derives from the Spanish silver coin specifically called *Real de a pocho* or Spanish dollar, which was the currency used in international trading. In Æther Republica, the peso has been modified to suit the prestige of Abansé City. Some pesos have the face of a well-known Spanish figure, and while many are indifferent to this, it proves to be awfully distasteful to members of rebellious groups, much to their dismay.

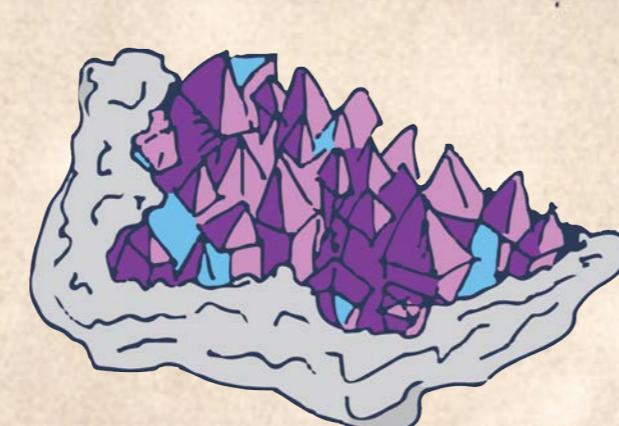


ÆTHER SHARDS

ÆTHER CLUMP

This is unrefined Æther ore fresh from Æther underground mines. If players are near or touch the ore, they take 1 shift Æther damage per scene. If taken to an blacksmith, it can be refined into an Æther shard for a price (refer to minor NPCs section). It can be utilised as bait for any Æther hoarding monsters.

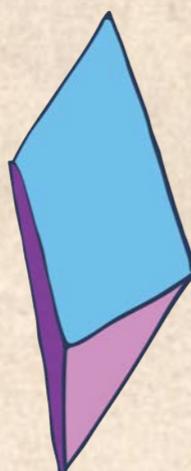
Market value: 100 pesos



SMALL ÆTHER SHARD

This small Æther shard has been refined. If players are near or touch the ore, they take 2 shift Æther damage per scene. Players can attach this shard to any Æther powered item which requires an Æther roll. If players succeed, they gain a +2 to the type of roll the item specifies. The shard breaks when used for the number of sessions equal to the shifts of damage (2 sessions).

Market value: 200 pesos



MEDIUM ÆTHER SHARD

This medium shard of Æther have been refined. If players are near or touch the ore, they take 3 shift Æther damage per scene.

Players can attach this shard to any Æther powered item which requires an Æther roll. If players succeed, they gain a +2 to the type of roll the item specifies.

Players receive Æther damage while this ore is used as an attachment per scene. The shard breaks when used for the number of sessions equal to the shifts of damage (3 sessions).

Market value: 300 pesos



LARGE ÆTHER SHARD

This large shard of Æther have been refined. If players are near or touch the ore, they take 4 shifts of Æther damage per scene.

Players can attach this to any Æther powered item. If players choose this action, they must perform an Æther check. If they succeed, they gain a +3 to a type of roll as the item specifies.

Players receive Æther damage while this ore is used as an attachment per scene. The shard breaks when used for the number of sessions equal to the shifts of damage (4 sessions).

Market value: 400 pesos



BODY MODIFICATIONS

In this age of marvelous technological breakthroughs, mechanical counterparts can replace a person's limb, drawing from the power of Æther. Students of the School of Engineering and Æthernautics have cleverly designed these prosthetics and use Æther as a fuel source. They adapt and change form in response to the intensity of the Æther that is powering it.

Body modifications must have an Æther shard attached to it. Depending on the type of shard, the character equipping the modification gains a new Stunt based on the type of modification (leg or arm modification).

Quality	Stunt for Leg Modification
Small Æther shard	You get +1 to quickly avoid an attack.
Medium Æther shard	You get +2 to quickly avoid an attack.
Large Æther shard	You get +3 to quickly avoid an attack.

Quality	Stunt for Arm Modification
Small Æther shard	You get +1 to when you forcefully attack.
Medium Æther shard	You get +2 to when you forcefully attack.
Large Æther shard	You get +3 to when you forcefully attack.

ÆTHER MODDED ARM

This type of prosthetic gives the player a bonus when they forcefully attack with their fists. The bonus can increase depending on the Æther shard used to power the prosthetic.

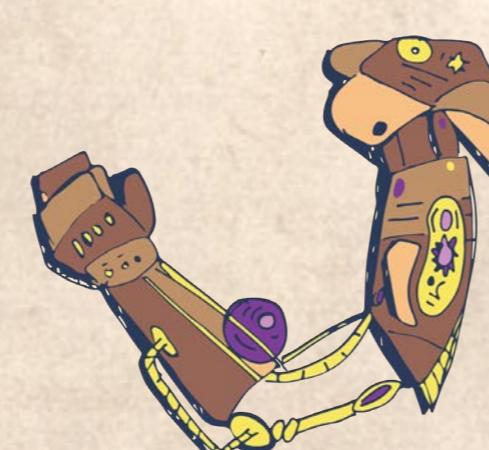
Market value: 100 pesos



WEAK



MODERATE



STRONG

Different types of prosthetics do not affect gameplay and is purely for aesthetics and flavour.

ÆTHER MODDED LEG

This type of prosthetic gives the player a bonus when they quickly defend through avoiding an attack. The bonus can increase depending on the Æther shard used to power the prosthetic.

Market value: 100 pesos



WEAK



MODERATE



STRONG

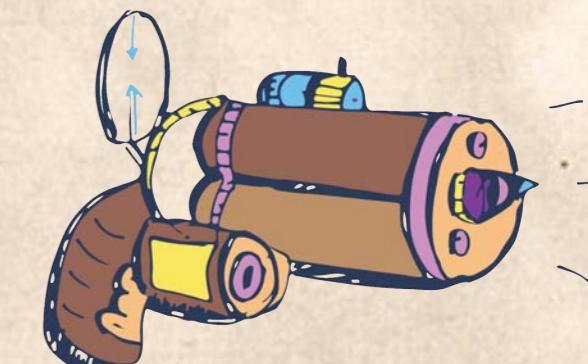
WEAPONS

ÆTHER BLUNDERBUSS

This gun looks like a flintlock to the average observer but the subtle purple accents show that this weapon is Æther modified.

This gun allows the player to go first in physical combat once per session.

Market price: 200 pesos



ÆTHER SHIELD

Players must don the shield on hand before utilising it. When donned, the shield redirects 2 physical damage to the attacking creature.

Market value: 200 pesos



KRIS

Peninsulares wield this sword as a sign of nobility. It is often used as an auxiliary weapon for court soldiers and as an accessory to a ceremonial dress. It is considered to possess magical power and has a strong connection to Æther.

Players get a +2 when they charmingly attack with this weapon.

Rarity: Rare

Market value: 100 pesos

BANGKUNG

A short sword like the kris, often used for hacking and slashing enemies.

Players get a +2 when they forcefully attack with this weapon.

Rarity: Common

Market value: 100 pesos

SIBAT (SPEAR)

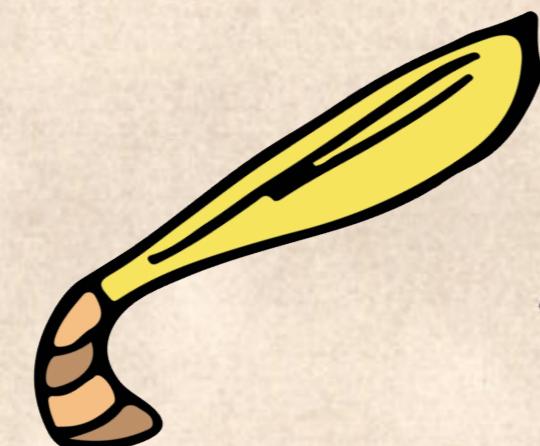
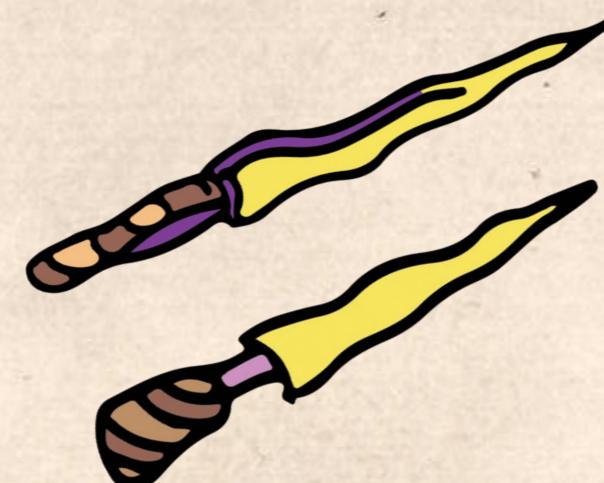
A regular hunting spear. It has a longer reach than a shortsword. It can be thrown up to 20 ft.

If modified with an Æther shard, the player can call the spear to return to their hand. Players must take Æther damage depending on the refinement of the shard.

Players get a +2 when they cleverly attack with this weapon.

Rarity: Common

Market value: 50 pesos



CONSUMABLES

POTION OF HEALING

Heals the 1st box of Stress

Market value: 50-75 pesos

POTION OF GREATER HEALING

Heals the 1st and 2nd box of Stress

Market value: 75-100 pesos

POTION OF LESSER CLEANSING

Heals the 1st box of Æther Stress and diminishes a mild consequence

Market value: 100 pesos

POTION OF CLEANSING

Heals the 1st and 2nd box of Æther Stress and diminishes a mild consequence

Market value: 200 pesos

RESPIRATOR

An item used to protect players against Æther radiation. It needs filters to be usable.

Market value: 100 pesos

POTION OF GREATEST HEALING

Heals all boxes of Stress.

Market value: 100-150

POTION OF GREATER CLEANSING

Heals the 1st, 2nd and 3rd box of Æther Stress and diminishes a severe consequence

Market value: 300

POTION OF GREATEST CLEANSING

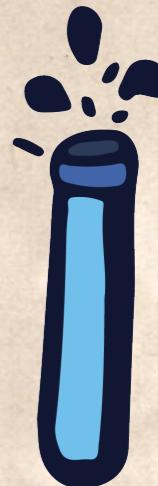
Heals all boxes of Æther Stress and diminishes a severe consequence.

Market value: 400

ÆTHER FILTERS

Players must use these filters with the respirator. 1 filter can repel Æther radiation for 1 scene.

Market value: 2 pesos



HOW TO PLAY

FATE ACCELERATED

The Æther Republica uses the FATE Accelerated role-playing system (FAE) as a foundation for storytelling and combat with some minor tweaks. This system is simple and easy to understand, allowing first-time players to immerse themselves into the story.

CREATING A CHARACTER

Think about the character you want to make. What's their name? Their backstory? Are they a swashbuckling pirate or a fancy pioneer? Use this information to write up a description. To create a Player Character (PC), you must think about and understand Aspects, Stunts and Approaches.

Similar to Fate Accelerated, *The Æther Republica* has Approaches, with an additional one called Æther. These Approaches include:

Perceptive: This approach allows your character to overcome obstacles through noticing minute details, either on the environment or on people. For example, if you notice someone may be fabricating a lie, players can use this approach to expose that.

Clever: This approach allows characters to think of logical solutions when it comes to problems. For example, if players are stuck within a confined room, players can use a clever approach to seek ways to escape.

Charm: This approach allows characters to use their charisma to lure others into doing favours for you. For example, players can appear to be charismatic around an informant as an attempt to get information out of them.

Forceful: This approach allows players to overcome obstacles through sheer brute force. For example, players can use this approach to break through doors or intimidate someone.

Quick: This approach allows characters to outpace opponents and obstacles, creating advantages using speed. For example, players can use a quick approach to dodge against falling objects.

Stealth: This approach allows characters to overcome challenges through sneaking. For example, if players need to get past a guard, they can use a stealthy approach to proceed unnoticed.

Æther: This approach allows your character to use Æther and their knowledge of Æther to overcome challenges. Examples include inserting Æther shards in weapons or body attachments.

Choose 1 Approach to be **Great (+3)**, 3 to be **Average (+2)**, 2 to be **Fair (+1)** and 1 to be **Poor (+0)** for your character.

OUTCOME LADDER

(+8) LEGENDARY

(+7) EPIC

(+6) FANTASTIC

(+5) SUPERB

(+4) GREAT

(+3) GOOD

(+2) FAIR

(+1) AVERAGE

(+0) MEDIOCRE

(-1) POOR

(-2) TERRIBLE

Using your character's backstory, write up five different aspects for your character. Your first aspect should embody the core of your character, the high concept. For example, cunning and quick, or a brawler. The second aspect should be something that troubles your character. What are they not good at? What is their flaw? The other three aspects can be whatever you want but should closely embody your character's background.

In the world of *Æther Republica*, characters MUST choose a social class, or choose to be a Foreigner. PCs may choose from the Stunts below:

Social Class	Stunts
Peninsulares	You get a +2 when you charmingly overcome an obstacle while talking to another Peninsulares
Mestizos	You get a +2 when you cleverly create an advantage while talking with another Mestizos
Indios	You get a +2 when you carefully create an advantage while convincing someone to join your cause
Foreigner	You get a +2 when you cleverly overcome an obstacle while utilising something from your homeland

Characters can optionally choose to join a Faction or a School. If PC's choose to join a School or Faction, they can choose from the Stunts below.

School	Stunts
Engineering and Æthernautics	<p>Once per session you may create/modify a piece of <i>Æther</i> weaponry or item using any <i>Æther</i> you find. You can have at most 3 <i>Æther</i> items at any time before they start breaking.</p> <p>You get a +2 when you carefully create an advantage using <i>Æther</i> items.</p> <p>Your allies get a +2 when they attack using an <i>Æther</i> item you have created.</p> <p>Once per session you may modify one of your body parts.</p>
Elevated Cosmologics	<p>Once per session you may trap someone in the earth, giving them a -2 on defense and making them incapable of moving.</p> <p>Once per session you may encase your fists with stone, giving you a +2 to attack.</p> <p>You get a +2 when you cleverly overcome an obstacle while lost.</p> <p>You get a +2 when you cleverly overcome an obstacle while using maps and navigation materials.</p>

Natural Order	<p>Once per session you may use a piece of <i>Æther</i> to heal one of your allies, allowing them to remove one shift of stress.</p> <p>Once per session you may look at an enemy and use your biological knowledge to identify one strength and one weakness of that enemy, including its <i>Æther</i> Level.</p> <p>You get a +2 whenever you cleverly create an advantage using plants and/or animals.</p> <p>Once per session you may use a piece of <i>Æther</i> to apply a body modification to yourself. You are able to do the respective stunt of that body modification (see modifications in Items section for more details).</p>
Physics	<p>Once per session you may interfere with someone's mind, forcing them to roll twice and take the lower number as their roll.</p> <p>You get a +2 when charmingly create an advantage while lying to someone.</p> <p>You get a +2 when stealthily overcome an obstacle through lying.</p> <p>Three times per session, you may move an object with telekinesis. Once per session, you may use one of those objects as an attack.</p>

Factions	Stunts
Para el Pueblo	<p>You get a +2 when you carefully overcome a challenge through pacifist means</p> <p>Twice per session you may attempt to persuade someone to your cause. If successful, that person offers their assistance to you whenever.</p> <p>You get a +2 when you quickly dodge an attack while trying to defuse a situation.</p>
Los Hijos de País	<p>You get a +2 when you forcefully attack an opponent using your fists.</p> <p>You get a +2 when you stealthily create an advantage while setting traps.</p> <p>Once per session, you may intimidate someone through stating that your faction's planning on sabotaging them. If successful, that person owes you a favour.</p>
Spanish Government	<p>You get a +2 when you cleverly create an advantage against another official.</p>

MATERIALS NEEDED (FOR BOTH PLAYERS AND GM):

- Dice: 4 standard 6-sided die or 4 fate/fudge die
- Fate Point Tokens: pennies or glass beads or poker chips or some other tokens
- Æther Republica Character Sheet
- Æther Republica Game Book

ASPECTS AND FATE POINTS

In FAE, there are different types of Aspects: Character Aspects, Situations Aspects, Consequences and Boosts.

Character Aspects describe the character's personality traits, details about their past, their relationship with others, titles and so forth. This includes their high concept and their trouble. Players can invoke this aspect to their advantage.

Situation Aspects are created when a player changes the environment to their advantage or disadvantage. For example, throwing shards of glass around so that people will have a harder time moving. Players can create this aspect or discover it using the create an advantage action. Refer to the Actions and Outcomes section for more details.

Consequences are aspects that represent injuries or lasting trauma which can either be physical or mental trauma. The severity of consequences varies, and it goes away over time. Refer to the Stress and Consequences section for more details.

Boosts are temporary aspects that players can invoke for free once. Boosts diminish after a scene or when the current advantage is no longer applicable.

What can aspects do? Players can invoke an aspect to do one of these four actions, each of which will cost 1 fate point.

- +2 bonus to your total.
- Rerolling your dice
- You can use someone else's negative aspect to increase their difficulty by +2
- You can help an ally with your aspect increasing their roll by +2

To understand how players replenish fate points, refer to the Stunts and Refresh section.

Players cannot invoke a singular aspect multiple times per roll; however, they can invoke multiple different aspects for the one roll.

COMPELLING ASPECTS

The GM and other players can compel the player's aspects. When an aspect you have is compelled, you or another person will suggest an action for you to take based on your aspects.

There are two ways an aspect can be compelled:

An event compel is not a conscious decision your character makes but rather it's a decision that your character did that would cause an event to occur. For example, if your character owes money to someone, the person that they owe money to could potentially identify the character at an inconvenient time.

Decision compels occur because of a decision you believe your character would make. For example, if you are the leader of the resistance, you may have to stay to lead a defence instead of running away.

Here's an example on how compel works in both cases: Let's call two players as Player A and Player B. If Player A compels an aspect against Player B, Player A must offer a fate point to Player B. The two players will agree on the terms of the compel. Player B must make a choice to either accept or decline the compel. If Player B accepts the compel, they get 1 fate point. If Player B declines, it will cost them a fate point. If Player B does not have any fate points, they cannot decline the compel. It is important to note here that Player A or Player B is a role that either the GM or player can take. Anyone can compel an aspect against anyone.

GM Tip: You don't have infinite fate points as a GM. You have 1 fate point for every NPC that is in a scene. When a player uses a fate point, that fate point then goes into your fate point pool. If you were to compel an aspect against a player, you do not remove a fate point from your pool.

STUNTS AND REFRESH

Use your aspects and your background to create at least three stunts, but be careful. The more stunts you have, the less Refresh points you have. Players start with 3 Refresh points. Every stunt you have past the initial 3, your Refresh decreases by 1.

Refresh points are how much your fate points get refreshed at the start of a session. If you finish a session with fate points more than your refresh points, then you start the next session with that amount of fate points. If you finish a session with an amount of fate points under your refresh, you add your refresh points to your fate points, and you start with that amount the next session. For example, you end a session with 4 fate points and your refresh is 3. You start the next session with 4 fate points. But if you were to end a session with 2 fate points and 3 refresh, you start the next session with 5 fate points.

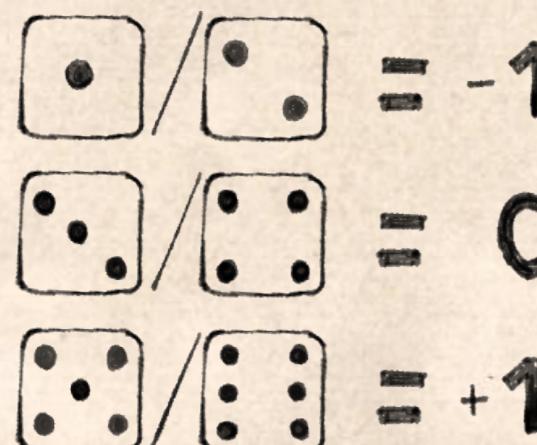
Stunts should be formatted in one of the following two ways:

Either, because I am a [aspect here] I get a +2 when I [create an advantage, overcome an obstacle, attack, defend] when [describe a circumstance] OR

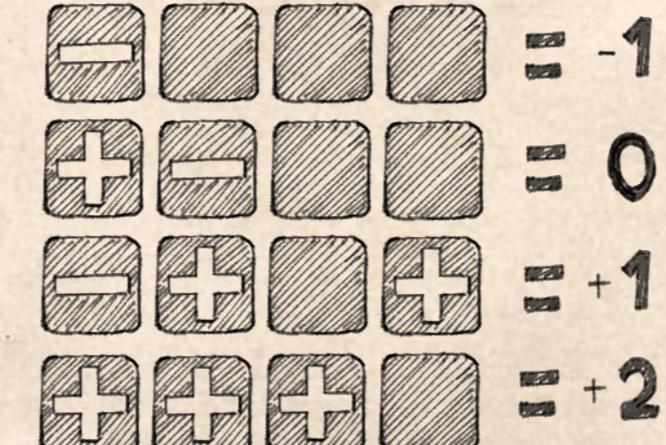
Because I am [aspect here], once per game session I can [describe what you can do].

ACTIONS, OUTCOMES, APPROACHES

Now that you have your character, how do you take action in the game? To play the game, the player must have **4 standard 6 sided dice (4d6)** or **4 fudge dice**. When the player wants to do an action, they must roll. Take a look at the top face on each die. The Fate system uses fudge dice which are six sided dice with three unique faces, two faces show [-], two faces show [+], and the remaining two are blank.



Standard six-sided die



Fate/Fudge die

You can influence a roll both using either fate points, aspects and/or approach. If you are working with an Æther modified heart and you choose to try to work the Æther out of it you would be able to add your Æther approach to the role. Then after your role has been modified you measure against either the skill level (set by the GM) that you are trying to beat or against the NPCs (or sometimes PC's) roll.

- You fail if your total is less than your opponent's total
- You tie if the totals are the same
- You succeed if your total is higher than your opponent's
- You succeed with style if your total is at least three greater than your opponent's total

GM tip: To set challenge level, use the following as a guide:

- If the task isn't tough at all, give it a Mediocre (+0) or just tell the player they succeed without a roll.
- If you can think of atleast one reason why the task is tough, pick Fair (+2)
- If the task is extremely difficult, pick Great (+4)
- If the task is impossibly difficult, go as high as you think makes sense. The PC will need to drop some fate points and get lots of help to succeed.

Now there are a few different **actions** you may attempt to do on a turn. You can either **discover or create an advantage, overcome an obstacle, attack or defend**.

You can **create an advantage either through utilising an aspect that already exists or discovering a whole new one**.

- If you fail, you don't discover or create one, or it may be created but the enemy can invoke it for free, which means they don't need to spend a fate point.
- If you tie while trying to create a new aspect, you discover the aspect and you get a boost, which is invoking it once for free
- If you succeed, you do discover or create that aspect and you or an ally gets to invoke it once for free.
- If you succeed with style, you create or discover the aspect and you or an ally may invoke it twice for free. You can even invoke it twice on the same roll.

You may also choose to **take advantage of an aspect you already know about**.

- If you fail when rolling to take advantage of an aspect, you don't get any benefit from it
- If you tie or succeed, you get one free invocation for you or an ally to use later.
- If you succeed with style, you get two free invocations of the aspect.

You can also **overcome an obstacle as an action**.

- If you fail, you can either simply fail, or you can succeed but at a cost. You and your GM must come to a consensus of what that cost is.
- If you tie, you succeed but at a minor cost that your GM must decide, either introducing a complication or presenting the player with a tough choice.
- If you succeed, you accomplish your goal.
- If you succeed with style, you succeed and you also gain a boost being able to invoke an aspect for free.

You can choose to **create an Attack against an enemy**.

- If you fail an attack roll your attack doesn't connect.
- If you tie. Your attack doesn't connect strongly enough to cause harm but you get to invoke an aspect for free.
- If you succeed your attack hits and you do damage.
- If you succeed with style your attack connects, and you can reduce the damage by one and gain the ability to invoke an aspect for free.

You must **Defend yourself when an enemy creates an Attack against you**.

- If you fail, you are on the receiving end of your opponent's success
- If you tie or succeed. Nothing happens on your end.
- If you succeed with style. Your opponent doesn't get what they want, plus you get to invoke an aspect for free.

There are 7 approaches that describe how you can do an action. This is important for stunts which rely on you performing a certain action in a certain way for them to work.

STRESS AND CONSEQUENCES

Whenever a hit attacks players, two scenarios may occur: Either the player suffers stress and/or consequences, but you remain in the scene or you get taken out.

Damage is calculated in shifts. The number of shifts is calculated through the Attack roll – the Defense roll. Players have three Stress boxes in their Stress track at the bottom of the character sheet, and three consequences labelled mild, moderate and severe. The first Stress box is labelled 1, meaning it can take up to 1 shift of damage. The second Stress box is labelled 2, meaning it can take up to 2 shifts of damage, and so on. Players must use 1 Stress box per hit. If the player is continuing to take damage but have their Stress track full, players can choose to take shifts as consequences. Each consequence can take a certain amount of damage: 2 shifts for a mild consequence, 4 for moderate, 6 for severe. If players can't handle an entire hit, they're taken out.

Players can give in before the opponents roll, giving themselves control over how they exit the scene, and as a reward, they obtain one or more fate points.

How are Stress and consequences removed? Stress and mild consequences diminish at the end of a scene, moderate consequences diminish at the end of a session, and severe consequences diminish at the end of an adventure.

GM tip: NPCs don't get consequences only stress boxes after they are used up, they go down. If you manage to cause a consequence against one of your players, one of your NPCs gets to invoke it for free.

ÆTHER DAMAGE, STRESS AND CONSEQUENCES

In the world of *The Æther Republica*, players can encounter Æther. This substance almost has a mind of its own. Several scenarios where Æther is involved can cause players to take a shift of **Æther damage** as **Æther stress**. Players must take Æther damage in the following scenarios:

- If a beast of high Æther Level with Æther-inducing moves attacks the player.
- If players are exploring an area with Æther radiation, such as underground mines or islands of Salvación, and are not equipped with gear to combat it.
- If players wield an item/weapon that has strong Æther radiation
- If players directly touch Æther

Each player has an Æther Stress track of four boxes. Like normal Stress, players must choose to take Æther damage as a consequence if they've taken enough Æther stress. The only difference is, instead of the players/GM coming up with a consequence, players must roll or choose a consequence on the tables below, based on the level of severity. Players start with a mild consequence, then a severe consequence, and for the final consequence, the character will go insane.

Mild Consequence	Description	Roll
Easily Irritated	This aspect causes the player to become quick to anger and often acting before thinking.	-4, 0
Mild Hallucinations	This aspect causes the player to see hallucinations from time to time.	-3, +1, +4
Æther sickness	This aspect causes the player to have headaches and mild vomiting whenever they enter a scene and the area has a high level of Æther radiation.	-2, +2
Nightmares	This aspect causes the player to have nightmares at night waking up in cold sweats and leaving them tired in the morning.	-1, +3

Severe Consequence	Description	Roll
Purple Veins	This aspect causes purple glowing veins to appear on the player's limbs. These veins emit a faint glow, proving to be advantageous when exploring dark areas, however it is equally disadvantageous when players are trying to sneak, as surrounding creatures can easily spot them.	-4, 0
Small Bat Wings	This aspect causes small bat wings to grow on the player's back. Players cannot fly with these wings, however, they can move it to emit sound. Surrounding creatures can see these wings when players attempt to sneak.	-3, +1, +4
Hostile to Others	This aspect has the chance to cause a player to view their allies as enemies and attack their allies during combat.	-2, +2
Æther communication	This aspect causes the player to gain a type of communication around them. In places with low radiation of Æther, they can use it to identify the type of Æther modifications a player has to a weapon, item or their body. However, in places of high Æther radiation, the voices become loud to the point of deafening. This causes the player to have a harder time concentrating on the environment around them.	-1, +3

GM tip: Mild Æther consequences are a lot more mental than normal stress resulting in the characters becoming less and less human. The GM can invoke these aspects or use it to compel the players' attacks during combat.

If a player gains a mild Æther consequence, their Æther Stress resets, but they keep the mild consequence. As long as there's a mild consequence, when the player reaches maximum Æther Stress again, they gain a severe Æther consequence and the Æther Stress resets to half. Maxing Æther Stress while having a severe consequence will cause the character to go insane. The character becomes unplayable and they turn into an Æther-infested beast.

Unlike normal stress, Æther stress does not reset at the end of a scene. Æther stress can only be removed through consulting a tribe leader in Indios/Native camps or a priest in churches. They can fully remove Stress but consequences remain until players are able to obtain a Potion of Cleansing. Different levels of Potions can remove different severities of consequences.

Certain areas and phenomena in *the Æther Republica* emit **Æther radiation**. The level of radiation is measured through Æther Levels. An area with Æther Level 1 causes players around it to take 1 shift of Æther damage every scene, an area with Æther Level 2 causes players around it to take 2 shifts of Æther damage every scene, and so on. Æther Level 3 is the maximum level.

Area/Phenomena	Æther Radiation Level
Underground Mines	1
Islands of Salvación	2
Æther Rain	2
Æther Crate	3

DETERMINING COMBAT ORDER

Before starting any type of combat, players and GM must determine the order of who goes first. If the type of combat includes physically hitting an opponent or any movement, players must look at their character's Quick approach. The character with the highest Quick approach goes first followed by the second highest, and so on. If the type of combat includes logic and mentality, say like a hypothetical debate amongst players, then the character with the highest Clever approach goes first. If characters have the same level of ability on an approach, for example, Great (+3) on Quick, then the players with the same level must roll. The player who rolls the highest goes first.

MILESTONES

Stories in Æther Republica are referred to as campaigns. They are full-length stories that involve various minor shorter stories. Throughout these shorter stories, characters may grow, change and become more powerful. These changes are represented through milestones. There are 3 types of milestones

MINOR MILESTONES

Minor milestones usually occur after every session. It is not focused on making characters powerful, instead it's about changing something about the character. Players can do these things with a minor milestone:

- Switch the ratings of any two approaches.
- Rename an aspect that isn't your high concept
- Exchange one stunt for a different stunt
- Choose a new stunt reflecting any changes in your refresh if you have three stunts already

SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES

A significant milestone occurs at the end of a scenario. Marking the end of a particular story arc. This type of milestone is meant to showcase how a party grows after a challenging encounter. You experience the same effects of a minor milestone and in addition you get to:

- If you have a severe consequence that has been around for at least two sessions, you may clear it
- Raise the bonus of one approach by one

You may not raise an approach bonus above Superb (+5).

MAJOR MILESTONES

Major milestones should only occur after major events. I.e at the end of a big story arc. Defeating the main villain. These milestones are about gaining more power and reflecting those power changes. You experience the same effects of significant and minor milestones in addition to the following:

- Take an additional point of refresh, which may be used to purchase a stunt immediately
- You may Rename your character's high concept

CHARACTER SHEET

ID		



Refresh _____ Current fate points _____

ASPECTS	

Approaches
Aether _____
Perceptive _____
Clever _____
Charm _____
Forceful _____
Quick _____
Stealth _____

STUNTS	

1	2	3	4
AETHER STRESS			

2	Mild
4	Moderate
6	Severe
CONSEQUENCES	

1	2	3
STRESS		

AETHER LEVEL RADIATION
Mild Severe Insanity

ITEMS

MORE ASPECTS

NOTES

MARIA CLARA CHARACTER SHEET

ID

Maria Clara She/her

A cheerful but resilient woman, Maria's lover was executed for being a part of founding the Para el Pueblo. She joined the organisation to continue his legacy.

ASPECTS

- Repairwoman
- The resistance is her family
- Member of Para el Pueblo
- School of Engineering and Aethernautics
- Mestizo

STUNTS

Because I'm a Repairwoman, I get a +2 when I cleverly create an advantage to repair a piece of Aether technology.

Because I am a member of the School of Engineering and Aethernautics, once per session I can channel Aether to modify a piece of technology.

Because I am Mestizo, I get a +2 when I cleverly create an advantage while in conversation with another Mestizo.

AETHER STRESS			
1	2	3	4

STRESS		
1	2	3

CONSEQUENCES			
2	Mild		
4	Moderate		
6	Severe		

AETHER LEVEL RADIATION		
Mild	Severe	Insanity



Refresh
3 Current fate points
3

Approaches

Aether	+2
Perceptive	+2
Clever	+3
Charm	+1
Forceful	+1
Quick	+2
Stealth	+0

PISH WALKER CHARACTER SHEET

ID

Pish Walker he/him

Pish enjoys working with natural elements and has a deep love for the land. However, due to his incredible amount of drinking over the years, he has forgotten who his family was and where he came from.

ASPECTS

- Master of the Drunken Fist
- Problematic drinking habit
- Member of Para el Pueblo
- School of Cosmologics
- Mestizo

STUNTS

Because I am a member of the School of Cosmologics, I get a +2 when I cleverly overcome an obstacle while using maps and navigation tools.

Because I am a Master of the Drunken Fist, I get a +2 to defense and a +2 to attack while drinking.

Because I am a Mestizo, I get a +2 when I cleverly create an advantage while in conversation with another Mestizo.

AETHER STRESS			
1	2	3	4

STRESS		
1	2	3

CONSEQUENCES			
2	Mild		
4	Moderate		
6	Severe		

AETHER LEVEL RADIATION		
Mild	Severe	Insanity



Refresh
3 Current fate points
3

Approaches

Aether	+2
Perceptive	+1
Clever	+3
Charm	+2
Forceful	+1
Quick	+0
Stealth	+2

NALI CAPILI CHARACTER SHEET

ID

Nali Capili she/her

Nali has a short temper, loves a good fight and has a deep hatred for Abanse City and Aether. She was found and raised as a fighter by a group of Indios rebels in the wilds of New Castille.

ASPECTS

- Captain of the Siege Crew
- Believes everything can be solved with fists
- Member of Para el Pueblo
- Indio
- Can take a beating

STUNTS

Because I am Captain of the Siege Crew, I am able to call upon an ally for help during battle once per game session.

Because I believe everything can be solved with fists, I get +2 to attacks when fighting with fists.

Because I am Indio, I get a +2 when I am perceptive in creating an advantage while in conversation with another Indio.

AETHER STRESS

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

STRESS

1	2	3
---	---	---

CONSEQUENCES

2 Mild
4 Moderate
6 Severe

AETHER LEVEL RADIATION

Mild	Severe	Insanity
------	--------	----------



Refresh
3 Current fate points
3

Approaches

Aether	+2
Perceptive	+0
Clever	+2
Charm	+1
Forceful	+3
Quick	+2
Stealth	+1

ISAAC SANTISTEBAN CHARACTER SHEET

ID

Isaac Santisteban he/him

Isaac resents the Catholic Church and ruling Spaniards but wears the latter's clothes to pass as Peninsulare. Quick and cunning, he quietly spreads Para el Pueblo propaganda wherever he goes.

ASPECTS

- Master of Disguises
- Cannot perform acts of violence
- School of Physics
- Member of Para el Pueblo
- Mestizo

STUNTS

Because I'm a Master of Disguises, I get a +2 when I stealthily create an advantage by impersonating someone else.

Because I'm a member of the School of Physics, I get a +2 whenever I charm to create an advantage in attempting to persuade someone.

Because I am a Mestizo, I get a +2 when I cleverly create an advantage while having a conversation with another Mestizo.

AETHER STRESS

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

STRESS

1	2	3
---	---	---

CONSEQUENCES

2 Mild
4 Moderate
6 Severe

AETHER LEVEL RADIATION

Mild	Severe	Insanity
------	--------	----------

CARMEN DE LA ROSA CHARACTER SHEET

ID
Carmen de la Rosa
she/her

Gifted from an early age, Carmen was sent by her wealthy Spanish family to study in Abanese City. She's always felt caged and finally took the opportunity to disappear and learn more about the outside world.

ASPECTS
Peninsulare
School of Natural Order
Agnostic to rebel/coloniser conflict
No street smarts
Bookish know-it-all

STUNTS
Because I am a member of the School of Natural Order, three times per game session, I can channel Aether to influence a creature to perform an action. In addition, once per game session, when I influence a creature to attack, I can give it a +2 to its attack roll.
Because I am a Peninsulare, I get a +2 when I charm for advantage while in conversation with another Peninsulare.
Because I am a bookish know-it-all, once per game session, I can identify a creature or object and know what it is or how to use it.

AETHER STRESS			
1	2	3	4

STRESS		
1	2	3

CONSEQUENCES
2 Mild
4 Moderate
6 Severe

AETHER LEVEL RADIATION		
Mild	Severe	Insanity



Refresh
2 Current fate points
3

Approaches

Aether	+3
Perceptive	+2
Clever	+2
Charm	+1
Forceful	0
Quick	+2
Stealth	+1

GAME MASTER SECTION

The Game Master (GM) has an important role in *The Æther Republica*. The GM acts as a storyteller, a referee, and the roleplayer for NPCs and monsters that players interact with.

They tell a story that player characters engage in. They act as the bridge between the players and the game world. They write and read adventures, and describe how the players' actions change the world around them. They present the players with encounters and challenges that they must overcome to progress the story. They're in charge of explaining gameplay mechanics and rules when something is unclear and they take the final say when players debate with them. They roleplay as various NPCs and monsters, choosing their actions and rolling dice for their behalf.

GM Tip: NPCs and monsters operate the same as players: using a character sheet.

These are the many responsibilities that the GM has that players don't have. A sample adventure, also referred to as Session 0, is important to make sure all players and even the GM themselves understand the boundaries of what they can and can't do, and what kind of story they want to tell.

BUILDING SCENARIOS

To build a scenario, you should have a villain or a main obstacle for the players to overcome. The GM should give the players a reason to care about what they are presenting to them.

The main villains or the Big Bad Evil Guys (BBEG) should have fleshed out character sheets with aspects, approaches, and stunts. To give players a good motivation to deal with the BBEG, great methods include giving rewards or punishments. If the motivation is monetary, a key NPC may offer up a sum of pesos to the players if they defeat the BBEG. Rewards aren't always monetary. Perhaps the NPC is a blacksmith and they don't have a lot of gold to their name. They would unlikely offer money, instead but they could offer a weapon or item they forged for the players to use.

Giving motivation through punishment is a lot more complex. It should be the result of natural consequences due to the players actions or in some cases inaction. For example, if the players know that the BBEG is going to blow up a town and they are unable to stop them in time, then the town faces the consequences instead of the players.

After creating the BBEG and the motivations for players, the GM's next step is to create different scenes. A good session should consist of multiple different scenes. When starting a scene, the GM should set it. Are there any involved NPCs? What's around the players? Why are they there?

SETTING DIFFICULTIES

When creating scenes, the GM should set tasks for the players to accomplish. The GM sets how difficult a task should be. A simple guide to follow is presented below:

- If the task isn't tough at all, give it a Mediocre (+0) or just tell the player they succeed without a roll.
- If you can think of atleast one reason why the task is tough, pick Fair (+2)
- If the task is extremely difficult, pick Great (+4)
- If the task is impossibly difficult, go as high as you think makes sense. The PC will need to drop some fate points and get lots of help to succeed.

Low difficulties are often best when you want to give the players an opportunity to show off how cool they are or how well they are able to do certain things. Difficulties that are near the players' Approach ratings are often used when you want to provide the players with a sense of tension. High difficulties are used when you want to portray the dire circumstances players are in and when you want the players to utilise all their resources to overcome an obstacle.

ROLEPLAYING AS AN NPC

When the GM plays as an NPC, your goal is not to defeat the player but to challenge them. Make sure every player gets to have their time in the sun. When designing NPCs, ensure giving them their own stories and goals. The players' choices and actions may affect the world around them, but that doesn't mean that it revolves solely around them. A little world building can go a long way with creating an immersive story arc.

However, there are some NPC's and bad guys whose stories are of little importance. They are meant to be quick obstacles for the players to get around and then they're never heard from ever again. In these cases, creating fully fleshed out character sheets for these NPCs can be tedious and redundant. It is better to make them as **Mooks**. Mooks don't have a character sheet, they're much more simplified.

To create a Mook, consider these:

- What is the Mook good at? They receive a +2 to these rolls.
- What is the Mook bad at? They receive a -2 to these rolls.
- How many stress boxes do these NPCs have?

An example mook is depicted below.

Guard:

Skilled (+2) at: running to get help, using spears and shields

Bad (-2) at: Staying focused on the job, spotting intruders

Stress: 1 first level stress box

If you have multiple bad guys, sometimes it's better to group them together.

- Lay out what they are good and bad at as depicted above.
- Give them an aspect.
- Give them one stress box for every two individuals in the group.

WHEN TO ROLL FOR ÆTHER

Æther is an approach that can be confusing to use as it's not self-explanatory on what exactly it's for. If the players want to attach an Æther shard to their modification or weapon, should they approach it cleverly? Or should they use a perceptive approach to examine if an ore is refined or not?

The GM should be knowledgeable on which actions require an Æther roll which includes:

- When players are attempting to modify an item, weapon or even their own body with Æther. The higher the quality and size of the Æther ore, the harder the roll. It is important to note that Æther stress is only taken if the roll is successful. Furthermore, if a player has a stunt that says "once per session you may modify something with Æther...", the stunt is not complete until the roll is successful.
- When players enter areas of high Æther radiation they should perform an Æther check. If they fail, they take an amount of Æther damage as specified in the table in the Æther Damage, Stress and Consequences section (page). However, after that initial scene where they enter the area, if players are still in the same area in a new scene, they do not need to do an Æther roll and instead they take Æther damage automatically, unless they are equipped with protective gear.
- When players are trying to identify if an Æther ore/shard is refined or unrefined.

FINAL SAY

The GM is the final judge around any rules. If players raise a question, or if the GM is unsure about something, the GM can refer to this book. Ultimately though, the GM has the final say.

ADVENTURE FUNNEL:

Testing Loyalties

This chapter contains a sample adventure intended for GMs to bring players into the world of *The Æther Republica*. This sample adventure has been written to take approximately one session to complete and is written in part so that the GM can read descriptions verbatim, with bold GM notes aside elaborating on NPC dynamics and player opportunities.

We encourage new players to use our five example characters (refer to **Playable Characters section, page 8**) for a balance of abilities and approaches but player-made characters are more than welcome. This scenario offers many opportunities to showcase the gameplay approaches, narratives and themes we hope players will engage with in more depth across a campaign in *The Æther Republica*.

In *Testing Loyalties*, player characters begin their first new day in the Testing Grounds region of Luzon, north of Abansé City. They can either be familiar with one another already or be meeting for the first time. What they should already know is this: labour in the Testing Grounds can swing between the mundane to dangerous. Here, in the rural hills and forests, the Schools have room for their experiments with a... wider scope of studies. Approached by a clerk from the School of Engineering and Æthernautics, the party will be contracted to retrieve an item from a test site the School has lost contact with. On their way there, the party will have the chance to meet NPCs from other factions, possibly giving more insight into the dangers and opportunities lying ahead. Will the party complete their contract or forego their first pay? Is there more to the experiments found in Testing Grounds?

IMPORTANT: Before the GM begins, know that italicised text, text written in [] and text inside this white box **SHOULD NOT** be said out loud and it is for the eyes of the GM only. Take these as gestures or as tips/notes.

SCENE I: FIRST CONTRACT

After a rough first night in the bunkhouses, you make your way to a workyard sanctioned by the School of Engineering and Æthernautics. Here, you'll find a contract board with today's postings. The wet season hasn't fully arrived, yet the sky already churns above. You can feel the humidity swelling and there's a thick smell of earth and rust. As the crowd of regular labourers hurriedly thins from the contract boards, you see all the postings have already been taken, and it's just yourselves without work.

[Let players take stock of one another, making any necessary introductions. After giving them time, clear your throat loudly.]

Before you suddenly stands a stocky mestizo man dressed in a steely-blue skullcap and same coloured academic overcoat. He's red in the face, out of breath.

'You there, countrymen. You are still looking for work, yes? I have urgent need of you.'

[Introduce yourself as Clerk Mendez, representing the School of Engineering and Æthernautics. Mendez speaks hurriedly, as if hiding panic. He has a newly inked contract of 500 pesos per contractor. The task: for player characters to journey a day north to a small test site to report on its current working conditions and courier their experiment logs back to him.]

Character profile: Clerk David Mendez [refer to Major NPC section in page 49 for more details]

A seasoned and faithful administrator with the School of Engineering and Æthernautics. He couldn't say no to his superiors and was posted off-campus to make way for budget reforms. But if God in His organisational wisdom could create Heaven and Earth in seven days then, with his Æthered timepiece in hand, David Mendez can raise his School's Testing Grounds experimental KPIs tenfold – God willing, maybe even with 10% less fatal human resource losses than last quarter.

[If pressed for more information, Clerk Mendez will react accordingly based on approaches and rolls]:

	Clever	Charm	Forceful
+2 or higher	Impressed	Grateful	Reluctantly impressed
+1	Charmed	Relieved	Surprised
0	Indifferent		Indifferent
-1			Flustered
-2 or higher			Annoyed

+2 or higher: [in addition to +1's] the site is working with explosives elaborating that secrecy is common enough when working for Schools due to their rivalries. The party should keep this in mind if they wish for higher paying contracts.

+1: they haven't heard from the site for a week, and he does not know why. He puts this down to field-scholars wasting time drinking.

0: there is not enough time to explain, there are enough members in the party to handle this simple task.

-1: warns that new contractors shouldn't go poking their noses in School information; more suspicious clerks will think you're trying to look for information to sell on.

-2 or lower: [in addition to -1's] warns that new Testing Grounds contractors should know not to pry further if they don't want themselves blacklisted from further employment.

[Uping the pay]: Clerk Mendez will only agree to increase the pay by 50 pesos each on the side [citing budgetary restrictions] based on one single player roll of +2 or higher. He will only keep this promise if the players fulfil their contract to the fullest.

Regardless, Clerk Mendez should reiterate to the player characters that it should only take a day's travel on foot, that they should arrive at the site by nightfall if they leave soon. When the player characters accept the contract, he will have them sign and give them a Contractors' Writ and Test Site Map].

Description of Test Site Map for players if asked:

A basic topographic map charting just north of the settlement with a site clearly marked. The site is on cleared land hugging the south face of a forested ridge. There is forest to the west and south and more cleared land to the east. A man-made track reaches the site from the east.

Description of Contractors' Writ if asked:

A written missive declaring you are currently working under the School of Engineering. This should be proof of your identities and your purpose while travelling through School-owned land for the purpose of avoiding notice of trespass and mishandling of the School of Engineering property.

SCENE 2: JOURNEYING NORTH

Looking at the marked map provided by Clerk Mendez, there is one clear route to the test site: the track approaching it from the east. Comparing it to the maps you already have on hand, you can see that though winding and meandering, the man-made tracks of the Testing Grounds purposefully avoid rough terrain as well as the different Schools' patchwork of sanctioned and claimed lands. The track to the marked testing site is easy to follow but cutting straight through the forests could prove much quicker if you can keep your bearings. There's also the weather to consider: if it does rain, the tracks will provide little cover.

[Give players the opportunity to decide their route. If they take the track, continue below. If they cut through the forests, go to page 91 to Scene 2.2].

SCENE 2.1: STAY ON TRACK

As the day goes on down the path, the humidity and heat are bearable. Passing by the forests, sometimes looming either side, you made the easier decision to keep to the tracks. Around midday, you come across another traveling party taking lunch in the shade beside the track. There are three people. Two are rough-looking mestizos in militia uniforms, each with a strip of cardinal-red fabric tied round their waists. You can see one has a rifle propped against the log they're sitting on, the other with their hand on a large hunting knife.

Between sitting them is a peninsular woman dressed in fine traveling wear, a cardinal-red stole embroidered with gold thread and a wide-brimmed, veiled hat of the same shade. She rests her gloved hands atop a hiking cane.

'Good afternoon, provincials. Care to join me a while? My companions aren't much in the way of entertaining conversation.'

Descriptive note: A stole is a scarf-like piece of clothing usually worn by Christian priests alongside robes, worn across the shoulders and draped across the front.

(Let at least one player introduce themselves first, only then introduce yourself as Dr Gabriela de Sevilla, soon-to-be tenured with the School of Natural Order. She has a self-righteous attitude and speaks boastfully but is always smiling and often gestures with her cane or gloved hands. Ask player characters who they are, what they are doing in the Testing Grounds (etc.) and only ever offer reciprocal information. Give players the impression that to get a straight answer, they must first give a straight answer).

Character profile: Dr Gabriela de Sevilla [refer to Major NPC section in page 49 for more details]

A relatively young scholar who recently arrived on Luzon to further her studies in Crypto-biology with the School of Natural Order. Spanish born but well-travelled enough, she's found non-Europeans are just as fascinating as anything else that crawls or walks in yet untamed places. Truly though, conversation is to any man as the scalpel is in dissection of any specimen. One simply must press sharply and draw a clear, straight line to get what they want, and what Dr Gabriela de Sevilla wants she will always ask for civilly before she takes otherwise.

Key Dr Gabriela de Sevilla Q&As :

- What is she doing? She is looking for a recently escaped specimen from a School of Natural Order test site. If pressed or shown your contract writ, she will describe the Bungisngis (Bestiary section, page 55).
- Where is she going? North, not far from here. If shown the Test Site Map given to the players by Clerk Mendez, she will say that her destination is nearabout the test site.
- What are her opinions on the ongoing rebel-colonist conflict? She thinks the Indios should be grateful for the Spanish bringing them so many opportunities. If player characters disagree with her, she says she finds it amusing because they decided to speak with her and through this, she has given them the opportunity to be disappointed or not.

[If pressed for information without offering any, Dr Gabriela de Sevilla will react accordingly based on approaches and rolls]:

	Clever	Charm	Forceful
+2 or higher	Impressed		
+1	Amused		
0 or lower	Curt		

+2 or higher: she acknowledges that the player character is trying very hard to be entertaining and she answers plainly.

+1: she gives a vague or shallow response that doesn't answer the question fully, asking to know the same from the player character if they want a proper answer.

0 or below: she moves the conversation on. If pressed once more on the same topic with the same results, she will say that the player characters are boring her and motions to her guards to move them on, by force if necessary.

(Should the player characters reveal where they are going and not trigger her to threaten them, Dr Gabriel de Sevilla will offer to accompany them, offering pay if they can assist in her task, saying the amount will depend on how useful they are).

The party continues down the track. After midday, the clouds finally burst. At first, the water feels cool to your skin. Then a little warmer. Soon, it stings and smalls tongues of smoke wisp up from the track ahead. You better find or make cover, fast.

[Additionally, if travelling with Dr Gabriela de Sevilla]:

Seeing the acid rain, Dr de Sevilla's guards take out and don hooded ponchos from their packs. The ponchos' fabric is paper-thin but has a strange sheen to it; any acidic droplets roll right off. Dr de Sevilla produces a wide umbrella of the same fabric.

[Players will each need to roll positively, otherwise take a Stress. Examples of how player's Approaches may interact with this check]:

Aether	Clever or Charm	Forceful	Quick
Using a School of Physics Stunt to hold the rain off them, or a Cosmologics Stunt to clear the weather.	Asking Dr de Sevilla about her umbrella or for a space under it (max 2 player characters).	Uprooting a plant with large wide leaves as improvised umbrellas.	Dipping between the cover provided by trees either side of the path.

SCENE 2.2: THROUGH THE FOREST

Even so close to a colonial settlement, amidst the trees and underscrub, the terrain quickly becomes rougher, and it is hard to keep your bearings off the beaten track or keep yourselves from exhaustion in the forest's humidity. How are you able to do so?

[Each player must roll to navigate the forest successfully. Failed saves will result in 1 shift of mental Stress and if the overall party sways negatively, describe them as being lost for a time or unable to keep a good pace, that it's not likely they will arrive any earlier than taking the track].

(Examples of how player's Approaches may interact with this check):

Perceptive	Clever	Forceful	Quick
Finding the traces of an old woodsman's trail to ease travel.	Keeping an eye on the map and looking for key landmarks.	Marching through the underscrub, physically undeterred.	Being light of foot, making sure never to trip on roots or rocks.

Later in the day, as you listen to the pattering of rainfall on the forest canopy, you come across a small clearing and what seems to be an abandoned camp. There's an old sheet tied between two trees for cover, a bedroll beneath it. At a glance, there's seemingly nothing else.

(If players make a Perceptive roll):

+2 or higher	There is a figure watching them from close by, hiding behind a tree.
+1	There is a mark carved into a nearby tree.
0	There are tracks of someone recently coming and going from here; it may not be abandoned.
-1	They find nothing more.
-2 or lower	They take a step and somehow find your foot in burning coals. They were covered by what looks like an up-turned basket woven from vines and leaves. The player character takes a Stress.

(If players investigate the mark, they succeed if):

- They invoke their Indio Aspect or similar
- They roll +2 or higher using their Clever Approach

(If successful, reveal the mark is code for 'comrade' used by Los Hijos del País [The Sons of the Country] radical rebel-group.

Should the players either notice the figure or linger at the camp, describe an indio man approaching through the forest, a simple bow slung over his shoulder. He says he is just a hunter and this is his camp. If they ask for his name, he says it is Capulong. If player characters continue to linger proceed with]:

Capulong eyes you, as if not sure what to make of your party. Then he says: 'Do you stand with the Schools or Church, countrymen?'

(If they answer yes):

He will be hostile, telling them to leave his camp. If they answer no he will ask: 'Then who do you stand with?'

(If players give any answers related to 'the people,' 'the island of Luzon,' or 'ourselves,' proceed with):

Capulong straightens his posture and looks each of you dead in the eye. 'Then maybe we can assist one another, countrymen. I am Comrade Capulong of Los Hijos del País.' He taps his fist to his chest. 'Freedom to Luzon and her peoples.'

Character profile: Comrade Capulong (refer to **Major NPC** section in page 50 for more details)

Once a simple woodsman from a village far to the north, when School-sanctioned mining bled poisons into their local rivers and water sources, Capulong's former way of life was uprooted. He moved with his family from settlement to settlement, colonist disasters following them all the way. After his parents passed, he saw no point in tying himself to place but instead to a newer, bigger family. When the revolution comes into bloom, Los Hijos del País will make sure peninsulares will never again bring ruin to Luzon.

Working as an independent operative, Comrade Capulong freed a captured Bungisngis (Bestiary section, page 55) from a test site and lured it to the marked School of Engineering test site to disrupt their operations. With the field-scholars dead and operations halted, he wishes to retrieve the experimental explosives left for use in the cause for Los Hijos del País. Anything else worth looting there can be the player characters' reward. After stating his intent, Comrade Capulong should ask the player characters if they are with him.

(Examples of how players' Approaches may interact with this check):

Clever	Charm	Forceful
(mark discovered) Speaking about the mark and what you know of <i>Los Hijos del País</i>.	Directly convincing Capulong you are with him.	Capulong will not tolerate being intimidated and show he is armed with a pistol.

GM Note: If Capulong recognises that a player character is Peninsulare, he will invoke this Aspect and cause a -1 for this player's rolls. Player characters who are Indio can invoke their Aspect to gain a +1 bonus. If Comrade Capulong is convinced the player characters are with him, he will accompany them to the test site. If not convinced, he will take out his pistol and threaten the party to return the way they came and to not meddle further. If they refuse, he will attack.

SCENE 3: THE TEST SITE

(If the party successfully navigated the forest, player characters arrive at the test site in the late afternoon, or at sunset if they were unsuccessful navigating. If the party took the track, they arrive at sunset regardless of checks)

The surrounding trees have been cleared to make a fortified perimeter around the test site, all against the northern rock-face.

- **Accompanied by Dr de Sevilla**, one of her militia will spy the front gate has been broken from afar and suggests everyone proceed with caution. Though still light out, this could be a sign the Bungisngis is near. Dr de Sevilla seems eager to recapture her specimen; night approaches, the time when the Bungisngis is most active.
- **Accompanied by Comrade Capulong**, he tells the party the Bungisngis will be sheltering from the sun in the old mine the School were using to test their explosives. They will have to go into the mine to retrieve the explosives but the Bungisngis should still be sleeping; **[If at sunset]** they need to be wary of how much time they have before sunset, when it wakes.

As you approach the site, you find the gates broken inwards, the worksite in ruins. Tents lie in collapsed messes and broken mechanical devices from the School of Engineering and Æthernautics are strewn across the worksite. There are dark smears along the ground but no sign of any field-scholars. All the smears track to a tunnel leading into the rock-face, its massive doors torn from their hinges.

(Key Details for Environmental Interactions):

If players inspect the ruined worksite, consult page [x] for full details on the items they may find depending on what they interact with. Based off their roll results, decide on the quality of those items. Importantly, the torn first half of the logbook, as requested by Clerk Mendez, can be found in the ruined overseer's tent to the left of the mine entrance. The torn second half can be found inside the mine, on what's left of the overseer.

(Limitation):

If the party arrived at sunset, players will only have time to roll to investigate the site twice before the Bungisngis wakes and emerges from the mine. If the party is accompanied by any NPCs, they will remark after that they don't have enough time, reminding them to hurry up after the first investigation check. However, if the party arrived in the afternoon, there is no limit.

(Key Conflict Scenarios):

Depending on the criteria players meet, there are three versions of conflict with the Bungisngis:

- **Encountering the Bungisngis outside the mine**

Should player character arrive at sunset via the forests or take the track, then investigate the work site first. This version should also be considered if player characters exit the mine with the Bungisngis in pursuit

- **Encountering the Bungisngis asleep inside the mine**

Only available to player characters who arrived early via the forests.

- **Encountering the Bungisngis awake inside the mine**

Should player characters arrive at sunset and proceed directly into the mine, or wake the sleeping Bungisngis if they arrived earlier and proceeded into the mine.

Should players begin combat with the Bungisngis, refer to page 55 for its stats. Should players be accompanied by Comrade Capulong or Dr Gabriel de Sevilla and her militia, refer to page 49-50 for their NPC stats.

(Encountering the Bungisngis Outside the Mine):

Environmental Elements

- **Advantages:** If player characters lie low, they can use the wrecked tents to keep out of the Bungisngis' sight, but not for long. If they search the research tents to the right of the test site, they can find components of the experimental explosives. If clever enough, they can use these remains to disorient the Bungisngis. A few rare mechanical items that aren't completely broken could also still be of use.
- **Hazards:** However, toying with explosive compounds could also prove dangerous. Equally, the broken mechanical components could further malfunction and cause the wielder harm.

If Dr de Sevilla is present:

The doctor's rifleman takes cover behind part of the broken gate at the test site's entrance. They load a tranquiliser round into their rifle. The other militia silently slips under the wreckage, knife drawn in one hand, rope in the other, now completely out of sight. Dr de Sevilla adjusts her hat and stands in plain sight, now brandishing her hiking cane as a Spanish noble would a rapier.

(Dr de Sevilla's party will fight on until she is incapacitated herself, at which point they will fall back to safety).

If Comrade Capulong is present:

As the Bungisngis clears the tunnel entrance, Comrade Capulong makes a mad dash past the creature. The Bungisngis swipes at him but Capulong slides deftly beneath its arm and disappears into the darkness. With a low rumble that sounds too close to a human chuckle, the Bungisngis turns back to you; there is more fresh meat here.

(Encountering the Bungisngis Asleep Inside the Mine):

Environmental Elements

- Advantages: Between the equipment and rock-formations in the mine, player characters may hide fully behind objects if needed. Old mining tools such as pickaxes could be used as improvised weapons if desperately needed.
- Hazards: There are only a few Æther-powered lamps in the mine shaft, everything must be performed in low-lighting, or it will wake the Bungisngis. The experimental explosives at the back of the tunnel are volatile, and either disturbing them with force or failed attempts to properly carry them will result in their detonation. Human remains are also scattered throughout the tunnel and player characters may be psychologically affected by seeing or having to interact with them.

If Comrade Capulong is present:

Comrade Capulong takes a low stance and leads the party onward, making gestures with his hands to avoid less obvious tripping hazards.

(Players may reroll their Stealth rolls to remain undetected while Comrade Capulong is also undetected).

(Encountering the Bungisngis Awake Inside the Mine):

Environmental Elements remain the same as the previous scenario

If Dr de Sevilla is present before player characters proceed into the mine:

'Very good!' Dr de Sevilla declares. 'Draw the creature out for me, will you?' She and her party readies their positions. The doctor's rifleman takes cover behind part of the broken gate at the test site's entrance. They load a tranquiliser round into their rifle. The other militia silently slips under the wreckage, knife drawn in one hand, rope in the other, now completely out of sight. Dr de Sevilla adjusts her hat and stands in plain sight, now brandishing her hiking cane as a Spanish noble would a rapier.

(Dr de Sevilla's party will fight on until she is incapacitated herself, at which point they will fall back to safety).

If the Bungisngis wakes and Comrade Capulong is present:

'Tanga kayo!' Capulong hisses. 'Draw it away from the explosives or we'll all be dead!' He takes cover behind an old mining cart, waiting to move closer to the explosives.

SCENE 4: COMPLETING THE CONTRACT

- If players successfully assist Dr de Sevilla to recapture the Bungisngis alive and let her take control of the test site's assets including the logbook, she will reward them with 700 pesos each, telling them to use her name in seeking out further contracted work with the School of Natural Order.
- If players successfully assist Comrade Capulong, in addition to loot from the test site, they will receive 3 Experimental Short-range Charges and a mark on their map to set another meeting further north.
- Without delivering the complete logbook, players will receive only a portion of their pay from Clerk Mendez should they report back. If they do not report back at all, they will be blacklisted from further contracts with the School of Engineering and Æthernautics

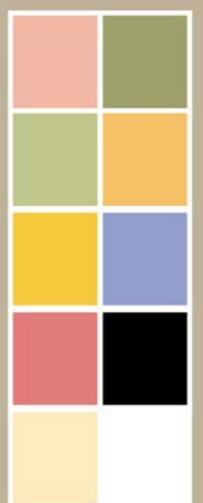
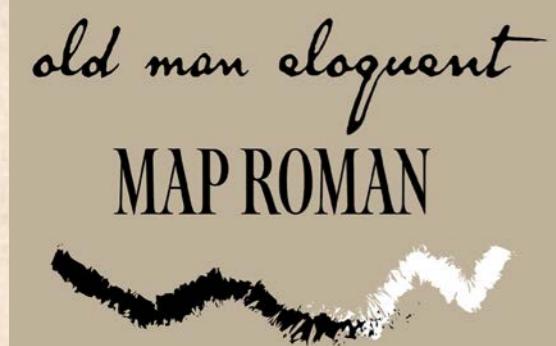
As players may only partially meet narrative criteria, or even successfully complete multiple, it is down to the GM's discretion on how to balance their rewards or narrative avenues for future adventures.

APPENDIX I

MOOD BOARD



STYLE GUIDE - MAPS



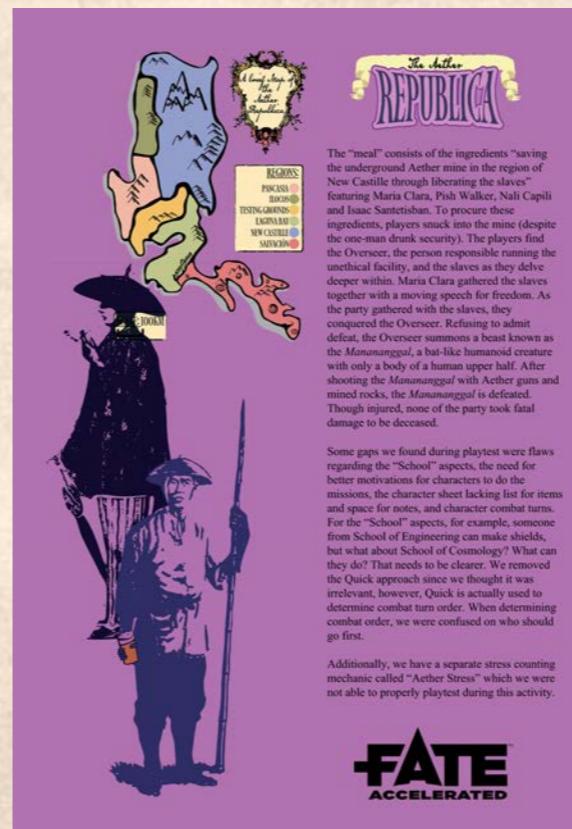
STYLE GUIDE - GENERAL

Typefaces used-



Elements within the book are to include a variety of colour palettes. (depending upon the content shown). There will be an overwhelming amount of brown and purple tones within the art.

PLAY TEST NOTES / REPORTS



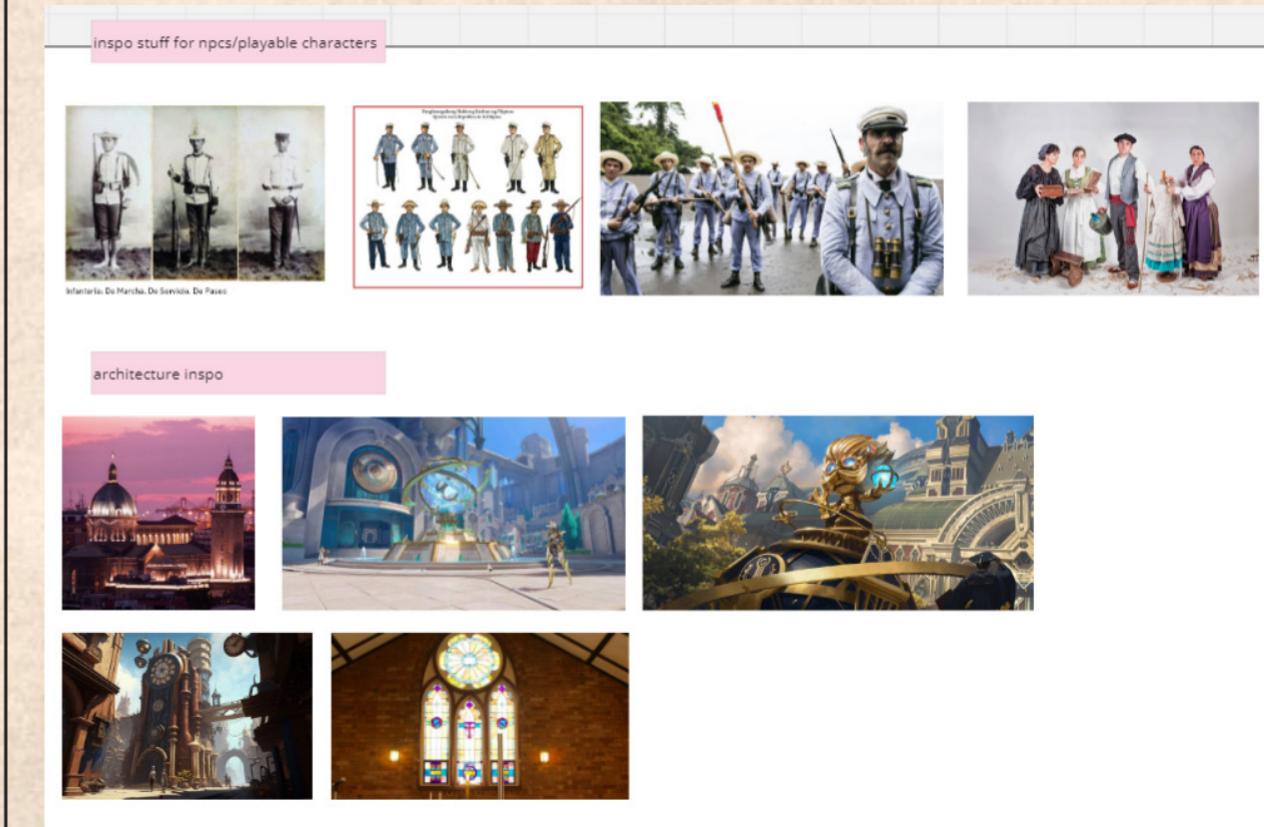
adventure funnel has lack of direction
"this is what you're doing" instead of not knowing what to do in the beginning
2.2 Scene = bit lost? why? <- lack of direction
why do School aspect needs to have the aether approach?
combat/turn/scene confusion/lacks clarity
social classes + factions need explanation on what they could do
feedback:
nice pace
world has a lot of depth
reading game book should've explained social classes + factions + schools <- not integrated with the character
carmen's identification is OP/not specific (creature or object?)
cannot perform acts of violence (trouble aspect)
making big decisions that allow players to choose
player agency

PROJECT WORKLOAD

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Week	Domain	Task category	Task description	Flag / Triage	Assigned to	Status	Actual time spent (including edits)		
1	Concept	Overall	Refining high concept	All	Complete		4		
2	Influences	Overall	Collecting notes from team members	Will / Hannah	Complete		2		
3	Systems	Fate tweak	Adapt FAE for world	Peyten/Casper	Complete		4		
4	Design	Fate tweak	Adapt FAE character sheet	Peyten/Casper	Complete		3		
5	World	Maps	City maps	will	Complete	1 week			
6	World	Maps	Country maps	will	Complete	"			
7	World	Mutation system	Explanation and aspects for character sheets	Peyten	Complete		2		
8	World	History	Story of the great event	Hannah / Rory	Complete		4		
9	World	Factions	Character creation	Everyone	Complete		2		
10	Art	NPCs	Main NPC art for character sheets	Hannah	Complete		3		
11	Gameplay	Creatures	General bestiary	Peyten / Caspar	Complete		4		
12	Art	Technology	Part of history section	cool person	Complete		2		
13	Design	GM notes	For final submission	Peyten	Complete		6		
14	Design	Adventure Funnel	For final submission	cool person	Complete				
15	Design	Book layout		Will / Hannah	Complete				
16	art	game logo		Will	Complete	1 day			
17	art	items - weapons		Will	Complete	1 day			
18	art	items - aether		Will	Complete	1 day			
19	art	location art		Will/Hannah	Complete	2 week span			
20	art	items - currency		Will	Complete	1 day			
21	art	map icons		Will	Complete	1 day			
22	art	items - leg body mods		Will	Complete	1 day			
23	art	items - arm body mods		Will	Complete	1 day			
24	art	faction logos		Will	Complete	1 day			
25	art	school logos		Will	Complete	1 day			
26	art	playable characters		everyone	Complete	2 days			
27	art	mood board		will/Hannah	Complete	finished			
28	art	style guides		will/Hannah	Complete	finished			
29	art	art process documentation		will/Hannah	Complete	1 hr			
30	art	Individual reflections		everyone	Complete				
31	art	items - consumables		Will	Complete	1 day			
32	Concept	artist statement		will/Hannah	Complete	1 day			
33	art	redesign character sheet		Will	Complete	1 day			
34	art	designing characters and beasts		Hannah	complete	several weeks			
35	art	backgrounds		Will/Hannah	Complete	several weeks			
36	art	adventure funnel artwork		Hannah	complete	1 day			
37	Systems	Consumables		Peyten	Complete	1 hour			
38	Systems	Stunts for schools/faction		Peyten	Complete	3 hours			
39	Systems	weapons		Peyten/Casper	Complete	2 hours			
40	Systems	How to play section		Peyten	Complete	1 day			
41	Systems	Aether stress + consequences		Peyten	Complete	2 hours			
42	systems	Pricing		Peyten/Hannah	Complete	1 hour			
43	Design	Major NPCs		Everyone	Complete	5 hours			
44	Design	Minor NPCs		Everyone	complete	5 hours			
45	Systems	Body mods		Peyten/Casper	Complete	3 hours			
46	Systems	Items		Peyten/Casper	Complete	2 hours			
47	World	Player characters - descriptive	Collating, developing and editing the teams' character concepts	Rory	Complete	5 hours			
48	World	Player characters - short stories	Writing and editing additional prose to build world tone and char.	Rory	Complete	5 hours			
49	Gameplay	Sample Adventure	Developing, writing and editing the sample adventure	Rory	Complete	10 hours			
50	World	Editing/proofing	Editing and proof reading text for regions, factions, and social cli	Rory	Complete	4 hours			

MIRO BOARD

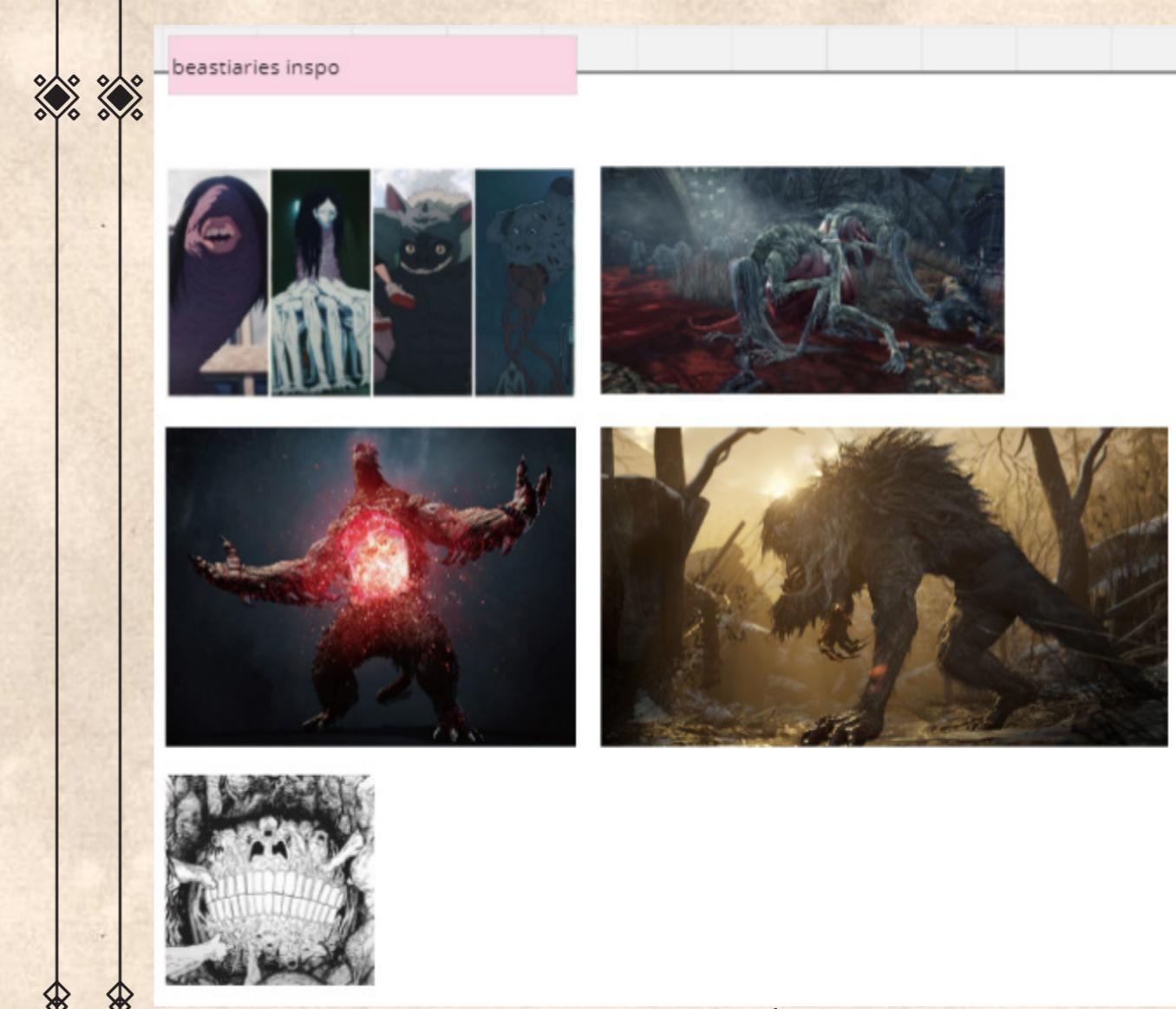
PROJECT INSPIRATIONS



REFERENCES

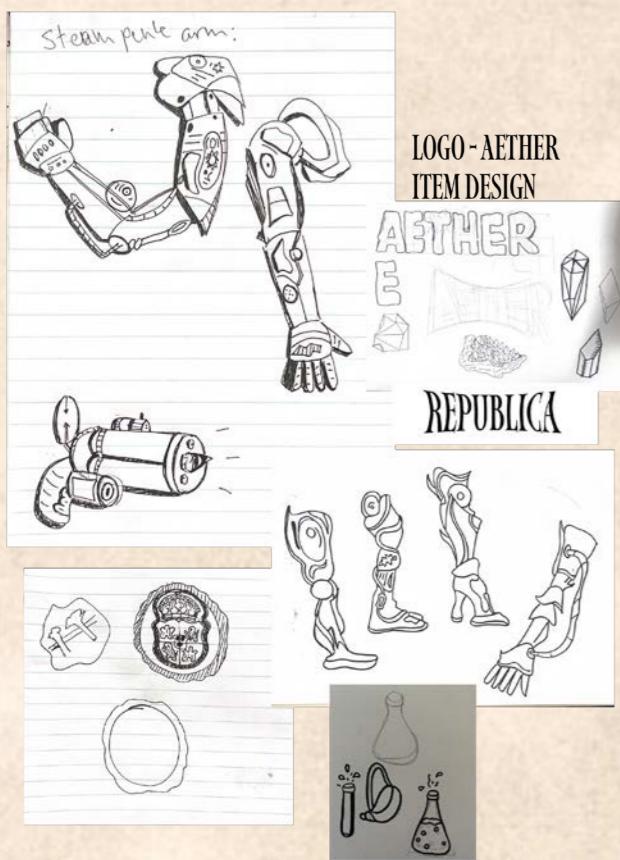
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PROCESS/SKETCHES

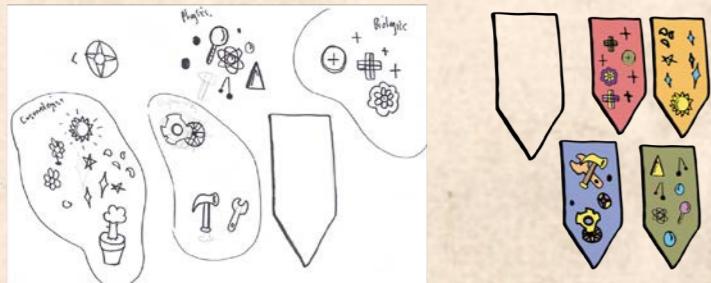
ORIGINAL ITEM DESIGN SKETCHES



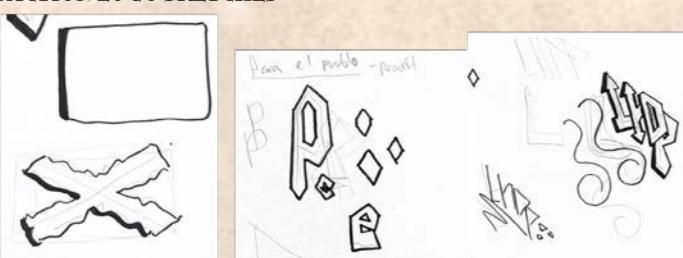
ORIGINAL WEAPON SKETCHES



SCHOOLS LOGO IDEATION



FACTION LOGO SKETCHES

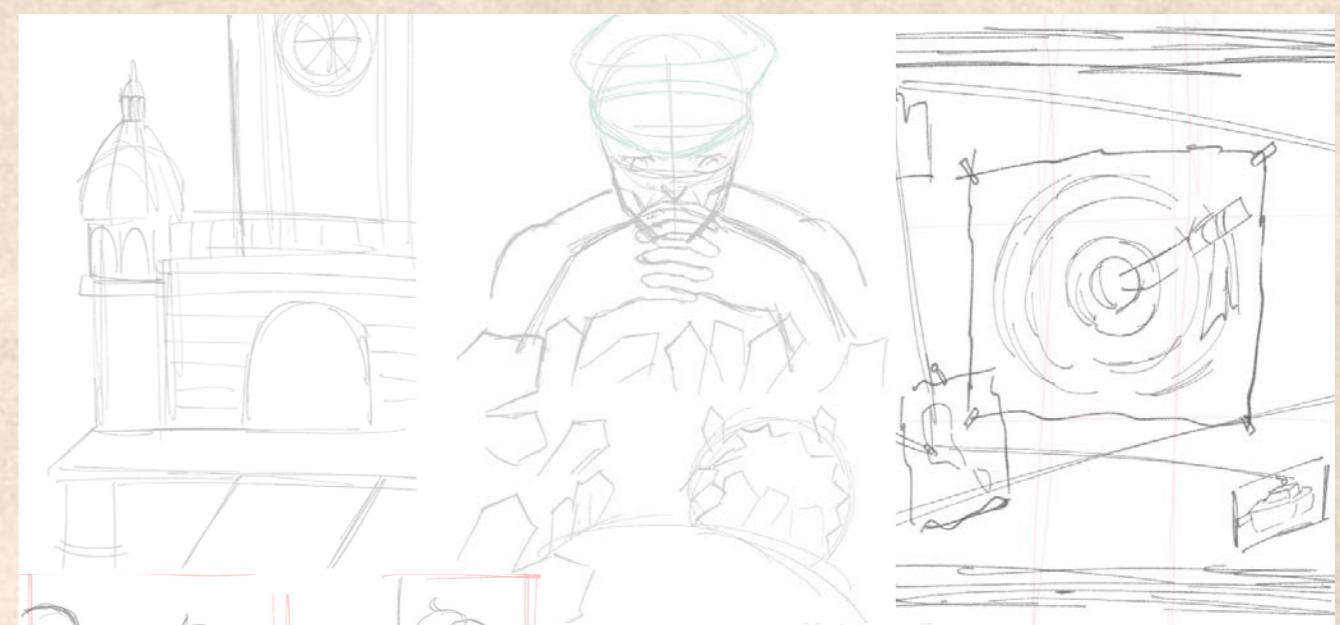


When designing item assets, this artist (Will), has illustrated each design via pen and paper. After completing a brief sketch, the design is then edited and refined via the use of Adobe Illustrator. This design process involves a fair amount of ideation before each asset is completed.

ORIGINAL ITEM DESIGN SKETCHES



Each map asset was hand drawn and edited/coloured via Adobe Illustrator.



APPENDIX II: TEAM MEMBER REFLECTIONS

HANNAH MAE EMPERADOR- N10996001

The planning process was smooth, as each of us tasked ourselves into what we excelled at. My original role in the project was the artist/designer since I study Visual Communications as my major; however, I was interested in writing and game design as well since I study creative writing as a minor and I have gaming as a hobby. I took part in a bit of writing of the world-building and gave constructive feedback on game mechanics to the game designers of the project, taking on the perspective of a player.

My experience with doing group projects have always been negative however I found the environment produced from this project as welcoming, safe and non-judgmental. Since I am a Filipino and this story was based on the Philippines, I wanted to contribute my ideas to the worldbuilding in which I was successful.

Each of the members assigned task to themselves which was discussed every week through in-person classes. Our group also utilised Trello and Discord to discuss ideas, tasks and more. However, when it came to presenting a draft, most of us were unprepared and several contents were rushed. As one of the layout designers, I found it difficult to compile large amounts of images and text into a document under a small-time frame. Several texts have not been proofread and some game mechanics lack clarity, so I also took the role of editor. I genuinely found this experience frustrating, and I intend to improve my communication with future projects so that tasks are done on time.

As one of the artists/designers, my task was to illustrate characters, bestiaries and some backgrounds. Designing humanoid characters is something I'm familiar with since I like character design, however I found designing the bestiaries challenging. They are still humanoid however, traits such as the Manananggal's bat wings or the Bungisngis jaw shape and mouth proved to be challenging but also interesting and engaging. I find it difficult to draw backgrounds since my experience in doing so is limited. I often rely on digital brushes such as a brush dedicated to drawing clouds, grass or leaves, but I lack the utility and knowledge to illustrate architecture. I found drawing buildings' repetitive features difficult and unengaging. I researched a video guide on how to draw backgrounds, but most of the advice included taking real life photos and using filters such as posturise, Gaussian blur and chromatic aberration to make the photos appear as backgrounds. I genuinely think that drawing backgrounds is something to improve on with time instead of using real life photos and filters as a quick fix. While the advice was not useful in illustrating backgrounds, some of these filters were utilised in the background illustrations I've made.

Another difficulty I've faced was creating a balance of designing characters and buildings that are between steampunk and Spanish/Filipino culture. Steampunk is based on the Victorian era and while the Spanish aesthetic is also European, it has its unique roots and distinctive appearance. Trying to achieve that balance but also making the characters and buildings distinctively Spanish/Filipino was difficult. I tried to utilise Steampunk's distinctive cogwheels and leather materials to make the characters and buildings appear Steampunk however it was subtle and ineffective. Overall, I'm unsatisfied with the result and I wish that the characters and architecture looked more Steampunk. I intend to improve my experience in designing characters and architecture for the future.

When it comes to designing a tabletop roleplaying game (TTRPG), its narratives and game mechanics, there were several things I found challenging. The aesthetic of *The Æther Republica* is steampunk, yet several

steampunk imageries represent itself as either depressing or lively and prestigious. I wanted the aesthetic of *The Æther Republica* to be welcoming, hopeful but also depressing since it challenges themes of colonialism. I found it challenging for certain story aspects to reflect gameplay mechanics. When writing the factions and social classes, I discussed what these could do in terms of game mechanics to the game designers. When it came to playtesting, our play testers were confused on what the social classes and factions entail in gameplay. After a lengthy discussion with the game designers, several changes were made to avoid confusion from players. I quickly learned how important playtesting and connecting narrative to gameplay to ensure smooth player experience is in game design.

Since I've always been interested in designing characters for potentially games, whether they are video games or TTRPG I found this experience of creating a TTRPG challenging yet refreshing. I was able to draw and design characters like I've always wanted, but I also learned about my weaknesses, such as designing or illustrating backgrounds, architecture and bestiaries. As a Visual Communication student, I wanted to take the job pathway of layout designer and concept artist/designer. From this project experience, I learned that I have several weaknesses to improve on before I could pursue this career path.

In preparation for Assessment 2, I'd like to create an adventure funnel where players are tasked to steal an important Æther item inside a party for high-social class people. I'd like players to choose pacifist routes rather than forcefully getting through a situation using violence. I'd like to introduce players into the world's luxury and prestige side, where they feel out of place.

WILLIAM PASCOE - NI1381558

During the beginning of the unit, I was tasked with envisioning a tabletop role-playing game (TTRPG) idea which was to be presented to classmates. This early game ideation allowed me to find a group of students which I believed to have not only similar values and ideas, but also a group where a variety of skill sets could be implemented. Within our group we have two visual communication design students (including myself), two game design students and a creative writing student. By forming a well-rounded team, workloads were able to be effectively and fairly dispersed. As I am a visual communication design student, it was important for me to find students with experience in game design, not only so I could learn more about this design area, but also because I have very little experience within the game design faculty.

Although we did not end up following my initial TTRPG idea, our whole group was able to collaborate, discuss and implement ideas for our final design project together. I believe that our group was able to freely discuss and pitch new ideas to one another without feeling judged. This allowed for impactful communication, and this also enabled us to improve and iterate upon many of our design deliverables.

I have never had any experience playing or designing a tabletop role-playing game before, so this task was quite a challenge for me. Although I have never experienced playing a TTRPG, I have always had an interest in the game genre, this made me excited and hopeful for what was to come throughout the duration of this group assessment.

During this design project, I was tasked with quite a few different jobs. These tasks included document formatting, producing location artworks, map design for the overall location as well as the zoomed in location maps, and map icons. I also produced the project logo, item artwork, faction logos, and the school logos. Overall, I have produced over thirty artworks and contributed to other elements such as mood boards, style guides and textual elements such as character sheets and artist statements. When producing the project artwork began by hand drawing each design with ink on paper. After each design was produced, I then scanned the elements and digitally manipulated them on the digital software Adobe Illustrator. Due to there being two artists working within this task, Hannah and I decided to produce different types of assets as our design styles are quite different. For example, I produced item artwork and Hannah produced character designs. By separating the design styles throughout the book, a consistent aesthetic was able to be effectively communicated.

Within the group work, specific tasks were determined at the beginning of the assessment. Since those decisions were made, a workload management organiser was made, although no clear project timeline was created. This resulted in much of the book formatting being completed quite close to the project due date. Although the group work was completed to a high standard, I believe that some of the process seemed unorganised, due to the group only adhering to one main meeting a week. Although the main meeting only occurred once a week, designers were able to connect via private meetings to consult with one another. This allowed for more effective group communication. If I were to complete this task again, I would make sure to determine a clear group leader or leaders, as well as a structured project timeline in order to keep individuals on track, as well as accountable for completing their work at a timely standard. An effective project timeline would also simplify and aid group coordination/ communication. These future changes would form a great opportunity to improve upon time management.

Since participating in this group experience, I have learned new design skills and new teamwork and communication skills. This group task has allowed me to reflect upon how I impact a team as well as how I make others feel heard and understood.

In order to prepare for assignment two, I will focus upon a new story involving a character who is trying to track down a fish that he caught, although has since escaped. What makes this fish so important is that it swallowed this man's sacred "Æther ring". This Æther ring is believed to enable the wearer to gain enhanced strength and abilities.

The only way this ring can be tracked down is by following the path of destruction that the fish is leaving behind. What the fisherman doesn't know is that as the fish keeps the ring in its system for longer, its strength and its size grows rapidly as a result. Adventurers will be tasked with the retrieval of this magical ring by any means necessary. Not only to retrieve a reward, but to also save the beautiful natural environment and those who live within it.

RORY HAWKINS - N1115645

As a Creative Writing student, my role on the project was Writer, though I contributed some part in editing others' text as well. I have some experience writing fantasy/sci-fi short stories and I regularly play TTRPG games, so coming into this unit, I believed I had a good sense of what I needed to immediately contribute as a writer: create a fictional world that offers plenty of narrative opportunities for players over creating those individual narrative arcs myself.

Our group began with my world/concept pitch, developing it further with their own concepts and interests, so it felt like I had succeeded in writing something appealing but still had room for others' input. However, I was still conscious of any changes that might infringe on whether we included ideas from my original concept and how much we changed. Our team was composed of a writing student (myself), two visual communication students and two game design students, so we had clear divides in our expertise; I have limited skills outside of Creative Writing and editing, and I didn't want any of my practice to be overlooked. However, in a collaborative project like this, this is an especially unproductive mindset for two reasons: 1) it impedes overall creative development and collaboration, and 2) imposing it on our team's workflow would have meant putting myself in a directorship role, that I am currently not well suited for (more on organisation later) and which would not have been appropriate.

While turning the narrative elements into gameplay can seem to be a top-down approach when reading a TTRPG book, through working with others, I now better know how narrative can develop from gameplay development. When one of our game designers wanted to include a monster-hunting element to showcase gameplay, we as a team readdressed the narrative setting: the supernatural resource I had conceived, 'Æther,' needed to be better tied to the setting to mutate wildlife into monsters. For my part with my writing tasks, I approached this with our team's player characters. Since we wanted readers to lean into Fate's characterisation led gameplay and put our character section first in our game book, I collated what other team members had written for their characters, developed them, wrote a short story piece for each to tie them into our setting, and sought feedback so that I was honouring team members' character concepts. I also wrote a 'Disclaimer' section to read before the character pages – while the intent was to make readers aware of the themes our game book covered, it was also a segue into making readers consider the setting on a character level through what our different team members had envisioned.

This task felt especially fulfilling; rather than creating a narrative element and trying to maintain it in a collaborative process, I really enjoyed the 'write to another's intent' approach, developing someone else's idea. In future projects, I'll try taking a step back from the initial pitch of concept or see how I can help develop others' when they need writing consultation. While working with creatives from other disciplines has made me reaffirm that I do have expertise on writing at a line-to-line level, it's kept me aware that that doesn't mean their narrative development is any less valid – it should be my job to help other creatives effectively communicate their ideas. However, I have to acknowledge where my personal organisation has negatively impacted my practice in this project.

Revisiting my previous point on directorship and organisation: while I was conscious not to dictate what others needed to do, I wasn't proactive enough in establishing good communication and a clear week-by-week workflow in our team. Individually, I also left many of my writing/editing tasks to the last minute or delegated them to one of the visual communications students who wanted to write more. This ultimately impacted the workflow of our visual communication team members when it came to submission. This is a bad habit in my own practice/organisation and is not professional enough within a team.

I don't have to imagine that in any team environment, not just with TTRPG development, this is a problem – I've worked on other group projects in university, one that was similar to this class (group-led) and another that was an internship project (individual-led). I feel I had better personal organisation in the group-led project because we began by discussing and collaborating on workflow, setting clear deadlines and with someone a project manager role to keep these in check. From my experience in the individual-led project, I know that I am not professional enough in my practice yet to work independently and because of this, I did not want to step into another management role.

However, I still should have spearheaded communicating about our team's workflow sooner into project development. I should know from experience that team working cultures can be unconsciously set from the first meeting. Even if I want to make clear I'm not comfortable in a management role, I still need to take better part in the initial collaborative side of organising. This would have also helped with delegating writing ahead of deadlines, and I could have better assisted the visual communication team member and her writing in our game book by helping proofread and edit more ahead of submission.

For my second assessment, I've already been lucky enough to have written the sample adventure for our game book. While writing the sample adventure, I consulted one of my GMs about how to structure a session with the five room dungeon concept. I also kept the TTRPG book *Vaesen* on hand while writing to understand the depth to which I needed to write the scenario and what narrative resources a GM would need to direct the scenario (i.e. NPC profiles, item descriptions, etc). This was a good first-time experience in writing a gameplay scenario but I can see where I need to better balance the opportunities for players to either engage in social role play or combat and puzzle solving, what I can develop for a different scenario. Even though our game book includes several regions across the island of Luzon, I'd like to focus on our city region in Laguna Bay, pitting players with and against the School factions in steampunk urban warfare and subterfuge.

PEYTEN REDBURN - NI18II757

At the beginning of this project, I was tasked with developing the idea for a tabletop role-playing game (TTRPG). During this time, I was able to assemble a team with a variety of skills, allowing me to support others through my own experience with both TTRPGs—having played and been the GM for Dungeons and Dragons and Call of Cthulhu—and my background in game design. Furthermore, I found a team I could rely on for areas where I lacked expertise, such as creative writing and artwork design. This led to a well-rounded team of 1 creative writer, 2 game designers, and 2 artists. It was important to build a well-rounded team to ensure that the final product would also be well-rounded.

Our group followed a path similar to my initial concept, with various minor and major adjustments that helped the project become more fully realised. This was due to Rory and me having similar starting ideas where the story would follow an alternate history where humanity discovered a mystical substance that would allow civilization to advance faster than normal. Throughout this process, the group maintained a supportive, judgement-free environment, where all ideas were welcomed. This open communication fostered a healthy atmosphere and allowed the world we were creating to become immersive through an iterative design process. This diverse set of experiences and the group's clear enthusiasm contributed to a strong sense of comfort and optimism as we progressed through the project.

During the project, I took on various minor roles, but my primary responsibility was overseeing the game system and adapting the Fate Accelerated system to fit the world we had created. This included modifying the system to incorporate our unique “magic system,” the Æther system. I was also responsible for designing and refining major and minor characters, weapons, monsters, and consumable items. In total, I helped create 4 major NPCs, 6 minor NPCs, 6 monsters with our unique Æther-level system, and 37 unique stunts. I was also in charge of the explanation of how to play our game as well as the changes to the Fate accelerated system. Since there were two game designers on the team, we split the workload: Casper handled monster gameplay, while I focused on character gameplay and weapon design. We collaborated to ensure balance between the various gameplay elements.

However, this division of labour led to a few issues. Due to Casper’s inexperience with TTRPGs, I provided him with the Dungeons and Dragons Monster Manual by Wizards of the Coast to familiarise him with TTRPGs in general. Unfortunately, I failed to clearly communicate that the system we were using, Fate Accelerated, was quite different from Dungeons and Dragons. This resulted in me having to review and revise much of Casper’s work to fit the Fate Accelerated system. In hindsight, I should have taken the time to sit down with him and explain the Fate Accelerated system in detail. This issue also became apparent with other team members, particularly those with experience in other TTRPGs, as Fate Accelerated operates differently from many other systems.

This miscommunication led to more work than I had anticipated, and the gameplay section was completed closer to the deadline than it should have been, creating additional pressure for our artists. If I had the chance to redo this project, I would have taken the time early on, once I fully understood the system myself, to run an example one-shot with the team to deepen my understanding and ensure that all members had a firm grasp of the system’s mechanics.

Through this group project I learned the importance of clarity between roles and ensuring that each team member understood the context and intentions behind my actions so that proper feedback could be given in a way that was beneficial to the project.

In preparation for Assignment 2, I plan to create a new storyline in which the players are tasked with uncovering one of two rebel groups and sabotaging their operations. The Spanish government will task the players with infiltrating one of the rebel groups and then from there leaking secrets back to the Spanish government about rebel operations and any advancements in Æther use that the rebels may be using.

However, the players must decide whether to side with the Spanish government or the rebel groups once they learn about the atrocities the government is committing against the Filipino people. This adventure will have multiple different opportunities for the players to learn of these crimes but only if they take opportunities to look. However, due to the quest that they have been given (to provide intel to the Spanish government) I suspect that players not discovering these plot threads will not be an issue.

The adventure will culminate in the players choosing either to sabotage the rebel group they have infiltrated and hand over valuable information to the Spanish government or to join forces with the rebels and strike the government where it hurts—at their school.

CASPAR HEYS - NI15986II

My role in this project was as a Game Designer, which entailed, split between the other Game Designer, Bestiary gameplay mechanics, item gameplay mechanics, and non-player character game mechanics, GM section and How to Play. I also did some creative writing, writing the bestiary flavour text and some of the location descriptions.

Having no experience with table-top role play games (TTRPG), I had to quickly learn about the Fate Accelerated System and what it means to play a TTRPG. While this was a challenge, having group members with experience playing these games was quite helpful in catching me up to speed although it did result in some of my work in gameplay mechanics having to be revised.

Firstly, I was responsible for researching monsters to include in our game world. Since our game world is an alternate history in the Philippines this involved researching creatures from Filipino folk lore and choosing which ones felt like they would fit best in the world. My criteria for deciding which would fit best was based on whether I could explain their existence in the game world given the introduction of Æther to this alternate Philippines. For example, the monster called "Bakunawa" [visit the Bestiary for more information] was added because I could explain its existence.

"Prolonged exposure to the Æther transformed this once average sea snake into a monolithic beast, mutating its body into a hideous monster. Although, the Æther changed more than the physical. Its mind now twisted, the Bakunawa is left to roam the west coast of New Castille, jealousy protecting the Æther to the North from any unfortunate souls who cross its path."

One of the challenges I encountered as a game designer was how to implement Æther into gameplay mechanics. The other game designer, Peyten Redburn, and I decided to adapt the Fate Accelerated System to include Æther related mechanics. Peyten decided to implement different variations of monsters, giving them different mechanics depending on their level of exposure to Æther.

For example,
when a Bungisngis is at Æther Level 1 it has the ability:

"The Bungisngis' attacks cause 1 shift of Æther stress alongside normal damage."

And at Æther Level 2 it also has the ability

"The Bungisngis can attack 2 players during its turn if those players are within 5ft of each other."

Then we agreed on the addition of a new Stress Track to player characters which dealt exclusively with Æther damage. Æther damage could come from multiple sources, attaching an Æther shard to a prosthetic, taking damage from a monster that deals damage in Æther shifts, or being exposed to unrefined Æther for too long. This modification to the Fate Accelerated System was helpful in incorporating Æther into the gameplay.

I have learned a lot about game design throughout this project. In the early stages of development, a lot of the work was related to creative writing, world building, and art. I found it a challenge to contribute effectively during these earlier stages of development since these are not my areas of study. I realised that my group members doing art and formatting relied on the punctuality of my work and I felt that with better time management and commitment to the project I would have been able to contribute better.

I learnt about the Fate Accelerate System; the various mechanics that make a cohesive tabletop experience. And, from my group members I have learnt about new project management and note taking software (like miro and lettucemeet), creative writing, world building and about the visual art process. Overall, I found this project a

positive learning experience, I greatly appreciate the work my group members put into it. If I were to do it again I would communicate better with my group members, discussing which tasks I would do, so I would be held accountable for my work ethic and be more motivated to complete tasks.

My possible scenario for Assignment 2 centres around a cultist offshoot of the church which now worships the Æther. They have the twisted belief that the Æther poisoning, the corruption that distorts one's mind and body, is actually God's active force. Wanting everyone on the archipelago to experience "the enlightenment", they have developed a way to isolate the Æther radiation and distribute it as an airborne infection. The party will be responsible for stopping the cult from spreading the Æther poison. But, this advanced technology that separates the Æther radiation from the ore could come in handy. In the end, if the players succeed in stopping the cult, they must decide whether to use this power to their advantage, or destroy it, knowing it would be too dangerous if it fell into the wrong hands.

Fight for independence!

During the 18th century in the Philippines, technology reached its peak. Thanks to the mysterious ore called “Æther” and the founding school for Æther research and technology, “The Schools of Universidad de Abansé”, the Spanish Government became prosperous in technology, ranging in luxuries from ease of transport and maximum defense from invaders.

But it's not all celebrations. The Spanish Government is abusive of its power. They created hierarchies between the Spaniards and the native people, the Austronesians, the Filipinos. The ones from the bottom became slaves to do the bidding of the ones at the top. They were either socially ostracised in the Schools, forced to work in toxic Æther mines, or used as lab rats for research. Jose Rizal, a half-Filipino half Spanish Mestizo, spoke out about the cruelties that Filipinos faced, and in return, he was shot as his execution.

That was the turning point. Filipinos gathered into rebellious groups and used the very substance the Spanish government is so proud of, Æther, to fight back. Take part in the world as a player, augment yourself with technology, fight against the Spanish Government and bestiaries. All for the freedom of the Filipinos!

