

OVA

THE ANIME ROLE-PLAYING GAME



The Game of Anime Adventure!



OVA: The Anime Role-Playing Game lets you and your friends become your favorite characters from the diverse worlds of Japanese animation. All you need are pencils, paper, dice, and your imagination! Save the princess (or prince!) from a fire-breathing dragon, tackle invading squadrons of giant robots, or find true love amid campus hijinks. It's all up to you!

CREATE YOUR PERFECT CHARACTER

With **OVA**, there's no need to worry about rows of numbers and statistics. Creating characters takes just minutes—it's as simple as describing them!

ENTERTAINING AND LAVISHLY ILLUSTRATED

Detailed examples and over 65 illustrations featuring **OVA**'s colorful, recurring characters are presented throughout the book.

EASY YET VERSATILE

The rules are only as complicated as you want them to be. Whether you keep it simple or fine-tune every detail, **OVA** is perfect for gamers old and new.

2+ PLAYERS

AGES 12 & UP

A GAME BY Clay Gardner

WITH ART BY Niko Geyer



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PDF



THE **ANIME** ROLE-PLAYING GAME



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This book was set in Calluna, Calluna Sans, and Chalet Comprime.



THE **ANIME** ROLE-PLAYING GAME

WRITTEN BY
CLAY GARDNER

ILLUSTRATED BY
NIKO GEYER

**“Our imagination
may be the most brilliant of all energy
that humans have ever possessed.”**

—**Osamu Tezuka**
FATHER OF JAPANESE ANIMATION







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DAISUKE
IN CONCERT



INTRODUCTION

- This book is more than a collection of rules. It's a window into worlds that you create. Within these pages, OVA has everything you need to venture forth and take part in your very own anime-inspired adventures. The game is easy to learn, fun to play, and flexible enough for whatever you encounter. So whether you're a die-hard anime fan, an avid gamer, or someone just getting started, you will find something in this book that's just right for you and your friends.

To the Anime Fan

It's an easy guess why this book may have caught your eye. The cover exudes an anime vibe from the start, and even more anime-style art is displayed throughout the book. But there's more to OVA than eye candy. Inside this book you will find a game that allows you to fulfill some of your greatest dreams and fantasies: to become the characters you have fallen in love with time and time again. The rules are easy to pick up, so you can begin creating and playing your perfect character in just minutes. And that's only the beginning of your adventure!

To the Gamer

Like the anime fan, you may have been attracted by the cover. Or maybe the rules highlighted on the back of the book piqued your interest. Either way, you already know a lot of what to expect. But you may be surprised at how simple OVA is without sacrificing flexibility. Actions, conflicts, and combat all resolve quickly without fuss, unified by a single unchanging mechanic. The rules are presented clearly with numerous entertaining examples, and despite the heavy anime influence, OVA is versatile and well suited for any setting.

To Everyone Else

You may be unfamiliar with anime, role-playing games, or even both. Still, something about this book grabbed your attention. A friend recommended it to you, or you just had an impulse to take a look. In any case, you will find that there are many good times in store. Hopefully, you will enjoy it so much that you explore the roots of the unique fandoms that inspired OVA. But for now, let's introduce you to what it all means.

What Kind of Game Is This?

OVA is a specific kind of game called a *Role-Playing Game*. If you've never played an RPG before, it might be a little different from other games you're used to. There's no winning or losing, no optimum choices or preferred strategies. Instead, you and your friends are working together to create a story, one grounded in the tropes and ideas of Japanese animation. With the rules as a guide, you create characters that live in this world, acting out their hopes and fears as they face conflict, overcome adversity, and fulfill their destinies. There are also rules for fighting that allow you to unleash the flashy attacks and powers you've come to know and love from anime...or not. There's no *one* kind of story you can tell, and if that happens to forgo fiery explosions for romantic escapades, political intrigue, or slapstick comedy, that's okay, too!

When you sit down to play a game of OVA, you take on one of two roles, that of a *Player* or that of the *Game Master*.

The Role of the Player

As a Player, you get to craft your own unique persona, or *Player Character* (PC), to portray during the game. Depending on the kind of setting you all agree upon, you could be a fierce mercenary, a cute magical girl, a geeky gadgeteer, a brooding sorcerer, or even a typical high school student.

This book will guide you in detailing your character's past, personality, talents, and faults with special descriptors called *Abilities* and *Weaknesses*. These statistics will aid you in portraying your character in the game and determine what you can do. Throughout play, you will describe what your character does and make decisions on their behalf. Remember, you are not you, you are your character!

You might take up arms with your friends and fight off the evil wizard, explore beyond the strange door you swear wasn't there yesterday, or investigate the neighborhood for clues to that mysterious disappearance. What happens next is up to you!



The Role of the Game Master

Everyone will become a Player in OVA except one person who must take on the mantle of the Game Master (GM). While Players are only responsible for their own characters, the GM is responsible for *everything else*. Describing the world the PCs live in, role-playing the *Non-Player Characters* (NPCs) they meet, and creating conflict and drama that drives the story forward all fall under GM jurisdiction. The Game Master also serves as final arbiter of the rules, determining the nature and resolution of conflicts as well as the answer to any rule quandaries.

Playing the Game

Together, the Players and the Game Master take part in an *adventure*, or a cohesive episode of the characters' lives. Over several hours, the Game Master will present a series of events while the Players decide how the characters respond to them.

When a character attempts to do something in the game, they take an *action*. Sometimes actions can be resolved just by saying so, but when doubt or chance come into play, you roll dice. Your Abilities will let you roll more dice, while your Weaknesses will cause you to roll fewer. The resulting number will determine if you succeed, fail, or some combination of both.

Play continues until the story comes to a meaningful conclusion. Maybe you all prevail—and maybe not. Your characters may change, grow, or stay the same. Whatever happens during the game, the most important thing is that everyone has a good time!

How to Read This Book

As with any book, you can simply start at the beginning and read OVA to the end. Concepts are introduced and explored in each chapter before moving on to the

next. These new chapters will in turn build on what you have just learned while adding new rules and information. Large headings represent main ideas, while the smaller ones usually focus on more specific details of the rules.

Boxes like this contain additional information pertaining to the text. It may be useful notes, references to rules, examples of play, or other tidbits that help give a better understanding of the game.

Using the Rules

Instead of further explaining the rules, these boxes contain extended advice and suggestions on how to represent your favorite anime and creative ideas in the context of OVA.

Of course, it's not necessary to read every word right away. If you were given a character by the Game Master or chose one from the *Sample Characters* chapter, you can skim over *Creating a Character* and only examine the attributes from *Abilities & Weaknesses* that apply to your character. Concentrate on *Taking Action* and *Combat, Health, & Endurance* as these chapters are the most important to understand.

As you become more familiar with OVA, you'll be able to flip through topics with ease. Over time, you will find that you need the book less and less.

Regarding the Revised Edition

This book is a revision of the original OVA published in 2005, so returning fans will feel right at home. Still, it's important to read through the book, as many things have changed to improve clarity, enhance ease of use, and otherwise work better. For a more complete overview of these changes, please visit the Wise Turtle website at www.wiseturtle.com.

What Is Anime?

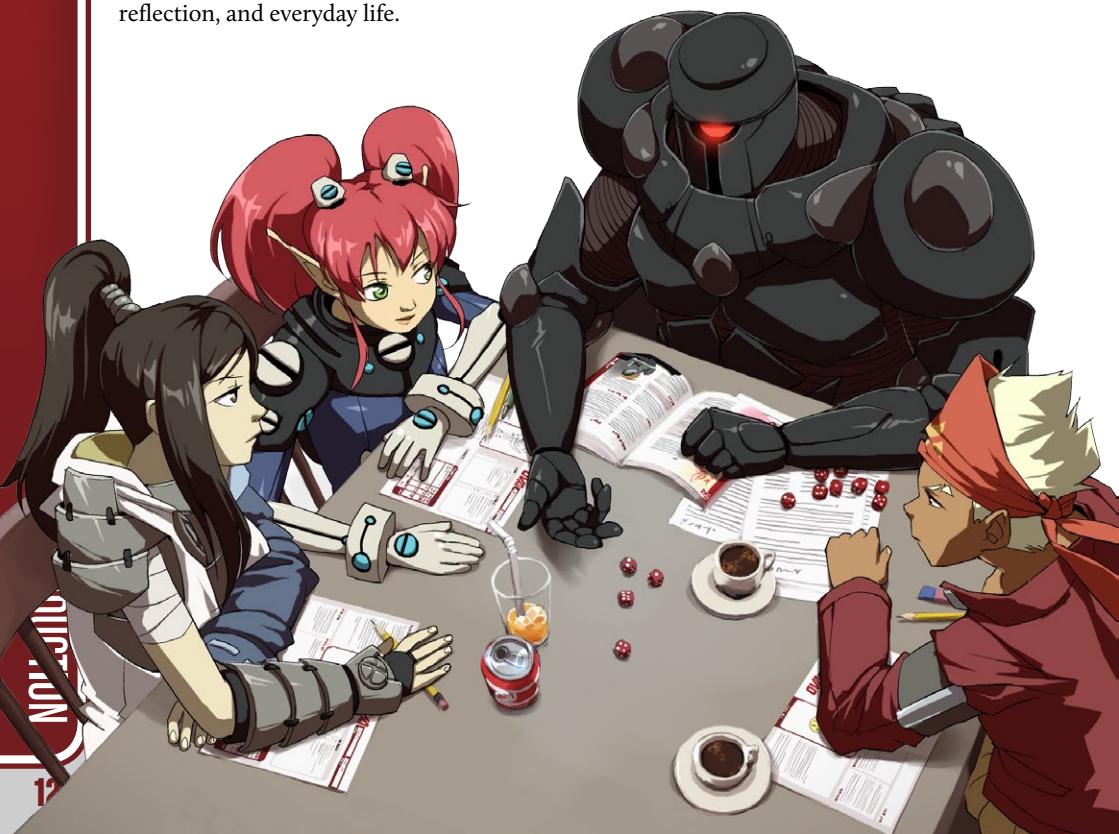
The simplest definition of *anime* would be “Japanese animation,” but this conveys none of the sense of it. It is not the fact that anime is Japanese, or even that it’s animated, that has captured the attention of fans worldwide.

Ever since Osamu Tezuka took the titular nuclear-powered hero of his *Astro Boy* comics and brought him to life in animated form, people have fallen in love with anime stories. Unlike much western animation, anime has never been afraid to appeal to adults as well as children. It takes advantage of the animated medium to convey larger-than-life tales of amazing technology and giant robots, of impossible magics and fledgling heroes in ways live action could not. But anime is also capable of great subtlety, able to share down-to-earth, sincere stories of growth, reflection, and everyday life.

Moreover, anime time and again flashily disregards expectations to combine all these facets however it sees fit. Slapstick comedy in the vein of *Silly Symphonies* plays out side by side with tear-jerking drama, over-the-top gun-toting action meshes with artistic flair, and the line between fantasy and science fiction ceases to exist. Using this versatility, anime crafts stories unlike anything else in the world.

Anime is also famous for its trademark visual style. Though large, expressive eyes and far-fetched hair colors are immediately obvious, Japanese animation is also famous for its detailed and complex designs. These artistic creations often take center stage, helping fuel an intense fanbase not only for the show, but for the art itself.

Most of all, anime is diverse, with stories encompassing every genre. There is really a little something, somewhere, for



everyone. Anime tells stories that captivate men, women, adults, children, art enthusiasts, action buffs, thinkers, escapees, and everyone in between!

What about Manga?

Japanese comics, or *manga*, share much in common with their animated brethren. In fact, a lot of anime you see is based on series of comic tomes penned in Japan. As such, anime owes a lot of its characteristic art style and thematic appeal to manga. Likewise, *OVA* is perfectly capable of re-creating manga stories, too!

If you would like to discover more about the defining tropes of anime, flip to Telling Anime Stories in the back of this book.

What You Need to Play

Obviously, you'll need a few friends (at least one) and this rulebook you have in front of you. But here's a quick rundown of the other things you need to play *OVA*:

- **Pencil or Pen** or anything that writes, really. You'll need this to write down your character's statistics as well as to take notes during the game, like if your character gets injured or otherwise changes through play.
- **Paper** to write on. A blank sheet will do, but a notepad, index cards, or an official character sheet from Wise Turtle are great options, too.
- **Six-Sided Dice** that you can get in any old board game. The more the better, but eight or so should suffice. If you don't have enough, one of your fellow Players may have some to share, or you can find blocks of dice for sale online or at your favorite local gaming store.

That's the bare minimum, but your gaming group might have its own unique additions. Music, character miniatures, snacks and drinks, props, or even—gasp—costumes can all be staples of *OVA*. Don't be afraid to let your imagination run wild!

Sample of Play

What follows is a sample of how a session of OVA might go. Don't think of it as a guide to follow to the letter, but rather an example to convey how role-playing games work. It may even inspire a few ideas for your own game!

Luke is hosting a game of *OVA* with his friends, Jordan, Alexa, and Oliver. Jordan's character, Karis, is an intergalactic bounty hunter on the hunt for the diabolical Shadowman. She's narrowed down his location to an abandoned temple in the Japanese countryside and has enlisted the aid of two local warriors, Alexa's Raine and Oliver's Shou, to help her find it.

Luke (as the GM): The snow continues to fall as you step into the remains of the deserted temple. Old foundations are cracked and crumbling from the roots of ancient trees that wind through them. It seems as though no one has been here for a very long time.

Jordan (as Karis): Hey Arasuni, are you sure this is the place?

Luke (as her robot companion, Arasuni): Data confirmed. The probability of this being inaccurate is 0.00034%.

Oliver (as Shou): Maybe we should just shout and see if someone answers? Helooooooo!

Alexa: ...Did you really just do that?

GM: It's Shou, of course he did. Right, Oliver?

Oliver: Right.

Jordan and Alexa: *Sigh.*

GM: In any case, Shou is answered only by the light howl of the snow-filled wind. But if you want to look around for clues or anything out of place...

Jordan: Yeah! Let's check it out!

GM: Everyone, make a roll, and add the dice from *Perceptive* if you have it.

Alexa: Hey, since this place is kind of wild and abandoned, can Raine include his *Wilderness Knowledge* dice, too?

GM: Makes sense to me—go for it!

Everyone totals their dice while the GM sets a secret Difficulty Number to beat.

Alexa: Okay, with the Bonus from my *Knowledge*, I roll four dice. 1, 5, 4...and 5! I add the doubles to get my result, right?

GM: Yep, that's 10. Anyone got higher?

Jordan: Not me.

Oliver: Seriously? I've got all ones here!

GM: At first, you see nothing out of the ordinary. But with Raine's keen eye for the wilderness, he notices that one stone statue has significantly less snowfall on it than the rest. With everything blanketed in snow, it's conspicuous now that you've noticed it.

Alexa (as Raine): Curious. What could this mean?

Oliver: I leap on it!

Jordan and Alexa: You what?!

GM: Light as a feather, Shou leaps and comes to rest gently on the small statue. But suddenly, the stone shape begins to sink into the ground.

Oliver (as Shou): I knew I should've laid off that third helping of tempura shrimp.

GM: It seems to have been a switch or lever of some kind, as the face of the temple suddenly opens before you, revealing a passage. It becomes apparent that Arasuni won't be able to fit inside due to his *Awkward Size* Weakness.

Jordan (as Karis): That's all right. I can handle myself just fine without you.

GM (as Arasuni): Be careful. And remember, as Sun Tzu said, "He who knows when he can fight and when he cannot will be victorious."

Jordan (as Karis): You and your quotes, Arasuni. Come on, let's hit it!

Alexa (as Raine): Yes, let us make haste.

GM: Beyond the entrance, the path leads down a narrow slope, forcing you to walk single file. As the three of you progress, the light behind you grows dimmer and dimmer. Despite the darkness, you get the impression that the stone walls around you are changing into something else entirely. Something smooth and metallic, with the hum of unknown machinery running through the surface. This is no normal temple!

Ahead, a dimly lit but massive room opens up. But more to the point, you realize the path in front of you is suddenly disappearing, fast. You can jump across, but only one at a time, and I'm afraid at the rate it's going, only two of you can make it over.

Jordan: Is there anything to hook my boomerang on? I can use it to swing across!

GM: You can see the gleaming edge of some sort of metal piping above you. It might work, but it won't be easy. Let's say a Difficulty Number of 10.

Jordan: Okay! But everyone else first!

GM: Is that what both of you want to do?

After nodding their assent, the GM describes their efforts to get across before prompting Jordan to roll some dice.

Jordan: So if I add *Agile* to my roll...that gives me five dice! Oh no! I only got an 8. That doesn't mean I fall into the dark, bottomless pit does it?

GM: No, you get across, but you sail past your allies and find yourself well into the mysterious room...and sprawled flat on your face.

Alexa and Oliver hold up pieces of paper with judges' scores on them.

Jordan: Cute. I'm just laughing so hard on the inside.

GM: From the shadows, a towering figure in black armor approaches you. In his face, a single glowing red eye.

GM (in a deep unknown voice): A most unlady-like entrance, Miss d'Ori.

Jordan (as Karis): Shadowman!

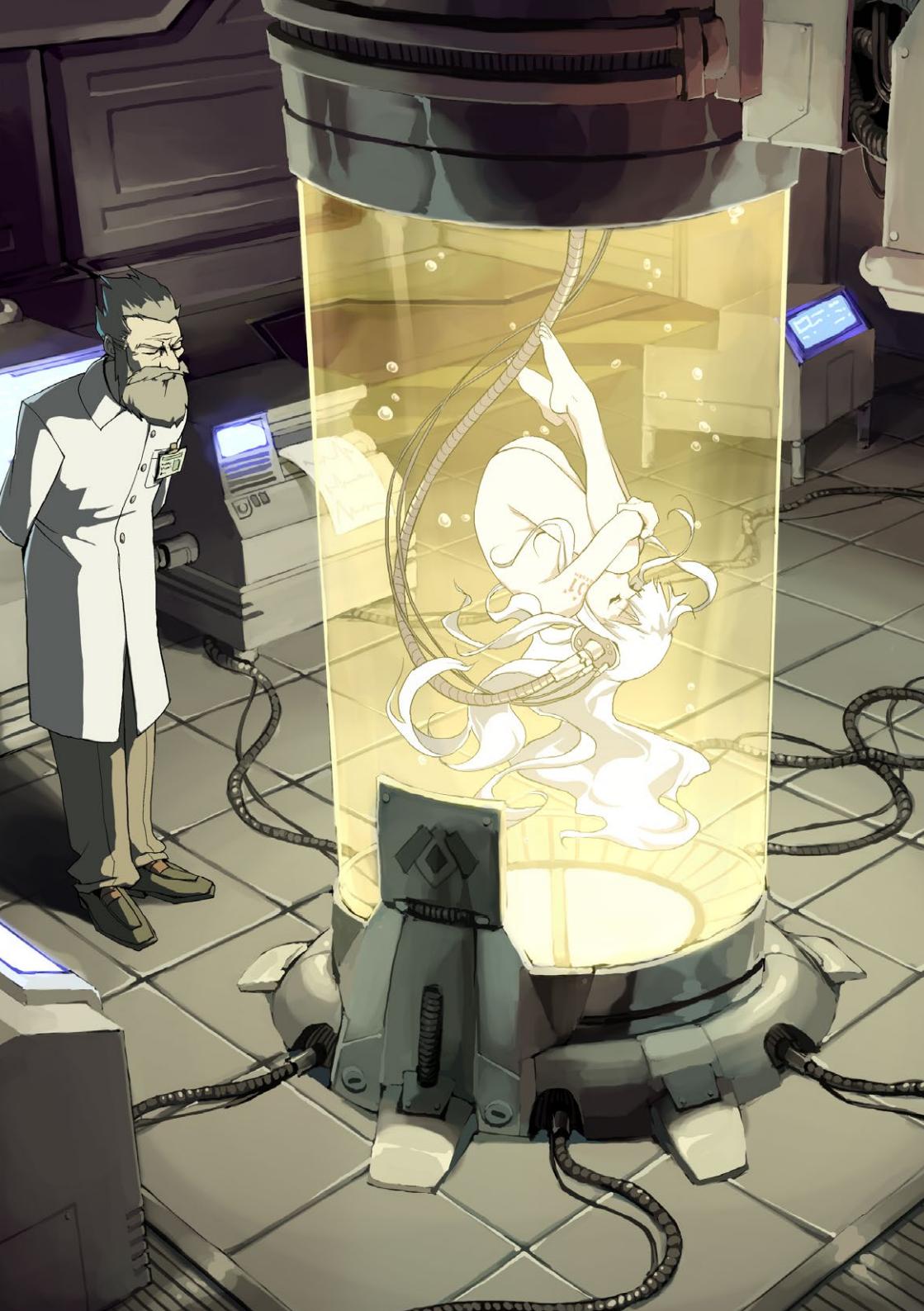
GM: Shadowman looks from side to side, apparently taking you all in.

GM (as Shadowman): I see you have brought friends. But no matter. If it's playtime you want...

GM: As his voice trails off into deafening silence, Shadowman lifts a heavy gloved hand above him. The groan of metal fills your ears until suddenly you are blinded with light. As your eyes adjust, you realize the entire ceiling is gone. Flurries of snow fall down upon you along with spiralling pieces of shrapnel from what once was above.

Shadowman: Come! Let us play in the snow!





CREATING A CHARACTER

- Charged by your favorite anime and a little imagination, you're probably more than ready to start your own adventure. But before you can jump into the action of OVA, you need to write down a few things. So grab a pencil and a sheet of paper, and let's get cracking.

Step 0: Discussion

When creating a new character, it is a good idea to talk with the Game Master, as well as your fellow Players, before going on to the first step. You can find out what rules the Game Master is using and get a feel for the kind of game being played. The Game Master can also help you throughout, assisting you with understanding the rules and any problems you might have.

Step 1: Concept

Before you can delve into the actual mechanics of making a character, you will have to make some decisions on who your character will be. A complete, detailed biography isn't necessary, but a general idea will be helpful as you go through the process. Keep in mind that your character can be anyone you like. Don't feel restricted to certain archetypes or building a combat-effective character. The important thing is making the character you want to play.

Brett, a Game Master with a long-running gaming group, invites Jade to join his latest OVA game. He tells her that it's a fairly light-hearted setting open to any kind of character. Jade has never played **OVA: The Anime Role-Playing Game** before, so she asks the Game Master for assistance making her character. Brett is more than happy to oblige.

After some thought, Jade decides to create a character similar to the heroines from popular magical girl anime. Fukiko, with the help of her flying feline companion, Azyrus, emulates her favorite shoujo manga and fights evil while trying to have a normal life. Although Jade only has the basics of an idea, Brett assures her that this is plenty to start making her character.

Step 2: The Abilities

Choosing Abilities will be among the most important decisions you will make while creating your character. That's because Abilities reflect what your character can do. What is he good at? What special attribute or power does she have? Scan through the list given at the end of the Abilities & Weaknesses chapter (p. 90) and make a note of any Abilities that you think apply. For each one that you write down, jot a number ranging from +1 to +5 next to it. This number is your *Level*, representing the power or skill you have in that area. Having +1 in an Ability means the character is above average, while +5 represents an uncanny, super-heroic level of Ability.

Your Level in most Abilities should be +1 (competent) or +2 (good). A Level of +3 is considered masterful, and characters should have few of these. A +4 is an incredible Level obtained only by a select few people in the world. Characters are lucky to have one Ability of this rank. A Level of +5 is extraordinarily rare, a class reserved for completely awing, supernatural abilities. Almost no character should start with an Ability of this magnitude.

Step 3: The Weaknesses

Nobody's perfect, and that includes your character! All good characters have flaws that make them unique, endearing, and believable. Theoretically, you could make a character without any Weaknesses at all, but that would be a very boring character indeed. Take a look at the Weaknesses list and write down any that apply to your character. Next to it, write a number ranging from -1 to -3. A Level of -1 represents a moderate flaw or disability, while -2 is bad, regularly impacting your character's life in a negative way. A Level of -3 is plain awful, wreaking havoc on your character's day-to-day activities and severely hampering their potential.

Because Fukiko has the ability to transform, Brett suggests that Jade try to list some of her natural Abilities first. Keeping this in mind, she gives Fukiko Iron-Willed at +1, which is better than average, and Cutel, Knowledge (Shoujo Manga), and Quick at +2, which are all fairly good. Since Fukiko is young, Jade decides she has little in the way of other Abilities. She scribbles in Companion: Azyrus which the Game Master helps her assign as +2. They can create his exact statistics later.

Now it's time to handle Fukiko's Transformation Ability. Jade gives her Transformation at +4, an astounding Level to help make up for her lack of other powers. At this Level, Jade can give Fukiko an additional 8 Levels' worth of Abilities. Scanning the list, she gives Fukiko Barrier +3, Combat Expert +2, and Healer +2. She also gives her Attack at +2. Jade notices that the Levels in Fukiko's Transformation Abilities are one too many (9) for her Transformation +4, but Brett tells her that this is fine and to wait for the next step.

Jade helps define Fukiko by giving her various Weaknesses befitting a young girl. She gets Frail, Easily Distracted, and Naive at -1, only a mildly annoying Level, but Ageism and Crybaby at -2, making for fairly significant flaws. Jade decides that Fukiko needs something to transform and gives her Focus: Neko Transformation Locket at -2. Jade realizes on her own that she can also give a Weakness to Fukiko's Transformation to make up the extra Level. She writes down Bizarre Appearance (Cat Features) at -1.

Step 4: Health and Endurance

Characters are often faced with the possibility of injury and exhaustion. For this reason, it is important to know both your character's *Health* and *Endurance*. *Health* represents your character's toughness, the ability to take hard knocks and keep going. *Endurance* is your vitality and energy, representing your ability to not tire or give up. Unless you take certain Abilities or Weaknesses that affect these, both *Health* and *Endurance* are assigned the number 40. Various actions and attacks can drain from either of these totals, so leave room to do some simple subtraction.

Because of her Frail Weakness, Brett reminds Jade to reduce Fukiko's Health to 30. Without any other Abilities and Weaknesses to modify it, her Endurance remains the default 40.

Step 5: Finishing Touches

Okay, now that you have all the basics down for your character, you're ready to go. You could join a game right now. However, you can, and should, go a little further. Think about appearance, like the details of a character's physique and style. Make a background that explains the character's past and motivations. Tell what the character is like to be around. In the long run, this information will make your character deeper and possibly open up new avenues for you to role-play. To organize this information, you may find the form below useful.

Jade spends some time and creates a full biography for her character, including Fukiko's heroic origin, goals, and personality traits. She also adds a Shape-Shifter Ability and applies attributes to Fukiko's companion, Azyrus. Now Jade is completely ready for a game of OVA. What magical adventures await Lovely Savior Myu Myu?



Yay! This is going to be so much fun! Are you ready to go, Azyrus?

BACKGROUND: Who is your character? Where does he come from? What is the story behind her? What does your character hope to obtain?

APPEARANCE: How does your character dress? What is her build, hairstyle, and eye color?

PERSONALITY: How does your character act? How does he react to different situations? Does she have any particular quirks that make her distinctive?

POSSESSIONS: Does your character have an item that she holds particularly dear? Are there any important weapons or gadgets that are part of his profession?

POWERS: Does your character have any special talents? A distinct fighting style? Can he do something most people cannot?

SHTICKS: Are there any habits that set your character apart? Does her hair always blow dramatically in the wind, or does he always adhere to a strict military code?



Fluffing

If you have trouble creating or describing your character, or if you would just like a little more detail, you may want to try filling out the following list. Of course, not all of the entries may apply, and you might want to add some of your own. The Sample Characters have a similar list filled out for you.

CONCEPT: *A few words describing your character*

AGE: *How old your character is*

GENDER: *Male or female*

HEIGHT: *How tall your character is*

WEIGHT: *How much your character weighs*

HAIR COLOR: *Color of your character's hair*

EYE COLOR: *Color of your character's eyes*

ASSOCIATION: *What group your character belongs to*

HOBBIES: *What your character likes to do*

FAVORITE FOOD: *What your character loves to eat*

ALLIES: *Your character's companions*

ENEMIES: *Those your character aims to defeat, best, or destroy (or vice versa)*

LOVE INTEREST(S): *Who your character loves or is loved by*

Creating with Others

While it's not always possible, especially when new people join an existing group, it can be rewarding for Players to create their characters together. You can explore how characters know each other, develop love—or hate—relationships, and otherwise tie your characters to one another. Weaknesses like *Guardian*, *Love Interest*, and *Rival* can all contribute to great interaction during the game!

Limiting the Character

These rules are meant to be extremely flexible, allowing you to create any character you could ever want to play without restrictions or hassles. Sometimes though, you might want limits—either to keep from making a character *too* good or to ensure similar levels of power among everyone's characters. To do this, you and your Game Master must first decide on one of the following rules. Even if the GM has not mentioned it, make sure to ask if any of these limitations are being used before making your character.

Base Zero

This rule is based on keeping your character's total of Abilities and Weaknesses as close to zero as possible. Just add all Ability Bonuses and subtract all Weakness Penalties to see your *Character Total*. At most, your character should not be above or below zero by more than five—or another number at the GM's discretion.

All of the Sample Characters in OVA favor the Base Zero rule, including Fukiko created in this chapter.

Power Ceiling

With this rule, all characters start with a number of Levels to distribute among Abilities but may gain more equivalent to the total Level of Weaknesses they take. However, the total Level of Abilities can never exceed a *Power Ceiling* set by the Game Master. That is, if the GM gave each character 5 Levels and a Power Ceiling of 15, you could choose 5 Levels of Abilities and increase this with up to 10 Levels of Weaknesses.

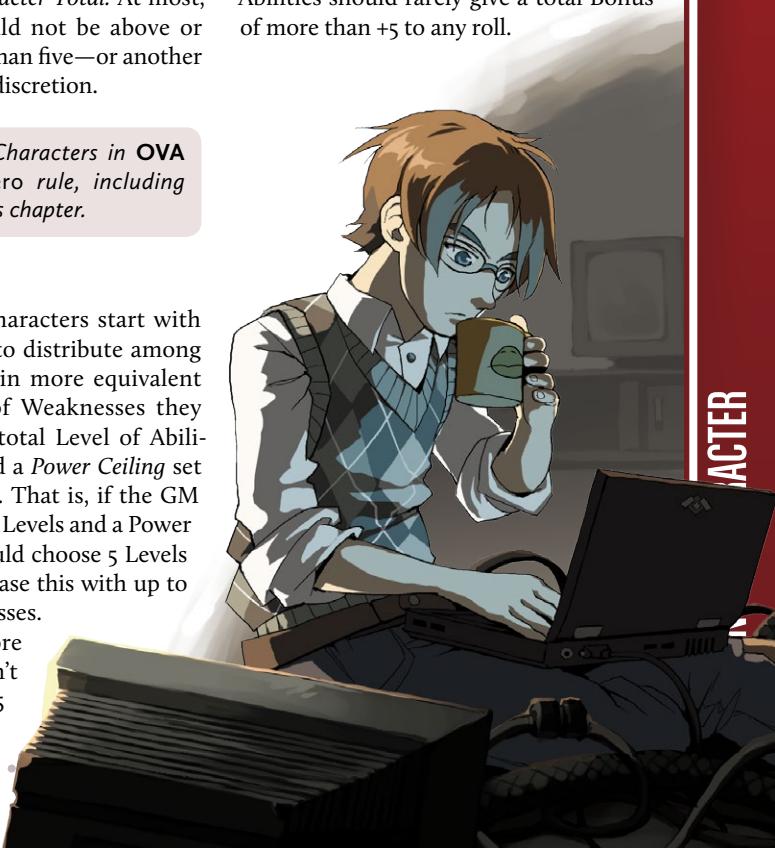
Even if you take more Weaknesses, you can't have more than 15 Levels of Abilities.

Scaled Cost

This third rule encourages Players to keep their characters in the middle ground rather than the extremes by applying prohibitive costs to high Levels in Abilities. A Level 1 Ability costs one point, 2 costs two, 3 costs four, 4 costs eight, and 5 costs an incredible fifteen points! Weaknesses apply the same costs as listed above, only they are subtracted from the total. The Game Master can either set a ceiling to the number of Levels that can be spent, like the *Power Ceiling* rule, or combine *Scaled Cost* with the *Base Zero* rule.

Combined Effectiveness

You may find it appropriate to apply the following limitation to starting characters regardless of what other rules might be used: When combined, a character's Abilities should rarely give a total Bonus of more than +5 to any roll.





SAMPLE CHARACTERS

- If you're still daunted by the character creation process, or you just want to see some of the many possibilities available, the following chapter contains twelve completely detailed Sample Characters ready for use, study, and modification.

Using the Characters

From interstellar bounty hunters and magical girls to power-hungry mega-millionaires and ninja assassins, there are plenty of great characters. But how will you make use of them?

As Is

The characters described here are ready for play just as they are. Feel free to pick a favorite and skip creating a character altogether.

In fact, everyone at the table can choose a character and get right into the game. Besides being varied enough to cater to almost any taste, many of the Sample Characters are well suited to play together. Could Fukiko see Auren as her guardian prince, just like in her favorite manga? What will happen when friends-turned-rivals Raine and Shou must set aside their differences and work together? Are seasoned performers Daisuke and Cora searching for the same malevolent spirit?

As Example

Because the Sample Characters are so diverse, they work great as examples for OVA's many Abilities and Weaknesses. Not only can you see how the rules come together to form a character, you can also see unique and inventive applications of the rules themselves.

As a Starting Point

Complete as they may be, there's nothing stopping you from taking these characters and keeping only the parts that interest you. Borrow tidbits of background, lift an Ability you like, or simply tweak a character to better suit your needs.

If you're strapped for ideas, the Sample Characters can be just the spark you need to get on track.

As mentioned in Creating a Character, all of the Sample Characters follow the Base Zero limiting rules.

Raine

I WILL ATONE FOR THE SINS OF MY PAST BY
HELPING THOSE WHO CANNOT HELP THEMSELVES!

Background

The Warrior of the Mist, The Storm, The Sword That Cuts the Wind—Raine has been known by all these names and more. His skill with his sword, like his beauty, is nearly unmatched. But for all his positive attributes, Raine's mind is ill at ease, riddled with the misdeeds of his past.

Raine was once a member of the infamous Clan Cave Fox, a group of skilled assassins for hire. His legendary ability was well suited for the task, and he was content to supply it for the money it procured. That is, until his job hit too closely to home. He had orders to kill a man whose debts exceeded that which the Clan felt could be repaid. It was a simple task made even easier in the darkness. The man never saw it coming, and Raine, to his ultimate regret, never saw his quarry's face until the deed was done. Feebly, the man clasped onto Raine's clothes. The eyes that looked into his were not that of yet another job completed...but of his own father, the man whose debts he had desperately tried to repay with all those years of service to the Clan.

For the first time, Raine questioned his actions. He realized a life was more than a thing you could take, that every life meant something to someone. Disgusted with himself, he wordlessly left the Clan. But no one, *no one*, left the Clan and lived. Clan Cave Fox dispatched another skilled assassin, Raine's old comrade Shou, to hunt him down. Now Raine wanders, doing good where he can in hopes of atoning for his life of sin. He longs for the day when he can finally escape Clan Cave Fox...and the shadows of his past.



Personality

Raine is a quiet person, usually only speaking when something significant must be said or in reply to someone else. Even though he is skilled and a solid thinker, Raine's mind tends to wander. He often loses track of what a person is saying to him, a trait that may cause people to underestimate his intelligence. In his spare time, Raine can usually be found practicing his swordsmanship or quietly contemplating, but he also has a passion for origami, the Japanese art of folding paper. He sometimes uses the paper to focus his thoughts.

ABILITIES

- +1 *Agile*
- +2 *Art of Invisibility*
- +3 *Attack (Kaze Satsujinsha)*
- +4 *Beautiful*
- +4 *Combat Expert*
- +2 *Evasive*
- +1 *Intuitive*
- +1 *Iron-Willed*
- +2 *Knowledge (Origami)*
- +2 *Knowledge (Wilderness)*
- +1 *Quick*
- +2 *Sixth Sense*
- +2 *Vigorous*

WEAKNESSES

- 1 *Airhead*
- 2 *Code of Conduct (Will Not Fight Surprised or Defenseless Opponents)*
- 2 *Guardian (Those in Need)*
- 3 *Ineptitude (Home Economics)*
- 1 *Pacifist*
- 3 *Poor*
- 2 *Rival (Shou)*
- 2 *Secret (Past as an Assassin)*
- 1 *Sensitivity (Sexual Misidentification)*
- 1 *Unique Weakness (Nightmares)*
- 3 *Wanted (Clan Cave Fox)*

OTHER STATISTICS

CONCEPT: Ambiguously Sexed Sword Master

BIRTHDAY: January 31

AGE: 23

GENDER: Male

HEIGHT: 5' 9"

WEIGHT: 140 lbs.

HAIR: Brown

EYES: Brown

ASSOCIATION: Previously of Clan Cave Fox

HOBBIES: Origami

FAVE FOOD: Miso Soup

ALLIES: None

ENEMIES: Shou, Clan Cave Fox

Attacks & Combat Stats**Kaze Satsujinsha**

ARMOR PIERCING; WEAPON

Raine's skill with a sword is extraordinary. His legendary katana is a suitable companion.

ROLL	DX	END
7	4	0

Raging Thunder Slash

EFFECTIVE X3, AFFINITY: ELECTRICITY; WEAPON

Raine whispers across his blade before striking with crackling electrical energy.

ROLL	DX	END
7	7	10

Electrical Storm

AREA EFFECT X2, EFFECTIVE, AFFINITY: ELECTRICITY; REQUIREMENT: MUST BE OUTSIDE (-10), WEAPON

Raine summons the power of nature to cut swaths through legions of enemies.

ROLL	DX	END
7	5	10

Mist Touch

CONTINUED EFFECT, FATIGUING, WILL ATTACK, AFFINITY: SPIRIT

Raine concentrates his energies to project his very spirit into the opponent's mind.

ROLL	DX	END
7	4	10

DEFENSE

5

HEALTH

40

ENDURANCE

60

TV

18

Nightmares

Raine is regularly haunted by nightmares of his bloody deeds, especially of his father's death. He rarely sleeps through the night, and his sudden awakenings may startle companions.

Shou

OLLY OLLY OXEN FREE! WATCH OUT NOW, HERE
I COME! THIS IS GOING TO BE THE BEST!

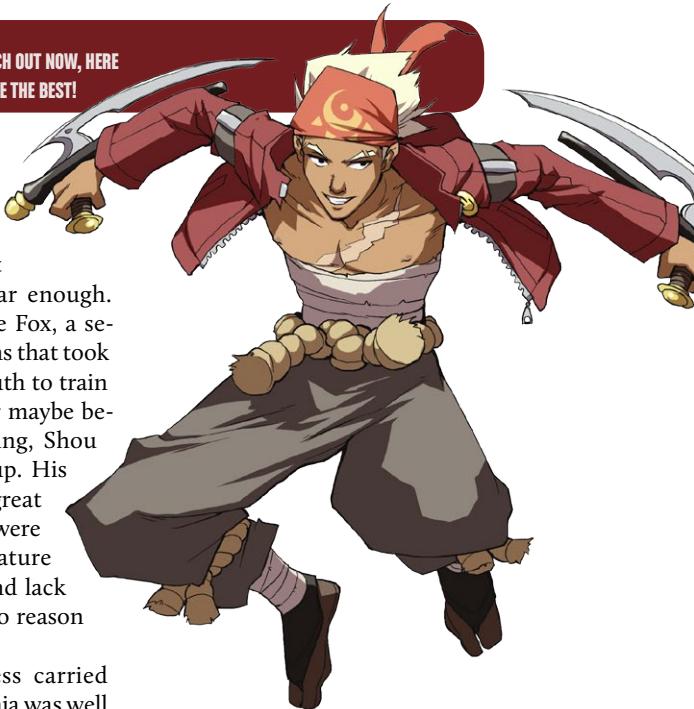
Background

As a young boy, Shou was left orphaned and alone. How this came to be has long been lost to his memory, but what happened afterward was clear enough. He was adopted by Clan Cave Fox, a secretive organization of assassins that took advantage of his malleable youth to train him in their ways. Despite, or maybe because of, this rigorous training, Shou never learned how to grow up. His incredible skill granted him great favor with the Clan, and they were willing to overlook his immature shortcomings. With power and lack of accountability, Shou had no reason to be an adult at all.

Shou's devious playfulness carried over to his work, where the ninja was well known for inventing games to play with his prey. The fairness of the rules varied with his moods. Sometimes the odds would be in his favor, other times his opponent's favor, and sometimes roughly equal all around. The particulars mattered little to him as long as it was *fun*. After all, he never lost.

As he grew older, Shou spent much of his time in the company of Raine, a serious, but still fun, friend. Raine was a fighter worthy of his time, a truly challenging opponent where no special rules were needed. They would often talk together for hours, hidden away in the high places of the world. But then something changed. Raine was suddenly different, and then he was gone. When Raine left Clan Cave Fox, Shou was not very happy about it. Neither, it seemed, was Clan Cave Fox. They wanted him found, and Shou was more than happy to oblige.

This may be the best game of them all.



Personality

Shou will kill you with a smile...literally. Despite his life as an assassin, he is passionate and lively. Without any true father figure or role model, he acts much like he did as a child. His youthful nature is a startling contrast to his occupation and often makes him even more imposing. Shou also loves to eat and can be easily swayed with food—temporarily anyway.

Dark World

Though many years dead, an elder member of Clan Cave Fox personally trained Shou in the art of shadow magic. By bargaining with dark spirits, Shou can become a shadow, travel distances in an instant, and even focus his energies into a blow that destroys light itself. But these bargains come at a cost. Shou's soul is tainted with darkness, and he is vulnerable to powers imbued with light.

ABILITIES

- +2 Agile
- +3 Art of Invisibility
- +2 Attack (Ninjutsu)
- +1 Combat Expert
- +2 Evasive
- +2 Knowledge (Food)
- +2 Perceptive
- +3 Quick
- +1 Strong
- +3 Teleport
- +2 Tough

WEAKNESSES

- 1 Easily Distracted
- 2 Impulsive
- 2 Infamous (Assassin)
- 2 Overconfident
- 2 Quirk (Playfulness at All Times)
- 2 Rival (Raine)
- 2 Rude
- 2 Servitude (Clan Cave Fox)
- 2 Soft Spot (Food)
- 2 Vulnerability (Light)

OTHER STATISTICS

CONCEPT: Scarily Playful Ninja Hitman

BIRTHDAY: April 1

AGE: 22

GENDER: Male

HEIGHT: 6'1"

WEIGHT: 184 lbs.

HAIR: Bone

EYES: Indigo

ASSOCIATION: Clan Cave Fox

HOBBIES: Eating

FAVE FOOD: Tempura

ALLIES: The Clan

ENEMIES: Too

Numerous to Count

Attacks & Combat Stats**Bladed Tonfas**

DEFENSIVE; WEAPON

The addition of a gleaming edge makes these otherwise humble weapons deadly.

ROLL	DX	END
5	4	0

Sweep Kick

STUNNING; INEFFECTIVE X2

Shou unbalances his opponent with a swift, low kick.

ROLL	DX	END
5	2	0

Pressure Strike

IMPAIRING; INEFFECTIVE X2

A precise blow that impedes the opponent's ability to fight.

ROLL	DX	END
5	2	0

Dark Spark

EFFECTIVE X2, RANGED, AFFINITY:

DARKNESS; BACKLASH X2

By focusing dark magics and striking his blades together, Shou sends out a bolt of energy that devours light in its path.

ROLL	DX	END
5	5	0

DEFENSE	HEALTH	ENDURANCE	TV
7	60	40	18

Karis

I'M EVERY BIT AS TOUGH AS MY FATHER WAS,
AND I'LL PROVE IT BY AVENGING HIS DEATH!

Background

Though largely unproven on our planet, life outside of the solar system does exist...far more than easily imagined. Galactic trade and diplomacy have flourished between alien races for millennia. Karis was from one of these space-faring cultures on the distant planet of Andaros. As the daughter of Dromar d'Ori, a highly successful bounty hunter in the employ of the Galactic Peace Legion, she enjoyed an easy life. Money was never short, and Dromar spoiled his precious little girl. That is, until Shadowman came.

A criminal of insane proportions, the mysterious Shadowman defied all means of identification and capture. Murderer, plunderer, mass destroyer, a sadistic fiend with power unmatched by even the greatest assets of GPL. Though Dromar had successfully cornered Shadowman, the resulting battle ended with the bounty hunter's death and Shadowman's escape.

In the years since, Karis has transformed from an innocent girl into a hardened and (somewhat) respected bounty hunter. She is determined to follow in her father's footsteps and end Shadowman's reign of terror forever. Partnered with GPL's proprietary ARrest AAssist UNIt (or Arasuni), Karis has tracked Shadowman to a distant undeveloped world...Earth.

Personality

Karis is quick on her feet and sharp-witted, but her strong-willed personality often leads to acting without thinking. Earth itself confuses her, so she sticks out like a sore thumb in otherwise typical situations. Karis can be prone to anger when annoyed



or flustered—or teased about her less-thanample bust size. It's an anger she's willing to demonstrate with more than words.

Arasuni

Arasuni is Karis's assistant supplied by the GPL. While researching their new surroundings, he has a tendency to grab Earthian analects, quotes, and other bits of wisdom and apply them to the task at hand. Despite his use of such human phrases, Arasuni has little emotional capabilities.

ABILITIES

- +3 Agile
- +3 Attack (Boomerang)
- +1 Combat Expert
- +2 Companion (Arasuni)
- +1 Cute!
- +1 Evasive
- +1 Intuitive
- +1 Perceptive
- +3 Quick

WEAKNESSES

- 1 Bizarre Appearance (Strange Ears)
- 1 Impulsive
- 3 Obsession (Kill Shadowman)
- 2 Quirk (Stranger in a Strange Land)
- 2 Sensitivity (Chest)
- 1 Short-Tempered
- 1 Soft Spot (Stuffed Animals)

OTHER STATISTICS

CONCEPT: Hotheaded Space-Trekking Bounty Hunter
BIRTHDAY: March 23
AGE: 18
GENDER: Female
HEIGHT: 5' 1"
WEIGHT: 108 lbs.
HAIR: Reddish-Pink
EYES: Green
ASSOCIATION: Galactic Peace Legion Contract
HOBBIES: Collecting Stuffed Animals
FAVE FOOD: Milkshakes
ALLIES: Arasuni
ENEMIES: Shadowman

- +2 Armored
- +1 Attack
- +1 Combat Expert
- +1 Evasive
- +3 Life Support
- +3 Strong
- +2 Tough
- +1 Unique Ability (Computerized Brain)
- 1 Awkward Size (Large)
- 2 Bizarre Appearance
- 2 Emotionless
- 1 Quirk (Quoting Earth)
- 3 Servitude (Karis)
- 1 Slow
- 2 Vulnerability (Electricity)

Attacks & Combat Stats (KARIS)

Kinetic Boomerang	ROLL	DX	END
ARMOR PIERCING, RANGED; WEAPON Karis's signature weapon can be wielded versatility, both as a blade and a boomerang.	6	4	0
Trick Shot	ROLL	DX	END
DISARMING, RANGED; INEFFECTIVE, WEAPON With finesse, Karis throws her weapon in a tight arc to disarm opponents.	6	3	0
Sweeping Strike	ROLL	DX	END
MULTIPLE TARGETS, RANGED; INEFFECTIVE, WEAPON Take down multiple foes in a single throw!	6	3	0
Flex-Steel Cable	ROLL	DX	END
PARALYZING X2, RANGED; INEFFECTIVE X3, WEAPON Her weapon can release a super-strong cable to entangle foes, among other creative uses.	6	1	0
DEFENSE HEALTH ENDURANCE	TV		
6 40 40	16		

Attacks & Combat Stats (ARASUNI)

Iron Knuckle	ROLL	DX	END
AFFINITY: MIGHTY ROBOT Arasuni's immense size and strength allow him to deal a crushing blow.	3	5	0
Stun Pulse Rifle	ROLL	DX	END
IMPAIRING, RANGED; INACCURATE, WEAPON While not the most powerful of weapons, it is useful for subduing stubborn foes.	2	2	0
DEFENSE HEALTH ENDURANCE	TV		
2 40 20	10		

Miho

I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS TO BE HUMAN,
BUT I KNOW THAT IT'S WHAT I'M MEANT TO BE!

Background

Since their earliest ventures in technology, people have strived to build a more powerful weapon of war. These attempts have all fallen prey to the limitations of humans themselves—until now. The Malicron Corporation was determined to create a better war machine. Self-sufficient, adaptable, the deadliest weapon of all: a human android.

Though the scientific community ridiculed the idea, Project MIHO (Military Intelligent Humanoid Operative) was a success. However, this new weapon exhibited a quality unintended by her creators: the ability to think for herself. Miho was built to adapt, but developing a conscience or emotions were not part of her programming. Dr. Heiji Tomori, head of the MIHO project, recognized these qualities and arranged for her escape. Unfortunately, Malicron quickly mobilized its military might to regain the company's prized creation. The events that followed, and the fate of Dr. Tomori, remain unknown. Whatever happened, the ordeal did not result in Miho's capture but left her critically damaged. With her last remaining strength, she simply collapsed into a dumpster many miles away.

By luck, or maybe fate, a young inventor named Braun rummaged through that very trash. It took time, but he restored the android to prime condition. Miho has dedicated herself to helping her hero ever since. Well, that, avoiding her pursuers, and destroying half of Tokyo with her good but ultimately disastrous intentions.

Personality

Despite her military origins, Miho is an innocent, kind-hearted spirit, hopelessly naive and trustful of anyone she meets.



She desires to learn as much as possible about the world, making reading (at inhuman speeds) one of her favorite pastimes. Though she wants to help, her inherently destructive build often proves more hindrance than aid.

Robot Characteristics

Miho sustains herself with energy from the sun, either in hour-long “sunbaths” where her systems shut down, or gathered gradually through the day. If deprived for

ABILITIES

- +3 Agile
- +3 Attack (Robo-Powered Arsenal)
- +3 Beautiful
- +3 Combat Expert
- +3 Heightened Sense (Sight)
- +3 Life Support
- +3 Quick
- +3 Strong
- +1 Transformation
 - +2 Combat Expert
 - +2 Endurance Reserve
 - 3 Unique Weakness (Loss of Control)
- +1 Unique Ability (Quick Calculator)

OTHER STATISTICS

- CONCEPT:** Missile-Powered Mechanical Maiden
BIRTHDAY: February 12
AGE: 1 (Appears 18)
GENDER: Female
HEIGHT: 5'5"
WEIGHT: 275 lbs.
HAIR: Blue
EYES: Yellow
ASSOCIATION: Malicron Creation
HOBBIES: Reading
FAVE FOOD: Sunshine
ALLIES: Braun
ENEMIES: Malicron Corp.

WEAKNESSES

- 1 Bizarre Appearance (Robot Features)
- 3 Dependency (Sun)
- 2 Guardian (Braun)
- 3 Ineptitude (Cooking)
- 2 Kind-Hearted
- 2 Naive
- 2 Trigger (Transformation If Critical)
- 1 Unique Weakness (Excessive Density)
- 3 Vulnerability (Electricity)
- 3 Wanted (Malicron Corporation)

Attacks & Combat Stats**Mode 1: Hand-to-Hand**

AFFINITY: MARTIAL ARTS
 Even barehanded, Miho is a competent combatant.

ROLL	DX	END
8	7	0

Mode 2: Gatling Gun

OVERWHELMING, RANGED; INACCURATE X3
 She's packin'! The more bullets, the better!

ROLL	DX	END
5	4	0

Mode 3: Missile Launcher

AREA EFFECT, RANGED, STUNNING;
 DELAYED, INACCURATE X3
 Speak softly and launch a big missile!

ROLL	DX	END
5	4	0

Mode 4: Sniper Rifle

ACCURATE, ARMOR PIERCING, IMPAIRING,
 RANGED; CONCENTRATION: AIMING
 Miho takes them out with robotic precision.

ROLL	DX	END
9	4	0

Mode SP: Miho Ray

EFFECTIVE X6, RANGED; REQUIREMENT:
 SELF-PRESERVATION MODE (-20)
 Nothing will remain to hurt her.

ROLL	DX	END
10	10	10

DEFENSE	HEALTH	ENDURANCE	TV
5	40	40	20

24 hours, Miho's systems switch to an alternate, less effective power supply. Her excessive density can pose problems too, straining weak floors, inhibiting attempts to swim, and making her very difficult to carry. Her body exhibits clues to her robotic nature that may be difficult to disguise.

Finally, if reduced to a combined 10 Health and Endurance, Miho enters Self-Preservation Mode. Her consciousness shuts down, instead focusing on eliminating the danger—and anything in her way, friend or foe. Once successful, Miho returns to normal with no memory of her time in this mode.

Braun

I KNOW THAT I'M NOT ALL THAT STRONG OR BRAVE...
BUT I'LL PROTECT HER WITH EVERYTHING I'VE GOT!

Background

There's one in every school: the incredibly smart, socially inept, and most teased kid in the student body. Now on his own, Braun has changed very little from his school days. Still brilliant and driven by a fascination with technology, Braun opted out of a formal higher education to better pursue his passion for inventing. He lived alone in a downtown apartment, a maze of reference books, parts, and inventions in various stages of completion. Though income was sporadic, he made enough money to feed himself and his habits. But Braun craved for something more...to discover a truly astounding innovation, something that would be heralded for generations to come.

But he never expected to find it in a dumpster. Scrounging through trash for parts, as he was prone to do, Braun was shocked to find a battered, but definitely humanoid, shape. Thinking he had found a woman injured or worse, Braun was paralyzed with uncertainty. Upon closer inspection, the wounds revealed mechanical origins. Was that really possible? After much time, effort, and muscle strain, Braun managed to return to his apartment with the strange girl. Using his mechanical know-how, he restored her to perfect working order. Immediately, Miho, the beautiful android, felt an incredible debt of gratitude and swore to remain by his side.

Ever since, Braun has had a dedicated and spirited companion, but his reclusive nature had not prepared him for life with a female, even a robotic one. He was sure, too, that Miho was running away from *something*—something that might want her back. His life would never be the same...but maybe that wasn't such a bad thing after all.



Personality

Braun is a mostly introverted individual, content to keep to himself. Still, he is a genuinely good-natured young man and always kind when he does interact with others. A hopelessly bad liar, Braun has a difficult time hiding his feelings and intentions. His unpopular childhood and his equally socially uneventful adulthood have left him ill at ease around women, as well as easy to bully. Despite often being embarrassed around Miho, Braun does

ABILITIES

- +1 *Connected*
- +2 *Dimensional Pocket*
- +3 *Inventor*
- +4 *Knowledge (Computer Whiz)*
- +2 *Knowledge (Cosplay)*
- +2 *Knowledge (Games, Anime, & Manga)*
- +1 *Pilot*
- +3 *Smart*

WEAKNESSES

- 1 *Absent-Minded*
- 2 *Clumsy*
- 2 *Compulsion (Honesty)*
- 1 *Nosebleeder*
- 1 *Shy*
- 1 *Weak*
- 1 *Weak-Willed*

OTHER STATISTICS**CONCEPT:** Hopelessly

Honest Inventor

BIRTHDAY: November 29**AGE:** 20**GENDER:** Male**HEIGHT:** 5' 8"**WEIGHT:** 133 lbs.**HAIR:** Brown**EYES:** Blue**ASSOCIATION:** Mecha

Monthly Charter Subscriber

HOBBIES: Video Games**FAVE FOOD:** Pizza**ALLIES:** Miho**ENEMIES:** Malicron Corp.

his best to curb his anxieties. He also can be a tad forgetful, overlooking things he should be doing.

Inventions

Although Braun is constantly scrapping and rebuilding his mishmash of inventions, there are a few he keeps handy. His laptop computer possesses the processing power of a much larger device, as well as built in hacking aids that provide a +3 Bonus for such endeavors. Unless you count his haphazard kitchen appliances (that have a habit of not working as intended) and small, simple-tasked robots, his only other kept invention is his own glasses. Despite their outwardly normal appearance, these specs are capable of numerous extrasensory purposes, like thermal vision

and extensive zooming. Detecting nerve impulses from the side of his head, Braun doesn't need to take any action to activate these functions. He is usually able to find these and other inventions on his person via his *Dimensional Pocket* Ability.

Connections & Cosplay

As honest as he is, Braun has dabbled in the black market for rare parts not available to the average consumer. Though he has very little influence, with enough money, he can gain access to many illegal items. But since his inventions rarely sell, Braun often resorts to sewing and selling cosplay costumes to make extra cash. Miho's current wardrobe owes much to this, and her uniform was one of his first designs, sewn long ago.

Attacks & Combat Stats**First Day of Sale Shove!**

AFFINITY: NERDY

When a new *Draconic Quest* game is out, Braun can hold his place in line. Sometimes.

ROLL	DX	END	
-2	1/2	0	
DEFENSE	HEALTH	ENDURANCE	TV
2	40	40	0

Natsuki

NO ONE WILL GET IN THE WAY
OF WHAT IS RIGHTFULLY MINE!

Background

Natsuki was once a simple woman. Hardworking and determined, she entered the oft male-dominated business world of Japan with a mind to make her mark. At first, it felt like that might just happen. Success was quick to come, and she relished it. But as her progression up the corporate ladder became stymied, Natsuki realized her value with the company was as a trophy piece instead of a valued employee. Co-workers and bosses treated her like a glorified errand-girl, not as the financial talent she knew herself to be. Despite the situation only becoming progressively more unbearable, she'd be damned if she would give up now.

Although her commitment to her work, and appeasing her superiors, eventually got her to the top, she suffered personally as a result. Success was no longer enough. She had to prove to all men just how much better she was, no matter what. After gaining control of the corporation through various ingenious deals, the entire male personnel was eradicated. Armed with a new all-female staff, Natsuki's sharp business skills turned Malicron into one of the hottest corporations in the Japanese business scene.

Not satisfied with besting her contemporaries mentally and monetarily, Natsuki used Malicron's resources to craft a strength-enhancing gauntlet especially for her. With its destructive power, no man would ever lord over her again, in any shape, form, or fashion.

Personality

Natsuki is a demanding woman, filling the space around her with an air of in-



tense intimidation. Both charismatic and frightening in her speech, Natsuki seems born to command. She has no interest in dealing with men and treats them with little civility, if she can muster any at all.

Malicron Corporation

As head of Malicron, a technological powerhouse in the military sector, Natsuki has access to a wide variety of vehicles, equipment, and arms. She can also summon trained security officers to her side at any time. These underlings have *Attack +1* (*a gun Ranged, Effective, and Inaccurate*).

ABILITIES

- +2 Agile
- +2 Attack (Iron Fist)
- +2 Beautiful
- +2 Intimidating
- +4 Knowledge (Business)
- +2 Knowledge (Flowers)
- +2 Minions
- +3 Position of Power (Malicron President)
- +2 Quick
- +3 Strong
- +5 Wealthy

WEAKNESSES

- 2 Arrogant
- 2 Fear (Being Held Against Will)
- 1 Focus (Strong Requires Gauntlet)
- 1 Greedy
- 2 Hatred (The Y Chromosome)
- 2 Infamous (Ruthless Man-Hater)
- 1 Loner
- 2 Obsession (Proving Her Superiority)
- 2 Overconfident
- 1 Quirk (Obnoxious Laugh)
- 2 Short-Tempered
- 1 Soft Spot (Flowers)
- 2 Stubborn

OTHER STATISTICS

CONCEPT: Manipulative
Mecha-Gloved Millionaire

BIRTHDAY: October 30

AGE: 31

GENDER: Female

HEIGHT: 5'10"

WEIGHT: 135 lbs.

HAIR: Platinum

EYES: Blue

ASSOCIATION: Malicron Corporation CEO

HOBBIES: Working in Her Flower Garden

FAVE FOOD: Filet au Poivre

ALLIES: None

ENEMIES: Men

Attacks & Combat Stats**Gauntlet Bull**

STUNNING; INACCURATE, WEAPON
A fierce punch with speed and power can bowl over even stalwart foes.

ROLL	DX	END
3	6	0

Gauntlet Bear

PARALYZING; INEFFECTIVE, WEAPON
Natsuki grasps her opponent in her clutches and doesn't let go.

ROLL	DX	END
4	5	0

Gauntlet Crash

AREA EFFECT, STUNNING; INEFFECTIVE, WEAPON
Natsuki pounds the ground, sending out a shockwave of destruction all around her.

ROLL	DX	END
4	5	10

Stiletto Kick

AFFINITY: MARTIAL ARTS
Even without her signature gauntlet, Natsuki proves a formidable fighter.

ROLL	DX	END
4	3	0

DEFENSE	HEALTH	ENDURANCE	TV
4	40	40	14

Though best known for its military offerings, Malicron is rumored to be dabbling in the field of sentient robotics...

A Secret Garden

On top of the flagship building of the Malicron corporate empire, Natsuki keeps a

secret flower garden that covers the entire rooftop. A beautiful place indeed, it serves as her sanctuary from the working world. There she can be herself—maybe even the person she once was—for a time. Very few people know of the garden's existence, a state of affairs unlikely to ever change.

Fukiko

IN THE MEMORY OF MY MOTHER, I'LL BE JUST
LIKE MY FAVORITE MAGICAL GIRLS!

Background

All little children dream of being like their most cherished heroes. Fukiko was no different. Every day (except when there was schoolwork or chores to be done), she would throw herself into the fantastic imaginary worlds of her *shoujo* manga. Fighting evil! Making friends! And maybe catching the attention of a handsome male comrade. But that's all they were: imaginary two-dimensional illustrations trapped forever in the pages of her comic books.

But sometimes, dreams come true. One night while gazing at the stars outside her window, as she loved to do, Fukiko was shocked to encounter a strange cat. Not just any cat, but a white cat with pink feathery wings. Though finding a creature like this on her window sill was more than a little unusual, Fukiko's curiosity overcame her apprehension. She opened the window. The feline's peculiar avian nature was only the beginning of a slew of strange surprises. The cat spoke to her, revealing himself to be Azyrus. As if this weren't enough, Azyrus continued to explain that Fukiko's mother, who died when she was too young to remember, was a magical crime fighter. The stories were so remarkably similar to her manga that Fukiko could hardly believe her ears. Despite being overwhelmed, she listened attentively to Azyrus as he continued his explanations. Her locket, a keepsake from her mother, was also the key to her mother's power. Though Azyrus, as well as Fukiko's mother, had hoped this power would never be needed again, that would not be the case. And so the young heroine Lovely Savior Myu Myu was born. But the story had just begun...



Personality

Fukiko is strong-willed and naive, expecting the world to play by her definition of the rules. This blind faith is also her strength, giving her the ability to see the good in bad and to persevere against all odds. Even so, her childish nature can lead to a bit of whining from time to time.

Lovely Savior Myu Myu

Whenever Fukiko clutches her locket and shouts "Lovely Savior Transformation," she becomes her kitty cat crime-fighting form. Her locket transforms into a collar with a bell, and the rest of her attire

ABILITIES

- +2 Companion (Azyrus)
- +2 Cute!
- +1 Iron-Willed
- +2 Knowledge (Shoujo Manga)
- +2 Quick
- +2 Shape-Shifter
- +4 Transformation
 - +2 Attack
 - +3 Barrier (AREA EFFECT; ELABORATE GESTURES; 5 END)
 - +2 Combat Expert
 - +2 Healer
 - 1 Bizarre Appearance (Cat Features)

WEAKNESSES

- 2 Ageism
- 2 Crybaby
- 1 Easily Distracted
- 2 Focus (Powers Require Neko Transformation Locket)
- 1 Frail
- 1 Naive

OTHER STATISTICS

- CONCEPT:** Magical Meow Meow Girl
BIRTHDAY: July 26
AGE: 12
GENDER: Female
HEIGHT: 4' 10"
WEIGHT: 85 lbs.
HAIR: Blonde
EYES: Blue
ASSOCIATION: Middle School
HOBBIES: Shoujo Manga
FAVE FOOD: Chocolate
ALLIES: Azyrus
ENEMIES: Sinister Folk and Their Minions™

Attacks & Combat Stats

Neko Neko Catnip Cantrip

RANGED, AFFINITY: LOVE

In her magical girl form, Fukiko can perform a variety of mystical attacks of love.

ROLL	DX	END
4	3	0

Neko Neko Heart Burst

EFFECTIVE X2, RANGED, AFFINITY: LOVE

Fukiko forms her hands into the shape of a heart over her chest and emits a barrage of magical heart-shaped bursts.

ROLL	DX	END
4	5	10

Neko Neko Wave

AREA EFFECT X2, STUNNING, AFFINITY: LOVE; NO DAMAGE

With a waving motion of her arms, Fukiko pushes away all opponents around her.

ROLL	DX	END
4	0	10

Neko Neko Yarn Entangle

PARALYZING, AFFINITY: LOVE

A ball of yarn magically appears and wraps around her target.

ROLL	DX	END
4	3	10

DEFENSE	HEALTH	ENDURANCE	TV
4/5	30	40	12

changes into her pretty little Myu Myu costume. Of course, even villains will wait through the lengthy transformation sequence before continuing any battle. Must be the catchy music and flashy lights. She can also use this power to just change her appearance, but she cannot use *Shape-Shifter* and *Transformation* simultaneously.

Azyrus

Despite his cute and fuzzy exterior, Azyrus is always ready with sage advice for Fukiko. He can often be exasperated with her youthful naivete, but his heart is in the right place—even when his mouth isn't. **Attributes:** Flight +2, Quick +1, Smart +2; Awkward Size (Small) -1, Frail -1, Short-Tempered -1

Auren

IT IS MY DUTY TO PROTECT THIS WORLD, EVEN IF ITS FUTURE MAKES ME DOUBT WHY I SHOULD BOTHER...

Background

In an ancient time, when marvelous magics and malicious monsters ruled the earth, the power of sorcerers reigned supreme. Among them was the greatly respected Order of the Fallen Star. This small, reclusive order of wizards ruled the lands as a council, managing the affairs of the world from afar in their secluded secret chambers. Auren was the youngest of the Order, but his skill as a sorcerer was among the greatest.

But something was wrong. Tierus, the Great Seer of the Order, felt a dark portent coming from another time. It was a deep-felt omen of impending doom—a danger for the very existence of Earth!

It was unclear what this vision meant, but Auren was not willing to take any chances. He offered to use his magical powers to scout out the future. Time Magic was an esoteric school, one largely forbidden and never talked about. But the words of Tierus hung heavy, and the Order could find no other recourse. To sit idly by with this knowledge was impossible. So permission was granted, breaking an unwritten rule that had lasted centuries. Auren knew he was travelling into unfamiliar territory, with little expertise in the craft and no knowledge of the place to which he was going, but he would do it. After heartfelt farewells, Auren cast the appropriate incantations and spirited himself through time...into twenty-first century Japan.

Besides the completely new and bewildering world around him, Auren also had



another small problem. His travel through time seemed to adversely affect his age. His body now had the appearance of a teenager. No matter how many times he tried, the spell to return him to his proper epoch failed. Stuck in a strange land with little direction, Auren had no choice but to pursue the unknown evil this time held and defeat it *himself*, if necessary.

...That and explore the mysterious world of "high school."

Personality

Auren is a very serious, drab sort of character. Known for his stubbornness, he can be difficult to deal with in any conflict of

ABILITIES

- +1 *Armored (Medieval Armor)*
- +3 *Attack (Sword & Sorcery)*
- +3 *Combat Expert*
- +2 *Evasive*
- +4 *Knowledge (Magic)*
- +3 *Magic, Arcane*
- Mana Shield (Barrier +2; 10 Endurance)*
- Wings of Dezantis (Flight +2; 10 Endurance)*
- Feeblemind (Intimidating +2; 10 Endurance)*
- Breath (Life Support +2; 10 Endurance)*
- Hasten (Quick +3; 20 Endurance)*
- Atlas Arm (Strong +3; 20 Endurance)*
- +2 *Smart*
- +2 *Vigorous*

WEAKNESSES

- 1 *Ageism*
- 1 *Arrogant*
- 1 *Code of Conduct (Protecting Women... Begrudgingly)*
- 2 *Easily Distracted*
- 1 *Hatred (Animals)*
- 3 *Ineptitude (Modern Technology)*
- 1 *Quirk (Antiquated Language)*
- 2 *Quirk (Stranger in a Strange Land)*
- 2 *Stubborn*

OTHER STATISTICS

- CONCEPT:** Time Skipping Sorcerer
BIRTHDAY: June 24
AGE: 44 (Appears 16)
GENDER: Male
HEIGHT: 5'10"
WEIGHT: 152 lbs.
HAIR: Grey-Blue
EYES: Grey
ASSOCIATION: Order of the Fallen Star
HOBBIES: Fencing
FAVE FOOD: Mutton
ALLIES: None
ENEMIES: Mysterious Evil from the Future

Attacks & Combat Stats

	ROLL	DX	END
Orion ARMOR PIERCING; WEAPON Auren's sword, crafted from unbreakable adamantine, is as beautiful as it is deadly.	5	4	0
Fireball CONTINUED EFFECT, EFFECTIVE X2, RANGED, AFFINITY: FIRE Auren sends forth a spiralling blast of flame. Its magic continues to burn after it hits.	5	6	20
Ice Spire Array AREA EFFECT, ARMOR PIERCING, OVERWHELMING, RANGED, AFFINITY: ICE; FEATHER BLOW, INEFFECTIVE A prismatic array of frozen shards bombards multiple enemies, piercing any defenses.	5	3	20
Thunder Godspell ACCURATE X2, EFFECTIVE, RANGED, STUNNING, AFFINITY: LIGHTNING; DELAYED Auren summons a bolt of electrical energy that stuns its target. It rarely misses.	7	5	20

DEFENSE	HEALTH	ENDURANCE	TV
4	40	60	18

opinions. He is both perplexed and constantly frustrated by his lack of authority as a teenager. Despite this, he often acts as if in the position to order others around. His old-fashioned background contributes to an obligation to protect

women, much to his chagrin. Auren also has a curious distaste for animals, no matter how cute and cuddly.

Ai

I HAVE TO BELIEVE THAT SOMEONE OUT THERE CARES ABOUT ME.
I HAVE TO BE STRONG FOR THEIR SAKE!

Background

Reflective men and women throughout history have sometimes wished to begin anew—to be able to wash the canvas clean and start fresh. But rarely do they consider what a *blessing* it is to remember things, to know who you are, flaws and all. Ai awoke cold and alone in a dark alley without any recollection of herself. Not knowing where she was, who she was, or even how she got into this place, Ai was completely lost. With little other option, she roamed the streets of Tokyo, existing by stealing what she could. But that was just the beginning of her troubles.

Ai began to realize she *felt* things from people. Vague emotions bombarded her wherever she went. Sometimes there was more. She would look at a woman and know she was having marital troubles, see a boy and know he was skipping school to catch a movie with friends. The more she focused, the more she knew them.

Even more frightening, she realized that sometimes her own thoughts became theirs, that she could in fact alter their perception. She could affect the world around her too, move objects from afar, perhaps even break things.

But even these strange powers were not the root of her anxiety. It turned out that she was being doggedly pursued by strange, horrifying men. Men in black suits. They weren't normal. When they were around, all she could feel was a consuming *nothing* from them. So far she has eluded capture, but what if it were only a matter of time? What did they want?

Ai hoped she would never find out.

Personality

Ai is hopelessly shy, overwhelmed by feelings of isolation and fear. She is slow to



make friends and has trouble articulating her feelings in words. Ai would rather avoid adversity than overcome it, spending most of her time running away from her problems. But her real problem lies in that she doesn't know where she can run to.

Men in Black

Although the Men in Black are very real, Ai is often scared by any person in a black suit. This leads to more than a few complications in the briefcase-tugging world of metropolitan Japan.

ABILITIES

- +2 *Art of Invisibility*
- +1 *Attack (Telekinetic Power)*
- +3 *Barrier (NO GESTURE; 5 END)*
- +2 *Dexterous*
- +1 *Knowledge (String Games)*
- +3 *Psychic*
- +2 *Quick*
- +3 *Sixth Sense*
- +3 *Telekinesis*

WEAKNESSES

- 3 *Amnesia*
- 2 *Fear (Men in Black Suits)*
- 2 *Frail*
- 1 *Pacifist*
- 3 *Shy*
- 3 *Wanted (Men in Black)*
- 1 *Weak*

OTHER STATISTICS

CONCEPT: Amnesiac
ESPer
BIRTHDAY: May 13
AGE: 17
GENDER: Female
HEIGHT: 5' 4"
WEIGHT: 111 lbs.
HAIR: Pink
EYES: Lavender
ASSOCIATION: Unknown
HOBBIES: String Games
FAVE FOOD: Taiyaki
ALLIES: None
ENEMIES: Men in Black

Attacks & Combat Stats**Telekinetic Push**

NO GESTURE, RANGED, STUNNING;
 INEFFECTIVE, LOW PENETRATION
 Ai lashes out with her telekinetic powers,
 pushing the target away.

ROLL	DX	END
2	4	5

Mind Break

ARMOR PIERCING, FATIGUING, NO
 GESTURE, RANGED, WILL ATTACK;
 CANCEL: UNLIVING (-5)
 Ai fills another's mind with a confusing din
 of psychic energy, draining the opponent.

ROLL	DX	END
2	5	5

DEFENSE	HEALTH	ENDURANCE	TV
4/5	20	40	10

Yuu

I WILL DO ANYTHING FOR MY SISTER! AND WITH FENRIR AT MY SIDE, THERE'S NOTHING I CAN'T DO!

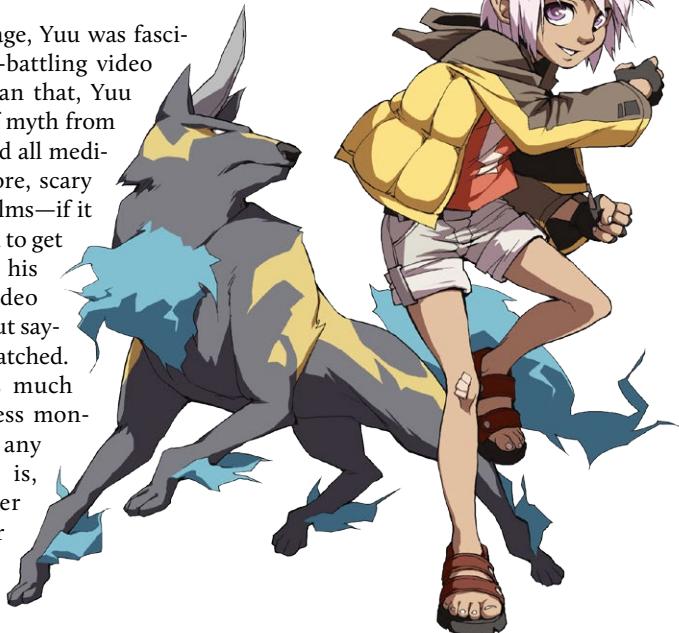
Background

Like many boys his age, Yuu was fascinated with monster-battling video games. But more than that, Yuu loved *all* monsters of myth from all over the world and all mediums. Books of folklore, scary manga, corny *kaiju* films—if it had monsters, he had to get his hands on it. And his prowess at those video games? It goes without saying his skill was unmatched.

In ways, he was much closer to his countless monster “friends” than any of his peers. That is, except for his older sister. Though her frail condition led to him adopting a big brother role, their bond was unbreakable. Her frequent hospital stays only furthered his resolve.

That rainy day was to be a hospital visit like any other. But when Yuu arrived, his sister was gone. The staff knew nothing of her whereabouts and insisted no such patient ever existed! Confused and afraid, Yuu rushed home. His sister was not there either. Nor was any trace of her. No photos on the entry table. Nothing in her room. Even his parents had no recollection of the daughter they loved and raised.

Nothing made any sense, but out of the corner of his eye, Yuu saw something. A shape, dressed in black, escaping out of the house! He gave chase but could only watch helplessly as the figure leapt into an awaiting van. However, the downpour had not let up, and the van hydroplaned into a nearby telephone pole. It was only superficially damaged, not enough to stop



it for long, but the back doors flew open. As the vehicle disappeared into the distance, it left behind a metal cage, and in it, the most curious wolf-like creature.

Despite his growing fear, Yuu felt he had to let it, whatever it was, free. The beast immediately repaid his kindness by tackling him to the ground. The wolf's hot breath in his face, Yuu was sure he was to be eaten. Instead the wolf only licked his cheek. A strange pair they made, but Yuu was certain it was fate. Together, they would find his sister. Together, they would get *Ai* back!

Personality

Yuu is inquisitive to a fault and too good to not leave things better than he found them. The combination often gets him into trouble, but Yuu's kind nature instantly adheres him to others—and to his new friend, Fenrir.

ABILITIES

- +4 Companion (Fenrir)
- +1 Evasive
- +1 Intuitive
- +1 Iron-Willed
- +3 Knowledge (Monsters)
- +3 Knowledge (Video Games)
- +2 Quick
- +1 Unique Ability (Trust)
- +1 Vigorous

WEAKNESSES

- 2 Ageism
- 2 Compulsion (Finding Things Out)
- 2 Guardian (Sister)
- 1 Impulsive
- 1 Kind-Hearted
- 3 Wanted (Men in Black)

OTHER STATISTICS**CONCEPT:** Plucky Pocket

Monster Master

BIRTHDAY: September 28**AGE:** 11**GENDER:** Male**HEIGHT:** 4' 8"**WEIGHT:** 78 lbs.**HAIR:** Pink**EYES:** Lavender**ASSOCIATION:** Elementary School**HOBBIES:** Monsters!**FAVE FOOD:** Pocky**ALLIES:** Fenrir**ENEMIES:** Men in Black**+3 Attack****+2 Combat Expert****+3 Quick****+2 Tough****+3 Vigorous****-2 Bizarre Appearance****-2 Fear (Enclosed Spaces)****-1 Guardian (Yuu)****-2 Mute****-1 Servitude (Yuu)****-1 Short-Tempered****Attacks & Combat Stats (YUU)****Struggle**

AFFINITY: NORMAL TYPE

Though he doesn't have any special moves, Yuu can still put up a fight if he needs to.

ROLL DX END

2 1 0

DEFENSE**HEALTH****ENDURANCE****TV****5****40****50****9****Attacks & Combat Stats (FENRIR)****Maul**

AFFINITY: NORMAL TYPE

Fenrir leaps at the target and attacks with a beastly fury.

ROLL DX END

4 4 0

Quick Attack

STUNNING; REQUIREMENT: TRUST +1 (-5)

Fenrir strikes repeatedly in the blink of an eye.

ROLL DX END

4 4 5

Lance

ARMOR PIERCING X2, EFFECTIVE X3;

DELAYED, REQUIREMENT: TRUST +2 (-10)

Fenrir charges up a skewering headbutt.

ROLL DX END

4 7 10

Lightning Rod

EFFECTIVE X6, AFFINITY: LIGHTNING;

REQUIREMENT: TRUST +3 (-15)

A bolt of lightning comes down from above, charging Fenrir's horn with power.

ROLL DX END

4 10 15

DEFENSE**HEALTH****ENDURANCE****TV****5****40****50****14****Fenrir and Trust**

Named for a fierce Norse beast, Fenrir has many Attacks he will only be able to perform as Yuu gains his trust (and raises

his unique *Trust* Ability). Yuu's *Trust* may also be rolled when commanding Fenrir to do tasks that are complicated or overly dangerous.

Daisuke

THIS – THIS IS TOTALLY CRAMPING MY STYLE!
I HAVE TO FIND THAT OLD BAG FAST!

Background

Never has a man so shallow and spoiled as Daisuke ever existed. Already from a well-to-do family, his rise into superstardom only increased his conceited rich-boy attitude. Worse than his fondness for excess, Daisuke was a hopeless womanizer whose mind was usually on girls and nothing else. And as one of the most popular male singers in Japan, fangirls were far from being in short supply.

But his ideal, girl-chasing existence was not to remain unchecked forever. At one of his concerts, an elderly lady requested his autograph. Daisuke, being Daisuke, not only ignored the request, but told the lady off with his usual lack of discretion. He had girls much easier on the eyes to attend to, after all! Displeased at Daisuke's shallowness, the crone started chanting a curse: "May no woman touch you until you discover the true meaning of love and compassion!"

Daisuke paid little attention to these mad ravings at the time. It wasn't until a crowd of fangirls tackled him that he realized his mistake. The curse was no mere babble of a lunatic woman at all. Whenever a female touched him in a remotely amorous way, he would turn into a black bunny rabbit—albeit a devastatingly handsome one.

Thusly, the easy, shallow, and girl-filled life of Daisuke took a most unfortunate turn, leaving him with little choice but to seek out the old woman and get rid of this awful curse!



Personality

Daisuke has three major problems: He's lecherous, narcissistic, and too popular to care about either. Besides being a helpless skirt-chaser, Daisuke is known for his oddball food demands and spoiled attitude when he can't get them.

Black Bunny!

Daisuke's bunny form lacks nearly all of his Abilities, but he gains *Quick +2* and *Awkward Size -2*. He will revert to human form when he escapes the inflicting female's sight. Unfortunately, his clothes are left behind...

ABILITIES

- +2 Agile
- +1 Attack (Kung Faux)
- +2 Beautiful
- +1 Combat Expert
- +3 Famous
- +2 Knowledge (Motorcycles)
- +3 Performer
- +1 Quick
- +1 Vigorous
- +3 Wealthy

WEAKNESSES

- 3 Accidental Transformation (Black Bunny)
- 1 Impulsive
- 2 Lecherous
- 1 Love Interest (Himself)
- 3 Love Magnet
- 1 Overconfident
- 1 Quirk (Odd Food Demands)
- 1 Rude
- 1 Weak-Willed

OTHER STATISTICS

- CONCEPT:** Cursed Singing Lech
- BIRTHDAY:** August 7
- AGE:** 24
- GENDER:** Male
- HEIGHT:** 5' 9"
- WEIGHT:** 146 lbs.
- HAIR:** Black
- EYES:** Red
- ASSOCIATION:** Soh-nii Records
- HOBBIES:** Chasing Girls
- FAVE FOOD:** Chicken and Waffles (...and Glazed Carrots)
- ALLIES:** He, Himself, and Him
- ENEMIES:** A Mean Ol' Bag

Attacks & Combat Stats

Crouching Rabbit, Hidden Bunny

AFFINITY: MARTIAL ARTS

Daisuke's fondness for martial arts movies has led to spending megabucks on tutors.

This Axe Goes to 11!

EFFECTIVE X3; AMMUNITION X3

In desperation, Daisuke can sacrifice his guitar to save his hide...

ROLL	DX	END	
5	2	0	
DEFENSE	HEALTH	ENDURANCE	TV
3	40	50	11

Cora

TO DESTROY THOSE THAT TOOK EVERYTHING FROM ME,
I MUST EMBRACE WHAT I LEFT BEHIND...

Background

Cora was born from the meeting of two worlds, and she has been torn between them ever since. Her father, Claude, was a successful stage magician from America, while her mother, Chiyoko, was from a long line of Shinto priestesses in Japan. Despite the guile and duplicity inherent in magic, the world of her father felt more real to her than any of the beliefs of her mother. You could trust magic; there was always a truth in every bit of mysticism. With her mother's religion, there was only faith in the unknowable, and to Cora that was more chicanery than any sleight of hand.

Years went by as Cora apprenticed under, then performed with, her father. While they each were adept with all kinds of stage magic, Cora found herself drawn to displays of mind reading and fortune-telling for which she had an uncanny knack. Together, their show was spellbinding.

But it was not to last. During a routine underwater escape act her father had performed night after night for as long as Cora could remember, something went wrong. The drowning, watched by a horrified, yet captive audience, could have been the result of any mistake or error. But Cora saw. She saw what no one else could see. An apparition, dark and full of loathing, *held her father down*.

The death was earth-shattering by itself, but the revelation that there was truth in her mother's words, in a world beyond the one she knew, robbed her of any understanding of her life.

Despite years apart, she returned to her mother, looking for something to fill the emptiness she felt. Understanding as always, there was no reproach from the



wise lady of the shrine. Instead, she taught her daughter everything she knew: of the long line of powerful women, how Cora too had these powers, how to interact with the dead, and how to imbue talismans with the energies of this earth.

Armed with a truer knowledge of herself, Cora opened a paranormal detective agency. It would pay the bills, with her days of stage magic behind her. And maybe one day she would find the evil eidolon that took her father from her.

ABILITIES

- +2 Attack (Card Shark)
- +2 Combat Expert
- +2 Dexterous
- +2 Illusionist
- +1 Intuitive
- +2 Knowledge (Stage Magic)
- +2 Magic, Witchcraft
- +1 Perceptive
- +2 Performer
- +1 Quick
- +2 Sixth Sense
- +1 Spirit Medium
- +1 Vigorous

WEAKNESSES

- 1 Dependency (Cigarettes)
- 2 Focus (Attack and Witchcraft Require Cards)
- 1 Guardian (Chiyoko)
- 2 Loner
- 2 Obsession (Find Father's Killer)
- 1 Overconfident
- 1 Quirk (Playing with Cards)
- 1 Rude
- 2 Sensitivity (Inquiries to Personal Life)
- 2 Stubborn

OTHER STATISTICS**CONCEPT:** Paranormal

Detective/Magician

BIRTHDAY: December 21**AGE:** 26**GENDER:** Female**HEIGHT:** 5'9"**WEIGHT:** 143 lbs.**HAIR:** Black**EYES:** Amber**ASSOCIATION:** Umbra

Paranormal Detective Agency

HOBBIES: Magic**FAVE FOOD:** Andouille Gumbo**ALLIES:** Chiyoko**ENEMIES:** Unknown**Attacks & Combat Stats****Spade**DEFENSIVE, RANGED; FEATHER BLOW
Cora fans out a hand of cards, which can deflect attacks and be thrown as a unit.

ROLL	DX	END
4	3	0

DiamondARMOR PIERCING X2, RANGED;
INEFFECTIVE
Cora throws a card with dazzling precision slicing through anything like butter.

ROLL	DX	END
4	2	5

HeartPARALYZING X2; FINISHER
Cora places a card against the chest of a battered foe, which explodes into a series of spiritual, binding chains.

ROLL	DX	END
4	3	10

ClubAREA EFFECT, STUNNING, TRAP;
ACTIVATION
Once placed, nothing can stop this blast.

ROLL	DX	END
4	3	15

DEFENSE	HEALTH	ENDURANCE	TV
3	40	50	12

Personality

Cora behaves much like one of her own magic tricks, constantly obscuring her true feelings with the face she wants others to see. With her quick wit and sharp tongue, it's almost impossible to catch Cora off guard. It also makes it impossible to really get to know her.

Talismans

While traditionally wielders of Cora's family power can enchant paper talismans (or *ofuda*) with spiritual energy, she prefers to use a material she's more familiar with: playing cards. In addition to an array of attacks, these cards may be empowered with the ability to inhibit others.



ABILITIES & WEAKNESSES

- *It has been said that people are defined by what they do. If this is true, it might help to know what you can, and can't, do within the boundaries of OVA.*
- *This chapter contains a list of the many attributes, both good and bad, that you can assign your character. Under Abilities, you'll find skills, talents, areas of physical prowess, and even supernatural powers. Under Weaknesses, you'll find disabilities, undesirable quirks, responsibilities, and other things that can ruin your day.*
- *But Weaknesses are not horrible attributes that you never want your character to possess. These Weaknesses may make things more difficult—they are called Weaknesses for a reason—but they will make your character much more interesting...and real.*
- *Even a Superman needs his kryptonite.*

Abilities

AGILE You are naturally adept at moving your body skillfully. Your graceful movements can impress others as well as aid in a variety of derring-do. Add your *Agile* dice to Attack Rolls and while balancing, dancing, performing aerial feats, or taking on other activities that test your coordination and grace.

ARMORED Your body is guarded from potential harm. The exact form this protection takes could be anything, whether it's a reinforced combat suit, a high-tech force field, or just a really thick hide.

For every Level you have in *Armored*, you may reduce the Damage Multiplier of any attack made to you by 1. If the Damage Multiplier would be reduced to zero or below, reduce it to $\frac{1}{2}$ instead.

In situations where the Level in Armored far exceeds the Damage Multiplier, the Game Master may choose to nullify the attack outright. Braun trying to brawl with a giant robot is not likely to achieve any results, and it is well within the GM's right to make it ridiculously ineffective.

ART OF INVISIBILITY You have an uncanny ability to move silently and blend into the shadows. You can add your *Art of Invisibility* dice when hiding, sneaking, and shadowing others or at any time when remaining unnoticed is desirable.

ATTACK Sometimes you have no choice but to fight. Luckily, you are equipped to deal with that! Your *Attack* Ability represents your capacity to dish out damage to adversaries, and each Level increases your Damage Multiplier (or DX) by 1. Whether *Attack* represents an ancient martial arts technique, a really big sword, or solely your fists is completely up to you. And if you like, it can remain as simple as that. However, Players wanting a more detailed representation of their combat mastery can choose to create a suite of attacks. Each of these possesses the same Bonus to your Damage Multiplier, but you may modify them with a variety of Ability Perks and Flaws.

Located at the end of this chapter (p. 83), Perks grant your attacks special attributes that they ordinarily would not have, like improved accuracy or the ability to pierce tough armor. However, these benefits come at the cost of an Endurance expenditure. Next to each Perk is a number, and this represents the additional Endurance cost of your attack. To counteract this, you may take Flaws. These will reduce the Endurance cost but also apply special hindrances to your attack. You can take any combination of Perks and Flaws, but the Endurance cost for any attack can never be reduced below zero.

Creating a suite of attacks may seem daunting at first. Check out the various Sample Characters to get a feel for what can be done or just leave your Attack Ability as a flat Bonus. You can always describe what makes your attacks unique on the fly.

Creating Attacks in Detail

There are many ways to build an *Attack* in OVA. Let's make one for Raine, the solemn swordmaster, and his faithful weapon, *Kaze Satsujinsha*.

You could simply leave this as a flat Bonus. Selecting *Attack +3* would mean that Raine gets to increase his Damage Multiplier by 3. How you describe his attack is up to you, but it will not affect the mechanics of the fight in any way.

You can give more mechanical detail by selecting Perks and Flaws. Due to its keen, mystical edge, the *Armor Piercing* Perk would be a fine choice. It allows Raine to ignore 2 Levels of the *Armored* Ability each time he strikes, but it would also cost him 5 Endurance. You can compensate for this by taking the *Weapon* Flaw, which reduces the Endurance cost by 5. Now he can use this attack freely. However, if he loses his sword through the excitement of battle, or outside of it, he can no longer use this attack at all!

But Raine could still have other attacks that grant +3 DX. That's fine if you want him to be a deadly force in any situation, but if you really want him to be vulnerable without *Kaze Satsujinsha*, you may choose the *Focus* Weakness and have *Attack* rely upon it instead. Without his sword, Raine would get no DX Bonus!

Whatever you decide, just remember the important thing is to have fun!

BARRIER You have the ability to defend yourself with a barrier of some kind. This could be a magical shield, an electronic device, or anything else that can protect you from harm. Instead of making a normal Defense Roll in combat, you may roll your *Barrier* dice. In addition, if your opponent's attack still connects, you may burn Endurance to "buy off" Damage on a one-for-one basis. With enough Endurance, you can theoretically nullify any attack! Using barriers this way, brought up in a flash in the heat of battle, can certainly be effective, but when used preemptively, they are even more valuable. If you decide to maintain a barrier, you may roll double your *Barrier* dice. This preparedness comes at a cost, however, as you cannot perform any other actions while doing so. If you modify this Ability with Perks and Flaws, the altered Endurance cost only affects activating the barrier. Additional Endurance spent to negate Damage remains one for one.

The Perk Effective gives your Barrier a DX of 1 (or more if taken multiple times), making it somewhat offensive. Should anyone without the Ranged Perk fail their Attack Roll against you or otherwise enter the area protected by the barrier, they will receive Damage. In this case, Barrier is treated like an Attack Roll against zero, and Damage is calculated accordingly.

BEAUTIFUL Beauty may be in the eye of the beholder, but you've managed to find your way into everyone's eyes! Your remarkable good looks tend to draw the attention of those around you and certainly make it easier to excel in jobs that require it, convince others to do as you like, and be sufficiently distracting when you want to be. When you take advantage of your appearance to aid the task at hand, add your *Beautiful* dice.

CHARISMATIC You are incredibly influential. Your manner, attitude, and presence make people acknowledge you, listen to what you have to say, and most importantly, see it *your way*. You may add your *Charismatic* dice when trying to convince, distract, inspire, or in any way charm others to do what you like or champion your cause.

COMBAT EXPERT You have trained yourself in an array of offensive tactics. With this Ability, you have the capacity to strike your opponent where it hurts, hit them hard, and look cool doing it. When making an Attack Roll, showing off your offensive expertise, or analyzing that of your opponent, add your *Combat Expert* dice.

This Ability covers the method of attacking in general, rather than any single weapon or fighting style. To specialize in a specific combat technique, choose it as a Knowledge instead.



COMPANION You have a loyal ally, faithful servant, or even a fuzzy friend that is always by your side. Whatever the form, this is someone you can count on. He or she has a total of Abilities and Weaknesses equivalent to your Level in *Companion*. However, this *Companion* can never be a true hero in your story and has a reduced Health and Endurance total of 20 each befitting such a role.

CONNECTED You have made a variety of contacts that you can call upon for favors. Perhaps they can obtain goods normally not in your reach or get you in places you could not normally get into. At Level 1, you know a guy who knows a guy, and they might be able to get you a discount or let you into a semi-private club. At Level 2, you have a friend who you can consistently rely on. You may have a supplier who can get you rare parts for your creations, an informant who can give you news about a certain subject or organization, or a skilled craftsman who can lend their talents. At Level 3, you know a variety of people in a small circle who can help you achieve what you want or have a friend with a wide breadth of uses. Though restricted to a particular field, you may have access to all of the previous examples at once. At Level 4, you have a vast assortment of contacts who owe you favors or are otherwise willing to aid you. Though it may take time, you can always find someone to help you with what you need. At Level 5, you are in with nearly everyone. No matter where you go, someone owes you something, and you can reasonably expect to cash in on a favor in any situation.

CUTE! You are every grandparent's dream come true. In addition to being an easy target for cheek pinches, many find it hard to be angry, mean, or in any way aggressive towards you. On the flip side, you

might also be hard to take seriously. You may add your *Cute!* dice whenever you wish to abuse your cuteness to get something you want, to persuade those you've angered from taking their aggression out on you (or anyone else), or to simply put on the charm.

DEXTEROUS You are incredibly adroit with your hands, making you well adapted to all matters of delicate manipulation. While this may be useful for certain illegal applications, you'll put this skill to good use, right? Roll your *Dexterous* dice any time you are trying to perform sleight of hand, pick pockets or locks, carefully rearrange wires or connections, or otherwise make fine interactions with your hands.

DIMENSIONAL POCKET You have access to a curious dimension where items of any size can be placed and recalled at will. Maybe you weave mysterious magics, carry a bottomless bag, or just possess really, really deep pockets. Only items that are relatively common to you and of reasonably liftable weight can be pulled from your *Dimensional Pocket*. You could pull a rose to woo a potential date, a canvas and easel to paint the sunset, or maybe even a gun to defend yourself from ne'er-do-wells, but you could not retrieve one of the legendary swords of Masamune, a magic cure for any disease, or a '57 Chevy—unless of course, you *are* Masamune, a master apothecary, or *Strong* enough to pull off such a feat.

When you wish to pull an item, roll your *Dimensional Pocket* dice and compare it to the appropriate Difficulty Number. If you succeed, you now have the desired item in your possession. If you fail, you cannot find the object, it won't work, or you pull a completely different (and usually quite useless) item altogether.

For example, if you were being attacked by an irate ninja assassin:

USEFULNESS	DN
Not Very Useful (<i>Rubber Ducky</i>)	2
Theoretically Handy (<i>Dinner Plate</i>)	4
Appropriate Enough (<i>Wooden Practice Sword</i>)	6
Just What You Needed (<i>Saber</i>)	8
More Than You Hoped (<i>Automatic Rifle</i>)	10
Amazingly Apropos (<i>Rocket Launcher</i>)	12

ENDURANCE RESERVE Through some item, you have an extra store of Endurance for your use. It could be an ancient magical amulet, an electronic power pack, or any object capable of storing energy. Although having this extra Endurance is useful, unlike real Endurance, it cannot be spent for stamina-related tasks or to receive Drama Dice. It cannot be recovered in combat, nor is it automatically restored by a short rest. Endurance for this item can only be regained after a length of time, such as through recharging over a 24 hour period. Also, *Endurance Reserve* cannot be used for Damage taken in combat. If the character's own Health and Endurance is reduced to zero, they still fall unconscious, regardless of the amount of Endurance remaining in the item.

Endurance Reserve is often linked to other Abilities through Gear or the Focus Weakness. In these cases, it may be logical for characters to only spend Endurance Reserve to power these Abilities. On the other hand, personal Endurance could represent luck, gumption, or giving it just that little bit extra. Whatever you decide, be consistent.

To determine the Endurance granted, refer to the following chart:

E. RESERVE LEVEL	BONUS
1	20
2	40
3	60
4	80
5	100

EVASIVE You have learned that getting out of the way of danger is a useful skill indeed. You may add your *Evasive* dice when you wish to avert personal peril, escape restraint, or make Defense Rolls to outmaneuver or block punches, stabs, energy blasts, pillars of flame, massive explosions, heat-seeking missiles, or anything else intent on doing you harm.

FAMOUS Through valor, fortune, or just being at the right place at the right time, you've become easily recognizable and are thought of fondly by people you may never have met. At Level 1, a few people know your name and might give you a hearty handshake or humor small requests. At Level 2, you are recognized in your field, and those familiar with your work or history will be thrilled to meet you in person. At Level 3, you are well known in many venues and can often cash in on your fame for a favor, accommodations, or other perks. At Level 4, you are world famous with countless adoring fans. You can expect the red carpet rolled out for you wherever you go and are treated to luxuries, favors, and amenities befitting your status. At Level 5, you are a legend. Meeting you in person is an unparalleled honor, and people will cater to your every need and want in hopes of being blessed with your presence a moment longer.

FLIGHT Whether by wings, supernatural powers, or machine, you have the miraculous ability to fly. While flying itself is not an extraordinary action for you, you may roll your *Flight* dice when racing others, attempting daring stunts, or otherwise testing your abilities in the air.

By its nature, Flight allows combatants to create a sizable distance from their opponents, enough for attacks to require the Ranged Perk. Conversely, it can also eliminate any such distance. In any given Round, flying characters can choose to be far away or not, but never both. A character could not use an attack without Ranged and decide to be far enough away to require Ranged of others in the same Round. Any other characters with Flight can always be within range.

GEAR You have equipped yourself with an item (or a collection of related items) that augments your own talents and capabilities. It may be a power suit built to increase your strength and toughness, a magical sword that grants you mystical power, or a customizable mechanical arm with an array of special effects. While you might consistently have access to this *Gear*, you are not required to use it all the time. Nor is its availability guaranteed, as it can also be lost, broken, or taken from you.

For every Level that you have in *Gear*, you may spend an equal number of Levels to craft it from other Abilities. You may also choose Weaknesses to increase the number of Levels available to your *Gear*. Any Abilities and Weaknesses granted by this equipment are cumulative with your character's own, enhancing or diminishing any natural attributes.

While Gear makes Bonuses higher than +5 or Penalties less than -3 possible, consider lowering gained Abilities and Weaknesses or discuss their effects with the GM.

HEALER You have the remarkable skill to heal others from even the worst injuries. You might have some special power, divine influence, or just a really big box of bandages. Simply roll your *Healer* dice; the result is the amount of Health recovered. This task takes significant concentration and generally cannot be done in combat or when your attention is otherwise diverted. If others safeguard and protect your efforts, you can complete the action in a Round. However, if you make any other rolls, even a Defense Roll, the effort is aborted, and you must try again. If a full Round passes without intervention, you succeed and the appropriate Health is regained. Characters knocked unconscious can be brought around through restoring their Health above zero. Only so much can be done for any injury in a given day, and an amount of time determined by the Game Master must pass before any single character may be healed again.

The Effective Perk may be applied to Healer to multiply the amount of Health regained. So a roll of 10 would now heal 20 points of Health, or more if the Perk is taken multiple times. Other Perks and Flaws, like Area Effect and Self-Only, can also be applied.

HEIGHTENED SENSE One of your five senses excels beyond the norm. You may have the nose of a bloodhound, eyes that can see the smallest detail near or far, or maybe just an unparalleled palate. You can add your *Heightened Sense* dice whenever you try to notice, differentiate, scrutinize or otherwise attempt something with this sense.

ILLUSIONIST You are capable of tricking those around you into believing something exists that is not actually there. Perhaps you are a skilled magician able to pull elaborate tricks from your hat,

or you can truly harness some power to cloud the minds of others with fictitious imagery. When attempting to pass off an illusion as real, roll your *Illusionist* dice. The result becomes the Difficulty Number others must beat, with Abilities like *Perceptive* and *Sixth Sense*, in order to see through your illusions. Depending on the complexity of your phantasm, you may receive one of the following Bonuses or Penalties to your efforts.

COMPLEXITY	MODIFIER
Easy	+1
Moderate	0
Challenging	-1
Difficult	-2
Very Difficult	-3

INCORPOREAL FORM You can phase out of the physical world and pass through solid objects as if they were air. While you are incorporeal, no one can touch or attack you, but likewise, you cannot do the same to them. All of your belongings are assumed to become incorporeal as well. While entering this state is not an astounding feat for you, increased Levels in *Incorporeal Form* improve your control over the power. In combat, you may roll your *Incorporeal Form* dice as your Defense Roll. *Incorporeal Form* dice may also be used to offset any Penalties in cluttered or otherwise difficult terrain.

INTIMIDATING You know how to frighten, bully, and overpower others through sheer presence. You may add your *Intimidating* dice whenever you try to force someone to do what you want—or just scare the living daylights out of them.



INTUITIVE While not necessarily well learned or book smart, you are certainly clever. You figure out things easily and pick up on small nuances others might miss. When you are trying to solve a non-academic problem, crack riddles, discern the true motives of others, put the pieces together, or otherwise rely on your personal insight, roll your *Intuitive* dice.

INVENTOR You have a natural talent for creating machines and gadgets to serve a myriad of purposes. However, attempts to build these things are not automatically successful. You must roll your *Inventor* dice (as well as any other Abilities that apply, like *Smart*) and compare it to the Difficulty Number listed below appropriate to the complexity of your invention. Some inventions might also require special parts and long periods of time to build at the Game Master's discretion.

COMPLEXITY	DN
Simplistic (<i>Turbo Toothbrush</i>)	2
Somewhat Involved (<i>Instant Glue</i> , +1)	4
Takes Some Know-How (<i>Tracking Device</i> , +2)	6
Complicated at Best (<i>Pocket Computer</i> , +3)	8
Modern Marvel (<i>Airship</i> , +4)	10
Legendary Invention (<i>Time-Space Portal</i> , +5)	12

These inventions may also mimic other Abilities and Weaknesses. Compare the total (Abilities minus Weaknesses) to the table to discover their complexity. Failed attempts produce nothing of value or something that will break (or explode) later on. New characters may start play

with one or more inventions of complexity equal to their Ability in *Inventor*. For example, a character with +4 in *Inventor* may start with a Modern Marvel.

Although characters can theoretically have as many inventions as they want, it is unlikely that they will be able to keep up with more than a few. Excess inventions are probably stored away in garages or maybe scrapped for parts. However, some characters might couple Inventor with Dimensional Pocket or Walking Arsenal...

INVISIBILITY Now you see you, now you don't! You have the ability to obscure yourself and your belongings from view. Attempts to spot, attack, or otherwise interact with you suffer a Penalty equal to your Level in *Invisibility*. At Level 1, you are not truly invisible, just more difficult to notice, whether by a mind trick or some form of camouflage. At Level 2, you are even harder to see. Perhaps you transform into a shadow, or special gear bends the light around you. At Level 3, you can become completely invisible. However, others may still discern your presence through sound or smell, or through your interactions with the environment, like footprints in the sand. At Level 4, you become invisible to all other senses as well. At Level 5, you are completely undetectable and leave no trace in the surrounding environment—unless you want to.

Some Abilities, like Heightened Sense, Perceptive, and Sixth Sense, can help negate the Penalty Invisibility provides. Likewise, environmental clues can aid in detection. Simply reduce the Penalty by an amount equal to the appropriate Ability or Bonus.

IRON-WILLED You are always reliable under pressure and true to your values and loyalties. You can add your *Iron-Willed*

dice when resisting temptation, fear, mind control, or anything else that tests your mettle and mental stamina.

KNOWLEDGE You have an interest or training in a particular area. This could range anywhere from computer programming and cooking to Japanese literature and Italian opera. When your expertise applies to the task at hand, add your *Knowledge* dice.

If you have limited your character with the Base Zero, Power Ceiling, or Scaled Cost rules, you are encouraged to make Knowledge cost half of what it normally would. If left with a fraction, round up.

LIFE SUPPORT You can survive in an environment that is normally uninhabitable. At Level 1, you can hold your breath or withstand other hazards for an extended time. At Level 2, you can live in another environment that humans normally cannot, such as underwater or in extreme heat or cold. You are also not affected by environmental changes, like pressure, in these surroundings. At Level 3, you can live in multiple environments, even space. However, certain environments may remain harmful to you at the Game Master's discretion. At Level 4, you are completely independent from your surroundings and unaffected by almost all environmental conditions. At Level 5, you require nothing to live. No energy source, no air, no rest. You are completely self-sufficient.

If this Ability is given to a Vehicle, it also grants its effects to all occupants. If you find Level 5 hard to justify in this way, treat passengers as if they have Level 4 instead.

LUCKY Lady Luck is on your side. Good things continually happen to you, and somehow even the worst of situations have a good side to them. (Your house has been blown sky high? You might just discover a natural oil well under it!) The higher your Level in *Lucky*, the more often it has an effect and to greater results. In addition to your natural luckiness, you also get a number of free Drama Dice equal to your Level in *Lucky*. These free dice are replenished only between adventures or at the Game Master's discretion.

MAGIC, ARCANE You have been gifted with the confounding ability to use magic or another similar mystical force. You can harness this energy to reproduce the effect of any Ability for yourself or others. In order to do so, you must spend Endurance. The exact amount varies according to your Level in *Arcane Magic* and that of the Ability you wish to mimic. Keep in mind that this is in addition to any costs the Ability may already possess.



SPELL ENDURANCE COST

LV	1	2	3	4	5
1	20	30	40	50	60
2	10	20	30	40	50
3	5	10	20	30	40
4	2	5	10	20	30
5	0	2	5	10	20



An example? *Forsooth!* *Sigh* Very well. If I wished to augment my extensive capabilities with a +2 Ability, I would first check horizontally for the Level of the Ability I am to mimic (2), then vertically for my Level in *Arcane Magic* (3). As you can see, this would require a paltry 10 Endurance.

For the spell to take effect, you must successfully cast it. For Abilities less than or equal to your Level in *Arcane Magic*, this is achieved automatically. For Abilities with greater Levels, you must roll your *Arcane Magic* dice, along with appropriate Abilities like *Smart*, and compare the result to a Difficulty Number. This number is $2 + \text{double the Level of the desired Ability}$. If failed, the spell does not work—at least, not as intended. Endurance spent to cast the spell is lost regardless, but any required by the mimicked Ability itself is *not* spent.

All effects last as long as the character deems necessary. However, Endurance spent to cast a spell may not be regained until its effects are relinquished. It counts as an action to cast a spell, but it does not to keep it in effect. Players may wish to list their favorite spells before the game to keep from halting play.

Abilities like Attack are cast on oneself and used on others. If you cast it on someone else, you would give the Ability instead!

MAGIC, WITCHCRAFT You have explored the mysterious realm of witchcraft or some other dark energy. You can channel this power to bewitch objects and people, or in other words, cast Weaknesses equal to your Level in *Witchcraft*. This Ability behaves like *Arcane Magic*, requiring the same rolls and Endurance costs. Although Weaknesses may not exceed -3, additional Levels in *Witchcraft* strengthen the curse. In the likely scenario that targets wish to resist the magic, they make a roll against your *Witchcraft* dice. Abilities like *Iron-Willed* and *Resistance* can affect this roll, but so can appropriate Weaknesses.

Once successful, a curse may only be removed in one of three ways. The original caster may relinquish the curse (and must in order to regain spent Endurance), the caster may be defeated in battle and have Health and Endurance reduced to zero, or someone with a *Witchcraft* Ability equal or greater in Level to the original caster can dispel it. While *Arcane Magic* could alleviate some of a curse's effects through temporary Abilities, it cannot provide a permanent cure. At the Game Master's discretion, items may be required to add or remove certain curses.

MINIONS Whether by charisma, fear, or mind control, you have the ability to call upon a sizable troop of allies. For each Level you have in *Minions*, you may summon twice that many reinforcements. Each of these allies has a Health and Endurance of 10, and when their Abilities and Weaknesses are combined, they cannot have a total of Levels greater than +1.

Players may choose to summon more powerful “combined” Minions. For instance, a character with Minions +2 could summon two Minions with 20 Health and Endurance and +2 in Abilities instead of the usual four. Minions may not be combined further.

PASSION There is a particular thing in life that drives you, so much that you feel yourself become more competent and powerful when in its presence. This can be a specific thing (race cars, classical music) or an emotion (love, anger). When in a situation that applies to your passion, you may add your *Passion* dice to all actions.

PERCEPTIVE You are in tune with the world around you and spot things that most people fail to notice. You can add your *Perceptive* dice to any attempts to notice things out of the ordinary, detect changes in people or things, sense your surroundings, or search an area for an item. While sight is an obvious application, the *Perceptive* Ability is by no means limited to this sense alone.

PERFORMER They like you, they really like you! You are at home in front of an audience and are able to dazzle them with a diverse array of talents, from music and singing, clever tricks and slight of hand, to acting and storytelling. You are just naturally entertaining. When trying to impress—or distract—an audience, lift the spirits of weary comrades, or get grumbling fuddy-duddies to lighten up, roll your *Performer* dice.

PILOT You have a knack for piloting any kind of machinery, no matter how strange or complicated. You may add your *Pilot* dice when attempting to drive cars, fly planes, steer boats, or even control spaceships. If you want your character to be able to pilot a single kind of vehicle, get the appropriate *Knowledge* Ability instead.

While Pilot is usually all that is needed, sometimes you want to consider the strengths and faults of the vehicle being piloted. Simply add or subtract the vehicle's own Abilities and Weaknesses to the roll.

A vehicle with Slow -2 would give a -2 Penalty to attempts to Pilot, while Quick +2 would provide a Bonus. If trying to use outfitted weaponry, character Abilities like Combat Expert and Weaknesses like Clumsy may apply instead of Quick/Slow.

POSITION OF POWER You are in a respected position that grants you power and influence. At Level 1, your power is limited and you only hold influence over a small subset of people. At Level 2, you control a small group and have minor influence over others outside of it. At Level 3, you control an important group whose influence is felt by many. At Level 4, you are in command of a major organization and have many resources at your disposal, as well as a significant amount of influence. At Level 5, your control is unquestioned, your power is incredible, and you hold influence over almost everyone.

PSYCHIC You have the mysterious ability to enter others' minds and read their thoughts or even change those thoughts and implant your own. To do so, make a roll with your *Psychic* dice (and modifiers from *Iron-Willed* or *Weak-Willed*) versus a roll by your target (also including *Iron-Willed* or *Weak-Willed*). You will also get an additional Bonus or Penalty depending on how you try to affect your target's mind.

TRYING TO...	MODIFIER
Read Surface Thoughts	+1
Read Deep Thoughts	0
Read Suppressed Memories	-1
Implant an Idea or Encourage an Action	-2
Control Mind	-3

Uses of the *Psychic* Ability with a Bonus may be done casually and do not require an action or a significant amount of concentration. *Psychic* abilities without any Bonus or Penalty require the use of an action and a good deal of mental devotion. All uses of *Psychic* with a Penalty require undivided attention. Contact (and control) is lost with the target if you are somehow distracted or focus your attention elsewhere. You cannot make any other actions, even Defense Rolls, while performing these powers.

In addition to the uses above, you may also talk to others telepathically. This does not require a roll or significant concentration unless the target wants to resist your communication.

QUICK You are particularly fast and have quick reflexes. You can add your *Quick* dice to dodging, running, driving, Initiative, Defense Rolls, or anything else that challenges your speed and ability to react.

RESISTANCE You are especially resilient to a specific kind of power or attack, such as fire-fueled blasts, chi-powered martial arts, the curses of *Witchcraft*, or a strike to a specific area of your body. Any attempts to affect you with the appropriate Abilities either suffer a Penalty to their roll or, if an attack, their Damage Multiplier. Unlike many other Abilities and Weaknesses, should the DX of an attack be reduced to zero by *Resistance*, it is in fact reduced to zero, *not* $\frac{1}{2}$. Reducing a DX into the negative range may even cause an attack to have the opposite effect, restoring Health by a multiplier equal to the number below zero!

Make sure to consider the Affinity of any Ability when determining if a Resistance applies.

SHAPE-SHIFTER You can change your appearance in various ways, whether through magic or a knack for disguise. Each Level in this Ability expands the possibilities in which you can change yourself, and each also includes the effects of every Level below it. At Level 1, you may change your clothes and hair instantaneously, regardless of how practical such a quick-change act would be. At Level 2, you may alter your age by decades, as well as make changes to eye, hair, and skin color. You might even pass for the opposite sex, though you remain looking very “girly” for a boy or “boyish” for a girl. At Level 3, you may take on the appearance of a completely different human being or even copy that of a specific person exactly. Differences in sex or stature are no trouble for you. At Level 4, you can change your appearance to match that of any other living thing and even make the leap across species. At Level 5, you can assume the appearance of anyone or anything, no matter how bizarre.

SIXTH SENSE You have a peculiar sense that few have, a kind of feeling that alerts you of forthcoming events and when you, or someone else, could be in danger. It may be a true paranormal sense, a voice from beyond, or just a really good gut instinct. You may roll your *Sixth Sense* dice to get a feeling for a person or situation, notice something fishy going on, or otherwise predict ambushes, traps, dark omens, and other unforeseen threats.

SMART You have a significant helping in the brains department. You can roll your *Smart* dice when recalling facts, designing inventions, casting spells, deciphering codes, passing that midterm, or attempting anything else that challenges your IQ.

SPIRIT MEDIUM You have a deep knowledge of the spirit world and how to interact with it. You can talk with various spirits, as well as summon, banish, and perhaps gain favor from them—with or without extravagant ceremonies. Benign spirits may come and go without much headache, but angry, reclusive, or

malevolent spirits will test your skills. When attempting to banish an unwilling spirit, you must roll your *Spirit Medium* dice against their highest Ability, regardless of what it may be. If you succeed, the spirit is banished to its realm, but if you fail, the spirit might become angry, among other unpleasant things. You may summon a spirit in much the same way. Even a failed roll can result in the appearance of a given spirit, but the failure will likely result in anger, resentment, or outright violence. Some spirits may even feign servitude to get the upper hand on their would-be masters.

Powerful spirits may require weakening by combat before one can banish them. A trained Spirit Medium will be able to discern when this is the case.



STRONG You have significant physical power at your disposal. You can add your *Strong* dice when lifting, breaking, climbing, or performing any action that tests your strength. *Strong* also acts as a Bonus to your Damage Multiplier when fighting barehanded, striking with weapons, or otherwise attacking with your own power.

What follows is a list of suggested difficulties for heavy lifting. The specific examples in parenthesis are written to apply to a typical human and would not be appropriate for towering mecha and other things of scale. Note also that these Difficulty Numbers imply actually lifting and carrying the object around. If the intention is to just lift the object a few inches off the ground for a short period of time, the difficulty might be a little lower.

HEAVINESS	DN
Like a Feather (<i>Trivial Appliance</i>)	2
No Big Deal (<i>Cumbersome Crate</i>)	4
Takes Some Grunting (<i>Another Person</i>)	6
Wow, That's Heavy! (<i>Well-Stocked Refrigerator</i>)	8
Oh, My Back! (<i>Daisuke's Motorcycle</i>)	10
Awe-Inspiring (<i>Cop Car...with Captain Jiro Still Inside</i>)	12

It's possible to use items you pick up as an attack. Just apply a DX Bonus that seems appropriate. However, they can also be good candidates for Perks and Flaws like Stunning and Unwieldy—or even Ranged, Strength-Powered if you decide to throw them. But it's better to leave it simple than slow down the game detailing a one-time use attack to the nth degree.

TELEKINESIS You have the curious ability to move objects with your mind. You can use this power to lift items, push buttons, throw things, and more. Although no roll is necessary for small objects, you are required to roll your *Telekinesis* dice to manipulate heavier objects, much like using the *Strong* Ability. In fact, the same difficulty table applies. You can also use *Telekinesis* as an attack, where the Level in the Ability acts as a Bonus to your Damage Multiplier.

TELEPORT Need to get somewhere? In the blink of an eye, you're there. Of course, you may have more difficulty teleporting farther away. Below is a quick table of Difficulty Numbers for different distances. You must roll your *Teleport* dice versus this number. If you fail, nothing happens, or you end up somewhere other than you intended—possibly ten feet in the air or in another country entirely.

TRYING TO TELEPORT...	DN
Within Sight	2
Out of Sight	4
Across the City	6
Across the Country	8
Around the World	10
Out of This World	12

In combat, you may choose to roll your *Teleport* dice as your Defense Roll. If your result exceeds that of your opponent's attack, you teleport far enough away to avoid the blow. If it does not, your attempt to teleport fails to achieve the distance necessary or does not happen soon enough. Damage is calculated as if you made a normal Defense Roll.

TIME FREEZE Time is constant...or was until you came along. You have the ability to slow or even freeze the flow of time. For each Level in *Time Freeze*, you gain an equivalent Bonus in all tests of speed and quickness or a Penalty to those of your opponents. While this Ability requires you to perform an action, you may offset the Penalty for acting multiple times (p. 108) by your Level in *Time Freeze*.

TOUGH Simply put, you're made of tougher stuff. You gain a bonus to Health equivalent to the following table:

TOUGH LEVEL	BONUS
1	10
2	20
3	30
4	40
5	60

You can also add your *Tough* dice when forced to shrug off pain or otherwise exhibit your resilience and durability.

TRANSFORMATION You have the incredible ability to change into a more powerful form. For every Level that you have in *Transformation*, you may spend double that number of Levels in new and improved Abilities. You may also choose Weaknesses to increase the number of Levels available to you. Any Abilities and Weaknesses gained through this transformation are cumulative with your character's own, enhancing or diminishing any natural attributes.

Besides manifesting new Abilities and improving those you already possess, *Transformation* can also produce alterations to your appearance. This can be as drastic as becoming a ruthless beast or

as simple as invoking a costume change. In many cases, transformed characters are exempt from recognition. Unless you have revealed your "other" identity, or someone sees you transform, no one will recognize you, despite any seemingly obvious similarities.

The ability to transform is instantaneous—regardless of how much time you spend describing its flashy effects—but not something that can be done willy-nilly. There's no hard and fast rules, but generally a transformation must be thematically appropriate and can only be done one or two times over the course of an adventure.

While it's theoretically possible to achieve higher than a +5 Bonus or less than a -3 Penalty through Transformation, you may want to consider lowering your gained Abilities or Weaknesses, or at least discuss the effects with your Game Master.



UNIQUE ABILITY If you cannot find an Ability in the rules to cover the power you wish to have, discuss it with your Game Master. Together, you can give your character a *Unique Ability* that fits what you want. The Game Master will help you decide the actual rules behind your Ability, as well as the appropriate Level.

VEHICLE (MECHA) You have access to a machine that conveys you from Point A to Point B. This Ability can represent many things, from motorcycles and sports cars to giant robotic mecha and fighter spacecraft. Your Level in *Vehicle* may be an abstract representation of its overall usefulness, or it can be used to create a vehicle with specific attributes much as you would a character. For every Level that you have in *Vehicle*, you may spend double that number of Levels to “build” it

from other Abilities. You may also choose Weaknesses to increase the number of Levels available to craft your machine.

These Abilities and Weaknesses are not necessarily cumulative with your own. While it’s reasonable for a *Quick* vehicle to be better controlled by a similarly *Quick* pilot, it’s unlikely your *Tough* nature will have any impact on your vehicle. If you want to create a suit of powered armor that enhances your abilities, consider *Transformation* or *Gear* instead.

Your vehicle also has a separate Health and Endurance total. Any Damage taken or Endurance used by your vehicle draws from these totals instead of your own. They behave in the way you expect with the following exception: Health and Endurance are no longer linked. The vehicle is destroyed or effectively incapacitated when Health is depleted, and Endurance-

Changing the Focus of the Game

As you’ve no doubt noticed, *OVA* has a lot of Abilities, ranging from magical powers, to natural aptitudes, to trained skills. It’s a well-rounded package that will suit most games of heroics and adventure, and what elements it misses can easily be squeezed in with *Unique Ability*.

But as written, *OVA* does place a focus on certain aspects. For instance, there are countless ways to individualize how characters fight, but not so much how characters might, say, race a car. If your campaign is all about street racing, be it through Tokyo streets or on an intergalactic circuit, the many combat Abilities and the singular simplification of *Pilot* is not ideal. But there’s no reason it has to be that way!

You could easily take *Attack*, *Combat Expert*, and *Evasive* and combine them into one Ability—just for those times when a driver might get into fisticuffs with another. Likewise, *Pilot* can be split into *Cornering*, *Overtaking*, and *Stunts* so each racer can have his or her own expertise.

This goes for the central element of any campaign. For a cooking competition, it’s totally conceivable to have a *Chef* Ability or even separate ones for *Cooking*, *Baking*, and *Presentation*. Find the balance that’s perfect for your story!

Even if you don’t want to create new Abilities for your game, feel free to take existing ones and rename them to fit what you are trying to represent. *Transformation* can become *Power Suit*, and *Magic* can be *Reality Manipulation*. Whatever works—just be sure to explain it to the other Players.

draining Abilities can never draw from Health. Like a normal character, both totals default to 40.

Depending on the design, it may be difficult or impossible to attack the pilot without first incapacitating the vehicle. Modifiers to strike the pilot (if this is indeed possible at all) are left up to the Game Master's discretion.

Most characters are assumed to own or have access to vehicles within their income. Students would have bicycles; working adults, cars; and the very wealthy, personal jets. If the vehicle in question is nothing special for the character, then it probably should not be listed as an Ability. On the other hand, a specially modified or upgraded vehicle, or one that is intrinsic to the character's identity, would be appropriate. Consult with your Game Master if you have a question regarding this.

VIGOROUS You have an abundance of energy and the ability to persevere against the effects of fatigue. You receive a bonus to Endurance equivalent to the following table:

VIGOROUS LEVEL	BONUS
1	10
2	20
3	30
4	40
5	60

You can also roll your *Vigorous* dice when trying to resist ailments, stay exhaustion, and recover lost Health. (See *Recovering Health* on p. 113 in the *Combat, Health, & Endurance* chapter.)

WALKING ARSENAL You are a living warehouse. Your enthusiasm for a certain kind of item is so great that you own nearly every specimen of it. With the *Walking Arsenal* Ability, you must pick another of your Abilities as its focus, such as *Gear* or *Vehicle*. You may now alter its attributes at will—essentially, grab a different gadget from your utility belt or get another vehicle from the hangar. You may not retrieve an item of an Ability Level greater than your Level in *Walking Arsenal* or the Level of the focused Ability. While there are no other hard limitations for *Walking Arsenal*, it is usually appropriate for your collection to follow a specific theme of some kind, like military equipment or a bag of magic tricks. It also helps to make a list of your favorite items before play.

WEALTHY Your fat wallet is the envy of all that gaze upon it. At Level 1, you are mildly wealthy and can afford to be extravagant with fancy clothes and lavish dinners. At Level 2, you can afford to buy expensive items on a regular basis, including state-of-the-art electronic set-ups and tailored suits or designer gowns. At Level 3, you can afford expensive cars, personal servants, and other such luxuries. At Level 4, you live in a mansion, ride in limousines, own a vast collection of cars and personal aircraft, and are easily the richest person around. At Level 5, you can buy anything and everything.

If the Players and the Game Master prefer, purchasing (or already owning) an item can be treated like any other roll, with Wealthy dice adding to that effort.



Of course, I can afford anything I want...but if I were playing your silly game, I would roll seven dice. Preferably gold ones with diamond pips.

Weaknesses

ABSENT-MINDED You have the unfortunate tendency to forget things at inopportune times. At Level 1, tasks you are supposed to do often slip your mind, such as attending important meetings or doing your homework. At Level 2, you have trouble recalling recent conversations and events, and even when you do remember, the details often escape you. At Level 3, you have the memory of a goldfish, making the world a practical blank past five minutes ago. You usually don't remember anything very long, and sometimes get lost while you are speaking or forget what you are doing while you're doing it.

ACCIDENTAL TRANSFORMATION You have an unusual condition that causes an inconvenient transformation when you come in contact with a certain substance or experience a certain event. The transformation may wear off once you escape its trigger, find its antidote, or wait a length of time as determined by the Game Master. At Level 1, you gain 1 or 2 Levels of Weaknesses, or this transformation proves some small, but bearable, nuisance. At Level 2, you gain 3 to 4 Levels of Weaknesses or find yourself otherwise significantly inconvenienced. At Level 3, you gain 5 Levels or more of Weaknesses, or the transformation is so detrimental that you avoid it at all costs. Even complete loss of control is a possibility! How you handle this is up to you, but allowing the Game Master to take up your character until the transformation ends is a good choice. You can still suggest things to the Game Master, as an inner voice perhaps, but your character might not listen!

While it is possible to gain Abilities through this Weakness, your total gained Weaknesses *must* exceed the Abilities by at least as many Levels as described by your Level in *Accidental Transformation*.

Players who want their characters to become stronger through Accidental Transformation may want to select appropriate Abilities—or the Transformation Ability itself—and give them a Trigger of whatever causes the Accidental Transformation.

AGEISM You are easily dismissed by others as useless or a bother because of your apparent age. At Level 1, you appear to be a young teenager or getting on in years. You are not completely ignored, but you are often forgotten or unwanted. At Level 2, you look childlike or quite elderly. No one takes you seriously, and you find it hard to get respect from anyone. At Level 3, you appear to be a very small child or absolutely ancient. Respect is nearly impossible to find, and the idea of having you around is immediately thought of as “babysitting.”

Characters with Abilities and Weaknesses like Position of Power and Infamous may not be appropriate candidates for Ageism. A respected elder of a community or the young heir to the crown are unlikely to deal with the same hardships as others their age.

AIRHEAD Anybody home? The answer to this question is somewhat debatable in your case. You may not be stupid or naive but come off as both through your sheer ability at not understanding, misinterpreting, or otherwise not retaining anything you are told. At Level 1, you sometimes miss the point of a conversation if it gets too long or complicated, and subtle humor completely eludes you. At Level 2, long-winded conversations go over your head completely. You have a hard time following instructions, and only the most overt attempts at wit

will successfully be conveyed to you. At Level 3, you have the attention span of a three-year-old but without the patience to sort building blocks by color. Almost nothing can be successfully discussed with you, and you totally miss the point of anything that's not a plainly stated fact.

AMNESIA Due to a strange illness, a freak accident, or some kind of foul play, you have lost your memory. At Level 1, the onset of your illness was long ago, and you have made many new memories. However, you may still long to know your forgotten beginnings and the cause of your memory loss. At Level 2, your amnesia is fairly recent. You have had time to readjust to where you are, but much of your life is a blank slate. At Level 3, your amnesia is very recent, and you have almost no memories at all. You may be completely lost and confused by your surroundings and filled with a dire need to know who you are.

ARROGANT You are the most important person to ever live...in your mind anyway. You believe in your own superiority to a fault and may offend others with your haughtiness, not to mention find your way into rough situations. At Level 1, you think you are superior to most around you but respect a select few, and those "below" you are treated with at least mild civility. At Level 2, you place yourself above almost everyone, and only a few are worthy "equals." You often treat your inferiors with hostility or a cold, pompous attitude. At Level 3, you are the sole reason for the world to be, and you are quite annoyed by the fact that others do not see this. Your hubris knows no bounds, and you treat everyone, regardless of who they are, as if they were dirt. When attempting matters of diplomacy, or otherwise performing tasks that require you to keep your arrogance in check, subtract your *Arrogant* dice.

AWKWARD SIZE You are of curious stature. You are either much smaller or much larger than those around you. At Level 1, you sometimes find it hard to use items and be in places meant for the typical human being, but you can still function in society. At Level 2, you cannot use many items meant for normal-sized people. Your size also creates a great hindrance in navigating your surroundings. You might be so large that you only fit in the most spacious of rooms—if you can even get through the doorway. Or you may be small enough that you have problems with things being built much taller and larger than you. Many minor obstacles can become significant challenges. At Level 3, you may be simply huge and cannot use anything meant for typical people, nor can you really function in any normalized environment without destroying pieces of it regularly, like knocking over trees while walking through a park. On the other hand, you may be positively tiny, unable to get around this "big" world easily. Everyday items become mountains and other insurmountable feats.

Although no other rules are implicit to Awkward Size, Players should consider the possible effects of this trait on other facets of their character. An unusual size may impact the ease in which a character dodges harm or the strength a character possesses, and appropriate Abilities might need to be selected.

Mecha, giant machines, and monstrous creatures may find the human-sized examples inappropriate. In such cases, the description should be reinterpreted. A very large spaceship with Awkward Size -2 would have difficulty docking in normal hangars, for instance.

BIZARRE APPEARANCE You have an appearance that is markedly different from those around you. At Level 1, you have a few noticeable, distinguishing features that, though odd, do not cause alarm or hatred in others. You may even be able to disguise your appearance with a little effort. At Level 2, you have many traits that single you out. You might not be hideous, but your appearance may startle those unfamiliar with you or cause immediate distrust. You could never blend in as “normal.” At Level 3, you are a monster. Children get scared and run from you, and others are greatly alarmed and try to avoid your company.

CLUMSY You, put simply, are a klutz. Things tend to find their way out of your grasp, you easily lose your balance, and at best others describe your attempts at anything that requires finesse of movement as awkward. At Level 1, you may be

a bit butterfisted or accident-prone, but you aren’t absolutely hopeless. You might even be able to move somewhat gracefully if you practiced enough. At Level 2, things tend to get broken in your presence, and any kind of beautiful or skilled movement is almost entirely outside of your ability. At Level 3, you may as well be a bull in a china shop with about as much grace. When attempting feats of agility, catching or balancing objects, making Attack Rolls, or facing other tasks that require your coordination, subtract your *Clumsy* dice.

CODE OF CONDUCT You have restricted your manner and actions by a defined code. At Level 1, this code is simple, usually containing only one major facet, such as honesty, refined manners, or a sense of fair play. At Level 2, your code may have many rules, such as the edicts of a major organization, a code of chivalry, or a series of established traditions. On the other hand, your code may be simplistic but highly inhibiting. At Level 3, your code of



conduct dictates every detail of your life, like belonging to an organization sworn to secrecy, a secluded temple with a strict moral code and elaborate rituals, or even the yakuza.

COMPULSION Sometimes you just can't help yourself. You have an intense need to act a certain way or perform some task, even when doing so could prove inconvenient. At Level 1, your impulse is difficult to keep in check, but it has few real consequences if you fail to do so. You may chatter on incessantly and annoy others, have an insatiable curiosity that gets you into trouble, or just can't resist stopping for a snack. At Level 2, your compulsion can adversely affect your life, and you can only control it with extreme difficulty. You may blurt out the truth even to your enemies or feel compelled to gamble every cent of your paycheck away. At Level 3, you cannot resist this temptation, and you probably resent anyone insinuating that you have a problem. You may be a hopeless addict, a kleptomaniac, or someone otherwise saddled with a compulsion so severe that it can seriously harm your well-being.

COWARD He who fights and runs away lives to fight another day. With just a little tweaking to "run away," this is your mantra. You are uneasy around danger and usually the first to bolt at the sign of trouble. At Level 1, you can hold your own for a while, but as soon as the tide of any situation turns against you, you are likely to make a convenient exit. At Level 2, you are frightened by danger and try to avoid it whenever possible. You are not above hiding from time to time, and if forced to confront this danger, you will usually run away at the first opportunity. At Level 3, self-preservation is the word, and you avoid any kind of danger, no matter how slight, with all your being. If forced

into a sticky situation, you will escape by any means possible. It is not beyond you to divert attention to anyone around to help your flight, even when such actions can cause them serious harm. If by some bizarre chance you stick around, you are usually too preoccupied with finding a safe place to hide to actually be of any use to anyone.

CRYBABY You are quite easily upset and have the annoying tendency to whine when things fail to go your way. At Level 1, while you are not *much* more sensitive than the average person, you do cry often enough and have a propensity to complain that may put others off. At Level 2, you cry regularly without significant cause. You want the world to be exactly how you wish and complain at length when it fails to meet those expectations. At Level 3, you sob profusely at even the slightest provocation, and you refuse to do anything that doesn't directly fall under what you want to do. Even when it does, you'll likely find a reason to cry about it anyway.

DENSE You are not known for your sharp wit or book smarts, and tasks requiring either are difficult for you. At Level 1, you may not be the brightest bulb in the box, but you are capable of understanding most things if you put in the effort. At Level 2, you speak simply, even the most basic calculations stress your brain cells, and any effort to absorb new knowledge or puzzle out a solution is a lengthy, arduous process. At Level 3, you barely possess human intelligence. Your language is broken, your ability to read questionable, and attempts to learn or figure out any scholastic task is beyond you. Subtract your *Dense* dice when attempting to learn new information, solve a problem, articulate your thoughts, put two and two together, or otherwise perform anything involving academics or reasoning.

DEPENDENCY You have a deeply ingrained need for something, whether it is an addiction, like drinking, or something more superstitious, like the need to carry a lucky rabbit's foot. If you are without the object of your dependency for too long—or at all, perhaps—you receive a Penalty to all actions equal to your Level in *Dependency* until you can once again have it. You may also become depressed or unwilling to take action when bereft of your dependency.

DULL While we all can't be Casanovas or charismatic speakers, your capacity to bore and disengage any audience is exemplary. At Level 1, you are not completely dreadful, but dates tend to be awkward and uneventful, and an audience may get your message but will rarely remember you for it. At Level 2, you drone on and on and people are compulsively unreceptive. Dates find excuses to leave the table, and audiences find other diversions and might miss your point. At Level 3, you are impossibly boring. Dates fake mortal injuries to escape your presence, and audiences fall asleep in droves. Subtract your *Dull* dice from any tasks involving your personality or likeability.

EASILY DISTRACTED During the fight of your life, if someone told you, "Hey, look that way!" you would indeed look that way. You're not necessarily gullible, but it's far too easy to distract you. At Level 1, sounds, bright lights, voices, and other attention-getters easily attract your notice. You may be taken by these diversions of interest but will quickly refocus on the task at hand. At Level 2, you will not only divert your attention, but you may spend significant time studying the object of distraction. At Level 3, you will immediately focus all your efforts on this distraction. Even obvious fake-outs and lies will keep you looking for a sizable chunk of time.

EMOTIONLESS You have deadened emotions, whether by forcefully suppressing these feelings or by never having them to begin with. At Level 1, you *do* have feelings, but you rarely express them, and when you do, it is to a very limited extent. At Level 2, your emotions are buried so deeply that you may not recall having ever felt anything. Only the most dramatic stimuli will elicit anger, joy, fear, sadness, or any other emotion from you. At Level 3, you not only have no emotions, but you also lack a capacity to understand other human ideals, such as right and wrong, selflessness and selfishness, good and bad, or anything else beyond logical comprehension and reaction to your surroundings.

ENDURANCE USE One of your Abilities draws upon your inner strength. Each Level in *Endurance Use* causes the Ability to drain Endurance each time it is used, or if it already has an Endurance cost, the amount required is increased.

WEAKNESS LEVEL	ENDURANCE
-1	5
-2	10
-3	20

FEAR You have an unnatural fear of an everyday object or situation, like spiders or heights, that limits your ability to function normally when confronted with it. At Level 1, you are uncomfortable in the presence of your fear and will try to distance yourself as soon as possible. At Level 2, you are genuinely scared and will do anything within reason to escape. At Level 3, you are so terrified by your fear that if you cannot run away immediately, you will freeze, curl up in a ball, or assume some other useless state. If you must perform an action, subtract your *Fear* dice.

Focus One or more of your Abilities require a special item to use. This may be a focusing point for your spiritual energy, or the item may actually generate the Ability itself. While this object is usually in your possession, should it become lost, stolen, or even broken, you can no longer use the Ability until it is recovered. At Level 1, you lose a single Ability without your focus, but you can get by without it. At Level 2, you may lose multiple Abilities or lose one or two of your core strengths. Not having your focus is a major burden. With Level 3, nearly all of your Abilities are lost, or you lose powers and skills that are vital to your existence. You become a pale version of yourself.

FRAIL You are more fragile than the average person. Perhaps you've led a pampered life, unhardened by the toil of labor, or your health may be compromised by a chronic illness. For each Level in *Frail*, subtract 10 from your Health.

Fussy You are very particular about everything and are quite perturbed when things are out of place or otherwise amiss. Your need for order can annoy others who do not understand your exacting ways. At Level 1, you are very concerned for the tidiness of your own affairs but can forgive the "failings" of those you know. You may be seen as nagging but never overbearing, and you are only mildly annoyed if things do not meet your standards. At Level 2, you want everything around you to be a certain way and organized to the point of excess. There is always some matter that needs attention, and if others are unwilling to be equally fastidious, you will take it upon yourself to remedy the situation. If forced to leave things as they are, you might become uncomfortable or anxious. At Level 3, you are truly obsessive. Everything has its place, and it must be in it. If you see anything as out of order or wrong, you are drawn to fix it immediately

Focus vs. Other Abilities and Flaws

The *Focus* Weakness, Abilities like *Gear* and *Vehicle*, and the Ability Flaws *Requirement* and *Weapon* all achieve a similar end: some Ability is not available without a certain circumstance or possession. Which you choose depends largely on the effect you want to achieve. *Focus* makes it possible to lose Abilities that are core to your being. *Gear* allows you to compartmentalize several Abilities and even Weaknesses together for easy removal should it suit the situation. *Requirement* and *Weapon* provide a reduction in Endurance and can be applied selectively to certain attacks without impacting your character's overall damage output. All are fine choices—just remember you can never take them together! If you choose *Vehicle* as an Ability, you cannot take *Focus (Vehicle)* as a Weakness.

without any thought of repercussions for your timing. Your life is dominated by trying to fix these problems while inventing more to attend to. If kept from doing so, you may become distraught and unable to function reasonably.

GREEDY You covet the good life, and no matter what you get, you always want more. At Level 1, you fancy material possessions a little more than you should, and finding any way to increase your personal wealth preoccupies your thoughts. At Level 2, you value things way too highly. Most of your time is spent attaining the latest object of your affection, and you are often blind to good sense, willingly taking unreasonable risks to pad your wallet. At Level 3, you must have everything, and someday it will all be yours. Nothing gets in your way, and the well-being of friends, or even yourself, serves as little more than a speed bump toward your goal.

GUARDIAN You have someone that you must protect. This could be for personal reasons (because you love your sister dearly) or a specific duty (because you are a bodyguard). At Level 1, the person you must protect is rarely in danger and certainly has no one specific to be defended from. At Level 2, the person is moderately well known and may get into trouble because of it, or they might have deep disagreements or rivalries with another party, causing possible action or violence towards them. It is also possible that they just manage to get into unfortunate situations that require your intervention. At Level 3, the person might be a major celebrity in need of constant protection, someone actively sought after by a large organization, or simply a convenient means to get to you. On the other hand, this person could be inherently self-destructive, constantly getting into highly dangerous situations that require you to rescue them.

HATRED You have a completely irrational hate of something, and being in its presence may cause you to become angry or even invoke violence. At Level 1, you can curb your hatred. However, you will avoid the object in question, or if a person, might act cold or inhospitable. At Level 2, you can hardly keep your hatred in check. You will want to harm or dispose of the object in question, or if a person, be extremely harsh or violent towards them. At Level 3, you become engulfed in rage. You must destroy or kill the object of your hatred and will risk everything to do so. Little, if anything, will keep you from unleashing your fury.

IMPAIRED SENSE One of your five senses fails to perform at full capacity. You may be hard of hearing, struggling to understand conversations around you, or have bad vision that makes objects difficult

to make out. At Level 1, the sense is only mildly impaired, while at Level 2 you have a significant handicap. At Level 3, this sense is entirely, or at least practically, useless. When attempting to use this sense to discern, scrutinize, or perform something, subtract your *Impaired Sense* dice.

If you can easily alleviate your shortfalls, such as with corrective eyewear or some device, it is inappropriate to take Impaired Sense. Consider Dependency or a Unique Weakness detailing your reliance on the object. Likewise, if you have a supernatural Ability that lets you “see” without seeing, like a sonar sense or a finely tuned awareness, you should consider a Unique Weakness that only covers its failings, like an inability to read or discern colors.

IMPULSIVE The old saying “Look before you leap” never really penetrated your thoughts very far. You tend to jump into situations without thinking through the possible consequences...or really thinking that much at all. At Level 1, even though you are impulsive, you can be somewhat rational, especially if others are trying to talk you out of whatever crazy stunt you are considering. At Level 2, you do not think about any course of action for long. You easily get yourself into a mess, and only the direst of situations have a remote possibility of making you think twice. At Level 3, you think it, you do it. That simple.

INEPTITUDE No matter how hard you try or how much you practice, you are just really bad at a certain skill or craft. When attempting to perform the object of your ineptitude, subtract your *Ineptitude* dice.

Like with the Knowledge Ability, it's encouraged to make Ineptitude worth half its Level when using any limiting rules. If your total Levels end up a fraction, round up.

INFAMOUS Your reputation precedes you...in a very bad way. People may distrust you or even hate you, regardless of whether your reputation is deserved. At Level 1, your reputation is more gossip than a true stigma, though some may steer clear of you. At Level 2, your infamy is more renowned and could cause fear, mistrust, or even disgust in those that have heard of you. However, you might be able to overcome their convictions through your actions. At Level 3, your reputation is known by nearly everyone, and they keep their distance out of fear or hatred. Although it might be possible to overcome this, most will just ignore what you do good and only remember what you have—or at least, are said to have—done.

JITTERY Although not necessarily a coward, you are easily startled or frightened by unexpected occurrences. At Level 1, sudden physical contact, sights, and sounds easily surprise you. You may flinch or make other sudden movements, but the consequences are generally more embarrassing than dangerous. At Level 2, if you don't see or hear it coming, it is likely to startle you significantly. You may yell in fright or take a combat stance in response. At Level 3, your world is one of many dangers lurking just out of sight. When startled, you might run away screaming or blindly attack anything that frightens you.

KIND-HEARTED Kindness is a quality to aspire to, but you take what would be a pillar of virtue and drive it into the ground. At Level 1, you'll never hold a grudge, and it's easy to get back in your good graces. You do your best to be kind and helpful where you can, even if it proves inconvenient. At Level 2, you can't help but be good to those around you, even if they have done you wrong. You will go out of your way and suffer hardship to do the right thing. At Level 3, your

kindness knows no restraint or measure. You will forgive sworn enemies and lend a helping hand even when you are sure it will be bitten in return.

LANGUID You lack the energy and pep of most other people. You tire easily and try to avoid strenuous activity. For each Level in *Languid*, subtract 10 from your Endurance.

LECHEROUS Although most have some sort of desire for companionship, they can also keep their urges in check. Unfortunately for you, you can't. At Level 1, you have a penchant for naughty things and will make attempts to get your hands on them, as well as sneak peeks at attractive members of your desire when the opportunity presents itself. At Level 2, you are a hopeless pervert and regularly buy various raunchy articles, take considerable risks to get revealing looks, and capitalize



on any opportunity to glomp, grab, or otherwise handle desirable targets. At Level 3, your sex drive is completely out of control. You will fondle, stare at, or otherwise harass anyone regardless of the consequences. You spend most of your free time patrolling private places in hopes of getting a look-see, and you often raid them for personal items.

LIMITED USES One of your Abilities can only be used a limited number of times before ceasing to function. It could be a magical power you can call on only so often in a day, a piece of equipment with a certain number of charges, or simply a weapon with a finite number of bullets. At Level 1, you may only use this Ability around five times. At Level 2, you are limited to activating the Ability about three times. At Level 3, the Ability may only be performed once before being rendered

inoperable. The Ability may be reloaded under certain circumstances but generally requires a day of rest or an otherwise significant wait to be restored.

LONER One is the loneliest number, and you like it that way. You prefer your own company and avoid help from anyone—even when you might really need it. At Level 1, going it alone is always your first choice, but you'll pass and repass with others and work together when it makes sense. At Level 2, you have little patience for social interaction beyond the necessities. You *will* work with others...but only for as briefly as possible. At Level 3, you make your own way or you don't make it at all. You drive everyone away and refuse their company with violence.

LOVE INTEREST Ah, the beauty of love. There is someone you hold a special place for in your heart, or vice versa. At Level 1, you have a caring, mutual relationship. Although there are no special complications, such a relationship still requires a substantial commitment. On the other hand, you may have an unwanted love interest that can't take a hint and insists on being a constant annoyance. At Level 2, you might have a strong love for someone else, but sadly it is unrequited. You may devote much of your energy and time to this pointless chase. If this is not the case, your love life is at least somewhat complicated. At Level 3, you may have any of the above relationships, but the romance is forbidden or otherwise socially unacceptable. Your respective families may refuse to allow you to be together, or you might be of incompatible backgrounds. In any case, your relationship is complicated and difficult, if not impossible.

If you have three or more unwanted Love Interests, consider the Love Magnet Weakness at Level 2 or higher instead.



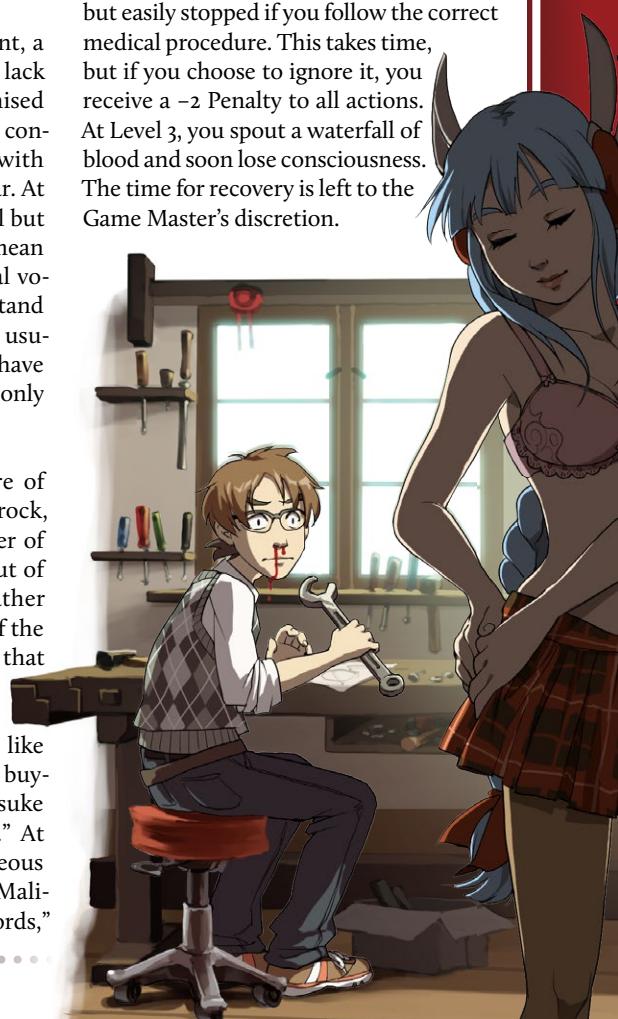
LOVE MAGNET You are one of the most romantically eligible guys or girls around. At Level 1, many are attracted to you and may hit on you from time to time, but few are interested in a serious relationship. At Level 2, you often have a number of groupies who fawn over you, as well as several other more serious (yet possibly unwanted) relationships that appear regularly. At Level 3, you are a literal *Love Magnet* and cannot go anywhere without being swarmed by a variety of admirers, many of whom have vowed their undying love for you. New significant love interests may pop up daily!

MUTE Whether by accident, ailment, a poor grasp of the language, or just a lack of intelligence, you have a compromised capacity to speak. At Level 1, you can convey your thoughts, but you do so with simplistic words and broken grammar. At Level 2, you are unable to speak at all but have the ability to convey what you mean through pantomime and non-lingual vocalizations. Getting people to understand you could take some work, but you usually get the job done. At Level 3, you have no concept of language at all and can only convey the most basic of messages.

NAIVE Most people are well aware of the fact that the moon is made of rock, but you are among the small number of people that still believe it is made out of cheese. In other words, you are rather unknowledgeable about the nature of the world, and you often believe things that rational people would know as false. At Level 1, you may fall for relatively small tugs on the truth and gossip, like “The Malicron Corporation plans on buying out a small business,” or “Daisuke wants to retire to the countryside.” At Level 2, you may fall for some outrageous stories and flat-out lies, like “The Malicron Corporation owns Soh-nii Records,”

or “Auren adopted a puppy.” At Level 3, you are so gullible and naive that you may very well believe anything! For example, “The Malicron Corporation owns *you*,” or “Miho is opening her own bakery.”

NOSEBLEEDER Due to bizarre anime medical law, your nose has the tendency to bleed whenever you catch sight of the nude form—or at least a revealing glimpse—as well as when you have particularly risqué thoughts. At Level 1, you spawn a small trickle, which really causes no harm except to reveal yourself to others. At Level 2, the nosebleed is more serious but easily stopped if you follow the correct medical procedure. This takes time, but if you choose to ignore it, you receive a -2 Penalty to all actions. At Level 3, you spout a waterfall of blood and soon lose consciousness. The time for recovery is left to the Game Master’s discretion.



OBLIVIOUS If it were a snake, it would have bitten you. You have difficulty noticing things out of place, picking up on subtle details, or otherwise being aware of your surroundings. At Level 1, while you're not completely checked out, things have to be fairly obvious to attract your attention. Searching for anything not left in plain sight is an arduous task, and it's easy for small details to change without calling your attention. At Level 2, all but the most blatant elements escape your detection. Searches are an exercise in futility, and obvious changes to your surroundings, belongings, and even friends may go unnoticed. At Level 3, you are completely unaware of anything around you. Things lost stay lost, your bedroom could be completely redecorated—or ransacked—without you being the wiser, and even the most drastic of changes in your friends fail to make an impression. When attempting to notice things out of the ordinary, or notice anything period, subtract your *Oblivious* dice.

OBSESSION You have an intense desire to have or achieve something. Your life revolves around this obsession, and you will go out of your way to succeed in obtaining it. At Level 1, you feel the urge often, but your obsession does not monopolize your life. You may even turn down realizing the object of your obsession if much bigger things are at stake. At Level 2, the obsession is extremely important to you, and you often push aside other interests to better pursue it. You may even choose it over things that would logically be much more important. It would be a moral crisis to choose between your obsession and a friend, or maybe even your continued personal well-being. At Level 3, your obsession is your sole reason for existence. Nothing is comparable, and nothing can stand in your way. You will choose your obsession over things that are incredibly

important to you, like friends and family or even your own life.

OUTCAST You do not belong here, and others are eager to help you understand this. You may have been ostracized due to your actions or affiliations, or perhaps you were just born into it. Whatever the reason, there are those who would rather you be somewhere else...or not "be" at all. At Level 1, you are discriminated against by a small group, such as a club or clique of friends in high school. This group may be hostile towards you, and you cannot participate in their activities. At Level 2, you are an outsider to a substantial group, such as an organization at work or a majority of the student body. Avoiding run-ins with them is problematic for you. At Level 3, your presence is largely questioned by almost everyone around you. Discrimination, disgust, and even outright violence are a daily part of your life.

OVERCONFIDENT Although a fair helping of self-confidence can be a good thing, you went back for seconds. You have a bloated sense of what you can accomplish and your abilities in general. At Level 1, you still have a (relatively) level head, but you overstate your abilities enough to get into situations you truly are not well-equipped for. You don't like to give up, but you will eventually figure out when you are outmatched. At Level 2, only the largest obstacles are considered too big for you to take on. You often jump into situations way out of your league and find it hard to reconsider your course of action, even when it is apparent you cannot handle it. At Level 3, you think you can take on the world...with one arm tied behind your back. You will never concede that any situation is too tough for you and will be hard pressed to ever give up, whatever the circumstances may be.

PACIFIST A deep part of you does not believe in the necessity of violence, and you try to avoid it whenever possible. At Level 1, you prefer peaceful means to resolve any confrontation, but you *will* fight if it becomes clear that no other solution will do. At Level 2, you will never attack anyone except in self-defense, to protect someone you care about from coming to great harm, or when it is otherwise a matter of life and death. At Level 3, you will never raise a hand to anyone, no matter what happens.

POOR Some people have all the money they could ever want, and there are others who have to fight tooth and nail to make ends meet. Unfortunately, you are of the latter. At Level 1, you live in cramped, unspectacular conditions and rarely have money to spend on anything beyond your basic needs. At Level 2, you live in a run-down shack or other dwelling barely passable as a residence. You have very little money and need to maintain multiple jobs to get by. At Level 3, you are dead broke and homeless. Even the most basic of purchases are beyond your reach. You might just be a traveler freed of the binds of material wealth and property...but more likely you are the victim of terrible circumstances.

QUIRK You have a curious habit or manner that might affect how others think about you. At Level 1, the habit is odd but probably thought of as more eccentric than offensive. You may carry a stuffed animal wherever you go, sing and rhyme constantly, or speak in an old-fashioned language. At Level 2, your idiosyncracy could offend some people or otherwise prove awkward in social situations, but it would be unlikely to incur strong repercussions. You might swear like a sailor, hail from a foreign land with customs very different from those around you, or think

of personal hygiene as a suggestion instead of a necessity. At Level 3, your quirk is very offensive and might cause outright hatred in others—even violence. You may kick puppies for sport, wear accessories made from the bones of your enemies, or openly kill animals to provide you with bloody, on-the-spot meals.

RESTRICTED FREEDOM Because of your job, your birth, or some other reason, you are limited in your capacity to do what you want to do, when you want to do it. At Level 1, you are only mildly inconvenienced. You may have a job that requires you to put in for vacation time and other leaves, or you could have very protective parents that make it difficult to do things without explicit permission. At Level 2, much of your life is dictated by your circumstances. You may have a job that requires you to report in daily and get approval for future activities, or perhaps you are part of a powerful family that keeps you close by and well guarded. At Level 3, every moment of your life is carefully penciled in. Your job may have complete control over your actions, or you might be royalty, with every moment scheduled and your every move watched over by a plethora of guards.

RIVAL There is someone you feel the need to best—or they feel the need to best you. More than likely, it's both. This rivalry could encompass anything: a simple contest of skills, a competition for someone's affections, or even deadly duels! At Level 1, your rival is less skillful than you or has a significant disadvantage. At Level 2, your competitor is just as capable as you are, or the playing field is otherwise equal. At Level 3, your rival possesses skills well beyond your own or otherwise has a significant advantage.

ROOM FOR TWO They say two's company, but you might disagree. Due to some bizarre happening or mishap, you have another voice in your head that isn't yours. Perhaps it is a mischievous spirit or a cybernetic implant with artificial intelligence—or maybe you're just plain crazy. At Level 1, this voice is supportive, maybe sometimes helpful. However, you will probably be cajoled into a conversation with it, which will attract its fair share of perplexed looks. At Level 2, the voice isn't particularly helpful but is not exactly a hindrance either. The voice may be rude and sarcastic but avoids attacking you personally...unless you really botch something up. At Level 3, the voice is harmful to your well-being, whether by being constantly abusive or coaxing you into performing wrong or evil acts. The voice may be extremely persuasive, and you might do things you will later regret.

RUDE You do not see the point in good manners or, really, being particularly well-behaved at all. At Level 1, you may come across as coarse, and often enough you are discourteous to others. At Level 2, you are seen as unmannered to the point of being blatantly offensive. Some of your actions may be considered crude or disgusting. At Level 3, you have no sense of proper behavior whatsoever. You do whatever pleases you and say whatever you feel like, regardless of the social repercussions. Unsurprisingly, you must subtract your *Rude* dice from any tasks involving charisma, charm, or etiquette.

SECRET There is something about yourself that you wish to keep secret. You could be a crime fighter by night, hiding your identity in order to keep family and friends safe, or you may have a dark past that would ruin your life as you know it if revealed. At Level 1, you protect your secret, but should it be discovered, there are

few serious consequences. These might involve mild embarrassment, an unwanted celebrity status, or other inconvenient social complications. At Level 2, you conceal your secret passionately. Should it be revealed, the secret would cause severe problems, such as the endangerment of yourself and others, the loss of your livelihood, or perhaps even incarceration. At Level 3, your secret must be kept at all costs. Your feeling of this may be so strong that you would choose death over its discovery. You believe that the revelation of your secret would completely destroy your life.

SENSITIVITY Everyone gets at least a little annoyed when they're teased, but you take it to an entirely new level. You have a particular sore spot, be it your hair, wealth, muscle tone, chest size, or lack of any of the above, that you are incredibly sensitive about. At Level 1, any remarks about your sensitivity will immediately upset you. It may cause you to be angry or at least curt to the offender, or instead you might become despondent and withdrawn. At Level 2, such actions greatly disturb you. You might respond with open hostility and do whatever possible to get them back, physically or otherwise. On the other hand, these words might wound you deeply, making it difficult to forgive or forget. At Level 3, you will hold a grudge for this slight until the day you die, or failing that, until something monumental happens to change your mind. You will probably attempt to cause pain or hardship to this person at every available opportunity—or at least consistently avoid them regardless of how inconvenient it would be.

SERVITUDE You are in the service of a person or organization. As expected, you are required to perform any tasks and take any orders placed upon you. This could

be the nature of your occupation, the result of a gambling debt, or even a self-imposed service to someone you admire or care about. At Level 1, your servitude is mostly voluntary, and although you feel obligated to perform your duties, you can weasel out of them when needed. At Level 2, you are devoted to your service and do your work to the best of your ability. You may sacrifice your duties if something very important to you comes up, but you may have to face repercussions for falling out of line or feel strong pangs of guilt. At Level 3, your servitude is your life, and little, if anything, comes between you and your duties. You comply with your tasks and orders without question, and not doing so could result in terrible consequences, or you may never forgive yourself for your disobedience.

SHORT-TEMPERED If you were dynamite, you would have a frighteningly short fuse. It doesn't take much to get you angry, and you may lash out even when nothing has really been done to you. At Level 1, you tend to be irritable and easily annoyed. You may grumble and yell at others, but you rarely get downright angry unless you are justifiably provoked. At Level 2, you are prone to anger, and it takes little provocation to set you off. You might even resort to violence, if anyone is dumb enough to keep antagonizing you. At Level 3, you are angered by the slightest indiscretion against you even if it were an accident. You may view things that were not negative to you at all as if they were, and you react accordingly with loud outbursts and brutal attacks.



SHY You are very uncomfortable with social situations and find it difficult to make friends or even function in public without seeking a proverbial rock to hide under. At Level 1, you are a bit reclusive, preferring the company of a select few friends. Though not exactly anti-social, you tend to be quiet around those outside of your circle. At Level 2, you have a reputation for being shy. You are probably a social misfit or a reclusive bookworm, more comfortable in your own company than that of others. You only attend parties or other social gatherings if forced and have one or two close friends at best. At Level 3, social interactions are the worst of tortures for you. You avoid contact whenever possible, just barely interacting enough to get by with your life.

SLOW Swift you are not, and your overall quickness is underwhelming. You tend to react to things well after they have happened, and the Tortoise could take naps during a race with you. When trying to do anything that requires significant speed, like running, piloting, getting out of the way, or making rolls for Defense and Initiative, subtract your *Slow* dice.

SOFT SPOT There is something in this world that you cannot help but enjoy far too much. This could be anything: gardening, motorcycles, dessert, or even stuffed animals. At Level 1, you may be partial to your soft spot, but you won't intentionally put yourself in harm's way for it. At Level 2, you are heavily influenced by your soft spot and may be bribed into poor decisions or coaxed into dangerous situations with it. At Level 3, you cannot resist your soft spot, making it very easy to take advantage of you. You will ignore obvious dangers and put yourself at risk before allowing it to go to waste, letting it escape your possession, or jeopardizing its existence in any way.

SPLIT PERSONALITY They say two heads are better than one. Unfortunately for you, the old axiom fails to mention anything about two minds. Or three or four...or ten. Through illness, a traumatizing incident, or some other means, you have developed one or more distinct personalities besides your own. You may switch personalities when stressed or confronted by some other trigger. At Level 1, you have another personality, but it is not a particularly harmful one, nor is it drastically different from your own. Maybe you become a bit bolder, or your typical seriousness fades into unusual good humor. While you may do things you never would have, the repercussions are minor. At Level 2, you have another personality that is distinctly different from your own. You may take on a Don Juan disposition where you once were shy and reclusive or become cowardly when you once were brave and commanding. Others will clearly see something is amiss, but you are unlikely to do much to cause any long-lasting problems in your life. At Level 3, however, your other self is particularly dangerous, maybe even evil. You may turn on friends, become deceitful, or do other horrible things. You have no control of this persona, so you must take the consequences in full whenever you revert to your normal self.

STUBBORN You're not an unreasonable person—at least, not until someone disagrees with you. You hold steadfast to your ideals and take offense to anyone trying to convince you that these ideals, or your actions based on them, are wrong. At Level 1, you are not beyond the realm of reason. If someone can provide a sufficient argument, you may be willing to back down or modify your train of thought. At Level 2, you are very stubborn and will keep to your mindset unless provided with an incredibly blunt and forceful reason to change your mind. However,

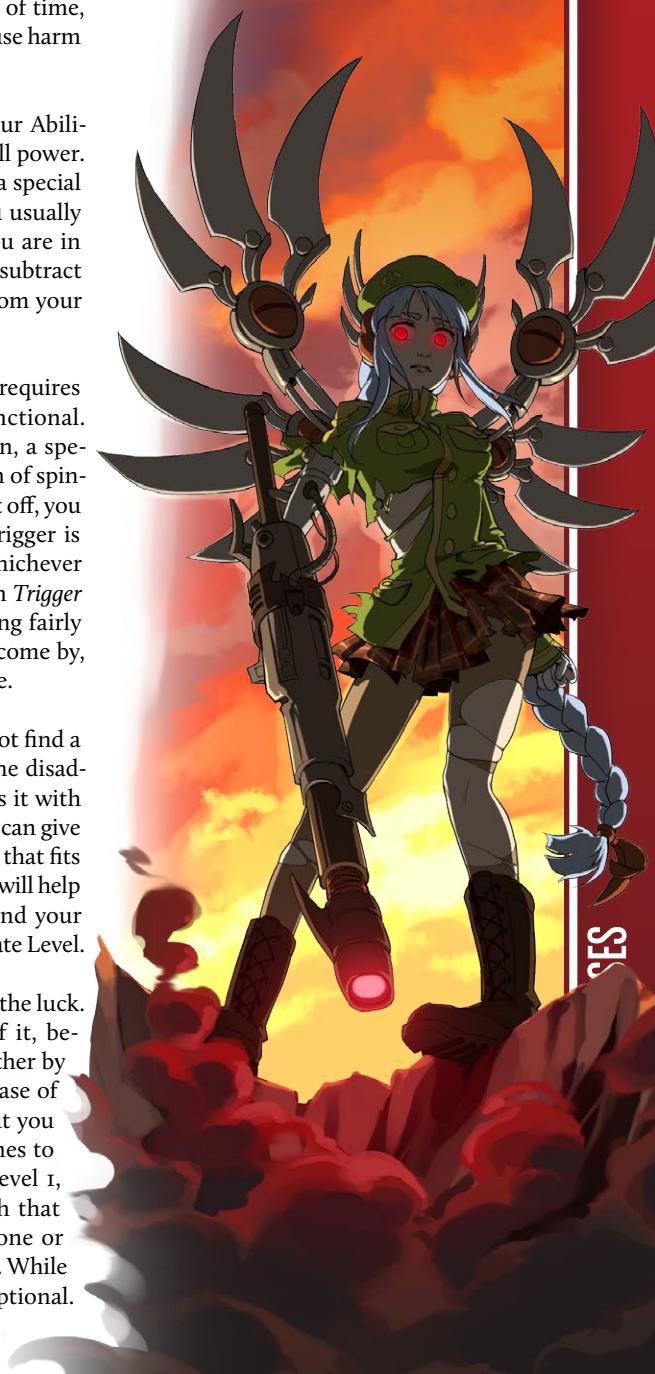
at Level 3, almost nothing will change your mind. If you believe something, you will likely believe it until the end of time, even if your stubbornness will cause harm to yourself and others.

SUPPRESSED POWER One of your Abilities does not normally work at full power. To function properly, it requires a special item, emotion, or event that you usually do not have access to. Unless you are in the presence of this special thing, subtract your Level in *Suppressed Power* from your Ability.

TRIGGER One of your Abilities requires a special trigger to become functional. This trigger might be an emotion, a specific event, a potion, or even a can of spinach. Once this trigger has been set off, you may use your Ability until the trigger is gone or until the effect fades, whichever is most appropriate. Your Level in *Trigger* affects its rarity, with Level 1 being fairly accessible, Level 2 being hard to come by, and Level 3 being exceedingly rare.

UNIQUE WEAKNESS If you cannot find a Weakness in the rules to cover the disadvantage you wish to have, discuss it with your Game Master. Together, you can give your character a *Unique Weakness* that fits what you want. The Game Master will help you decide the actual rules behind your Weakness, as well as the appropriate Level.

UNLUCKY Some people have all the luck. No really, they must have all of it, because you don't have a lick. Whether by a family curse, karma, or just a case of bad luck, there's something about you that causes the world's misfortunes to gravitate in your direction. At Level 1, bad things happen often enough that you may be seen as accident-prone or unlucky, but it's never too serious. While at Level 2, your bad luck is exceptional.



You always pick the short straw, get the short end of the stick, or otherwise find yourself short-changed in any situation. At Level 3, your life is a ceaseless series of misfortunes that can jeopardize your well-being. Being a guinea pig, trap tester, human shield, or in some other dangerous occupation is a regular occurrence for you.

VULNERABILITY Your body is especially vulnerable to some power, a specific source of harm (like electricity or magic), or attacks directed at a weak point. At Level 1, for every two points of Damage you receive by this means, add one. At Level 2, receive an additional point for every point of Damage. At Level 3, receive two additional points for each point of Damage. For other Abilities that do not cause Damage, decrease your roll to resist its influence by your Level in *Vulnerability*.



WANTED Wanted alive, or maybe even dead! You have acquired the ire—or at least interest—of another person or organization. They are actively pursuing you, and you are actively avoiding them. At Level 1, your hunter doesn't intend to do you any harm, isn't very persistent in the search, or isn't powerful enough to carry out their threats when they find you. At Level 2, the hunter wants to give you a little payback, take something from you, or is very capable of getting what they want. At Level 3, the hunter wants you severely punished, possibly even killed, or wants to take something of incredible significance from you and will do anything to get it. Not only might they be very capable of doing so, they could have resources and powers that greatly exceed your own!

WEAK You have the muscle tone of a cabbage leaf. You find it hard to lift heavy objects, create significant force, or do anything that involves feats of strength. Subtract your *Weak* dice any time you intend to use your muscle power. Your Level in *Weak* also subtracts from your Damage Multiplier when attacking bare-handed, with melee weapons, or when otherwise applying your strength to an attack. Should your Damage Multiplier be reduced below 1, reduce it to $\frac{1}{2}$ instead.

WEAK-WILLED You find it difficult to resist temptation or withstand pain, and you easily fall under the influence of others. At Level 1, though unreliable under fire, you can take a stand when something is vitally important to you—at least for a little while. At Level 2, you submit easily, and only dear causes will inspire you to resist. At Level 3, you are a slave to temptation and the whim of others. Any hardship will immediately break your spirit, and you'll succumb to defeat or any demands made of you. Whenever the fortitude of your will is at stake, subtract your *Weak-Willed* dice.

Ability Perks and Flaws

Ability Perks and Flaws are special attributes that provide additional ways to customize your Abilities and are listed as a subset of them. It's sort of like applying Abilities and Weaknesses to the Ability itself.

Perks improve your Abilities in some manner. They can make your *Attack* more accurate, allow your *Barrier* to protect more people, or increase the effectiveness of your talent as a *Healer*. These advantages come at a cost, however. Next to each Perk, a number indicates the addition of an Endurance cost. To use this Ability, you must spend the total of Endurance from any Perks it has—as well as any costs the Ability may have already.

Flaws, on the other hand, encumber your Abilities with disadvantages, like making them slower, more unwieldy, or otherwise less effective. But Flaws also help offset any Endurance cost your Ability may have acquired, as indicated by the number next to their name. While the Endurance expenditure may be reduced to zero, it can never become a negative amount.

For any Ability you feel can be further individualized through Perks and Flaws, simply go through the list and assign those that fit your mental image. Some Abilities mention the use of Perks and Flaws right in their text, but they can be applied to others as well. Perks and Flaws that specifically mention attacks are usually best used with the *Attack* Ability. As always, use common sense, and if you have any questions, confer with your Game Master.

Many Perks and Flaws may be purchased multiple times to increase their effect. If possible, it will be mentioned in the text that accompanies it. Indicate this with x2, x3, etc. as appropriate.

Perks

ACCURATE (+5) Your attack can hit opponents with greater ease than normal. This could be a homing projectile, a strike so quick dodging is difficult, or simply a blow with improved accuracy. This Perk can be taken multiple times; for each time *Accurate* is taken, add one die to your Attack Roll.

AREA EFFECT (+10) Your Ability can affect multiple targets by spreading itself over a wide area. This could be a cone-shaped blast of energy, a circular explosion, or a dense array of bolts. This Perk may be taken multiple times; for each time *Area Effect* is added to an Ability, you may target up to three relatively close individuals, as deemed by the Game Master. If this Ability is an attack, those caught in the trajectory receive a one die Penalty to their Defense Roll for each time *Area Effect* is taken. This represents the difficulty to avoid an attack of such magnitude. Abilities with this Perk can affect both allies and enemies, so be careful when applying it!

ARMOR PIERCING (+5) Your attack has the ability to bypass your opponent's armor. Perhaps it is extremely sharp, hits with incredible impact, does damage through non-physical means, or has some other way of negating protection. This Perk may be taken multiple times; for each time *Armor Piercing* is applied to an Ability, you may act as if your opponent's *Armored* Ability were two Levels less. If the opponent's *Armored* is reduced to zero, or the opponent does not have *Armored* at all, nothing additional happens.

BARRIER BUSTER (+5) Your attack can overwhelm an opponent's use of the *Barrier* Ability. It may pack an incredible

wallop or is specifically designed to take down defensive shields. Whatever the case, the defender may still roll their *Barrier* dice as they normally would. However, if the Attack Roll ever bests the *Barrier* roll by any amount, your opponent is not allowed to spend additional Endurance to block the attack. In addition, the character is immediately *Stunned*, regardless of the amount of Health lost.

BLINDING (+20) Your attack has the ability to hinder the vision of others. It might be a dark, blinding substance over the eyes, a brilliant flash, or some trick of the mind. Characters struck by the attack have a -3 Penalty to all vision-reliant actions until the effect wears off or is otherwise neutralized. The blindness wears off naturally in a number of Rounds equal to the Level of your *Attack* Ability.



CONTINUED EFFECT (+10) Your Ability continues to affect its target after use. This can be represented as a burning or poisoning attack or a magical aura that continues to heal. Until the effect is somehow neutralized, or a number of Rounds equal to the Level of your Ability pass, it will continue dealing (or healing) half of the original Damage inflicted each Round, rounded up. If this Perk is taken twice, use the full amount of Damage.

DEFENSIVE (+5) The best defense may be a good offense, but a defensive offense is even better. Your attack, whether it's bashing with a huge shield, bouncing to and fro, or by some other means, improves your Defense even if it misses. This Perk may be taken multiple times; for each time you take *Defensive*, increase your Defense Rolls by one until your next turn.

DISARMING (+10) Your attack takes the opponent off guard and activates a Weakness or Flaw, whether by literally disarming a weapon in their grasp or disarming them emotionally. You only need to inflict a quarter of your opponent's total Health to inflict the *Weakness/Flaw Complication*. Or, if you choose, you may forgo dealing Damage at all and activate a Weakness or Flaw automatically. You must still make a successful Attack Roll for this Perk to take effect.

EFFECTIVE (+5) Your Ability is more effective than others of the same Level. This Perk can be taken multiple times; for each time it is taken, add 1 to your Damage Multiplier when using this Ability.

FATIGUING (+0) Your attack works as normal, but instead of dealing Damage to Health, it takes away directly from your opponent's Endurance. If their Endurance is zero, this attack will begin to take from Health.

IMPAIRING (+10) Your attack hits them where it hurts. Whether by making use of devastating weaponry, striking pressure points, or just whacking really hard, you only need to inflict a quarter of your opponent's total Health to inflict the *Impaired* Complication. Or, if you choose, you may forgo dealing Damage at all and *Impair* automatically. You must still make a successful Attack Roll for this Perk to take effect.

MULTIPLE TARGETS (+10) Your Ability can selectively affect multiple targets, whether by splitting apart, emitting numerous rays, or just jumping from one to another. This Perk may be taken multiple times; for each time *Multiple Targets* is taken, you may select up to one additional target for your Ability. The same Attack Roll result is used for all targets, and this Perk does not allow the Ability to affect the same target twice.

Unlike the Area Effect Perk, targets do not have to be in close proximity to each other, nor do you have to worry about affecting unintended targets.

NO GESTURE (+5) Normally, Abilities require some sort of movement or gesture to make them work, whether it is just pointing your finger, weaving a magic spell, or actually dealing some physical blow. With this Perk, you require no movements at all to perform the Ability.

OVERWHELMING (+15) Your attack is actually not one strike but many in the span of a second. These attacks come so quickly that opponents must spend their next action to even be eligible for a Defense Roll. If they do not, the attack is made against a Defense of zero.

PARALYZING (+10) You can use your Ability to stop opponents in their tracks. You could have a long, whip-like weapon that

entraps their limbs, the ability to freeze them in blocks of ice, or a debilitating electric shock. If this attack ever deals half of an opponent's total Health, it inflicts the special *Paralyzed* Complication. The target not only loses the ability to take actions but also to defend, making further attacks compared to zero. The *Paralyzed* status can only be removed in a few ways: The original attacker receives a Complication, a number of Rounds pass equal to the Level of the Ability, or the *Paralyzed* character breaks free. During their turn, a *Paralyzed* character may attempt to break free by rolling any dice that could logically apply against the original Attack Roll. If successful, the *Paralyzed* character can act normally on their next turn. This Perk may be taken twice. If so, you only need to inflict a quarter of your opponent's total Health, or you may choose to do no Damage and inflict the *Paralyzed* Complication automatically. You must still make a successful Attack Roll for this Perk to take effect.

While Strong or Evasive can be obvious Abilities for breaking free, creative Players may find other ways to nullify paralysis. Allies can sever constricting tentacles or melt an ice prison with a fiery attack. A paralyzing shock may be overcome with Iron-Willed. Players and the Game Master should use common sense in any scenario.

RANGED (+0) Your Ability can affect targets at a range, allowing you to take down opponents from great distances and heights or otherwise affect faraway targets. However, your attack can no longer take advantage of any Bonuses from *Strong* and may be blocked or prevented by intervening obstacles.

To remedy the former, take the Ranged, Strength-Powered Perk instead. To ignore things in your way, take the Strike Through or Redirectable Perk.

RANGED, STRENGTH-POWERED (+5) Your Ability can now strike distant targets, as with the *Ranged* Perk, and is subject to the same benefits and disadvantages. However, you may now include any *Strong* Bonuses your character can muster in your Damage Multiplier. By the same token, any *Weak* Penalties will apply, and this Perk is not recommended for characters with that Weakness.

REACH (+5) Your attack has extensive reach that makes it difficult to engage you in combat. Perhaps you wield a hefty pole-arm, strike with immense claws, or just have one hell of a swing. The recipient of this attack, even if it misses, must choose a -1 Penalty to either their Attack or their Defense Rolls against you until your next turn. This Perk may be taken multiple times; for each time it is taken, increase the Penalty by one.

REDIRECTABLE (+5) Even if your attack misses, by having this Perk, you may still have a chance to hit your target. On your next turn, just make your Attack Roll again to redirect the attack, no additional Endurance expenditure necessary. However, if you take another action besides a Defense Roll, you lose control of your attack and no more redirections can be made. You will also lose control if you are hit, injured, or otherwise severely distracted. You may only have this Perk if you also have the *Ranged* Perk.

By nature, the Redirectable Perk can also allow attacks to avoid intervening obstructions and other challenges that may have made other attacks difficult or impossible.

STRIKE THROUGH (+5) Your Ability is unhampered by any obstacles that may come in its path. This could be due to an incorporeal nature of its effect or simply an unparalleled capacity to permeate

intervening objects. As such, you may always affect a target within range, regardless of what lies between you.

STUNNING (+10) Your attack has such force behind it that it only needs to inflict a quarter of your opponent's total Health to cause the *Stunned* Complication. Or, if you choose, you may forgo dealing Damage at all and *Stun* automatically. You must still make a successful Attack Roll for this Perk to take effect.

TRAP (+5) Your attack is such that you may spend an action to set it up ahead of time and choose a trigger for its activation, such as a target stepping in a certain place. When anyone sets off your trap, roll for Attack and Defense as normal, but the target is subject to *surprised* Penalties (see p. 109) and you spend no action.

UNIQUE PERK (+?) If you do not see a Perk here that reflects the one you want for your Ability, get with your Game Master. Together, you can create a new Perk with the appropriate Endurance cost.

VAMPIRE (+5) Your attack is capable of replenishing your Health at the expense of your enemy's. It could be a magical effect, or perhaps you truly are a vampire and suck the life out of them. This Perk may be taken multiple times; for each time *Vampire* is applied, you may restore a quarter of the Damage you inflict with this attack, rounded up. Health can never be restored beyond its maximum this way.

WILL ATTACK (+0) Your attack is inherently different in that it affects the mind of your opponent directly. Attack and Defense Rolls now use the *Iron-Willed* Ability and the *Weak-Willed* Weakness instead of the usual *Agile/Clumsy* and *Quick/Slow*. *Combat Expert* and *Evasive* may still apply depending on the nature of the attack.

Flaws

ACTIVATION (-10) Your Ability requires time to activate before each use. This could be due to cocking, reloading, aiming, recharging, or one of many other reasons. You must spend an entire Round to activate your Ability, but you may still make Defense Rolls to any incoming attacks. On your next turn (or any turn thereafter), you may use your Ability as normal. Once the Ability is used, time must be spent to activate it again.

AMMUNITION (-5) Your Ability may only be activated a certain number of times before it becomes useless. This could represent bullets in a gun, charges in an electric baton, or a limited grant of power from a divine entity. This Flaw may be taken multiple times; if taken once, the Ability can be used around five times. If taken twice, around three times. If taken three times, this Ability can only be used once. While the exact method of recharging this Ability is up to you, it is generally appropriate that it takes a full day or at least extensive off time. If the character can simply reload the Ability with little effort, consider another Flaw, like *Activation*, instead.

ASSISTED (-15) This Ability requires an ally's help to function. They might launch you in the air for a devastating dive attack, or you might pool your energies together to power the Ability. In any case, those assisting you with this Ability lose their next action, but they may spend up to half of the Endurance cost of this Ability for you if they choose. This Perk may be taken multiple times; for each time it is taken, you need an additional helping hand.

Familiarity and capability are assumed here. Random strangers cannot assist you, nor could your little sibling launch you into the air. Use common sense in any situation.

BACKLASH (-5) Your attack comes at the cost of your own well-being, and you may be injured through its use. This Flaw may be taken multiple times; for each time, you receive a quarter of the Damage you inflict with the attack, rounded up.

BREAK (-10) This Ability may only be used once you have exhausted either all of your Health or all of your Endurance. Perhaps you need to build up rage to unleash a fierce attack, or maybe you only feel empowered when the tide of battle has turned against you.

BUILDDUP (-5) You cannot use your Ability right away but must wait for its power to build up. It could be an energy weapon that requires charging, a martial arts move you have to limber up for, or just a need to have dramatic timing. This Flaw may be taken multiple times; for each time *Build-up* is taken, you must wait a Round before using the Ability. No action is necessary (or lost) to build up. Once the Ability has been used, the waiting period begins again.

CANCEL (-0 TO -20) Your Ability does not work on a certain class of targets. If this is fairly rare, such as combatants made entirely of metal, you receive -5 to the Endurance cost. If it's incredibly common, like humans, you can get up to -20. If the *Cancel* is something that is ridiculously uncommon, like hippopotamuses, you get no subtraction to Endurance.

CONCENTRATION (-20) This Ability requires a Round of your undivided attention. You must make no action, and if you are severely distracted, get injured, or make a Defense Roll, the Ability does not work and Endurance is expended anyway. Otherwise, on your next turn you may perform your Ability as normal. This Flaw may be taken multiple times, each increasing the turns required to prepare.

DELAYED (-5) This Ability does not take effect until just before the start of your next turn. If you receive a Complication or are otherwise compromised before this time, then the Ability does not work, and Endurance is lost. Making Defense Rolls, or even being hit, will not affect this Ability.

ELABORATE GESTURES (-5) In order to use this Ability, your entire body must be free to perform some elaborate motion, dance, or ritual. You cannot be holding items, pulling things, navigating terrain, or otherwise occupying any part of your body with another task.

FEATHER BLOW (-5) Your attack is of such a nature that it cannot be used to inflict Complications. There is no additional effect if half a target's Health is lost.

FINISHER (-10) Your attack is only effective against a target that has already lost all Health. Otherwise, it does no Damage.

INACCURATE (-5) Your attack has a tendency to miss. You may have yet to master it, or the attack is just imprecise by nature. Regardless of the cause, you receive a -1 Penalty to your Attack Roll. This Flaw may be taken multiple times, increasing the Penalty by one each time it is applied.

INEFFECTIVE (-5) This Ability is not as effective as others of the same Level. This Flaw may be taken multiple times; for each time you take *Ineffective*, reduce your Damage Multiplier by 1 when using this Ability. If your Damage Multiplier would be reduced to zero, reduce it to ½ instead.

LOW PENETRATION (-5) Your attack is unusually susceptible to armor. For each time you take *Low Penetration*, treat your opponent's *Armored* Ability as if it were two Levels higher, to a maximum of +5. If

the opponent does not have the *Armored* Ability, there is no additional effect.

NO DAMAGE (-20) Your attack is not much of an attack at all. Regardless of how good of a result you receive on your Attack Roll, you can never inflict any Damage. However, any other Perks and Complications work as normal. You may not combine this with the *Ineffective* Flaw.

OPEN TO ATTACK (-25) After completing your Ability, you cannot make any Defense Rolls until your next turn. You may be exhaustively spent, have temporarily exposed a critical weak point, or otherwise thrown caution, and a proper defense, to the wind.

RECOIL (-10) This Ability packs enough of a punch to knock you off your feet. When used, you immediately receive the *Stunned* Complication.

REQUIREMENT (-5 TO -20) Your Ability may only be used if a certain condition is met. If the requirement is easily accessible (Need Lots of Room), it is worth -5 Endurance, while an extremely rare and specific requirement (Must Be the 12th Day of the 4th Month of the Ancient Galbelzan Calendar and a Full Blue Moon) can be worth up to -20. Well, okay, perhaps not that precise, but you get the idea.

SELF-ONLY (-5) This Ability may only be used on yourself. It cannot be shared with others or otherwise targeted at other persons or objects. If an Ability is already only usable in this way, then this Flaw should not be taken.

UNIQUE FLAW (-?) If you do not see a Flaw here that reflects the one you want for your Ability, discuss it with your Game Master. Together, you can create a new Flaw with the appropriate Endurance cost.

UNWIELDY (-5) Your Ability is of a nature that makes you unsteady after its use. It might be an immense weapon, or perhaps you just become woozy from exhaustion. This Flaw may be taken multiple times; for each time it is taken, you receive a -1 Penalty to Defense Rolls until your next turn.

WEAPON (-5) This attack is actually a weapon, be it a blade, a gun, or something in between. Should you lose it, have it taken from you, or find yourself disarmed during a battle, you may no longer use this attack.

With any Flaw, doubling up with a character's Weaknesses is prohibited. If your attack is already affected by the Limited Uses Weakness, you cannot also apply the Ammunition Flaw. This goes for Focus/Requirement, Gear/Weapon, and so on.

Affinities

Affinities are a special kind of Perk that can be applied to any Ability without an additional Endurance cost. These *Affinities* describe the source of the Ability's strength or the nature of its power. Your Ability may be a fiery attack to roast your enemies, a focus of your spiritual energy from years of martial arts training, or magic imbued with holy power. Just write it down next to the Ability like any other Perk. Most of the time, an *Affinity* is a cosmetic choice, but there may come a time when the exact type of power you wield can make a big difference. The *Resistance* Ability and the *Vulnerability* Weakness are just two cases where *Affinity* can matter.



Quick List

Abilities

Agile	Spirit Medium	Kind-Hearted	Continued Effect (+10)
Armored	Strong	Languid	Defensive (+5)
Art of Invisibility	Telekinesis	Lecherous	Disarming (+10)
Attack	Teleport	Limited Uses	Effective (+5)
Barrier	Time Freeze	Loner	Fatiguing (+0)
Beautiful	Tough	Love Interest	Impairing (+10)
Charismatic	Transformation	Love Magnet	Multiple Targets (+10)
Combat Expert	Unique Ability	Mute	No Gesture (+5)
Companion	Vehicle (Mecha)	Naive	Overwhelming (+15)
Connected	Vigorous	Nosebleeder	Paralyzing (+10)
Cute!	Walking Arsenal	Oblivious	Ranged (+0)
Dexterous	Wealthy	Obsession	Ranged, Str.-Powered (+5)

Weaknesses

Dimensional Pocket	Absent-Minded	Overconfident	Redirectable (+5)
Endurance Reserve	Accidental Transformation	Pacifist	Strike Through (+5)
Evasive	Ageism	Poor	Stunning (+10)
Famous	Airhead	Quirk	Trap (+5)
Flight	Amnesia	Restricted Freedom	Unique Perk (+?)
Gear	Arrogant	Rival	Vampire (+5)
Healer	Awkward Size	Room for Two	Will Attack (+0)
Heightened Sense	Bizarre Appearance	Rude	
Illusionist	Clumsy	Secret	
Incorporeal Form	Code of Conduct	Sensitivity	Flaws
Intimidating	Compulsion	Servitude	Activation (-10)
Intuitive	Coward	Short-Tempered	Ammunition (-5)
Inventor	Crybaby	Shy	Assisted (-15)
Invisibility	Dense	Slow	Backlash (-5)
Iron-Willed	Dependency	Soft Spot	Break (-10)
Knowledge	Dull	Split Personality	Buildup (-5)
Life Support	Easily Distracted	Stubborn	Cancel (-0 to -20)
Lucky	Emotionless	Suppressed Power	Concentration (-20)
Magic, Arcane	Endurance Use	Trigger	Delayed (-5)
Magic, Witchcraft	Fear	Unique Weakness	Elaborate Gestures (-5)
Minions	Focus	Unlucky	Feather Blow (-5)
Passion	Frail	Vulnerability	Finisher (-10)
Perceptive	Fussy	Wanted	Inaccurate (-5)
Performer	Greedy	Weak	Ineffective (-5)
Pilot	Guardian	Weak-Willed	Low Penetration (-5)
Position of Power	Hatred		No Damage (-20)
Psychic	Impaired Sense	Accurate (+5)	Open to Attack (-25)
Quick	Impulsive	Area Effect (+10)	Recoil (-10)
Resistance	Ineptitude	Armor Piercing (+5)	Requirement (-5 to -20)
Shape-Shifter	Infamous	Barrier Buster (+5)	Self-Only (-5)
Sixth Sense	Jittery	Blinding (+20)	Unique Flaw (-?)
Smart			Unwieldy (-5)

Perks

Agile	Area Effect (+10)	Requirement (-5 to -20)
Armored	Armor Piercing (+5)	Self-Only (-5)
Art of Invisibility	Barrier Buster (+5)	Unique Flaw (-?)
Attack	Blinding (+20)	Unwieldy (-5)
Barrier		Weapon (-5)





TAKING ACTION

- Okay! Now you have a living, breathing human (or some other kind of) being.
- This character is capable of many things, and often these are done by simply describing your intent aloud. But sometimes you want to do something special, something with consequences for failure, or something where the outcome is uncertain. Remember those dice mentioned earlier? They represent chance and dramatic tension, and what your character does is called an action.

Actions

When you want to take an action, roll two dice and take the highest one. If they end up the same, add them together. This number represents how well you did. It's then compared to a *Difficulty Number* set by the Game Master or to a roll made by someone else. If you beat it, you succeed!



Aww, man! After my rockin' performance, all of my devoted female fans are storming the stage! With my current...condition, I have to get out of here, fast! If I could just reach that cable dangling like a carrot from the rigging above, I could climb it and make my escape. I roll two dice, both coming up fives! I add them for a total of 10, which exceeds the Difficulty Number of 8 the GM set for the task. I get out of dodge without a hitch! ...But the girls! Why me?!

Modifiers

But what if your character is particularly good at what he is trying to do? Or what if the odds are stacked against her favor? These things are represented by *modifiers*. Modifiers are added or subtracted from the number of dice you roll.

ADD DICE WHEN...

- You have an Ability that aids what you are trying to do. Add a number of dice equal to your Level in that Ability.
- You have something working in your favor. This *Bonus* is decided by the Game Master.

TAKE AWAY DICE WHEN...

- You have a Weakness that hampers what you are trying to do. Remove a number of dice equal to your Level in that Weakness.
- You have something working against you. This *Penalty* is decided by the Game Master.

More dice are handled the same way. With doubles, add them together and compare the sum to any other number rolled. If the added dice are highest, use them. If not, use the other highest die. Triples, quadruples, and so on are all added together.



If only I could discover the truth about Miho's origin, I could better protect her! I know it has something to do with Malicron, so I could try hacking into their computer network. That won't be easy! They have some of Japan's most thorough security measures, making the task *Nigh Impossible* with a DN of 12. But with my Bonuses from *Smart (+3)*, *Knowledge: Computers (+4)*, and my super-computer-powered laptop (+3), I get a whopping 12 dice to roll! The results: ☀☀☀☀☀☀☀☀☀☀☀☀. Ignoring all but the fives, 15, I'm in! Page after page of secure data flashes in front of me...What secrets await?



Negative Dice

Going by the rules, you may soon realize it's possible to have fewer than one die to roll. Don't panic; all is not lost! When dice are reduced this low, you roll *Negative Dice* instead. At zero, roll two dice and take the lowest. For each number below zero, roll an additional die and again take the lowest. Duplicate dice are never added together when rolling this way.



Rainy season is in full force and the sun hasn't shown for days!

Because of my *Dependency: Sunlight (-3)*, I'm not feeling my best. But I know Braun will love it if I try out this recipe I saw in a magazine! Oops! Along with my *Ineptitude: Cooking (-3)*, I have a -6 Penalty, so I roll six dice (☒☒☒☒☒☒) and take the lowest (1). Um...you think he minds if it's really, really well done?

Difficulty

So now you know how to roll dice: how many to roll and how to determine the result. But what defines the line between success and failure? There are two ways to determine the outcome of an action.

Opposed Rolls

When making an action against or in competition with another character, *opposed rolls* are made. This means that both Players, or a Player and the Game Master, roll dice appropriate to their characters' Abilities and compare them to determine the highest result. The greatest roll wins. Ties may result in neither character succeeding, temporary stalemates, or other outcomes at the GM's discretion.



Come on, Arasuni, get out of my way! He thinks what I'm doing is dumb, but I think he's dumb! I'll overpower him through sheer will!



Karis's plan of action is reckless. I cannot, through inaction, allow her to come to harm. Karis has no Bonuses in her attempt to force me aside and rolls two dice (█ █, for a result of 5). I, however, have *Strong* (+3) on my side (five dice, █ █ █ █ █, a result of 9). Karis finally submits. She will forgive me in time. As Gandhi said, "Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."

Difficulty Numbers

Sometimes you are not trying to best another character but the world itself. It could be a stubborn door, a wide chasm, a difficult to remember fact, or just a video game. Since things like these make no "effort" against the character, the Game Master assigns them a Difficulty Number instead. This number is based on how hard the task is to perform, and Players must meet or exceed this number to successfully complete it. To aid the Game Master in this decision, what follows is a list of difficulties and the appropriate number for each.

DIFFICULTY	DN
Easy	2
Moderate	4
Challenging	6
Difficult	8
Very Difficult	10
Nigh Impossible	12

A note to Game Masters: Take care not to make certain factors count twice. If you give someone a Bonus for hiding in the dark, or raise the DN, you should not also give another a Penalty for searching in it.

Describing Actions

Everyone plays their character a little differently. While a few gestures can do wonders, it's not necessary to actually pantomime a character's actions. Simply tell the Game Master and your fellow Players what you want your character to do *up until* the point where the task actually succeeds or fails. Then roll the dice. Your Game Master will take over from there, describing the final result of your attempt. Whether you say this as a quick first-person declaration ("I want to decipher the arcane writing.") or present a lengthier, third-person narrative ("Auren, blowing his breath with exasperation, agrees to translate the arcane writing.") is ultimately up to you.

Some groups are comfortable with the Player continuing the narrative after a successful action. There's no wrong way to play, so discuss this and other ideas with your group!

What It Means to Fail

No matter how much characters try or how badly they want to succeed, they will eventually fail. But a bad roll does not always mean outright failure. Sometimes characters can still succeed...just not as they intended!

Succeeding with Complications

When you fail a roll, your character may fail at their attempt altogether or instead *Succeed with Complications*. Perhaps something else goes wrong, or maybe one of your character's Weaknesses comes into play. You might even gain a temporary Weakness as a consequence of your failed attempt. While characters can fall short in a myriad of ways, there are three major types of Complications.

- **Situational Complications** allow characters to succeed, but something else goes wrong outside of their direct control. A character may hack into and open an electronic lock only to set off an alarm, while another character may successfully evade capture only to come face-to-face with another foe.
- **Impairing Complications** result in a character being impaired in some way. This is much like a temporary Weakness, giving characters a Penalty to further actions based on the task they tried to complete. A character trying to leap between buildings may find themselves “*Strained*,” while a character deep in negotiations may become “*Flustered*.” Such Weaknesses are usually -1 in severity, but further failures may increase this Penalty. How long an impairment lasts is left to the Game Master’s discretion and logic, but generally they are removed in the same instances characters can regain lost Endurance. (See p. 113)
- **Weakness/Flaw Complications** let a task be completed, but one of the character’s Weaknesses or Flaws comes into play. If a character were using Abilities with the *Focus* Weakness or *Requirement* Flaw, that item may become lost, broken, or out of commission. Characters may fall into their negative personality traits, like *Short-Tempered* or *Crybaby*, straining the patience of those around them. *Rivals* or enemies the character is *Wanted* by may arrive. And so forth.

Some Abilities, like Inventor or Vehicle, imply a Focus even without the Focus Weakness and can be prone to the same Complications!

Drama Dice

Oh no! You just botched that roll, and now you are in one heck of a mess.

Or are you? If you feel success is vitally important, you may spend Endurance to help improve your result. For every 5 points you spend, you may roll one additional die, a *Drama Die*. These dice can be gained even after you have rolled!

But be careful, as Endurance spent in this way cannot be regained in the usual manner. This drive to succeed at any cost takes a piece of your character’s very soul, and recovering that can only happen between adventures or after another lengthy stretch of time determined by the GM.

Free Drama Dice

Throughout the game, the Game Master may reward you with free Drama Dice. Maybe you came up with an inspiring idea, made everyone laugh, or otherwise just improved the experience for the group. Characters with the *Lucky* Ability also get a number of free Drama Dice at the start of the adventure. Note these on your character sheet—or if you have plenty of dice, set a few aside—and mark them off when you decide to use them. If you want to reserve them, you can burn Endurance for Drama Dice even if you still have free dice available. However, free Drama Dice are lost when the adventure is over, so don’t hold on to them too long!

Miracles

In especially dramatic situations, where success or failure can change the characters’ lives, it is possible to have a *miracle*. By expending 30 Endurance, a character may guarantee the success of a single action. If the degree of success is important, as for an attack, add six dice to your roll. Regardless of the actual outcome, you succeed by at least one. The Game Master may refuse a miracle if the scenario is not appropriate.

Special Considerations

Taking action can be as simple as that. However, there are several special cases that may change how actions are resolved.

Amazing Success

Without any Bonus dice, you may have noticed that the highest result you can roll is 12 (❻❻). This makes achieving the highest Difficulty Number *possible*—but just barely. When you add more dice to a roll, not only is it more likely that you can succeed at that nearly impossible difficulty, but you can also get numbers that far exceed the limitations of two dice alone. Results like these are pretty amazing—in fact, we'll call them *Amazing Successes*—and it's perfectly okay to role-play them that way! If you ever roll greater than 12, feel free to describe your action with a little more vim and vigor than you set out to. The Game Master might reward your Amazing Success by changing the situation to account for it or even ask you to detail that change yourself!

If you are making an opposed roll when you get an Amazing Success, you can gain an additional edge in the conflict. If you roll over 12, but your opponent does not, you may choose to give them a Complication as described previously in this chapter. If you *both* roll an Amazing Success, neither side gets a Complication—or maybe you both do! Use common sense, and go with whatever makes for a more exciting confrontation.

Declarations

As you play OVA, you will most often find your character reacting to the world as it is presented by the Game Master. There are challenges to overcome and foes to face. But this story belongs to you as a Player, too, and it's possible to have your own say on the contents of your surroundings.

Many Abilities in OVA already imply a little bit of input from you. Whether it's the limousines of the *Wealthy*, the adoring fans of the *Famous*, or the many informants of the *Connected*, your Level can give you a good indication of what you can simply state to exist. But sometimes this might not be clear cut. Maybe you're not sure if you can *really* afford that tricked out bus for your mobile headquarters, find that faithful devotee in a foreign land, or get someone to acquire that super-rare, super-illegal item you need. If you are ever in doubt, the Game Master can set a DN and you can roll any dice that apply. Success means that what you want to exist *does*, whether it's the exact contents of your garage or the people you may know around town.



Extended Actions

Actions tend to be singular, quickly-handled affairs. You either achieve what you hoped to do or you don't. But other times, there are endeavors that cannot be accomplished with a single roll. Repairing a battered spaceship might require several rolls and multiple skill sets. Such an action is an *extended action*.

When creating an extended action, the Game Master must state a DN *and* the number of successful actions to complete the task. This can be accomplished by a single character, or it can be done by multiple characters applying their own unique talents to the task, like computer know-how, military training, or just blind luck.

Of course, extended actions cannot always be taken leisurely. The GM may decide you must achieve that number of successes *before* a specific number of failures. If the task is failed too many times, the clock may run out and the bad guys arrive, or the ship becomes damaged beyond repair. Or you can Succeed with Complications...and it just breaks down later at a very inopportune time!

Fuzzy Difficulty

Tasks are not always a case of complete success or failure. You may be researching for every scrap of information you can find, sewing together an outfit, or otherwise performing an action where outright failure isn't likely. In these cases, the dice determine how well a task is completed. The higher DN you meet, the better you did. Meeting the lower difficulties means achieving the bare minimum, finding trivial information and insubstantial rumors, or creating an embarrassingly patchwork, but theoretically wearable, ensemble. Conversely, higher difficulties produce better results like uncovering obscure, useful facts or impressing your robo-girlfriend with a dazzling dress!

RESULT	ROLL
Pathetic	2
Passable	4
Good	6
Great	8
Amazing	10
Unmatched	12

Hampering Others

When it's you against someone else, things are almost always handled by an opposed roll. But not everything is a direct contest. You might be piloting an aircraft as a fight breaks out inside and wish to use your flying know-how to keep the unwanted stowaways unsteady. Or maybe you'd like to cover an area with gunfire, making progress through it that much more difficult.

When a character wants to make things harder for others through an Ability, simply roll the appropriate dice. Your result determines the Penalty applied to the other party.

YOU ROLLED...	PENALTY
1 or 2	+1
3 to 6	0
8	-1
10	-2
12	-3

Yes, you can make things *easier* if you do a bad enough job! Also, keep in mind that these Penalties only last as long as you continue taking action and that your well-meaning efforts may hamper your allies, too.

Hidden Rolls

The Game Master may occasionally make rolls on your behalf. Usually, this is for casual, subconscious tasks, like noticing something out of place in a room or an ambush farther ahead. Asking you, point-blank, to roll dice may give away that there is something to find. On the other hand, if the Game Master *does* ask you to make such a roll but keeps the DN secret, it might just be to keep you on your toes!

Impossible Tasks

These rules encourage even unskilled characters to try a task when the odds are against them. Sometimes, but not often, characters can still succeed by a stroke of luck when logic dictates otherwise. However, there are situations where characters without the proper Abilities simply should not be able to try. Characters without *Flight* will never fly. Characters without medical training could not perform major surgery. At the GM's discretion, any task can be considered impossible, and any attempts to perform them will result in automatic failure.

Negative Dice & Drama Dice

While rolling Negative Dice and drama don't necessarily go hand in hand, if you really want to succeed at something you're not good at, you can use Drama Dice to buy off Negative Dice on a one-for-one basis.

Reversed Modifiers

Generally, Abilities and Weaknesses are self-explanatory. Abilities increase your capability to succeed while Weaknesses detract from it. But this is not always the case. Weaknesses like *Bizarre Appearance* can actually improve a character's ability to be *Intimidating*. Likewise, *Cute!* can hamper that same effort. In these cases, simply subtract your Level in the Ability or add your Level in the Weakness.

Rolling All Ones

In much the same way that double sixes represent the highest result a character can achieve without Bonuses, rolling nothing but ones is the absolute worst. If you want to give this instance of bad luck more significance, you can mark the occasion by not just having the character fail but also by giving them a Complication for their efforts. This can be true even if you roll more than two dice, as long as they all come up one! On the other hand, if you're rolling Negative Dice, any result of one can count as "all ones."

Taking Time

Much of the time, characters are racing the clock. The bomb has to be dismantled before it explodes, the chasm crossed before the villains show up, and so on. But sometimes, there is no rush. In situations where characters can try and retry a task at length with no repercussions, it is possible for them to automatically succeed. Just use common sense. If it seems like a task your character is equipped to do, given unlimited time, they can do it!

Teaming Up

When faced with difficult situations, characters may choose to team up against a common obstacle. First a leader is chosen for the task, most often someone with the most expertise in the matter. The leader then rolls as normal. Each person wishing to aid in the task may roll one additional die and contribute it to the leader's roll. Through teamwork, what was a failed action now has the potential to succeed! However, not all endeavors are appropriate for a team effort, and it is ultimately up to the Game Master's discretion what tasks characters can help each other with. Generally, characters without an appropriate Ability related to the task at hand should not be able to contribute.

Scale

The way things are defined in OVA is relative. An Ability with a Level of +3 is excellent, but this can mean very different things depending on what you are trying to represent. While a world-class athlete with *Quick* +3 would be considered very fast for a human, the speed he or she can achieve would pale in comparison to vehicles like cars and airplanes. So it stands to reason that what is excellent for a typical character is not necessarily excellent for something else.

Normally such differences in scope can be kept separate from each other. After all, it's not likely that the athlete and the sports car will be competing in a race together. But situations will arise where a direct comparison must be made or a conflict resolved. This is represented in OVA by *Scale*.

To determine the effects of Scale in any situation, one must first decide who has the *Scale Advantage*.



Ahhh! My “foolproof” plan of breaking into the headquarters of Zurkrieg Enterprises isn’t turning out as I hoped! Worse, my “foolproof” escape route isn’t doing much better! I’m being chased not by guards, soldiers, or even those creepy Men in Black but by a *ginormous* spider tank! Even that year of track doesn’t change the fact that the tank’s faster than me, giving it the Scale Advantage! But if I duck into this side street littered with junk and dumpsters, I can weave around them way better than it can, giving me the Scale Advantage instead!



Whenever a given party has the Scale Advantage, they may add a +5 Bonus to their roll.



The tank, despite having the *Slow (-1)* Weakness, easily outpaces my *Quick (+2)* because of its Scale Advantage. After accounting for *Slow*, the tank ends up with a +4 Bonus and six dice to roll.

But once I duck into the side street, the tables are turned! With the Scale Advantage, my Bonus is +7, giving me nine dice compared to the tank's lonely one!

In situations where neither party has a clear advantage, do not apply a Bonus at all.



Through sheer luck and a little bit of quick wits, I make it out of the side street in one piece! Now I'm in a busy intersection, surrounded by cars and pedestrians everywhere. Maybe being in plain sight will discourage that stupid tank from following me! No such luck. The hunk of junk careens out of the street behind me! I continue to duck and weave, but the heavy traffic slows me down. The tank has no regard for anyone's safety, but it still needs time to stomp over those pesky cars and other things in its way. Neither of us gets a clear Scale Advantage.

Scale and Certain Abilities

Some Abilities, like *Attack*, do not function in a way that dice can be added to them. Reference what Level 5 of that Ability does instead. For instance, scaling *Attack* would add 5 to the character's DX. Because *Tough* alters a character's Health, you should consider scaling another Ability that achieves a similar purpose, like *Armored*.

If in a setting where the butting of heads between disparate Scales happens a lot, Players and Game Masters may want to create lists of obvious Scale differences from the standard human. Vehicles may have Scale differences for Quick or Armored, while super-powered alien martial artists may be in a completely different league from mere humans and apply Scale Advantages for Attack.

Mecha and Scale

An obvious place Scale will come into play is handling one of anime's most iconic creations: mecha. These giant robots can tower stories over PCs, and it only makes sense that they have Abilities that are equally awing. Or does it? If you're playing a sillier sort of game, or basing your world on anime of that sort, it's not out of the question for skilled warriors to trash these same mechanical behemoths with reckless abandon. That's part of the reason Scale works on a case-by-case basis. What is appropriate for one story is not necessarily appropriate for another.

But if you want at least a casually realistic approach to mecha, you should consider Scale Advantages for *Armored* and *Strong*. While you can scale *Attack* too, it seems that even in more realistic anime, characters have a reasonable chance of surviving barrages of mecha gunfire. *Quick* should be a dynamic consideration, on the side of mecha in direct contests of speed but favoring characters in combat. Humans make puny targets, after all. If you have mecha facing off with even bigger opponents—say, starships—Scale Advantages should be similar.





COMBAT, HEALTH, & ENDURANCE

- Conflict, and its more violent counterpart, combat, can form the core of many stories. Characters may seek justice or revenge, or fights may be brought to them despite their reservations. The world itself can be a dangerous place too, filled with obstacles, traps, and hostility. Overcoming these can take skill and fortitude, and your character might get hurt in the process. So suit up, ready your weapon, and have your wits about you as you explore how OVA handles danger. Past here, there be dragons!

The Round

Most often when you are playing OVA, the passage of time is not important. Waiting for the bus at 3 o'clock can take as long as saying so many words. However, in situations of excitement, danger, and suspense, the nature of time starts to matter. You need to know exactly how much you can accomplish—and how fast.

In these cases, time is split up into dramatic units called *Rounds*. This is not a specific segment of time. A Round may represent mere seconds between a furious exchange of blows. Or instead, it can encompass minutes of heroic dialogue, the detailed exposition of evil plans, a lengthy stalemate of wits, or other posturing. All a Round represents really is enough time for everyone to perform an action. The order in which characters can do so is determined by *Initiative*.

The Game Master may split the game into Rounds for reasons other than combat. Characters might have to escape a trap before time runs out, solve a puzzle before the opposition arrives, or handle other time-sensitive issues. A Round always represents time enough to perform one action.

Initiative

At the beginning of the first Round, everyone involved in a given conflict rolls their Initiative.

Initiative is Two Dice

+ BONUSES & ABILITIES (*Quick*)
– PENALTIES & WEAKNESSES (*Slow*)

Players and NPCs act from highest to lowest Initiative. Should two Initiatives tie, the character rolling the most dice goes first.

If the results are still tied, refer to the next highest result. In the rare scenario that *even this* results in a tie, take turns rolling a die until a winning number is produced.



"Finally we play again, Warrior of the Mist!"

I look up from my partially complete origami crane to see Shou perching on a nearby awning. "Oh, it's you," I say.

With an eerie silence to be expected from an assassin, he drops to the ground below. Shou asks if I am ready without words.

I draw my sword, simultaneously slicing my unfinished crane in half. *Always*.

We both roll our Initiative. I get three dice after applying my *Quick (+1)*: , a result of 6. Even though Shou has more dice, his result of 5 fails to beat mine. I go first.

Refooting

At the beginning of every future Round, any character may reroll their Initiative in an attempt to improve it. However, they must keep the new result, regardless of whether it is higher or lower than before.



Going second is no fun at all!
I'll show that Raine who's boss
by improving my Initiative! I roll
five dice because of my *Quick (+3)*:

...W-Wait! That's even worse than before! Bummer! I'm still stuck going last, after all...

Your Turn

Finally! Your Initiative has come up, and it's time to make a move. This is your *turn*, and at this point you might wonder what exactly you can do. As stated before, you may make one action every Round, whether it is attacking, running away, helping a fallen comrade, or making emergency repairs on your mecha. Defense Rolls, as described later, do not count as actions, and are instead considered *free actions*.

Free Actions

While some things require concentration and effort, making them thus worthy of an action, many things are not. Attacking with a weapon is an action, but drawing that weapon is not. Performing a detailed search of a dresser's contents would require an action, or even several Rounds of actions, but scanning a room quickly would not. If any action can be performed instantaneously and has no room for failure, then it is probably a free action and will never take up a character's action for a given turn. The final determination of what is considered an action is up to the Game Master's discretion.



Attack!

So you've readied yourself, with your fists or weapon up and your feet in an imposing battle stance. Now what? After picking a target, let loose with an *Attack Roll*.

Attack Roll is Two Dice

- + BONUSES, ABILITIES, & PERKS
(*Agile, Combat Expert, Accurate...*)
- PENALTIES, WEAKNESSES, & FLAWS
(*Impaired, Clumsy, Inaccurate...*)

This roll is treated like an opposed roll, with your result being compared to another made by your opponent, the *Defense Roll*. If you exceed this roll, you hit. If you roll less than or tie the *Defense Roll*, you do not.

You should never add Abilities that increase your Damage Multiplier, such as Attack or Strong, to your Attack Roll.

Range

Exact distances are not important in OVA. It is assumed that any character can close the gap and properly face any opponent within a Round. However, there are times when this is not the case. Characters in flying vehicles, on top of buildings, or in other faraway places are simply not in range. Unless the character has a convenient way of getting to them, such distant opponents can only be hit with attacks that have the *Ranged* Perk.



There is no need to tarry further. I whisper the words "Raging Thunder" across my cherished blade before shouting out a resounding "Slash!" in time with the practiced movements of my sword. A wave of crackling energy forks out in front of me.

My skill with a sword gives me seven dice (■■■■■■■) for an admirable result of 12. But is it enough?

Defend!

More than likely, you will want to evade your opponent's attacks. As mentioned previously, this is accomplished through the *Defense Roll*.

Defense Roll is Two Dice

- + BONUSES, ABILITIES, & PERKS
(*Evasive, Quick, Defensive...*)
- PENALTIES, WEAKNESSES, & FLAWS
(*Impaired, Slow, Unwieldy...*)

The act of defending covers any method that avoids or blocks an incoming attack. Whether you backflip out of the way, fend off the blow with your shield, or just trip at the appropriate time is completely up to you.

Some Abilities, like Barrier and Teleport, can also modify your Defense Roll.



Remember, unless explicitly stated otherwise, everyone always has the opportunity to make a Defense Roll, whether they have already attacked, received a Complication (described later), or lost their next action.



Ooooh, is Raine gonna try to singe my eyebrows with that little fork in the toaster attack? We'll see about that! He may be skilled with the sword, but I'm just as fast on my feet!

I roll seven dice, too: ■■■■■■■. Check out all those fives! With that 15, I impressively somersault out of the way of his little lightning bolt completely. Too slow, Raine-chan! Now it's my turn!

Countering

If the old saying “The best defense is a good offense” reflects your combat style, you may consider *Countering* instead of your normal Defense Roll. Countering is a tricky business, with both great possible risk and reward. By declaring you want to Counter *before* your opponent rolls the dice, you actually make a new attack of your own. Then you *both* make an Attack Roll. The highest result is the only attack to have any effect, and it is compared to a Defense Roll of zero! You can describe the maneuver as overpowering the other attack, redirecting it, dodging it deftly and returning fire, or simply managing to strike before the opponent can. In addition to the previous risks, you also lose your next action. If you have already lost your next action, you cannot Counter.

Damage

Once a successful hit is landed on an opponent, *Damage* is calculated. For every point your Attack Roll exceeds your opponent's Defense Roll, you deal your *Damage Multiplier* (or *DX*). The total is then subtracted from your opponent's Health.

Damage Multiplier is 1

+ ABILITIES & PERKS
(*Attack, Strong, Effective...*)
- WEAKNESSES & FLAWS
(*Weak, Ineffective...*)

An opponent's Armored Ability can reduce the DX of your attack. Should this reduce your DX below 1, treat it as $\frac{1}{2}$ instead. Abilities and Weaknesses like Resistance and Vulnerability can modify your Damage, too.



Tch. A miss was most unfortunate. Now, Shou has given me an attack in turn with a result of 10. I'm not quite as evasive as the annoyingly chipper ninja, and my five dice (■■■■■) result only in 8.

Shou's DX is 4 (1 + 2 from *Attack* and +1 from *Strong*). Since the difference between our rolls is 2, I take 8 points of Damage to my Health. Barely a scratch.

Combat Complications

If characters should take half or more of their maximum Health in a single attack, they receive a *Combat Complication*. This represents the overwhelming nature of the blow and puts characters in a position of disadvantage. A Complication can mean many things, but it usually falls under one of these three types:

- **Stunned** characters are thrown off guard by the force of the attack. They may be knocked down, flung into a nearby wall, or simply dazed. Regardless of the exact circumstances, the character loses their next action. If a character is already losing an action through another *Stunned* Complication, Ability, or condition, there is no additional effect.

- **Impaired** characters are debilitated by the attack. The offense may inflict a crippling injury, rattle the character's capacity to think clearly, or otherwise reduce the ability to fight. Characters who are *Impaired* receive a -1 Penalty to all actions for the combat's duration. Further attacks can add more *Impairments*, and the effects may last after the battle at the Game Master's discretion.
- **Weakness/Flaw Complications** cause characters to succumb to one of their Weaknesses or Flaws. A character with *Focus* or *Requirement* may be disarmed or have a key item broken, *Short-Tempered* characters may become enraged and have poor judgment, and so on.

Some Perks allow an attack to only require inflicting a quarter of a character's Health to cause a Complication, like Stunned. The Flaw Feather Blow, on the other hand, makes it impossible altogether.

Damaging Other Things

Whether your battle involves sparring martial artists or giant robots slugging it out, there's bound to be some collateral damage. Missed attacks will often hit *something*, and *Stunned* characters can collide helplessly into the environs. Or you may want to intentionally take out surrounding objects, like locked doors or just stuff in the way. Such things can be handwaved or given Difficulty Numbers, but if you prefer to keep track of exactly how much Damage an object can sustain before being destroyed, reference this chart:

STURDINESS	HEALTH
Flimsy (<i>Cheap Furniture</i>)	10
Typical (<i>Solid Wall</i>)	20
Sturdy (<i>Freezer</i>)	40
Reinforced (<i>Armored Car</i>)	80

For simplicity's sake, characters knocked into an object deal Damage equivalent to the attack that *Stunned* them. Also, even if an item's Health is not depleted, it may still show signs of wear or become unusable.

Health & Endurance

Health will gradually wear down over the course of a fight as you take a few hard knocks. Your Endurance, on the other hand, is reduced by actions *you* take. Feats of stamina and many attacks carry with them an Endurance cost to perform.

If you run out of Health, the battle is not over yet! Through sheer force of will, you can keep on fighting. Further Damage will take away from your Endurance instead, but you now receive a -1 Penalty to all actions, much like the *Impaired* Complication. Likewise, if you use up all your Endurance, further expenditures will deduct from Health, and you'll incur this same -1 Penalty. Once both Health and Endurance are gone, your ability to contribute to the fight is over. You may fall unconscious or tire to the point that you give in. In any case, it's up to your friends to continue the fight from here!

Even when a character is forced to use their Endurance to absorb Damage, Complications are still calculated with total Health, never total Endurance.

Recovering

Once in any combat, you may choose to let your character *recover* instead of taking an action that Round. This maneuver immediately replenishes 10 Endurance, not to exceed the character's maximum. The actual action the character performs is up to you, whether it's focusing ones energy, quoting axioms from an old mentor, or simply having a second wind. Once a character has taken advantage of recovering, they may not do so again until this combat has ended.

Other Combat Actions

While the previous rules will suit most conflicts just fine, what follows is a short list of other options, exceptions, and considerations that you may find useful.

Acting Multiple Times

Normally, you are limited to making one action a Round, but by taking a Penalty to all rolls until your next turn, you can make two—or more! However, you may not repeat the *same* action to the *same* target. (You could attack two opponents but not one opponent twice.) This Penalty is equivalent to the *total* number of actions being made. While Defense Rolls do not count to this total, they still suffer the same Penalty.

You may not compensate for a lost action with this Penalty. If you have lost an action due to the Stunned Complication or an Ability Flaw like Concentration, you cannot act until your next turn.

Adjusting Attacks

While the *Attack* Ability is capable of countless ways of expediting harm, sometimes you just don't feel like fully fleshing out an attack. Or maybe the course of battle makes you wish you could tweak an existing maneuver *just* a little. What follows are a few adjustments you can make to any attack without altering its Endurance cost.

- **RECKLESS OFFENSE** Increase your Attack Roll by 2 but reduce your Defense Rolls by 2 until your next turn. (Accurate x2, Unwieldy x2)
- **KAMIKAZE STRIKE** Increase your Attack Roll by 5 but make no Defense Rolls until your next turn. (Accurate x5, Open to Attack)
- **DEFENSIVE STANCE** Reduce your Attack Roll by 2 but increase your Defense Rolls by 2 until your next turn. (Defensive x2, Inaccurate x2)

Don't Hurt Me!

By forfeiting your next action in the pursuit of not getting hurt, you may double the number of dice in your Defense Roll.

If you have already lost your next action due to being Stunned or an Ability Flaw, you may not double your Defense Roll.

Mark

Any successful strike that would ordinarily damage an opponent may be turned into a *mark*, a non-damaging but potentially embarrassing attack. A mark can represent a taunting slap, a shot-off hat, or even a carved letter in clothing. This technique is useful when you do not want to harm the opponent or, rather, want to enrage the foe into a state of carelessness.

Protect

Sometimes, the well-being of another is more important to you than your own. Risking life and limb, you can help a character who has failed their Defense Roll. By forfeiting your next action, you may make a Defense Roll against the attack as if it were made against you and take any Damage received as well. But use common sense. If the character is behind a wall, in the air, or otherwise out of your reach, this will not be possible.

Situational Modifiers

While it's perfectly plausible to duke it out in carefully constructed arenas with nary an obstacle in sight, often battles will take place in less than ideal surroundings. Characters may find themselves facing off over long distances, from behind the cover of walls, through the veil of fog, or amid difficult to navigate terrain. In situations like these, characters should receive Penalties to appropriate actions, with -1 covering mild annoyances and -3 representing truly inhibiting circumstances. Characters may be able to offset these Penalties with

Agile, Heightened Sense, Incorporeal Form, Sixth Sense, or Perks that can strike through or around what stands in an attack's way.

Submission Attack

If any attack deals enough Damage to reduce both Health and Endurance to zero, the striking character may instead opt to make a *Submission Attack*. This move puts the opponent in a very undesirable position, such as a sharp blade to the throat or anything else that guarantees a measure of obedience. This technique is useful to gain information out of an opponent, obtain a hostage, or just toy around with other combatants. However, it may be possible for characters held by a Submission Attack to turn the tables, depending on circumstances and ultimately the GM's discretion.

Surprise

While sometimes adversaries will announce themselves honorably to each other, there are times when getting the jump on your opponents is more advantageous. If you ever come upon your opponent unaware, whether through chance or deliberate sneaking attempts—with Abilities like *Quick* and *Art of Invisibility*—you may initiate a fight and be the exclusive party to attack in the first Round!

While they cannot act, surprised characters can still perform free actions like Defense Rolls. However, they receive a Penalty to all actions during the first Round based on their state of awareness:

- **ALERT AND READY (-1)** Characters are probably armed and, though caught off guard, on the lookout for trouble.
- **CASUAL (-2)** Characters are fully active but not expecting danger.
- **UNAWARE (-3)** Characters may be resting, asleep, or deeply invested in a task.

Once the surprise Round ends, combat is conducted as normal.

Wrestling

Instead of making an attack on your turn, you may indicate that you intend to wrestle with your opponent. Any successful Attack Roll immediately entwines you together in a grab, chokehold, or some other inhibiting move. While no Damage is dealt this turn, on future turns, you and your opponent may only attack each other. Instead of an action, grappled opponents may state that they are trying to break free. Opposed rolls (with Abilities like *Strong* or *Evasive*) are made, and success means the hold is broken.

If you want to truly stop someone in their tracks, you should make an attack with the Paralyzing Perk instead.

Changing How Combat Works

OVA makes a few assumptions about the kind of story you're telling—that it's one prone to thrilling bouts between good and evil and probably an explosion or two. But that's not the only kind. If your game is about high school romance or adjusting to life in a rural town, blow-to-blow accounts of fighting simply aren't necessary. You just need to know if the bully stuffs you in the locker or how that tussle with the peevish cat went.

Treat it as an opposed roll instead. Just roll all the dice you think will apply to the fight (even *Tough* and *Frail*), and your opponent does the same. The winner is the winner and gets his or her way.

On the other hand, if you want combat to be a darker, grittier affair, you can cut down on the default Health and Endurance by as much as half. Not only will each blow smart that much more, Complications will be easier to inflict—and receive.

Other Ways to Get Hurt

Of course, there are more ways to get hurt than an outright fight. The truly daring might even find potential harm around every corner...or at the corner...or right before the corner...

Crashing, Colliding, & Ramming

Should a vehicle come abruptly into contact with another object—whether by accident or an intentional ramming maneuver—it will receive Damage. Much like if they were attacked, characters must make a Defense Roll versus the appropriate DN. Include *Quick*, *Pilot*, and any other Abilities that logically apply. If the collision has come about due to a roll the character has already failed, use that result instead.

SPEED OF IMPACT	DN
Sunday Driving	2
Rolling Along	4
Brisk Clip	6
Speed Demon	8
Breakneck	10
What Were You Thinking?	12

If two vehicles collide head on, consider what their combined speed would be. If they are going the same direction, only consider the difference between speeds.

Even if the character succeeds at this Defense Roll, the collision is not averted; the vehicle simply escapes with no more than a superficial blemish.

After this roll, the character's vehicle receives Damage. The Damage Multiplier is determined by a variety of factors. Compare to the following chart, adding Bonuses and Penalties to a DX of one.

COLLIDES WITH... DX MODIFIER

Permanent Structure	+4
Weaker Object	-1
Tougher Object	+1 to +3
Other Modifiers	-1 to +3

Characters will always receive half this Damage from the trauma of the impact.



Hey, look! I was minding my own business, riding my motorcycle like always, all right? Okay, maybe I ran that red light back there, but this cop is crazy! You think he might give me a ticket or something, but no! The guy pulls out the biggest gun I've ever seen and opens fire! I try to jet the hell out of here, but since I'm being *shot at* and all, I may have oversteered a little. Now my bike is skidding out of control! My unimpressive roll of 3 will have to do for this crash. I was going pretty darn fast, so the DN is 8. A difference of 5. Ouch!

Thankfully, I didn't run into anything in particular, so the DX of 1 does little more than scratch up my paint job (5×1 , 5 Damage) and maybe scrape my elbow ($5 \times \frac{1}{2}$, rounded to 3). But even so, it will take me a bit to get my bike going again, and where do I go to get away from this nut? I think I better hoof it instead, so I dive into a tight alley between two buildings...

Falling

Falling from great heights is a danger all too real for the adventurous—and even the not so adventurous. This is handled much like crashing, you even use the same DX table, but there's no vehicle to protect you from Damage, and what you hit is almost always a +4 DX Permanent Structure: the ground. For Damage, compare a

roll of *Agile* and other applicable Ability dice to a Difficulty Number below. Multiply the difference by the fall's DX.

DISTANCE FALLEN	DN
Missed a Step	2
A Good Jump	4
Challenging Drop	6
Difficult to Manage	8
That's a Long Way Down...	10
Nobody Could Survive That!	12

Due to the inescapable anime law that one can jump many times one's own height, you can allow characters to hop about as they please and only resort to falling Damage for accidents or extreme drops.

Gag Damage

Often in anime, characters possess a remarkable ability to survive dreadful injuries for the sake of a laugh. You can just role-play such situations out, but if you want to give them more mechanical significance, characters can take *Gag Damage*. *Gag Damage* works as Damage always does. Calculate it the same way and even inflict Complications as appropriate. However, this Damage, and any effects from it, wear off in a short amount of time: a few minutes of story time or a few Rounds in combat. Even if a character receives enough *Gag Damage*, or enough combined *Gag* and normal Damage, to reduce Health and Endurance to zero, the incapacitation is temporary.

*You can use *Gag Damage* to represent any sort of short-lived injury.*



Draining Endurance

Like Health, there are reasons outside of combat that can drain your Endurance. Many trials will test your fortitude as opposed to your raw toughness. Even a hulking warrior can succumb to these dangers!

Tests of Stamina

Endurance is a measure of your vitality and energy, and as such, is vitally important for any extended mode of action, whether it involves holding up a collapsing ceiling, running a marathon, or just remaining perfectly still.

Initially, none of these activities require any use of Endurance. But as time passes, fatigue sets in. The weight becomes too much, the race too hard, or the urge to sneeze too much to ignore.

Similarly to combat, the game is split into Rounds whenever a character continues an activity over time. Each Round, others have time to complete one action. The exact amount of time that passes is inconstant and ultimately up to the Game Master's discretion. Every Round after the first, the character loses Endurance. How quickly this happens depends on the initial difficulty of the task.

DIFFICULTY	ENDURANCE
Easy	5
Challenging	10
Difficult	20

If Endurance reaches zero, a character must abruptly give up. The ceiling falls in as the character steps away, the runner pauses for a catch of breath, and hiding is forsaken in favor of regaining feeling in numb limbs.

Pressing On

Sometimes, carrying on is more important than one's well-being. By successfully making a roll with *Iron-Willed/Weak-Willed* against a Challenging (6) Difficulty Number, a character may press on. Further Endurance is now subtracted from Health. Should this be exhausted, characters fall unconscious. The character remains inside as the building collapses, crumples in a heap as runners race past and over, or makes a big scene fainting into plain view.

Drowning, Suffocation, & Other Dangers

In some cases, a character cannot press on even if they want to. A character can only hold their breath for so long or resist the effects of smoke or dangerous gasses so much. Should you find yourself trapped, forced, or stuck underwater, in a giant gelatinous mass, in a sleep-inducing fog, or in some other space with compromised air, you run the risk of succumbing to it.



As with other tests of stamina, how fast you lose Endurance is determined by how difficult the task (in this case, breathing) is, and uses the same chart.

However, when Endurance runs out, the character immediately falls unconscious and cannot press on. Generally, characters will never die from drowning or suffocating but may be inconvenienced in a major way. Washing ashore in an isolated place, being out of action for the rest of the adventure, or catching a cold when they eventually make it out of the mess are just a few of the possibilities.



An underwater escape act? I could do that in my sleep. Staying calm and using as little movement possible, I only need 5 Endurance to hold my breath. The act involves four locks and four Rounds of actions. That's 20 Endurance! I emerge with energy to spare.

If a character does not spend longer than a Round without air, you should not bother noting an Endurance cost. Quick dives underwater, darts into a smoke-filled room, and other short tasks should not affect a character's Endurance.

Healing and Rest

With so many things out there to cause harm, one might lose hope of surviving at all. Luckily, there are many ways to recover from the injuries and ills suffered during the course of adventures.

Recovering Health

Health can be restored in several ways:

- **BETWEEN ADVENTURES** All Health is automatically regained after an adventure has ended. If you can make it to the end of the story, there is little to worry about besides glorying in victory or grousing in defeat.

- **A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP** Due to the amazing physics of cinematic storytelling, most injuries can be cured with a full night's rest. At the Game Master's discretion, other long pauses in a game's narrative can also provide the opportunity to recover lost Health.
- **A HEALER'S AID** Those trained in the *Healer* Ability can provide the most efficient recovery of Health when true rest is not obtainable. See *Healer* (p. 54) for details on how it works.
- **SHORT RESPITE** If no other method is available, you can still recover some from your injuries. By finding a significant chunk of rest, a few hours in story time at least, you can gain back Health. Simply roll two dice, and your *Vigorous* dice should you have it, and add the result to your Health. Once you have recovered Health in this way, you may not do so again until the next day.

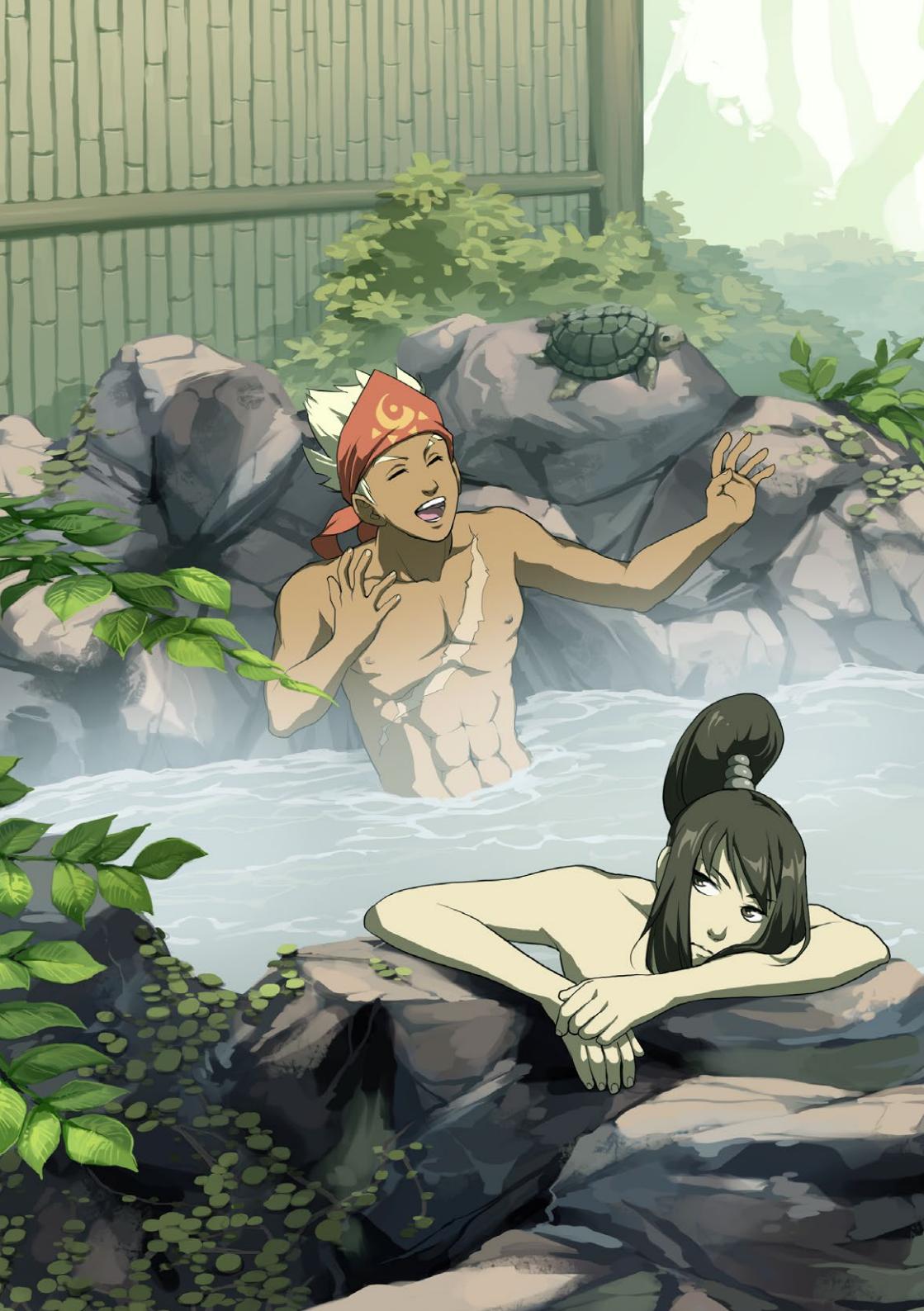
Recovering Endurance

Unlike Health, Endurance is fairly easy to recover. All that is needed is a short period of rest, around half an hour in the story, and all Endurance is regained.

If you are consistently thrown from one dire situation to the next, then this opportunity is not available. However, like in combat, you may spend an action to recover 10 Endurance. This may not be repeated for a significant amount of time at the Game Master's discretion.

Injuries and the Story

While the abstract totals of Health can be reduced, restored, and otherwise altered with abandon, there are times when injuries become more integral to the story. Should Players and the Game Master wish it, certain conditions may only be healed as the story permits. Broken limbs, near-mortal wounds, mysterious illnesses, and other woes may only be resolved through time—or adventures of their own!





GROWTH & EXPERIENCE

- Over the course of time, your character and those of your fellow Players will change. The adventures, confrontations, friendships, mistakes, and lessons they encounter affect who they are—and how they act. Perhaps even more importantly, it helps them grow and reach new potential.

Growing through Play

As you play your character, you may come across situations that directly shape who they are. If a character should meet a skilled teacher and train, she will either become more adept or gain a new Ability altogether. A once easily frightened character may become brave through his adventures. Some characters may just mature, getting over what once seemed important to them. Still others will confront intense traumas that may give new fears and doubts. When these things happen, the character's Abilities and Weaknesses will change and disappear.

Growing through Experience

But not all growth is the direct result of specific stimuli. As characters go on adventures, find their way, and fight the good fight (or the bad one, for that matter), they gradually become more capable and take one step closer to the people they're destined to be. This experience is represented in OVA as *Experience Points*.

The Game Master may give you Experience Points after a few sessions, after a single adventure, or even during the course of play. These points are used to make your character grow, and there are several ways to earn them:

- Be There.** By simply taking part in the story, you will gain an Experience Point every few gaming sessions.
- Be Inventive.** Sometimes, you will come up with a really great idea, take the story in a creative direction, or just form a potentially good plan. When it is apparent that extra effort has been made, the Game Master may award an Experience Point—even when such brilliant ideas do not work out.
- Be Involved.** Don't just play, role-play! If your interaction with other Players, the Game Master, and even the world itself consistently improves the quality of the game, you might be rewarded with an Experience Point.

Game Masters can find more advice on giving out Experience and running the game in the Game Master's Section.

Spending Experience

So, what can you do with these Experience Points? Spend them! You can use your hard-earned Experience Points to raise your current Abilities—or even to gain new ones.

But all stories won't use Experience in the same way. A coming of age adventure tale where plucky heroes rapidly advance in their capabilities, expand their arsenals, and...well...grow up, has different implications than a grim cop story populated with grizzled veterans who have already lived full lives, taken their hard knocks, and are unlikely to change much at all between adventures.

The Rate of Experience

The Game Master will set a *Rate of Experience* for the game. This determines how many points you need to spend to gain a Level in an Ability.

EXPERIENCE RATE	COST/LEVEL
Heroic	1 per Level
Typical	2 per Level
Limited	3 per Level



I feel like I have gotten better at using my telekinetic powers to defend myself. If I wanted to gain *Combat Expert* at +2, I would need 2 Experience Points in a *heroic* game. In a *typical* game, this would be 4 Experience Points instead, and I'd need 6 in a *limited* game. That's a lot...Maybe I should raise *Art of Invisibility* instead...

Experience and Weaknesses

Weaknesses can potentially be lessened in severity or removed altogether in the same way. However, it's generally more interesting, and more poignant, to face your Weaknesses during play than just buying them off between adventures. If you would like to modify your Weaknesses with Experience Points, discuss this with your Game Master. Together, you may find a way to incorporate it into the game itself. Bonus, you can keep those Experience Points to add something neat to your character!

If you used the Scaled Cost rules during character creation, these same costs still apply to using your Experience Points. With typical and limited games, your spent Experience will need to be doubled and tripled respectively.

Experience Epiphanies

While it's perfectly fine to use up your Experience between adventures, you might not be sure what you want to do or how your character should grow. That's fine, too! In fact, holding on to your Experience Points opens another option.

If during the game you decide that you want your character to have an Ability that's not on their character sheet, you can spend the Experience then and there to gain that Ability! Maybe you harness a mysterious power in the exact moment you need it most, evolve into a more fierce battle machine, or simply possess a talent you haven't told anyone about. Whatever the case, mark off the Experience and write it down as a permanent addition to your character.

You can remove or temper Weaknesses, too, with the same caveats described earlier.

A Game without Experience

Just like games will vary in their Rate of Experience, it's possible you, your Game Master, and your fellow Players will find no need for Experience at all. Perhaps all of your adventures are of the one-shot variety, with few characters ever appearing again. Or maybe it's just a low-key sort of story where characters are apt to change very little, and when they do, they do so directly in response to specific events. If that's the case, you can disregard Experience altogether.

Game Masters who want to reward good play can make use of free Drama Dice in the stead of Experience.

Retiring Characters

As time passes, you may feel you need a change of pace. Some characters, once they have achieved all their major goals, seem to lack purpose. Others may simply become boring to you over continuous play. For these and other reasons, you may want to retire your character.

This "retirement" can be handled in several ways:

- **The character may become an NPC.** This is useful when characters have become inseparable from the storyline, but a Player is unwilling or unable to continue. The character remains much the same, only now under Game Master control. This can also be appropriate for a Player who wants a break and will resume play of the character later.
- **The character may die.** Players can discuss with the Game Master how to make an appropriately moving scenario for such a death. You can even plot your character's demise without the other Players being aware!

- **The character may be captured or temporarily incapacitated.** If killing off your cherished character seems too harsh, but you aren't entirely comfortable with handing the reins over to the Game Master either, this can be a satisfactory middle ground. And who knows, maybe something happens in that time away to make the character a very different one to play altogether!
- **The character may retire from their adventurous exploits.** They could settle down and start a family, move far away, or just stop hanging out with the other characters. Such characters can either disappear from the story completely or remain available as an advisor or other infrequent participant in your adventures.





GAME MASTER'S SECTION

- So you want to be a Game Master? The job you've chosen is far from a simple one. The responsibility for the entire game rests on your shoulders. Handling the rules and settling the results of the Players' actions require a great deal of quick thinking. And creating the world itself! Meticulously plotting out the adventures and personifying a plethora of characters will take more than a little creativity. If it seems like a lot of work, you're right. But therein lies the beauty of Game Mastering. Through all your toils, you have an entire universe under your fingertips. The only limit is your imagination!

There is no need to read this chapter if you only plan to participate in OVA as a Player. But if the role of the Game Master calls to you, read on!

What Does a GM Do?

The Game Master is a unique entity. Unlike the Players, whose sole responsibility is to play their own characters, a GM has to juggle numerous roles at the same time.

The GM Is a Storyteller

Arguably the most essential role of a Game Master is that of a storyteller. While it's everyone's responsibility to contribute meaningfully to the game's fiction, it is the GM who lays the groundwork of the tale, establishing a starting point and giving the Players a reason to want to participate. As a GM, you must also be able to visualize this story in words, describing the world surrounding the Players'

characters and making quick decisions based on their often unpredictable actions.

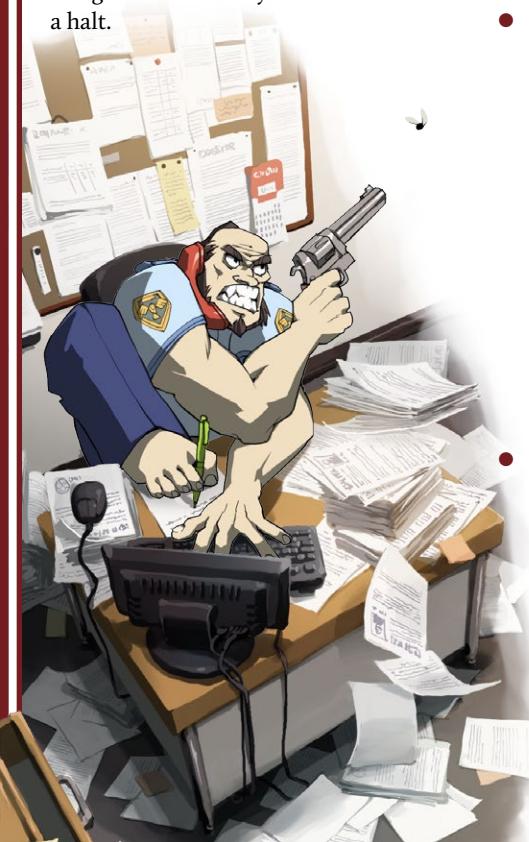
Before each session, the Game Master prepares an adventure, a single episode or scenario of the story, for the Players to take part in. This involves making a few notes. What do you expect to happen? Who will the PCs meet? Where will they go? What will the PCs' goals for the adventure be, and why will they care? A Game Master must answer all of these questions.

Should Players go astray from your intended flow of events, you must be able to gently guide them back without resorting to blatant force. If you're feeling adventurous, you might even wing it, taking this new path wherever it may lead.

The GM Is a Referee

Like any game, OVA adheres to a set of rules. Similar to a referee or judge, the Game Master has the final say on how these rules are interpreted and applied during the game. But that does not give you free reign to be an arbitrary despot! You must do your best to be fair to everyone and rule in a way that keeps the game moving smoothly. And with rules being so tightly interwoven with the story, it is important to be very familiar with them and all their uses. It's no fun to watch you constantly thumb through the rulebook as you scratch your head.

But this book is not exhaustive. Many times, the Players will try to do things not directly covered by these rules or find new uses for previously mundane skills and abilities. You must not only rule sensibly and fairly, but also quickly. Indecision can bring an otherwise dynamic adventure to a halt.



The GM Is a Player

Despite these other responsibilities, the Game Master is still a Player—only instead of a single character to portray, an entire world lies under your purview!

Because you know so much about the world and the PCs—there are no secrets from the Game Master—the ability to role-play honestly can be difficult. But you can use this knowledge as an advantage, molding NPCs to complement the Players and the plot.

And like the word *Player* suggests, the Game Master is here for the same reason as everyone else: to have a good time.

Types of Games

As it is with so many facets of role-playing games, there is no *one* right way to play and structure your adventures. Even so, here are some of the most typical setups:

- **The One-Shot** is an RPG at its most basic, consisting of a single adventure played over the course of one or two sessions. Plotlines are introduced quickly and resolved by the adventure's end. Because there is so little time for character development and plot progression, one-shots are best suited for fast-paced, exciting games with very little carrying over from one adventure to the next. The episodic nature of one-shots makes them ideal for gaming groups that meet infrequently or are constantly swapping participants.
- **The Story-Arc** is a group of adventures united by a common goal or story element. With a less defined length, plots can be slower and more deliberate. Antagonists, conflicts, and obstacles may appear in any of these adventures, but most will only find resolution at the story-arc's end. The Players can take advantage of the looser time frame for role-playing, but characters will likely

change little during the story-arc. If you and the Players continue to explore their characters and the world they live in, story-arcs may evolve into the type of game known as...

- **The Campaign** is the most epic kind of game. With a broader scope, the world is very open to the actions of the Players. Antagonists will come and go, story-arcs will begin and draw to a close, and as time passes, the characters will grow and change as a result of their adventures. Some campaigns may have no defined ending at all, going in directions the Players, and even you, never expected. Because they can stretch across many sessions and weave so many intricate connections into the world itself, campaigns are best for groups that meet often and change very little in their members.

Making an Adventure

The term *adventure* harkens back to the origins of role-playing games, where the Players almost always took up arms and set forth into a dangerous world. Your adventures in OVA can be just as bold, or they can convey the subtler, day-to-day “adventures” of life. Regardless of the path you and the other Players choose, it is important to set up the groundwork for your story before you play. It’s much like putting together an episode of a television show. Only by bringing the set, the script, and the cast together can you create a well-rounded adventure.

The Set

First, and most importantly, you have to decide on the kind of world (or worlds) your Players will become a part of. A modern day high school, a battle cruiser in the Galactic Empire, and feudal Japan all have very different implications and expectations.

Maybe you already have a world in mind. Sparked by a favorite anime or idea,

it’s easy to start creating. However, this world is not yours alone but one that belongs to your Players, too! You should sit down with your gaming group and discuss the sort of place you want to tell stories in.

How deeply you detail this world depends on what you want to accomplish. A modern day, slice-of-life story can be built on places and themes your Players are already familiar with and need little preparation beyond the typical locations they will visit. Even more outlandish worlds of high technology or magic may not require any extensive level of detail. A brief description of the way things are and, again, the typical destinations should suffice.

But many Game Masters thrive on this stage of preparation. You have the ability to devise a new world completely of your own design. This effort can directly translate into gameplay opportunities, too. Intricate politics provide the background for intrigue and strife, long-standing mysteries beg to be investigated, and exotic locales may become the basis for adventures in their own right. How far you take the set of your game is purely up to you and your Players’ expectations for the adventure.

The Script

The script of your adventure is a basic guideline of what you expect to happen, what people will be met, and what problems will arise and be resolved. Unlike a script, though, your Players are not limited to prewritten lines on paper. They have the ability to write their own lines. You will have to use more creative means to encourage them to become involved in your adventure.

The key to any good story—especially an adventure like yours—lies in conflict. By upsetting the way things are, it is up to your Players to take action and restore order. A villain may be running rampant,

a powerful artifact is stolen, or even a new pretty boy has enrolled in the PCs' high school!

But why should they act? If they have no reason to make a change, they probably won't. You have to get them involved. Look at your Players' characters and find what they care about. By carefully considering their motives, be it money, love, duty, or saving their own skins, you can make the Players act without forcing them to do so.

Once you have decided the source of conflict, you have to complicate its resolution. How exciting would it be if the Players could simply knock on the villain's door and say, "Hi, we're here to kill you"? In every adventure, there should be at least a few major complications. Some ideas could be:

- **Don't reveal the source** of the problem. Leave it up to the PCs to discover where to find it. You can even set up a complex trail of clues to lengthen an adventure.
- **Misinform the PCs.** What seems to be the origin of the problem turns out not to be. Present several false leads only for them to point in another direction.
- **Henchmen** make instantly gratifying roadblocks. Not only do they keep the game exciting, but it's a good excuse to reveal more information about the source of the conflict once they have been beaten.
- **Let the problem get away.** This can be particularly useful for story-arcs and campaigns, where leaving avenues for a quick escape can keep a full resolution from happening. Even if the villain's current plot is foiled, there will be a next time!
- **Change the rules.** Encourage the PCs to go about resolving the issue in a different way. If an encounter would

normally be resolved with fighting, put the characters in a situation or locale where they can't engage their opponent. Appeal to the PCs' other talents.

- **Change the antagonist.** The new student isn't causing the PCs' troubles at all...but that unassuming bookworm has a diabolical plan. Who Players *thought* was the villain only takes orders from the real culprit under duress.
- **Make a dilemma,** and you put your Players in an instant bind. It's especially fun to present an easy solution to the problem but take advantage of the PCs' moral (or at least self-preserving) sensibilities to convince them to do something else.

All of the twists and turns lead to one final point. This climax is the single most exciting event of the story, and more often than not, where the characters face a very powerful foe or otherwise worthy opponent. Many questions raised thus far are answered, and the source of the problem is revealed. Now it's time for your Players to do something about it! They may combine what they've learned in the adventure to solve the problem, confront the antagonist, or just destroy what stands in their way. But even the completion of the adventure may not resolve *everything*. Questions of who, what, why, and how can persist. Use them to draw the PCs into a story-arc or even a campaign!

The Cast

As you plot out your adventures, you may come to the conclusion that the best way to move your story along is by letting NPCs do the work for you. After all, there are few more direct, tangible ways to interact with PCs than through the words and actions of other denizens of their world.

But how does one go about populating an adventure with these Non-Player Characters?

Creating NPCs

Creating an NPC is not all that different from creating any character in OVA. But unlike those of the Players, not all of your characters are created equal. Based on their capabilities, importance, and staying power, NPCs fall under one of four categories.

Extras

Extras are the most basic NPCs you will use. They are the shop clerks, the janitors, the security guards, and the stock ninja. Many of these NPCs will not even warrant assigning Abilities and Weaknesses at all.

But when you *do* detail Extras, remember their place in the story. They should rarely have more than a few Abilities, and only at modest levels of +1 or +2. Also, these disposable characters start with 10 Health and Endurance. In fact, if you find it easier during play, your PCs may dispatch Extras with a single hit, regardless of the Damage dealt!

If you plan to field a lot of Extras as cannon fodder against the PCs, it's perfectly all right to roll Initiative and declare actions for them as a group.

Secondary

Unlike Extras, whom the PCs will likely never meet again, Secondary NPCs have some significance to the plot. Even if they do not appear directly, their actions still have impact. They are the parents and families, the political officials, the well-ranked soldiers, and the established (if mad) scientists.

Though not as easily dealt with as Extras, Secondary NPCs only have 20 each of Health and Endurance—the same as characters created with the *Companion* Ability. They should rarely have better than +2 or +3 in Abilities, or if they do, only in very focused areas or accompanied by substantial Weaknesses.

Heroic

NPCs of Heroic caliber are integral to your story. These characters advance the plot, are a large part of the PCs' motives, or can even be the root of their troubles. Such NPCs can be formidable adversaries, capable of possessing amazing Levels of Ability and using the same starting Health and Endurance as any Player Character.

Boss

Boss NPCs are the ultimate antagonists, able to face off against an entire group of daring heroes! Not only can they wield power comparable to that of the Player Characters, they have access to several special *Boss Abilities* to give them an extra edge. Moreover, these Boss Abilities can be applied and removed as they're needed. Have a bunch of robotic minions to round out a fight? Maybe you won't need them. Is the villain fighting alone against a party bolstered with extra members? By all means, load up!

- **Health Reserve** grants NPCs an additional Health total equal to their current one. Once one set of Health has been depleted, the next kicks in. Complications are still calculated with the original total, not the sum of the numbers. However, Bosses only get the -1 Penalty for losing all Health if *both* totals are reduced to zero.
- **Extra Actions** allow an NPC to take a number of actions equal to the number of PCs present without penalty.
- **Scale Advantages** for combat-related Abilities like *Attack*, *Combat Expert*, or *Quick* can help give NPCs the upper hand in battle.
- **Escape Plan** lets NPCs disengage from the Encounter instead of facing defeat at the hands of the Players. Teleportation devices, escape capsules, or even convenient clouds of smoke all work in a pinch!

Creating Conflicts

Conflict can take on many forms. The PCs may have their ideals challenged, be faced with a mystery that needs solving, or have their deepest desires dangled tantalizingly within reach. They may have to use their talents, their knowledge, or pure luck to confront and overcome them.

But often, conflict cannot be resolved through quick-thinking or just a test of skill. Sometimes the PCs have to fight their way, and the antagonists that test their combat prowess and fortitude are not to be constructed lightly. Balancing them appropriately against the PCs is important. But how is this done? When the Players' party can vary so much, with so many powers, strengths, and weaknesses, it can be difficult to determine what is too hard—and what is not hard enough!



Threat Value

Every character in OVA has a *Threat Value*. This number can give you a better handle on how to balance conflicts in the game.

Simply add the following *without* taking into account any Perks or Flaws: the character's Attack Roll, Defense Roll, Damage Multiplier, Level in *Armored*, and the Levels of any Abilities or Weaknesses that modify Health and Endurance.

For example, *Attack*, *Strong*, and *Weak* should be included, but not modifiers from the Ability Perk *Effective* or the Flaw *Ineffective*. *Quick*, but not *Defensive*, and so on. If a character has multiple options for a given item, use the best one.

If the character has an Ability that does not affect any of the above, yet could prove particularly useful to an encounter, include it in the Threat Value but *halve* its Level, rounded up. Abilities like *Healer* and *Magic* are good candidates. *Companion* and *Minions* are not. Calculate their TVs separately.

Finally, consider NPC type. Subtract 4 from Secondary NPCs (minimum of 1). Extras are always 1. Add 5 for each Boss Ability.

To create a balanced encounter, combine the TVs of all PCs, choose a difficulty below, and use the multiplier to generate a rough estimate of your opposition's TV.

DIFFICULTY	ENEMY TV
Easy	$\frac{1}{4}$
Moderate	$\frac{1}{2}$
Challenging	$\frac{3}{4}$
Dead Even	1
Unlikely Victory	$1\frac{1}{2}$
Nigh Impossible	2

But Threat Value is not an explicit science nor a magic number. Be mindful of how combats play out and tweak a few enemy Abilities and Weaknesses if needed!

Running a Game

So! You've crafted a world, populated it with interesting people, and sown it with seeds for captivating tales. But while the value of preparation cannot be understated, eventually you have to open the gates to your world and let the Players run wild. Daunting as that may be, take solace in the fact there is no *wrong* way to play as long as everyone is having a good time. Still, what follows is some advice on running a game of OVA, how to keep the game going smoothly and, most of all, fun.

Rolling Dice

Dice are central to playing OVA. They represent skill, chance, and action. Few things charge a dramatic moment with tension the same way as those funny little cubes tumbling across the table.

But as with most things, more is not necessarily better. Dice take time, both to roll and to tabulate, so you should make sure that the result you're looking for is actually worth that investment to discover. If you break out the bones every time a character performs a task, at best, you make the game drag on more than it needs to. At worst, you rob the events that do matter of the gravitas they deserve.

Before you suggest that a Player roll the dice, consider the following:

- **Is it routine for the character?** If a character can complete a task easily, dice are rarely necessary. The marginal chance of failure provided is dull and potentially ludicrous, not dramatic.
- **Is there any consequence for failure?** Resorting to dice is not necessary when failing causes no repercussions or loss.

So don't make Players roll to jump a ditch, nor should you penalize them with a risk of failure just for letting their characters show off. Giving your Players the latitude

to toss boulders in a fit of rage or perform showy, but ultimately needless, stunts like running along a telephone line will result in much more rewarding stories.

On the other hand, if the character is trying to toss boulders at a specific spot to disrupt the workings of a death machine, or that tightrope display is accompanied by an entourage of evil ninja in close pursuit—well, that's totally different, isn't it?

Handling Failure

Of course, with risk comes the possibility that the PCs *are* going to fail sometimes. How you handle this is the difference between nail-biting excitement and slamming the game into a brick wall.

You should never let the fate of the adventure rest on a single roll of the dice. If the PCs fail to find that sole vital clue you've hidden away, or they don't manage to catch on to the escaping airship where you *planned* to have the adventure's climax take place, the Players have few options to continue. Consider alternate paths for them to pursue or other talents the characters can avail themselves. And don't forget to make use of Complications! These not only allow you to keep the game moving forward, but the story will almost always become that much better with a wrench or two thrown in!

And when characters do fail, try to phrase failure in the context of the story. If your Players are a bunch of cooler-than-cool adventurers, having them fall flat on their face is unlikely to serve anyone's vision of the game well. Did the party's acrobatic ne'er-do-well fail that roll to leap over the chasm? Instead of having her miss the jump outright, have the ground give way on the other side. Unexpected security measures can foil the ever-capable thief, runes can prove too worn for the astute scholar to read accurately, and so on. Failure doesn't have to make the heroes look bad!

On the flip side, if you are going for a ridiculous slapstick romp, by all means have characters trip, flail, get injured, and otherwise make a laughing stock of themselves, despite—or because of—their qualifications.

Getting Players to Care

While ideally everyone will be invested in telling great stories in OVA, you have to do your part to involve the Players. Looking to their characters is an ideal place to start. After all, the Abilities and Weaknesses Players choose are like bullet points for the kind of game they want to play. Fill your adventures with ideas inspired by them, and you'll surely grab their attention. But keeping that attention during the game requires your input, too!

Set the Scene

The first impression Players will have of the game's world is through you. Your words frame their surroundings and bring into focus all the things that exist within. So it's really important for you to be enthusiastic about the storytelling aspect of Game Mastering. If your description is bland, their view of the world will also be bland, regardless of how magnificent you picture it to be.

After that burst of light, you mysteriously find yourselves in a strange place. Everything's metal; it looks like the inside of a spaceship of some sort.

Despite the potential interest of such a wild setting, the deadpan factual description gives the essential but none of the atmosphere. The feeling of awe you wanted to share with the Players is nonexistent. Even though all you have are words, try to appeal to all the senses. Give details. Rich imagery will bring the Players into your world.

As the blinding light fades, your bodies are overcome with a chilly tingling sensation. This feeling, too, fades away as the ability to see your surroundings returns. The glossy shine of metal is everywhere, punctuated by small points of light. Screens displaying incomprehensible data float near the walls without support. The hum of countless mechanisms fill your ears, and your footsteps echo about the small room. Wherever you are, it is not of this earth!

If you're not comfortable making up verbose descriptions on the spot, it's perfectly reasonable to write down snippets of text for locations and events before the game. Just be careful not to overtly force your Players down a given path to ensure their usage. (See the *Pacing and Structure* heading later on.)

Make NPCs That Matter

While there is plenty of natural wonder you can put into the game, with brilliant locales and dangerous obstacles for the PCs to encounter, more likely than not it will be *other characters* that drive your story. They guide your heroes, lead them astray, aid them in their quests, or get in the way. If your description of the world is the Player's map, your NPCs very much provide the X that marks the spot where you want them to go.

And sure, you could have a faceless citizen point the way to the gloomy castle or create a villain with a laundry list of awesome powers with little thought or reasoning beyond "he's so bad!" It'll work. Most Players will go along for the ride and thrash whatever baddie of the week you set before them. But why leave it at that? Involve the PCs! Exhibit the fear that the townsperson feels and how loath she is to even *mention* that horrid castle. Make Players *want* to defeat the villain by

having the bad guy threaten the goals and ideals they hold dear. Kidnap loved ones, terrorize innocents, hold elaborate speeches of intended future villainy!

But interesting NPCs are more than just the role they fill in your story. Even though the heroes are the stars, other characters still have dreams and qualities of their own. Think of what they did day-to-day, what they wanted from life before the PCs arrived. Strive to make any character in your story unique and memorable. A quirky manner of speaking, elaborate wardrobe choices, or an intriguing hobby will embed the character in your Players' minds. Try to avoid generic characters that can be replaced without anyone being the wiser.

This goes for your antagonists, too! While you can get a lot of mileage out of demons, aliens, and ogres, few people are evil just for the sake of being evil. They have some motivation for being who they are and doing the things they do. Some of the best villains are really not so evil at all but slaves to circumstance or simply misguided. They might even join the Players should it fit their goals. (There's always time for betrayal later.)

And just like your PCs, even the most powerful villains have Weaknesses. Questionable ethics do not exclude a character from having...well...character. Something is important to them, and something hurts them. Considering such Weaknesses can provide openings for role-playing—and avenues for resolution beyond fists and weaponry.

Remember Who the Heroes Are

But as captivating as your NPCs can be, remember that you and your friends are creating a story, and that this story is about the heroes. If you spend too much time expounding on the intricacies of your NPCs' backstories or create impossible situations just so your latest awesome

character can show off and save the day, you risk eroding the Player investment you've worked so hard to create. That's not to say you can never have an NPC share the limelight; just try to give the Players concrete involvement in their story.

Remember that OVA is not a competitive game. It's not you against them, and you shouldn't arrange encounters just so you can steamroll over the PCs. The Players certainly won't be happy, and it's just not a very satisfying story.

Give Everyone Their Time to Shine

Some PCs are easier to involve in the game than others. One might have a dynamic personality, interacting easily with the inhabitants of your world. Another may be more "effective," armed to the teeth with an arsenal of useful Abilities.

If you don't take care, it's easy to let such characters steal the show and leave other Players with little to do. Bored Players quickly become unhappy Players, which isn't good for anyone.

Instead, take advantage of all the PCs' attributes and involve each of them in the story. Even a character with no apparent skills to contribute can prove useful given the right situation. An immature kid among a group of powerful martial artists may seem useless...That is, until the party needs someone small enough to fit through a narrow passageway.

Involve all the Players by encouraging role-play. Look at their Weaknesses and introduce situations that make them come up during the game. Plan conflicts that can only be resolved through conversation or the PCs' unique talents. And let the Players act it out! When they want their characters to bribe, fast-talk, interrogate, convince, or otherwise interact with an NPC, have them actually do it. Sometimes, this can eliminate rolling dice altogether and gives everyone the opportunity to take center stage.

Reward Players For Playing

Letting Players know they're doing well is always a good way to encourage involvement in the game. If a Player really carried the story, provided particularly entertaining dialogue, role-played a Weakness despite the hardship it caused their character, or simply went the extra mile, toss a free Drama Die their way.

Drama Dice not only provide a free shiny thing for Players to strive for, they also give Players more freedom to try to do the incredible. Which in turn might be worth some more Drama Dice! Just try not to favor any one Player, and make sure everyone has a chance to earn a few of their own.

If you want to further involve the Players, consider allowing them to nominate each other for Drama Dice. Have a pile of dice off to the side and dole them out as you all see fit.

Finally, if a Player has consistently improved the game for everyone throughout a session, you may want to award an extra Experience Point. (See *After the Adventure*.)

Pacing and Direction

As you play OVA, events rarely progress in any fashion resembling *real* time. Hours of story time can pass by in seconds. Likewise, an invigorating battle can take much longer to play out than the length of time the characters themselves experience. Balancing how much real time to spend on a given amount of story time can be the difference between a game that flows smoothly and one that drags its heels.

Try to spend more time on the things that are exciting, interesting, or story building. Consider breaking down pivotal moments into several tasks instead of resolving them with a single roll of the dice. It's also okay to just say something happens or an amount of time passes if it moves the story along—as long as there's no reason for the Players to contest!

A Beginning, a Middle, and an End

Following a general outline can help you pace and guide your adventure. In Japanese storytelling, there is a four act structure known as *Kishoutenketsu*. It has been applied to plays, novels, and even four panel gag strips, but it can just as easily help you structure your adventure!

- **Ki Introduction** The situation is established. Where are the PCs? What has changed in the world that forces them to respond?
- **Shou Development** PCs pursue their goals and attempt to accomplish them. What details can be revealed? What do they need to do to succeed?
- **Ten Turning Point** The PCs' efforts reach a critical moment. What ultimately stands in their way? What secret is revealed? What unexpected twist awaits them?
- **Ketsu Resolution** The PCs succeed, fail, or come to a new understanding. Have things returned to normal? Have the PCs themselves changed?

Once you feel like you have answered all the questions of a given act, it's time to move on to the next! But don't forget to give your Players a little breathing room. If their characters are beaten or exhausted, it might be a good idea to work in some respite between acts.

Keep the Game Going

Fun happens when *something* is happening, and it quickly evaporates when there is nothing to do. Despite their best efforts, Players may have no idea what to do next. Or maybe the course of action they have chosen simply proves uninteresting.

Whatever the case, as the Game Master, you must do your best to keep the game going. If Players are confused or lost, push them in the right direction. Tell a PC to make a roll to notice a useful clue.

Have someone, or *something*, show up and force them to react. Whatever you do, add an ingredient to the mix that gives the Players very clear choices about what to do next, even if it's as simple as fight or flight!

...But Avoid Railroading

Although you may help them along sometimes, your Players are still Players. They expect to be able to make decisions and have them matter in this world. And try as you might, it's impossible to account for every possible outcome, no matter how thoroughly you plan your adventure.

But don't panic! The worst thing you can do is make Players act in the manner you want them to. Barring their way with mysteriously locked doors or thwarting their ideas without justification *may* work in the short term, but you lose the Players' trust and investment in the story. Instead, work *with* them.

If you find yourself unprepared, ask the Players what they expect to come of their choices. If they're exploring a location you didn't really think about beforehand, ask them what they hope to find. You immediately have a nugget of an idea to work with, even if the Players' efforts fail.

If Players figure out a creative way to bypass your obstacles, create new ones. Not *roadblocks* mind you, just ways to make even this shortcut interesting. Did the PCs take a train to get to a destination sooner than you expected? Have the train break down, get hijacked, or even be attacked by monstrous monsters. Or consider other ramifications. What could they have overlooked or left behind with this different direction?

Following a new path doesn't mean your planned content has to be canned. With a little ingenuity, you can move your conflicts and encounters to new locations, have new characters be the mouthpieces for old exposition, and so forth.

But if you feel things have strayed too far from your comfort zone, think of ways to encourage the PCs' return. Entice them with things they value, invoke their Weaknesses, remind them of important details. Just make sure the Players always have a choice. If the right choice is attractive enough, they'll surely follow...eventually.

Sharing the Work

Being a Game Master can be a heavy burden, but it's not one you have to bear alone! While many Players enjoy being responsible only for their own characters and becoming fully engrossed in that role, others would be more than happy to become involved in shaping the world and the adventures you go on together.

One simple option is to allow Players to be responsible for parts of the setting directly related to their own characters. If a PC is the greatest living expert on a mysterious lost civilization, it makes sense that the character can be called upon to detail that culture if needed. NPCs met through the *Contacts* Ability can be described by the appropriate Player. Characters with *Magic* or *Inventor* can help define the rules that govern their powers. And so on.

Players can also have greater narrative control. What happens when characters succeed, or even when they fail, can fall under the direction of the Players. Choosing between failure and taking a Complication can be a compelling part of playing all by itself!

Even the Game Master role can be shared. Players can take turns wearing the GM hat, or if you're a particularly adventurous group, you can drop the Game Master role altogether and work in concert to direct the story!

After the Adventure

So the Players have saved the world, put the bad guys in their place, solved the problem, or at least made it through another day. For now, the adventure is over. It's time to pick up the papers, pens, and dice and go home.

Or maybe not! What happens after an adventure is ultimately up to you and the Players. You could spend time discussing the adventure's events and the possible repercussions, reminisce over particularly exciting moments, plan your next meet-up, or just chat a little before everyone heads out.

Then again, you might be daring enough to hop right back into the fray, ready for another escapade into this fictitious world you've created together—or a new one entirely!

Experience

If you are using Experience for OVA, this is a great time to give it out. The break between sessions allows Players plenty of time to consider what they want to do with their Experience Points or if they want to hold on to them for later use.

Don't feel obligated to give out Experience *every* adventure. If the PCs have quelled a significant threat or faced deep fears, then an Experience Point is warranted. On the other hand, if everyone just had a good time mopping the floor with some goons, then perhaps it can wait until another adventure. And if this were the culmination of a story-arc and involved the resolution of many story threads, then maybe two or even three would be justified!

Most of the time, everyone should get Experience as a group, but if a particular Player stood out continually through the adventure, giving an extra Experience Point can be a nice way of showing your appreciation. If you want to involve the

Players more, you can always have *someone* get a bonus Experience Point after the adventure, but everyone has to vote on the recipient!

As mentioned in the *Growth & Experience* chapter, characters can spontaneously gain Abilities and Weaknesses through play. It is up to you to decide exactly what they receive and how much. Discuss such changes with the Player. As a general guideline, characters should rarely gain more than one or two Levels in any Ability this way. Even if the Magical Supreme Power of the Universe has been bestowed by some deity, characters will still need time to learn how to use it!

And Beyond

With the exception of the *Sample NPCs* and the appendix *Telling Anime Stories*, this marks the end of your journey with OVA. There are no more rules to teach. But the end of this book is only the beginning! With the knowledge you've gained, many great adventures in role-playing lie ahead.

So get gaming! Have fun. And in traditional Japanese gaming style...

Thanks for Playing!







SAMPLE NPCs

- *What are heroes without their foils? Where would the Players be without the guidance of helpful mentors and allies? Who would they strive to protect—or to destroy? Without other characters in the form of NPCs, a role-playing game could be a rather lackluster experience!*
- *You're probably quite capable of making these dastardly villains and what-not on your own...but just in case you need some inspiration, this chapter provides all kinds of Sample NPCs to sprinkle into your campaign. Use them as is or modify them to fit your needs.*

How to Use NPCs

These Non-Player Characters can be used in many of the same ways as the Sample Characters found earlier in this book. You can reference that chapter for more ideas on employing the NPCs. However, there are a few differences to keep in mind.

Using NPC Type

Every NPC has a type listed within their statistics indicating their importance to the story. This affects their Health and Endurance totals as well as encourages limits on their capabilities.

Heroic NPCs can easily become the main antagonists of your story or even strong allies. Secondary NPCs may appear now and again but will never compare to the PCs in importance. Extras are typically used once and never seen again.

Many of the NPC Fragments later on can be considered Extras.

But don't be afraid to change the type as you see fit! Even if an NPC has already appeared in your story as the Secondary type, or even an Extra, there's no reason their next appearance can't be of the Heroic variety!

Threat Value

If you plan to have an NPC, or group of NPCs, face off with the Player Characters, be mindful of everyone's Threat Values. If you throw enemies too tough or too weak at the heroes, the combat may drag on, end abruptly and unsatisfactorily, or just be *boring*. Feel free to modify each NPC's Abilities and Weaknesses, or give them more allies, until they make a fitting match for an encounter.

Acacia

DARLING, LET US DESTROY THIS WORLD TOGETHER.
SIDE BY SIDE, WHO WOULD STOP US?

Acacia is a member of the Order of Chaos, an organization dedicated to reviving the ancient discipline of magic to bring forth a new epoch of discord. With her partner Saspar, Acacia carries out the commands of this Order—whatever they may entail. Her diverse array of witchcraft and entourage of otherworldly demons make her very capable of doing just that. Despite outward appearances, Acacia has little care for the goals of Chaos. Her true allegiance lies with Saspar. Her devotion to the Order is only to appeal to him and his own dedication. As of yet, her efforts have proved fruitless, but she longs for the day when they are more than just partners.

Acacia's Demons

Sazza and Fraz, a pair of twin lesser demons of mischief, are never seen apart. Individually weak, together they possess power that is surprisingly devastating.

Attributes (Secondary): Attack +2 (EFFECTIVE x3, RANGED; ASSISTED), Quick +3, Frail -1, Weak -2

High Fructo Cezar was once powerful, but a moment of kindness stripped him of his rank and locked much of his power. Though bitter, he's mostly faithful to Acacia.

Attributes (Secondary): Strong +3, Tough +2; Clumsy -1, Slow -2



- +1 Agile
- +2 Attack (Black Magic)
- +2 Barrier (EFFECTIVE, 5 END)
- +3 Beautiful
- +3 Flight
- +2 Incorporeal Form
- +2 Knowledge (Magic)
- +3 Magic, Witchcraft
Break (Frail -2, 10 END)
Impede (Slow -2, 10 END)
Wither (Weak -3, 20 END)
- +2 Vigorous

- 1 Arrogant
- 2 Focus (Flight/Incorporeal Form Require Hat)
- 1 Impulsive
- 2 Love Interest (Saspar)
- 2 Overconfident
- 3 Servitude (Chaos)
- 2 Vulnerability (Light/Holy)

Attacks & Combat Stats (HEROIC)

Lock Heaven's Door

FATIGUING; UNIQUE PERK: PREVENTS HEALING/RECOVERING UNTIL BATTLE'S END
A stroke of her finger saps the target's energy and fills them with dread.

ROLL	DX	END
3	3	10

Devil's Breath

BLINDING, AFFINITY: DARK; FEATHER BLOW
A chilling breath clouds the target's mind.

ROLL	DX	END
3	3	15

DEFENSE

4

HEALTH

40

ENDURANCE

60

TV

14

Saspar

TIME, UNSTOPPABLE TIME ... WHEN WILL MY TIME
COME TO AN END?

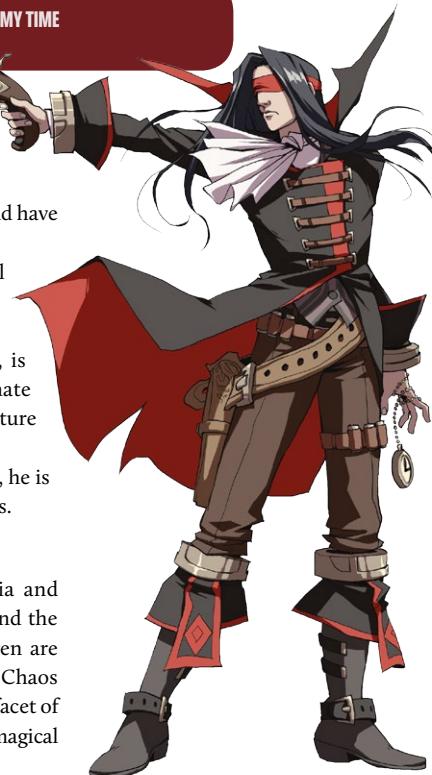
On the surface, Saspar seems to be an emotionless man dedicated only to his work for the Order of Chaos, but at heart, he's just a man indifferent to his own existence. He secretly longs for the day to finally fail in his task and have his excuse for a life to end.

Like Acacia, Saspar's power lies in magical ability, though instead of any direct arcane mastery, he relies on strange magical machinery. His magic gun, once loaded with the proper bullet, is capable of firing bursts of spells, while his ornate pocket watch allows him to predict the timing of future events and intercept danger before it arrives.

Although it is unknown if Saspar is truly blind, he is never seen without a brilliant red sash over his eyes.

Character Hooks

Because of their obviously sinister goals, Acacia and Saspar can be foes for anyone who wants to defend the world from evil. Characters like Fukiko and Auren are especially well-suited candidates as the Order of Chaos fits the "ambiguous darkness that must be fought" facet of their backgrounds. Acacia and Saspar also work as magical rivals in a pinch.



Attacks & Combat Stats (HEROIC)

- +3 Art of Invisibility
 - +3 Attack (Magic Gun)
 - +3 Combat Expert
 - +4 Knowledge (Violin)
 - +3 Quick
 - +3 Sixth Sense
-
- 2 Emotionless
 - 1 Focus (Chronos Watch)
 - 2 Hatred (Excessive Noise)
 - 3 Servitude (Chaos)
 - 2 Unique Weakness
(Cannot Detect Things Perceptible to Sight Alone)
 - 1 Vulnerability (Holy)

Brim Shot

ACCURATE X2, EFFECTIVE, RANGED,
AFFINITY: FIRE; ACTIVATION, WEAPON
Calls on the spirit of Phoenix to fire a homing projectile bathed in fire.

ROLL **DX** **END**

7	5	0
---	---	---

Ise Shot

EFFECTIVE, IMPAIRING, RANGED,
AFFINITY: ICE; ACTIVATION, WEAPON
Calls on the spirit of Ymir to fire a frost ray that encapsulates what it hits in ice.

ROLL **DX** **END**

5	5	0
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Lode Shot

EFFECTIVE, RANGED, STUNNING,
AFFINITY: EARTH; ACTIVATION, WEAPON
Calls on the spirit of Gaia to fire a rocky blast that knocks targets off their feet.

ROLL **DX** **END**

5	5	0
---	---	---

DEFENSE

5

HEALTH

40

ENDURANCE

40

TV

14

Shadowman

MY PRECIOUS DAUGHTER, WE WILL BE TOGETHER
AGAIN EVEN IF I MUST DESTROY THE WHOLE UNIVERSE!

Shadowman—it's a name that strikes fear across galaxies. His motives, like his origins, are unclear, but it's impossible to deny the sheer destruction left in his wake. But perhaps the havoc of Shadowman is not as random as it appears. He began his life as Har Grimoire, a famous and celebrated scientist. Though his wife had long since passed, he retained a special bond with his daughter, Elle. That all changed when a disastrous lab accident took her life and nearly his own. Grimoire disappeared from the world, presumed dead. In truth, he was rebuilding himself. Years before, research was being made to reconstruct a human being from a single sample of DNA. The project, OVA, was abruptly halted and banned by the intergalactic government. But Grimoire knew it still existed somewhere. With his custom designed armor, built not only to sustain his ravaged body but to improve it beyond human capability, he set out to find it. And nothing, *nothing*, would get in his way.

Character Hooks

While obviously suited to Karis, Shadowman can prove an adversary for anyone protecting the common good. Though an interesting footnote is that Karis and Elle bear a startling resemblance...



- +2 Armored
- +3 Attack (Futuristic Force)
- +4 Barrier
- +1 Combat Expert
- +3 Flight
- +3 Inventor
- +3 Life Support
- +2 Pilot
- +3 Smart
- +3 Strong
- +3 Telekinesis
- +4 Tough
- +2 Vigorous

- 2 Bizarre Appearance
- 3 Focus (Abilities from Suit)
- 3 Infamous (Criminal)
- 3 Obsession (Finding OVA)
- 3 Secret (Identity)
- 3 Wanted (GPL)

Attacks & Combat Stats (HEROIC)

Laser Sword

ARMOR PIERCING; WEAPON

A glowing beam of light that instills fear into those who would dare face him.

ROLL	DX	END
3	7	0

Psycho-Kinetic Crush

AREA EFFECT, STUNNING; INEFFECTIVE X2

Shadowman uses his amplified mental powers to toss around the opponent.

ROLL	DX	END
3	5	10

DEFENSE	HEALTH	ENDURANCE	TV
6	80	60	24

Zurkrieg

COME, HAVE AT YOU! I WILL SHOW YOU
WHAT REAL STRENGTH IS!

A cold man, Grant Zurkrieg has been obsessed with power since his impoverished childhood in Europe. Even then, he was plotting his rise in the financial world. With his brilliant grasp of economics, he became a self-made millionaire by his mid-twenties. But money was not enough. He toned his body into a hulking, fighting machine. But that, too, was insufficient. He had to have *more* power. With his Men in Black, he searches the world for the most powerful people in order to make them join him—or to destroy them.

Zurkrieg's Men in Black are, in fact, cyborgs. Created from the bodies of the terminally ill, the brain dead, and even corpses, they are an unholy combination of man and machine. Though slow, they are determined and strong, capable of fulfilling Zurkrieg's orders to the letter.

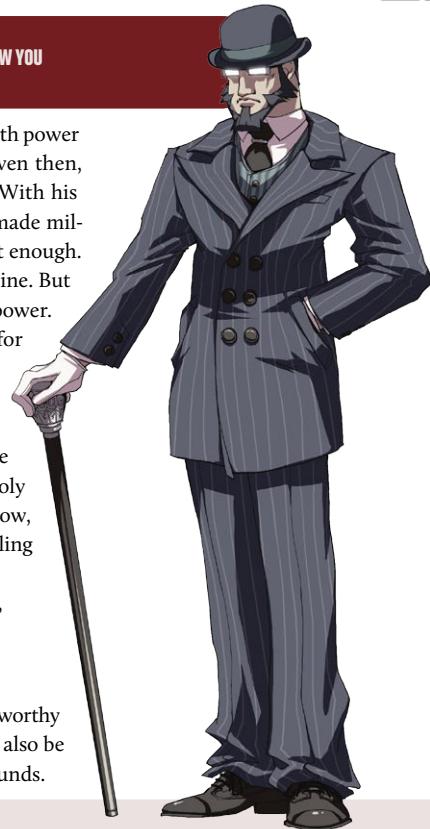
Attributes: Strong +2, Tough +2; Emotionless -3,
Servitude -3, Slow -1

Character Hooks

Zurkrieg can find interest in any character of noteworthy skill or ability. His well-funded experiments can also be the source of trouble, as in Ai and Yuu's backgrounds.

- +3 Attack (Power & Control)
- +3 Combat Expert
- +2 Evasive
- +3 Intimidating
- +2 Iron-Willed
- +4 Knowledge (Economics)
- +4 Minions (Men in Black)
- +2 Smart
- +3 Strong
- +2 Tough
- +5 Wealthy

- 2 Arrogant
- 1 Code of Conduct
(Must Have Fair Duels)
- 3 Fear (Drowning, from
Childhood Accident)
- 2 Hatred (Weakness)
- 3 Obsession (Power)
- 3 Secret (Illegal Research)
- 3 Stubborn



Attacks & Combat Stats (HEROIC)

Extending Cane	ROLL	DX	END
REACH; WEAPON Zurkrieg's cane is engineered to extend, giving him command of any situation.	5	7	0

The World's Strongest	ROLL	DX	END
STUNNING; INEFFECTIVE, UNWIELDY While fond enough of his cane, Zurkrieg enjoys finishing off opponents barehanded.	5	6	0

DEFENSE	HEALTH	ENDURANCE	TV
4	60	40	18

Ancel

IT IS MOST UNFORTUNATE THAT YOU HAVE SEEN ME.
OH WELL, IT CAN'T BE HELPED. GOOD-BYE.

At first blush, Ancel appears much like any 12 year-old boy. But more than a momentary acquaintance reveals a hidden and mysterious depth. His collected demeanor, intuition, and apparently self-supporting lifestyle as a piano player all seem alien when compared to his youthful frame. But this is far from the most bizarre facet of his lifestyle. In reality, he only moonlights as a pianist—his true calling is that of a hitman. Armed with all matters of weapons and gadgets, Ancel does the job, and he does it well. Those who hire him never see him face-to-face, and his quarry never lives to tell. His appearance makes for the perfect disguise. As for his past...no one may ever know.

Character Hooks

Obviously, anyone who has rubbed the wrong person the wrong way could end up encountering Ancel. PCs may also try to intervene and thwart Ancel's efforts to make good on his job description. Or perhaps he may simply become a pleasant face at a local café or bar.



- +2 Agile
- +3 Art of Invisibility
- +2 Attack (Tools of the Trade)
- +4 Combat Expert
- +3 Dimensional Pocket
- +2 Evasive
- +2 Intuitive
- +4 Knowledge (Piano)
- +2 Perceptive
- +1 Quick
- +2 Wealthy

- 1 Ageism
- 1 Emotionless
- 2 Frail
- 1 Fussy
- 2 Ineptitude (Speaking Face-to-Face)
- 3 Secret (Assassin)
- 2 Soft Spot (Music)
- 3 Wanted (The Law)
- 2 Weak

Attacks & Combat Stats (HEROIC)

	ROLL	DX	END
Handgun EFFECTIVE, RANGED; WEAPON Happiness is a warm gun. Well, Ancel never seems to be <i>happy</i> , but close enough.	8	4	0
Sniper Rifle IMPAIRING, RANGED; DELAYED, WEAPON What better way to carry out one's work but from afar and well out of harm's way?	8	3	0
Length of Wire PARALYZING X2; LOW PENETRATION X2 If left without other means, Ancel knows how to improvise to take down a target, even if his small frame makes the effort exhausting.	8	1	10
DEFENSE	HEALTH	ENDURANCE	TV
5	20	40	14

Nazo

SHALL I SHOW YOU WHAT YOU COVET MOST?
WHAT, PRAY TELL, WOULD YOU GIVE UP TO HAVE IT?

Nazo is a *kitsune*. These infamous Japanese fox spirits are well known for their skillful trickery as well as preying on hapless mortals for their games of deceit and foolishness. However, Nazo spends most of her time estranged from other *kitsune* due to her refusal to adhere to their traditions and laws. She has no qualms about revealing her true nature—a clear taboo—while her interest in mankind goes beyond the typical desire to beguile and confuse. Nazo genuinely wants to learn more about them. Some whisper that she is even envious of them. Whatever the cause, little can curb Nazo's lust for experiments. Using her magical ability to change shape, craft illusions, and even inflict curses, she concocts elaborate schemes to test the ideals of her targets. Only when her curiosity is sated will she leave them alone.

Character Hooks

Because Nazo is equally comfortable in the form of a fox, a child, and a beautiful woman, she can integrate easily with a variety of characters. With her extensive spiritual power, an entire adventure can be based around one of her carefully scripted plans. Likewise, the “old bag” in Daisuke’s background or the malevolent spirit in Cora’s could easily be Nazo.



- +4 Charismatic
- +5 Illusionist
- +3 Incorporeal Form
- +3 Magic, Witchcraft
- +3 Psychic
- +2 Resistance (Physical)
- +5 Shape-Shifter
- +2 Telekinesis
- +3 Teleport
- +3 Vigorous

- 2 Compulsion (Curiosity)
- 2 Obsession (Human Nature)
- 2 Outcast (Other Kitsune)
- 2 Overconfident
- 2 Soft Spot (Green Tea)
- 3 Unique Weakness
(Priests Immune to Illusions)

Attacks & Combat Stats (HEROIC)

Fox Fire

AFFINITY: SPIRIT

Nazo dazzles the opponent with a brilliant illusionary display before overwhelming them with spiritual power.

ROLL	DX	END
2	3	0

DEFENSE	HEALTH	ENDURANCE	TV
5	40	70	16

Dr. Tomori

COMPUTERS MAKE FOR DRY COMPANIONS
BUT VERY HELPFUL ALLIES WHEN YOU ARE “DEAD.”

A brilliant man and revolutionary scientist in the field of artificial intelligence, Dr. Heiji Tomori was drafted to work for the otherwise female-only Malicron Corporation. With his expertise, he was able to make the Malicron pipe dream, Project MIHO, a reality. Unfortunately, Dr. Tomori died in a tragic accident soon afterwards. Or so everyone thought. Using his skill with artificial brains, he managed to upload a complete version of his own mind into the Malicron Corporation network. Although his presence is unknown, he often influences the work of the business behind the scenes and scouts the worldwide information network in hopes of finding a trace of his beloved Miho.

Character Hooks

Dr. Tomori will most likely appear in campaigns centering around Malicron (and thus, PCs like Natsuki, Braun, and Miho), but he could theoretically show up in any computer system. His expertise with robotics could prove vital, and even his lack of physical form has advantages.



- +5 Knowledge (AI)
- +4 Knowledge (Robotics)
- +4 Smart
- +3 Unique Ability (Instant Computer Research)

- 1 Absent Minded
- 3 Unique Weakness (Can Only Travel in Cyberspace)
- 3 Unique Weakness (No Physical Form)

Attacks & Combat Stats (SECONDARY)

Litanies of Scientific Fact
FATIGUING, AFFINITY: ERUDITE
Dr. Tomori's exhaustive knowledge can be tiresome to the uninitiated.

DEFENSE	HEALTH	ENDURANCE	ROLL	DX	END
2	20	20	2	1	0
				TV	1

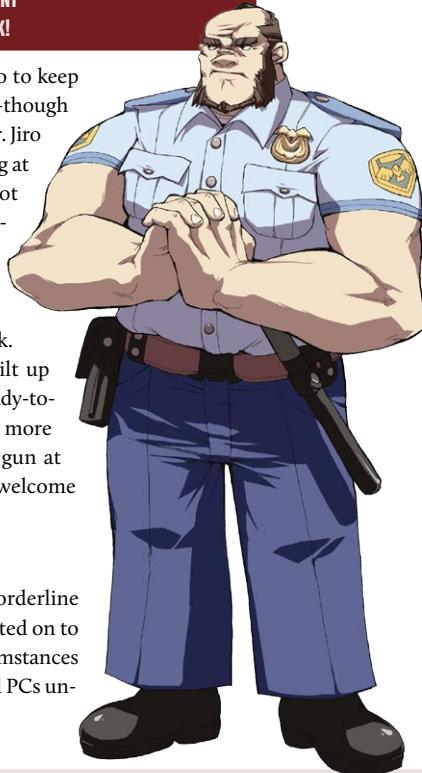
Jiro

BREAK? THERE'S NO TIME FOR A BREAK! IF YOU WANT A BREAK, I'LL GIVE IT TO YOU—A BREAK IN THE NECK!

As captain of the local police force, it's up to Jiro to keep the peace-keeping engine running as it should—though this *may* lend to his constantly stressed demeanor. Jiro is jumpy, short-tempered, and constantly juggling at least three or four wholly separate tasks. It's not uncommon to find him simultaneously answering the phone, giving orders, organizing files, and filling out forms...with his feet. Despite constant encouragement from his colleagues to take a holiday, Jiro has yet to miss a day of work. (Some even speculate he has vacation time built up from decades ago.) Whether it's because of his ready-to-boil-over mental condition or something much more psychotic, Jiro has a bad habit of pointing his gun at anything and everything that he deems an unwelcome intrusion.

Character Hooks

Despite (or maybe because of) Captain Jiro's borderline psychopathic work ethic, he can usually be counted on to do his job well. However, this doesn't mean circumstances can't conspire to put even the most well-behaved PCs under the watchful eye of the police.



+1 *Armored (Bulletproof Vest)*

+1 *Attack (Police Training)*

+2 *Combat Expert*

+1 *Evasive*

+2 *Intimidating*

+3 *Minions (Officers)*

+1 *Perceptive*

+2 *Position of Power*

+2 *Strong*

+1 *Tough*

-2 *Compulsion (Trigger-Happy)*

-1 *Dependency (Coffee)*

-2 *Jittery*

-3 *Obsession (Work)*

-2 *Servitude (Police Force)*

-3 *Short-Tempered*

-1 *Stubborn*

Attacks & Combat Stats (SECONDARY)

Desk-Side Revolver

EFFECTIVE X2, RANGED; AMMUNITION, WEAPON

Jiro's constant companion and likely only friend.

ROLL

DX

END

4

4

0

Bare Knuckle

STUNNING; INACCURATE

While he prefers "civilized" weaponry like his revolver, Jiro can throw a mean punch.

ROLL

DX

END

3

4

5

DEFENSE

HEALTH

ENDURANCE

TV

3

30

20

9

NPC Fragments

Of course, every NPC needn't be as robust as those on the previous pages. It's a big world out there, and sometimes you need characters to fade into the background—or at least serve more as color than to spearhead the plot. Here you'll find short snippets of characterization perfect for Extras or even Secondary NPCs. But that's not to say they can't be more than they first appear. Don't be afraid to beef up their Abilities and Weaknesses to fit the story!

Around Campus

The **Shady Teacher** is new to the school but seems to be knowledgeable enough. Yet there's something...off about him. Maybe it's because he wears sunglasses even indoors or that students are suspiciously disappearing from his class...

ATTRIBUTES: Art of Invisibility +2, Perceptive +2, Smart +3; Absent-Minded -1, Fussy -1, Quirk -1 (Always Wears Sunglasses), Secret -2 (To Everybody)

The **Ebullient Club President** is convinced that his club is the best one in the whole school, and he will talk your ear off until you're convinced, too! Never mind that, by all accounts, he's the only member...

ATTRIBUTES: Charismatic +1, Evasive +2, Knowledge +2 (Club Matters), Smart +1; Compulsion -2 (Talking), Oblivious -2

The **Weird Exchange Student** is definitely weird! She keeps to herself, always writing secrets in that old leather book of hers. Sometimes, when the class hours stretch long, her lips whisper words to people who are not there.

ATTRIBUTES: Knowledge +2 (The Occult), Psychic +1, Spirit Medium +1; Outcast -1 (Weird Kid), Shy -2

The **Snobbish Upperclassman** is the school's academic darling, the kendo team's star athlete, and easily the most popular girl on campus—and she knows it. You'd be lucky if she gave you the time of day...or honored you by allowing you to tell it to her.

ATTRIBUTES: Agile +2, Beautiful +2, Knowledge +2 (Kendo), Minions +2 (Her Clique), Quick +2, Smart +2; Arrogant -2, Emotionless -1, Obsession -2 (Meeting Her Mother's Lofty Expectations), Overconfident -2, Short-Tempered -1

On the Town

The **Weathered Salaryman** is a dedicated worker and provider for his family. He is happy that his toils have led to many promotions and kept his loved ones safe and secure. But yet, somewhere amidst the endless hours at his desk, there were dreams he may have once had. Or maybe not. He doesn't remember.

ATTRIBUTES: Knowledge +2 (Business), Smart +1, Wealthy +2; Clumsy -1, Dull -1, Languid -1, Restricted Freedom -1 (Chained to Desk)

The **Beat Cop** is a friendly face in the neighborhood. He's young and hasn't been with the force long, but he is always ready with directions and a helping hand. During slow times he might scribble notes for his crime novel...as long as his boss doesn't catch him slacking.

ATTRIBUTES: Attack +2 (Pistol), Combat Expert +1, Knowledge +2 (The City In and Out), Knowledge +1 (Writing), Perceptive +1, Position of Power +2 (Police Officer); Secret -1 (Writing Aspirations), Servitude -2 (Police Department and the Common Good), Soft Spot -1 (Dessert)

A **Shinto Priest** resides in a small shrine tucked away in a corner of town. Though his age might leave him less spry than he once was, he can be counted on to deal with a troublesome spirit—or just grant a little advice.

ATTRIBUTES: Intuitive +1, Sixth Sense +2, Spirit Medium +3; Frail -1, Pacifist -1, Restricted Freedom -2 (Rarely Strays Far from Shrine), Weak -1

The Wrong Side of the Law

The **Indebted Yakuza** owes his crime family his life. Because of this, he has become a dedicated and decorated member despite wishing nothing more than to avoid violence. The battle of these two halves of his spirit plague his existence.

ATTRIBUTES: Attack +2 (Illegal Firearm), Intimidating +2, Knowledge +2 (Gambbling), Tough +1; Bizarre Appearance -1 (Full-Body Tattoos), Pacifist -1, Servitude -3 (Yakuza)

Thugs, the omnipresent dwellers of dark alleyways and quintessential quick encounters. You could say they're victims of circumstance, but really, we all know they're just here for the PCs to beat up.

ATTRIBUTES: Attack +1 (Length of Chain), Combat Expert +1; Dense -1, Easily Distracted -1

In the Wild

All matters of **Wild Beast** exist outside the hubbub of human society. Some might be larger, others swifter, but these attributes should give you a start to craft exciting encounters with nature.

ATTRIBUTES: Agile +2, Attack +1 (Tooth & Claw), Intimidating +2, Quick +2; Easily Distracted -1, Short-Tempered -1, Stubborn -1

This cold-hearted **Venomous Killer** waits in the shadows to strike when you least expect it. Whether slithery and legless or giant and lizard-like, it's something you'd rather not meet up close and personal.

ATTRIBUTES: Art of Invisibility +2, Attack +2 (Bite: Continued Effect x2; Feather Blow, Low Penetration x2; 5 Endurance), Quick +1; Vulnerability -2 (Heat/Cold)

Lurking in the Shadows

Never mind that a **Ninja** and his brothers are dispatched with ease and in number. No matter that years of experience in the assassinating arts prove ineffective. A ninja's work is his life, and not even overwhelming odds will make him betray it.

ATTRIBUTES: Agile +1, Art of Invisibility +2, Attack +1 (Katana), Quick +1; Code of Conduct -3 (Will Die Before Revealing Information)

Ghosts are the spirits of the dead, trapped in the earthly realm due to some unfinished business. Besides wielding spooky powers, their inability to be harmed by physical means may make special powers of your own, or at least an exorcist, handy.

ATTRIBUTES: Attack +1 (Haunt: Fatiguing), Flight +1, Incorporeal Form +2, Resistance +5 (Physical Attacks), Telekinesis +1; Bizarre Appearance -3 (Ghostly), Restricted Freedom -3 (Place of Death)

Zombies...you can't live with them, and they can't live without your brains. Plodding and mindless, their lack of offensive capabilities is more than made up by their numbers and unwillingness to stay dead.

ATTRIBUTES: Attack +1, Tough +2, Unique Ability +3 (Turns Defeated into Zombies); Clumsy -1, Dense -3, Slow -2, Vulnerability -2 (Fire), Vulnerability -2 (Head Shots)

Fantastic Creatures of Lore

Magical *Fairies* range from helpful to mischievous, and it's hard to know which you're dealing with. Their cryptic sing-song speech certainly doesn't help.

ATTRIBUTES: Charismatic +1, Cute! +1, Flight +2, Magic, Arcane +1, Quick +2; Awkward Size -3 (Tiny), Frail -1, Quirk -1 (Nonsensical Talk), Weak -2

Filthy, ugly, and mean spirited, a *Goblin* is an unpleasant encounter to say the least. Able to make use of all kinds of derelict weaponry, their small forms belie a fierce willingness to cause havoc.

ATTRIBUTES: Attack +1 (Rusty Sword), Combat Expert +1, Quick +1; Bizarre Appearance -2, Dense -1, Greedy -1, Rude -2

Oni are Japanese ogres with devilish horned visages and otherworldly red or blue skin. They are known to possess an iron club and incredible strength. While not all *oni* are necessarily evil, you may not want to invite one over for tea to find out.

ATTRIBUTES: Attack +1 (Iron Club), Intimidating +2, Strong +2, Tough +2; Awkward Size -1 (Big), Bizarre Appearance -3, Short-Tempered -2, Slow -1

A *Dragon* is a fearsome foe. Were its sheer size and strength not enough, that small detail about it *breathing fire* might prove troublesome to the unprepared adventurer (or hapless villager).

ATTRIBUTES: Armored +2, Attack +2 (Fire Breath: Area Effect, Ranged; 10 Endurance—Claw & Bite: Reach; Inaccurate), Combat Expert +1, Flight +2, Intimidating +2, Smart +1, Strong +2, Tough +2; Awkward Size -3, Obsession -2 (Treasure), Slow -1, Stubborn -2

High-Tech Marvels & Outer Space

Slow but relentless, this heavily armored *Spider Tank* monstrosity has one goal: to destroy. Armed to the hilt as it is, it should have no trouble following its programming.

ATTRIBUTES: Armored +3, Attack +3 (Countless Weapons), Combat Expert +2, Tough +1; Awkward Size -3 (Huge), Clumsy -1, Emotionless -3, Slow -1, Vulnerability -2 (Electricity)

The arachnid-like *Sentry Bots* are more nimble than their big brother—and thankfully significantly less dangerous. Still, that laser rifle attached to the top of their heads is nothing to sneeze at.

ATTRIBUTES: Armored +1, Attack +1 (Laser Rifle), Combat Expert +2, Heightened Sense +2 (Vision), Quick +2; Clumsy -1, Emotionless -3, Vulnerability -2 (Electricity)

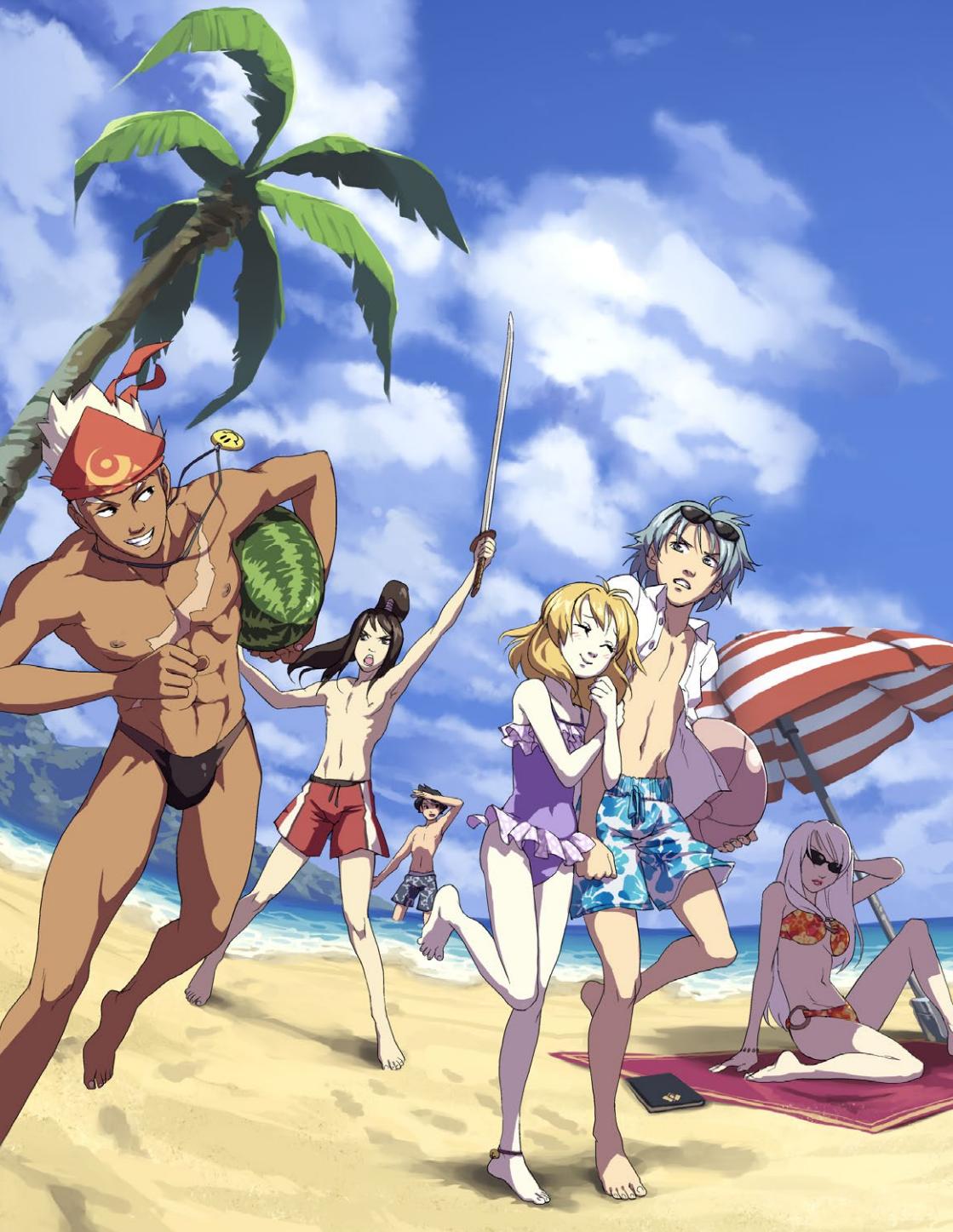
GPL Agents have their work cut out for them, policing the entire known universe and all. Their no-nonsense demeanor has inspired rumors that they are actually robots or at least some kind of genetically engineered clones. The GPL denies this.

ATTRIBUTES: Attack +2 (Stun Baton: Paralyzing; Ineffective, Low Penetration), Combat Expert +1, Evasive +1, Perceptive +1; Emotionless -1, Servitude -2 (GPL)

Wanted galaxy-wide, the *Cat Burglar* is more than happy to sashay off with your valuables. Her feline-like alien origins give her a body that's agile and sneaky. Just don't call her a cat to her face, or you might lose more than your belongings!

ATTRIBUTES: Agile +2, Art of Invisibility +2, Attack +1 (Claws), Dexterous +2, Quick +2; Greedy -2, Sensitivity -2 (Being Called a Cat), Wanted -3 (GPL)







TELLING ANIME STORIES

- No doubt you have fallen in love with anime and have fully embraced the countless facets that make it the unique medium cherished the world over.
- But if you are just beginning your journey with one of Japan's biggest cultural exports, or you just want to make sure that your role-playing is filled with enough appropriate details to engage your friends, this appendix can be a handy overview for your efforts.

Tropes & Themes

While neither anime nor manga are genres in and of themselves, they nevertheless carry with them a collection of ideas, methods, and shared inspiration that immediately call out their origin in Japan. If the saucer eyes and minimized noses don't give a story's nature away, surely one or more of the following tropes will.

Ancient Japan

In the same way the fantasy genre in the West is rife with fantastical depictions of medieval Europe (or close analogs thereof), many anime stories take place in embellished versions of Japan's past. Devout samurai loyal to their *daimyo*, mysterious ninja always lurking in the shadows, and dangerous spirits beyond understanding all make for great storytelling, if not always historical accuracy. Research into Japan's feudal past and rich folklore of creatures (see *Mythical Creatures* later in this section) can provide the fuel for many adventures.

Animal Mascots

Japan is a culture very fond of *cute* things, to the point that the Japanese word *kawaii* has come to represent their particular

brand of cuteness worldwide. While this very often carries over to character designs, even when it doesn't, much of this sensibility can be firmly ingrained into the animal mascot character. These creatures, which can be real, mythical, or something in between, can serve as comic relief or advisors to the protagonists—or they can be multiplied in droves to form the basis for a worldwide monster-battling tournament.

Cherry Blossoms

The blooming of cherry trees, or *sakura*, can be seen everywhere come spring in Japan. Their peak only lasts a week or two, leading many to hold cherry blossom viewing parties called *hanami* and picnic, talk with friends, and enjoy life under the cascade of fading pink petals.

Their inherent beauty, short life, and arrival at the beginning of spring lend the cherry blossom to countless metaphors, and Japanese storytelling uses it liberally to represent the passage of time, the sweet nature of love, and the fragility and brevity of life. Since April also marks the beginning of the Japanese school year, it can also represent growing up, moving on

from old friends, or just the arrival of new transfer students.

On the other hand, cherry blossoms can be summoned any time when the story calls for it, to emphasize beauty, love, or just the presence of a really sensational samurai.

Emotion Sight Gags

Japanese animation and comics have numerous visual cues to indicate various moods, emotions, and states of being. Many carry over well enough into English, but others are peculiarly Japanese idioms that can require a little explanation to the uninitiated.

A single large sweat drop can appear by or behind the head to indicate bewilderment, embarrassment, or exasperation at one's self or others.

Bulging veins in the forehead or temple (making an X or cross-like shape) can indicate anger or frustration.

A small white cloud can appear from the character's mouth when sighing or at other times when emphasizing the character's breath is warranted.

A character may become chibi, where the body shrinks drastically in size while the head increases to match. This usually indicates the character is doing something silly or cute, even if they're not aware of it. It's also a good way to indicate characters are about to break the imaginary fourth wall between themselves and the audience.

Sprouting cat ears can mean the character is being mischievous or playful...or just serves as an excuse to further cutify the character.

Sparkles shimmering around a person emphasize that the character is perceived as beautiful. Since anime and manga have a habit of rendering *everyone* in an attractive manner, this can be a useful clue to differentiate the truly stunning from the rest of the cast.

Nosebleeds can spontaneously show up when characters are confronted with a titillating sight—based on the Japanese superstition that such things can drastically raise blood pressure. It's usually used to convey that a character is inexperienced in matters like these.

A peripheral spark, flash of color, or angular shape appearing next to a character's head indicates a sudden realization, whether it's noticing something at the edge of their vision, becoming aware of a source of danger, or finally putting together the answer to some problem or riddle.

Having one's soul visibly escape through the mouth can emphasize the character has received a shock so intense that they feel as though they might have died.

While the English notion of floating Zs have found their way into the Japanese consciousness, **expanding and deflating snot or spit bubbles** can also be used to show off a sleeping state. This is especially true with old or comical characters.

All of these gags tend to appear in comedic stories, but the occasional sweat drop or sparkle may even find its way into more serious ones.

Gender Fluidity

Characters in anime stories often buck traditional gender roles. Gorgeous young men (*bishounen*) dazzle with their long locks and effeminate appearance. Others intentionally dress in gender ambiguous clothing or attire outright lifted from the opposite sex. Magical transformations and mystical curses can have them change sex altogether.

Anime doesn't shy away from all kinds of love, either, with stories incorporating loving gay relationships alongside any other. (In fact, entire genres have been devoted to the subject matter.)

Hair, Technicolored & Gravity Defying

Unlike comics in the west, which quickly gravitated to color despite the obvious limitations of affordably printing it, Japan has long embraced the economy and beauty available from simple black and white. The result left much to the reader's imagination. This might explain a little of how bizarre, saturated colors became popular choices to envision on characters' heads, but it does little to explain manes full of spikes or tresses that reach the ground yet remain light as a feather. But like so many things in anime, as long as it looks really neat, the plausibility doesn't have to be questioned.

Harems

A comedic scenario common to anime is the idea of one relatively normal guy or girl swamped by the affections of a practical harem of suitors. Whether these potential love interests are intensely unwanted, the source of tortuous indecision, or some combination of both varies from situation to situation. These admirers are often exotic compared to their desired affection, whether they are strange aliens, gods and goddesses, or very human-like robots. Ironically, finding true love can be made that much more difficult with the inevitable fighting and competition that ensues.

Love and Destiny

Tales of love have existed throughout the ages, but often romance goes beyond "love at first sight." Love can cross the boundaries of time and space, uniting destined lovers from their previous lives and across universes. Further enforcing this idea is the classic Asian folklore that people destined to be in love are united by an invisible red string tied to their pinkies.

But love in anime can be more than just a powerful attraction between two people. It can be a quantifiable force, one

that can be focused into marvelous magics, channeled through high-tech weapons, and otherwise used in the fight against evil. It's the *true* power of love.

Magical Girls

The term can feel very broad, but magical girls (or *mahou shoujo* in Japanese) reference a very specific bundle of themes. In the same way superheroes can call to mind masked defenders in capes and spandex costumes, magical girls generally display frilly, over-the-top dresses and uniforms they don piece by piece in elaborate transformation sequences. How the girls get their powers, and what those powers entail, varies from series to series, but the triumph of good over evil, finding true love, and the inevitable passage from silly girl to mature young woman are tried and true elements of the genre.

Martial Arts

Martial arts encompasses more than training to fight unarmed, it's the ability to harness spiritual energy to achieve limitless fighting potential. Punches and kicks can successfully rend machinery to pieces, and if you yell loud enough you can convert your sheer will into fiery blasts of power. But more than that, martial arts as presented in anime reflects the human potential, an overt, flashy metaphor for character growth and determination.

Mecha

Never satisfied with the conventional way of doing anything, the Japanese have a storied history of replacing tanks, starships, and other manned vehicles with giant humanoid war machines called mecha. While such creations rarely make sense—and even if possible would be an overly complicated means to an end—mecha allow an audience to empathize with pilots while enclosed in their massive vehicles. These large battle bots form

an extension of the pilots themselves, exhibiting their strengths, weaknesses, and unique personalities in ways most real-world equivalents could not. That's not to say that more realistic, smaller portrayals can't be made (and many stories do just that), but mecha lend themselves to the far limits of technological imagining.

The word mecha derives from the English mechanism and can refer to any number of machines and gadgets. However, the term has firmly planted itself in Western fandom to refer exclusively to the giant robots anime is known for.

Naming Your Attacks

The idea of words having power is a belief as old as language itself. Anime displays this in spades by having characters of all walks of life not only name their unique attack maneuvers but shout the name as they perform them. The practice can be sourced back to early children's super robot shows but probably passed into ubiquity with the popularity of fighting video games. These names can vary as much as the attacks themselves, but they tend to entail several superlatives and a combination of borrowed English words that don't necessarily string together in natural use of the language. You don't *have* to shout your own attacks while playing OVA...but really, it's much more exciting if you do.

Rivals Turned Allies

While anime can have its share of ugly, mindless brutes as antagonists, often enough the villains can be just as complex and interesting as the heroes. In fact, they can be *more* so, making them fan favorites despite their role as the big bad to be beaten.

You can't just let good characters like that go to waste! Instead of defeating villains and rivals outright, it's perfectly

feasible for them to have a change of heart instead. Perhaps they see the error in their ways, have come to really like the heroes despite their differences, or must face an even *bigger* villain that requires everyone to combine forces.

That's not to say such characters stay "good" forever, or even for very long. But it allows cherished characters to stick around, at least for a little while, past their would-be expiration date.

Sentai

Roughly "task force," *sentai* has come to represent a very specific set of tropes involving super-powered teams sporting near identical (but often color-coded) costumes as they fight against the monster-of-the-week. Teamwork is emphasized, often to the point that the characters actually combine their power to form (or at least pilot) a single giant fighting entity. *Sentai* themes can leech into other genres, with magical girl teams and mecha squadrons demonstrating similar reliance on cooperation—and collaboration in outfit design.

Shounen and Shoujo Stories

Meaning "boys" and "girls," *shounen* and *shoujo* have transcended their original definitions of demographic to describe specific styles of storytelling. *Shounen* stories often center around super-powered teenagers fighting the good fight (or competing in the good competition, as the case may be) as they ever expand their prowess, discover the value of friendship, and strive to protect what's important to them. *Shoujo*, on the other hand, almost always has strong romantic overtones and leans to more slice-of-life style situations, though the existence of the magical girl genre certainly shows that there's plenty of room for action and adventure in these stories, too!

Strange Ears

While exceptions certainly exist, when a given anime needs to present a fantasy race, an alien species, or a robotic construct, it is common to eschew the weird and bizarre for a very simple visual cue: strange ears. Whether these ears are elegant and elf-like, sharp metal fins, or fuzzy ones borrowed from this animal or that, anime makes it clear that this being is someone different but keeps at the forefront the human connection. These are characters that can be empathized with and understood, not faceless creatures to be subjugated or thwarted. Unless of course it is some outright evil race that needs subjugating and thwarting, then many-eyed visages, writhing tentacles, fangs, horns, and other inhumanities are fair game.

A Sword Is All You Need

While in the real world, the firearm has all but supplanted melee weaponry as a primary offensive tool, in anime, the sword and its other hand-to-hand cousins never see the end of their utility. Even when technology has progressed to the point that giant humanoid robots are totally feasible, invariably some of these mechanical behemoths sport equally giant blades.

It's all in the name of being cool, and swordplay certainly lends itself to more creative and cinematic battles than typical gunfire can allow.

We Have the Tech, Iron Age Be Damned!

In the same way anime is loath to leave behind the captivating weaponry of the past, writers have long seen little reason to let logic stand in the way of introducing futuristic technologies into otherwise primitive settings. Medieval kingdoms protected by fleets of airships, magic-powered gunslingers, and the ever-popular lost civilization of technological marvels are well-established mainstays of Japanese storytelling.

What It Means to Be Human

Since there are so many kinds of stories that anime can tell, you will likely encounter many strange, inhuman, and otherworldly beings. Yet, often enough, these disparate cultures and personalities can find something to admire—or even love—in human nature.

Technologically advanced aliens may discover the heart and spirit in humanity that their “elevated” race has long left behind. Robots can strive to understand emotion and become more human themselves. Demons, spirits, and other supernatural folk might fall in love with mere mortals and may, in fact, choose to become mortal themselves. Whatever the specifics, the simple state of *being human* can be a goal, or hopeless wish, of many.

Youthful Protagonists

Because much of Japanese animation is produced for a younger demographic, it should come as little surprise that many series are headlined by similarly youthful characters. Drama set against a high school backdrop is commonplace (see the *School* heading later on), but anime will find creative ways to justify teenagers in any walk of life, no matter how adventurous or traditionally populated by adults. Sometimes this is explained away, with powerful magics or technologies that can only be used by the young, by the heroes’ prodigy-like talents, or as the result of unfortunate circumstances. Other times, it’s just the way things are, and no one in the story questions it much.

But like Young Adult fiction in the west, this doesn’t mean anime shies away from difficult themes, complicated stories, or in any way dumbs down the experience. Likewise, there’s still plenty of anime that embrace the adult demographic fully, complete with protagonists that are a little older, if not wiser.

Japan

Because anime and manga were born in Japan, it's hardly surprising that many stories take place there—or at least, in some Neo-derivative thereof. But don't feel the need to recreate a perfect Land of the Rising Sun in your games. For one, it would be difficult without a considerable amount of first-hand experience. But more than that, you really only need to create an impression of Japan that gels with everyone playing the game. If you're all gung-ho Japanophiles, then by all means, incorporate as much as you can. But being a stickler for whether your characters should doff their shoes in a given place or if the locals would be aware of a typically Western holiday just isn't as important as telling great stories and having a good time.

Still, knowing a few details about the amazing place we call Japan can't hurt. At least, it will give you a better understanding of the anime stories you know and love.

The Country

Japan is a nation made up of thousands of islands, the most populous of this being Tokyo's home, Honshu. Much of the land of Japan is too mountainous to cultivate or even inhabit, leading its citizens to congregate in what little remains. As such, Japan is one of the most densely populated areas in the world. It is also home to numerous live volcanoes and rests on several fault lines, making earthquakes a familiar experience.

Weather varies from the northern island of Hokkaido, with its colder winters and comparatively short summers, to the hot and humid climate of Japan's southern, subtropical tip. The middle of the country is temperate, featuring both occasional snow and hot summers.

The Japanese government features a democratically elected Prime Minister

and a parliament known as the *diet*, as well as an emperor, whose role is largely ceremonial and has little political power.

Tokyo is Japan's capital, though it is actually a prefecture containing 23 individual wards. A few well-known places are the fashion district of Harajuku, the electronics and *otaku* district of Akihabara, the famously massive Shibuya Crossing with its statue of Hachikō, and Shinjuku, home to many of Tokyo's skyscrapers and the world's busiest train station.

The city has faced great destruction in its past, including the disastrous Great Kantō earthquake of 1923 and the bombings of World War II. Every time, Tokyo has been rebuilt to a greater grandeur than before. It's a small wonder that stories involving the destruction of the city and its replacement by so-called "Neo Tokyo" are popular plotlines in anime.

Tokyo is a thoroughly modernized city. Public transportation is elaborate and convenient, with a subway terminal almost always within walking distance. It is common for teenagers and even adults to not know how to drive.

Even in the face of its urban metropolises, Japan remains home to quaint rural villages and swaths of countryside where the people still follow "the old ways," tending the land and cherishing long-held traditions—and mayhap a little magic.

Food and Drink

Addressing the wide breadth of Japanese food culture would be impossible to do here, but as a whole, the Japanese eat a lot of rice (the center of most meals), noodles, vegetables, and fish while partaking less red meat and bread. Here are some of Japan's more iconic culinary contributions:

Bento, Japan's traditional boxed lunch, usually contains several dishes divided by compartments. Artisan lacquered boxes can be a sight to behold, but most Japanese prefer the convenience of plastic.

Onigiri are rice balls often filled with pickled fruits and vegetables or salted fish. They are a popular snack easily recognized by their traditional triangular shape.

Pocky is a mass-produced candy consisting of chocolate-coated biscuit sticks. It also comes in many other flavors.

Ramune is a carbonated drink sold in a distinctive, old-fashioned glass bottle sealed with a marble. It is a mainstay during Japan's hot summers.

Sake, or rice wine, is Japan's indigenous alcoholic beverage. Characters can often be seen drinking it from traditional cylindrical vessels or saucer-like cups.

Sushi is likely Japan's most famous culinary export, but the term actually refers to the vinegared rice, not the raw seafood it is wrapped around. Fish alone would be correctly referred to as *sashimi*.

Taiyaki are pancake batter-like confections filled with sweetened red bean paste and baked into friendly fish shapes.

Tea has an important place in Japanese culture with its distinctive green teas and the famously elaborate tea ceremony.

Vending machines can be found *everywhere* in Japan, with sodas, juices, hot beverages like coffee, and almost any food imaginable available at the press of a button.

Of course, **imported American** fast-food chains, processed snacks, and drinks also exist and are heavily enjoyed throughout Japan, not to mention a fascination with a certain fried chicken mascot that is hard to quantify or explain.

Honorifics

Commonly when addressing each other, the Japanese append one of several *honorifics* to a name (eg. Yomada-san). Many of these are analogous to English salutations, and it's perfectly okay to stick with what you know—a lot of translations do! But if you want to add a bit of authenticity to your role-playing, here's a quick overview of the most common:

-san is a term of respect used when addressing others. It's roughly equivalent to Mr./Ms., but it can be attached to a first or last name and is as a whole used more often.

-sama conveys even greater respect and is used for those in a higher station than yourself. Lord/Lady and Master/Madam are close equivalents, though Japanese propensity for politeness sees *-sama*'s use in more situations than these typically are. **-dono** is a similar honorific but conveys an antiquated ye olden tyme feel.

-chan is a diminutive term of endearment often used for babies, children, and animals but can be used between any close friends.

-kun usually refers to male children and teenagers. It may be used by teachers, male buddies, or doting girlfriends.

-sensei is often translated as teacher, but it is also used for other figures of authority, like politicians, or any master of a trade or craft, like lawyers, doctors, or revered manga illustrators. Dr. and Professor can be good English stand-ins.

-sempai is used to refer to elder students or senior co-workers but never teachers or a boss. On the other hand, **-kohai** is used for colleagues equal or junior to yourself, but it is used alone, not as an honorific.

Sensei and **sempai** can also be used as stand-alone words. However, addressing someone by name but with no honorific implies a close relationship.

Language

Japanese is a complex language grounded in origins very different from our own. But while learning all the strange characters that represent their words and the grammatical structures that tie them together can take time and toil to master, pronunciation is refreshingly simple with only a handful of exceptions. Once romanized (written with the standard

alphabet you know), most letters behave exactly as you expect them to. Below are more specific notes:

Vowels are always pronounced one way: *A* as in ah, *E* as in get, *I* as in ski, *O* as in go, and *U* as in true. Vowel pairs are technically voiced independently, but you may find it easier to create diphthongs out of them: *ai* like fly, *ao* like cow, *ei* like bay, and *oi* like koi. A vowel repeated twice is held a moment longer, and it is sometimes represented with a macron over the letter like *sō*. Sometimes the vowels *i* and *u* can become silent between other consonants or at the end of words. Daisuke is pronounced *dice-keh* and Natsuki is *knots-key*.

The letter *N* is pronounced like an *M* before the consonants *B*, *M*, and *P*. Translators may even write it as an *M* for you (as in *sempai*).

What we romanize as *R* is actually a sound somewhere between *R* and *L*, which the Japanese use interchangeably for both when borrowing English words. Pronouncing it as an *R* is okay for gaming purposes though.

Tsu may seem odd, but say *tsunami* and you'll find you know the sound already!

And finally *Y* takes on a vowel-like sound directly after another consonant. *Ryo* would be like *Rio*.

English loan words (even with their original romanized spellings) are commonplace in Japan, but since Japanese is a language made of fixed syllables, the result can often be quite foreign-sounding just the same.

Law & Order

Japanese police work on the *kōban* system, where a force of around three to five officers operates out of a small building or box (the *kōban*) and services the needs of the local community. Officers carry batons and sometimes handguns (which cannot be purchased by the general public), wear uniforms, and usually have one

or more police cars at their disposal.

The crime rate in Japan is the lowest of any industrialized nation, but that doesn't mean that Japan, real or fictional, is free from crimes to solve. In fact, it's perfectly fine to play up criminal activity to fuel exciting adventures. Or you can just keep it to small town stuff where the police help out the community.

Crimes are tried by one or more judges, and Japan has a startling high conviction rate. However, many cases, even violent crimes, can be settled out of court if satisfying reparations are made. Attorneys also have more leeway to conduct investigations than their Western equivalents.

Yakuza are Japan's indigenous mafia, known for their strict codes of conduct, full-body tattoos, and potentially missing digits, which are cut off in penance for transgressions. There are also the *bōsōzoku* motorcycle gangs. Largely made up of younger members, their "crimes" tend to be limited to troublemaking and driving recklessly on their heavily customized motorcycles.

Money

The unit of currency in Japan is the yen, and it is available in both notes and coinage. The coins valued at 5 and 50 yen are distinctive for their holes through the center. With the value of any currency changing from day to day, providing a precise exchange rate here would be an exercise in futility. But a good rule of thumb is to treat a yen like a penny. Thus 100 yen is roughly the same as \$1. The yen as a penny is the reason even the cheapest items in Japanese video games often have several zeroes in their prices.

Mythical Creatures

Like any culture, Japan has its own extensive folklore and bestiary of strange creatures. One could write whole books on Japan's supernatural beings, *yōkai* (and

truly, some have), but here are a few of the most noteworthy:

Kappa are turtle-like imps that reside by the river...which they also like to drown children in if they wander too close. Their heads sport a natural cavity that contains water. Should this become empty or dried, the *kappa* loses its powers and becomes defenseless. They also have a penchant for cucumbers, apparently.

Kitsune are fox spirits able to take human form—most often that of a beautiful woman. These shape-shifters are known alternately as benevolent messengers or deviant tricksters, depending on which tale you're hearing about. They can live hundreds of years, and as they grow older, gain more powers *and* more tails. Nine is said to be a sign of the most powerful of all.

Oni are essentially ogres, though the term can be translated as a number of other things like demons, devils, and trolls. They often carry large iron clubs, grow horns on their heads, and have wild skin colors, like red or blue.

Tanuki are often butchered into English as the similar-looking raccoon, but they are a distinct species more accurately referred to as a raccoon dog. Lore has it that they have extensive transformation powers and...other assets. Despite having similar abilities to the *kitsune*, they're more often depicted as silly, laughable creatures than malevolent.

Tengu are prideful bird beings that live in the mountains and generally exhibit an unpleasant temperament. They are most known for their extraordinarily lengthy, perhaps beak-ish, noses.

Yurei are Japanese ghosts. They are surprisingly similar to their Western equivalents and follow most of the supernatural conventions you are familiar with. Unique to the Japanese version is the accompaniment of glowing will-o-the-wisp-like flames called *hitodama*.

Onsen

Relaxing in *onsen*, or hot springs, has long been a cherished part of Japanese life. Being a nation of volcanic origins, the land of Japan is abundant with these relaxing hot spots, though man-made and indoor *onsen* can also be found. Citizens and tourists alike beleaguered by the hectic city often escape to the countryside to find relaxation. Rural old-fashioned buildings are a common way to further distance themselves from city life.

It's a recurring tradition for anime heroes, too, to take at least one episode respite from their adventures at a traditional *onsen*, even when such adventures take place in distant times or across the galaxy. Because experiencing *onsen* in the nude is the norm, and the hot springs are almost always segregated between the sexes, the mishaps of one sex encountering the other, intentionally or by accident, is a commonly explored theme. *Onsen* can also serve as a good excuse to visit old, traditional Japanese inns and countryside locales for some spirit mischief.

Religion

Japan has two major national religions. Shinto and Buddhism. The two have existed more or less side by side for centuries, and many Japanese consider themselves a member of both. Even so, religion is not typically a big part of day-to-day Japanese life—instead it is usually reserved for weddings, funerals, festivals, and some holidays. Japanese may visit shrines and temples on New Year's for good luck but do not attend a regular religious service as is common in many Western religions.

Shinto is Japan's native religion and is rooted in the belief of *kami*, supernatural spirits of nature that exist in everything. As such, there are many, many *kami* that each have their unique sphere of influence. *Kannushi*, white robed priests, often maintain shrines devoted to a specific

kami, and people may come to pray for good fortune in whatever matter lies under its power. The priests' efforts can also be aided by *miko*, shrine maidens recognized most easily by their distinctive red *hakama* pants and white kimono jackets. Devout Shinto followers can ward away evil spirits and create paper talismans called *ofuda* that do much the same, though their powers may be even more extensive in anime stories.

While Shinto deals much with fortune and life, the business of death and the afterlife is often left to **Buddhist** beliefs. Buddhist temples exist throughout Japan, and families may keep small altars to pay respect to their ancestors.

Because many Japanese take religion in a less formal, serious manner, elements of other faiths can be treated with surprising casualness in anime and manga—in the way one might write about ancient Greek gods. Angels and devils have become common motifs in countless stories that are not overtly religious otherwise.

School

Since much of anime and manga is originally targeted at a younger audience, especially the kind that most often finds its way into English, school is an incredibly common setting—so common that it has become an anime trope in itself.

Japanese children are educated over the course of 12 years much like their American counterparts. However, middle school marks the end of mandatory schooling, with entrance to high school requiring an exam. The academic year begins in April, and classes are held from Monday to Friday—though many schools also include Saturday as a half day. School lets out for various holidays throughout the year including a six-week summer vacation.

Unlike American schools, students stay in the same classroom throughout

the day, even eating lunch there, while the teachers move from room to room. Students may remain with the same group of pupils for years at a time.

School uniforms, like the famous sailor-styled *seifuku*, are usually only worn by middle and high school students. There are also special uniforms for gym class. Uniforms differ from school to school, making it easy to spot new transfer students. They also become a matter of pride for their wearers, so you may find students intensely possessive of their uniform even after being teleported to strange, magical places.

School Clubs

In addition to their studies, students often participate in one of many extracurricular clubs. These vary greatly in focus and include sports, martial arts, music, science, *go* (the Japanese equivalent of chess), the school paper, and the student council. Clubs are typically led by a student president but may also have an adult advisor.

But clubs, especially anime clubs, need not be so mundane. There's no reason there can't be a mecha-battling club or a demon-summoning club. Likewise, there's nothing stopping the student council from holding real political power or making world-shaking decisions. The more combat-oriented clubs, like *kendo* (Japanese fencing) or archery, can provide otherwise typical students with the weapon know-how to fend off an invasion or survive after finding themselves in another more dangerous world.



Okay, this is really the end of OVA, but I hope to see you soon! We'll be waiting for you.

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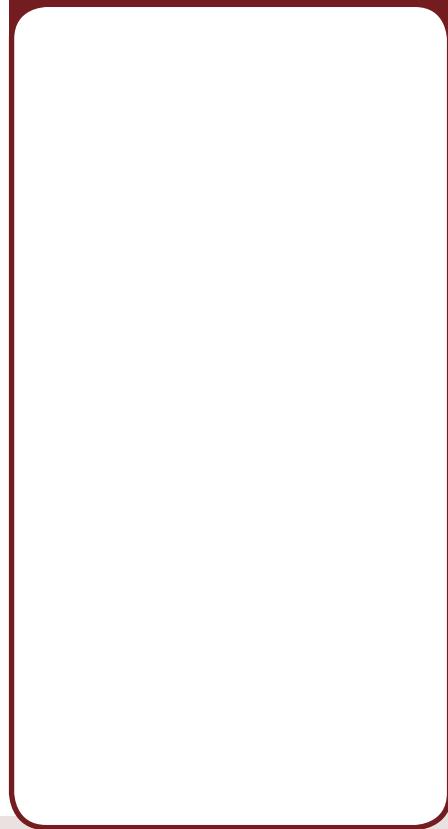
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Background



Appearance

Personality

Other Notes



CHARACTER NAME

PLAYER NAME

ABILITIES

WEAKNESSES

COMBAT NOTES

Combat Stats

	ROLL	DX	END



